

Corporate Grants Policy

for the operation of
Grants Schemes
in Cheshire East Council

2018/19



*Working for a **brighter future** together*

OFFICIAL

1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

1.1. Cheshire East Council is committed to working for a brighter future together to build strong and resilient communities within the Borough and to maximise social wellbeing for all residents. One way of achieving these goals is to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to individuals and groups to develop leadership skills, increase participation in community life and address identified social issues.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. This document is Cheshire East Council's Corporate Grants Policy, which sets down the approach to be taken to the allocation of grants, donations and other contributions to outside Bodies. It is reviewed annually by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Communications, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer and Head of Legal Services.

2.2. When using the term grants in this Policy it refers to the giving of a fixed amount of Council funds to organisations or individuals through an application and assessment process.

2.3. There are many different service areas across Cheshire East Council that currently offer grant schemes or may wish to introduce a grant scheme in the future. This policy covers all grants made by Cheshire East Council, including Statutory Grants and Discretionary Grants, both in terms of annual grant schemes and ad hoc schemes established to meet a specific need.

2.4. This Policy sets out how discretionary grants (statutory schemes have their own national requirements) offered by these service areas should be aligned to meet the strategic outcomes as set out in the [Council's Corporate Plan](#). The Council's Corporate Outcomes are:

- Outcome 1 – Our local communities are strong and supportive
- Outcome 2 – Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy
- Outcome 3 – People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive
- Outcome 4 – Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place
- Outcome 5 – People live well and for longer

2.5. Aligning grant schemes with the strategic outcomes 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 ensures that all Cheshire East Council grant schemes operate under strict criteria and policies, 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 Grants Protocol that clearly sets out guidance for establishing a grants scheme and the differences between grants and contracts commissioned through the procurement process, with a pathway to follow when deciding which funding will be the most appropriate route to secure the desired outcomes of the service area.

2.7. Discretionary Grant funding should only be provided where organisations can demonstrate that a defined impact will be made through their project or activity and that clear outcomes can be achieved.

2.8. This Policy covers all discretionary grants offered by the Council and can include statutory grants offered to individuals or organisations, community grants offered to the voluntary, community and faith sector, capital grants offered to nursery and educational establishments and grants to businesses.

3. LEGAL AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Communications will on a periodical basis, agree a policy setting down the approach to be taken to the allocation of grants, donations and other contributions to outside bodies, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer and Head of Legal Services as per section 6.29 of the Council's Constitution.
- 3.2. Grants, donations and contributions will be paid by the Council in accordance with the policies determined under this policy subject to there being adequate provision in service budgets and the appropriate approvals being sought.
- 3.3. The Grant Funding Protocol sets out further guidance on grant funding, consideration of state aid implications, the process for allocation and any conditions that should apply to any grant funding.
- 3.4. Heads of Service will report on the outcomes achieved through the provision of support to outside bodies on an annual basis to the appropriate Member Group and Cabinet Member, with interim reporting on an exception basis or where the sums involved are significant.

4. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL POLICIES

- 4.1. The Council manages a number of grants schemes under this Policy. This policy is approved by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Communications on an annual basis. Individual discretionary grant schemes should also be reviewed annually and approved by Cabinet or the relevant Portfolio Holder as appropriate. Statutory Grant schemes will be operated in line with national requirements.
- 4.2 The Council has put in place a number of discretionary and statutory grant schemes which are listed in Appendix 1.

5. GRANT SCHEMES

- 5.1 As a general principle, a new grant should not be launched unless there is a clearly identified need for a new scheme to operate in preference to any existing scheme. The Early Help Framework may be an appropriate vehicle in order to commission work effectively and in a timely manner.
- 5.2 Mapping work should be undertaken to understand if outcomes desired under the grant scheme can be delivered either by existing contracts or grants. In this way, the Local Authority 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 apply the principles of the Council's overall early help strategy (as detailed in the Council's Commissioning Framework) where appropriate. This means using funds to address need early, rather than to target people once health has declined. For instance, funding criteria might reflect this approach.

6. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 6.1. Each scheme must have an accessible application form and guidance notes. Templates for the corporate grants application form are contained in the Grant Funding Protocol and must be adapted to meet your particular grant scheme.

- 6.2. Each service area which offers grants must create a Policy for each discretionary scheme which sets out when the deadline 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. Scheme Policies should make it clear what the grant scheme can provide funding for along with examples of what cannot be funded under the scheme. It must also set out who can apply to the scheme and any criteria that the organisation must meet.

7. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

7.1. Each Scheme Policy 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 as per the Council's Constitution are:

Approval level	Amount
Officers	Up to and including £50,000 (where grant is within approved grant policy)
Portfolio Holder	Between £50,000 and £100,000 (where grant is within approved grant policy)
Cabinet	All Grants of £100,000 or more. All grants which do not fall within existing approved grant policy require Cabinet 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 Head of Legal Services.

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 in each scheme Policy, a monitoring report will be required following completion of the project or activity that was grant funded. A corporate template for grant monitoring is contained in the Grant Funding Protocol and must be adapted to meet the particular grant scheme.
- 8.2. Services will request copies of invoices or receipts to show 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 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 Policy 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 policy sets out the scheme specific monitoring requirements.