

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR POLICY, PLANNING AND
CORPORATE SERVICES****REVIEW & REFRESH OF THE CORPORATE GRANT AID STRATEGY &
PROPOSALS FOR THE GRANT AID PROCESS 2015 – 2018****Purpose of the Report**

1. To agree an approach for a review of the Corporate Grant Aid Strategy and the implementation of a timetable leading to the award of grant aid for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2018.

Information and Advice

2. The County Council has a long history of working with and supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector [VCS]. The council recognises that the VCS:
 - Harnesses the time, talents and ambitions of local residents who wish to volunteer
 - Reaches excluded or isolated people and communities that the statutory sector sometimes cannot
 - Attracts additional resources to Nottinghamshire through grant funding
 - Is a significant employer of people and as such is an important part of our mixed economy
 - Assists the Council to improve the quality and accessibility of our own services
 - Provides a local Community Voice – advocates for vulnerable people and provides valuable feedback on community consultation
3. In November 2011 the County Council adopted a Corporate Grant Aid Strategy that was intended to cover the period from 2011 to 2015. A copy of the strategy is available
4. The key drivers and features of the current strategy are:
 - Member Led – ensuring that members take a strategic lead on decision making
 - Corporate approach – decisions are aligned to the council's priorities
 - Recognition of the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) – valuing the enormous contribution made across the county

- Centralised administration – a streamlined process for the administration of grant aid across the council
 - Proportionate at all stages – simpler application, 1 or 2 payments each year, monitoring simplified
 - Making better use of IT – application & monitoring processes
 - Longer agreements – where possible awards will be for a three year period to enable the VCS to forward plan
 - Grants to make a contribution towards provision, not to directly purchase key services – making Grant Aid distinct from commissioning
5. The agreed budget for grant aid for 2012/13 & 2013/14 was £2,141,000 and reduces to £1,916,000 in 2014/15. Whilst no allocation has been agreed for the years going forward the Council remains committed to working with the VCS, the need to review and refresh the Corporate Grant Aid Strategy is part of this commitment.
6. The **Appendix** is a proposed timetable for the committee to approve. It covers a period of 18 months, commencing with the approval of the recommendations in this report and leading to the award of 3 year grant aid agreements in July 2015. Key milestones in the timetable include:
- 20 May 2014 – Agree timetable for refresh of Grant Aid Strategy & process leading to the awards for 2015-18
 - 1 June 2014 – Online survey of existing recipients regarding 2011-15 strategy & process
 - Sept 2014 – Members agree refreshed Strategy, themes, indicative budget & application process
 - Sept 2014 – Countywide consultation on draft Strategy & 2015-18 “themes”
 - 1 Oct 2014 to 21 Nov 2014 – Application window
 - 22 Nov 2014 to 20 Dec 2014 – Application assessments
 - 27 Jan 2015 – Members decisions on awards 2015-18
 - 1 July 2015 – New 3 year agreements commence

Financial Implications

7. Currently no allocation for grant aid beyond 2014/15 has been agreed by the council

Other Options Considered

8. To cease the grant aid programme, this would have a significant impact on the sector and those who benefit from the programme we currently resource. There would be loss of valuable support to some of the most vulnerable people in the County. This is not thought to be a viable option, despite the serious financial pressures faced by the County Council – the value of the contributions made by the VCS are recognized.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. To meet our ongoing commitment to working with the VCS in Nottinghamshire we should put in place a clear process for refreshing our Grant Aid Strategy, giving the VCS the opportunity through consultation to influence both the timetable and the themes we intend to support going forward.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION

11. It is recommended that the Grant Aid Sub-Committee agree the proposed timetable for the refresh of the Grant Aid Strategy and the process leading up to the award of Grant Aid Agreements for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2018.

Jayne Francis-Ward

CORPORATE DIRECTOR POLICY, PLANNING AND CORPORATE SERVICES

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (NAB 8.3.14)

The Grant Aid Sub-Committee has authority for grant aid as set out in the Council's Grant Aid Strategy and is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (SEM 7.3.14)

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Working with the Voluntary & Community Sector
Corporate Grant Aid Strategy 2011- 2015

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

ALL