

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Corporate Services

Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee – 25 August 2010

Subject : Old People's Welfare Grant Funding

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with an update on the survey being completed by the CVS regarding the grant funding for elderly welfare organisations. Also, to consider information previously reported to Members and provide Members with a summary of the issues identified to date and make recommendations thereon.

2. Background

- 2.1 At Christmas 2009, the Council agreed to pay out grant funding to elderly welfare organisation to the value of £186,310 (made up of Council funding, Common Good funding and staff donation funding). The allocation of this funding is noted in Appendix 1 (as reported to Committee on 30 September 2009).
- 2.2 Thereafter, a report was submitted to the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee on 24 March 2010, together with a presentation from Strathclyde Police on safety aspects regarding the latest Clydebank Christmas payout in 2009. At that meeting, Members agreed that the West Dunbartonshire Community Volunteer Service (CVS) would conduct an independent survey of the elderly welfare organisations receiving grant funding; the individuals benefiting from the grant funding and any other key stakeholders (e.g. police).
- 2.3 A report was submitted to the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee on 26 May 2010 advising Members that the report prepared by the CVS on the outcome of their independent survey would be sent to Members prior to the next Committee. This report was sent to Members by email on 8 July 2010 and is appended to this report for information (Appendix 3), together with the covering briefing (Appendix 2).
- 2.4 The grant allocation report to Members would be due to Committee for consideration on 27 October 2010.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 From the review and survey undertaken by the CVS, confirming previous findings by officers, the following issues should be noted:

Allocation of funding

- 3.2** Currently organisations provide information of their membership, which cannot always be verified by Council officers, other than in comparison to previous years. There is concern that membership is not always given under the same assumption, or from the same source, for each organisation (e.g. concern is raised that some organisation membership includes all pensionable individuals within the areas, whereas other membership is based on the actual members attending the group regularly). Work requires to be completed to ensure that all organisations can verify their memberships and are being compared on a like-for-like basis.

Use of funds

- 3.3** The organisations provide information within their grant application as to their preferred use of funds. Historically, there have been concerns raised over the non-consistent approach on the use of the funding within areas or organisations. This was discussed at a previous meeting held between the Council and the organisations, raising issues such as:

- (a) Some members of the community may receive benefit of this funding more than once due to membership of various groups
- (b) Some members of the community (e.g. housebound) may not receive any benefit due to personal circumstances – whether they are unable to collect money or attend events
- (c) Some members of the community may not receive benefit due to not being a member of any group which organises events.

- 3.4** However, the outcome of discussions was that all organisations felt that their use of funds was appropriate to the area needs; including:

- (a) Examples were given by each organisation of how they attempted social inclusion for the housebound; and
- (b) If a member of the public chose to be a member of more than one or no groups, then this did not exclude them from benefiting other than through personal choice.

- 3.5** The available funds for elderly welfare organisations from the Council increases annually by an agreed inflationary rate. However, Members should be aware that if all organisations were to offer similar terms of payment to the Clydebank area organisation(s), the individual payouts may be less than currently given (see 3.2).

Eligible area

- 3.6** This appears to be a particular issue within Clydebank, Old Kilpatrick and Duntocher/ Hardgate, particularly due to new housing estates. To ensure eligibility for all members of the public, work requires to be undertaken with the groups involved to ensure this issue is resolved. Consideration would be given to membership numbers in relation to this.

- 3.7** In some cases the areas advertised by the groups were different to those within catchment areas. As such, elderly individuals arrived expecting payout and were not eligible. Consideration requires to be given to the information given on any advertisements

Age criteria

- 3.8** Difficulties surround the different pensionable ages for men and women. Some organisations identify membership to men 65+ and women 60+. However, the Council could minimise this issue by asking all organisations to be consistent with age groups of their membership – e.g. all individuals over 60 or 65. This may also have an effect on the point raised above in 3.5.

Robustness of eligible identification

- 3.9** Currently, due to the nature of identification being accepted at the Clydebank payout, there is a risk that a person could request and receive payment twice. The process surrounding identification should be reviewed by the Clydebank Group.
- 3.10** There also appears to be an issue whereby representatives arrive to collect the payment on behalf of a relative or a client, without proper identification. To minimise these situations, eligible identification should be made clear in any advertisement to avoid confusion.

Administration and labour costs

- 3.11** It has previously been reported that the payout is highly labour intensive – for Council staff, CVS staff, organisation representatives, as well as the police. Alternatives to the payout have been considered (as have practices in other Councils) – e.g. vouchers/cheques to home addresses of eligible individuals, or direct payments. However, it would be far more labour intensive to create a database of required information – and keep it up to date. Historically, the number of elderly individuals without bank accounts, or unwilling to give personal details (such as bank accounts) to others is relatively high and, as such, possibly unworkable.
- 3.12** If the use of grant funding continues to be as it is at present, possibly the current process (if slightly amended as discussed below in 3.20) would be easier to administer and of more benefit to the public.
- 3.13** With the in-depth local knowledge of relevant groups, the Council should consider whether it would be beneficial to all parties for the CVS to be asked to lead the administration of the payouts (Clydebank, Old Kilpatrick, or both) on the groups' behalf.

Security of cash payouts

- 3.14** The Police attended Committee in March 2010, providing a briefing over the security of the payout (see appendix 4 for the briefing provided at that time). In the briefing the risks identified to both the public and those administering the payout are clear and require to be addressed.

- 3.15 Within the briefing, the police state in the event of the payout continuing in Clydebank, those administering the payout require to advise and work with the police giving acceptable notice to any requirements
- 3.16 Any security issues identified require to be considered and addressed by all organisations arranging cash payouts. Clear evidence should be provided to the Council on risk assessment and minimisation prior to funding being released. All organisations should be made aware of this condition.

Other

- 3.17 Any changes to areas/ age/ identification should be clearly advertised to avoid confusion or embarrassment of individuals.
- 3.18 It should be noted by Members that funding is given to the organisations for their agreed use of the funds. The use of the funds thereafter is managed by each group. The Council does not manage any payouts, nor make any rules at the payouts. The Council and the CVS help administer the Clydebank payout, under the management of the relevant organisation. The Council and the CVS do not currently help out at the Old Kilpatrick payout
- 3.19 Clydebank Town Hall may not be available for a payout in 2010. Relevant organisations require to consider alternative arrangements – giving due consideration to security aspects, waiting times/weather/accessibility.
- 3.20 There are not many events which gather so many members of the public on an annual basis. Previous years have seen representatives from e.g. welfare rights, community police attend the event and play an active roll in communicating with those attending. Thought should be given to extending this further, to maximise the service representatives available at the event to benefit a vulnerable group within the community.

4. People Implications

- 4.1 There are no people implications at this stage.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1 The risk of cash payouts have been considered above.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.1 Equalities impact has been considered and points discussed in section 3 above.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Within the survey and assessments completed by the CVS, which confirms the findings previously identified by officers, there are a number of issues which have been raised with the current system.

8.2 Members are asked to consider the information noted above and agree that:

- (a) all organisations should provide verification of their memberships to the Council to confirm allocation of funds is being given on a like-for-like basis;
- (b) it is for an organisation to ensure the application for funding is for an acceptable use – payout or event. However, evidence will be sought to ensure action is being taken to ensure maximisation of benefit to all eligible individuals;
- (c) work requires to be undertaken by officers with the organisations involved to ensure eligible areas is resolved. Groups should be reminded that areas require to be correctly and clearly advertised to avoid disappointment or confusion;
- (d) an age criteria should be adopted for all groups regarding grant funding. Groups should be reminded that age eligibility should be correctly and clearly advertised to avoid disappointment or confusion;
- (e) the identification process during payouts should be reviewed by all groups concerned. Eligible identification should be made clear in any advertisement;
- (f) the future process for any payouts (if Members agree to continue this) remains similar to current process – ie through manual payouts;
- (g) the CVS are requested to consider increasing their current administrative role in any payouts (including Old Kilpatrick);
- (h) those administering the cash payouts are asked to contact the police at least 3 months in advance of any payout to allow relevant discussions & actions to be taken to minimise risk to all parties;
- (i) acceptable risk assessments should be completed and provided to the Council by those administering the cash payouts prior to funding being released;
- (j) if the payout goes ahead, organisations are required to find suitable accommodation for any payout – particularly in relation to the temporary closure of the Clydebank Town Hall (dependent upon timing); and
- (k) any payout should consider attracting appropriate service representatives available at the event to benefit a vulnerable group within the community.

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Joyce White
Executive Director of Corporate Services
Date: 3 August 2010

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Appendix:

- 1 Allocation of grant funding 2009/10
- 2 Old Peoples' Welfare Christmas Grant Funding Briefing
- 3 Independent Survey update report (CVS)
- 4 Police Briefing on security of cash payouts

Background Papers: Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee report
25 February 2009

Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee report
29 April 2009

Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee report
24 March 2010

Corporate and Efficient governance Committee report
26 May 2010

Wards Affected: All Wards

Allocation of grant funding - 2009/2010

Appendix 1

	Membershi p no's 2008/2009	Membershi p no's 2009/2010	Percentag e	2008/2009	Total 2009/2010
2009					
Clydebank OPW	7000	7000	52.91%	97,516.09	98,584.17
Duntocher OPW	900	950	7.18%	12,537.78	13,379.28
Old Kilpatrick Senior Citizens Committee	600	650	4.91%	8,358.52	9,154.24
Age Concern, Vale of Leven	275	275	2.08%	3,830.99	3,872.95
Age Concern, Renton	350	350	2.65%	4,875.80	4,929.21
Age Concern, Balloch, Haldane & Jamestown	66	70	0.53%	919.44	985.84
Gartocharn Kilmaronock OPW	40	40	0.30%	557.23	563.34
Bowling Sen Citizens W.C.	80	85	0.64%	1,114.47	1,197.09
Dumbarton Sen Citizens	1500	1500	11.34%	20,896.31	21,125.18
Alexandria OAP Assoc/Scottish Old Age Pensioners	165	165	1.25%	2,298.59	2,323.77
Milton Senior Citizens Committee	85	85	0.64%	1,184.12	1,197.09
Dalvait & Carrochan Older Peoples Welfare	200	273	2.06%	2,786.17	3,844.78
Levensvale Older Peoples Welfare	348	356	2.69%	4,847.94	5,013.71
Bonhill Age Concern	140	80	0.60%	1,950.32	1,126.68
Bonhill Senior Citizens Association	265	265	2.00%	3,691.68	3,732.12
Bonhill & Jamestown Older Peoples Association	430	430	3.25%	5,990.27	6,055.88
Age Concern Dumbarton	180	180	1.36%	2,507.56	2,535.02
Old Kilpatrick Senior Citizens Tuesday Club	51	50	0.38%	710.47	704.17
Levenside Senior Citizens	70	70	0.53%	975.16	985.84
Clydebank Seniors Forum	128	110	0.83%	1,783.15	1,549.18
Linnvale Senior Citizens	35	35	0.26%	487.58	492.92
The 50-60 Club	140	150	1.13%	1,950.32	2,112.52
Vale of Leven Arthritis Club	0	60	0.45%	0.00	845.01
	13,048	13,229	100%	181,770	186,310.00



West
Dunbartonshire
Council

**Briefing Notes to Council Leader
and Committee Conveners**

To: Elected Members
Person to Contact: Gillian McNeilly **Date:** 30 June 2010
Telephone: Extn. 7194
Subject: Old Peoples' Welfare Christmas Grant Funding.

1.

Background:

- *The Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee requested the CVS to complete an independent review of the Old Peoples' Welfare Christmas grant funding. The review is now completed and the CVS report is now attached for Members' information.*
- *Members should be reminded that the Council gives grant funding to the organisations. Currently, organisations have the freedom to spend this money on how it decides, as long as the outcomes provided on the grant application are fulfilled. The organisations administer their own use of the grant with the exception of Clydebank OAP group, who receives an element of help from the Council/ CVS.*

Main Issues:

- *There are a number of points raised in the report. However, Members should consider the points noted below whilst reading the report:*
- *Per the report 2.1, Members should note a further anomaly is that the level of pay out to individuals varies dependent upon the group in question (i.e. Clydebank £15 each, Old Kilpatrick £18 each)*
- *Per the report 4.8, Members should be advised that the Council has previously assessed the likely success of direct payments to bank accounts or cheques to home addresses - with due consideration to cost of administering (e.g. postages), the difficulty of the time required by the organisation to verify information and ensuring information is kept up to date. Also considered was the likelihood of all senior citizens having bank accounts to cash cheques/ the risks of posting uncrossed*

cheques.

- *Per the report 4.10, as this issue has previously been reported to Members, an exercise to verify membership numbers is currently underway.*
- *Per the report 4.15, Members should note that the Clydebank welfare organisation pay out a small level of funding to the affiliated groups for their own use, as well as payouts to individuals.*

3.

What it means for WDC:

- *This briefing is for Members' information only. As reported at the Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee, officers will work with the CVS to prepare a full report for Members' consideration in August 2010.*

**SUBJECT: WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL CHRISTMAS GRANTS
SCHEME REVIEW**

DATE: JUNE 2010

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the findings of the recent review of the Older People's Christmas Payments Scheme operated by West Dunbartonshire Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2008/9 Corporate and Efficient Government Committee considered a review of the way it makes annual payments to older people's organisations in West Dunbartonshire. Currently, individual payments of £15 are made to older people resident in Clydebank and parts of Old Kilpatrick via the Clydebank Older People's Welfare Association and to residents of Old Kilpatrick via the Old Kilpatrick Senior Citizens Committee. A separate arrangement operates in the Duntocher area where funding for an event is given via the Duntocher Older People's Welfare organisation.
- 2.2 In the Dumbarton & Vale of Leven areas, payments are made to applying voluntary organisations to meet the costs of activities. Older people focussed Clydebank organisations are also eligible to apply for such funding.
- 2.3 After an initial review at both the Corporate and Efficient Government and Community Participation Committees, it was agreed to continue the process with a further review.

3. REVIEW PROCESS

- 3.1 The review has been in two parts – a review of the Clydebank individual payout process and a follow up survey with a range of local older people's groups to discuss their views on the current system and what should happen in the future.
- 3.2 15 organisations, previously in receipt of funding from the Scheme, from across West Dunbartonshire participated in the telephone interview.

4. MAIN ISSUES

Clydebank & Old Kilpatrick

- 4.1 The Clydebank Older People's Welfare Payout took place over 5 days in the week commencing 30 November 2009. The process is highly labour intensive, on this occasion involving 4-6 staff from WDC, 4 staff from WDCVS and 2-4 representatives of the Older People's Welfare Committee taking part

daily, with a reduced staff presence on the latter 2 days. It is estimated that this represented an in-kind staff cost of around £4,500. Additionally, given the quantity of cash being held on the premises, two members of Strathclyde Police were in attendance throughout the week.

- 4.2 During the payment week, eligible residents are asked to present either an official COPW white card or eligible identification to allow payment to be made. This gives rise to some concerns regarding the robustness of the process. The 'white card' is a very simply printed card which could easily be produced and on most occasions, cards presented for payment contained no personal details of the holder.
- 4.3 A larger quantity of claimants attended with eligible identification. Although advance publicity had taken place, there was a clear issue regarding identification for men given that an eligible age of 65 years has traditionally been set. Whilst the use of identification was easier to authenticate, it was not possible to ensure that duplicate claims were not taking place either on the day or during the course of the week.
- 4.4 Should the process continue into 2010/11 and beyond, it may be beneficial to have a first step to the process, where eligible addresses are checked and highlighted when a claimant attends.
- 4.5 Two area specific issues also arose involving the Duntocher and Old Kilpatrick areas. Separate arrangements have traditionally been in place for distribution in the Duntocher area, leaving Duntocher addresses ineligible to access the COPW payout. However, a significant number of potential claimants highlighted an anomaly exists where areas of Hardgate have been designated as Duntocher and vice-versa leaving people unable to claim in either payout. This appears to have arisen due to growth in local housing developments since the inception of the COPW payout regulations.
- 4.6 COPW payout regulations specify that only Old Kilpatrick addresses which feature the name of an island are eligible. However, again housing developments have made that stipulation difficult to enforce and caused some issues regarding eligibility. Additionally, a number of Old Kilpatrick residents attended the Clydebank payout stating that they had missed the Old Kilpatrick payment week and felt they should not miss out.
- 4.7 Arrangements have traditionally been made for local home helps/care assistants to collect COPW payments on behalf of their clients. Whilst acknowledging the need for swift handling of these, there was some disquiet amongst those attending in person to Home Helps being seen separately from the general line. There were also a significant number of instances where home helps did not have the appropriate identification/information for the clients on whose behalf they were claiming such as no birth date information.
- 4.8 A significant number of those attending highlighted that mention had previously been made of making direct payments to bank accounts or similar. With the support of the COPW representatives present, a random sample of 80 people attending were asked their views. All respondents believed that the Christmas payout should continue, with only 7 respondents expressing a

preference to continue to collect payments personally in future years. Remaining respondents were equally split between direct payments to bank accounts and payments being posted directly to eligible home addresses.

- 4.9 Both within the December payment period and in discussions during the review process, a number of security concerns have been raised regarding the pay-out systems. Whilst publicity in the form of public notices is required to raise awareness of the payouts, this also raises awareness within the wider community and brings significant safety risks and vulnerability to the distributing organisations.

Other Christmas Payments

- 4.10 The results of the survey indicate a general satisfaction with the present arrangements, however some concerns regarding the application process and the potential spread and uptake of funding were raised.
- 4.11 Respondents were asked to comment on their awareness and understanding of the scheme, their perception of how important the scheme was, ease of application and support or otherwise of the current arrangements.
- 4.12 All respondents noted their recognition of the Council's support for Older People and noted their perception of the importance of maintaining the payment scheme into the future.
- 4.13 A number of Dumbarton and Vale of Leven organisations accessing the payments largely felt that a group grant system was most beneficial as individual payments have a limited social impact and could maintain isolation amongst vulnerable older people. However there was recognition across the whole local authority area that such group events could also be exclusionary and limit the potential uptake from the wider older population. Several older people's organisations contacted for the survey stated that they did not know that the scheme existed and suggested that increased publicity of the scheme was required.
- 4.14 In particular, several groups highlighted that in their experience a small number of individuals were accessing multiple trips and events through their membership of several organisations whilst semi house-bound/housebound older people, who may be in most need of support, received no benefits from the scheme if they lived in the Dumbarton/Vale of Leven end of the authority.
- 4.15 Several Clydebank organisations noted that the Christmas payout was welcome and gave a boost to their members but also acknowledged that members were also recipients of the individual payments.
- 4.16 With regard to the application process, several groups raised concerns that the application form was overly complicated and should be re-worded to better reflect the nature of the scheme. Additionally, organisations requested that the application process and resulting payments take place earlier than currently is the case.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 It is recommended that discussions take place with Clydebank Older People's Welfare Committee to consider the following aspects:
- Re-consideration of the current age criteria (60 for women and 65 for men)
 - Re-consideration of eligible areas
 - Consideration of a move to a direct payment process.
- 5.2 It is recommended that discussions take place with Duntocher Older People's Welfare and Old Kilpatrick Seniors Committee to ensure that the criteria used throughout the Clydebank/Old Kilpatrick area is consistently publicised
- 5.3 It is recommended that the safety/security aspects of public payouts are reviewed and a risk assessment undertaken.
- 5.4 It is recommended that steps are taken to minimise the possibility of multiple benefits from the activities payments and to improve reach into those most at need.
- 5.5 Given the increasing older population in West Dunbartonshire and the funding dedicated through a range of grant schemes, it is recommended that ongoing engagement is maintained with the older people's organisations in West Dunbartonshire to work towards the development of an Older People's Strategy.

West Dunbartonshire CVS
June 2010