

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Resources Committee 14th June 2006

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Grants to National and Regional Voluntary Organisations

Report by Head of Policy and Performance

Summary This report seeks the approval of the Committee to continue grant payments to a range of national and regional organisations which accord with the Council's corporate priorities. The amount of funding sought is £28,792 for 2006-7 against budget provision of £24,628. Given budget pressures and previous awards, it is recommended that £20,544 is approved.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 To address its corporate priorities the Council supports a small number of national and regional voluntary organisations through annual subscription or annual grant. In 2005-6, following Budget Working Group scrutiny, the number of voluntary organisations supported was reduced with a consequential budget saving.
- 1.2 In total the Council is being asked to provide assistance in 2006-7 to the value of £28,792. Several of these organisations request the Council to have a representative(s) at member level to work with their organisation and it is expected that the appointed members will continue to fulfil this role. The budget for 2006-7 is £24,628.

2. Organisations seeking continued funding

- 2.1 The organisations seeking continued funding from 2005-6 are detailed below:

Organisation	Type of support	Funding request for 2006/07
Local Government Forum Against Poverty	Subscription	£2,100
Scottish Women's Aid	Grant	£1,100
Crimestoppers	Grant	£4,214
Grampian Racial Equality Council (GREC)	Grant	£2,200
Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)	Grant	£7,885
Volunteering Highland Grant	Grant	£2,500
Scottish Accident Prevention Council	Subscription	£555
	Total	£20,554

- 2.1.1 *The Scottish Local Government Forum Against Poverty* works to combat poverty and deprivation in a number of ways. This includes campaigning and lobbying for action, providing Councils with a common voice, influencing local, national and European Union policy, promoting specific initiatives to alleviate poverty and deprivation, providing a network for sharing information on 'best practice' and co-operating on joint projects and commissioning research. The Scottish Forum is a valuable partnership between local councils in Scotland highlighting areas of common interest on matters of poverty and inequality. Councillors W Fulton and O Macdonald represent the Council on the Forum.
- 2.1.2 *Scottish Women's Aid* is the national office for 39 local affiliated Women's Aid groups in Scotland. There are 4 Women's Aid groups in Highland, based in Inverness, Lochaber, Ross – Shire and Caithness and Sutherland, which provide information, support and/or accommodation

to women and children who have experienced domestic abuse. Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse) can be perpetrated by partners of ex partners and can include physical, sexual, financial, racial and emotional abuse. The small grant from the Council to Scottish Women's Aid mainly supports the national office in its national role (campaigning and information provision) as well as providing the Council guidance on its role in tackling domestic abuse.

- 2.1.3 *Crimestoppers* is a charity working in the field of crime reduction and seeks to support the police in the preservation of law and order. They also work with communities encouraging good citizenship and greater public participation in the prevention and solution of crime. Crimestoppers is another route for the public to give information on criminal activity using a Freephone hotline. The more aware the public are of this opportunity to fight crime the more calls are received and more arrests are made. The grant from the Council will be directed to local promotion and awareness raising in the Council area. Community safety issues arising from inward migration to the Highlands is an emerging issue which can be added to the scope of this work.
- 2.1.4 *Grampian Racial Equality Council's (GREC)* work is governed by its charitable aims, which are the elimination of racism, the promotion of good relations and the promotion of equal opportunities. GREC have provided a casework service in Highland and have worked with the Council and its partners to collate and analyse information on racist incidents in the area.
- 2.1.5 However, a reduction in GREC's core funding from other sources is likely to have an impact on the case work produced for Highland. This is unfortunate timing as the Council is about to introduce its guidance to staff on reporting racist incidents. Rather than recommending an increase in funding from the Council to fill a funding gap, work is required to cost the service and to consider whether other options exist to provide a comparable racist incident monitoring service. This work needs to be done with community planning partners also using the service and also introducing protocols for reporting racist incidents. It is recommended that the previous grant level is maintained while other options are considered. It may be preferable to move to a Service Level Agreement, rather than grant, for funding case work.
- 2.1.6 *Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisation (SCVO)* is the national body representing the voluntary sector. It seeks to advance the values and shared interests of the voluntary sector by fostering co-operation, promoting best practice and delivering sustainable services. SCVO North of Scotland is based in Inverness and has responsibilities for the delivery of rural policy for SCVO providing content and editorial services for the Rural Gateway and a range of other programmes. SCVO will continue to support the Council in policy development (it is currently contributing to the Council's work on rural disadvantage, rural development and in developing community planning) and in good practice in working with the voluntary sector.
- 2.1.7 *Volunteering Highland* (Highland's Volunteering Development Scotland branch) is based primarily in Inverness but has outreach offices across parts of the Highland. It works to develop volunteering in the area through activities including support for Volunteers Week and Make A Difference Day Activities.
- 2.1.8 *The Scottish Accident Prevention Council (SAPC)* seeks to co-ordinate and stimulate accident prevention work in Scotland by bringing together officers and elected members from local authorities, health professionals, and other individuals and organisations with safety as part of their remit. Councillors M Macmillan and N M Clark represent the Council respectively on two of the national committees of this organisation: Road Safety and Water and Leisure. Councillor M MacLennan formerly represented the Council on the Homes Safety committee. Approval is sought retrospectively for this allocation as payment was required in April.

3. A request for a review of funding and other changes

3.1 *The Scottish Low Pay Unit* had previously received funding from the Council up to 2004-5. The funding request for 2005-6 was not approved during the Budget Working group's review of discretionary grants as there was seen to be duplication between its work and that of the Scottish Local Government Forum Against Poverty also supported by the Council. The Scottish Low Pay Unit has asked for the Council to review its position and has requested funding of £8,248 for 2006-07. With no award made in 2005-6, the previous funding of around £8,000 was identified as a saving in 2005-6 and subsequently the budget for discretionary grants was reduced. There is no budget provision for this request.

3.2 *The Scottish Human Rights Centre* had previously received funding and provision was made in the budget of £3,744 for 2006-07. However, the organisation has recently ceased to operate so no funding is required in 2006-7.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 The current budget provision for grants to national and regional voluntary organisations totals £24,628. Total requests amount to £28,792 for 2006-7. To continue funding those organisations from last year which request grant this year £20,554 is required. It would be prudent to retain some flexibility in the budget in order to meet statutory duties on racist incident monitoring should costs increase. Such flexibility is possible as the Scottish Human Rights Centre no longer requires funding of around £3,700. There is no budget provision to reinstate funding for the Scottish Low Pay Unit. Last year the Budget Working Group decided to withdraw the grant to the Unit because it was seen as duplicating the effort of, and the Council support to, the Scottish Local Government Forum Against Poverty.

4.2 Further work is currently in progress, guided by Budget Working group, to scrutinise all discretionary funding to local organisations and groups as well as those operating at the regional and national level. Decisions on the funding awards for these groups cannot be postponed any later into 2006 without impacting on the business planning arrangements of the organisations seeking funding. The Budget Working Group expects to consider discretionary grants over the summer. Given that this group of grant awards was considered last year and that there may be some scope for a further saving in this budget arising from the closure of the Scottish Human Rights Centre and the potential move to funding racist incident recording from another budget through a SLA, Members are asked to agree funding to those organisations listed in paragraph 2.1 for 2006-7, with any changes to awards considered for 2007-8.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to agree that:

1. The Council maintains its support for the Scottish Local Government Forum Against Poverty at a cost of £2,100 during 2006/07 and to note that Councillors W Fulton and O Macdonald represent the Council on the Forum.
2. The Council continues its support to Scottish Women's Aid at a cost of £1,100 during 2006/07.
3. The Council continues its support to Crimestoppers at a cost of £4,214 during 2006/07 and note that Councillor J Home represents the Council on this organisation
4. The Council maintains its support of GREC at a cost of £2,200 during 2006/07, with flexibility kept in the budget in case of increasing costs incurred in racist incident monitoring
5. The Council continues its support to SCVO at a cost of £7,885 during 2006/07
6. The Council supports Volunteering Highland with a grant of £2,500 during 2006/07
7. The Council continues its recurring support to SAPC a cost of £555 during 2006/07 (retrospective approval is sought) and to note that Councillors M Macmillan and N M Clark currently represent the Council on two national committees of this organisation. Members will

be advised if a request is made for another Councillor to be involved in the home safety committee.

8. The Council does not re-instate the grant to the Scottish Low Pay Unit, following the Budget Working group's decision for 2005-6, with the request for £8,248 declined.

5.2 Members are asked to note that work is on-going through the Budget Working Group to continue to scrutinise discretionary funding to local organisations and groups as well as those operating at the regional and national level.

Signature:



Designation: Head of Policy and Performance

Date: 29.5.06

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