

Clubs, Societies, and Projects (CSP) Budgeting Paper

Proposed by Richard Cameron
Seconded by Benjamin Howitt

Background

Historically, the clubs and societies budgeting process – and the resultant distribution of funds between different clubs – has been highly inconsistent between different clubs and management groups.

This was addressed last year with the introduction of a new budgeting process, which removed the discretionary powers held by management groups and centralised the process to the Clubs, Societies, and Projects Board (CSPB). As a result, funds are now allocated in a more consistent and fairer manner than previously.

However, the policy failed to address the lack of consistency in budgeting between years. Currently, CSPB is able to make changes to the budgeting process at its own discretion, and at any time – including during the process itself.

This effect can cause clubs to have funding allocated according to a different set of rules to those under which the budget was submitted – and has been shown on several occasions to have a significant impact on clubs and societies.

In addition, these altered rules are often not successfully carried through to subsequent years and therefore may yield no long term benefits to CSPs.

A set of rules, agreed by CSPB in advance of budgeting, could work to improve:

- Transparency – when submitting their budgets, CSPs would know the most important factors and criteria they were being compared against, and the priorities of CSPB
- Fairness – changes to the budgeting process would be decided via a dedicated discussion in advance of the event, separating the strategic and operational parts of the budgeting process
- Consistency – having a formal budgeting policy which can be updated and build upon in subsequent years gives the potential for a more consistent budgeting process from year to year

The Union notes:

1. For the last few years, there have been significant annual shifts in the way CSP budgeting is carried out.
2. These changes are currently at the sole discretion of CSPB.
3. Changes can currently be made during the budgeting process itself, and after clubs have submitted their budgets. This can affect clubs significantly and can leave them with little or no opportunity to change their budget submissions accordingly.
4. There is currently no specific mechanism to ensure consistency in rules/funding criteria between years.

The Union believes:

1. Funding levels which fluctuate significantly from year to year depending on the membership of CSPB are not fair on clubs and societies, and hinder responsible financial planning on the part of the clubs.
2. Consistency in policy (and funding levels) between years should be an aim of the CSP budgeting process.

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3. Budgeting should be carried out under a well-defined set of rules and funding aims/priorities.
4. The relevant rules, priorities, and important dates for the budgeting process should be decided (and made public) in advance of the process.

The Union resolves:

1. To mandate the Deputy President Clubs & Societies and Deputy President Finance & Services to produce a list of budgeting aims and priorities in consultation with the incumbent and incoming CSPB.
2. To mandate CSPB to produce a formal budgeting policy by December 2015, in which shall be described the rules under which the budgeting process will be carried out. This policy shall then be publicised to all CSPs, and will become binding on CSPB and govern the budgeting process.
3. CSPB may amend the budgeting policy by simple majority vote, up to one month before the budgeting process commences each year. Amendments may also be made by simple majority vote after budgeting is complete.
4. All proposals for alterations to the policy must explain their benefit to the process, within the context of the Budgeting Mission Statement as approved by the Trustee Board.
5. CSPB may further alter the budgeting policy at any time with a simple two-thirds vote. Such alterations shall be made only where deemed absolutely necessary, and with direct reference to the Budgeting Mission Statement.