

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00 am, Thursday, 11 February 2016

Present

Councillors Godzik (Convener), Aitken, Aldridge, Barrie (substituting for Councillor Fullerton), Bridgman, Child, Corbett, Day, Jackson, Ricky Henderson (substituting for Councillor Austin Hart), Key, Lewis, Lunn, Main, Milligan, Redpath, Robson, Rust and Tymkewycz.

Added members for Education matters

Craig Duncan and Alexander Ramage.

1. Children and Families Revenue Grants to Third Parties 2016/19

1.1 Deputations

The Committee agreed to hear the following deputations in relation to the report by the Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families on the Children and Families Revenue Grants to Third Parties 2016/19.

1.1.1 North Edinburgh Young People's Forum

Josh Ward, Brandin Sharpe and Bethany Forbes spoke on behalf of the North Edinburgh Young People's Forum and highlighted the following:

- Ratho Retreat was one of the largest and most popular residential projects available for young people in the North Edinburgh community. For some young people this would be the only holiday they got each year and it was important that this opportunity remained.
- This retreat provided affordable accommodation and transport. As a result many members had attended a number of times and were very close.
- The proposed extension of grant funding was only for one year; this was disappointing as the retreat had a positive effect on the community and provided a service for those who needed it most.
- The decision to close Panmuir School would be a mistake as it provided an alternative for those who found it difficult to study in mainstream education.
- Many pupils studying at Panmuir would have to transfer to mainstream schools, and this would have a negative impact on them and the pupils in other mainstream schools. With teachers already stretched, this was not ideal.

- The Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre was the only facility of its type in the area and acted as a hub for young people. If this was taken away it would make it more difficult for young people to mix together.
- North West Carers was a fantastic resource and to stop this initiative would be a mistake.
- It was good that funding for Music in Schools was to continue, and to consider this as part of a future cuts package would be an error.

The deputation concluded by asking the Committee to reconsider removing funding to the organisations outlined in the Acting Director's report.

The Convener thanked the deputation for their presentation and invited them to remain for the Committee's consideration of the related report at item 1.2 below.

1.1.2 Nari Kallyan Shangho (NKS)

Rohini Sharma Joshi, Naina Minhas and Naseem Suleman spoke on behalf of Nari Kallyan Shangho (NKS) and highlighted the following:

- NKS were an organisation that served the needs of approximately 200 Asians every week. A key part of their role was providing an interface between the South Asian population in Edinburgh and the medical community.
- The Communities and Families assessment process for grant funding had been misleading and had made incorrect assumptions about the organisation. The independent assessor appointed by the Council had not contacted them and the consultation had not been carried out correctly.
- NKS was one of the few organisations to have 100% of its funding withdrawn.
- The needs of the South Asian population had not been incorporated into the Council's funding criteria and therefore NKS was at a disadvantage when applying for grant funding.
- The implementation of a preventative approach when dealing with South Asian families would save funds at a later stage by stopping the need to refer individuals to specialist projects when families found themselves in difficulties.
- Statistically South Asian families were younger relative to the rest of Edinburgh's population and, therefore, more reliant on Communities and Families funding than other sources.
- NKS provided an interface between the South Asian population and medical professionals. By withdrawing funding, the Council would heap further pressure on the medical community.

The deputation concluded by asking the Committee to fit the needs of the South Asian population into its grants criteria and to reconsider the recommendation to withdraw funding from NKS.

The Convener thanked the deputation for their presentation and invited them to remain for the Committee's consideration of the related report at item 1.2 below.

1.1.3 Jack Kane Centre Management Committee

The Clerk advised the Committee that a deputation request from the Jack Kane Centre Management Committee had been withdrawn.

1.1.4 Corstorphine Youth and Community Centre (CYCC)

Tommy McLean and Sheila Perry spoke on behalf of the Corstorphine Youth and Community Centre (CYCC) and highlighted the following:

- The CYCC was established in 1980 and had been in receipt of financial support since then. The CYCC thanked the Communities and Families directorate for their longstanding support.
- Over recent years most of the financial support received from the Council had allowed the CYCC to employ two part time employees. It was expected that the decision to remove grant funding would lead to redundancy for these individuals.
- The organisation raised core costs through applications for funding.
- The grant funding requested had been reduced to the absolute minimum required to keep the organisation in operation.
- There was an ongoing demand for the CYCC service in the community and research had been conducted to back this up.
- The original premises for the CYCC had been destroyed by fire, but in the interim several different venues were being utilised for activities.
- There was a lack of support from the Council towards universal and preventative youth and children's work that stopped individuals becoming part of targeted provision. This was reflected in the grants funding criteria and concern regarding the impacts of this, particularly for community centres, was voiced at consultation sessions held by the Council.
- It was concerning that a decision made the previous year by the Education, Children and Families Committee had withdrawn support for voluntary community centres
- The CYCC met the education aims of Communities and Families in that it provided universal provision but instead the grants funding application process had a very narrow focus.
- There were concerns that the small grants scheme would utilise the same narrow criteria.
- If CYCC and similar organisations were forced to close then other costs for preventative support would rise. This would cost the Council more money in the longer term.
- No group based in the West Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership Area had been awarded a grant. This was leaving wide areas without any support.
- If support for CYCC was unable to continue at its current level, this could result in CYCC being unable to take on the lease for the new Corstorphine Youth Centre building once it was finished. The cost of the replacement building was estimated at £2.5m.

The Convener thanked the deputation for their presentation and invited them to remain for the Committee's consideration of the related report at item 1.2 below.

1.1.5 West Granton Community Centre

Janet Campbell, May Riorden and Sheila Sinclair spoke on behalf of the West Granton Community Centre (WGCC) and highlighted the following:

- The Centre had previously been in receipt of grant funding pre 2011 before moving to a Service Level Agreement.
- The West Granton Community Trust (WGCT) had operated the WGCC for 22 years. The centre was currently providing more services than ever before.
- The WGCC provided early years care and education through its daily playgroup. This was situated in an area of multiple deprivation and research indicated that children from this background benefited most from universal provision in early learning and childcare.
- If the Committee was serious about closing the attainment gap then the early years was where it needed to start. The Prentice Centre playgroup was one of the prime examples of a service required in North Edinburgh to provide effective learning and childcare through provision of indoor and outdoor activities.
- The WGCC worked in partnership with Children First, North West Carers, Dad's Rock Musical Playgroups, Craigoyston Early Years Centre and Alzheimers Scotland.
- The organisation also provided a wide range of services for older people. Many of the issues which had led to bad press in the local area could be put down to intergenerational conflict, and encouraging generations to come together was an invaluable part of the service provided.
- WGCT owned the Post Office and Community Shop that were adjacent to the Community Centre. The Post Office and shop provided community services and if there was a threat to WGCT then these facilities were also at risk.
- The decision to cut grant funding for the Community Centre amounted to a 60% cut meaning there would be £58k shortfall towards running costs.
- The grants application process was flawed as it had not been tested before implementation.

The deputation requested that recommended cuts to grant funding were instead implemented across the board in the first year while work was undertaken with the voluntary sector to find a longer term solution.

The Convener thanked the deputations for their presentation and invited him to remain for the Committee's consideration of the related report at item 2.2 below.

1.1.6 EVOC

Sarah Wade and Ella Simpson, on behalf of EVOC, referred to their paper that had been circulated to all members of the Committee and highlighted the following points:

- The move to a three year grants programme and the introduction of the small grants programme was to be welcomed as it would bring stability.
- The redesigned grants to third parties process had not been a transparent coproduced grants programme.
- The Acting Director's report did not adhere to the compact values of equal respect and this had damaged the perception of fairness and transparency surrounding this process, as well as the faith of the sector in partnership working with the Council.
- It was not clear how the allocated funds had been calculated and there did not appear to have been discussions regarding outcomes with organisations who had been allocated partial funding. Clear principles and/or a statement on this would have helped make things clearer moving forward.
- There were areas that lacked clarity, this included information surrounding the allocation of the breakfast fund.
- Further clarity and further communication to aid the transparency moving forward was required.
- Third sector concerns had been raised with Children and Families officers and responses issued. The addition of an enhanced assessment process following this was welcomed as this had improved fairness and objectivity. However, subsequent decisions did not seem consistent with the aims of the redesign process.
- Any further delay to the process would not be desirable and therefore EVOC were of the view that funding needed to be agreed as recommended in the Acting Director's report.

The deputation asked the Committee to consider the following:

1. To establish a cross-sector checkpoint group (to evaluate the impact of the new grants programme across the sector),
2. To work in partnership with EVOC to create a 'lessons learned' document.
3. To negotiate clearly with organisations awarded partial funding to work out what objectives would be taken forward as outcomes from each project.

The Convener thanked the deputation for their presentation and invited them to remain for the Committee's consideration of the related report at item 1.2 below.

1.1.7 Strengthening Communities for Race Equality - SCOREscotland

Kate Betney, on behalf of SCOREscotland, referred to their paper that had been circulated to all members of the Committee and raised the following points:

- The proposed budget cuts from 1 April 2016 posed an existential danger for SCOREscotland.
- Communities and Families officers had proposed that elements of the organisations work that fitted the definition of 'Youth Work' would be funded until September 2016. This was to be welcomed.

- SCOREscotland had managed to secure funding from a variety of sources including BBC Children In Need, the Lottery and the Robertson Trust and would continue to seek funding, however, bridging funds would be required until this funding was in place. Flexibility was also sought from the directorate in the way in which secured funds could be utilised.
- As a small organisation SCOREscotland had found it difficult to make applications to a variety of Council departments.
- An organisational review had been carried out between September and December 2015, which included consultation with stakeholders and this had shaped SCOREscotland's five year business plan. Funds would be required to implement this and improve the effectiveness of the organisation.
- The definition of "children and families" used for the grants process was too narrow to include families that were vulnerable due to a variety of reasons, including racist abuse and harassment in their homes and neighbourhoods.
- A number of components of public sector equality duty and the Council's Framework to Advance Equality and Rights 2012/17 aligned directly with SCOREscotland's core objectives.
- Through the Scottish Government funded Local CommUNITY Voices project, SCOREscotland participated in key local partnership developments. The withdrawal of funding from SCOREscotland would have a negative impact on such projects.
- Given the wider context of ongoing global hateful atrocities and increasing locally reported hate crimes, bullying of ethnic minority children in local schools and Scottish Government current strategies for children, refugees and race equality, SCOREscotland's contribution was still essential.

The deputation requested the Committee's intervention and support to help SCOREscotland survive, bring in more resources and to continue their valued role in the local community.

The Convener thanked the deputation for her presentation and invited her to remain for the Committee's consideration of the related report at item 1.2 below.

1.2 Report by the Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families

Proposed awards of revenue grants to organisations following the new procedures approved by Education, Children and families Committee in May and October 2015 were detailed. A Small Grants Programme for awards of between £1,000 and £10,000, with funding proposals due in March 2016, was also outlined.

Motion

- 1) To note the work of the Third Party Grants Short Life Working Group and the reports of 3 March 2015, 19 May 2015 and 6 October 2015 which outlined the proposed approach.

- 2) To welcome the range and scope of applicants and the large number of new partners committed to working towards the objectives set out by the Council and the Children's Partnership.
 - 3) To note the input from the Chief Officers of the Children's Partnership, including input from NHS Lothian, Police Scotland and EVOC.
 - 4) To note the external scrutiny of the application process which concluded that the process was a 'well-planned, considered and co-produced approach to a grant application process'.
 - 5) To agree that the points highlighted in paragraph 3.6 of the Acting Director's report be considered for future application processes.
 - 6) To agree the grant recommendations in the Acting Director's report and outlined in Appendix 1 and the proposed distribution of 95% current funding for existing partners and 50% for new applicants.
 - 7) To recognise, however, that some organisations which had previously been awarded Council funding had not been successful, and to agree to award six of these organisations one year of funding at 95% of their 2015/16 award to assist with transition. In addition, for one other organisation, a request would be made to Finance and Resources Committee for a one year contract extension. The value of this would be 95% of the 2015/16 contract value. The progress of these organisations would be monitored during this transition.
 - 8) To note that meetings with all existing but unsuccessful applicants would be offered. These meetings would investigate what additional internal and external assistance and support could be provided to these organisations to explore other sources of funding, and this support would also be offered to those new applicants who have moved from contracts to grant.
 - 9) To note that funding was also available through the Small Grants Programme.
 - 10) To agree to receive a report in March 2016 on proposed awards from the Small Grants Programme.
 - 11) To note also that a decision had been taken to delay the process of commissioning for universal youth work. This would be reviewed in 2016/17.
 - 12) To agree that the Third Party Grants Short Life Working Group be reconvened to discuss lessons learned, where appropriate. EVOC and other relevant groups to be co-opted onto the working group.
- Moved by Councillor Godzik, seconded by Councillor Barrie

Amendment 1

- 1) In similar terms to the motion subject to the deletion of paragraphs 4 to 6 and the inclusion of the following.
 - 2) Recognises the lack of trust and concerns about the process expressed by numerous applicants.
 - 3) Notes that Youth Work contracts should have been allocated first to reduce duplication.
 - 4) Notes the lack of transparency around the process and specifically the absence of the provision of clear information in terms of unsuccessful applicants.
 - 5) Seeks further information as to the "equitable geographical spread" referred to in respect of paragraph 3.4 of the report by the Acting Director and how this has been achieved.
 - 6) Observes that there have been decreases in funding recommended for individual awards since the December 2015 report for all but five organisations and questions the objectivity of the criteria.
 - 7) Appreciates that the uncertainty for the applicants in such proximity to the new financial year is of serious concern and therefore has no option but to proceed with the awards as recommended.
 - 8) Suggests that the short-life working group should reconvene to discuss lessons learned, when appropriate.
 - 9) Remits the third party grants award process to the Governance Risk and Best Value Committee for a report in two cycles requesting consideration be given to the process issues to ensure they are avoided in future situations where the Council is dealing with third party applicants.
- Moved by Councillor Rust, seconded by Councillor Aitken

Amendment 2

- 1) In similar terms to the motion, subject to the deletion of paragraphs 4 to 8 and the insertion of the following.
- 2) Regrets the delay in bringing forward recommendations, originally due in December 2015, the difficulties that the resulting uncertainty may have caused applicants, and the lack of any explanation for the delay.
- 3) Regrets the lack of clarity, within the report, on the objectives against which the applications were assessed and whether the recommended grants achieve the optimal match to those objectives.

- 4) Regrets the absence, within the Acting Director's report, of detail on organisations which have not been successful in being recommended for a grant, and how those recommendations are justified by failure to match the objectives of the grant scheme.
- 5) Regrets the lack of engagement with organisations recommended for a grant, particularly for those receiving only 50% funding, in advance of reporting to committee which therefore precludes judgement on the extent to which the aims of the activity for which funding is sought can still be achieved, and resulting uncertainty about the delivery of projects and the uptake of awards.
- 6) Notes the lack of transparency and consistency over which organisations not receiving funding are recommended for a 95% transition grant for one year.
- 7) Notes that some organisations that have been recommended for funding, have now received a contract extension from universal youth work section, which may include duplication of funding.
- 8) Recognises, however, that the failure to administer the grant process efficiently, transparently and timeously leaves the decision perilously close to the start of the financial year to which grants apply and therefore agrees that awards are made as outlined in appendix 1 of the Acting Director's report, subject to 9 below.
- 9) Agrees that for those youth work organisations which are found to have received duplicate funding, the duplicated surplus funds will be deducted from the awards and total surplus reported back to committee for consideration.
 - 9.1) Further notes:
 - a) those applicants who have not received funding and may be financially vulnerable;
 - b) some organisations who have been recommended for partial funding may consider themselves especially vulnerable;
 - c) some organisations may have legitimate complaints about the process.
 - 9.2) Therefore Committee agrees to invite appeals from applicants in 9.1 above and instructs officers to consider these appeals and report to next Committee meeting, or as soon as possible thereafter, with full details including criteria scores and financial information, to allow Committee to consider the appeals and any action it is able to take.
- 10) Notes the new Breakfast Club Development Fund and agrees that officers' recommendations for funding criteria and for the distribution of this fund are brought annually to the Committee for approval, with the small grants programme report.

11) Agrees that a cross party working group, including external members from the sector, oversee and scrutinise a lessons-learned exercise and report back to this committee within six months, to include full consideration of the external scrutiny report.

- Moved by Councillor Main, seconded by Councillor Corbett

Voting

For the motion 12

For amendment 1 4

For amendment 2 3

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor Godzik

(References – minute of the Education Children and Families Committee 6 October 2015 (items 27 and 30); report by the Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Aitken declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as a Director of Oxfams Care.

Councillor Child declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as the Council's Voluntary Sector Champion and a member of the Compact Partnership Board.

Councillor Day declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as a member of the Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre Board of Management.

Councillor Ricky Henderson declared a non-financial interest in the foregoing item as Chair of a sub-committee of SCOREScotland.