

**To: City Executive Board**

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**Item No: 9**

**Report of:** Head of Service for Housing & Communities

**Title of Report:** Grant Allocations to Community & Voluntary Organisation (CVOs) 2011/2012

### **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** For City Executive Board to make decisions on the allocation of Grants to Community & Voluntary Organisations for 2011/2012

**Key decision:** - Yes

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Bance

**Report Approved by:**

**Director:** Melbourne Barrett

**Finance:** Janine Graham

**Legal:** Jeremy Thomas

**Policy Framework:** Oxford Community Strategy & Corporate Plan

**Recommendation(s):**

Providing Full Council approve the budget as proposed, see table 2, the following recommendations are made:-

1. To approve the recommendations for commissioning in 2011/2012, as set out in Appendix 1.
2. To approve the recommendations for 2011/2012 open bidding grant applications, as set out in Appendix 2.

### **Introduction**

1. At the City Executive Board meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010 the committee approved a grants programme to support Oxfords community and voluntary organisations (CVOs) in 2011/2012.

2. The programme has two elements to it:-,
  - Open bidding – one off grants, CVOs can apply for funding on an annual basis or on a smaller scale throughout the year.
  - Commissioning – funding for activities that have been identified by the Council as making a substantial and central contribution to the achievement of our corporate goals.

## Grants Budget

3. The Government's recent Comprehensive Spending Review set out the biggest programme of public spending cuts in the UK for decades.
4. All council services will have to make significant reductions focused on maximising efficiency. However, we have tried to minimise cuts to those functions that are core to the Council's purpose. As far as is possible, the council has tried to protect front-line services and, in particular, those on which the most vulnerable in our communities rely. We will work with the voluntary sector and community groups, safeguarding funding in this area as far as possible
5. Despite a very challenging financial settlement, reductions to the annual and commissioned grants budgets have been kept to a minimum, and support to our most vulnerable communities has been maximised. Within this, support for homeless organisations has been ring-fenced and money, benefits and debt advice is also being strongly protected
6. In 2010-11, a total of £1,653,759 was available for the 2010/11 grants programme
7. Two years ago the Council agreed a £100k reduction to the grants budget to come into effect in 2011/12, plus a further £30k reduction was made at the beginning of 2010/11. As part of the annual budget setting process a further reduction of £120k has also been added.
8. These reductions, if agreed by Full Council in February 2011, total £250,000 and are due to come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.
9. The total indicative budget for the grants programme, as currently proposed and having taken into account the reductions as shown above, is £1,403,759, for 2011/2012 and is set out below.

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>Budget (£)</b>
Partnership / Commissioning	1,320,460
Open Bidding	68,000
Set aside for small grants in 2011/12	15,299
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,403,759</b>

## Commissioning

10. The current commissioning period is in its third and final year and is due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. A review of the services funded through the commissioning process has taken place since March 2010..
11. The results of this review were reported to the City Executive Board on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010. It was at this meeting the board approved a commissioning programme for two years, (2011/12 & 2012/12), subject to budget decisions now and in the future.
12. Commissioning themes and an indicative budget, subject to approval, for each theme is:

<b>Table 2</b>	<b>Budget (£)</b>
Advice	507,768
Homelessness	442,279
Inclusive Arts & Culture	248,595
Community Safety	58,082
CVO Infrastructure	48,736
Inclusive Play & Leisure for Children & Young People with Disabilities	15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,320,460</b>

13. Key community & voluntary organisations were invited to bid for funding through the commissioning programme. The closing date was 4<sup>th</sup> November 2010.
14. Officers met to evaluate the bids returned and applications were assessed against set criteria. Applications needed to evidence an ability to meet Council priorities and show value for money. A capacity to provide a flexible and responsive service, past performance, experience and track record were also taken into consideration plus the quality of the bid itself.
15. After assessing each application recommendations are arrived at and are set out in Appendix 1. The City Executive Board is asked to approve these recommendations.

## Annual Open Bidding

16. A total of 36 applications were received to the annual open bidding programme by the closing date 4<sup>th</sup> November 2010, with a total requested amount of £216,658.
17. The total budget available for the open bidding section is £58,000,
18. Oxford City Council officers appraised applications to the open bidding section over four days. Each application was firstly screened for

eligibility (application must show that they are a constituted community organisation run by a committee, that they have provided annual accounts and a bank statement and an equal opportunities statement). All applications are read and then evaluated against criteria relating to evidence of need, who the project is targeting, what risks are associated with the project, how the application meets the Council's priorities, how the group will monitor and evaluate the impact of the grant, whether the group received any other subsidy from the City Council, if the group is financially competent, if the application demonstrates a financial need and if the grant would be value for money. A recommendation is arrived at after considering these factors for each application.

19. There were a number of applications for community newsletters and over the next year the Communities & Neighbourhoods team intend to work with the applicants to see if there are any ways they could link/share training and printing and so be more cost effective and sustainable.
20. Appendix 2 is a listing of each application received, the amount requested and the rationale for the recommendation. City Executive Board is asked to approve these recommendations.

## Rents

- 21 Some organisations, requesting to be grant funded through the grants process, also occupy Oxford City Council premises and their rent will be deducted from their grant (if awarded) before it is paid. The organisations this may affect are listed below in table 3.

Table 3

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Recommended Baseline Grant</b>	<b>2011/12 rent</b>	<b>Balance to Organisation</b>
Oxford Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis Centre	£15,000	£5,000	£10,000
Rose Hill & Donnington Advice Centre	£90,478	£3,000	£87,478
Agnes Smith Advice Centre	£85,289	£7,750	£77,539
Modern Art Oxford	£60,000	£60,000	NIL
Oxford Community Work Agency	£94,000	£8,100	85,900
Oxford Film & Video Makers	£29,303	£5,000	£24,303
Oxfordshire Chinese Community & Advice Centre	£18,000	£18,000	NIL
Donnington Doorstep	£10,000	£700	£9,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>£406,070</b>	<b>£107,550</b>	<b>£298,520</b>

## **Members Involvement**

- 22 Due to wide Member interest in the grant process, an information leaflet was circulated to all Members in October, which familiarised Members with the process.
23. This report will be circulated to all Area Committees and Community and Partnership Scrutiny Committee. At the time of writing this report these meetings have not happened. Please see a note of the comments received as annexes to Appendices 1 and 2..

## **Climate Change Implications**

- 24 We received two applications for projects that protect and enhance Oxford's built and natural environment and these were considered alongside other applications. Please see Appendix 2 for the recommendations.
- 25 We will make all successful applicants aware of Oxford City Council's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and encourage them to take similar action.

## **Risk**

- 26 In order to manage any risks associated with awarding grants, a successful applicant must agree to and sign terms and conditions for this funding. Within these terms, they must agree to:-
  - spending the funding on the project or specific items described in the applications.
  - repay any unspent grant funding
  - keep financial records and receipts
  - returning a monitoring form detailing how the grant funding has been spent and how they have publicised this support from Oxford City Council
- 27 Each organisation or group will be monitored by either the grants officer or a member of the officer grants panel. Please see Appendix 3 for the report's risk register.

## **Equalities**

- 28 Equality impact assessments have been undertaken and attached as Appendix 4.
- 29 In summary, the assessment demonstrates that these recommendations promote equality for Oxford's population, in a number of ways. Some examples of how equality is positively enhanced by this process include:

- between women and men, by guaranteeing two years' funding for services for survivors of rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence, who will disproportionately be women
  - for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, through guaranteeing continued funding for the Oxford Friend helpline
  - for people with disabilities, especially children with disabilities, through funding Parasol inclusive play
  - for older people, through supporting specific activities to help socially-excluded older people access support and information
  - for BME groups, through funding dedicated work with asylum-seekers and refugees
30. There may be a limited negative impact on equality for people of Chinese ethnicity caused by the decision to reduce funding for the Chinese Community & Advice Centre. However, there were concerns about the value for money and accessibility of this service, so the decision to reduce funding was appropriate. Any negative impact will be mitigated by the following actions: the rent for premises will continue to be grant-funded, to enable the organisation to seek funds elsewhere; other advice agencies in the city will be specifically requested to increase their work targeting the Chinese and other BME communities.
- 31 As part of the bidding process each organisation provide their equal opportunities statement to confirm they comply with this legislation and understand their responsibilities to promote equality.

**Recommendation(s):**

Providing Full Council approve the budget as proposed, see table 1, the following recommendations are made:-

1. To approve the recommendations for commissioning in 2011/2012, as set out in Appendix 1
2. To approve the recommendations for 2011/2012 open bidding grant applications, as set out in Appendix 2

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**Background papers:** None

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