

To: City Executive Board

Date: 8th February 2012

Report of: Head of Housing & Communities

Title of Report: GRANT ALLOCATIONS TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS FOR 2012 / 2013

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: For the City Executive Board to make decisions on the allocation of grants to community & voluntary organisations for 2012/2013.

Key decision? Yes

Executive lead member: Councillor Antonia Bance

Policy Framework: Oxford City Council Corporate Plan & Oxfords Sustainable Community Strategy

Recommendation(s):

Subject to Full Council subsequently agreeing the grants budget for 2012/13 as set out in Table 1, the City Executive Board are recommended to:-

1. Approve the recommendations for commissioning in 2012/13, as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Approve the recommendation to allocate Oxford Community Work Agency additional funding of £28,611.
3. Approve the recommendations for the applications received to the grants 2012/13 open bidding programme as set out in Appendix 2.

Appendices to report

- Appendix 1 Recommendations for the 2012/13 commissioning programme
- Appendix 2 Recommendations for grant applications received to the 2012/13 open bidding programme.
- Appendix 3 Risk register
- Appendix 4 Evaluation framework used when assessing grant applications

Introduction

1. Oxford City Council traditionally supports the local community & voluntary sector with grant aid. The Councils grant programme is administered & monitored through Communities & Neighbourhoods a department within the Housing & Communities Service.

2. The grants programme has two elements to it:-
 - Open Bidding – one off grants, community & voluntary organisations can apply for on an annual basis or on a smaller scale throughout the year.
 - Commissioning – funding for activities that have been identified by the Council as making a substantial and central contribution to the achievement of our corporate goals.

Grants Budget

3. The total indicative budget for the grants programme, as currently proposed, is £1,463,465 for 2012 / 2013 and is set out below.

Table 1	Budget (£)
Partnership / Commissioning	1,355,738
Open Bidding	92,428
Set aside for small grants in 2012/13	15,299
Total	£1,463,465

Commissioning

4. A review of the services funded through the commissioning process took place during 2010/11. The results of the review were reported to the City Executive Board on 6th October 2010. It was at that meeting that the Board approved a commissioning programme for two years, (2011/12 & 2012/13), subject to budget decisions.
5. At the time of writing this report proposals are going through Government about the potential cuts to the legal aid system to take effect from April 2012.
6. Currently complex benefit appeals which have been turned down on their first application for review, where clients are eligible for legal aid support and where it is believed there is scope for further action, are referred to Oxfordshire Welfare Rights or Turpin & Miller as the main civil legal aid provider in Oxfordshire.
7. However from April 2012 if the cuts to the legal aid system are approved it's unlikely Turpin & Miller will be in a position to help people who are unable to pay for the legal support they need. These clients will be referred to the advice centres and in turn when it gets to a complex benefit appeal as mentioned above they will be referred to Oxfordshire Welfare Rights (part of Oxford Community Work Agency at Barton).
8. In February this year Oxfordshire Welfare Rights had 267 live cases of which 170 were specialist case work. Currently, on average, they are attending 5 court appeals each week, taking up 15 hours of their time. To be in a position to cope with the additional clients they can expect through the loss of legal aid they will need another full time post.
9. At the City Executive Board on the 7.12.11 the consultation budget identified additional funding, of £28,611, was approved for welfare advice. Subject to Council subsequently agreeing the budget, the City Executive Board is recommended to allocate this funding to the Oxford

Community Work Agency (OCWA), for a two year period (2012/13 & 2013/14) to enable them to cope with the additional clients they can expect through the loss of legal aid.

10. During the financial year 2011/12 officers have worked closely with the commissioned organisations being recommended for continued funding in 2012/13. Commissioned organisations have achieved their contracted targets. Details of these achievements will be reported in the next monitoring report to the City Executive Board later in the year.
11. Commissioning themes (which remain the same as in 2011/12) together with indicative budget allocations for 2012/13 are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2	Budget (£)
Advice	536,379 *
Homelessness	442,279
Inclusive arts & culture	255,262
Community safety	58,082
Community & voluntary sector infrastructure	48,736
Inclusive play & leisure for children & young people with disabilities.	15,000
Total	£1,355,738

* includes the additional £28,611 for OCWA

12. Due to Oxford City Council being awarded £1,042,000 (homelessness prevention grant) from the Communities and Local Governments (CLG) Homelessness Directorate for 2012/13 and the Street Services Outreach Service currently being tendered, a report will be brought to the City Executive Board later in the year with detailing the proposed allocation of both the CLG funding and the Councils Homelessness grant commissioning budget to voluntary sector organisations.
13. Consequently, the City Executive Board is recommended to approve the recommendations for the rest of the commissioning programme as detailed in Appendix 1.

Annual Open Bidding

14. A total of 59 applications were received to the annual open bidding programme by the closing date 11th November 2011, with a total requested amount of £416,275.
15. The total indicative budget available for the open bidding programme is £92,428.
16. Oxford City Council officers appraised applications to the open bidding programme over five days. Appendix 4 is a copy of the evaluation framework used by the panel for this process and is attached for information.
17. Each application was firstly screened for eligibility (applicants must show that they are a constituted community organisation run by a committee, that they have provided annual accounts and a bank statement and an equal opportunity statement). All applications are

read and then evaluated against criteria relating to evidence of social need, who the project is targeting, what risks are associated with the project, how the application meets Council priorities, how the group will monitor and evaluate the impact of the grant, whether the group receive any other subsidy from the City Council, if the group is financially competent, if the application demonstrates a financial need, and if the grant would represent value for money. A recommendation is arrived at after considering these factors for each application

18. Appendix 2 is a listing of each application received, the amount requested and the rationale for the recommendation. The City Executive Board is asked to approve these recommendations.

Rents

19. Some organisations recommended to be funded through the grants programme also occupy Oxford City Council premises and their rent will be deducted from their grant (if awarded) before any grant funding is paid. The organisations this may affect are listed below in table 3.

Table 3

Organisation	Recom'd baseline grant	2012 / 13 rent	Balance recom'd to organisation
Agnes Smith Advice Centre	£85,289	£7,750	£77,539
Donnington Doorstep Family Centre	£5,000	£700	£4,300
Emmaus Oxford	£25,000	£5,000	£20,000
Film Oxford (OFVM)	£29,303	£5,000	£24,303
Modern Art Oxford *	£66,667	£66,667	0
Oxford Community Work Agency**	£122,611	£8,100	£114,511
Oxfordshire Chinese Community & Advice Centre	£20,500	£18,000	2,500
Rose Hill & Donnington Advice Centre	£90,478	£3,000	£87,478
Total	£444,848	£114,217	£330,631

* rent charges for Modern Art Oxford are currently set at £60,000 this will rise to £70,000 from 01.08.12. The amount due has been calculated as follows:

£60,000 divided by 12 = £5000 x 4 months (April to July) = £20,000

£70,000 divided by 12 = £5,833.3333 x 8 months (August to March) = £46,667

Total rent due for the financial year 2012/13 is £66,667

** baseline grant includes the additional £28,611

Climate Change / Environmental Impact

20. We received five applications from organisations working to raise awareness and understanding of the impact of lifestyle on climate change. Please see Appendix 2 for the recommendations.
21. We will make all successful applicants aware of Oxford City Councils commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and encourage them to take similar action.

Equalities Impact

22. As part of the bidding process each organisation must provide their equal opportunities statement to confirm they comply with this legislation and understand their responsibility to promote equality.
23. Some examples of how equality is positively enhanced by the grants programme include:
- Funding services for survivors of rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence for both men and women.
 - For lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people through recommending continued funding for the Oxford Friend helpline.
 - For people with disabilities, particularly children and young people with disabilities through recommending funding for Parasol inclusive play.
 - For older people, through recommending support for specific activities to help socially excluded older people access support and information.
 - For BME groups, through funding dedicated work with asylum seekers and refugees.

Risk

24. In order to manage any risk associated with awarding grants, a successful applicant must agree to and sign terms and conditions for this funding. Within these terms they must agree to:-
- Spend the funding on the project or specific items described in their application
 - Repay any unspent grant funding
 - Keep financial records and receipts
 - Return a monitoring form detailing how the grant funding has been spent and how they have publicised this support from Oxford City Council
25. Each organisation or group awarded grant funding will be monitored by either the grants officer or a member of the officer grants panel. Please see Appendix 3 for the reports risk register.

Financial Impact

26. The allocations of grant funding as proposed are dependant on Full Council agreeing the 2012/13 budget in February.

Legal Impact

27. There are no legal implications

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