

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 12 March 2013

BY: Executive Director (Services for Communities)

SUBJECT: Housing Service External Grant Awards 2013/14

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To recommend Cabinet approve the External Grant Awards as detailed in Appendix 1.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the External Grant Awards totalling £551,549 as detailed in Appendix 1 and approve the continued approach to fund services currently in receipt of grants, in line with the Council's Corporate Review.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has made awards to external bodies for grant funding for a considerable number of years. 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 accordance with this, it was agreed in 2011 that for services which receive grant funding, 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.

3.3 The Council budget for 2013/14 was approved at a Special Meeting of the Council on 12 February 2013. No efficiency savings were identified as being required specifically from the external grants budget.

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

3.5 **Care and Repair East Lothian – Funding recommended £285,464**

Care and Repair East Lothian has been operating in East Lothian since 1987. Care and Repair East Lothian and the Small Repairs Service assist older 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 although the Grant continued 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 were put in place to enable the service to operate with a 5% reduction during 2011/12 and 2012/13. It is considered that the project cannot continue to operate in its current format with a further reduction in 2013/14, without an adverse effect upon service delivery. The service will be reviewed and a decision will be taken on whether to competitively procure this service in 2013/14.

3.6 **East Lothian Energy Advice Centre (ELEAC) – Funding recommended £56,998**

ELEAC provides an energy and fuel poverty advice service to householders of all tenures, with vulnerable households targeted. This helps the Council meet its obligation under the Home Energy Conservation Act (1996) (HECA) and accords with section 88(1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

The service was competitively procured in 2012/13 with a newly contracted service in place from October 2012 to March 2015. There is no opportunity to reduce the funding for this service during 2013/14.

3.7 **Warm and Well – Funding recommended £10,984**

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 service has continued to operate with a 5% reduction in funding during 2010/11; 2011/12 and 2012/13. It is considered that the project

cannot continue to operate with a further reduction without an adverse effect upon service delivery.

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.

3.8 Midlothian Women's Aid Domestic Violence Service – Funding recommended £69,831

Competitive procurement for domestic violence services across East Lothian commenced in spring 2012 and Midlothian Women's Aid were subsequently awarded the contract from 1 November 2012 for a three year period. 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 violence.

It was agreed that the service could not operate at the intended 5% reduction in 2012/13 and beyond (£66,339) and funding was increased to 2011/12 levels (£69,831) for the three-year period of the contract. During 2012/13, the shortfall was met from budget savings. There is no opportunity to reduce the funding for this service during 2013/14 and it is intended that the additional funding for the project will be met from other Community Housing budgets.

3.9 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 accordance with 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 three-year service in place from 1 April 2011. There is no opportunity to reduce the funding for this service during 2013/14. A view will require to be reached on whether to competitively procure this service in 2013/14.

3.10 Bridges Project – Funding recommended £8,574

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 service has continued to operate with a 5% reduction in funding during 2010/11; 2011/12 and 2012/13. It is considered that the project cannot continue to operate with a further reduction without an adverse effect upon service delivery.

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.

3.11 East Lothian Voluntary Organisations network Furniture Recycling Project (ELVON) – Funding recommended £15,800

The Furniture Recycling 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 service has continued to operate with a 5% reduction in funding during 2010/11; 2011/12 and 2012/13. It is considered that the project cannot continue to operate with a further reduction without an adverse effect upon service delivery.

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.

3.12 Four Square (Scotland) Prison Outreach Project – Funding recommended £0

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

It is considered that low levels of demand for the service evidenced over a significant period can be met by the Council’s Homelessness Team working alongside the Criminal Justice Team, with limited impact upon existing services. It is therefore recommended that funding for this service is ended with effect from 31 March 2013.

3.13 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 across East and Midlothian. The service was reviewed in 2011/12 with a recommendation to continue funding for a further year.

The service is jointly funded with Midlothian Council. In order to achieve reductions of 5% in funding during 2012/13, Midlothian Council agreed to fund the difference between East Lothian's 2011/12 and 2012/13 award. The service has been monitored closely and it is considered that the service cannot operate at the recommended 2012/13 levels without enhanced funding from Midlothian Council. It is therefore recommended that funding is reinstated to 2011/12 levels. A view will require to be reached on whether to competitively procure this service in 2013/14.

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 External Grant awards for 2013/14 total £551,549.

6.2 Personnel – None.

6.3 Other – None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Appendix 1 – Grant Awards 2013/14 attached.

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DATE	27 February 2013

Appendix 1 - External Grant Awards and Contributions 2013/14

External Grants	Amount 12/13	Amount 13/14	Difference (£)	% Difference
East Lothian Care and Repair	£285,464	£285,464	£0	0
Energy Advice Service - ELEEAC	£57,350	£56,998	-£352	-0.6
Warm and Well	£10,984	£10,984	£0	0
Shelter East Lothian	£99,402	£99,402	£0	0
Bridges base project	£8,574	£8,574	£0	0
ELVON	£15,800	£15,800	£0	0
Four Square (Scotland)	£3,202	£0	-£3,202	-100
Shelter Gypsy Traveller Project	£4,271	£4,496	+£225	+5
Women's Aid	£66,339 (estimated spend)*	£69,831	+£3,492	0
Total	£551,386	£551,549	£163	

*£69,831 actual spend