
Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel

18 March 2009

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

Service Level Agreements with Community Centre Management Committees 2009/10

Summary

1. This report seeks approval for the provision of grants linked to Service Level Agreements (SLA's) relating to the Community Centre voluntary Management Committees (CCMC's) in York. The report covers the financial year 2009/10. The Community Centres to be funded via an SLA are Bell Farm Social Hall, Foxwood Community Centre, Tang Hall Community Centre, Sanderson Court House and Poppleton Community Centre.
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 (SLA's) 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. The grants awarded concern four voluntary management committees 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 discussions with the Council over time. The CCMC's plan and deliver services with direct input from the local community and local users, with development support from officers within the Neighbourhood Management Unit. The SLA's are individual to the particular circumstances of each CCMC. The CCMC's that are given an SLA are required to complete yearly monitoring forms at the end of March each year. In these they describe how the funded programme was carried out and what outcomes were achieved.
4. There is currently no budget available within the Neighbourhood Management Unit to provide a grant provision for Sanderson Court Community House. This community centre was transferred from Lifelong Learning and Leisure without grant support. A growth proposal was submitted as part of the 2009/10 budget to support the centre after it was transferred into the management of the Neighbourhood Management Unit in 2008. However, this proposal was

deemed to be 'de minimis' and did not proceed. Without the level of grant support, this may lead to issues over the management, maintenance and running of the building. It is proposed therefore to fund the grant provision from Sanderson Court House from within the existing Neighbourhood Services budget

5. At the EMAP meeting of 19th March 2008, the need to review the level of grant provision in light of rising running costs was requested by members. This request was taken into account by officers and a proposal for an increase to the grants of 5% was included in the growth proposal referred to in paragraph 4. However, this was also been deemed 'de minimis'. Therefore, without the increase, the grants will remain at current levels. Work continues with each CCMC to develop long-term business plans so that their reliance on Council grants is reduced over time. This is difficult in the current financial climate. It is proposed therefore to fund the 5% increase from within the Neighbourhood Services budget.

Delegated Powers

6. The scheme of delegation in respect for SLA's with voluntary organisations can be found in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution and in summary as follows:
 - o Delegated authority for Chief Officers to approve grants of up to £5k.
 - o Delegated authority for the Executive Member to approve grants of more than £5k and up to £50k.
 - o Grants of more than £50k to be approved by Executive.

Consultation

7. SLA's have been developed over a number of years following consultation with each CCMC. The SLA's for 2009/10 will reflect the individual circumstances of each community centre, whilst also providing for a programme of events and activities for the residents living in the area of benefit that are accessible for the whole community. Officers consult with CYC Legal Services before signing a final copy of each SLA.

Options

8. The options for Members are to:
 - a) Option One – To award the grants to the CCMC as outlined in Annex One.
 - b) Option Two – To discontinue grants to all committees with effect of the 1st April 2009.

Analysis

9. Option One is recommended by officers for financial year 2009/10. The grant is utilised by each CCMC for day-to-day management of the centres and the 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 CCMC's rely on income from rent and room hire charges, fund raising, donations and external grants. Rent and room hire has to be competitive and remain within the reach of users within the locality.
10. Bell Farm Social Hall, Foxwood Community Centre and Tang Hall Community Centre are in areas which fall within the top 20% most deprived areas in the country, (according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation). The grants enable these CCMC's to levy affordable charges and help them to keep essential services as the centres, including caretakers for the centres to remain open so that local people can use them.
11. Poppleton Community Centre is not in an area of deprivation in the city. As a result of this on the 21st March 2006 the Council's Executive considered Double Taxation matters around Community Centre provision. They resolved to:

'phase out support and funding to Poppleton Community Centre and notify the management committee of a four year period during which this will occur.'

The Advisory Panel should therefore note that the level of grant will be reduced to £1,180 for 2009/10 and will then cease.

12. Option 2 is not recommended for financial year 2009/10. The CCMC's need the grant to sustain their current levels of option. This provision ensures that facilities are provided for local people in key areas of the city.
13. As detailed in paragraph 4 above there was no budget transferred from Lifelong Learning & Leisure to fund the grant provision to Sanderson Court Community House. This Community Centre would be eligible for a grant under the policy decision for Double Taxation, as the ward falls with the 20% most deprived in the country. The newly formed CCMC would be able to utilise the budget to provide service for local people within the community. If a grant were not provided, CYC would not be applying a consistent policy across the city. The Advisory Panel were made aware of this budget issue on 19th January 2009 within the Revenue and Capital Budget Estimates 2009/10 report. It is proposed therefore to fund the grant provision from Sanderson Court House from within the existing Neighbourhood Services budget

Corporate Priorities

14. The SLA's and grant provision supports the Council's Corporate Strategy in a number of ways. It supports the Corporate Values of:
 - o Delivering what our customers want.

- o Supporting and developing people.

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

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

They also contribute to the Corporate Priorities, namely:

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

Implications

15.

- **Financial** – The grant provision detailed within Annex One can be met from existing Neighbourhood Services revenue budgets.
- **Human Resources (HR)** None
- **Equalities** – The SLA's specify that CCMC's must 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** – The SLA's are legally binding documents which are approved by CYC Legal Services before they are finalised.
- **Crime and Disorder** – None.
- **Information Technology (IT)** - None
- **Property** - None
- **Other** - None

Risk Management

16. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy. The main risk relates to not progressing, developing and monitoring the SLA's which could lead to damage to the Council's image and reputation and failure to meet public and partners expectations. There is also a risk of not providing a grant to Sanderson Court Community House in the same manner and therefore not applying consistent standards across the city.

Recommendations

17. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to:

- i) Approve Option One outlined within paragraphs 9-11 to give grants to the 4 CCMC's for financial year 2009/20 as outlined within Annex One.

Reason: To ensure that the Community Centres are supported so that they remain with the local community who have the knowledge and motivation to manage these community assets for the benefit of the local area. In doing so they support the Corporate Strategy and the empowerment and engagement agenda.

- ii) Provide advice on how to provide financial support to the CCMC of Sanderson Court Community House in the absence of an approved growth bid.

Reason: to enable a grant on the same level to be awarded and ensure that a consistent approach is being applied to the CYC community centres assets managed via voluntary CCMC's.

Contact Details

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Report Approved

Date 17/02/09

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None.

Wards Affected: Westfield, Heworth and 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.

Level of Grant Funding for Community Centres

Organisation	Amount granted in 2008/09	Proposed Grant 2009/10
Bell Farm Social Hall	£7,180	£7,540
Foxwood Community Centre	£7,180	£7,540
Tang Hall Community Centre	£7,180	£7,540
Poppleton Community Centre	£3,180	£1,180
Sanderson Court House Community Centre	NIL	£7,540
Total	£24,720	£31,340