
COMMUNITY FUNDING – EVALUATION PROCESS

Report by Director – Resilient Communities

Audit & Scrutiny Committee

9 December 2022

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an overview and summary of the evaluation process of the Community Fund from April 2021 to present date.**
- 1.2 On 25 March 2021 Council agreed that from April 2021 the current evaluation regime for applications would be extended to any body/organisation which receives a grant award from any part of the Community Fund.
- 1.3 It was also recognised that the need for uniform scrutiny and evaluations across all Area Partnerships was important and support would be offered where required. Members commented on the operation of the fund in their areas and the need to involve groups in this process in addition to community councils.
- 1.4 The Community Fund budget for 2021/2022 is £470,718 and is allocated to each Area Partnership based on population estimates as detailed in section 3. It also contains a number of ring-fenced grants totalling £194,593 made to Community Councils, Village Halls and Festival Grants.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee notes the evaluation process including evaluation form, and progress to date.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting of 25 March 2021, Council agreed a number of changes to the Community Fund to allow flexibility as to how the fund would operate and be dispersed within each Area Partnership.
- 3.2 Each Area Partnership can if desired, allocate their funds to different schemes, priorities and timescales, for example Quality of Life/Member Priority Fund, VE Celebration Fund, or to a third party to undertake local participatory budgeting on their behalf. It is likely that each of these of sub-fund schemes will have set outcomes and criteria. Each Area Partnership may also allocate funding to market and promote the Community Fund as they see fit.
- 3.3 It was acknowledged that there was a need for scrutiny and evaluation across all of the Community funding, and that support would be offered as each Area Partnership determined their arrangements.
- 3.4 It was also agreed that from April 2021 onwards, the current evaluation regime for successful applications was extended to any community body or organisation which received a grant award from any part of the Community Fund.
- 3.5 The Community Fund budget for 2021/22 is £470,718. Based on this figure, the allocations for each Area Partnership based on population estimates is shown at table 2 below:

Base Budget 2021/22	£
Community Councils	58,159
Village Halls	50,074
Community Council Network*	1,250
Festival Grants	85,110
Balance	276,125

*Contribution to Borders-wide Network

Table 1

Area	Population	£
Berwickshire	20,969	50,230
Cheviot	19,433	46,551
Eildon	35,598	85,273
T&L	17,925	42,938
Tweeddale	21,345	51,131
Total	115,270*	276,125

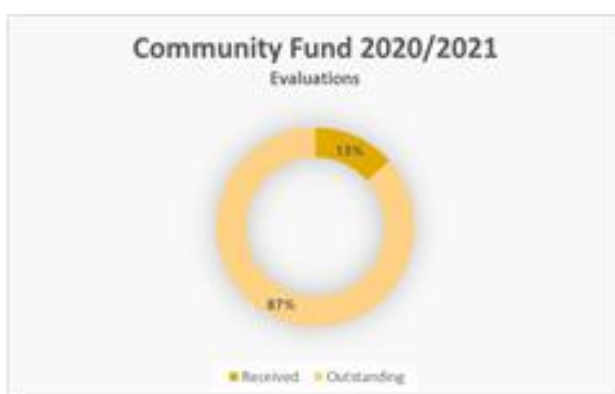
*2018 Population Estimate (NRS)

4 EVALUATION PROCESS – COMMUNITY FUND

- 4.1 As part of the terms and conditions within the Community Fund award letter, each organisation or community group gives signed agreement to complete an evaluation and monitoring form as detailed at *Appendix A*. A reminder is also sent 12 months after the funding award being made, asking for completion of the form, or to advise us if they are encountering delays in delivering their project. Support can be provided for those who encounter any difficulties in completing the form, and the award letter also gives examples of the type of evaluation that is expected for their specific project.
- 4.2 An evaluation and monitoring process has been in place for the last two years, with return levels at 51% for 2019/2020. Reminders have been sent out to those who received grant funding, and we are actively chasing these evaluation forms.



- 4.3 For 2020/21, evaluation returns are 13%, although it needs to be borne in mind that there has been a considerable delay in delivering projects due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Communities & Partnership Team have been in discussion with groups to find out if they can deliver their original projects, or if the award needs to be repurposed in light of the pandemic.



- 4.4 The decision made by Council on 25 March 2021, now means that **no community body or organisation will be able to apply for further funding** if they have not provided an evaluation form for a previous award.

- 4.5 For those who have completed their projects and evaluation forms, they are invited to their local Area Partnership to discuss and demonstrate how their project has made a difference within their community and to answer any questions from the Area Partnership attendees in relation to this. The evaluation form is also published on the Area Partnership Agenda, and some examples of completed evaluation forms are detailed at Appendix B.
- 4.6 Grants made to 69 Community Councils (£58,159) are for administration (treasurers and secretariat expenses etc.) and for those who require hall hire in order to hold their meetings. Each Community Council is required to submit their annual accounts and evidence of spend before the grant is awarded and no awards are made until these documents have been submitted and checked. It is anticipated that hall hire reimbursements will be very low for 2021/22 due to the pandemic.
- 4.7 In the relation to grants made to Village Halls (£50,074), this is distributed via the four federations of village halls in the Borders, (Berwickshire, Central Borders, Roxburghshire and Peeblesshire) with each federation aiming to support the development of the village halls in their area as well as provide training and ongoing advice to village hall committees. The four federations provide a set of annual accounts which is summarised at Appendix X, and provides review of achievements and performance. A summary of the Accounts is detailed at Appendix C.
- 4.8 The Festival Grant Scheme (£85,110) supports 29 festivals across the Borders in relation to public liability insurance and public protection measure costs. The level of grant awarded is based on population levels and the requirement of horse cavalcades at festival activities as detailed at Appendix D. As per the other ring-fenced grants, annual accounts and evidence of spend is required before further awards are made.
- 4.9 Insurance and associated costs were met during the pandemic, and 50% of the grant is being awarded to Festivals this year, as per the report that was approved by Council on 16 March 2021. The remaining 50% of the Festival Grant will be returned to each area's Community Fund for local projects.
- 4.10 As this evaluation process has now been formally agreed at Council, it will continue to be reported to Area Partnerships as detailed above, and reported via Executive as part of regular performance reporting and monitoring.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a reputational risk to the Council that if efficient and effective outcome based evaluation does not take place, it will be unable to justify the benefits and impacts that community funding brings to each local area. By signing an award letter, organisations and groups agree to the terms and conditions of the grant, which include evaluation.

As this process has now been agreed formally at Council, the Communities & Partnership Team will not accept future applications from those who have not provided evaluation from previous awards.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

It is anticipated there will be no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

There are no direct economic, social or environmental issues with this report which would affect the Council's sustainability policy.

5.5 Climate Change

There are no direct implications associated to climate change in the report.

5.6 Rural Proofing

There are no implications or amendments to this policy or strategy from the proposals contained within this report.

5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no implications to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation from the proposals contained within this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications are being consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.
- 6.2 The Corporate Management Team have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Jenni Craig
Director, Resilient Communities

Author(s)

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Background Papers: Council, 25 March 2021

Previous Minute Reference: [insert last Minute reference (if any)]

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