

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CUMNOCK AREA LOCAL COMMITTEE - 24 JANUARY 2001

DISBURSEMENT OF COMMUNITY GRANTS 2001/2002

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To enable the Committee to consider arrangements for (a) the submission of applications for Community Grants during the 2001/2002 financial year; and (b) dealing with applications from certain organisations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As the Members will recollect the Committee at its Special Meeting held on 24 January 2001, agreed detailed arrangements for dealing with applications for community grant submitted by Older People's Groups.
- 2.2 On the basis of the arrangements adopted by the Committee for the submission of and dealing with applications for grant from all other organisations in previous years, there are a number of other issues which the Committee require to determine at this time. These issues are identified in Section 3 below together with discussion and recommendations as to how the Committee should proceed relative to the matters concerned in respect of the 2001/02 financial year.

3. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Setting of a Closing Date for Submission of Applications

- 3.1.1 In respect of the 2000/01 financial year, the Committee approved the following arrangements for the submission of community grant applications, namely:-
- (i) local organisations were required to submit their applications, irrespective of when the group's proposed activity/event etc was due to take place, no later than 31 March 2000 and all applications received by the due date were considered by the Committee as soon as possible following commencement of the financial year; and
 - (ii) in order to facilitate the submission of applications by local groups, the appropriate Officer arranged (a) for those organisations who had applied for community grant funding the previous year to be advised of the arrangements for applying for the current year and to be issued with a community grant application form; (b) for posters to be displayed at Council premises advising of the arrangements; and (c) for an advertisement to be placed in the local press.

3.1.2 In determining arrangements for dealing with applications for next year, the Committee may wish to take into consideration the undernoted matters, namely:-

- with regard to the arrangements adopted in the last two years, the Committee have previously recognised that the main benefit of this approach is that the Committee should be in a position to consider the relative merits and priority of individual applications having regard to the other applications received and the total funding available for disbursement. In addition, from the point of view of the local organisations, each organisation is given an equal opportunity of applying for, and receiving, a grant award;
- while the great majority of applications for the 2000/2001 year were received by the closing date, a further seven applications were received during the year;
- in view of the likely volume of community grant applications to be received by this Local Committee, it is anticipated that should a closing date be specified for applications, operational difficulties could arise in processing the applications both in respect of Assessing Officers and Administrative Officers time. Experience of operating such a mechanism during the last two years gave rise to a disproportionate burden being placed on staff time in processing and assessing the applications over and above those applications still requiring processing from other Local Committees and Service Committees. Additionally, it is important to ensure that quality in the assessment process is maintained and is not unduly affected by time pressures;
- previous research indicates that while some local groups were in favour of a closing date being stipulated which assists in their forward planning, some other small local groups are not in favour because they felt that a closing date puts undue pressure on them to apply for a grant too far in advance and restricts spontaneity of applying for grant assistance;
- a requirement for organisations to apply for grant at the start of the financial year can mean that some proposals can be speculative; and
- should all funds be disbursed at the start of the financial year, the Committee are not in a position to consider grant awards in respect of groups which might be formed during the year, emergency applications or any cross boundary applications received during the year which include the Cumnock Area.

3.1.3 The above information is presented for consideration to assist the Committee in its deliberations. The Committee is requested to determine whether it would wish to set a closing date for submission of applications or not, and it is suggested for the reasons detailed above that applications for community grants be dealt with during the year as and when received.

3.1.4 Should the Committee wish to specify a closing date for grant applications for the 2001/02 financial year, it is requested that the arrangements be similar to those for the 2000/2001 year as set out in Paragraph 3.1.1 above.

3.2 **Formula and Flat Rate Payments or on a Merit Basis**

3.2.1 The approach applied by the Local Committee during 2000/2001 in respect of dealing with applications for community grants from young people's uniformed organisations and in respect of Gala Days and hanging basket projects was on a formula/flat rate payment basis as follows, namely:-

Young People's Uniformed Organisations - grants were made to such organisations in respect of general operating costs according to membership numbers as follows, namely:- (a) less than 20 members - £60; (b) 20-40 members - £70; and (c) more than 40 members - £80. In addition, these organisations were able to submit further applications for project specific purposes;

Gala Days - flat rate payments of £300 were made; and

Hanging Basket Projects - flat rate payments of £235 were made.

3.2.2 The guidance contained within the Accounts Commission document "Following the Public Pound", which has been endorsed by the Council and is contained within its procedures indicates that all grant applications should be considered on their own individual merits. The application of the formula/flat rate grant arrangements reduces flexibility to react to the particular needs and priorities of individual organisations.

3.2.3 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 it is suggested that applications from young people's uniformed organisations and in respect of Gala Days and hanging basket projects be dealt with each on their individual merits having regard to the nature of the proposal, the proposed costs and the financial circumstances of the organisation concerned.

4. **FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS** - Nil.

5. **RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 It is requested that the Committee determine which options they would wish to adopt as set out in Paragraphs 3.1.3 and 3.2.3 for the disbursement of community grants for 2001/02.

Fiona Lees
Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

11 January 2001

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.

AGENDA