

Meeting	Loans and Grants Scrutiny Review Task Group
Date	4 September 2013
Present	Councillors Steward (Chair), Potter and Runciman

4. Declarations Of Interest

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in respect of business on the agenda.

Councillor Potter declared a personal interest in relation to the Service Level Agreement for community transport services as an employee of York Wheels Ltd.

5. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Loans and Grants Task Group meeting held on 20 May 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

6. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

7. Loans And Grants Scrutiny Review - Interim Report

Consideration was given to the interim report of the Task Group which had been set up to undertake a review of how loans and grants from the City of York Council to outside organisations were being monitored.

The background to the review, details of the information gathered to date, together with the review focus were set out at paragraphs 2 to 32 of the report.

Details of additional information gathered to inform the Task Groups work was reported at paragraphs 33 to 42 and outstanding information arising from the Group's meeting in May reported at paragraphs 43 to 52.

Officers confirmed that work was ongoing to update the Council's financial regulations to include a section specifically relating to grants which would include the levels of delegated authority.

Having considered the information contained within the report, Members listed the following as issues found arising from the review:

- Service Level Agreements (SLA's) lacked metrics for specific and measurable targets
- That there were numerous ways in which funding could be accessed
- CYC Departments did not use the same criteria when processing loans/grants
- There was no overarching system for applications in place and no risk assessments were undertaken.

As a result of their work on the review Members agreed that:

General

A common approach should be set for the processing of future loans and grants. This would enable a clearer and more transparent overall picture of the Council's loans and grants to be made.

Draft Service Level Agreement Template (Annex B)

To provide a corporate approach a template for Service Level Agreements should be set up together with officer guidance notes to support the process of producing an SLA, as per the newly drafted SLA template and guidance notes at Annex B of the report.

Any Service Level Agreements that made reference to other documents must always have the document attached as an appendix to the agreement.

Section 4 of the Service Level Agreement – Responsibilities of the Service Provider to include reference to risk assessment, public liability and employee insurance requirements, training and equipment, Health and Safety policies, that adequate staff are in place and that the body should advise CYC at the earliest opportunity of any problems or delays in service provision.

Website

To improve transparency, provide information on the Council's website of loans and grants made, together with information on how to make loan/grant applications to include details of those available to the voluntary and third sector.

Defaulted Loans

An examination to be made of the set up of a separate recovery route for defaulted loans, to allow the Corporate Finance Team to identify and actively monitor them. With information on the website of the default procedure and Officer involvement.

Council Plan 2012-15

Amend the Council Plan reference in the report, at paragraph 54, to confirm that the review supports all the Council Plan priorities.

Interest Rates

Include information on Interest Rates which should be applied at the market rate or better or a reason provided for any disparity. Wording to be agreed with the Corporate Finance Officer.

Proposed Officer Guidance for Issuing of Loans and Grants (Annex B1)

Amend (iii) to read 'The *final* decision to award a grant must be made by a chief officer and be recorded'.

Monitoring arrangements – to include a six monthly minimum requirement to report back to a specified named Officer or Cabinet for higher level loans. Update information to be entered onto the CYC website.

Inclusion of a requirement that organisations must also provide details of any other avenues explored for funding.

Amend all references in guidance from 'should' to '*must*'.

Points for Further Clarification

- Living Wage requirements in relation to SLA's
- Level above which any grants/loans should be considered by Cabinet/Cabinet Member
- Number of grants/loans which would require sign off by Chief Officers.

Following further lengthy discussion it was

RESOLVED: That following the above mentioned changes to the interim report and Annexes and receipt of clarification of the issues set out, copies of the final draft report be emailed to Task Group Members for agreement prior to submission to Cabinet in November.

REASON: To conclude the work of this review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

Cllr C Steward, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.20 pm].