



Executive
6th April 2009

**Report from the Director of
Housing and Community Care**

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Wards Affected:
ALL

Main Programme Grant Funding 2009/10

Forward Plan Ref: H&CC-08/09-28

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the Executive with details of local voluntary organisations that have applied for funding from the Council's Main Programme Grant (MPG) for 2009/10.
- 1.2 This report follows on from a previous report presented to the Executive on 17th November 2008, where it was agreed to renew funding to existing organisations not affected by the proposed three year funding programme. It was also agreed that funding would be allocated for one year and renewed at the same level as in 2008/9.
- 1.3 The report provides details of the funding renewal process and provides information on the organisations and projects that have applied for funding.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members to note and approve the recommendations for the allocation of the Main Programme Grants for 2009/10 as summarised in Appendix A and detailed in the individual reports attached as Appendix B.
- 2.2 Members to confirm that all funding is made subject to the Council's Grant Conditions, and that the funding is subject to each organisation agreeing and abiding by a statement of purpose with the Council.
- 2.3 To agree an allocation of £10,000 to deliver training and capacity building to voluntary sector organisations by the Voluntary Sector Team.

2.4 Members to note that of the 30 organisations that previously received funding in 2008/09 have re-applied. 1 organisation did not re-apply and therefore has not been recommended for the grant.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The Council has provided grant funding to a range of voluntary organisations for a number of years. Some of these organisations provide services which supplement those provided by the Council and assist in ensuring that specific local needs are met.

3.2 Over the years much of the funding has been allocated on a historical basis and there has been very little change in the organisations that receive MPG funding or the amounts allocated to them. This has made it very difficult for new organisations to access Council funding from this source.

3.3 A Scrutiny Task Group made up of a member from each political party was asked to review voluntary sector funding in April 2007. Proposals were made to change the funding process and the following were included

- That the MPG should be made more accessible to organisations not currently funded by the Council
- That future funding from the MPG should be linked to corporate priorities
- That we should identify ways of funding voluntary sector organisations for periods longer than a year

3.4 The recommendations made by the Task Group were agreed by the Executive in July 2007, and officers were asked to explore possible new approaches for allocating the Main Programme Grant.

3.5 Officers had to take into consideration the issues relating to the current funding process (as stated in the Task Group report) and explore options that would ensure that the MPG would deliver services that meet locally identified needs and priorities whilst minimising disruption to local voluntary agencies and the services they provide.

3.6 Officers carried out intensive work over a period of time on this task and reported back to the Executive in November in 2008. The report proposed an allocation of up to £260,000 from the MPG budget to a theme selected from the Council's Strategy. The proposed themes were **Crime, Services to Young People, Regeneration and Sustainability, and the** detailed the implications of funding each priority and the subsequent effect of reducing or withdrawing funding from currently funded groups to resource the new programme.

3.7 The proposals to develop a new funding process were accepted and it was agreed that Children and Young People's Services would be the first theme for the new programme.

- 3.8 Implementation of the new funding programme commenced in December 2008, and a report with details of the organisations and projects that have applied for the fund will be presented to the Executive in April 2009.
- 3.9 Also at the Executive Meeting in November 2008, it was agreed that rather than openly advertise the remaining of the MPG budget, existing organisations, not affected by the theme selected for the 3 year funding would have their funding renewed at the same level as in 2008/09. This will allow these organisations to operate for a further year and will give them time to prepare for the next 3 year funding round.
- 3.8 Written notification of the change in the funding process and the process for re-newing grant applications was sent to existing funded groups in December 2008. Organisations were sent an application form, guidance notes for completing the applications and the Council's Standard Conditions of Grant Aid. The closing date for applications was 7th January 2009. 29 applications were received.
- Assessment Process
- 3.8 In assessing the grant applications, officers ensured that every application was treated fairly, and according to the grant conditions and Council's funding priorities. Officers noted the aims and objectives of each organisation, the activities or projects for funding, the outcomes and outputs to be achieved and the internal monitoring arrangements for the funded activity.
- 3.9 Performance information held by the Voluntary Sector Team for previously funded groups was also considered. In addition to the above, each application was assessed by a management accountant to ascertain the financial viability of the organisation. This process was carried out in accordance with the Council's contract standing orders guidance and included detailed financial analysis of each organisation.
- 3.10 Of the 30 groups invited to apply, 29 have been recommended for funding. One organisation, Roadpeace, did not return their application form and therefore has been excluded from the process. The total amount recommended for allocation is £750,386
- 3.11 Funding has been recommended for projects that complement and support the Council's overall aims and objectives. Also, where organisations indicated that they could deliver a number of services, officers assessed each project and chose the one that best met the Council's priorities. Appendix A shows the organisations recommended for funding, the funding level and details of the project or activity to be provided. Individual assessment reports of all organisations that have applied for the grant is attached as Appendix B.
- 3.12 The Voluntary Sector Team recommends that a small amount of the allocated budget for the year (£10,000) should be held aside to enable capacity building and training work with the voluntary sector organisations to support their work and growth.

- 3.14 If members agree to the funding recommended in this report the Voluntary Sector Team will monitor each organisation regardless of funding level. Organisations will be monitored according to established procedures which will include planned and unannounced visits to administrative offices and service locations, feedback from service users and regular analysis of service targets set out in the original grant application.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The estimated MPG budget for 2009/10 is £1,976,749. We estimate that a payment of £940,930 will be made from this budget to the London Councils' Grant Programme.
- 4.2 Based on the proposals in this report the table below shows how the current resources will be allocated.

Main Programme Grant Budget 09/10	1,976,749
• Less London Council allocation for 09/10	940,930
• Less Main Programme Grant to new funding theme 09/12 for three year programme	258,199
• Less allocation to currently funded groups not within the theme (at the same level as 2008/09) and including capacity building fund.	758,251
• Three month's notice to fund 4 groups up to June 2009.	8,774
Balance	10,595

- 4.3 It is proposed that the balance of £10,595 from the voluntary sector budget for 2009/10 will contribute to funding initiatives that will enable effective liaison and engagement with the voluntary sector, such as the Voluntary Sector Forum, annual voluntary sector conference and Funders Fair.
- 4.3 If the proposals in this report are accepted the Main Programme Grant budget for 2009/10 will be allocated.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Responsibility for making decisions on the allocation of funding from the Main Programme Grant currently rests with the Executive of the Council.
- 5.2 Officers in the Council's Legal Services Unit have considered the individual reports on the grant applications and consider that the Council has the power to make the grants recommended.

- 5.3 The Council has powers under s137 Local Government Act 1972 and s2 Local Government Act 2000 to make grants to voluntary organisations.
- 5.4 The decision to award a grant is discretionary. The Council discretion must not be fettered by previous commitments they may have given and it should make its decision in the light of present circumstances.
- 5.5 The Council is bound to act reasonably and must take into account relevant considerations and to ignore irrelevant considerations and should consider its fiduciary duty towards local taxpayers.
- 5.6 As a public authority the Council has general duties to promote equal opportunities relating to race, disability and gender and to remove discrimination. These duties are set out in the:
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005);
 - Equality Act 2006;
 - Equal Pay Act 1970;
 - Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRAA 2000);and
 - Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
- 5.7 The DDA 2005 requires public authorities, when considering disabled people, to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and take positive steps, even if that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others.
- 5.8 To provide guidance on the duty there is a Statutory Code of Practice. The general duty is not absolute but it does require authorities in respect of all their functions to give due regard to disability equality.
- 5.9 The core general duties are similar for race and gender i.e.:
- To promote equality of opportunity; and
 - To eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination.
- 5.10 The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) places a statutory duty on public authorities to work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and to promote race equality in all its functions. There are three complementary parts to the general duty:
- Eliminating unlawful racial discrimination
 - Promoting equal opportunities
 - Promoting good relations between people from different racial groups
- 5.11 The Code of Practice issued under s71C Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) is relevant and the council must have regard to it.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 As part of the application process organisations were asked to submit a copy of their Equal Opportunities Policy. These were evaluated by officers to identify how each organisation will promote equality and eliminate discrimination. Details of the Equal Opportunities Policy assessment are included in the appraisal reports in Appendix B.
- 6.3 Given the demographic profile of the borough, a number of community specific projects based on identified need and Council priorities have been recommended for funding. Due consideration has been given to ensure that a broad spectrum of projects are funded reflecting the very diverse service issues and needs within the borough.
- 6.4 Steps will be taken to ensure that all funded projects are duly supported and monitored for achieving equality outcomes thereby encouraging all projects to mainstream equality across all aspects of employment and service delivery. Such an approach, whilst strengthening partnership working will result in creating a positive impact across the voluntary sector.

7.0 Staffing Implications

- 7.1 The new monitoring arrangements for grants will be met from existing resources.

Background Papers

Voluntary Sector Funding – A report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – May 2007

Voluntary Sector Funding – Allocation of Main Programme Grant 2008/09 - 18th March 2008

Process for Allocating Main Programme Grant 2009 – 17th November 2008

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