

Finance Sub-Committee

Date of Meeting:	9 November 2022
Report Title:	The Grants Register
Report of:	Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services
Report Reference No:	FSC/18/22-23
Ward(s) Affected:	All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To consider the full Grants Register (unringfenced and ringfenced revenue grants) for 2022/23, including an update on the Shared Prosperity Fund.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) includes a comprehensive list of ringfenced and unringfenced revenue grants for the four-year period 2022/23 to 2025/26. This list is a mixture of announced allocations for the authority and prudent estimates where firm information was not available at the time of publication.
- 2.2. During the financial year, this register is updated to include refinements to grant levels already estimated as announcements are released. It is also updated for new burdens grants that are announced part way through the financial year.
- 2.3. **Annex A** to this report sets out the 2022/23 ringfenced and unringfenced revenue grants as at the October Financial Review stage.

3. Recommendations

The Sub-Committee is asked to:

3.1. Note the contents of the Grants Register contained at **Annex A**.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

4.1. Members are responsible for setting the Council's budget, which includes having regard to available funding levels. The Sub-Committee requested additional transparency and understanding on what is included on the grants register, where the monies come from and what the Cheshire East Council's share of the national allocation is for each grant.

5. Other Options Considered

5.1. Other options were not considered necessary as this report was requested by Members of the Sub-Committee as part of their work programme development.

6. Background

6.1. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as approved at full Council on 24 February 2022 included a comprehensive list of ringfenced and unringfenced revenue grants for the four-year period. This was included at Appendix C, Annex 7 of that report.

6.2. Firm announced allocations are not always available due to the timing of when the budget report is published; so, for items that are expected, but the information is not yet available, prudent estimates are included.

6.3. During the financial year, this register is updated to include refinements to grant levels already estimated as announcements are made. It is also updated for new burdens grants that are announced part way through the financial year.

6.4. Each grant is subject to its own terms and conditions. Some are ringfenced for specific purposes and must be spent in a prescribed way, often with statistical returns on usage being made back to the relevant Government department. These grants are usually held within the service budgets directly. Other grants are given without conditions, even if they are named for a particular purpose.

6.5. Unspent grant balances for ringfenced grants are usually required to be returned to the issuing body if they cannot be utilised within a specified timeframe. Conversely, unringfenced grants can be used to support any wider budget pressures, or they can be transferred to reserves at year end as appropriate.

- 6.6.** Annex A to this report sets out the position on 2022/23 ringfenced and unringfenced revenue grants as at the October Financial Review stage.
- 6.7.** The Annex sets out the following detail for each grant:
- 6.7.1. Grant title
 - 6.7.2. The national funding allocation in total (to assist with understanding of the share available to Cheshire East Council)
 - 6.7.3. Hyperlinks to the allocation on the relevant Government website (available when using the electronic version of Annex A)
 - 6.7.4. Treatment of the grant by the Council
 - 6.7.5. Amount included in the MTFS 2022-26
 - 6.7.6. Amount updated at the October Financial Review stage (if different, or a new announcement)

7. Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1.** As part of the budget setting process the Pre-Budget Consultation provided an opportunity for interested parties to review and comment on the Council's Budget proposals, some of which would be funded by grant income. The wider revenue budget is partly funded by general government grant and the consultation exercise allowed commentary on where funding should be prioritised. This is an annual process.

8. Implications

8.1. Legal

- 8.1.1.** The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced annual budget. As part of the budget setting process there must be due regard to the estimated level of funding available to ensure that unnecessary budget reductions are not implemented.

8.2. Finance

- 8.2.1.** Future estimated income levels (including grant income) will form part of the usual budget setting process and will be included in the budget engagement and Medium-Term Financial Strategy on an annual basis.

8.3. Policy

- 8.3.1.** The Corporate Plan will drive and inform Council policy and priorities for service delivery. These priorities may have a direct policy implication on how certain unringfenced grants are utilised and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

8.4. Equality

- 8.4.1.** Under the Equality Act 2010, decision makers must show 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
- and - Foster good relations between those groups.

8.4.2. The protected characteristics are age, disability, sex, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.

8.4.3. Having “due regard” is a legal term which requires the Council to consider what is proportionate and relevant in terms of the decisions they take.

8.4.4. The Council needs to ensure that in taking decisions on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Budget that the impacts on those with protected characteristics are considered. The Council undertakes equality impact assessments where necessary and continues to do so as proposals and projects develop across the lifetime of the Corporate Plan.

8.4.5. The process assists us to consider what actions could mitigate any adverse impacts identified. Completed equality impact assessments form part of any detailed Business Cases.

8.5. Human Resources

8.5.1. No direct implications from this report.

8.6. Risk Management

8.6.1. The Council has a legal duty to set a balance budget every year. As part of the budget setting process, the level of income (including grant funding) needs to be carefully estimated to provide an accurate funding envelope to ensure that risks can be covered as necessary.

8.7. Rural Communities

8.7.1. Detailed grant allocations are included in Annex A of this report.

8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

8.8.1. Detailed grant allocations are included in Annex A of this report.

8.9. Public Health

8.9.1. Detailed grant allocations are included in Annex A of this report.

8.10. Climate Change

8.10.1. No direct implications from this report.

Access to Information

Contact Officer:	Alex Thompson Director of Finance and Customer Services
Appendices:	Annex A – Grants at MYR (Unringfenced and Ringfenced Revenue Grants) 2022/23
Background Papers:	MTFS 2022-26