

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	8 January 2020
Subject:	Community Grants
Report of:	Head of Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Lead:	Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Community
Number of Appendices:	Three

Executive Summary:

This is the second annual update to the Executive Committee on capital grant schemes which remain outstanding since the Community Grants Working Group, which approved the applications, was disbanded. The Executive Committee has taken back responsibility for overseeing and managing each grant scheme going forward.

At the last update in November 2018 there were four of these grants, plus one older capital grant, that had either yet to begin or had not yet drawn-down the full allocation. The Committee decision at that time was to give three schemes a 12-month extension with conditions attached, one scheme was awaiting payment of final invoices and the final scheme was agreed to be completed and outstanding monies on the grant award to be returned to the general capital pot.

This report provides an update on progress on meeting the grant conditions set out by the Executive Committee. All grant awardees have been approached to provide an update on the current position of each project. The details of the responses received are appended to this report.

The Executive Committee is asked to consider the responses and provide guidance to Officers on how it wishes to manage each grant going forward.

Recommendations:

To consider the updates provided and, for the remaining two grants, agree an approach to the ongoing management of the grant award.

Reasons for Recommendation:

There are now three grant awards that were made that remain uncompleted. The balance of grant award is £112,518 (£115,299 in November 2018). It is now 32 months since the Council's approach to supporting community projects changed and the Council has looked to see the completion of all outstanding projects.

It is an appropriate time for a full update to be presented to Executive Committee and Members given an opportunity to provide guidance to officers on the future management of the outstanding grants.

Resource Implications:

In total, there remains £112,518 of grant monies that have yet to be claimed. Should Members decide to withdraw grants from applicants the monies will be returned to capital balances for use on future capital grants or projects.

Legal Implications:

For the 3 grant applications detailed in Paragraph 2.1 of the report, each scheme is required to sign a formal grant agreement, registered against each property (unless the recipient is a local authority).

The Wormington Village Society grant document has not been completed due to the title issues.

The Winchcombe Skate Park grant document has not been completed due to the delay in obtaining planning permission.

There is a provision that the works in each case have to be carried out within 26 weeks of the date of the grant document, or such later date as the council may agree. This period (actual in the case of Priors Park, anticipated in the other two applications) has passed in all three cases.

The Priors Park grant document contains a provision standard in all the Council's capital grant documents requiring repayment of all or part of the grant if the grant conditions are not complied with, but the council must not act unreasonably: if the council proposes recalling or withholding part of the grant funds, it should give reasonable notice to the grant recipient warning them that if the works are not completed by a stated future date, then the provisions of the grant agreement will be enforced and either repayment required or remaining sums withheld.

Similarly, if the Council proposes withdrawing the grant offer to Wormington and Winchcombe, it must act reasonably, in particular giving reasonable notice to ensure that the applicants are not put to wasted expense

Where there is a surplus and additional works are being considered, it would be appropriate for this to be formally recorded so that the original grant conditions apply to the additional works as they would have been to the original works.

Risk Management Implications:

There is a reputational risk to the Council both in continuing to support grant awards, given the age of some, and withdrawing support at this stage. In addition, there is a risk that worthwhile capital projects may not be supported due to insufficient capital balances if the Council continues to earmark monies for projects which have yet to progress.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Officers will implement the instructions given by Committee and report back on progress as per Member instructions.

Environmental Implications:

None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Executive Committee received an update in November 2018 on the outstanding capital schemes, which have yet to be completed, approved by the previously constituted Member Working Group. This Group was disbanded 18 months earlier in Spring 2017. An update on five schemes was provided to the Committee detailing the position on each scheme and asking for Member direction on the continued support for each scheme.

1.2 In the last 12 months, two of the schemes have been completed and all grant funding provided in line with the approval given. This has left three schemes which are still to be completed. This report sets out the conditions which were attached to each of these schemes at the last meeting and the progress in achieving them.

2.0 COMMUNITY GRANTS UPDATE

2.1 The Grants Working Group awarded nearly £1.5million in capital grants during its existence and the majority of those grants have now been claimed and the expected community benefit delivered. Three grants however remain either unclaimed or part-claimed as detailed in the table below:

Grant applicant/ Project	Date of award	Amount of award	Balance
Priors Park Community Project – Parking Provision Grant	03/11/2010	£70,000	£25,054
Wormington Village Society / Wormington Village Hall	07/03/2013	£57,700	£57,700
Winchcombe Parish Council / Winchcombe Skate Park (£29,764 is capital and £40,236 is revenue)	15/12/2015	£70,000	£70,000

* Priors Park grant was awarded outside of Working Group structure.

2.2 Priors Park Community Parking Provision

The decision of the Executive Committee in November 2018 was to approve a 12-month extension to a grant agreement to allow the investigatory work on further parking provision to be undertaken.

An update on the scheme has been set out in Appendix A. In summary, Tewkesbury Borough Council has identified suitable sites in its own ownership and is now at the stage of procuring design and specification services to apply for planning permission early in the New Year. Given this is being progressed by the Council on Council owned land with no actual grant to a separate body being made, it is now essentially a capital scheme and as such should be re-designated as a capital project rather than as its current designation as a capital grant. The capital programme of the Council will be updated accordingly.

2.3 Wormington Village Society (WVS) – Village Hall.

The decision of the Executive Committee in November 2018 was to approve a 12-month extension to the grant agreement with stringent conditions applied in terms of the commencement of development. A letter was written to the Village Society on 7 December 2018 setting out that, during the 12-month period, it was expected that:

- the legal issues would be resolved;
- all funding would be secured;
- planning permission would be in place;
- a contractor would have been appointed; and
- works would have begun by 1st November 2019.

An update has been received from WVS and is set out in Appendix B. In summary, WVS has not been able to agree with Dumbleton Parish Council on the use of the land and therefore they have not been able to progress on commencement of the scheme.

2.4 Winchcombe Parish Council - Winchcombe Skate Park

The decision of the Executive Committee in November 2018 was to approve a 12-month extension to grant agreement to allow completion of works. A letter was written to the Parish Council, which is overseeing the project, on 7 December 2018 setting out this condition.

An update on progress has been received and is set out in Appendix C. In summary, the Parish Council has had planning conditions that required approval. Due to a change in scheme design there is a planning condition and Tewkesbury Borough Council is in discussions with the Parish Council to ensure that the change is appropriate. Commencement of the scheme is dependent on being able to agree the revised scheme design.

2.5 Member Decision

Executive Committee is asked to consider the summary updates provided and provide guidance to officers on how they wish the grants to be managed going forward.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 None.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 All bodies with grant awards have been consulted on progress in order to inform this report.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 None.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 None.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 None.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 There could be some community impact if the outstanding grants are withdrawn.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 None.

Background Papers:

None.

Contact Officer:

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Appendices:

A – Priors Park Parking Provision.

B – Wormington Village Society.

C – Winchcombe Parish Council.