

REPORT TO BANFF AND BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE – 16 June 2015

COMMUNITY COUNCIL FUNDING 2015/16

1 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Area Committee:

1.1 Note the results of the ‘Report On Community Council Funding For The Six Administrative Areas Of Aberdeenshire’ at Appendix 1.

1.2 Approve the allocation of an administration grant fixed at £41 per Community Council meeting, distributed as follows based on the number of Community Council meetings per annum:

Community Council	No of Meetings Per Year	Proposed Admin Grant
Alvah & Forglen	11	£451
Banff and Macduff	10	£410
Cornhill	4	£164
Fordyce	6	£246
Fraserburgh	10	£410
Invercairn	6	£246
King Edward and Gamrie	9	£369
New Aberdour	6	£246
Portsoy	10	£410
Rathen and Memsie	6	£246
Rosehearty	11	£451
Whitehills	11	£451
		£4,100

1.3 Agree to make the remaining sum of £3,429 available for Project Grant applications.

2 Background / Discussion

2.1 Within the financial year 2015/16 a budget of £62,000 has been agreed for Community Councils within Aberdeenshire. The total budget for the Banff and Buchan Area is £7,529.

- 2.2 It was agreed by Area Committee on 01 April 2014 that administration grants be disbursed in line with the number of meetings held per annum.
- 2.3 Centrally a provision of £2,380 has been made in order to cover the costs of registration under the Data Protection Act. This equates to £35 per Community Council and is paid directly to each group. There is also a centralised funding provision of £6,200 which is utilised corporately to cover insurance costs for all Community Councils within Aberdeenshire. In addition to this should Community Councils be required to undertake election activities a centralised fund of £800 can be used to cover any associated expenses. £3,000 has been allocated for Community Council Development Events.
- 2.4 Under the auspices of the 'Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils', Community Councils should be supported and empowered to raise funds for schemes, projects and other purposes within their stated objectives.
- 2.5 It is therefore recommended that the remaining budget of £3,429 be set aside for Community Council project grants by contributing 80% towards the cost of a project, to a maximum of £1,000.
- 2.6 This enables the budget to be used responsively to address the needs of communities and maximises the use of scarce resources. This enables Aberdeenshire Council, through the utilisation of all available resources, to work more closely with individuals and communities to understand their needs, maximise talents and resources, support self reliance, and build resilience. This approach was adopted for the first time during the financial year 2012/13. Proactive community councils have embraced this change and over that last 3 years the budget has been fully committed.
- 2.7 Grants made to Community Councils will be in compliance with the 'Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils'.
- 2.8 The disbursement of Community Council project grants, based on the submission of an eligible grant application form, will be devolved to the Banff and Buchan Area Committee. All decisions will be within the constraints of the total sum as agreed by Aberdeenshire Council.
- 2.9 Although Community Councils would always be encouraged to work in partnership with other community organisations, this scheme can only be used for the delivery of Community Council projects. Applications for works to be undertaken on behalf of third party organisations will not be eligible.
- 2.10 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

3 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 3.1 An equality impact assessment is not required in this instance as the fund is designed to support Community Councils. All Community Councils, as per the Scheme of Establishment, are required by legislation to be proactive in the promotion of equality.

3.2 There is no additional staffing or financial implications arising from this report. The management of the budget will be undertaken within existing area management resources.

RITCHIE JOHNSON
Director of Communities

Report prepared by: Ian Rogan
Area Project Officer (Banff and Buchan)
Date: 02 June 2015

APPENDIX 1.

REPORT ON COMMUNITY COUNCIL FUNDING FOR THE SIX ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS OF ABERDEENSHIRE

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the Review of the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils, the current funding processes in place have been considered.
- 1.2 All 70 currently active Community Councils were consulted by way of a questionnaire and 39 Community Councils Responded.

2. Background/Discussion

- 2.2 At present each of the six areas in Aberdeenshire have different procedures for the calculation and processing of Community Council grants.

Buchan

Each Community Council receives £425 + £35 for Data Protection. The remaining funds within the budget are retained for project grant allocations. The project grant contributes 80% of the total cost of a project, up to a maximum of £1,000.

Grants are paid to Community Councils on receipt of their annual accounts and AGM minutes.

Feedback is sought from Community Councils on what they have used their project grants for. No feedback is sought on the admin grants, although minutes of meetings are monitored.

Banff & Buchan

Community Councils are paid a fixed amount of £41.00 per Community Council meeting. Any remaining sums in the budget are available for project grant applications and the project grant contributes 80% of the total cost of a project, up to a maximum of £1,000.

Grants are paid out to the Community Council when the signed off financial accounts are submitted along with their AGM minutes, either approved or in draft.

Feedback is sought from Community Councils on what they have used their project grants for. No feedback is requested on how the admin grant is spent, although minutes of meetings are monitored.

Formartine

Each Community Council receives an admin grant and project grant based upon the number of electors in their area. This is inclusive of £35 towards data protection.

Grants are paid to Community Councils after the submission of ratified annual accounts and AGM minutes.

No feedback is sought on the monies granted.

Garioch

Each Community Council is allocated £425 per year with an additional per capita payment for the remaining funds in the budget. There is no project grant scheme in Garioch.

Before payment of the grant, Community Councils require to provide a copy of their audited accounts and minute of their AGM, demonstrating that these have been agreed.

There is no feedback requested on the expenditure and the Area Office would not necessarily see the accounts as they are routinely sent to Finance direct.

Kincardine & Mearns

Each Community Council receives an admin grant and project grant, calculated on a per elector basis.

Prior to the payment of the grant, the Area Office requests the submission of AGM minutes and audited accounts.

No feedback is sought on how the Community Council have spent their grant.

Marr

Each Community Council receives an admin grant, calculated on a per elector basis.

Prior to payment of the grants, Community Councils are required to submit their year-end accounts which are forwarded to Finance.

No feedback is requested from Community Councils on how grant money is spent.

- 2.3 It has become apparent that the calculation of grant monies differs from area to area, however all request the submission of AGM minutes and annual accounts, prior to any payment being made. Feedback is not currently sought on how admin grants are spent however, under the scheme of establishment, minutes of all meetings throughout the year require to be submitted to the relevant area office.

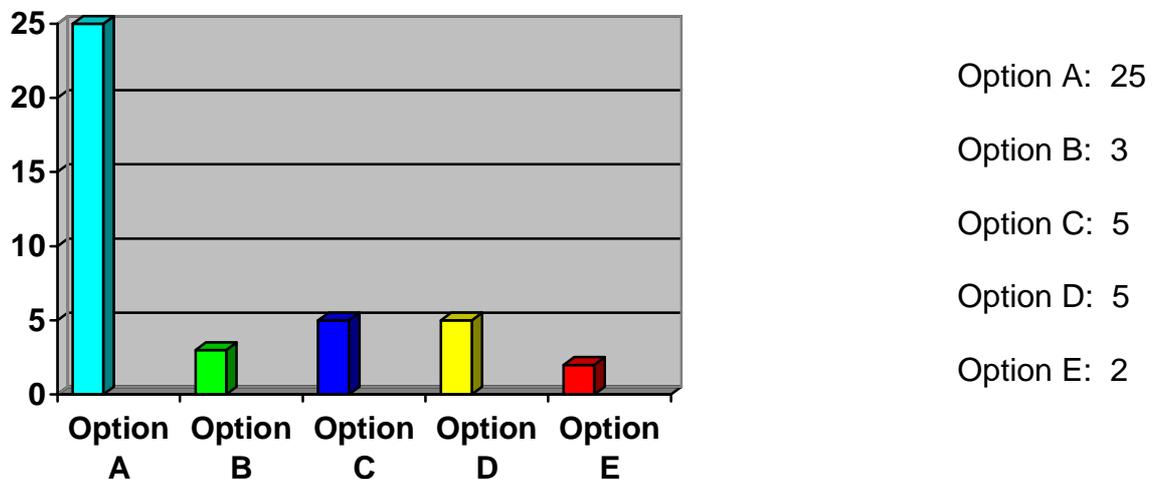
3 Options for Future Payments of Community Council Grants

3.1 A questionnaire was sent to all Community Councils to seek their views on the various funding options.

3.2 Community Councils were asked to select their preferred choice from the following options:

- a) The annual budget to be split between the Community Councils in the area, based on the proportion of residents within each Community Council area,
- b) As option 'a' but with a proportion of the annual budget being retained by the Area Office for project grant allocations which Community Councils can bid for,
- c) The annual budget to be split between the Community Councils in the area, based on the number of meetings that each Community Council holds,
- d) As option 'c' but with a proportion of the annual budget being retained by the Area Office for project grant allocations which Community Councils can bid for, or
- e) Other.

3.3 At present there are 70 active Community Councils within Aberdeenshire and we received a response from 39 from across all six areas, representing a 56% return. The results were as follows:



(One Community Council selected 2 options which gives a total of 40 options selected from 39 responses).

3.4 The following demonstrates the breakdown of responses by area:

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Buchan	1	1		2	
Banff & Buchan			2	1	1
Formartine	6		1		
Garioch	2				1
Kincardine & Mearns	7			1	
Marr	5				
Anonymous	4	2	2	1	
Total	25	3	5	5	2

3.5 Of those who selected Option E 'other' their suggestions were:

- *The calculation should be based on 1. Proportion of residents within each community area; 2. The overall size of that area; and 3. Based on the number of meetings held within the Community Council area.*
- *We feel that a simpler system which reimbursed the actual annual costs would be much more efficient to operate. Possibly giving an initial allowance, then adjusted to cover any overspend actually incurred by the CC. In summary, the CC running costs should be met in full, and if there are additional project funds available, these could be applied for with a simple application form.*

3.6 In addition to selecting their preferred option, Community Councils were also invited to provide any further comments for consideration which officers have noted. Several queries were also received, examples of these being questions about training opportunities; whether printing facilities in Council offices were available; whether additional funding could be provided towards election costs and if assistance could be given by the Council to publicise elections and encourage nominations; whether information about available grants in the area could be provided with details on how to apply; and whether it would be possible for the Council to allocate a separate fund to reward secretaries, in order to remove the burden of the secretary's honorarium from the Community Council funding.

4 Banff & Buchan Community Council Responses.

4.1 We received 4 responses from Banff & Buchan Community Councils with 2 opting for Option C, 1 Opting for Option D and 1 suggesting a new formula. It should be noted that one of the Community Councils opting for Option C claimed this was current practice when in fact Option D. is current practice in this area.

- 4.2 There were also 2 anonymous responses which selected Option C. and 1 anonymous response which selected Option D.
- 4.3 It would therefore appear, that there are no strong objections to continuing with the current method of funding for Community Councils in Banff & Buchan.
- 4.4 The Monitoring Officers within Business Services have been consulted and their views incorporated within the report.

5 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required because the recommended actions will not have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.
- 5.2 There are no particular staffing implications arising from this report and proposals outlined in this report.
- 5.3 The funding options are affordable within the limits of the allocated budget.

Ritchie Johnson
Director of Communities
02 June 2015

Report prepared by:

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