

## Decision under Delegated Powers

### Officer Requesting Decision

Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager

### Officer Making the Decision

Head of Neighbourhood Services

### Recommendation

To allocate Fearon Community Association their Strategic Partner Grant for the first 6 months with a review after 4 months regarding progress and future payments and subject to all the following requirements being met:

- Agreement of new governance / organisational structure
- Completion of year end accounts and revised Business Plan
- Recruitment of new Directors
- Pension deficit liability resolved
- Agreement and outcome regarding new lease arrangements with the Diocese by 30<sup>th</sup> September

### Reason

To ensure that Fearon Community Association can continue to operate the community hall and provide much needed facilities and activities for the local community during a period of organisational change. The Strategic Partner Grant provides core funding to the organisation and ensures that running costs are met. Without this funding the hall would have to either close or reduce its opening times to the significant detriment of its users and future income generation.

### Authority for Decision

At its meeting on 21st January 2016, the Cabinet resolved that that a Strategic Partner Grant be awarded in principle to Fearon Community Association, subject to it continuing to work with the Council, the receipt of evidence demonstrating that it is financially robust and the implementation of appropriate governance structures prior to 1st April 2016, and that the Head of Neighbourhood Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Lead Member, to determine the most appropriate way forward (minute 93.4 15/16 refers).

### Decision and Date

*Julie Robinson 8/4/16*

## Background

Following Fearon Community Associations (FCA) application to continue as a Strategic Partner for 2016/17, the grants panel approved their application subject to receipt of evidence that they were addressing their financial situation, governance structures and their commitment to moving forward with the signing of a Hall lease agreement with the Diocese.

Evidence has been provided that demonstrates that the Association are delivering against these requirements however the time frame for all the actions to be completed is likely to take up to 6 months.

Fearon Community Association has been a Strategic Partner for over 10 years and exists to maintain and improve the quality of life for people in East Loughborough, especially Hastings and Lemington wards, and promote equality of opportunity between individuals and groups of people from different backgrounds. The venue is used for community and private events.

The Strategic Partner Grant will cover running costs of the various projects/ areas of work/services offered, including youth provision, health, advice and outreach to BME community, community learning, communication and cohesion.

The FCA provides the following services and caters for:

- Older people – to maintain / regain their independence
- Vulnerable adults – improved self-esteem and engagement with Adult social-services
- Young people – provides a meeting point and fills gaps in local youth Services, provides diversionary activities
- Unemployed people – increase skills base and employability
- People with drugs / alcohol problems – minimises the negative impact of substance misuse.

The hall itself sits within a tri-party agreement between the Diocese, Charnwood Borough Council and Fearon Community Association. There have been some ongoing issues regarding the lease of the hall that has resulted in the premises requiring significant structural work that in turn, has impacted hall usage. In addition the lack of an agreed long term lease has meant that the association has been unable to apply to other funding sources such as the Big Lottery to help with its ongoing running costs and any internal maintenance requirements.

Negotiations are currently taking place to move this forward with the proposal that the FCA takes the lease on directly from the Diocese. A deadline has been set for this agreement to be finalised of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

The Lead Member for Community Cohesion has been consulted.

## Financial Implications

That £13,917.60 of the £27,835.20 Strategic Partner Grant be allocated to Fearon Hall Community Association which represents 6 months of Strategic Partner Grant.

FCA have confirmed that they would prefer the Borough Council to still pay any Community Association staffs salaries. If salaries are still to be paid by CBC, then the residual amount minus salaries will be paid over to FCA. No payments will be made until confirmation that there is sufficient funds to cover the salary costs.

There are no financial implications as this is within the budget allocated.

## Risk Management

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
FCA fail to meet the requirements for the continuation of the Strategic Partner Grant	Possible	Significant	FCA is being supported by Officers to help meet all the agreed requirements.
Adverse publicity regarding the closure of a community facility	Possible	Moderate	FCA is being supported by Officers to help ensure the continuation of the association.

Key Decision:

No

Background Papers:

Cabinet Report 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016 –  
Charnwood Grants – Strategic  
Partners (2016/17 – 2017/18) Min  
93

