

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CUMNOCK AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE - 24 JANUARY 2001

DISBURSEMENT OF GRANTS TO OLDER PEOPLE'S GROUPS 2001/2002

Joint Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To set out the options available to the Cumnock Area Local Committee for dealing with applications for community grants from Older People's Groups during the 2001/2002 financial year.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Committee on 25 May 2000 agreed, in respect of the 2000/2001 financial year that grants be awarded on a per capita basis at the rate of £3.75 per person to the Old Folks Welfare Associations and Age Concern Organisations for Summer activities and Christmas activities and further grants were made to other Older People's Groups who had made application.
- 2.2 The Committee also agreed that work be carried out by appropriate Officers with Older People's Groups over the year 2000/2001 to assist Groups with submitting grant applications based on need rather than a calculation per capita; and that a report by the Officers concerned be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to enable consideration to be given as to how grant applications from Older People's Groups might be dealt with in future.
- 2.3 The Committee further agreed, on 9 November 2000, having examined a report by the Officers concerned, to continue consideration of this matter at a Special Meeting in the light of the submission of a further report by the Officers setting out the options available.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 Over the Summer period, discussion has taken place regarding the best means of working with older people's groups, within the resources available to the Council.
- 3.2 The East Ayrshire Elderly Forum Liaison Group held a conference on 3 October 2000 to which a number of representative older people's organisations in the Cumnock Area were invited.
- 3.3 Following this conference, Community Development staff met with the Darby and Joan Club in November 2000 and following expression of interest from a number of older people to form a group a further meeting was arranged for 18 December 2000. Unfortunately due to poor attendance at this meeting, it has been rescheduled for 5 February 2001.

- 3.4 This meeting will form the basis for ongoing discussions with older people in Cumnock and their representative organisations to gain their views on a range of issues affecting them and will include the grants administration and the needs of older people. The existing Muirkirk Elderly Forum will also inform the Council in this respect. Officers will support both Forums in their development.

4. OPTIONS

APPLICATIONS FOR SUMMER AND CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

- 4.1 In recent years, the main issue of concern to the Committee in dealing with applications for grants from older people's groups has related to grant awards for the groups' Christmas and Summer activities. In particular, the Committee have been concerned that no duplication of funding should occur in respect of such activities i.e. to avoid the situation whereby an individual, who is a member of different organisations, would benefit more than once from grant funding given by the Local Committee for these activities.

- 4.2 It is suggested that in order to resolve this particular issue, the Committee need to consider the following options and determine the following matters:-

(a) WHICH ORGANISATIONS WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT?

4.2.1 OPTION 1 - APPLICATIONS FROM OLD FOLKS WELFARE ASSOCIATIONS/AGE CONCERN ORGANISATIONS ONLY

- (i) Acceptance of applications for Summer and Christmas activities from Old Folks Welfare Associations/Age Concern Organisations only would necessarily require a complementary decision which would have the effect that applications in respect of such activities from any other older people's groups will not be accepted and the "other" groups would need to be advised that the benefit to individuals of grant funding from the Local Committee for these activities can only to be accessed through the Old Folks Welfare Association/Age Concern Organisation within their local community. This approach would ensure that no duplication of funding would occur.
- (ii) However, this option would mean that the choice of individuals as to where they go and who they go with would be curtailed and this is contrary to the guidance provided within the "Better Government for Older People" initiative, the principles of which the Council have endorsed, which indicates that older people's choices, independence and views should be acknowledged. In addition, it should be recognised that, in many cases, while the "other" older people's groups exist for the social benefit of their members generally, often the focus of these groups' activities is the Summer and Christmas activities.

If the Committee are minded to agree this option, it is recommended that the Head of Social Work be authorised to arrange for community work staff to work with the “other” older peoples groups in respect of the nature of the applications which they intend to submit.

4.2.2 OPTION 2 - APPLICATIONS FROM ANY OLDER PEOPLE'S GROUPS

The alternative option under this heading of considering applications for Summer and Christmas activities from any older people's group has the significant benefits of (i) ensuring that the right of choice of the individuals who are members of the organisations concerned is preserved; and (ii) facilitating the determination of applications by the Local Committee each on their individual merits. Adoption of this option would mean that a degree of duplication of funding may occur.

4.2.3 OPTION 3 - APPLICATIONS FROM ANY OLDER PEOPLE'S GROUPS BUT WITH RESTRICTED GRANT PAYMENTS FOR CERTAIN GROUPS

This option is the same as Option 2 with the exception that grant awards to “other” older people's groups would be restricted and made only in respect of those members of that organisation who are not also members of the local Old Folks Welfare Association/Age Concern Organisation. This option would address the demerit of Option 2 in that no duplication of funding would occur in this case. However, if the “other” older people's group concerned has only a small proportion of members who are not also members of the local Old Folks Welfare Association/Age Concern Organisation, then the proportion of grant made by the Committee may be so insignificant as not to constitute a meaningful contribution to the overall cost of the activities concerned, thereby jeopardising the financial viability of the groups' proposals. In addition, the right of choice of individuals would be affected due to the funding restriction.

Administration of this option would be extremely burdensome and could not be guaranteed to be completely accurate.

4.2.4 The above options are presented for consideration to assist the Committee in its deliberations. The Committee is requested to determine which option it would wish to adopt and Option 2 is suggested in view of the benefits of this approach as indicated.

(b) WHETHER GRANT AWARDS SHOULD BE MADE ON A “PER CAPITA” OR ON A “MERIT” BASIS?

- 4.2.5** Bearing in mind the guidance contained within the Accounts Commission document "Following the Public Pound" which document has been endorsed by the Council and is applied within its procedures, all grant applications should be considered on their own individual merits and assessed accordingly.
- 4.2.6** The practice of per capita allocations can give organisations an expectation that grant funding will be awarded as a matter of course, on the basis of a formalised arrangement. The local grants scheme is intended to react to local needs and the per capita arrangement and expectations reduces flexibility to react to changing local priorities.
- 4.2.7** It must also be recognised that the per capita arrangements does not accord with the Council's procedures which require each application for grant to be assessed on its own individual merits having regard to the nature of the applicant, its activities, membership and the distribution of the benefit of the group's proposed activity. In addition account requires to be taken of the financial circumstances of the individual organisations concerned, some of which may have significant, uncommitted bank balances, while others may have little or no reserve funds. The per capita arrangement also favours larger organisations over the smaller groups.
- 4.2.8** The above 2 options are presented for consideration to assist the Committee in its deliberations. The Committee is requested to determine which option it would wish to adopt and in view of the issues and guidance referred to in Paragraphs 4.2.5 to 4.2.7, it is suggested that all applications be dealt with on their individual merits and having direct regard to the purpose for which the grant is sought and the associated financial considerations (amount of grant sought, the group's contribution, the group's bank balance) as set out in the submitted application form.

5. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** None arising directly from this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** It is requested that the Committee determine, in respect of applications for Summer and Christmas activities from Older People's Groups:

- (i) which organisations will be eligible for grant; and
- (ii) how awards of grant should be made.

Fiona Lees
Depute Chief Executive/
Director of Corporate Resources

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

15 January 2001

SN/SR

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Council's Corporate Plan.
2. Better Government for Older People Programme.
3. East Ayrshire Joint Community Care Plan 1999-2001.
4. Following the Public Pound.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers relative to this report should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, on telephone number (01563) 576104. 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

AGENDA