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| **To:** | **Public and Voluntary Sector Partnership** |
| **Title** | **Voluntary and community sector grants programme ; annual report 2012/13** |
| **From:** | **Adult Social Service; Community Partnerships Team** |
| **Date:** | **3rd October 2013** |

1. **Summary**

1.1 This report provides a summary of the grants programme and an overview of some of the achievements of the organisations / projects that were funded through the Corporate Voluntary and Community Sector Grants programme for 2012/13.

1. **Background**

2.1 In 2012/13 the Council awarded grants to 12 Strategic Partners. It also awarded funding to 10 organisations to deliver projects for emerging needs and new initiatives and to the East London Community Foundation to administer the Small Grants Programme on behalf of the Council, to support applications for smaller community-based initiatives or one-off projects. The total amount allocated was £592,879.

1. **Monitoring Procedure**

3.1 All successful organisations are required to agree a set of performance indicators prior to the grant being released. The performance targets are included in the Grants Agreement between the Authority and the organisation. The Agreement sets out the terms and conditions of the grant for all parties to sign.

3.2 It is the responsibility of the Management Committee to plan the business of the organisation and monitor the performance against the agreed targets. Funding is released subject to receiving satisfactory progress reports. Monitoring Returns consists of a progress report against the agreed performance indicators, supporting evidence and expenditure of spend.

* Strategic Partners: are required to provide two six-monthly progress reports. An annual monitoring visit is also carried out between October and November.
* Emerging Needs and New Initiative: the frequency of monitoring is agreed on a case-by-case basis as part of the Grant Agreement. However, a quarterly progress report is required with financial spend and supporting evidence. A six monthly monitoring visit is also carried out between September and October.
* Small Grants Programme: All groups receiving a grant through the East London community ELCF are required to complete a monitoring form for them. Groups in receipt of a small grant (up to £5,000) usually have 12 months to spend the grant, and must then submit their monitoring report within six weeks after the 12 month period. All groups are required to submit evidence of their grant spending, in the form of receipts and invoices (over £50).

3.3 Payments of grant each quarter is subject to receiving satisfactory monitoring return. If the monitoring return is late or it fails to meet the agreed performance targets, then the payment is suspended until satisfactory monitoring information is returned.

1. **End of Year Grants Monitoring Progress Report**

4.1 **Strategic Partners:** In 2012/13 monitoring information showed that £473,970 was awarded to Strategic Partner organisations which generated an additional income in excess of £1,280,088 for 2012/13. All the Strategic Partners successfully met their agreed performance targets and actively participated at various strategic meetings despite some organisations having to go through a restructure and some staff redundancies due to the financial climate, some funders were not awarding grants.

4.2 **Emerging Needs and New Initiatives:** The monitoring information also showed that £119,089 was awarded by the Council to match fund emerging needs and new initiatives projects. In return it generated a further £305,968.00 for 2012/13. All the projects successfully met their agreed performance targets.

4.3 In total over 831 volunteers were recruited to participate in various events, activities and provided support and advice.

4.4 Cabinet at its meeting in October 2008 (minute no: CAB/06/061008) agreed where possible that there should be one Strategic Partner for each of the ambitions of the following Sustainable Community Strategy. However, as the priority for ‘health and wellbeing’ has many facets, Cabinet agreed to fund three or more organisations to enable them to address the issues of elderly, young and families, people with disability and poverty alleviation.

4.5 Below is a list of some of the key achievements supporting the Sustainable Community Strategy for both Strategic Partners and projects that were funded under the Emerging Needs and New Initiatives fund in 2012/13; The Strategic Partner role for ‘improving the Redbridge economy’ could not be filled, as the existing provider Barnabas Workshop went out of business, and attempts by the Council to fund a suitable replacement was unsuccessful.

**4.5.1 Improve Health, Care and Well-being:**

* AGE UK (SP): secured five contracts for 3-5 years with the Council and ONEL NHS for a total of £353,107. It also secured £70,630 from City Bridge Trust to deliver a physical and senior impairment exercise programme and developed a new advice and information service.
* Redbridge Children and Young Peoples Network (SP):secured £11,940 from the Children’s Trust, Community First Fund and Swan Foundation. It also secured sponsorship from four local businesses to provide incentives to volunteers.
* Redbridge Carers Support Services (SP):secured a 3-year contract with the Council for a sum of £176,708. It also secured £130,600 from Henry Smith Charity, Mulberry Trust, Big Lottery and £5,600 from the People’s Health Trust. It delivered a project to support Young Adults in Transition and an Older Carer’s project to improve outcomes for older carers. It was chosen as one of the Mayors charities in 2012/13 and it was nominated for the Queens Voluntary Service Award.
* Redbridge Citizen Advice Bureau (SP): secured three contracts for two years with the Council a total sum of £49,000. It also secured £19,750 from Macmillan Cancer Research to work in King George and Queens Hospital to provide advice to cancer patients; it worked with three neighbouring boroughs CAB’s and the Redbridge Trading Standards on an enforcement project to develop an effective referral system and share trends in local consumer problems.
* Redbridge Disability Consortium (SP):is made up of two organisations: Concern for Mental Health and Redbridge Forum. Jointly it secured four contracts between 1-3 years with the Council for a sum of £603,743. Jointly it also secured over £40,177 for various contracts and £230,000 from the Big Lottery over five years for a RUN-UP project; it also acts a Third Party Reporting Centre.
* Air Football**:** secured £155,000 from Comic Relief and Mercer’s Company. One service user passed his FA Level 1 coaching qualification and First Aid certificate, and took up a role as volunteer coach for under 16’s boy’s football club.
* Haven House (SP): secured £4,568.00 from St. James Place and Price Waterhouse Coopers to work with siblings who had terminal illnesses and 37 children were provided with fun activities. It also delivered 11 sessions of special yoga to 6 children with life threatening conditions.
  + 1. **Skills and opportunities to develop the Redbridge Economy**
* Redbridge Community Housing Ltd**:** supported 13 volunteer placements in 10 businesses with outcomes related to employment.
  + 1. **Environmental Sustainability**
* Forest Farm Peace Gardens (SP):secured a one-year contract with the Council for a sum of £1,357. It also secured £44,890 from City Bridge Trust, Awards for All, Ecominds Changing Spaces and Ecominds Supporting Change. This enabled them to deliver the Eco Therapy Scheme. This also helped people with mental health and / or higher supports needs to improve their confidence and skills.
  + 1. **Voluntary Sector Capacity building**
* Redbridge Council for Voluntary Service (SP): secured four contracts from NELC and one with MOPAC for 3 and 4 years, a sum of £268,426. It also secured over £680,540 from the Big Lottery, RIAE and the London Council’s. It appointed a Community Fundraiser to support groups in the borough to make funding applications, with bids submitted which raised a total of over £540,843.00 shared between 20 groups and came from 26 different funds. Of the £540,843.00 raised, 13.5% of this (£72,949.00) came from LBR grants, the rest all came from external charitable funders; in addition it secured a 3-year contract to deliver the Volunteer Centre and a Brokerage Service in Redbridge, and the East Tenders Training and Employment Programme.
* Centre for Independent Living**:** secured £9,000 from the Office for Disability. 2 volunteers completed the National Open Collage Network entry level 3 work experience and 2 volunteers trained in food hygiene for catering level 2 and volunteered in the Tea Bar.
* Volunteer Centre Redbridge:secured £225,000 for a 3-year contact with a possible 2-year extension to deliver a ‘Volunteer Centre and a Brokerage Service in Redbridge’; It produced an **‘**Inspiration and Motivation’ volunteering DVD.
  + 1. **Strengthen Community Cohesion**
* Redbridge Equalities and Communities Council (SP):secured £1,000 from the Ford Britain Trust; it established a Community Witness and Support Team to support victims of hate crime and Victims Groups in Barkingside and Hainault.
* Redbridge Faith Forum (SP):secured £8,327 from Near Neighbours Fund, donation from faith communities and income generated though quiz nights and charity dinners. It organised a successful interfaith walk and visited 6 places of worship; over 100 residents took part; it was awarded the National Compact Award for 2012 for ‘Advancing Equalities in Inter-faith work and strategic partnership working’ andit promoted a number of health and well-being fitness programmes.
* Lontano**:** - secured £20,650 from Kings Collage London, Robert Keeley CD and Vision Redbridge. It worked in 3 local schools where children learned about Roma culture and lifestyle, traditional songs, dances, stories, history and composed their own songs.
  + 1. **Increase Community Participation and Engagement**
* Volunteer Reading Help**:** secured £5,000 from Evening Standards Appeal Fund. Nine reading helpers worked in 5 schools and it negotiated a Service Level Agreement with four schools.
* Redbridge Rainbow: secured £48,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for an oral history civil partnership project. It worked in partnership with the Police and the sexual health workers; jointly they visited 10 sites where hate or sexual crime took place and provided advice about safe sex and reporting of hate crime.
  + 1. **Make Redbridge Safer**
* Victim Support Redbridge (SP):secured three contracts with the Council and a one-year contract with the Met Police for a total sum of £111,200. It also secured over £193,271 from Met Police and the Children’s Trust to deliver various specialist projects in Redbridge; it supported two Catering High School pupils in Barkingside to provide information stalls on issues of gangs and gun crime to other students; the Bogus Caller Scheme received the Mayor’s Award for 2012 for ‘outstanding partnership working’ in the borough and it launched the Redbridge Victims Panel.
* League of British Muslim**:** secured £1,500; 5 Roma and 4 Asian volunteers worked on filming a local documentary about antisocial behaviour and its effects, causes and solutions. 2 Roma adults were supported into employment and 4 Roma young people secured a school placement.
* Aanchal Women’s Aid Ltd:secured £60,000 from Barclays Capital. It supported the re-establishment of the Domestic Violence (DV) Forum. 38 women were provided with housing options and safety plans and 7 women were referred out of the borough for safe housing for resettlement after fleeing DV. It was successful in securing 2nd year funding for the EN&NI under exceptional circumstances for 2013/14.

**5. Small Grants Programme: Voluntary Sector Capacity Building**

5.1 The small grants programme had been administered by the East London

Community Foundation (ELCF) for the past 15 years. In 2012/13, it supported small groups with financial support, guidance around applying for funding, governance, book-keeping and payroll and claiming gift aid.

5.2 It ran three grants round and awarded16 organisations with a grant. This enabled three new groups to be set up: Redbridge Somali family Centre, Redbridge Residents Network and Iranian Cultural Community - London East.

5.3 During the year the organisation was in discussions with the London Community Foundation (LCF) for a possible merger, due to the financial climate. LCF also managed grants for other corporate funding bodies and had experience of managing small grants over a number of years. The merger took place in July 2013 and all assets were transferred over to LCF.

**6 Internal Controls**

6.1 In July 2012/13, the Council’s internal Audit undertook a review of the operational and management arrangements in relation to the Corporate Voluntary Sector Grants Programme. This was to form an opinion on the reliability of the internal controls that we had in place as well as the accuracy, completeness and validity of the management information provided. In general audit was happy with the review and stated: *‘In our opinion, based upon the areas examined, we can give Substantial Assurance for this review’.*

6.2 Following minor recommendations from Internal Audit in relation to the monitoring process. A new section for policy review dates was introduced. The dates for renewal of Insurance Certificates are requested during the quarterly and six monthly monitoring returns with a copy of the renewal certificates. At the monitoring visits, officer’s also looked at the validity of the certificates if it had not already been provided.

* 1. The quarterly and six monthly monitoring visits forms were revised following consultation with the voluntary and community sector. The feedback from the sector was that they wanted clarification on how much ‘evidence’ should be provided and some sections in the monitoring visit form was ‘duplicating’ information that had been provided in the application form or the quarterly monitoring forms.
  2. Previously some funded groups were providing progress reports using their own templates. Now all funded organisations are required to submit their progress reports on the Councils standard monitoring templates. In addition, grant payment are only authorised once satisfactory progress reports are returned using the Councils monitoring forms.
  3. As part of the condition of the Grant Agreement, all organisations are now required to provide an End of Year Summary Report highlighting the outcomes and benefits that the grant has brought to the organisation, service users and residents of the borough.
  4. In addition to revising the monitoring templates, we implemented a risk management for monitoring by introducing a traffic light rating system to streamline the six monthly monitoring visits. This has enabled the monitoring visit to be carried out more efficiently.

6.7 The Grant Agreement has also been revised to highlight the condition of grant and the measures that would be taken in case of any breaches. The Grants Monitoring Procedure has also been revised to include different stages for reporting breaches and non-compliances.

6.8 In order to comply with the Redbridge Compact 2011/14, all grant awards are now published on Redbridge i under Contracts Register following Cabinet approval.

1. **Conclusion**

7.1 The monitoring information shows that whilst the voluntary sector had been affected by the recent financial climate in relation to staff cuts or operating at reduced services due to reduction both in the number of donor organisations and the amount available for donors to fund voluntary and community activities in the borough, the sector in Redbridge did exceptionally in securing over £1,631.056 from external funding for 2012/13.

7.2 The 3-year Strategic Partners funding has got another year to run (2014/15). This will give us the opportunity to review the grants programme to enable the Council to continue providing appropriate grant support to the sector.

1. **Recommendation**

**8.1 The Partnership is recommended to note, discuss and comment on the report.**

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