

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report by Chief Officer - Resources**

**Council: 23 June 2021**

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**Subject: Voluntary Grants – Use of 2020/21 Underspend**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update of the planned approach to distributing unspent voluntary sector grants following a decision of Corporate Services Committee on 19 May 2021

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** Council is asked to note the planned approach by West Dunbartonshire Community and Voluntary Service (WDCVS) to administer and distribute the funds available during 2021/22.

**3. Background**

- 3.1** At the Corporate Services Committee on 19 May 2021 a report was considered in relation to the annual position on the use of grants in 2020/21. At the meeting a motion was agreed regarding the use of £100,289 of funds that were unallocated by WDCVS in 2020/21 mainly as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on the use of funds normally distributed to assist voluntary groups access transport. The agreed motion stated:

*“Committee notes the significant reduction in uptake of voluntary grants in 2020/21. We also recognise that this will have exacerbated social exclusion and loneliness. Accordingly, Committee recommends that the underspends are regarded as priority, additional funding in 2021/22 to promote community activity and social events. For example, summer and Christmas events. Committee asks for a report to come to a future meeting detailing this activity.”*

- 3.2** Following the agreement of the above motion officers have engaged with WDCVS in order to establish an approach to meet the aims of the motion.

**4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** WDCVS has agreed to administer the distribution of the funds in line with the aims defined within the motion.
- 4.2** The approach identified by WDCVS is as follows:

**Branding:** Communities Matters Fund

**Fund use/aims:**

- Reduce social isolation experienced in communities and exacerbated during the pandemic period;
- Encourage and support group members to return to activities (as levels allow); and
- Celebrate the achievement of a community.

**Dates:** Open 1st July - close 1st October as funds allow. Fund would be administered on a first come basis. With application available either online via WDCVS website or a paper option for those unable to access online.

**Publicising approach:** WDCVS will promote via their social media channel, weekly e-bulletin and telephone contacts (call or text) for groups they have on their database and for whom they do not have an electronic contact.

**Criteria:**

- open to community and third sector organisations with an annual turnover less than £250,000;
- minimum award of £500 with a maximum award of £3,000 per application;
- the funded activity must be completed by the end of Jan 2022;
- applying organisations must be based within West Dunbartonshire;
- applying organisations must be appropriately constituted as would be normal for grant applications;
- any registered charities applying should not be in default with OSCR in relation to annual returns; and
- the funding application must be for a discrete activity with clear delivery timescale and community benefits identified.

If the sum needed for the activity is more than the stated maximum award, groups will require to advise how they will meet the balance.

The community benefit criteria that will be used to assess applications are:

- increase options for community interaction (festivals, gala days, fun days, celebrations, etc.);
- reduce loneliness and isolation;
- support community group re-start activity; and
- support wellbeing programmes and events to help overcome COVID-19 harms.

**4.3** Any unsuccessful applicants would be forwarded to the WDCVS funding surgery service to identify alternative and/or additional funds as is normal.

**4.4** The use of this funding will be reported to a future Corporate Services Committee as part of the normal voluntary grant reporting process.

## **5. Option Appraisal**

- 5.1** An option was considered to run the administration of this funding distribution internally by Council staff; however it was felt that WDCVS has the expertise in place to run this scheme more effectively and efficiently than Council officers devising a scheme and administering.

**6. People Implications**

- 6.1** There are no people implications.

**7. Financial and Procurement Implications**

- 7.1** The unspent funding available for this scheme is £100,289 and is not budgeted for use elsewhere and has been earmarked in the Council's annual accounts for 2020/21 for use in 2021/22 for this purpose. There is therefore no financial impact.

- 7.2** There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

**8. Risk Analysis**

- 8.1** There are minimal risks in relation to the planned approach in administering this funding scheme, as WDCVS have a proven track record of managing and delivering such processes, however officers will liaise with WDCVS to check on progress at appropriate intervals.

**9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 9.1** No issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this report.

**10. Environmental Sustainability**

- 10.1** No assessment of environmental sustainability was required in relation to this report.

**11. Consultation**

- 11.1** Legal and Financial Officers have been consulted in preparing this report.

**12. Strategic Assessment**

- 12.1** The appropriate use of voluntary grants is expected to contribute assist with meaningful engagement with active, empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged.

**Stephen West**  
**Chief Officer - Resources**  
**Date: 4 June 2021**

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**Appendix:** None

**Background Papers:** Report to Corporate Services Committee, 19 May 2021 –  
Grant Update Report 2020/21;  
Minute of Corporate Services Committee, 19 May 2021; and  
Equality Impact Assessment Screening

**Wards Affected:** All wards