

To: City Executive Board
Date: 14 July 2016
Report of: Head of Community Services
Title of Report: Monitoring the Community & Voluntary Organisations Grants Programme – Report for 2015/16

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To inform members of the monitoring findings of the 2015/16 grants programme.
Key decision:	No
Executive Board Member:	Councillor Christine Simm, Culture & Communities
Corporate Priority:	Strong, Active Communities.
Policy Framework:	None.
Recommendations: That the City Executive Board resolves to:	
1	Note the results of the grant monitoring, the positive impact the community and voluntary sector is making in the city.
2.	Work with partners to understand the issues facing the community and voluntary sector in greater depth so we are better able to target our support where it is most needed and will have the greatest impact.

Appendices	
Appendix 1	List of Community and Voluntary Organisations (CVOs) awarded a grant through the open bidding, commissioning and youth ambition grants programme.
Appendix 2	Case studies
Appendix 3	Risk Register
Appendix 4	List of closed groups

Introduction

1. Effective monitoring ensures that grant funding awarded is spent for the purpose it was provided and helps the council assess impact of the funded work. It provides an opportunity to find out if there are any external factors affecting the voluntary sector and how organisations are weathering these circumstances.

2. Community Services ran the following programmes shown in Table 1 in the last year. The three programmes, to which eligible community and voluntary organisations could apply, were:-

- Community & Voluntary Organisations (CVOs) Grants Programme
- Youth Ambition Grants Programme
- Holiday Activities Grant Programme (monitoring feedback for this programme is reported separately)

Table 1 below shows the amount spent by each programme.

Table 1	Amount spent
CVOs grant programme	
Advice & money management	£498,379
One off payments supporting objectives of the Financial Inclusion Strategy *	£20,000
Homelessness	£442,279
Inclusive arts & culture	£235,262
Community safety	£61,082
Community & voluntary sector infrastructure	£48,736
Inclusive play & leisure for disabled children & young people	£15,000
Annual open bidding grants programme	£103,204
Small grants programme	£8,673
Youth Ambition grants programme	£46,724
Total	£1,479,339

*Payments made to the Soup Kitchen, Archway Foundation, Community Emergency Food Bank & Oxford Credit Union

Key Findings

3. Voluntary sector organisations are feeling the impact of the national cuts with an increasing number ceasing to operate. Oxford Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) has observed an increase in the number of groups having serious financial difficulties. For some a reduction in funding options is compounded by a lack of reserves and other significant difficulties with their organisation such as weak governance or financial planning, a lack of volunteers. OCVA have also seen a rapid increase in groups closing. 10 have been recorded as disbanding from across the County last year of which four are Oxford based groups. Others have had to reduce the services they offer, or eat into their reserves spending them on direct charity activity and operating costs looking at ways to be more creative when raising funds for their work.
4. More positively many groups have risen to the challenges and are now working more collaboratively and are sharing back office costs and office accommodation.
5. Feedback indicates that anything that the Council can do to help CVOs keep their core costs down has potential to make a real difference. Officers are giving more thought to this issue.

Despite there being fewer funding sources available for every £1 awarded through these Council's programmes last year an average of £7.44 has been matched or levered into the city by funded organisations. This represents excellent value for money and contributes towards the delivery of strategic services, projects, activities and events.

6. During 2015/16 grants were awarded to 71 CVOs. The total number of people counted as benefitting from projects and activities funded through these grant programmes was 268,866 however, there will be some double counting with some individual's benefitting from more than one project.

Addressing Council Priorities

7. The community grants, whether as part of our commissioning programme or through open bidding and small grants, provides funding to CVOs who help the Council in meeting its Corporate Plan objectives and improve quality of life for Oxford residents. This would particularly help vulnerable people, promote community cohesion and promote a positive future for young people.

Social Impact of the community grants programme

8. This is a very challenging time for the City's CVOs and City Council funding is considered vital by many of the CVOs it supports. Grant recipients and OCVA feedback during the year was that CVOs are being asked to do more and more to support vulnerable clients at a time when funds are getting scarcer and citizens face increased pressure on time for volunteering. Below is set out some indicators of the social and community impact of the grants programme.
9. Areas where the grants programme is making a significant impact include:-
 - Developing and expanding volunteer delivery of a wide range of key community services including befriending of isolated older people, teaching English to asylum seekers, food banks for clients unable to access benefits, children's activities in deprived localities, ensuring residents in regeneration areas access information and news about their locality, cultural and family events.
 - Making a real difference to local communities, improving the quality of people's lives and their life chances by funding the advice centres to support people out of debt and look at ways to increase their income.
 - Funding organisations working with homeless people and rough sleepers to help them make life changing choices, improve their accommodation, learn new skills and get into employment.
10. In July 2015 a report was published by the Citizens Advice Bureau that looked at their impact (at a national level). The report showed that for every £1 spent clients benefit by £10.94. For every £1 spent by helping people resolve problems £8.74 was saved in the wider society and the economy due to people feeling better and more confident leading to increased productivity for businesses and reductions in time spent off work due to ill health. By these estimates, Oxford City Council's contribution to Oxford CAB will have contributed £2.18 million benefit to clients and £1.75 million in savings to the wider society of Oxford.
11. Research carried out by Volunteering Matters showed that 96% of volunteers feel better prepared for employment or education after volunteering. The Parasol Project was awarded funding for their youth volunteering project. 28 young people (12 with

a disability) aged between 15-25 years old gave 4,104 volunteer hours for the project last year. Using the national hourly wage for young people aged between 18 – 20 years old (£5.30) Parasol's volunteer contribution alone equates to a financial value of £21,751.20. See Appendix 2 for case studies from this project.

12. A social impact report published last year by Aspire Oxford showed that for every £1 invested in the organisation they delivered £5.50 of social benefit, Aspire estimate that work facilitating the transition of people from homelessness into accommodation and employment or volunteering the organisation has saved the Government (at national and local levels) £3.4 million by preventing homelessness, re-offending, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour.
13. An evaluation undertaken by the Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre demonstrated that 90% of service users felt more in control of their lives and reported better health and wellbeing as a result of the service they received. Research into early intervention in domestic violence and abuse (published by the Early Intervention Foundation in 2014) showed economic output losses (measured as time off work, half borne by employers and individuals) of £2.7 billion and human and emotional costs calculated at £17.1 billion. For every £1 invested in services supporting victims of sexual and domestic abuse, it's calculated that between £5 and £11 of social value is generated for women, their families and the State. By a conservative estimate, the social value of Oxford City Council's investment is £75,000, leveraging additional social value of £556,875 from other donors.

Process for gathering monitoring information

14. One of the conditions for funding is that organisations agree to provide qualitative and quantitative reporting on the grant received. In most instances this is received via a completed monitoring form. In other cases, a site visit by officer(s) takes place or a combination of both dependent on scale or perceived risk of grant.
15. All organisations returned their monitoring during the year which is an improvement on previous years and reflects more business like relationship with CVOs.

Monitoring Information

16 Appendices 1 and 2 provide the following information:-

- Name of organisation / group
- Amount of grant awarded
- Description of project/activity
- Number of beneficiaries
- Brief description of what was achieved
- Total amount of match funding and / or funding levered in as a result of Oxford City Council funding.
- Case studies from a variety of organisations.

- 17 Table 2 below summarises the information listed in Appendix 1 for grants awarded through the 2015/16 Open Bidding Programme.

Table 2 – Annual Open Bidding Summary – grants up to £10,000

Number of projects awarded a grant	Total amount of Grant Awarded	Total of other funding matched or levered in	Number of Beneficiaries from these projects	Some of the things the funding paid for
20	£104,484	£389,472	8,363 plus 20,000 households that received community newsletters	Community activities & events plus local newsletters

For each £1 invested in the annual open bidding, simplistically the equivalent of £3.73 in additional funding was leveraged by CVOs into Oxford.

18. Table 3 below summarises the information in Appendix 1 for grants awarded through the small grants programme during 2015/16.

Table 3 - Open Bidding – small grants of up to £1,000

Number of projects awarded a grant	Total amount of Grant Awarded	Total of other funding matched or levered in	Number of Beneficiaries from these projects	Some of the things the funding paid for
13	£8,673	£106,815	5,343	Community events, young people activities

For each £1 invested in small grants open bidding, simplistically the equivalent of £12.32 in additional funding was leveraged by CVOs into Oxford.

- 19 Whilst the income leveraged figure for the small grants programme is considerably higher than for other grant programmes, it should be noted that useful comparison is limited since leverage figures take no account of the ease of fundraising for smaller one off projects and community events. Comparison also doesn't take into account complexity of need of a target group or level of impact sort (counselling to a traumatised client versus the staging of a one off event).
20. Table 4 below summaries the information listed in Appendix 1 for grants awarded through the 2015/16 Youth Ambition grants programme.

Table 4 – Open bidding - summary from Youth Ambition Grants Programme – grants of up to £10,000

Number of groups funded	Total amount of Grant Awarded	Total of other funding matched or levered in	Number of beneficiaries of these project	Some of the things this funding paid for
7	£46,724	£95,294	194	Volunteering, FGM awareness, raising awareness of how to stay safe, music

For every £1 invested in the youth ambition programme, the equivalent of £2.04 in additional funding was leveraged by CVOs into Oxford.

21 Tables 6 & 7 below summarises the information listed in Appendix 1 for grants awarded through the 2015/16 commissioning programme.

Table 6 – Commissioned Grants Summary

Commissioned Theme	Number of groups funded	Total amount of Grant Awarded	Total of other funding levered in	Number of Beneficiaries from these projects	Some of the things the funding paid for
Arts & Culture	11	£235,262	£4,031,810	242,930	Training in film & digital media, music, Twinning events
For every £1 invested in the Arts & Culture commissioning programme the equivalent of £17.13 in additional funding was leveraged by CVOs into Oxford.					
Homelessness*	10	£422,279	£4,948,992	1523 plus 120 households	Day centres, life skills, specialist workers,
For every £1 invested in the Homelessness commissioning programme £11.71 in additional funding was leveraged by CVOs into Oxford.					
Community Safety	4	£61,082	£134,842	708	Domestic violence outreach, helpline service for victims of sexual violence,
For every £1 invested in the Community Safety commissioning programme the equivalent of £2.20 in additional funding was leveraged by CVOs into Oxford.					
CVOs infrastructure	1	£48,736	£293,013	655 organisations who are members of OCVA of which 53% are in Oxford City	Providing information, support and advice to the voluntary sector.
For every £1 invested in the CVO Infrastructure commissioning programme the equivalent of £6.01 in additional funding was leveraged by the organisation into Oxfordshire.					
Play & Leisure Activities for Disabled Children & Young People	1	£15,000	£215,546	139	Supporting disabled children and young people to participate in inclusive mainstream play
For every £1 invested into the Play & Leisure Activities for Disabled Children & Young People the equivalent of £14.36 was leveraged by the CVO into Oxford.					
Totals	27	£782,359	£9,624,203	245,300 people, plus 120 households & 655 CVOs	

* 12 grants were awarded through this programme however two projects were delivered by the Council (Sanctuary Scheme & Welfare Reform Team see appendix 1 for details of these two projects)

Table 7 - Summary from Commissioned Advice Centres

Number of Organisations	Total amount of Grant Awarded	Number of Beneficiaries from these projects	Total of other funding levered in	Total Benefit take up	Total amount of Debt Written Off
4	£498,379	9,666	£799,124	£3,806,632	£995,685

For every £1 invested in the commissioned advice centres, the equivalent of £1.60 in additional funding was leveraged by the advice centres into Oxford.

Financial implications

22 The report demonstrates the value of the Council's grants programme.

Legal issues

23 There are no legal implications.

Level of risk

24 Please see Appendix 3 for risk.

Equalities impact

25 Grant funding awarded to community and voluntary organisations has a significant and positive impact on equalities and promotes community cohesion. Grants actively supported the achievements of equality by otherwise marginalised groups, such as funding supplied to Oxford Friend, to Oxford Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis Centre, for a domestic violence case worker and to the Parasol Project that provides inclusive play and leisure activities for disabled children and young people. In addition 57% of the Council's funding benefited people in localities facing multiple deprivation or inequalities.

26 When applying for grant funding each organisation has to supply a copy of their equal opportunities statement to confirm they comply with this legislation

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Background Papers:	
1	Annual Reports from funded organisations
2	Aspire Oxford Social Impact report
3	The value of Citizens Advice service
4	Report on the Early Intervention in Domestic Violence and Abuse

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