



Exeter Community Strategy
Grants Panel Terms of Reference

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Contents

1 . Background	1
2 . Grants panel composition.....	1
2.1 Transparency and Accountability.....	1
2.2 Grants panel meetings.....	2
3 . Grant-making process and timetable	2
3.1 Direct grants.....	2
4.. Eligibility criteria.....	2
5. Priorities: As identified by participants in community events.....	3

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1 . Background

The Exeter Community Strategy will underpin community-led development in the city for ten years from 2016. It will provide a way for the communities to take the lead, build their capacity to own and manage assets, work with partners, and fund and deliver initiatives and services. It is based on a statement of principles of community-led development to which partners are invited to sign up, and will embody openness and accountability in all its activities.

The strategy includes an action plan for the first three years, from April 2016 to March 2019. The action plan will be delivered through the three programmes, all of which will receive funding from Exeter's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Some programmes will receive additional funding from other sources. The programmes are:

1. Supporting community plans. This will be delivered by appointing one or more community plan support officers.
2. Supporting community action. This will be delivered by:
 - (a) Community organising, by appointing one or more community organisers,
 - (b) Community initiatives, through direct grants, or web-based fundraising. This can be capital or revenue funding.
3. Community collaboration, delivered through direct grants. (see note i)

The Exeter Community Strategy grants panel will make all funding recommendations regarding direct grants in programmes 2.b. and 3. Its recommendations will be subject to ratification by Exeter City Council where CIL or other council-disbursed funds are involved.

2 . Grants panel composition

Invited to sit for 1 year, the grants panel will be composed of the following members:

1. The Exeter Community Forum chairperson or nominated substitute (Voting member)
2. Up to four other community representatives drawn from different organisations which are full members of Exeter Community Forum. (To be drawn from different organisations and geographic areas of the city.) (Voting members)
3. The Exeter City Council portfolio-holder for Communities and Neighbourhoods. (Voting member)
4. The Exeter City Council Community Involvement and Inclusion Officer or nominated substitute (non-voting member)
5. Work towards a member of the Exeter Community Youth Forum to attend panel meetings and have voting rights. (see note ii)

2.1 Transparency and accountability

Conflicts of interest must be declared prior to reviewing applications and attending panel meetings. (Where there is a conflict of interest the panel member will not have a vote, following guidance from the Chair).

The grants process and the grants panel will follow a transparent process, and so:

1. Grant application guidelines will be publicly available.

2. Minutes will be taken at all panel meetings, which will include a brief statement of the reasons for any decision taken on a grant application.
3. Minutes will be published on the Exeter Community Forum website.

Decisions of the panel will be made fairly in line with criteria.

2.2 Panel Meetings

The applicant may invite up to three other people to attend the Grants panel meeting in order to present and support the application. In this way, the panel may become better informed regarding the issues relating to, or community context of, particular grant applications.

To assist the panel's decision-making further, the applicants should:

1. Take appropriate steps to obtain the views of community interest groups (e.g. elderly, young people etc).
2. Seek comment and support for applications, verbally or in writing, from city or county councillors for a ward where a proposed grant-funded activity will take place. This may also include relevant portfolio holders.

3 . Grant-making process and timetable

The panel may determine the grant-making process and timetable. Until it does so, the following will apply:

3.1 Direct grants

1. The panel will meet no more than three times per year, with meetings timed to allow decisions to be passed to Exeter City Council for ratification by full council.
2. Simple application forms and guidelines will be used.

The grant process will be administered by the Exeter City Council Community Involvement and Inclusion Team. They will liaise with the ECF chair to agree applications that broadly meet eligibility criteria that can then progress to the panel, or identify those that need further work that need to be referred back to the applicant for further work

4 . Eligibility criteria

Applications can be for capital, or revenue funding, or both.

Applicants must:

1. Be community groups such as voluntary organisations, residents' groups, community associations, local charities, clubs and faith groups. Funding cannot be paid to individuals.
2. Have a constitution and access to a bank account with at least 2 signatories.
3. Be applying for between £1,000 and £50,000. For smaller applications, please see [the Community Grants Scheme](#).
4. Be applying for activities that will normally be completed during one calendar year. The panel will review after 1 year and agree extensions where deemed appropriate.
5. An organisation may make a further bid in a subsequent financial year (provided that the fund continues to exist), but the grants panel will weigh the merits of repeat applications against those of worthwhile new projects.

(see note iii)

6. Include an element of match funding, whether a cash or in-kind contribution.

Evaluation criteria

All applications will be scored and assessed against the following criteria:

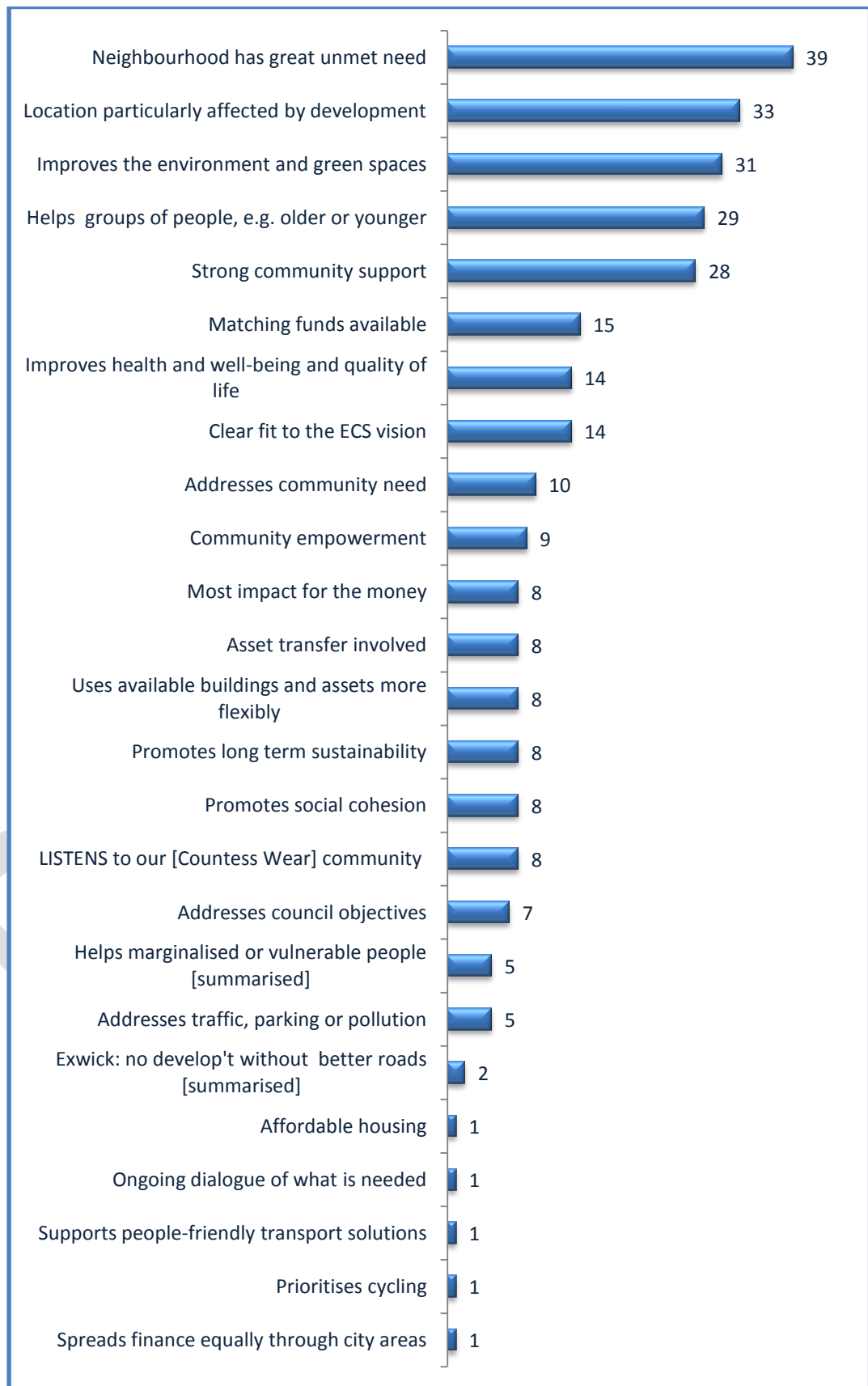
1. Addresses one or more of the priorities identified by ECF (see Appendix)
2. Provides evidence of local consultation/need
3. Provides evidence of seeking local support, including
 - support from local councillor/s
 - support from community interest groups, e.g. young people, minority ethnic communities, etc, where relevant.
 - Support from Community Organisers where relevant or possible
4. Provides evidence of partnership approach and evidence of community collaboration where possible
5. Assessment of Social Impact of project (see note iv)
6. Provides evidence of the viability of the overall project.
7. Commitment to provide match funding, for example;
 - a. Cash contribution through fundraising activities, crowdfunding, contribution from partner and/or
 - b. Social capital or in-kind contribution e.g volunteer hours, expert input, use of building.

See note iv.

5 . Priorities: As identified by participants in community events

The grants panel will take into account the prioritisation provided by participants in community events, as summarised in the table Appendix xx or with reference to any local community plans.

Table 1: ECS Criteria for Assessing Proposals: Prioritisation by participants in community events



6 . Notes

- i. Funding applications should be led by community organisations. Collaboration might see groups working with statutory bodies but the application should be community led
- ii. New ECC Communities Officer will work with ECF towards establishing an Exeter Community Youth Forum to provide a perspective on all applications. Once established the panel will invite a member of the Youth Forum to attend panel meetings and have voting rights.
- iii. Applications can be for different elements, activities and services and be viewed as 'new project'
- iv. A sample Social Impact pro-forma will be provided with the application guidance and form

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