

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE Finance and Resources

DATE 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011

DIRECTOR Stewart Carruth

TITLE OF REPORT Community Fund

REPORT NUMBER: CG/11/071

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides a response to Councillor McCaig's motion that was referred to the Finance and Resources Committee of the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2010 that:

"Council recognizes the benefits that can be gained from small scale investment in local areas and agrees to investigate the establishment of a city wide 'community fund' from which community groups, including community councils, can bid for money from to fund specific projects in their local area. Requests that officers report back on potential funding levels and streams with consideration given to this proposal as an alternative to ward budgets."

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) agree that consideration is given as part of the budget setting process for 2012/13 to establishing a 'city wide community fund' from which community groups, including community councils, can apply for funding for specific projects for their area.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The existing 5 year Business Plan has made no allocation for establishing a 'city wide community fund'. Currently, the Council provides a wide range of separate miscellaneous grants and support to the voluntary and community sectors and an internal audit report reviewing existing management and monitoring arrangements for these various schemes is being undertaken and will report to the Council's Audit and Risk Committee in due course. It is proposed that any new scheme will need to take cognizance of recommendations and improvement proposals in relation better to management of grant streams once these are considered and agreed.

Prior to this financial year Councillors were each provided with ward budgets which allowed them to support projects and initiatives in their wards that could respond to locally identified issues. In 2010/11 members ward budgets were set at £1000k per member and have ceased in this financial year.

Depending on the additional workload created by a future community fund scheme there may be additional staffing costs required.

#### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

##### Personnel

The introduction of a new 'community fund' would likely have staffing implications in relation to promoting, managing and administering the fund, supporting application, assessment and decision making processes and subsequent reporting and monitoring of delivery. It may though be able to minimize staffing requirement through integrating these functions with an existing Council grant scheme.

#### 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Aberdeen City Council currently provides a wide range of funding support and grant opportunities for the voluntary and community sector in order to help the Council deliver its objectives. This includes Youth Activities Small grants, Cultural grants, Sports grants and grants to support and promote Equal Opportunities activity.

5.2 At a ward and neighbourhood level the Council also provides annual support to Community Councils and, where Community Centres are operating. Based on the "leased centre" model most centres receive an annual development grant of £10,500.

5.3 The Council also provides annual funding of £1,625M, through the Fairer Scotland Fund. Some of this funding has been targeted directly to support locally identified priority issues within Aberdeen's most disadvantaged communities. Experience from the Fairer Scotland Fund has demonstrated that often small levels of funding to support areas and residents to address locally identified issues and problems can deliver significant benefits and social return on investment. Progress reports on the Fairer Scotland Fund have been well received and commended by the Council's Policy and Performance Committee.

5.4 Various local authorities elsewhere in the UK operate 'community fund' or 'community grant schemes'. For example Falkirk Council's Community Grant Scheme aims to support community groups and voluntary organizations to deliver projects that make a positive difference to communities across the Falkirk area. Supported projects are required to demonstrate how they can contribute to one or more of the goals of the Council as set out in its Corporate Plan. Falkirk's scheme offers support, up to a maximum of £5,000, towards

community based projects that can usually be completed within a 12 month period.

5.5 If Aberdeen City Council decides it wants to establish a Community Fund, as set out in Councillor McCaig's Motion, and if the Council agrees to establish a budget for this in 2012/2013, a further report proposing how the scheme would operate in practice could quickly be brought forward for consideration by members so that this could be established early in the next financial year.

## 6. IMPACT

Depending on the ultimate scope for the "Community Fund", if this is agreed it would have the potential to contribute to the delivery of the Council's vision i.e making Aberdeen "an even better place to live and work where people can expect high quality services that meet their need."

Within the existing Single Outcome Agreement we have commitments in relation to Outcome 11: "We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others." Also, in relation to Outcome 15: "Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs."

Also, in the draft 5 year Business Plan we are looking to work closely with our partners, including local communities to deliver a single set of outcomes for all the citizens of Aberdeen.

## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Falkirk City Council, Community Grant Scheme, as published on their website <http://www.falkirk.gov.uk>

## 8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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