

Report to: Policy & Resources Committee, 24th May 2022

Report of: Corporate Director – Finance and Resources

Subject: GRANT REQUESTS 2022-23

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To delegate responsibility for allocations from the miscellaneous grants reserve to the Managing Director in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair(s) of the relevant committee; and**
- 1.2 To approve allocations from reserves for the financial year 2022/23 for two prior requests for grant support.**

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting of 14 December 2021, the Committee considered a report on the use of grants in 2019/20 and proposals for managing grants for the period of the revised City Plan: 2022 to 2027. The Committee approved a proposal to include in the 2022/23 budget a sum of £50,000 to meet one-off requests for funding as they arose during the year.
- 2.2 At its meeting of 8 February the Committee approved a proposal from the Place and Economic Development Committee to include a further £50,000 in the 2022/23 budget as an enabling Fund to support the delivery of the Arts and Cultural Strategy. The Strategy has not yet been published but the funding is available for use when the Place and Economic Development Committee determine a suitable use for it.
- 2.3 In respect of the miscellaneous grants requests fund, a request to establish the reserve is included in the Quarter 4 financial monitoring report elsewhere on the agenda. As reported in December 2021, the purpose of the reserve is to create a resource for one-off requests for funding that are either outside of the approved processes for requesting Community Grants and/or need an urgent decision. At present the reserve is allocated to the Policy & Resources Committee but it is proposed to delegate responsibility to the Managing Director to administer this fund in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair(s) of the relevant committee for each application. Under Appendix A to the Financial Regulations, officers have authority to allocate up to £50,000 from reserves that are delegated to them.
- 2.4 Two requests for funding have been received to date which were outside the limits for small grant applications at the date that they were received. The Committee is asked to approve these applications as they pre-date the proposals in this report.

3. Worcester Paint Festival

- 3.1 Worcester Paint Festival (WPF) is an annual city festival bringing artists involved in the street art scene to the city to create a high quality, outdoor free public art trail.

WPF launched in 2021, with a trail of large murals for all to enjoy, following a festival map (paper and online). The September 2021 event attracted 3,500 map clicks during the period of the festival.

- 3.2 All murals created are designed to be high quality and non-offensive. WPF aims to deliver beautiful pieces of artwork which are free for all to view, working with a network of established street artists. WPF aims to inspire others and support local artists and members of local communities with lesser access to the arts.
- 3.3 WPF is planning a paint festival for 17 and 18 September 2022. The estimated costs of the event, based on the 2021 arrangements, is £31,300. An application for funding has been made to the Arts Council for £20,000 and match funding is being sought from a variety of local groups and sponsors included Worcester BID which has committed £3,000.
- 3.4 In March, WPF requested a grant of £3,000 to match the Worcester BID contribution and in support of their bid to the Arts Council for funding. This was above the limit of £2,000 that applied for small grants applications at that date, which has subsequently been revised to £5,000.

4. Worcester Mela

- 4.1 Worcester Mela aims to be an inclusive celebration of South Asian culture in Worcester. Mela literally means 'festival of togetherness' and a cross-party group has been formed to develop and sustain a Mela festival in the city.
- 4.2 In 2021 Worcester Mela secured funding and support from Severn Arts as part of the Worcester Arches festival strand, through the DCMS and Arts Council England's Cultural Development Fund. A steering committee was established and this co-ordinated, with contributions from a wide range of local people and groups, a number of events:
 - Mini Mela – outside the Guildhall in summer of 2021
 - Mela voices documentary
 - Art installation at the Royal Worcester Hospital.
- 4.3 In April 2022 Worcester Mela established a website presence and promoted this with a launch event at the Art House. This event was very well attended by members of the public as well as the Mayor and other Members and officers of the Council.
- 4.4 Later this year, Worcester Mela is planning to hold events as part of the Worcester Show. Funding of £12,500 has been secured to establish a marquee as part of the show and a match element of £12,500 is sought from the Council to help create the content for the event. The aim is to promote a more inclusive and diverse representation of the city and to include communities that may not often engage with these kinds of events. This will include:
 - Mela to provide 1 hr Entertainment on the main stage
 - Mela to provide 1 hr Entertainment on the community stage
 - 1 Marquee to include cookery demonstration, 2 viewings of the Voices documentary, Asian fashion show, henna artists, arts and craft table, photo rickshaw, etc. Games and entertainment open to all.

5. Preferred option

- 5.1 To establish a simplified process for allocating funding from the miscellaneous grants request reserve.

6. Alternative options considered

- 6.1 To continue to deal with miscellaneous grant requests on an ad hoc basis. Financial Regulations state that reserves must be held for a specified purpose and the arrangements for determining allocations from reserves are clear and recorded. This report clarifies the purpose and governance arrangements for this reserve.
- 6.2 To take requests as they arise to the relevant committees. From time to time requests require a short-term decision which is in advance of the next scheduled meeting of the committee and the value of the requested funding is likely to be such that it does not merit the calling of an extra-ordinary Committee to consider the request. This report proposes the delegation to officers in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair(s) of the relevant committee so that decisions can be made on a timely basis within the existing delegation limits set out in financial regulations

7. Implications

7.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

The total grant requests in this report are £15,500. The balance in the reserve made available for one-off, in-year requests for support is £50,000. Approving the requests would therefore leave a balance of £34,500.

7.2 Legal and Governance Implications

Processes are already in place to manage funding allocated and dispensed by the City Council. The proposed approach is in line with recommended practice for the management of reserves.

7.3 Risk Implications

There is a risk that grant funds are not used for the purpose intended. This is mitigated by end of project reports required by the recipient detailing project outcomes.

7.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

The grants are designed to support the aims of the City Council as set out in the City Plan.

7.5 Equality Implications

No adverse equality implications have been identified as part of this report. The grant requests are designed to support activities which promote equality, diversity and inclusiveness in line with the aims of the City Plan.

7.6 Human Resources Implications

There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

7.7 Health and Safety Implications

There are no direct health and safety implications arising from this report.

7.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

Following the recommendations in this report will support communities, voluntary organisations, and volunteers as well as health and other benefits. The miscellaneous grants reserve has been created to enable additional requests for funding not otherwise covered by existing community grants so that a wider range of organisations and activities can be supported.

Ward(s): **All Wards**
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Background Papers: **None**