

REPORT TO GARIOCH AREA COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 23 APRIL 2024

COMMUNITY COUNCIL GRANTS 2024-25

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report outlines the breakdown for the allocation of the Garioch Community Council Grants for 2024-25 and seeks approval for the proposed allocations.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to consider and agree the proposed allocations for Community Council Grants for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 The Committee has the power to consider and allocate grants to Community Councils within approved budgets as per B.1.1 and B.3.2 of part 2A of the Scheme of Governance.

2.2 Each of the six administrative areas has flexibility in deciding how to allocate their sum within its area. In May 2019, Garioch Area Committee reconsidered the allocations and agreed to set the fixed grant at a rate of £800 plus a per capita amount for the remaining funds. The Committee has continued to allocate funds on this basis in subsequent years.

3 Discussion

3.1 Each year, the Council grants funding to Community Councils towards their administrative costs and local projects. The budget for Aberdeenshire for 2024-25 is £67,900.

3.2 The costs of data protection registration (£40 per Community Council) and an amount for election expenses are top sliced from the budget with the £40 Data Protection Fee being added to the grant to each Community Council when released.

3.3 In previous years, the Council has paid the amount for standard insurance cover with additional insurance payments being deducted from the grant before release. However, the Council no longer has any role in the payment of Community Council insurance and this process is now totally the responsibility of individual Community Councils. All Community Councils were advised at the beginning of the year to allow them time to contact the current insurer or seek alternative cover to meet their needs. There was also a meeting hosted with the current insurer to allow Community Councils to have a group discussion and seek clarification about issues and concerns that they may have had.

- 3.4 As there is no longer a requirement for an amount to be top sliced for insurance, it is proposed that the base budget for all Community Councils be increased by £100 to provide a fixed increase for all Community Councils (this is expected to cover the costs of standard cover for this year, but there is no intention to increase this amount in coming years).
- 3.5 Therefore, the balance will now be allocated to Areas on the basis of a fixed lump sum of £400 per Community Council (68 currently operational) plus an amount per elector for the remaining balance. The breakdown is provided as **Appendix 1**.

Single Election 2024

- 3.6 In 2024, Aberdeenshire Council is holding its first single election date election for Community Councils. This will allow a more coordinated approach to promoting and marketing Community Councils. Officers are currently working on a wide-ranging communication strategy that is seeking to include radio, video and audio clips for social media alongside more traditional promotion materials. In order to achieve this, amendments have been made to the elements to be top sliced. For this year, it is proposed to combine previous amounts for events, elections, and the budget increase, to provide funding to undertake the election including resourcing of the election process itself. The amount for this single year to be allocated for elections is £5,000. It is envisaged that this will be for a single year with future years election expenses being built up over the three-year interim period.
- 3.6.1 It should be noted that the single election date will require a change in procedures for Community Councils as all Community Councillors will stand down at once and a new Community Council will be formed following the election where enough nominations are received to exceed the minimum. Where nominations exceed the maximum numbers, ballots will be held to elect the Community Councillors. Where nominations fall below the minimum numbers the Community Council cannot form and a second call for nominations will be done as soon as possible.
- 3.6.2 Community Councils will hold an inaugural meeting as soon as possible at the completion of the election process which will agree their constitution, appoint office bearers and set meeting dates. This will allow the Community Councils to get up and running quickly following the election. Detailed information regarding the new election process and timescales was circulated to Community Councils in February and this is attached as **Appendix 3** for information.
- 3.6.3 Within the briefing note it proposes a change to co-options to be part of a pilot running alongside the new election process. This would allow for automatic move from co-opted membership to full membership after a defined period of time. This allows the Community Council to better manage their membership between elections and reduce the need for interim elections to take place.

Events

- 3.7 The events budget was largely unspent last year as the networking event arranged for November was cancelled due to low numbers. It is planned to undertake induction training with Community Councils following the election process, but this is likely to be delivered online reducing the costs and requiring no budget to be allocated for this year.

Garioch Allocation

- 3.8 The allocation of the budget to central costs and to each area are given in **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 3.9 The Garioch allocation of the Community Council budget is £10,573. In previous years the Garioch allocation of the Community Council budget has been done on the basis of £800 plus a per elector amount for the remaining balance. In order to take account of the changes to insurance and provide this across the board at the same amount, it is proposed that the base amount be increased by £100 to £900 and the remaining balance distributed on a per elector basis. This is expected to cover the insurance costs for the standard cover previously provided, but this will be a change that is proposed to be retained (budget allowing), but not increased in coming years.
- 3.10 The breakdown of allocations for Garioch Community Councils is attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 3.11 There continues to be 9 active Community Councils in Garioch with the only area not currently represented by a Community Council being Kinellar. It has not reformed since separating from a Community Council with Hatton of Fintray and no approach has been made in the past year to indicate a wish to move towards re-establishing a Community Council in its own right. If the community submits a petition to instigate the process to seek nominations, and the Community Council was successfully reformed, the Community Council would receive the funds held in safe keeping for it since the dissolution. It would be allocated an administration grant in line with the agreed allocation on a pro rata basis. This would result in a potential overspend of up to a maximum of £950 for the financial year in which the Community Council reformed.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 The funding of Community Councils through this report will meet a number of Council priorities under Our Environment - Resilient Communities in ensuring that we support communities to help themselves and encourage and assist in the delivery of community priorities and to promote greater participation by communities in decisions that impact them

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Learning for Life Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Climate Change Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economic Growth Infrastructure and public assets

4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation is agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			X
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			X
Climate Change and Sustainability			X
Health and Wellbeing			X
Town Centre First			X

4.3 The funds for Community Councils come from the 24/25 Revenue Budget for Area Managers.

4.4 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken on the basis that the funding of community Councils will allow communities as a whole to be supported and there would not be specific implications for any of the protected characteristics.

4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: Budget Pressures ACORP001; Working with other organisations ACORP005. ([Corporate Risk Register](#)).

No risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level ([Directorate Risk Registers](#)).

5 Scheme of Governance

5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

5.2 The Committee has the power to consider and allocate grants to Community Councils within approved budgets as per B.1.1 and B.3.2 of part 2A of the Scheme of Governance

Laurence Findlay

Director of Education and Children's Services

Report prepared by Alison Cumming, Area Committee Officer (Garioch)

10 April 2024

List of Appendices –

Appendix 1 – Aberdeenshire Allocations

Appendix 2 - Garioch Community Council Allocations

Appendix 3 – Single Election Briefing