

To: City Executive Board

Date: 13th February 2013

Report of: Director of Community Services

Title of Report: GRANT ALLOCATIONS TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS FOR 2013 / 2014

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: For the City Executive Board to make decisions on the allocation of grants to community & voluntary organisations for 2013/2014.

Key decision? Yes

Executive lead member: Councillor Stephen Curran

Policy Framework: Oxford City Council Corporate Plan & Oxford Sustainable Community Strategy

Recommendation(s):

Subject to Full Council subsequently agreeing the grants budget for 2013/14 as set out in Table 1, the City Executive Board are recommended to:-

1. Approve the extension of the Commissioning Programme for a further year, in accordance with and as amended by the provisions of Appendix 1.
2. Approve the recommendations for the rest of the commissioning programme as set out in Appendix 2.
3. Approve the recommendations for the applications received to the grants 2013/14 open bidding programme as set out in Appendix 3.

Appendices to report

- Appendix 1 Recommendations for the 2013/14 Inclusive Arts & Culture commissioning theme
- Appendix 2 Recommendations for the rest of the community grants commissioning programme for 2013/14.
- Appendix 3 Recommendations for grant applications received to the 2013/14 open bidding programme.
- Appendix 4 Risk register
- Appendix 5 Evaluation framework used when assessing grant applications

Introduction

1. Oxford City Council traditionally supports the local community & voluntary sector with grant aid. The Council's grant programme is administered & monitored through Communities & Neighbourhoods a department within the Community Development Team.

2. The grants programme has two elements to it:-
 - Open Bidding – one off grants, community & voluntary organisations can apply for 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 total indicative budget for the grants programme, as currently proposed, is £1,463,465 for 2013 / 2014 and is set out below.

Table 1	Budget (£)
Partnership / Commissioning	1,355,738
Open Bidding	95,000
Set aside for small grants in 2013/14	12,727
Total	£1,463,465

Commissioning

4. 2012/13 is the final year of a two year commissioning period. During the year officers have worked closely with the commissioned organisations. Commissioned organisations have achieved their contracted targets. Details of these achievements will be reported in the next monitoring report to the City Executive Board later in the year.
5. Commissioning themes (which remain the same as in 2012/13) together with indicative budget allocations for 2013/14 are set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2	Budget (£)
Advice	536,379
Homelessness	442,279
Inclusive arts & culture	255,262
Community safety	58,082
Community & voluntary sector infrastructure	48,736
Inclusive play & leisure for children & young people with disabilities.	15,000
Total	£1,355,738

6. With the appointment of a new Cultural Development Manager this year, a review of the Inclusive Arts & Culture commissioning theme has taken place.
7. The review included ensuring that the arts and culture commissioning theme helped the council meet its three key priorities for culture, which have now been confirmed in the Council's Culture Strategy, which are:-
 - Lead a partnership-based approach to sustaining, developing and improving the cultural life of the city.
 - Improve opportunities for young people to access and actively participate in high quality cultural activities.

- Improve opportunities for the diverse range of communities in the city actively to participate in high quality cultural activities that reflect their own identities and can be shared with the whole community.
8. The review has highlighted that since Oxford Inspires amalgamated with Visit Oxfordshire the team was reduced in size which has reduced their capacity to deliver cultural development and develop cultural partnerships in Oxford.
 9. Also, the City Council's needs – and, inevitably, those of other funding organisations - have changed since Oxford Inspires was first established. The City Council:
 - Has adopted a new Culture Strategy and the Council's cultural investment is now underpinned by that strategy.
 - Is sponsoring and supporting the Cultural Action Group, which is in the process of being expanded. This group will fulfil the role of an expert board and will be in a position to broker major collaborative cultural projects to attract funding and increase cultural engagement.
 - Appointed a new Cultural Development Manager who is experienced in providing strategic support to cultural organisations, building capacity for the arts, identifying collaborative marketing opportunities, co-ordinating large-scale public events and brokering partnerships.
 10. With the support of its partners, Oxford City Council's Culture Team is therefore in a position to lead on cultural development and partnership working in the city (with more focused and measurable outcomes) rather than outsourcing this to a third party organisation.
 11. Therefore part of the reduction recommended to Oxford Inspires in Appendix 1 will go towards funding a Culture Fund which was piloted this year and has been designed to enable cultural organisations and individual practitioners to enhance Oxford's cultural offer and leverage in new funding from philanthropic sources.
 12. It will also enable Oxford City Councils Culture Team to develop Culture Forums which will be used to provide specialist support for developing cultural groups and organisations.
 13. The City Executive Board is recommended to approve the recommendations for the Inclusive Arts & Culture commissioning theme as set out in Appendix 1.
 14. Dependent upon budgets being approved by Full Council in February 2013, £25,000 will be vired from the arts & culture commissioning theme budget into the Culture Teams budget for the Culture Fund and Forums.
 15. The City Executive Board is recommended to approve a further years funding for the community & voluntary sector grants commissioning programme for 2013/14. During this period a review of the other

commissioning themes will be carried out to ensure the themes continue to meet the Councils objectives especially the links into welfare reform, housing benefit and direct payment to tenants.

16. A report to the City Executive Board will follow this review in September 2013 to report the results and any recommendations for a programme from April 2014.
17. Due to Oxford City Council being awarded £962,424 (homelessness prevention grant) from the Communities and Local Governments (CLG) Homelessness Directorate for 2013/14 a report will be brought to the City Executive Board in April 2013 with details of the proposed allocation for both the CLG funding and the Councils Homelessness grant commissioning budget to voluntary sector organisations.
18. Consequently, the City Executive Board is recommended to approve the recommendations for the rest of the commissioning programme as detailed in Appendix 2.

Annual Open Bidding

19. A total of 41 applications were received to the annual open bidding programme by the closing date 9th November 2012, with a total requested amount of £302,394.
20. The total indicative budget available for the open bidding programme is £95,000.
21. Oxford City Council officers appraised applications to the open bidding programme over five days. Appendix 5 is a copy of the evaluation framework used by the panel for this process and is attached for information.
22. Each application was firstly screened for eligibility (applicants 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 opportunity statement). All applications are read and then evaluated against criteria relating to evidence of social need, who the project is targeting, what risks are associated with the project, how the application meets Council priorities, how the group will monitor and evaluate the impact of the grant, whether the group receive 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 represent value for money. A recommendation is arrived at after considering these factors for each application
23. Appendix 3 is a listing of each application received, the amount requested and the rationale for the recommendation. The City Executive Board is asked to approve these recommendations.

Rents

24. Some organisations recommended to be funded through the grants programme also occupy Oxford City Council premises and their rent will be deducted from their grant (if awarded) before any grant funding is paid. The organisations this will affect are listed below in table 3.

Table 3

Organisation	Recom'd baseline grant	2013 / 14 rent	Balance to organisation
Agnes Smith Advice Centre	£85,289	£7,750	£77,539
Donnington Doorstep Family Centre	£7,500	£700	£6,800
Film Oxford (OFVM)	£25,000	£5,000	£20,000
Modern Art Oxford	£70,000	£70,000	0
Oxford Community Work Agency	£122,611	£8,100	£114,511
Oxfordshire Chinese Community & Advice Centre	£20,520	£18,000	2,520
Rose Hill & Donnington Advice Centre	£90,478	£3,000	£87,478
Total	£421,398	£112,550	£308,848

Climate Change / Environmental Impact

25. We will make all successful applicants aware of Oxford City Councils commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and encourage them to take similar action.

Equalities Impact

26. As part of the bidding process each organisation must provide their equal opportunities statement to confirm they comply with this legislation and understand their responsibility to promote equality.
27. Some examples of how equality is positively enhanced by the grants programme include:
- Funding services for survivors of rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence for both men and women.
 - For lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people through recommending continued funding for the Oxford Friend helpline.
 - For people with disabilities, particularly children and young people with disabilities through recommending funding for Parasol inclusive play & KEEN a student run organisation providing sporting and recreational activities for children & young people with special needs..
 - For older people, through recommending support for specific activities to help socially excluded older people access support and information.
 - For BME groups, through funding dedicated work with asylum seekers and refugees.

Risk

28. In order to manage any risk 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:-

- Spend the funding on the project or specific items described in their application
- Repay any unspent grant funding
- Keep financial records and receipts

- Return a monitoring form detailing how the grant funding has been spent and how they have publicised this support from Oxford City Council

29. Each organisation awarded grant funding will be monitored by either the grants officer or a member of the officer grants panel. Please see Appendix 4 for the reports risk register.

Financial Impact

30. The allocations of grant funding as proposed are dependant on Full Council agreeing the 2013/14 budget in February 2013.

Legal Impact

31. Oxford City Council considers it reasonable and appropriate in exercising the Council's powers pursuant to the provision of s.2 Local Government Act 2000 and all succeeding and other relevant enabling legislation to offer grant assistance to community and voluntary organisation through its community grants.

Name and contact details of author:-

Name: Julia Tomkins

Job title: Grants & External Funding Officer

Service Area / Department: Communities & Neighbourhoods,
Community Services

Tel: 01865 252685 **e-mail:** jtomkins@oxford.gov.uk

List of background papers: none

Version number: 5 (@ 02.01.13)