
Subject: DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME AND NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

Meeting and Date: Cabinet – 1 March 2017

Report of: Mike Davis, Director of Finance, Housing and Community

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Keith Morris, Portfolio Holder for Skills, Training, Tourism, Voluntary Services and Community Safety

Decision Type: Non-Key

Classification: Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To review the nominations for DDC representation on the Neighbourhood Forums during 2017-18

To summarise the actions arising from the review of the 2016-17 DDC community grants

Recommendations: To confirm the DDC representatives for membership of the Neighbourhood Forums during 2017-18 as set out in Table 1 at paragraph 3.2 of this report.

To agree the actions arising from the review of the 2016-17 DDC community grants as set out in paragraph 5.1 of this report.

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Dover District Neighbourhood Forums are a key channel for us to engage with residents. Each Forum has equal representation from Dover District Council (DDC), Kent County Council (KCC) and the Town/Parish Councils. Representatives are encouraged to bring forward issues, concerns and ideas from their community for discussion at the Forums.
- 1.2 On July 7th 2015 Cabinet agreed that authority be delegated to the Director of Finance, Housing and Community, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Skills, Training, Tourism, Voluntary Services and Community Safety, to agree any changes to the format of Neighbourhood Forums, as determined by the Dover District Neighbourhood Forum representatives.
- 1.3 Improving the Dover District Neighbourhood Forums is a continuous process so that they can remain responsive to local needs within the resources available. Each year an Annual Review of both the DDC Community Grants Process and the Neighbourhood Forums public events programme are conducted to ensure the continuous improvement in their future operation.
- 1.4 This report will summarise the findings and outcomes of the Annual Review of 2016-17 and sets out the arrangements that have been put in place for the coming year.

2 Neighbourhood Forum Public Events

- 2.1 Five Neighbourhood Forums (NHF) meet across the district. These Forums follow the Kent County boundaries: Deal and Walmer; Dover North; Dover Town; Dover West and Sandwich Area.
- 2.2 The Forums were set up in December 2006, following a cabinet decision to improve local government arrangements across the three tiers, improve community engagement, and look at the possibilities of devolved decision-making in response to the localism agenda and to ensure local people had their say in the decisions that affect their lives and their communities.
- 2.3 An on-going commitment to the Forums after 2009-10 was made following a report to Cabinet in June 2009, with an assurance that the Forums would continue to look for ways to improve the running of, and public involvement in, the meetings. Officer responsibilities in respect of Neighbourhood Forums transferred to the Communication and Engagement team in April 2013 following an organisational restructure.
- 2.4 The current operation of each Neighbourhood forum requires the following:
 - To hold up to two fixed meetings for each Forum each year.
 - To be able to hold a further two flexible meetings a year if required.
- 2.5 On March 7th 2016 Cabinet confirmed the DDC Neighbourhood Forum representatives for 2016/17.
- 2.6 Neighbourhood Forums provide an opportunity for members to interact with their community, listen to their views and consult on key issues that affect them. All members are therefore encouraged to support the events.
- 2.7 The role of Neighbourhood Forums may need to evolve and expand in future to take account of requirements flowing from the Localism Act, NHS Reform and relating to Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- 2.8 During 2016-17 the KCC representatives held the Chair for each Forum area. There were three periods of purdah during the year which significantly reduced the time available for the delivery of any events. In total, three Forum events were planned at the request of the Forum representatives. These included one environmental themed event in Deal during November 2016, a Dover Town Centre and Investment Zone update in Dover Town during February 2017 and an event to discuss the NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plan in Deal during March 2017.

3 The nominations for DDC representation on the Neighbourhood Forums during 2017-18

- 3.1 The role of Chair for each the Forums will fall to the representatives from the Town and Parish Councils during 2017-18.
- 3.2 A list of the DDC Members who have been nominated to represent DDC on the Forums during 2017-18 are outline in the table below. These nominations now require the approval of the Cabinet.

Table 1: Nominated DDC representation for the Neighbourhood Forums 2017-18

Neighbourhood Forum Area	DDC Members
Deal & Walmer	Cllr. Pam Hawkins Cllr. Trevor Bond
Dover North	Cllr. Keith Morris
Dover Town	Cllr. Kevin Mills Cllr. Peter Wallace
Dover West	Cllr. Pauline Beresford
Sandwich Area	Cllr. Michael Holloway

4 Neighbourhood Forum Community Grants Scheme

- 4.1 DDC has allocated £22,500 of grant funding¹ to the DDC Community Grants Scheme during 2017-18 to give out as small grants to support the delivery of projects that benefit local communities.
- 4.2 During 2015-16 a new approach was piloted for the DDC Community Grant Scheme that used an Appraisal Panel. The Panel members were the Dover District Councillors who held the position of Neighbourhood Forum Chair for 2015-16. The Panel was responsible for scoring the projects to determine how the grant was distributed.
- 4.3 In 2016-17 the Panel was expanded to include all the DDC representatives who were members of the Neighbourhood Forums in 2016-17. The Table below details the Appraisal Panel Members for 2016-17

Table 2: The DDC Community Grants Appraisal Panel Members 2016-17

Neighbourhood Forum Area	DDC Appraisal Panel Members
Deal & Walmer	Cllr. Pam Hawkins Cllr. Trevor Bond
Dover North	Cllr. Keith Morris
Dover Town	Cllr. Kevin Mills Cllr. Peter Wallace
Dover West	Cllr. Pauline Beresford
Sandwich Area	Cllr. Michael Holloway

- 4.4 The last Panel meeting took place on 14th October 2016 to allocate the grants.

¹ £22,500 represents an allocation of £500 for each Dover District Councillor

4.5 On November 7th 2016 Cabinet approved the DDC Community Grants that were awarded during this 2016/17 grants process.

4.6 The Panel have subsequently contributed to the annual review process including identifying the actions for improving the grants process that will be implemented during the next grant round.

5 The actions arising from the review of the 2016-17 DDC community grants

5.1 The actions arising from the review are as follows:

- To introduce a new question on the application form that requests details about the financial reserves of the applicant organisation. This will enable the grants to target groups that are in the most need of grant support.
- To reduce the lower limit of grant available to applicants from £500 to £100. This will encourage smaller groups to apply.
- To remove the “capital only” restriction. This will make the grants more flexible and responsive to the needs of the local community.
- To create the requirement for all applicants to submit a copy of a recent bank statement and, if available, the latest copy of their verified accounts. This will enhance safeguarding within the process and allow DDC to verify the bank account and financial information provided in the form.
- To consider each application and determine whether an opportunity exists for DDC to offer support through its own service provision. If opportunities are identified these will be progressed with an impact evaluation taking place in March 2018.
- To deliver the first annual awards event in November 2017.
- To prioritise the use of the community and voluntary sector services when sourcing suppliers and venues for the awards event.

6 Timetable for 2017-18

6.1 The outline timetable for delivering the 2017-18 DDC Community Grants and Neighbourhood Forum Events programme are set out in the table below.

Table 3: Annual Delivery Timetable for Neighbourhood Forums and DDC Community Grants

Target Dates	Objective
March	Cabinet Confirm the DDC NHF Panel Reps for 2017-18
April	Request Town & Parish Councils to nominate NHF representatives
June	NHF reps contacted to begin planning NHF events
July 1 st	DDC NHF Grants opened to applications (2 months)

Jul-Aug	DDC NHF Grants Applications period for online applications
Aug 31 st	DDC NHF Grants closed to applications
Sept	Eligibility checked & applications followed up
Oct	Appraisal Packs prepared and sent out to Panel
Oct	Panel Meeting held
Nov	Grants confirmed by Cabinet
Nov/Dec	Distribute Grant payments
November	Awards Event held
Mar – Apr	Project monitoring
Apr	Annual review involving DDC Panel representatives

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 To confirm the DDC representatives for membership of the Neighbourhood Forums during 2017-18
- 7.2 To agree the actions arising from the review of the 2016-17 DDC community grants.

8 Resource Implications

- 8.1 The Neighbourhood Forums process will continue to be delivered within capacity of existing services. There are no additional resource implications.

9 Corporate Implications

- 9.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer and the Accountancy Section: The Section 151 Officer and the Accountancy Section have been consulted on the report and have no further comments to add. (LS)
- 9.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.
- 9.3 Comment from the Equality Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equalities implications however, in discharging their responsibilities members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>.

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