

Decision maker:	Cabinet member transport and regulatory services
Decision date:	11 October 2018
Title of report:	Herefordshire Public Green Spaces Community Grant
Report by:	Parks and leisure centre commissioning manager

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

All wards

Purpose and summary

To seek approval for the relaunch of the existing Herefordshire Public Green Spaces Community Grant scheme.

The grant supports Herefordshire Council's aim to dispose of non-strategic assets. This small and limited fund will support Town and Parish Councils in Herefordshire to have an opportunity to demonstrate that they have the ability to maintain and enhance a green space with the view to a long term asset transfer. The scheme supports projects that have community involvement and impact. Where a lengthsman scheme is in place this grant will aim to provide complementary opportunity.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the public green spaces community grant scheme as detailed at appendix A be approved with a non-recurring scheme budget of £21k; and**

- (b) **the Director for environment and place be authorised to determine grants in accordance with the scheme criteria and having regard to the recommendations of the established panel**

Alternative options

1. Not to approve the grant scheme has the potential to restrict and dilute the current projects around community asset transfer aimed at reducing the maintenance liability within the public realm. It is an option to transfer the funding to another body to distribute but this was not deemed appropriate as this is public funding and likely to be a one off.

Key considerations

2. The council is keen to support local communities who wish to get involved in the provision of local services and has supported initiatives in the past through community asset transfer.
3. The Public Green Spaces grant was first introduced in 2015 to assist in areas with funding grants from £750 to £1,500 and over £10,000 was awarded to 10 community groups. This proposed grant would enable larger scaled projects with potentially enhanced or longer term maintenance agreements.
4. Relaunching the existing Public Green Spaces Community scheme will complement the Parish Lengthsman scheme and is designed to offer grants to Town and Parish Councils to undertake grounds maintenance activities to improve their local environment. The proposed information sheet which sets out the terms under which grants would be awarded is attached to the report at appendix A.
5. All Town and Parish Councils will be sent information about the scheme and how to apply. The successful applicants will be monitored against agreed outcomes and overall scheme performance will be reported as part of the corporate performance reporting process.
6. The budget for the scheme is provided through the sale of equipment no longer required for the Public Realm contract.

Community impact

7. Relaunching this grant scheme will, for a small investment, enable the council to support community led activities and solutions to a countywide concern. A similar scheme has operated in the past across the county and has demonstrated that a small amount of funding has supported extremely beneficial outcomes at a very local level.

Equality duty

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
8. The council is committed to supporting people to live full and independent lives with their local communities and will monitor the impact of these schemes to ensure that they support the council's commitment to our Equality Duty.

Resource implications

- 9. A budget of £21,000 has been identified through the re-sale of surplus grounds maintenance equipment owned by Herefordshire Council held by our contractors Balfour Beatty but which are no longer required for the Public Realm Contract.
- 10. There is no additional funding available for this project and if not spent during year ending 2018/19 the balance will be rolled over to 2019/20.

Legal implications

- 11. The council has powers under the Localism Act 2011 and other enabling legislation to give grants such as those proposed in this report. Advertising the grant scheme will help the council encourage a wide range of eligible applications and therefore assist in demonstrating that the council has met its duty to secure best value in the delivery of all of its functions.
- 12. There are no other significant legal implications arising from this report.

Risk management

- 13. The development of the original grant scheme was in direct response to the public reaction to the reduction of service delivery. The grant helped to mitigate the negative reputation of the council and this relaunch will continue to support those aspirations.
- 14. In establishing a grant scheme it is important to ensure funds are administered correctly. This grant scheme will be administered by the delegated grants team who have significant experience in managing and administering grant schemes of this nature.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
That the items/actions purchased through the grant are not consistently used for the purpose with which they were bought	The sites will be monitored regularly and there will be clawback as per the terms and conditions of the grant offer
That there is more call for funding than there is currently available.	The panel will assess each application on merit and will be able to assess which would provide best value for money.

Consultees

- 15. None

Appendices

Appendix A – Herefordshire Public Green Spaces Community Grant Information Sheet

Appendix B – Herefordshire Public Green Spaces Community Grant Application Form

Background papers

None identified