

POLICY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS GROUPS AND ACITIVITIES UNDER THE THENEW 'UMBRELLA'

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1. POLICY BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Thenew's aim is "to contribute to rebuilding and sustaining communities and promote social inclusion". Our strategic objectives relating to providing and managing housing are drafted in such a way as to give a central role to tenant/resident/user involvement in decision-making. To support this we have a more detailed Tenant Participation Strategy. In addition we have a specific strategic objective of "Promoting and collaborating in wider community action to complement the association's core functions, and to encourage a positive community lifestyle and enhance the quality of life for residents".
- 1.2 As a registered Scottish Charity our contribution towards regeneration activities must be clearly focussed towards our charitable status. The Inland Revenue has advised that appropriate wording for this objective would be "to assist local statutory and voluntary organisations by contributing to the regeneration of communities as part of the relief of poverty."
- 1.3 Our strategic objectives are supported by internal management objectives that aim to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and value for money in all we do. Behind our objectives are values which include the aim of delegating decision-making to those affected by decisions or have to implement them.
- 1.4 In pursuit of these aims and objectives Thenew has supported a range of area associations, steering groups, registered tenant organisations and informal residents associations under our 'umbrella' structure. At October 2006, there were 11 such groups. Under the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Thenew has a Tenant Participation Strategy and designate a role for our current area groups as Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs).
- 1.5 The Management Committee approved this Policy on 24 October 2006.

2. SMALL GRANTS

- 2.1 The Association will set aside funds in our annual budget to contribute to the costs of Thenew's community development and wider action policies and to give effect to our Tenant Participation Strategy as required by the Act. These funds will be divided into three categories:
 - a) **Wider Action Grant – per area**
A sum calculated on a per house basis including owner occupied and shared ownership properties as well as tenanted houses, for each of the main communities where we work (~~currently 6~~) (this would be subject to annual bidding by area groups/RTOs);
 - b) **Committee Training Grant – per area**
A standard sum per area for training for local committees or tenants groups including attendance at conferences;
 - c) **Wider Action – General**

A general or contingency fund for promoting wider action and community development including supporting groups outwith our 6 main areas.

- 2.2 This policy excludes grants to that can be made by Thenew Trust. The Trust has a separate policy with regard to how it is able to distribute small charitable grants.

3. PURPOSES OF THE GRANTS

- 3.1 Grants under paragraphs 2.1a or 2.1b may be used to support the activities of any or all of the constituted or un-constituted residents groups operating for the benefit of the community by: -
- Providing costs for local newsletters, crèche, transport for group members, catering for events, social and wider action initiatives and Annual General Meeting costs;
 - Donations to local organisations subject to meeting approved criteria;
 - Attendance at training activities and conferences or the costs of tailor made inhouse training.
 - Providing a contribution towards 'start-up' costs for a new or emerging resident group.

- 3.2 In communities where there is an area association or residents group with an informal or formal agreement to work together constructively with Thenew in the interests of our tenants and the local community, Thenew will in addition to these small grants contribute to the development and running costs of area associations by: -

- Making our premises available for meetings;
- Providing photocopying, mailing and essential secretarial services and producing regular area newsletters;
- Where resources allow providing design and layout services for letterheads, posters and local newsletters.

These costs will come from office budgets and will not in these circumstances be charged to the small grants wider action budget heads.

- 3.3 Constituted associations will be encouraged to seek grant funding from other sources in addition to the grants from Thenew in furtherance of their objectives. Thenew staff will advise on possible sources.

4. RESPONSIBILITY AND DELEGATION OF DECISION MAKING

- 4.1 Overall responsibility for administering all grants remains the responsibility of Team Leaders. Responsibility for authorising all grants is the responsibility of the Community Regeneration Manager, because on a regular basis, we report on financial expenditure to our Wider Role Sub-Committee.
- 4.2 Where an Area Association is constituted and a formal agreement is in place specifying delegation of powers in a range of areas to the Area Association, responsibility for decisions and administration of small local grants may pass to the Area Committee as specified in the Minute of Agreement. This may include payment of grant into the Area Association's bank account subject to suitable arrangements being in place for accountability, bookkeeping and audit.
- 4.3 In communities where there is no constituted association, or where an association does not have an agreement to work constructively with Thenew, or where there are several groups established which might be eligible for funding, administration of the grant will normally rest with the Team Leader, and subsequent approval by the Community

Regeneration Manager. In these circumstances eligible groups may make application to the association for funds in the agreed manner.

5. STAFF RESOURCES

- 5.1 To achieve Thenew's policy objectives with regard to area regeneration, community development and wider action it is essential that staff resources are directed into supporting the activities of area associations and other residents groups. For example servicing an area committee is part of what we do generally to support groups, and it is expected that housing, development and maintenance staff will report to and attend meetings of residents on a regular basis.
- 5.2 It will be for senior managers to determine the level of staff resources devoted to such activities, having regard to local circumstances. All such activities will be recorded on time sheets using the appropriate code. These costs will not be charged to the area grants budget.

6. PROCEDURES

- 6.1 We have separate procedures to assist staff in the administration of these grants, and these procedures should be consulted should further information be required. They include an 'application form' for grant and our criteria for approving grant.

7. REVIEW

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed by October 2009 or earlier if required by changes in legislation or good practice guidance.