

## RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

|                                  |
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| <b>*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT</b> |
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| Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted for the Officer or Executive Member<br><b>[NO]</b> |
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### SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Legal and Community

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| <p><b>1. DECISION TAKEN</b></p> |
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| <p>1.1 To update the Community Grants Policy to ensure that it is fit for purpose with the view that any changes and updates will be in place for the new Policy to commence at the start of the forthcoming financial year 2025/26.</p> |
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| <p><i>The amended Policy will not be circulated via MIS – it will be available with the Decision on the relevant decision page: <a href="#">Delegated decisions 2025   North Herts Council</a></i></p> |
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| <p><b>2. DECISION TAKER</b></p> |
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| <p>2.1 Executive Member for Community Partnerships, Cllr Val Bryant and Jeanette Thompson, Service Director, Legal &amp; Community</p> |
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| <p><b>3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:</b></p> |
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| <p>18 March 2025</p> |
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**4. REASON FOR DECISION**

- 4.1 The previous Community Grants Policy have been updated on regular occasions as part of good practice to ensure the policy remained fit for purpose.

- 4.2 The awarding of grant funding awards to organisations, charities and voluntary groups, and the use of community grant budgets allows the Authority to further its aims and overarching Priorities of the Council and District, demonstrating support to voluntary and community sector organisations is key for the Council and the Policy is due for review in a timely fashion. Currently community grants are considered through an application process assessed by officers and are then presented to a member led quarterly Community forum for consideration and then recommendation to the Executive Member for Community Partnerships and Service Director for Legal & Community for approval. The review set out ensures that the current Policy fit for purpose, and supports grant funding in an effective and equitable manner.

**5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 There are no alternative options being proposed other than those detailed as the Policy ought to reflect the changing funding landscape which voluntary organisations now operate (i.e. the impacts of the and cost of living crisis).

**6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)**

6.1 Community Forum Chairs were consulted on two separate meetings (29/01/2025 and 03/02/2025) to discuss any potential amendments to the Grants Policy criteria. The meetings were Chaired by the Executive member for Community and Partnerships, supported by the Policy and Communities Manager and the Team Leader for Community Partnerships. Written comments were also received from Policy & Strategy Team and Community Partnership Officers.

## **7. FORWARD PLAN**

7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

## **8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The general funding climate has become more challenging for voluntary and community sectors not only in North Hertfordshire but is a national issue. The review of the Policy was identified as an action on the service plan for 2024/25. In the light of the challenging financial climate and the action to review – it was important to ensure that the Policy remains fit for purpose. The Executive Member felt that that it important to seek the views of the Community Forum chairs on the policy before amending it. The meetings provided for the Chairs to share any relevant experiences in making recommendations to the presented application at their respective community forum meetings to inform the policy review. Officers, both assessors and authorisers, were allowed to provide the opportunity to contribute to the review.

8.2 The meetings set out to assess whether the present grant criteria allowed for each Forum to make the most community impact with the limited amount of budget available and to view officer comments in respect of the following areas:

- Which organisations or projects should be able to apply
- Minimum and maximum amount limit
- Re-application period
- Council priorities
- How many people should benefit in an area?
- Representation of applicants at Forums

8.3 Following the two meetings, it was agreed to amend the Policy as follows:

- Council priorities adhered to as closely as possible. Council decisions will not be reversed by a funding application.
- Remove BIDs being allowed to apply as other substantial funding has recently been allocated to these organisations from centra government funding schemes.
- Organisations will not be allowed to apply within 12 months for the same project.
- Clear statement that individuals cannot apply for funding.
- A minimum limit of £500 to be set. The necessary checks and officer resource do not cost effective to assess amounts lower than £500.
- Detailed explanation of financial viability and financial need
- More detail on the likely permissions required.
- More detail on the specific safeguarding policies and when required.
- Funding must be spent with one year of the funding receipt date.  
Definitions of both capital and revenue spend added to the policy for clarity.

- 8.4 Amendments to the Grants Policy were made following the consultation with Community Forum chairs and Community Partnerships officers. The amended Policy is at A, showing the tracked changes.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Grants Policy and approving amendments to it, are an executive function under section 9D Local Government Act 2000. As the proposed amendments are fairly minor in nature, then this can be discharged by the Executive Member with responsibility for Grants under the Constitution (in consultation with the relevant Director – Legal & Community as per section 14.6.9(b)(ii)(A)/ (5)).

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. There are no financial implications to the authority in amending the community grant criteria.
- 10.2. The outcome of the amendments is aimed to make the best use of the authorities' resources, to support the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector to provide additionality, identify and support where there is an identified need.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.
- 11.2 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Ideagen Risk, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 Community Grant funds are awarded to community groups that clearly demonstrate positive impact on the community and wider environment.
- 12.3 For organisations to be compliant with both the current and new grant criteria they must demonstrate an open-door membership policy and provide services that are accessible to all. This does not preclude single-gender organisations from applying provided they can demonstrate that they comply with the Equality Act 2010.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this decision.

**14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

**15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 There are no human resource implications involved in amending the grant criteria and the changes will not negatively impact the workload of officers.

**16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

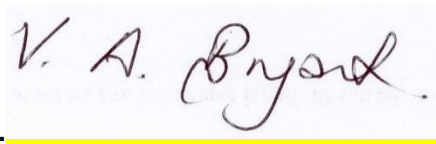
16.1 Internal meeting notes/ Member representations.

**17. APPENDICES**

17.1 Appendix A – Community Grants Policy as amended.

**NOTIFICATION DATE**

21.3.25



Signature of Executive Member Decision taker ...

Date 18.3.25.....

Signature of Service Director consulted



.....

**Please Note:** that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.

**Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**



## Community Grants Policy

Commented [BE1]: Could the whole thing be renamed Grants Policy as other grant streams use this as their base?

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 North Hertfordshire ~~District~~ Council is committed to providing support to community groups and organisations working in the district to deliver services, build capacity and sustainability, and contribute positively to the achievement of the Council's priorities for the District.  
The Council recognises the significant contribution made by the voluntary and community sector to deliver services and contribute positively to the achievement of the Council's priorities for the District.  
The Council's ~~Area~~ Community Forums will seek to establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations operating specifically within their area including, where appropriate, the recommendation of provision of grant aid / financial support etc, to the relevant Executive Member.
- 1.2 Any provision of grant funding will seek to support activities that are 'open to all' and do not exclude any specific group of people.
- 1.3 North Hertfordshire ~~District~~ Council will not usually authorise the award of a grant which goes against the Council's policies. It will not ~~or seeks~~ to reverse a previous decision.
- 1.4 This document sets out the terms and conditions under which funding applications to the council should be made, the criteria for the award, and the context in which applications will be considered.

### 2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

#### 2.1. Applications will be accepted from organisations that are:

##### A. Volunteer led or operated on a not-for-profit basis, such as, but not limited to:

- Registered Charities (*that have a charity number*)
- Un-registered Charities (with income under £5000), Constituted Groups or Clubs (*e.g. including children, youth and the elderly, etc*) - ~~Community Interest Companies (CIC) or Community Interest Organisations (CIO)~~ or Social Enterprises.
- ~~Schools / Academies~~ (*providing the activity is beyond their statutory responsibilities*)
- ~~Social Enterprises~~
- Sports Clubs
- Resident Groups / Clubs
- Faith based organisations (*where they are including the wider community*)
- Business Groups and Organisations, including Business Improvement Districts (*on condition that the funding is for something that provides Additionality*)
- Parish, Town and Community Councils (*on condition that the funding is for something that provides Additionality*)

Commented [RA2]: Will we not fund national organisations and local branches? (Samaritans?)  
Or do we set a window for larger organisations to apply in December to March and smaller local organisations to apply in June to September? This may require a quick turnaround by officers to get this published from the Cabinet decision in March.

Commented [RA3]: 29<sup>th</sup> Jan meeting - remove BIDS as in receipt of UKSPF funds.

Commented [BE4R3]: How long will UKSPF go on? I don't disagree with removing BIDS, but the reasoning behind it seems short-term

B. Be for the benefit of residents of North Hertfordshire.

C. Be able to demonstrate financial viability by providing details of income and expenditure and, where relevant, demonstrate compliance with previous grant conditions. Financial viability can be defined as the ability of a business to meet ongoing financial obligations, with an additional margin of comfort to support future investment and trading. (In order to comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022, those seeking grants must confirm on their application that their organisation will not receive subsidy funding of more than £315k over a three-year period from any Government/Local Government source.

Commented [RA5]: Explain what financial viability means (or put a link to something explaining it).

Commented [BE6]: Adapting this from Ian C slightly might be clearer:  
In order to comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022, those seeking grants must confirm on their application that their organisation will not receive subsidy funding of more than £315k over a three-year period from any Government/Local Government source.

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D. Have an open-door membership policy and provide services that are accessible to all. This does not preclude single gender organisations from applying as long as they can demonstrate that they comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Commented [RA7]: feels like it needs updating

E. Either be formally constituted or demonstrate a good governance structure, including a Management Committee or Board of Trustees that are not all immediately related.

F. Be able to demonstrate financial need and that other sources and options for funding have been considered. (For example, but not limited to, organisations will be required to provide a valid reason for holding 12 months of unrestricted.)

G. Be able to demonstrate the award of the grant provides Additionality to the service provision of the organisation

2.2 **In the case of projects that involve work on a building or outdoor space, the group or organisation must:**

- *Own the freehold of the land or building, or have a lease which cannot be brought to an end by the landlord for at least five years after the work has been completed.*
- Have the relevant permissions/ licences in place (e.g. planning consent, change of building usage, land owner's consent ).

Commented [BE8]: Can we add in a bit more in here to guide applicants?

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2.3 **In the case of projects that involve directly working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, the group or organisation must:**

- *Have a safeguarding policy.*
- *Have completed DBS checks as appropriate.*
- Have undertaken safeguarding training as necessary.

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• If the project application does not involve working directly with children, young people or vulnerable adults the Council will still review the submitted policy. We will provide good practices examples to the organisations where there is a need and check that these have been incorporated.

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### 3. FUNDING INFORMATION

3.1. The Council may support and provide financial assistance as outlined below:

| ELIGIBLE for funding   | NOT ELIGIBLE for funding  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Equipment</li> <li>• Publicity and Publications</li> <li>• Repairs and Maintenance</li> <li>• Site and Building works</li> <li>• Training/Workshops</li> <li>• Travel and Transport (not overseas)</li> <li>• Venue Hire</li> <li>• Refreshments (not alcohol)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrospective funding e.g. for items already purchased or events that have already happened. <u>Items or events cannot take place before the funding has been received.</u></li> <li>• Goods and Services already received or paid for</li> <li>• Purchase of Alcohol</li> <li>• A service that the state is obliged to provide.</li> <li>• Charitable donations.</li> <li>• Contingency cost, loans, endowments or interest.</li> <li>• Land or building where ownership (freehold or eligible lease) is not yet established.</li> <li>• Political or religious activities.</li> <li>• Purchase of items on behalf of another</li> <li>• Recoverable VAT</li> <li>• <u>No.</u></li> <li>• </li> </ul> |

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#### 3.2 Capital spending is:

Money spent on buying or improving assets which can be used for more than one year. This often means spending on things such as buildings or equipment, which can be used repeatedly over a long period. Where the funding is used to improve assets then it should significantly extend the life of that asset (i.e., how long it can be used for before it needs replacing).

##### Examples:

- Extending a building
- Re-roofing a building
- New IT equipment
- New heating system
- New furniture
- New vehicle

#### 3.2.3 Revenue spending is:

The additional running costs you will incur in improving or developing your service.

##### Examples:

- Additional staff costs (e.g., new staff or additional hours for existing staff)
- Additional stationery and supplies
- Repairs to equipment and buildings, including painting and decorating. Where these costs are an integral part of improving or developing the services that you provide

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- [Additional utility costs from operating for more hours or additional premises.](#)
- [Additional vehicle running costs, e.g., fuel for existing vehicles or fuel, servicing and repairs for additional vehicles.](#)

#### 4. APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

4.1. [All requests for funding must be submitted on the council's Community Grant relevant application form along with all the required supporting documentation.](#)

**Commented [BE9]:** Possibly reword to 'relevant application form along...'

4.1.4.2. [A minimum of £500 can be applied for, when applying for a Community Grant. The maximum amount that can be applied is usually £1500.](#)

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4.3. [The form is available as a Microsoft Word file downloadable from the Council's website. \*\(Wherever possible this should be completed and returned electronically in Microsoft Word.\)\*](#)

**Commented [BE10]:** I'd suggest 'Application forms are...'

4.4. [Organisations cannot apply for funding towards the same project within 12 months.](#)

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4.5. [State individuals and may not apply \(including sole traders\).](#)

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4.3.4.6. [Community Grant applications are considered at the relevant Forum /Panel and a listing of application deadlines is published on the Council's website.](#)

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4.4.4.7. [District wide Community Grant applications may be considered by a District- wide panel. Subject to funds, the panel will meet at least twice a year, and once in July of each civic year, after Cabinet have approved any revenue carry-forwards from the Area Forums and another date to be agreed. \\*](#)

4.5.4.8. [You can find the Community Grant application forms at \[Community grants | North Herts Council \\(north-herts.gov.uk\\)\]\(http://Community grants | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)\)](#)

4.10: [Applications for other grant streams can be found on the relevant web page. Grants and funding | North Herts Council](#)

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[Can we confirm what monitoring is and what we require in a document for staff, and procedure for if monies aren't spent in the relevant timeframe?](#)

**Commented [BE11]:** As part of the criteria should we state that we make checks on Companies House / Charity Commission and that we expect the info to be up to date so groups are aware

**Commented [RA12R11]:** No - they should do this anyway - we are checking publicly available information.

## 5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 5.1. All applications for grant funding will be carefully assessed to ensure that funding is allocated to projects or activities and areas that will have the most beneficial impact on the residents of North Hertfordshire
- 5.2. The assessment process will use three main criteria:

| A. Feasibility Assessment   | B. Priority Assessment   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will the funding benefit residents of North Hertfordshire?</li><li>• Will it be spent within 12 months from receiving the funding)?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the project fulfil a need for the local community?</li></ul>                                  |
|   | C. Economic Assessment   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does it provide good value for the money?</li><li>• Is the applicant financially viable?</li></ul> |

- 5.3. **Other areas for consideration, which may strengthen an application:**
- Partnership with other groups involved in this type of work.
  - Efforts to seek additional joint funding from other sources
  - If the organisation has not applied to NHDC in the past or for a long period of time

## 6. TERMS OF THE AWARD

- 6.1. Grant monies awarded must only be spent on activities as described in the application, within one year of the ~~decision~~[funding receipt date](#).
- 6.2. The Council will require details of how the grant was spent, and the provision of receipts, within one year of the decision, [via the supplied monitoring form](#).
- 6.3. Grant recipients may be requested to report back to the relevant Forum / panel (or Executive Member) either by presentation or writing.
- 6.4. Any unspent funds must be returned to the Council.
- 6.5. Details later proved to be incorrect may prejudice a subsequent application and could result in a requirement to repay any funding awarded.

**Updated Policy March 2025**

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Commented [BE13]: Nor does this