



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 10 July 2024

Report of Councillor Rhea Rayside,
Cabinet Member for People &
Communities

SK Community Fund – Criteria Review 2024

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To consider proposed changes to determine access to the SK Community Fund: Main Grants Scheme and provide a recommendation to the Cabinet Member on a revised eligibility criteria.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Comments on the changes proposed to the criteria of the SK Community Fund.**
2. **Recommends the Cabinet Member for People and Communities approves the changes proposed to the criteria of the SK Community Fund.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? N

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Connecting Communities

Which wards are impacted? (All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

1.1 The financial implications are set out within the report and are related to criteria setting for an established budget.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy 151)

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

2.1 The Council has a strong record in supporting the voluntary and community sector by helping to enable communities to be more self-sufficient. This continues to be a key priority for the Council and is evidenced through its Corporate Plan aim of Connecting Communities. Working with and providing support for the voluntary and community sector is central to achieving this.

2.2 In support of such groups, the Council introduced the SK Community Fund in 2015 to offer grants to constituted community groups, charities and social enterprise organisations. This scheme has operated under three specific strands since that time:

- **Small Grants Fund:** Awards of up to £2,000 for eligible groups and projects, where 100% of required funding can be applied for. Fees for sessional workers (freelance workers, not on the usual staff of the applying group/agency) could be considered for small community event applications
- **Main Grants Scheme** covering:
 - **Community Projects:** Capital funding only. Up to 80% of required funding to a maximum of £5,000 for eligible groups and projects. 20% match funding required from the applicant
 - **Community Events:** Generally capital funding, but fees for sessional workers (freelance workers, not on the usual staff of the applying group/agency) could be considered for community events. Up to 80% of required funding to a maximum of £5,000 for eligible groups and projects. 20% match funding required from the applicant.

2.3 Since its introduction, grants in excess of £768,000 have been awarded for projects or events within South Kesteven. A report was presented to Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 March 2023 recommending changes to the scheme's eligibility criteria which included the removal the 'Community Buildings' category to avoid the potential for double funding with the introduction of UKSPF funding. Prior to this change, 30% of applications to the SK Community Fund had related to the development or refurbishment of community venues. The removal of this category was always intended to be temporary to cover the duration of alternative funding available through UKSPF. As this fund is now in its final year, it is considered timely that the Community Buildings category is re-introduced to the SK Community Fund's eligibility criteria.

2.4 Funding through the SK Community Fund is generally used to support or act as match funding for larger funding bids made by the voluntary and community sector to external funders. The ability to use the SK Community Fund for this purpose therefore helps lever in additional funding to benefit the communities. For example: if a project costs £20,000, the maximum award from the SK Community Fund is £5,000. In order to deliver the project, further applications to other, external, funders would need to be made by the community group carrying out the project. Using this example, an additional £15,000 of external funding would be brought into the District which therefore impacts positively on the economy of South Kesteven.

2.5 Other proposed changes to the SK Community Fund include:

- the introduction of an additional offer within the Community Amenities category to cover monuments and war memorials
- a tightening up on eligibility for projects related to highways to remove such items as speed signage/cameras and village signs from the criteria at the request of the Awarding Panel

- a tightening up on eligibility of applications from Parish and Town Councils and Parish Meetings to state that projects that are parish-specific should be supported through the Precept process

3. Key Considerations

3.1 Members of Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are therefore asked to consider the proposed changes to the criteria of the SK Community Fund as outlined above. For clarity, these proposed changes are:

- The re-introduction of the Community Buildings category
- The introduction of an eligibility to allow applications relating to monuments and war memorials within the Community Amenities category
- The restriction of applications relating to such items as speed signs/cameras and village signs
- A tightening up on applications from Parish and Town Councils which should be funded via the Precept process

3.2 A copy of the draft, amended criteria can be found at **Appendix A**.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 The Fund's criteria could remain unchanged. The proposed amendments, however, allow for increased opportunities and greater clarity/transparency.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1 The recommendations will improve opportunities offered by the SK Community Fund for the voluntary and community sector of South Kesteven

6. Background Papers

6.1 The following background papers are available to support this report:
[Report to Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee 16.3.23](#)

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix A – Draft Criteria, Application Process and Conditions document.