

Equality Impact Assessment

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and why does the County Council do them?

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) is an obligation within the [Equality Act 2010](#) (“the Act”), which asks public authorities, like Hampshire County Council, to give ‘due regard’ to equality considerations, in particular to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This includes assessing the impact of policies and practices on individuals and communities with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Act and some other specific groups. The County Council uses EIAs to ensure it has paid ‘due regard’ to equalities considerations when there are changes to a service or policy, a new project or certain decisions.

EIA author	Position & Department	Contact
Alice Kendall-Ashton	Project Manager Hampshire 2050	alice.kendall-ashton@hants.gov.uk

Title:	County Councillor Grants Review
Related EIAs:	None
EIA for Savings Programme:	Yes EIA - Hampshire 2050 - County Councillor Grants Review - 2025/08/22
Service affected	County Councillor Grants Scheme.
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	Hampshire County Council offers a ‘County Councillor Grant Scheme’ which provides a budget of £8,000 per County Councillor to allocate to local projects, organisations and initiatives within their division. The scheme is a discretionary activity of the County Council and there is no legal requirement for the expenditure. Members may allocate funds to a wide range of projects which support the County Council’s Strategic Aims. Given that the Grants are discretionary in nature and the criterion for awards is broad, there are a wide range of types of projects and schemes funded. In December 2024, the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services agreed that a review of the current County Councillor Grant Scheme should take place, to start following the completion of the 2024/2025 grant award window. The paper confirmed that the review would be conducted through the lens of the organisation’s core purpose, noting the discretionary nature of the grant scheme. It was agreed that the

	<p>2025/2026 County Councillor Grant Scheme will not be opened until the outcomes of this review have been reviewed and considered, which will inform decisions about the future operation of the Scheme. This project included a review of the scheme that was conducted to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the scheme and covered the nature of the awards, the degree to which they meet the grant criteria, and the relative benefits they deliver. The aim of the review was to help determine whether the scheme continues to meet its objectives and inform decisions about its future operation, ensuring it aligns with the County Council's core purpose. A Task and Finish Working Group was established by the Hampshire 2050, Corporate Services and Resources Select Committee to oversee and scrutinise the approach and outcomes of the County Councillor Grant Scheme Review, providing a report on its activities to the Select Committee for consideration, as part of the pre-scrutiny process. The review involved data analysis of four years of grant awards, feedback from all County Councillors on their experiences of the scheme, comparative analysis on the operation of similar schemes in other authorities, professional advice from officers involved in scheme administration, and scrutiny by the Task and Finish Working Group.</p>
<p>New/changed service/policy/project</p>	<p>It is recommended that the County Councillor Grants Scheme be discontinued with immediate effect, noting the discretionary nature of the grant scheme and in the context of the County Council's significant budget deficit. However, recognising the value the scheme delivers, it is also acknowledged that Cabinet may wish for it to continue. Should this be the case, the scheme should continue with amendments to address specific issues identified during the review, as outlined in option 3 of the recommendation options considered. These take into account the suggestions of the Task and Finish Group and advice from officers who administer the scheme. These changes aim to reduce the scheme's annual cost, update the criteria to ensure relevance, and maximise its impact for local communities. Implementing these changes would require system amendments and additional officer time. These changes aim to ensure the scheme continues to deliver effectively against the Council's four strategic outcomes.</p>

<p>Engagement</p>
<p>This project did not require public consultation but did include Member consultation. A consultation form was shared with all County Councillors to understand their views on the scheme, with responses informing the recommendations on this report. The survey ran between 27 May and 15 June, with a follow up email being sent on 9 June.</p> <p>45 responses were submitted from Councillors (43 via the survey and 2 via email). County Councillors expressed strong support for the scheme through the consultation, citing its value in addressing local needs, supporting vulnerable groups, and enhancing community cohesion. County Councillors provided suggestions for how to deliver the scheme within a reduced budget, which included changing grant criteria, reducing the overall budget for the grant scheme and providing less support to organisations who already have access to other sources of funding.</p> <p>A Task and Finish Working Group was established by the Hampshire 2050, Corporate Services and Resources Select Committee to oversee and scrutinise the approach and outcomes of the County Councillor Grant Scheme Review, providing a report on its activities to the Select Committee for consideration, as part of the pre-scrutiny process.</p> <p>The Task and Finish Working Group met three times in May and June and in these meetings covered the background of the scheme, approach to the review and member</p>

engagement; reviewed grant data from the last 4 years of awards; and reviewed the consultation responses and discussed the Working Group recommendations. They unanimously concluded that the scheme should continue, however did provide suggestions for a modified scheme should it continue, around which no specific consensus were reached. The feedback from the Task & Finish Working Group will be outlined in a paper they are taking to Select Committee on the 18 September 2025.

Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Within the application form, applicants to this grant scheme are asked to identify where their project is targeted to certain protected characteristics. Across a sample three-year timescale, age was most commonly cited (12.67% of funded projects across the three years). This includes projects targeted at older people, as well as at children and young people, with awards to Scouts/Guides and from Schools/Nurseries each representing an average of 4% of awards made over the last five years. Without this grant opportunity in the future, similar projects may be delayed while other sources of funding are secured or, where this is not possible, may not be able to proceed, reducing local opportunity for older people and for children and young people.</p> <p>However, the purpose of this funding is to support short term project related costs and not designed to support core services for people with this protected characteristic, so although the public impact could be negative, it will be low. Stopping the scheme will not result in harm, non-compliance with standards or legislation and/or totally unacceptable standard of service, as this is a discretionary activity of the County Council and there is no legal requirement for the expenditure.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Organisations can apply to other national and local funding bodies and/or seek local business sponsorship or fundraising.</p> <p>Recognising the value the scheme delivers, it is acknowledged that Cabinet may wish for it to continue. Should this be the case, the report includes a set of recommendations designed to address specific issues identified during the review. If the scheme continues, these recommendations mitigate against the impacts outlined above as future grants may support projects that benefit individuals with this protected characteristic.</p>

Disability

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral

Rationale	<p>Within the application form, applicants to this grant scheme are asked to identify where their project is targeted to certain protected characteristics. Across a sample three-year timescale, disability was the second most commonly cited characteristic (6.72% of funded projects across the three years). Without this grant opportunity in the future, similar projects may be delayed while other sources of funding are secured or, where this is not possible, may not be able to proceed, reducing local opportunity for residents with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>However, the purpose of this funding is to support short term project related costs and not designed to support core services for people with this protected characteristic, so although the public impact could be negative, it will be low. Stopping the scheme will not result in harm, non-compliance with standards or legislation and/or totally unacceptable standard of service, as this is a discretionary activity of the County Council and there is no legal requirement for the expenditure.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Organisations can apply to other national and local funding bodies and/or seek local business sponsorship or fundraising.</p> <p>Recognising the value the scheme delivers, it is acknowledged that Cabinet may wish for it to continue. Should this be the case, the report includes a set of recommendations designed to address specific issues identified during the review. If the scheme continues, these recommendations mitigate against the impacts outlined above as future grants may support projects that benefit individuals with this protected characteristic.</p>

Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Analysis of trends of awards made through this grants scheme over a sample three-year timescale does not suggest any targeted activity in relation to gender reassignment has been supported. Removal of this funding opportunity does not have a positive or negative impact on this protected characteristic overall.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Desk based research has been undertaken to understand what other boroughs and districts in Hampshire offer grants and could fund organisations, groups and activities in Hampshire that could support/enhance the lives of those with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>As part of the project, Members are being engaged with. This will include consulting them on suggestions as to how the County Council could continue to support the activities enabled by the County Councillor Grant scheme, should this be withdrawn.</p>

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>A number of awards made through this grant scheme (less than 4%) over the last five years have been made to Schools/Nurseries. These projects may include targeted support for new parents. Without this grant opportunity in the future, similar projects may be delayed while other sources of funding are secured or, where this is not possible, may not be able to proceed, reducing local opportunity for residents with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>However, the purpose of this funding is to support short term project related costs and not designed to support core services for people with this protected characteristic, so although the public impact could be negative, it will be low. Stopping the scheme will not result in harm, non-compliance with standards or legislation and/or totally unacceptable standard of service, as this is a discretionary activity of the County Council and there is no legal requirement for the expenditure.</p>
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Race

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Analysis of trends of awards made through this grants scheme over a sample three-year timescale suggests less than 1.5% of awarded projects have included any targeted activity on the basis of race. Without this grant opportunity in the future, similar projects may be delayed while other sources of funding are secured or, where this is not possible, may not be able to proceed, reducing local opportunity for residents with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>However, the purpose of this funding is to support short term project related costs and not designed to support core services for people with this protected characteristic, so although the public impact could be negative, it will be low. Stopping the scheme will not result in harm, non-compliance with standards or legislation and/or totally unacceptable standard of service, as this is a discretionary activity of the County Council and there is no legal requirement for the expenditure.</p>

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Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Analysis of trends of awards made through this grants scheme over a sample three-year timescale suggests less than 1% of awarded projects have included any targeted activity on the basis of religion or belief. While approximately 3% of awards over the last five years have been made to Churches, criteria for the grant scheme makes it clear that applications from religious bodies are only eligible where the project will bring wider community benefit. Removal of this funding opportunity does not have a positive or negative impact on this protected characteristic overall.
Mitigation	Desk based research has been undertaken to understand what other boroughs and districts in Hampshire offer grants and could fund organisations, groups and activities in Hampshire that could support/enhance the lives of those with this protected characteristic. As part of the project, Members are being engaged with. This will include consulting them on suggestions as to how the County Council could continue to support the activities enabled by the County Councillor Grant scheme, should this be withdrawn.

Sex

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Analysis of trends of awards made through this grants scheme over a sample three-year timescale suggests less than 1% of awarded projects have included any targeted activity on the basis of sex or gender. Removal of this funding opportunity does not have a significant positive or negative impact on this protected characteristic overall.
Mitigation	Desk based research has been undertaken to understand what other boroughs and districts in Hampshire offer grants and could fund organisations, groups and activities in Hampshire that could support/enhance the lives of those with this protected characteristic. As part of the project, Members are being engaged with. This will include consulting them on suggestions as to how the County Council could

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Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Analysis of trends of awards made through this grants scheme over a sample three-year timescale suggests approximately 0.15% of awarded projects have included any targeted activity on the basis of sexual orientation. Removal of this funding opportunity does not have a significant positive or negative impact on this protected characteristic overall.
Mitigation	<p>Desk based research has been undertaken to understand what other boroughs and districts in Hampshire offer grants and could fund organisations, groups and activities in Hampshire that could support/enhance the lives of those with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>As part of the project, Members are being engaged with. This will include consulting them on suggestions as to how the County Council could continue to support the activities enabled by the County Councillor Grant scheme, should this be withdrawn.</p>

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	Analysis of trends of awards made through this grants scheme over a sample three-year timescale does not suggest any targeted activity in relation to marriage and civil partnership has been supported. Removal of this funding opportunity does not have a positive or negative impact on this protected characteristic overall.
Mitigation	<p>Organisations can apply to other national and local funding bodies and/or seek local business sponsorship or fundraising.</p> <p>Recognising the value the scheme delivers, it is acknowledged that Cabinet may wish for it to continue. Should this be the case, the report includes a set of recommendations designed to address specific issues identified during the review. These take into account the suggestions of the Task and Finish Working Group and advice from officers who administer the scheme. If the scheme continues, these recommendations mitigate against the impacts outlined above as future grants may support projects that benefit individuals with this protected characteristic.</p>

Poverty

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral

Rationale	<p>Over the last five years, approximately 1% of awards have been made to Food Bank projects. Without this grant opportunity in the future, similar projects may be delayed while other sources of funding are secured or, where this is not possible, may not be able to proceed, reducing local opportunity for residents with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>However, the purpose of this funding is to support short term project related costs and not designed to support core services for people with this protected characteristic, so although the public impact could be negative, it will be low. Stopping the scheme will not result in harm, non-compliance with standards or legislation and/or totally unacceptable standard of service, as this is a discretionary activity of the County Council and there is no legal requirement for the expenditure.</p>
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Rurality

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Over the last five years, approximately 1% of awards have been made to Fetes, Country Shows or Carnivals. Without this grant opportunity in the future, similar projects may be delayed while other sources of funding are secured or, where this is not possible, may not be able to proceed, reducing local opportunity for residents with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>However, the purpose of this funding is to support short term project related costs and not designed to support core services for people with this protected characteristic, so although the public impact could be negative, it will be low. Stopping the scheme will not result in harm, non-compliance with standards or legislation and/or totally unacceptable standard of service, as this is a discretionary activity of the County Council and there is no legal requirement for the expenditure.</p>
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Geographical Impact: All Hampshire

Equality Statement

Additional information:

None.

Overview Statement:

A summary assessment to show that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been paid, which is undertaken when a full EIA is not needed:

EIA reference number: 00868

Date of production of EIA for publication: 12/09/2025