

Report To: Charity Committee

Date of Meeting: 11th December 2023

Report Title: Changes to the FST grant schemes for the year 24/25

Report By: Victoria Conheady, Director of Place, Deputy Chief Executive

Key Decision: Y

Classification: Urgent

Purpose of Report

The FST 5 year business plan for 2024 – 2029 is in development. One thematic which will be included in this business plan is that the charity wishes to expand its support to charitable activity, which in turn, supports tourism to the town.

As part of this there is a proposed 2 year expansion of the small and events grants to focus on existing, large and well established events. The purpose of this expansion is to foster sustainability of these key events which take part on some of the FST land and derive income to the trust via parking fees and support of FST assets.

Given the planning timelines for large events, a proportion of this budget is ringfenced for 3 large existing events. We also wish to announce this prior to the business plan being agreed for the 24/25 financial year.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That the charity committee delegate authority to the deputy chief executive, or her nominee, in consultation with the Chair of the Charity Committee and the protector to:**
 - To temporarily expand the budget for the events and small grants by £20,000, from April 2024
 - To expand the criteria/ add a separate section for established events to apply for funding to support the move towards reduction in grant aid
 - Undertake consultation with the Grant Advisory Panel (GAP) regarding the proposed criteria for this expansion
- 2. That the charity committee ring fence part of this expanded funding for 3 established events deemed to be able to meet the criteria – subject to appropriate robust consideration of application forms by the GAP. The events being : Jack in the Green, Old town carnival week and Hastings week.**
- 3. That a further open call is made during the 24/25 FY to support other established events which meet the criteria.**

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1. To enable swift development and delivery of this expanded section of the FST small and events grants.**

2. To enable proper consultation with the Grant Advisory Panel on all relevant matters regarding this proposed expansion:

Introduction

Charitable Objectives

1. The Hastings and St Leonards Foreshore Trust's charitable objectives focus on public benefit and state:
 - That the Foreshore is to be held for the benefit of Her Majesty's subjects and the public generally forever and such charitable purposes within the Borough of Hastings as the Trustee thinks fit.
 - Where the land is beach and beach alone, the objects are achieved by ensuring that the public have free and safe access to the Foreshore.
 - The 2011 Scheme included a new object to distribute surpluses as grants for charitable purposes within the Borough of Hastings.
 - The Trustee has a duty to ensure the Trust is run in line with those objectives. Additionally, the "Protector" is established to ensure this, and the postholder is entitled to see all documents and attend meetings.
2. However, maintaining land in proper condition has a cost and the Charity requires an income to meet its expenditure. The Hastings Borough Council Act 1988 varied the original Trust to permit certain uses on defined areas of the Trust's land. For example, paid parking was permissible at Rock-a-Nore Car Park and at Pelham Car Park and leisure facilities were permitted in the Stade area. These variations to the Trust's powers enabled the generation of income to meet the costs of maintaining the Foreshore. The uses permitted under the Act, however, are seen as complementary to the Trust's objects.
3. So far as is possible and subject to the uses permitted under the Act, the aim of the Trusts Objective is that the Foreshore should be accessible by all members of the public who wish to visit it, free of charge. At the same time, part of the Foreshore is a working beach and so health and safety considerations apply.
4. To ensure that public benefit is best achieved, and in line with the Scheme established by the Charities Commission, the Charity Committee consults with the Coastal Users' Group on proposals for the future of the Foreshore and specifications and standards of maintenance and with the Grant Advisory Panel on the grant criteria and grants processes.

Grant Advisory Panel

5. The object to distribute surpluses, after meeting the costs of administering the Charity and managing its assets, including the repair and insurance of its land and buildings, through grants for charitable purposes in the Borough, are subject to consultation with the Grant Advisory Panel. The 2011 Scheme provides that consultation is to take place concerning the grant criteria, grant processes and grant determinations.

Current FST Grant Schemes:

6. Large Grants Scheme 2021-2024:

This 3 years scheme is finishing in March 2024. A review into this scheme was undertaken during the summer and the findings reported at the September charity committee. Charity committee members are currently considering the findings of this review, and though the focus and timescale of the scheme may remain – the budget and a potential narrowing of focus is likely. The budget for this programme going forward will be identified in March 2024.

7. Current areas of focus are:

- a. Housing, legal, welfare and debt advice
 - b. Domestic violence support
 - c. Provision of advice and support to community organisations (voluntary sector infrastructure support)
 - d. Rough sleepers outreach support
 - e. Advice and support to migrant and newly settled communities.
8. As part of its Large Grants Programme (LGP) the Foreshore Trust allocated an additional £20,000 pa over 2 years related to the theme of Mental Health. Recipients of the LGP were asked to work together with a view to establish a project or initiative for funding from April 2022 – March 2024

A further report in March will outline the future of this grant scheme for 2024/2025 onwards.

9. Small and Event Grants

The programme offers awards of up to £6,000 for grants to support smaller voluntary and community groups in carrying out activities, services and events which benefit and support the local community within Hastings & St Leonards. There is normally a call for projects twice per year dependent on budget available.

10. Proposed temporary expansion of the Small and Events grants (SEG)

There is a wish from the charity a focus on supporting charitably activity which in turn supports tourism sector. It is proposed that this be included within the new 5 year business plan for the trust.

As part of this ambition, there is also a wish to support existing large events become more sustainable through a temporary expansion of the events elements of the small and event grants scheme.

11. This also recognises the fact that a number of established events are often recurrent applicants to the SEG scheme. This expansion will be for 2 years, and it is proposed a budget of £20,000p.a is identified for this scheme. (Budget will be finalised in March '24)

12. Though this has been brought as an urgent item the scheme won't officially launch until at least March 2024. This expanded element of the SEG will be titled 'established events grant – 'towards sustainability' '

The proposed draft criteria of this existing events – sustainability grant are as follows, though the below needs further consultation with the GAP before finalising:

- a. Fund existing events only, and those who have previously applied for FST small event grants.
- b. Applicants must be not for profit organisations, or volunteer community organisations.
- c. They must have significant 'reach' in terms of tourism footfall, as the highest weighted category, or a significant benefit to community cohesion as a second criteria.
- d. They must have been running for at least 8 years.
- e. Scheme will commence from April 2024 and finish March 2026, or within the 12 months of the last award being issued.
- f. Grant a minimum of £1,000 and a maximum of £5,000.
- g. The event needs to have some connection with the FST land or asset.
- h. They need to run the event in the Borough of Hastings.
- i. They need to be able to articulate their route to sustainability, or the reduction of reliance on grant aid, within 2 years. (it is noted that these events currently have a myriad of funders)
- j. High priority/weighting given to those events which are free to attendees.

13. Given the above criteria, the charity already identified 3 existing events applicable for funding in 24/25 and 25/26– subject to clause i, which we would need the GAP to consider and make recommendations on. These are:

- i. Jack in the Green
- ii. Hastings Old Town Carnival
- iii. Hastings Week

14. It is expected that the total allocation for these three grants will be approx. £8,000 but it will depend on their application, funding request, and their narrative for category (i) (sustainability/ reduction of reliance on grant aid).

15. It is important to note that though 3 events have been identified as suitable for this expanded section of the small and events grants, the GAP will conduct its robust appraisal of these applications. Applications will need to reach a certain standard and address the above criteria before recommended by the GAP for funding.

16. Consultation with the Grant Advisory Panel (GAP)

The development of this expansion has been fast in nature, however the chair of the FST charity committee, the protector and senior officers have met with the chair of the grant advisory panel to discuss the proposal.

17. Queries and clarification questions have also been received by the other members of the GAP

18. The GAP chair is happy to work with officers of the FST in further developing this new element of the small and events grants and the revised application forms and process which will need to be adopted.

Timetable of Next Steps

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
GAP consultation	Completed - agreement on application forms etc.	31 st January 2024	Charity Committee chair, Protector, Lead officers and GAP chair.
Call for ringfenced applications		Late January early February 2024	HBC/FST
Receive & determine early ring fenced bids		February 2024	FST/HBC/GAP
Confirmation of award to ringfenced bids		March 2024 charity committee	Charity Committee
Launch of wider schemes		This will co-inside with the normal schedule of calls for the small and events grants	

Wards Affected

All

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y/
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N
Risk Management	Y
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	Y
Economic/Financial Implications	Y/
Human Rights Act	N
Organisational Consequences	Y
Local People's Views	Y
Anti-Poverty	Y
Legal	Y

Additional Information

none

Officer to Contact

Officer Victoria Conheady
Email vconheady@hastings.gov.uk
01424 451796