

GRANTS AND DONATIONS POLICY

AGENDA ITEM No. 10

MEETING: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATE: 14TH APRIL 2021

REPORT BY: TOWN CLERK

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to put forward for the consideration of the Policy and Resources Committee, a draft Grants and Donations Policy for the Council, as requested at the Council Meeting on 10th March 2021.

2.0 Background to the Report

- 2.1 It was resolved at the Council Meeting on 10th March 2021 (Council Minute 227(iv) refers) that officers prepare a 'Grants and Donations Policy' for consideration and adoption.

3.0 Current Situation

- 3.1 Grant and donation requests are currently considered by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 3.2 The Council does not currently have a formal Grants and Donations Policy in place and there is no formal application form or terms and conditions in place for grant and donation requests.
- 3.3 Currently, officers review any requests and seek further information from the individual or organisation requesting the grant or donation in order to enable the Policy and Resources Committee to effectively consider making an award. For example, the latest set of audited accounts are requested from formally constituted organisations.
- 3.4 The Council currently operates the following grant schemes:-
1. Annual Grants and Donations Budget of £5,000 per year.
 2. Annual Youth Council Grant Budget of £2,000 per year.
- 3.5 The above budgets may be supplemented from time to time by additional resources, for example additional budget approvals may be made via the annual budget setting process or unspent resources may be carried forward from year to year as part of the year-end closedown process. For example, last year the Council set up a specific COVID-19 Grants Fund from the 2019/20 Revenue Budget savings.
- 3.6 The Council may also from time to time set aside additional grants funds. For example, financial support can currently be requested from the Council's Large Community Events Budget from local organisations wishing to hold community events within the Parish, and the Council has also recently agreed to set-up a COVID-19 Recovery Reserve in the 2021/22 financial year, which is likely to include a Community Grants Fund.

- 3.7 Any grants or donations relating to large events are currently considered by the Events Sub Committee and are already subject to the completion of a formal application form and subject to specific requirements and conditions. Grants relating to events would therefore fall outside of the scope of the Grants and Donations Policy.
- 3.8 The Council may also provide non-financial support to individuals and community organisations, for example by providing free advice and support, offering free use of Council land, facilities and equipment e.g. use of land to hold events and vouchers for free use of facilities such as the golf complex and sports complex to use as prizes for fundraising activities. The monetary value of any such non-financial support is recharged to the Donations Budget.
- 3.9 The current absence of a formal policy setting out the eligibility criteria and application process for grants and donation requests is not helpful to potential applicants as they do not know whether they are eligible to apply, what information to provide, or how an application will be dealt with and considered.
- 3.10 The absence of a policy is also not helpful to the Council, as the Policy and Resources Committee often does not receive information in a consistent format, and there are no formal guidelines in place for making informed assessments of grant applications and donation requests, and making decisions in a fair, objective, and transparent way.
- 3.11 Finally whilst most grants and donations are currently of relatively low value, the forthcoming set-up of the COVID-19 Recovery Reserve may lead to larger grants being considered during later this year, and it is therefore an opportune time to consider putting in place more robust arrangements for the consideration of large grants via a Grants and Donations Policy.

4.0 Proposed Grants and Donations Policy

- 4.1 The proposed Grants and Donations Policy is attached to the report.
- 4.2 The policy includes appendices setting out the application forms and proposed terms and conditions and post grant questionnaire that are recommended to be put in place for large grants.
- 4.3 The requirements of the policy have been split between small grants and donations up to £1,000 and large grants between £1,000 and £5,000.
- 4.4 The policy covers the following areas:-
- Scope of the Policy
 - Purpose of the Policy
 - Legal Framework
 - Eligibility Criteria for Organisations and Individuals
 - Small Grants and Donations Policy
 - Large Grants and Donations Policy
 - Payment of Grants and Donations
- 4.5 The individual policies for small grants and large grants cover the general principles, the application process, and the criteria for considering and approving grant requests.

- 4.6 The key difference between the small grants and donations and large grants is that it is proposed that applications for large grants will require the completion of a formal application form and also be subject to terms and conditions and post grant feedback arrangements.

5.0 Matters for Consideration

- 5.1 It is considered best practice for local councils to have in place a fair, open, objective, and transparent process for dealing with grant and donation requests. For example, this is a key requirement in the Local Council Award Scheme.
- 5.2 A formal Grants and Donations Policy puts in place formal a formal protocol and guidelines around eligibility, general principles, the application process including any requirements for supporting information, the criteria for considering and approving grants, the arrangements for payment, and terms and conditions, and post grant monitoring arrangements for large grants.
- 5.3 A formal policy is beneficial to potential applicants as it provides clear guidance on whether they are eligible to apply, what information they need to provide, or how an application will be dealt with and considered.
- 5.4 It is also of significant benefit to the Council as information is received in a consistent format, and there are formal guidelines in place for making informed assessments of grant applications and donation requests, and making make decisions in a fair, objective, and transparent way.

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 The proposed draft policy will assist in meeting Strategic Aims 1, 2 and 6 in the Council's Service Delivery Plan:-
- 1. To provide good quality governance and management of the Council.*
 - 2. To manage the council's finances and assets in a responsible manner.*
 - 6. To help and encourage partnership working to improve services and facilities for the residents of Great Aycliffe.*

7.0 Staffing Implications

- 7.1 The implementation of a formal Grants and Donations Policy will have a positive effect on those officers dealing with grant and donation requests by making clear the eligibility criteria and information required from applicants, helping to reduce the amount of time that is involved in processing and preparing information for the Policy and Resources Committee.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The approval of a Grants and Donations Policy will improve the financial controls in place around the consideration of grants and donation requests.
- 8.2 There are no additional budgetary implications arising as a result of the approval of the policy as all donation budgets have already been set and no changes are proposed to these amounts.

9.0 Crime and Disorder Implications

9.1 None.

10.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

10.1 The adoption of a formal Grants and Donations Policy will enable the Council to make informed assessments of grant applications and donation requests based on clear guidelines, helping it to make decisions in a fair, objective, and transparent way.

11.0 Environmental Implications

11.1 None.

12.0 Risk Assessment

12.1 It is not considered that the matters contained in this report pose a risk to health and safety of staff or to the financial or public standing of the Council to a degree that a risk assessment should be appended to this report.

13.0 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

13.1 Personal information will be processed via the grant application process and the information recorded on this form will only be used for the purposes of considering the grant requests.

13.2 Under the provisions of GDPR, the personal data will be treated in a secure and confidential manner and will not be kept for longer than necessary.

13.3 A GDPR Privacy Notice will be prepared and issued with the Large Grant Application Form, should the Grants and Donations Policy be approved.

14.0 Recommendation

14.1 It is recommended that:-

- (i) Members consider the attached Grants and Donations Policy, Large Grant Application Form, and Large Grant Terms and Conditions and Post Grant Questionnaire for approval and adoption by the Council.

Town Clerk