



Executive
19 October 2009

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

Theme for main programme funding 2010/13

Forward Plan Ref: H&CC-09/10-06

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the new funding process for the Main Programme Grant (MPG) and the options for the next funding theme for the next financial year 2010
- 1.2 The report follows on from a previous report to the Executive last November where it was agreed to develop a new funding process for the MPG, which recommended a themed approach to funding and where a proportion of the MPG is allocated to a specific service priorities each year.
- 1.3 The decision to establish a new funding process was taken following a review of the voluntary sector funding carried out by a Scrutiny Task Group in May 2007.

2.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- 2.1 Merge crime/community safety with regeneration and form a single theme.
- 2.2 Select Crime/community Safety and Regeneration as the funding themes for 3 years commencing April 2010, and consider 'sustainability as the funding theme for 2011.
- 2.3 Discontinue the grant to 17 currently funded organisations groups that fall within the proposed theme for 2010. Details of these groups are listed in Appendix A
- 2.4 Allocate £347,187 from the MPG budget to the proposed theme in 2010.

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- 2.5 Renew funding to 12 organisations that fall within the theme of 'sustainability'. These groups will need to complete an application form for their annual funding at the same level as 2009/10. These organisations are listed in Appendix B.
- 2.6 To approve 3 months exit fund to organisations whose services fall within the proposed theme for 2020 but who may chose not to apply or may be unsuccessful in their bid for the new fund.

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 The Council has a long tradition of supporting the local voluntary sector, however until recently many organisations did not have access to council funding. For years much of the funding was allocated on a historical basis and relatively the same organisations were funded each year and new organisations did not have access to funding.
- 3.2 A review of the MPG was carried out in May 2007, and the main recommendation was to link funding from the MPG to specific objectives, preferably to the Council's corporate and service priorities.
- 3.4 The recommendations to change the process were agreed and officers were asked to implement a new system that took into account the findings of the review. Proposals for a new process were reported back to the Executive on 17th November 2008
- 3.5 The main features of the new funding process are:
- A themed approach to funding, i.e. a portion of the MPG is allocated each year to a specific theme
 - The proposed themes to be taken from the Council's Corporate Strategy or current priorities. The selected themes were children and young people services, crime/community safety, regeneration and sustainability.
 - Projects to receive up to 3 year funding, offering longer term grants and better financial stability to organisations
 - Existing organisations to be mapped against the proposed themes and will need to re-apply when funding for their theme is advertised. This will enable the gradual shift to the new process.
 - To phase out the current funding process over 3 to 4 years
- 3.6 Members approved these proposals in November 2008, and the new funding process started in April 2009. The theme selected was children and young peoples' services. 22 projects were awarded funding totalling £774,597 over 3 years.

Funding Themes

- 3.7 As stated above, the themes for funding were approved by members in November 2008. Organisations in receipt of the MPG were classified against the themes that broadly represented their main area of work. The process took account of the organisations that provided services on more than one

theme and these were classified accordingly. The table below shows the number of organisations and the level of funding allocated to the 3 remaining themes.

Theme	Number of organisations	Funding level (£)
Crime/community safety	3	65,607
Regeneration	14	281,580
Sustainability	12	401,064

- 3.8 As the funding allocated to crime/community safety is lower than the other two themes, consideration could be given to merging this with regeneration as they address similar issues. Activities within one area usually results in improvement in the other and experience shows that successful regeneration projects also include activities designed to tackle crime and other social and economic issues. Merging these themes will also create a larger 'pot' of money for distribution. It is therefore recommended that these two areas are combined as a single theme.

Themes for 2010

- 3.9 Assuming the above proposal is accepted, the options for the next funding round are crime/community safety and regeneration or sustainability.
- 3.10 Sustainability has been taken in its wider sense, as seeking to provide the best outcomes for the human and natural environments both now and into the indefinite future. This covers our need to support and encourage our voluntary sector generally, as a crucial contributor to the overall wellbeing of Brent citizens as well as the overall Green agenda. Some of our voluntary sector funding has traditionally been invested in "umbrella" organisations such as BrAVA and BADP, with a focus on maximising the capacity of the sector to sustain itself.
- 3.11 We are actively working with these groups to enable them to develop stronger partnerships with each other, and secondly to enable the focus of these organisations to be developed in line with the Voluntary Sector Strategy, which is currently being prepared. Further, the Primary Care Trust is developing its approach to the sector, with the intention of building its capacity.
- 3.12 This is to ensure that they may provide more health and wellbeing services in the future, and we would want to ensure that we do not double fund or duplicate services. This work is ongoing and will take some months to complete. For this reason we would recommend converting the theme sustainability into three year grants in the third year.
- 3.13 The joint themes of crime/community safety and regeneration will provide additional resources to two areas where the council has identified that significant improvements are needed. Targeting MPG funding to deliver these priorities will contribute to the activities already stated in our strategic

plans such as the Regeneration Strategy and Brent Crime Prevention Strategy.

- 3.14 It will strengthen our commitment to develop safer and stronger communities and will provide opportunities for the voluntary sector to work in partnership with the statutory sector. This funding round will also support the new local performance framework (CAA) which is primarily about two things; improving quality of life in places and better public services (DCLG). As MPG funding will directly contribute and support our existing priorities, we would recommend that community safety and regeneration be selected as the next themes for funding. The total fund for distribution will be £347,187
- 3.15 Funding will be allocated to projects that focus on developing safer and stronger communities and which demonstrate the potential benefits to the local community. Projects will need to demonstrate a link between the Council's plans for regeneration and community safety. A draft funding criteria and timetable is attached as Appendix C.
- 3.16 As in the previous year funding will be restricted to £25,000 per organisation per year, however depending on the number and quality of bids, it may be necessary to reduce the funding level in order to fund eligible projects.
- 3.17 It is proposed that an open bidding process is used and the fund will be widely advertised to enable non funded groups to apply. Existing groups that fall within the themes and organisations already receiving 3 year funding will be invited to apply. However preference will be given to organisations not currently in receipt of the 3 year MPG funding programme. Preferences will also be given to organisations that raise match funding towards the proposed project. Three organisations will be affected by this decision Middlesex ITEC, Asian Women's Resource Centre and Victim Support.
- 3.18 With regard to the assessment process it is proposed that officers from the Regeneration Team and the Community Safety Unit will participate with the Voluntary Sector Team to assess the bids received.

Process for Allocating the Balance of the MPG

- 3.19 It is proposed that funding to existing organisations not affected by the themes proposed is renewed at the same level as in 2009/10. Funding to these organisations will be available for one year.
- 3.20 These organisations will be required to submit applications for renewal of funding, clearly stating the activities, outcomes and outputs to be provided with the MPG.
- 3.21 Decisions regarding the future funding for these groups will be made when a theme for the third year is agreed. Organisations that will have their funding renewed are attached as Appendix B.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There is no plan to increase the current budget for this service it will remain the same 2009/10. The budget will be £1,976,749. We estimate that a payment of £940,930 will be made from this budget to the London Councils Grant Programme. This is based on the amount paid in 09/10, but Members should note this may change.
- 4.2 Based on the proposals in this report the table below shows how the current resources will be allocated.

Main Programme Grant Budget 10/11	1,976,749
Less London Council allocation for 10/11	940,930
Less Main Programme Grant to new funding theme 09/12 for three year programme - Children and Young People Services (year 2)	253,467
Less allocation to new themes i.e. Crime/Community Safety and Regeneration.	347,187
Less allocation to currently funded groups not within the theme (at the same level as 2009/10)	401,064
Capacity building fund for 2010/11	10,000
Balance <i>Three months exit fund to organisations that have their funding withdrawn</i>	24,101

- 4.3 The balance of £24,101 will fund the 3 months notice period to organisations that have their funding withdrawn as a result of this theme. This fund will be allocated on a pro-rata basis if bids exceed the amount available.
- 4.4 The recommendations made in this report can be implemented within the available budget.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Council has powers under s137 Local Government Act 1972 and s2 Local Government Act 2000 to make grants to voluntary organisations.
- 5.2 The decision to award a grant is discretionary. The Council's discretion must not be fettered by previous commitments they may have given and it should make its decision in the light of present circumstances.

- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 The core general duties are similar for race and gender i.e.:
- To promote equality of opportunity; and
To eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination.
- 5.8 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
- 5.9 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 Consultation with the voluntary sector has been ongoing since 2006 when the Scrutiny Task Group Review first started. Discussions with Voluntary Sector representatives were undertaken and the Task Group met with organisations at two Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum meetings to discuss their proposal to change the funding process.

- 6.2 Overall there was a consensus that there was a need to change the process for allocating the Main Programme Grant. The information from the consultation process has been used to inform the new funding programme.
- 6.3 Following the first phase of the new process, a Predictive Equality Impact Needs Assessment was carried out and the outcome is attached as Appendix D. The assessment showed:
- The new process is likely to affect some organisations in the short to medium term but will have a positive impact on promoting equality for both service users and voluntary organisations
 - No adverse impact on people from diverse background will be affected by the new process
 - Will ensure information relating to all 7 equality strand are collected within the community
- 6.4 A positive change will be that the grant will now be available to all community and voluntary organisations and this should widen access to the fund to local organisations that previously did not have access to Council funding.
- 6.5 Another positive change is that the new funding programme will be based on a 3 year funding cycle which will provide groups with stability to assist their business planning cycle.
- 6.6 Projects recommended will reflect the diverse needs of service users across respective themes with due consideration being given to corporate and departmental objectives which are constantly reviewed in response to community needs. In addition the proposed themes will focus on the areas where the Councils consider community needs are greatest.
- 6.7 To address any adverse impact organisations that fail in their bid for the new fund or decide not to apply, they will be encouraged and supported to access alternative sources of funding to continue their services.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

- 7.1 There will be no staffing or accommodation implications resulting from this report.

Background Papers

- Voluntary Sector Funding – a report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – May 2007
- Process for allocating the Main Programme Grant – 17th November 2008.

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