
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF DISCRETIONARY FUNDING TO COMMUNITY COUNCILS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report follows the agreement of Policy & Resources Committee on 13 December 2018 that officers proceed to look at the current terms of the discretionary grant in effort to address the concerns. It outlines options for dispersing the monies currently available within the discretionary fund.

The Council previously allocated an additional £10,000 in 2012 to enhance the funding to community councils by way of introducing a discretionary grant fund. The then Executive Committee agreed that allocation of funding should be at a rate of 10p per elector (equivalent to £6,780) and that the remaining funds (£3,220) be set aside to meet mileage or transport costs associated with attendance at Area Community Planning Group (ACPG) meetings at a rate of £0.45p per mile (less the first 20 miles of any claim) and/or reimbursement of any public transport fares. This would only be paid subject to budget being available and to guidance regarding the use of video conferencing and car sharing.

Options were explored by officers which looked at alternative ways to disperse funds in accordance with the existing budget of £10,000. Being limited by budgetary constraints only two options are feasible to progress and in each case there would be a reduction to the level of direct financial support some community councils would receive.

The most recent set of accounts on file for each of these Community Council's does indicate that their core costs could continue to be met from reduced funding but it would limit, particularly for Helensburgh Community Council, some of the community engagement work that could be undertaken.

Mention of a challenge fund was raised but in terms of the proposals only option 1 would provide additional monies for such a fund. However, this particular option would impact negatively on significantly more community councils and is not recommended as the preferred option.

Option 2 is the recommended option should the committee wish to alter the way these funds are distributed. While it does still reduce the grant level for our 5 main towns (Rothesay is excluded on the basis of its Island status), such a reduction could not be avoided when these 5 areas currently benefit from 43.2% of the funding distributed. The options are contained within Appendix 2 which provides members with information regarding how each of the proposals would affect individual community councils.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report follows on from the agreement of Policy & Resources Committee, on 13 December 2018, that officers explore alternative methods of distributing the allocated £10,000 of discretionary funding in view of representations to look at the current funding levels from 3 rural/island community councils.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The committee is invited to determine whether or not to change the grant criteria for financial year 2019/2020 and if so minded, it is recommended that option 2, outlined in Appendix 2, be progressed as the preferred option.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The case for additional funding by 3 rural/island community councils was made on the basis they feel there is an inequity in personal costs to those who volunteer as a community representative in more rural areas and consider that this should not be a barrier to volunteering. In response to this, the Policy & Resources Committee invited officers to look at alternative ways of distributing the funding.
- 4.2 £10,000 in discretionary funding was made available to support community councils in 2012. £6780 of this is available for community councils by way of a 10p per elector top up. While this benefits our larger community councils, the 2 smallest community councils (in terms of population) benefit to the sum of £11.80 each. The remainder of the funding (£3220) supports community council attendance at ACPG meetings by paying the actual costs of public transport to the meeting or providing 0.45p per mile allowance (excluding the first 20 miles of each journey). Expenses can only be claimed where there is no provision for Video Conferencing.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 outlines the existing payments made to each community council in respect of their administrative and discretionary top up grants.
- 4.4 Appendix 2 outlines two options which are within budget for consideration of the committee. Option 2 increases the grant to rural and island communities by being less weighted to electorate although there is a negative impact on the discretionary payments which would

be received by our main towns. Within existing budgetary provision a negative impact to those 5 towns cannot be avoided without additional funding as they presently receive 43.2% of the top up grant of £6780.90 with the remaining monies being split between 51 community councils.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The committee is invited to determine whether or not to change the grant criteria for financial year 2019/2020 and if so minded, it is recommended that option 2 of appendix 2 be progressed as the preferred option for the reasons outlined previously.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – The current method for allocating discretionary funding was agreed by Committee and therefore it would be appropriate that any plans to deviate from this should also be made by committee.
- 6.2 Financial – Depending on the preferred option there may be no impact on the Council as costs could be contained with the existing budget but there are negative impacts on the level of overall funding some of our community councils would receive, these are detailed within the attached appendices.
- 6.3 Legal – The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 states that councils may provide financial support for community councils. There is no national agreement in place, each local authority must set its own budget.
- 6.4 HR - None
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 6.5.1 Equalities - none
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - none
- 6.5.3 Islands - cost of associated travel should not be a barrier to democratic participation
- 6.6 Risk – failure to provide adequate finances to support the reasonable costs to community councils could lead to communities not having a statutory voice.
- 6.7 Customer Service - none

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Appendix 1: Existing Community Council Administrative and Discretionary Grants.

Appendix 2: Options for Reallocation of Discretionary Grants.

Existing Community Council Administrative and Discretionary Grants

Name of CC	Core Grant	Discretionary Grant
Southend	£400	£33.90
The Laggan	£400	£32.50
Campbeltown	£500	£416.80
West Kintyre	£400	£68.50
East Kintyre	£400	£58.30
Tarbert & Skipness	£500	£113.30
Gigha	£400	£13.50
Islay	£500	£258.50
Jura	£400	£16.80
Colonsay	£400	£11.80
South Knapdale	£400	£20.40
North Knapdale	£400	£42.80
Ardrishaig	£500	£110.00
Lochgilphead	£500	£225.10
West Lochfyne	£400	£27.00
Furnace	£400	£22.50
Inveraray	£400	£55.90
Dunadd	£400	£74.40
Craignish	£400	£34.10
MAKI Total	£8100	£1636.10

Name of CC	Core Grant	Discretionary Grant
Mull	£500	£242.10
Iona	£400	£13.10
Coll	£400	£15.90
Tiree	£400	£54.10
Oban	£700	£671.60
Glenorchy & Innishail	£400	£60.60
Taynuilt	£400	£88.30
Avich & Kilchrenan	£400	£22.70
Luining	£400	£15.10
Kilninver & Kilmelford	£400	£34.70
Seil & Easdale	£400	£55.60
Kilmore	£400	£30.90
Dunbeg	£400	£58.50
Lismore	£400	£15.70
Appin	£400	£42.00
Connel	£400	£49.10
Ardchattan	£500	£137.80
OLI Total	£7300	£1607.80

Name of CC	Core Grant	Discretionary Grant
Colintraive & Glendaruel	£400	£28.90
Cairndow	£400	£11.80
Lochgoil	£400	£36.30
Strachur	£400	£64.30
Kilfinan	£400	£64.50
Hunter's Quay	£400	£78.20
Kilmun	£400	£78.80
Ardentinny	£400	£15.40
Sandbank	£500	£103.60
Dunoon	£700	£527.30
South Cowal	£500	£131.00
Bute	£500	£478.60
B&C Total	£5400	£1618.70

Name of CC	Core Grant	Discretionary Grant
Rhu & Shandon	£500	£163.50
Garelochhead	£500	£126.10
Cove & Kilcreggan	£500	£123.30
Arrochar & Tarbet	£400	£68.10
Rosneath & Clynder	£500	£115.00
Luss and Arden	£400	£29.00
Helensburgh	£700	£1090.90
Cardross	£500	£202.40
H&L Total	£4000	£1918.30
Overall Total	£24,800	£6780.90