

**Audit, Risk and Governance Committee**  
Meeting to be held on Monday, 29 January 2024

Electoral Division affected:  
N/A;

## **Local Member Grants Scheme - Update Report**

Contact for further information:  
Josh Mynott, Democratic and Member Services Manager, Tel: 01772 534580,  
Josh.Mynott@lancashire.gov.uk

### **Brief Summary**

Monitoring of the money awarded under the Local Member Grants Scheme is conducted by Democratic Services. This report provides an update on the outcomes of that monitoring activity, following the Local Member Grants Scheme Annual Report and Update Report which were presented to the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee at its meetings on 24 April 2023 and 16 October 2023 respectively.

This update report covers the period January 2022 to June 2023.

### **Recommendation**

The Audit, Risk and Governance Committee is asked to consider and comment on the Local Member Grants Scheme - Update Report for January 2021 to June 2023.

### **Detail**

On 16 December 2021, Full Council approved the reintroduction of the Local Member Grants Scheme with effect from 1 January 2022. Under the Scheme, each county councillor has been given a specific budget which they can spend to enhance the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of people who live in their division.

To support the reintroduction of the Scheme and in line with the powers granted by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Leader of the Council has authorised individual county councillors to take formal decisions on behalf of the county council. This legislation does not apply to Cabinet Members as they already have these decision-making powers.

Every decision taken by a county councillor to award a grant under the Scheme is available to view on the county council's website here:



Monitoring of the money awarded under the Local Member Grants Scheme is conducted by Democratic Services. Six months after a grant has been awarded, the recipient organisation is contacted to request evidence of their expenditure. This is to ensure the money awarded has been spent in line with the organisation's application and as agreed by the local county councillor(s).

In line with the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee's recommendation, since October 2023 Democratic Services' procedure has been updated so that the appropriate county councillor(s) will be informed when organisations do not provide evidence of expenditure within three months of Democratic Services' first request.

The information below provides the committee with a summary of the outcomes of this monitoring activity, in line with its responsibility for oversight of the county council's governance and risk management.

## 2021/22

Month	Total number of grants awarded	Total amount awarded (£)	Satisfactory Evidence of Use		No or Unsatisfactory Evidence of Use	
			Total no. responses received	Total amount (£)	Total no. responses outstanding	Total amount (£)
Jan 2022	23	5,710.00	22	5,210.00	1	500.00
Feb 2022	34	8,928.35	33	8,428.35	1	500.00
Mar 2022	52	14,187.02	47	12,737.02	5	1,450.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>28,825.37</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>26,375.37</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2,450.00</b>

For the period from 1 January to 31 March 2022, a response providing satisfactory evidence of expenditure has been received in relation to 94% of grants, equating to 92% of the total value awarded. This information is correct as of 31 December 2023.

The committee will note that a few organisations are still to provide satisfactory evidence of expenditure for the period to March 2022. One member of Democratic Services staff has focussed on contacting these organisations about their grants since the last Audit, Risk and Governance Committee meeting and the evidence requested is still outstanding. A summary of the circumstances is as follows:

- For two grants, the organisation's project start was delayed. They have provided evidence of expenditure for some, but not all, of the money awarded and the outstanding evidence will be provided once the project is completed.
- For the remaining five grants, the organisations have not responded to correspondence from Democratic Services. Given the length of time that has passed since their grant application, it is considered unlikely that these organisations will provide evidence of expenditure.



As highlighted at the last meeting of the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee, organisations which do not provide satisfactory evidence of expenditure are noted by Democratic Services. Should they apply for a Local Member Grant in the future, the decision-making county councillor(s) will be informed that the organisation has previously not provided evidence of expenditure.

## 2022/23

Month	Total number of grants awarded	Total amount awarded (£)	Satisfactory Evidence of Use		No or Unsatisfactory Evidence of Use	
			Total no. responses received	Total amount (£)	Total no. responses outstanding	Total amount (£)
Apr 2022	34	12,074.98	32	11,124.98	2	950.00
May 2022	64	23,069.78	57	19,717.98	7	3,351.00
Jun 2022	23	9,046.00	18	6,871.00	5	2,175.00
Jul 2022	26	8,985.00	22	8,135.00	4	850.00
Aug 2022	9	3,220.00	6	1,970.00	3	1,250.00
Sep 2022	30	13,065.00	23	9,165.00	7	3,900.00
Oct 2022	23	9,976.70	11	3,596.70	12	6,380.00
Nov 2022	31	14,417.57	23	10,662.60	8	3,754.97
Dec 2022	29	14,606.06	18	7,264.00	11	7,342.06
Jan 2023	21	10,803.00	9	5,198.00	12	5,605.00
Feb 2023	42	17,973.41	28	10,241.55	14	7,731.86
Mar 2023	81	45,920.32	51	26,235.32	30	19,685.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>183,157.82</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>120,182.13</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>62,974.89</b>

For the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, a response providing satisfactory evidence of expenditure has been received in relation to 72% of grants, equating to 66% of the total value awarded. This information is correct as of 31 December 2023.

## 2023/24

	Satisfactory Evidence of Use	No or Unsatisfactory Evidence of Use
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Month	Total number of grants awarded	Total amount awarded (£)	Total no. responses received	Total amount (£)	Total no. responses outstanding	Total amount (£)
Apr 2023	52	21,239.98	25	9,332.98	27	11,907.00
May 2023	39	17,197.00	8	1,937.00	31	15,260.00
Jun 2023	44	14,124.98	1	500.00	43	13,624.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>52,561.96</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11,769.98</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>40,791.98</b>

For the period from 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023, a response providing satisfactory evidence of expenditure has been received in relation to 25% of grants, equating to 22% of the total value awarded. This information is correct as of 31 December 2023.

For grants awarded from 1 July 2023 onwards, organisations have not yet been contacted to request evidence of their expenditure. Updated information for the 2023/24 financial year will be provided in the next annual report to the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee in April 2024.

The total number of grants awarded over the last six months is as follows (correct as of 22 December 2023).

Month	Total number of grants awarded	Total amount awarded (£)
Jul 2023	41	13,763.44
Aug 2023	32	13,964.28
Sept 2023	29	11,733.60
Oct 2023	24	9,923.35
Nov 2023	33	13,028.87
Dec 2023	11	3,970.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>66,383.74</b>

## Consultations

N/A

## Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

## Risk management

Democratic Services maintain an effective audit trail of the money allocated to organisations. Monitoring is intended to be proportionate and takes into account that the organisations receiving the money are often small volunteer groups with limited resources, meaning that it is important to keep paperwork requests to a minimum



and to be flexible with the type and nature of evidence accepted. Where no reply is received, this is followed up.

In some cases, organisations may never respond to Democratic Service's requests for evidence of expenditure or may provide evidence that does not sufficiently demonstrate how they have spent their grant money. However, these cases are limited, and the Internal Audit Service is satisfied that Democratic Services are taking suitable steps to ensure money awarded under the Local Member Grants Scheme is spent in line with the organisation's application and as agreed by the local county councillor(s).

### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

None

