

Title: Rural/Urban Capital Improvement Scheme (RUCIS) Criteria and Process Changes

Lead Officer: Jon Dawson (01926 456204)

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Richard Hales

Wards of the District directly affected: All

Summary

This report aims to seek Cabinet agreement to a delegated authority to determine all future Rural / Urban Capital Improvement Scheme (RUCIS) applications and a reduction in the overall maximum contribution.

Recommendation(s)

- (1) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Head of Finance to determine all future applications for grant funding in line with the RUCIS Grants Scheme Criteria, subject to prior consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and that the Council be asked to update the Officer Scheme of Delegation accordingly.
- (2) That Cabinet agrees to a reduction in the overall maximum contribution amount from £30,000 to £20,000, for applications received from 1st April 2022 onwards, details as follows:

“Small Grant Scheme” – projects with a total cost of up to £10,000 with a maximum contribution of up to 90% (providing the ‘Environmentally sensitive’ aim is met) of the overall project costs (maximum of £9,000)

“Main Grant Scheme” – projects with total costs of more than £10,000 with a maximum contribution of 60% (providing the ‘Environmentally sensitive’ aim is met) of the overall project costs (capped at a maximum of £20,000)

If projects don’t meet the ‘Environmentally sensitive’ aim the maximum contribution will be reduced to;

“Small Grant Scheme” – 80% (maximum £8,000)

“Main Grant Scheme” – 50% (maximum £20,000)

1 Background/Information

- 1.1 Historically, a RUCIS grant award is decided by Cabinet once the RUCIS Grant Scheme manager has evidenced that an application has met all the scheme criteria and has completed a recommendation report.

There has never been an occasion whereby an application that has met all the scheme criteria has been declined by Cabinet; there is no reason why an

application should be declined if sufficient evidence has been provided to show that it meets all the criteria, it therefore makes sense to implement an Officer Scheme of Delegation to make the decision making process more efficient and responsive whilst also saving Members time.

- 1.2 Historically, the annual RUCIS budget has been £150,000, however, for this financial year it was reduced to £100,000 and is planned to remain at this level for the forthcoming years.

Initially the maximum contribution amount to projects was £50,000, however, a scheme review reduced this to £30,000 from April 2014. This reduction was to enable the scheme to help as many community organisations as possible within each financial year; by reducing the maximum amount to £30,000 as a minimum, the number of projects that the scheme could contribute towards increased from 3 to 5 per annum.

With this years annual budget reduction, the minimum number of projects that the scheme can contribute towards has now decreased from 5 to 4 per annum.

An analysis of the sheme has been completed (excluding 2020/21 when the scheme was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic), highlights include:

2013/14 to 2019/21 (Time period of an annual £150,000 budget and pre-pandemic);

- Lowest number of grants completed = 9
- Highest number of grants completed = 11
- An average of 10 grants per financial year
- Average amount of £144,078 awarded per financial year
- Average of three £20,000+ grants per year
- Average of five less than £10,000 grants per year

2021/22

- 6 grants completed; scheme then closed for review and also insufficient funding remaining available (only £2,308 remaining with a pending application of £27,000 unable to progress)

In order to continue to help as many community groups as possible it is therefore recommended that the maximum contribution amount is reduced from £30,000 to £20,000 so that once again the scheme can contribute to a minimum of 5 projects a year although working off the averages noted above this is likely to be around 8 projects a year.

2 Alternative Options available to Cabinet

- 2.1 Members may choose to make no changes; this would continue a time consuming decision making process and potentially risk less community projects being supported each year due to the reduced annual budget.
- 2.2 Members could decide an alternative amount in which to reduce the value of the maximum contribution; this may potentially impact on the number of community projects that can be supported and/or may prevent projects from being completed.

3 Consultation and Member's comments

- 3.1 Include any comments received in response to the consultation on the report.

4 Implications of the proposal

4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications

4.1.1 There are no legal rights implications for the proposals.

4.1.2 There are no human rights implications for the proposals.

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 The annual budget for Rural/Urban Capital Improvement Scheme applications is £100,000.

4.3 Council Plan

4.3.1 Warwick District Council's Fit for the Future (FFF):

People - Health, Homes, Communities; all RUCIS applications are designed to encourage and support local communities and local not-for-profit organisations in developing cohesive and active communities.

Services – Green, Clean, Safe; through the delivery of RUCIS grants the aim is to deliver cohesive and active communities which in turn help to support and maintain lower levels of crime and ASB.

4.4 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

4.4.1 There are no environmental implications for the proposals.

4.5 Analysis of the effects on Equality

4.5.1 Impact Assessments; there are no new or significant policy changes proposed in respect of Equalities

4.6 Data Protection

4.6.1 There are no data protection implications for the proposals.

4.7 Health and Wellbeing

4.7.1 RUCIS projects support a combination of potential reductions in anti-social behaviour, obesity and social isolation.

5 Risk Assessment

5.1 There are no risks for this proposal.

6 Conclusion/Reasons for the Recommendation

6.1 To maintain a 'robust' scheme periodic reviews should be undertaken to ensure that the scheme criteria remains relevant and suitable.

6.2 Implementing an Officer Scheme of Delegation will make the decision making process more efficient and responsive whilst also saving Members time.

6.3 Reducing the overall maximum contribution amount will help to ensure that the reduced annual budget continues to support as many community projects as possible with the funds that are available.

Background papers:

None

Supporting documents:

Appendix 1 – RUCIS Award Analysis 2013/14 to 2021/22

Report Information Sheet

Please complete and submit to Democratic Services with draft report

Committee/Date	10 th February 2022	
Title of report	Rural/Urban Capital Improvement Scheme (RUCIS) Criteria and Process Changes	
Consultations undertaken		
Consultee *required	Date	Details of consultation /comments received
Ward Member(s)	N/A	Not applicable
Portfolio Holder WDC & SDC *	10.1.22	Cllr Hales - support
Financial Services *	17.12.21	Richard Wilson – no comments
Legal Services *	10.1.22	Phil Grafton – no comments
Other Services	N/A	Not applicable
Chief Executive(s)	17.12.21	Chris Elliott – support
Head of Service(s)	17.12.21	David Platts – no comments
Section 151 Officer	17.12.21	Mike Snow – no comments
Monitoring Officer	10.1.22	Phil Grafton – no comments
CMT (WDC)	18.1.22	Chris Elliott, Andy Jones, Dave Barber, Tony Perks - support
Leadership Co-ordination Group (WDC)	24.1.22	Support
Other organisations	N/A	Not applicable
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Ctte/Council?		Recommendation Cabinet Committee
Contrary to Policy/Budget framework		No
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?		No
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?		Yes – Forward Plan Item 1267
Accessibility Checked?		File/Info/Inspect Document/Check Accessibility