

Record of individual Cabinet member decision

Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Decision made by	Councillor Maggie Filipova - Rivers
Key decision?	No
Date of decision (same as date form signed)	17 November 2020
Name and job title of officer requesting the decision	Suzi Wild, Community Liaison Officer
Officer contact details	Tel: 07919 381609 Email: suzi.wild@southandvale.gov.uk
Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the revised South Councillor Community Grant Scheme, as attached, to remove the restriction that excludes town and parish councils and parish meetings, with an annual grant scheme and/or giving budget, from applying. To open the South Councillor Community Grant Scheme on 20 November 2020.
Reasons for decision	<p>Each South Oxfordshire District Councillor has a budget of £5,000 to award to projects or services that benefit the communities in their ward.</p> <p>Officers check the eligibility of applications and prepare a short summary of each for councillor consideration and a funding decision.</p> <p>As part of this year's budget setting, councillors requested a review of the council's grant schemes. Due to the impact of Covid-19 this review remains on hold, as our resources are focused on responding to the pandemic and delivering statutory obligations. The councillor community grant scheme has yet to open this year, partly due to uncertainty about the Councils overall budget position prior to the recent Full Council decision and partly because of the availability of staff resource required to complete the review and action the scheme.</p> <p>Under the current grant scheme policy, town and parish</p>

	<p>councils and parish meetings are eligible to apply to the scheme unless they have their own grant scheme and/or giving budget.</p> <p>This eligibility restriction does not take into consideration the difference in the scale of grant schemes or grant giving budgets across South Oxfordshire town and parish councils and parish meetings. Schemes range from modest grant schemes or grant giving budgets with no formal grant policies or process to more generous formal grant schemes and giving budgets. Some town and parish councils who have small budgets or their own grant schemes have previously been disappointed at not being eligible to apply to the scheme.</p> <p>Whilst a full review of the scheme was originally intended, with the eligibility criteria for town and parish councils and parish meetings to form part of this review, it will not be possible to complete a large scale review of the scheme before the end of the current financial year. The minor amendment to the policy will address the concerns of some town and parish councils and recognises the variation in scale of grant scheme and giving budgets across the districts town and parish councils. The revised policy will remain in place until a full review of the grant scheme can take place.</p>
<p>Alternative options rejected</p>	<p>Not to revise the eligibility criteria for town and parish councils. This option was rejected as to not do so would be to continue assessing town and parish council eligibility against a grant policy that makes no allowance for or recognises the difference in the scale of grant scheme and grant giving budgets across South Oxfordshire town and parish councils and parish meetings.</p>
<p>Legal implications</p>	<p>Under normal circumstances Cabinet would approve such grants policy revisions. However, the Leader's Scheme of Delegation dated 23 June 2020 and included in the Constitution dated 1 November 2020 enables decisions to be taken by the relevant cabinet member In lieu of Cabinet.</p>
<p>Financial implications</p>	<p>Council initially allocated a revenue budget of £180,000 for the awarding of Individual Councillor Grants within the 2020-2021 budget. Whilst the impact of the COVID pandemic initially created the likelihood of an overspend position existing across the Council, additional overall budget funding was provided by the in-year budget increase approved by Council on October 8 2020, to address this, effectively permitting discretionary spend against identified budgets to continue or commence.</p> <p>The decision to open the South Individual Councillor Grant Scheme will commit the funding of £180,000 identified by Council to this purpose.</p> <p>Any council decision that has financial implications must be made with the knowledge of the council's overarching</p>

	<p>financial position. The position reflected in the council's medium-term financial plan (MTFP) as reported to Full Council in February 2020 showed that the council was due to receive £2.2 million less in revenue funding than it planned to spend in 2020/21 (with the balance coming from reserves including unallocated New Homes Bonus). Following the revised budget agreed in October, this has increased to £3.2 million.</p> <p>This funding gap was predicted to increase to over £6.5 million per annum by 2024/25. As there remains no certainty on future local government funding, following the announcement of a one-year spending review by government, and as the long-term financial consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic remain unknown, this gap could increase further.</p> <p>Every financial decision made needs to be cognisance of the need to eliminate this funding gap in future years.</p>			
<p>Other implications</p>	<p>Officers are mindful that the May 2021 election purdah period will start in late March 2021. The scheme closing date of 5 February 2021 has been set to allow applications to be processed and payments made before purdah.</p> <p>Councillors with any concerns over requests for funding from town and parish councils and parish meetings can continue to contact the community enablement team for advice.</p>			
<p>Background papers considered</p>	<p>n/a</p>			
<p>Declarations/conflict of interest? Declaration of other councillor/officer consulted by the Cabinet member?</p>				
<p>List consultees</p>		<p>Name</p>	<p>Outcome</p>	<p>Date</p>
	<p>Ward councillors</p>	<p>n/a</p>		
	<p>Legal</p>	<p>Pat Connell</p>	<p>Comments included in the report</p>	<p>11/11/2020</p>
	<p>Finance</p>	<p>Nicole Tyreman</p>	<p>Comments included in the report</p>	<p>10/11/2020</p>
	<p>Human resources</p>	<p>n/a</p>		
	<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>n/a</p>		
	<p>Diversity and equality</p>	<p>n/a</p>		
	<p>Climate and biodiversity</p>	<p>n/a</p>		
	<p>Communications</p>	<p>Andy Roberts</p>	<p>Communications</p>	<p>10/11/2020</p>

			team have the resource to support	
	Senior Management Team			13/11/2020
Confidential decision? If so, under which exempt category?	no			
Call-in waived by Scrutiny Committee chairman?	n/a			
Has this been discussed by Cabinet members?	Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers has discussed this with cabinet colleagues			
Cabinet portfolio holder's signature To confirm the decision as set out in this notice.	Approval by email Signature _____ Maggie Filipova-Rivers Date 17/11/2020			

ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY.

For Democratic Services office use only		
Form received	Date: 17 November 2020	Time: 3pm
Date published to all councillors	Date: 17 November 2020	
Call-in deadline	Not applicable as not key decision	

Guidance notes

1. This form must be completed by the lead officer who becomes the contact officer. The lead officer is responsible for ensuring that the necessary internal consultees have signed it off, including the chief executive. The lead officer must then seek the Cabinet portfolio holder's agreement and signature.
2. Once satisfied with the decision, the Cabinet portfolio holder must hand-sign and date the form and return it to the lead officer who should send it to Democratic Services immediately to allow the call-in period to commence.
Tel. 01235 422520 or extension 2520.
Email: democratic.services@southandvale.gov.uk
3. Democratic Services will then publish the decision to the website (unless it is confidential) and send it to all councillors to commence the call-in period (five clear working days) if it is a 'key' decision (see the definition of a 'key' decision below). A key decision cannot be implemented until the call-in period expires. The call-in procedure can be found in the council's constitution, part 4, under the Scrutiny Committee procedure rules.
4. Before implementing a key decision, the lead officer is responsible for checking with Democratic Services that the decision has not been called in.
5. If a key decision has been called in, Democratic Services will notify the lead officer and decision-maker. This call-in puts the decision on hold.
6. Democratic Services will liaise with the Scrutiny Committee chairman over the date of the call-in debate. The Cabinet portfolio holder will be requested to attend the Scrutiny Committee meeting to answer the committee's questions.
7. The Scrutiny Committee may:
 - refer the decision back to the Cabinet portfolio holder for reconsideration or
 - refer the matter to Council with an alternative set of proposals (where the final decision rests with full Council) or
 - accept the Cabinet portfolio holder's decision, in which case it can be implemented immediately.

Key decisions: assessing whether a decision should be classified as 'key'

The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils' Constitutions now have the same definition of a key decision:

A key decision is a decision of the Cabinet, an individual Cabinet member, or an officer acting under delegated powers, which is likely:

- (a) to incur expenditure, make savings or to receive income of more than £75,000;**

- (b) to award a revenue or capital grant of over £25,000; or**
- (c) to agree an action that, in the view of the chief executive or relevant head of service, would be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising more than one ward in the area of the council.**

Key decisions are subject to the scrutiny call-in procedure; non-key decisions are not and can be implemented immediately.

In assessing whether a decision should be classified as 'key', you should consider:

- (a) Will the expenditure, savings or income total more than £75,000 across all financial years?
- (b) Will the grant award to one person or organisation be more than £25,000 across all financial years?
- (c) Does the decision impact on more than one district council ward? And if so, is the impact significant? If residents or property affected by the decision is in one ward but is close to the border of an adjacent ward, it may have a significant impact on that second ward, e.g. through additional traffic, noise, light pollution, odour. Examples of significant impacts on two or more wards are:
 - Decisions to spend Didcot Garden Town funds (significant impact on more than one ward)
 - Changes to the household waste collection policy (affects all households in the district)
 - Reviewing a housing strategy (could have a significant impact on residents in many wards)
 - Adopting a supplementary planning document for a redevelopment site (could significantly affect more than one ward) or a new design guide (affects all wards)
 - Decisions to build new or improve existing leisure facilities (used by residents of more than one ward)

The overriding principle is that before 'key' decisions are made, they must be published in the Cabinet Work Programme for 28 calendar days. Classifying a decision as non-key when it should be a key decision could expose the decision to challenge and delay its implementation.