



North Devon Council

Report Date: Monday, 6 November 2023

Topic: Climate and Environment Grants Scheme for Parish Councils 2024/25

Report by:, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 6 January 2020 adopted a Climate and Environment Grants Scheme for Parish Councils for 2020-23 which was implemented with effect from 1 April 2020.
- 1.2. The original scheme set aside a budgeted contribution of £20,000 for each of the three years, with any funds unspent being retained in an earmarked Climate and Environment Grants reserve.
- 1.3. At the end of the financial year 2022/23, there was a residual reserve balance of £40,000; therefore it is proposed that consideration be given to re-introducing the Climate and Environment Grants Scheme for 2024/25.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the Climate and Environment Grant Scheme for Parish Councils for 2024/25 be adopted and implemented with effect from 1 April 2024.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To put in place the governance arrangements for the processing and administering of applications for grants submitted by small Parish Councils for projects which are undertaken that are sustainable and look to improve the environment and/or tackle climate change issues such as reducing carbon and improving biodiversity.

4. REPORT

- 4.1. Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 6 January 2020 adopted a Climate and Environment Grants Scheme for Parish Councils for 2020-23 which was implemented with effect from 1 April 2020.
- 4.2. The Covid-19 pandemic hit right at the start of the time the grant scheme was rolled out in April 2020; this undoubtedly had an impact on the number of projects coming forwards seeking funding. The Council through the scheme funded projects totalling £10,000 in 2020/21 and £10,000 in 2021/22.
- 4.3. At the end of the financial year 2022/23, there was a residual balance of £40,000 within the reserve; some Members have asked about Council funding opportunities for potential projects within their parishes and therefore it is proposed that consideration be given to re-introducing the Climate and Environment Grants Scheme for 2024/25.
- 4.4. The scheme encourages and support projects undertaken by small Parish Councils which are sustainable and look to improve the environment and/or

tackle climate change issues such as reducing carbon and improving biodiversity. These projects could include “wilding” open spaces, wild flower meadows, more sustainable approaches to graveyards, renewables, etc

4.5. The policy for the previous grants scheme has been reviewed and updated as detailed in Appendix A of the report.

4.6. The draft policy includes:

4.6.1. Sets out the purpose of the scheme and how the funding can be used by Parish Councils.

4.6.2. Sets out the Parish Councils which are eligible to apply which have a population of less than 1000 (as per the October 2023 Register of Electors)

4.6.3. Two funding rounds with the deadlines for the receipt of application ending on 31 August 2024 and 31 January 2025. Up to 50% of the total fund may be allocated for each funding round. The policy does not restrict Parish Councils in the amount of funding that can be applied for or awarded.

4.6.4. Evidence to be provided by Parish Councils (i.e. application form, quote and safeguarding policy (if applicable)).

4.6.5. Types of grants that cannot be supported.

4.6.6. Details of how to apply.

4.6.7. Processing procedure and decision making process.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. As set out in the report, the total potential cost of the grant scheme is up to £40,000 and this can be funded from the residual balance held within the Climate and Environment Grants earmarked reserve.

5.2. If Members approve the recommendation set out in 2.1; a virement from the outlined reserve would be transferred to create the budget required in 2024/25 financial year.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report. Parish Councils as part of the application process will be required to set out details of their projects and any equalities implications arising from the projects will be assessed as part of this application process.



7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. There are no environmental implications directly arising from this report.

Parish Councils as part of the application form process will be required to set out details of their projects concerned with climate issues and the environment, which will be assessed by the decision making panel.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda: Not applicable

8.1.2. Improving customer focus and/or: Not applicable

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development: Positive

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. The decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made by this Committee pursuant to delegated powers provided in Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph 1.

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

Climate and Environment Grants Policy 2020-2023

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Jon Triggs, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive