

## **CABINET - 18 MARCH 2010**

### **Supplementary Report of the Director of Governance & Procurement**

#### **ITEM 13     SERVICE REVIEW – COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME**

##### Purpose of Report

This report sets out the results of the Service Review of the Community Grants scheme and proposes new arrangements for the assessment of grant applicants and the allocation of grant funding.

The supplementary report provides updated information on the responses to the consultation on the review which was not available when the Cabinet agenda was published.

##### Recommendation

That the issues raised by consultees and the responses to those issues set out in the appendix to this supplementary report be noted.

##### Reason

To enable all the views put forward by the community and voluntary sector to be considered.

##### Policy Context

The delivery of the programme of Service Reviews will contribute to the Council's aim of continually improving the way we do business, setting challenging but realistic targets, and delivering value for money on Council services.

It is also of note that the Audit Commission considers the process of conducting service reviews to be 'good practice' in assessing a council's 'Use of Resources', an element within the current Comprehensive Area Assessment regime.

##### Background

As set out in the main report there were two stages of consultation as part of the Service Review of Community Grants. The first stage consultation was used to draw up the proposals set out in the main report. The second stage was to consult on the proposals set out in the report. The results of the consultation are set out in the appendix to this supplementary report.

This stage of the consultation has produced responses which generally welcome the principles which have been applied in the new Community Grants scheme but raise some concerns. Several organisations which are identified as strategic partners have highlighted the impacts of applying a taper to their funding. The response to these comments highlights the fact that these organisations are still able to apply for

Community Development project funding in addition to their strategic partner funding.

More specific concerns have also been raised. Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood have highlighted that they have only existed in their current form for two years and that basing their funding on the average of the past three years creates a misleading impression. This fact is acknowledged but the review also acknowledges that there are a number of historical anomalies in grant funding arrangements. Funding in the period to 2012/13 has therefore been calculated by applying the same formula to all organisations as part of a move to arrangements from 2013/14 based on clear eligibility criteria. In the case of the comments by Gorse Covert about community centre funding more generally and by Charnwood CAB about its move to the Old Magistrates Court building, it is proposed that these issues are taken up in discussions with the organisations concerned.

#### Financial Implications

No further financial implications as a result of this supplementary report.

#### Risk Management

No further risks have been identified as a result of this supplementary report.

Key Decision:	Yes
Background Papers:	Consultation letters and responses
Officer(s) to contact:	Simon Jackson                      01509 634699 <a href="mailto:simon.jackson@charnwood.gov.uk">simon.jackson@charnwood.gov.uk</a> Michael Hopkins                      01509 634785 <a href="mailto:michael.hopkins@charnwood.gov.uk">michael.hopkins@charnwood.gov.uk</a>

Respondent	Main Issues	Response to Issues
Albert Street Artists	<p>Concern regarding the suggested timetable for Community Development Grant applications which would result in the first round of decisions being taken in July. This would leave the organisation without adequate funds at the beginning of the financial year and cause significant anxiety.</p> <p>The organisation would meet the criteria set out in the application form for Community Development Grants but is uncomfortable in changing its activities to suit those criteria rather than needs it has identified.</p> <p>The process of applying for funding on an annual basis would be stressful and the organisation would have to redirect resources into the application process. The previous Cabinet decision to provide ongoing funding was partly to avoid having to go through this process.</p> <p>Albert Street Artists should be considered for strategic partner funding.</p>	<p>Recommendation in Cabinet report included to give Director of Governance and Procurement delegated authority to determine Community Development Grant applications which cannot be considered by Cabinet due to exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>In order for the process to be fair and transparent and common set of criteria must be used. These have been based on as wide a description of community and organisational need as possible.</p> <p>Officers are available to provide advice and assistance in the application process.</p> <p>The revised scheme includes the possibility for new partner organisations to be identified.</p>
Charnwood CAB	<p>Proposals to reduce grant each year came as a surprise.</p> <p>Concerns regarding effect of reduction on plan to move to Old Magistrates Court building. Issues of rent and service costs are still to be finalised. Concern about committing to long term lease when funding is being reduced.</p> <p>Effect of reduction in grant could be reduced opening hours as there must be adequate supervision in place whenever the bureau is open. This is a concern given the current increase in demand for the bureau's services.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p> <p>This particular issue will be discussed with CAB as a separate matter.</p> <p>Strategic partners are able to apply for Community Development funding in addition to the amount provided by virtue of being strategic partners.</p>
Fearon Hall	<i>Management Group meeting on evening of 15th March</i>	

Respondent	Main Issues	Response to Issues
Gorse Covert Community Association	<p>Welcome differentiation of grant funding into clear categories and ability to plan offered by considering three year period.</p> <p>Aware of general financial position but Borough Council should also consider impact of any changes of affected organisations and continue to value work that is being done.</p> <p>When drawing up proposals unaware of full potential impact of County Council's proposed funding cuts to community centres.</p> <p>Will continue to consider how to increase self-generated income but if want to support full range of groups not able to charge commercial rates for room hire.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p> <p>Work is valued and reflected in partnership working arrangements. Strategic partners are able to apply for Community Development funding in addition to the amount provided by virtue of being strategic partners.</p> <p>This particular issue will be discussed with affected organisations as a separate matter.</p> <p>Comment noted</p>
Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood	<p>Grateful for three-year funding which provides assurance of continuity to staff.</p> <p>HREC has only existed in current form for two years. The use of a three year average does not reflect the position of HREC and the average of the last two years should be used. The development of the organisation to cover all equalities and human rights issues is continuing.</p> <p>Partnership working with the Council is also developing and has led to successes in relation to hate incidents and other areas of work. If funding is reduced some of this work would have to cease.</p> <p>To deliver partnership working with the Borough Council and the County Council, HREC spend £55,000, of which the Borough Council provides £15,000 and the County Council £40,000. The organisation was originally set up with equal funding from the two councils.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p> <p>Comment noted. The review acknowledges that there are a number of historical anomalies in grant funding arrangements. In order to move to arrangements from 2013/14 based on clear eligibility criteria, funding in the intervening period is based on applying the same formula to all organisations.</p> <p>Work is valued and reflected in partnership working arrangements. Strategic partners are able to apply for Community Development funding in addition to the amount provided by virtue of being strategic partners.</p> <p>Comment noted.</p>

Respondent	Main Issues	Response to Issues
Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood – Bangladeshi Community Project	<p>Grateful for three-year funding which provides assurance of continuity to staff.</p> <p>Reduction in grant funding would remove the previous parity of funding with the County Council for this project and could threaten the work.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Strategic partners are able to apply for Community Development funding in addition to the amount provided by virtue of being strategic partners.</p>
John Storer House/ Voluntary Action Charnwood	<p>Welcome creation of strategic partner funding and inclusion, of John Storer House among strategic partners, funding for Shepshed Volunteer Centre and continuation of funding through contribution to Countywide Infrastructure Organisation.</p> <p>Reduction in amounts through tapering does not come as a surprise but will add to organisations difficulties. Will seek to raise other funding and self-generated income.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Strategic partners are able to apply for Community Development funding in addition to the amount provided by virtue of being strategic partners.</p>