



To: Executive Councillor for Community, Arts and Recreation:
Councillor Richard Johnson

Report by: Debbie Kaye, Head of Communities, Arts & Recreation

Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 15/1/2015

Wards affected: All

COMMUNITY GRANTS 2015-16

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 On 11th July 2014 this committee considered a report detailing the review undertaken on the former Community and Arts and Recreation Development Grants recommending new priorities and outcomes under the name 'Community Grants' which was agreed by the Executive Councillor for Community, Arts and Recreation.
- 1.2 At the same committee it was agreed by the Executive Councillor that:
- § The 2015-16 budget for the Community Grants be provisionally set at £900,000 subject to confirmation as part of the 2015-16 budget round.
 - § Once confirmed as part of the 2015-16 budget round, the Community Grants budget will be frozen for a further two years (2016-17 and 2017-18).
 - § The amount of the overall budget devolved to Area Committees for 2015-16 is provisionally set at £80,000 subject to confirmation at Community Services Scrutiny Committee in January 2015.
- 1.3 This report details the implementation process undertaken for the new Community Grants fund and makes recommendations of awards, for voluntary and community organisations, under the new scheme, for 2015-16.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to agree:

- 2.1 The grants to voluntary and community organisations for 2015-16, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report, subject to the budget approval in February 2015 and any further satisfactory information required of applicant organisations.
- 2.2 The Area Committee grants budget as set out in paragraph 8.1, subject to the budget approval in February 2015.
- 2.3 To establish a Transition Fund of £75,000, from 2014-15 unallocated funding, to support voluntary and community organisations through the first year of the implementation of the new priorities and outcomes as detailed in Section 6, and as allocated in Appendix 1, of this report.
- 2.4 That officers review the Discretionary Rate Relief contributions from this fund, in discussion with the Business Rates service, and bring a report back to this committee in March 2015, as detailed in paragraph 6.1 of this report.

3. Background

- 3.1 In October 2013 the Director of Customer and Community Services presented a report to this committee on future options for discretionary services. This was in the context of the very challenging situation facing local government and the significant savings requirement for the Council over the next four years. The report included plans to bring the two service areas together under a single head of service by October 2014 and to review Community Development and Arts and Recreation Development grants. The Executive Councillor for Community Wellbeing agreed that officers should report back to this committee in June/July 2014 with recommendations about new grants priorities and options for future budgets.
- 3.2 A scoping report for the grants review was considered by this committee on 16.1.14. The Executive Councillor for Community Wellbeing agreed that the review should include consultation around a set of proposed grant priorities, outcomes and impact of three budget options: reductions of 10%, 20% and 30%. The draft proposals suggested that when the Council considers grant awards it should seek to prioritise those applications demonstrating outcomes that help people in most need.

- 3.3 Given the Council's very challenging financial environment, the review also consulted on the impact that reduced grants budgets might have on the Cambridge voluntary sector and on particular organisations should members decide to make savings from 2015-16. This impact assessment continued into the application and assessment phases of the new Community Grants fund.
- 3.4 Following the elections in May, the new ruling group set out policy objectives in the Annual Statement approved at Council on 12.6.14, including making a commitment to improve social inclusion and tackle poverty.
- 3.5 On 11.7.14. this committee received a report setting out the findings from the review undertaken on the former Community and Arts and Recreation Development Grants recommending new priorities and outcomes under the name 'Community Grants' which was agreed by the Executive Councillor (the priorities and outcomes are shown in the next section). The Executive Councillor also agreed that:
- § The 2015-16 budget for the Community Grants be provisionally set at £900,000 subject to confirmation as part of the 2015-16 budget round
 - § Once confirmed as part of the 2015-16 budget round the Community Grants budget will be frozen for a further two years (2016-17 and 2017-18).
 - § The amount of the overall budget devolved to Area Committees for 2015-16 is provisionally set at £80,000 subject to confirmation at Community Services Scrutiny Committee in January 2015
- 3.6 The Council's savings requirement was one of the drivers for the new scheme. The new, more focussed, criteria sought to achieve a balance between recognising the need to make savings, while continuing to support voluntary groups and organisations that work with City residents with the highest needs within the remit of the Community Grants priority areas.
- 3.7 Officers have since promoted the new grants to community and voluntary groups and assessed applications against the new priorities and outcomes. Although the overall budget has been reduced by 25%, there has been no corresponding reduction to individual organisations. All applications have been assessed on their own merit under the new scheme criteria and recommendations for awards are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.8 The following flowchart shows the priorities and outcomes approved for the Community Grants fund.

All applications MUST demonstrate how the funding will reduce social and/or economic inequality, by removing barriers for City residents with the most need, to enable them to access one or more of the funding priorities:

Funding Priorities

Your activity needs to be one of these:

- § **Sporting activities**
 - § **Arts and cultural activities**
 - § **Community development activities**
 - § **Legal and/or financial advice***
 - § **Employment support**
- or**
- § **Capacity building of the voluntary sector to achieve the above**

* Organisations applying to give legal advice and support must have The Advice Quality Standard (AQS) or equivalent.



Primary Outcome

Your activity must achieve this:

Reduce social and/or economic inequality for City residents with the highest needs



As well as the primary outcome, your activity must achieve one or more of the following strategic outcomes:

Strategic Outcomes

- § **Improved health and wellbeing**
- § **Communities come together and bring about change**
- § **More people have better opportunities to gain employment**
- § **Stronger voluntary sector in the city**

4. Implementation

4.1 In addition to an email to 320 groups funded over the past three years, two face-to-face briefings were held (28.7.14 and 5.8.14) to explain the closure of the Community, Arts and Recreation Development grants and the key requirements and focus of the new Community Grants fund. In total 39 people attended representing 38 different organisations. Officers also attended Arts and Sports networking events, the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service's Chief Officers forum, and a board meeting of the Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum to present the Community Grants fund.

4.2 A comprehensive guide was produced following feedback from organisations through the briefings and working closely with the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service:

- § explaining the new scheme
- § giving examples of what would and would not be considered
- § containing an eligibility simple step checklist
- § signposting to a range of help and support for individuals and groups with applications

4.3 Three application workshops were offered (6.9.14, 15.9.14, 25.9.14), one of which was organised by the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service. In total 50 people attended from 44 different organisations.

4.4 Officers met organisations on a one to one basis as requested and infrastructure organisations also offered support (Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service, Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum, Cambridge Guidance, Education and Training Group).

4.5 From the launch of the new fund in August 2014 to the closing date for applications on 3.10.14 a communications plan was implemented including a press release, newsletter articles, twitter, email reminders and work with targeted groups and via infrastructure organisations.

5. Assessment

5.1 There were 153 applications received from 101 different organisations for 2015-16 Community Grants funding.

5.2 An assessment matrix was developed around the priorities and outcome requirements to pilot this year and build on for the future. Officers undertaking assessments were briefed on the process to help gain a consistent approach. These assessments were then moderated

by strategy officer meetings informing the award recommendations detailed in Appendix 1.

- 5.3 Officers met with the Arts Council to discuss arts in the City in more general terms and to understand their current funding situation and priorities.
- 5.4 The application process required organisations to self-assess the impact of no or reduced funding from the Council. While this was helpful to understand the potential impact of recommended awards, it did not influence the decision to fund applications that did not meet the remit of the Community Grants fund.
- 5.5 The Executive Councillor attended a meeting with officers to review the process and outcomes.

6. Transition

- 6.1 Even though a lot of time, consideration and effort was put in to convey the changes from the old funding stream to the new, and to specify the requirements of the new fund and support organisations throughout, it is apparent that there are some areas that need further attention. In particular:
 - § We received a higher than anticipated number of applications which did not meet funding criteria, including a number from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups, e.g. applicants have to demonstrate why the funds will tackle inequality, detail the activity and budget they want funding for, demonstrate the organisation needs our funding and that the activity meets our priorities and outcomes.
 - § Discretionary Rate Relief needs review.
 - § Greater clarity for applicants on areas this funding cannot support because the areas are the remit of other statutory organisations (e.g. County Council – older people’s care) or another service in the City Council (e.g. Homelessness – we are seeking to find ways of funding this through the Housing section’s separate Revenue Account).
 - § Impact self-assessments undertaken by applicants.
- 6.2 To help with the transition from the old and new criteria a Transition Fund is proposed. This will be £75,000 from unallocated 2014-15 funds. Organisations will be awarded transition funding with conditions covering the following themes:
 - § Exit strategy

- § Discretionary rate relief review
- § Improve the quality of future bids

6.3 Officers will continue to support organisations and implement appropriate briefings and workshops to improve understanding of the criteria and the quality of applications, in particular with BAME organisations. Where appropriate this will include one to one meetings.

6.4 Officers will review Discretionary Rate Relief in relation to the Community Grants fund in discussion with the Business Rates section and bring back proposals to this committee in March 2015.

7. Community Grants 2015-6 Awards

7.1 Appendix 1 details the recommended awards and transition funding for 2015-16.

7.2 Where no funding is recommended it is due to one or more of the following not being adequately met:

- § grant scheme priorities
- § grant scheme outcomes
- § identifying need
- or
- § proposals were the remit of another service or organisation such as the County Council, Health, Housing etc.
- § organisations did not demonstrate the beneficiaries could not fund the activity themselves, or that reserves could not be used to fund the activity.

8. Area Committee Grants 2015-16

8.1 The Area Committee Community Grants process has not altered and the revised priorities and outcomes will be integrated with a simplified application process. Grants are up to £5k per organisation per area committee. The budget will be allocated as follows (as agreed at this committee in July) using the agreed percentage calculated from population and deprivation data.

Committee	% split	Community Grant £	Safer City Grant £	Total £
North	37.8	22,680	5,000	27,680
East	32.2	19,320	5,000	24,320
South	20	12,000	5,000	17,000
West Central	10	6,000	5,000	11,000
Total	100	60,000	20,000	80,000

9. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

- § The £900,000 Community Grants budget is subject to the Council's budget approval February 2015
- § The recommended awards from the Community Grants budget are as set out in Appendix 1
- § The £75,000 Transition Fund to be funded from unallocated 2014-15 grant funds

(b) Staffing Implications

- § Officers will need to implement the awards and monitoring process and follow up the areas for further attention identified in section 6.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

- § An initial Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out in December 2013 to inform the Community and Arts and Recreation Development grants review process. The main impacts and mitigation were reported to this committee in January 2014 when the review process was agreed.
- § A second EqIA was carried out in July 2014 in the context of the findings from the review and desktop research to inform the new Community Grants priorities and outcomes. The main equalities and poverty impacts together with proposed mitigation measures were reported to this committee in July 2014
- § Although the July report stated an EqIA would not to be carried out at this stage, a health check has been undertaken in light of the applications received under the new criteria. The main findings are summarised below and a full copy is available on request and will be published on the council's website:
 - Regardless of the range of help and support offered detailed in this report, some applications, particularly relating to the BAME sector, were not adequately focused on helping those in most need and/or did not provide sufficient evidence for this.
 - The proposed one-off 'Transition Fund' will help to mitigate the effect of this period of change on identified groups alongside the support work identified in section 6 of this report.
 - Groups receiving transitional funding will need to:
 - § submit stronger applications meeting our priorities and outcomes in the future
 - § source additional or alternative funding streams
 - § develop appropriate exit strategies where necessary

- There were no other identified negative impacts. All applications which were specifically for low income residents were successful.

(d) Environmental Implications

- § Funded organisations are expected to have or develop environmental policies.

(e) Procurement

- § None. The Council's approach to grant aid through the Community Grants is via an application process rather than through the direct commissioning of services.

(f) Consultation and communication

- § As set out in the report.
- § Applicants were notified when this report was published detailing recommended awards, giving an indication of proposed funding from April 2015. This adhered to the Cambridgeshire Compact framework to give three months' notice of funding changes.
- § Officers will continue the process of award notification, signposting and support, and implementing and monitoring awards.
- § Officers will follow up areas for further attention identified in paragraph 6.1.

(g) Community Safety

- § None.

10. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- § Community Services Scrutiny Reports January and July 2014

11. Appendices

- § Appendix 1 – Community Grants 2015-16 award recommendations

12. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers please follow the appropriate link or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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