



**Finance, Governance and Staff Committee Meeting  
19<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

**Report for Approval**

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 To ask that the Committee considers allocating a proportion of the Council's Discretionary Grants Fund each year to accessibility projects

**2.0 Background Information**

2.1 In November 2020 the Council approved the Council's draft Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan. Action number 11. In the Action Plan states :

**“Review the Council's grants programme to examine the possibility of specific grants to deal with Disability Access issues”**

2.2 The Grants programme budget is currently comprised of yearly Service Level Agreement Grants totalling £56,071 and a one off small grants budget of £20,000. With the latter there is a spending limit of £1,000 per grant unless exceptional circumstances apply at the discretion of the Council

2.3 Both schemes are required to state how any Grant award will meet the needs of people with Disabling Conditions. Although most applications try to accommodate this requirement some are more disability friendly than others due in part to the nature of the activity.

2.4 What is missing from these arrangements are specific interventions which would assist people with disabilities more generally as they access the outside world. Some examples include :

- More Access ramps in order that wheelchair users can access shops and community venues
- Equipment in Community venues ( e.g. The Hoist for the Swimming Pool at the Leisure Centre )
- More dropped kerbs in public places
- Improvements to signage to assist people with visual impairments
- Hearing loop facilities in public places
- Software to provide subtitles and talk facilities for videos produced by Community Groups

2.5 Therefore, Members are asked to consider whether they agree in principle to allocating a percentage of the small grants budget specifically to help fund Disability Access projects and arrangements which can benefit a range of people rather than specific individuals as the examples at paragraph 2.4 suggest.



2.6 If Members are in agreement then some criteria will need to be developed and consultation with local Disability Groups will need to take place with the main criteria being :

- An application can be made by an individual or a community group or community organization
- The proposal must be fully costed with the contribution from the Council being clearly identified
- The proposal cannot be used to support the needs of a particular individual, it must have a wider community impact as indicated in the examples at 2.4
- Where the request is for a project which lies within the remit of another organization ( e.g. a dropped kerb ) then any necessary permissions or approvals must be sought prior to applying to the Council for funding support.

2.7 In terms of the percentage of the Grants budget which should be allocated to Disability Access issues Members may wish to discuss this. It is suggested that a figure of 20% would be a sensible figure as £4000 would potentially help to fund 4 projects a year if a limit of £1000 is imposed for each project.

### **3.0 Legislation**

3.1 The core piece of appropriate Legislation is the Equality Act of 2010  
N/A

### **4.0 Accessibility Implications**

4.1 The report focuses exclusively on Accessibility issues.

### **5.0 Climate Emergency Implications**

5.1 None directly

### **6.0 Financial Implications**

6.1 Although the report does not suggest any increases or decreases in overall budget amounts the report does recommend that part of the small Grants budget is ringfenced for Accessibility projects

### **7.0 Recommendation(s)**

7.1 Members consider whether or not to allocate a percentage of the small grants budget for Accessibility projects

7.2 If Members agree to recommendation 7.1 they further consider what percentage of the overall budget is appropriate to be ringfenced, and;

7.3 The Accessibility Working Group carries out consultation with Disability Groups on the principle and draft scheme criteria prior to a final report being submitted to Full Council for approval.



**Reasons for recommendation(s)**

Full Council approved the Accessibility Strategy Action Plan in November 2020 including the action to consider whether the grants programme should be reviewed in order to consider whether to allocate funding to Accessibility projects