

18 December 2018

Agenda Item: 10

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEES

UPDATE ON USE OF THE COUNCILLORS' DIVISIONAL FUND

Purpose of the Report

1. To present Committee with a six monthly update on the use of the Councillor's Divisional Fund (CDF) in the period April – September 2018.

Information and Advice

Background

2. The CDF is a specific budget which enables each County Councillor to put forward proposals for expenditure in their electoral divisions which accord with the strategic objectives of the Council. Such payments are subject to compliance with the requirements of the CDF Policy.
3. Each Councillor receives an annual allowance of £5,000 to spend within each financial year. Any funds remaining unspent within this budget at the end of the financial year will be returned to corporate balances.
4. As part of the revised CDF Policy agreed by Policy Committee on 18 July 2018, a new requirement was introduced for reports on the use of the CDF to be brought to this Committee on a six monthly basis. This is the first such report and Members' views are sought on the contents and the format of the report. Details of the applications received from Councillors during the period 1 April 2018 – 30 September 2018 are included at **Appendix A**.
5. The Policy also proposes that between 5-10 applications are audited annually to ensure that the monies provided have been spent in accordance with the application's proposals. The applications to be audited will be agreed with the Chairman of this Committee. The results of the audit will be included within the next six monthly update report to the Committee.

Relevant Issues

6. One other ongoing issue is the need to remind Councillors that payments must be for one-of items of expenditure rather than anything which could create an on-going financial commitment or which are, in effect, running costs of an organisation.

Future Developments

7. In response to Councillors' previous requests, work is underway to introduce a new electronic 'self-serve' software package so that Councillors (or their Group support officers) can input their applications remotely in future.
8. This new system should be less resource-intensive than the current arrangements and enable payments to be made in a more cost-effective and timely manner. It will also prompt Councillors to complete all sections of the forms which will help address continuing problems with the current hard copy forms only being partially completed.
9. It is hoped that the functionality of the system can be developed further in the future so that it will be possible to give a running record of funds available at the point of making an application.

Other Options Considered

10. None – the report provides an update on expenditure as required in the revised CDF policy.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. To update the Committee in line with the requirements of the CDF Policy and to highlight ongoing issues and future developments.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the Committee considers the CDF expenditure for the period April-September 2018 detailed in Appendix A.
- 2) That the outcomes of the planned audit exercise be included in the next six monthly update to the Committee.
- 3) That the plans to introduce a new electronic 'self-serve' system be supported.

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 3/12/2018)

Governance & Ethics Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

Financial Comments (RWK05/12/2018)

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All