Section Five - Locality Budgets Operating Principles

General Guidance

Each Member of the County Council is allocated an annual budget to be applied within the 'operating principles' approved by the Council, as set out below. It is a matter for each Member to determine how his/her budget is allocated subject to a number of overriding principles to ensure financial probity, value for money and accountability. Members are encouraged to be proactive in considering the kinds of activity which would most benefit their areas, rather than waiting to be lobbied by active local groups.

Locality Budgets Operating Principles

The use of such funds is likely to vary from one area to another, in part reflecting the **diverse** nature of Devon's communities. Furthermore, there are some parts of Devon in which various external funding designations mean there are different possibilities for matched funding (e.g. the Objective 2 area).

A decision should be backed by evidence of need to ensure that the project seeking support cannot be easily funded from another source (the principle of "investor of last resort") and should demonstrate:

- consistency with (and be not contrary to) the council's current policies,
- evidence of value for money (perhaps measured in part by match-funding leverage secured),
- evidence of proper procurement practices,
- transparency and accountability, and
- the extent to which the investment encourages or triggers partnership working.

A Member may choose to allocate funds individually or jointly with another Member or to 'pool' a proportion of his/her budget with a like amount by other Members through any formal mechanism established by the Council (e.g. a Locality (County) Committee, Link or Cluster) or any other locally agreed arrangement. .

Areas for which the locality budget may not be used*:*

Funding of individuals.

Reinstating a cut in a county council service or activity arising from an earlier policy decision of the County Council or other public body excepting where any one-off funding is required to mitigate the immediate impact of any such service reduction where a creative alternative solution has been found that in other respects meets the operating principles, provided also that there is no commitment upon the Council or Member to provide on-going support.

On-going yearly commitments, unless specifically agreed by the Cabinet in advance.

Approval and Monitoring of Allocations

The Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment & Prosperity or Officers nominated by them can provide support and guidance on ensuring that the principles of this scheme are met when decisions to invest are made.

Any allocation shall be dependent upon the recipient(s) formally agreeing to spend the funding on the activity/scheme specified in the application form, return any unspent monies and provide the relevant Member(s) with a simple statement of how the funding has benefited the organisation and/or local community so that Members are able to identify the success, or otherwise, of the funding granted.

A cumulative statement of allocations approved by a Member (or Members acting jointly) will be made available for public inspection on the Council's website and an Annual Report/Statement shall be submitted to the Cabinet and the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee for audit and monitoring purposes.

Carry forward of unallocated funds

The present practice of the Council is to allow carry forwards in members' locality budgets from one year to the next.

Members Interests

It will sometimes happen that a member has an interest in an organisation or project they wish to support. There is no reason why that organisation/project should automatically be excluded simply for that reason. In those circumstances a Member, or Members where acting jointly, shall make a recommendation to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Cabinet indicating the extent of their interest. The Chair or Vice-Chair will then make a decision in the light of that submission with the presumption that consent should not unreasonably be withheld.