

Joint Report of the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive

USE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S URGENCY POWERS FOR A CAPITAL GRANT AID REQUEST FROM THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION (BEESTON) SOCIAL CLUB1. Purpose of report

The report informs the Committee of the use of the Chief Executive's urgency powers since the last meeting, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

2. Grant Aid Application

An application for capital funding has been received from The Royal British Legion (Beeston) Social Club. This has been considered in accordance with the provisions of the Council's grant aid policy.

The club, which is based at Haigh House on Hall Croft in Beeston, is refurbishing its premises in advance of a planned re-opening in June 2021 when it is hoped that the pandemic restrictions relating to social distancing will be lifted. The club needs to bring the premises up to current fire safety standards to make it safe for community use.

The Royal British Legion (Beeston) Social Club has requested grant aid of up to £8,645 towards the full cost of necessary fire safety works at its premises. The total cost of the fire safety and additional electrical works is around £16,000. Further details of the application are included in the appendix.

With the agreement of the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and the Chair of this Committee, and in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive, the Council has agreed to award a grant of up to £8,645 towards the cost of fire safety works.

3. Financial Position

No budgetary provision exists for capital grants to voluntary organisations. The award of grant will be funded from the 2021/22 Capital Contingencies of which £28,250 remains available.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the exercise of the Chief Executive's urgency powers in awarding grant aid of up to £8,645 to The Royal British Legion (Beeston) Social Club to be funded from Capital Contingencies 2021/22.

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX**ROYAL BRITISH LEGION (BEESTON) SOCIAL CLUB**

A request for capital funding has been received from The Royal British Legion (Beeston) Social Club towards necessary refurbishment works at its premises in advance of a planned re-opening in June 2021.

The Royal British Legion (RBL) was formed in the aftermath of the First World War when four organisations came together to fight the injustices faced by those returning home after service and became the British Legion in 1921. From the beginning, it campaigned for fair treatment of those who had given so much for their country and provided much needed welfare support and comradeship. In its centenary year, the RBL continues to respond to the changing needs of the Armed Forces community, providing small interventions to life-changing and sometimes lifesaving support.

The Royal British Legion (Beeston) Social Club was formed in 1949 and is located at Haigh House on Hall Croft in Beeston. The Beeston Club is a not for profit registered society, which provides a social, community and entertainment venue and activities for residents of Beeston, Chilwell, Toton and the surrounding areas. Activities include fundraising for good causes, support for veterans' groups, support for the local RBL Branch, and a venue for events e.g. Oxjam. Before the pandemic lockdown, around 300 to 400 people would attend the venue on a monthly basis depending on range of activities and entertainment.

The RBL national membership fees are not shared with the local clubs, although there is an option to join the Beeston Club for a nominal £1 (around 140 local members before the lockdown). The Club is open to non-members and guests.

The Beeston Club is currently refurbishing its premises in advance of a planned re-opening in June 2021 when, hopefully, the pandemic restrictions relating to social distancing will be lifted. It needs to bring the premises' systems up to current fire safety standards as advised by the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. Improving the fire safety of the building to current standards will make it safe for community use.

The Beeston Club has requested a capital grant of up to £8,645 to enable it to complete this work. This will include the supply and fitting of an emergency lighting system to meet current fire safety requirements; the supply and fitting of a fire alarm system comprising fire alarm panel, smoke detectors and alarm to meet current fire safety standards; and the fitting of radiators to extend year-round use of the whole building. The total cost of these works are quoted at £8,645. The Club also has to fund a planned additional scheme for electrical safety at a cost of £7,310. The Beeston Club does not have sufficient funding or reserves to meet these costs and has indicated that it is at real risk of not being a going concern.

The Beeston Club has earmarked some of the Covid-19 related grant funding towards the refurbishment scheme in time for its planned re-opening in June 2021. No other funding applications have been made at this point.

The premises are leased from The Royal British Legion – Regional Office Property Management on an ‘open-ended’ lease agreement.

The Royal British Legion (Beeston) Social Club has provided its accounts for the year ended 30 September 2020 for scrutiny. Turnover amounted to £33,421 (down from £60,731 in 2019) with other operating income of £10,000 relating to government grants. Total expenditure for the year was totalled £38,144 (£64,534 in 2019) which mainly related to cost of sales (£11,511) and other administrative expenses, including wages and salaries (£8,837 for three employees, down from £17,314 and an average of 10 staff), repairs and renewals, premises expenses, utilities, rent and rates and other operating costs. The profit before taxation was £5,277. The cash at bank and in hand as at 30 September 2020 was £9,787.

This is the first application that the Council has received from The Royal British Legion (Beeston) Social Club and for 2021/22 grant aid of up to £8,645 has been requested towards the full cost of necessary fire safety works at its premises (the total costs of fire safety and electrical works is around £16,000).

Given the nature of this scheme, any approved grant would normally be given on the basis of 25% of the actual costs incurred (given that it relates to a non-Council owned asset) with a maximum figure specified in appropriate circumstances.

With the agreement of the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and the Chair of this Committee, and in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive, the Council has agreed to award a grant of up to £8,645 towards the cost of fire safety works. This equates to around 54% of the necessary safety works required (fire and electrical) to re-open the premises.

No budgetary provision exists for capital grants to voluntary organisations. The award of grant will be funded from the 2021/22 Capital Contingencies of which £28,250 remains available.