Proposed Process for Assessing and Allocating Funding Applications to Tavistock Town Council – as submitted by Councillor P Palfrey

Aim

To create an appraisal system for grant applications that;

- is transparent, unambiguous and consistent in application
- is straightforward for applicants to understand what criteria is required and how the decision process is made
- is of benefit to Tavistock residents, businesses and visitors as a whole
- welcomes new initiatives from applicants
- welcomes applications from "new" applicants
- acts as a start-up grant to enable projects to establish themselves
- reduces the amount of "roll over" projects
- considers any knock-on effects and hidden consequences if funds are/are not granted
- has a robust monitoring system in place

Any assessment process inevitably includes some element of emotional bias when considering applications. This proposal aims to level out some of that bias. It also aims to provide a process which is more robust to scrutiny and is more equitable to all applicants

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Method

The grant body uses a scoring grid which awards a cumulative score to place applications in an order of priority. (Similar to a Risk Analysis process.)

These scores would be based on three broad criteria;

- repetition of grant applications from single organisations (**Time**)
- benefit to the community (**Value**)
- severity of failure to grant an applicant any funds. (**Risk**)

This has seven main benefits;

1. Reduces the likelihood of repetitive applications from organisations year after year.
2. Reduces applications for the same project year on year.
3. Places emphasis on new applications, promoting innovation.
4. Encourages submission from organisations that have not previously applied.

5. Use the same criteria to assess all applications.
6. Considers other factors. e.g. would other organisations need to make up any shortfall if an application were unsuccessful and at greater cost to them or others?
7. Applications are not penalised for being numerically at the end of the list. (A risk at present if there are several applications.)

Process

Each application would be assessed and receive a score of between 20 and 0 from each member of the grant body. (This individual scoring could be done prior to the grant body meeting.)

At the grant body meeting individual scores would then be combined to make a final overall score from all grant body members. e.g. If there are 5 grant body members, each application would receive a score between 100 and 0 (5 x 20 – 0)

The applications, in the order as determined above, would then be further considered to assess which ones would be successful, considering the highest scored application first.

NB There could also be a gateway score requirement for applications. For example, applications failing to reach a target figure, of say 50% of the maximum score, would not be further considered at the grant body meeting.

Scoring Criteria and Values

Time – Using a scale of 5 - 0 a value is given to the number of times an organisation and/or project has previously applied for grant funding. The highest appropriate value from this category is applied to each application.

5= **New Organisation** (to the fund) with **new project** applying for grant.

4 = **Existing Organisation** (to the fund) submits a new project (not seen to be linked to previously submitted projects.)

3 = **Existing Organisation** (to the fund) has applied for grants *without success* (can be for different projects) in 4 of the previous 5 years.

2 = **Existing Project** (to the fund) has been used to apply for grants in 4 of the previous 5 years (either successfully or otherwise.)

1= **Existing Organisation** (to the fund) has been *successful* for 3 or more consecutive years in the previous 5.

0 = **Existing Project** (to the fund) has *successfully* received a grant for 3 or more consecutive years in the previous 5.

Value – Using a scale of 5 - 0 to assess the impact a project would have on the community.

5 = **Significant benefit** to residents, businesses and visitors to Tavistock as a whole.

4 = **Medium benefit** to residents, businesses and visitors to Tavistock as a whole.

3 = **Limited benefit** to residents, businesses and visitors to Tavistock. e.g. A benefit to businesses and visitors, but not to residents.

2 = **Little benefit** to residents, businesses and visitors to Tavistock as a whole.

1 = **Targeted benefit** to the applying organisation. e.g. A benefit only to the organisation's members and of no benefit to the community as a whole.

0 = **No benefit** to any sector at all.

Risk – Using a scale of 10 - 0 the impact of refusing grant would be considered. As the risk of refusing a grant could have wider implications the scoring scale reflects this.

10 = **Severe risk** to refuse grant. e.g. Refusal would have substantial detrimental impact to the community as a whole. There would be an increased burden on other organisations to provide the same project/offering and it would be likely to have greater cost.

8 = **High risk** to refuse grant. e.g. The project/offering could be supplied by another organisation with some cost implication to them.

4 = **Medium risk** to refuse grant. e.g. Project/offering could still be supplied by applicant organisation but would have some detriment to what is offered by them and with some cost implication to them.

2 = **Slight risk** to refuse grant. e.g. The application is refused. However, another organisation could supply/already supply the project/offering with little or no additional cost to them.

1 = **Low risk** to refuse grant. e.g. Project/offering could still be supplied by applicant organisation without detriment to what is offered by them or at any additional cost.

0 = **No risk** to refuse grant. e.g. Refusal would have little or no impact to the community or applicant organisation if project/offering not supported or delivered.

Monitoring and Limitations

Every successful project and organisation is allocated funds from Tavistock Town Council (TTC.) TTC has a responsibility to the residents and businesses of the town to use precept and other income in the best way possible.

To satisfy financial scrutiny and to restrict the funding programme exceeding budget, monitoring and limitation criteria are included. These criteria need to be met by successful applicants and can be considered to form part of the conditions of acceptance by the applicants for funding from TTC.

These criteria are;

- The individual funds awarded for each project by TTC is considered the maximum sum that may be allocated to that project.
- Any under spent funds will remain with TTC.
- TTC reserve the right to cease funding projects, both active and future.
- The project must be completed within an agreed timescale as determined by the application submitted
- The applicant is required to submit proof for any goods or services purchased in relation to the project prior to funds being released by TTC. (This may be in stages i.e. an initial deposit is required etc.)
- Proof of other expenditure must be evidenced by the successful applicant.
- TTC may ask for progress reports or reviews of project spend.
- A summary report is available to TTC at completion of the project.
- TTC will, if there are sufficient funds and feels it is appropriate, use non-allocated/under spent finances to support further projects. (This could be by revisiting previously unsuccessful submitted applications from the current year or by inviting new applications.)

Considerations

Even if an application achieves the highest score of all those submitted, it does not mean it would automatically receive funds.

There is no obligation for the grant body to allocate any funding if it considers applications submitted do not fulfil the criteria/aims of the fund.

It would still be possible to deny all applications if they were judged as having no overall benefit.

It would still be possible to fund "roll-over" projects.