

To: City Executive Board

Date: 22 October 2008 **Item No:**

Report of: Head of Community Housing and Community Development

Title of Report: To approve the 2009-10 annual grant prospectus

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To approve the 2009-10 annual grant prospectus for Oxford City Council's support for Community and Voluntary Organisations (CVOs)

Key decision Yes

Executive lead member: Councillor Bance

Report Approved by:

Finance: Andy Collett

Legal: Lindsay Cane

Policy Framework: Oxford Community Strategy and Corporate Plan

Recommendation(s):

Approve the annual grants prospectus for 2009-2010, as a framework for allocating the indicative £1,633,759 grants budget to community and voluntary organisations (CVOs).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2006 Executive Board accepted recommendations of a review of the grants process, designed to make it more open, seen to be fair, deliver strategic goals and be value for money.

1.2. The key recommendation was to separate the decision making on the priorities from decisions on which organisations to fund. This was to be achieved by producing an annual prospectus setting out what type of activities the City Council will fund.

2. 2009/2010 Grants Programme Prospectus

2.1 The grants budget is deployed to support strategic Council priorities. This report is requesting approval for the 2009/2010 grants prospectus that follows the City Council's core priorities as outlined in the Corporate Plan for 2008-2011. Appendix 1 to this report comprises the proposed grants prospectus for 2009-2010.

3. Consultation

3.1 The draft 2009/2010 grants programme prospectus has been out for consultation for 6 weeks.

3.2 We received a 20% return from the 115 consultation questionnaires posted out to Community and Voluntary groups. Appendix 2 to this report provides a breakdown of feedback received.

4. Budget Allocation

4.1 The budget agreed for the 2008/2009 grants programme is £1,633,759. It is envisaged that this will remain the same for the financial year 2009/2010 with no increase for inflation.

This budget is divided into two sections:-

- Commissioning (approx 91%)
Oxford City Council will commission with organisations that provide a service that contributes directly to the council's priorities and aims.
- Open bidding (approx 9%)
Applications will be invited to apply for funding through the open bidding section for specific projects that fall within broad themes and contribute indirectly to the council's priorities and aims.

5. Area to be commissioned (see appendix 1 for full details)

Priority	Committed & Allocated To:-
More Housing Better Housing For All	£447,279 - homelessness
Stronger and More Inclusive Communities	£500,000 - advice £59,486 - CVO infrastructure £20,000 - equalities
Improve the Local Environment, Economy and Quality of Life	£60,000 - children & young people £331,430 - arts programme £5,000 - twinning projects
Reduce Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	£76,000 - safer community projects
Total allocated to commissioning	£1,499,195

- 5.1 Lead officers will manage the relationship with each of the organisations to be commissioned with, negotiating the appropriate grant payment and leading on monitoring and evaluation of the services each organisation provides.
- 5.2 From the beginning of the financial year 2008/09, organisations falling into the following categories were commissioned with for 3 years.
- Homelessness
 - CVO infrastructure
 - Arts Programme
 - Twinning projects
- 5.3 Where possible the remaining categories will be commissioned for two years. In 2011/2012 all commissioned funding arrangements will be reviewed and where appropriate organisations will be recommissioned.

6. Open Bidding (see appendix 1 for full details)

- 6.1 The remaining balance of £134,564 is allocated as follows:-
- Open Bidding £109,564
 - Small grants £5,000
 - Emergency grants £10,000
 - Arts Development grants £10,000

7 Members' Involvement

- 7.1 Due to wide member interest in the grant process, a training session has been arranged and will be held on 20th October 2008 to familiarise members with the process and criteria for making grants decisions. Area committees will be consulted on the recommendations at the January/February 2009 cycle of meetings

8. Climate Change Implications

- 8.1 Thought has been given to climate change and its impacts. Organisations may apply for funding for projects which protect and enhance Oxford's built and natural environment and these will be considered alongside other applications. All successful applicants will be reminded of the city council's corporate plans to cut emissions and reduce the impact of climate change, and will be encouraged to develop similar plans of their own.

9. Risk

- 9.1 In order to manage any risks to the grants process a timetable has been prepared and is attached for information as appendix 3 to this report.

Recommendation:

To approve the annual grants prospectus for 2009-2010, as a framework for allocating the indicative £1,633,759 grants budget to community and voluntary organisations (CVOs).

Name and contact details of author:

Julia Tomkins, Grants Officer

Tel: 01865 252685

Email: jtomkins@oxford.gov.uk

Background papers: None

Version number: 4

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

GRANTS PROSPECTUS PROGRAMME

2009 - 2010

Introduction

Oxford City Council has traditionally funded voluntary and community groups, as part of building stronger and more inclusive communities in our city.

This prospectus sets out which activities Oxford City Council will fund in the financial year 2009-10, both through commissioning and through open bidding. Organisations can apply for grants of up to and including £15,000 in the open bidding section.

Oxford City Council wishes to prioritise funding for activities that contribute to the corporate priorities of the city council, as set out below.

- More housing, better housing for all
- Stronger and more inclusive communities
- Improve the local environment, economy and quality of life
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Tackle climate change and promote environmental resource management

It particularly welcomes applications for projects that provide added value to existing or new provision, through joint commissioning or partnership working. The council does not wish to replace or duplicate other organisations' responsibilities or funding.

For clarity, Oxford City Council will NOT fund:

- Party political promotion or activities
- Activities which promote a religious viewpoint
- Retrospective funding for project costs that have already occurred or commenced.
- Individuals (unless art development projects)
- Projects where there is a commercial gain
- Capital items or tangible "things", such as goods or equipment
- Projects that do not primarily benefit Oxford City residents (e.g. projects that are Oxfordshire county-wide and do not show specifically how they benefit residents of the city)
- Activities where a more appropriate funding source exists or which are functions that are the responsibility of other public agencies, for example:
 - After school clubs and extended school activities
 - Childcare, unless it is part of a larger project
 - Play and activities targeting over 13s, unless they contribute to reducing antisocial behaviour and crime
 - Social care

You may wish to refer to Oxford City Council and other local plans and strategies in your application, to demonstrate how your project will fulfil their aims too. All these plans are available on the City Council website or in hard copy from the Grants team.

- Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan
- Oxford's Sustainable Community Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy

- Oxford City Children and Young People's Plan
- Area Committee Plans
- Economic Development Strategy
- Leisure Strategy
- Arts Strategy
- Dance Strategy
- Oxfordshire Play Strategy
- Oxford Community Safety Strategy and Plan
- Oxford City Anti-social behaviour Strategy and Action Plan

Support in writing your application

This year Oxford City Council have been working with Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) to provide training in writing your application. These workshops will be held during October 2008. For more information and to register your interest please contact OCVA on 01865 251946 or email info@ocva.org.uk

1. More Housing, Better Housing For All

Oxford City Council recognises the contribution that settled and appropriate accommodation for all our citizens can make to community safety. Our intention is to continue to fund a range of services including hostels, day care centres, floating support and employment and training opportunities.

In the main, these services would receive funding from a variety of funding streams, including HSSD and Supporting People, and wherever possible we will co-ordinate our spending with those agencies to generate value for money and enhance levels of service for our citizens.

Funding for this theme will be commissioned.

Priority area	Activities supported
To sustain the Government's rough sleeping target at two-thirds below 1998 baseline figure	Provide hostel accommodation and supported housing for vulnerable young people. Provide day centre provision ranging from emergency provision to meaningful occupation. Provide tenancy sustainment services Provide opportunities for training, education and employment for homeless people.

2. Stronger and More Inclusive Communities

Oxford City Council wishes to use the grants funding process to support our aim of increasing social inclusion. We wish to prioritise funding for those projects which target the most disadvantaged communities in our city. In particular, we will support the advice sector, recognising its value in supporting people in need from the most disadvantaged groups in the city, including through increasing the take up of council tax and housing benefits by 20 per cent.

Funding for this theme is split into commissioning and open bidding.

Priority	Activities Supported
Raising levels of income, education and skills attainment in the most deprived areas Promote equality Promote a healthy voluntary and community sector	Commission Projects that give advice on increasing the uptake of welfare benefits and tax credits for those on low incomes Projects that reduce debt and improve money management for those on low incomes An infrastructure project to provide advice, guidance and support to VCS organisations A project to provide equalities advice and support, particularly to BME communities
	Open bidding Training and skills projects aimed at areas of deprivation, which are not provided by other agencies and/or which show major investment from other agencies Projects which support people living on low incomes and which are not provided by other agencies and/or which show major investment from other agencies

3. Improve the Local Environment, Economy & Quality of Life

Oxford City Council supports the development of strong, cohesive communities where diversity is valued and communities can come together through local cultural recreational and sport activities.

Oxford is a city with vibrant cultural, arts, sports and leisure environment. Oxford City Council wish to work in partnership with the community and voluntary sector to continue to support its international, national and local strengths. We also wish to ensure that all people in the city can access activities, in particular those who are at greatest risk of exclusion. Oxford City Council aims to work in partnership with other agencies such as the PCT and the Healthy Living Partnership to encourage healthy lifestyles. Finally, we wish to support activities aimed at enhancing our natural and built environment.

Funding for this theme is split into commissioning and open bidding.

Priority	Activities Supported
Improve health and social inclusion Increase active participation in cultural and recreational activities Ensure healthy and sustainable lifestyles Promote equality and community cohesion Protect and enhance Oxford's built and natural environment.	Commission Arts projects which are open to all and/or develop new opportunities for local people to participate, particularly in areas of deprivation Play projects for young people which are open to all, including those with disabilities and particularly in areas of deprivation, which are not the primary responsibility of another statutory agency Projects celebrating the links with Oxford's twin cities
	Open bidding Local cultural, recreational and sporting projects, particularly for disadvantaged communities or groups, where they are not the primary responsibility of another statutory agency Projects which protect and enhance Oxford's built and natural environment

4. Reduce Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Oxford City Council wishes to support the delivery of the Oxford Community Safety Strategy and Plan. Key priorities within the strategy for the coming years are funding diversionary activities for young people, and tackling sexual and domestic violence, car crime, burglary, serious anti-social behaviour, hate crime and tackling extremism. The Council is keen to ensure that the grants budget adds value to the funding of other agencies responsible for delivering the key objectives within the strategy.

Funding for this theme will be commissioned

Strategic Priority	Activities Supported
Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour Respond to local concerns about crime	Projects which aim to reduce anti-social behaviour and criminal activity, including diversionary activities for young people Projects tackling hate crime and extremism Projects providing help and assistance to victims of crime, including survivors of sexual and domestic violence

APPENDIX 2

2009 / 2010 Grants Prospectus Consultation Results.

Question 1	Yes	Nn
Are you planning to apply to the next annual grant round for 2009/2010	100%	

Question 2	Yes	No
If yes, do you think you will find this document useful when putting together your application	100%	

Question 3	Yes	No
When applying for a grant you will need to fit your project under one of our corporate priorities. Will this document help you to select the priority your project will fit under.	99%	1%

Question 4	Yes	No
Would you be interested in attending a workshop in writing your application?	98%	2%

Question 5	Yes	No
Do you think there is anything missing from the 2009/2010 grant prospectus	1%	99%
Comment received	"Nothing much about the role of sport."	

Question 6	Comments received
Are there any other comments you would like to make?	"This is helpful in ensuring we fit with your priorities for the year."
	" A concise and clear prospectus"
	"We are indebted to Oxford City Council for the tremendous support"
	"Funding for more than one year would be helpful."
	"Quicker and clearer communications when advising outcome of grant applications."
	"Grants make huge differences."
	"We have strong reservations about applying for grants as the response is almost always negative."
	"You need a full on sports strategy."
	"It would be helpful if core funding could be applied for via the open grants process."

APPENDIX 3

Timetable for the 2009/10 grant application process

Time Frame / Date	Activity
September to 22.10.08	Grants prospectus reviewed and approved
From 27.10.08	Prospectus issued and 2009/10 application forms available Lead officers to contact commissioned organisations to negotiate 2009/10 targets New organisations falling into the commissioning process - negotiations commence.
20.10.08	Workshop for Members on how we evaluate grant applications
27.10.08 (afternoon session) & 29.10.08 (morning session)	OCVA training to CVO's on writing your grant application
21.11.08	Closing date for 2009/10 grant applications
01.12.08 to 05.12.08	Evaluation of grant applications to open bidding
22.12.08	Deadline for report for information and ratification
22.12.08	Deadline for lead officers to provide grants officer with 09/10 targets & funding to commissioned organisations
January 2009 (date to be confirmed)	Question & answer session for members on grant recommendations
21.01.09 to 10.02.09	CEB report circulated to Community & Partnership Scrutiny and Area Committees
18.02.09	Grant report to CEB for approval
19.02.09	Inform applicants of final decisions.

Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee – 7 October 2008

24. OXFORD CITY COUNCIL GRANT PROSPECTUS – 2009/2010

The Head of Community Housing and Community Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended), which was presented by Julia Tomkins (Grants and External Funding). The Committee also welcomed Councillor Antonia Bance (Board Member for Social Inclusion and Young People).

Councillor Bance informed the Committee that the Grants Prospectus was subject to the budget process, and the timetable shown in appendix 3 had moved on since the agenda was produced – she would circulate the revised timetable following the meeting. There was less money available for the open bidding section of the grants process, as more emphasis was being placed on commissioning, but the total amount of funding available, including for equality issues, had not been reduced.

Councillor Murray observed that there was a need for transparency around the commissioning process, and that there should be clear information available to help applicants to understand this. The Chair, Councillor Rundle, added that the criteria for commissioning needed to be stated and well-known, with transparency around the groups that were commissioned and those that were not. He felt that there should be a place for Councillor involvement in this process to ensure openness, and he questioned the means by which Area Committees, for example, could be involved.

The Chair then highlighted the following issues of concern arising from the discussion:-

- The move from open bidding to commissioning;
- The lack of decision making at Area Committees – last year each Area Committee could nominate a delegate to attend a Member Steering Group on grants, but that was not taking place this year;
- The recognition that the grants process always presented a challenge, but there was a continued need to see how the process could be improved;
- Greater involvement of Councillors would be useful.

Resolved to ask the City Executive Board to look at a process for greater involvement by Members in the commissioning and evaluation of grants, noting that the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee particularly recommended the formation of a Steering Group with membership drawn from each Area Committee.

