

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Corporate Services

Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee: 20 June 2012

Subject: Update on Elderly Welfare Grant Funding

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the distribution of the elderly welfare grant funding for 2011/12, including budget allocations, process review and to update on the 2012/13 distribution.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following a review of the current process, a report was submitted to the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee on 22 June 2011 recommending a change to the way in which the grant funding held for older people was allocated, paid and used, which was subsequently approved at Committee.
- 2.2 An update was given at the Special Committee on 20 October 2011. Following further checks, particularly in relation to duplication and nominations, total numbers, at that time, were advised to Committee on 18 January 2012 as:

	Number	Value (£)
Nominated to self:	7,688	115,320
Nominated to groups:	<u>1,640</u>	<u>30,800*</u>
Total	<u>9,328</u>	<u>146,120</u>

*Includes Dumbarton Common Good allocated directly to Dumbarton Senior Citizens, per Committee 20 October 2011

- 2.3 At the meeting on 18 January, Members agreed that Dumbarton Senior Citizens receive an additional £9,000 from the Dumbarton Common Good (excluded in the figures above in 2.2). Members also agreed that further payments of late applications could be made, where appropriate.
- 2.4 Future reporting was agreed at the Committee in January as:
- A report of the budgetary allocation, following disbursement of grant funding, would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee for Members' consideration; and
 - A further final report on the 2011/12 payments would be submitted to the Committee after the year end.

3. Main Issues

Budgetary Position 2011/12

3.1 The final budgetary position for 2011/12 is as follows:

	Budget (£)	Paid (£)	Remaining (£)
Council Funding	183,690		
Staff Donations	120		
Group Total		25,380	
Individual Total		117,540	
Total	183,810	142,920	40,890
Common Good	15,200	15,200	nil

3.2 This shows that £40,890 remains unallocated from the 2011/12 Council budget. For year end purposes, this will be earmarked within the Financial Statements for use in 2012/13, pending Members' consideration and agreement of use or allocation of this balance.

Process Review 2011/12

3.3 During the process of 2011/12, a number of controls have been in place to ensure security of the information – e.g.:

- the forms are held in a secure location;
- the electronic information is held securely, with access only to those authorised; and
- ongoing reconciliations to ensure all payments are accounted for.

3.4 The change in the distribution of the 2011/12 grant funding proved to be time consuming and labour intensive. During these changes, the aim was to minimise issues for groups and individuals caused by the process:

(a) The change in process could have resulted in a number of groups, who previously received grant funding, having financial difficulties – due to reduced grant funding through the nomination process. However, the 2011/12 process identified a number of smaller groups who received nominations for funding but who subsequently did not want/accept the funding. No groups (who did not provide a membership list for use in funding nominations) contacted the Council advising of financial hardship. This could change during the 2012/13 allocation, where groups may have less money than they did a year ago.

(b) There were a small number of groups who received funding through nominations that did not meet the agreed criteria. Officers worked with those groups to ensure payment was made e.g.:

- groups that did not have an agreed constitution (officers are working with the groups to agree a constitution for future use); or

- groups who refused to provide bank details to the Council (these were subsequently paid through Dumbarton Senior Citizens group, following appropriate approval by the appropriate groups)
- (c) There were a number of duplicate nominations – through either individuals submitting more than one form, or being a member of more than one membership list. Action was taken to ensure the appropriate payment was made.
- (d) There were a number of wrong bank details given (e.g. wrong sort codes, wrong number of account digits, etc), or information submitted being in relation to bank/ post office accounts which do not receive incoming funds. This was corrected through checks completed and correspondence with the individual.
- (e) A number of individuals did not have bank accounts. When there was no alternative, cheques were processed – with cashing facilities available at Council offices in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria.
- (f) Late nominations/changes in deadlines resulted in the need for staff to complete the same checks more than once.
- 3.5** As with any new process, there have been a number of lessons learned to reduce the time taken to process the nomination forms (e.g. collate, input, check and correct the information). However, as 2011/12 information is to be used as the base information for 2012/13 and only necessary 'changes' made, the time required for processing of 2012/13 information should not be as significant.

Process actions identified for 2012/13

- 3.6** In order to meet likely Committee timescales to allow payments prior to Christmas and taking account of the closure of groups over the Summertime, the action plan for 2012/13 payments has already commenced.
- 3.7** Last year's information has now been collated into one spreadsheet and will be used for the base position 2012/13.
- 3.8** The summary action plan for 2012/13 is as noted below:

ACTION	DEADLINE
Update blank forms and Frequently Asked Questions –for individuals & groups	Completed
Advertising commences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters – e.g. doctors surgeries, Council premises, partner organisation offices (e.g. Leisure Trust, Citizen's Advice Bureaux); • Internet; and • Newspapers through press release 	31/5/12
Arrange for blank forms to go out to identified Council premises. These premises will be used to pick up blank forms & drop off completed forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries • Social work Homes and Centres 	31/5/12

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Area Offices • Main Council Offices 	
Contact groups with last year's payment details & request an update on this information only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Members; • Members who have left; and • Change in group details (such as bank details) The offer will be made to meet the groups to talk through this process	31/5/12
Write to all individuals who received cheques in 2011/12 & ask for confirmation of cheque/bacs payment for 2012/13	31/5/12
Update process of controlling mail in & changes to spreadsheet	31/5/12
DEADLINE FOR RETURN OF CHANGES /FORMS – GROUPS/INDIVIDUALS	31/7/12
Deadline for input into main spreadsheet	31/8/12
Report to Committee - September /October	To be confirmed
DATE OF PAYMENT	30/11/12

3.9 It should be noted that there is no plan to hold public open days for the 2012/13 process and that the Contact Centre will work with Finance Officers to ensure all questions and queries are resolved.

3.10 It should also be noted that although officers will make the available checks to ensure changes in individual nomination are identified, it is for the individual or a representative (where possible) to contact us regarding changes – new nominations, residential changes, bank account changes, etc. Officers will **not** make contact with all individuals listed in 2011/12 to verify no changes.

Budgetary Allocation 2012/13

3.11 The agreed budget for elderly payments this year is:

	£	
Grants Budget 2012/13	185,530	
Staffing donation	100	(approximate – to be confirmed)
	<u>185,630</u>	
Grants Budget 2011/12	<u>40,890</u>	
Dumbarton Common Good	<u>6,200</u>	(allocated directly to Dumbarton Senior Citizens)

3.11 If nomination numbers remain similar to those last year, of the £0.186m for 2012/13, there may be a further £0.040m unallocated by the end of the year which would be added to the remaining 2011/12 balance. Consideration needs to be given to the appropriate use of these funds – for example:

(a) Funds could be allocated to all elderly groups on a pro rata percentage to membership. However, this may be considered unfair to individuals who

have nominated their proportion to a group already, against others who have benefited from receiving funding directly;

- (b) 'Payout value' per individual nomination could be amended each year in line with total available budgets (once nomination totals are confirmed); or
- (c) The remaining balance each year, after allocation from nominations (including the unallocated balance from 2011/12), could be given to the CVS under the community chest grants, with the instruction it would be for allocation to elderly groups only.

4 People Implications

- 4.1 Any workload resulting in the process to date has been contained within the current staffing resources.

5 Financial implications

- 5.1 Payments paid from the 2011/12 budget allocation total:

Council	£142,920
Common Good	£15,200

- 5.2 Therefore, the budgets currently identified for distribution in 2012/13 is:

2011/12 Earmarked	£40,890
2012/13 Council	£185,530
2012/13 Common Good	£6,200
2012/13 Staff Donations	£100 (to be confirmed September 2012)

6 Risk Analysis

- 6.1 This report is for noting and no risk analysis was required for this report.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for the recommendations regarding the change to processes per the Committee report on 22 June 2011. This update follows as part of that assessment.

8. Strategic Assessment

- 8.1 The report updates on a process to allocate funds already held within the budget. The Council has identified a strategic priority for 2011/12, namely Social and Economic Regeneration, to which this contributes.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 9.1 Following Committee decisions the grant funding 2011/12 has been dispersed as agreed, however there remains an unused balance of £40,890, which has been carried forward for use in 2012/13.

- 9.2** Members are asked to note that the process for 2012/13 is currently underway, per the action plan note above at 3.8.
- 9.3** Members are asked to note that officers make no recommendations at present on the unallocated funds from 2011/12. A full report on allocation of funds for 2012/13 will come to Committee in September/ October (prior to payment), once nomination numbers are known for the year. At this time, the 2011/12 unspent funding will also be considered.

Angela Wilson
Executive Director of Corporate Services
Date: 7 June 2012

Person to Contact: Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager, Garshake Road, Dumbarton
Telephone (01389) 737194.
E-mail: gillian.mcneilly@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: none

Background Papers: Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee report 25 February 2009
Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee report 29 April 2009
Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee report 24 March 2010
Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee report 26 May 2010
Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee report 25 August 2010
Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee report 22 June 2011
Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee report 20 October 2011
Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee report 18 January 2012
Grant Applications & Nomination Forms

Wards Affected: All Wards affected.