



DRAFT: Voluntary and Community Sector Grant Funding – Progress so far...

Introduction

Nottingham City Council regards the Voluntary and Community Sector as a key partner in delivering its vision for a safe, clean, ambitious and proud City. Significant measures have been put in place by the Council to support the Voluntary and Community Sector with Nottingham Compact Plus Framework, which is the formal partnership agreement between the Nottingham City Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector, and the awarding of the infrastructure contract to Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service and partners which is to build and support capacity within the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Therefore, this Strategy sets out to formally record the new streamlined model for Area Based Grant Funding with the Voluntary and Community Sector at an Area and City-wide level.

Section One: National Changes and Community Focus

A great many changes have occurred nationally and regionally since the Nottingham's Compact Plus Framework was written in 2008. These include a coalition Government with its concept of the Big Society, a refreshed national Compact, Equality Act (2010) the Localism Act (2011) and the Localism Act (2013) and the drive to make efficiencies to balance the need for savings and an increasing demand for services. In addition the Nottingham Plan outlines the long term vision for Nottingham City to 2030. In view of these developments a corporate Voluntary and Community Sector Grant Funding Strategy for the Council is needed to build on the steps already undertaken with the Area Based Grant Funding. This Voluntary and Community Sector Grant Funding Strategy sets out the Council's corporate approach to investing in the Voluntary and Community Sector in a way that is consistent, fair and transparent and the new model for Grant Funding with the VCS at an Area and City-wide level.

The Nottingham Plan is a route-map for everyone in Nottingham City, local people, communities, organisations and businesses to help Nottingham City Council achieve this vision. To ensure Nottingham City Council achieves Nottingham's long term vision Nottingham City Council will:

1. Support Nottingham City's most vulnerable people
2. Prioritise local jobs for local people
3. Intervene early to prevent difficulties and problems arising later
4. Provide visible services in our Neighbourhoods
5. Ensure local people are able to enjoy themselves in our City

The overall vision of Nottingham's Compact Plus Framework states: *"Compact Plus should recognise the valuable contribution that both our sectors make to reducing inequalities in our society and to improving cohesion between our different communities and neighbourhoods"*.

"By implementing this Compact, we seek to improve our cross-sector working arrangements and the impact we make on building a fairer and more prosperous city." This

overall vision aligns with the overall priorities from the Nottingham Plan as outlined above. One of the other key aims of the Compact is to make a positive impact on the relationship between Nottingham City Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector and their joint commitment to establishing effective partnership working where appropriate. The Compact constitutes a set of principles about working in partnership which underpin the approach taken in delivering this funding strategy and all of the Council's joint working with the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Nottingham City Council is committed to supporting a thriving local Voluntary and Community Sector, as indicated through the Nottingham Plan and the Corporate Commissioning Framework. Approximately £31.1m has been invested in the Sector in 2012/13 - most of this is through commissioned City-wide arrangements, and £1.1m is through Area-based funding.

Section Two: Historical Grant Funding Arrangements

Historically, a number of different grant programmes to the Voluntary and Community Sector were administered across various parts of Nottingham City Council. These grant programmes were often complex and confusing for the Sector.

Since 2011 work has commenced to streamline this approach in order to make investment simpler, more transparent, and easier for the Sector itself to understand and access.

Section Three: New Grant Funding Model

Nottingham City Council undertook a review of the activities and funding of support services ('infrastructure') to the Voluntary and Community Sector, which were funded under the 'Voluntary Sector Investment Programme' that was due to end in March 2012. A new contract was awarded to a consortium led by NCVS and came into effect on 1 April 2012.

In 2012 Nottingham City Council's Executive Board Commissioning Sub-Committee agreed the move to a more streamlined approach to allocating funding, bringing together and replace existing grant programmes and the associated processes, documentation and contracts. As part of this process, Voluntary and Community Sector organisations were asked to work in partnership to deliver these outcomes and identify a 'Lead Organisation' for each partnership.

The Lead Organisation is the provider that has the relationship with Nottingham City Council and the Area Committee, and is responsible for ensuring that all outcomes in an Area are delivered. Smaller organisations report directly to the Lead Organisation eliminating the need for organisations to have several reporting lines in to Nottingham City Council - thus creating a streamlined approach to investment.

It is important for Nottingham City Council to have a strong and transparent relationship with the Lead Organisation, therefore Nottingham City Council has committed to supporting and developing the Lead Organisation and partners. Nottingham City Council will look at all aspects of the business and support the Lead Organisation with business planning and development. The aim of this support is that when other funding becomes available, to be invested at an Area level, Lead Organisations will be ideally placed to manage this process.

Section Four: To Enhance this Work; Phase Two Work Streams

Building on the success of Phase One which introduced Area Based Grant Funding, Nottingham City Council is now in the process of implementing Phase Two that contains the following strands of work:

- Review of needs and funding of “Communities of Identity”
- Voluntary Sector Property and Lease Review
- Widening the scope of Voluntary and Community Sector Streamlining to include City-wide and partner organisation budgets
- Fair Funding Formula

This was approved by the Executive Board Commissioning Sub Committee in November 2012. The following sections give more detail on each these strands of activity.

Communities of Identity Review

Communities of identity have been defined, for the purpose of this review, by people who come together and feel part of a community around shared issues or circumstances. Communities of identity are likely to have particular needs and priorities for public services, barriers need to be removed to enable these communities to have power and influence in relation to these. In prioritising and resourcing communities of identity the focus is for those communities experiencing disadvantage or inequalities. The Communities of Identity review will take place during 2013/14.

Voluntary Sector Property and Lease Review

The Voluntary Sector Sustainability Team is working with Property Services and Legal Services to conduct a review of the fifty two voluntary sector properties with the intention of implementing new occupancy agreements that make clear the rights and responsibilities for the occupants and Nottingham City Council. Until this review is complete current Service Level Agreements will remain the same.

Widening the Scope of Voluntary and Community Sector Streamlining to include City-Wide Budgets and Partner Organisation Budgets

Nottingham City Council has begun to explore City-wide funding and also funding from partner organisations which potentially could be invested through the Area Based Grants Process.

Fair Funding Formula

Phase One of Streamlining Investment to the Voluntary and Community Sector has brought together a range of grant programmes and identified the funding Nottingham City Council is investing in each Area.

The opportunity now exists as part of Phase Two, to move to a Fair Funding Formula between Areas. Over the next year the following steps will be taken:

- Agree key factors and bring together current funding formulas
- Design and agree a safe timescale for moving to the formula, allowing for a gradual move
- Communicate with key stakeholders to agree changes

Section Five: Contact Details

If you have any comments on this draft document, require copies in alternative formats or further information, please contact:

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