

Subject:	Discretionary Grants Programme 2010-13: Three Year Process
Date of Meeting:	20 November 2008
Report of:	Director of Cultural Services
Contact Officer:	Name: John Routledge: VSU Manager Tel: 29-1112
	E-mail: john.routledge@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Key Decision:	Yes Forward Plan No. 5516
Wards Affected:	All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To consolidate and build upon the corporate Discretionary Grants Programme 2007-10 in recognition of its role in underpinning council's working relationship with, and the continuing sustainability of, Brighton and Hove's community & voluntary sector.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet agree to a future discretionary grants programme for 2010-2013. The size of the programme to be determined by the 2010-11 budget strategy subject to the council's financial position, the indicative amount being equivalent to the 2008-09 budget level plus appropriate inflationary uplift (approx £1,584,000 pa. please see 5.1).
- 2.2 That the Cabinet agree to adopt a revised vision for the discretionary grants programme, as detailed in paragraph 3.9, accompanied by updated eligibility criteria reflecting the new corporate priorities.
- 2.3 That the Cabinet agree to maintain the current application procedure, appraisal process & delivery mechanism including the recommended timetable (please see Appendix 1. 'Timetable Three Year Strategic Grants 2010-13').

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 Council is currently committed to a three year cycle of discretionary grants through 2007-10 (Policy & Resources Committee Report June 2005).

This is managed by the Voluntary Sector Unit (in consultation with service departments) and delivered as Three Year Strategic Grants (£1.21M pa),

accompanied by an Annual Grants Programme (comprising 6 distinct smaller schemes worth in total approx £330,000 pa).

3.2 Following the adoption of a new constitution & cabinet structure the Cabinet Member for Community Affairs, Inclusion & Internal Relations asked the Voluntary Sector Unit to formulate recommendations for continuing delivery of a discretionary grants programme to support community & voluntary sector organisations in future years.

3.3 Therefore, in June 2008, the Unit facilitated a meeting of the existing cross-party Members Advisory Group for Grants (MAG) comprising one elected member from: Conservative (Chair & Cabinet Member for Community Affairs), Labour, Green & Liberal Democrat Groups to discuss background and options.

3.4 At this meeting MAG considered:

Original application & appraisal mechanisms for the discretionary grants programme, agreed by council following an extensive consultation programme with partners / stakeholders (P&R: Best Value Review of Grants 2001 and Grants Scrutiny Panel 2002).

Subsequent revisions to process & procedure, informed by the Voluntary Sector Unit's experience & evaluation of three year grant cycles: 2001-04, 2004-07 & 2007-10 and agreed at relevant Policy & Resources (P&R) Committees.

Current mechanisms, recognised as reflecting best practice in the field (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy 2005).

In summary MAG considered & agreed:

- A two stage process of Outline & Full Bid for Three Year funding open to application every three years (please see Appendix 1: 'Timetable Three Year Strategic Grants 2010-13').
- Quarterly application & appraisal cycle for Annual Grant funding each year (typically commencing in January, April, July & October)
- A cross party Members Advisory Group providing comment & input on all recommendations to Cabinet covering Three Year Outline & Full Bids plus Annual Grants above £3,000 (below this level decision delegated to Chair & senior officers)
- Clear matching of grants programmes to council priorities

- 3.5 MAG suggested that the programme continued to offer open, transparent & accountable process & procedures. In addition a dedicated Unit, working in consultation with service departments, ensured effective / efficient programme management / delivery and value for associated monies.
- 3.6 MAG advised that the evolving strategic context within which any future discretionary grants programme would operate necessitated a new 'vision' for grants with associated eligibility criteria that clearly matched emerging corporate priorities.
- 3.7 It was agreed that the Unit would initiate a process of consultation with service heads & senior officers with a view to identifying those key priorities that would define the recommended vision & criteria for grant aid (please see Appendix 2: 'Officer Consultation List' & Appendix 3: 'Strategic Reference Index').
- 3.8 On completion of the above consultation process a subsequent meeting of MAG, held in October 2008, unanimously supported Recommendations: 2.1, 2.2 & 2.3 above alongside the following recommended vision & criteria for grant aid.

3.9 Vision

“Brighton & Hove City Council recognises the value of independent, not-for-profit community and voluntary sector organisations...

... the discretionary grants programme demonstrates council commitments around delivery of open & effective leadership by investing in a vibrant third sector to help citizens become more involved in their communities and participate in regular volunteering.”

The vision is directly derived from “Our Corporate Plan 2008-11” and recognises the third sector’s capacity to design & deliver high quality services efficiently & effectively (Economic & Social Audit of the CV sector in B&H: Dialogue 50/50 Group 2003 & draft 2008).

As such it embeds ‘value for money’ at the earliest stage of grant giving.

In addition the vision encompasses key cross-cutting themes for council around promotion of citizen participation through active volunteering (Local Area Agreement (LAA): Strengthening Communities 2008-11) alongside established & emerging priorities in terms of opportunity & engagement (Creating & City of Opportunities: 20/20 Community Strategy 2006-09 & Community Engagement Framework: Draft Sept 2008).

Brighton and Hove is the only authority in South East region to have adopted the 3 major LAA Strengthening Communities indicators NI 4:

'influencing decisions', NI 6: 'regular volunteering' & NI 7: 'thriving third sector'. The council is also one of only 18 Community Empowerment Champions nationally.

The vision acknowledges this status and seeks to ensure that council and our communities benefit from the opportunities ahead (An Action Plan for Community Empowerment: DCLG 2007).

3.10 Criteria for Grant Aid

A cross-cutting vision will ensure all successful applicant organisations demonstrate: ability to effectively engage as well as capacity to empower resident communities, alongside delivery of value for grant monies.

However the dynamism and diversity of sector partners also means they are uniquely placed to complement key council service priorities. Each applicant organisation will therefore need to demonstrate how its day-to-day work meets at least one of four eligibility criteria derived from the corporate plan and core strategies:

(1) Protecting the environment while growing the economy

Preserving & improving our urban & natural environments, growing our economy & supporting people into work...

Thereby prioritising actions to address, for example:

- Sustainability Strategy – Local Agenda 21
- Social Enterprise Strategy
- City Employment & Skills Plan
- Reducing Inequality Review

Criteria 1 enables activities that tackle poverty & address 'worklessness' by enabling those early, often low-level, interventions whereby the sector specialises in prevention of dependency and progression towards independence.

(2) Providing excellent cultural opportunities for all

"Promoting participation in cultural & sporting activities... expanding 'life chances', improving physical / mental health & enabling people to share in the city's life"

Thereby prioritising actions to address, for example:

- Active Living Strategy
- City Sports Strategy
- A Thriving Creative Ecology - A&CIU draft

- Community Development Commissioning Strategy

Criteria 2 is placed to maximise the sector's individual contribution to forthcoming 2012 Cultural Olympiad, LAA NI 11 "Engagement in the Arts", as well as new and emerging initiatives around asset transfer & community anchors.

(3) Making a city where people are safe & feel safe

"Encouraging responsibility... involving communities in reducing crime & antisocial behaviour"

Thereby prioritising actions to address, for example:

- Safe in the City - Community Safety, Crime Reduction & Drugs Safety
- Youth Justice Team Action Plan
- LGBT Strategic Action Plan
- Neighbourhood Action Plans

Criteria 3 acknowledges targets identified in the Partnership Community Safety Team's Strategic Assessment and the sector's capacity to engage both communities of place and interest across the city in the delivery of effective interventions through diversionary activities etc.

(4) Reducing inequality by increasing opportunity

"Giving children the best start in life...providing excellent education for all, improving health working together to target the most vulnerable"

Thereby prioritising actions to address, for example

- Children & Young Peoples Plan (currently under revision)
- B&H Homelessness Strategy
- Personalisation: Transforming Adult Social Care
- Working Towards an Equal City: BHCC Equalities & Inclusion Policy

Criteria 4 recognises that deprivation can be widely dispersed across the city and that sector expertise can remove barriers by helping Brighton and Hove's diverse communities make their own different and valuable contributions to tackling disadvantage.

- 3.11 In conclusion Appendix 4: 'Translating priorities into Actions' illustrates how vision, criteria & priorities become practical activities against which community & voluntary sector organisations can deliver eligible applications for council grant aid.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation process directly engaged the Cabinet Member for Community Affairs alongside representatives of each political party (through the Members Advisory Group) as well as service heads and senior officers. Please see 3.3 to 3.8 above plus Appendix 2: Officer Consultation List

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

The council's budget for its Discretionary Grants Programme is £1,545,080 in 2008/09. The value of the Discretionary Grants Programme for 2010/11 will be determined as part of budget setting for 2010/11 and prioritised against competing demands on the Cultural Services budget and the council's financial position at that time. Based on current level plus inflation the indicative grant programme would be £1,584,000 for the years 2010/11 to 2012/13 however this is subject to resources being available to fund the programme in each of the three years.

*(Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley – Head of Financial Services
Date: 30/10/08)*

5.2 Legal Implications:

The report recommends continuation of the discretionary grants programme with the current application procedure, process and delivery mechanism all maintained alongside a new timetable for Three year Strategic Grants 20-13. It also recommends adopting a revised vision for the discretionary grants programme, accompanied by updated eligibility criteria which reflect new corporate priorities. This is considered to be a reasonable legal approach.

(Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce – Principal Solicitor Date: 20/10/08)

5.3 Equalities Implications:

Actions to promote equalities issues are prioritised in the vision & criteria for grant aid as outlined above.

In addition the specialist grant schemes identified at Appendix 5 address key council strategies in this regard.

This report recommends continuation of the discretionary grants programme. However an Equalities Impact Assessment is underway & due for completion by Cabinet 20 November 2008.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

Actions to promote sustainability issues are prioritised in the vision & criteria for grant aid as outlined above.

In addition the specialist grant schemes identified at Appendix 5 address key council strategies in this regard.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

Actions to address crime & disorder issues are prioritised in the vision & criteria for grant aid as outlined above.

In addition the specialist grant schemes identified at Appendix 5 promote key council strategies in this regard.

5.6 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

Promotion of opportunity is prioritised in the vision & criteria for grant aid outlined above. Provision of mechanisms for the appropriate management of associated risk are acknowledged & addressed in the recommendations made.

Risks attached to discontinuing the programme are outlined in this report. In summary: “provision of a discretionary grants programme in future years will be essential, not only for the council’s continuing good working relations with a thriving third sector but also its capacity to deliver on corporate commitments and strategic priorities throughout the period.”

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

Recommendations made support a number of council priorities as outlined. For example:

- Our Corporate Plan 2008-11
- LAA Strengthening Communities Indicators NI: 4, 6 & 7

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Alternative options have been considered & rejected as part of the consultation exercise outlined in this report.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Recommendations 2.1 & 2.2 recognise that provision of a discretionary grants programme in future years will be essential, not only for the council’s continuing good working relations with a thriving third sector but also its capacity to deliver on corporate commitments and strategic priorities throughout the period.
- 7.2 Recommendation 2.3 acknowledges 3.4 & concurs with 3.5 above.
- 7.3 Should Cabinet agree the above recommendations Appendix 5: ‘Provisional Grant Scheme Budgets 2010-13’ summarises the anticipated allocation pa. across all schemes.

nb. Current grant allocations & commitments 2007-10 have previously been circulated to all members, can be downloaded from the council's website or are available on request from the Voluntary Sector Unit.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Timetable Three Year Strategic Grants 2010-13
2. Officer Consultation List
3. Strategic Reference Index
4. Translating priorities into Actions
5. Provisional Grant Scheme Budgets 2010-13
6. Glossary of Acronyms

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. n/a

Background Documents

1. Please see Appendix 3: 'Strategic Reference Index'