

# Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 9 March 2023

## Edinburgh Discretionary Business Support Fund – Muirhouse Millennium Centre

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Executive 1 - Almond
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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee is asked to agree to set aside up to £40,000 from the Edinburgh Discretionary Business Support Fund to support Muirhouse Millennium Centre in 2023/24.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

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# Report

## Edinburgh Discretionary Business Support Fund – Muirhouse Millennium Centre

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report seeks approval from Committee to set aside up to £40,000 for Muirhouse Millennium Centre in 2023/24 to support the Centre to meet its operational commitments. Officers will continue to work with the Board of the Centre to identify financial and other support available and they will be invited to be fully engaged in the Council's development of a new community centre strategy.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 On [29 January 2021](#), Committee approved a framework under which Discretionary Grant Funding for Businesses.
- 3.2 This framework was developed following the allocation of funding by the Scottish Government, in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, to be allocated on a discretionary basis.
- 3.3 On 17 January 2023, Policy and Sustainability Committee agreed to utilise the remaining discretionary grant fund to cover any additional costs until a staff transfer to a new operator, subject to confirmation the costs could be covered by the funding within the discretionary grant fund. To date, no funding has been allocated from this fund for Gorgie Farm.

### 4. Main report

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#### Edinburgh Discretionary Business Support Fund

- 4.1 The Edinburgh Discretionary Business Support Fund was provided by the Scottish Government during the Coronavirus pandemic, with governance and oversight by the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.
- 4.2 The original fund was over £12m and its purpose was for Council's to "provide additional support for businesses where they consider that necessary or justified". Further guidance stipulated that "the aim of this fund is to mitigate the short-term

financial challenges being experienced by businesses adversely impacted by restrictions and regulations introduced to control the spread of Covid-19”.

- 4.3 Since the removal of all restrictions, the original purpose of the fund has been superseded and local authorities have been advised that any residual amounts (for the Council, the residual amount is £257,000 in total) can now be spent on economic development activity. The Business Growth and Inclusion team had identified using the residual funding for visitor economy related business activity.

#### **Muirhouse Millennium Centre**

- 4.4 On 9 February 2023, the Council heard a deputation from Muirhouse Millennium Centre which recognised that while they are facilitating important services for people from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds and demand for services is increasing, they are facing significant financial challenges.
- 4.5 The Council asked officers to engage with the Muirhouse Millennium Centre Board to provide advice and support on how the centre can continue on a sustainable financial basis, with the outcome of this work to be reported back to Culture and Communities Committee and ward Councillors.
- 4.6 An update on this and on the development of a community centre strategy is due to be considered by Culture and Communities Committee on [7 March 2023](#).
- 4.7 Within this report, Culture and Communities Committee is asked to agree to award funding of up to £40,000 to support Muirhouse Millennium Centre to meet its operational financial commitments in 2023/24, while officers will engage with them on the development of a community centre strategy. This final strategy will also outline how future financial support from the Council will be administered and what requirements will be placed on management committees.

#### **Recommendation**

- 4.8 In order to support Muirhouse Millennium Centre financially in 2023/24, Committee approval is sought to set aside £40,000 from the remaining funding in the Edinburgh Discretionary Business Support Fund.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 If Committee approve the recommendation in this report, and Culture and Communities agree the award of grant funding, officers will work with the Board of Muirhouse Millennium Centre to develop a grant funding agreement for 2023/24. This funding will be used to meet the Centre’s operational financial commitments in 2023/24. Officers will also ensure that the funding required from the Council is minimised.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 As noted above, the Council was awarded £12m of funding by the Scottish Government to create a Discretionary Business Support Fund in response to the impact of COVID-19 on businesses.
- 6.2 The balance of funding available is £257,000, although the Council agreed to allocate some of this funding to Gorgie Farm.
- 6.3 This report requests approval to set aside up to £40,000 to support Muirhouse Millennium Centre to meet its operational commitments in 2023/24, while officers continue to work with the Board to develop a longer term sustainable financial model for the Centre. This will include engaging with the Board on the development a new community centre strategy for the city.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 The [motion](#) from Councillor Younie on Muirhouse Millennium Centre, together with the deputation to the Council, on 9 February 2023 outlined the community support work which is facilitated by the Centre.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 None.

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 None.