

GRANT STANDING ORDERS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present updates to the Grant Standing Orders to the Partnership Board for approval.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. To support delivery of the People and Place programme, the Board approved an additional document as part of the Governance Scheme, the Grant Standing Orders, at its meeting on 15th March 2024. At the time of approval, it was intended that these would be reviewed within 2 years of approval.
- 2.2. The current Grant Standing Orders (GSOs) are based on those followed by City of Edinburgh Council and were refined following discussions with SEStran's solicitors and City of Edinburgh Council.
- 2.3. Since implementation, the GSOs have performed well to shape the governance of the People and Place grant programme. However, as the GSOs have been implemented and the grant programme has grown, it is felt prudent to review their operation to ensure a frictionless process. City of Edinburgh Council have also updated their GSOs in the intervening period, and so this also gives an opportunity to carry out some more general updates.

3. PROPOSED UPDATES

- 3.1. This section details the main changes to the GSOs and the reasons for these.
- 3.2. The current GSOs mandate that, prior to any award of a grant exceeding £25,000 the financial sustainability of the applicant organisation shall be assessed (paragraph 5.2). They do not however set out any process for if the organisation fails the test, or if one cannot be carried out due to the organisation being newly formed. In these instances, it is proposed that a decision on awarding the grant should be at the discretion of the Partnership Director, taking into account the detailed outcome of the assessment and the specific risks of making the award.
- 3.3. When the GSOs were written, approval thresholds for the Partnership Director were set at up to £1million, with the expectation that this threshold would only be hit by exception. Since then however, the overall P&P funding pot for SEStran to distribute has risen by about 20%, resulting in larger grants being issued, and for 25/26 one grant (of £1.04million to the City of Edinburgh Council) required Board approval. In addition, this threshold also affects the approval of the grant eligibility and assessment criteria, and as

grants may now just exceed £1million, it is difficult to set the correct approval level in advance. It is therefore proposed to amend the delegation to increase this limit to £1.5million, as well as simplify the approval levels above this level to refer everything to the Board. The changes proposed are as follows:

For grants to non-Local Authorities:

Grant Funding Pot Value	Individual Grant Value (OLD)	Individual Grant Value (NEW)	Open/ Closed round	Eligibility Criteria Approval	Assessment Process Approval	Award of grant Approval
Under £50k	Under £50k	Under £50k	Either	Partnership Director	Partnership Director	Partnership Director
Any	Up to £100k	Up to £100k	Open	Board	Board	Partnership Director
Any	£100k-£1mil	£100k-£1.5mil	Open	Board	Board	Partnership Director (on advice of a Panel)
Any	£1mil-£3mil	Removed	Open	Board	Board	P&A (on advice of a Panel)
Any	£3mil+	£1.5mil+	Open	Board	Board	Board (on advice of a Panel)

For grants to Local Authorities:

Grant Funding Pot Value	Individual Grant Value (OLD)	Individual Grant Value (NEW)	Open/ Closed round	Eligibility Criteria Approval	Assessment Process Approval	Award of grant Approval
Any	Up to £1mil	Up to £1.5mil	Closed	Partnership Director	Partnership Director	Partnership Director
Any	£1mil-£3mil	Removed	Closed	Board	Board	P&A
Any	£3mil+	£1.5mil+	Closed	Partnership Director	Partnership Director	Board

3.4. Additional minor changes have also been made:

- in line with updates to City of Edinburgh Council's GSOs, a change has been made to set out and bring awareness to the SEStran's obligations in respect of equalities and inclusion
- a section on grant variations has been included, to clarify that the approval levels for this are the same as for the original grant approvals

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. The Partnership Board is asked to approve the revisions to the Grant Standing Orders and instruct the Partnership Director to make the changes to the document.

Michael Melton
Programme Manager
 5th December 2025

Policy Implications	Approval of the GSOs will underpin the award of grants that will contribute to achieving our policy objectives
Financial Implications	None, the new grant standing orders put in place a robust governance framework to ensure grant funds are suitably awarded in line with agreed budget
Equalities Implications	Approval of the GSOs will underpin the award of grants that will contribute to achieving our equality objectives
Climate Change Implications	Approval of the GSOs will underpin the award of grants that will contribute to achieving our climate change objectives