

Report to: Resources Portfolio Decision Making Meeting
Date: 29th September 2009
Report from: Fiona White, Head of Democratic and Community Engagement
Report by: Delyth Horsley, Voluntary and Community Sector Support Officer
Title: Voluntary and Community Sector Grants 2010/2011

1. Purpose of the Report

To make recommendations prior to the commencement of the annual grant programme for 2010/2011 with a view to continuing to support an environment for a thriving third sector in the city.

2. Recommendations

That the council should not advertise an open-for-all grants programme for 2010/2011 but organisations who are currently receiving grant funding should be invited to re-apply.

3. Background

3.1 Portsmouth City Council has committed to supporting the development of a thriving Third Sector and to increase public service delivery by Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations. The city has a long history of working in partnership with the sector and of the sector providing innovative and cost-effective services. There are over 500 voluntary and community organisations in the city providing a wide range of services to the community. If the sector is to thrive and provide services on behalf of the council there needs to be a commitment to support it. The Local Area Agreement includes National Indicators 6, "Participating in Regular Volunteering" and 7, "Environment for a Thriving Third Sector", both of which relate directly to the sector and contribute significantly to several corporate priorities.

3.2 The council has agreed that the future role of the role of the VCS should not only be in public service delivery but also in:

- a. Providing a voice for local people
- b. Lobbying and campaigning
- c. Promoting volunteering
- d. Supporting small VCS groups who are unlikely to wish to become deliverers of public services

(Portsmouth Local Area Pathfinder: Building Public Service Partnerships 2007)

4 Recommendation details

That the council should not advertise an open-for-all grants programme for 2010-2011, but organisations who are currently receiving grant funding should be invited to re-apply.

In 2008, following a review of the City Council's Grants programme, it was agreed that the council should not advertise an open-for-all grants programme but that

organisations currently receiving funding should be invited to re-apply. If funding for grants is limited expectations can be raised unfairly by advertising an “open for all” programme. In addition this incurs costs in administering the application process, which could otherwise be used to support the growing third sector agenda and supporting individual third sector organisations in their development.

Following consultation with grants officers it is apparent that circumstances have not changed significantly since 2008 and all agreed that the council should continue to operate a programme in which only those organisations currently receiving funding should be invited to reapply. Other organisations will be signposted to alternative sources of funding and to the Funding Advisor at Community First for Portsmouth .

5. Conclusion

The Portfolio Holder is asked to consider the recommendations in the report, so that the Democratic and Community Engagement Service can proceed in particular either to advertise the annual grants programme or advise VCS organisations differently and to continue to develop a thriving third sector.

6. Equality Impact assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken

7. City Solicitor’s Comments

The Cabinet Member is able to approve the recommendation made in this report.

Signed.....Date.....

Fiona M White
Head of Democratic and Community Engagement

Background Documents: None