

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

Ward Committee Local Improvement Schemes Grant Applications

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Members of proposed changes to the Ward Committee local improvement schemes grant application process and to seek approval for the incorporation of the changes into a new Ward Committee grant application policy in respect of local improvement schemes.
2. The Executive Member is recommended to approve the proposed changes and adopt the local improvement schemes grant application policy as contained within the draft Ward Committee Grants Policy Guidance Notes and Application Form at Annex Three and Four.

Background

3. Each Ward Committee use their Ward Committee budgets to pay for the implementation of schemes and grant projects by not-for-profit organisations which either improve the physical environment or provide local services in the ward. In doing so the Ward Committees seek to improve their local area.
4. Each ward has identified ambitions and priorities for their local area (as set out in their Neighbourhood Action Plan) and the Council is committed to listening to communities to ensure that people have a greater say in deciding local priorities.
5. Schemes and grant projects can be suggested by local residents, Ward Councillors, community groups and other public organisations. Not-for-profit groups and organisations who are active locally can apply for grants for projects providing that they can show that they will benefit people living in the ward committee area. Ward Councillors make the decision on what schemes are funded taking into account ward priorities, residents' preferences and budget available. Information about possible projects are published in the ward newsletter, Your Ward, and all ward residents can vote to indicate their preference for the schemes that they would like to see funded in their ward.
6. A review of the Ward Committee local improvement scheme process has been undertaken to ensure that it is robust, consistent with best practice of other

Local Authorities and to ensure that local needs are met. The proposed amendments to the Ward Committee grant application process are detailed in Annex Two and will apply to applications for grant funding in the financial year 2009/10.

7. These amendments which have been incorporated into the Ward Committee Grants Policy guidance notes and application form seek to provide additional clarification and guidance to applicants including conditions that clearly set out the basis on which ward committee grant applications will be judged to ensure that grant money allocated by the Ward Committee is targeted at local needs.

Consultation

8. Voluntary and community sector groups have been asked to comment on the proposed changes to the Ward Committee grant application process. This includes all those who have applied for grants in the past three years and through the York Compact. The eight-week consultation period ends on Friday 14th March. A copy of the letter is attached at Annex One. Members will receive a verbal report and details of the comments received at the meeting of Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel.

Options

9. After consideration of the verbal report as to the consultation exercise the options for Members are to:
 - a) Option One – To implement the amended terms and conditions in respect of Ward Committee local improvement schemes grant applications as recommended in paragraph 2 and Annex Three and Four.
 - b) Option Two – Not to implement the terms and conditions in the Ward Committee local improvement schemes grant applications as recommended in paragraph 2 and Annex Three and Four.

Analysis

10. In examining their options Members will want to ensure that Ward Committee grant application process is transparent, reflects best practice, is aligned to other similar local authority schemes and ensure that the grant money allocated by the Ward Committee is targeted at local needs. Option One supports this. Option Two maintains the existing system, and does not include the amendments.

Corporate Priorities

11. Ward Committee local improvement schemes support the Council's Corporate Strategy. By updating and incorporating a transparent policy within the process this demonstrates the Corporate Values of:
 - Delivering what our customers want

- Supporting and developing people
- Encouraging improvement in everything we do

They also support a number of the 10 year Direction Statements including:

- Listening to communities and ensuring that people have a greater say in deciding local priorities

In addition they contribute to the Corporate Priorities, namely:

- Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces
- Reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York

Implications

11.

- **Financial** – To be met from existing budgets.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – None.
- **Equalities** – There are no equalities implications. The views of voluntary and community groups will be taken into account.
- **Legal** – None.
- **Crime and Disorder** – None.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – None.
- **Property** – None.
- **Other** – None.

Risk Management

12. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy. The main risk relates to not being transparent in the policy and application of the grant process. This could lead to damage to the Council's image and reputation and failure to meet the public and partners' expectations.

Recommendations

13. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to:

Approve Option One to enable the incorporation of the proposed changes into a new Ward Committee grant application policy in respect of local improvement schemes.

Reason: To ensure transparency of policy and process in the application of Ward Committee local improvement schemes grant applications.

Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 19.2.2008

Specialist Implications Officer(s) : None

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Ward Committee Local Improvement Schemes 2008/09 Application Form and Information Sheet

Annexes

Annex One – Letter to Consultees

Annex Two – Proposed amendments to the Ward Committee Grant Application Process

Annex Three - Draft Ward Committee Grants Policy Guidance Notes

Annex Four – Ward Committee Application Form 2009/2010