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Report of: Executive Member for Community Development

Meeting of:	Date	Agenda item	Ward(s)
Voluntary and Community Sector Committee	11 July 2016		All

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SUBJECT: Islington Council's Community Chest: Round One Grant Awards 2016/17

1 Synopsis

- 1.1 Small voluntary and community organisations play an important role in Islington, helping to build community resilience and supporting residents who are experiencing poverty and isolation. Islington Council's Community Chest (ICCC), one of the borough's most popular grant programmes, has proved to be a very effective way of funding grassroots activity and developing the capacity of local groups.
- 1.2 This report sets out proposals to amend the Council's current Grant Agreement with Cripplegate Foundation which administers the ICCC and for awarding the first tranche of ICCC funding for 2016/17.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the proposed grant awards for the first round of ICCC for 2016/17 as set out in Appendix A.
- 2.2 To agree to award grant funding as set out in paragraph 3.3 to Cripplegate Foundation to be dispensed in accordance with the approved ICCC criteria (taking into account recommendations from the ICCCP) and to agree that the current grant agreement with the organisation be amended accordingly.

3 Background

- 3.1 ICCC is a partnership between Islington Council and Cripplegate Foundation. It is a small grants programme that funds grassroots activity and brings additional capacity building, networking and development support to local voluntary and community organisations. By providing resources for local groups ICCC helps to build community resilience and to tackle poverty and isolation.
- 3.2 ICCC is available to local organisations with a turnover of no more than £100,000 per year – in most cases less than £50,000 per year. Organisations can apply for one grant of up to £5,000 per year. The priority is to support applications from the most deprived areas of the borough with a focus on:
- Advising and supporting people
 - Educating people and improving their skills and employability
 - Reducing isolation and increasing people's involvement in the community
 - Improving people's mental and/or physical health
 - Improving the local environment and making communities safer
- 3.3 Community Chest programmes in Islington have been successfully managed by Cripplegate Foundation for many years. Under current grant funding arrangements, agreed by VCS Committee in March 2015, the council provides funding of £200,000 per year and Cripplegate Foundation adds £50,000 per year (from which £36,000 per year is deducted to cover the costs of administering and developing the programme). In addition Cripplegate Foundation has committed up to £2,500 a year towards the costs of holding an annual celebration event to promote the achievements and impact of activity supported through ICCC. The previous year's celebration event in June 2015 was attended by over 100 people.
- 3.4 Applications to the ICCC are considered by the Islington Council Community Chest Panel, (ICCCP) which meets three times a year. The ICCCP is Chaired by the Executive Member for Community Development and consists of two nominated ward Councillors, representatives from Cripplegate Foundation and representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector, nominated by the Islington Community Network. The ICCCP currently makes recommendations on funding awards to the VCS Committee and to Cripplegate Foundation Governors.
- 3.5 The ICCCP also considers issues of wider relevance to the local voluntary and community sector and reviews priorities annually to ensure that the programme continues to meet the needs of Islington's most vulnerable and isolated residents. In addition panellists track application trends and identify any gaps in the programme that should be addressed.
- 3.6 Members of the panel have highlighted that the current arrangements often lead to a delay in the notifying applicants of the outcome of the application process.

4 Streamlining the Decision making processes

- 4.1 As highlighted in section 3 of this report, the ICCCP makes recommendations on ICCC grant awards to the Cripplegate Foundation Governors and the VCS Committee which has the final decision on grants awards.
- 4.2 The current process means that unless the VCS Committee meets soon after ICCCP meetings there is often a delay before applicants can be notified if their application has been successful or unsuccessful. These delays present challenges to VCS organisations in planning, implementing and managing the projects for which they are seeking grant funding.
- 4.3 Members have highlighted the need to streamline the decision making process in order to avoid any unnecessary delays and enable organisations to implement activities as soon as possible. The ICCCP is Chaired by the Executive Member for Community Development and includes two other nominated Council Member to ensure that the Council's priorities are maintained.
- 4.4 In order to rectify the situation and streamline the decision making process, it is proposed that in

future, all council funding for the ICCC is awarded to Cripplegate Foundation for the purposes of the programme and that all decisions in respect of applications for awards from the ICCC are made by the Cripplegate Foundation. The current grant agreement with the organisation will need to be amended accordingly.

- 4.5 The VCS Committee would still receive reports to note on which organisations have been awarded ICCC funding.

5 Round One Grant Awards 2016/ 17

- 5.1 The first round of ICCC for 2016/ 17 opened for applications in April 2016. It was widely advertised to local groups through voluntary sector networks and forums and on the Islington Council and Cripplegate Foundation websites. Information sessions were arranged for organisations thinking of applying.
- 5.2 23 applications for funding were received for this round, including two applications deferred from the previous round (Bridging the Gap and Minority Matters). One applicant was not eligible as they were not a constituted group and another withdrew their application.
- 5.3 21 face-to-face meetings were held with applicants, one organisations subsequently withdrew their applications and another organisation was not available for a visit from a Cripplegate Grant Officer.
- 5.4 21 applications were received, requesting a total of £90,633. £71,334 was available for Round One, and a further £2 was carried forward from Round Three making a total of £71,336 available for the ICCC panel to allocate.
- 5.5 The ICCCP met on Tuesday 28 June 2016 to consider applications and, after careful deliberation, agreed recommendations totalling £56,936 to 14 organisations. Unlike previous rounds there was a drop in number of applications for this round, however the ICCC panel decided to recommend award of funding to 14 organisations (61%). A list of organisations recommended for funding and the proposed grant award for each organisation is set out in Appendix A.
- 5.6 From the 21 funding applications, 14% were considered first-time applicants and 2 applications considered that were deferred from previous rounds that had not previously applied to ICCC. 21% of organisations recommended for funding have not previously received ICCC funding.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial implications:

- 6.1.1 The council's grant funding of £200,000 per year referred to in this report will be met from existing budgets allocated to ICCC in the Chief Executive's Department.

6.2 Legal Implications:

- 6.2.1 The council has power to provide grants for the voluntary and community sector under the General Power of Competence set out in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. The provision of grants for the voluntary and community sector as described in this report is not subject to any other statutory provision. In providing these grants the council must ensure that it complies with its duty to secure best value (Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999).

6.3 Environmental Implications:

- 6.3.1 One of the priorities of ICCC is 'improving the local environment and making communities safer'. Funding proposals in this report support grassroots community activity which will have a positive impact on the local environment.

6.4 Resident Impact Assessment:

- 6.4.1 The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 6.4.2 ICCC provides resources for small community organisations, many of which are volunteer-led and wouldn't meet the criteria for funding under other programmes. It enables some of Islington's poorest residents to access community-based services and activities including through newly established groups who offer the potential for adding to existing provision locally or who can reach communities that may not otherwise be supported. Analysis of previous grants demonstrates ICCC's success at meeting the needs of groups with protected characteristics, for example people from black and minority ethnic and refugee backgrounds, young people and older people, women, and people with disabilities.

7 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 7.1 The recommendations in this report will help to nurture and sustain an innovative and resilient voluntary and community sector in Islington, in particular providing resources for smaller organisations that find it hard to access funding from other programmes. ICCC is an effective way of developing grass roots activity across the borough and building capacity in local organisations to support residents who are experiencing poverty and isolation.
- 7.2 The proposed changes and amendment to the Council's current grant agreement with Cripplegate Foundation to transfer full responsibility for the ICCC to that organisation will help streamline the decision making processes and reduce delays in notifying VCS organisations of the outcome of their applications. The Council's interest will be protected by having the Executive Member for Community Development as Chairperson of the ICCCP. The VCS Committee will receive reports to note decisions made by Cripplegate Foundation in respect of awards through the programme.

Appendices

Appendix A – Recommended Grant Awards for ICCC: Round One 2016/ 17

Background papers: none

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz
Executive Member for Community Development

Tuesday 5 July 2016

Received by:

John Lynch
Head of Democratic Services

Tuesday 5 July 2016

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Recommended Awards For Islington Council's Community Chest Round One:

Organisation	Project / Activity	Proposed Grant Award (£)
Advise and Support People		
Bridging the Gap	Mentoring ex-offenders	3,654
Community Language Support Services	Advise and support for disabled and elderly BAMER	5,000
Educate People and Improve their Skills and Employability		
Maison Verte-UK	Volunteer recruitment, training, mentoring	2,720
Minority Matters	Supplementary School	3,500
Skills Training Network	ESOL	5,000
STORE Schools and Projects CIC	Architecture summer school scholarships	2,000
Improve People's Mental and / or Physical Health		
BIRD	Music mentoring	5,000
Eagle Recovery Project	Addiction recovery self-help group	4,200
Improve the Local Environment and Make Communities Safer		
Friends of Pooles Park	Community Garden Project	3,362
Reduce Isolation and Increase People's Involvement in the Community		
Angel Canal Festival	Support festival costs	5,000
Blackstock Triangle Gardeners	Community Gardening Project	2,500
Eritrean Community in the UK	Activities for older Eritreans	5,000
Healthy Generations (formerly Music for People)	Music and dance sessions for older people	5,000
Turkish Education Group	ESOL for illiterate women	5,000
Total		£56,936

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