

REPORT TO MARR AREA COMMITTEE – 4 MAY 2021

ABERDEENSHIRE CHARITIES TRUST (ACT2) APPLICATIONS

1 Reason for Report / Summary

1.1 This report presents applications for funding to ACT2 (Aberdeenshire Charities Trust) from South West Aberdeenshire Citizens Advice Bureau (SWACAB), for £1,978.16 to purchase IT and communications equipment to deliver services to clients in Wards 15 and 16.

2 Recommendations

2.1 **The Committee is recommended to consider the following applications for ACT2 funding and determine whether to approve or reject the applications:**

Ward	Trust Purpose	Applicant
15	The prevention or relief of poverty; the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.	SWACAB
16	The prevention or relief of poverty; the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.	SWACAB

3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

3.1 Aberdeenshire Council is responsible for administering a number of individual charitable trusts which are now amalgamated into ACT2 (Aberdeenshire Charities Trust). The Trust is divided according to Ward Area and subdivided according to various purposes outlined within the trust deed and in keeping with its original purpose. The routine administration of the Trust has been delegated to Area Committees.

3.2 At its meeting on 19 February, 2019 (Item 5), the Marr Area Committee agreed that no award be granted for less than £100 or more than £500 to individuals, £1,000 to groups in Wards 15 and 16, and £2,000 to groups in Ward 14.

4 Discussion

4.1 The Area Committee is asked to consider two applications for funding as detailed in **Appendix 1** to the report.

4.2 The applicant has been invited to attend the meeting and has confirmed that they do not wish to address the meeting.

4.3 The applications have been assessed by officers from Legal and People and Finance and have been validated as competent and compliant with the trust purposes within the relevant trust areas.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1 The report helps deliver:
Council Priority 1 – Our People - Education, Health & Wellbeing; and
Council Priority 2 – Our Environment - Infrastructure, Resilient Communities.

5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing		X	
Equalities			X
Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Town Centre First			X
Sustainability			X

5.3 The funding available for the relevant wards and trust purposes:

Ward and purpose	Revenue	Capital
Aboyne, Upper Deeside and Donside (Marr Area) Ward 15 – the prevention or relief of poverty	£2,704.60	0.00
Banchory & Mid Deeside (Marr Area) Ward 16 – the prevention or relief of poverty	£1,096.84	0.00

5.4 An equality impact assessment is not required because Section 193 of the 2010 Act contains an exemption for charities which make positive discrimination to groups or individuals on the basis of their disadvantage. Insofar as the charity purposes discriminate positively in favour of individuals or groups on the basis of poverty, age, disability, or other disadvantage, there is no discrimination on the basis of any other protected characteristic (such as gender or religion). No negative impact on any individual or group as a result of this report has been identified.

- 5.5 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.
- 5.6 There is no financial risk of the Committee decision, however the financial implication will be that a greater proportion of Area Committee funds will transfer to the prevention or relief of poverty within Marr.
- 5.7 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: ACORP001 - Budget Pressures; ACORP005 - Working with Other Organisations (see Corporate Risk Register). No risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level.

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Any comments are incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section B.2.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the administration of trusts controlled by the Council for the benefit of their Area.

Alan Wood
Interim Director of Infrastructure Services

Report prepared by Alison McLeod, Area Committee Officer (Marr)
Date: 14 April, 2021

Appendix 1 – Project Outline and Costs

APPENDIX 1

Applicant 1: South West Aberdeenshire Citizens Advice Bureau (SWACAB)

Trust Ward and Purpose:

Ward 15 – the prevention or relief of poverty; the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.

Ward 16 – the prevention or relief of poverty; the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.

Amount Applied for: £1,978.16 (£989.08 from each Ward).

Why the Funding is required: the funds are required to purchase a laptop and a mobile phone (for each Ward), to deliver services to clients within Wards 15 and 16.

SWACAB use a comprehensive web base information system, Advisernet which provides detailed information and resources used by their advisers on a huge array of subjects from employment and benefits to housing and debt and the 16 advice categories they cover. Advisernet is renowned for its breadth and accuracy and is the only available source of independent, trusted and quality assured information for the advisers, ensuring they can confidently support their clients with accurate information. SWACAB currently have 4 x new trainee volunteer advisers, outreach advisers, specialist advisers and some volunteers working remotely and based within the Banchory, Aboyne and other offices supporting clients. In line with Scottish Government restrictions they have an incremental plan to return to face to face services also operating a blended model of delivery with some advisers working from home, using platforms namely Zoom, Microsoft Team and Attend anywhere to deliver online advice to clients also via telephone. SWACAB have an office in Banchory and Aboyne and in line with their plan aspire to relocate some of their volunteers within these offices to effectively deliver services to clients and deliver operations safely, some of the volunteer advisers have not worked within the services for 1 year and will require refresher training first, the equipment will help to facilitate this.

The impact of this equipment will be to increase capacity and availability of access to equipment for advisers and subsequently increased capacity to support clients giving Wards 15 and 16 residents the opportunity to access high quality advice. It would mean increased volunteering opportunities for the local community; increased capacity to deliver services to clients via online platforms; for advisers to undertake essential training; to enable advisers to communicate and liaise with clients and bureau staff; and for adviser liaison with other agencies and bodies on behalf of clients. Additionally, it will facilitate the compilation of letters, completion of forms, emails and communications on behalf of clients, and increase bureau capacity to support volunteers in refreshing skills when returning to volunteering.

Recent monitoring statistics on SWACAB activities indicate that the number of individuals seen by postcode during Q1 (January to March 2021) were 95 for Banchory and 60 for Aboyne, Ballater and Strathdon, with 581 individuals accessing the services of SWACAB during that period.

Who will the Funding help: The funding will help to provide outreach services to clients in the Ward 15 and 16 areas and will help to deliver services to clients seeking support advice and information on welfare rights, employment, personal debt, benefits, consumer issues, bereavement, family and relationships, pensions, tax, immigration, housing, legal and other advice as appropriate, to help relieve hardship and promote wellbeing. The laptops and mobile phones will facilitate delivery of services to clients living in social and rural isolation, experiencing financial hardship, economic deprivation, fuel and food poverty, people with disabilities, people with life limiting disabilities and illness, those who do not have access to transportation, individuals with caring responsibility, clients who have limited mobility, clients with anxiety and mental ill health.

Moreover, the funding will help SWACAB to deliver services to support the economic and social recovery of Ward 16 population, now critical given the deepening inequalities, unprecedented rise in food poverty, unemployment and the broader societal impact on individuals due to the COVID pandemic presently and in the longer term.

Other Funding Applied for: No other applications have been made to fund this project.