



**18 October 2016**

**Agenda Item: 6**

## **REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR PLACE GRANT AID REPORT 2015/16**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an overview of how the first year of the 3 year Grant Aid 2015 to 2018 programme is contributing to achieving the Nottinghamshire County Council strategic plan.

### **Information and Advice**

#### **Grant Aid Strategy & Budget**

2. At the July 2014 Grant Aid Sub-Committee, Members agreed:
  - To endorse the key drivers and features of the 2012-2015 Grant Aid Strategy for the new Grant Aid 2015 to 2018 programme (see Appendix 1).
  - To align the corporate Grant Aid programme for 2015 to 2018 with the core functions defined in "Redefining Your Council"
  - That Grant Aid service specifications (priorities) to be aligned with the Council's Core Functions as detailed in Redefining Your Council and shown in Appendix 1 to this report.
3. At the March 2015 Grant Aid Sub-Committee, Members agreed the following:
  - To approve 117 three-year awards in the region of £1.6m per year, subject to annual review.
  - That, in addition to the three-year awards, a further £100,000 be allocated for annual grants in the Arts, Sports, Summer Play Scheme and Great War Commemoration categories, bringing the total Grant Aid 2015/16 awards to £1.7m.
  - For £50,000 of the total Grant Aid budget per year to be "set-aside" for "new" or "innovative" proposals under the 'Innovation Fund'. The Innovation Fund was intended to be advertised on an annual basis, and available for groups who did not apply as part of the three year programme. At the May 2015 Grant Aid Sub-Committee, 13 applications were approved for funding under the 'Innovation Fund'. In response to the Council's budget review, the Innovation Fund was later removed from the Grant Aid programme (agreed at the January 2016 Grant Aid Sub Committee).

## **Service Priorities and the Grant Aid Process Transformation**

4. The Community & Voluntary Sector (C&VS) team reviewed and transformed the end-to-end process for all Grant Aid themes. This included:
  - Working with the Cross-Services Officer Group who were tasked with writing the service priorities (with support from the C&VS team)
  - Designing the application process, guidance and forms
  - Designing the assessment process and assessment tools
  - Coaching cross-departmental colleagues in the assessment process & tools
  - Moderating the assessments
  - Co-ordinating the assessment process and providing all unsuccessful applicants with quality, written feedback and information about other sources of funding and advice
  - Revising the agreements to make it clearer for both parties what the Grant Aid funding is contributing to, reducing the number of agreements inherited from the various departments and bringing the agreement template in line with the corporate legal services guidance
  - Issuing agreements and processing payments
  - Improving the monitoring process and questions to provide groups with an opportunity review their projects and feedback to the C&VS team
  - Developing the information management database and procedures
  - Liaising with cross-departmental colleagues as appropriate.

## **Promotion, Applications and Awards**

5. All Grant Aid rounds were advertised throughout the County using a range of media including press-releases, the Council website, Facebook and Twitter. The C&VS team organised 3 “Launch Events” to give the Community & Voluntary Sector a face-to-face opportunity to discuss the priorities and ask questions about the new 3-year Grant Aid round.
6. All applicants were required to apply through the corporate process for their respective theme. Groups offering similar / the same services were encouraged to apply as a consortium (partnership). Applications received by the published closing date were assessed and moderated. When assessing applications, particular consideration was given to projects that:
  - Help people to help themselves
  - Provide volunteering opportunities
  - Seek to address inequality in areas of deprivation
  - Identified ways for the applicant to generate their own income and be less reliant on Grant Aid.

7. The C&VS team presented recommendations for each funding round and Members approved applications for funding. At the October 2015 Grant Aid Sub-Committee, Members agreed that the Summer Play Scheme, Arts and Sports Fund (except Talented Athletes), to be brought in-line with the 3-year Grant Aid Programme; and for the talented athletes programme to continue to operate on an annual basis. Appendix 2 to this report includes an overview of the Grant Aid awards and the number of projects by theme.

## Information sources

8. The information presented in this report has largely been provided by the Grant Aided groups through the monitoring process. Almost all groups (98%)<sup>1</sup> submitted the required Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2015/16. Groups were asked to provide information on a number of generic and theme specific areas. Due to the diverse range of projects / services there will be some differences in how the information is reported. Therefore, where appropriate, some reasonable assumptions have been made (based on the information available at the time), to calculate approximate or estimated values. In some cases, information has been obtained from annual reports submitted to the Charities Commission, departmental colleagues who carry out additional monitoring for specific themes (e.g. community transport), the Nottinghamshire State of the Voluntary Sector 2015 report and other reports as appropriate.

## Grant Aid Reach

9. During 2015/16, groups reported that over 109,200 individual service users benefitted from the Grant Aid provision – representing almost 14% of the Nottinghamshire population (based on a total Nottinghamshire population estimate of 805,800<sup>2</sup>). Groups also reported that services/activities were accessed over 1.1 million times during the same period. Appendix 2 to this report includes a breakdown of the number of service users (beneficiaries) by theme.

## How Grant Aid funding is helping to improve the lives of Nottinghamshire Communities

10. Appendix 3 to this report includes a selection of case studies, examples and quotes (provided by groups in their AMR), which help to illustrate how the funded projects are contributing to the Council's vision: *"...to make Nottinghamshire a better place to live, work and visit"* - and values: *Treating people fairly, value for money and working together.* In summary, the case studies and quotes provide an insight into how:
  - Early intervention is enabling older service users to stay in their own home for longer, resulting in improved levels of dignity, happiness and lower social care/health costs
  - Vulnerable adults are less lonely and isolated as a result of funded projects. People experiencing Dementia (and their loved ones/carers) are receiving much needed support

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<sup>1</sup> For the groups that did not complete their AMR, the groups provided reasons for the delay in submitting their Reports.

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/business-employment-and-benefits/economic-data/population-estimates> (Mid 2015 data)

- Lives are being transformed and saved as exemplified by the following service user quotes: *“If [funded project] was not here then I would most probably be still at home every day deteriorating... I am hopeful that I will get a job soon and I have not felt that hope in years...”* and, another service user fed back that a particular project *“...saved my life.”*
- Support services which help to lift Nottinghamshire people out of poverty and debt. For example, the Citizens Advice Consortium supported clients with almost £10m of benefit claims and £42m of debt issues during 2015/16. This has a knock-on effect of improving health & well-being, supporting the local economy and preventing crisis situations such as homelessness.
- Partnership approaches to holistic wellbeing and support is both outcome and cost effective
- Although the beneficiaries are primarily service users, groups have also reported examples of volunteers ‘moving on’, e.g. developing skills, and experience to assist them with moving into paid employment – see Appendix 4 to this report
- Funded projects are delivering cost effective, ‘value for money’ services. For example, one project carried out face-to-face work with 7,243 children and adults which they have costed at £1 Grant Aid contribution per person. Another project fed back that: *“The County Council grant means that we [the project] can deliver a support service that is good value for money in the long term by reducing social care benefit costs.”*

11. It is recognised that the full value (or impact) of the Grant Aid programme cannot be measured in monetary terms alone – soft outcomes are extremely difficult to observe or measure in financial or numerical terms. For example, it is difficult to quantify the improvement in the quality of people’s lives, a change in lifestyle/attitude and a reduced or delayed need for other services/interventions. Many benefits to the community are priceless in terms of improved health and well-being and in some cases, lives have been transformed or even saved as a result of the support received from Grant Aided groups (as shown in Appendix 3 to this report).

### **Grant Aid as Leverage to Secure Other Income**

12. Fifty-six groups reported securing over £2 million of additional funding during 2015/16 alone; 46 of these groups stated that the Grant Aid helped them to secure the additional funding for the benefit of Nottinghamshire communities. In many cases, the C&VS team supported groups to identify other funding sources and by providing advice on applications.

### **Volunteer Contribution to Nottinghamshire Communities**

13. Volunteers are critical to delivering the services and contribute enormously to the funded projects. Many VCS groups not only survive but thrive on the dedication, time, commitment, support and service provided by Nottinghamshire people who give their time freely to help others. Grant Aided groups reported that over 9,800 volunteers contributed to their projects during 2015/16, with approximately 1,700 of these volunteers

recruited as 'new' volunteers. Groups also reported that volunteers delivered approximately 937,200 hours of their time. As a conservative estimate, if volunteers received the minimum or living wage, this would equate to between £6 and £7.5 million. Appendix 2 to this report includes a breakdown of the number of volunteers and the number of volunteer hours by theme.

## **Achievements, Innovation and Partnership Working**

14. The vast majority of projects are either achieving or exceeding the objectives as stated on their Grant Aid Agreement. Additionally, many groups have also reported other achievements above and beyond the scope of their Grant Aid Agreement. For example Grant Aid funding helps groups to secure additional funding from other sources and therefore, the extra funding enables the group to offer enhanced and/or innovative services to the most vulnerable children, young people and adults in Nottinghamshire communities. Similarly, many groups have developed partnerships to enable the needs of Nottinghamshire people to be met in the most effective and efficient way. Appendix 5 to this report includes some examples about achievements, innovation and partnership working.

## **Sustainability Planning**

15. The Council encourages Grant Aided groups to become more sustainable and reduce their reliance on Grant Aid funding. Through the monitoring process, groups were specifically asked whether or not they have a sustainability plan in place – approximately 80% of groups responded to confirm that 'yes', they do. Information provided by groups also suggested that there is varying levels of understanding about sustainability plans and in July 2016, the C&VS team shared a range of 'sustainability support information' with all Grant Aided groups as summarised in Appendix 6 to this report.

## **Reporting Challenges and Continuous Review and Development**

16. Due to the diverse and often complex nature of the projects/services funded by the Grant Aid programme, reporting in a consistent, coherent and succinct way continues to pose a significant challenge. Appendix 7 to this report provides a summary of other aspects of monitoring carried out during 2015/16. With the transition to a corporate programme the C&VS team regularly review and develop the way we work to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the monitoring and information management processes.
17. An update on the Sports, Summer Play Scheme and Arts Grant Aid programmes can be found in Appendix 8 to this report. Due to the timing of the Arts and Sports Fund, information is not yet available for a full year and this report does not seek to review the Innovation Fund, The Great War Commemoration Fund, nor the Grant Aid strategy, arrangements or processes.
18. Appendix 9 to this report provides a summary of the project closures.

## **Other Options Considered**

19. No other options are necessary as this report is for noting only and to provide an overview of decisions already approved.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

20. It is recommended that this report is noted.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation**

21. The recommendation is based on the value and benefits to Nottinghamshire communities as a result of the Grant Aid programme.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, 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.

## **Financial Implications**

23. There are no new financial implications as a result of this report.

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### **Constitutional Comments (SLB 07/10/16)**

Grant Aid Sub Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

### **Financial Comments (SES 05/10/16)**

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this 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.

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All

