Abstract:
This report outlines a proposed procedure to inform the decision making process on the distribution of the £80,000 allocated for ward based projects.

1 RECOMMENDATION

The Council is recommended:-

(i) to confirm the budget of £80,000 should be allocated on the basis of £10,000 per ward;

(ii) to agree that option (1) set out in paragraph 3.3 should be utilised for deciding on the allocation of funding;

(iii) to confirm that the Infrastructure Services Committee has delegated authority for approving expenditure; and

(iv) that the delivery of the identified work programme should be co-ordinated by the local community planning teams.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 As part of the 2010/11 budget announcement, £80,000 was allocated to allow the Council to pursue local priorities and the delivery of small projects of a non-recurring finance obligation.

2.2 No formal process was agreed or put in place at the time to decide how this funding should be distributed or the decision making process to be applied, other than the principle that £10,000 be allocated to each ward.

2.3 The funding was not utilised in financial year 2010/11. Report No 75/11, considered by Strategic Policy Committee on 1 February 2011, approved the carry forward of £80,000 to augment the mainstream budget resources available for community grants (managed by Infrastructure Services) given the ongoing success of this initiative, but recognising that the intention of the carry forward was to maintain the principle of the £10,000 per ward, not to increase the funds generally available for community grants.

2.4 Members are asked to confirm that available funding of £80,000 is to be allocated equally across the 8 wards.

3 DECISION MAKING

3.1 On the basis that the funding is allocated to each ward it is important to consider the decision making process as to which projects/initiatives get funded and the processes which could/should be utilised for identifying projects/initiatives.
3.2 As ward members do not have delegated authority to authorise expenditure, it will be necessary
either to delegate the authority to officers in consultation with members, or to follow the practice
currently adopted for use of Common Good funding. At present proposals for funding from any of
the Common Good funds are considered by the elected members for the relevant burgh who
provide a view on proposals, which are then subject to formal committee approval (Corporate
Services in the case of the Common Good). As this practice works effectively for the Common
Good it is considered that this model offers the best option for administering the funding allocated
to each ward. However as the funding is managed by the Director of Infrastructure Services, it
would therefore be appropriate for the decisions to be made by the Infrastructure Services
Committee.

3.3 The process of identifying projects/initiatives is also important. Taking into account the relatively
restricted funding allocation per ward it is considered appropriate that the decision-making
process is not overly complex and unnecessarily bureaucratic in order that the identified
projects/initiatives can be delivered timeously. Two main options in this regard have been
identified:-

(1) Ward Councillors in conjunction with officers, primarily the local planning teams,
producing ideas based on their community consultation/engagement and knowledge.

Officers would liaise with individual members to draw together and detail specific projects
and ideas which would then be presented to the group of each ward’s elected members
for consideration prior to any formal decision by committee. The two Arbroath and
District Wards can be combined to provide an available fund of £20,000.

(2) Formal full engagement/consultation with the community incorporating bodies such as
the local area partnership.

This option provides access to a wider level of engagement, but is comparatively
complex, potentially time consuming and for funding provision on the scale available may
build undeliverable expectation.

3.4 There are advantages and disadvantages in each of these options which relate primarily to
ownership and the time which any process would take.

3.5 It will be necessary for the Council to decide on the desired process to allow officers to move this
forward.

3.6 The two options are not mutually exclusive, for example option (1) can bring about ideas that
have come from local members and officers based on the regular local community consultation
and engagement which local members and local planning staff have garnered.

3.7 To avoid confusion and disappointment it is important that a clear process is agreed at this stage.

3.8 As this funding has been available for some time the process should be kept as simple as
possible to ensure quick delivery of projects.

4 OFFICER SUPPORT/FACILITATION

4.1 As these projects/initiatives which may be achieved from this process could relate to a number of
the Council’s departments or may be delivered outwith the Council, officers dealing with the co-
ordination of the process need to have both a local and cross cutting role.

4.2 The local community planning teams currently deal with Common Good issues and local co-
ordination/initiatives. It is therefore considered that these officers are best placed to facilitate the
discussion with ward members and can bring to the table their wide knowledge of community
considerations.
5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Report No 75/11 considered by the Strategic Policy Committee on 1 February 2011 approved a carry forward of £80,000 from the 2010/11 Community Planning revenue budget. This £80,000 funding will be added to the community grants budget within Other Services in 2011/12, but will be ring fenced pending approval of specific projects to be met from this funding.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

Failure to agree a transparent and practical decision making process creates the risk of further delaying the use of available funding and the creation of undeliverable expectation.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS

There are no human rights issues arising from the content of this report.

8 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities implications resulting from the proposals in this report.

9 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

The contribution this budget/initiative has in relation to the single outcome agreement is largely dependent on the projects/initiatives which are to be funded.

10 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Neighbourhood Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law & Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.


NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

ESL/JSG