

Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment - Screening

Title of Policy:	Removal of community council grant, training budget and reimbursement of meeting expenses.
Service:	Strategy & Performance
Team:	Performance & Change

Will the policy have to go to Council or committee for approval	Yes
Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	No
Does it relate to functions that previous involvement activities have identified as being important to particular protected groups?	No
Does it relate to an area where the Council has set equality outcomes?	No
Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities?	No
Does it relate to a policy where there is significant potential for reducing inequalities or improving outcomes?	No

IF YES TO ANY - Move on to an Equality & Fairer Scotland Assessment

IF NO - Explain why an Equality & Fairer Scotland Assessment is not required

APPROVAL

NAME	DESIGNATION	DATE
C Jarvie	Strategy and Performance Manager	February 2019

NB This screening exercise is not to be treated as an assessment of impact and therefore does not need to be published. However, if you decide not to assess the impact of any policy, you will have to be able to explain your decision. To do this, you should keep a full record of how you reached your decision.

Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment - Scoping

Purpose of the proposed policy or changes to established policy

The budget for expenditure on community council running costs and reimbursement of meeting expenses for non-Council venues, and training budget is to be reduced by £86K. This in line with the approach to providing grants for community and voluntary sector organisations.

Which aspects of the policy are particularly relevant to each element of the Council's responsibilities in relation to the General Equality Duty and the Fairer Scotland Duty?

General Equality Duty -

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct

- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

A reduced grant for the year 2019-2020 will not be sufficient to offset running costs including the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, making it less likely people on low or fixed incomes will take part. The removal entirely of a grant will make it impossible for community councils to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses without first having to raise funds for running costs.

Removal of provision for reimbursement of meeting venue costs will make it harder for community councils to find an accessible meeting space which they can afford.

- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

A reduced grant for the year 2019-2020 and the complete removal of the grant in subsequent years will require community councils to raise funds first to cover the basic minimum cost of running a community council before they then apply voluntary effort to organising social activities such as community galas which are socially inclusive by virtue of being open to all members of the public either free of charge or for a nominal fee and to representing people who are experiencing inequality due to socioeconomic disadvantage

Fairer Scotland Duty -

- Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage

A reduced grant for the year 2019-2020 and the removal of the grant in subsequent years will require community councils to raise funds first to cover the basic minimum cost of running a community council before they apply voluntary effort to safeguarding the community assets, amenities and facilities upon which people who are experiencing inequality due to socioeconomic disadvantage depend.

To which of the equality groups is the policy relevant?		
Protected Characteristic	Yes/No*	Explanation
Age	Yes	<p><i>The options for meeting venues is now limited and could mean they are further away, harder to reach by public transport or less easily accessible by the elderly.</i></p> <p><i>This could be a barrier to attending cc meetings.</i></p> <p><i>Electors who do not have independent incomes might be deterred from becoming community councillors if they have to pay for materials and equipment from their own pockets.</i></p>
Disability	Yes	<p><i>The options for meeting venues is now limited and could mean they are further away, harder to reach by public transport or less easily accessible by the elderly.</i></p> <p><i>This could present a greater barrier to disabled people to attending cc meetings.</i></p> <p><i>Electors who are on low incomes or do not have independent incomes might be deterred from becoming community councillors if they have to pay for materials and equipment from their own pockets.</i></p>
Gender Reassignment	No	
Marriage and civil partnership	No	
Pregnancy and Maternity	No	
Race	No	
Religion and Belief	No	
Sex	No	
Sexual Orientation	No	

* Delete as required

What evidence is already available about the needs of relevant groups, and where are the gaps in evidence?

Community councils gather feedback from older people, disabled people and people experiencing socio economic disadvantage about the accessibility of their meetings and the impact of their activities and they have shared this information with the Council.

The closure of council-run community buildings has already reduced the options for ccs to meet for free in accessible meeting places in some communities.

The Council has not directly consulted these groupings specifically on the impact of this particular policy.

Which equality groups and communities might it be helpful to involve in the development of the policy?

Community councils have made representation on behalf of the communities they represent.

Next steps

Use the submissions from community councils to identify possible mitigation and inform the decision.

Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment - Decision

Evidence findings		
All evidence gathered was presented to elected members prior to the budget setting Council meeting.		
Details of engagement undertaken and feedback received		
Community councils have made representation on behalf of the communities they represent.		
Decision/recommendation		
Having considered the potential or actual impacts of this policy, the following decision/recommendation is made:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Option 1: No major change The assessment demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for unlawful discrimination and that all opportunities have been taken to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review.	
	Option 2: Adjust the policy – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality or to foster good relations. It may be possible to remove or change the aspect of the policy that creates any negative or unwanted impact, or to introduce additional measures to reduce or mitigate any potential negative impact.	
	Option 3: Continue the policy – this means adopting or continuing with the policy, despite the potential for adverse impact. The justification should clearly set out how this decision is compatible with the Council's obligations under the duty.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Option 4: Stop and remove the policy – if there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, consideration should be given to stopping the policy altogether. If a policy leads to unlawful discrimination it should be removed or changed.	
Justification for decision		
The Council met on 6th March 2019 and set the budget for 2019/20. Funding for the Community Halls will be maintained at 2018/19 levels.		
APPROVAL		
NAME	DESIGNATION	DATE
Cherie Jarvie	Strategy and Performance Manager	7 th March 2019