

7. COMMUNITY FUNDING REVIEW

Officer responsible Community Relations Manager Leisure Unit Manager	Author Mary Richardson, DDI 941-8882
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The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to community organisations about the Community Funding Review community consultation.

Community Boards are asked to consider and provide feedback on the broad directions outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND

Earlier this year the Council decided to undertake a review of its community funding streams. Elected members suggested that a funding review could help recommend ways of prioritising requests for funding and help evaluate the impact of community funding. A review could also address the issues raised by the various requests for the Christchurch City Council to support projects which have traditionally been core government responsibility. The need for this review was reinforced by some community groups, who had identified the need to streamline Council's community funding processes.

Terms of Reference of the Community Funding Review

- The aim of this review is to identify and recommend an overall approach for distributing community funding as well as priorities and mechanisms which are consistent with policy objectives and good practice guidelines.
- The objectives of the review are:
- To identify the broad funding context within which Council community funding is distributed (both within Council and in Christchurch generally);
- To identify the current policy guidelines and administration processes of each of the funding streams within the scope of this review;
- To identify the level of funding currently allocated to achieving specific policy outcomes (including the level of funding specifically allocated to achieving target group policy outcomes);
- To survey community groups, funding decision makers and funding administrators about ways in which the funding streams could be better co-ordinated and made more accessible (taking into account both policy and administrative considerations);
- To develop recommendations for each of the targeted funding streams which improve their policy fit and administrative efficiency;
- To develop recommendations to improve the overall co-ordination of the Council community funding streams;
- To identify appropriate monitoring and evaluation processes for Council community funding streams.

Scope

This review covers the community funding streams which are administered by the Council. These are: Loan Scheme, Major Grants, Metropolitan Discretionary Funds, Strengthening Community Action Plans, Social Initiatives Programme, Community Workers funding, and the Community Development Scheme.

The review will also include information about the broader Council funding context within which these schemes operate.

REVIEW PROCESS

The review process has included consultation with staff, elected members and community organisations. These findings are being analysed and used to develop recommendations to be considered by Council.

This report focuses on providing Community Boards with an indication of the general direction of these recommendations, and an opportunity to have further input into the review by commenting on them.

BROAD DIRECTIONS

The consultation with elected members, staff, and voluntary sector organisations has informed the development of the following broad recommendations. Detailed recommendations will be developed expanding on each of these main themes. Our purpose at this stage is to ask for feedback on the broad directions themselves.

The broad recommendations from the Funding Review are that the Christchurch City Council:

1. Continues to provide a significant level of community grants funding

The Council fulfils a unique role in the Christchurch funding climate. While there will always be a greater level of demand on these funds than the Council is able to meet, the current level is considered to provide a significant boost to the level of community services, arts, sport, recreation and community development provided within the city.

2. Develop a clear direction for community grants funding

The Council will be able to provide even more benefit to the Christchurch community by clarifying its priorities and intended direction of funding policy. This direction should be in keeping with the Council Social Wellbeing Policy and Community Policy.

3. Clarify Council's funding role in relation to other funders and seek collaboration with other funders

There is the opportunity for the Council to develop protocols for working with other funders. Council will also clarify its intentions regarding funding for areas where there is a core central government responsibility.

4. Provide a range of community funding streams, in order to be able to respond to different kinds of funding need

There is great value in the Council providing different kinds of community grants (such as emergency, long term, large and small grants). This approach means that different needs can be met in different ways. In particular, while the impact of small grants to small organisations is sometimes hard to measure, the benefits of these to the community are large.

5. Continue to distribute funding in flexible and responsive ways

There are benefits of the Council being able to respond to emerging needs and issues. The Council could retain this flexible approach and still provide a more standardised funding process with fewer overall streams of funding.

6. Further streamline its application and accountability processes across the various funds to ensure the cost of applying for, and receiving, Council funding is kept to a minimum

It is apparent that the current variation in funding applications is confusing for grant recipients, staff and elected members. A more streamlined approach for funding applications could include co-ordinating application dates and providing application forms electronically.

The Council will develop a process for determining the level of accountability which is appropriate for grants. This may vary according to the size of the grant, its purpose, and the degree of 'risk' associated with the activity being funded.

7. Develop strategies to improve the transparency of, and access to, Council funding

The Council will improve its methods of delivering funding information and develop ways of ensuring that grant applicants have all the necessary information about the funding available and how to apply for it.

8. Clarify reasonable expectations for effective systems to monitor and evaluate community grants

The Council will develop a process for determining the level of monitoring and evaluation which is appropriate for different kinds of community grants. This will take into account the needs of groups in these processes.

9. Continue to strengthen its funding role as part of a broader capacity building strategy

The Council provides community funding as part of a broader capacity building function. It supports the voluntary sector in a variety of other ways, including through the employment of community development staff to work with individual groups.

Funding provided should be seen as making a contribution to the community more generally, and not just to the specific activities targeted by a grant. For example, positive changes for families of individuals targeted by funded programmes (and therefore for neighbours, schools, and local communities) can be considered as some of the indirect benefits of funding that programme.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

The Community Board is invited to provide feedback on the broad directions.

Further work on the Community Funding Review recommendations will be carried out in October and November. This work will take into account community consultation, the findings of the earlier Community Development Funding Review, information from other funders, and the views of staff and elected members.

The final Community Funding Review Report and Recommendations will be presented to the Council for endorsement early in 2003. A process for implementing the agreed recommendations will then be developed.

Recommendation: That the Community Board provides feedback on the broad directions of the Community Funding Review.

Chairperson's Recommendation: That this item be referred to the November Seminar meeting for a presentation. Any questions that Board members have prior to the seminar, please forward them to the Community Secretary.