



CABINET LEAD MEMBER DECISION MEETING

To: Councillor Taylor (For attention)

All other members of the Council
(For information)

You are requested to attend the Cabinet Lead Member Decision Meeting to be held in Committee Room 2 - Council Offices on Thursday, 3rd January 2019 at 5.00 pm for the following business.

Chief Executive

Southfields
Loughborough

17th December 2018

AGENDA

1. MEMBER GRANTS SCHEME

2 - 6

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD

CABINET LEAD MEMBER DECISION MEETING – 3RD JANUARY 2019

**Report of the Monitoring Officer
Lead Member: Councillor Taylor**

ITEM 1 MEMBER GRANTS SCHEME

The Decision

That the Lead Member for Communities, Safety and Wellbeing approve the following award under the Member Grants Scheme where the Ward Councillors have declared personal interests that might lead to bias:

1. That £250 be awarded to The Rectory Wildlife Garden in Loughborough, towards re-building the garden.
2. That £397 be awarded to the Thurmaston Action Group, towards improvements to a footpath in Watermead Country Park.

Reasons

1&2. To approve awards under the Member Grants Scheme where the relevant Ward Councillor has declared a personal interest that might lead to bias in connection to the organisation receiving the funding.

Other Options Considered and Rejected

None

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Decision-Maker

None

Dispensations

None

Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent

The Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board has been consulted and has agreed that these decisions be exempted from call-in, given their nature and low financial value. This is subject to review in the new financial year when the operation of the Grants Scheme will be reviewed.

Approved:

Date: 3rd January 2019

Cabinet Lead Member for Communities, Safety and Wellbeing

CABINET LEAD MEMBER DECISION MEETING – 3RD JANUARY 2019

Report of the Monitoring Officer Lead Member: Councillor Taylor

Part A

ITEM 1 MEMBER GRANTS SCHEME

Purpose of Report

To bring forward recommendations for an award under the Member Grants Scheme where the Ward Councillor has declared a personal interest that might lead to bias.

Recommendations

1. That £250 be awarded to The Rectory Wildlife Garden in Loughborough, towards re-building the garden.
2. That £397 be awarded to the Thurmaston Action Group, towards improvements to a footpath in Watermead Country Park.

Reasons

1&2. To approve awards under the Member Grants Scheme where the relevant Ward Councillor has declared a personal interest that might lead to bias in connection to the organisation receiving the funding.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Member Grants Scheme was approved by Cabinet at their meeting on 12th April 2018 (minute reference 116).

Under the scheme each Councillor is allocated £1,000 to fund local community projects within their ward.

Situations are now arising where Ward Councillors are considering awarding grants under the scheme to organisations they have a connection to, which under the provisions of the Member Code of Conduct may result in them having a 'personal interest which might lead to bias'.

The Member Conduct Committee considered this matter at their meeting on 17th September 2018, and were of the view that in cases where a Ward Councillor has a conflict of interest that the grant application should be referred to the Cabinet for decision.

The Leader of the Council on 2nd October 2018 allocated this Executive function to the Lead Member for Communities, Safety and Wellbeing.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board has been consulted and has agreed that these decisions be exempted from call-in, given their nature and low financial value.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

The grants can be funded from within existing identified budgets.

Risk Management

There are no specific risks associated with this decision.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Lead Member is being requested to make the final decision on the award of the grant in question because the Ward Councillors have declared personal interests that might lead to bias, and therefore the advice of the Monitoring Officer is that they should not be the final decision makers.

Key Decision:	No
Background Papers:	None
Officer to contact:	Adrian Ward Monitoring Officer (01509) 634573 adrian.ward@charnwood.gov.uk

Part B

Background

1. Cllr Christine Harris is a Ward Councillor representing Loughborough Lemyngton, and wishes to support the award of a grant towards re-building The Rectory Wildlife Garden. However, she has declared that she has recently been appointed as a trustee of the group. Therefore the Cabinet Lead Member is being requested to act as the final decision maker in respect of the award of the grant.
2. The Wildlife Garden is in the process of being completely re-planned and re-built after a hiatus which lasted a number of years whilst the rectory site was being developed, the ownership of the land has now been transferred to Charnwood Borough Council. The garden has been re-planned by a landscape architect and this is now being costed. Much of the work will be carried out by volunteers. The majority of the money to rebuild the garden is coming from Section 106 funds. When completed the garden will provide a wildlife haven adding to the publicly accessible green spaces in the town centre. It will be maintained by volunteers.
3. Cllr Brenda Seaton is a Ward Councillor representing Thurmaston, and wishes to support the award of a grant to Thurmaston Action Group for work to improve a footpath at Watermead Country Park. However, she has declared that she is the treasurer of the group. Therefore the Cabinet Lead Member is being requested to act as the final decision maker in respect of the award of the grant.
4. Watermead Regeneration Corridor Framework was drawn up in November 2016 for Charnwood Borough Council. The framework identified several linked regeneration themes one of which was 'connecting it all up' which focused on improving connections between the country park and surrounding communities and employment areas. The Bridle Way is the first public right of way in Thurmaston to Watermead Country Park. The path is maintained by Leicestershire County Council to the standard width for a bridle path but the 3 meter deep corridor running the 50m length of footpath is heavily populated with dead and dying self-set common limes. The limes are susceptible to fungal disease which in this case is causing root rot as well as being covered in ivy that is sucking the sap from the bark this makes the trunks very susceptible to collapse in high winds as well as being dragged down by the sheer weight of ivy clinging to the dead hollow trunks.
5. The path has been opened up to the right by two newly built warehouses but the unmanaged wooded area hangs over the path and often requires users of the path to manhandle a fallen trunk that is blocking the path adding to the chaotic mix of natural undergrowth, lager cans and vodka bottles. The path is used by cyclists for work as it joins with the Watermead Park's cycle path to the City and Birstall. It is also heavily used by leisure cyclists and walkers as well as a popular route for dog walkers.
6. The Grants Panel have also noted that the strip of land that the application relates to is not owned by anybody – however it is alongside a footpath belonging to Leicestershire County Council.

7. The Grants team is also awaiting a response from Cllr Mark Lowe as to whether he wishes to support the application or not with a further £1,000 of grant funding, and it is hoped that this will be confirmed by 21st December. If Cllr Lowe decides not to support the application, it is then questionable whether the project could go ahead, even if Cllr Seaton's amount was approved. A verbal update will be given to the Lead Member on 3rd January.