

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

---

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Finance and Resources
<b>DATE</b>	15 March 2012
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Stewart Carruth
<b>TITLE OF REPORT</b>	Financial Assistance – Application Process Update
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CG/12/040

---

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the progress of updating and streamlining the application process for financial assistance, in response to the item included in the committee business statement.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- i) note the progress in moving towards a more streamlined process for financial assistance / grant applications; and
- ii) request a final report on the process when it is implemented.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

The awarding and approval of grants and financial assistance is a significant element of council business and as such millions of pounds are paid to external organisations each year. Appropriate and suitable means of approval following the principles of 'Following the Public Pound' require to be reviewed and maintained in order to ensure Best Value.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The award of grants and financial assistance provide benefits to the City of Aberdeen and its citizens.

### 5. BACKGROUND

The Finance and Resources Committee has considered many requests for financial assistance and has requested that officers bring forward proposals for streamlining the way in which the grants applications process works, particularly with regard to reporting to Committee.

In October 2011 the Council approved a revised Local Code of Guidance for Following the Public Pound and subsequent to this a group of officers was formed bringing together the various individuals associated with approving,

managing and administering external funding. This may be through the awarding of grants from hundreds of pounds to millions of pounds.

The group has focussed on ensuring the consistent application of the Local Code and in reviewing how individuals and organisations find out about funding opportunities, consider the marketing of the various funding streams and how to apply. In the past a Council Funding Pack has provided a great deal of information to interested organisations however this has been withdrawn as it was out of date and a new approach is considered necessary.

The group has embarked upon looking at the rebranding of funding opportunities that are available to organisations and individuals by the council and to develop a dedicated micro website to provide up to date information, a means of application, detailed criteria that apply to the various funding streams and contact details for assistance and advice.

The benefits of doing this are that there will be a single location to which all applicants are channelled, the information will be consistent, application forms can be tailored to contain standing data required – as per the Local Code – as well as specific data required to evaluate an application against the funding stream criteria.

Clear information will also be provided that ensures applicants are aware of deadlines for applications and the various approval processes that are then linked to those deadlines. For example, stating the date of Committee that will make any decision.

The varying nature of funding streams, and various criteria that apply, mean that linking all application approvals into a single reporting structure is considered impractical and that specific funding streams should continue to be progressed through Service Committees in the first instance, with ad-hoc requests for financial assistance coming to Finance and Resources Committee.

Where this can be streamlined is in ensuring that applications are not being duplicated and having confidence that applicants are not accessing different funding streams for the same purposes. This is now achievable with far greater certainty through the introduction of the Following the Public Pound central register that has been created and maintained through out this year.

Reporting to Committee is therefore expected to refer to the fact that the central register has been checked to ensure that funding is not being awarded previously for the same project / purpose.

The Committee are asked to note the content of the report and a further report will be provided when the work on the micro website is completed

## **6. IMPACT**

The City Council will within financial constraints seek to support external organisations and partnerships within the City. All applicants will be given equal

consideration within the general criteria for the disbursement of grants and donations from the budgets.

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**


None

**8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

Jonathan Belford

Corporate Accounting Manager

[jbelford@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:jbelford@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

 (52) 2573