

GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS 2013/14 FINANCIAL YEAR

Cabinet Member	Cllr Douglas Mills
Cabinet Portfolio	Community, Commerce and Regeneration
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Papers with report	Appendix A Voluntary Sector core grant Recommendations 2013-14 Appendix B Transport grant recommendations 2013-14 Appendix C Assessment of grant applications 2013-14

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	To agree the Council's 2013/14 Voluntary Sector Grants budget (Core funding) and Transport grants. To agree the Council's 2013/14 contribution to the London Councils Grants scheme.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	The grants budget is used to support a range of Voluntary Sector activity. The transport grant is used to facilitate the transport needs of members of a number of small voluntary organisations. Hillingdon's voluntary sector supports the Council in achieving its priorities and objectives.
Financial Cost	The report proposes the allocation of £1,681,366 core funding grants for the 2013/14 financial year from a budget of £ 1,815,058. The report also recommends the allocation of £54,540 to support the provision of transport. The report also proposes making provision to enable a contribution to the London Councils Grant scheme of £302,227. If agreed, this would result in an estimated budget saving of £88,832 in 2013/14 and which has been factored into the MTFF budget proposals.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee
Ward(s) affected	All.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet agrees:

- 1. The overall allocation of grants to Voluntary Sector of £ 1,681,366 for the provision of core grant funding for the 2013/14 financial year and specific awards as set out in the schedule - Appendix A**
- 2. Grants totalling £54,540 to organisations to enable the provision of transport as set out in Appendix B**
- 3. Proposals for the extension of the small grants development programme to include support for local retail associations.**
- 4. That the Cabinet member for Community, Commerce and Regeneration be delegated authority to consider potential increased grants to Heathrow Travel Care and Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services.**
- 5. That the Cabinet Member for Community, Commerce and Regeneration be delegated authority to agree the terms and conditions of support to the borough's retail associations and chambers of commerce.**
- 6. Approve the Council's 2013/14 contribution of £302,227 to the London Councils Grants scheme.**

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendation

The Council continues to be a long term financial supporter of the borough's voluntary sector and acknowledges the important role of the voluntary sector particularly in providing services that residents value. As such, the Council has committed significant levels of funding to a range of voluntary sector organisations based in the borough.

In the current economic climate it remains vital that the Council seeks to maximise the benefits to residents from investment in Hillingdon's voluntary sector and to ensure value for money. The proposals agreed by the Cabinet in December 2011 and January 2012 served to strengthen Hillingdon's commitment to the voluntary sector in key areas and provide significant additional investment.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet has the following alternative options:

- 1 Agree the recommendations subject to any changes the Cabinet wishes to make or
- 2 Reject one or more of the recommendations.

In relation to the recommendation in respect of the Council's contribution to the London Councils Grant Scheme, the Council has the option of not approving its contribution. However, for the overall scheme to be approved, at least two thirds of the 32 London boroughs plus the City of London must approve their individual budget contribution. If there is no agreement, under the legislation governing the grants scheme, the overall level of expenditure for the Grants Committee reverts back to the previous year's budget. Last years budget was set at a higher level so this would not result in savings for the Council.

Comments of Policy Overview Committee

This issue has not been discussed by the Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee.

Supporting Information

The voluntary sector core grants budget is unique in offering core funding to organisations that are seen to be key partners and offer essential services that contribute to the Council's priorities and the well-being of residents. Recipients with stable core support are often able to draw down external funding.

2012/13 Financial Year

For the 2012/13 financial year, the Council significantly increased the level of funding it committed via the core grants budget, which was very much in contrast with the significant reductions that have been made by other Councils. The Council deliberately chose not to award across the board increases but to maximise value for money through a targeted approach.

The additional allocation of £400,000 for 2012/13 enabled the Council to achieve the following;

- Sustain support at the level of previous years where appropriate,
- Increase the level of core funding to a number of organisations (significantly increased funding was awarded to two organisations) including Homestart, Age UK Hillingdon, Northwood live at home scheme, Bell Farm and Hillingdon Shopmobility,
- A new £50,000 small grants development budget,
- Support for new schemes and priority initiatives including the WRVS Dementia care scheme, support to town centre partners and improved services for victims of domestic violence,
- Supporting and sustaining long term partners whose services are valued by residents but who are financially struggling for example the Yiewsley based Community Cancer Centre.

The increase in funding has not only served to sustain the voluntary sector but more importantly enabled the expansion of services which Hillingdon residents regularly use and value. In targeting the funding the Council sought to support services that complement statutory provision, have a preventative element or reduce pressure on Council resources.

2013/14 recommendations

The majority of the recommendations on the level of funding to be offered to organisations are similar to those offered for the 2012/13 financial year. A detailed analysis of each application together with financial comments is attached as Appendix C.

There are a number of exceptions where an increased level of grant or further work with an organisation is recommended. These are;

Heathrow Travel Care

Heathrow Travel Care has been a key partner for Hillingdon over a number of years. Travel Care provides a range of day to day 'social care' services supporting travellers and those drawn to the airport. These can include people with mental health issues, unaccompanied minors or travellers returning to the country without any means of getting themselves beyond the airport. Travel Care also works with the Council and other statutory agencies on a range of specific issues including child trafficking and 'rough sleeping'. Travel Care has requested an increase on last year's grant, which was £30,000. The request is in part to make their Emergency Planning Officer a full time permanent post and thereby enable them to respond more effectively to major issues and emergency situations. Travel Care will also use increased capacity to undertake more in depth support to their clients. They are confident that as a result of working with clients that they can, in most cases, then be relocated back to a borough other than Hillingdon and thus save expenditure. There is a strong case to support the request from Travel Care, but this needs to be considered alongside the Travel Care's cautious approach to the use of reserves. The organisation is currently carrying six months running costs which could be considered as more than is necessary.

An increased grant could be recommended, if it is offered subject to the trustees agreeing to reduce the level of reserves held. Cabinet is asked to agree that the level of additional funding to be offered (up to £16,952) be determined by the Cabinet Member for Community, Commerce and Regeneration, should agreement with the trustees be secured.

Hillingdon Federation of Community Associations Summer Playschemes

The Council has been a long term supporter of the Playscheme programme, which provides supported summer holiday play schemes based in community association buildings across the borough. The Association want to extend next years programme to take in Sipson. An increased grant of £2,000 taking the grant to £20,000 for 2013/14 is recommended.

Uxbridge Child Contact Centre

A small but very effective programme backed by RELATE that links children with parents who have divorced or separated within supported and managed environment. An increased grant of £900 taking the grant to £2,900 for 2013/14 is recommended.

Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services (HAVS)

In January 2012 the Cabinet agreed a reduction in 50% in the grant to HAVS which meant a grant of £48,750 for the 2012/13 financial year and a proposed core grant of £45k for 2013/14. The intention was to prioritise investment in front line voluntary services, which directly benefit residents. However it was made clear that the Council particularly valued some of the services HAVS provides and that officers would be looking to work with the HAVS management board and provide support whilst the organisation refocuses and transforms to incorporate the change in finance.

Whilst progress in refocusing and re-evaluating priorities was initially slower than we would have expected, there has been some significant recent progress. The organisation has now started to develop a business plan, which serves to streamline and refocus services and activities. HAVS have also started to work in partnership with some of the

boroughs other larger voluntary groups to pursue development opportunities. This trend is very much welcomed.

HAVS have developed their approach in relation to the funding of core services. They seek to support each strand of activity from an identified funding source, even if in some circumstances that funding source is self generated. This could be through developing for example a number of social enterprise models. As a result, HAVS are also exploring moving from seeking a traditional contribution towards core costs to a position where the Council 'purchases' a service or a range of services. This initiative is worth exploring but in terms of the 2013/14 grant allocation it is too early in development to support an increased funding model. The organisation needs time to transform and the Council's core funding is required to enable the transformation to occur. In light of the progress the organisation appears to be making, it is recommended funding at last year's level of £45,000. If the organisation continues to make progress an increase in this level might be merited. It is therefore, also recommended that the Cabinet Member for Community Commerce and Regeneration be delegated authority to agree additional funding should the situation warrant and further progress is demonstrated.

Extending the remit of the small grants development scheme

The introduction of the small grants scheme in 2012/13 recognised that many groups had difficulty accessing relatively small amounts of funding to pump prime, develop or implement new initiatives.

The introduction of the scheme served to facilitate such initiatives. It is proposed to both continue and extend the scheme so it supports small pump priming initiatives and includes other not for profit initiatives, such as the local chambers of commerce and retail associations.

These associations are often the focal point in terms of coordinating retail activity and also play a key role in promoting and encouraging wider community participation. There are a number of retail associations attached to some of our town centres who are highly active in supporting the range of activity that encourages wider community participation. The town centre festive lights programmes are often run in conjunction with the local retail associations or chambers of commerce. Some of the chambers were very active over the summer months supporting Jubilee celebrations and London 2012 focused events.

As with the development of new initiatives from the voluntary sector, small amounts of development funding can be extremely effective in encouraging and supporting activity based around our high streets. It is therefore proposed to develop funding which assists and sustains the existing chambers but also serves to encourage the development of associations in town centres which currently lack an active chamber.

Details of the new element of the small grants scheme will be worked up in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Community, Commerce and Regeneration.

Transport Grants

In addition to the funding the Council offers to support the core costs of organisations it has traditionally awarded grants to support some of the boroughs smaller voluntary groups. These grants are used to meet the transport needs of group members. The

organisations supported from this budget cater mainly with clients with disabilities who require specialist transport and that would find it challenging to travel by public transport. The budget to support these organisations for 2013/14 is £54,540. Details of the organisations and the level of grant recommended is attached as Appendix (B) The grants awarded in respect of transport are not funded from the corporate grants but are funded by a budget managed by the Finance Department's Commissioning Team.

London Councils Grant Scheme

For the 2012/13 financial year the Council committed £391,056 to the London Councils Grant Scheme.

The scheme supports voluntary sector activity and specifically funds voluntary organisations across all 32 London authorities and the City of London.

On 13th November London Councils Leader's Committee agreed that overall borough contributions for 2013/14 would total £9m. Hillingdon's contribution would be £302,227.

It is anticipated that the individual boroughs will agree to accept the recommendations on their contributions.

Financial Implications

This report proposes the allocation of £1,681,366 core funding grants for the 2013/14 financial year from a budget of £ 1,815,058, leaving an unallocated balance of £133,692. A full review of the financial statements and application forms of each organisation has been undertaken and brief comments have been included in the Summary of Applications 2012/13. The report also recommends the full allocation of the budget of £54,540 to support the provision of transport.

The proposed contribution to the London Councils grant scheme is set at £302,227. The current budget is £391,056, so this proposal, if agreed, would represent a reduction of £88,832 on the budget, which has been included in the MTF 2013/14 savings proposals.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

Consultation / What will be the effect of the recommendation?

The overall effect of these proposals will be to strengthen and support Hillingdon's voluntary sector with new growth and initiatives, which will directly benefit residents.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

No formal consultation has been undertaken on the proposals for agreement at this Cabinet.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and confirms that the budgetary position set out above is consistent with the draft 2013/14 revenue budget presented to Cabinet on this agenda. The recommendations contained within this report would broadly maintain

funding to the voluntary sector at 2012/13 levels, enabling the sector to continue to provide valued support to residents.

As noted within this report, the reduced contribution towards London Councils grant scheme contributes £89k savings to the latest draft budget for 2013/14.

Legal

The Localism Act 2011, introduces a power of general competence which provides local authorities with the power to do anything that individuals may generally do. It includes the power for Council to make grant payments to voluntary organisations.

With regard to the London Councils Grant Scheme, this Scheme is established under Section 48 of the Local Government Act 1985. As stated in the report, if two-thirds of the London boroughs do not approve their individual budget contribution, the previous year's budget will continue to apply to the Scheme.

Corporate Landlord

N/A

Relevant Service Groups

Relevant teams in Residents Services and Social Care and Health have also been consulted on the proposals.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL