

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 7 FEBRUARY 2007

FUTURE FUNDING OF EAST AYRSHIRE ACCESS PANEL (NORTH DISTRICT) AND CUMNOCK AND DOON VALLEY ACCESS PANEL; AND KILMARNOCK FORUM ON DISABILITY AND EAST AYRSHIRE (SOUTH) FORUM ON DISABILITY

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request Members of the Policy and Resources Committee to consider future funding arrangements for both Access Panels and Forums on Disability operating within the East Ayrshire area.

2. BACKGROUND OF COUNCIL FUNDING TO THE GROUPS

- 2.1. Historically, each Access Panel and Forum on Disability have applied individually for funding through the Local Committee Grants Scheme.
- 2.2 In the past, following concerns from some Local Committees on the methodology used to apportion grant monies, recommendations on grant awards have been split evenly across the Local Committees operating within the North of the area. Within the South of the area, this has also been proportioned evenly by a 70%/30% split (Cumnock Area Local Committee/ Doon Valley Local Committee). This was to take cognisance of the views from the Local Committees that there was no geographical restrictions placed on membership from the groups and that the groups work touches services and access issues throughout East Ayrshire.
- 2.3 Furthermore, and more recently, there has been a suggestion from a few of the Local Committees, that as both the Access Panels and both the Forums on Disability provide an East Ayrshire wide service by two administrative centres, future grant funding should be provided centrally.
- 2.4 In light of the forgoing, Officers are now the taking opportunity to review funding arrangements for the four groups. The commitment to this review was also reported to the last Council Meeting.

3. AIMS AND ORGANISATION OF THE GROUPS

3.1. ACCESS PANELS

In 1981, the Secretary of State for Scotland recommended that each Local Authority set up an Access Panel within each area for the purpose of improving disabled access to the built environment. An Access Panel would provide a point of contact where disabled people could meet and consult with

Local Council Representatives such as Architects, Building Standards, Surveyors, and other available bodies on access issues.

Two Access Panels, namely East Ayrshire Access Panel (North District) and Cumnock and Doon Valley Access Panel were established. Both groups have a remit to review Planning and Building Warrant applications, are continually working in partnership with the Council, and have recently been involved with Parr Architects regarding the 4 PPP Projects; Keppie Architects regarding the Maternity Unit at Crosshouse Hospital; and the Council's Architects responsible for new Local Office, Library, Police Office and Community Facility at Stewarton.

3.2 FORUMS ON DISABILITY

There are 2 Forums on Disability based within East Ayrshire, Kilmarnock Forum on Disability whose remit is to promote the benefit of all disabled people with a physical, sensory or a mental impairment who live within the North of East Ayrshire; and East Ayrshire (South) Forum on Disability whose remit is to campaign on disability issues within the South of East Ayrshire in collaboration with the Council and other appropriate agencies.

In the 2002, the relationship between the Forums and the Council was strengthened by the signing of a partnership agreement. The aim of which was to promote and support the development of the equal opportunities for Disabled People within East Ayrshire. Since this agreement was signed, liaison arrangements with the Forums and Council Officials have continued to work successfully. Recently, the Forums participated in the establishment of the Shopmobility Scheme based in Kilmarnock; are involved in the dispersing of information to relevant parties on Government Legislation; and assist individuals with aids and adaptations and benefits which are available to them.

4. PROPOSED FUTURE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1** In light of the above, and due to the cross departmental activities which all four groups operate, it would seem appropriate that consideration be given to funding both the Access Panels and both Forums on Disability centrally from the Policy and Recourses Grant Funding to Voluntary Organisations.
- 4.2** It is proposed that grant applications be submitted annually on a joint basis by both Access Panels and both Forums on Disability. Grant applications would therefore be assessed and presented to Committee for consideration on a merit basis and in accordance with normal grant procedures.
- 4.3** If this proposal is agreed by Committee, a meeting with all four groups will be arranged to advise them of the decision and arrangements for submission of future grant applications.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Based on past grant awards, an average combined expenditure for both Access Panels is approximately £6,000 and for both Forums on Disability approximately £7,000, giving a total of £13,000.
- 5.2** Provision can be made within the Policy and Recourses Grant Funding to Voluntary Organisations for this amount, grants to be considered annually on a merit basis.

6. LEGAL/ POLICY/ COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The provision of support to these groups meets the terms of the Guiding Principals of the East Ayrshire Community Plan by promoting Social Inclusion, Joint Working and Ensuring Quality and Accessibility.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1** It is recommended that the Committee:-
- (i) consider future funding arrangements for the Access Panels and the Forums on Disability;
 - (ii) if agreed, to note that joint grant applications would require to be submitted by the Access Panels and the Forums on Disability; and
 - (iii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

Elizabeth Morton
Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

LY/KS
06 February 2007

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 Community Grant Applications for Cumnock and Doon Valley Access Panel and East Ayrshire Access Panel (North District).
2. 2004/2005 and 2006/2007 Community Grant Applications for Kilmarnock Forum on Disability; and 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 Community Grant Applications for East Ayrshire (South) Forum on Disability.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers should contact Lynn Young, Administrative Officer on Tel: (01563) 576283. Any person wishing further information should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager on Tel (01563) 576135.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: BILL WALKINSHAW, ADMINISTRATION MANAGER