

DeSOISSONS Oliver

From: Jan Penrose [jpenrose6@yahoo.co.uk]

Sent: 24 July 2006 10:58

To: DeSOISSONS Oliver

Subject: Innovation grants

Dear Oliver - thanks for the meeting on Thursday. I hope you didn't feel too battered by the end of it!

I promised to write you an email about my concerns regarding the OCC setting up an Innovation Fund. I work mainly on fundraising from charitable trusts and other funding organisations (eg. the Lottery), and one of the major frustrations that I have, (shared, I know, by many other fundraisers), is that there is great enthusiasm amongst these funders for "innovative work" -many are keen to fund the new and the untested, to the extent that it can be difficult to find enough funders prepared to fund ongoing, tried and tested work, that we need to continue to offer, because we know that it addresses the needs that are out there. Asylum Welcomme is a perfect example of this: having received very good funding to build up our services over the last 4/5 years, it is now proving almost impossible to raise the money to keep them going, to the extent that we are having to reduce our budget by £50,000 this year, cutting staff hours and services.

I can see the sense of your argument for an Innovation Fund, and I agree there could be a place for funding of small experimental pilot schemes, from a fund that could be accessed quickly and flexibly, with minimal demands for defined outcomes etc. However, I am concerned if this is going to reduce the size of the budget available for grants to ongoing work - speaking from the point of view of the voluntary sector, I feel there is an important role for OCC to ensure the continued existence of good quality, long-term services in the city, in contrast to the vagaries of national funders.

I hope that is useful. You kindly offered to check for me how the grant to Asylum Welcome this year has been classified - whether as an advice service etc. If you are able to let me know, it would be really useful.

Many thanks, and best wishes

Jan Penrose
Asylum Welcome

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Oxford City Council – Oxford Playhouse feedback on Draft Prospectuses

- 1 That the City Council is inviting our comments on this prospectus is, as always, a welcome sign. With new personnel, new structural and political parameters at OCC, we appreciate that "the case" may need to be refreshed in the light of new imperatives. However for those of us who have had a long history working with and in the city and who have contributed to successive strategies, policies and consultations we trust that our confidence in the process will be engendered by a very real engagement.

In relation to the process and the pre-amble to the prospectus, OCC could maximise the benefits of this consultation by firstly giving a more upbeat introduction (the language of the consultation documents should be clear and positive, minimising negative interpretation or confusion), which paints the picture both positive (and if necessary negative), of the status quo and future plans ie: summarise what this budget supports and what in turn these organisations return to the authority.

Secondly the documents could do more to anticipate some generally held concerns by;

- a) recognising the skill levels, experience, status and value of its partner organisation
- b) allaying fears that this is a pre-cursor to budgetary cuts
- c) explaining how/where this exercise fits in vis a vis the existing cultural/leisure/arts published strategies
- d) establish that it is not an imposed solution – stressing that organisations themselves will work closely with the Council to reach a useful solution.

How also does it fit in with the recent Arts at the Strategic Centre consultation?

Lastly, as the local cultural development agency, should Oxford Inspires not be asked to comment?

- 2 The consultation process and writing of the prospectus should be seen as a genuine opportunity to work in partnership with Arts, Community and Voluntary organisations and to mine their combined skills and experience. Also to withstand the political uncertainties we have experienced over the past few years. There is a wealth of skill, experience and dedication here with many individuals working over years to deliver great activities or services for local people - organisations need support to play to their strengths. Central to the outcomes should be stability, sustainability, capacity building and development of quality, all which in the case of the Arts could be seriously undermined by competitive tendering or one-year grants.

Specific issues with draft prospectus 07/08 and Future Allocation from Arts/Oxford Playhouse perspective

1. Please explain how 38 broad outcomes and respective narrow outcomes are incorporated and/or relate to the existing Arts Strategy.
2. Arts and Cultures projects can deliver areas of all main themes.
3. Bidding process needs to adequately address the qualitative (as well as financial) differences between very different cultural organisations, for example the Playhouse, Pegasus, and Creation – their distinctive catchments/contributions. It will be important to clarify who judges quality – Council Officers? Councillors? In producing a qualitative assessment framework it needs to be considered that a cornerstone of the vibrancy of Oxford's cultural scene is "choice" and breadth of opportunity.
4. The bidding process must not be used, or be designed to be used, as a producing/creative tool. The organisations should take the lead and shape, the City Council should provide the enabling framework.
5. Three year funding agreements are crucial to the sustainability of arts organisations. It is impossible to build rigour into business plans, look forward strategically to exploit artistic and educational opportunities (joint working for example) without the ability to plan effectively. This is a basic business principle. The City Council needs to understand the business of producing and presenting arts, including the relationship between funding (guaranteed income), strategic planning and the best quality work (see below). Likewise, arts organisations welcome a deeper engagement and understanding of the City Councils objectives.
6. The Prospectus should highlight the huge and vital contribution arts organisations make to the city, not just to the high quality end cultural offerings, but also in terms of community and education work (over 9,000 people involved in Playhouse education projects in 2004/5 for example), tourism, student life, and contribution to local economy. The economic impact of Oxford Playhouse alone in 04/05 was £9 million.
7. Cultural activities, associated community and education work notwithstanding, should not be viewed as less vital than social agenda areas. Creativity and 'spiritual' development are crucial to a successful society. While understanding the need to account to the electorate, blunt measurement tools that do not recognise 'value' in all its senses risk a return to the Arts only being justified on a social agenda.
8. The City Council must recognise the value of audience activity and we seriously challenge the insertion of the restrictive classification 'non audience'. As distinct from commercial arts and entertainment activities the programme at the Playhouse (as with other non-commercial venues locally) is inherently developmental – containing both high quality work and the wide range of opportunities associated with it in the form of workshops etc. However, the route into the additional activities is usually through being an audience member. Similarly, our high quality community and education activities are directly connected to the programme, and therefore 'audiences'. It is a misconception to perceive community/education/developmental activities as distinct from the programme (and audiences) – they are inextricably connected. Any move to devalue or under fund 'audiences' would dismantle community and education activities and remove the opportunity for audiences to get more practically involved. Not only is it through watching a performance that most people are introduced to theatre e.g. the annual pantomime, but also, through the box office income generated by the most popular shows and performances the rest of the programme is underpinned. This is particularly true of the more developmental and niche work, as well as the educational and outreach components.

9. The City Council must ensure it takes into consideration all of arts organisations funding partners and the delicate relationships between these when considering tendering in order to prevent disruption of core funding. In the case of the Playhouse, the City Council was one of the triumvirate feeding the Playhouse's re-opening and renaissance. Recent protracted negotiations with the University – another of the triumvirate, have led to the restoring of our grant following a 40% cut. A corner stone of this argument was the interdependency partnership between funders.
10. Does "Safer" logically link in with "Active" and "Healthy"?
11. " A better living environment" presumes a consensus on the current situation.
12. It would be useful to clarify the potential impact of emergency and smaller grants on the wider funding for larger/more stable organisations.
13. It will be important to reaffirm the clear strategic objectives for culture in Oxford, centred on quality, in order to ensure social agenda areas can be considered in parallel. Without being clear there is a danger that a vocal minority could respond negatively against large sums allocated to arts and culture.
14. It would be useful to separate out physical costs and activity costs in looking at grant allocation
15. As £0 is so far allocated against providing venues for cultural and educational activity it will be vital to understand how this will be reassessed and what resources will be allocated to this area. In order to deliver the strategic objectives set out in the Culture Strategy adequate resources will have to be allocated to support this broad outcome.
16. The Objectives and Outcomes of the theme 'Vibrant and Inclusive Economy' could be more comprehensive.
17. Funded organisations will need to have an example of the proposed cost recovery method of delivery allocation.
18. The innovation section is not as dynamic as it could be, and should reflect the huge benefits of previous innovative projects such as Oxford Inspires 'Evolving City'. The amount of money earmarked should also be published to allow discussion.
19. There is no mention of 2008 or 2012 which will require special focus and additional resources for special projects.
20. Crime prevention should come out of policing budgets in order to maximise the resources for particular activities as well as the benefits of those activities. It would be a false economy to divert money away from play/leisure/well-being agendas which are arguably harder to find other resources for than crime initiatives.

Oxford Playhouse summary contribution to Themes & Objectives and Outcomes

(those in *red italics* are suggested inclusions)

Active & Healthier Communities

Objective	Broad Outcome	Playhouse contribution
Increased active participation in cultural and recreational activities	Have a high proportion of population motivated and taking part in physical activity, and participating (<i>non-audience</i>) in the arts	Over 9,000 people participating in education and community activities per annum. Over 200 dedicated events, including residential summer schemes.
	Provide support for those aspiring to high level skill/national/regional standard in sport and arts	Development and training offered at Playhouse. Student Drama. Internationally renowned.
	Provide venues for cultural and recreational activities	Oxford Playhouse is a 613 seat theatre situated at the heart of the city. Founded in 1921 it continues to attract audiences of 180,000 per annum, with capacity running well above peer average at 65-70%. The Burton Taylor Studio theatre (50 seats) is also run by the Playhouse.
	Develop an International outlook amongst the local population	The Playhouse has an established regular programme of high quality visiting work from around the world. The Arts Council see the venue as 'a major platform for International work in the region' and programming work from abroad is a cornerstone of our programme – with plans to develop this further. Unlike many comparable venues the Playhouse attracts a healthy audience to International work emphasising both demand for work and our ability to attract receptive audiences.

Increase number and range of people going to see art/art events	Have a wide range of audience art events	Oxford Playhouse is a medium scale regional receiving and producing venue, with a reputation for presenting high quality British and international work at the heart of Oxford. The Playhouse Programme consists of distinctive seasons of work which will include contemporary & classic repertoires, new writing, international work, comedy, contemporary dance, music, music theatre, poetry, young peoples theatre, student work and non-professional companies
	Providing venues for art, sport and community activities	
Increase range and numbers of children and young people playing safely	Increase access to after school and holiday activities	The Playhouse has a well established Education and community programme running around 200 events per annum. In 2004/5 over 9000 people participated in an activity.
Promotion of community cohesion	Offer information and network opportunities	
	Build a sense of identity for the area	Oxford Playhouse is a corner stone of the city's cultural heritage as well as being one of the most important city centre venues. Through its high quality programme, education and community work, as well as work with key local organisations such as Oxford Inspires, the Playhouse plays a major role in defining the identify of the city.
	Increase understanding between cultural groups	The Playhouse has an established and high quality International programme, as well as undertaking work with Maximise – an Arts Council initiative to help build audiences for culturally diverse work. Additionally Oxford Playhouse was part of the Cultural Diversity Consortium, helping to develop, present and build audiences for diverse work.

Opportunities for life

Raise levels of income, education and skills attainment in most deprived areas	Improve employment prospects and employability	Work experience programme, Comm/Ed work with schools/community groups etc
<i>Provide affordable opportunities to experience high quality/unique cultural activities</i>	<i>Access to culture and associated learning opportunities are increased</i>	

Vibrant and inclusive economy

Strengthen the role that the community and voluntary sector plays in the local economy	Increase number and time of people volunteering	Oxford Playhouse has a well established volunteer programme with approx 120 people undertaking ushering and other duties.
<i>Increase access to educational, cultural and recreational activities that promote learning, internationalism and personal development</i>	<i>Opportunities for individuals and groups to experience and participate in activities are increased</i>	

DeSOISSONS Oliver

From: Jennie.Rhodes@artscouncil.org.uk
Sent: 28 July 2006 18:08
To: DeSOISSONS Oliver
Cc: NEWPORT Claire; THOMPSON Claire;
andrew.nairne@modernartoxford.org.uk
Subject: Draft prospectus for support to community and voluntary organisations 2007
Importance: High

Dear Oliver

Further to our telephone conversation earlier this week I am writing with a formal response to the above consultation from Arts Council England, South East.

Firstly I would like to thank you for taking the time to talk through the proposal and process and for inviting a response from the Arts Council.

Having spoken to colleagues in the culture and business unit at the city council, as well as to arts organisations represented at the meeting on Monday 17th July, both Arts Council and they felt that their initial concerns had been taken on board and that their involvement in the process will be much clearer for them going forward.

Whilst the further year of a one year funding agreement for arts organisations is not ideal, we do understand that such reviews take time and unforeseen circumstances can make delay unavoidable. However beyond 2007/08 a return to the 3 year arrangement should be a priority and on a practical level would make planning and therefore the ability to programme to meet Oxford City Council's objectives easier. For your information the Arts Council is in its 2nd year of the current 3 year cycle and the next 3 year agreements (from April 2008) will be confirmed in Autumn / Winter 2007/08.

Arts Council regularly funds a number of the organisations affected by the consultation and decisions are made in dialogue with the Oxford City Council. Between April 2005 and March 2008 the total Arts Council investment into the city through regular funding of those organisations will be £4,930,245. We would therefore request inclusion in any conversation concerning changes to funding levels to them.

With reference to the wording around participation under objective 2.2 and the broader outcome referring to 'non-audience'. Arts partners and the Arts Council would like to see this removed as it is confusing and not in line with our targets in relation to participation in the arts. Our Public Service Agreement (PSA) target with the DCMS refers to 'Increasing the numbers who participate in arts activity at least twice a year by 2% and increasing the number who attends arts events at least twice a year by 3%'. Participation is about 'attending' and 'doing' and the term 'non-audience' excludes vast numbers of people engaging in arts activity through visiting galleries and theatres, as well as at least two of the key arts organisations in Oxford, who deliver both international and community based work. We would therefore request the removal of the phrase '(non audience)' from the text altogether.

Whilst some of the organisations we jointly fund could be described as voluntary and community organisations, we would argue that others do not fit comfortably into this category and have very different core purposes. They do have education and community programmes and as part of their agreements with Arts Council this is a key part of what they do. However they are of major strategic importance to the city in terms of tourism and

economic agendas and therefore need to be seen separately from community and voluntary organisations.

The Culture and Business Unit of the city council has the knowledge and expertise to inform this process and the arts and cultural strategies must be represented in the final prospectus. Regular dialogue about our jointly funded organisations is therefore essential to ensure the best outcomes for all and we would want to be consulted throughout the process. We would suggest including a member of the unit on an steering group taking this work forward.

I hope you are able to take these points forward and we would welcome further discussion with you throughout the consultation process.

On a different note and in relation to your question about procurement the best person for you to speak to would be Scott Pugh, Head of Legal Services within our national office, tel: 020 7973 6511.

Kind regards

Jennie Rhodes

Resource Development Officer
Arts Council England, South East
Direct line +44 (0)1273 763033
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From David Trebilcock
Cutteslowe Community Association

Comments on prospectus

Firstly I welcome the review of grant allocation and the consultation process.

I also welcome the broad outcomes as described in the prospectus.

As Oliver suggested at the meeting on 18.7.06., I think there is a strong case for a section in the prospectus which is dedicated specifically to supporting **community development work**. This could include a number of elements aimed at strengthening individual communities and promoting the role of community associations, including work aimed at promoting community cohesion and identity (as mentioned in the 06-07 allocation).

My main concern in all this is that the City Council works hard to achieve a clear overview of the City as a whole. This seems essential to me if the grants system is to be fair, and seen to be fair.

I would suggest that this should include the following:

Mapping the real needs of particular neighbourhoods across Oxford

- not relying on historical patterns of resource allocation
- ensuring that historical patterns of neglect in some areas (eg Cutteslowe!) are addressed and not replicated in the future
- ensuring that small areas / pockets of deprivation are not overlooked (eg Cutteslowe!) - these areas do not require the same level of funding as bigger estates, but they still require resources!
- ensuring that 'new' communities with serious emerging social needs are not left out of the equation (eg Waterways, North Oxford)
- ensuring that socio-economic data (SOAs etc) is complemented by input from and about real people from the respective communities

Assessing the capacity of community associations to address these needs

- Community Associations should be well placed to be key partners in meeting identified need and drawing attention to remaining unmet needs
- Community Associations may lack funding / resources / organisational skills / expertise / capacity / management etc to address such issues single-handed and the allocation of grants must have some role in strengthening their role

Funding considerations

- Ensuring that grants are allocated in ways which meet (evidence-based) identified needs (eg background levels of poverty / SOA etc but also specific areas of work eg elderly, personal knowledge of communities and even micro needs specific to parts of neighbourhoods)
- Ensuring that grants are allocated in such a way that funding is re-distributed to take account of relative historical neglect

- The Council should not give in to pressure to fund things because it has always been done that way in the past - even if that causes discontent amongst those with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo
- Ensuring that the City Council takes a pro-active role (based on mapping / needs analysis) in encouraging / promoting / seeking out / initiating / supporting applications which might not otherwise see the light of day. This might mean officer time being dedicated to working with a specific community association and providing time / expertise / mentoring / modelling to access the grants system in a way that might not otherwise happen. Similarly it might mean officer time dedicated to brokering partnerships with other agencies / community associations to make delivery of services more feasible / robust
- Ensuring that the application process is streamlined and (please!) as non-bureaucratic as possible (otherwise smaller centres esp those without paid community workers and who rely on volunteers are likely to opt out with the effect of excluding the communities in which they work). The streamlining / lack of bureaucracy should also apply to monitoring / evaluation after grants have been awarded.
- Ensuring that grant-giving is considered hand in hand with other issues and ways of offering support eg considering the possibility of offering time-limited admin help for community associations, to assist in the delivery of a specific service supported by a grant. This issue can be critical for community associations who often struggle in this way - and successful delivery might very well depend on such support. Executed properly, this can also be an investment in capacity-building; a community association which is adequately supported through the life of one grant is more likely to acquire the confidence and expertise to re-apply for another grant at a later stage and be able to manage this effectively.
- Considering other infrastructure needs related to the delivery of grant-supported activity. Community Associations are more likely to be effective in delivering projects if the grants are accompanied by support in other vital areas. In particular I have in mind working with volunteers (recruiting, supporting, supervising and above all a centralised system of CRB checking ie with the City Council being an umbrella organisation for (cost-free? / subsidised?) checking). A similar point was made at the meeting about infrastructure needs like transport. CCA spends large amounts on transport for young people, families with young children, older residents (esp when wheelchair transport is required). A (fairly allocated) centralised transport resource would be invaluable.
- I very much welcome references to risk-taking and innovation in the prospectus. Obviously this has to be carefully managed but I think taking risks is an inevitable part of community development work and where appropriate should be encouraged. I think this is linked to comments at the meeting about harnessing energy and creativity in the community.
- I have no detailed knowledge of advice work, but I think the same principles apply to advice-themed grants. Thus I would suggest that in

practice, a bidding process should include the elements mentioned above ie a City-wide perspective, redressing historical neglect, attention to pockets of deprivation where there are needs but where there is no / inadequate provision, and a creative 'joined up' approach including adequate consideration of methods of service delivery (eg winning trust / relationship-building / home visits / work across communities / capacity building / seconded workers etc rather than just benefits surgeries).

David Trebilcock
CCA community worker

20th July 2006

DeSOISSONS Oliver

From: CARLEY Rebecca
Sent: 01 August 2006 15:13
To: DeSOISSONS Oliver
Subject: FW: Comments on grants consultation

Oliver

Some comments from Angela and me.

Rebecca Carley
Area Co-ordinator
Oxford City Council
Tel: 01865 252803
Fax: 01865 252581

From: CRISTOFOLI Angela
Sent: 01 August 2006 15:06
To: CARLEY Rebecca; LAPAGE Fergus
Subject: RE: Comments on grants consultation

Agree with all comments below and added in a couple of comments. Also:

- not all grants are covered - no mention of events grant under the section about allocation of budgets. Also feel that emergency fund of up to 25k needs very strict guidelines - who decides on these? Is it the same panel as listed for other grants?

- have councillors been included in consultation and PH?

Angela

From: CARLEY Rebecca
Sent: 31 July 2006 11:23
To: CRISTOFOLI Angela; LAPAGE Fergus
Subject: Comments on grants consultation

See below. Need to make a formal response. Comments? I need to get this to Nicky and Oliver asap. Also, you both need to comment on the prospectus elements relating to your areas.

1. Wholeheartedly agreed that all financial support (or support in kind) provided by the council should be calculated and assessed as grant e.g. below market rent (or no rent in many cases), rates etc.
2. Pleased that approaches for grant-type expenditure from area cttee discretionary budgets will be assessed and administered via the grants unit. However, Area Cttees will require that this is done as the opportunities arise and not shoe-horned into a timetable e.g. 3 times a year. needs to be monthly otherwise time delay too great for some projects. Also says under point 23 p3 that 'grants staff and specialist staff will review these application'. I think we should be part of this assessment process even if we reviewed applications to eachothers areas to avoid any bias.
3. Do not agree that applicants should be advised of provisional recommendations regarding their grant application and offered a right to object. However, do advise that they should be informed of the proposed grant (once finalised) and the committee date on which it will be determined.
4. N.B. EH and Planning make grants which will frequently be to private individual e.g. conservation

building grants, disabled facilities grants.

5. We note that it is proposed that grants are addressed by themed service objectives and budgets apportioned accordingly. - what about SOA data? Is there any targeting of budgets?

V. uncomfortable with the (lack of) role proposed for Area Committees given that they are the responsible committees for community grants.

The only role offered is that of inserting Area Plan outcomes in the prospectus and endorsing the prospectus as a whole and the Area Chair being able to comment on proposed grants within each area. In effect, EB becomes (as it has always been) the responsible committee for all community grant giving.

This does not allow Area Committees to exercise their service responsibilities for community grants.

Rebecca Carley
Area Co-ordinator
Oxford City Council
Tel: 01865 252803
Fax: 01865 252581

North Oxford Association

Further Comments on the Draft Prospectus for Support to Community & Voluntary Organisations 2007 – 2012

Following the discussion at the Consultation Meeting, 20th July 2006, we should like these additional points to be considered:

- The guidelines concentrate on large-scale grants for major projects. It would be preferable for small grants and large grants to have separate guidelines and application procedures.
- We should like to see much shorter application and monitoring forms for the small grants. Could some provision be made in cases where the need is on-going and the request is repeated each year? Is it necessary to have to send in membership details, area covered etc? At the moment the forms seem to be geared to one-off grants for specific items.
- The guidelines and procedures for all grants should be as simple and as short as possible.
- There are no objectives aimed at the elderly and the infirm. These are groups that benefit particularly from our services. At present, it is difficult to see how a grant to support these services could be matched to your objectives.

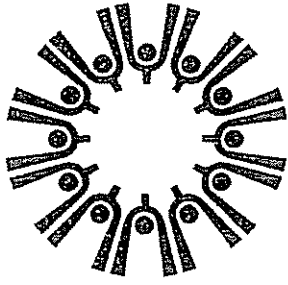
DeSOISSONS Oliver

From: Fran Bennett [fran.bennett@dsl.pipex.com]
Sent: 21 July 2006 08:35
To: DeSOISSONS Oliver
Subject: draft prospectus

dear Oliver
thank you for listening to our concerns at the consultation meeting last night.

One thing I didn't raise in the meeting was that the draft prospectus for 2007/08 mentions the Legal Services Commission's plans for a new method of funding which includes CLANs and CLACs, and suggests that this is one reason for going for bidding/tendering in the near future. I think the logic may in fact be the other way round. The legal apparatus involved in a bid, it seems to me, could be more difficult (than grants) to unravel if arrangements needed to be changed as a result of the CLAN having to be set up in pilot or final form in the near future. This would be the case in particular if any form of joint organisation (eg consortium/management arrangement) was contemplated as being necessary for bidding/tendering. In addition, it is not yet clear (to me at least) whether the CLANs are going to incorporate all funding for any kind of advice, or only funding for those who currently have a legal aid franchise; at the moment, for example, our advice centre has a quality mark but no franchise.

Best wishes
Fran Bennett
Treasurer, BLNSS Ltd (Agnes Smith Advice Centre)



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Nicky Harrison
Oliver De Soissons
Oxford City Council

26 July 2006

Dear Nicky and Oliver

Grants Prospectus

This letter is to supplement the formal reply we enclose using your questionnaire. It attempts to address the issue that I see arising around funding for infrastructure services. It is intended to clarify not criticise, in order to find a productive way forward.

My assumption is that OCVA funding has been divided into three boxes on page 5 of the green paper:

Increase number and time of people volunteering	£11,000
Increase numbers of voluntary groups that are stable and effectively managed	£10,500
Community and voluntary organisations work closely together	£8,000

This illustrates the long-standing problem that we have with all three of our ongoing grants, from yourselves, the county council and the PCT. No one really knows what they are buying out of the suite of services we try to provide. Your figures obviously attempt to get a handle on this but are an arbitrary division of our current grant, which bears no relation to the reality of our budget. This will make it very difficult for us to apply for funding for next year because we can't possibly say that we will deliver those services for the prices you have attached to them. When we applied for funding last year we were hopeful of obtaining a grant from SODC in addition to the three listed above. This did not happen and we were left with a £50,000 shortfall, approximately, for our core activities: resource centre and funding information, mailings and newsletter, volunteer brokerage, networking and partnership work. Trustees had to take a difficult decision about how to cut costs and chose to reduce staff time dedicated to the volunteer centre to a minimum on the grounds that it is better to try and deliver the other services adequately than to damage them all by cutting across the board. We have also made the finance officer post redundant and split financial administration and management between myself and the office manager.

Our current budget, therefore, assumes that the bulk of city council funding is split between information resources and networking, with a small percentage allocated to overall management, administration and costs of governance.

Yesterday the OVID consortium decided to apply to Capacity Builders for funding from October to support volunteering, as our top need in the county. I hope it will therefore be possible for us to have a dialogue in September, by which time we will have an answer from Capacity Builders, about which parts of the OCVA business plan the city council is interested in supporting as a priority. I am just finalising a five year plan and budget which shows the full costs of each service and would be happy to share it with you if it would be useful at this stage. Looking at your proposed narrow outcomes, I am sure you realise, for example, that you have never paid for us to deliver training courses and if that is what you want us to deliver, we will need funding comparable with what we have had from the LSC for the past couple of years. Likewise mentoring of new groups implies a dedicated worker, which we do not at present have funding for.

I hope these comments are helpful. Overall, I have a concern that if our funding has been split into boxes to fit your new outcomes, you have done the same for other groups and this will lead to confusion for more people than just OCVA. It might be safer therefore to stick to a more broadbrush categorisation this year.

If you want to talk about any of this, I'm around throughout August.

With kind regards

Alison Baxter
Chief Executive

OCVA

Grant Prospectus Questionnaire

Feedback continued

Section 1

1) Although in agreement with using the broad outcomes to select projects and services, reading through them it is very confusing to know where groups should place themselves. It is stated in point 13 (Draft Prospectus, Section 1 – Allocating Community Grants 07/08) that the funds will be allocated to the same areas of work but it would be beneficial for groups to have a glossary of terms that show exactly how these outcomes are related to last year's themes. It would give organisations a clearer idea as to which heading to place themselves.

Is there scope for the City Council to re-direct groups and organisations that might have placed themselves under the wrong outcomes. Will there be the opportunity for groups to re-apply under different outcomes if this situation arises? (Big Lottery Fund practice)

2) As stated in point 1 a glossary stating what the previous outcomes were and how they relates to this year's would be very useful to make them easier to understand.

It is also very difficult and unclear for groups who have been funded in the past to see which outcome their funding sits under.

Also, if an organisation's funding has been split to cover three or four outcomes - what is the criteria for segregating the funding this way?

3) Although there is a feeling of general agreement regarding the bidding process there is concern that with all organisations bidding against each other some of the smaller groups in the local voluntary sector will not have the resources to compete at such a level. If too many contracts are awarded to national or regional bodies this weakens the local sector.

OCVA agree that there should be support and workshops in place for groups going through the bidding process.

4) No further comments.

5) The amounts set out on page 4 of the prospectus should only go through minimal change, if at all. To change figures dramatically at this stage would cause too much disruption without consultation. Consultation takes time and seeing as this is another holding year it seems better to maintain the status quo.

6) Other comments

Please see accompanying letter from Alison Baxter, Chief Executive, OCVA

Section 2

7) The bidding process seems to be an effective way of working for larger organisations/pieces of work. But we firmly believe there should still be a grant system for the smaller amounts of money. Local groups will possibly struggle to compete with regional and national organisations in an open bidding process.

We are still concerned about point 12, full cost recovery. Full cost recovery is not necessarily compatible with a sympathetic bidding process. The temptation is to reduce costs in order to put in a winning tender. Both sides need to understand this.

In point 7 it is also stated that with a bidding process in place it will gain cost savings but this is not necessarily so. Bidding on a full cost recovery basis will mean that services could cost more, not less.

There will be more responsibility for smaller groups to manage their budgets with absolutely no margin for error once a contract price is agreed on. This represents an increased risk.

8) The narrow outcomes and how they will be used to help select projects has not been made completely clear. We are unsure as to whether all of the narrow outcomes are to be covered when deciding on what projects to fund or if only a selection of them will be used and if this is the case, will groups be told what outcomes are to be targeted?

It is good that the outcomes remain broad. If they become too narrow groups will find themselves trying to fit into set boxes that will stifle creativity and enthusiasm around projects.

9) No further comments

10) Funding for less innovative projects shall not be reduced to fund more innovative grants. The general feeling from OCVA is that there is more of a need for stability rather than innovation and groups having to re-invent themselves.

11) When considering a grant application the City Council should take into account the rental of City Council property. This also needs to work the other way around as well so that offices dealing with setting rents are aware of the grant level of the organisation in question.

Comments on rate relief – this should not need to come into the equation when the council are considering a grant. It is a separate issue and should be dealt with as one.

12) Other comments

Re: Draft Prospectus – Appendix

Under how to apply, invitations to bid for projects over £5K to £100K

The text says that applications must be supported with a presentation of project.

We feel that this would be very time consuming, not just for the organisation but the City Council as well. Is it absolutely necessary that presentations have to be made for projects below £100K?

DeSOISSONS Oliver

From: HARRISON Nicola
Sent: 31 July 2006 11:14
To: DeSOISSONS Oliver
Subject: FW: Oxford Printmakers/draft

From: Catriona Brodribb [mailto:catriona.brodribb@dsl.pipex.com]
Sent: 31 July 2006 09:56
To: HARRISON Nicola
Subject: Oxford Printmakers/draft doct

Hello Nicola

thank you on behalf of Oxford Printmakers for the draft consultation documents.
This is only a skimpy reply-partly in response to our telephone conversation held last week.

My immediate concerns are:

bidding: not sure how a group like ours fits in with the bidding process, though I think from our conversation that what we do would not come under the 'bidding' category.

Needing references for grant applications: I am not sure of the need for this, I understand that core funding as such, is on its way out and what is happening instead is project-funding, or rather 'outcomes' which sort of is more like a project - based approach. i.e. something specific and measurable.

Most of the people who could provide us with references are already members, and therefore we would need to go out-county to find someone who could do this for us, I wonder is this really necessary? Surely an annual interview/review with your arts officer when appointed, would cut out the need for this?

How would the scoring system work?

Other concerns are that your list of broad and narrow outcomes as listed on the table (blue document) p 18-19 might not overlap with our intentions.

Hopefully they do tally, but what if they didn't.

We set our own agenda in accordance with what we perceive that we need, but what if our goals differ from yours?

These are probably minor concerns, but they are what immediately spring to mind.

I have not filled in a questionnaire as I am not sure fully sure that I understand the implications of the changes across the board. It is too big to take in, and my colleagues feel the same way.

Cheers
Catriona Brodribb

DeSOISSONS Oliver

From: HARRISON Nicola
Sent: 28 July 2006 11:01
To: HOLMAN Neil; DeSOISSONS
Subject: FW: Funding for Play in Oxford City.

Importance: High

Hi Neil and Oliver,
I have not yet replied to Chris's email. Can you let me have your veiws so I can respond
Nicky

From: Sewell, Chris - CYP&F - Early Years & Family Support [mailto:Chris.Sewell@Oxfordshire.gov.uk]
Sent: 27 July 2006 14:42
To: HARRISON Nicola
Cc: Willis, Kay - CYP&F - Early Years & Family Support; Duffy, Frances - CYP&F - Early Years & Family Support; Smith, Amanda - CYP&F - Early Years & Family Support
Subject: Funding for Play in Oxford City.

Dear Nicola,

Long time no see.

I have only just received a copy of your consultation document about the funding of playschemes etc in the City. I would like to point out that the assertion that 3-8s are now being catered for by the county council though the EYDCP and Children's Centres is completely false. We have received funding for children's centres which we are using to meet the very tight government spec for as range of integrated services, including childcare, family and health services, qualified teacher support, inclusion etc. Although the funding is strictly 0-5s (not 0-8s) it will not be sufficient to allow any subsidy of holiday playschemes except in terms of overall management costs. Childcare is expensive and most of our childcare will be requiring subsidies from the revenue allocations over the next few years, and possibly for longer. We cannot also subsidise playschemes from the funding available.

I am aware that at least two of our centres bid to the city council to provide subsidised daycare during the summer holiday and that this was turned down on the grounds that our costs were too high. I must warn you that if the City Council takes the view that the county council and children's centres should fund or subsidise playschemes in the city, the biggest losers will be the children themselves who will have no playschemes to go to. We still need to work together in developing a strategy that will support provision for 3-8s in the city.

I am sorry that this response comes late in the day and without the time to read your proposals in full. It would have been much easier if we had been drawn into the consultation earlier on. I only chanced upon your proposals through one of our centres.

If you are able to respond with an opportunity to discuss this further with you, Kay Willis, City Childcare Development Manager, is the person who would represent our

service.

Chris Sewell
Parenting Education and Family Support Manager (City Children's Centres)
Children, Young People & Families
☒ - Early Learning and Childcare Service, Macclesfield House, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1NA
☎ - 01865 810517 Fax - 01865 816226

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From: Willis, Kay - CYP&F - Early Years & Family Support
[mailto:Kay.Willis@Oxfordshire.gov.uk]
Sent: Thu 27/07/2006 12:13
To: HARRISON Nicola
Cc: Powell, Amanda - CYP&F - Early Years & Family Support
Subject: Future funding of playschemes in the City

Dear Nicola

As Senior Childcare Development Officer in Oxford City and new in post it has been brought to my attention that 'The City Council is considering concentrating funding on the provision of activities for 8 to 19 yearolds, split 50/50 between 8-12s and 13 - 19s. Currently national funding (DfES) is providing support for under 8s, through the County Council and the Early Years and Childcare Partnership, and children's centres. The City Council would like to see most playschemes it funds including disabled children and young people...' Whilst it is excellent that the City Council is including the needs of disabled children and young people there seems to be a misconception that 'Currently national funding (DfES) is providing support for under 8s, through the County Council and the Early Years and Childcare Partnership, and children's centres.

I would like to stress this is a false understanding of the nature of children's centres and early years funding.

Whilst it is true there is some pump priming this can also benefit all facilities for children up to the age of 14 years (16 years for disabled children). However this is based on a provision providing childcare and on a fee paying basis by parents which has to ensure the provision is sustainable. Parents on lower income would be able to subsidise fees by applying for tax credits but only if they are working.

If the City Council only looks at funding activities for children from 8 years there will be many under 8's unable to attend provision due to affordability or have a provision to go to. I urge the County Council to reconsider this decision and include the needs of under 8's in their funding strategy. Please could you ensure my comments are included in the consultation.

I would be very happy to meet with you to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me as I am extremely keen to work in partnership with the City Council to ensure the needs of all children and young people are met

Best regards,

Kay