

**The Highland Council**

**Care, Learning and Housing Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **External and Third Sector Sports, Leisure, Culture and Community Funding Working Group** held in Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 25 April 2019 at 10.30 am.

**Present:**

Mr T Heggie  
Mr A Jarvie  
Mr G MacKenzie

Ms L Munro (Substitute)  
Mr D Macpherson  
Mr G Ross

**In attendance:**

Mr B Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service  
Ms I Murray, Commissioning Officer, Care and Learning Service  
Mrs F Shearer, Interim Care and Learning Manager – South, Care and Learning Service  
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Corporate Resources Service  
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Office

**Business**

**1. Appointment of Chair**

Mr G MacKenzie, having been duly nominated and seconded, was unanimously appointed Chairman.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Boyd, Mr A Christie, Mr R MacWilliam and Mr C Smith.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

The Working Group **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 5 – Mr A Jarvie, Mr G MacKenzie, Ms L Munro and Mr G Ross (all non-financial)  
Item 6 – Mr A Jarvie (non-financial)

**4. Terms of Reference**

The Working Group **APPROVED** the Draft Terms of Reference.

**5. Current Funded Organisations**

**Declarations of Interest:**

**The following Members declared non-financial interests in this item but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of**

**Conduct, concluded that their interests did not preclude their involvement in the discussion:-**

**Mr A Jarvie – Board Member of Highland Disability Sport and Director of High Life Highland**

**Mr G MacKenzie – Director of the Puffin Hydrotherapy Pool**

**Ms L Munro – Director of High Life Highland**

**Mr G Ross – Council representative on Inverness Area Sports Council and Treasurer of Highland Disability Sport**

There had been circulated a briefing paper setting out the variety of organisations currently funded.

The last major review of funding had taken place in 2016 and therefore the purpose of the meeting was to explore how Members wished this review to be carried out, what criteria were to be used and how they would be applied in time for organisations to be notified, in advance, of any changes to funding. The organisations had been informed that a review was taking place but, to date, few had raised concerns. It was acknowledged however that many might see the appropriate time to make representation was when they were notified of final funding proposals.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- there was a level of understanding of the Council's financial position by many of the groups;
- all the organisations had unique characteristics and challenges and it was difficult therefore to make comparisons between them. Other factors needed to be taken into consideration, such as the number of users, location etc, and each one looked at individually;
- whilst there might be a presumption to cut grants to organisations with large reserves, there were often very valid reasons as to why reserves had been built up i.e. the need for future capital investment;
- the impact of not providing services needed to be considered. In this regard, it was pointed out that some involved Council assets and changes to funding might result in the Council having to take back responsibility for these assets;
- reduced grants would impact some organisations to a greater extent than others;
- it was important to take a Council-wide approach and not to be parochial;
- there was a possibility that the effect of any reductions could be mitigated by other types of community support such as the economic benefits of the wind energy developments and regeneration funds;
- in consideration of the provision of leisure services in Badenoch and Strathspey, it would be of value to ascertain the views of the Local Members and High Life Highland;
- grants to Village Halls had been reduced significantly over the previous 5 years and, with over 170 halls being funded, the amounts provided were relatively small. However, this had to be compared to their income overall and what other sources of funding were available at a local level. For example, Ward Discretionary funding could be used but this was dependent on how many halls were in each Ward. Consequently, a high-level analysis of funding to Village Halls would be beneficial;
- there needed to be equality in how organisations were treated, community centres being cited as one example;

- High Life Highland could potentially have suggestions as to how to progress sport development;
- it was possible to find the necessary savings by cutting larger grants, thus affecting fewer organisations. However, this could have significant effects but cutting funding of smaller grants would impact on more groups;
- information was sought, and received, regarding which organisations had indicated an interest in the asset transfer process; and
- it was important to consider the viability of groups and whether or not their existence was dependent on Council funding.

The Working Group **AGREED**:-

- i. that a representative from High Life Highland and Badenoch and Strathspey Ward Members be invited to the Working Group's next meeting;
- ii. an analysis of Village Hall funding be provided;
- iii. to consider High Life Highland's proposals for sport development at a local level; and
- iv. additional information be provided on specific organisations, as requested during discussion.

## 6. Review Process, Criteria and Workplan

The Working Group **NOTED** information provided on the review process, criteria and workplan, recognising that there would be a requirement for the Working Group to meet regularly to accomplish its task within the timescale outlined.

## 7. Early Years Funding

**Declaration of Interest: Mr A Jarvie declared a non-financial interest in this item as a family member had previously been employed by an organisation who had submitted an application but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

The Interim Care and Learning Manager (South) provided a verbal update on the process to date.

Members were reminded that the sum available had been reduced to £200,000 across Highland for 2019/20. Accordingly, organisations which the Council were keen to support through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) had been informed of the application process and the deadline of 10 May 2019 and that Elected Members would make decisions by 21 June. The SLAs would run this year from July to 31 March with subsequent years running from April to March.

With the limited funding available it was important for the Council to identify which aspects of service it wanted to support. Members were provided with additional information regarding the one application received to date. The request was for urgent funding but Members felt they were not in a position to determine funding until other applications had been received and that a rigorous and robust approach needed to be adopted. Going forward, Members requested a Briefing Paper of all applications received detailing what the organisations did, their previous funding structure and what the Council's funding was used for. Furthermore, it would be advantageous to have Area Care and Learning Managers present at the next meeting to explain who

they supported, why they supported them, the impact of not supporting them and how the effects of cuts could be mitigated.

The Working Group **NOTED**:-

- i. the letter issued to relevant organisations;
- ii. the Service level Agreement Criteria;
- iii. the Application Guidance Notes;
- iv. the letter to be issued to successful applicants;

and **AGREED**:-

- v. that the Area Care and Learning Managers attend the next meeting;
- vi. that the Area Care and Learning Managers prepare a concise Briefing Paper on the applications.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group **AGREED** that the next meeting would be held on 17 May 2019, time and venue to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 12.10 pm.