

Fairer Scotland Fund – Options for future development

1. Background

The Fairer Scotland Fund is a relatively new fund created by the Scottish Government in December 2007 aimed at tackling poverty and deprivation across Scotland. From April 2008 the Fairer Scotland Fund effectively replaced five previous national programmes that had operated in the city i.e. the Community Regeneration Fund, the Working for Families Fund, the Changing Children Services (Social Inclusion Element), Community Voices Fund and More Choices More Chances. The purpose is to tackle poverty and deprivation across Scotland and it has the following key principles:

- A clear focus on investment to address the causes of poverty;
- A strong emphasis placed on making early interventions for vulnerable individuals, families and disadvantaged communities;
- Promotion of joint working between local partners;
- Focused action on improving employability as a key means of tackling poverty;
- Empowering communities and individuals to influence and inform the decisions made by Community Planning Partnerships.

An allocation from the fund has been made to each local authority area to enable Community Planning Partnerships to **tackle area based and individual poverty and to help more people access and sustain employment opportunities.**

The total award from the Government to the Aberdeen City Alliance is as follows:

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
2,118,000	2,481,000	2,843,000

The allocation was ring-fenced for the first two years in order to provide transparency and ensure that all Community Planning Partners can play a part in driving strategic investment of these resources. In 2010-2011 the FSF allocation is no longer ring-fenced and the Aberdeen Community Planning Partnership allocation of 2.843 million will be paid to Aberdeen City Council as part of their block allocations paid via Revenue Support Grant.

2. Management of the Fund

The Aberdeen City Alliance (TACA) of the 13th March 2008 agreed to establish the Fairer Scotland Fund (Transition and Disbursement) Board to manage the fund.

The Fairer Scotland Fund Board has the following membership:

1. TACA Chairperson
2. 3 Aberdeen City Council (TACA) members appointed by Aberdeen City Council.
3. 3 TACA Participating Partner representatives appointed by respective partner organisation (initial membership 1 Grampian Police, 1 Grampian Health Board, 1 ACVO)
4. 10 Community Representatives (7 from priority regeneration neighbourhoods appointed by the Regeneration Network – Regeneration Matters plus 3 representatives from the Civic Forum appointed by the Civic Forum).

3. Tackling Poverty: Individuals, Families and Communities

The Scottish Government wants to see Community Planning Partners use the fund to promote effective joint working and as a catalyst for galvanising mainstream resource to create lasting change that will benefit the most disadvantaged communities and people. Scottish Government Ministers expect Community Planning Partners to provide evidence of accelerated impact for the most deprived 15% of areas (datazones) identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. It should be noted though that the guidance for FSF has allowed increased freedom to invest in disadvantaged groups or individuals wherever they may live in order to tackle the root causes of

poverty across their entire area. An up to date SIMD 2009 is due to be published on 29th October 2009.

4. Single Outcome Agreement

The Fairer Scotland Fund is focused on eight of the Scottish Government national outcomes that TACA has agreed with Ministers as part of the Single Outcome Agreement. These are:

- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- We live healthier, longer lives.
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

5. Current Programme

Following a transitional period from previous funding streams and an evaluation of all the projects funded by these in July 2008, the Fairer Scotland Fund Board has developed a programme of Fairer Scotland Fund activity, aimed at tackling poverty and deprivation. These priority themes, were identified linking to the national priorities within the Single Outcome Agreement, with clear strategic links between local outcomes and targets and the Fairer Scotland Fund.

As part of the considerations on where investments of FSF should be best placed the FSF Board gave detailed consideration to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2006) and the different weighting applied to the specific elements of the index. The SIMD domains of Employment and Current Income have the highest weightings and this has been reflected in the levels of FSF funding allocated to these thematic areas:

Employment and Training
 Neighbourhoods
 Income and Financial Inclusion
 Health
 Literacy and Learning
 Community Safety

Priority theme	£	% of fund
Employment & training	708,000	27%
Neighbourhoods	696,379	26%
Income & Financial Inclusion	350,000	13%
Health	343,432	13%
Learning & Literacy	100,000	4%
Community Safety	100,000	4%
Community Support Fund	70,000	3%
Support costs, admin fee, Support Team		approx 10%

a) Employment and Training

27% of the fund (£708,000) is allocated to this theme, in line with Scottish Government priorities. The programme has been developed by Aberdeen Works, the Aberdeen City Alliance Employability Forum which focuses on the employability issues, skills gaps and development opportunities within Aberdeen.

Funding supports a LOAN (Linking Opportunity and Need) Team to coordinate activities and services supporting those furthest from the job market to take up employment opportunities. A range of organisations are funded to ensure people have access to the support and skills they need to return to work. This is based on a 'pipeline' approach, to map out a route or journey from an individual's current circumstances to sustainable paid employment. This involves initial engagement, personal development activity, vocational training, and post employment after care.

Funding has been allocated to Pathways, Community Training Unit, Grampian Racial Equality Council, Grampian Society for the Blind, VSA Volunteer Centre and WEA.

Funding is also allocated to MCMC (More Choices More Chances) to support young people into employment or training. From this allocation funding goes to Aberdeen Foyer, the Princes Trust, WEA and the Community Training Unit.

b) Income and Financial Inclusion

13% of the fund (£350,000) is allocated to this theme, and the programme has been developed by the Cash In Your Pocket Partnership, supported by the FSF Support Team.

There are four main strands of activity:

- Improving access to affordable financial services and products
- Delivery of financial education initiatives
- Co-ordinated provision of quality advice and information services
- Tackling significant income inequality by identifying a 'living wage' for Aberdeen

Funding is allocated to Grampian Credit Union, St Machar Credit Union and North East Scotland Credit Union, ensuring access to saving schemes and affordable loans across all the regeneration areas, and for low paid workers.

The Citizen's Advice Bureau is funded to deliver income maximisation and money advice in the regeneration neighbourhoods, and a Financial Inclusion Development Team provide capacity building, training and a referral service. Financial education is provided in schools, in partnership with Save the Children, and to vulnerable individuals through WEA.

A research project is planned to analyse the cost of living factors and identify a living wage for Aberdeen. The outcome of this project will contribute to a reduction in income inequality and contribute to the long term economic potential of economically disadvantaged individuals and families.

c) Health

13% of the fund (£343,432) is allocated to this theme, and the programme has been developed by the Community Health Partnership.

The Health theme focuses on three key areas:

- Reducing health inequalities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Substance misuse

Appendix 2

Community Food Initiatives NE receives funding to improve access to healthy food, and Give Kids A Chance gives vulnerable young people opportunities to develop and sustain interests and hobbies encouraging healthy lifestyle choice.

A range of mental health and wellbeing initiatives significantly enhance the capacity to meet the needs of those experiencing mental health issues, across all communities and client groups. Counselling services for adults are provided through Pathways to Wellbeing and Mental Health Aberdeen, covering all the regeneration areas. Mental Health Aberdeen is funded to provide a Children and Young People's counselling service, and also provide a service at Quarry Family Centre and Primary schools in Torry.

Drugs Action provide Community Outreach support and counselling for drug users and their families, and the Integrated Drug Service provides support in rehabilitating drug and alcohol users from across the regeneration areas, as well as running a programme in Seaton in partnership with Aberdeen Cyrenians, Aberdeen Foyer, Phoenix Futures and NHS Grampian.

d) Literacy

4% of the fund (£100,000) supports a programme of literacy work. This includes developing a Literacy Learners' Forum for Aberdeen City, supporting joint working between the Healthwise project and NHS Grampian, providing Literacies and ICT work in the Blair Unit, Royal Cornhill Hospital, supporting a Family Learning PEER Group Project, and adding value to current literacies provision to support FSF initiatives.

e) Neighbourhood programme

27% of the fund (£696,379) is allocated to neighbourhoods, according to the population living within the 0-15% most deprived data zones. This funding supports local projects and initiatives to address the priority areas of community learning, improving neighbourhoods and strengthening communities.

Community Flats/Projects are supported in Cummings Park, Printfield, Seaton and Tillydrone, as well as the Youth Flat in Middlefield. These provide accessible venues for activities, advice and information, and allow a range of agencies to deliver services within the local area. They are also instrumental in delivering the thematic aspects of the programme.

Funding also supports Arts Development to provide additional capacity to their work in the areas, and Station House Media Unit (SHMU) to support community radio, the publication of community newsletters, and a variety of media training and resources. SHMU has recently been highlighted as an example of good practice within the HMIE inspection of the learning community surrounding Northfield Academy.

For young people the funding supports under 12s work in Middlefield, youth work in Fersands, Feeling Great events, a youth drumming band, Family Support, community sports and activities, teenage pregnancy peer support, alcohol early intervention, a Family Liaison Officer in Torry, and health information provided through the Reading Bus.

Many of these initiatives provide volunteering opportunities and provide accessible services and support to the most vulnerable people in Regeneration areas.

f) Community Safety

A new allocation of £100,000 for Community Safety has been added to the thematic priorities. This funding currently supports a Project working with persistent offenders and environmental improvements such as additional lighting for community facilities. Further Community Safety initiatives will be agreed by the Board in due course.

g) Community Support Fund

This funding (£70,000) is managed by Regeneration Matters on behalf of the FSF Board, and supports community involvement in regeneration issues, training, support to attend meetings, events and conferences, communications and capacity building.

h) Regeneration Matters

Regeneration Matters is a forum of representatives from all the regeneration areas, and are active in addressing issues around poverty and deprivation. The group selects 7 members to act as community representatives on the Fairer Scotland Fund Board, along with 3 reps from the Civic Forum.

Regeneration Matters have been nominated for a SURF (Scotland's Independent Regeneration Network) Award for Best Practice in Community Regeneration. They are currently producing a DVD to highlight the work that they are involved in., and to showcase some examples of FSF initiatives. They will present this DVD at a Scottish Government learning event on Regeneration and Community Empowerment in November 2009.

6. Options for future development

Given the change in the funding arrangement for Fairer Scotland Fund from 2010 with the Scottish Government removing ring-fencing and therefore providing the £2.843 million to the Council through Revenue Support Grant it is necessary to consider the best use of this funding for the future in conjunction with our Community Planning Partners.

The following 3 options are therefore presented for consideration – through discussion other potential options or adaptations/combinations of these options may emerge.

Option 1 – Maintaining current arrangements developed through the Fairer Scotland Fund and identification of areas for improvement.

Option 2 - Distribute identified Fairer Scotland Fund allocation for 2010-11 across Key Council service committees for consideration as part of budget setting process.

Option 3 – Development of new partnership arrangements for neighbourhoods with datazones in the worst 0-15% areas.

The following considers these options in relation to their impact on:

- a. Governance and Accountability
- b. Partnership Working and Stakeholder Involvement
- c. Community Involvement and Engagement in Decision Making
- d. Performance Management and Quality Assurance
- e. Resource Implications and Best Value