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COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Tuesday 7 September 2021

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DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE DECISION-MAKING MEETING

A meeting of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance Decision-Making Meeting will be held virtually on **Tuesday, 14 September 2021 at 1.00 pm.**

Rob Weaver
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Decision-Making Meeting
(Councillors Mike Evely)

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Committee Administrator know prior to the date of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Community Welfare Grant Arrangements for the Last Two Quarters of 21-22**
This report seeks the approval of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance to roll forward current arrangements for the Community Welfare Grant until year end, to enable decision and roll-out of a new approach.

Reporting Officers: Joseph Walker (01285 623146) / Jacqueline Wright (01285 623617)

DATE OF DECISION: NO EARLIER THAN TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS: NOON ON MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

2. **Discretionary Council Tax Discount**
This report in relation to an application for Council Tax Discretionary discount submitted under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, recommends that the application be refused by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for finance.

Reporting Officers: Jon Dearing (01993 861221) / Mandy Fathers (01285 623571)

DATE OF DECISION: NO EARLIER THAN TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS: NOON ON MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

Note: Any Member who wishes to comment on an item is requested to send those comments (preferably by e-mail) to the Reporting Officer, copied to Democratic Services, by the deadline identified.

Any comments received will be reported to the Decision-Maker prior to the decision(s) being taken.

(END)

Agenda Item 1

 <p>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE DECISION MAKING MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2021</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM I</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>COMMUNITY WELFARE GRANT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LAST TWO QUARTERS OF 21-22</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Mike Evemy, Cabinet Member for Finance Tel: 01285 623000 Email: mike.evemy@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Joseph Walker, Community Partnerships Officer Tel: 01285 623146 Email: joseph.walker@publicagroup.uk</p> <p>Jacqueline Wright, Healthy Communities Manager Tel: 01285 623617 Email: jacqueline.wright@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To roll forward current arrangements for the Community Welfare Grant until year end, to enable decision and roll-out of a new approach.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p><i>a) To agree a roll forward of current arrangements until new arrangements commence, anticipated to be 1 April 2022.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Help residents, businesses and communities to access the support they need to ensure a high level of health and well-being</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>Senior Management Team</p>

1. BACKGROUND

The Community Welfare Grant is a budget used to support one of the Council's key areas of focus – help residents, businesses and communities to access the support they need to ensure a high level of health and wellbeing. One way we help to achieve this is to provide core funding support to voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners providing vital services and support aligned to this priority in the Cotswold District.

2. MAIN POINTS

2.1. The process for allocating the Community Welfare Grant is due for review. The scheme has been tied into long-standing grant arrangements with key partners. While the value of their service provision has been demonstrated by the VCS response to the Covid-19 outbreak, there is not a current process to consider new grants nor criteria to determine what scale of support should be provided.

2.2. Over recent months the purpose of the budget has been reviewed, and options for managing the budget considered. These options will be the topic of a report to Cabinet in October. Irrespective of what process is agreed by Cabinet, a period of time will be required to finalise procedures and run the process to agree the disbursement of the budget. It would appear sensible that new arrangements commence with the new financial year in April 2022.

2.3. In recognition of the valuable services our current funded partners provide, and in order to provide appropriate notice of any change to the support individual partners receive, officers recommend that the current arrangements are rolled forward pro rata until the commencement of the Council's new arrangements. This is expected to be at the start of financial year 2022-23, although will be subject to agreement by Cabinet.

2.4. In 2020-21, the budget for the scheme was increased, and distributed across new and existing recipients. The final two agreements were new recipients in-year. A six month pro rata figure is provided in parentheses.

- a. The Churn Project - £9,000 (£4,500) for services; a neighbourhood project working in Cirencester, services include providing support to jobless residents, befriending services and older people's groups. Contribution to core costs.
- b. Cotswold Counselling - £5,425 (£2,712.50) towards rent; this is a registered charity dedicated to the relief of emotional distress caused by mental or physical ill health or by social or economic circumstances, affecting people in the Cotswolds and the surrounding area. Contribution to core costs.
- c. Cotswold Friends - £9,100 (£4,550) for services; services include community transport and befriending services as well as running social prescribing in the North Cotswolds. Contribution to core costs.
- d. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council - £13,100 (£6,550) for services; SLA covering a contribution towards the two local advisors covering Cotswold District, providing a range of services such as advice on external funding, neighbourhood planning, and setting up community organisations.
- e. Stroud and Cotswolds CAB - £70,920 (£35,460) towards advice services across Cotswold District.
- f. CHYP - £3,200 (£1,600) towards mortgage repayments
- g. People 4 You - £2,050 (£1,025), towards their Befriending service

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The proposal is budget neutral

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. This is discretionary activity by the Council, to recognise the vital work carried out across the district by partner organisations. The Council is not bound into long term agreements with such partners, but sectoral good practice indicates that funding arrangements should not be altered without appropriate notice.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. In reviewing the Council's financial support of its voluntary and community sector partners, the biggest risk is impact on the services they deliver, and reputational fallout from such impact. Potential impact is mitigated by ensuring decisions are procedurally and evidentially sound, and notice of any changes given.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT (IF REQUIRED)

- 6.1. No EIA is required at this stage, as the proposal is to roll forward existing arrangements. However, a revised process to distribute this budget may need to be assessed, as any reduction in support to voluntary and community sector partners could have an equalities impact.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS (IF REQUIRED)

- 7.1. None at this stage

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1. None. This budget is established to support the voluntary and community sector, and it has already been agreed that a better process needs to be established. A roll forward of the existing arrangements is the best way to create the time and space for such a review without negatively impacting on the organisations this budget supports.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1. None

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 <p>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE DECISION MAKING MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2021</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM 2</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>DISCRETIONARY COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNT</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>Bourton Vale</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Mike Evey – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: mike.evey@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer Author</p>	<p>Jon Dearing – Group Manager for Resident Services Tel: 01993 861221 Email: jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Operational Support and Enabling Tel: 01285 623571 Email: mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To determine an application for Discretionary Council Tax discount submitted under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>none</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p>That the:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>a) Application for Council Tax Discretionary discount submitted under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, be refused by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for finance.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Delivering our services to the highest standards Responding to the challenges presented by the Climate Crisis</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Group Manager for Resident Services</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.** The Council has been approached by the owner of St Kellens, Lower Slaughter to request a discretionary hardship discount be applied to the Council Tax account of the property.
- 1.2.** This is a band E council tax property with a 2021/2022 annual charge of £2,273.26 and classified as a second home for council tax purposes.
- 1.3.** On 7 June 2021 Cabinet approved the council Tax Exceptional Hardship Discretionary Policy and delegated the decision making process for individual applications to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive; acting in the role of Chief Finance Officer.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1.** St. Kellens is a grade II listed building situated close to the river Eye in Lower Slaughter.
- 2.2.** On 23 December 2020 and again on 24 December 2020 the property experienced severe flooding.
- 2.3.** Loss Adjusters attended the property in early January 2021 and a contractor has been appointed to complete the works. Due to the extent of the damage caused by the flooding, building work has not yet commenced. This is mainly because of the length of time it has taken to dehumidify the building and then plan the works to be undertaken.
- 2.4.** The proprietors have now confirmed the scheduled works will commence on 2 August 2021 with a completion date expected at the end of September 2021.
- 2.5.** The current discount available for properties undergoing major works is 100% for a maximum period of six months. This discount has been applied to the council tax account for the period of 23 December 2020 to 21 June 2021 as follows:

Period	Discount	Amount
21 December 2020 to 31 March 2021	100%	£587.56
1 April 2021 to 21 June 2021	100%	£510.70

- 2.6.** Although some elements of this application meet the criteria in the Councils 'Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Discretionary Policy; it is not compliant with all. This property is a 'second home, therefore the owners have not been displaced from their main residence. It is therefore being proposed that if any additional discount award is considered it should be done so under Section a 13A provision which permits the Council to reduce the amount a person is liable to pay by way of Council Tax to such an extent that they think fit.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1.** The full cost resulting from the granting of a local discretionary discount is met by the billing authority and there is no statutory right to pass on the cost to other major precepting authorities.

- 3.2.** The costs would be as follows:

Date(s)	No of Days	Amount per day (£)	Total (£)
22 June 2021 to 30 September 2021	101	6.23	629.23

** If the scheduled works are finalised before the 30 September the discount will end to reflect the completion date.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by Section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003) the Council is permitted to award a discretionary council tax discount.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. There is a risk that by approving this award may lead to setting a precedent for similar requests being made.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on the protected characteristics covered by the Equalities Act that have been identified

7. CLIMATE CHANGE

- 7.1. None

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1. The Cabinet Member may decide not to permit any additional Council Tax discount or to apply an alternative percentage of discounts up 30 September 2021. Examples of the cost of alternative discount levels are set out below:

Percentage Discount	Percentage Discount Award (£)
80%	503.38
100%	629.23

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