

Town Centre Events Programme - Interim Project Report

Assistant Director: Helen Rutter, Communities
Service Manager: Tim Cook, Area West Team Leader
Lead Officer: Dylan Martlew, Neighbourhood Development Officer (Economy)
Contact Details: dylan.martlew@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462695

Purpose of the Report

To inform members about the progress of the Town Centre Events Programme and the funding decisions at the end of the second and final call for applications.

Public Interest

The Town Centre Events Programme was allocated £4,500 ring-fenced from Christmas parking savings to fund new events and activities to stimulate footfall and participation in the town centres of Crewkerne, Chard and Ilminster. Applications were invited in two calls from 1/9/17 to 31/11/17 and from 1/1/18 to 28/2/18. Applications were assessed and offers made at the end of each call. This report informs Members of the results of the first and second call and progress to date.

Recommendation

That Members note the content of the report.

Background

The Town Centre Events Programme (TCEP) was requested by Area West Members, developed by the Area West Development team under Area Lead Zoe Harris and approved by Area West Committee in August 2017.

The programme was created to fund new events and activities to stimulate footfall and participation in the town centres of Crewkerne, Chard and Ilminster. It was allocated a budget of £4,500 ring-fenced from Christmas parking savings in the three towns. The process was based on the existing community grants process with the requirement for 50% match funding removed and funding decisions delegated to Area West Development officers.

Applications were invited in two calls from September to November 2017 and January to February 2018. Applications were assessed and offers made at the end of each call. This report informs Members of the results of the calls and progress to date.

Report

The First Call

The first call opened on the 1st of September 2017. By late October no applications had been received and in consultation with Val Keitch (Chairperson, Area West Committee) and Tim Cook (Area West Development Manager) it was agreed to extend the first call from 31/10/17 to 30/11/17.

Seven enquiries were received and after consultation with applicants six application forms and guidance notes were sent out.

By the end of November deadline three applications had been received and were assessed by AW Development Team officers as follows:

Event name	Family Christmas	Month of Saturdays	Crewkerne Charter Fair (Bartholomew's Fair)
Lead organisation	Chard Town Team	Chard Town Council	Crewkerne Rotary Club
	Family events Fri 22/12 & Sat 23/12 in Guildhall enabling parents to shop in town.	Celebration of creativity through four Saturdays in April 2018 with art and performances in shops.	Addition of street entertainment to established Crewkerne Charter Fair on 7 th & 8 th September 2018
Request	£282 of £340 (83%)	£1,500 of £1,650 (91%) plus £2,240 in-kind	£950 of £950 (100%) part of larger event
Officer assessment			
A Eligibility	Y	Y	Y
B Equalities Impact	2	3	3
C Aims of Project	4	5	4
D Capacity of Org'	5	4	4
E Financial need	4	4	5
F Innovation	3	3	2
Total	18	19	18
Recommendation	£282 *subject to provision of additional documentation. (83% of project 100% of request)	£1,000 (61% of project 67% of request)	£750 (79% of project 79% of request)

Offer letters were sent to the three applicants.

The first call committed £2,032 (45%) of the total programme allocation of £4,500 from the community grants revenue budget agreed by Area West Committee in August 2017.

The Second Call

The second call opened on the 1st of January and closed on the 28th of February 2018. By the end of February deadline two applications had been received and were assessed by AW Development Team officers as follows:

Event name	Creative Crewkerne Pom Pom Event	Crewkerne in Bloom
Lead organisation	A Better Crewkerne & District	Crewkerne Town Council
	Pom Pom launch day on 28 th April 2018, part of the larger week long Pom Pom event.	Collaborative provision of planters and hanging baskets to make Crewkerne more attractive and colourful.
Request	£1,477 of £1,477 (100%)	£1,175 of £1,825 (64%)
Officer assessment		
A Eligibility	Y	Y
B Equalities Impact	3	2
C Aims of Project	6	4
D Capacity of Org'	5	4
E Financial need	2	4

F Innovation	2	3
Total	18	17
Recommendation	£1329 (90% of project 90% of request)	£1,057 (58% of project 90% of request)

Offer letters were sent to the applicants.

The second call committed £2,386 (53%) of the total programme allocation of £4,500.

Progress to date

Two of the five events supported by the programme have been delivered and one is on hold due to staffing issues. One claim has been received.

Event name	Lead organisation	Date	Status
Family Christmas	Chard Town Team	22 & 23/12/17	Delivered, claim in progress.
Month of Saturdays	Chard Town Council	April 2018	On hold
Crewkerne Charter Fair (Bartholomew's Fair)	Crewkerne Rotary Club	7 th & 8 th Sept. 2018	Pending
Creative Crewkerne Pom Pom Event	A Better Crewkerne & District	28/4/18	Delivered
Crewkerne in Bloom	Crewkerne Town Council	Through 2018	Pending

Lessons learned

1. Developing, agreeing, promoting and administrating a new programme required additional time, effort and materials, resulting in higher overheads than the conventional community grants programme. The required officer time was redirected from other activity.
2. A greater promotional effort and a longer lead time may have produced more applications.
3. Funding events which were already successful was discouraged. Anecdotal feedback from one source commented that there were already enough events in their town.
4. Delegating decisions to officers with the £1,000 delegation threshold waived and no authorisation required, reduced normal checks and balances putting officers in a vulnerable position.
5. Officers attempted to balance funding between the three towns and between the two funding calls. This resulted in a variation in the percentages of awards granted.
6. The application process limited applicants to formally constituted groups with a bank account and the required policies in place. A broader base might have encouraged wider participation, for example from individuals, local businesses and smaller community groups.
7. The application process presented a large overhead to groups not familiar with the service. Likewise the overhead was disproportionate for smaller grants. A simpler, lighter process may have encouraged others to participate.
8. One event has been delayed and may not go ahead. While officers assess the viability of proposals it is in the nature of events that some will not go ahead. Funding allocated to these events will not be reallocated, at the expense of other proposals. There may be an argument for funding in smaller amounts to off-set this risk.

Financial Implications

The Town Centre Events Programme committed £4,418 (98%) of the total programme allocation of £4,500 from the community grants revenue budget agreed by Area West Committee in August 2017.

Council Plan Implications

The SSDC Council Plan 2016 – 2021 states:

Focus on economy: “We will work with businesses and use our assets to grow our economy.”
Focus on Heath and communities: “Support communities so that they can identify their needs and develop local solutions.”

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Rural communities are vulnerable to isolation from services & markets and face higher transport costs. This programme provides an opportunity to support locally important economic initiatives.

Privacy Impact Assessment

None directly arising from this report.

Background Papers

Report to Area West Committee ‘Town Centre Events Programme’ August 2017.
