



**The Kollektive, 145 17th Ave West, Tauranga, Post: c/o The Kollektive,
DX HP40007, Tauranga 3112. Ph 07 987 0920**

www.sociallink.org.nz

SocialLink Western Bay of Plenty is a registered charity based at The Kollektive in 17th Avenue, Tauranga. It is the umbrella peak body for the social and community sector in the Western Bay of Plenty. Its vision is a resourced, skilled and cohesive for purpose sector enabling communities to flourish. Its purpose is to build the capability, confidence, sustainability and voice of community organisations in the Western Bay of Plenty.

Submission to TCC review of Community Funding Policy

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the review of the Community Funding Policy.

This submission is presented in two parts:

- SocialLink's views in relation to partnership or cornerstone agreements, as it relates to SocialLink's funding from and relationship with TCC
- SocialLink's feedback, from the perspective of the community and social sector, on the community funding policy.

SocialLink views on partnership/cornerstone agreements

SocialLink applauds the points raised by the Commissioners regarding their expectations of partnership agreements at the June Strategy, Financial and Risk Committee in relation to the review of the Community Funding Policy and we would like to share SocialLink's view on the points that were raised.

SocialLink's view on removing Partnership Agreements from the Community Funding policy is dependent on information about the nature of the alternative arrangements and we would welcome an opportunity to discuss any proposed alternatives.

Fundamentally, SocialLink seeks a relationship with Tauranga City Council (TCC) that is based on trust and recognises and values what each party brings to the relationship. We value our partnership agreement with TCC and believe that by working in partnership we can better support the social and community sector and the communities they serve.

SocialLink brings the following to the relationship which contributes to the strategic priorities of TCC:

- Knowledge of the social, community and voluntary sector and the communities they serve
- Knowledge of social issues in Tauranga
- Acts as a conduit to the social, community and voluntary sector
- Skills and expertise in building capability, research, collaborative practice and volunteering

- Respected voice for the social, community and voluntary sector in the western Bay of Plenty
- Ability to be responsive and agile in responding to the social, community and voluntary sector.

SocialLink very much values what Tauranga City Council brings to the relationship, including:

- Knowledge of Tauranga communities
- Community Development team
- Funding for community services that contributes to TCC's strategic priorities
- Ability to impact on local social wellbeing e.g. social infrastructure, policies, plans, bylaws

A relationship brings benefits and obligations on both parties and as noted in the discussion by Commissioners, currently there are obligations on SocialLink, primarily in relation to the delivery of services. In the draft revised Community Funding policy report – Schedule 4 in the 26 June Strategy, Financial and Risk committee agenda, TCC's obligations are outlined. SocialLink supports demonstrating a commitment to the partnership, regular meetings and being instrumental in communications between SocialLink and Council. The statement "regular assessment of whether the (partner) organisation is meeting their agreed objectives" suggests a one way relationship and a transactional way of operating. As noted below, SocialLink needs to be accountable but a relationship would suggest that both parties regularly discuss progress towards outcomes.

The types of things that would add value to us as an organisation include:

- Seek SocialLink involvement at the beginning of discussions in relation to work TCC is conducting in relation to the social, community and voluntary sector and on social wellbeing. For example, we appreciated TCC inviting SocialLink staff to a demonstration of Strategic Grants.
- Regular engagement and discussion of progress towards outcomes.
- Sharing of relevant information.
- Act as a conduit between SocialLink and Council
- Funding for services delivered.

Nature of the agreement between TCC and SocialLink

SocialLink believes the term 'Cornerstone', rather than 'partner' agreements best reflects the nature of the relationship between TCC and SocialLink, an organisation that supports, connects and represents the social, community and voluntary sector.

SocialLink does not support that these agreements be contestable. It is hoped that it should be evident by the nature of the services delivered by cornerstone organisations (e.g. SocialLink, Envirohub, Priority One, Sport BOP, Creative BOP) which organisations are the local 'cornerstones'. These organisations are all independent of Council, deliver services across Tauranga city, contribute to Council's priorities, build capacity of their respective sector, represent their sector (e.g. member based, ability to communicate to their sector) and are regarded by local and central government as the voice for the sector. Secondly, the very nature of contestability somewhat undermines the concept of an ongoing and mutually beneficial relationship, as Commissioner Wasley states, "contestability is clinical" which suggests a transactional, not a relational way of working.

In keeping with a relational approach of working, it is proposed that the agreements are outcomes focused, rather than output focused which aligns with a more transactional way of operating. SocialLink appreciates that there needs to be shared accountabilities and reporting on progress. However, we recommend rather than referring to deliverables, key performance indicators are jointly agreed for both SocialLink and TCC which are regularly reported on. In addition, reporting should reflect a high trust approach and be commensurate to the work and funding comprising the agreement. Consideration should also be given to other forms of reporting e.g. orally rather than just written reports.

A relational approach is also enduring, not time limited. SocialLink recommends that cornerstone agreements mirror those TCC holds with Priority One and Tourism Bay of Plenty which have no end date, although the KPI's and funding may change over time to reflect changes in priorities. Any issues of concern for either party can be discussed as part of the ongoing relationship.

Equity in funding across wellbeing areas

SocialLink was one of the stakeholders involved in the development of the Community Funding policy, and understood that one of the original premises of developing the Community Funding policy was to equalise the allocation of funding and subsidies across the wellbeing areas. It was well recognised that the sport and recreation sector receive considerably more investment than the other sectors. In addition to the sport and recreation sector receiving considerably more investment from Councils than other sectors, they also secure a significant chunk of funding from gaming trusts and philanthropic sources.

SocialLink strongly submits that to date the Community Funding policy has not improved the distribution of funding between the sectors and this needs to be urgently addressed, particularly given 'nature' is one of the vision pillars and the lack of investment in the environment.

SocialLink supports Envirohub and Creative Bay of Plenty's submissions and respectfully request that at the hearings, SocialLink, Envirohub and Creative Bay of Plenty oral submissions be grouped together.

SocialLink's feedback, from the perspective of the community and social sector, on the community funding policy.

SocialLink supports:

- Changes that streamline administration, make it easier and more transparent for community organisations to apply and provide an overarching approach to community funding.
- Increasing the Community Match Fund Small Grant from \$1000 to \$5000 max
- Removing the Match Fund Medium Grant and the associated changes in amounts to the Community Grant Fund.
- Establishing Multi-Year Funding Agreements to provide a three year contestable funding option.
- That all things being equal, any single project should only be able to receive one type of funding from the Council, although there can be a good reason that a project is supported in more than one way, so suggest there is some flexibility in this.

Other suggestions and comments:

Principles

The policy has four principles of transparency, equity, accountability and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Transparency

The policy identifies what TCC will take into account when considering applications and what it will require of applicants. We suggest it would be useful to include a mention in the Policy that TCC will provide a public report on number of applicants, successful applicants and the amounts of funding successfully applied for by subsector and any other information that may be of interest to the community sector.

Accountability

We understand that TCC is looking more closely at how recipients will complete an accountability report on their use of funding and any outcomes and will prepare a paper for consultation, which we would be pleased to provide feedback on.

We recommend looking at the Acorn Foundation's approach of annual oral round table reporting sessions accompanied by a 1 page report confirming the money has been spent on services as outlined in the application. In addition to reducing the reporting compliance, organisations enjoyed sharing and hearing about other organisations.

Equity

How will TCC ensure all communities have equal opportunities to be considered for funding, in other words, what proactive processes will it employ to support awareness of funding opportunities and how to develop successful applications? Socialink welcomes any referrals from TCC so we can assist organisations with their funding applications.

If it's not already in place, it is recommended that an equity lens is applied as part of the criteria in allocating funding.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi –

The policy states that 'Council recognises our partnership relationship with iwi and hapū from Tauranga Moana which informs how we support kaupapa Māori outcomes through community funding.'

According to information available on the TCC website, seven kaupapa Māori organisations received between 9 and 14% of the funding granted to a total of 74 organisations in three of the last four funding rounds for the Community Grants scheme. In the fourth round there were no successful applicants.

To improve equity of distribution and Te Tiriti o Waitangi development, Socialink suggests the policy should enhance

- rangatiratanga for iwi and/or hapū over decision making about funding relevant to them
- support the development of capability in submitting successful funding applications for profit iwi and/or hapū organisations and kaupapa Māori organisations if required e.g. Socialink is

piloting a Whakamana Tangata project to provide wrap around support for Māori organisations to help them secure funding.