

<b>Report of:</b>	James Bromiley - Strategic Director of Finance, Governance and Support Councillor Chris Hobson - Executive Member for Finance and Governance Councillor Mieka Smiles - Executive Member for Culture and Communities
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<b>Submitted to:</b>	Executive - 21 January 2020
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<b>Subject:</b>	Community Grants Programme
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**Summary**

<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>
That Executive approves the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Community Grants Programme with an annual value of £160k to replace the existing Community Action Fund (£127k) (propose to be renamed to ‘Community Grant’) and combine it with the Community Chest fund (£33k).</li> <li>• Formal process for the award of funding from the Community Grant Programme.</li> </ul>

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent? <sup>1</sup>
Decision	Yes, it is over financial threshold and affects more than two wards	Non confidential	Non-urgent

Contribution to delivery of the 2018-22 Strategic Plan		
Business Imperatives	Physical Regeneration	Social Regeneration
		Assists in delivering the social regeneration agenda by supporting local communities to identify issues and source solutions

<sup>1</sup> Remove for non-Executive reports

		and to support local organisations to build capacity.
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<b>Ward(s) affected</b>
The grant opportunity will be available to all wards.

**What is the purpose of this report?**

- 1 To propose and seek approval of the proposed Community Grants Programme.

**Why does this report require a Member decision?**

- 2 Member approval is required to agree the future direction of the Community Grant Programme as part of the Empower Programme to facilitate its re-instatement.

**Report Background**

- 3 The Community Action Fund delivered under the Empower Programme was previously limited to a geographical area and has been reviewed by the Mayor.
- 4 Following the review a new centralised Community Grants Programme is proposed to replace the Community Action Fund and combine it with the Community Chest fund. This will produce a total of £160k available for funding within the new Community Grant Programme.

Community Grant Programme

- 5 The proposed Community Grants Programme will cover all wards across the town. The funds available will be:

Community Chest Grant £33,000

Community Action Fund £127,000 \*proposed to be renamed 'Community Grant'

The combined Community Grants Programme fund of £160,000 is aimed at supporting the objectives of the Empower Programme (Middlesbrough Council's Social Regeneration strategy aimed at improving the lives of the residents of the town) and internally will encompass two distinct areas:

Community Grant - Introductory Grant (formerly the Community Action Fund) objectives

- 6 The main feature of this part of the fund is the ease of application. There is no requirement for people and groups to be formalised – no constitution, group bank account, two signatories etc. needed. Residents don't have to physically fill in an application form but can apply via video or even just telling us about what they want to do. This has been particularly well received by those delivering community development in the town. Predominantly aimed at people or extremely small grass root groups who have not before considered applying for grant but who want to make a difference in their area. Not all applications will result in money being given; for example if a group apply to run a training course this will be linked into

Community Learning who have funding to be able to deliver on their behalf. This allows the residents/group to get what they have asked for and also helps Community Learning link into new groups/communities and meet their targets. The fund will be particularly keen to identify projects that identify how the Council can deliver better services or save money by delivering in a different way.

The value of the fund will be £127,000 per year, with a maximum grant of £1500. The fund is only available to residents/groups unable to apply for other funding.

#### Community Chest Capacity Building objectives

- 7 This element of the fund aims to build capacity within existing groups, or support the formation of new groups, by having a number of policies that need to be in place including a formal constitution. This enables the organisation to better prepare to apply for substantial funding elsewhere.

The value of the fund will be £33,000 per year, with a maximum grant of £1500.

- 8 Findafunder, a web based resource which identifies grant funding opportunities, allows groups and individuals to identify other funders. In partnership with MVDA the Council runs regular drop in sessions to demonstrate how best to use the system and also gives those attending a report with all the information needed to contact/apply to funders for their project. All grant applicants will receive an invite to one of these sessions to look at sustainability for their projects.
- 9 Promotion of the Community Grants Fund will be linked to Empower and also the work of Findafunder. This will include both a revamp of the Community Grants page on the Council website, along with promotion through social media.

#### Community Grants Programme overall objectives

- 10 The aim of the fund will bring together the objectives of the previous Community Action Fund and the Community Chest. It will aim to empower residents to identify issues and source solutions; build capacity to apply to other funders bringing more money into the town; enable the development of new community groups especially linked to the work of Council projects; and support the Council towards meeting its social regeneration objectives. Applicants must be Middlesbrough residents or small resident/community groups.

#### Process for the award of funding from the Community Grants Programme

- 11 The Council will have one entry point for all Community Grants Programme applications and all other grant requests made to the Council which will sit within the Commissioning team who have voluntary sector liaison responsibility. The Commissioning team will review applications and redistribute them to the most appropriate potential funding stream, maximising their chance for success. The Commissioning team will have proactive links with funding bodies and networks across the town and wider, and will build up knowledge of available funding opportunities for applications to be redirected as the more applicable route. Regular meetings will be held with funders to maximise these opportunities.

Figure 1 below demonstrates the funders that will be invited to be part of this process.

Links will also be made with the North East Funders network – to encourage other funders to consider funding activity in the town; learn more about what other

funders are looking for; demonstrate work being done to build capacity within the town, and build positive working relationships.

- 12 A quarterly panel will be established to agree all grant awards. A suggested composition is the Executive member for Culture & Communities, Community Infrastructure Manager; Empower Programme Manager, Chief Executive of Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA); Head of Projects and Initiatives -Ethnic Minorities Training & Education Project (EMTEP), Market Management & Grants Officer - Commissioning Team.

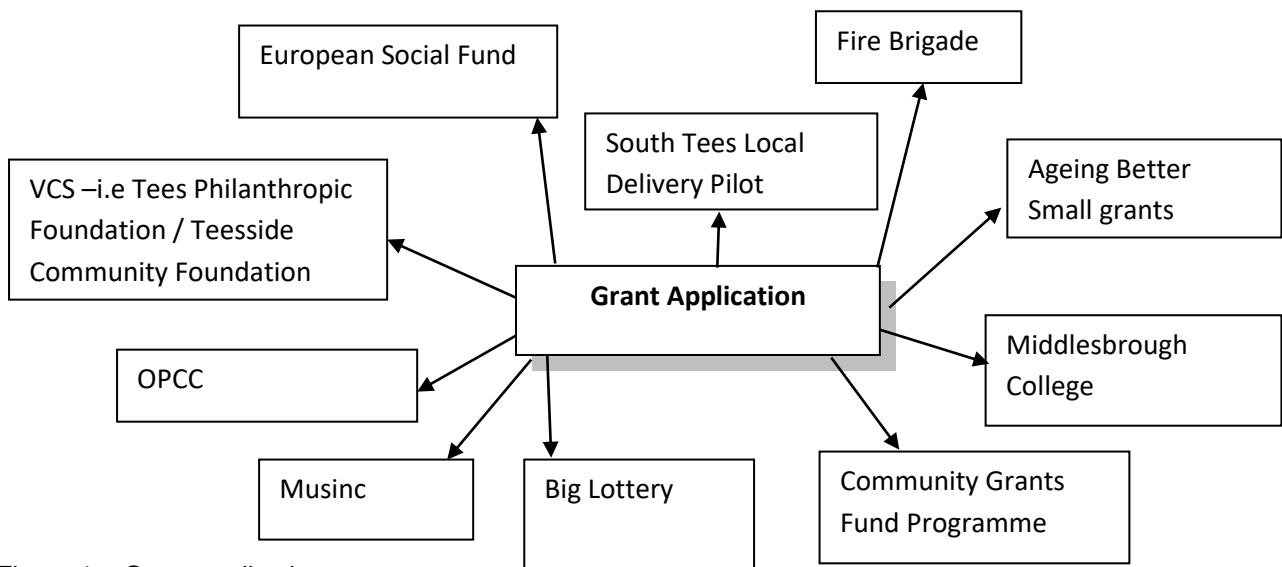


Figure 1 – Grant application route

13 Criteria for Community Grants Programme funding

The criteria for the funding includes the following aspects:

- The applicant/organisation must be based in Middlesbrough
- The activity must be targeted at Middlesbrough residents
- Assessment of whether it could be funded by another local funder
- Assessment of the anticipated benefit and whether it provides value for money
- Links to Council and wider Empower objectives
- Assessment of whether spend is eligible
- Links to other grant allocations
- Assessment of how it would help the organisation develop – i.e. for applying for grants elsewhere

**What decision(s) are being asked for?**

- 14 That Executive approves the following:

- A new Community Grants Programme with an annual value of £160k to replace the existing Community Action Fund (£127k) (propose to be renamed to 'Community Grant') and combine it with the Community Chest fund (£33k).

- Formal process for the award of funding from the Community Grant Programme.

### **Why is this being recommended?**

- 15 The Community Action Fund under Empower attracted significant interest from the public with 79 applications for funding being received prior to the pause being implemented. The revised process will ensure that any applications are screened to check they are not viable for alternative funding streams, and those which are eligible for the Community Grants Programme will follow the designated approval mechanisms.
- 16 The relaunch of this programme aligns with the Council's commitment to social regeneration, facilitating opportunities for communities to bring forward innovative solutions for development in their local communities.

### **Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended**

- 17 Alternative delivery options were considered however the Council is best placed to drive this programme forward as applications submitted may not always require the award of cashable sums. Previous learning has showed that some community ideas have led to improved partnership working between Council departments and teams and community members which have delivered the required results without the need to award grant sums, thus ensuring that the overall grant allocation can go further throughout the course of the year. Therefore it is more beneficial for the Local Authority to facilitate this process and identify these opportunities directly.

### **Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)**

#### ***Legal***

- 18 All grants will be subject to a grant agreement.

#### ***Financial***

- 19 The financial commitment is:

Community Chest Grant £33,000 per annum 19/20, 20/21, 21/22

Community Action Fund £127,000 per annum 19/20, 2020/21, 2021/22

For 19/20 £71,000 has been allocated to date from the Community Action Fund, a further £17,000 will be allocated for 2019/20. The balance from the £127,000 will remain in the social regeneration budget. The CAF/Empower Grant budget has already been approved – it is not a new financial commitment.

The collective grant fund of £50,000 (£33,000 from Community Chest and £17,000 from Community Action Fund) will go to panel meetings to be held before end of March 2020 using application submitted prior to both funds being paused.

- 20 The initial commitment is a further two–year commitment with an evaluation conducted halfway through the second year. The Community Chest grant is a pre-existing commitment within the commissioning budget.

***Policy Framework***

- 21 The Community Grants Programme has no impact on the Council’s Policy framework.

***Equality and Diversity***

- 22 No protected groups will be affected by the decision.

***Risk***

- 23 No risks identified.

**Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)**

- 24 Following receipt of approval the following key milestones will be progressed:
- Publicity of the Community Grants Programme and process.
  - Set deadline for first round of applications.
  - First panel meeting for approval of applications.

**Appendices**

- 25 No appendices.

**Background papers**

- 26 No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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