

Review of Community Grants Fund Criteria

South West Neighbourhood Partnership

20 March 2008

Purpose of report

- 1 To refer proposed revised criteria and guidance for the community grants fund to the Neighbourhood Partnership for consideration.

Main Report

- 2 On 26 February 2008, the Policy and Strategy Committee considered the attached report by the Director of Services for Communities detailing proposed changes to the current community grants fund criteria. The revised criteria would make the application process simpler and ensure that funding decisions were made taking into account local need, knowledge and circumstances.
- 3 The Committee agreed:
 - a) to approve the revised community grants fund criteria for consultation with Neighbourhood Partnerships.
 - b) **to refer the report to all Neighbourhood Partnerships for consideration.**
 - c) to note that a final draft of the criteria would be submitted to the Policy and Strategy Committee following the consultation.
 - d) to note that the existing criteria would continue to be applied until the outcome of the consultation was known.

Recommendation

- 4 That the Neighbourhood Partnership considers the proposed revised criteria and guidance for the community grants fund.

Jenny Dawe
Convener

Appendix	Report no PS/57/07-08/SfC by the Director of Services for Communities
Contact/tel	Lesley Birrell, Committee Services Tel: 529 4240 Fax: 529 7607 e-mail: lesley.birrell@edinburgh.gov.uk
Wards affected	City-Wide
Background Papers	None

Review of the Community Grants Fund Criteria

Policy and Strategy Committee

26 February 2008

Purpose of report

- 1 To outline proposed changes to the current community grants scheme to make it simpler and easier for groups to apply.

Main report

- 2 The current Community Grants Fund (CGF) and associated criteria was established by the Council on 20th May 2003 and the budget was decentralised to the six Local Development Committees. On 19th June 2007 the Executive of the Council agreed to the transfer of the Community Grants Fund Scheme and decision making arrangements from the Local Development Committees to the twelve Neighbourhood Partnerships.
- 3 The scheme now requires revision to ensure that the funds are used to maximum effect in supporting the priorities identified within the emerging Neighbourhood Plans. The total Community Grants Budget amounts to £571,097 in 2007/08.
- 4 The need to review the criteria is underlined by the fact that of the 184 applications considered to date this year only 76 (41%) have received approval, the majority of applications not gaining approval were assessed as not meeting the fund criteria. The revised criteria and process will be clearer and simpler for applicants and will ensure that funding decisions are made taking into account local need, knowledge and circumstances.
- 5 The proposed new scheme will improve on the current arrangements by:
 - Bringing the fund closer to local communities and giving more local discretion on the use of the grants
 - Providing start up grants for establishing new groups to encourage activities which support the aims of the partnership
 - Providing grants for buying pieces of equipment for groups
 - Supporting community activities which progress the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Plan

- Being promoted as an accessible fund which supports creativity
- 6 The draft guidance is shorter, clearer, and explains to applicants how decisions on their applications will be made. Standards will be developed for the grant assessment / approval process including the turnaround time for applications, and a calendar of submission dates will be produced for each partnership. A draft of the new Guidance Note for Applicants is attached to this report (Appendix 1).
 - 7 Neighbourhood Managers and Partnership Information Managers have been consulted on the proposed guidance and their comments have been taken into account.
 - 8 It is proposed that this report would be referred to each Neighbourhood Partnership for consideration in the next cycle of Partnership meetings. The partnerships have already expressed an interest in being consulted.
 - 9 The revised scheme will use the same application form as the recently established Community Engagement Fund. All outstanding applications have been considered in the last round of Neighbourhood Partnership meetings and it is proposed that the new criteria will apply to applications commencing in financial year 2008/09. In the longer term there will be a city-wide review of what activities are being funded through the Community Grants Fund to ensure that a consistent approach is being taken.
 - 10 When the revised scheme has been adopted it is proposed that Community Grant Fund reports and urgent grant decisions under Standing Order 84 will be carried out by Neighbourhood Managers (acting on the advice of Neighbourhood Partnerships) on my behalf.

Recommendations

- 11 Members of the Policy and Strategy Committee are requested:
 - (i) to approve the draft revised guidance note for the Community Grants Fund (subject to consultation with Neighbourhood Partnerships)
 - (ii) to refer this report and guidance for consideration by the Neighbourhood Partnerships in the next cycle of meetings



Mark Turley
Director of Services for Communities

18/2/08

Appendices	Appendix 1 – Draft Neighbourhood Partnership Community Grants Fund Criteria
Contact/tel	Angela Leitch 0131 529 6752
Wards affected	All
Background Papers	

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP COMMUNITY GRANTS FUND
CRITERIA – GUIDANCE NOTE FOR APPLICANTS****(DRAFT)****CONTENTS:**

1. About the Neighbourhood Partnership Community Grants Fund
2. Who is eligible to apply?
3. What kind of things will the Neighbourhood Partnership Community Grants Fund pay for?
4. What are the conditions of funding?
5. What is the process for assessing applications?
6. Can we apply more than once?
7. Are there any things that the Community Grants Fund will not fund?
8. Making an application

1. About the Neighbourhood Partnership Community Grants Fund

The Neighbourhood Partnership Community Grants Fund is a small grants scheme created from funds provided by the City of Edinburgh Council.

The fund aims to encourage small scale activity that benefits local communities and supports the work of the Neighbourhood Partnerships and their Local Community Plans.

The fund can provide grants of up to £5,000 to voluntary and community groups, and is allocated locally by Neighbourhood Managers following the advice of the Neighbourhood Partnership.

2. Who is eligible to apply?

Any constituted voluntary organisation or community group operating in the City of Edinburgh, in a Neighbourhood Partnership area, that has:

- a constitution or articles of association, (this should describe the group's aims and objectives, its members and details of how decisions are made).
- a bank account in the name of the group, requiring at least two signatories for cheque transactions or cash withdrawals.

3. What kind of things will the Neighbourhood Partnership Community Grants Fund pay for?

Applications for locally targeted, one-off activities aimed at improving and encouraging community activity in the area are encouraged. The kinds of things that the fund will support could include:

- Start up grants of up to £1000 for new groups (where none of the members of the group have previously been involved in activities deemed to be inappropriate by the Council)
- Buying a piece of equipment for your group (grants up to £1,000)
- Improving or developing your community group's activities
- Raising awareness of your group's activities
- Recruiting new volunteers/members to your group
- Finding out about needs in your community
- Small scale projects that enhance quality of life and complement other improvements in the area
- Supporting projects which progress the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan

Some examples of projects which could be funded include: consulting the local community on their priorities for improving facilities in the partnership area, providing activities for young people to encourage them to move away from being involved in anti-social behaviour and community events.

4. What are the conditions of funding?

- Grants must be used within 6 months of the date awarded.
- Grants cannot be awarded for projects that have already started or for events that have taken place.
- The maximum cash award is £5,000.
- All projects/activities to be funded must be for the benefit of residents of the City of Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership areas
- All groups must provide a copy of their latest annual accounts or bank statements and income and expenditure plans as requested
- Organisations must acknowledge grant aid from the City of Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership in their publicity and promotional activities
- In addition, all applicants must adhere to the standard **Council Funding Conditions** issued by the City of Edinburgh Council and applicable to all grant recipients.
- On completion of the project/activity a monitoring form should be completed and returned to the Neighbourhood Manager confirming the money has been spent for the purpose originally identified. This should include copies of receipts for all expenditure incurred and any information and supporting evidence to demonstrate to what extent the project /activity successfully achieved its intended outcomes

5. What is the process for assessing applications?

Your application will go through the following steps:

- Initial Check The Local Community Planning Team based at Waverley Court will check the application is eligible, and each section is complete.

Applications which are eligible and complete will go to the next stage.

For those that are either ineligible or incomplete, the applicant will be notified and where appropriate advised of alternative sources of funding.

- Assessment by Neighbourhood Manager This stage will determine if the project is a local priority in accordance with the local community plan
- Decision The Neighbourhood Partnership will give advice on recommendations made by the Neighbourhood Manager. These recommendations will be based upon how well the applicants have met the assessment criteria and will take account of remaining funds

available in the year.

- **Notification** All applicants will be informed of the final decision within two weeks of the partnership meeting.

For applications that are not funded, applicants will be informed of the reasons and may apply again in the future.

We will try to complete the process as quickly as possible – applicants can assist by checking they have fully completed the application form and provided all necessary supporting documents before submitting.

6. Can we apply for a grant more than once?

Repeat applications from voluntary groups who have previously received a Neighbourhood Partnership Community Grant will be discouraged but may be considered if the group can demonstrate that:

- The new bid is different from the previous bid
- The proposal is for a new activity or project

7. Are there any things that the Neighbourhood Partnership Community Grants Fund will NOT fund?

- Activity of a political or inappropriate lobbying nature
- Groups advocating particular outcomes from the statutory planning process
- Routine property maintenance/repairs or for ongoing running costs
- Servicing of debt or monies already spent (retrospective funding)
- Contributions towards a large fund raising activity (e.g. minibuses, new buildings) are not normally eligible, unless it is a specific priority for the Neighbourhood Partnership.
- Activities designed to specifically promote party political or religious causes (although applications from Faith Groups involved in local community work are welcomed)
- Public or private sector bodies or individuals
- Day to day running costs for groups (e.g. heating, lighting, rent and annual staff salaries)

- Charges relating to maintenance costs (e.g. maintenance charges for websites)
- Repairs and refurbishments to Council premises

Please note that the Neighbourhood Partnerships have a policy of not funding projects which would appear to be more appropriately funded by another body e.g. School/Education projects should be directed to the City of Edinburgh Council Children and Families Department, Health projects should be directed to the Lothian NHS Trust etc.

The Council is keen to work with Neighbourhood Partnerships to use this fund to meet local needs. If you have any questions about this guidance the Neighbourhood Teams will be happy help provide you with advice.

8. Making an application

Application forms can be downloaded at *INSERT WEB ADDRESS HERE*
If you have any queries about your application, please contact your local **Neighbourhood Team**:

DETAILS TO BE INSERTED

or

the Local Community Planning Team on
tel: 0131 469 3595 / 3896

or email:

maureen.thompson@edinburgh.gov.uk or alasdair.fuller@edinburgh.gov.uk

Signed, complete applications should be submitted to:

The Local Community Planning Team
The City of Edinburgh Council
Services for Communities
Business Centre C4, Courtyard Level
Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street
Edinburgh EH8 5BG
Tel 469 3595 / 3896
Fax 529 6203