

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 10th December 2019

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 17th December 2019

Report of: Director, Communities, Health, Wellbeing Sport and Leisure

Title: Exeter Grants Programme Changes to the Scheme of Delegation

Is this a Key Decision?

No

* One that affects finances over £1m or significantly affects two or more wards. If this is a key decision then the item must be on the appropriate forward plan of key decisions.

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

1. What is the report about?

Council agreed a new Grants Programme in July 2019 and the scheme of delegation now need to be amended to reflect the new policy.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 That the Executive recommend to Council to approve the following:

- a) amend the scheme of delegation to delegate approval of grants to the Director for Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities;
- b) the Terms of Reference for the operation of the Grants Panel with delegated authority to the proper officer to review and amend the terms of reference as necessary; and
- c) the decision to open an ad-hoc Strategic Grant Fund is delegated to the Director for Communities in consultation with the Council Leader and the Portfolio-holder for Communities

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 The delegated authority is required to allow the Grants Panel to operate under the proposed terms of reference.

3.2 The proposed terms of reference and supporting operating procedures may need adjustments following an initial pilot phase given the process is new and improvement may be identified in the early implementation phase.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources.

4.1 There are no resource implications.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 There are no financial implications for Council to consider. The section 151 Officer is supportive of the changes proposed in the report.

6. What are the legal aspects?

- 6.1 The proposed delegation of powers is necessary under the Council Constitution to enable the effective operation of the new Grants Panel within the context of the Terms of Reference under development.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

Amending the Council's scheme of delegation in this way should enable speedy decision making relating to applications for grant support.

8. Report details:

- 8.1 In July 2019 Council agreed to implement a new Exeter Grant Programme. This followed extensive engagement and consultation with community groups and other stakeholders. The agreed mobilisation plan requires a new Grants Panel to be set up that recognises the specific accountability of elected members but enables the Council and community to decide on priorities together.
- 8.2 The overall purpose of the Exeter Grants Panel (the Panel) is to provide strategic direction for the Exeter Grant Programme and to ensure that grant awards are made in line with Council priorities and requirements.
- 8.3 The panel membership will reflect the political make-up of the Council and will include community representatives and advisers. Advisory members of the panel will be non-voting. The chair of the Panel will be the Portfolio Holder for Communities.
- 8.4 The Panel Chair is accountable for ensuring that decisions and recommendations made by the Panel are fair and transparent and that the underpinning system and processes are proportionate to the funding required but that they also recognise the accountability of elected members.
- 8.5 The Portfolio Holder for Communities will be supported in this role by the relevant Director. The proposed delegated powers are necessary allow the Panel to act in accordance with the proposed Terms of Reference attached to this report.
- 8.6 The Panel Terms of Reference require that all grant requests in excess of £3,000 will be considered by the Grants Panel and that grants under £3,000 will be considered by a sub-group of the Panel.
- 8.7 The Grants programme allows for an ad-hoc Strategic Grant Fund to be offered when funding allows. This report requests decision to open such a fund to be delegated to the Director for Communities in consultation with the Council Leader and the Portfolio-holder for Communities. This is to ensure that the available fund for grants are utilised in the most open, flexible, transparent way to meet the needs of local communities.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

- 9.1 This recommendation responds to the Corporate Priority of a well-run Council

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

- 10.1 The recommendation in itself is a risk mitigation measure in that its implementation ensures that the Council is meeting the requirements of its Constitution.

11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equality Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.

11.4 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because: because the recommendations are technical relating to effective governance under the Council's Constitution and in this context are administrative only.

12. Are there any other options?

12.1 An alternative option is to amend the Council's Constitution and create the Grants panel as a formal committee. This is not being recommended as it would enforce additional bureaucracy into the grant programme creating considerable delays in awarding grants.

Jo Yelland, Director

Author: Jo Yelland

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:
Democratic Services
01392 265477