

**REPORT TO BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE – 23rd April 2024****BUCHAN AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2024/2025****1. Reason for Report/Summary**

- 1.1 To agree the allocation process of the Buchan Area Committee Budget for 2024/2025 amounting to £71,200.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to agree the disbursement of the Buchan Area Committee Budget, totalling £71,200, in the financial year 2024/2025 as follows:-

- 2.1 that the Brighter Buchan Initiative be set at a maximum of £1,000 per village/town with the exception of Peterhead to be set at a maximum of £1,500 and that £17,500 be ring-fenced for this initiative; with determination of the applications being delegated to the Area Manager and that any monies remaining available as at 30th November 2024 automatically transfer back into the Buchan Area Committee Project Grant Scheme for disbursement,**
- 2.2 that £3,000 is allocated to provide grants of up to £500 to assist community groups with the preparation of Local Place Plans; with determination of the applications being delegated to the Area Manager and that any monies remaining available as at 30th November 2024 automatically transfer back into the Buchan Area Committee Project Grant Scheme for disbursement,**
- 2.3 that a contingency budget of £2,000 is retained to cover hospitality and any unforeseen events, and that this sum be delegated to the Area Manager to disburse appropriately,**
- 2.4 that £1,000 be allocated to Buchan Development Partnership to deliver the “Buchan in Bloom” scheme, and**
- 2.5 that the remaining £47,700 from the Area Committee Budget is allocated as follows –**
- (a) that £40,000 is devoted to the Buchan Area Committee Project Grant Scheme to be publicised and developed in tandem with the Buchan Development Partnership, and**

(b) that £7,700 is put towards a Buchan Area Small Grants Fund with the fund being set at a maximum grant of £500 per application, and that authority to approve grants be delegated to the Area Manager in consultation with local Ward Members

3. Purpose and Decision-Making Route

3.1 At the start of each financial year the Area Committee is asked to agree the process for allocating the Area Committee Budget, which amounts to £71,200 for 2024/25.

3.2 As in previous years it is the intention to fund projects that will help deliver towards the Council's priorities and to help groups attract match-funding where possible.

4 Discussion

Brighter Buchan Initiative

4.1 The Brighter Buchan Initiative was again successful and well received by the large majority of our local communities last year. The grant award allows local groups to carry out environmental and greening projects in their local villages and towns. The list of groups is as below –

Boddam & District Community Council
Crimond Community Centre
Cruden Bay Horticultural Society
Fetterangus Community Association
Hatton in Bloom
Longside Community Council
Maud Village Trust
Mintlaw & District Community Council
New Deer Community Association
New Pitsligo Community Council
Old Deer Community Association
Peterhead Community Council
St Combs Community Hall Management Committee
St Fergus Community Association
Strichen Community Council
Stuartfield & District Community Association

4.2 As previously confirmed by Committee, the award can be used for employment and provision of materials or plants; to allow groups to move towards being sustainable, they will be encouraged to purchase a combination of annual and perennial plants. In addition, each year the groups are advised that, where appropriate, public liability insurance must be in-place.

4.3 It is proposed that each group can apply for a maximum of £1,000, with the exception of Peterhead who can apply for a maximum allocation of £1,500 to be

split between town centre planting (£500) and 'Peterhead Greening Grants' (£1,000). The Peterhead Greening Grants will allow neighbourhood groups to apply for a grant of up to £200, again groups will be encouraged to move towards being sustainable by purchasing a combination of annual and perennial plants.

- 4.4 This grant is provided to groups upfront on the condition that they sign an Agreement confirming that they will provide evidence of spend (ie copy receipts or copy bank statements). In the past, some of the groups have been very slow in claiming their grants, therefore, this year it is proposed that the onus be put over to the groups to apply for the funding in the first instance. They will be required to complete an application form outlining how they intend spending the grant, and – as previously – they will have to sign an Agreement confirming that they will provide evidence of spend.
- 4.5 Determination of the applications will be delegated to the Area Manager and to ensure that the allocation of £17,500 is fully utilised, groups will have until 30th November 2024 to claim their Brighter Buchan Grant and provide evidence of spend; thereafter, any unclaimed funds (from the ringfenced £17,500) will transfer back into the Buchan Area Committee Project Grant Scheme for disbursement before the end of the financial year.

Local Place Plans Grants

- 4.6 It is proposed that £3,000 is allocated to provide grants of up to £500 to support community groups to develop Local Place Plans. This could support, for example, venue hire, software, advertising, printing, information boards, event materials, or consultant fees. The allocation could be reviewed if demand exceeded the allocation.
- 4.7 Determination of the applications will be delegated to the Area Manager and to ensure that the allocation of £3,000 is fully utilised, groups will have until 30th November 2024 to make an application; thereafter any remaining funds (from the ringfenced £3,000) will transfer back into the Buchan Area Committee Project Grant Scheme for disbursement before the end of the financial year.

Contingency Budget

- 4.8 It is proposed to reserve the sum of £2,000 to cover unforeseen costs that occur at area level, and, as in previous years, that this sum be delegated to the Area Manager to disburse appropriately.

Buchan in Bloom

- 4.9 Buchan Development Partnership (BDP) reintroduced the "Buchan in Bloom" competition in 23/24, and it continues to be very popular. This initiative allows BDP to award prizes for the best floral displays throughout the towns and villages of Buchan.

- 4.10 The improvements in the floral displays throughout Buchan are a tribute to the hard work of all the volunteers involved.
- 4.11 It is therefore proposed to allocate £1,000 to Buchan Development Partnership towards the cost of the prizes for the successful villages and to cover volunteer expenses incurred.

Buchan Area Committee Project Grant Scheme

- 4.12 The remaining £47,700 will be split between the Buchan Area Committee Project Grant Scheme (£40,000) and a Small Grants Scheme (£7,700).
- 4.13 Based on previous years' success, it is proposed that the Buchan Area Committee Project Grant Scheme be organised in tandem with the Buchan Development Partnership.
- 4.14 As in previous years, communities across Buchan can apply for up to 80% of the total cost of a project or £5,000, whichever is the lesser –

Up to a maximum of £5,000 will be available for projects that can demonstrate wide community benefit and can enhance their local area. The funding can be used to support a range of improvements such as boosting the appearance of towns and villages, supporting the health and wellbeing of residents, reducing social isolation, and supporting community businesses and social enterprises.
- 4.15 Area Committee will continue to have the discretion to allocate funds accordingly should a project of exceptional merit be received. It is a usual requirement that projects that are awarded funding need to be completed and copy receipts/bank statements provided before the end of the financial year. However, in the event of a group finding it difficult to make upfront payments, the grant may be paid out on receipt of a copy invoice (subject to evidence of spend being provided as soon as is available) or interim grant payments may be made; such financial agreements to be at the discretion of the Area Manager.
- 4.16 Buchan Development Partnership will work with applicants to identify funding streams that will deliver partnership projects and improved outcomes for our communities. In particular, prioritisation will be given to new groups coming forward who have not previously made a bid under this initiative.
- 4.17 If required, informal meetings can be scheduled for Buchan Members and representatives of Buchan Development Partnership to consider the applications received prior to reporting formally to Area Committee.
- 4.18 The scheme will be advertised widely by the Buchan Development Partnership. The first round of applications will be requested by Sunday, 26th May 2024, with remaining funds being subject to a second call and a deadline for applications of Sunday, 18th August 2024; with the opportunity for any urgent applications to be considered outwith these times should the situation arise.

- 4.19 To ensure that the grant fund is fully utilised, groups will be advised that by 30th November 2024 they must be able to demonstrate their ability to complete their project and draw down their grant award by 12th January 2025. In the event of a group advising that they will be unable to draw down their grant award, the unclaimed funds will transfer back into the Area Committee Grant Scheme for Committee to redistribute.

Small Grants Scheme

- 4.20 In recognising that there are times when community groups may need a helping-hand to undertake a fairly small project, it is proposed to introduce a Small Grants Scheme. A total allocation of £7,700 has been ringfenced for this Scheme, with a maximum grant of £500 per application.
- 4.21 Determination of the applications will be delegated to the Area Manager in consultation with local Ward Members. The usual requirements will apply in that projects that are awarded funding need to be completed and copy receipts/bank statements provided before the end of the financial year. The scheme will be advertised widely by the Area Team, with a closing date of Sunday, 2nd February 2025, allowing any remaining funds to be reported to the Buchan Area Committee on 25th February 2025 for redistribution.
- 4.22 It is hoped that these two funds will assist community groups in finding a sustainable way forward in the light of the current economic climate. There may also be an opportunity for some schemes to lever additional support through other funding streams and agencies.

5. Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 5.1 This report helps deliver on the Council's priorities -

People	Environment	Economy
Learning for Life	Resilient Communities	Economic Growth
Health and Wellbeing	Climate Change	Infrastructure and Public Assets

- 5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			X
Children and Young People's Rights and			X

Wellbeing			
Climate Change and Sustainability			X
Health and Wellbeing			X
Town Centre First			X

5.3 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. Each application received for Area Committee budget funding will be assessed and reported to the Area Committee.

5.4 There are no particular staffing implications arising from this report. The management of this budget will be undertaken within existing area management resources. The proposals outlined in this report are in line with the allocation of financial resources as contained in the 2024/25 Revenue Budget for Area Managers.

5.5 The following risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level - [Corporate Risk Register 2021 \(aberdeenshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/corporate-risk-register-2021) –

ACORP001 – Budget Pressures and
ACORP005 – Working with other organisations

5.6 No risks have been identified as relevant to these matters on a Strategic Level - [Plans and reports - Aberdeenshire Council](#).

6. Scheme of Governance

6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

6.2 The Committee can consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section B.6.3 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance - [List of Committee Powers \(aberdeenshire.gov.uk\)](#) - as it relates to the authorisation of expenditure from the Area Committee Budget.

Rob Simpson
Director of Business Services

Report by Theresa Wood
Area Committee Officer
25th March 2024