



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

12 March 2024

Community Funding Scheme – Discretionary Grant

Report by:

Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford

Officer Contact:

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Purpose

To agree the allocation of the discretionary grant funding for 2024/25 to voluntary and charitable organisations as part of the Council's Community Funding Scheme.

Options

1. To agree the recommendations contained in this report made by the Community Funding Panel.
2. To agree, with amendment, the recommendations contained in this report made by the Community Funding Panel.

Preferred option and reasons

The preferred option is to agree the allocations recommended by the Community Funding Panel, which have been through a thorough process of assessment and aligned to City Council corporate priorities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that

1. Cabinet agrees to allocate £130k in 2024/25 to fund the 24 organisations in the amounts shown in Appendix 1, and one year core funding for 3 organisations.
 2. That the Director of Connected Chelmsford is authorised to prepare and issue the grant offer letters and grant funding agreements to those organisations receiving the grants for 2024/25.
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1. Background

- 1.1. As part of the Community Funding Scheme, each year the Council allocates discretionary revenue grant funding to voluntary and charitable organisations that support vulnerable Chelmsford residents.
- 1.2. In 2023/24, £90,000 was made available through a budget provision of £50,000 and the use of £40,000 from the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund. For 2024/25 this has been increased to £130,000 based on the use of a further £80,000 of funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). This UKSPF funding is expected to be confirmed in late April 2024. The grant payments will not be made until this is confirmed.
- 1.3. In the unlikely event that the UKSPF funding is not confirmed, the Community Funding Panel will meet again to revise its recommendations for allocating the available funding.
- 1.4. This additional funding has been agreed to recognise the vital role that voluntary and charitable organisations play in supporting vulnerable residents at a time when there are even greater pressures and higher demand due to the cost-of-living crisis, inflation and high energy costs. At the same time, the City Council's financial position has also been affected by the same issues and the increased funding has been identified to support organisations with some increased funding for this next year. As the economy recovers, it is anticipated that the third sector will not require the same level of support from the Council in future years.
- 1.5. There are also four Service Level Agreements in place that are due to expire on 31st March 2024, which have been provided to strategic partners for longer periods to provide continuity of funding for core provision.

2. Process

- 2.1. The discretionary grant scheme was open to applications throughout October and November 2023, for grants to be made to the successful applicants once the UKSPF funding has been confirmed, which is anticipated to be in the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.
- 2.2. Organisations can apply for up to £10,000 of revenue funding only and must have matched funding of at least 50% of the total applied for. Successful applicants are expected to sign a grant funding agreement with the City Council.
- 2.3. The Council received 26 eligible applications (more than previous years), which were all vetted by the Chelmsford CVS. The value of the grants requested totalled £225,810 against an available budget of £130,000. The eligible applications are summarised in Appendix 1.
- 2.4. Following a review of the submitted applications, the Officer Panel (comprising the Procurement & Risk Manager, Public Health Improvement Officer, Strategic Housing Manager, Economic Development Manager and Planning Contributions Officers), met on 10 January to consider the eligible applications. The Planning Contributions Officers then scored the eligible applications against a scoring matrix to evaluate the strength of each application. The Officer Panel met again on 24 January to discuss the scores and prepare comments for the Community Funding Panel.
- 2.5. The Community Funding Panel (comprising the Cabinet Member for Active Chelmsford, Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford, Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford, Director of Sustainable Communities, Director of Connected Chelmsford, Economic Development and Implementation Manager, Procurement and Risk Services Manager and Chief Officer of the Chelmsford CVS) then met on 31 January to consider the Officer Panel comments and make recommendations to Cabinet.
- 2.6. The Panel fully considered the eligible applications and recommended that 24 funding applications be made. Reasons for the decision to not award funding to the other 2 eligible applications are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.7. In considering the applications, the Community Funding Panel agreed that the 24 applications all demonstrated a specific benefit to Chelmsford residents and provided value for money. The Panel therefore agreed that the funding amount available is split between them, as shown in the table below. The Panel agreed however that the two lowest scoring of these 24 applications (New Generation Development Agency LTD and Wilderness Foundation UK) should receive a lower percentage of funding to reflect the greater strength of the other applications.

Organisation	Amount requested	Community Funding Panel Recommendation	Percentage of requested amount
Action for Family Carers	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
CARA (Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse)	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
Carers First	1,600.00	960.00	60%
CHESS Homeless	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
City of Chelmsford Mencap	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
Crossroads Braintree and Chelmsford	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
English for Women	8,620.00	5,172.00	60%
Essex Dementia Care	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
Families InFocus (Essex)	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
Farleigh Hospice	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
Hearing Help Essex	9,500.00	5,700.00	60%
Ideas Hub Chelmsford	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
InterAct Chelmsford Limited	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
Kids Inspire	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
Lighthouse Furniture Project Ltd	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
New Generation Development Agency LTD	10,000.00	4,007.00	40%
North Avenue Youth Centre	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
Sanctus	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
South Woodham Ferrers Men's Shed and Community Hub	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
St Francis Community Church	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%
Support 4 Sight	9,910.00	5,946.00	60%
SVP Springfield Furniture bank	9,430.00	5,658.00	60%
The Millrace Foundation	4,250.00	2,550.00	60%
Wilderness Foundation UK	10,000.00	4,007.00	40%

2.8 It is recommended the following Service Level Agreements for Chelmsford Citizens Advice Bureau, Chelmsford Centre for Volunteering and Chelmsford YMCA within existing SLA allocation of grant budget. Due to some commissioning changes effecting some SLA recipients the final allocations need to be confirmed so delegation be given to Director of Connected Chelmsford to allocate within existing budget.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Chelmsford's charities and voluntary organisations play a significant role in supporting vulnerable residents. The City Council can support them in difficult economic circumstances and although the funding the Council has available is limited, it plays a key role in the funding mix that third sector organisations rely on to sustain themselves.

3.2. The recommended discretionary grant awards for 2024/25 will help support 24 organisations to continue to provide key services to Chelmsford's residents.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1: Community Funding Scheme – Summary of eligible applications received October/November 2023 for the discretionary grant, grouped by theme

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: Provided the UK Shared Prosperity Fund payment is made for 2024/25, it must be spent within 12 months of receipt. The above payments do not amount to a “subsidy” under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and accordingly the Act does not apply to these grants.

Financial: The budget for 2024/25 comprises £50,000 of Council resources and £80,000 from the Council's Year 3 UKSPF allocation. A decision confirming the UKSPF funding from Government is expected in late April 2024. Grant payments will not be made until this funding has been confirmed.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: Appropriate checks on organisations will be carried out before funding is distributed, including insurance, financial and charitable status.

Equality and Diversity:

(For new or revised policies or procedures has an equalities impact assessment been carried out? If not, explain why)

Health and Safety: Funding agreements will include a requirement that organisations comply with health and safety regulations, and organisations will be required to provide evidence of relevant safeguarding policy and procedures.

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Our Chelmsford Our Plan

Appendix 1: Community Funding Scheme – Summary of eligible applications received October/November 2023 for the discretionary grant, grouped by theme

	Organisation	Overall Cost	Amount Requested	Recommended grant	Percentage of request	Description
	Homelessness / poverty					
1	CHESS Homeless	1,577,573.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards the salary of a support worker working directly with homeless people to lead them towards independent living and good health
2	Lighthouse Furniture Project Ltd	222,720.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards salaries and utilities to support the project which provides refurbished electrical appliances at low or no cost
3	Sanctus	60,000.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards running costs of the service supporting homeless people to take positive steps forward as well as offering help for immediate needs
4	St Francis Community Church	52,000.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards running costs of the mobile social supermarket providing food for those facing food poverty. Also offer refreshments and a place to sit and meet others
5	SVP Springfield Furniture bank	39,023.00	9,430.00	5,658.00	60%	Towards storage, insurance, rates and running of van. Service provides second-hand furniture, household items and white goods where the Essential Living Fund does not meet needs.
	Therapy					
6	CARA (Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse)	26,923.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards salaries for service providing specialist counselling for young people (aged 12-19) who have been victims of sexual violence or child sexual abuse
7	Kids Inspire	25,005.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards salaries of clinical admin team for 2 months - conducting initial assessments, timely assessment and prioritisation. Service supports children and adolescents struggling with emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties
8	The Millrace Foundation	21,740.00	4,250.00	2,550.00	60%	Towards running costs. Service provides support for people recovering from long term mental health problems. Beneficiaries receive skills training in furniture restoration.

9	Wilderness Foundation UK	36,400.00	10,000.00	4,007.00	40%	Brave Futures Programme - 3 x 8 week programme of weekly face to face, nature therapy sessions for groups of up to 8 people
	SEND					
10	City of Chelmsford Mencap	22,000.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards Advocacy and Community Support Manager's salary. Service provides support for adults with a learning disability
11	Families InFocus (Essex)	46,558.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards running costs of service supporting families who have a child (or children) with any Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND)
12	InterAct Chelmsford Limited	20,620.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards costs for the Chelmsford Together club - an evening and holiday club supporting 8-25 year olds with SEND
	Carers					
13	Action for Family Carers	31,714.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards weekly Young Carers Respite Club at Galleywood Youth Centre
14	Carers First	3,200.00	1,600.00	960.00	60%	Towards running costs for programme of carer wellbeing activities
15	Crossroads Braintree and Chelmsford	78,000.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards Support Worker salary cost, for service providing support for adult carers through respite care
	Other healthcare					
16	Essex Dementia Care	423,000.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards running costs for One2One support service and activity centre groups for those in the earlier stages of their dementia journey
17	Farleigh Hospice	60,000.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards running costs for virtual ward, providing 24/7 clinical support for end of life care and support
18	Hearing Help Essex	42,000.00	9,500.00	5,700.00	60%	Towards volunteer support costs for the Hearing Aid Support Service in Chelmsford
19	Support 4 Sight	19,832.00	9,910.00	5,946.00	60%	Towards running costs for information, advice and guidance service and social & well-being activities for those with sight loss
	Social					
20	North Avenue Youth Centre	102,832.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards salaries for youth centre running groups in deprived area
21	English for Women	46,116.00	8,620.00	5,172.00	60%	Towards running costs for English language sessions in order to encourage social inclusion
22	Ideas Hub Chelmsford	96,494.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Towards running costs for community facility and activities

23	New Generation Development Agency LTD	108,139.00	10,000.00	4,007.00	40%	Towards rates and utilities for unit in The Meadows to provide community space and activities for ethnic minorities
24	South Woodham Evangelical Church	1,000.00	500.00	0.00	0%	<p>Towards ongoing costs of soup, drinks and cakes for Warm Welcome drop in providing free lunch and conversation.</p> <p><i>Reason for recommendation: This application had an unknown number of beneficiaries but is able to be funded through a different route through the CVS.</i></p>
25	South Woodham Ferrers Men's Shed and Community Hub	28,960.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	60%	Running costs towards setting up of new community facility
26	The BIG Sing SOUL administered by Imagine The Day Ltd	4,714.00	2,000.00	0.00	0%	<p>Towards running costs for free baby singing group and care home singing.</p> <p><i>Reason for recommendation: Service is not unique. Not considered to represent good value for money.</i></p>
	TOTAL	-	225,810.00	130,000.00	-	