

Appendix 2

Overview of commissioning programme by theme, funded from 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2018

Community Safety (£61,083)

What's Worked Well

During the last three years services funded through this programme have supported victims of violence, intimidation and abuse.

Good working partnerships have been developed with the funded organisations and this work has contributed to supporting Oxford City Council in meeting its duty to help reduce the fear of crime which has an adverse effect on all our communities.

OSARCC provide counselling and a support group for victims recovering from sexual abuse. Generally counselling is for a 6 week period but for some people sessions can carry on for as long as one year. Both have waiting lists. Their helpline is open 3 days a week and the last Friday of every month.

The domestic abuse outreach worker post is employed by A2 Dominion who provide the day to day support the post needs.

From April 2014 to March 2016 the Children's Society (Oxford Branch) were funded to work with asylum seekers, refugees and newly arrived families in the UK. This was on top of the County's Orientation 6 week programme these individuals may have already received.

The project was called 'Safe Choices' and primarily engaged with young males from a variety of countries who were fleeing war or famine. The group was based with the City of Oxford College at Oxpens. The focus of the project was to help young males understand appropriate behaviour towards other genders; provide internet safety, consent and protection from exploitation.

Feedback from the young people said the group provided them with a safe space where views could be shared and the experience of sharing with others was valued.

From April 2017 this funding was used as crisis funding for the Step Out project running at Donnington Doorstep family centre while they waited for a decision on an application they had submitted to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

The Step Out project works with young people who are being, or are at risk of being, sexually exploited.

Their application to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation was successful and 3 year funding was secured for this work

Oxford Friend is a small voluntary group that run a helpline for the LGBT community in Oxford and is open three days every week.

Issues

Loss of funding continues to be a problem. Oxfordshire County Council recently completed a strategy review on Domestic Abuse Services and from July 2017 funding to A2 Dominion will be cut by 40%.

Oxfordshire County Council has asked all district councils to pool their funding to jointly commission domestic abuse service across the County. Although at the moment not all district councils fund this work and those that do award grants it's at different levels (Oxford City £35,082, South & Vale £50,000, Cherwell £25,000 and West Oxford £0)

It's unlikely that joint commissioning will start during 2017 because we and others have agreements in place until 31st March 2018. Discussions are on-going.

Awarding funding on a yearly basis has been problematic for the organisations causing uncertainty and difficulties keeping experienced staff.

The grants budget has remained at the same level for the last 6 years while core costs to deliver these services continue to grow.

Going Forward

There continues to be need for specialist support for victims of violence, intimidation and abuse. Domestic abuse (including Honour Based Violence) and sexual abuse reports have increased in recent years, reflecting the significant amount of work undertaken by agencies to increase reporting before they get to crisis point.

These offences do not only affect the victim but has a significant impact on their children and extended families. This requires outreach support to victims of domestic and sexual abuse as many victims do not want to report to the police or the police are not appropriate to provide the necessary intensive support for such victims.

Services going forward need to continue to:-

- Deliver a helpline to support victims of sexual abuse
- Provide a full time domestic violence outreach worker post to work with both male and female victims.
- Deliver a programme to support young people, parents and carers who are at risk of child sexual exploitation and sexual violence.
- Delivery of a helpline for the LGBT community

We will continue working with the other District Councils and Oxfordshire County Council to look at joint commissioning domestic abuse service from April 2018.

We will also work with Donnington Doorstep family centre to develop a programme focusing on BME communities to enable them to have a better understanding of safeguarding and what it means to them, working with mothers and if possible

fathers from different ethnic communities across the city in open and closed sessions, 1 to 1 and group sessions.

We will also work with other partners to build resilience and share good practice and learning.

The community safety theme links into the following strategies and plans:-

- Oxford City Council Corporate Plan 2016-2020 – Strong and Active Communities
- Oxfordshire Domestic Violence Strategy
- Oxford Safeguarding strategy

Homelessness (£442,279)

What's Worked Well

The homelessness commissioning grant (£442,279) is managed alongside the preventing homelessness grant (in 2016/17 this was £942,935). Services funded through this programme are used for homelessness prevention activities as well as tackling rough sleeping and support the council in meeting its Corporate Priority of Meeting Housing Need and the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy.

The funding contributes to providing specialist services/posts and projects in the following areas:-

- Small supported Accommodation projects
- Tackling rough sleeping
- Preventing homelessness
- Access to health and social care
- Tackling worklessness and improving positive activities

Good working relationships have been developed with organisations funded through this programme and with officers from the Districts and County Council tackling these issues.

This funding programme has enabled vital background services to continue.

Issues

Over the last three years rough sleeping and homelessness numbers have grown. There are more people with complex issues (mental health, alcohol & drug related), a high number of people rough sleeping who are not from Oxford/shire and can therefore not access any accommodation services here, an increasingly expensive private rented sector housing market which makes it difficult for people to move on from a street based life style or moving from supported accommodation and into independent accommodation.

In February 2016 Oxfordshire County Council made a decision to cut their housing related support funds by 100% with grant funding to be phased out with no funding support from April 2019. Housing Related Support currently funds all the supported

accommodation (including the two homeless hostels O'Hanlon House and Simon House) in the County.

These cuts will have a significant impact on accommodation available for single homeless people across the County.

Charitable organisations delivering these services were unprepared for the level of cuts, with a large number of organisations being heavily reliant on grant funding. These organisations are facing a difficult funding climate and many seeking funds from the same sources.

In general, funded organisations have expressed concern that grant funding that is one year only, with late notification (after budget setting process normally in February for a finance year starting 1st April) is hard to manage and difficult for services to plan for the future.

Going Forward

During the last year work has been on going to ensure that some provision for supported accommodation for single homeless people continues when the County's cuts are implemented.

Together with the City Council the Districts, County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group are contributing to a pooled budget and have entered into joint commissioning arrangements for a period of three years starting April 2017. The pooled budget arrangements will fund a much reduced level of supported accommodation in City and County. In order to meet the need for supported accommodation, City will have to fund any additional and much needed accommodation from our own funds.

City Council's commissioning will significantly change due to moving into commissioning supported accommodation, which the Council has not done previously at any significant scale.

Services going forward need to continue to focus on:

- Supported Accommodation
- Tackling rough sleeping
- Preventing homelessness
- Access to health and social care
- Tackling worklessness and improving positive activities

The homelessness theme links into the following strategies and plans:-

- Oxford City Councils Corporate Plan 2016-2020, priority Meeting Housing Needs
- Oxford City Councils Housing Strategy
- Oxford City Councils Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 (this is currently being reviewed with a new strategy in place from 1st April 2018).

Play & Leisure for Disabled Children & Young People (£15,000)

What's Worked Well

Significant research has been undertaken over the last twenty years about the barriers for disabled children and young people to access main stream services.

Disabled children are often excluded from their local provision as a result of the level of support they need and the fear that many have of working and interacting with disabled people.

Interactions for disabled teenagers with their peers are generally at school or college.

Full and effective participation and inclusion in society is one of the key principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Person with Disabilities. The Parasol Project provides inclusive play and leisure activities for disabled and non-disabled children and young people.

During the past year they have had 75 (41 disabled & 34 non-disabled) children aged 5-12 years old attending their inclusive play schemes and 88 young people aged 13 – 19 years old (53 disabled & 35 non-disabled) .

2 years ago the organisation had a restructure and overhauled their systems. This involved developing a central record system and separate invoicing system; they have 5 full time staff and are looking to employ a fundraiser.

Their trustees are actively involved , for example, one is an accountant and helps with the accounts.

Better relationships have been built with the local community and links made with Plowman Tower tenants residents group. When they are not using the premises they rent out the space for parties or to other play providers. Both of these initiatives have helped reduce incidents of vandalism to their play area.

Issues

Oxfordshire County Council cut their funding by approximately 30% but delivery and monitoring expectations have increased.

Demand for their service, by both disabled and non-disabled children and young people, has grown.

Concerns were expressed that short term funding is hard to manage and difficult for the service to effectively plan for the future

Going Forward

Children and young people with complex needs require specific support to enable them to benefit from play opportunities, this theme will help Oxford City Council

achieve that aim and contribute to equality of access to leisure for children and young people with disabilities.

Long term funding will help with security and sustainability.

Inclusive play and leisure for children and young people with disabilities link into the following strategies and plans:-

- Oxford City Councils Corporate Plan 2016-2020, priority Strong and Active Communities
- Oxford City Councils Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Oxfordshire Play Strategy
- Oxford City Councils Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Oxfordshire Play Strategy

Arts and Culture (£235,262)

What's Worked Well

During the last three years arts and culture has contributed to the economic, educational and community wellbeing of the city.

Organisations funded through this theme have offered a wide range of employment and training opportunities for emerging artists and other local communities. Cultural activities build connections within communities and enable the exchange of ideas around issues of identity and pride in localities.

In addition to contributing to cultural community work, Oxford City Council's funding enables these organisations to leverage in large amounts of funding from other sources including Arts Council England.

Issues

It's a fact that funding streams are reducing for the arts while there are growing numbers of organisations and individuals competing for smaller pots of funding;

In 2016/17, 14 arts and culture organisations were funded through the commissioned programme; and 29 individuals and organisations were funded through the culture fund (grants of up to £1k) 13 of which were first time recipients of an award from the Council.

In addition, as well as awarding grants, the Culture Team also competes with other art organisations because the team produces its own projects that requires additional funding (Christmas Light Festival, Dancin' Oxford, Cultural Education Partnership);

All this goes against the trend of the other districts and from April 2017 Oxfordshire County Council will no longer directly invest in the arts and whilst this only affects one art organisation in the City its implication is far more reaching

Other issues that are affecting art organisations and artists:

- Affordable spaces to make project focused work; spaces for longer rehearsal times
- Storage is proving to be a problem so much so that many organisations and artists cannot utilise many of their resources gained through project work as they cannot store it anywhere so a lot of waste happens.
- Many have mentioned the enormous pressure and resources spent on generating funds. Taking time away from delivery of projects or even managing the organisation.

Going forward

It is being proposed that art and culture organisations should bid for funding from the budget allocated to this theme. The proposal is to follow the Arts Council model and organisations will be able to apply for 3 year funding.

It is also being proposed that we accept Arts Council monitoring when an organisation is being funded by the Arts Council and Oxford City Council.

The arts and culture theme links into the following strategies and plans:-

- Oxford City Councils Corporate Plan 2016-2020, priorities A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy & Strong and Active Communities
- Oxford City Councils Culture Strategy
- Museum Development Plan

Advice & Money Management (£518,379)

What's Worked Well

Through the advice and money management commissioning theme four voluntary organisations are funded to deliver free independent, impartial and confidential advice.

Their work helps support and deliver outcomes against the Financial Inclusion Strategy:

- Residents will be able to seek free advice about their debts and be supported to make affordable repayment plans
- Residents will have increased ability and confidence in managing everyday finances including contracting with utility companies
- Residents will be supported to claim the benefits to which they are entitled
- Residents will be supported to access emergency support when required
- Residents will be supported to manage their finances

Agreeing an annual priority with the advice centres has focused this work.

Issues

Oxfordshire County Council discontinued funding the advice centres two years ago. The worst centre affected by these cuts was Oxford Community Work Agency (OCWA).

To help support the organisation through this transition Oxford City Council awarded an additional £53k last year. This helped them through a restructure, they reduced the space they use and now use trained volunteers to deliver some of their service. Also the centre manager has a Charity Mentor giving advice and support.

They have also looked at different ways in applying for other sources of funding, recently they were successful in applying for funding from Thames Water in partnership with Agnes Smith advice centre.

Going Forward

Going forward an independent review of the advice sector in Oxford was carried out earlier in the year looking at how the work meets the Financial Inclusion Strategy and to support the work in recommissioning them for 2018 to 2021.

The review undertaken by Advice UK found that funding for advice services had met local needs, represents good value for money, and recommends maintaining the Council's approach of strategic grant funding for the sector.

The advice and money management theme links into the following strategies and plans:-

- Oxford City Councils Corporate Plan 2016-2020, priority Strong and Active Communities
- Oxford City Councils Financial Inclusion Strategy

Community and voluntary sector infrastructure support (£43,736)

What's Worked Well

Investment in community and voluntary sector infrastructure builds the capacity of all of Oxford's voluntary and community organisations. The benefit to community groups is support to look for funding and help with funding applications and access to specialist knowledge about governance and management.

In 2016 we worked with OCVA to celebrate International Volunteers Day. This was a week long campaign and gave volunteers and volunteer organisations an opportunity to raise awareness of, and gain recognition for, the contribution they make to their communities. We commissioned a survey to help understand the picture of volunteering in Oxford which found that 41% of Oxford residents give their time in volunteering and give 3,000,000 hours annually.

In 2017 a funding fair was organised and was held at the Asian Cultural Centre. Funders in attendance were Oxford City Council, the Big Lottery; Oxfordshire Community Foundation; Groundwork South Trust; Lloyds Bank Foundation; BBC Children in Need; Charity Mentors and Abingdon and Witney College and Tesco's regarding their community budget funded from the 5p carrier bag charge.

OCVA interacted with charities, providing funding searches and advice throughout the event.

Over 80 people from 66 organisations (of which 22 were groups receiving funding from the Council) made use of the event to increase their fundraising potential.

Training opportunities and bid writing workshops have been delivered during this funding period.

Issues

Demand continues to grow and organisations are being asked to deliver more. Many organisations are struggling to secure funding and are seeking support and advice on governance, structures and funding.

Going Forward

We would like put this work out to procurement and focus the scope of the work for community and voluntary infrastructure on the main priorities identified through community and voluntary sector feedback:

- help and support with fund raising
- advice and support on governance
- volunteering support

The amount currently allocated for this theme is £43,736. Feedback indicates that the budget should be split between the above priorities, critical training in additional areas identified through monitoring (current examples include financial planning, charitable trading, project cycle) and an independent evaluation of the grants programme at the end of the 3 year programme to review social value and provide evidence based input into future funding recommendations.

The community and voluntary infrastructure support links into :-

- Oxford City Councils Corporate Plan 2016-2020, priority Strong and Active Communities

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