

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

### Report by Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability

Corporate Services Committee: 19 February 2020

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**Subject: Council motion on Wreaths for Community Councils**

#### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to update members of Corporate Services Committee following the motion to Council in November 2019 regarding the purchase of wreaths by Community Councils using their Community Council administrative grant.

#### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1** It is recommended that members:
- Note the content of the report and the amendment that has been made in the context of a wider review of support to Community Councils.

#### **3 Background**

**3.1 The following motion was agreed at Council in November:**

Council notes that the current local rules for spending of the Community Council administrative grant from the Council specifically prohibit the purchasing of wreaths.

Council notes that these rules have been in place for decades, and since then new national guidance has been issued in the form of a model Constitution.

The model constitution states:

*“All monies raised by or on behalf of the Community Council or provided by the local authority and other sources shall be applied to further the objectives of the Community Council and for no other purpose.”*

The objectives specified in the Model Constitution include:

*“to take such action in the interests of the community as appears to it to be desirable and practicable”; and  
“to promote the well-being of the community and to foster community spirit”.*

West Dunbartonshire Council believes the purchasing of wreaths for Remembrance Sunday falls within these two objectives and asks officers to

update local rules to permit Community Councils to use administrative grant funds for this purpose.

- 3.2 Following the motion, there has been an amendment to the conditions of spend for the Community Council administrative grant. Community Councils have been notified of the change with regards to the purchase of wreaths which has been applied retrospectively.
- 3.4 During 2019/20 a review of Community Councils has been undertaken in order to improve the support offered by the Council. In addition to the specific issue on wreaths, other concerns raised by Community Councils on the conditions of spend for their administrative grant have been highlighted.

#### **4. Main Issues**

- 4.1 In response to the motion to Council in November 2019, the conditions of spend for the community council administrative grant has been amended. Community Councils have been notified of the change with regards to the purchase of wreaths which has been applied retrospectively.
- 4.2 Following a review of Community Councils carried out during 2019/20, a body of revised and improved supporting information is currently being developed. This will include the amendment on the purchase of wreaths, and any other change highlighted through the review. All information is being prepared in consultation with Community Councils. This includes an Induction Pack, incorporating the conditions of administrative grant spend, while allowing additional flexibility on how the grants are spent to meet the objectives of community councils.
- 4.2 The review process has also led to the development of an action plan to ensure improved co-ordination of support services for community councils. This work stream is being delivered by a Community Council Support working group.
- 4.4 During 2020/21 there will be a review of the Scheme for Establishment and the model constitution. This process ensures the Scheme remains relevant and fit for purpose taking account of legislative changes and best practice. A further report will be prepared on the review of the Scheme during 2020, a timetable for which is currently being developed.
- 4.5 All of the above should be viewed in the context of the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy, which aims to support and encourage community groups, including Community Councils, to develop their skills and take a more active role in their communities.

#### **5 People Implications**

- 5.1 There are no people implications resulting from this report.

#### **6 Financial & Procurement Implications**

**6.1** There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

## **7 Risk Analysis**

**7.1** There is a risk that failure to adequately support community councils could have an impact on the Council's strategic commitment to develop empowered communities.

## **8 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

**8.1** There was no requirement for an EIA to be carried out for this motion as it reflects a change to administrative processes.

## **9 Consultation**

**9.1** Consultation has been carried out as part of the review of Community Councils and will continue as this process is finalised and moves into the Review of the Scheme of Establishment during 2020.

## **10 Strategic Assessment**

**10.1** Support to Community Councils links to the delivery of the Council's Strategic plan objectives in relation to meaningful engagement with active empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged.

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West Dunbartonshire Council**

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**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** None

