

Midlothian Council Small Grants Allocation 2018/19

Report by Dr Mary Smith, Director Education, Communities and Economy

1 Purpose of Report

This report is asking the Council to approve the recommendations of the Small Grants Programme for the funding of Voluntary and Third Sector organisations in 2018/19.

2 Background

2.1 In June 2014 the Council approved a set of recommendations following a review of Council grants (part of the wider review of Services to Communities) to establish a three-year grants programme for small and large grants from 2015/16 to 2017/18. The review was prompted by a need to focus on the areas of greatest need for the Council's resources and services and to ensure a more focused approach, as part of a wider agenda of financial savings.

2.2 The Small Grants Programme has an annual budget allocation of £150,000 and funds individual projects up to £3,000. The Small Grants Programme is made up of four separate funding streams. Each stream has a grant stream lead, an allocated budget and set criteria for assessment – a copy of the guidance and criteria for all streams is included in **Appendix 1** of this report. The small grant streams are:

- i) Developing Communities, including Community Councils;
- ii) Employability, Learning, and Training
- iii) Health and Physical Activity
- iv) Poverty

2.3 On 15 December 2015 Council agreed that Gala Day funding of circa. £10,000 be considered as a separate funding stream outwith the Small Grants Programme: and the Head of Commercial Operations to be responsible for the future management of Gala Day funding.

2.4 On 28 June 2016 Council agreed to allocate the £40,000 annual Poverty Stream to the priority communities of Dalkeith/Woodburn, Mayfield/ Easthouses and Gorebridge in the 2017/18 small grant round and beyond, using a participatory decision making process and gave governance for officers to use this money to apply for external match funding. The Communities Team is developing a participatory budgeting programme for the targeted areas for 2017/18 and 2018/19 and has secured an additional £40,000 grant from the Scottish Government's Community Choices Fund to support this work. The programme will involve working with the Child Poverty Action Group and 11 local primary schools to reduce the cost of the school day.

2.5 On the 27 June 2017 Council discussed the future of Voluntary Sector Grants. A reduction to the overall grants budget is one of the proposals being considered as part of the current budget challenge. At the meeting the

Council decided to extend the large grants by 6 months and to “continue with another round of one year small grants on the existing basis”.

2.6 Due to the decisions agreed in Section 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 the Small Grants fund available to apply for in 2018/19 was £100,000.

2.7 Between August and October 2017 a small grants communications plan was delivered. The promotion included adverts in the local press, a social media campaign, correspondence to existing grant recipients, communication via Third Sector networks, promotion at funding events and face-to-face meetings to ensure that community groups received the support they needed to apply for a small grant – **see Appendix 2.**

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

From the overall budget of £100,000 the Small Grants Programme recommends the following allocation for each of the grants streams;

Grant Stream	Budget	Requested	Awarded
Developing Communities	30,000	102,044	30,054
Community Councils	10,000	11,103	8,369
Employability, Learning and Training	20,000	41,782	19,371
Health and Physical Activity, including junior football clubs	40,000	122,564	32,476
Total	100,000	277,493	90,270

A full breakdown of the proposed awards is available in **Appendix 3.**

3.2 Risk

The Review of Council Grants has been risk assessed and these risks are included in the Council's Risk Register. The Small Grants Programme provides financial support to a range of local organisations, many of whom are struggling financially because of a reduction in funding from public bodies and other grant providers. The risks for these organisations include a reduction in staff and volunteers, increased pressure to fundraise from other sources, loss of external funding leverage and a reduction in services. The Small Grants Programme helps to mitigate against these risks.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☒ Community safety
- ☒ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☒ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan (SMP)

The SMP has directly informed the criteria used to assess and award all of the small grant applications for 2018/19.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The proposed small grants allocation will be monitored to help ensure that the allocation of small grants will support the outcomes identified in the SMP.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Prevention is part of the criteria for all grant streams. All applications were assessed by the scoring panels against this criterion.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The review of Council Grants used a co-production approach with the Third Sector. Many of the criteria and processes in the Small Grants Programme have been informed by this process.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

A full Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the Council's review of grants in 2014. The approved recommendations are now embedded in the three year small grants programme. The grants panels carefully assess the applications against the Council's equality duties. The funded organisations are required to monitor equalities and take positive action to promote access for equality groups.

A further Equalities Impact Assessment was completed on the 24 August 2016. The assessment concluded that the Small Grant Programme is compliant with the Council's Equalities Duties and will have a positive impact on equalities groups in Midlothian.

A full Integrated Impact Assessment was completed on the 13 November 2017. The assessment concluded that the Small Grant Programme will have a positive impact on equality groups across Midlothian.

See Appendix 4.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

The Small Grants Programme funding will help maintain the Voluntary and Third Sectors in Midlothian. With reductions in public sector funding, the Voluntary and Third Sector have an important role in developing communities, reducing inequalities and addressing social isolation.

4 Summary

- 4.1** The Small Grants Programme 2018/19 is a key part of the Council's overall contribution to Voluntary and Third Sector organisations. It therefore remains a Council commitment to support local organisations in Midlothian. The programme has been promoted across Midlothian, and the applications have been carefully assessed against the Council's agreed criteria. The poverty stream has been reallocated to the priority areas, allowing officers to use this resource to attract additional external funding.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1** It is recommended that Council:

- i) approves the recommended grant awards as set out in Appendix 3 of this report (subject to meeting the appropriate conditions of grant); and
- ii) acknowledges the significant contribution that Voluntary and Third Sector organisations make to communities across Midlothian.

Date 24 November 2017

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Appendix 1: Small Grants Guidance and Criteria

Appendix 2: Small Grants Communications Plan

Appendix 3: Small Grants Proposed Awards

- i) Developing Communities**
- ii) Community Councils**
- iii) Health and Physical Activity**
- iv) Employability, Learning, and Training**

Appendix 4: Small Grants Integrated Impact Assessment