



West Lothian
Council

COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

WEST LOTHIAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS – PAYMENT OF ANNUAL GRANT

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Following the decision of Council Executive on 21 February 2012, to consider again the payment of the annual administration grant to the West Lothian Association of Community Councils for financial year 2011/12.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council Executive:-

1. Approves the payment of £1,000 to the West Lothian Association of Community Councils for its administration grant for 2011/12, or the transfer of the equivalent sum to the fund available for Community Council Special Project Grants.
2. Considers whether applications by the Association for payment of its administration grant require to be brought to committee in future years, or may be dealt with through delegated powers, and whether additional conditions for payment should be imposed.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs, being honest, open and accountable, working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Section 22 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The timescales for awarding community council administration grants are monitored and recorded through Covalent
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	None
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The proposed funding, or transfer of funding, can be met from the community council budget

for 2011/12

VII Consideration at PDSP

None

VIII Other consultations

Council Executive, 21 February 2012; West Lothian Association of Community Councils

D. TERMS OF REPORT

In May 2011, the Council Executive agreed that the decision on the payment of the Association's administration grant should be discussed at a future meeting.

The Association held its AGM in November 2011 and submitted a copy of its audited accounts, seeking payment of its annual administration grant. A copy of the audited accounts is attached in Appendix 1, along with an additional statement to give members information on additional expenditure the Association made between the accounts being audited mid-September and the end of October 2011.

In the past, the annual administration grant to the Association has been paid automatically upon receipt of satisfactory accounts. The level of administration grants for community councils and the Association has remained unchanged for several years.

In dealing with the resulting report on 21 February 2012, Council Executive decided as follows:-

To write to the West Lothian Association of Community Councils advising that due to the substantial balance of funds held by the Association the Council Executive was of a mind to refuse the £1,000 administration grant for 2011/12 and instead transfer £1,000 to the Community Councils Special Projects budget, and to report back to a future meeting of the Council Executive with the West Lothian Association of Community Councils response to the proposal.

The Association was informed of the decision, and was asked for its views. A meeting of the Association was called for 28 March 2012 to address the issue. The response received on 11 April is as follows:-

"Thank you for your communication.

At last month's meeting of the Association, council's views on the payment of our grant were discussed.

The members present felt that as the grant was retrospective they would still wish to receive the full grant, so that the Association could build on its strengths.

The Scottish Government is currently conducting a short life review of Community Councils across Scotland, and is due to report back to ministers later this summer. In addition on 18th April, the final meeting of the National Association of Community Councils is due to take place in Dunblane, and we are expecting that community councils will be given increase responsibilities in due course.

However, we appreciate that in the current financial year, it is important that any council money is put to the most appropriate use, and we have agreed that at the time of our next AGM in November, if we have not spent our annual allowance for this year we will (on a one off basis) return the sum of money for 2011/2012 for redistribution to community councils for the special projects fund."

In dealing with this present issue, it would be helpful for Council Executive to decide if future applications require to be brought to committee for approval, and, to assist the Association in future, if there are to be additional criteria attached to the payment of the Association's grant.

E. CONCLUSION

The conditions applied in previous years for payment of the Association's grant have been met, and a decision is now required as to whether payment should be made. It would also make for greater clarity if Council Executive considered if future applications for payment are to require committee approval, and whether there are additional conditions to be met before payment is made.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Council Executive, 3 May 2011 and 21 February 2012

Statement of Accounts in Appendix 1

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1 – West Lothian Association of Community Councils
Audited Accounts

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