

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 26 MARCH 2008

MATCH FUND BUDGET

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To recommend to Cabinet an award from the financial year 2007/2008 Match Fund Budget in respect of the following applications:

- Ayrshire Rivers Trust - a contribution to the 'Salmon in the Classroom' project.
- Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group – a contribution to the 'Ayrshire Red Squirrel Rescue Project';
- Darvel Music Festival – a retrospective contribution to the 2007 Darvel Music Festival.

2. BACKGROUND

Ayrshire Rivers Trust

- 2.1 The Ayrshire Rivers Trust was established in 2000 with the primary aim of preserving a valuable part of Ayrshire's natural heritage for the enjoyment of the current and future generations, through the conservation, enhancement and development of the freshwater habitats and the fisheries they support.
- 2.2 'Salmon in the Classroom' is an educational project designed to teach school children about river wildlife and environmental issues. The project is tailored to suit each school and includes an aquarium containing salmon eggs being provided for the class and two site visits to a local river. The Trust works closely with the Education Service and aims to run the project in at least one school on each major river every year, throughout Ayrshire.
- 2.3 The grant support will form part of a cocktail of external funding to deliver the project in three primary schools within East Ayrshire (yet to be identified). Specifically, the grant will contribute towards providing aquariums, educational games on the lifecycle of the salmon, and enable field trips to release salmon back into the river and other environmentally related outdoor activities.
- 2.4 It is anticipated that approximately 25 pupils per school in East Ayrshire will benefit from the project during 2008, a total of 75. However, in some schools elements of the programme, including presentations in the classroom, can be made to a number of classes, thereby increasing the level of awareness of environmental issues.

- 2.5 The total cost of the project for the whole of Ayrshire is £15,020 with the Trust seeking a cocktail of external funding to meet this total. Within East Ayrshire, the cost of delivery to three schools is £2,315 (£772 per school) and grant support of £1,200 (£400 per school) is sought, which will secure the leverage of an external funding package. Full details of the funding package are provided below in paragraph 3.1. It should be noted that following the former Policy and Resources Committee approval, the Match Fund Budget made a contribution of £1,500 in March 2007 to a similar project within East Ayrshire, when pupils from Catrine, Dalmellington, Muirkirk and Patna Primary Schools participated.

Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group

- 2.6 Ayrshire Red Squirrel Rescue Project is a two year Ayrshire wide project which will undertake a range of initiatives including mapping the distribution of red and grey squirrels, monitoring changes, developing and training a team of volunteers to complete surveys, providing educational material to all primary schools, providing red squirrel friendly woodland management and undertaking guided walks. The project will also support a full-time conservation officer, for the two year period of the project.
- 2.7 Red squirrels are an important feature of Scotland's natural heritage and have been the emblem of Kilmarnock since the time of Kilmarnock and Loudoun District Council. This species is declining rapidly and is rarely sighted north of Cumnock. This grant would allow the Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group to train the community and raise awareness of the issues surrounding squirrel conservation to further protect and enhance this priority species.
- 2.8 The total cost of the project for the whole of Ayrshire is £95,649 with the Group seeking a cocktail of external funding to meet this total. A grant of £3,500 is requested from East Ayrshire Council. Full details of the funding package are provided below in paragraph 3.4.

Darvel Music Festival

- 2.9 Darvel Music Festival, under the auspices of Darvel Improvement Group (DIG), has been in existence for six years and attracts approximately 3,000 people to the event each year. The 2007 event was the largest festival undertaken to date with over 30 international and regional artists performing over the two week period in September 2007.
- 2.10 The Festival cost £81,884.73 to stage with the Festival Committee managing to raise £75,108.48 from external funding sources, private sponsorship and ticket sales. However, a deficit of £6,776.25 has been incurred and a grant of £4,801.25 is now sought from the Council's Match Fund Budget which will be used to repay DIG which has agreed to pay part of the 2007 Festival deficit on an interim basis, amounting to £4,801.25; comprising three outstanding bills:

- DIG (Entertainment Sub Group) £2,881.68
- 2 x £500 PR agency invoices £1,000
- Performing Rights Society invoices £919.57
- £4,801.25

The remaining deficit of £1,975 has been met from a grant award from the Council's Interim Northern Local Grants Committee. The decision of the Committee was to approve the award of grant, subject to the group providing confirmation of the cost of the hall hire and up to date bank statements. The Committee were also of the unanimous view that the Local Committee Grants Scheme was not the most appropriate funding mechanism for this group's event and accordingly, remitted to the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support to give consideration to reviewing the most appropriate funding mechanisms for any further applications from this group. Full details of the funding package are provided below in paragraph 3.6.

3. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Ayrshire Rivers Trust

- 3.1 The total cost of the project for the whole of Ayrshire in 2008 is £15,020. The Trust has secured funding from the Big Lottery Fund (£8,445) and Hadyard Hill Windfarm Fund (£1,500), with other applications pending; Scottish Natural Heritage (£1,875) and Spirit Aerosystems (£650). Ayrshire Rivers Trust will fund the shortfall of £1,350.
- 3.2 Within East Ayrshire, the cost of delivery to three schools is £2,315 (£772 per school) and grant support of £1,200 (£400 per school) is sought, which will secure the leverage of the external funding package
- 3.3 Following an assessment of the application, the Quality Improvement Officer within Education and Social Services recommends a Match Fund award of £1,200, representing 7.9% of the overall project costs and 51.8% of the East Ayrshire project costs.

Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group

- 3.4 The total cost of the project is £95,649. The Group has secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (£44,000), Forestry Commission Scotland (£20,000), Scottish Natural Heritage (£12,000) and South Ayrshire Council (£5,000). The Group will contribute £10,250 of its own funds to the project. A grant of £3,500 is sought from the Council's Match Fund Budget.
- 3.5 Following an assessment of the application, the Countryside Development Manager within Neighbourhood Services recommends a Match Fund award of £3,500, representing 3.6% of the overall project costs.

Darvel Music Festival

- 3.6 The total cost of staging Darvel Music Festival in 2007 was £81,884.73. The Festival Committee secured funding amounting to £75,108.48 comprising; Event Scotland (£10,000), European Union Development Fund (£4,000), Awards for All (£10,000), Scottish Arts Council (£812.50), private sponsorship (£8,489.98) and ticket sales of £26,806. In addition, the Council gave two grants of £10,000 (business grant) and £5,000 (Local Committee grant).
- 3.7 A deficit of £6,776.25 has been incurred and a grant of £4,801.25 is now sought from the Council's Match Fund Budget which will be used to repay DIG, which has agreed to pay part of the 2007 Festival deficit on an interim basis, amounting to £4,801.25. The Interim Northern Local Grants Committee at its meeting on 20th February 2008 agreed to make a grant of £1,975, the remaining outstanding balance.
- 3.8 Following an assessment of the application, the Arts and Media Manager within Neighbourhood Services initially recommended refusal of the application as the balance of accounts for DIG exceeded the grant request. However, it should be noted that since the grant assessment was undertaken DIG has lodged a more recent bank statement which indicates a balance of £287.90 (as at 15th February 2008). Accordingly, it is recommended that the grant award of £4,801.25 is made. This grant award together with all other Council awards totalling £21,776.25 represents 26.6% of the overall Festival costs.

4. SUSTAINABILITY

- 4.1 Risk Assessments have been undertaken as part of the Match Fund assessment process for all three grant applications. Satisfactory levels of sustainability for Ayrshire Rivers Trust and Ayrshire Red Squirrel Group have been established.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The grant awards to all three projects can be fully met from the 2007/08 Match Fund budget. This would leave a balance of £338.75 which is recommended should be carried forward as part of the departmental underspend to 2008/09.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no policy/legal implications arising from this report.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING ISSUES

- 7.1 The projects being considered for grant assistance will assist in meeting the themes of the Community Plan.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1.1 Cabinet is asked to approve:

- i) an award of £1,200 to the Ayrshire Rivers Trust;
- ii) an award of £3,500 to Ayrshire Red Squirrels Group;
- iii) a retrospective award of £4,801.25 to Darvel Music Festival 2007; and
- iv) the carry forward of the remaining Match Fund Budget balance of £338.75 as part of the departmental underspend to 2008/09.

Elizabeth Morton

Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

7 March 2008

Members wishing further information should contact Alison Brown, Developer Contributions Officer on 01563 576253