

Rother District Council

Report to: Community Infrastructure Levy Steering Group

Date: 8 February 2021

Title: Community Grants awarded in the past two years

Report of: Head of Strategy and Planning

Purpose of Report: To advise Members on how many projects in the past two years that have been awarded funding from the Community Grant Scheme may have also met the criteria for funding from the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy.

Officer

Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

Introduction

1. On 5 October 2020, Members of the Community Infrastructure Levy Steering Group (CILSG) were presented with a report setting out differences between the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Community Grants Scheme (CGS) Criteria.
2. Members asked Officers to carry out a comparison exercise on how many projects in the past two years that have been awarded funding from the CGS may have also met the criteria for funding from Strategic CIL.

Community Grants awarded in the past two years

3. As reported at the last CILSG meeting, the Council's CGS supports the development of community facilities, community activities and sustainable local action. Applications are welcomed from voluntary or community organisations for services and activities which benefit the residents of Rother. The CGS is split into three levels of funding, from small grants of under £500 up to a maximum grant of £30,000. The maximum grant available for each scheme is limited to 50% of the total cost of the project. Preference is given to groups or organisations that:
 - have secured additional funding sources;
 - can demonstrate strong community support for their project from the community, local Councillors, and Parish and Town Councils; and
 - can show how the on-going costs of their project will be met.
4. A scoring template is used to ensure that all applications are fairly assessed, with the CGS Grants Panel making a recommendation to Cabinet regarding which projects should be supported.
5. Attached at Appendix 1 is a list of community grants that have been awarded funding in the past two years, from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2020. An assessment has been undertaken against each description which is an

indication as to whether that project could have been eligible for Strategic CIL funding. Members will note that of the 43 projects, officers consider that six¹ of these projects may have been considered suitable for funding through the Strategic CIL, but one of which would have been below the current CIL threshold of £100,000 and it is considered that a further seven projects may have been considered suitable for funding from Local CIL (subject to consideration by the respective Parish/Town Council).

6. Whilst it is noted that the current threshold to apply for Strategic CIL funding is £100,000, analysis was undertaken to consider those projects which were awarded funding through the CGS that may² have qualified for Strategic CIL funding at a £30,000 project total threshold and this reveals the following information:
 - Projects with a total value of above £30,000 – 4³. Total value of projects £506,115.
 - Projects with a total value of below £30,000 – 8⁴. Total value of projects £164,957.

Rother Strategic CIL

7. Strategic CIL (that which is retained by Rother District Council [RDC]) can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure such as transport, flood defences, schools, hospitals and other health and social care facilities. However, charging authorities (RDC) may not use the levy to fund affordable housing. Local authorities must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area, and they will decide what infrastructure is needed and this is informed by the [Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#) which supports the Local Plan.

Rother Local CIL

8. Where all or part of a chargeable development⁵ is within the area of a Parish or Town Council, the charging authority (RDC) must pass a proportion⁶ of the CIL receipts from the development to the Parish or Town Council. This is known as the Local CIL. The Parish or Town Council must use the CIL receipts passed to it to support the development of the Parish or Town Council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area.
9. The Local CIL can be spent on a wider range of projects than the Strategic CIL, provided that it meets the requirement to 'support the development of the area'. The wider definition means that the neighbourhood portion can be spent on projects other than infrastructure (as defined in the regulations)

¹ Two of which were awarded Strategic CIL funding as well as Community Grant Scheme Funding.

² A full analysis of each application against the CIL bidding criteria has not been undertaken.

³ Battle Health Pathway, the Pelham Community Space Project, Beulah Baptist Church and Jubilee Green Community Garden - Camber

⁴ Bexhill Senior Citizens Club, Guestling Playing Fields, playground equipment at Northiam, outdoor fitness equipment at Westfield, MUGA at Beckley, play area at Iden, ramp for disabled access at Rye Cricket Club, roof repairs at Stonegate Village Hall.

⁵ Development which is CIL liable

⁶ 15% of the total receipts. This rises to 25% where there is a 'made' neighbourhood plan.

provided it is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the Parish's area. For example, the pot could be used to fund affordable housing. Other examples may include environmental improvement (landscaping, open space improvements) public art, street furniture, equipment for a community group. These types of local projects are similar to those which fall within the scope of the CGS.

Conclusion

10. It is apparent that the Strategic CIL and Community Grants are different and fulfil different funding functions. However, the Local CIL is more akin to the local community projects that may potentially overlap with the Community Grants. Members may wish to consider options for the CGS criteria that seeks to avoid duplication/overlap with the Local CIL, as explained in paragraph 5 above and highlighted in Appendix 1.

Implications

Financial Implications

11. The Community Grant Fund of £130,000 is currently funded from Earmarked Reserves that will not be sustainable into the future.