

The current process for receiving Grant Aid applications is that applications are invited in October and they are asked to be returned by the end of November, awards are then made in April of the following year.

In the past either the chair and vice-chair of the council and of the Planning, Contract and Works Committee or a small group of councillors have reviewed grant aid applications received and brought a recommendation of individual awards to the Budget Meeting in January; the result being that the decisions on Grant Aid inform the amount committed in the budget for this purpose.

The council is asked to consider a revision of this process and to agree that the budget agreed for Grant Aid is based on a strategic decision of what the council can afford to commit to this purpose, rather than being based on what those who apply request.

The rationale behind the suggestion is as follows:

- Other funders agree the pot of money they have available, prior to asking for applications for grant aid.
- The figure agreed for Grant Aid will be debated and decided at the Budget meeting, taking into account all other budget decisions at the same time, a more systematic approach.
- The council will not be rushed into making individual Grant Aid decisions in time for the January budget; they can be made in February which is less busy.
- Those applying for Grant Aid will know in advance the money being made available.

The council is asked to agree to make this change with immediate effect, previous grant aid applicants will be advised that applications will be invited from 31st January 2019, to be received by the 1st March 2019.