

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 12 June 2023

Title: Youth Services Grant 2023

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk - Adam Clapton

Background

The Town Council's Youth Services Grant was established in 2020 following meetings of a Youth Forum, made up of local stakeholders, and subsequent recommendations of the Council's Youth Services Working Party. Gaps were identified in local provision following cuts in the dedicated outreach services run by the County Council.

The purpose of the funding is as follows:

The Youth Fund is open to applications from community and voluntary sector organisations, including existing organisations and those in the process of setting up to establish easily signposted and accessible youth opportunities, supporting open access to preventative services, particularly for those who may be hard to reach and to extend activities to support the young people of Witney.

Activities may include, for example, providing guidance and support about their lives and issues relating to school, family life and peers through way of drop-in sessions.

Applications may, for example, facilitate the provision of a safe space for young people who would otherwise have nowhere to go, including a safe space to talk, and the ability to enjoy some self-directed or group/organised discretionary activities. In this instance funds could be requested towards facility hire costs and towards a permanent youth structure in the town.

The Grant scheme has run successfully for three years, with funds being expended in full to two organisations in 2020, four in 2021 and four in 2023.

Current Situation

The budget for 2022-23 was increased to £40,000 as the fund was previously oversubscribed to and this remains the current budget. The provision of youth services was a key objective of the previous Council administration.

Members are asked if they would like to consider any changes to the attached criteria for this grant or in the way it is awarded for the current fiscal year so officers may review and bring back to the Committee before the scheme is opened for applications between August-September 2023.

The 2022-23 Grant Criteria is attached as **Appendix A** for information.

Oxfordshire County Council has also reconstituted an Oxfordshire Youth Service for targeting support and outreach to young people, focusing on early intervention to reduce risk of exploitation, offending behaviour, substance misuse, exclusion, housing issues as well as improving mental wellbeing. Support workers have been approached to provide this Committee with an update on their work.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Financial implications

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- There is a budget of £40,000 for this year's Youth Services Grant Scheme.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. The Purpose of the Town Council's Youth Services Grant 2022-23. If members would like to officers to review the criteria and award process, a report can be brought to the next committee meeting.