

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday 26 June 2019

Present:

Councillor Vizard (Chair)
Councillors Begley, Moore, J, Oliver, Pattison, Pierce and Quance, I

Apologies:

Councillors Wardle and Foggin

Also present:

Director (JY), Active & Healthy People Programme Lead and Democratic Services Officer

In Attendance:

Councillor Phil Bialyk - Leader
Councillor Amal Ghusain - Portfolio Holder for Equalities, Diversity and Communities

23

APOLOGIES

These were received from Councillors Foggin and Wardle.

24

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

25

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 19

None.

26

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 20

None.

27

COMMUNITY AND ARTS GRANTS REVIEW

The Portfolio Holder for Equalities, Diversity and Communities introduced the report which described the public consultation on the proposed Exeter Grants Programme, highlighting feedback themes and proposing a revised Grants Programme to replace the current core, rent, city and grass roots grants. The report included:-

- The proposed Exeter Grants Programme;
- The report of the consultant - Red Quadrant;
- Equalities Impact Assessment : Exeter Community Grants Programme;
- Equality Impact Assessment - Exeter Community Grants Programme Transition Impacts on previous grant receiving organisations; and
- Summary of Issues Resulting from the transition from the Old to New Grants Programme.

The Director spoke to the presentation setting out the process for modernising the community and arts grants programmes following the commissioning of Red Quadrant to undertake a review and listening exercise in 2018 and further consultation in March 2019 with community groups and organisations on the draft proposals. A strong consensus had emerged for a single city fund and the Director explained the proposed framework, governance, priorities and timetable for implementation. The presentation, attached to these minutes, detailed the proposed breakdown of the total Community Grant Programme of £1,065,000 into the following five grant categories:

- Exeter Ward Grants;
- Exeter Community Buildings Fund;
- Exeter Small Grants Fund;
- Exeter Large Grants Fund; and
- Exeter Move More Small Grants.

The Grants Programme would be resourced by the Neighbourhood Proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the New Homes Bonus and funds other than the General Fund.

An Independent Information, Advice and Advocacy Service would be created to help and advice residents with a particular focus on increased digital inclusion and an Exeter Voluntary and Community Sector Support Service would be established to provide practical support and training. It would have a key monitoring role in the grant giving process to ensure that application processes are simple and easy to access and encouragement given to underrepresented groups. Crowdfunding and digital platforms would help engender collaboration and new models of delivery. Tender bids would be invited for this process.

The Director further explained that an Exeter Grants Panel, membership to reflect the political make-up of the Council and with two community representatives and advisors would be established, responsible for strategic direction and ensuring that grant awards are made in line with the framework. In addition, a one-off start-up budget of £30,000 would be necessary to commence the initial processes including the commissioning of a simple to use website.

The Leader endorsed the transition to a new grant making process, highlighting the six priorities of:

- address inequalities;
- improve health and wellbeing;
- get people active;
- support communities working together to address local needs;
- encourage volunteering; and
- improve where we live.

He referred to the City Council's commitment to maintaining a robust grant giving programme for Exeter of over £1million. He also reported that the remaining Exeter Town and Parish Council Grant of £89,367, originally a joint funding initiative with the County Council, had been passed to Exeter City Council, and would be spent to aid the transition arrangements to the new grants programme. One-off grants to help support core running costs would be allocated to Ex Access and Devon Rape Crisis, both organisations providing services to vulnerable groups with protected characteristics under the Disability Discrimination Act (2010).

In addition, £25,000 would establish an additional Young Persons Small Grant Fund to be launched alongside the Exeter Grants programme to support grass roots projects generated by young people and £24,369 would be held in reserve to cover any particular unidentified emergency need that could emerge in 2019/20 from a group or organisation.

The Leader, Portfolio Holder and Director responded to Members' queries.

The start off budget of £30,000 was to assist initial mobilisation, in particular the creation of a website, a decision yet to be taken on the means of delivery. In the spirit of seeking to encourage community and voluntary participation in the new process, some assistance with expenses could be given to the community representatives on the panel whose independent contribution as specialists would be of great value. To proceed quickly with mobilisation, it was not considered appropriate for governance arrangements to be reviewed by Scrutiny Committee, the Leader undertaking to ensure that the Panel did engage Scrutiny Chairs as appropriate. He referred also to the monitoring role of the Exeter Voluntary and Community Sector Support Service which would also be facilitating an annual community conference where issues could be raised and to the annual Panel report on the programme. The Panel would also undertake any necessary adjustments during the year should these be necessary.

The Leader and Director clarified the match funding proposals within the different grant categories confirming that the term was not prescriptive and that the use of specific resources rather than actual funds would also be acceptable, as appropriate. The Director stated that sustainable support could embrace many alternative sources and funding packages, including, for example, crowdfunding. She also highlighted that the strategic city fund was a first step to securing additional investment through external partners and funders who could be seeking to offer added value and leverage for their own funds where sought by communities. A flexible approach would be necessary and this would apply also to very new organisations who would seek some guarantee of Council funding to kick start their plans as well as more established groups who would look to a recognised funder in the first instance in order to build momentum for their projects. The Leader assured Members that these and other issues would be kept under review as the programme progressed.

For ward grants, for which £65,000 had been identified, the "sub-committee" determining bids would be the three respective ward Councillors. Community buy in to the bids was important and Members asked for guidance to be provided on the governance of this aspect of the grants programme.

People Scrutiny Committee noted and unanimously supported the revised Exeter Grants Programme in the light of feedback from the comprehensive public consultation process and the amendments made to the original proposals noting the actions taken to support organisations in the transition from the old to the new system and requested Executive to:-

- (1) support the report and recommend Council adopt the proposed Exeter Grants Programme and allocate a start-up budget of £30,000 from the New Homes Bonus Local Community Reserve to mobilise the new Exeter Grant Programme;
- (2) support the report and recommend Council approve the creation of the Exeter City Fund from the sources described and notes that the extensive listening and consultation process had enabled the Council to seek views on

spending priorities with regard to the Neighbourhood Portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy in line with CIL Regulations 2010 (Regulation 59F) and the underpinning Planning Practice Guidance (PPG Paragraph 73); and

- (3) recommend Council approve the establishment of the Exeter Grants panel to provide strategic oversight and leadership of the Exeter Grants Programme.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.35 pm)

Chair



Exeter
City Council



Exeter Community Grants Programme 2019

- April 2018: Council identified the need to review and modernise its grant giving: built over a number a years: whilst well intentioned but unsustainable & inequitable.
- Oct 2018: Independent listening exercise report published
- Feb 2019: Interim arrangements 2019/20 following the new budget also £260k ring-fenced for local Arts Council National Portfolio Orgs
- March 2019: formal proposals published & further independent consulation process
- June 2019: Final Draft Exeter Grants Programme now under consideration

- Overall approach and principles
- Priorities
- Openness and transparency
- Contracts for more strategic service requirements
- Support for Information and advice and Infrastructure Support Services
- Single city fund
- An approach that maximises the value of the Council's spending and ensures the sustainability of community groups
- Councillor Ward Grants
- the Council's 'bottom up : ABCD' approach to community development *Wellbeing Exeter* and *Community Builders*

- Ability of everyone to benefit from the proposed use of digital platforms
- Ability of some groups and projects to be able to raise match funding
- Some commentators felt that the proposed maximum limit on the large grants fund of £30,000 could mean that some larger community projects may be disadvantaged
- How arts and cultural projects will be supported in addition to the ring fenced funding for the Arts Council National Portfolio Orgs
- Importance of measuring impacts, sharing learning and improving communication
- Decision making and governance, in particular the need for transparency, openness and improved communications

1. Establishment of a grant funding approach that will maximise the value of the council's spending and ensure the sustainability of community groups.
2. A balance of awarding grants with contracts for more strategic services.
3. A clear 'bottom up' approach to community development: Asset Based Community Development.
4. Good governance that recognises the specific accountability of elected members but enables the Council and community to decide on priorities together.





Exeter Grants Programme will support *communities* to use their passion, skills, experience and knowledge on:

- Helping people to help themselves and each other
- Building on the strengths of people and communities
- Connecting people and organisations within and across communities

- Reducing disadvantage and inequality
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Increasing individual and community resilience (the ability to manage)

Key priorities

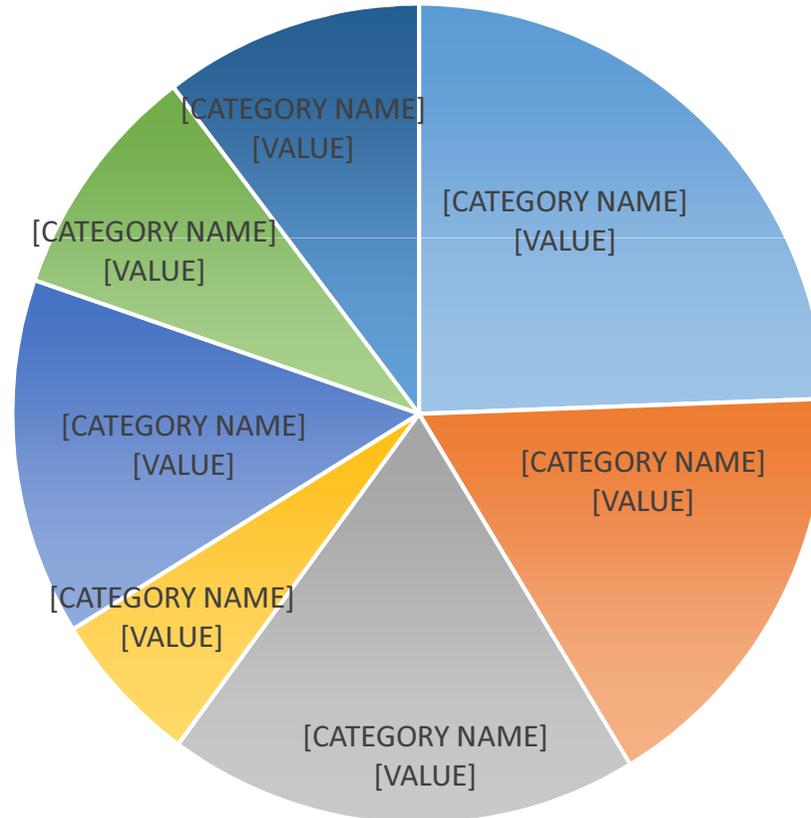
1. Address inequalities
2. Improve health and wellbeing
3. Get people active
4. Support communities working together to address local needs
5. Encourage volunteering
6. Improve where we live



Community Grant Programme £1,065,000 per year

£265,000
New Homes
Bonus

£800,000
Neighbourhood
CIL



	Fund	Max	Duration	Match	Purpose
Exeter Ward Grants	£65,000	£500	1 year	✗	Community projects/events
Exeter Community Buildings Fund	£150,000	£5,000	3 years	✓	50% Running Costs
Exeter Small Grants Fund*	£100,000	3,000	1 year	✓	20% Community projects/events/equipment
Exeter Large Grants Fund	£110,000	30,000	1 year	✓	50% Community projects/building refurb
Exeter Move More Small Grants	£55,000	£300	1 year	✗	Community projects/events/kit etc.

Match funding % can be reduced by the Grants Panel for projects within the top 20 LSOA's

** Match can be volunteering hours*

Independent Information, Advice and Advocacy Service

Address the demands of development by increasing access to good quality information and advice service for residents.

A particular focus on increased digital inclusion for people whose circumstances make it difficult for them to access services and the opportunities they could benefit from.

Exeter Voluntary and Community Sector Support Service

To build capacity to develop a sustainable community and voluntary sector.

A particular focus on supporting groups to use their skills, local knowledge and expertise to improve things for everyone in the city: individuals as well as geographic communities and communities of interest.

Exeter Grants Panel

Responsible for strategic direction & ensuring that grant awards are made in line with the framework

Chair (Portfolio for Communities)

Accountable for ensuring decisions & recommendations are fair & transparent & that the underpinning system & processes are proportionate to the funding required but that they also recognise the accountability of elected members.

Membership

Panel membership will reflect the political make-up of the Council & will include community representatives and advisers

New Exeter Community Programme Website

Criteria for grants will be set annually and an annual report will be published setting out:

- Impacts from previous year's grants programmes
- Recommended priorities for the forthcoming year's programme.
- Proposed budgets for the forthcoming year's programme.
- Membership of Community Grants Panel for the forthcoming year.

Contracts Awarded for Commissioned Services	August 2019
Inaugural Exeter Grant Panel Terms of Reference & Operating Policy & Procedures agreed & published	September 2019
Voluntary & Community Sector Support Service mobilised	October 2019
Exeter Grant Programme Website and City Fund Launch	November 2019
Exeter City Fund First Awards	December 2019

