ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 9th MARCH 2021
Agenda item 10 - Community Services Grant Scoring spreadsheet

Introduction

As promised at earlier meetings of the Community Services Committee, I am presenting a short report on the proposed method of scoring each grant application on a spreadsheet.

I have now incorporated some suggested changes from Cllr Andrew Coveney, and scored some sample grant applications provided by Louise Brown. The approach was inspired by the methods adopted by the Vale of White Horse District Council in their scoring of grant applications going to their Area Committees.

Sample Scoring

The table below gives a summary of a selection of grants run through the scoring spreadsheet. Note that this was only a rough "run through" of the applications and clearly not intended to be a full appraisal of their merits. A raw score in this table should not be seen as showing approval or disapproval of any individual project or type of applications

Organisation	Grant	Score	% Score	Score to cost
ACS Heritage days	£1,000.00	17	61%	1.7
Citizens Advice	£5,000.00	22	79%	0.44
Cleanslate	£500.00	14	50%	2.8
Damascus	£5,000.00	23	82%	0.46
Home Start	£1,000.00	18	64%	1.8
Scouts	£2,000.00	22	79%	1.1

A new feature of the spreadsheet is the "score to cost" column – which shows how effective the funding is in meeting our objectives. The lower score in this column, the more effective the project will be to meeting our published aims.

In this way, the Heritage Days and Cleanslate applications scored poorly as there were key areas that they didn't address, but Damascus and CAB did well as they hit several areas.

Promoting improvement and good practice

A major advantage of this tool is that it promotes good practice amongst the organisations which we support. If we tell them that their applications would score more highly if they reported back to us regularly, or considered their impact on Climate Change, I would anticipate future grant applications to show those things.

Not a complete solution

I am not proposing that this tool should detract from the committee's deliberations. It should instead be a tool to inform them, and could be used to justify our decisions. For example, it could be used to rank applications, or we could decide that applications with a score over 1.5 would not receive their request in full. But if all the applications that we receive score over 1.5 we could award money in proportion to how close they came to a lower score. And, of course, we would still have the discretion to override the scoring tool for exceptional projects.

Future-proofing

One beauty of this tool is that it is easy to slot in new criteria to fit with changing aims of the Council.

Acknowledgements

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Louise Brown – for sample applications
Vale of White Horse District Council officers – for the original concept

Andy Foulsham
4th March 2021