

The Royal Borough Of Windsor and Maidenhead

Annual & Quarterly Grants Briefing note

Points for discussion

1. Background

The findings of research conducted by the policy and performance team into the grants process as used by a cross section of local authorities has highlighted five key themes that emerge and appear to demonstrate what a good grants process/ management system comprises, regardless of whether it is paper based or electronic These are detailed below:

1. A single route of information (website) that outlines all grants, commissioning opportunities available through the local authority.
2. Clearly defined categories of grant funding available, showing levels and duration of funding.
3. Funding eligibility criteria, including practical examples to provide clarity to potential applicants.
4. An application process that is commensurate with the level of grant requested.
5. On going support provided throughout the application process.

Although it is acknowledged that a piece of work is required to conduct a wider review of the Borough's Grants process to ensure that the process is efficient, effective and inclusive, this paper seeks specifically to address points 2, 3 and 4 as an initial first stage of a potentially wider review.

2. Rationale for considering grant applications.

The Council has well established strategic objectives which have been widely communicated both internally and externally and it is suggested that applications for RBWM grants should initially be assessed through these themes.

This will ensure that partner organisations not only understand the Borough's priorities as a local authority but will ensure the Council is able to achieve its key aspirations for local communities and their residents. Initiatives within the 'Resident's First' theme could be a case in point and such an approach would, at the same time, enable the Council to advance its 'Delivering together with our partners' objective.

Any investment made by the Council would be required to clearly outline the expected benefits for residents and local communities against the Council's set of key objects as defined below:

1. The Borough's Strategic Objectives:
 - Residents First.
 - Value for Money.
 - Delivering Together.
 - Equipping Ourselves for the Future.

2. Build local capacity:

- Support the delivery of the Borough's Big Society aspirations around resident involvement and civic participation.
- Help to remove barriers for communities to take action for things that matter to them.
- Building local capacity of residents and communities to engage in civil involvement.
- Building the capacity and capability of the local voluntary sector to be less reliant on Council funding.

3. That supports the delivery of specific directorate service targets and objectives.

3. Criteria for awarding the level of grant funding.

Many local authorities and funding bodies provide different levels of funding with the level of funding awarded directly commensurate with the contribution made to the achievement of specific key corporate priorities.

A suggested framework for awarding grants by financial level is detailed below:

A. All Quarterly grants & Annual grants < £1000

Must meet:

At least one Borough's Strategic objectives. These grants are principally used to help build local capacity for residents and voluntary and community sector and promote/ increase levels civic participation.

B. Annual grants £5000 to £10,000

Must meet:

Two or more Borough's Strategic objectives. Grants would seek to build local capacity of the Voluntary and Community Sector to facilitate local civic participation, remove barriers or contribute towards the delivery of a key Council priority.

C. Annual grants £10,000 to £50,000

Must meet:

Four or more Borough's Strategic objectives. Contribute towards the delivery of specific directorate targets.& build local capacity for residents and voluntary sector organisations to engage in Civic participation.

D. Annual Grants. £50,000 – Move to commissioning model.

Having clear commissioning arrangements that align with the local authorities' objectives, as suggested earlier in the report would maximize the well documented benefits of working with third sector organisations and these include:

- **An increase the choice of providers** – more than ever it is essential to have in place a policy which ensures that the Council has the widest range of options when commissioning services and makes best use of the resources available to achieve best value;
- **Engage with users** – many organisations within the sector are established in response to an identified need. They are trusted by the people they work with, and therefore are often best placed to listen to and understand peoples' needs;
- **Create and harness social capital** – through building and maintaining relationships within and across communities;

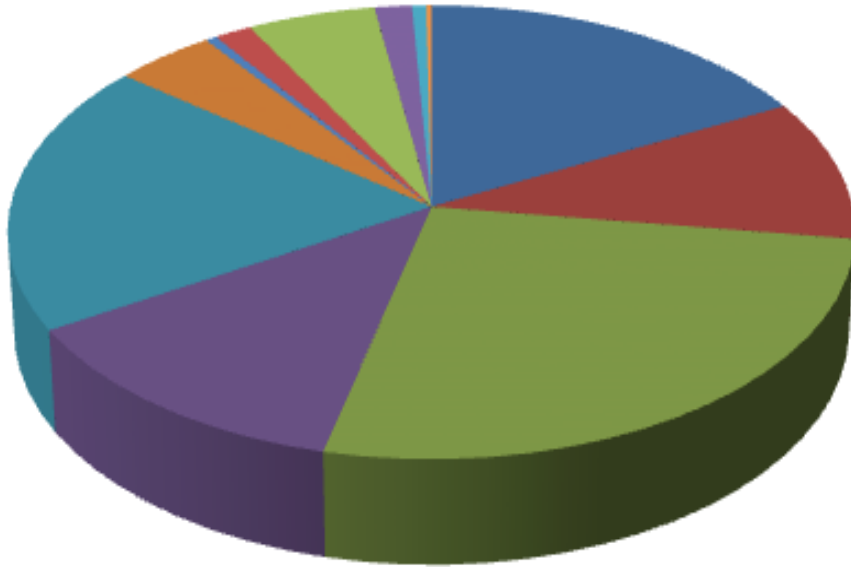
- **Tailor services around the user** – it is common for third sector organisations to be founded by people who have direct experience of an issue and to involve service users on the board or in delivery, thus directly informing service design;
- **Access 'hard to reach' groups** – as VCS organisations are independent and have gained high levels of trust they can often engage more effectively with marginalised or disadvantaged groups. Many services can be delivered within a community setting to remove any stigma and fear of being associated with a particular issue or problem;
- **Innovate** – an ability to respond quickly and be flexible in their approach means that the sector can often pilot and innovate new solutions to meeting needs;
- **Provide value for money** - many organisations deliver preventative / early intervention services, which can subsequently reduce the number of future users of statutory services. Also the establishment of joined up services can deliver a number of outcomes across a range of service areas. The third sector organisations may also have access to additional funding that is not available to statutory agencies.

4. Additional points to consider:

- Establish clearly that applicants should not expect to automatically be awarded funding by the Grants panel; funding should be seen as being discretionary. There is a limited budget and many competing good causes.
- Clarity to applicants that RBWM grants should not be relied upon by applicants as the sole source of funding. Applications should in the main have or be encouraged to secure their own independent sources of funding.
- Consider a change of policy so that rather than giving almost everybody who applies a fraction of what they have applied for give a to limited number of those who apply (but increase the amount awarded? and meet the Borough's corporate priorities.
- Greater clarity given to applicants that the grants should not be viewed as a contribution towards on an going annual operational cost or for funding for specific annual events or activities e.g. Town Centre Partnerships, Maidenhead at the Movies etc.
- Consider options for moving to an on line grants making system – more scoping required is here.
- Provide greater clarity around the eligibility of uniformed and or religious groups.
- A communications & marketing plan should be developed to raise local awareness of grants to develop a wider more diverse pool of applicants. The plan should include the Use of Social Media (Marketing) and grants are promoted via Facebook and Twitter through a dedicated [funding twitter feed](#) as done by Southampton City Council.

Distribution of annual grants (SLAs, Revenue, Service Funded, Kidwell, Community/3 grants). 13/14

SUMMARY		%
Accredited Advice Services	140000	17.2
Voluntary Sector Infrastructure	82410	10.1
Arts and Heritage	215550	26.4
Support Older People	103000	12.6
Support for Carers	158850	19.5
Support Children and Families	35067	4.3
Education & Literacy	3888	0.5
Youth Services	12950	1.6
Learning Disabilities	44500	5.5
Health & Disability (other)	12975	1.6
Environment	4950	0.6
Windsor Town Partnership	1800	0.2
	815940	



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- Environment
- Windsor Town Partnership