

Future Grant Distribution: Third Sector and Early Years Grants

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** At the Council meeting 11th February 2016, officers were asked to: “Review an amalgamation of all grant structures and criteria (for example, allowing community councils to apply)” and to “Promote and develop a participatory budgeting scheme for Area Committees”.
- 1.2** Grants currently allocated by the council to community groups through an application process are the Third Sector Grants fund and the Early Years Fund. Improvements to these processes have been considered and recommendations made for members to consider.
- 1.3** Committee are asked to agree:
- Third Sector Grant funding is allocated by Area Committees in one round, from April 2017.
 - The criteria for grant funding are extended to allow community councils and parent councils to apply.
 - The scoring of grant applications is opened to community participation

Future Grant Distribution: Third Sector and Early Year Grants

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In its review of budget decisions in February 2016 the Council asked officers to review the way in which grants are distributed to community groups. Officers were asked to:
- a) Review an amalgamation of all grant structures and criteria (for example, allowing community councils to apply)
 - b) Promote and develop a participatory budgeting scheme for Area Committees.
- 2.2 This report considers the potential to combine grants, the ability for community councils to apply for Third Sector Grants and the future of grant distribution including participatory budgeting.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Policy and Resources Committee agree:

- 3.1 Third Sector Grant funding is allocated by Area Committees in one round, from April 2017.
- 3.2 The criteria for grant funding are extended to allow community councils and parent councils to apply.
- 3.3 The scoring of grant applications is opened to community participation through a panel of community members making recommendations to Area Committee, for funds distributed from April 2018.
- 3.4 Participatory Budgeting (PB) as a method to distribute grant funding is looked at in future following the pilot PB project run with the Argyll and Bute Gaelic Forum, funded by Scottish Government in 2016/17.
- 3.5 The Third Sector Grant fund is renamed 'Supporting C 0 Td (funded)Tj 785

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Communities Fund with the Health and Wellbeing Grant Fund run by the Health and Social Care

current and new statutory duties for Early Learning and Childcare. In Argyll and Bute the implementation of Day Care and Out of School services is reliant upon Third Sector partners supported by this fund. This is de

Development, with final recommendations taken forward to Area Committee. A representative panel with appropriate training and support will require the council to advertise the opportunity, select and train community members well in advance of the F

The Democratic Society Scotland presented available digital engagement tools at an elected members' seminar on 3rd October 2016.

The next stage is to explore how Participatory Budgeting could work for distribution of grants by delivering a pilot with the Gaelic Forum this year, 2016/17.

The timescale for the proposed development of participative decision making for Third Sector Grants is therefore set out below:

Table 1: Development steps for Third Sector Grant Fund

Funding year	Development Step	Detail
2017/18	Community Councils and Parent Councils can apply	Grant criteria changed in December 2016. Applications accepted for

grants to best meet the needs of communities in Argyll and Bute. The proposed developments for the future of these grant funds also considers the current political context to devolve decision-making.

Whilst it is proposed not possible to combine the Third Sector Grant Fund with the Early Years Fund it is possible to develop the criteria to allow community councils and parent councils to apply. It is also possible to develop the process of the decision making of the Early Years Fund to include elected members. With the Third Sector Grant Fund it is possible to further develop this to include, in the future, panels of community members to assess applications and make recommendations to Area Committee. Further into the future of managing the grants it may also be possible to build on the participatory budgeting model and seek opportunities to amalgamate with community

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Background of Third Sector Grants

Appendix 2: Background to Participatory Budgeting

Appendix 1

Background of Third Sector Grants

Approx 100 amount of groups on average each year have benefited.

The funds went through a review in 2010 and this simplified the process and created a robust grant funding scheme. On 11 Feb 2016 the council requested that officers look at the criteria and distribution of grants to :

- Review an amalgamation of all grant structures and criteria (for example, allowing community councils to apply)
- Promote and develop a participatory budgeting scheme for Area Committees

Currently the grants:

- Do not allow parent/community councils to apply
- Are assessed by the Community Development Officer in each area.
- Operate two rounds of funding - April and August committees

What we do not fund at present:

- Capital costs - The budget strand that the grant funding comes from is not intended for Capital costs.
- Statutory bodies (community councils, parent councils)
- We do not fund 100% of project costs – the maximum award is 50% of total costs and we do not fund projects that are in receipt of other council funding.

Appendix 2

Background to Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) has been defined, in simple terms, as 'local people having direct decision-making powers over part of a public budget'. The Scottish Government are keen on Participatory Budgeting and are currently working with a number of local authorities in Scotland. PB can be inter-generational and can build capacity from grass roots, rather than favouring those who know how to write successful application forms.

Money and time have to be spent on PB, it has the benefits of informing and building capacities of communities.

Originally developed in Latin America in the 1980s, PB has spread into Europe, the USA and beyond, with over 1500 experiences reported worldwide. Hundreds of PB initiatives have been run in the UK in all types of communities, by local councils and in the public engagement work of police authorities, health boards, social housing, town and parish councils and within not-for-profit organisations.

So far in the UK the majority of PB funds have been allocated using a 'small grants' model, where residents decide between relatively small projects run in their communities. The PB story elsewhere has been more adventurous. In 2014 in New York over \$24m was spent through PB, using money that had previously been the prerogative solely of elected politicians and public officials⁴. And even in the UK the sums have reached into the millions on occasion. Through the careful application of PB it is possible to find creative and effective ways of improving essential services. Sharing responsibility with citizens in a planned way, with the aim of:

- Increasing the quality and quantity of community engagement
- Increasing trust in politics and in politicians
- Stimulating dialogue and positive action within communities
- Encouraging well targeted public investments

PB has much to offer residents and community leaders in terms of community empowerment. When well run, those involved feel their views have been respected and the process is fair and accessible. They respect those that have given them the opportunity to make decisions, rebuilding trust in the democratic process.

At its heart PB is about involving more people in all stages of the commissioning of public services. Whenever money is being spent in a community, ward or at authority level it is possible to increase the amount of citizen involvement in decision-making and also in the prioritization delivery and monitoring of services.
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