

People and Communities Committee

Review of Grant Criteria

1. Background
 - 1.1. Since its inception, BTC has awarded grants to community groups to support events and environmental and community projects. Grants are awarded after completion of an application form and paid after evidence of agreed expenditure is submitted.
 - 1.2. Initially, there was little information to guide applicants as to what BTC would support, beyond a statement that applications from sporting organisations would not normally be considered. With time, criteria evolved that saw BTC focus support for events primarily on 'infrastructure', such as toilets, tents and PAs, that would support an event while leaving the funding for 'attractions' to come from other sources or the organisers' own funds.
 - 1.3. More recently, BTC adopted a set of stringent criteria specifying more closely what would be supported and the level of support available. These criteria were recognised as unworkable at a meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 3rd July, when this review was initiated.
 - 1.4. Existing practice has been for events which are an established part of the council calendar, such as the Tweedmouth Feast, Spittal Seaside Festival and Riding of the Bounds to be treated as the recipients of grants. It is arguable that this is not helpful, and that these three events should be treated as events the council part funds, in collaboration with the organisers, not as grant applications. On such occasions council will agree criteria for the event and its management that are at least to the same standards as those below, via the normal council reporting and budgetary process.
2. Review
 - 2.1. Grant criteria across a number of northern town councils have been reviewed. There are many broad similarities in the criteria in that grants are usually awarded for the benefit of residents and in accordance with the council's objectives.
 - 2.2. However, at the same time, there are variations in details in terms of what different councils choose to support, when they accept applications and how applications are assessed. In the latter case, some councils utilise a detailed scoring system, which is set out within their application process, while others offer little guidance on what may make an application successful.
 - 2.3. The making of grants, or their approval, is often delegated to a committee or sub-committee of council at other authorities, and it is recommended that the approval of grants within these guidelines, and within budget, be delegated to the People and Communities committee.
 - 2.4. Information gathered from the review has been used to draw up a set of draft guidelines for BTC to use for future grant schemes, provided council agrees the principle of treating large events as separate budget lines rather than recipients of aid under the grants scheme.
3. Recommendation
 - 3.1. Committee are invited to consider and comment on the draft guidelines.

Draft Grant Guidelines:

1. Grants will be awarded to promote BTCs aims as set out in its mission statement:
Promote the economic growth of Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth
Encourage people to visit Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth
Maintain the environment of Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth
2. Grants will only be awarded to independent organisations based and/or active in the BTC area, open to anyone to join, with a constitution and bank account controlled by at least two members.
3. Grants will not be awarded to organisations whose main purpose is to influence public policy or to engage in political campaigning. The making of grants to organisations providing advice or support to individuals will be reserved to council.
4. Grants will be up to a maximum of £2500 per grant, and where there are multiple grant applications from the same organisation in one civic year they shall not total more than £2500.
5. Grants may be used for purchase or hire of equipment, insurance or the cost of hiring external labour or support for activities. This may include the cost of attracting speakers or facilitators.
6. Applications will need to be supported by an explanation of the outcomes the expenditure is intended to achieve, and the way in which those outcomes relate to the objectives in paragraph 1 (above).
7. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how, especially in the procurement of items costing more than £100, they will achieve value for money.
8. It shall be a standard condition of the making of grants that no payments shall be made except against invoices submitted.
9. Grants will not be given:
 - To individuals
 - For entertainment or food and drink
 - For the hire of venues on a regular basis.
 - To organisations donating all or most of their income to charity