

Proportions and written Comment on Grants Prospectus Questionnaire July 2006

Figure following category is the numbers ticking that box and the total ticks for that question.

**Question 1**

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with using the broad outcomes to select projects and services to fund? - further comments and explanations**

*Strongly agree/Agree* 21/27

- Broad outcome is best to select projects  
As long as it is clear that some organisations cross several outcomes.
- Broad outcomes are a useful framework
- Its confusing for groups to place themselves- need chart to relate to last year's objectives
- All very wordy using dated jargon - must be a more efficient way of stating this.
- But what are relative priorities between outcomes?
- In principle good idea to fund by Broad outcome
- Its good to have priorities linked to strategies
- I agree with Broad aims but am concerned that advocacy services for the most vulnerable members of community is not mentioned

*Neither agree nor disagree* 1/27

- It is difficult/impossible to see how current grants are allocated to different headings and how Council will decide priorities

*Disagree/Strongly Disagree* 5/27

- They are actually quite limiting
- Mediation does not fall into regular categories of advice and support
- They are too vague and subject to interpretation.
- Could potentially limit range of services.

**Question 2**

**Do you think there are any changes that need to be made to the broad outcomes to make them easier to understand?**

*Yes* 11/27

- Make it as simple as possible
- The language is not at all user friendly. The main area I would wish to apply for help in is hardly covered and would not attract points
- Less jargon and more nitty gritty.
- Not clear how funding for an organisation has been split between outcomes  
The five outcomes are nearer: Be healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic wellbeing.
- 'Art' and 'sport' might well be more apart
- "Reduce knowledge barriers..." does not give weight to generalist advice- a service that actually directly enables clients to solve problems not just 'reduces knowledge barriers'. Such services help ALL citizens.
- The ones related to the Arts should link more closely with the City Council's arts strategy
- Add Advocacy, in our case by community volunteers

*No* 12/27

- As long as they are in tune with over OCC (and wider) strategies.
- I suggest make it clear that the list is ADVISORY not mandatory so if you have a good idea let us see it.

*Don't know* 4/27

### Question 3

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with using the bidding process for allocating advice themed grants?**

*Strongly agree/Agree* 13/27

- It is good to rationalise commissioning however the process its self is difficult to get right and expensive
- It is easier to do this for this kind of stand-alone work, and ensures get best service gets contract.
- But concern that some of smaller groups will not have the resources to compete. If too many contracts go to national or regional bodies- this weakens the local sector
- But only if quality is a major criteria- number of clients is not sufficient and cannot be monitored accurately. How will you measure quality- time consuming exercise? If not possible bidding will not work as you will give to those who promise the highest numbers.
- Have a preference for 3-year agreements- cannot plan services on one year grants

*Neither agree nor disagree* 1/27

- Still not sure why bidding necessary and what it actually means in the given context
- Could be overly bureaucratic for small organisations
- I don't have much experience of this area

*Disagree/Strongly Disagree* 6/27

- It does not value local rootedness and connection.
- As a non-statutory activity advice does not have to be dealt with by procurement so this is unnecessary.
- If the Legal Services Commission is to introduce Community Legal Advice networks in next few years, it would seem sensible to wait until this is clearer before making fundamental changes in advice provision eg by asking for bids which might favour certain structures which might have to subsequently be undone again.
- Excessive focus on cost/inadequate cost recovery for CVOs
- This would seem to me to be the end of neighbourhood advice I cannot believe this is enough money to satisfy a commercial enterprise.

*Don't Know* 7/27

### Question 4

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with having a budget for emergency grants?**

*Strongly agree/Agree* 24/27

- Sometimes emergency grants are very useful.
- Sometimes an easy to acquire emergency backup is necessary
- There are always emergencies that cannot be dealt with under a general heading
- To allow for unexpected change
- But criteria need to be clarified as it will be awarded on an ad hoc basis
- Other funders may fund on a different time-table to OCC
- It maintains an extra element of flexibility in the grant system

*Neither agree nor disagree* 1/27

- Not enough information to judge

*Disagree/Strongly Disagree* 2/27

- The amount is relatively small anyway. Rather fund sustainable services from the outset.

### Question 5

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the amounts set out for each of the broad outcomes?**

*Strongly agree/Agree* 14/27

- Demand will exceed supply. Broadly agree
- The amounts shown on page 4 is very good.
- Agree with minimal change, because more consultation is needed
- Set aside 10% for flexibility
- Very small amounts [changed between outcomes] wont make much difference.
- Given that to vast majority, Benefits and Debt limits what can be done in other advice areas
- It is good to have earmarked funds, however thses shouldn't preclude the Council being able to adjust these if circumstances demand this e.g. to respond to a particular new initiative in one area, or newly funded organisation.

*Neither agree nor disagree* 8/27

- Cannot tell if this based on current or future expectations.
- I don't have that kind of overview.
- Seems very diverse and I do not feel qualified to make a judgement
- It is hard to have an informed opinion in the absence of measures of demand and unmet need.
- Difficult to agree as advocacy to access services and involve community in volunteering not clear.

*Disagree/Strongly Disagree* 5/27

- Very little for Safer Communities
- Not enough for protect and enhance natural environment

### Question 6

**Is there anything else you would like to add about the plans in the prospectus for 2007/8?**

*Dealing with limited scope for change*

- As there is limited time for 07/08 it is best to divide funding in similar way to the past. Afterwards bigger changes need to be made to ensure value for money without destroying what is already.
- Given that there is not much scope for change we would prefer allocation of grant to existing providers who are performing well, and a smaller process for any left over.

*Coverage of broad outcomes not fit activities, or new activities suggested*

- The plans are very broad and at the same time do not cover many issues related to community centres. Community Centres are staffed by volunteers who do not have the time to spend interpreting City Council Strategies . Most volunteers are very busy people who devote their time to the priorities in their actual Centres.
- Mediation does not seem to fit into this year's criteria.
- Funding for the setting up of links between clubs and school, and clubs and PCTs.
- Recognition of Advocacy- has not been a priority in recent years as we have persistently been unsuccessful in bidding. If the City council do not wish to fund advocacy it would be helpful to state that and prevent us wasting time in applications.

*Process too complicated*

- It looks to have been made excessively complicated. I think it will prevent small organisations, in particular from applying
- Documents of this kind are frightening. I fill in forms by the ton and I know you can ignore a lot of the written material provided you meet the main objectives generally. You are in danger of overwhelming ordinary people so they cannot work with you. Give them a more human approach

*Miscellaneous*

- Oxford City Council should look at the activities of each organisation before grant approval
- Just not looking forward to filling in grant form for just one year AGAIN.

## SECTION 2- Scope of the review of all support for CVOs

### Question 7

**How strongly do you agree or disagree that the bidding process is an effective way for the City Council to select projects and services to fund?**

*Strongly agree/Agree* 13/26

- The bidding process is most appropriate.
- 80 to 90% effective.
- Full cost recovery needs to be understood by both sides otherwise CVO group could be tempted to underestimate them to win the bid
- But restricts City Council to give a small amount (under £1,000) with other authorities to other County- wide projects.

*Neither agree nor disagree* 3/26

- Very difficult where other funding streams are involved.
- Do not know the difference what bidding involves and to what actually happens now

*Disagree/Strongly Disagree* 6/26

- Difficult to apply the Council's values in competitive process which pitches local agencies one against another and absorbs huge time.
- Leads to too narrow a focus and reduces partnership work because organisations feel they are in competition for funding.
- It makes voluntary organisations work even harder for help.
- I cannot believe there is enough to satisfy a commercial enterprise
- This kind of process has the potential to work against small but highly effective smaller arts organisations

*Don't Know* 4/26

### Question 8

**How strongly do you agree or disagree with the use of narrow outcomes to help select projects and services to fund?**

*Strongly agree/Agree* 14/27

- But not acknowledging needs of socially disabled.
- As long as these are carefully selected/negotiated with local groups.
- To make sure the money is allocated properly and fairly
- The Council needs to demonstrate that it arrived at them objectively

*Neither agree nor disagree* 3/27

- How narrow outcomes will be used is not clear. If too narrow, they could stifle creativity and enthusiasm.
- As long as they are the right outcomes and should be led by the arts strategy (for arts projects)
- Problem is flexibility to respond to needs not yet identified

*Disagree/Strongly Disagree* 8/27

- Too prescriptive and therefore inflexible
- In section on Play there seems to be a sense that all facilities need to be open to all. this actually does not work for the autistic community which I represent. People with autism find the noise/bustle of the local sports hall/swimming pool intolerable and I devote a great deal of time and effort to finding ways of hiring venues which can be used privately by individuals
- with autism-eg hiring a pool just for our group. This sort of use is not covered. Not everyone can PARTICIPATE.
- Very dangerous. You will lose more that you gain- agencies will jump through hoops but quality advice will be lost in the process. Agencies already do work in a variety of outcomes- how do we access funding for those parts e.g. recruitment of volunteers?

*Don't Know* 2/27

### Question 9

#### How strongly do you agree or disagree that the Council should have an innovation grant?

*Strongly agree/Agree* 17/26

- Obvious benefit to developing experimental work
- It is very important to have an innovation grant. Some organisations need to have this grant.
- Projects should be judged on their value to the community and not on innovation alone.
- New ideas always necessary but there has to be proof of sustainability- not just a good idea.

*Neither agree nor disagree* 2/26

- What is meant by innovative funding ? Examples?
- Funders tend to like innovation, but not risk. without accepting risk you cannot innovate.

*Disagree/Strongly Disagree* 3/26

- Too complex. OCC should expect that all providers will be using innovation in service delivery. Shouldn't all services have some innovative strands, IE constant improvement?
- All other funders welcome innovatory projects; local authorities should focus on core costs.
- More need for stability rather than innovation and groups having to re-invent themselves

*Don't Know* 4/26

### Question 10

#### Should the funding available for less innovative projects be reduced to fund more innovative grants?

*Yes* 2/27

- Provided the grant is spent and spent properly

*No* 17/27

- Quality should be monitored that can look at innovation.
- Less innovative projects, so no need to have funding
- Funding for innovative work available from lots of other sources eg Trusts. Because other funders largely only fund new projects; local authorities are virtually the only funders to fund continuing core costs.
- Projects should be judged on their value to the community and not on innovation alone
- Because it is hard to get ongoing funding for work even when it is proved to be effective
- Fund extra.
- Less innovative doesn't necessarily mean less effective, and innovative projects can also be more risky/less successful
- Less innovative services may be serving a high priority need. To remove that may only create a crisis for that group of benefactors

*Don't know* 8/27

- Case by case must likely best course
- Define innovative

### Question 11

#### Should the Council take into account different type of support it gives organisations when considering a grant application?

*Yes* 15/27

- As long as full-cost recovery is looked at.
- The logic seems obvious
- Thought it did already- our rent is deducted form our grant before we get it
- Need City Council departments to work better on this. Rate relief is a seperate issue to grants.
- Too many 'reliefs' make organisations lazy, especially those who do raise income and cash flow.
- The given reliefs have very little to do with the projects which community centres carry out.
- This is the only way to reassure actual cost of the services provided by an agency
- Ongoing outcomes must be key touchstone
- All benefits received should be taken into consideration- e.g. free or reduced costs of premises etc.

No

9/27

- Some organisations cannot afford within their incomes
- Different budget headings!! Small organisations run on minimal funding.

Don't know

3/27

## Question 12

**Is there anything else you would like to add about the plans in the prospectus?**

### *Outright positive statements*

- Achieves good balance between OCC defining specific objectives/CVOs responding to perceived needs.
- Good to see an emphasis on quality and inclusion.

### *Build in capacity for CVOs to respond to experience on the ground*

- Please don't lose capacity to allow CVOs to set the agenda and respond to what they experience on the ground

### *Working closely with the community and voluntary sector*

- In principle the Council should be able to decide its priorities. But it may be more constructive to discuss with local voluntary organisations how to achieve these rather than pit them against one another
- The setting of the narrow objectives should be a process of consultation and negotiation with the relevant officers in the Council e.g. arts development officers and the sector itself

### *Things to look out for in implementing the process*

- The problem with grants, especially with ongoing grants that are to ameliorate running expenses is the uncertainty of the grant at all or part of the sum applied for.
- Making presentations could be very time consuming and only required where helpful
- The exercise is conducted as though the city council is the sole funder paying for outcomes. But it will often be one among several stakeholders/supporters of certain activities.

### *Presentation issues*

- Some paragraphs seem unfinished e.g. para 31. Some are unclear-Para 8
- Please supply a VERY SIMPLE SUMMARY OF HOW TO DO THINGS for the poorly educated, by clever folks in the community.

### *Area of work not covered by Broad Outcomes*

- It looks at present that it will provide nothing for a small group like mine which represents a group of families of very specific needs. [Autism]
- Advocacy

### *An alternative way*

- Would be better for key officers to have budgets that they can allocate to appropriate projects. that way they tend to become more involved and can monitor projects using their knowledge and expertise.

### *Is this all necessary?*

- There must be an easier way of decision making? Do people have time to read and understand the implications? Is all the jargon and the amount of hard work which has been put into the plans really necessary?

### *Sector specific comments*

- [Advice] agencies need to be encouraged to work together. Oxford City Council is not getting value for money for clients of small agencies duplicating basic costs.
- Play; age groups. Under 8s funding is mainly for child care i.e. for working parents. It is vital that funding is also available for sessional play. Children centres will not be able to do every thing without additional funds.
- Play for 3-8 has not funding from the EYDCP Children's Centre – the current funding is for childcare only—Play must be a priority for children 3 to 8.