



REPORT TO:	Boston Town Area Committee
DATE:	14 th April 2022
SUBJECT:	Small Grant Scheme Review
PURPOSE:	To discuss the current provision and to provide recommendations from the BTAC Small Grant Working Group as to how it could operate in the future.
KEY DECISION:	N/A
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Martin Griggs
REPORT OF:	BTAC Small Grant Working Group.
REPORT AUTHOR:	Maddy Eyre – Local Communities Officer and Administrator of the BTAC Small Grant Scheme.
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	BTAC
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

SUMMARY

This report presents options for the committee to consider on the future delivery of the BTAC Small Grant Scheme, it provides a background to the scheme and information for the committee to consider when deliberating over the options presented by the BTAC Small Grant Working Group. The committee are being asked to decide which option they would prefer as the way forward for the Small Grant Scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For members to consider the four options presented by the BTAC Small Grant Working Group and determine which option the small grant scheme will operate to in the future. These options are as follows:

Option 1: No Change to BTAC Small Grant scheme

Option 2: Allow community groups and organisations to request funds in excess of £1000, by exception only. Requests must be reviewed by the Grants Working Group before submission to full committee. Budget remains at £9,000

Option 3: Retain current small grant offer of applications to a maximum of £1000. Increase the BTAC small grant budget. This will allow for more applications to be supported.

Option 4: Increase maximum funds that can be applied for. An increase in annual BTAC small grant budget would be required.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To seek clarity on the current provision of the grant scheme and its future delivery.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Stop providing the Small Grant Initiative : this option is not recommended. The Small Grant Scheme presents a positive opportunity for BTAC to support local groups in the community.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The BTAC Small Grant Scheme is for community groups and organisations wanting to contribute to their town centre community. The scheme is operated using BTAC's Small Grants Policy – See Appendix A, with a scoring matrix based on the requirements of the Committee that it be consistent with BTAC's Terms of Reference and constitution See Appendix B and C respectively.
- 1.2** This is easy to understand; flexible and inclusive; and includes a pre-assessment process carried out by officers so that only those applications scoring above a defined threshold are considered by a Working Group of up to 5 members of the committee which makes decisions on awards offered which are then submitted to the full committee for endorsement.
- 1.3** Community Groups and organisations can apply for funding up to £1,000 through the submission of a simple application form See Appendix A
- 1.4** Community groups and organisations are also able to apply to BTAC for grants in excess of the £1,000, which the small grant scheme allows if the project directly benefits the town centre wards of Boston and is innovative and supports the objectives of the Committee.
- 1.5** This process, currently, invites applicants to write directly to the Chairman of the Committee and it is at the Chairman's discretion as to whether it is submitted to the full committee for consideration. There are currently no checks and balances and it is not reviewed through an application form or considered by the Small Grant Working Group.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Each financial year £9,000 is committed towards offering small grants to community groups operating in and for the benefit of the 8 Town Centre Wards of Boston. This scheme has been in operation since 2005.
- 2.2 Prior to 2019/2020 all BTAC small grant underspend was returned to the BTAC reserves at the end of each financial year, with £2,046 being returned in 2017/2018 and £3,368 in 2018/2019.
- 2.3 In 2020, due to Covid-19 and the following restrictions, the small grants programme was effectively halted for the entire year. A small number of applications were process from the previous financial year.
- 2.4 Therefore £18,000 (including the £9,000 from 2020/2021 budget), plus underspend from 2019/20 was made available to spend in 2021/22. A Record of 13 applications were submitted in Round 1, where £12,680 worth of grants was awarded. Projects did not have to fit any new criteria for covid-19 recovery but this was taken into account when reviewing applications.
- 2.5 At the end of the financial year, the scheme has £3,698 of unallocated funds to carry over into 2022/2023.
- 2.6 During 2021/2022 The Chairman of the Committee received 3 requests for funding in excess of the £1,000 maximum allowed for the small grant scheme. All 3 requests were for funding up to £5,000.
- 2.7 2 out of the 3 applications were rejected by the Chairman who followed the basic principles of the small grant scheme guidelines. The 3rd application was considered by full committee but was not supported.
- 2.8 BTAC currently have no budget allocated to support applications for funding in excess of £1,000 maximum per grant and any funding agreed in excess of £1,000 maximum per grant has to be found from their main budget.
- 2.9 BTAC, at its 3rd February 2022 meeting, determined to task the BTAC Small Grant Working Group with reviewing the current grant scheme provision and proposing options for the future delivery of the scheme.

3. REVIEW OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Working Group subsequently met on 24th February 2022 to review the Scheme, where they drew up a number of options for the committee to consider going forward. These were as follows:

Option 1: No Change to BTAC Small Grant scheme

Option 2: Allow community groups and organisations to request funds in excess of £1000, by exception only. Requests must be reviewed by the Grants Working Group before submission to full committee. Budget remains at £9,000

Option 3: Retain current small grant offer of applications to a maximum of £1000. Increase the BTAC small grant budget. This will allow for more applications to be supported

Option 4: Increase maximum funds that can be applied for. An increase in annual BTAC small grant budget would be required.

4. CONCLUSION

In accordance with BTAC's request at their 3rd February meeting for the BTAC Small Grant Working Group to carry out a review of the small grant scheme and to draw up options for the future delivery of the scheme, the committee is now asked to consider these options and determine the way forward.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

There are no implications concerning any expected benefits to the Partnership arising from this report.

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

There are no implications to the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership arising from this report.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

There are no corporate priority implications arising from this report.

STAFFING

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no constitutional and/or legal implications arising from this report.

DATA PROTECTION

There are no data protection implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL

Any increase to the Small Grants Scheme will impact on the funds available to the committee for any new or old extended projects.

The committee may wish to cap any agreement to carry forward any surplus small grants funds as there is a risk of carrying an ever-increasing budget that may not be expended. This could be agreed annually.

RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no risk implications arising from this report

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

No consultation undertaken.

REPUTATION

There are no reputational implications arising from this report.

CONTRACTS

There are no specific contractual implications arising from this report.

CRIME AND DISORDER

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

There are no equality and diversity, human rights or safeguarding implications arising from this report.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

There are no health and well-being implications arising from this report.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no climate change and/or environmental implications arising from this report.

LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

There are no links to the 12 missions of the levelling up white paper within this report.

ACRONYMS

BTAC: Boston Town Area Committee

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

APPENDIX A	BTAC Small Grants Policy – Application Form and Guidance Notes
APPENDIX B	BTAC Small Grant Scheme – Scoring Matrix
APPENDIX C	BTAC Terms of Reference and Constitution

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
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BTAC Small Grants Working Group Minutes – 24 th February 2022	Held by BTAC Small Grant Administrator and can be viewed by members and officers on request.
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CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT
A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

REPORT APPROVAL	
Report author:	Maddy Eyre Maddy.eyre@boston.gov.uk
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Approved for publication:	Councillor Paul Goodale Paul.goodale@boston.gov.uk

FINANCE PROFORMA

PROFORMA FOR APPROVAL OF THE RELEASE OF RESOURCES

(CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGETS)

FROM: Rachel Chatterton

THIS PROFORMA PROVIDES THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
IN RESPECT OF THE ATTACHED

REPORT: Small Grant Scheme Review

REPORT DATE: 14th April 2022

OPTION 1	£ Year 1 2022.23	£ Year 2 2023.24	£ Year 3 2024.25	£ Year 4 2025.26	£ Year 5 2026.27
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Revenue

Total Revenue Cost

Funding required:

Total capital cost £

Considered by:

BTAC

Date:

14.04.22

Revenue cost £

Financial Services Comments

If the committee were to consider increasing the Small grants budget there are funds unallocated at each budget setting for any "New initiatives" the committee agree within the year.

The table below shows the balance of this fund as per the agreed budget from February 2nd 2022.

	2022.23	2023.24	2024.25	2025.26	2026.27
New initiatives	50,314	70,677	74,557	78,406	87,543

Risk

Any increase to the Small Grants Scheme will impact on the funds available to the committee for any new or old extended projects.

The committee may wish to cap any agreement to carry forward any surplus small grants funds as there is a risk of carrying an ever-increasing budget that may not be expended. This could be agreed annually.

Procurement

N/A

Value for Money Efficiency

This FP is valid for 3 months from FP date	If this FP is no longer required please advise Finance	If there are changes to the original report it may invalidate this document, it must be reviewed by Finance.