

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 23 NOVEMBER 2007

REVIEW OF EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a report on the review process carried out on the Council's Community Grants Scheme and to provide, for information, a note of the outcomes and recommendations which will be subject to consideration by Council at its meeting to be held on 6 December 2007.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Central Local Community Planning Forum, at its meeting on 5 June 2007, requested a review of the Council's Community Grants Scheme, in particular the criteria for applying for grant assistance, whether groups should be allowed to apply for grant assistance more than once per financial year, whether grants should be awarded where the project supplements existing Council services and to look at, in their view, the apparent inconsistency in grant assessments.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 From the inception of East Ayrshire Council in 1996, the Council have operated a Community Grants Scheme. 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.
- 3.2 It has been past practice that the former Local Committees determined applications where they referred to five or less Local Committee areas.

4. THE REVIEW PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

- 4.1 As part of the review process, the following groups were consulted:-

4.1.1 Elected Members

Questionnaires were issued to all Elected Members to obtain views and suggestions. 20 questionnaires were returned and a synopsis of the responses is shown at Appendix 1.

The main suggestions coming forward were as follows:

- In general, the grant conditions were deemed appropriate;
- 65% agreed to further criteria or conditions being introduced (in respect of minimum amounts which can be applied for; allowing one application per year, per group, per project; groups requiring to contribute a certain percentage to the project);
- 60% agreed that grants should not be awarded where the project supplements existing Council services;
- National, political, sectarian or profit-making groups should not be eligible for grant assistance;
- The assessment form should provide details of previous grant assistance given through the Community Grants Scheme;
- 90% agreed Officers from assessing Departments should attend meetings to answer questions raised in grant applications;
- 70% agreed that there should be Officer delegation to determine grants under a certain amount;
- 60% agree that the use of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is a fair indicator for the distribution of resources.

4.1.2 Local Committee Community Representatives

Local Committee Community Representatives were invited to workshops which were held to focus on the proposals to establish three Local Community Planning Forums and seek views on aspects of the Community Grants Scheme. 33 Community Representatives attended the sessions and a synopsis of the results is shown as Appendix II.

In general terms, there were concerns raised about the inconsistencies with the assessment criteria and general support for the separating out of the Grants Scheme from the new Forums.

4.1.3 Grant Recipients

A cross-section of grant recipients from each of the former Local Committee areas were sent questionnaires to seek their views.

From the 79 questionnaires issued, 49 were returned. The synopsis of responses is shown at Appendix III.

- 91% were satisfied/very satisfied with advice given in completing the application form;
- 91% stated that the criteria for applying for grant assistance was clear;
- Mixed views with the introduction of further criteria;
- 89% stated contact made by Assessing Officer provided sufficient opportunity to explain and discuss the project;
- 83% stated determination of the application by more than one Local Committee did not cause group concern;
- 72% do not foresee problems with three Local Community Planning Forums;

- 94% had no problem with receiving payment of their grant and 85% stated progress report was clear and easy to complete.

4.1.4 Support Officers

A meeting was held with a cross-section of Assessing Officers and a number of Administrative Officers to seek their views on any changes they would suggest to the Scheme. Initial views expressed were as follows:

- Increased requirement of quotes from £100 to £500;
- Fast-track applications under £500 (ie delegated to Officers and use a condensed application form);
- One application per year from groups applying for £500 and over;
- Guidance Note 15 regarding Disclosure - add telephone number and re-word to be more user friendly;
- Application form Question 20 - add expectation that groups should be contributing to the costs of the project;
- If groups have a Service Level Agreement with the Council they should get no more than 50% funding for all other projects;
- One Grants Committee should be adopted with one overall budget;
- An increase in the Officer delegation for emergency or urgent grant funding from £500 to £1,000

Officers from the Planning and Building Control Section were also consulted regarding the calculation used to allocate grant funds to each of the Forums. Officers are of the view that this is a sound method to use which takes into account a range of indicators and weightings which best reflect the needs of individual areas and communities.

4.1.5 Benchmarking with Other Authorities

Colleagues from the Scottish Members' Services Development Network were contacted to request that they forward a copy of their current Grants Scheme along with applications and any supporting guidance notes. Seven Authorities returned information and a synopsis of these is shown at Appendix IV.

5. PROPOSALS FOR NEW LOCAL COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

- 5.1** The Scheme will continue to provide grant assistance to local voluntary organisations and community groups to assist projects which are in the interest of the local area or of the people living there. Projects which provide an East Ayrshire wide service and beyond will continue to be considered by the central budgets of the Council or referred to the External Funding and Employability Manager for advice and assistance on applying to alternative funding sources.
- 5.2** To supplement the new scheme, taking into account the views and comments expressed during the review, the following proposals also recommended for consideration:

5.2.1 Criteria for Applying for Grant Assistance

There were various issues raised from the Central Local Community Planning Forum on 5 June 2007 (referred to in paragraph 2.1 of the report), and these issues were included as part of this review.

Issues for Consideration

Following the consultation, whilst within certain groups of consultees there was a majority view to introduce changes to grant criteria, in terms of specific changes there was no overall support for any one of the changes as detailed below:

- A minimum % contribution from all applicants towards total costs of the project;
- Participants of projects should contribute more towards costs of certain elements eg travel costs/entrance fees;
- Fixed contributions for specific projects, namely sporting tournaments, eg £50 per capita;
- One application per each group, per year or one application per group seeking grant of £500 or over;
- Groups with Service Level Agreements already receiving grant support from the Council to qualify for a maximum of 50% grant funding for all other projects;
- Grants should not be awarded where projects supplement existing Council services, ie school trips.

In terms of the above, the introduction of allowing one group, one application per financial year would require groups to encompass all their events/projects in the one grant application which could be burdensome for the majority of the local voluntary groups and would not allow any flexibility for any applications to be submitted for emergency situations or unplanned for events.

The introduction of groups being tasked with contributing a percentage of the project would put pressure on many voluntary organisations with limited funds. However, it remains within the powers of the Committee, having considered the financial position of each applicant, to impose a condition that a percentage contribution be made which is considered to be a more flexible and fairer approach. In respect of requiring contributions from individual participants either in general or as a result of setting maximum contribution payments based on per capita, the previous comments apply and have been applied in previous grant applications.

In terms of community grants supplementing existing Council services, this would not be appropriate and grant information states that "projects in respect of functions for which the Council or any other Authority has a statutory responsibility or has otherwise agreed to provide will not normally be awarded". The question whether or not a project presented to the Committee is suitable for grant funding is a matter for the Committee to determine based on the assessment report/grant information presented.

Currently, grant applications are considered on their own merits and undergo a robust assessment which includes a general, financial and risk assessment. This current assessment process is considered a fair and reasonable way for Assessing Officers to make an informed recommendation on each application submitted.

In conclusion, it is therefore recommended that none of these criteria be introduced.

5.2.2 Types of Groups Eligible for Funding Through the Scheme

The scheme at the moment is open to any constituted voluntary organisation or Community Council that meet the Conditions of Grant. Organisations must not be party political; are not projects or activities that are designed primarily to promote religion; or projects where people must take part in religious services in order to benefit.

Issues for Consideration

In order to strengthen the message that groups must be inclusive and not discriminatory in any way to any section of society, it is considered that the guidance and conditions be strengthened to ensure groups promote equality of opportunity and are not exclusive.

It is recommended that the guidance and conditions make reference to the Council's Equalities Policy which groups must apply in terms of their membership.

5.2.3 Delegated Authority

There has been strong support from all consultees to the introduction of delegated authority to officers to determine grant applications under a certain amount.

Issues for Consideration

The introduction of delegated authority to officers to determine grant applications under a certain level would streamline the process for dealing with applicants seeking a small level of funding from the Council. This will allow Elected Members to concentrate on dealing with and considering grant funding for projects of a larger nature.

It is therefore recommended that delegated authority be given to the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support or Head of Democratic Services to approve grants, based on a recommendation from the appropriate Department, for approval of £500 and under in consultation with the appropriate Chair/Vice-Chair. It is proposed that a list of these delegated awards be reported to Elected Members, for information, in the most appropriate way.

5.2.4 Assessment Process

The main response for this issue came from grant recipients who were happy with the assessment process undertaken by the Council. However, there were a few comments from other consultee groups regarding apparent inconsistencies with assessments, although no further details or examples were given. Further, there is a strong view that Assessing Officers should attend Forum meetings to answer questions.

Corporate training for all Assessing Officers is carried out regularly and the latest training delivery was carried out in Autumn 2006 which has assisted with the quality of assessments being carried out. However, based on comments received, it is recommended that Assessing Officers from appropriate Departments be asked to attend meetings in future.

There are designated "sign off" officers within each Department who review and sign off all assessments for their individual Department, and it is also recommended that the comments in relation to the apparent inconsistencies with grant assessments also be brought to their attention.

5.2.5 Operational Issues

Various issues have arisen in terms of general operational issues (ie increase requirement for quotes to items over £500; rewording questions/guidance notes; general guidance to be further developed to give advice and assistance on the Local Community Grants Scheme's main aims and objectives).

Existing information and processes will be reviewed to accommodate such operational issues.

6. ONGOING CONSULTATION

- 6.1** The consultation with community groups is still ongoing in respect of the proposals for developing community engagement which also provided groups with an opportunity to comment on the review of the Community Grants Scheme. The closing date for comments is 30 November 2007 and any comments received in respect of the Community Grants Scheme will be verbally reported to Council.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** None arising directly from this report.

8. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** Grant funding to support local voluntary organisations complements the main themes of the Community Plan.

9. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** Section 83 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended provides powers to Councils to make grants to voluntary organisations which, in their opinion, is in the interests of the area or any part of it.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1** The Governance and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the review process and the proposals detailed in paragraph 5 of this report which will be subject to consideration by Council at its meeting to be held on 6 December 2007.

Elizabeth Morton
Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

29 October 2007
JMcG/FM

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Elected Member questionnaires.
2. Grant recipient questionnaires.
3. Various information received from other authorities.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers relative to this report should contact Julie McGarry, Administration Manager on Tel No (01563) 576147. Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services on Tel No (01563) 576135.

Implementation Officer: Julie McGarry, Administration Manager

APPENDIX I

COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME - ELECTED MEMBERS

Issued - 32
Returned - 20

SYNOPSIS OF RESPONSES

APPLICATION STAGE

1A Do you consider the grant conditions to be appropriate? (please see conditions enclosed)

Yes No

Comments

- Condition 12 - Could this be expanded to ensure that any group who perhaps have a long lease (ie 20-25 years) but who are now in the final say 5 years are still able to make application as to not do this may negatively impact on what had formerly been a success.
- Condition 14 to be strengthened to "requires you to"
- Condition 4 appears to contradict OSCR requirements for charity status. This expects that equipment/funds be passed to like minded organisations. Guidance also required in relation to outings.
- While I am not in favour of minimum amounts I believe only one application per year per group is worthy of consideration.
- They should be considered at an alternative meeting from Local Community Forum.

1B Should further criteria or conditions be introduced (areas for consideration are minimum amounts which can be applied for; allowing only one application per year per group or project; groups requiring to contribute a certain % to the project)

Yes No

Comments

- Yes - But only based on feedback from scheme users
- Minimum + (maximum amounts across a set period say 3-5 years) to be introduced + a minimum set % that would be an acceptable contribution as a match from a group, with "in kind" contribution accepted as contributing to this.
- Some guidelines for community groups would be beneficial as some do not know how much they can apply for.
- For outings/trips members should be expected to contribute a percentage of cost.
- Should be clear guidelines for Members, with a degree of flexibility.

- Sport - football etc, £50 per head maximum for trips abroad.
- Minimum: I think only one application is too tight: contribution depending request/funding raised in house.
- While I am not in favour of minimum amounts I believe only one application per year per group is worthy of consideration.
- If they should be funded from another budget. Ref 1C
- A minimum % for groups to contribute.

1C Should grants be awarded where the project supplements existing Council services? (ie educational activities)

Yes No Not sure No comment

Comments

- On a case by case basis
- In certain circumstances and could be dealt with in assessment
- Supplement being operative word.

1D Are there any type of groups you think should not be eligible for grant funding through the Community Grant Scheme?

Yes No No comment

Comments

- Sectarian groups
- Applications for computer equipment where this is held in any individual's home (this has the effect of making it for individual use - in particular Community Associations).
- Any group that is in a profit making situation - nursery (private) etc
- Political, sectarian
- Political and sectarian
- National organisations
- Private organisations
- Political
- There are some groups that should not be eligible depending on their function but this should become obvious on assessment
- Only if of non-mainstream or undesirable to the general groups in the communities.
- If grant conditions are achieved then each group application should be considered on its merits.
- Discriminatory organisations
- Any discrimination groups

ASSESSMENT STAGE

The assessment process requires the completion of the general assessment, risk assessment and financial assessment forms. Pages 1 and 2 of the general assessment is submitted to Members to allow them to determine grant application.

2A Is there any further information you would like to have submitted on the application?

Yes No
Don't know No comment

Comments

- Do not overburden officers with masses of questionable paperwork
- Introduce as standard outlined officer recommendation which explains and lists all information that has been received and on which an officer is basing their decision and which CP theme this application contributes to, including target information, + as standard a summary of all awards to date against theme and target.
- Historical data as to how much that group has applied for and the outcome
- No - Provided full assessment available at meeting in case of query.
- Additional information in relation to activity if could influence decision
- If there are transport difficulties, eg financial etc, then group should be guided to Coalfield Community Transport, and in gardening, hanging baskets, plants etc the relevant groups should be guided to the Auchinleck Garden (Dome) Project.
- Brief details of past applications and details of any financial contributions to the local community from any excess funds.
- Other grants approved previously should be clearer

2B Assessments are either completed via telephone, letter or visit determined by how well the Assessing Officers knows the project/group. Do you have any comment on these methods of assessment?

Yes No No comment

Comments

- Someone should sign from the group as the “responsible person” that all details are correct.
- Assessment without knowledge and responsibility for the project/group by officer, by telephone or letter is not acceptable. And officer attending committee should

be fully briefed with background files available at Committee to be able to answer questions raised prior to decision.

- Satisfied
- Telephone or visit should be main route. Difficult to assess information when using letters to communicate.
- Sometimes in the past it seems to take a long time for some grant forms to be assessed.
- It would be helpful if scrutiny of assessment by Democratic Services could lead to consistency of assessments.
- While telephone is quicker and easier if the group is well known, I believe letter and or visit allows for better accuracy and detail.

2C There are a wide range of Assessing Officers within all Departments of the Council. Assessing Officers can range from Community Workers to Sports Development Workers. Do you have any comments to make on this?

Yes

6

No

12

No comment

2

Comments

- Appears to be a good balance of assessment officers.
- This has potential to introduce real inconsistency of assessment approach and should receive a further scoring process for commonality of approach.
- Satisfied
- All should be trained to the same level to ensure consistent approach.
- Same as last question - take too long sometimes to assess
- It would be helpful if scrutiny of assessment by Democratic Services could lead to consistency of assessments.
- All assessments have varying levels of detail. I would like to see more detail on all applications presented to Elected Members (without going to extremes).
- Wide range understandable to draw on experience, but due to subjectiveness, may lead to inconsistencies in assessments.
- They all do a brilliant job.

2D Do you have any further comments to make on the assessment process?

- No - As a new Councillor, perhaps I lack in-depth understanding of scheme.
- I am unclear that we currently have equality across all Committee areas, with reference to application assessment, ie are the same scoring criteria applied consistently across all areas?
- Is assessment always impartial?
- Greater clarity required where officers do not recommend full award of application - greater probing required where groups have large funds in bank (some examples are agricultural organisations, Loudoun Musical Society)
- It has improved vastly over the last eight years.

DETERMINATION STAGE

3A Local Committees/Local Community Planning Forums determine local grants based on the membership of the Group. This can mean that some applications are determined by more than one decision making body. Do you have any comments on this?

Yes

8

No

12

Comments

- More than one determining body can add complexity to scheme.
- The major group holding should make principal decision and then % allocation automatically given by officer delegation from any other areas.
- Grant should only be determined by more than one committee where less than 90% of grant value can be attributable to one area.
- I think group should be encouraged to go and find other sources of funding to also be able to fund raise plus receive help from Council grants.
- For consistency one body should determine grants including cross boundary grants
- If a previous body has determined the application, the reasons should be made clear to the next decision making body.
- I don't believe that these Committees are appropriate. If it has to be through this process, then it should be determined by the same method across all Local Committee areas.

3B Do you think Officers from assessing department should attend meetings to answer questions raised on grant applications?

Yes

18

No

1

Don't know

1

Comments

- Only if there is a specific need based on case merits or otherwise
- This has potential to introduce real inconsistency of assessment approach and should receive a further scoring process for commonality of approach.
- No, If arrangements as per 2B (Scrutiny of assessment by Democratic Services)

3C Do you think there should be officer delegation to determine grants under a certain amount?

Yes

14

No

6

Amounts

£200 (3 responses)

£250 (2 responses)

£500 (6 responses)

£1,000 (2 responses)

No amount given (1 response)

3D Do you have any other comments on the determination of grants?

Comments

- There is merit in simplicity in any system - it must, however, be auditable to others.
- Yes, that grants should not be allocated on a rolling programme but on a set date with then a further allocation of any underspend allocated on a further set date - as the process too far dominates the committee agenda and turns a local CPMF into nothing more than an "allocation feast".
- But still have to report to Committee
- As long as the money allocated to Doon Valley stays for residents of Doon Valley.
- But we should be advised that all is in order.

FINANCIAL ALLOCATION TO LOCAL COMMITTEES/FORUMS

4 The Community Grants budget is allocated to individual Forums taking into consideration issues of deprivation using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2006 and Small Area Population Estimates (SAPE). Do you consider this a fair distribution of resources?

Yes

12

No

6

Don't know

2

Comments

- SIMD is quite complex - Answer in short is I am not sure.
- Although I think that the community as a whole would be more interested in an allocation that at least had an equal allocated amount to each geographic area which was then supplemented by SIMD and SAPE allocation calculation from an additional resource.

- There are areas with aging populations but who do not fall into SIMD 15% category but for whom funding is often requested.
- In most cases this is fair but system should allow for a small section of budget to be used to deal with particular events etc which could not be accommodated within above budget allocation due to indexing.
- Whilst I do appreciate the deprivation factor I think the distribution needs to be totally fair. It is felt by some areas that the SIMD areas get perhaps more than their fair share.
- If an area is “low” on the “SIMD” this does not mean that it is affluent or that it has the resources, amenities that it requires. There may also be other additional resources available to areas “high” on the “SIMD”.
- Elderly population - people can be disadvantaged living in an urban area as much as rural, ie rurality should not be taken into consideration.
- I offer no suitable alternate to the current arrangements, but it adds to conclusion is that more scrutiny should be given to organisations with considerable funding in place.
- Sometimes it’s alright, other times it’s not.

GENERAL

5. Any Other General Comments/Suggestions

- This is a useful exercise.
- Please ensure that community reps are aware that they have no vote in relation to allocation. Could it be that prior to Councillors making any comment on a grant application that each meeting brings forward from community reps a list against all applications received which gives their views and that a scoring mechanism be introduced as there may well be times when demand exceed available funds - this could be an output from the reps’ pre meeting. These then could be considered by elected members.
- We should work toward a more informative document to give to groups; financial limits, what can be claimed etc.
- Don’t think new Committees work - taking away local issues - no Police present. - too much travelling involved to attend.
- I would welcome the separation of the grants from the mainstream planning as discussed with yourself BW and Mrs Barker.
- I believe the system in place is as fair as it can be ie recommendation and decision.

APPENDIX II

LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING FORUM CONSULTATIONS WITH LOCAL COMMITTEE COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES JULY – AUGUST 2007

ALL ISSUES RAISED IN RESPECT OF COMMUNITY GRANTS

Northern Local Community Planning Forum Consultation – 5 July 2007

- Issues raised around the level of bureaucracy and time spent at meetings to disburse Community Grants.
- There was a perceived unequal distribution of Community Grant funds across East Ayrshire.
- It was acknowledged that a review of the application criteria was needed.
- A suggestion was made to disburse the Community Grants monies to the Communities Federations for reallocation to projects/groups.
- Separate grants making body/group proposed.
- The administrative cost of preparing reports for Local Committee in respect of the grants scheme was highlighted.

Central Local Community Planning Forum Consultation – 18 July 2007

- A Local Committee identified strength was its disbursement of grants role.
- A Local Committee identified weakness was the grant scoring criteria.
- It was agreed that the cross boundary grant allocation method was based on sound principles and fair.
- Issues in relation to voting rights were raised and some representatives felt that the grant scheme should not be included in the forums.
- Some awareness raising was needed in order for more/different groups to apply for funds.
- Group didn't see benefit of keeping grants within the proposed new forum structure.
- It was acknowledged that a review of the application/scoring/assessment criteria was needed as the current system was often inconsistent.
- A suggestion was made to disburse the Community Grants monies through an independent board on a quarterly basis and that good practice in other Local Authorities should be investigated.

Southern Local Community Planning Forum Consultation – 8 August 2007

- Issues in relation to voting rights were raised and representatives felt that the current way of working was unfair – the legal obligation to continue with the voting as it stands was highlighted.
- The possibility of creating a separate grants body was discussed, this would be comprised of representation from all three Local Community Planning Forums.
- The ineffectiveness of the Cumnock deadline method of disbursement was discussed.

- It was acknowledged that a review of the application/scoring/assessment criteria was needed as the current system was often inconsistent.

General Local Community Planning Forum Consultation – 14 August 2007

- Separate Grants Board with continued community involvement/input suggested.
- Grants Panel would give applicants a fairer opportunity to argue their case.
- Tightening of application/scoring criteria needed.
- Awareness raising needed.
- The possibility of creating a separate grants body was discussed, this would be comprised of representation from all three Local Community Planning Forums.
- It was acknowledged that a review of the application/scoring/assessment criteria was needed as the current system was often inconsistent

APPENDIX III

COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME RECIPIENTS

Issued - 79
Returned - 47

SYNOPSIS OF RESPONSES

The Department is committed to continued improvement. Therefore it is important that you complete and return the survey in order that your views are taken into consideration.

PRE-APPLICATION STAGE

1A How satisfied were you with the advice you were given in completing your application form?

Very satisfied Satisfied Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied N/A

Comments

- Just a small point, supplying estimated costs for this year (festive event) - in our case costs are fairly constant but not definite until the bills arrive (easier to supply last year's exact bills if that helps)
- Parts of the application form is quite complicated and is difficult to ascertain as to what is required, eg Minerals Trust form is probably too easy and many groups applying are elderly and don't know how to fill in forms.
- Perhaps could be processed quicker
- It is a very detailed handout which accompanies the application form. "Guide to Grant"
- We didn't receive any direct support in the completion of the application, although we were encouraged to apply.
- List of membership each year, if a membership list has been given, following years, groups should only need to give new members details and if a member has deceased given in.
- On completing the form is quite straightforward - however, there is little or no guidance made available for support or guidance in relation to special criteria - what you should include/what you need in order to promote your application.
- The instructions given were reasonably straight forward.
- More publicity regarding availability of grant.
- Although was disappointed with the delays in which it took the Council to look at the application form.
- Good advice on all the basic things we needed to know about.
- You keep changing forms
- Advice received from External Funding Department
- Our grant application straddled two financial years so some contradictory/confusing advice on what accounts OK to submit. Perhaps cut-off date could be more explicit.

1B Is the criteria for applying for grant assistance clear?

Yes No 1 can't remember

Comments

- As above (point re estimates)
- Eg, we applied for decoration of room - IFE Wing but it did not meet criteria but 2 years previous we received money for another part of wing.
- Although some sections are pretty complicated to fill in.
- My only comment is that it was not made clear on the application form that the grant was only allowed for members of the organisation living in East Ayrshire.
- Awaiting new criteria guidance for applications

1C Should further criteria be introduced (ie minimum amounts which can be applied for; allowing only 1 application per year per group or project; groups requiring to contribute a certain % to the project)

Comments

- One application per group, gives others a chance and give a % of the project is fair.
- Prefer it as it is - Encourage projects.
- There should be "no" minimum amounts. More than one application per year - contributions should be "in kind" acceptable.
- No - Some groups find it difficult to contribute and getting match funding can be an obstacle.
- Not necessarily fair as some organisations have single projects eg Boys' Football Club and other organisations such as Meg and the BB are complex organisations which are quite complex.
- I feel that 2 of the *above* should be included:
 1. Minimum amount - as this allows organisations to budget for projects.
 2. 1 application per year - this will stop overlap of projects.
 - *3. I do not think % should be in as groups have limited funding.*
- Each group/project is different and has different requirements therefore flexibility is key.
- Set a maximum amount applied for, eg £500 and only 1 application per year.
- It would be helpful - you are always wondering should I ask for less - am I asking for too much?? Never quite sure.
- Although our group only apply once per year for a small amount (< £250), I think the scheme runs OK giving flexibility to groups and projects large and small.
- Given the scarcity of funds it would be useful to have further criteria.
- The maximum amount would be useful. I think groups should be able to apply if and when they might require some assistance as long as it is for a judicious and credible development.
- One application per year per group.

- Most groups, especially ones who are clients of ED&SS should not be expected to contribute a certain % to the project, also 15%-30% communities should be taken into account, the criteria does not need to be changed, Community Councils when applying for hanging baskets, should all be given the same amount of money, and groups needing transport should be encouraged to go for community transport to sustain a community project.
- There should be clearer guidelines for what is appropriate or statements/procedures for what is not appropriate.
- A minimum amount should be introduced and only one application per year per group, groups should be prepared to contribution 50%.
- Minimum amounts would be a good idea providing % contribution was limited to 10%.
- I personally feel that at times one application is not enough especially if your group is just starting up
- If for a special project then it is only fair that the group contribute a % to the project.
- I think groups should contribute a certain % to the project then more groups can get money to help pay for things.
- We contribute a % to the project except for the lease of the hall. We think this way works well.
- I don't think further criteria be introduced. Gatehead Monday Club is a small group, which apply once per year for grant, and also contribute to the project.
- Yes, all boys clubs I'm sure are struggling to survive financially.
- We have no problem with the above.
- Group only applies once per year.
- A minimum and maximum amount should be specified and one grant for each project.
- I think that in the case of our choir which performs in East Ayrshire a full grant should be given regardless of the residence of the individual choir members.
- Certain groups have different sub-sections so more than one application should be allowed per group and each case taken on merit.
- I think the way it is at present is great - no minimum is sometimes useful if wanting a small amount of funding.
- Suggest you don't introduce matching cash funding - most voluntary groups provide contributions in kind/people's time. Minimum amounts - good idea. And advising groups on periodicity of grants being awarded would be useful if this is, in fact, the reality.
- It would be helpful to know the minimum amount that can be applied for. 2. We have always made 2 applications a year, summer outing and Christmas dinner. 3. We have always made a contribution to both and had no problem with that.
- It would be helpful to apply once a year for an ongoing project.
- Yes, a minimum amount should be contributed by the application per project. 20% minimum.
- Our project always contributed a part of application (staff wages).
- Different groups need to apply for new areas of work at separate time of year. Therefore I do not think that you should only be allowed to apply once.
- Circumstances can arise which would require more than one application. A group could pay part of the grant if they had sufficient funds.

ASSESSMENT STAGE

*2A What type of contact was made by the Assessing Officer?

Telephone Letter Visit

*some respondents indicated more than one type

2B Did this give sufficient opportunity to you to explain and discuss your project with him/her?

Yes No

2C Comments

- Not for us - our projects are highly visible yearly show - publicised - banner - posters - cards etc.
- This allowed you to discuss in more detail about our project.
- Assessing Officer has visited group in the past and is welcome to visit at any time.
- A face to face meeting may be helpful. I was attempting to explain about "horse classes" which children would be competing in and if they would be accompanied by an adult. It was difficult to explain. These are one-off classes at our annual show and not like, say, swimming lessons which children attend every week.
- There was a little confusion at first. We showed our total expected expenditure for the year including the "contribution" from the Community Grant towards these, rather than against a specific item. Our discussion cleared up the confusion and also where our other income comes from.
- My assessment was very relaxed and friendly. I think this approach is on the whole good practice.
- Every group should be given an opportunity to give a fair assessment, as new assessment officers, themselves did not understand questions, asked questions asking for information, then phone to say it is not needed.
- In my opinion the assessing officer should visit the group/project in order to gauge the suitability of the project.
- It seemed to be straight forward and fair.
- Appeared over-complicated and long drawn out, especially form filling.
- Officer was very helpful
- We also visited the officer for assistance.
- If I had known what the interview was all about I could have taken more information with me.
- It seems very unwieldy having all the different committees, surely one committee representing all the areas in East Ayrshire would be better.
- Very helpful
- No - seemed very fair

- Assessing Officers got in touch to make an arrangement to meet up at my home. I welcomed this opportunity. Good to meet different officers in person and to learn that such care is taken before grants are awarded.

DETERMINATION STAGE

3A The Council previously had seven Local Committees, with each Local Committee's remit to determine their own local grants based on the membership of the group. Did determination of your grant application by more than one decision making body cause your group any concern?

Yes No No comment

Comments

- Had to await decisions whether Local Committees would fund application.
- Our Local Committee knows our project and so has a better understanding of need.
- I post away application and have no idea who sees it from what Committee. It was only per chance during a phone call I learnt that % is paid out depending on where you committee live!!
- This caused confusion with insufficient explanation of why grant came from two sources.
- One previous application was 5 weeks late making payments for trip a bit difficult.
- We didn't have this info, it explains why we get asked questions after the form is sent.
- It seems very unwieldy having all the different committees, surely one committee representing all the areas in East Ayrshire would be better.

3B Interim proposals are to introduce a new decision making structure of three Local Community Planning Forums again, each Forum determining their own grants based on membership. Do you foresee any problems with this?

Yes No No comment

Comments

- Having to await separate decisions and total amount of funding required may not be granted!
- This will increase the workload as each group will have a larger area, and may cause a longer delay in decisions being returned to organisations.
- Priorities in each area of Local Committees are different.
- You have not given enough detail to determine the detail of the proposals. For example, what do you mean by membership?

- If this results in a reduction of monies available, coupled with an increase in organisations competing for the cash.
- No - if communication is good
- Our membership can vary as most of our members are retired - so this can affect our numbers.
- As long as every organisation gets a fair hearing, money should be spread around.
- Grant being held up for more info.
- I notice that out of the three districts each district has their own criteria. There should be uniformity throughout. Same rules for each area. Some applications look as if multiple applications.
- It should work if the grant allocation is divided fairly among the Forums.
- If there is a reduction of 7 bodies . 3 will need to ensure there is fair representation across communities. Impartiality of decision making is critically important.
- What concerns us is that with 7 Forums most of our members were covered for a grant. Will the same areas be covered by the 3 Forums?
- The grant scheme will be based on a once a year application, therefore many vulnerable groups will miss the deadline.
- People in other areas don't always know about a project.

3C Do you have any other comments to make on the consideration of your application?

Comments

- No - we are very grateful for the grant and always publicly show our appreciation in our programme for the show.
- I have been satisfied with the way my applications have been dealt with and thank everyone concerned.
- I have always found the process to be very well structured.
- As long as everyone's application gets the same consideration and all assessing officers have the same criteria.
- Despite several hitches, the contact with EA staff was very helpful.
- I have always been happy with any decision made regarding applications I have submitted.
- Application forms should be easier to fill in.
- When I look at the numbers of people there grants affect, eg some 220, ours 5,000 people. Surely this should be considered.
- Staff all very helpful during the entire process.
- The discussion was made at the Local Committee to give the grant. Then it was held up by Council Officers for several months.

POST APPLICATION STAGE

4A Did you have any problems with receiving your payment?

Yes

2

No

44

No comment

1

Comments

- From authority to bank account took too long if required for outing.
- None at all, paid promptly into bank account
- Money was late into bank
- Previous payment paid direct into bank or by cheque

4B Is the progress report, which is required to be completed after the monies are spent, clear and easy to complete?

Yes

40

No

4

No comment

3

Comments

- I feel that there should be more of how the project developed with the money as well as how the money has been spent. The area for recording information is very limited, and I feel that this can cause problems in how to deliver the information required for your audit.
- Just never sure exactly what to write - but everyone seemed happy enough with reply last year.
- The only slight difficulty is in the timing of the report as our financial year is November to October rather than the normal April to March so we show expenditure from parts of two balance sheets.
- If a group gets the monies to run a group or club from April to March each year, the progress should say send in after the year and not within 6 months of the money be given, these types of groups or club, should not be classed as projects.
- Appears to ask for repeat information.
- I feel this could be made easier maybe heading up bullet points as I feel a lot of time is input into our groups and its voluntary. The Council is needing to remember that the parents all work, have families to care for and struggle to create time to complete such reports.
- Not quite sure about everything that we should put in our report, should be easier to follow.

GENERAL

5. Any Other General Comments/Suggestions

- We are happy in your arrangements, thank you.
- It makes the difference. The grant makes it possible for us to keep our prices down. The cost of putting on a “West End” type show (orchestra, scenery, costumes, theatre, hall hire etc) is over £30k - If we sold every ticket £28.5k
- The requiring of members’ names and addresses by the Council should not be a requirement.
- The amount of enclosures is too much - even large applications to other grant providers do not ask for as much.
- Most grants should go to organisations which help the whole community irrespective of age.
- EA’s organisation and arrangements at present are perfectly adequate and the staff have been most helpful.
- My only concern about reducing the number of local group Committee is how this will effect the turnaround in applications.
- If only 2 Local Committees grants would take too long to discuss and be passed, eg first joint meeting.
- I find the whole process very co-operative.
- A list of what a grant can be applied for, for example insurance and maybe make a list of what cannot be applied for.
- If there are issues in relation to your application these should be raised/discussed before submission of application - if grant refused again this should be discussed before submission.
- Fenwick Community Association has been reasonably satisfied with the amount of grants received over the years.
- I have found application forms easy to complete and have no reason to not use this scheme in the future if I required funding.
- On completion of Community Council applications you ask for balance sheets, copy of our Constitution. East Ayrshire have got all this information already so causing unnecessary duplication.

- It would be helpful to know when Committees in connection with grants are due to take place. In the past I have had to make enquiries and then discovered that my application had to be in 3 weeks or so before that.
- I would have liked to see someone visit, to see the difference the grant had made. Just handing over the cheque with no apparent interest seemed so sad.

APPENDIX IV

GRANTS REVIEW

INFORMATION ON OTHER AUTHORITIES' GRANT SCHEMES

<u>Council</u>	<u>Details of Scheme</u>	<u>Assessment Process</u>	<u>Decision Making Body</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Scottish Borders	From the budget, there is a £10,000 budget to respond to Groups which work Borders wide. From this there is also a £10,000 budget to respond to groups who are not based in the Borders but who nevertheless provide services directly to Borders people. The balance is divided, on a population basis, to create five Area Committee budgets.	<p>The application is received, assessed and given a recommendation by the Grants Co-ordinator in the Business Improvement Unit. We use an assessment sheet to record findings and recommendation.</p> <p>No grants paid to individuals, party political groups, profit making companies, statutory bodies or religious organisations.</p>	Applications between £500 and £5,000 go out, via an Area Committee report, for formal consultation and then on to the relevant Area Committee agenda for open, public, local decision making, monthly. Applications up to £499 are delegated to the Head of Business Improvement Unit. The Borders-wide and Non-Border based budgets have the same application, assessment, recommendation and consultation process but the decision making is done by the Grants to External Bodies Working Group which consists of five Area Committee Chairs.	£180,000

<u>Council</u>	<u>Details of Scheme</u>	<u>Assessment Process</u>	<u>Decision Making Body</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Stirling	The Community Grants Scheme supports voluntary and community organisations working for the benefit of people in Stirling Council area. It offers grants up to £1,000.	<p>Assessment looks at Constitution, accounts, number of beneficiaries and how wide the community benefit, group's own contribution, if any, sometimes consider how much has been spent in the area already. Tends to be unwritten policy for a maximum amount for Gala Days and such like, and per capita amount for lunch trips, day trips, outings and so on.</p> <p>The scheme will not fund private enterprise, individuals, more than one grant per year to an organisation, regular running costs, retrospective application, trips abroad, fireworks or Christmas lights.</p>	Discussion takes place among Council officers in the first place and a recommendation goes into a bulletin for final decision by Councillors. Councillors given two weeks to object/comment on recommendations. Applications are considered in a bulletin approx every 6-8 weeks.	£33,000

<u>Council</u>	<u>Details of Scheme</u>	<u>Assessment Process</u>	<u>Decision Making Body</u>	<u>Budget</u>
South Ayrshire	<p>Financial support may be available to national or local voluntary organisations and locally based community groups which are properly constituted and can assure the Council that they operate for the benefit of the wider community.</p> <p>Organisations may apply more than once in any financial year but it should be noted that as demand increases careful consideration will be given to individual applications and no guarantees can be given that any specific application will be approved.</p> <p>Applicants complete form which is returned enclosing copy of constitution, financial statement, current bank account and for applications requesting funding of £500 or under, a referee's certificate.</p>	<p>All applications considered under delegated authority (£500 or under) are desktop assessed by a Council officer and sent to Council's Depute Chief Executive/ Director of Development, Safety and Regulation for delegated approval or otherwise. Applications requesting funding of over £500 are assessed by an Officer of the Council and are reported to Provost's Panel for consideration thereof.</p> <p>In considering applications the Council will take into account the extent to which groups are prepared and able to make a financial contribution towards their project/ activities.</p>	<p>£500 or under - Council's Depute Chief Executive/Director of Development, Safety and Regulation for delegated approval or otherwise; over £500 - Assessed by an Officer of the Council and reported to Provost's Panel for consideration.</p>	£125,791

<u>Council</u>	<u>Details of Scheme</u>	<u>Assessment Process</u>	<u>Decision Making Body</u>	<u>Budget</u>
West Dunbarton	Scheme supports local voluntary organisations and general grant applications to national bodies.	All applications when received are given a recommendation of grant by officers of the Council. This is based on the project itself, how much funds the organisations holds, whether they have applied to anyone else for funding and whether it meets any of the Council's priorities within the Corporate Plan.	The application is referred to the Corporate and Efficiency Governance Committee for consideration by Members (10 Members on the Committee) with local grants being considered twice yearly in June and December and general grants approximately every two months.	£581,000
North Ayrshire	A Community Development Grants Scheme administered and supported by locally and centrally based staff of Community Learning and Development, Educational Services along with applications to various Common Good Funds throughout the area.	Each Development Grant Scheme is assessed by Community Learning and Development. Applications to the Common Good Funds are administered and assessed by Officers within the Administration Section.	Community Learning and Development Grants Scheme normally are considered by the five Area Committees. However, for this financial year the Executive has considered this type of grant. They revert back to the Local Area Committees next year. All applications to the Common Good Funds are considered by the five Area Committees.	£104,200
Falkirk	Falkirk Council has a general grants budget, a women and equal opportunities budget and a community councils budget, all of which have an upper limit of £5,000. The process for applying to these three budgets is the same.	The contact officer assesses the applications in terms of how they fit with the relevant criteria and also does a risk assessment on the project.	Recommendations from the contact Officer are then included in a report to the Chief Executive who approves (or not) the report under delegated powers.	To be confirmed

<u>Council</u>	<u>Details of Scheme</u>	<u>Assessment Process</u>	<u>Decision Making Body</u>	<u>Budget</u>
South Lanarkshire	Council operate a grant scheme which is open to all properly constituted organisations who provide benefit to the community and promote social, cultural and recreational activities. Only one award is made to any group in each financial year (except in exceptional circumstances). The maximum award available to any one application is £1,000. Levels of grant funding are applied as follows: £200 for outings/transport costs; £250 for outings and entrance fees and start up costs; £300 youth clubs, bowling clubs, football clubs and other sporting groups; and £350 for uniformed organisations.	An officer assesses the applications and prepares a report to the Area Committee	Grant applications are considered by the four Area Committees within South Lanarkshire, ie Cambuslang/ Rutherglen, Clydesdale, East Kilbride and Hamilton.	Each area has a budget of £52,000
Inverclyde	The Council's Grants to Voluntary Organisations Scheme support voluntary and community organisations. There are two separate grant application processes, one for grants up to £5,000 and one for grants over £5,000.	An appraisal panel comprising two to three officers "score" the projects on set criteria. Each application receives a score out of 100 and based on this score the Head of Economic and Social Regeneration makes a recommendation to the Regeneration Sub-Committee.	Regeneration Sub-Committee which comprises six members from the Regeneration Committee made up of three members from the majority group and three members from the minority group.	£449,780

<u>Council</u>	<u>Details of Scheme</u>	<u>Assessment Process</u>	<u>Decision Making Body</u>	<u>Budget</u>
City of Edinburgh	The Council operates a Neighbourhood Partnership Grants Scheme which is open to fully constituted organisations which require to broadly contribute to one of the City Plan objectives. Maximum cash awards are £5,000.	An officer assesses the applications and prepares a report to the Partnership Meeting	The Council's Neighbourhood Partnerships (12 in total) consider all grant applications.	£500,000 (split across the 12 Partnership areas based on population)