

Report of: Executive Member for Economic and Community Development

Meeting of:	Date	Agenda item	Ward(s)
Voluntary and Community Sector Committee	15 December 2015		All

Delete as appropriate		Non-exempt
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SUBJECT: Islington Council's Community Chest: Round Two Grant Awards 2015/16

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 second tranche of Islington Council's Community Chest funding for 2015/16.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the proposed grant awards for the second round of Islington Council's Community Chest for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix A.

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, agreed by VCS Committee in 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 administering and developing the programme).
- 3.4 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. This year's event was held in Islington Assembly Hall on 10 June 2015. Well over 100 people attended the celebration and enjoyed a range of excellent performances from community chest beneficiaries as well as an opportunity to network and learn more about projects supported by community chest.
- 3.5 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. It is chaired by the council's Executive Member for Economic and Community Development.
- 3.6 The panel 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.

Round Two Grant Awards 2015/16

- 3.7 The second round of ICCC for 2015/16 opened for applications in July 2015. 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.
- 3.8 31 face-to-face meetings were held with applicants, two organisations subsequently withdrew their applications when it became apparent that their income was over the £100,000 threshold.
- 3.9 30 applications were considered, with one application (Deaf Parenting UK) included due to being deferred in the previous round.
- 3.10 Organisations requested a total of £137,863. £71,333 was available for Round Two, and a further £111 was carried forward from Round One making a total of £71,444 available for the ICCC panel to allocate.
- 3.11 The ICCC panel met on 20 October 2015 to consider applications and, after careful deliberation, agreed recommendations totalling £69,634 to 16 organisations. During this round £71,444, was available to allocate so £1,810 will be carried forward into the next round. 25% of recommended applicants have not previously been funded from Community Chest. A list of organisations recommended for funding and the proposed grant award for each organisation is set out in Appendix A.
- 3.12 The ICCC panel requested Cripplegate Officers meet with two organisations that were strongly considered for funding, but have been deferred to a future round.
- 3.13 From the 30 funding applications, 27% were considered first-time applicants. The 16 successful applications, 19% were from groups that have not previously received funding.
- 3.14 The ICCC Chairperson (Executive Member for Economic and Community Development) has requested a meeting to discuss the grant aims, and explore how they can be better aligned with Islington council's strategic priorities.
- 3.15 The ICCC Chairperson (Executive Member for Economic and Community Development) has requested that there unrepresented areas are actively targeted in order to have a greater spread of organisations applying for grant funding.

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 in the Chief Executive's Department.

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 in this report support grassroots community activity which will have a positive impact on the local environment.

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.

Appendices

Appendix A – Recommended Grant Awards for ICCC: Round Two 2015/16

Background papers: none

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



Executive Member for Economic and Community Development

2 December 2015

Received by:

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Date

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