

**FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
25TH FEBRUARY 2004**

**VOLUNTARY SECTOR SUPPORT REVIEW
AND MAIN GRANTS PROGRAMME CRITERIA**

BRIEFING NOTE

1. At the meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee on 26th November 2003, members considered the report approved by the Executive on 12th November, "Voluntary Sector Support Review – consultation and next steps". This briefing note outlines the action that has been taken since November and the next stages of the review process.
2. The officers' working group has developed a draft application form, guidance notes, criteria, and monitoring procedures. These were consulted upon with a group of representatives from voluntary sector organisations at a workshop on January 15th. They were also the topic of in-depth discussion at the Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum on 10th February. Further revisions have been made as a result of the helpful comments that were made.
3. A letter was sent to all funded organisations on 19th January explaining the new arrangements, and informing organisations of the support that would be available to them through the transition period. A press release was also sent to the local papers.
4. Three briefing seminars were held for voluntary organisations on February 2nd, February 7th, and February 12th to explain the new arrangements and to answer questions.
5. The Lead Member for Education, Arts and Libraries has been briefed on the draft criteria and on the review process.
6. The final version of the application pack has now been agreed, and advertisements inviting organisations to apply for funding for the period 1st July 2004 to 30th March 2005 will appear in the local press on 18th and 19th February.
7. The closing date for applications is 19th March. Applications will be assessed between 20th March and 30th April. The final decisions on awards will be made at the Council's Executive at its meeting on 7th June 2004.
8. Three further seminars have been organised for voluntary organisations on February 23rd, February 28th, and March 5th, in order to give information about additional/alternative sources of external

funding and to explain the new Main Grants programme application form.

9. An open seminar for members is scheduled for 4th March so that they can be briefed on the changes in detail.
10. The revised criteria reflect Council priorities and strategies. The specific areas to be funded and proposed outputs have been consulted upon with the relevant strategy “owners”.

Karen Tyerman
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Education, Arts and Libraries
February 12th 2004