

Audit, Risk and Governance Committee
Meeting to be held on Monday, 22 April 2024

Electoral Division affected:
N/A;

Local Member Grants Scheme Annual Report

Contact for further information:
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Brief Summary

Under the Local Member Grants Scheme, each county councillor has a specific budget which they can spend to support the work of voluntary, community and faith sector groups in their local community.

Monitoring of the money awarded under the Local Member Grants Scheme is conducted by Democratic Services. This is an annual report to the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee on the outcomes of that monitoring activity, in line with the committee's responsibility for oversight of the county council's governance and risk management.

This annual report covers the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years.

Recommendation

The Audit, Risk and Governance Committee is asked to consider the Local Member Grants Scheme Annual Report.

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 a specific budget which they can spend to support the work of voluntary, community and faith sector groups in their local community.

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:

<https://council.lancashire.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?bcr=1&DM=0&DS=2&K=0&DR=&V=0>

Each year, county councillors are allocated a budget of £2,000 to award to organisations in their area and can also carry forward a maximum of £200 that was unspent in the previous financial year.

In addition, Full Council approved two increases to each county councillor's budget of £500, in commemoration of the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022/23 and the Coronation of King Charles III in 2023/24. Accordingly, county councillors had a total budget of £2,500 to award in those financial years, plus any funds carried over.

In accordance with the Local Member Grants Scheme rules, grants must be awarded to not-for-profit organisations, used to fund projects that will directly benefit the community, and fit in with the council's corporate priorities particularly 'caring for the vulnerable' and 'protecting the environment'.

The information below provides a summary of the money awarded under the Local Member Grants Scheme for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

2022/23

In total, 486 applications were submitted to the Local Member Grants Scheme in 2022/23. 413 grants were approved by councillors, totalling £183,007.82.

£8,216.02 of unspent budget was carried forward into the next financial year (a maximum of £200 per councillor) and £28,189.72 was reallocated to the care leavers' budget.

2023/24

In total, 549 applications were submitted to the Local Member Grants Scheme in 2023/24. 452 grants were approved by councillors, totalling £191,114.96.

£6,756.66 of unspent budget was carried forward into the next financial year and £18,780.40 was reallocated to the care leavers' budget.

The grants awarded were categorised as follows:

| Category | Number of grants awarded |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Community events | 172 |
| Equipment | 107 |
| Sports and leisure | 40 |
| Community facilities | 36 |
| Repairs and renovations | 28 |
| Education and PTFAs | 23 |



| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Other | 18 |
| Environment and climate change | 11 |
| Healthy living | 8 |
| Cost of living | 4 |
| Older people | 3 |
| Parks and play areas | 2 |

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

The information below provides the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee with a summary of the outcomes of this monitoring activity for 2022/23 and 2023/24, in line with the committee's responsibility for oversight of the county council's governance and risk management.

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 | 33 | 11,824.98 | 1 | 250.00 |
| May 2022 | 64 | 23,069.78 | 60 | 21,069.78 | 4 | 2,000.00 |
| Jun 2022 | 23 | 9,046.00 | 20 | 7,701.00 | 3 | 1,345.00 |
| Jul 2022 | 26 | 8,985.00 | 25 | 8,735.00 | 1 | 250.00 |
| Aug 2022 | 9 | 3,220.00 | 7 | 2,220.00 | 2 | 1,000.00 |
| Sep 2022 | 30 | 13,065.00 | 25 | 9,915.00 | 5 | 3,150.00 |
| Oct 2022 | 23 | 9,976.70 | 16 | 5,426.70 | 7 | 4,550.00 |
| Nov 2022 | 31 | 14,417.57 | 27 | 12,012.60 | 4 | 2,404.97 |
| Dec 2022 | 29 | 14,606.06 | 23 | 10,788.56 | 6 | 3,817.50 |
| Jan 2023 | 21 | 10,803.00 | 17 | 8,023.00 | 4 | 2,780.00 |
| Feb 2023 | 42 | 17,973.41 | 38 | 16,166.55 | 4 | 1,806.86 |
| Mar 2023 | 81 | 45,770.32 | 67 | 37,505.32 | 14 | 8,265.00 |
| Total | 413 | 183,007.82 | 358 | 151,388.49 | 55 | 31,619.33 |



For the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, a response providing satisfactory evidence of expenditure has been received in relation to 87% of grants, equating to 83% of the total value awarded. This information is correct as of 1 April 2024.

Where evidence of expenditure is outstanding, Democratic Services have made regular contact with the organisations. The main reason for delayed or outstanding evidence is a delay to organisations' projects, meaning they have not spent the grant money yet.

2023/24

| 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 2023 | 52 | 21,239.98 | 32 | 11,082.98 | 20 | 10,157.00 |
| May 2023 | 39 | 17,197.00 | 20 | 7,387.00 | 19 | 9,810.00 |
| Jun 2023 | 44 | 14,124.98 | 9 | 2,328.00 | 35 | 11,796.98 |
| Jul 2023 | 41 | 13,763.44 | 2 | 850.00 | 39 | 12,913.44 |
| Aug 2023 | 32 | 13,964.28 | 2 | 1,200.00 | 30 | 12,764.28 |
| Sept 2023 | 28 | 11,073.60 | 0 | 0.00 | 28 | 11,073.60 |
| Total | 236 | 91,363.28 | 65 | 22,847.98 | 171 | 68,515.30 |

For the period from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023, a response providing satisfactory evidence of expenditure has been received in relation to 28% of grants, equating to 25% of the total value awarded. This information is correct as of 1 April 2024.

For grants awarded from 1 October 2023 onwards, very few project dates have passed and therefore few organisations have been able to provide their 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:

| Month | Total number of grants awarded | Total amount awarded (£) |
|----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Oct 2023 | 24 | 9,923.35 |
| Nov 2023 | 33 | 13,028.87 |
| Dec 2023 | 13 | 4,795.20 |
| Jan 2024 | 31 | 14,600.53 |
| Feb 2024 | 50 | 25,854.78 |
| Mar 2024 | 65 | 31,548.95 |



| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------------|
| Total | 216 | 99,751.68 |
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Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Legal

There are no legal implications identified.

Finance

As set out in this report.

Risk management

Democratic Services maintain an effective audit trail of the money awarded under the Local Member Grants Scheme.

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 requests for paperwork to a minimum and to be flexible with the type and nature of evidence accepted. Where no reply is received, this is followed up and, as previously recommended by the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee, the relevant county councillor informed.

In some cases, organisation may never respond to Democratic Services' 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.

Organisations which do not provide satisfactory evidence are noted by Democratic Services. Should they reapply for a Local Member Grant in future, the decision-making county councillor(s) will be informed that the organisation has previously not provided evidence of expenditure.

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

| Paper | Date | Contact/Tel |
|-------|------|-------------|
|-------|------|-------------|

N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A



