

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Report by the Chief Executive

### Audit & Performance Review Committee – 20th September 2006

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**Subject: External Funding Performance**

#### **1. Purpose**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is to update members of the Audit and Performance Review Committee on:

- Council performance with regard to attracting Lottery funding during 2005 and so far in 2006
- Issues affecting West Dunbartonshire Council in the External Funding environment
- Current initiatives organised by the External Funding Officer aimed at increasing levels of External Funding Coming to West Dunbartonshire
- The activities of the External Funding Officer over the past year.

#### **2. Background**

**2.1** National Lottery Good Cause Distributors in Scotland will distribute in excess of £500 million in grant funding between 2006 and 2009. This funding comes from National Lottery ticket sales across Britain and represents Scotland's share of the 28p from every pound spent on National Lottery products allocated to good causes.

**2.2** There are 4 main National Lottery Distributors in Scotland, namely The Big Lottery, The Heritage Lottery Fund, Sportscotland and The Scottish Arts Council. The Big Lottery is the biggest of these distributors, responsible for 50% of the total funding available.

**2.3** In general, grant funding from the National Lottery is accessible by public sector agencies, charities, social enterprises and voluntary and community groups with appropriate constitutional documents. However, The Big Lottery has made a commitment with regard to its grant funding programmes that between 60 and 70% of its total funding will be targeted at non-public sector applicants.

**2.4** Additional sources of External Funding are also available from Charitable Trusts, the Scottish Executive and Central Government, however accurate figures of funding allocated are not available from these funders. Measurement of performance is therefore based on National Lottery performance in order to monitor performance accurately over time.

### 3. Main Issues

#### 3.1 West Dunbartonshire National Lottery Performance

Year	No. of Awards	Rank	Total Awarded	Rank
2004	43	28th	£ 1,399,036	28th
2005	60	24th	£ 827,469	24th

(Rank refers to position compared to other Scottish Local Authorities, Source: Lottery Monitor April 2006)

- 3.2** During 2005, the number of awards from the National Lottery to West Dunbartonshire rose from 43 in 2004 to 60 in 2005. In 2004 there were 4 awards made to West Dunbartonshire Council as a corporate body amounting to £767,845. In 2005 there were also 4 awards made to the council, amounting to £120,841.
- 3.3** Grants awarded to groups and agencies within West Dunbartonshire so far in 2006 number 36 amounting to £631,194.

#### The External Funding Environment

- 3.4** 2006 has seen several changes to the domestic External Funding environment. The launch of the new Big Lottery Funding programmes under the “Investing in Communities” umbrella has introduced 4 new funding programmes, worth £257million till 2009. The 4 programmes are called, Growing Community Assets, Investing in Life Transitions, Investing in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Living and Investing in Dynamic Inclusive Communities. Local authorities can make direct application to Life Transitions and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Living, however they can be identified only as partners in the other 2 programmes.
- 3.5** Fundamental changes to the Awards for All funding programme have also been introduced in 2006. Changes to this programme now mean that the maximum award has risen from £5,000 to £10,000 with the previous restrictions on sports and arts projects removed. Schools have also been identified as possible applicants, though not as priority applicants.
- 3.6** Formation of the National Funders Forum in Scotland will also affect the External Funding environment. This forum contains representatives from all major funding bodies in Scotland along with representatives from the Scottish Executive, COSLA and SOLACE. The aim of the forum is to discuss, organise and standardise the External Funding environment in Scotland.
- 3.7** A key factor of change within the External Funding environment is the ending of the current funding programmes from the European Union. Already it is evident that the amount of funding available from European sources post 2007 will be greatly reduced by a figure in excess of 50%. Details of the management of the new programmes are still to be clarified however the new programme priorities have been identified and are as follows:

## ERDF

**Priority 1:** Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurship

**Priority 2:** Promoting Community Regeneration

**Priority 3:** Environmental Sustainability and Rural Development

## ESF

**Priority 1:** Progressing into Sustainable Employment – focussing on the most disadvantaged groups outside the labour market.

**Priority 2:** Progressing into Sustainable Employment – progressing people into better jobs by improving skills of the workplace and concentrating on those most vulnerable to losing employment

**Priority 3:** Investing in the Lifelong Learning Support Environment

**3.8** Unlike the current European programmes, initial indications suggest that funding post 2007 will not be targeted at specific areas of deprivation. Scotland will effectively be split in half, with the Highlands accessing their own pot of funding as a transitional area, and the rest of Scotland accessing funding through a challenge system. This means that, not only will the funding available be vastly reduced, but this reduced pot will be accessible by the whole of Lowland Scotland, including areas that were previously unable to access European funds.

**3.9** In general, changes to the External Funding environment will mean that attracting funding to West Dunbartonshire will become increasingly competitive in the coming years. We will require high quality projects, clear partnerships across sectors, and a co-ordinated approach to project identification, project development and application preparation.

## External Funding Team

**3.10** In light of the changing and more challenging nature of the External Funding Environment, West Dunbartonshire Council has agreed in principle to the formation of an External Funding Team in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership.

**3.11** This new team will provide a co-ordinated approach to External Funding issues and will focus the funding expertise already available into one unit. The unit will be accessible by all council departments, community planning partners and the voluntary and community sector, and will facilitate a more co-ordinated approach to attracting External Funding for all of West Dunbartonshire in the future.

## **3.12** Current External Funding Initiatives within West Dunbartonshire

The following initiatives are continuing within West Dunbartonshire:

- i Continuing development of the External Funding Weblet – Pages have been developed within the council website giving valuable information and tips to any groups interested in applying for External Funding;
- ii Officer Training programme on External Funding – Comprehensive training programme for officers working within the community on all

matters relating to the External Funding environment. Recent training events include an Awards for All training session delivered by Awards for All grant officers and attended by 18 council and partner officers;

- iii Referral and follow-up from WDC Local Grants Programmes – Applicants to the local authority grants programme are referred to the Awards for All funding programme in the first instance with assistance available from the External Funding officer if required. Unsuccessful applicants to council programmes are also referred to the External Funding Officer for further assistance in identifying alternative funding sources;
- iv The External Funding Officer and other staff promote funding options and run workshops at Community events;
- v One to One Group work by External Funding Officer – Within financial year 2005/06 the External Funding officer dealt with 97 funding enquiries and assisted 34 groups and departments to make funding applications. The total awarded as a result of this assistance was £735,961;
- vi Continuing development of the External Funding Group – E-mail information bulletins are circulated regularly to all departmental managers and a wide selection of voluntary and community group contacts. The External Funding Group currently has in excess of 350 recipients;
- vii External Funding Newsletter – a hard copy newsletter circulated quarterly to Voluntary and community organisations;
- viii Formathon Events – In partnership with the “Inspire” group, 2 Formathon events are held annually, where voluntary and community groups receive one to one guidance on the Awards for All application process. To date in excess of 70 groups have been assisted through these events;
- ix Workshops on specific funding programmes – The “Investing in Communities” workshop held in Dalmuir on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August included an officer workshop for those working with groups within the community attended by 30 officers. There was also an opportunity for 15 groups to meet and have a one to one session with grant officers from the Big Lottery discussing possible future funding projects. The event also included a full presentation to voluntary and community groups interested in finding out more about the new funding programmes;
- x Grantfinder/GrantNet – Over the last 3 years West Dunbartonshire Council has purchased access to the Grantfinder funding database. This database gives council officers access to a wide range of information on External Funding sources and has proved very valuable in identifying possible funding sources for projects. GrantNet is the public version of this database which is accessible through the council website.

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

- 4.1 There are no personnel issues other than those already agreed by council with regard to the External Funding Unit.

## **5. Financial Implications**

**5.1** There are no financial implications resulting from this paper.

## **6. Conclusions**

**6.1** While the number of successful lottery applications from West Dunbartonshire continues to rise slowly, awareness among local voluntary and community groups of the funding available, hurdles presented by the application process and the capacity of groups to develop and manage larger scale projects continues to limit progress.

**6.2** It is envisaged that,

- Continued development of a partnership approach to raising community capacity through vehicles such as the Inspire Group,
- Provision of high quality training to front line community workers,
- Organisation of funding events,
- Circulation of funding information and,
- Broadened and improved one to one application support,

will provide dividends over time in improved Lottery Funding performance.

**6.3** Creation and development of the External Funding Team will help provide high quality support to a wide range of funding applications from the authority area, and will facilitate a more co-ordinated and strategic approach to attracting External Funding to West Dunbartonshire.

## **7. Recommendations**

**7.1** The Committee is asked to note the information and points raised within this report.

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Background Papers: Report to Council on External Funding Team 26<sup>th</sup>  
April 2006