

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CUMNOCK AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE - 6 NOVEMBER 2003

COMMUNITY GRANTS: TIMESCALES FOR PROCESSING OF COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present, for approval, timescales to be applied in respect of the processing of applications for Community Grant during the next and subsequent financial years.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This Committee on 26 June 2003, considered and dealt with all applications for Community Grants which had been received in respect of the current, 2003/2004 financial year. In dealing with the applications, the Committee expressed some concern at the length of time which had elapsed between submission of most of the applications, i.e. prior to 28 February 2003, and these being presented to Committee for determination on 26 June 2003.
- 2.2 The Committee were mindful of the need to have applications dealt with as quickly as possible, and for grant awards to be paid, as soon as possible, following commencement of the financial year, in order to assist applying organisations in making arrangements for activities, projects etc during the year. Accordingly, it was agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting setting out timescales to be applied in respect of the processing of applications for Community Grant to be dealt with by this Committee during the next and future financial years, for the purpose of ensuring, insofar as is possible, that such applications are dealt with expeditiously.

3. PROPOSED TIMETABLE

- 3.1 A proposed timetable for the various processes attached to dealing with Community Grants is set out in Paragraph 3.2, below, and in order to accommodate the timescales detailed therein, the following recommendations are made to Committee, namely:-

- (a) Closing Date for Submission of Applications - It is proposed that, in future, the closing date for the submission of grant applications should nominally be 14 February each year, rather than 28 February each year as previously approved by the Committee. This would bring forward completion of the whole process by two full weeks and at the same time it is considered that the ability of local organisations to prepare and submit applications within this timescale would not be significantly compromised as the result of any recess which organisations may have over the Christmas and New Year period; and

- (b) Late Applications - It is recommended that the Committee agree that, in future, all applications received after the specified closing date be not accepted and returned to the applying organisation without further action. To ensure that organisations are aware of the position the publicity carried out in November and January each year would feature an appropriate reminder of the closing date, and that no applications will be accepted beyond this.

3.2 The proposed timetable, from the issue of invitations to apply through to the payment of grant awards/refusal of applications is, accordingly, as follows, namely:-

<u>GENERIC DATE</u>	<u>2004/05 DATE</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
Week 4/5, November	Week beginning 24 November, 2003	Issue of publicity inviting submission of grant applications, i.e. letter to organisations, poster campaign and advertisement in Cumnock Chronicle (all these actions previously agreed by Committee)
Week 4/5, January	Week beginning 26 January 2004	Issue of reminder letters to local organisations
14 February	13 February 2004	Closing date for submission of applications
Week 5, March	Week beginning 29 March 2004	Initial assessment reports by Service Departments on all grant applications to be complete
Week 2, April	Week beginning 5 April 2004	Assessment report by Service Departments to be finalised
Week 3, April	Week beginning 12 April 2004	Local Committee Pre-Agenda meeting
Week 4, April	Week beginning 19 April 2004	Issue Agenda

<u>GENERIC DATE</u>	<u>2004/05 DATE</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
Week 5, April	Week beginning 26 April 2004	Special Local Committee Meeting
Mid May	Week beginning 10 May 2004	Issue of grant payments/letters of refusal to organisations

3.3 As can be seen, a large proportion of the time between receipt of applications and the issue of grants to organisations is accounted for by the period allowed for the completion of initial assessment reports. The Service Departments have intimated that it would not be possible to reduce the time allowed for this stage, in view of the volume of applications which require to be dealt with for this Local Committee, applications requiring to be dealt with for other Local Committees and Service Committees at the same time, and other work requirements within the Departments.

3.4 It should be recognised that the timescales set out above are fairly tight for all stages and may be subject to minor variation in the light of operational requirements and diary commitments etc. It should be noted that for the next financial year, it is intended that the Special Local Committee meeting will avoid the two week period either side of the Easter holiday weekend.

4. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None arising directly from this report.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) agree that, in future, the nominal closing date for the submission of Community Grant applications from local organisations be 14 February each year;
- (ii) agree that grant applications received after the specified closing date each year be not accepted and be returned to the applying organisation without further action; and
- (iii) approve the timescales for the processing of Community Grants for the next and future financial years as set out in Paragraph 3.2, above.

Fiona Lees
Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

9 October 2003

SN/SR

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager on telephone number (01563) 576135.

Implementation Officer: Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.