

**REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY GROUP MANAGER
SAFER AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES****REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF CORPORATE GRANT AID
STRATEGY****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to review and inform Members of progress being made on the implementation of the Grant Aid Strategy.

Information and Advice

2. The 2011-15 Corporate Grant Aid Strategy agreed by full Council on 3rd November details NCC's future plans and priorities for Grant Aid funding and strategic engagement with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The development and implementation of the strategy is an important element of the Council's response to the difficult financial climate faced by the public sector, in which it will be operating in over the coming years.
3. The implementation of the strategy is a continual process which aims to provide a clear and transparent framework for engagement with the sector and the allocation of the Grant Aid budget. The principles which underpin the strategy are to:
 - Make Nottinghamshire a place where people enjoy life, are healthy, safe and prosperous; and where business is able to thrive.
 - Create a fair; consistent and coherent decision making process for the distribution of Grant Aid.
 - Have a long term and meaningful strategy that helps promote sustainability in the VCS.
 - Review historical Grant Aid and make the best use of the available budget.
 - Have clear corporate priorities across all areas of Grant Aid funding with a closer link to outcomes, ensuring that everything we fund contributes to the delivery of our priorities.
 - Be proportionate at all stages of our processes, especially in our performance monitoring, payments and administration.

- Where appropriate, move towards Service Level Agreements.
- Retain flexibility in our funding to fund both large and smaller voluntary groups.
- Promote a better mixed economy of funding, including working closely with other funders.
- Support collaborative working and consortia within the VCS.
- Increase Council understanding of the potential VCS provider base and increase opportunities for the voluntary sector to participate in bidding for other Council services.
- Improved strategic engagement, building more pragmatic and versatile relationships with the VCS.

4. Implementation of the Strategy during 2011/12 has included:

- The centralisation of Grant Aid processes with one streamlined process for the administration of Grant Aid, which includes a simplified application process and a proportionate approach to monitoring. This is managed through the Community and Voluntary Team in Policy, Planning and Corporate Services making best use of County Council staff resources.
- A Member led approach through the establishment and development of a work programme initially for a cross-party Members Reference Group and since May 2012, a Grant Aid Sub Committee to take a strategic lead on decision making.
- Adopting a corporate approach which has ensured that all decisions are aligned to the Council's strategic priorities and demonstrate good value for money. The County Council has, when making funding decisions, taken an overview of how much funding any organisation is receiving from the authority as a whole and this has enabled the Council to target Grant Aid where it is most needed.
- Ensuring clarity on how Grant Aid is invested through specific award categories including: prevention and intervention services for vulnerable adults, young people, children and families; community transport services; activities and play for children; arts and sports for all; advice services and infrastructure support.
- The move towards three year Grant Aid agreements for the majority of groups Grant Aid funded is to provide greater stability and enable groups to plan longer term. Of the 133 groups who received funding 112 groups are on 3 year agreements.
- A guaranteed minimum of 90 days notice to grant aided groups of any change in Grant Aid provision.
- A move towards grant aiding groups as consortia, giving them greater flexibility to deliver on agreed outcomes in the way they best know how. Examples include the Nottinghamshire CAB network, Mental Health and Infrastructure Support Services.

- Strategic engagement with the sector which has included quarterly liaison meetings and is helping to build stronger working relationships.
5. The implementation of the Grant Aid strategy seeks to provide a clear and transparent framework for engagement with the Voluntary and Community Sector and the allocation of the Grant Aid budget

Other Options Considered

6. As part of the County Council's Grant Aid Strategy as outlined above it is not appropriate to consider other options at this stage.

Reason(s) for Recommendation(s)

7. To review the Corporate Grant Aid Strategy and to provide information to Members on its implementation.

Statutory and Policy Implications

8. 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(S)

9. That Members:
- Note and approve the report

Chris Walker
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Constitutional Comments

The Grant Aid sub-committee has authority to approve the recommendations set out in this report.

Financial Comments

There are no financial comments for this report.

Background Papers

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.

Corporate Grant Aid Strategy 2011 - 15

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

ALL