

Suggested City Executive Board response to the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee on the Review of Community Grants and Commissioned Advice Services

Provided by the Executive Board Members for Culture & Communities and Customer & Corporate Services

Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
1. That the Council identifies a suitable means of building capacity within BAME communities that are underrepresented among open bidding and small grants recipients, perhaps by linking this objective to the priorities for community and voluntary sector infrastructure support going forwards.	Y	Within the papers inviting bids for the CVO infrastructure support a specific question has been included asking applicants to explain how they will support the BAME communities in building capacity.
2. That a greater emphasis is placed on disseminating information about the grant application processes, together with advice about how to make a good application. This information should be generally available but also targeted at underrepresented groups and communities.	Y	As well as promoting the grant programme through our website and social media channels we will distribute leaflets through community centres and display through our noticeboards. Guidance notes include information on how to complete the application form and suggestions on what to consider to ensure they answer the questions fully, 4 workshops will be held when the open bidding grants programme is open for applications, 2 on bid writing and 2 on what makes a successful application. One of these will be held in East Oxford.
3. That the Council ensures that there is a continuing dialogue with advice centres about the proposals, including specifically the proposal to make a 5% reduction to the direct funding that goes to each organisation and to pool that money with an additional £20k that advice centres can bid for to fund development work.	Y	The Revenues & Benefits Programme Manager met with the advice centres on 8th November to discuss the revised specification and the proposed new funding approach. It was a productive meeting, and all parties reaffirmed their commitment to act on the recommendations of the Advice UK report (this commitment had been made at a previous meeting on August 3rd). The advice centres made a request to defer the 5% reallocation of core funding to a new match funded development pot until April 2019, the second year of the new contract. Officers will hold a further meeting with the agencies in the new year following a decision by CEB.

<p>4. That consideration is given to whether there is a role for the Council in providing 'social grants' funding directly to social enterprise organisations.</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Through the open bidding grant programmes one of the things that we list as not wanting to fund are organisations making a commercial gain; however we do fund community interest companies and other none profit making organisations as long as they can evidence there is more than one person running the organisation and they are not related.</p> <p>Through the Homelessness commissioning grant programme we fund The Big Issue and support Aspire who run social enterprises supporting homeless people change their lives.</p>
<p>5. That further consideration is given to whether the proposed £200k income ceiling is the most appropriate means of limiting the size of groups that can apply for small grants.</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>We will look into this.</p>