

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Community Grant Panel held at online via Zoom on 25 November 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 2.51 pm

69 Public Speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

70 Minutes of the previous meeting 31 August 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 31 August 2021 were agreed.

71 Declarations of Interest

Minutes 74 and 75; Councillor Jess Bailey; Personal interest: Devon County Councillor.

72 Matters of Urgency

None.

73 Confidential or exempt items

None.

74 Small Community Grants stream proposal

The Engagement and Funding Officer outlined to the Panel a proposal for Small Community Grants stream.

The Crowdfund East Devon fund balance is approximately £70k that still remains, and discussions had taken place to look to develop a mechanism for expanding the types of applications that could be made for money from this fund.

The proposal before the Panel was to set up a Small Community Grants Fund, whereby applicants could apply for between £300 and £500 for projects that help to achieve either or both of:

1. One or both of the following key priorities in the Council Plan:
 - a. Better homes and communities for all
 - b. A greener East Devon
2. One or more priorities/actions listed in the Poverty Strategy.

The Panel were also presented with drafted guidance for applicants for the fund, and an application form. The application form had been formulated to reflect the small amount of funding that could be requested. The fund, as part of the original agreement with Devon County Council for Crowdfund East Devon, would have to be for community projects.

Discussion covered:

- There was no timescale for the £70k to be spent;
- There were many groups in need of funding, particularly in light of the pandemic;
- Suggestion of allocating a proportion of the £70k (an example given of £30k) to councillors to spend on local projects in their ward, in a similar format to the Locality Budget provided to Devon County Councillors, that will require clear guidelines; an example given was that South Hams District Councillors had a £2k locality budget with a minimum grant of £100;
- A form of locality fund would need further consideration and involvement of Legal Services, best served by a further report to the Panel;
- Panel members welcomed the proposal before them in principle;
- Opening up the fund to applications from town councils was not necessary, as the towns had other means of sourcing funding and some towns had significant reserves;
- Explore other new and innovative ways, including a locality fund element, to apply to the Crowdfund East Devon balance to ensure that the money gets spent;
- Care to manage expectation that, for any grant system, there would not be any future budget provision for funds – once the Crowdfund East Devon fund was spent, there was no further funding;
- There were still some potential schemes that may come forward for funding under the Crowdfund East Devon scheme;
- Under the proposal, there were no strong views from the Panel members about the regularity of meetings to decide on applications; some comments were made in favour of seeking agreement by email as per the current setup for the Crowdfund East Devon in order to reach a swift decision for the applications.

The Panel agreed that the setting up of a Small Community Grant stream should be pursued by the Engagement and Funding Officer, to include the most efficient way of reaching a swift decision for applicants; and requested that a further report be provided to the Panel that explored other new and innovative ways the council could distribute grants, including how a locality fund could be provided, to ensure that as many community projects could benefit from the fund balance that remained.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet

That a Small Community Grant stream be set up to increase take up of the Crowdfund East Devon fund available by permitting applications for small amounts with an appropriate criteria.

75 **Revised Community Buildings Fund guidance**

The Panel had previously requested that the guidance for the Community Buildings Fund be revised to reflect ways identified that may help the applicants to provide a complete application.

The Engagement and Funding Officer had provided the Panel with the revised guidance, including a table that set out the amendments made, based on the Panel's requirements for revision.

The two amendments suggested to the reviewed guidance notes were:

- to clarify under modernising/improving outdated facilities some examples of what that might cover – such as kitchen refits, which was listed as a separate item in the guidance suggested;

- to clarify that “the building itself” being eligible includes eligible projects inside the building.

The Panel agreed the revised guidance, subject to the amendment set out in the above paragraph.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet

That the revised guidance for the Community Buildings Fund, as endorsed by the Community Grant Panel, be agreed.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

J Rowland (Chair)
J Bailey
J Loudoun
H Parr
V Ranger

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Millar

Officers in attendance:

Jamie Buckley, Community Engagement and Funding Officer
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Councillor apologies:

D Key