

Management Committee

11 July 2017

Revision of Discretionary Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy

For Decision

Portfolio Holder(s)/ Briefholder

Cllr Christine James

Cllr Jeff Cant

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

S Hill, Strategic Director

Report Author:

Jane Nicklen, Community Planning & Development Manager

Statutory Authority

The Localism Act, 2011, Section 137 of Local Government Act, 1972 and any other relevant statutory powers as applicable to specific grant provision

Purpose of Report

1. To recommend changes to the council's current Discretionary Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy for Member decision pursuant to Minute 152 (a) of April 2017 Management Committee.

Recommendations

2. Committee is requested to approve the following recommendations:
 - (a) The revisions contained within the revised Discretionary Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy at Appendix 1.
 - (b) The adoption of a standard grant agreement between the Council and all recipients of grants of £2,000 which will be adapted according to the organisation and amount of award.
 - (c) That the Officer Scheme of Delegation be amended to give officers delegated authority to approve grants, loans and subsidies up to a value of £2,000 in consultation with the relevant brief-holder/s and Ward Members.
 - (d) The consideration of the draft community priorities at the end of Appendix 1.

Reason for Decision

- 3 To update the current grants, loans and subsidies policy by ensuring that council financial assistance is offered fairly and administered robustly. To also ensure that the council is better recognised for the assistance it gives to local organisations for the benefit of Weymouth & Portland and its residents.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4 The council's existing Discretionary Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy was introduced in 2012 following extensive research undertaken by a Member Working Party. The aim of the policy is to ensure fairness and robustness in the giving of **all** grants, loans and subsidies and is not directly linked to any recent reports relating to specific existing or proposed grant funds. It also aims to help the council receive recognition for what it gives out.
5. The key aspects of the existing policy are as follows:
 - Management Committee are responsible for reviewing all grants, loans on subsidies on an annual basis and a full report is required for committee once a year for decision.
 - Group leaders are asked to respond about each grant over £1,000 before the responsible officer prepares a report for Management Committee..
 - All grants over £1,000 must be considered by Management Committee
 - Standard Service Level Agreements must be put in place between the council and the recipient, for any grants or loans of £1,000 or more that are recurring annually, or are one-offs but the funding will be used for more than 12 months.
 - Where recurring grants or loans are covered by an SLA (up to four years), a report only needs to be taken to Management Committee once, before the start of the agreement; not annually.
 - All applications for a grant or loan totalling less than £1,000 will be at the Service Manager's discretion, but will be assessed retrospectively by Management Committee once a year.

The following point applies to subsidies which occur when the council supports an organisation by subsidising its use of council facilities such as a berth in the harbour , a reduction their rent or subsidised parking:

- All applications for a subsidy will be assessed at the Service Manager's discretion, but will be reviewed retrospectively by the Management Committee once a year.
- 6 Working practice has indicated a need to review aspects of the policy to make it more efficient. Officers and Members have worked together to identify the necessary changes to the policy so it can be administered effectively in the short to medium term. It was not felt necessary to undertake a fundamental review of the policy at this time.

7. The main changes proposed for consideration are:
- the introduction of a revised upper limit for officer delegation in relation to discretionary grants, loans and subsidies from £1,000 to £2,000.
 - Use of a standardised discretionary grant agreement for grants over £2,000 which includes monitoring and reporting requirements. This will be adapted, as required, on a case by case basis.
 - Grants under £2,000 must be covered by an award conditions letter and a requirement for the applicant to report on use of the grant.
 - The use of evidence-based community priorities in addition to Corporate Priorities to inform decisions on the allocation of grants, loans and subsidies.

Implications

8. **Corporate Plan**
This report has implications for all priorities in the Corporate Plan.
9. **Financial**
The allocation of grants, loans and subsidies clearly has financial implications for the council.
10. **Equalities**
The allocation of financial assistance provides the potential for positive impact in relation to local people with protected characteristics under The Equality Act, 2010.
11. **Environmental**
The allocation of financial assistance provides the potential for positive impact in relation to environmental projects in the Borough.
12. **Economic Development**
The allocation of financial assistance provides the potential for positive impact in relation to economic development.
13. **Risk Management (including Health & Safety)**
The management of grants, loans and subsidies under the proposed policy requires all recipients to sign an agreement and agree to supply a monitoring report relating to their grant. This minimises risks to the council and provides proof of due diligence on the case of audit..
14. **Human Resources**
Work relating to this report will be undertaken within existing staff resources.

Consultation and Engagement

15. The proposals in this report have been discussed in detail with officers and members with experience of grants, loans and subsidies.

Appendices

16. Appendix 1 –Draft Revised Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy

Background Papers

17. WPBC Grants, Loans and Subsidies Policy, 2012
Standard grant agreement prepared by Legal Services, May 2017

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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