

To: City Executive Board
Date: 11 February 2016
Report of: Head of Community Services
Title of Report: Grant Allocations to Community & Voluntary Organisations

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: Allocate grants to community & voluntary organisations through the Community Grants Programme.

Key decision? Yes

Executive lead member: Councillor Simm & Councillor Brown

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

Recommendation(s):

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 second year of a three year commissioning programme as listed in Appendix 1.
2. Approve the recommendations for the applications received to the grants annual open bidding programme as set out in Appendix 2.
3. Approve the recommendation to delegate authority to the Executive Director for Organisational Development and Corporate Services in conjunction with the Executive Members for Customer and Corporate Services and Culture and Communities to allocate the residual unallocated funding (£20,000) in the Advice and Money Management commissioning theme.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 2016/2017 Recommendations for the Community and Voluntary Organisations Grants Commissioning Programme.
Appendix 2 Grant Applications to the 2016/2017 Open Bidding Grants Programme.
Appendix 3 Evaluation framework.
Appendix 4 CEB Report 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.
3. The demand for grants from the city council continues to grow as other sources of funding are reduced reflecting the general tightening in public sector funding. We should expect further turbulence in this area if the county council removes all such grants. The proposal in this report is to broadly maintain the funding pattern established in previous years through the City Council's prospectus and maintaining existing relationships and funding patterns

Grants Budget

4. The total indicative budget for the CVO's grants programme, as currently proposed for 2016/2017, is set out below.

Table 1

	2016/17 Budget (£)
Advice & Money Management commissioning theme	518,379
Homelessness commissioning theme	442,279
Inclusive arts & culture commissioning theme	235,262
Community Safety commissioning theme	61,082
Community & voluntary sector infrastructure commissioning theme	43,736
Inclusive leisure & play for disabled children and young people commissioning theme	15,000
Open Bidding	110,000
Small grants programme to run during the year.	5,232
Total	£1,430,970

Commissioning

5. During 2015/16 officers have worked closely with the commissioned organisations. Achievements will be reported in the next monitoring report to the City Executive Board later in 2016.
6. This report recommends allocations for the second year of a three year commissioning programme ending 31 March 2018.

7. Commissioning themes, which remain the same as in previous years, were selected to prioritise grant funding for those most disadvantaged communities in our city.
8. 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 access 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.
9. Funding agreements will be put in place with each of the commissioned organisations and a feature of that agreement will be that funding in any given year will be subject to an assessment of performance and budget availability.
10. The Grants Officer works with a number of lead officers from other service areas that have specialist knowledge of specific commissioning themes.
11. The three year commissioned advice services agreement (2015/2018) makes provision for agreeing on an annual basis a priority area to focus on. The priority area agreed with the Advice Organisations for 2016/17 is households with someone in low paid work. This has been chosen as impact assessments of the government's welfare reforms announced in the summer budget show this group's income suffering the largest reduction. Work in the area will include supporting people to manage their money, dealing with debt and helping them maximise their income. A specific set of outcome measures will be developed in partnership between the City Council and Advice Organisations.
12. The commissioned advice programme has previously funded the development of Credit Unions in the city, both to aid sustainability, and to fund a merger (which ultimately did not proceed). £20,000 has previously been

allocated in this area on an annual basis. A number of organisations currently providing support to the proposed priority area are likely to see their funding reduce or end altogether. This would include the four Job Clubs in the city, which have required additional top-up funding from both the City and County Council during the year to continue operating

13. Consequently, it is proposed that the Welfare Reform Team and Revenues and Benefits Programme Manager develop options to utilise this funding by the end of April 2016 and that authority is delegated to the Executive Director of Organisational Development and Corporate Services in conjunction with the Executive Members for Customer and Corporate Services and Culture and Communities to allocate this funding
14. The Financial Inclusion Strategy includes actions to help support people into employment. This work is led by the Welfare Reform team, and utilises various organisations in the city that provide specialist help to our customers.
15. The City Executive Board is recommended to approve the recommendations for the commissioning programme as listed in Appendix 1.
16. A report will be submitted to the City Executive Board in March 2016 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

17. A total of 39 applications were received to the grants annual open bidding programme by the closing date of 4 November 2015. Of the 39 applications received 35% were targeting children and young people. Indicating the perceived severity of funding cuts in these areas.
18. Where previously some of these groups would not have applied to this programme they are finding that there are fewer other funding sources available.
19. The total amount requested this year was £323,668. More than three times the indicative budget allocated for the open bidding grants programme which is £110,000.
20. The total amount of grant funding awarded through this programme last year (2015/16) was £104,484
21. Appendix three is a copy of the evaluation framework used by the officer grants panel that made the recommendations for each of the applications received.
22. 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. Those organisations working with children & young

people or vulnerable adults also provided copies of their safeguarding and data protection policies. 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.

23. Appendix 2 is a listing of all applications received, the amount requested and the rationale for the recommendation.
24. The City Executive Board is recommended to approve the recommendations for the open bidding grants programme as listed in Appendix 2.

Rents

25. Some organisations recommended for funding from the CVO's grants programme also occupy Council premises and their rent will be deducted from any funding awarded to them. These are set out in table two below.

Table 2

Organisation	Grant (£)	2016/17 rent	Balance to organisation
Agnes Smith Advice Centre	85,290	7,250	78,040
Donnington Doorstep Family Centre	7,000	700	6,300
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
Rose Hill Junior Youth Club	7,500	7,270	230
Emmaus Oxford	25,000	5,000	20,000
Total	£432,879	£106,320	£326,559

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.

Level of 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 4 for the risk register.

Financial Impact

31. The allocations of grant funding as proposed are dependent on agreement of the Councils budget in February 2016.

32. The total amount of the grants budget currently recommended in this report is £983,459 because £5,232 has been allocated for a small grants programme that will take place during 2016/17 (see table 1 above) and a report will be submitted to the City Executive Board in March 2016 with the proposed allocations for both the Preventing Homelessness grant and the Council's Homelessness grant commissioning budget (£442,279) to voluntary sector organisations.

Legal Implications

33. There are no legal implications of this report.

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List of background papers:

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