

17. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES GRANTS FUNDING PROGRAMME – OPERATION OF LOCAL DISCRETIONARY RESPONSE FUND



General Manager responsible:	General Manager Community Services, DDI 941 8607
Officer responsible:	Community Support Unit Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to suggest changes around the operation of the Local Discretionary Response Fund, with amendments to take place from the 2010-11 funding round onwards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Council adopted the Strengthening Communities Strategy on 12 July 2007. The Strengthening Communities Grants Funding Programme comprises four funding schemes:
 - Strengthening Communities Fund
 - Small Projects Fund (now called Small Grants Fund)
 - Discretionary Response Fund
 - Community Organisations Loan Scheme
3. The Discretionary Response Fund (DRF) operates at both a Metropolitan and Community Board level.
4. The purpose of the DRF is to: **“assist community groups where the project and funding request falls outside other Council funding criteria and/or closing dates. This Fund is also for emergency funding for unforeseen situations”**.
5. Applications to the DRF open on 1st July each year. The DRF closes on the 30 June of each year or when the Fund is fully expended, whichever is the earlier.
6. The following table shows details of the Discretionary Response Funds across the city:

	2010-11
Metropolitan	\$ 145,057
City Board	\$ 51,197
Lytelton / Mt Herbert	\$ 12,799
Akaroa / Wairewa	\$ 12,799

Metropolitan Discretionary Response Fund

7. All requests to the Metropolitan DRF are assessed on a monthly basis by the Community Grants Funding Adviser, with input from other relevant staff. A recommendation is then put for consideration to a cross-unit Council Staff Panel, who make a final recommendation to the Community Support Unit Manager.
8. The Community Support Unit Manager currently has delegation to approve applications to the Metropolitan DRF up to the amount of \$15,000. Applications to the Metropolitan DRF for over \$15,000 are put to the Metropolitan Funding Committee for consideration and a final decision.

Local Discretionary Response Fund

9. All requests to the local DRF are assessed by an appropriate member of staff and then reported to the Community Board for consideration and a final decision.
10. Under the Community Board delegations, Community Boards have **“absolute discretion over the implementation of their respective discretionary funding allocation, (subject to being consistent with any policies or standards or resolutions adopted by the Council).”**

11. In recent months there have been occasions where Community Boards have made grants to applicants to the DRF where requests have fallen outside the criteria of the DRF (attached as **Appendix A**). In these cases, the granting of funding to these requests have been inconsistent with Council policies.
12. There has been discussion regarding the phrase “**absolute discretion...**”. In December 2009, staff were asked by the Council to provide options to consider the future operation of the local Discretionary Response Fund.
13. The following four options are submitted for consideration:

Option A

14. Change the current criteria of the local Discretionary Response Fund, limiting the items that the Fund does not cover to:
 - Legal challenges against Council, Community Boards or Environment Court decisions.
 - Projects or initiatives that change the scope of a Council project.
 - Projects or initiatives that will lead to ongoing operational costs to the Council.

Option B

15. Change the name of the Fund from the Discretionary Response Fund, to the Response Fund.
16. Change the process of the Fund so that all decisions made by Community Boards that are not “... **consistent with any policies or standards or resolutions adopted by the Council**”, require a Part A report to the Council – as with other decisions made outside of Community Board delegation.

Option C

17. Change delegations to give Community Boards absolute discretion in the true sense of the phrase, by deleting the words “**subject to being consistent with any policies or standards or resolutions adopted by the Council**”.

Option D

18. Retain the status quo. Do not make any changes and allow local Discretionary Response Funds to operate as they have been.

Recommendation

19. Staff recommend Option A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

20. None.

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2009-19 LTCCP budgets?

21. Yes.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

22. Not applicable.

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

23. Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

24. Yes.

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2009-19 LTCCP?

25. Yes.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

26. Yes.

Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?

27. Yes, Strengthening Communities Strategy.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

28. Not applicable.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council adopt Option A, that the Council change the current criteria of the local Discretionary Response Fund, limiting the items that the Fund does not cover to:

- Legal challenges against the Council, Community Boards or Environment Court decisions.
- Projects or initiatives that change the scope of a Council project.
- Projects or initiatives that will lead to ongoing operational costs to the Council.