Glasgow City Council

Executive Committee

Report by Councillor Martin Rhodes, Executive Member for Communities

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INTEGRATED GRANT FUND REVIEW: AREA BUDGET

Purpose of Report:

To seek Executive Committee approval of the recommendations outlined in relation to the Integrated Grant Fund Review: Area Budget.

Recommendations:

The Executive Committee is invited to:

1. Note the content of this report;
2. Note the consultation process undertaken; and
3. Consider the proposed recommendations outlined in Section 6.

Ward No(s):   Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐   consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

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1. Introduction

1.1   This paper seeks approval from the Executive Committee on the recommendations outlined in relation to the Integrated Grant Fund Review: Area Budget.   These recommendations have been developed following consultation with members of both the Area Partnerships and the Sector Partnerships.

2. Background

2.1   At its meeting in June 2014, the Council's Executive Committee approved a review of the Integrated Grant Fund (IGF) to take place during 2014/15. Subsequently, a number of further papers have been considered by the Executive Committee in relation to various aspects of this review.   The Executive Committee noted that proposals relating to Challenge 3, (the Area Budgets allocated by the 21 Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Area Partnerships), would follow at a later date.

2.2   The proposals set out within Challenge 3 (the Area Budget), incorporated a number of considerations. This paper specifically seeks to respond to those that relate to:

- the allocation of funding to the public sector
- the merits of a scheme of delegation
- eligibility and criteria
- simplifying the process
- targeting the funding
- eradicating duplication
- links to community budgeting
- promotion and marketing

2.3   In accordance with the principles of the IGF Review, the proposals made below will, if approved, be phased in over a period of time. This will enable changes to be properly implemented, effectively managed and evaluated on an incremental basis.

3. Consultation Process

3.1   A paper on the Integrated Grant Fund Review was issued to each of the 21 Area Partnerships in September 2014. This provided information on the IGF Review and more specifically the detail of Challenge 3: Area Budgets. This paper sought responses from each Area Partnership on the method by which they wished to be consulted on this Review.   The majority of Area Partnerships indicated a preference for the opportunity to discuss proposals outwith their existing cycle of meetings. A smaller number indicated that they would be happy to complete a questionnaire with others expressing no preference for the format of consultation.

3.2   In early April 2015, a Consultation Document (Appendix 1), outlining proposals on the future use of the Area Budgets, was issued to each member and substitute member of the 21 Area Partnerships as well as the three Sector Partnerships. The proposals were informed by analysis of the current process and expenditure patterns and feedback from applicants as part of a previous review (2011). These included:

- The introduction of an investment strategy for each Area Partnership,
- Proposals on eligibility criteria including minimum and maximum awards,
- Proposals on public sector bodies accessing Area Partnership funds,
- Proposals on the application process,
- Proposals relating to a Scheme of Delegation, and
- Proposals on the introduction of community budgeting.

3.3   In total, this document was circulated to over 200 participants of the Community Planning Partnership structures.   The participants included; elected members, local residents drawn from Community Councils, Tenants & Residents Groups, Housing Associations; Voluntary Sector Networks in conjunction with the Third Sector, Strathclyde Fire & Rescue, Police Scotland, and Community Health Partnership as well as partners from Glasgow Housing Association, representatives from the West of Scotland Housing Forum, Skills Development Scotland and Glasgow Colleges.

4. Survey Monkey

4.1   The Consultation Document was issued alongside a link to a short SurveyMonkey questionnaire inviting recipients to provide their responses to the proposals. The SurveyMonkey sought to measure the responses and to identify areas where a more discursive approach would be beneficial. The SurveyMonkey findings (detailed in Appendix 2) clearly articulated the views of respondents and were used to inform workshop discussions in each of the three Sectors.

4.2   A total of 93 responses to the SurveyMonkey were submitted. A further 20 questionnaires were returned having only responded to the first question. These were not included in the analysis. The key findings were:

- 79% of respondents agreed with the principle of a £300 minimum award
- 81% of respondents agreed with the principle of a maximum award
- 77% of respondents agreed with the proposed maximum awards for specific activities
- 88% of respondents agreed with the proposed eligibility criteria
- 78% of respondents agreed that clearer funding deadlines should be introduced
- 68% of respondents agreed the public sector should be able to access Area Partnership funds for non-core activity.
- 69% of respondents agreed with the principle of delegated authority
- 79% of respondents agreed with the proposed process of delegated authority

- 95% of respondents agreed with the introduction of community budgeting.

5. Discussion Events

5.1 The responses to the SurveyMonkey were discussed in detail at three Sector events which took place in mid May 2015. The events provided an opportunity for Area Partnerships to come together and explore the proposals, to listen to the views of others and to debate the recommendations.

5.2 The format used was very much open dialogue and discussion. The intention was to hear all views, generate debate and enable participants from different backgrounds and geographies to work through the proposals and their impact. The discussions sought to encourage contributions to the consultation process that would further shape and refine the final recommendations.

5.3 A summary of the workshop discussions is attached at Appendix 3. This provides detail on the contributions that were made. The statements include those made by individuals, others had broader support and others represented the majority view.

5.4 Fifty-six Area Partnership members and/or substitutes attended the three events. Workshops provided an opportunity for general discussion on the Consultation Document but also the space to debate specific proposals.

5.5 The evaluation surveys completed by participants indicated that the events themselves were very well received. Respondents reported that they were pleased with the format used and that they considered these had been constructive events. Participants welcomed the opportunity to get together and share views. Participants commented that they felt they had had a real opportunity to discuss the options and influence the final recommendations. The positive feedback is evidenced by eighteen respondents scoring the event as 5/5. Thirty-one respondents scored at 4/5 and three scored at 3/5. A number also commented on the openness of discussion. Participants suggested that it would be useful to have further events of this kind.

6. Integrated Grant Fund Review: Area Budget – Recommendations

6.1 The original recommendations, as set out in the Consultation Document (Appendix 1), have been refined using the feedback provided in both the SurveyMonkey and the discussion events. The recommendations below have been developed based on the majority views of those that participated in the consultation approaches outlined.

Investment Strategy

6.2 There was clear support for this approach. This was considered an opportunity to better target the available resources. It would also demonstrate clearer connections to the local area and benefit to local residents. A number of suggestions were made regarding the process of determining such a strategy. There were some concerns that this had the potential to become an

overly complicated exercise for the level of funding involved at each Area Partnership and that the terminology was too formal. In recognition of this, it will be important to make clear that the investment strategy is primarily a document which sets out agreed local priorities of the Area Partnership.

Recommendations
- *Area Partnerships are required to agree their overarching approach for the use of their funds by 1st April 2016.*
- *This statement should detail the locally agreed investment priorities for their area which will be used as the basis for targeting Area Partnership funding.*
- *The investment priorities should be updated on an annual basis.*

Eligibility Criteria

6.3   The majority of respondents agreed that the fit with locally determined priorities should be the principal focus of investment. There was agreement that this would assist potential applicants to gauge whether their proposals were appropriate for consideration.

6.4   There were some concerns that too rigid an approach might stifle innovation and creation or may deter community groups from applying for funding. Participants supported as open an approach as possible. It is recognised that, within an overall funding framework, there should be scope for flexibility to address emerging issues. It is therefore proposed that Area Partnerships will have the ability to consider applications that do not deliver against the agreed priorities but that make a strong case for support. Prior to agreeing such funding, Area Partnerships will require to reassess their priorities for investment and agree to reflect the additional issue within these. This will then become part of the future priority setting discussions.

Recommendations
- *Area Partnerships should seek to allocate funding to applicants that will assist in the delivery of their locally agreed priorities.*
- *Area Partnerships will be able to discuss applications that do not fit with the investment priorities but that make a strong case for consideration. The Area Partnership will be required to agree an amendment to their investment priorities prior to agreeing any funding to such applicants. Area Partnerships should consider whether these changes should continue to be reflected in the annual review of investment priorities.*

Minimum and Maximum Awards

6.5   Respondents were clear that there should be a minimum award for grants made by the Area Partnership. The proposed minimum level of £300 was considered appropriate. This supported the result from the SurveyMonkey which showed 79% in favour of the £300 minimum. There were some concerns raised that this might disadvantage applications for smaller amounts. However, as indicated, most respondents agreed that the £300 minimum was a reasonable amount.

6.6 Respondents also agreed with the proposal for a maximum award, again in line with the SurveyMonkey findings (81% agreed). There was agreement that this would be useful to manage expectations of applicants and ensure the impact of funds are maximised. There was agreement with the proposed maximum awards for specific activity (similarly 77% of SurveyMonkey respondents agreed with this). Within the responses however, there were calls for the application of flexibility in certain circumstances, for example to respond to emergency situations.

Recommendations
- *A minimum award of £300 will be applied to the Area Partnership budgets from 1st April 2016.*
- *A maximum award of 10% of the Area Partnership's annual budget to any single organisation for one or more projects, unless there are exceptional circumstances, will also be applied from 1st April 2016.*
- *The proposed maximum awards for specific activity will be applied from 1st April 2016.*

Eligibility of Public Sector Applications

6.7 The majority of respondents agreed that public sector applications can be submitted for consideration to Area Partnerships. This was in line with the SurveyMonkey results showing 68% of respondents in agreement. The primary requirement for respondents was that the beneficiary of any funding should be the local community. Applications should therefore demonstrate a fit with the locally agreed priorities, that local residents have been involved in the development of the initiative and that it is additional to their core remit. The assessment of additionality should follow clear criteria to ensure consistency across the city. Furthermore, to assist with this, information should be provided to Area Partnerships on organisational core remits.

6.8 Whilst concern was expressed by some respondents that this approach would reduce the level of funding that was available for voluntary and community groups, there was broad support for the proposal. It is submitted that the proposed process in which all applications will be assessed against local priorities provides the necessary safeguards to ensure that all applications are treated fairly.

6.9 It was proposed that this approach be piloted for a year and then reviewed.

Recommendations
- *Public sector organisations will be eligible to submit funding applications to the Area Partnerships where they have demonstrated:*
  - *Fit with local priorities*
  - *Involvement of local communities*
  - *Additionality to core remits.*
- *The application forms will be revised to facilitate this.*

- *A review of this approach will be undertaken towards the end of the financial year 2016/17.*

Application Process

6.10 Respondents agreed with the proposals for shorter, simpler application forms that demonstrated a fit with the agreed local priorities. Suggestions were put forward that this, combined with the provision of additional support to complete these forms would improve the quality of applications. Respondents stated that they felt that officers undertook a thorough assessment but that they would find it useful to understand more about this process.

6.11 There was consensus that setting fixed application deadlines would assist the management of applications to Area Partnerships. Respondents agreed with the proposal that there should be some flexibility to allow for exceptional circumstances.

6.12 It was agreed that publicity relating to the Area Budget should be clear and consistent. This should set out the eligibility and the application deadlines. Suggestions were provided on the methods that could be used to raise awareness of the Area Budget.

Recommendations
- *A shorter, simpler application form will be introduced from 1st April 2016.*
- *A report will be provided to Area Partnerships before the end of 2015/16 confirming the application and assessment process.*
- *A revised approach to publicising the Area Budget, including detail on criteria and application deadlines will be agreed and implemented.*

Delegated Authority

6.13 The SurveyMonkey results showed that 69% of respondents agreed with the principle of delegated authority. This support was mirrored at the consultation events. Participants recognised that this would facilitate more efficient decision making, particularly within a clear framework of locally agreed priorities, a consistent assessment process and a robust monitoring system.

6.14 Furthermore, the support for the proposal to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Corporate Services evidenced in the SurveyMonkey (79%) was also replicated. A number of participants proposed that delegated authority should be afforded to the Chair of the Area Partnership rather than a senior officer. The current proposal already sets out that the Chair of the Area Partnership will receive a summary of all applications to be considered under delegated authority prior to a decision. The Chair will have the ability to direct specific applications to the Area Partnership for decision. It is proposed that a guidance note will be developed for the Chairs of Area Partnerships. This ensures a strong role for the local Chair whilst at the same time adhering to the Council's Scheme of Delegation which does not permit delegated authority of this nature to elected members.

6.15 Some respondents were concerned that this approach would dilute the role of the Area Partnership and reduce transparency. The process set out includes:

- the identification of clear investment priorities by the Area Partnership itself,
- a robust assessment process based on fit with these priorities, and
- the ability of the Chair to direct applications to the Area Partnership rather than through delegated authority.

This provides the necessary safeguards to ensure that the focus of resources allocated by the Area Partnerships is consistent with their locally agreed priorities.

6.16 There was a range of responses in terms of the level at which delegated authority should be introduced. Some were comfortable with a limit of £1,000 whilst others felt £500 was more appropriate. It is considered prudent that the initial implementation of delegated authority is for applications of no more than £500. Consensus existed on the need for a robust monitoring system to ensure proper implementation of this.

6.17 It is proposed that this approach is trialled for one year with lessons learnt and appropriate adjustments made thereafter.

Recommendations
- A *Scheme of Delegated Authority will be introduced for applications under £500.*
- *This will be piloted across Area Partnerships for 2016/17 with a review towards the end of 2016/17.*
- *The Area Partnership Chair will have the ability to direct specific applications to the Area Partnership meeting for a decision rather than use delegated authority.*
- *Delegated authority decisions will be taken by the Executive Director for Corporate Services.*
- *A full report on each funding decision approved under delegated authority will be provided to each Area Partnership at their next meeting.*

Community Budgeting

6.18 The principle of community budgeting received strong support both through the SurveyMonkey (95% agreed), and at the discussion events. There was significant interest in the potential that this could bring in terms of improving local decision making. Participants also suggested that this could be used in the longer term to influence the detail of service provision by mainstream organisations rather than only a relatively small amount of grant funding.

6.19 It is clear that there is a need for more information on the detail of community budgeting, how this might operate and how it could be implemented. Participants emphasised the need to prevent this becoming an overly complex

process. Consideration will also need to be given as to how communities are supported to be involved in community budgeting approaches that are inclusive and do not reinforce inequality. Respondents at the events indicated that there was a need for training on community budgeting.

6.20 There will require to be robust monitoring of this approach. It is proposed that we build on the lessons that will be learnt from the current pilots to inform the development of future community budgeting approaches.

6.21 A further paper on community budgeting will be submitted to the Executive Committee later this year.

Recommendations

- *The programme of training on community budgeting will be continued for Area Partnership members throughout 2015/16.*
- *The focus of this training will be to improve understanding of community budgeting, provide opportunities to consider how this might be delivered in Glasgow, and discuss processes and supports that will require to be developed.*
- *Support will continue to be provided to a small number of pilot community budgeting initiatives and lessons learnt will be reviewed.*
- *The training and evaluation of pilot initiatives will be used to develop a more detailed proposal on the introduction of community budgeting in Glasgow. This proposal will be 'co-produced' with local residents and submitted for consideration before 1st April 2016.*

Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	None – these recommendations will inform the use of funds already allocated to the Area Partnerships.
Legal:	There may require to be an amendment to the scheme of delegated functions.
Personnel:	None
Procurement:	None

Council Strategic Plan: Investment of funds by the Area Partnerships will contribute to the delivery of all themes of the Strategic Plan

Equality Impacts:

EQIA carried out: This does not relate to a new service, policy or plan or a significant change to/review of a service,

policy, strategy or plan.

Outcome: N/a

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental: None

Social: Funding allocated through the Area Partnerships will result in a positive impact on local communities.

Economic: None

7.   Recommendations

The Executive Committee is invited to:

1. Note the content of this report;

2. Note the consultation process undertaken; and

3. Consider the proposed recommendations outlined in Section 6.