
Subject: ARRANGEMENTS FOR DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL'S COST-OF-LIVING COMMUNITY IMPACT FUND 2024/2025

Meeting and Date: Cabinet – 13 May 2024

Report of: Mike Davis, Strategic Director (Finance and Housing)

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Charlotte Zosseder, Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property

Decision Type: Non-Key

Classification: Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To approve the funding allocated to the Dover District Council Cost-of-Living Community Impact Fund, ahead of the 2024/25 grant scheme round.

Recommendations: To approve the proposed budget of £104,791.67 available to the Community Impact Fund which will be allocated over two (summer and winter) grant scheme rounds during 2024/25. (Option 1)

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Dover District Council “Cost of Living Community Impact Fund” is operated by DDC to provide grants to local charities, community interest companies (CICs) and constituted community groups, to enable them to support residents through the cost of living.
- 1.2 Ordinarily, £22,500 is made available for the annual scheme from the district councillor budget, as well as £7,500 from the Council’s share of the Dover District Lotto. On top of this, £70,000 is available from the special revenue projects, as highlighted in the Dover District Council Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/25 (Annex 6B). Finally, it is proposed that the £4,791.67 returned to DDC from three previous applicants is included in the total grant pot available.
- 1.3 Due to the level of grant funding available this year, it is also proposed that we once again administer both a summer and winter round, splitting the grant pot available into two, totalling £52,395.86 each round. This will help provide more spread-out and consistent support to the local community throughout the financial year. It is also noted that the Household Support Fund has only been extended for a further 6 months (expected to close September 2024). Therefore, financial support will be available from DDC before and after the Household Support Fund closes.
- 1.4 The remainder of this report sets out:
 - 1.4.1 Funding available
 - 1.4.2 Review of 2023/24 Cost of Living Community Impact Fund
 - 1.4.3 DDC Member representation on the 2024/25 Appraisal Panel

2. Funding Available

- 2.1 DDC has continually allocated £22,500 of grant funding to the Community Impact Fund, which is available once again during the 2023/24 financial year, from the district councillor budget.
- 2.2 DDC will also inject £7,500 from the Dover District Lotto Central Fund Reserve (CFR) into the funding pot for 2023/24, as approved by Cabinet in October 2018. This figure is based on the projected income generated from the previous year.
- 2.3 DDC will also inject £70,000 from the special revenue projects, as highlighted in the Dover District Council Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/25 (Annex 6B).
- 2.4 Finally, it is proposed that the £4,791.67 returned to DDC from three previous applicants is included in the total grant pot available. This includes:
 - 2.4.1 Deal Town Rangers Football Club - £2,691.67 returned due to the applicant being unable to deliver their project, awarded from the Community Grant Scheme Winter 2022/23.
 - 2.4.2 Dover Deal District Citizens Advice - £1,300 returned due to the applicant being unable to deliver their project, awarded from the Community Grant Scheme Winter 2021/22.
 - 2.4.3 Charlton Church Dover - £800 returned due to the applicant being unable to deliver their full project, awarded from the Community Grant Scheme Summer 2021/22.

3. Review of 2023/24 Cost-of-Living Community Impact Fund

- 3.1 Last year, the Council launched its Community Impact Fund which outlined a number of changes to the long-running Community Grant Scheme. In line with the Council's Cost-of-Living Plan, this scheme ensured funding was provided to a number of local charities, CICs and constituted community groups, providing cost-of-living support, in line with the Council's pledge to support those most in need.
- 3.2 Projects included supporting warm spaces, social supermarkets, foodbanks, community lunches, food vouchers, supporting residents with disabilities and the wider community, and community events.
- 3.3 The grant scheme funded a wide variety of projects including capital and consumable costs, enabling charities, clubs and groups to buy items and equipment outright, to help facilitate their projects. The scheme also funded revenue costs, helping to buy in activities or services.

4. DDC Member Representation on 2023/24 Appraisal Panel

- 4.1 Local charities, CICs and constituted community groups are invited to submit applications for funding, to deliver projects and activities that meet the Community Impact Fund criteria.
- 4.2 These applications are assessed by a Community Impact Fund appraisal panel which consists of six district councillors, as nominated by the group leaders. The nominated appraisal panel members for 2024/25 are listed below in table 1.

Table 1

DDC Members
Cllr Zosseder (L) (Chair)
Cllr Brivio (L)
Cllr Beer (L)
Cllr Richardson (C)
Cllr Beaney (C)
Cllr Back (C)

5. Identification of Options

- 5.1 Options to be considered by Cabinet in consideration of whether to deliver a Community Impact Fund for the Dover District for 2024/25 are as follows:
- 5.2 Option 1 – To approve the proposed budget of £104,791.67 available to the Community Impact Fund, that will be allocated over two (summer and winter) grant scheme rounds during 2024/25.
- 5.3 Option 2 – To approve the proposed budget of £104,791.67 available to the Community Impact Fund, that will be allocated over one grant scheme round during 2024/25.
- 5.4 Option 3 – To not approve the proposed budget of £104,791.67 available to the Community Impact Fund for 2024/25.

6. Evaluation of Options

- 6.1 Option 1 – This option would allow the fund to assist local good causes in supporting residents through the cost of living. In delivering the fund over two grant scheme rounds, this will help provide more spread-out and consistent support to the local community, throughout the financial year.
- 6.2 Option 2 – This option would allow the scheme to assist local good causes in supporting residents through the cost of living.
- 6.3 Option 3 – This option would not allow the scheme to assist local good causes in supporting residents through the cost of living. There will also be a risk of bad publicity, as the council has delivered at least one community grant scheme round, each year for the last 10+ years.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 Option 1 - To approve the proposed budget of £104,791.67 available to the Community Impact Fund, that will be allocated over two (summer and winter) grant scheme rounds during 2024/25.

8. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 8.1 In its first year of delivery, the Community Impact Fund supported applicants in delivering warm spaces, enabling residents to come together within a community setting. These projects allowed beneficiaries to save on their utility bills, and access various other advice, guidance and services, on all things cost-of-living.
- 8.2 Applications promoting climate change and environmental implications will be accepted, as long as applicants identify the impact cost-of-living has on its beneficiaries, and deliver projects that help bridge the cost-of-living gap. The scheme will continue to accept applications featuring capital, consumable and revenue costs, that for example support the delivery of fuel vouchers, reductions in utility bills, energy efficiency measures, allotments, grow your own projects, and so on.
- 8.3 Within the application form, applicants will be asked to provide a statement on how their project will support the five strategic priorities, including 'protecting our environment'. This will help monitor any implications projects have on climate change and the wider environment.

9. Resource Implications

- 9.1 The Grant allocation will be funded as below:
- £22,500 district councillor budget.
 - £7,500 allocation from the Dover District Lotto Central Fund Reserve (CFR), as approved by cabinet in October 2018.
 - £70,000 allocation from the special revenue projects.
 - £4,791.67 in returned DDC grants.

10. Corporate Implications

- 10.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Members are reminded that the Council's resources are under pressure and so they will wish to assure themselves that all proposals progress the Council's priorities, are the best option available and will deliver value for money (HL).
- 10.2 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.
- 10.3 Comment from the Equality Officer: This report relating to the arrangements for Dover District Council Cost of Living Community Impact Fund for 2024-2025 does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties 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/section/149>

Background Papers

Dover District Council - Cost of Living Plan 2023

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