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**Meeting of Executive Member for  
Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel**

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

**Service Level Agreements with Community Centre Management  
Committees 2008/09**

**Summary**

1. This report seeks approval for the provision of grants linked to Service Level Agreements (SLAs) awarded to four Community Centre Management Committees in York. It relates to centres owned by City of York Council (CYC) but managed on a daily basis by voluntary management committees. The report covers the financial year 2008/09.
2. The Executive Member is recommended to approve the level of grant funding to the community centres as detailed at Annex One

**Background**

3. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with associated grant are one form of funding offered by the Council to York's voluntary sector. The grant is used to purchase a specific activity or programme from an organisation, in this instance the voluntary management of Council-owned community centres.
4. Organisations that are given an SLA are required to complete yearly monitoring forms at the end of March each year. The organisations use the monitoring forms to describe how the funded programme was carried out and the outcomes achieved.
5. The grants awarded concern four voluntary organizations that the Council has been working in partnership with and has funded for a number of years. They are providing day-to-day management for community centres, according to mutually agreed standards that have been actively developed through discussion with the Council over time. These agreements are reviewed to take account of the particular circumstances of each community centre management committee.

## **Delegated powers**

6. The scheme of delegation in respect of service level agreements with voluntary organisations can be found in Part 3 of the Council Constitution and in summary is as follows:
  - delegated authority for Chief Officers to approve grants up to £5k
  - delegated authority for the Executive Member to approve grants of more than £5K and up to £50K
  - grants of more than £50K to be approved by the Executive

## **Consultation**

7. SLAs have been developed over a number of years following consultation with each Community Centre Committee concerned. The SLAs for 2008/09 will reflect the individual circumstances of each community centre whilst providing for a programme of events and activities for the residents living in the area of benefit that are accessible to the whole community. Officers consult with the Council's Legal Services before they sign a final copy of each SLA.

## **Options**

8. The options for Members are to:
  - a) Option One – To award grants to each Committee as recommended in paragraph 1 above and Annex One
  - b) Option Two – To discontinue grants to all committees with effect from 1.4.2008

## **Analysis**

9. Option One is recommended for the financial year 2008/09. The grant represents the Council's support to each management committee for undertaking day-to-day management of the centres and associated costs. The centres concerned are Bell Farm Social Hall, Foxwood Community Centre, Tang Hall Community Centre and Poppleton Community Centre. To run the centres the management committees rely on income from rent and room hire charges, fundraising events, donations, and external grants. Rent and room hire charges have to be competitive but also within reach of users in each locality.
10. All centres (excepting Poppleton) are in areas which, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), fall within the top 20% most deprived areas on the country. Therefore, the grants awarded to committees in Bell Farm, Foxwood, and Tang Hall allows these committee to levy affordable charges, and helps each committee keep essential services at the centres including caretaking for the centres to remain open during hours that local people need to use them.

11. Regarding Poppleton Community Centre, on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2006 whilst considering Double Taxation matters the Executive resolved to *'phase out support and funding to Poppleton Community Centre and notify the management committee of a five year period during which this will occur'*. The Advisory Panel should therefore note that in future years the grant to Poppleton Community Centre is expected to decrease by £2000 each year as follows:

- 2009/10      £1,180
- 2010/11      £ Nil

12. Option 2 is not recommended for financial year 2008/09. Bell Farm, Tang Hall and Foxwood management committee will need the grant to be able to sustain their 2008/09 operation at current levels. The 2008/09 grant is the same as that awarded in 2007/08, with the exception of Poppleton Community Centre. Work continues with each Committee to develop long-term business plans so that their reliance on Council grants is reduced over time. In the case of Poppleton Community Centre, there is agreement in place for the grant to be tapered as outlined in paragraph 11 above.

### **Corporate Priorities**

13. The development of SLAs with grants to assist independent Community Centres run by local volunteer management committees supports the Council's Corporate Strategy. They support the Corporate Values of:

- Delivering what our customers want
- Supporting and developing people

They support a number of the 10 year Direction Statements, in particular:

- Listening to the community and ensuring people have a greater say in deciding local priorities
- Promoting a cohesive and inclusive community

They contribute to the Corporate Priorities, namely:

- Improve the health and lifestyles of the people who live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest.
- Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the City.

The local management committee plan and deliver services located at each centre with direct input from the local community and local users whilst undertaking the day-to-day management with development support from Neighbourhood Management Officers.

## Implications

14.

- **Financial** – There are no financial implications other than those described above which will be met from existing budgets.
- **Human Resources (HR)** - None
- **Equalities** – The SLAs specify that Community Centre Committees observe current Equalities legislation and relevant CYC policies when they plan and deliver services in the Centres. The views of the local community and other groups are taken into account in providing these services and meeting local needs.
- **Legal** – SLAs are legally binding documents which will be examined and approved by CYC Legal Services before finalised.
- **Crime and Disorder** – None.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – None.
- **Property** – None.
- **Other** – None.

## Risk Management

15. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy. The main risk relates to not progressing, developing and monitoring the SLAs. This could lead to damage to the Council's image and reputation and failure to meet public and partners' expectations.

## Recommendations

16. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive member to:

Approve Option One as outlined in paragraphs 9 to 11 to give grants to the organisations concerned for the financial year 2008/09 as outlined in Annex One.

Reason: To ensure that Community Centre management remains with the local community who have the knowledge and motivation and are enabled to manage local community assets. In doing so support the Corporate Strategy of the Council.

## **Contact Details**

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### **Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

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**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** None

**Wards Affected:** Westfield, Heworth, Rural West

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### **Background Papers:**

Service Level Agreements

### **Annexes**

Annex One – Level of Grant Funding for Community Centres