

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2017

**ANGUS COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME
PROPOSAL FOR NEW SCHEME VIA CROWDFUND ANGUS**

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

This Report requests that the Policy and Resources Committee approve the proposal to move the Angus Council Community Grant Scheme funds to being hosted on the Crowdfund Angus portal from 1 April 2017. This report outlines the benefits, financial implications and links to the Council's future direction in terms of digitalisation.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approve the request to move the ACCGS budget to the Crowdfund Angus Portal to act as a match fund for community raised funds as of 1 April 2017;

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit.

3. CURRENT POSITION

3.1 The Angus Council Community Grant Scheme in its current guise has been operating since 2009 and has received over 615 applications. This has provided over £800,000 of support to 435 groups within the Angus area.

3.2 The current process for the grant scheme involves supporting applicants through the application process, eligibility checks, gathering all necessary information, processing for assessors, assessment by a panel of assessors, budget monitoring and project monitoring as well as regular reports to committee. This is a resource intensive process requiring significant staff resource from officers across the council such as economic development to promote the fund and process applications, Finance to process payments and budget monitoring and representatives from all directorates to assess projects.

3.3 The current annual budget has not changed significantly over the years and indeed was increased at one point for a period of three years. The priorities for funding and eligibility criteria have been regularly reviewed but in general terms ACCGS continues to support community groups across different thematic areas, some of which are now responsibilities of Angus Alive rather than Angus Council e.g. arts, sport, culture etc.

3.4 Crowdfund Angus currently operates as a complimentary service to the grant scheme for communities as well as for businesses and individuals to lever in funding they require to deliver local projects. To date it has supported 27 campaigns, 14 of those going live and generated over £90,000 (excluding the additional funding brought in following a successful campaign).

4. 2017/18 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 It is proposed that from 1 April 2017 the Angus Council Community Grant Scheme budget be used as a match fund for community led projects and administered through Crowdfund Angus. [See Appendix 1 – Process Map]
- 4.2 Communities would be required to raise at least 50% of their target through crowdfunding. If they reach this then then ACCGS money would be used to match the other 50% up to a maximum of £1,000 for any project reducing the current maximum Council contribution from £5,000 Applicants could have a campaign up to any value however the contribution would be capped at £1,000. This would maximise the value of the Council funding and keep the risk at a minimum.
- 4.3 Community groups will be able to raise more money than their original target if the project is well supported locally without it affecting the council match funding. This encourages applicants to promote their activities more and engage a wider community given that they may be competing with other projects in their area.
- 4.4 Administering the fund through Crowdfund Angus would release staff resource across the council from processing and administration of grants and in particular allow more time to develop more capacity within communities, businesses and Council services to lever in alternative external funds. Officer time will still be required to help develop campaigns but will be more proactive and developmental rather than a processing function.
- 4.5 It would support the Council objectives of becoming more efficient in terms of reducing paper based processes and overall more efficient methods of delivery as well as contributing to our digital objectives by using a digital and online funding method in crowdfunding.
- 4.6 By moving the funds to Crowdfund Angus we can increase community capacity in line with the Community Empowerment Act Legislation, give communities a greater say in supporting projects in their area, increase the transparency of decision making and offer a genuine bottom up approach from the community. Reliance on long term grant support will decrease. Communities may need to develop new skills to run campaigns but this can be supported and will have a longer term benefit.
- 4.7 There is potential for the ACCGS budget to be reviewed and/or decreased but the impact of ACCGS input will be increased.
- Similar methods of distributing Council funds have been explored in other areas of the UK following the successful development of Crowdfund Angus Plymouth Council in conjunction with partners have developed a platform for local projects and through this Plymouth businesses and community projects have raised over £400,000 in the past 18 months. Plymouth Council contributed £50,000 as a match fund.
 - Aberdeen City Council are moving their funding available for Leisure related activities to Crowdfunding in the same way proposed in this report and hope to encourage more innovative projects.
- 4.8 Delivering ACCGS in this way will build on our innovative methods of supporting communities and increase awareness of Angus as a forward thinking council.
- 4.9 Approved funds will continue to be reported to elected members through the information report. A promotions plan has been drafted [Appendix 2] to outline how this new process would be advertised to communities, to ensure an efficient transition.
- 4.10 A review will be undertaken at the end of 2017/18 and recommendations for the future brought forward.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Angus Council Community Grant Scheme Budget

The base provision for the Angus Council Community Grant Scheme contained within the 2016/17 revenue budget totals £58,000 (Communities - £7,000 and Other Services - £51,000).

- 5.2 To deliver ACCGS through Crowdfund, Angus will incur a 5% fee on every campaign, a cost of approx £2,900 from the Council towards to the administration, processing, finance fees and licenses if the budget remains at £58,000. This is significantly less than the current staff costs of administering ACCGS in its current format. Should the ACCGS be reduced for 2017/18 the fee will reduce accordingly.

6. CONSULTATION

The Strategic Directors of Children and Learning, Communities and Resources, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Corporate Improvement and Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**RICHARD STIFF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

NOTE: Article 3 of the minute of meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee of 7 May 1996; Article 11 of the minute of meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee of 21 June 2005; Article 16 of the Resources Central Services Committee of 4 May 2006; Article 16 of the Corporate Services Committee of 12 March 2009; Article 8 of the Angus Council Committee of 17 September 2009 and Article 4 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 5 March 2013. Reference is also made to Article 19 of the minute of meeting of the Angus Council Committee of 22 March 2012; Article 14 of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 14 June 2012 and Article 4 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 5 March 2013.

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