

**Report of:** Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager

**To:** Executive Board

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> June 2006

**Item No:**

**Title of Report :** Review of policies and procedures support for the community and voluntary sector

### Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To seek agreement on the allocation of the revenue grant budget for 2007/08 between themes, area committees and emergency fund.

**Key decision:** Yes

**Portfolio Holder:** Caroline van Zyl, Community Safety, Community development and grants

**Scrutiny Responsibility:** Community

**Ward(s) affected:** All

#### **Port Approved by:**

Councillor Caroline van Zyl

Michael Lawrence, Director Housing, Health and Community

Helen Liddar, Legal Services

Andy Collett, Financial Services

#### **Policy Framework:** The Oxford Community Strategy

-a vibrant and inclusive economy

-safer communities

-a better living environment

-opportunities for life

-active and healthy communities

and the Oxford City Council Corporate Plan

-reduce inequality through social inclusion

-more housing for Oxford, better housing for all

-Improve the quality of our environment

-reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour

-be an open, intelligent and responsive organisation

#### **Recommendation(s):**

1. To agree the broad allocation of the revenue grants budget for 2007/08 as set out in paragraph 15.

2. To ask for a report to Executive Board on 21<sup>st</sup> Aug 2006 to agree the prospectus.

## **Background**

1. In 2005 a review was undertaken by Oxford City Council of the Revenue Grants and other support it gives to community and voluntary organisations. This followed consultations with the community and voluntary sector. A new process for deciding and allocating support was developed by officers and went for consultation to Area Committees and Community Scrutiny in March 2006. Modified procedures were then agreed by Executive Board in April 2006.

2. The agreed proposals included the creation of a steering group to oversee changes, and the use of a Prospectus. The Prospectus is a framework explaining how and for what funding will be given (described using outcomes).

3. Concerns of Area and the Community Scrutiny committees included that of top slicing for administration costs of the current revenue budget, and this proposal was withdrawn. Many of the other concerns related to how changes might affect existing organisations that receive grants, the flexibility to respond to local need, and the role of Area Committees. The procedures agreed in April 2006 will result in these issues being resolved in the Prospectus, which will be consulted on, and then agreed by Executive Board. The prospectus will include outcomes derived from the Area Plans, and an assessment of what outcomes are best secured by citywide action or area level action and decision-making.

4. The Steering Group has now been established and has met three times. There is representation from a number of Business Units, including Legal and Finance, Leisure, City Works, Built Environment, Asset Management, Neighbourhood Renewal, Facilities Management, Strategy and Review, e Area Coordinators, and the Chief Executive of Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action.

5. The first step in the procedures agreed in April is to allocate the revenue grant budget for 2007/08 between the themes, area committees and emergency fund. That is the subject of this report.

## **Setting the criteria used to assess grants**

6. The Steering Group agreed the following criteria in order to identify the themes for allocation of the grants revenue budget for 2007/08:

- Support to the priorities contained in the Oxford Community Strategy
- Support to the priorities contained in the Oxford (Corporate) Plan
- Support to the City Council's statutory duties
- That clearly identified and prioritised needs are met.
- There is a coordinated approach with other funding bodies wherever possible to ensure that there is no double funding and to prevent 'cross over'.

7. The City Council gives most grants under the “Well-being provisions” from the 2000 Local Government Act. This states that the well-being powers should be used with regard to the Community Strategy. The steering committee therefore decided to use the Community Strategy Themes and objectives, with additional objectives added to reflect City Council Policy and Strategy documents. The Oxford City Council Corporate Plan sets out to include the Community Strategy priorities.

8. The 5 themes in the Community Strategy are:

- Opportunities for Life
- Active and healthy Communities
- A better living environment
- A vibrant and inclusive economy
- Safer Communities

### **Keeping funding to current priorities**

9. Recent case history (involving Leicester City Council’s decision to halt funding for Community and Voluntary Organisations), government guidance and the City Council’s adoption of the Oxfordshire COMPACT require the City Council to consult and give notice of significant changes in funding. There is insufficient time this year to do so, so funding needs to broadly reflect last year’s allocations.

10. All the grants for 2006/7 (except the small grants fund) were reviewed and allocated to the Objectives. To help this process desired outcomes were developed for each objective, based on the criteria in paragraph 6. The table in Annex 1 provides the details. A desired outcome is a description of the meeting of the identified needs of people (or environment) For example: In Blackbird Leys all those that need after-school childcare have it.

### **Putting money by for the innovation and emergency grants**

11. The Steering Group has proposed that £25,000 be set aside for an emergency grants pot. Further work will be done on defining the criteria for this pot for inclusion into the prospectus and will be linked to the priorities contained within it. The fund would be managed as a reserve. Any of the £25,000 not spent at the end of each year will be carried over and topped up from the grants budget back up to £25,000.

12. The Steering Group has also proposed that up to 5% of each theme is allocated to innovative projects achieving the objectives of the theme. This money would encourage innovative solutions to the required outcomes set out in the prospectus. This would enable the Council to support more risky projects that are potential 'one off' and pilots. If less than 5% of the budget is allocated to innovation projects, the balance will be allocated to other projects.

## Including central revenue grants decided by Area Committees

13. This year outcomes from the Area plans will be in the Prospectus, reflecting the central revenue grants for 2006/7 agreed by Area Committees.

14. The Prospectus will also include outcomes derived from the Area Plans which will be used to allocate all Area Committee allocations of money to community and voluntary groups. This enables a coordinated approach with one application route but which is still responsive to local colour. Non-delegated decisions on these grants will remain with the Area Committees.

## Guidance for allocation of funding across the themes

15. Based on the above criteria and the 2006/7 allocations, the Steering Groups recommend the broad split set out in Table 1 and Table 2. This will be a guide for the steering group in drawing up the Prospectus and in consulting with the Community and Voluntary sector.

Table 1 gives the proposed split of Neighbourhood Renewal revenue grants based on 2006/7 grants reduced to fund the £25,000 Emergency fund

Theme	City-wide allocation based on 2006/7 grants	Area allocation based on 2006/7 grants
Opportunities for Life	£496,764	£1,876
Active and healthy Communities	£349,644	£185,674
A better living environment	£475,579	£1,329
A vibrant and inclusive economy.	£29,214	£13,295
Safer Communities	£64,976	£0
<b>Sub-totals</b>	<b>£1,416,177</b>	<b>£202,170</b>
Emergency fund =	£25,000	
<b>All Revenue Grants =</b>	<b>£1,643,347</b>	

Table 2 gives the proposed split as percentages of all revenue grants

Theme	City-wide allocation	Area allocation	Percentage allocated to Themes
Opportunities for Life	30.2%	0.1%	<b>30.3%</b>
Active and healthy Communities	21.3%	11.3%	<b>32.6%</b>
A better living environment	28.9%	0.1%	<b>29%</b>
A vibrant and inclusive economy.	1.8%	0.8%	<b>2.6%</b>
Safer Communities	4.0%	0%	<b>4%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>86.2%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>	
Emergency fund	1.52%		

## Way Forward

16. A Working Group has been set up for each theme to develop the prospectus. Each Working Group has a Lead Officer and will involve voluntary

and community representatives as appropriate. Area Coordinators will also be on the Working Groups.

17. The prospectus will set out the desired outcomes to be used to assess grant applications and bids for funding in 2007/8. It will also explain the application and assessment processes to be used

18. There is a working group looking into the allocation processes and procedures.

19. The Prospectus will also include proposed changes in funding priorities and methods over the next three years, including the non-revenue grant support to the voluntary and community sector, and the impact of other funding streams.

20. The Prospectus will be published for consultation on June 27<sup>th</sup>. It will come to Executive Board for agreement in late August 2006.

### **Staff resource**

21. Further work will be carried out on the resource needed to develop, and to run the new CVO (including grant) structure. Results will be discussed at Senior Management Board and taken further as necessary.

### **Recommendations**

21. Executive Board is recommended to:

- a) agree the broad allocation of the revenue grants budget for 2007/08 as set out in paragraph 15.
- b) ask for a report to the Executive Board on 21<sup>st</sup> August to agree the prospectus.

### **Name and contact details of authors:**

Oliver de Soissons, Project officer for CVO support, Neighbourhood Renewal

Tel: 01865 252812

E-mail: [odesoissons@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:odesoissons@oxford.gov.uk)

Val Johnson, Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager

Tel: 01865 252209

E-mail: [vjohnson@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:vjohnson@oxford.gov.uk)



### **Background papers:**

None





**Appendix 1: All grants including Area grants broken down by Broad Outcome, 2006/7 allocation** (Proposed 2007/8 allocation is different since it takes out £25,000 for the emergency fund)

Theme and objectives	Broad Outcome	Outcome spend	Objective spend
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A better living environment

Protect and enhance the natural environment/biodiversity		£3,905	£3,905
Minimize waste/maximize recycling		£13,905	£13,905
Protect and enhance the built environment		£0	£0
Improve supply and condition of affordable housing in Oxford		£0	£0
Tackle and reduce homelessness in the city	Reduce the number of people sleeping rough	£149,385	
	Increase % of homeless maintaining tenancies for 2 years	£7,328	
	Reduce the number of failed tenancies in the private rented sector resulting from financial hardship	£18,405	
	Reduce numbers becoming homeless, particularly from vulnerable groups	£184,425	
	Reduce number of homeless households	£95,000	
	Reduce material & social impact of being homeless	£30,937	£485,480

£503,290

Active and healthier communities

Ensure healthy lifestyles	Improve diet, and related food skills	£654	
	Reduce substance misuse (drugs and alcohol)	£33,000	
	Increase physical activity levels	£0	£33,654
Increase active participation in cultural and recreational activities	Have high proportion of population motivated and taking part in physical activity- sports, walking or dance, and active (non-audience) participation in arts	£175,374	
	Provide support for those aspiring to high level skill/ national/regional standard in sport and arts	£8,075	£183,449
Promotion of Community Cohesion		£39,865	£39,865
Increase number and range of people going to see art/ art events	Have wide range of "audience art events",	£132,508	
	Providing venues for art, sport & community activities	£28,329	£160,837
Increase range and numbers of children and young people playing in safety	Increase access to after school and holiday organised activities	£127,633	
	Adequate provision of places/venues and transport	£0	£127,633

£544,784

Theme and objectives	Broad Outcome	Outcome spend	Objective spend
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### Opportunities for life

Raise levels of income, education and skills attainment in the 17 current most deprived super output areas	Increase uptake of welfare benefits by those not working or on low incomes	£231,168	
	Support improvement of local educational achievement	£2,000	
	Increase up-take skills training particularly basic skills	£33,012	
	Reduce poor management of debt.	£209,169	
	Increase self-employment and setting up of small businesses and social enterprise	£0	£475,349
Improve access to services	Increase joined up and partnership working.	£0	
	Increase use of ICT and links to e government initiatives	£0	
	Improve and increase consultation with users and non-users of services, and hard to reach groups to improve services	£500	
	Develop new forms of democratic engagement	£0	£500
Develop international outlook amongst the local population		£5,500	£5,500

£481,349

### Vibrant and inclusive economy

Support sustained economic development and a skilled and employable workforce	Improve employment prospects for all	£0	£0
Encourage Social Enterprise			£0
Increase recognition of and strengthen the role that the community and voluntary sector plays in the local economy	Support CVO infrastructure services	£29,486	£29,486
Support key regeneration proposals	Benefits of regeneration (physical and social) are maximised for those currently excluded	£13,500	£13,500

£42,986

### Safer Communities

Respond to local needs and concerns in reducing crime and fear of crime	Increase public confidence in reporting racial, homophobic and domestic crimes	£11,240	
	Reduce impact of crime amongst the most vulnerable members of the community	£28,740	£39,980
Increase safety of and support for those experiencing domestic violence		£20,600	£20,600
Respond to antisocial behaviour	Reduce the impact of antisocial behaviour in our communities	£5,000	£5,000

£65,580