



Report

Cabinet Member for Community and Resources

Part 1

Date: 31 August 2017

Subject Application to Welsh Church Acts Fund 2017/18

Purpose To make a decision on an early application for funding from the Welsh Church Act Funds

Author Head of Finance

Ward All

Summary There has been an urgent application request for grant funding from the Welsh Church Acts Fund for 2017/18. The Cabinet Member needs to consider the bid and decide if the bid is urgent and therefore can receive funds at this time as opposed to being considered alongside all others in October/early November 2017.

Proposal To

- review and decide if the bid is 'urgent' and can receive its contribution at this time, from the 2017/18 Welsh Church Act Funds allocation
- Agree the contribution rate as being the same as that used in November 2016, this being a reasonable and fair method.

Action by Head of Finance – organise payment in line with decision

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Head of Law and Regulations
- Head of People and Business Change
- Ward Member for affected ward

Signed

Background

Newport City Council receives an amount each year for distribution under the Welsh Church Acts fund to be distributed in accordance with the adopted criteria. For 2017/18 the amount available for Newport City Council to distribute is £50,539.94, this includes £139.44 carried over from 2016/17.

There is set criteria for the payment of this grant and the Lead Member will be given a copy. The Head of Finance considers the applications initially and makes recommendations for those which fall within the criteria and the amount. Usually these applications are agreed once a year, in October; but there is provision to consider applications which are deemed urgent at any point. There has been an application from Newport U3A (Newport University of the Third Age) requesting early approval for funding for the purchase of an 'emergency defibrillator'.

The Head of Finance has considered the application and is happy that the request falls within the criteria. Given the nature of the request and the setting it is used in, it could also, reasonably, be deemed to be urgent given that no such equipment exists at the current time. The Cabinet Member will need to take a view on this and decide if it is urgent and can be paid now or consider this alongside other applications, when reviewed in October/early November.

Ordinarily, all bids in any one year receive a consistent contribution as opposed to the full amount. This is because the value of bids normally outweigh available funds and this enables all bids which meet the criteria to be supported. It is recommended that this bid, if supported for payment now, is given a contribution at the percentage contribution rate used last November 2016 – which was 60%. As deadline for 2017/18 applications is October, we do not know the total value of all current bids against the funding available and using last year's percentage seems a reasonable and fair approach.

Financial Summary

The cost for this application is funded from the Welsh Church Acts Fund and has no financial implications to the council.

	Year 1 (Current) £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Ongoing £	Notes including budgets heads affected
Costs (Income)					N/A – application is funded through external funding
Net Costs (Savings)					
Net Impact on Budget					

Risks

There are no material risks arising directly from this report.

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
N/A				

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

Not applicable as funds are used for those bids that meet specific Welsh Church Act criteria.

Options Available and considered

The Cabinet Member could decide that this is 'not urgent' and consider it alongside all other 2017/18 bids in October/early November 2017. In addition, if approved now as urgent, a different contribution rate to that recommended could be agreed.

Preferred Option and Why

To make the award as 'urgent' and use the 2016/17 contribution rate as the basis of financial support.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no direct financial consequences on Council budgets. The applications recommended for funding are within the agreed criteria and funded from Welsh Church funds.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The proposed grant funding is compliant with the express purposes of the Welsh Church Act Charitable Trust and is also in accordance with the Council's criteria for the approval of grant applications. The proposed contribution rate of 60% of the total cost of the defibrillator is also consistent with other grant approvals. However, the Cabinet Member will need to be satisfied that this application is sufficiently "urgent" that it requires early approval in advance of determining other competing grant applications at the annual review in October/November.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

There are no HR and business change impacts.

The prioritisation of the proposals to spend will need to be considerate of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act

Comments of Non-Executive Members

Councillor M Al-Nuaimi:

The report does not make it clear the value of the grant requested, nor what's proposed to approve ahead of the October deadline. It's difficult therefore to give the proposal an unconditional support.

However the principle behind the application and the request to agree it earlier are both supported.

The report does bring into focus whether it's advisable to have a single date (in October) for determining all the applications to the Welsh Church Fund. As a member of the Council, I'm not sure when such a decision was taken to go for a single deadline and the timing of it being 6 months ahead of the end of the Financial year.

Now with the deletion of the Councillor Neighbourhood allowance, the Welsh Church Fund offers the only lifeline for local community organisations for seeking relatively small sums of money to help with their set up or the continuation of their activities. The October deadline represents unnecessary long delays for those applications made say in April.

I therefore ask the Cabinet member to explore the alternative of maybe 3 or 4 times during the financial year for determining Welsh Church grant applications. Having such a system/annual calendar would have obviated the need for making a special decision like the one involved in this report. It's also fairer and more equitable for applicants.

Response from Cabinet Member:

No value was attributed to the grant in the report as the application did not have a definitive value. There are numerous options of different 'defibrillators' and the charity are currently taking advice on which one would suit them best. However, they have supplied me with a list of options they are looking at and the

average price is c£1,200.00. Based on that, I will, in line with the report, to make an award of 60% of this, making £720.00.

I am grateful for the points raised on the frequency of these grant awards, in the context of neighbourhood funds now having stopped. I will consider this point when I review the 2017 grant applications in October and any change could start in 2018. I will set out any proposed changes in a CM report.

Local issues

N/A

Scrutiny Committees

N/A

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

N/A

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

N/A

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

These grants are used to support a number of small community groups. These groups enable various areas of the City to function in a better way and to contribute to the above priorities for the Council.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

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Consultation

N/A

Dated: 31 August 2017