

Midlothian Council Small Grants Allocation 2016/17**Report by Eibhlin McHugh, Director Adult Health and Care****1 Purpose of Report**

This report is asking the Council to approve the recommendations of the Small Grants Programme for the funding of Third Sector organisations in 2016/17.

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). That wider review was prompted by a need to focus on the areas of greatest need for the Council's resources and services, to ensure that a more focused approach, driving efficiencies in seeking opportunities for financial savings. Overall the financial savings approved by Council were to achieve a recurring saving of circa. £500,000 by 2018, a reduction of 34% over a three year period.
- 2.2** The Small Grants Programme has an annual budget allocation of £150,000 and funds projects up to £3,000. During September and October 2015 the programme was promoted across Midlothian. This promotion included adverts in the local press, correspondence to existing grant recipients, communication via Third Sector networks, and drop-in grant surgeries in Dalkeith, and Penicuik.
- 2.3** The Small Grants Programme is made up of four separate funding streams. Each has an allocated budget, set criteria, and grant stream lead. The streams are;
- i) Poverty
 - ii) Developing Communities, including:
 - Community Councils;
 - iii) Employability, Learning, and Training
 - iv) Health and Physical Activity, including
 - East of Scotland Football

A separate report is being submitted regarding allocations of financial and in kind support to Gala Days

3 Report Implications**3.1 Resource**

From the overall budget of £150,000 the Small Grants Programme is recommending the following allocation for each of the grants streams;

Grant Stream	Budget	Requested	Awarded
Developing Communities	40,000	83,311	50,397
Poverty	40,000	16,725	15,725
Community Councils	10,000	16,278	9,822
Gala Days	-	23,559	9,665*
Employability, Learning and Training	20,000	27,562	20,069
Health and Physical Activity	40,000	78,207	44,322
Total	150,000	245,642	150,000

This sum is to be transferred to the Resources directorate this year, and proposed future arrangements are the subject of a separate report.

During the assessment process the grant stream leads accepted that there may need to be some movement across grant streams, depending on the quality and quantity of the applications. It was also acknowledged that a number of projects met the criteria of more than one funding stream.

A full breakdown of the organisations and proposed awards is available in **Appendix 1**.

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 Council core funding, and reductions in money available from other external funders. The risks for these organisations include losing staff and volunteers, closure, increased pressure to fundraise from other sources, and loss of external funding leverage. The Small Grants Programme helps to mitigate 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 2016/17.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The proposed small grants allocation will require monitoring to see if the desired outcomes for each grant stream are demonstrably being achieved. The existing robust monitoring processes will help ensure that the allocation of small grants will support the outcomes identified in the SMP.

The Communities Team will review the Small Grants Programme, in partnership with the Third Sector, and grant stream leads, to identify improvements needed for 2017/18 and beyond allocations.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Prevention is a key part of the criteria for all grant streams. All applications were carefully 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. Much of the criteria and processes in the Small Grants Programme have been informed by this process. The Voluntary Sector Forum nominated Dr Lesley Kelly, Assistant Manager at Midlothian Voluntary Action, to take on an advisory role as part of the Small Grants Programme, but she was not directly involved in the scoring. Dr Kelly provided valuable support and advice to Third Sector organisations during the application period.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

Equalities is a key part of the criteria for all grant streams. All applications were carefully assessed by the scoring panels to ensure they considered and promoted equalities.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

The Small Grants Programme funding will help maintain the Third Sector in Midlothian. With reductions in statutory funding, the Third Sector has an increasingly important role in developing communities, reducing inequalities, and addressing social isolation.

4 Summary

- 4.1** The Small Grants Programme 2016/17 is a key part of the overall Council's contribution to Third Sector organisations. The programme has been promoted across the sector, and scoring panels have carefully assessed all the applications against the agreed criteria. The Small Grants Programme implements the approved recommendations following the Council's review of Grants in 2014. Whilst there has been, consideration given to area targeting by each grant panel, There is a view that this should be more formalised with a weighting of scoring towards applications from these areas in future funding allocations.

6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that Council:

- i) Notes the recommended grant awards as set out in Appendix 1 of this report (subject to meeting the appropriate conditions of grant);
- ii) Notes that for small (below £3,000) grants the next round of bids will be invited in 2017/18, and annually thereafter;

- iii) Acknowledges the significant contribution the Third Sector makes to communities across Midlothian; and
- iv) Notes that we will set out a system for weighting coring to benefit the target areas of Mayfield, Gorebridge and Dalkeith in the 2017/18 and beyond grants round.

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