

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

9 MAY 2023

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND CHANGE

GRANTS FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval of the updated Grants Financial Management Policy at **Appendix A** and to confirm the grant acceptance approval finance authorised signatories for the Council.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

- 2.2 The Grants Financial Management Policy puts in place processes to ensure the appropriate use of grant funding to support the Council in the delivery of its services. It also puts in place processes to ensure that any grant funding received complies with audit requirements and seeks to ensure integration with other policies and processes.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has in place a Grants Financial Management Policy as approved by Cabinet on 23 July 2019. As a result of an internal audit review of the Capital Programme, and a requirement for the Council to have in place a Policy for the Awarding of Grants in relation to the Welsh Language, it is necessary to update the Grants Financial Management Policy.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 Following an internal audit review of the Capital Programme, a recommendation was made that the Policy should include reference to seeking approvals where a grant offer is changed, and in particular increased, to ensure that all appropriate approvals for grant funding are in place. To reflect this recommendation, the current Policy has been updated at Page 8 setting out that where there are variations to approved grant and/or project value, reapproval of the revised scheme and costs must be sought. The following has been included:

Variations to approved grant

Where there are variations to approved grant and/or project value, you must seek reapproval of the revised scheme costs and grant funding in line with Section 1.0 or 2.0 above. Changes in funding may have an impact on Council resources, particularly where a scheme increases in cost but the grant funding is fixed, or where grant funding is reduced. Furthermore, if additional grant is awarded it will be necessary to seek a further delegated power to accept the grant and ensure that the approval process as set out in this Policy is followed.

- 4.2 The Policy has also been updated to take account of the Awarding Grants protocol in relation to the Welsh Language, which is reflected at page 19-20 of the revised Policy. The Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 requires the Council to ensure that application information is produced in Welsh and that any applications received in Welsh are not treated less favourably than those in English. It also requires that if the applicant wishes to undertake any or all of the process in Welsh that the Council must ensure that this is undertaken. The following has been added to the Policy:

The Council has in place a Protocol on Awarding Grants in line with the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, which must be considered. When awarding a grant you must consider the effects on:

- *opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and*
- *treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language*

for each of the following:

- *what effects, if any (and whether positive or negative), the awarding of a grant would have*
- *how the decision could be taken or implemented (for example by imposing conditions of grant) so that it would have positive effects, or increased positive effects*
- *how the decision could be taken or implemented (for example by imposing conditions of grant) so that it would not have adverse effects, or so that it would have decreased adverse effects*
- *whether you need to ask the applicant for any additional information in order to assist you in assessing the effects of awarding a grant*

- 4.3 Part of the governance arrangements noted within the Grants Financial Management Policy also require having in place finance signatories to formally accept any offer of grant. The officers that are authorised to sign grant applications and acceptances are:

- Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change
- Deputy Head of Finance
- Group Manager – Chief Accountant
- Group Manager – Budget Management

- 4.4 The Policy has also been updated to reflect the Council's revised Wellbeing Objectives.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 This report is to approve an updated Grants Financial Management Policy.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. link to Socio-economic Duty, Welsh language requirements, and equality impact assessments. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. As the report is for information it is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Grants Financial Management Policy at **Appendix A** and the list of finance officers as per paragraph 4.3.

Carys Lord
Chief Officer – Finance, Performance and Change
May 2023

Contact officer: Nigel Smith
Group Manager – Chief Accountant

Telephone: (01656) 643605

Email: nigel.smith@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal address: Civic Offices, Angel Street, BRIDGEND. CF31 4WB

Background documents: None