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**Subject:** DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME AND NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

**Meeting and Date:** Cabinet – 16 April 2018

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

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor M J Holloway, Portfolio Holder for Community Services

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Purpose of the report:** To review the nominations for DDC representation on the Neighbourhood Forums during 2018-19.

To summarise the actions arising from the review of the 2017-18 DDC community grants.

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**Recommendations:** (a) To appoint DDC representatives to the Neighbourhood Forums during 2018-19 as set out in Table 1 at paragraph 3.3 of this report.

(b) To agree the actions arising from the review of the 2017-18 DDC community grants as set out in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of this report.

(c) To authorise the Head of Community Services, acting in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services, to formally approve community grants appraisal panel recommendations in relation to the award of individual grants.

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## 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 2017-18 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 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 Cabinet confirmed the DDC Neighbourhood Forum representatives for 2017/18.
- 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 2017-18 the Town and Parish Council representatives held the Chair for each Forum area. There were two periods of purdah during the year which significantly reduced the time available for the delivery of any events. A planning meeting was held with all representatives invited in October 2017. One Forum took place at the request of the Sandwich Forum representatives. This event took place on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2018 at The Guildhall in Sandwich, presentations and discussions took place on the topics of Discovery Park and The Open Golf Championship which takes place at The Royal St George's Golf Club in July 2020.
- 2.9 Neighbourhood Forums are resource intensive, particularly with regards to officer time. Early planning enables resources to be planned effectively and community participation in the forums maximised. Representatives will be contacted to identify Neighbourhood Forum Event dates for 2018/19, with advanced notice to allow suitable time for resource planning.

## **3 Nominations for DDC representation on the Neighbourhood Forums during 2018-19**

- 3.1 The role of Chair for each of the Forums will fall to the representatives from Dover District Council during 2018-19.

- 3.2 It was recommended at the representatives planning meeting in October 2017 that the Town & Parish Representatives should be increased to two per area.
- 3.3 The names of the DDC Members who have been nominated to represent DDC on the Forums during 2018-19 are set out in the table below. These nominations now require the approval of the Cabinet.

**Table 1: Nominated DDC representation for the Neighbourhood Forums and DDC Community Grants appraisal panel members 2018-19**

<b>Neighbourhood Forum Area</b>	<b>DDC Members</b>
Deal & Walmer	Cllr. Pam Hawkins Cllr. Trevor Bond
Dover North	Cllr. Peter Jull
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 funding<sup>1</sup> to the DDC Community Grants Scheme during 2018-19 to award as small grants to support the delivery of projects that benefit local communities.
- 4.2 On November 6th 2017 Cabinet approved that an additional £1000 refunded grant will be made available to projects in DDC Community Grants pot for Deal & Walmer in 2018/2019.
- 4.3 In 2016-17 the Panel was expanded to include all the DDC representatives who were members of the Neighbourhood Forums in 2017-18. If agreed by Cabinet the community grants appraisal panel for 2018-19 will consist of the nominated DDC representation for the Neighbourhood Forums 2018 -2019, as shown above in table 1.
- 4.4 The last Panel meeting took place on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017 to allocate the grants.
- 4.5 On November 6th 2017 Cabinet approved the DDC Community Grants that were awarded during this 2017/18 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 2017-18 DDC community grants:**

- 5.1 The actions arising from the review are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> £22,500 represents an allocation of £500 for each Dover District Councillor.

- 5.2 To agree that in 2018/19 there is flexibility in the use of underspent grant. To permit the use of underspent grant from one forum area, to fund projects in oversubscribed forum areas in the District within the same grant year.
- 5.3 It is a requirement of the funding that funds are spent by the end of the financial year. Appraisal Panel members expressed a view that organisations would benefit from additional time to deliver their projects, and recommended that the grants process be delivered earlier in the year. Because of this, a new streamlined timetable has been proposed for the 2018-19 community grant scheme. This will require authorising the Head of Community Services, acting in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services to formally approve the recommendation of the cross party community grants appraisal panel with regard to individual awards of grant. This will enable awards to be distributed at the end of June giving organisations nine months in which to deliver their projects. Cabinet is accordingly recommended to delegate the necessary authority to the Head of Community Services.

## 6 Timetable for 2018-19

- 6.1 The outline timetable for delivering the 2018-19 DDC Community Grants and Neighbourhood Forum Events programme are set out in the table below.

**Table 2: Annual Delivery Timetable for Neighbourhood Forums and DDC Community Grants**

Target Dates	Objective
April 2018	Request Town & Parish Councils to nominate NHF representatives
April 2018	Cabinet confirm the DDC NHF panel reps for 2017-18
April 2018	NHF reps contacted to begin planning NHF events
April 2018	DDC NHF Grants opened to applications (6 weeks)
May 2018	DDC NHF Grants closed to applications
June 2018	DDC NHF Grants re-open if required due to underspend (2 weeks)
June 2018	DDC NHF Grants closed to applications
May – June 2018	Eligibility checked & applications followed up
June 2018	Appraisal packs prepared and sent out to panel
May 18 – March 19	NHF Area meetings to take place
June 2018	Panel meeting held and awards agreed
June 2018	Grants payments distributed following Head of Service / Portfolio Holder sign off

June 2018	Distribute grant payments
July 2018	Awards event held
September 2018 - April 2019	Project monitoring
May 2019	Annual review

## **7 Recommendations**

- 7.1 To appoint the DDC representatives to the Neighbourhood Forums during 2018-19.
- 7.2 To agree the actions arising from the review of the 2017-18 DDC community grants.
- 7.3 To agree that the Town & Parish Representatives is increased to two per area.
- 7.4 Cabinet to agree that the Head of Community Services, acting in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services be authorised to formally approve the recommendation of the cross party community grants appraisal panel with regard to individual awards of grant on the basis of the justification set out in paragraph 5.3 above.

## **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>

## **10. Appendices**

None.

## **11. Background Papers**

None.

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