

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 10 JUNE 2004

EXTERNAL FUNDING UPDATE

Report by the Head of Corporate Development and Communication

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to Members on progress made in securing external funding to the East Ayrshire area.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Reports on progress in securing external funding to the East Ayrshire area are presented periodically to Committee for information. At the Policy and Resources Committee of 2 October 2003, Members were provided with a comparative analysis of funding gains from the National Lottery Distributors to the East Ayrshire area, benchmarked against other local authorities in Scotland.

- 2.2 As a result of the findings of that report, a Members' seminar on external funding was convened in November 2003 to consider opportunities to secure greater success for the East Ayrshire area. The main issues arising from the seminar are summarised below.

- explore further opportunities to provide information to community and voluntary groups and the general public on funding opportunities;
- consider capacity building issues and how we can assist in increasing the capacity of the community and voluntary sector;
- ensure that the 'Three Way Agreement' developed with the Community Fund continues after the merger of the New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund; and
- ensure greater co-ordination across Council Departments.

Actions to address these matters have been detailed within the report or will feature as priority issues in the 2004/05 workplan.

3. DEDICATED EXTERNAL FUNDING STAFF - UPDATE

- 3.1 Members will recall that the External Funding and Sustainability Officer's post became vacant on 30 September 2003 and the Social Inclusion Partnership's (SIP's) External Funding and Sustainability Worker left her post on 5 February 2004, leaving both dedicated external funding posts unoccupied.
- 3.2 After an unsuccessful recruitment and interview process held in December 2003, the External Funding and Sustainability Officer's post was readvertised and Brenda Walker was appointed to this post, effective from 13 April 2004.
- 3.3 The SIP post is yet to be advertised, although finance has been secured for this post until 31 March 2005.

- 3.4 During the vacancy period, temporary measures were put in place to ensure a continued level of service to local community and voluntary groups with staff from the Community Planning and Partnership Unit and the Council of Voluntary Organisations (East Ayrshire) dealing with routine funding enquires.

4. **PROGRESS REPORT AND FORWARD PLAN**

In an attempt to improve the level of funding secured for the East Ayrshire area generally, the following actions have been agreed and are being progressed:

- 4.1 **External Funding Network:** The External Funding Network comprising officers from key council departments has been re-established to:
- develop an external funding action/development plan for 2004/05;
 - ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to external funding, across all Council Departments, in order to continue to maximise funding to the East Ayrshire area;
 - assist in the dissemination of best practice;
 - assist in the dissemination of information for new and existing funding opportunities;
 - ensure a co-ordinated approach to community and voluntary organisations; and
 - report progress to relevant Council Committees.

This group will meet on a bi-monthly basis, ensuring the above actions are progressed effectively. The first meeting under the new arrangements was held on 28 April 2004.

- 4.2 **Continued Support to Community and Voluntary Organisations:** A short questionnaire has been prepared and issued to over 700 community and voluntary organisations operating within East Ayrshire, asking them to identify their future needs and existing support requirements. In response to identified need, a programme of surgeries, 'form filling' sessions and funder briefings will be convened over the summer period and into the autumn of 2004.
- 4.3 Work is currently underway to update the Trusts and Funds Guide, establish a more robust mechanism for routinely keeping community groups and voluntary groups up to date with information on new and existing external funding opportunities and, in response to feedback from the above questionnaire, an external funding leaflet providing details of planned events will be prepared and distributed.
- 4.4 To ensure support to community and voluntary organisations is appropriately targeted and prioritised, it is proposed that priority be given to supporting those groups with a project or programme idea that tackles one or more of the priorities within the Community Plan.
- 4.5 Throughout the summer period, a series of meetings, hosted by the Community Planning Joint Officers' Group, will be convened with the Directors of each of the National Lottery Distributors to advise them of the issues within East Ayrshire, the difficulties faced by local communities and the priorities of the Community Plan, with the aim of securing a fairer share of external funding for local communities.

5. REPORTING ON EXTERNAL FUNDING GAINS

- 5.1 As Members will recall, reports have been submitted periodically to Committee on external funding gains secured for the East Ayrshire area. These reports have mainly focused on the gains secured via the National Lottery Distributors.
- 5.2 In the future, it is proposed that reports be prepared for Committee that give an overview of all external funding gains secured to the East Ayrshire area and work is underway across all relevant Council Departments to routinely collate this information.
- 5.3 It is anticipated that a comprehensive National Lottery comparative analysis will be available at the end of June 2004, for funding gains secured in 2003. The National Lottery Distributors report on funding distributions on a fiscal year basis, around summer following the year-end at 31 March annually. The National Lottery Monitor analyses this data and reports on comparative funding gains across all authorities on a calendar year basis annually, at the end of June each year. In the past, this timing difference has involved officers extrapolating complex data from that provided by the Lottery Distributors to allow a report to be presented to Committee on a financial year basis. It is proposed that, in future, this information is presented to Committee on an annual basis, by calendar year, to ensure full consistency with the data collated by the Lottery Monitor. It is further proposed that the 2003 lottery gains information be prepared and presented to Committee at its next meeting, along with the wider funding gains analysis referred to in the report.

6. FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 NIL

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 External funding assistance will, in the first instance, be directed towards projects that link to the priorities contained within the East Ayrshire Community Plan.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to:
- i) note the actions taken to secure greater external funding to the East Ayrshire area and, in particular, the proposed package of support to the community and voluntary sector;
 - ii) agree to prioritise support to community and voluntary organisations whose proposed projects meet one or more of the priorities of the Community Plan;
 - iii) agree to receive a further report at the next Committee meeting on external funding gains secured to the East Ayrshire area from Lottery Distributors on a calendar year basis, and additional gains reported on a fiscal year; and
 - iv) otherwise, note the content of the report.

John Clayton
Head of Corporate Development and Communication
18 May 2004

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

Any person wishing further information should contact John Clayton, Head of Corporate Development and Communication (tel. 01563 576165) or Gwen Barker, Community Planning and Partnership Manager (tel. 01563 55402)

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: John Clayton, Head of Corporate Development and Communication