

Committee(s): Community and Health Committee	Date: 15 December 2020
Subject: Brentwood Community Fund	Wards Affected: All
Report of: Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager	Public
Report Author: Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk	For Decision

Summary

The Brentwood Community Fund was set up to give Brentwood's communities the opportunity to provide local initiatives to improve the quality of life for local people living in the borough. The Community Fund of £36,300 is currently allocated within and existing 2020/21 budget, and grants of up to £4,000 are available to applicants. The funding was open from 1 April until 30 September 2020. A summary of the applications and the officers scoring sheet is attached in **Appendix B**.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

R1. Agree to fund those projects highlighted in green as outlined in Appendix B out of the Community Fund.

Main Report

Background

1. The Brentwood Community fund has been set up to give Brentwood's communities the opportunity to promote local initiatives to improve the quality of life of people living in the local area. The Fund has £36,300 allocated for localism projects. The fund this year consists of £16,300 contribution from Brentwood Borough Council and £20,000 contribution from Axis, the Council's repairs and maintenance contract as part of their Social Value contribution. Grants of up to £4,000 are available and the funding was open to applications from 1 April until 30 September 2020. The recommendations are before members tonight.
2. The criteria that applicants need to meet for applications for the Brentwood Community Fund were provided in the information and guidance notes which were available to applicants and are attached in **Appendix A** of this report.

This also includes the scoring matrix (**Appendix C**) that officers have used to score each of the applications.

3. The total number of applications to the Community Fund was 17 requesting a total of £55891.39. Last year there were 39 applications. Fewer applications were expected this year due to the impact of COVID-19, the wealth of funding pots currently available to support community initiatives, and organisations' confidence in their ability to deliver planned projects as far ahead as next year.
4. A summary spreadsheet of officer recommendations and a copy of all of the application forms can be made to Members on request to provide comments on the applications to the Chair of Community and Health Committee prior to the meeting.

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

5. The criteria, expected outcomes and application process have been simplified in order to encourage applications and to broaden the accessibility of funding as set out in **Appendix A** of this report.

Reasons for Recommendation

6. Each application has been subject to a robust, independent and transparent scoring process to ensure fairness in the allocation of funding (**Appendix C**). Once reviewed, the applications were scored by a panel of officers and a representative from Axis, considering the following key priorities:
 - Evidence that the bid meets the criteria, the Council's priorities and expected outcomes
 - Evidence that the community has been involved in the development and implementation of the project
 - Evidence that the bid supports the promotion of volunteering and community participation
 - Evidence that the applicant has sought additional external funding or in-kind value (such as the use of volunteers) for the project
 - Evidence that the project is sustainable once the Council's contribution has ceased.
7. Once the applications were individually scored, they were ranked by their score. The recommendations by officers of the projects that met the key priorities and the amount of funding that is recommended is attached in **Appendix B** of this report.

8. Those applications marked as green are recommended to receive funding.
9. Notifications will be made to all those applicants that applied. Successful applicants will also have to agree to any terms stipulated within the conditions of the grant being awarded. Successful applicants will also need to complete a self-monitoring report once their project has been completed.
10. Any unsuccessful applicants to the Community Fund will be offered the following support: Telephone call or online meeting with a member of the Community Services team to review their prospective application; offered a funding training session via Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services which includes tips on submitting a good funding application. Members will also be asked to assist in this process; Organisations will also be signposted to the Open 4 Community on the Council's website to look at other sources of external funding to support their project if applicable.

Consultation

11. Consultation has been undertaken with previous applicants and as a result we have revised and simplified the application process and simplified the application form and supporting guidance notes. It was recognised that some organisations or individuals may have had difficulty understanding some terminology in respect of completing the funding application, and the requirements for information and match funding should be proportionate to the amount of money being awarded.
12. Part of the monitoring form that is sent out to all successful candidates, also asks the organisation about the whole process and areas that can be improved.

References to Corporate Plan

13. The Community Fund supports a number of priorities and sub priorities within the Corporate Plan. The criteria and expected outcomes from the Community Fund are outlined in **Appendix A**. It is proposed that the Community Fund is reviewed for 2021/22 to ensure that the priorities and desired outcomes continue to align with the Council's Corporate Plan for 2020-2025 and any further priorities that may arise as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts , Corporate Director (Finance & Resources)

Tel & Email: 01277 312500 jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk

14. The Community Fund pot consists of £16,300 from existing budgets and £20,000 contribution from Axis as part of their social value commitment through their housing, repairs and maintenance contract.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312705 amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk

15. The General Power of Competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a broad power, subject to some limitations to do things an individual may do, provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. This power is wide enough to include the allocation of funding under the Community Fund.
16. Criteria has been formulated against which applications for grant funding will be assessed. This will support decision making on the allocation of funding being made in a fair and transparent way and satisfies the legal process.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Director of Strategic Planning

Tel/Email: 01277 312500 philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk

17. The Community Fund can have a positive impact on the local economy where there are increases in employment and volunteering, improvement in local facilities and skills development opportunities.

Other Implications

Equality and Diversity Implications

18. The Mental Health small grants scheme will support voluntary and community organisations that best support those with mental ill-health regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race religion and sexual orientation.

Asset Implications

19. Where relevant, the granting of funding is dependant upon permissions being granted by the owner of the asset.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Community Fund Guidance and Criteria
- Appendix B – Community Fund Scoring Recommendations
- Appendix C – Community Fund Scoring Matrix