

## **Information Request 03284**

“This FOI request relates to funding of community projects by Devon County Council (DCC) ‘Community Funding – County Councillors Discretionary/Locality Budgets (D/LB)’

Information requested is for a five year period as detailed below or for as long as this scheme has been operating if less than five years and refers only to expenditure within/to the community and not to any related DCC administration costs.”

DCC’s response is provided below in **blue bold** text:-

1. What was the total amount of funding distributed annually across Devon County for financial years commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007/08/09/10/11/12 - 2012 (projected to 31st March if amounts not yet finalised)?

**Summary of past spend is provided in the table below –**

	<b>2007/08 Final £</b>	<b>2008/09 Final £</b>	<b>2009/10 Final £</b>	<b>2010/11 Final £</b>	<b>2011/12 Final £</b>	<b>2012/13 Estimated £</b>	
<b><u>Locality Budget:</u></b>							
<b>Budgeted amount per Councillor</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	
<b>No.of Cllrs</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	
<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>620,000</b>	<b>620,000</b>	<b>620,000</b>	<b>620,000</b>	<b>930,000</b>	<b>620,000</b>	
<b>Annual spend</b>	<b>489,877</b>	<b>860,514</b>	<b>360,112</b>	<b>581,847</b>	<b>825,118</b>	<b>577,623</b>	<b>Carried forward funds</b>

Exeter Budget	90,000	90,000	90,000	90,000	135,000	90,000	
No. of Cllrs	9	9	9	9	9	9	
Exeter spend	75,924	115,035	51,518	83,565	117,496	96,933	Carried forward funds

Discretionary Budget:

Annual Budget	-	-	-	-	300,000	600,000
Annual spend	-	-	-	-	126,094	586,291
Exeter Area Budget	-	-	-	-	43,650	88,900
Exeter Area Spend	-	-	-	-	37,400	75,027

**Scheme Detail:-**

**Locality Budgets** - This is contained in the regular reports to County Committee with annual outturn figures appended to the locality report in the first meeting of the new financial year. This can be found at :-  
[http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision\\_making/cma.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma.htm)

**Discretionary funds** – in 2011/12 in same report format as above. For 2012/13 a summary report will be submitted to Cabinet at year-end.

2. What was the total amount of funding distributed annually by Exeter City County Councillors financial years commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007/ 08/ 09/ 10/ 11/ 12 - 2012 (projected to 31st March if amounts not yet finalised)? **See Q.1 above.**

3. Do the figures at 1 and 2 above include any additional funding provision (over and above that initially allocated by DCC) as a result of the sale/disposal of DCC assets, excluding the sale of Exeter Airport (see 4 below)? If yes – a) what did the sale of these assets realise and was any of this money distributed through D/LB, and b) What was the amount of additional funding distributed annually for financial years commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007/08/09/10/11/12 - 2012 (projected to 31st March if amounts not yet finalised) as a result of the sale of assets?

**The amounts in Q1 and Q2 relate to revenue funded budgets. Local Government regulations do not allow revenue spending to be funded from capital receipts. There were no other pots of capital receipts apart from IID that were distributed via individual county councillors.**

4. It is my understanding that in 2007 an allocation of £25,000 had previously been distributed to all County Councillors over and above their basic Discretionary/Locality Allowance as a result of the sale of Exeter Airport. Is this correct?

**In 2008/09 there was an allocation of £25,000 to each county councillor from the proceeds of the sale of Exeter Airport. This was the first such allocation. In 2011/12 there was a further allocation of £25,000 to each county councillor from the proceeds of the sale of Exeter Airport. In the current financial year each councillor has been allocated an additional £10,000.**

5. It is also my understanding that a further £25,000 from the sale of Exeter Airport was allocated to all County Councillors Discretionary/Locality Allowance in the financial year 2011/12, with the understanding that this is spent within 3 years. Is this correct?

**Please see the answer to question 4 above.**

6. Re 4 and 5 above –Can you please confirm that all Devon County Councillors received a total of £50,000 over and above their standard D/LB allowance as a share of the proceeds from the sale of Exeter Airport? If all DCC Councillors did not receive this £50,000, how many did and where are they located?

**Please see the answer to question 4 above.**

7. How much of the Councillors share of the proceeds from the sale of Exeter Airport remain unspent or unallocated to date?

**To date approximately £640,000 of the £3,720,000 total has yet to be allocated to schemes by councillors.**

8. Where, if applicable, are the proceeds from the sale of all DCC assets posted in the annual financial report/accounts?

**The balance of capital receipts is shown within the usable reserves section of the balance sheet. The proceeds of sale are included within 'Other Operating Expenditure' (Gains/ losses on the Disposal of Fixed Assets) within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.**

9. What are the protocols outlined by DCC as to how this funding is allocated? Please provide a copy of these protocols; including all 'prohibitions' that exist (see 10 below).

**Locality Budget:** [http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/county\\_councillors/locality-budgets](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/county_councillors/locality-budgets).

**Discretionary Budget - Each District/Board has its own scheme.**

**Investing In Devon:-**

[http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision\\_making/cma/cma\\_report.htm?cmadoc=report\\_fi0792.html](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_report.htm?cmadoc=report_fi0792.html)

10. Devon County Council (DCC) have amended their 'Prohibitions List', i.e. the criteria that stipulate how community funding can be used, from "The County Council Administration which brought the locality budget scheme into being specified a number of situations for which locality budgets must not be used: These are:"

1. "Reinstating a cut in service or activity arising from an earlier policy decision of the County Council or other public body..."

This was changed to –

1. "“Reinstating a cut in 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 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 ongoing support.....”

DCC's amendments appear to now effectively permit County Council community funding to be directed away from what may be perceived by the taxpayer as 'true' community activities to subsidise/finance less community focussed projects (see 11 below). Am I correct in my interpretation of these amendments? At what meeting(s) were these amendments to the Prohibitions List discussed and who attended this/these meeting(s)? Please provide a copy of the Minutes of this and any other relevant meeting(s). Was there any Public Consultation process included in the decision making prior to the implementation of changes to the Prohibition List?

Refer to link for approved change '42 constitutional change':

[http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision\\_making/cma/cma\\_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes\\_prc\\_20110201.html](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_prc_20110201.html)

11. I have been informed that, for example, the provision of grit bins and treatment of weeds on the public highways has already been funded from Discretionary/Locality Budgets, both of which were previously funded by alternative County Council revenue sources? Is this correct?

**New grit bins have been installed with locality money against certain criteria and are over/above budgeted provision providing a complementary service to the new snow warden initiative. The weed spraying budget is primarily to ensure the safe use of the transport network under the Highways Act. Additional one-off limited sprays have been done at the discretion of the Councillors to "help maintain and improve the landscape of the City Centre and local communities".**

12. What services have already been provided by DCC and funded from Discretionary/Locality Budgets that were previously funded by alternative revenue sources? What has been the total expenditure to date from D/LB on these other services since the amendments to the Prohibitions List?

**The funding decisions are all in the public domain and inspection of the lists will show that there is not a direct transfer of spending on mainstream services or activities.**

13. What other services have DCC agreed should be transferred from their existing funding to Discretionary/Locality Budgets, if only on a temporary basis and what will be the anticipated total expenditure up to end of financial year 2015?

**None. There is no direct transfer as each member has discretion as to the allocation of their own locality budget annually.**

14. Where and how is Discretionary/Locality Budget funding posted/detailed in DCC's annual financial reports/accounts?

**Expenditure for these budgets is posted within the appropriate analysis of revenue activity heading.**

***If you wish to speak with someone regarding the above request, please contact the Freedom of Information team on 01392 383445 or e-mail [foioffice@devon.gov.uk](mailto:foioffice@devon.gov.uk)***