



Subject:	Discretionary Payments Framework
Date:	23 rd May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Contact Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To consider the reintroduction of the framework of the management of discretionary payment requests which do not fall within existing Council funding schemes.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed Discretionary Payments Framework detailed in this report. 2. On the basis of recommendation 1 being agreed, to set a discretionary payment limit of £431,972 for the 2025/26 budget.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will recall at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24 th November 2023, a new set of criteria for Discretionary Payments was agreed, based on the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis.
3.2	<p>Prior to this, the Council had a Discretionary Payment Framework in place to assist it in dealing with requests from external groups throughout the year for non-recurrent funding which does not fall within one of the Council's normal grant or other funding processes. This framework had been agreed at the SP&R meeting of 17th August 2018, attached at Appendix 1.</p>
3.3	In order to manage the discretionary payment requests which do not fall within existing Council funding schemes it is proposed that members agree to the re-instatement of the framework for the 2025/26 and future financial years.
3.4	<p>As part of the framework, and as part of the half year and year end position reporting of the Council to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Director of Finance will, after considering the level of financial risk and in discussion with the Chief Executive, recommend to the Committee the amount of underspend which could be re-allocated, together with areas of priority for such re-allocation and the amount of funding that could be applied to discretionary payments if the committee so wished.</p>
3.5	The calculation of the limit on total allocations allowable in any year, was based on a product of the domestic and non-domestic rate as detailed in Section 40 of the Local Government Finance (NI) Act 2011 and is included as Appendix 1.
3.6	Using the rate product calculation (appendix 2) a limit of £431,972 would be applicable for re-allocations from any under-spend arising from the 2025/26 revenue estimates.
	Next Steps if Framework is Agreed
3.7	If the reintroduction of the framework is agreed, then information on discretionary payments will be published on the Council website. It will be emphasised that there is no designated fund, but that if in year resources become available for re-allocation then an amount may

	be set aside by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for discretionary payments and that this will normally be considered at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June and November.
3.8	The application form used previously to be completed by those organisations wishing to submit a funding request, will be reviewed and updated if needed, which will allow the request to be assessed by officers against the agreed criteria.
3.9	A Committee report will be presented to the November (Half-Year) and June (Year-End) Committees outlining resources available, if any, up to the limit available for discretionary payments and a summary of applications received which meet the criteria.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.10	There are no implications associated with this report
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.11	There are no implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Discretionary Payments Committee Report SP&R 17 August 2018 Appendix 2: In Year Re-allocation Limit Calculation