

## **REPORT TO EXECUTIVE**

Date of Meeting: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026

Report of: Chief Executive

Title: Citizens Advice Exeter Grant

### **Is this a Key Decision?**

No

### **Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Executive

## **1. What is the report about?**

1.1 This report requests that Executive agree to award a grant of £75,000 to Citizens Advice Exeter in 2026/27 and £75,000 in 2027/28, subject to grant agreement, subsidy control compliance and satisfaction of monitoring requirements under the Council's General Grants Policy (Appendix A).

## **2. Recommendations:**

2.1 It is recommended that Executive approve the award of a grant of £150,000 (one-hundred and fifty thousand pounds) to Citizens' Advice Exeter to be awarded in two tranches, namely the sum of £75,000 for the financial year 2026 to 2027 and the sum of £75,000 for the financial year 2027 to 2028.

## **3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

3.1 The Council's General Grants Policy provides a clear and transparent route for awarding grant funding where this will contribute to Council priorities and respond to need in the city. The policy also makes clear that recipients should provide monitoring and impact reporting.

3.2 Citizens Advice Exeter's published information shows that it provides a broad local general advice offer, with residents able to access support online, by telephone and face to face.

3.3 The decision supports the continuation of a service that brings together a range of advice needs in one place for Exeter residents, whilst also supporting the volunteering opportunities that help Citizens Advice Exeter meet demand in the city. Citizens Advice Exeter's volunteers are central to delivery and that support is needed to train and supervise them.

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

4.1 The decision commits to funding of £75,000 in 2026/27 and £75,000 in 2027/28.

4.2 Officer time will be required to put in place the grant agreement, oversee monitoring and review reporting, consistent with the General Grants Policy requirement for evidence of spend and impact. However, this can be delivered within current resourcing.

## **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

5.1 The decision is subject to Council approving the proposed budget after these papers are published. Subject to that approval there are no further financial issues. If approved the funding requirement will be built into next year's budget and at present do not cause any further challenges in delivering a balanced budget.

## **6. What are the legal aspects?**

6.1 In awarding grant funding, the authority must determine whether the grant funding constitutes a subsidy for the purposes of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 ('the Act').

6.2 Officers have carried out a subsidy control assessment which confirms that the proposed grant funding is a subsidy covered by the Act. To comply with the provisions of the Act and lawfully grant the proposed sum of £150,000 over two years, the subsidy will need to be recorded on the subsidy database, which is maintained by the Department for Business and Trade. Where a subsidy award is divided into smaller tranches of payments which each fall below the statutory threshold of £100,000, the relevant amount to be recorded remains the total amount of the subsidy award, in this case £150,000. An internal subsidy control report must be prepared by officers setting out how the proposed subsidy meets the statutory test under the Act.

6.3 A formal agreement between the Council and the recipient of grant funding should be completed to ensure the funds are allocated in accordance with the agreed purpose of the grant. It is usually the case that any unspent funds are returned to the Council. The agreement should also include appropriate reporting and record-keeping obligations.

## **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

7.1 Members will note the legal aspects of this matter at paragraph 6 of this report. The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

## **8. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)**

8.1 The report seeks a decision on a proposed grant award. Continued access to general advice services may particularly affect residents with protected characteristics. For example, Citizens Advice Exeter's year-end report (Appendix B) states that 64% of clients in 2025/26 had a disability or long-term health condition. This should be taken into account in considering the impact of the decision

## **9. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

9.1 No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

## **10. Report details:**

10.1 The grant is intended to support the continuation of Citizens Advice Exeter's general advice service for Exeter residents, providing access in one place to general advice and

information across a range of issues. Citizens Advice Exeter provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice, with support available online, by telephone and face to face.

10.2 The grant is also intended to support Citizens Advice Exeter's contribution to volunteering opportunities in the city, including the recruitment, training, support and supervision of volunteers who help deliver that advice service. Volunteers are central to its work and this grant will support training and supervision of volunteers.

10.3 The grant is being awarded under the Council's General Grants Policy, which provides a clear route for grant funding outside the Community Grants Programme and requires monitoring of how funding has been used and what impact it has had.

10.4 In line with that policy, the grant agreement should set out the purpose of the award, reporting requirements and evidence of benefit to Exeter residents. The policy also states that grant awards should show that at least 75% of people benefiting from the project live in Exeter.

10.5 The level of grant reflects previous requests from Citizens Advice Exeter, to maintain their advisory services, as well as the level of grants previously given.

10.6 The proposed award is a one-off, time-limited grant for 2026/27 and 2027/28. The grant agreement will define the approved purposes for which the funding may be used and will require the recipient to maintain records sufficient to demonstrate that expenditure has been applied only to those approved purposes.

## **11. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

11.1 The decision supports the Council's Corporate Plan 2025–2028, particularly the People priority, by helping residents access support to improve wellbeing, resilience and inclusion. It also supports the Homes priority where advice can help residents address housing-related problems at an earlier stage.

## **12. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

12.1 There is a risk that the Council cannot clearly demonstrate what the grant has achieved. This can be reduced through clear reporting requirements linked to the purpose of the grant and evidence of how it has supported Exeter residents, in line with the General Grants Policy.

12.2 There is a risk that demand for advice continues to exceed available capacity. The decision responds to that by supporting continuation of the service and the volunteering capacity needed to help meet need in the city. Citizens Advice Exeter's website notes both the role of volunteers and the need for support to sustain delivery

## **13. Are there any other options?**

13.1 The alternative option would have been not to make the grant award or make a lower award. This would create a risk to broad local advice services in the city.

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

List of Appendices:

Appendix A - General Grants Policy

Appendix B - Citizens Advice 2026/27 Annual Report