

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 8 March 2011

BY: Executive Director of Community Services

SUBJECT: Community Housing & Property Management
External Grant Awards 2011/12 and Future Approach

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To recommend External Grant Awards as detailed in the attached Appendix 1 and set out proposals for the future approach to funding organisations.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the External Grant Awards totalling £575,175 as detailed in the attached Appendix 1 and approve the future approach to funding services currently in receipt of grants, in line with the Council's Corporate Review.
- 2.2 Cabinet is asked to note that the Executive Director of Community Services has approved these External Grant Awards and the future approach to funding organisations.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has for a considerable number of years made awards to external bodies for grant funding. In September 2003 a procedure was introduced and this was reviewed as a Community Housing & Property Management Procedure Note in August 2004.
- 3.2 The Council is currently developing a partnership finance strategy to manage grants more effectively. The Council has also updated its existing corporate procurement strategy. In line with this, it is recommended that for services which until now have received a grant, external grants and associated procedures are eliminated and replaced with competitive procurement where this is considered appropriate. This will ensure the Council is receiving the best combination of cost and quality that is available and streamline administrative procedures, promoting more efficient working practices. It is

recognised that while competitive procurement has been applied to some services already, this is resource intensive and a transitional phase is required for this until 2015 to implement competitive procurement where required.

The Council budget was approved at a Special Meeting of the Council on 9 February 2011. To deliver efficiency savings, a 5% reduction in funding has been negotiated with all grant recipients.

3.3 The following summarises those services for which funding is being recommended for approval and the corresponding position with regard to competitive procurement:

3.3.1 Care and Repair East Lothian – Funding recommended £300,488

Care and Repair East Lothian has been operating in East Lothian since 1987. Care and Repair East Lothian and the Small Repairs Service assist elderly and disabled homeowners and private tenants by providing practical help with adaptations, repairs and household maintenance.

The administration of Care and Repair funding transferred to the Council in April 2005 and was wholly funded through Scottish Government Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG). Ring-fencing of PSHG was removed from 2010/11 and funding distributed with the Council's Revenue Support Grant and General Capital Grant. However, the Grant will continue to be separately identified as PSHG until 2013/14.

During 2010/11 Care and Repair were made aware of anticipated reductions in grant funding and jointly agreed measures have been put in place to enable the service to operate with a 5% reduction during 2011/12. This will be monitored closely during 2011/12 and a view reached on whether to competitively procure this service.

3.3.2 East Lothian Energy Advice Centre (ELEAC) – Funding recommended £60,368

ELEAC provides an energy and fuel poverty advice service to householders of all tenures in East Lothian. This helps the Council meet its obligation under the Home Energy Conservation Act (1996) (HECA) and is in line with section 88(1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The project delivers its service via the issuing of tailored reports for advice and by direct advice to vulnerable households through an outreach advice worker.

It is proposed that the service will be subject to a competitive procurement process, to commence April 2011, with a view to having a newly contracted service in place towards the end of 2011. In the meantime, it is recommended the existing East Lothian Energy Advice Centre is awarded six months funding for the period 1 April 2011 to 30 September 2011 at a 5% reduction from 2010/11 levels and any further funding required is provided at the same level until a new service is in place.

3.3.3 Warm and Well – Funding recommended £11,562

The Warm and Well project provides a mechanism to enable health professionals to access energy efficiency improvements for their patients who are living in cold, damp or hard to heat homes and whose health is consequently at risk because of their housing conditions.

The Council has not and does not wish to specify what or how funding should be used for Warm and Well, other than to ensure the service continues to be provided at an appropriate level. Competitive procurement is not deemed to be appropriate.

3.3.4 East Lothian Women’s Aid – Funding recommended £69,831

The main aim of East Lothian Women’s Aid is to provide crisis support to women and accompanying children experiencing domestic abuse. The grant funds:

- A Crisis Support Service, which provides confidential emotional and practical support and advocacy to women who have experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse from a partner.
- A Children and Young Persons Worker’s post, which provides support to children and young people living in refuge or second stage accommodation, in dealing with their experiences of domestic abuse.

A comprehensive service review of ELWA was completed in June 2010, with a number of issues highlighted as cause for concern. A decision will require to be taken during spring 2011 in relation to the potential competitive procurement of the service. In the meantime, the service can continue to operate with the funding recommendation in this Report, being jointly funded through additional sources.

3.3.5 Shelter East Lothian (SELP) – Funding recommended £99,402

SELP was established in October 2000 and provides an independent housing advice and advocacy service in East Lothian. SELP is funded in the context of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, which sets out Local Authority duties to make independent homelessness advice and information available in their area.

The service was procured competitively during 2010/11, with a new service to commence in April 2011 for a three year period.

3.3.6 Bridges Project – Funding recommended £9,025

The main objective of the Bridges Project is “To enable disadvantaged young people aged 16 to 21 years to become self reliant through the delivery of local services which focus on the acquisition of skills to: manage tenancies; become employable; combat poverty and exclusion; become contributing

members of the community; access further education and establish community anchors”.

The Council has not and does not wish to specify what or how this money should be used, other than to ensure the service continues to be provided at an appropriate level. Competitive procurement is not deemed to be appropriate.

3.3.7 East Lothian Voluntary Organisations network Furniture Recycling Project (ELVON) – Funding recommended £16,632

The project aims to provide good quality recycled furniture and other household goods through a referral system used by, among others, the Council’s Homelessness Unit.

The Council has not and does not wish to specify what or how this money should be used, other than to ensure the service continues to be provided at an appropriate level. Competitive procurement is not deemed to be appropriate.

3.3.8 Four Square (Scotland) Prison Outreach Project – Funding recommended £3,371

This project provides housing advice to prisoners given a custodial sentence in HMP’s Edinburgh, Cornton Vale and Polmont. It assists service users in making decisions about their accommodation, seeking to prevent homelessness and providing assistance to rough sleepers upon release.

The Council has not and does not wish to specify what or how this money should be used, other than to ensure the service continues to be provided at an appropriate level. Competitive procurement is not deemed to be appropriate.

3.3.9 Shelter Gypsy/Traveller outreach, information and advice service – Funding recommended £4,496

A single sourcing procurement process took place during 2009/10 and a contract with Shelter was agreed from 1 April 2010 for a two-year period, for the provision of an information and advice service to Gypsy Travellers. The service is jointly funded, with Midlothian Council contributing the same level of funding.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications arising from this Report.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Equalities – An equalities impact assessment has been completed and no negative impacts have been found.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – The overall financial implication is a 5% cost reduction across External Grants, with savings of £32,718 and has been approved by the Head of Finance.
- 6.2 Personnel – None.
- 6.3 Other – None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Grant Awards 2011/12 attached.

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	25 February 2011

Appendix 1 - External Grant Awards and Contributions 2011/12

External Grants	Amount 10/11 (£)	Amount 11/12 (£)	Difference (£)	% Difference
East Lothian Care and Repair	316,303	300,488	-15,815	-5
Energy Advice Service -				
ELEEAC	63,545	60,368	-3,177	-5
Warm and Well	12,171	11,562	-609	-5
Women's Aid	73,506	69,831	-3,675	-5
Shelter East Lothian	107,317	99,402	-7,915	-5
Bridges base project	9,500	9,025	-475	-5
ELVON	17,507	16,632	-875	-5
Four Square (Scotland)	3,548	3,371	-177	-5
Shelter Gypsy Traveller Project	4,496	4,496	-0	0
Total	607,893	575,175	-32,718	-5