

**REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE AND
FINANCE SCRUTINY
SUB-COMMITTEES**

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| Date of Meeting: | 27 th November 2014 |
| Subject: | Mid Year VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) grant monitoring report |
| Responsible Officer: | Paul Najsarek, Corporate Director Community Health and Well-Being |
| Scrutiny Lead Member area: | Councillor Chris Mote, Policy Lead Member for Community Health and Well-Being |
| Exempt: | No - except Appendices 1 and 2. These are exempt from publication under paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as they contain information relating to any individual. |
| Wards affected: | All wards affected |
| Enclosures: | Appendix 1: Extracts from monitoring forms (OBG) Appendix 2: Extracts from monitoring forms (Small Grants) Appendix 3: Monitoring report: Third Sector Support services |

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out information on the monitoring of projects or services awarded grant funding in 2014-15. The report presents a summary of information provided by organisations on the delivery of their services as part of the mid-year monitoring process.

Recommendations:

The Performance and Finance Scrutiny sub-committee is requested to note the contents of the report.

Section 2 – Report

2.1 Introductory paragraph

Harrow Council offers discretionary grant funding to Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations through an open, competitive, application process. The funding enables the delivery of a range of services to people living, working or schooling in Harrow. The application process is administered in line with the principles set out in the Third Sector Investment Plan (2012-15). The aim of the plan is to ensure that funding is awarded to projects and services that support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and core outcomes. This report provides a summary of the monitoring feedback received from organisations in receipt of grant funding during 2014-15 under both the Outcomes Based and Small Grants programmes.

2.2 Background

2.2.1 In March 2014 Harrow Council approved the award of grant funding to 41 projects and services as follows:

- the renewal for a second year of 15 Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for projects/services funded through the Outcomes Based Grants (OBG) programme
- the renewal of the SLA for the delivery of Third Sector Support services
- the award of 23 annual Small Grants. This was increased to 25 following completion of the appeals process.

2.2.2 Organisations in receipt of grant funding are expected to participate in a process of annual monitoring as part of the SLA requirements. The monitoring of projects takes place at mid-year (six months in to the grant funding year) and at the end of the year. All grant funded organisations are required to complete an on-line, self-assessment monitoring form to provide an update on the delivery of their services and a report on the expenditure of grant funds. The closing date for submission was 20th October 2014.

- 2.2.3 Information is checked and queries raised with organisations. Organisations in receipt of OBGs then receive a monitoring visit to verify information provided. The visiting process has not yet been completed for 2014-15. Appendix 1 and 2 provides extracts from the monitoring forms received from organisations.
- 2.2.4 The monitoring of the Third Sector support services contract is subject to a separate process. Monitoring meetings are held quarterly with Harrow Community Action (HCA) the provider of this service. A summary of the services provided since February 2014 is provided in Appendix 3.

2.3 Current situation

- 2.3.1 Grant funding awarded during 2014-15 has supported the delivery of a range of activity to a diverse cross-section of people from across the borough. The number of beneficiaries expected to benefit from grant funded services during the monitoring period ie. April-September 2014 was **56,935**. Based on the monitoring information received, the actual number of beneficiaries that have benefited so far this year is **59,075**. This compares favourably with the actual beneficiary numbers reported at mid-year in 2013-14 which was **43,783**.
- 2.3.2 The following is a summary of some of the achievements and issues identified by organisations:
- 2.3.3 Summary of achievements

Organisations have reported a number of positive developments during the first six months of the funding period;

Improvements in health and well-being: A number of projects have reported on the positive outcomes achieved for **young people and families** including; ADHD and Autism Support Harrow has reported on the positive outcomes achieved for young people including reduced isolation, improved confidence and self-esteem; Harrow Churches Housing Association (HCHA) have assisted young people secure apprenticeships and training opportunities; Young women involved in the Roxeth Youth Zone project have reported significant improvements in the areas of stress management, self care, self-esteem and confidence; The Wish Centre has reported on the number of clients that have reduced or stopped self-harming and others that have reported on their improved emotional health helping them to feel more in control of their lives and choices.

Many projects have reported on the positive impact their services have had on the health and well being of **older people**; Organisations such as the Harrow Over 50 Club, London Kalibari and the Harrow Tamil Association have all provided activities that help alleviate isolation and help maintain the health and well-being of older people; Activities organised by the South Harrow Christian Fellowship such as the weekly coffee mornings, monthly luncheon club and befriending

service have helped relieve isolation and has resulted in the formation of strong friendships amongst some members.

Learning and skills development: Some of the funded projects have supported service users and volunteers with accessing learning and gaining new skills; The Kids Club organised by the South Harrow Christian Fellowship has helped foster skills such as team working, confidence and money management. The project has also provided parenting workshops for parents and cooking skills for older children; The 9th Kenton Scout group have continued to deliver their activities helping children and young people develop their scouting and team working skills; Headstone Manor Ladies Cricket club has delivered cricket coaching and the Herts Inclusive Theatre has provided opportunities for people with learning disabilities to learn performance techniques, time management and public speaking.

Outreach and promotion of services: Many projects have worked pro-actively to promote their services to reach sections of the community that might not otherwise be able to access them; Relate are arranging counselling sessions in Central London to ensure flexible access for Harrow residents that work in London; The Harrow Environmental Forum and Harrow Shopmobility attended a number of events to promote their work including this year's Under One Sky.

New and expanded service: Harrow Community Radio have launched two new shows, one focusing on local issues as well as a weekly business show; The Harrow United Deaf Club has been able to develop its work and reach out to more people with the launch of its 2014-15 programme of events.

Partnership activities; Many projects have developed their partnership activities including; Age UK which has started working with libraries to deliver computer courses including the use of social media and IT for people with dementia; EACH have developed their outreach activities with GP surgeries, Probation service, Northwick Park hospital as well as a range of voluntary, community and faith organisations; Mind in Harrow have worked in partnership to create referral pathways to other agencies such as the CAB and Carramea; they have also worked with BAME organisations to distribute information on new legislation regarding the use of Khat; Harrow Heritage Trust are working with the Home Group to recruit volunteers to develop Newton Farm; The Harrow Kuwaiti Community Association have worked in partnership with Barnet FC to deliver football training activities to young people resulting in increased self-esteem, confidence and improved health.

Volunteering: The total number of volunteers involved in grant funded projects was 656 and these volunteers contributed 2,293 volunteer hours to projects in this period. Organisations have reported on the creation of new and expanded volunteering opportunities as well as the positive impacts of volunteering:

- Harrow Law Centre has taken on a number of young unemployed volunteers providing them with experience of working in a legal setting.
- Harrow Shopmobility has been recruiting volunteers from the Job Centre. As a result of their volunteering experience some volunteers have gone on to secure employment.
- Nine beneficiaries of the Harrow Anti-Racist Alliance (HARA) were offered volunteering placements at the Carramea Resource Centre with the offer of free training from the College of North West London.
- Harrow Community Radio have two new volunteers with a further eight ready to go through their induction process.
- Harrow Heritage Trust has supported the delivery of 1,957 volunteering hours.
- Northwick Park Radio has been able to recruit more volunteers and get them DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked so that they are able to spend more time with patients.

2.3.4 Summary of challenges

As well as the positive developments reported, a number of challenges were also identified;

1. Some services such as Harrow Shopmobility have reported on the challenge of recruiting and retaining sufficient volunteers to help them deliver their activity;
2. Some services are expecting to spend more than originally anticipated on their project delivery in addition to the monies they have received in grant funding. Grant funding across OBGs and Small Grants was awarded at less than 100% of the amount requested in order to maximise the number of organisations receiving funding. These projects will be aiming to address this by increasing membership fees and additional fundraising.
3. Ignite Trust have reported on some of the challenges facing young people. The project has encountered groups of young people forming cliques and then only socialising within their own groups. Ignite have addressed this through developing activities that facilitate integration and providing opportunities to understand and learn about each others differences and cultural diversity.
4. Roxeth Youth Zone had a period without a Project Co-ordinator which impacted on the project's ability to deliver the expected level of activity. The project is addressing this delay by involving a trainee youth worker to work alongside the new Project co-ordinator thereby increasing the amount of activity that can be delivered in the second half of the year.

2.4 Financial Implications

2.4.1 The total amount of funding awarded to projects and services in 2014-15 was £597,362 out of a total budget of £600,000. These grant awards were made within the £600,000 budget available.

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| OBG grant awards total; | £433,707 |
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| Small grant awards total; | £88,655 |
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|--------------------------------|---------|
| Third Sector Support Services; | £75,000 |
|--------------------------------|---------|

2.4.2 Small Grant payments are made to organisations in one instalment and OBG grant payments are made quarterly. A total of £343,009 in grant payments has been made in the first half of the year.

2.5 Performance Issues

2.5.1 The Mid Year monitoring process provides a mechanism for monitoring performance against SLA outcomes. Appendix 1, 2 and 3 provides information on the progress of each grant funded project or activity against SLA outcomes.

2.5.2 There are mid-year and annual targets for grant funded beneficiary numbers and grant funded volunteering hours:

- The mid year target for beneficiary numbers is 20,000 this target has been exceeded as 59,075 beneficiaries have been reported.
- The mid year target for volunteering hours was 1,000 this target has been exceeded as 2,293 volunteering hours have been reported.

2.6 Environmental Impact

2.6.1 Some of the projects funded through the Small Grants programme have provided services that support the maintenance of biodiversity, flora and fauna including; Harrow Heritage Trust which has reduced the amount of rubbish at Newton Farm; Cut by hand a total of 1.2 hectares of grassland at Stanmore Country Park and Stanmore Common and completed the design of the nature trail at Stanmore Common.

2.6.2 Harrow Heritage Trust have also provided guided walks attended by 92 members of the public and expect a total of 200 people to participate by the end of the year. Leaflets and posters for the Stanmore Country Park and Bentley Priory have been printed and distributed; 104 records have been added to the species database and one school party visited Newton Farm for pond dipping in early summer.

2.6.3 Harrow Environmental Forum have continued to work closely with schools including promoting the "Rubbish Diet" aimed at educating pupils about waste reduction. The Helix Education Centre has been awarded the Anne Swain award in recognition of their environmental work and the Forum's October meeting will be discussing air quality

and will include a presentation on the monitoring work conducted at Aylward School.

2.7 Risk Management Implications

2.7.1 The risks associated with the provision of grant funding to VCS organisations are;

- (i) Funding is not used as stated in the grant application.
- (ii) Organisations misapply or make fraudulent use of the funding.
- (iii) Stated service outputs and outcomes are not achieved;
- (iv) Organisations in receipt of funding cease operating and the funding is put at risk.

2.7.2 These risks are mitigated in the following ways;

- (i) The annual monitoring process requires organisations to provide mid-year and end of year reports on service delivery, expenditure of grant funds and equalities information. Recipients of OBG funding also receive an annual monitoring visit and are required to present evidence of activity delivered and expenditure.
- (ii) All grant recipients are required to sign a standard SLA which sets out the Council's expectations for appropriate policies and management controls to be in place for the management of grant funds.
- (iii) The SLA also sets out a service specification setting out the expected outcomes for the funded service.
- (iv) The SLA also places a requirement on organisations to notify the Council if there are any significant changes to the organisation.

2.8 Equalities implications

2.8.1 Grant funded organisations are asked to provide information on the protected equality groups they are targeting. The monitoring form asks organisations to select two of the protected characteristics that most closely describe their target group. An analysis of responses to this question shows that amongst Small Grant funded projects the protected characteristic of age is the most targeted for services; amongst OBG funded services both the Age and Disability protected characteristic are targeted.

Small Grants

| Protected equality group | No. of projects targeting this group |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Age | 21 |
| Disability | 7 |
| Gender reassignment | 0 |
| Pregnancy & maternity | 0 |
| Race | 12 |
| Religion or belief | 0 |
| Sex | 4 |
| Sexual orientation | 0 |
| Marriage & civil partnership | 1 |

Outcome Based Grants

| Protected equality group | No. of projects targeting this group |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Age | 6 |
| Disability | 6 |
| Gender reassignment | 0 |
| Pregnancy & maternity | 0 |
| Race | 3 |
| Religion or belief | 0 |
| Sex | 1 |
| Sexual orientation | 0 |
| Marriage & Civil partnership | 0 |

2.9 Council Priorities

2.9.1 The provision of grant funding to VCS organisations helps support the Council's vision: Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow. The process for grant funding enables joint working to deliver services that make a difference across the following priorities;

- *Making a difference for the vulnerable*
Grant funding has supported the delivery of services that make a difference to the vulnerable including older people facing isolation and loneliness (e.g. Harrow Over 50 club, London Kalibari and the Harrow Tamil Association); people with disabilities who have limited access to mainstream services (e.g. Herts Inclusive Theatre) and people on low incomes who need help accessing welfare benefits and other advice (e.g. Harrow CAB).
- *Making a difference for communities*
Grant funding has supported the delivery of services that make a difference to communities such as projects to clear and preserve open spaces (e.g. Harrow Heritage Trust); projects that promote waste reduction and improvements to air quality (e.g. Harrow Environmental Forum) and projects that provide access to information and advice (e.g. Harrow Community Radio).
- *Making a difference for families*
Grant funding has supported the delivery of services that make a difference to families including projects providing parenting workshops (e.g. South Harrow Christian Fellowship); projects that support young people during transition phases in their lives (e.g. ADHD and Autism Support) and projects that support young people facing emotional difficulties (e.g. The Wish Centre).

Ward Councillors notified:

NO

Grants awarded are for organisations across Harrow.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Kashmir Takhar, Service Manager, Community Sector Services,
020 8420 9331

Background Papers:

Cabinet report: Small Grant and Outcome Based grant recommendations
2014-15, 13th March 2014

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/documents/g61437/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2013-Mar-2014%2018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>