

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CENTRAL LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FORUM – 5 JUNE 2007

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an overview of the existing Community Grants Scheme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 From the inception of East Ayrshire Council in 1996 the Council have operated a Community Grants Scheme.

- 2.2 The Scheme is intended to give grant assistance to any constituted local voluntary organisation to provide or maintain cultural, social welfare, recreational or sporting facilities or to promote these activities and to assist community based projects that are in the interest of the local area.

- 2.3 Some broad categories under which grants are considered are shown as follows however, consideration may be given to specific projects that merit consideration, notwithstanding that they fall out with any of these broad categories

- Arts and Cultural – Assistance for groups involved in, for instance drama, dance, music, visual arts, crafts and literature.
- Community Safety – Activities to make communities safer and accident prevention.
- Disability – Development and promotion of the quality and equality of life for individuals who have a disability
- Children's Services – To promote Early Education, opportunities for childcare aged 0-5 and for the provision of childcare aged 0-14 within local communities and other related activities.
- Environmental – Environmental improvements (urban and rural), environmental education and conservation.
- Ethnic Minorities – To support activities in the black and minority ethnic communities.
- Heritage – For the preservation of heritage, archiving of historical information, interpretation, new displays and educational activities.
- Leisure Activities – Recreation activities, i.e. play and special interest clubs. Also community events such as galas and festival.
- Older People – Groups who are actively involved in enhancing the quality of life of older people

- Sport – General sporting activities including coaching, equipment and facilities.
- Women’s Issues – Everything to health and equality
- Young People – To assist young people to reach their potential.

3. OPERATION OF THE COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

3.1 Applications to the Community Grants Scheme are submitted to the Democratic Services, Corporate Support Department for processing.

3.2 Once a properly completed application is received, it is sent to the appropriate service department for assessment. A summary of this assessment is thereafter produced and is submitted to Committee for consideration. This summary report incorporates key information taken from the full assessment process which includes assessment of the group and project in the following three key areas:-

- (i) financial assessment - this looks at the total grant requested and includes an analysis of the financial viability of the Group; an analysis of the audited annual accounts; an analysis of any budget plans/cash flow projections; whether applications are made to alternative funding sources; details of specific equipment required and analysis of quotes received; whether there are any recurring revenue implications and any financial issues arising from previous projects operated by the Group;
- (ii) risk assessment - this looks at the life span of the project; proportion of Council grants to annual turnover; previous project evaluations; how long the Group has been established; any constitutional issues; that proper accounting systems are in place, i.e. audited accounts or business plans and bank statements; and issues surrounding the protection of children; and
- (iii) general assessment - aims and objectives of group; who benefits from the grant; how will the grant develop the organisation or benefit the local community; cross-boundary implications; is the proposal a realistic undertaking; contributions from the group; alternative funding sources; value for money aspects of the project; whether appropriate planning permission and building warrants are in place; what Council Strategy/Community Planning/Local priorities are addressed by the application.

4. ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISBURSEMENT OF GRANT MONIES

4.1 Normal practice is for consideration to be given to grant applications on a “first come, first served” basis.

4.2 However, over the past few years, some Local Committees faced increasing pressure on their budgets and put in place local arrangements to disburse the grant budgets. The local arrangements in place were as follows:-

- **Cumnock Area Local Committee** – set an annual closing date for grant applications to be lodged and dealt with all grant applications on an annual basis at one committee (normally held in April).
- **Irvine Valley Local Committee and Kilmarnock Central Local Committee** – adopted a method of budgeting based on a percentage “spend” by category. Under this system the annual grant was equally divided on a meeting to meeting basis using categories and weightings. Flexibility existed to make adjustments between categories at each meeting.

4.3 It will be for the new Forums to decide, if they would wish to introduce any new local arrangements.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 This report gives Members a flavour of the operation of the Community Scheme. The report highlights the criteria for applying to the Scheme, the assessment process, and background to the disbursement methods by the previous Local Committees.

5 LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Section 83 of the Local Government (Scotland) 1973 as amended provides powers to councils to make grants to voluntary organisations which, in their opinion, is in the interest of the area or any part of it.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Statutory Council meeting on 17 May 2007 agreed to the disbursement of grant monies to the Local Community Planning Forums as follows:-

Central – £76,204.00
 Northern - £47,341.00
 Southern - £79,553.00

7.2 The budget is allocated taking into consideration issues of deprivation using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006 and Small Area Population Estimates 2005.

8 COMMUNITY PLANNING ISSUES

8.1 The support given by way of grants to local voluntary organisations supports the main themes of the community plan.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Forum is asked to note the contents of the report

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21 May 2007
JMcG/SW

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS - Nil

Any person wishing further information on this report should telephone Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services on (01563) 576135.

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