

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 4 November 2021

Report of the Head of Legal and Governance Services

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;
Protecting our environment;

Local Member Grants

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

In order to help support the Corporate Priorities, in particular "Caring for the Vulnerable" and "Protecting our Environment", and to facilitate and empower all county councillors to support their communities, it is proposed to re-introduce the Local Member Grant Scheme from 1 January 2022.

Recommendation

That Cabinet is asked to agree that:

- (i) Full Council be asked to approve that:
 - a. The Local Member Grant Scheme is re-introduced from 1 January 2022.
 - b. Each member be allocated a full year budget of £2,000 for grant within their division, with a pro rata amount of £500 for the period January to March 2022.
 - c. Appropriate officer support is put in place to ensure the effective administration of Local Member Grants.
- (ii) Subject to Full Council approval above, that:
 - a. In accordance with section 236 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, all county councillors be authorised to take formal decisions on behalf of the county council, in relation to the awarding of Local Member Grants within their own divisions with effect from 1 January 2022.
 - b. The rules and conditions of the grant scheme are as set out in the report.

Detail

From 2006 to 2017, the county council had in place a Local Member Grant scheme. Under the scheme, each county councillor was awarded a sum of money that they could allocate to smaller Voluntary, Faith and Community Sector Groups within their own area. It is proposed that the scheme be re-introduced from 1 January 2022 to support individual councillors in their local area work and to contribute towards the delivery of the Corporate Priorities, in particular:

- Caring for the Vulnerable
- Protecting Our Environment

The intention of the scheme is to support smaller groups and groups looking for relatively small sums of money to support their valuable work, with a minimum grant level set at £100. Although larger charities and organisations are very welcome to apply, this scheme is also open to groups with less capacity and resource, and who sometimes might find applying for grants daunting or difficult. The difference that such groups can make in their communities with relatively small amounts of money is well understood and something the council can support further through this scheme.

To facilitate this scheme, the Cabinet is asked to utilise powers granted by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Section 236, whereby decisions affecting specific electoral divisions that would normally be a function of the Cabinet can be delegated to the councillors who represent that electoral division.

Individual councillors will be asked to promote the scheme in their area and work with groups to help them through the application process. The council will promote the scheme through traditional and social media. A guide for prospective applicants will be produced to help them understand the scheme and how to apply.

Rules of the Scheme

The full details and criteria are set out below:

1. Grant amounts:

- Each county councillor will have £2,000 per year to award to organisations in their own area. This could be a single award of the full amount or multiple awards of smaller sums.
- For the partial year January to March 2022, each county councillor will have £500 to spend.
- The minimum award is £100.
- Councillors will be allowed to carry over up to £200 to the following year.
- Groups may apply for multiple grants in a year, but only once for each event/project.
- Groups may apply to more than one councillor as long as the event/project benefits the area of each councillor applied to.
- Organisations may apply for full or partial funding for their event or project. Councillors may decide to award a different amount to that applied for.

2. Decisions:

- As long as application for grants meet the criteria, individual councillors will be authorised to make the decision themselves – there is no need for approval by Cabinet or any other body.

3. Criteria:

- Groups applying must:
 - Be Not for Profit
 - Have a bank account
 - Have some form of Constitution, Articles of Association or other similar rules
- Grants cannot be awarded to fund county council services.
- Grants cannot be awarded to District or Parish Councils, NHS organisations, the Constabulary or Fire and Rescue Service.
- Grants cannot be awarded directly to schools, although may be awarded to Parent and Staff Associations.
- Funding cannot be for "core funding" – eg staffing/salary costs, office rental etc.
- Political and religious activity may not be funded, although political and religious groups may apply for funding for other community activities.
- Individuals cannot receive funding.
- Funding cannot be for research.
- Grants cannot be awarded retrospectively.
- Projects or activities that run contrary to county council policies or are unlawful cannot be funded.
- Where the funding is in relation to supporting vulnerable children or adults, the groups would be expected to have appropriate safeguarding policies in place and be able to demonstrate that.

4. Monitoring:

- Groups are expected to keep receipts and records for monitoring purposes.
- Monitoring will be appropriate to the level of grants awarded.

Financial

The full year costs of the scheme will be c£195,000 including an additional officer post (grade 5) in Democratic Services to support the administration of the scheme. The c£49,000 cost of the scheme in 2021/22 can be met from existing uncommitted budget provision with the full cost from 2022/23 then included in the medium-term financial strategy as an additional funding requirement.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Although individual sums awarded will be relatively small, there will need to be an effective audit trail of the money allocated to groups. Monitoring will be conducted by Democratic Services and there will be an annual report to the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A