

To: City Executive Board

Date: 12 February 2015

Report of: Head of Service for Leisure, Parks & Communities

Title of Report: Grant Allocations to Community & Voluntary Organisations

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: For the City Executive Board to decide the allocation of grants to community & voluntary organisations through the Community Grants Programme.

Key decision: Yes

Executive lead member: Councillor Rowley, Board Member for Leisure Contract and Community Partnership Grants

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

Recommendations: Subject to Council subsequently agreeing the grants budget as set out in Table 1, the City Executive Board is recommended to:-

1. Approve the recommendations for the three year commissioning programme as listed in Appendix one.
2. Approve the recommendations for the applications received to the grants annual open bidding programme as set out in Appendix three.
3. Approve the recommendation for Oxford Friend to be funded through the Community Safety commissioning theme.
4. Approve the recommendation to delegate authority to 2 Councillors and the Head of Service for Customer Services to approve proposals for the unallocated funding (£20,000) in the Advice and Money Management commissioning theme.

Appendices to report

- Appendix 1 Recommendations for three year grants commissioning programme from April 2015 until March 2018.
- Appendix 2 Priority area and measures agreed to monitor this with the commissioned Advice organisations.
- Appendix 3 Recommendations for applications received to the grants annual open bidding programme for projects and activities from April 2015.
- Appendix 4 Evaluation framework
- Appendix 5 Risk register

Introduction

1. Oxford City Council supports the local community and voluntary sector with grant aid. The community and voluntary organisations (CVO's) grants programme is co-ordinated and monitored through the Communities and Neighbourhoods team in consultation with lead commissioning officers and their portfolio holders.
2. The CVO's grants programme has two elements:-
 - Open Bidding – one off grants that can be applied 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 contribution to the achievement of our corporate priorities.

Grants Budget

3. The total indicative budget for the CVO's grants programme, as currently proposed for the next three years, is set out below.

	2015/16 Budget (£)	2016/17 Budget (£)	2017/18 Budget (£)
Advice & Money Management commissioning theme	518,379	518,379	518,379
Homelessness commissioning theme	442,279	442,279	442,279
Inclusive arts & culture commissioning theme	255,262	255,262	255,262
Community Safety commissioning theme	61,082	61,082	61,082
Community & voluntary sector infrastructure commissioning theme	48,736	48,736	48,736
Inclusive leisure & play for disabled children and young people commissioning theme	15,000	15,000	15,000
Open Bidding	101,984	101,984	101,984
Small grants programme to run during the year.	10,732	10,732	10,732
Total	£1,453,454	£1,453,454	£1,453,454

Commissioning

4. During 2014/15 officers have worked closely with the commissioned organisations. Achievements will be reported in the next monitoring report to the City Executive Board later in 2015.
5. In October 2013 the City Executive Board agreed that from April 2015 the grants commissioning programme would be for a three year cycle for all of the commissioning themes.
6. Commissioning themes, which remain the same as in previous years, were selected to prioritise grant funding for those most disadvantaged communities in our city.
7. Based on previous performances by commissioned organisations, some of the main achievements that we can expect to be delivered under each theme are:-
 - People suffering hardship or distress will get the support they need from the advice centres. In particular by the provision of information, advice and assistance on all matters relating to welfare benefits and debt.
 - Children and young people from different societies will be supported to better understand the local context, stay safe and take advantage of opportunities.
 - Specialist support for victims of violence, intimidation and abuse, will be provided giving practical and emotional support.
 - There will be improved opportunities for the diverse range of communities in the city to actively participate in high quality cultural activities and events. This will be achieved by offering reduced and/or free tickets and places to low income families.
 - Work will be done to support homeless people or those threatened with homelessness or rough sleeping into sustainable accommodation. They will be given opportunities to education, training and employment.
 - Community & voluntary organisations will be supported to bid for funding and improve their sustainability.
 - Volunteering will be promoted giving local people the opportunity to increase their skills, knowledge and confidence..
8. Funding agreements will be put in place with each of the commissioned organisations for a three year period. However, a feature of that agreement will be that funding in any given year will be subject to an assessment of performance and budget availability.
9. The Grants Officer works with a number of lead officers from other service areas that have specialist knowledge of specific commissioning themes.
10. The commissioned advice services round from 2015/18 include provision for agreeing a priority area to focus on for each year. The City Council and Advice Organisations have agreed that the priority area to

focus on during 2015/16 will be debt. This will include supporting people to manage their money, and helping them maximise their income.

11. Oxford Credit Union has not been recommended to be funded in the new commissioning period because they have informed us that they are now sustainable.
12. The £20,000 that was previously awarded to the Oxford Credit Union is currently unallocated. It is proposed that Officers work up a proposal for this funding to target debt and money management issues.
13. Working with the Welfare Reform team and the Revenues and Benefits Manager in Customer Services a proposal will be developed by the end of April 2015. The City Executive Board is recommended to delegate the authority to 2 Councillors (Board Members) and the Head of Service for Customer Services to approve proposals for this funding.
14. Debt links into the themes of both Debt and Income in the Council's Financial Inclusion Strategy (FIS). Appendix two provides the measures that will be used to monitor how the advice organisations deal with debt issues, and shows how these measures meet both the aims of the FIS and the outcomes required from the Service Specification for Advice Services.
15. The Financial Inclusion Strategy also includes actions to help support people into employment. This work is led by the Welfare Reform team, and utilises various organisations in the city who provide specialist help to our customers. To support this work, the new advice agreement includes a measure for the advice organisations to make referrals to the same organisations, where work would form part of the solution to someone's problem
16. The City Executive Board is recommended to approve the recommendations for the commissioning programme as listed in Appendix one.
17. A report will be submitted to the City Executive Board in March 2015 with the proposed allocations for both the Preventing Homelessness grant and the Council's Homelessness grant commissioning budget to voluntary sector organisations.

Annual Open Bidding

18. A total of 32 applications were received to the grants annual open bidding programme by the closing date of 4th November 2014, the total amount requested was £233,841.
19. The total indicative budget allocated for the open bidding programme is £100,000.

20. Appendix four is a copy of the evaluation framework used by the officer grants panel that made the recommendations for each of the applications received.
21. Each application was first screened for eligibility, i.e. applicants must demonstrate that they are a constituted community organisation run by a committee, providing annual accounts, a bank statement and an equal opportunity statement. All applications are subsequently evaluated against criteria relating to:
 - Evidence of social need
 - Who the project is targeting
 - Risk
 - How the application meets Council priorities
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Whether the group receive any other subsidy from the Council
 - If the group is financially competent
 - Demonstration of financial need and
 - Value for money.
22. One of the applications received to the open bidding programme was from Oxford Friend, which is a small voluntary organisation run entirely by volunteers. They provide a confidential telephone helpline for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people living in Oxford. The panel felt that as this organisation has been providing this service over a number of years to a high risk marginalised group of people it is recommended that the work is in future commissioned through the Community Safety commissioning theme because this is the only support in Oxford for this high risk group of people and will help towards meeting priorities in the Community Safety plan around hate crime
23. The City Executive Board is recommended to approve for Oxford Friend to be funded through the Community Safety commissioning theme and that £3,000 is moved from the indicative budget allocated for the grants annual open bidding programme into the proposed budget for the Community Safety commissioning theme.
24. Appendix three is a listing of all applications received, the amount requested and the rationale for the recommendation.

Rents

25. Some organisations recommended for funding from the CVO's grants programme also occupy Council premises and their rent will be deducted from their grant.

Table 2

Organisation	Grant (£)	2015/16 rent	Balance to organisation
Agnes Smith Advice Centre	85,290	7,750	77,540
Donnington Doorstep Family Centre	5,000	700	4,300
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
Rose Hill & Donnington Advice Centre	90,478	3,000	87,478
Total	£398,379	£94,550	£303,829

Climate Change / Environmental Impact

- 26 Successful applicants are made aware of the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and encouraged to take similar action.

Equalities Impact

27. Each organisation must provide their equal opportunities statement to confirm they comply with this legislation and understand their responsibility to promote equality.
28. Some examples of how equality is positively enhanced by the grants programme include funding services for:
- Survivors of rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people through recommending continued funding for the Oxford Friend helpline
 - People with disabilities, particularly children and young people with disabilities through recommending funding for Parasol inclusive play
 - Older people, through recommending support for specific activities
 - BME groups, through funding dedicated work with asylum seekers and refugees.

Risk

29. Successful applicants must agree to and sign terms and conditions within these terms they must agree to:
- Spend the funding on the project described in their application
 - Repay any unspent grant
 - Keep financial records and receipts
 - Return a monitoring form

30. Each organisation awarded grant funding will be monitored by an officer. Please see Appendix five for the reports risk register.

Financial Impact

31. The allocations of grant funding as proposed are dependent on Council agreeing the Councils budget in February 2015.

Legal Impact

32. The 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 organisations.

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List of background papers: none

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