Council Briefing Agenda

Date:	Tuesday, 16 April, 2024
Time:	10:00 am
Location:	Civic Centre, Te Iwitahi, 9 Rust Avenue
Elected Members:	His Worship the Mayor Vince Cocurullo
	Cr Gavin Benney
	Cr Nicholas Connop
	Cr Ken Couper
	Cr Jayne Golightly
	Cr Phil Halse
	Cr Deborah Harding
	Cr Patrick Holmes
	Cr Scott McKenzie
	Cr Marie Olsen
	Cr Carol Peters
	Cr Simon Reid
	Cr Phoenix Ruka
	Cr Paul Yovich

For any queries regarding this meeting please contact
the Whangarei District Council on (09) 430-4200.

Whangarei
District Council

2.1 Review of the Community Funding 2024

Meeting:	Council Briefing
Date of meeting:	16 April 2024
Reporting officer:	Cindy Fields, Community Funding Coordinator

1 Purpose / Te Kaupapa

To present the outcomes of an internal staff review on the community funding programme and the changes proposed.

2 Background / Horopaki

Staff were asked to conduct a review of the Community Funding model, to address pain points and opportunities as well as to ensure the continued best use of Council's resources for community support.

The review was conducted by the Community Funding Coordinator. Stakeholders briefed included relevant staff from Venues and Events, Waste, Parks, Strategic Planning (Better Off Funds), Finance, Communications, and the strategic leadership team. All supported the general direction.

3 Discussion / Whakawhiti kōrero

This briefing is an opportunity for elected members to provide input on the proposed changes before the final proposal is presented for adoption. Adoption in May will enable the changes to be implemented in time for the new financial year and year 1 of the long-term plan 2024-2034.

The following changes are proposed to the delivery of Council's community funding:

1	**Visual separation and simplification**
	Visually separate WDC (ratepayer funded) community funding from our partner funds (Creative Communities Scheme, Kai Ora Fund, Better Off Funds, etc). • Simplifies the information presented on our community funding (currently multiple 'Funds') • Removes confusion about which are ratepayer funded and which are not • Improves storytelling to the community

2	**Centralisation with a 'single Fund' triaging system**
	Use a single Fund to receive and triage all applications (excludes partner funds), working with internal parties to determine appropriate support mechanisms.
	- Reduces confusion about which Fund to apply to - Enables greater flexibility 'behind-the-scenes' - Supports improved alignment and consistency in criteria, management, and approach for fairness, equality, and transparency in Council's community support.
3	**Applications management system**
	Procure and implement a grants management system whereby all applications will be managed through an online portal. - Significant efficiency gains for applicant, funder, and those on funding panels - Frees up Funding Coordinator to support and upskill community groups - Improved communication and workflow management between parties - Reduces risk to Council of potential privacy breaches, particularly for external review panels like Creative Communities Scheme - Facilitates a one source of truth for Council's community support.
4	**Capability development**
	Reserve up to $25,000 per annum from the community grants budget for community sector capability building initiatives. Supports community groups to learn and grow, and thereby help themselves in an increasingly competitive funding environment.
5	**Apply anytime**
	Allow funding applications to be made at any time, aiming for a turnaround on decisions in 4-6 weeks (if under staff delegation). - Supports greater flexibility in seeking funds - Community groups can apply on their timeframe, rather than ours, and there's no fear of missing out on a once-a-year funding round - Reduces pressure on resourcing, enabling flexibility for planned and unplanned leave - Requires discipline and planning to manage budget for the year.
6	**Multi-year funding for the District Amenities Fund**
	The District Amenities Fund, which provides ringfenced operating grants to key community amenities, is now considering funding for the three years of the LTP. The

	Community Development Committee will consider the awarding of these multi-year grants in June 2024.
7	**Milestone progress reporting and payments** Require progress reports for grants over $75,000 (excluding operating grants) with the ability to hold and carry over promised funds over multiple financial years (3 years max). • Manages risk to Council of potential misuse of funds or funded projects not proceeding.
8	**Flexi-Funds** Reduce the number of Funds and their attached budgets to three flexible funds: 1. Community Fund (amalgamated) – Value $1,000,000 (with an indicative reserve of $750,000 for facilities) 2. District Amenities Fund – Value $1,435,000 (includes additional $75k for inflation adjustments, moved from other flexifunds) 3. Other – Value $70,000 (for Community Associations donations, Youth Week Fund, Creative Communities Scheme top up, and for community capability development initiatives) • Easier budget management • Reduces potential for fund underspends when a funding round is 'undersubscribed' • Greater flexibility to reprioritise funds according to community need and demand • Clearer articulation of the contestable vs non-contestable funds
9	**Greater flexibility in facilities funding** Within the amalgamated Community Fund (single fund approach), combine existing facilities funding options and amend criteria to support fair and equitable outcomes with improved transparency in eligibility. Amended criteria proposed: 1. Up to $150k for all new builds, renovations, and include large maintenance projects (maintenance was previously capped at $10k or $20k depending on Fund and eligibility) 2. Capped at 70% of project cost (extension of existing Partnership Fund criteria) 3. Up to $2k for facility running costs for those facilities that earn less than $5k in rental income (currently up to $10k for halls and marae only). 4. No longer require halls to have insurance?

	Outcomes:
	- Removes the confusion and limitations of the Partnership Fund, Community Facilities Fund, and Community Fund which all support facilities under different criteria and eligibility. - Removes the potential for applying to the 'wrong' fund or missing out by not applying to the 'right' fund in time, further supporting the move to applying anytime. - Uses to best effect the existing budget of the Partnership Fund and Community Facilities Fund, with the option to use more (or less) from the flexible funding pool if necessary. - Prioritises support for maintenance and new builds in areas where these are needed. - Prioritises running costs support for those that need it most, while not creating a full-dependency model.
10	**Co-funding model** Apply a cap of 70% of project/programme costs for all requests for support under the proposed flexible Community Fund. Applicants will need to source 30% of the project cost from other sources. This can include in-kind support such as volunteer labour. - This is a move away from 'funding for success' towards helping those who help themselves. - Enables Council to support more initiatives within its limited budget. - Supports applicants with a 'hand up' rather than a 'hand out', reducing the full-dependency model.
11	**Go local** Amend criteria so that organisations with no relationship to the Whangarei District or operating under a centralised funding model at the national level (i.e. where local spend and activity is not separately tracked) are excluded from applying. - Practiced in recent funding rounds to manage increased competition for funds. - Supports local but doesn't exclude all those operating under an affiliation model.
12	**Staff delegation** Enable staff to manage decision-making on funding allocations within existing financial delegations, up to $20,000. All funding decisions to be peer-reviewed and reported to the Community Development Committee monthly. - This is in line with existing practice across Council. - Frees up the Community Development Committee to focus on larger fund allocations - Reduces the wait time for applicants to get a decision. - Supports resourcing pressures by reducing committee agenda deadlines and enables flexibility in response times.
13	**Community Associations Fund** Amend the Community Associations Fund for eligible resident and ratepayer groups to be a donation of $1,000 per annum for eligible organisations demonstrating good governance.

	- Removes the requirement for coming up with a 'community project' for the extra $500. - Removes the burden of applying for a grant – applicants would only need to submit their AGM minutes which should demonstrate good governance and continued representation of their local community. - Continues to acknowledge the important role of resident and ratepayer groups in advising Council of local issues and concerns.
14	**Funding criteria / priorities** 1. Strengthen the wording on Council's funding priorities, as follows (applicants must support at least one priority to be eligible for support): - Arts, Culture and Heritage – To support and celebrate the heritage, culture, and art of our diverse communities. - Recreation and Sport – To support recreational and sporting opportunities for all ages, abilities, and life stages. - Environment – To support making a positive difference to our environment, enable kaitiakitanga of our taiao, raise environmental awareness, and support resilience to climate change impacts. - Connection and Resilience – To support initiatives that enable equitable outcomes, raise community resilience, participation, and connection, and help create safe, healthy, thriving communities. 2. Remove the weightings applied to each of the four priorities to guide allocation based on budget. 3. Add prioritisation for Kaupapa Māori organisations that seek to realise aspirations for Māori. Outcomes: - Improved clarity on Council's priorities for funding. - Supports applicants in understanding their alignment with our goals and supports staff in advising applicants and in decision-making. - Strengthens the policy intent of enabling equitable funding support for tangata whenua.
15	**Reducing repeat funding applications** Amend the criteria so that Council will only fund an organisation once per year or until all grant obligations are satisfactorily met. - Enables a more equitable spread of support. - Reduces the likelihood of multiple funding applications from the same applicant, and the resourcing burden this creates.
16	**Youth Fund age range** Amend the Youth Fund age range to 12-24 years old, in line with the age range adopted by the Ministry of Youth Development.

17	**Rent concessions**
	Extend the moratorium on granting new rent concessions or peppercorn rentals across all Council managed leases until a Community Occupancy Policy is developed and adopted, no later than the end of 2025.
	• Supports the transition to a more equitable, fair, and transparent means of managing lease concessions. • Supports the recommendations made in the 2019 internal audit review.

4   Attachments / Ngā Tāpiritanga

Attachment 1 – Presentation on Community Funding Review

Community Funding Review – April 2024

Council Briefing

What are we trying to achieve?

- Address pain points

- Respond to economic pressures

- Live by our funding principles

Funding Principles

Effective

Equitable

Consistent

Transparent

Flexible

Inclusive

Key points

- No change to overall budget
- Applicants can still apply for all the things they apply for now (more or less)
- Mostly cosmetic changes
- A few criteria changes
- But all combined, will greatly enhance the experience for applicants (and staff)

Current state

Which Fund?!?

Community Association Fund

This fund is for resident and ratepayer groups and their community activities.
This fund is closed. Check back in June 2024.

Community Facilities Fund

This fund is for maintenance and management of multi-use community venues.
This fund is closed. Check back in June 2024.

Community Fund

This is our flagship fund, for a variety of initiatives and events that deliver community benefit.
This fund is closed. Check back in June 2024.

Event Development Fund

This fund is for new and significant events that demonstrate District or region wide appeal. Applications are open from 4 March to 30 May 2024.

Māori Wellbeing Fund

This fund is a $4 million contestable fund to support Māori and community well-being projects or initiatives within Whangārei.

Partnership Fund

This fund is suitable for new builds or significant renovations of community facilities.
This fund has closed. Check back in June 2024.

Community Loans

Offers interest-free loans for the creation of recreation facilities

Creative Communities Scheme (CCS)

This scheme can be used for the creation and presentation of diverse arts and culture projects and events.
This fund is closed. Check back in June 2024.

District Amenities Fund

This fund is for operational support for organisations providing a District-wide benefit.
This fund is closed. Check back in June 2024.

Waste Minimisation Fund

This fund is for projects leading to measurable reductions in waste to landfill.
Apply any time.

Youth Week Fund

This fund supports young people aged 12 - 20 to deliver a community event to celebrate Youth Week. Applications are open now and close on 18 March 2024.

+ Papakainga Fund

+ Climate Action Fund

+ Mowing grants (?)

+ ...?

What can I apply for?!?

Too hard!!

Current state

- 7 Funds managed by Community Development – total budget of $2.5m

- 2 official and some unofficial funds managed by other parts of Council

- A growing number of 'partner funds' – which can cause confusion amongst ratepayers

Future state

- Front-facing centralisation into a single 'Fund'

- Triaging of applications 'behind the scenes'

- Clear separation of non-WDC funds

- Elevates the role of partnerships in community support

Apply for WDC's community funding:

Community Fund

There will be a lot of detail behind this to help applicants

Our partner funds

Whangarei District Council partners with others to provide the following community grants:

Whangarei District
creative nz
COMMUNITIES

Kai Ora Fund

Waste Minimisation Fund - MfE

Papakāinga Fund

Māori Wellbeing Fund

Climate Plan Fund

What's changing for us?

A more flexible and agile funding model, replacing admin with meaningful community support

- Centralization and triaging
- Grants management system
- Flexible funds (fewer 'buckets')
- More capability development
- More internal decision-making

What's changing for applicants?

"Easy to get right, hard to get wrong"

- Easier to apply and manage applications

- Apply anytime

- Quicker turnaround for decisions

- Greater flexibility in facilities funding

- Locals are prioritised

Facilities funding framework – current state

Partnership Fund

- for development of facilities up to $150k
- shared funding model
- $600k funding pool

Community Facilities Fund

- limited to halls and marae,
- maintenance and running costs up to $10k
- $200k funding pool

Community Fund

- anyone else who doesn't qualify for above,
- maintenance, development, running costs, up to $20k
- $250k funding pool for ALL requests, mostly non-facility

Facilities funding framework – future state

Community Fund – facilities framework

- Up to $150k for development, renovations, and maintenance
- Up to $2k for facility running costs (where rental income is under $5k)
- 70/30 shared funding model
- $750k flexible funding pool*
- Remove requirement for insurance?
- Milestone reporting and payment for >$75k

* From $1m Flexi-Fund 1, leaving $250k for general Community Funding support.

Changes to conditions and criteria

Managing limited resources and sharing the burden of the recession

- Milestone reporting and payments
- Multiyear funding
- Co-funding model
- Reduce repeat applications
- Local applicants only
- Community Association Fund simple donation
- Youth age range 12-24 years

Funding priorities

These are YOUR strategic priorities
for community funding

They are the essential framework and criteria
to guide staff and applicants

Current state

- Arts, Culture and Heritage (30%)

- Recreation and Sport (20%)

- Environment (15%)

- Community Wellbeing (35%)

Funding priorities –amendments

Weightings – remove for maximum flexibility

Tweak definitions of existing Priorities:

- Arts, Culture, and Heritage and Recreation and Sport – no change

- **Environment**

  - CURRENT: To support, celebrate, and protect our flora, our fauna, and our special places for current and future generations to enjoy. We particularly want to see applications that align with waste minimisation objectives, climate change adaptation or mitigation objectives, national objectives such as Predator Free 2050, and enabling kaitiakitanga of the district's taiao (natural environment).

  - **PROPOSED: To support making a positive difference to our environment, enable kaitiakitanga of our taiao, raise environmental awareness, and support resilience to climate change impacts.**

Funding priorities – amendments

CURRENT: Community Wellbeing

To support and celebrate happy, healthy connected communities and individuals. We particularly want to see applications that support communities to help themselves, promote community wellbeing and address disadvantage, and promote and celebrate community participation and identity.

PROPOSED: Connection and Resilience

To support initiatives that enable equitable outcomes, raise community resilience, participation, and connection, and help create safe, healthy, thriving communities.

Further prioritization (sub-criteria)

Add prioritisation for:
Kaupapa Māori organisations that seek to realise aspirations for Māori

'Balanced mix'
of social infrastructure and services,
while prioritizing needs over wants

Questions

1. What should our priorities (criteria) for community funding be for the next 3 years?

2. Is there any further prioritization (sub-criteria) that you want to apply?

3. Is there anything else we should look at for the funding review?

4. Do you support what has been presented?

Next steps:
May – Community Development Committee for approval
June – Implementation