

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
Report by Strategic Lead, Resources
Corporate Services Committee
13 November 2019

Subject: Dumbarton Common Good Fund - Grant Applications

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update and recommendation in relation to a grant application from Bellsmyre Digital Trust (currently withheld).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to agree £33,101 award be made to Bellsmyre Digital Trust, releasing the previously withheld grant.

3. Background

General

- 3.1 Dumbarton Common Good Fund grants are administered by West Dunbartonshire Council and are reported to this Committee as and when applications are received, once they have been considered for other funding sources by the West Dunbartonshire Community & Volunteering Service.

- 3.2 The value of reserves of the Common Good Fund as at 31 March 2019 was £0.469m. Based upon the budget set by Council on 27 March 2019 (assuming the remaining Town Centre budget is spent) and one grant of £0.020m being awarded to date (to the Bellsmyre Trust), the projected balance carried forward as at 31 March 2020 is £0.307m. As at 31 March 2019, the remaining budget for the Town Centre projects was £0.229m. The Dumbarton Common Good Prudential Reserve is £0.025m.

Bellsmyre Digital Trust

- 3.4 At its meeting on 9 June 2019, a report was submitted to Corporate Services Committee regarding Bellsmyre Digital Trust. The organisation has an approved annual grant budget through Dumbarton Common Good of £35,601 as agreed by Council on 27 March 2019. The report advised Members that £33,101 grant funding had been withheld from the organisation in respect of the 2018/19 grant. The reasoning behind this was that, following review of the organisation's financial position, officers

assessed that the funding was not required due to the level of balances held.

- 3.5 The report also advised Members that the net 2018/19 expenditure was slightly lower than that budgeted. The group had funded the 2018/19 expenditure from the reserves held and other income.
- 3.6 The report also advised that the group's planned spend for 2019/20 was higher than the historic annual spend, and that the group had not confirmed the reason for the need for the increase and has not confirmed how the 2019/20 budget would change as a result of their move to new premises.
- 3.7 The Committee decision was that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee providing full detail on why Bellsmyre Digital Trust was requesting payment of the 2018/19 withheld grant award and that officers consider a Service Level Agreements (SLA) for Bellsmyre Digital Trust.

4. Main Issues

Update: Bellsmyre Digital Trust

- 4.1 Officers have held a series of meetings with representatives of Bellsmyre Digital Trust and have now agreed a draft SLA (still to be signed). Discussions have also taken place to establish why the 2018/19 grant award was required.
- 4.2 At this time the relocation date from Bellsmyre to the Concorde Centre is still unknown and therefore any change to the annual property costs is still not finalised. However, of their annual running costs only £8k is related to property, therefore it is assumed that changes will not be significant.
- 4.3 The Trust representatives have provided a detailed breakdown of additional costs to be incurred during 2019/20 linked to a required upgrade of IT equipment which will allow them to continue to provide an acceptable level of service to their users in a new location (£27k, following quotes) with additional relocation and installation costs also anticipated (costs yet to be confirmed).
- 4.4 The group has also advised that they plan to occupy a small premise in Bellsmyre (to be let from Bellsmyre Housing Association) and continue to provide a service in that location. Draft running costings (totalling £13k per annum) have been provided, however to date no funding to support that expenditure has been secured/ identified. The reserves currently held by the group will allow time for the group to draft a full business plan for this

project and to identify longer term funding to ensure sustainability, whilst providing a service within Bellsmyre.

- 4.5** Having considered the additional information now received, officers now recommend that Committee approve the payment of £33,101 – the equivalent value of the withheld grant for 2018/19. This will allow funding for relocation and to allow a needed upgrade to IT equipment, with older equipment being transferred, where possible, to enhance the smaller Bellsmyre site.

5. Option Appraisal

- 5.1** No option appraisal consideration was required for this report.

6. People Implications

- 6.1** There are no people implications.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1** As the recommended amounts are not currently budgeted, if the recommended values were to be agreed, this would result in the projected carried forward balance in the Common good to be reduced by £33,101.

8. Risk Analysis

- 8.1** The Committee must consider financial and reputational risks when considering grant applications. The financial risk is not only that the Dumbarton Common Good Fund remains financially viable, but also that the organisations funded by the Fund comply with the Conditions of Grant which cover issues such as discrimination, health and safety, insurance, etc.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 9.1** No issues were identified in a screening of applications.

10. Environmental Sustainability

- 10.1** No environmental sustainability issues require to be raised in connection with this report.

11. Consultation

11.1 All organisations are consulted regarding recommendations of grant prior to the report being submitted to Committee. The report has also been considered by legal colleagues.

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Date: 3 November 2019

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Appendix:	Bellsmyre Digital Trust Costs Estimates
Background Paper:	2018/19 Grants Update report – Corporate Services Committee 22 May 2019 Grant Application Forms and background papers Dumbarton Common Good Budget 2019/20 – Council Report 27 March 2019 Dumbarton Common Good Budget Report / Minute – Council 5 March 2018 Dumbarton Common Good Budget Report / Minute – Council 6 February 2013 Dumbarton Common Good – Dumbarton Town Centre Budget Report / Minute – HEED 8 May 2013
Wards Affected:	Wards 1, 2 and 3