

Report of: Executive Member for Economic and Community Development

| Meeting of: | Date | Agenda item | Ward(s) |
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| Voluntary and Community Sector Committee | 16 March 2015 | | All |

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SUBJECT: Islington Council's Community Chest: Round Three Grant Awards and Programme Management 2015-2018

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, 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 recommendations for awarding the final tranche of Islington Council's Community Chest funding for 2014/15. It also recommends that successful partnership arrangements for Islington Council's Community Chest should continue and that a proposal submitted by Cripplegate Foundation for programme management is agreed. On this basis the VCS Committee is asked to confirm Islington Council's contribution to ICCC of £200,000 per year for three years to March 2018.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the proposed grant awards for the third round of Islington Council's Community Chest for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix A.
- 2.2 To agree the proposal submitted by Cripplegate Foundation for the programme management of Islington Council's Community Chest and, on this basis, to confirm the council's contribution to ICCC of £200,000 per year for three years from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018.

3. Background

- 3.1 Islington Council's Community Chest (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 arrangements, established in 2011 and ending on 31 March 2015, the council contributes £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 managing the programme).
- 3.4 A panel made up of representatives from Islington Council, Cripplegate Foundation and the local voluntary sector (nominated by Islington Community Network) meets three times a year to consider applications and to make recommendations to the VCS Committee and to Cripplegate Foundation Governors. It is chaired by the council's Executive Member for Economic and Community Development.

Round Three Grant Awards 2014/15

- 3.5 The first round of ICCC for 2014/15 opened for applications in February 2014 and awards totalling £71,203 were agreed by the VCS Committee on 21 July 2014. The second round opened in July 2014 and awards totalling £65,491 were agreed by the VCS Committee on 17 November 2014.
- 3.6 The third and final round of ICCC opened in December 2014. It was widely advertised to local groups through voluntary sector networks and forums and on the Islington Council and Cripplegate Foundation websites. Two information sessions were arranged at different times of the day for organisations thinking of applying.
- 3.7 30 eligible applications were received with a total requested amount of £119,906. As part of the assessment process grants officers at Cripplegate Foundation held face-to-face meetings with applicants, offering additional support to groups where there were barriers such as language and disability. In this round applicants were provided with information about a London Region Mentoring Scheme, FIT Money, Voluntary Action Islington and Businesses for Islington Giving Alliance.
- 3.8 The ICCC panel met on 27 February 2015 to consider applications and, after careful deliberation, agreed recommendations totalling £68,250 to 17 organisations. 24% of recommended applicants have not previously received funding from ICCC. A list of organisations recommended for funding and the proposed grant award for each organisation is set out in Appendix A.
- 3.9 After all the awards for 2014/15 have been agreed there will be an underspend of £8,786. This will be carried forward and added to next year's ICCC allocation.

Programme Management 2015-2018

- 3.10 ICCC is one of the borough's most popular grant programmes and feedback from local organisations suggests that it is running well. The partnership model is a good one and on this basis the VCS Committee agreed at its meeting on 19 January 2015 to invite Cripplegate Foundation to submit a proposal for management of the programme from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018.
- 3.11 The VCS Committee agreed to consider this proposal at its next meeting for a three year council

contribution of £200,000 per year, subject to council's final budget approval in February 2015.

- 3.12 To help capture the council's ambitions for the programme and its role in increasing the resilience of local organisations and the communities they serve, officers prepared a funding prospectus setting out a number of key areas the proposal should address. A copy of the prospectus is attached at Appendix B.
- 3.13 Cripplegate Foundation is committed to investing in and developing the ICCC programme in partnership with Islington Council and has submitted a proposal which responds to all the criteria in the funding prospectus. Members of the ICCC panel had an opportunity to discuss the proposal at their meeting on 27 February and to make final revisions. A copy of the proposal is attached at Appendix C.
- 3.14 The proposal is divided into the following sections:
- Responding to local priorities and fostering local resilience (including consideration of feedback to the council's recent consultation on support to local voluntary organisations)
 - Raising the profile of ICCC
 - Growth potential of ICCC grants budget
 - Programme management fee

Proposed actions are summarised in each section and clearly distinguish between those which are continuations of existing activity and those which are new to the programme. Overall the proposal demonstrates an intelligent and robust approach, combining a range of features that have made ICCC successful in the past with elements of innovation that will give it a greater impact in the future.

- 3.15 Cripplegate Foundation intends to make a contribution to ICCC of £50,000 a year over three years. This is subject to formal approval, and allocation of a £50,000 commitment for 2015/16, at the Foundation's Programme Committee meeting on 10 March 2015.
- 3.16 Cripplegate's proposed administration and management fee for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018 is £36,000 per year. This covers staffing costs plus a contribution to the running costs of the building. Details of the tasks involved are included in the proposal. Cripplegate will absorb any changes in staff salaries or cost of living increases which take place over the three year period in order to maintain the grants budget at its current size.
- 3.17 In addition Cripplegate Foundation will commit up to £2,500 a year (inclusive of VAT) towards the costs of holding an annual celebration event to promote the achievements and impact of activity supported through ICCC. This will help to raise awareness of the council's role as main funder of ICCC. Cripplegate and the council will work together to plan these events and to secure in-kind contributions for venue and refreshment costs where possible.
- 3.18 After careful consideration it is therefore recommended that the VCS Committee agrees the proposal submitted by Cripplegate Foundation for the programme management of ICCC. On this basis the committee is also asked to confirm Islington Council's contribution to ICCC of £200,000 per year for three years from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2018.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial implications:

The council's contribution of £200,000 per year referred to in this report will be met from existing budgets allocated to ICCC. By committing to ICCC for three years, any savings related to the voluntary and community sector required as part of the budget planning process will need to be found from other areas of the VCS grants programme.

4.2 **Legal Implications:**

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).

4.3 **Environmental Implications:**

One of the priorities of ICCC is 'improving the local environment and making communities safer'. Funding proposals support grassroots community activity which has a positive impact on the environment e.g. community gardening schemes and estate improvements.

4.4 **Resident Impact Assessment:**

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.

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.

5. **Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

- 5.1 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. Islington Council's Community Chest 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. Agreeing programme management arrangements and funding contributions for the next three years will enable a successful partnership with Cripplegate Foundation to continue for the benefit of local communities.

Appendices

Appendix A – Recommended Grant Awards for ICCC: Round Three 2014/15

Appendix B – Funding Prospectus for ICCC 2015-2018

Appendix C – Proposal from Cripplegate Foundation for Programme Management of ICCC 2015-2018

Background papers: none

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



Executive Member for Economic and Community Development

2 March 2015

Received by:

Head of Democratic Services

Date

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