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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Report of: Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager

To: Executive Board

Date: 21st August 2006 **Item No**:

Title of Report : Agreeing the Annual Prospectus for Support for Community and Voluntary Organisations

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: Approve annual Prospectus for City Council's support for Community and Voluntary Organisations

Key decision: Yes

Portfolio Holder: Councillor van Zyl

Scrutiny Responsibility: Community

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by
Portfolio Holder: Councillor van Zyl
Legal: Helen Liddar
Finance: Andy Collett
Strategic Director: Mark Luntley (standing in for Michael Lawrence)

Policy Framework: The Oxford Plan - Section 3.2.1

Recommendation(s): Approve the Prospectus as framework for:

- allocating £1.64 million Community Grants in 2007/8
- carrying out a review of all support for community and voluntary organisations, working with them.

Background:

1. In April 2006 Executive Board agreed procedures to allocate support for community and voluntary organisations to be brought in over 2 years. The procedures included the publication of an annual prospectus. This would set out:

- priorities for, and methods of, funding in the next financial year, including details of funding agreed over more than a year.
- more strategic changes envisaged over the next two to three years.

2. In June 2006 Executive Board agreed that this year the priorities would be broadly the same as in the previous few years. The report also mentioned the working party looking at legal issues relating to contracts and procurement.

3. The subsequent Draft Prospectus went out for consultation for 4 weeks, with a questionnaire, and two open consultation sessions, and officer visits to appropriate fora. Over 500 copies were distributed, to Councillors, Officers, joint-funding organisations and community and voluntary groups around the City. Attached are the main replies. Analysis of all the replies will be available at the meeting.

The Prospectus

4. Attached, as part of this report, is the updated Prospectus taking into account the consultation. The main changes are:

I. Re-writing of the Prospectus to stress the co-operation between the City Council and the CVO sector, including explaining better the background and how the sector will be involved in the Review.

II. For 2007/8:
- Reduction of the role of Broad Outcomes in prioritising funding. 16 objectives will be used instead. Organisations had difficulty in seeing how their work related to the outcomes, and suggested working together to get wording of the outcomes right.
- Allocation of funding directly for one year to all organisations previously on a 3-year agreement. Since the Council is not recommending significant change in priorities this year, it seemed unfair to make our major partners re-apply for one year grants for the second year running.
- Limiting of Emergency Grant and Small Grant to sums available in previous years. There was concern that grants to organisations would be reduced to pay for the proposed increase, especially since the full review had not been carried out to see where it should come from.

III. For the review:
- Better explanation of the use of commissioning, and a costing model to ensure community and voluntary organisations receive the full cost of providing services. Though replies were on balance in favour of commissioning including a competitive element where necessary, some organisations were unclear on what was being proposed and

why, and feared CVOs would bid at unrealistic costs to secure the contract.

- Addition of a task to identify how we can put by funding for new organisations and to meet new needs not identified by the Council. This is different from innovation to deliver established needs- innovation can be supported where it is the best way to meet those needs.

Appendix
This contains brief analysis of the answers to the questionnaire (giving the comments too). The appendix also includes the written submissions received. At the meeting an analysis of written submissions will be available.

Recommendation(s):

Approve the Prospectus as framework for:

- allocating £1.64 million Community Grants in 2007/8
- carrying out a review of all support for community and voluntary organisations, working with them.

Name and contact details of author:

Oliver de Soissons, Neighbourhood Renewal (01865) 252821

Background papers:

None