

# Corporate Grants Policy

## for the operation of Grant Funds to Outside Bodies in Cheshire East Council

**2022 to 2025**



*Working for a brighter future together*

## 1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Corporate Grants Policy is to give guidance to officers on how to create and implement an effective grant funding scheme that aligns with the Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2021 - 2025 and Constitution. Further advice can be sought from Procurement and Legal Services.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. This document outlines the approach to be taken for the allocation of grants, donations and other contributions from the Council to a person or an organisation to support a particular purpose or set of objectives, without firm entitlement to specific goods or services in return.
- 2.2. When using the term grants in this Policy it refers to the giving of a fixed amount of Council funds or external funds received by the Council to organisations or individuals through an application and assessment process.
- 2.3. There are different service areas across the Council that currently offer grant schemes or may wish to introduce a grant scheme in the future. This policy covers discretionary grants to outside bodies made by the Council, both in terms of annual grant schemes and ad hoc schemes established to meet a set of objectives.
- 2.4. This Policy sets out how discretionary grants (statutory schemes have their own national requirements, for example, education exemption in relation to capital funding for school places) offered by Council departments should be aligned to meet the [Council's Corporate Plan](#).
- 2.5. Aligning grant schemes with the Corporate Plan provides an opportunity to be more targeted with limited resources in achieving the set priorities of the service area whilst making a difference to people in our communities, which also contribute to the overall priorities of the Council.
- 2.6. This Policy will ensure that all Council grant schemes operate under set criteria and processes, providing a corporate approach to ensure each grant scheme considers all legal and budgetary implications as well as having a clearly defined application, decision making and monitoring process in place. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the When to Grant Fund Guidance that clearly determines the need for establishing a grant scheme and the difference between grants and commissioning a service with a required contract.
- 2.7. Discretionary grant funding should be provided where organisations can meet a set of objectives through their project or activity.
- 2.8. This Policy covers discretionary grants offered by the Council and can also be applied to statutory grants offered to individuals or organisations, community grants offered to the voluntary, community and faith sector and grants to businesses. There may be circumstances when funds are received from external bodies to the Council which are then distributed as grants. These funds will be distributed as per the parameters set by the funding body as per section 5.6.
- 2.9. Large capital grant funding received by the authority is dealt with under the Constitution – Financial Procedure Rules ([Chaper 3, Part 4](#)) and approvals to receive and spend money/act as accountable body.

2.10. Where services wish to undertake an activity not originally identified in the budget or incur additional revenue expenditure on an existing activity, approval must be sought for a supplementary estimate in accordance with the tables below. Approval can only be given where full funding is identified (for example through additional specific grant allocations or developer contributions). The Chief Finance Officer must be consulted in all cases. Directors may make applications for grants, where the application does not create a commitment, financial or otherwise, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer. However, if the application is for a grant in excess of £1m, or if any match funding will be required, then the Corporate Leadership Team must be consulted in advance. Successful grant applications will require a supplementary estimate to incur spending, in line with the approval limits set out in the table below. If grant application or receipt commits expenditure outside of the Budgetary Framework then a Virement or other Supplementary Estimate will also be required.

Supplementary Estimate Amount	Approval Level
Up to and including £250,000	Relevant Member of CLT
In excess of £250,000 up to and including £500,000	Relevant Member of CLT in consultation with the Chair of the relevant Committee, Chair of Finance Sub-Committee and Chief Finance Officer
In excess of £500,000 up to and including £1,000,000	Committee
<b>Over £1,000,000</b>	<b>Council</b>

### 3. LEGAL AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1. This Policy is approved by Policy Committee and will be reviewed when significant changes are made to the Constitution. The Policy will be refreshed in 2025.
- 3.2. Grants, donations and contributions will be paid by the Council in accordance with each specific grant process which will be determined under this Policy and subject to there being adequate provision in service budgets with the appropriate approvals being sought.
- 3.3. A supporting document, When to Grant Fund Guidance, sets out further guidance on grant funding, consideration of subsidy control implications, the process for allocation and any conditions that should apply to any grant funding.
- 3.4. Heads of Service will report on the outputs and outcomes achieved through the provision of support to outside bodies on an agreed basis to the appropriate committee, with interim reporting on an exception basis or where the sums involved are significant.

### 4. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL POLICIES

- 4.1. The Council has a number of discretionary and statutory grant schemes in place which are managed under this Policy. Statutory Grant schemes will also be operated in line with national requirements.

## **5. GRANT SCHEMES**

- 5.1 As a general principle, a new grant scheme should not be launched unless there is a clearly identified need for a new scheme to operate in preference to any existing scheme. This need could be identified by national priorities or external funding provided to the Council e.g., Shared Prosperity Funding.
- 5.2 Research should be undertaken to understand if outcomes desired under the grant scheme can be delivered either by existing contracts or grant schemes. In this way, the Council can make best use of its finite resources.
- 5.3 Procurement should be informed of any new grant scheme so that they are better able to provide support.
- 5.4 Grant schemes should make reference to the Council's Corporate Plan, unless following statutory requirements as stated in paragraph 2.4 or meeting the objectives as set out in a grant determination document received as part of an external grant award from another funding body.
- 5.5 Each individual grant scheme implemented by the Council should have its own process put in place which aligns to this Policy and approval should align with the decision making process outlined in 7.2. This allows for consistency across the Council and creates flexibility for grant schemes to be implemented at speed in response to varying priorities.
- 5.6 There may be circumstances where the Council becomes the responsible and accountable body for funds, such as funds from Government, where those funds are distributed as grants. The mechanisms, priorities and protocols for allocating such funds are usually set by the funder and grant schemes should strive to meet the objectives as set out in the grant determination document received as part of the external grant award from the funding body.
- 5.6 When the Council is distributing capital grant funding and acting as accountable body, officers should be mindful of the principles set out in the Corporate Grants Policy and should consult the Legal Team on matters of subsidy control, terms and conditions of grant funding, suitable forms of grant agreement and offer letters and should conform to the Council's standards and templates.

## **6. APPLICATION PROCESS**

- 6.1. Each scheme must have an accessible application form and guidance notes which are clearly advertised and available on the Council's website. Template and example documents which can be adapted to meet your particular grant scheme can be obtained by contacting [communitygrants2@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants2@cheshireeast.gov.uk).
- 6.2. Each service area which offers grants must create a process for each discretionary scheme which sets out when the deadlines for applications are, how people must apply, any documents that must be sent in with the application form and when they are likely to hear the outcome of their application.

6.3. Individual processes must be clear about what the grant scheme can provide funding for, along with examples of what cannot be funded under the scheme. They must also set out who can apply and any criteria that the organisation must meet.

## 7. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

7.1. Each Grant scheme must state when the grant applications will be assessed and who will make the decision.

7.2. The approval levels for grants, donations and contributions to outside bodies as per the Council's Constitution are:

Approval level	Amount
Officers	Up to and including £50,000 (where grant is within approved grant policy and fully funded)
Relevant Corporate Leadership Team member in consultation with the Chair of the relevant Committee and Chair of Finance Sub-Committee	Between £50,000 and £100,000 (where grant is within approved grant policy and fully funded)
Committee	All Grants of £100,000 or more.  All grants which do not fall within existing approved grant policy require Corporate Policy Committee approval.

7.3. When putting in place a grant scheme, consideration should be given to the Council's powers to award grants and advice sought from your Finance and Legal representative, in line with the Financial Scheme of Delegation and Financial Procedure Rules details in the Council's Constitution – [Chapter 3 – Part 4](#)

7.4. Decision makers, when awarding specific grants, should ensure that they follow the application process and criteria which apply to the specific grant scheme and:

- take into account only those considerations which are relevant to the decision being made (the criteria that apply to the specific policy),
- follow the procedural requirements (the processes and procedures set out in the grant scheme and this policy)
- not be unreasonable (the decision is logical and rational).

7.5. Decisions should always be in writing and include reasons for the decision (an explanation about how the decision has been reached) which meets the principles set out above.

7.6. There is no overarching appeals process, individual grants schemes which do include a right to appeal will refer to this in their individual policies. Complaints about any aspect of the Council's

Grants process will be dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. A copy of the [Council's Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy](#) is available from the Council's website.

## **8. MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING**

- 8.1. Following a successful application and in order to ensure that monies are used in an appropriate manner, as set out under each scheme, a monitoring report will be required following completion of the project or activity that was grant funded. Template and example documents which can be adapted to meet your particular grant scheme can be obtained by contacting [communitygrants2@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants2@cheshireeast.gov.uk).
- 8.2. Services may request copies of invoices or receipts and evidence of how the grant monies were spent.
- 8.3. The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of the grant and ask for evidence to support an application.
- 8.4. The funded organisation must allow reasonable access to premises/accounts upon request from the Council.
- 8.5. Organisations must retain records relating to the grant for an appropriate period (to be advised depending on the grant).
- 8.6. Each scheme must state that if organisations do not supply satisfactory monitoring reports and supporting information in full and within the set time scale, they may be asked to repay the grant funding to the Council. Failure to comply with the conditions of the grant may be taken into account when considering any further applications for grant funding made by the same organisation in the future. Where the scheme provides grants to individuals the process will set out the scheme specific monitoring requirements.