

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report

For further information on undertaking and completing an Equality Impact Assessment, please see the [guidance](#).

Name of policy/ procedure/ function/ service being assessed:	SHIRE Community and Participatory Grant funding
Department and Section:	Chief Executive's Dept, Communities and Places Team
Name of lead officer and others completing this assessment:	Mike Thomson/Derk Van Der Wardt
Contact telephone numbers:	0116 305 7090/7581
Date EIA assessment completed:	January 2014

Step 1: Defining the policy/ procedure/ function/ service

Using the information gathered within the Equality Questionnaire, you should begin this full EIA by defining and outlining its scope. The EIA should consider the impact or likely impact of the policy in relation to all areas of equality, diversity and human rights, as outlined in the Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy of Leicestershire County Council.

What are the main aims, purpose and objectives of the policy/ procedure/ function/ service? How will they be achieved?
The proposal is to cut funding for community grants managed by Chief Executive's Department by 50% in order to contribute to the County Council's overall savings requirements over the period of the MTFs to 2017/18. The reduction in funding is proposed to be implemented in 2014/15 and to be accompanied by a restructure of grant funds to more effectively and efficiently manage remaining resources.
What are the main activities relating to this policy/ procedure/ function/ service and distinguish who is likely to benefit from these activities.
The main activity is to replace the following grant schemes with new schemes also identified below. Schemes to be replaced; Big Society Grant Fund - £340,000 SHIRE Community building Grant - £124,000 SHIRE Environmental Grant - £66,800 Community Forum Budgets - £320,000 New schemes to be introduced for 2014/15; SHIRE Community Grant - £260,000 A participatory community fund - £160,000 The SHIRE grant is proposed to provide funding to community groups and the participatory fund is proposed to provide smaller scale funding allocated through a participatory process.
What outcomes are expected?
The primary outcome will be to achieve financial savings for the County Council from reduced grant budgets. As a result of the reduced budgets the number of projects that can be supported, and the amount of benefits achieved throughout the community, will be reduced.

Step 2: Potential Impact

Use the table below to specify if any service users or staff who identify with any of the 'protected characteristics' below will be affected by the policy/ procedure/ service you are proposing (indicate all that apply) and describe why and what barriers these individuals or groups may face.

Who is affected and what barriers may these individuals or groups face?	
Age	The ability of people to benefit from the replacement grant schemes may be differentially affected by reason of age. This could occur because of reduced funding availability and because a relatively higher proportion of existing grant funds has been allocated to young people and older people (as identified in grants research referenced in Section 3 below). Reduced funding for projects by voluntary groups is expected to reduce volunteering opportunities and this could potentially have a greater impact on older people who may be more likely to volunteer.
Disability	The ability of people to benefit from the replacement grant schemes may be differentially affected by reason of disability. This could occur because of reduced funding availability and because a relatively higher proportion of existing grant funds has been allocated to vulnerable people including those with a disability (as identified in grants research referenced in Section 3 below).
Gender Reassignment	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Pregnancy and Maternity	
Race	
Religion or Belief	
Sex	
Sexual Orientation	
Other groups e.g. rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities	The ability of people to benefit from the replacement grant schemes may be differentially affected by reason of other factors including rural isolation, health inequality and deprivation/disadvantage. This could occur because of reduced funding availability and because a relatively higher proportion of existing grant funds has been allocated to vulnerable people (as identified in grants research referenced in Section 3 below). In addition one of the existing grant schemes provides funding specifically for community buildings; Many rural buildings provide the only meeting and activity space for rural communities and in urban areas community buildings often serve deprived neighbourhoods. Reduced funding for projects by voluntary groups is expected to reduce volunteering opportunities and this could potentially have a greater impact on vulnerable people for whom volunteering opportunities may be particularly important in terms of developing skills, community links etc.
Community Cohesion	The existing grant schemes have helped to build community

cohesion by prioritising support for community buildings and projects which foster cohesion by providing community meeting space, encouraging participation in community activity and developing links within the community. Reduced funding availability could diminish the ability of grant funds to contribute to community cohesion.

Step 3: Data Collection & Evidence

In relation to your related findings in 'Step Two' are your presumptions on these barriers based on any existing research, data evidence or other information?

What evidence, research, data and other information do you have which will be relevant to this EIA?

What does this information / data tell you about each of the diverse groups?

The County Council's consultation on its Medium Term Financial Strategy was carried out over the summer of 2013 and sought the views of residents, stakeholders and County Council staff on how the Council could meet its savings requirement of £110million and reshape services for the future. In terms of grants to communities the consultation identified that funding for such grants was one of the lowest priorities when compared to other service areas and there was a greater willingness to see funding reductions in this area. The proposal to reduce grant budgets by 50% reflects this consultation response.

A more detailed analysis of the consultation results has shown that within the above response men and people of pre-retirement age (45-64) living in villages or more isolated areas are significantly more likely to feel that grants to communities should be cut a great deal. Those groups who are significantly more likely to feel that the budget should not be cut at all include younger respondents and those living in more deprived areas of the County (this could indicate that community grants are more valued by, and of greater value to, younger people and those living in deprived communities).

An analysis of existing grant schemes (winter 2013/14) has identified the range and nature of outcomes achieved by projects and thematic beneficiaries. The analysis has identified that a relatively higher proportion of grant support is directed at benefits/outcomes for young people, vulnerable people and older people and for rural and disadvantaged communities.

A Community Building Survey, carried out January 2013, has identified a strong demand for funding for community venues.

What further research, data or evidence may be required to fill any gaps in your understanding of the potential or known affects of the policy?

Have you considered carrying out new data or research?

Feedback will be sought from grant applicants via satisfaction surveys. The impact of grant schemes will be monitored in terms of the type of project and groups supported.

Step 4: Consultation and Involvement

When considering how you to consult and involve people as part of the proposed policy/ procedure/ function/ service, it is important to think about the service users and staff who may be affected as part of the proposal.

Have you consulted on this policy/ procedure/ function or service?

Outline any consultation and the outcomes of the consultation in relation to this EIA.

Community consultation has been carried out via the Medium Term Financial Strategy consultation and the survey of community building management groups as outlined above.

Do any of the barriers you identified *actually* exist based on this consultation?

The revised grant schemes will provide reduced access to grant funds as a result of reduced funding availability. Whilst this change will reduce the extent to which outcomes can be achieved for communities as a whole it could, if implemented without mitigating changes to the aims, objectives, criteria and assessment processes of replacement schemes, disproportionately disadvantage groups representing young people, older people and vulnerable people and rural and disadvantaged communities in terms of access to funds to achieve benefits for these groups.

Step 5: Mitigating and assessing the impact

In relation to any research, data, consultation and information you have reviewed and/or carried out as part of this EIA, it is now essential to assess the impact of the policy/ procedure/ function/ service and distinguish whether a particular group could be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?

If you consider there to be actual or potential adverse impact or discrimination, please outline this below. State whether it is justifiable or legitimate and give reasons.

Reduced access to grant funding for the above groups could potentially result in an adverse impact for those sections of the community that they represent. Design of replacement grant schemes will however take account of, and seek to mitigate, this potential impact. Delivery of the service will have due regard to eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity.

N.B.

a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.

b) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.

What can be done to change the policy/ procedure/ function/ service to mitigate any adverse impact?

Consider what barriers you can remove, whether reasonable adjustments may be necessary and how any unmet needs that you have identified can be addressed.

In order to mitigate the potential differential impact identified above it is proposed that the development and design of replacement grant schemes will reflect opportunities to mitigate potential impacts through consideration of the aims, objectives, criteria and assessment processes for replacement schemes.

Implementation of the grant schemes will encourage social cohesion and will be accompanied by promotion of opportunities to all sections of the community and provision of advice, guidance and signposting to assist both eligible and ineligible applicants/enquiries.

Step 6: Making a decision

Summarise your findings and give an overview of whether the policy will meet Leicestershire County Council's responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and human rights.

The above findings indicate that there is the potential for differential impacts associated with the transition to revised grant schemes and that the measures identified in Step 5 should be taken to minimise the potential for these impacts.

**Step 7: Monitoring, evaluation & review of your policy/
procedure/service change**

How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the new policy/ procedure/ service change and what monitoring systems will you put in place to monitor this and to promote equality of opportunity and make positive improvements?

The effectiveness of service changes will be monitored via ongoing community consultation including feedback forms, discussion with community groups, web site feedback etc.

How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes?

e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.

The recommendations of this assessment will be built into the planning and design of the grant schemes.

Equality Improvement Plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from the Equality Impact Assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equality Objective	Action	Target	Officer Responsible	By when
Enable participation opportunities for young people, older people, vulnerable people and rural and disadvantaged communities.	Design replacement grant schemes to take account of equalities objectives, including those identified through the EIA process, alongside other County Council policy objectives.	The aims, objectives, criteria and assessment processes for replacement schemes reflect consideration of equalities impacts.	Andy Hayes /Suzanne Kinder/Noel Singh/ /Derk Van Der Wardt/ Nicole Rickard	March 2014
Enable participation opportunities for young people, older people, vulnerable people and rural and disadvantaged communities.	Provide assistance to both eligible and ineligible applicants/enquiries including by provision of advice, guidance and signposting to complementary services and grant schemes.	All sections of the community are assisted to implement projects.	Andy Hayes /Kevin Butcher (RCC)	In conjunction with the launch of grant schemes - Spring 2014 and on-going.

Update and develop service provision as necessary taking account of equalities impacts.	Monitor the equalities impact of service delivery through analysis of grant awards and consultation with communities including user feedback forms, web questionnaire and community meetings.	Maintain up to date intelligence on equalities impacts.	Andy Hayes /Suzanne Kinder/Noel Singh/ /Derk Van Der Wardt/ Nicole Rickard	On-going
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1st Authorised Signature (EIA Lead):Mike Thomson..... Date: January 2014...

2nd Authorised Signature (Member of DMT): Date: January 2014...

Once completed, please send a copy of this form to the Departmental Equalities Group for quality assurance. Once authorised, this Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report will need to be published on our website. Please send a copy of this form to the Members Secretariat in the Chief Executives Department to louisa.jordan@leics.gov.uk.

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