

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
SUBJECT:	PROCESS FOR AWARDING GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS 2013/14 AND BEYOND
DATE OF DECISION:	21 AUGUST 2012
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR EFFICIENCY AND IMPROVEMENT
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:	
Not applicable.	

BRIEF SUMMARY:

Southampton City Council has a long history of supporting the contribution of the voluntary and community sector in the city with grants, contracts and other help in kind. On 12 March 2012 Cabinet approved, in principle, an outcome-based commissioned grants model from 2013/14 to award longer term grants (2 or 3 years) where appropriate, from the Grants to Voluntary Organisations budget from 2013/14. This report makes recommendations on the implementation of this model.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To approve the process for the outcome-based Commissioned Grants Programme, including the key changes as set out in paragraph 6.
- (ii) To approve the list of outcomes grants are to be awarded against as set out in paragraphs 7-15.
- (iii) To approve that where appropriate, the council award longer term (2 or 3 year) grants from the grants to voluntary organisations budget from 2013/14, as set out in paragraphs 16-18. These grants would take the form of 2 or 3 year funding agreements that would be subject to annual review in line with budget approvals.
- (iv) To approve in principle that a proportion of the grants to voluntary organisations budget is used for one-off, one year grants awarded against the same criteria and outcomes as the longer term grants, as set out in paragraph 19-20.
- (v) To propose a budget of £4,977,756 over three years (2013/14 to 2015/16) for grants to voluntary organisations, as set out in paragraph 21, subject to approval by Full Council at the annual Budget Setting meeting in February of each year. Of this £1,777,345 would be the proposed budget in 2013/14.
- (vi) To propose a tapered reduction of 6.8% each year for 2014/15 and 2015/16 as set out in paragraph 22, subject to approval by Full Council at the relevant annual Budget Setting meeting in February of each year.
- (vii) To approve that formal notice is given to existing grant recipients highlighting that any applications for grant funding for 2013/14 and beyond will be considered without reference to previous grants and their current funding relationship with the council will end on 31 March 2013, as set out in paragraphs 24-29.

- (viii) To agree amendments to the standard grant criteria as set out in paragraph 30.
- (ix) To discontinue the previous tapered reduction plan for Shopmobility to bring them in line with the new process, as set out in paragraph 31.
- (x) To note that the Dedicated Schools Grant contribution in the grants to voluntary organisations budget will be re-allocated to schools in April 2013 following the changes brought in by central government and therefore this funding will no longer be available, as set out in paragraph 32.
- (xi) To approve in principle the pooling of the council's Community Chest budget with the NHS Health and Wellbeing grants budget and to explore alternative options for administration of the scheme, subject to consultation with community groups and the Trade Unions, as set out in paragraphs 33-39.
- (xii) To delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Economy, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Improvement, to implement changes to the Community Chest scheme following the consultation with community groups and the Trade Unions.
- (xiii) To delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Economy, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Improvement, to do anything necessary to give effect to the recommendations contained in this report.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The recommendations detailed in this report will ensure that the council continues to have a fair, transparent and open grants process with informed long term strategic decision making in place to award grants to the voluntary and community sector. It ensures that existing grant recipients are given adequate notice of changes in the council's approach which could potentially impact the outcome of future applications for grant aid. The council's changed approach will ensure that council grants meet needs and strategic priorities, achieve best value for the residents of the city and provide greater access and stability for the voluntary and community sector in Southampton.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED:

2. Delaying giving formal notice to existing grant recipients that their funding would end until after the decisions are made in January 2013 was considered and rejected. Due to the need to give reasonable notice of the end of funding there would be a cost implication for the 2013/14 budget which would reduce the funding available for new grants. Furthermore, it may create a perception that existing grant recipients who are successful under the outcome-based Commissioned Grants Programme received preferential treatment.
3. Continuing to manage the Community Chest scheme in house was considered and rejected as the council is currently exploring alternative ways of sharing and delivering services. The arrangements for pooling budgets suggested in this report offer an opportunity to consider a different way of administering this scheme. This combined with the need to respond to new policy initiatives such as the 'localism' agenda is leading to more efficient

ways of working, making the time right to give the voluntary sector the opportunity to take this on.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out):

4. The council has a long history of supporting the contribution of the voluntary and community sector in the city with grants, contracts and other help in kind and values the services the voluntary and community sector provide. In 2009 a Review of Grants to Voluntary Organisations was undertaken to find a fairer way to award grants. The grants budget had become 'silted up' so that only voluntary organisations that were already receiving council funding were funded each year. New applicants found it difficult to break into the system. Following the Review changes were brought in part way through 2010/11. However, before the changes had a chance to properly bed in, the public spending cuts brought a reduction in the grants budget. As the true scale of the public spending cuts did not become clear until December 2010 it was too late to make any significant changes for 2011/12. This meant that the council could only fund the existing recipients and even though most recipients received a reduced grant the budget became silted up again.
5. In order to create a fairer, open and transparent grants process on 12 March 2012, following consultation with voluntary organisations, Cabinet approved in principle an outcome-based commissioned grants model to award longer term grants (2 or 3 years) from the Grants to Voluntary Organisations budget from 2013/14. The Commissioned Grants Programme has been developed using feedback received in the ongoing consultation with the voluntary and community sector, including feedback on the detailed process and draft recommendations of this report, which is attached at Appendix 2.
6. The key changes from the previous grants process are:
 - Up to three years of funding, where appropriate, in response to consultation – to provide greater stability for organisations (see paragraph 16).
 - One-off one year grants, up to £10,000 – to provide small grants in between commissioning cycles. This gives the council flexibility to respond to the changing needs of the city as well as the voluntary and community sector. (see paragraph 20).
 - 8 week grant application period (between the scheme opening for applications and the closing date for applications) – as per the consultation in August-October 2011 the grant application period has been shortened as part of a more streamlined process.
 - The decision on grant allocations will be brought forward from March to January, in response to consultation giving applicants more notice between the decision and implementation on 1 April each year.
 - Accepting joint bids, in response to consultation – applications from two or more voluntary organisations working together will be welcomed providing one of the applicants acts as the responsible body for the grant. This will allow voluntary organisations working together to share resources.
 - Proportional paperwork, in response to consultation – there is a shorter application form for applications under £10,000 per year.
 - Grants to be awarded against outcomes – using outcomes rather than the broad council priorities allows the council to focus on key areas of work. This also makes it clearer what the council and city are getting in return for

the grant (see paragraph 7).

- Scored appraisal process - applications will be scored by a small panel of specialist council officers who will make the initial recommendation. This makes the appraisal process more robust and also more streamlined.
 - Applicants notified of initial recommendations earlier – it is aimed to notify applicants of their initial grant recommendation around 6 weeks before the Cabinet meeting, to allow them sufficient time to provide information on the impact, especially equalities and community safety impact, of the recommendation before Cabinet makes a final decision.
7. The outcomes against which the grants will be award have been developed from the 'challenges' outlined in the Southampton Profile (needs assessment). Outcomes for Infrastructure Support Services have also been included as these services are vital to ensure a thriving voluntary and community sector in the city. All applicants will be expected to make a contribution to at least **one** of the outcomes. The outcomes have been grouped into funding themes. It is expected that a range of applications will be received including some that only meet one outcome, some that meet several outcomes within a funding theme and some cross-cutting applications meeting several outcomes across two or more funding themes. The proposed outcomes are listed below, with the funding themes in bold.
8. **Skills, education and jobs for local people**
- Local people have higher levels of skills and employment leading to increased economic activity and employment rates in the city
 - Increased number of young people participating in education, employment or training
 - Increased number of young people achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs
 - Increased school attendance
 - Increased number of not for profit businesses starting up in the city
9. **A better and safer place in which to live and invest**
- Reduced carbon emissions in the city, through increased bus use, energy efficiency, etc
 - Reduced amounts of overall household waste
 - Reduced levels of repeat victimisation
 - Reduced levels of physical disorder, such as broken windows, graffiti or litter, and ASB in areas of multiple deprivation
 - Improved public perception of crime and ASB in the city
 - Reduced risk of young men aged 16-24 being victims of crime
 - Reduced risk to women of serious physical harm or death through domestic violence.
10. **Better protection for children and young people**
- Improved life chances for children in care and care leavers, particularly increased participation in education, employment or training
 - Reduced levels of child poverty in the city
 - Increased individual resilience and personal aspiration

11. **Supporting the most vulnerable people and families**
 - Reduced alcohol consumption
 - Vulnerable people better supported and a consequent reduced demand on both health and social care services as a result of the ageing population
 - People enabled to stay independent, socially engaged and physically active
 - Vulnerable people and families are supported through the Welfare Benefit changes
 - Strengthened parent and child relationships and increased resilience within the family
 - Reduced levels of household poverty
12. **Reducing health inequalities**
 - Reduced health inequalities between different parts of the city
 - Reduced health inequalities between men and women
 - Increased physical activity across the lifespan, particularly in childhood to create a healthy active blueprint for life
13. **Infrastructure Support Services**
 - Local voluntary and small community groups are supported, including new groups given support to start up. All groups have better governance, have access to and are supported through training, have help finding funding and making effective use of resources.
 - Volunteers, trustees and staff of local voluntary and small community groups have improved knowledge, skills and confidence, leading to raised standards.
 - Stronger links between local voluntary and small community groups and agencies such as local authorities and health agencies, leading to groups being better heard and policy makers better understanding the needs of groups. Agencies are supported when conducting consultation with local voluntary and small community groups.
 - Greater understanding of the needs of disadvantaged and under-represented communities through the promotion of equality and diversity. Local voluntary and small community groups are supported to better articulate the needs of disadvantaged and under-represented communities and the most vulnerable people.
 - Local voluntary and small community groups are supported to come together to share ideas and intelligence and address issues of common concern and are better connected and able to work together more efficiently.
 - Increased number of volunteers and volunteering opportunities.
14. It is intended to review both the funding themes and outcomes regularly throughout the life of the grant awards, as council plans and strategies and the Southampton Profile challenges evolve. Any changes that could affect grant awards will be discussed with the grant recipients as part of the monitoring process to ensure all grant awards continue to meet the needs of the city.

Feedback from these discussions and amended equality and community safety impact assessments will be considered when making final decisions under delegated powers

15. Where possible the grant application process has been streamlined, by reducing paperwork and reducing the overall time it takes from the start of the application period to the grant award decision by approximately two months. Full details of the process and outcomes can be found in the Prospectus attached as Appendix 1.
16. The council wishes to provide stability to the voluntary and community sector and aims to do this by awarding three year funding agreements to successful applicants, where appropriate. While the aim will be to fund successful applications for three years, each application will be assessed on a case by case basis as to whether three year funding is appropriate. The council may offer two years or one year funding instead.
17. As the budget is set annually applicants need to be aware that years 2 and 3 of any funding agreement for more than one year will be provisional and may be subject to change in light of council budget decisions. While the council aims to keep to the provisional budget it must be noted that the council's financial position is continually changing. Any changes to the grants in years 2 or 3 will be made by Cabinet subject to approval by Council of the annual revenue budget in February of each year. It is aimed to notify grant recipients of any proposed change within the relevant timescales, as per the Compact, before the Cabinet meeting, to ensure the impact of the proposals can be fully considered before the decision is made.
18. If there is no change to the provisional budget for years 2 or 3 Cabinet's original grant award decision of January 2013 will stand and does not need to be re-confirmed each year. The grants for years 2 and 3 will be confirmed automatically when the budget is approved by Full Council at the annual Budget Setting meeting in February of each year. This is a significant change from previous three year funding agreements where Cabinet re-confirmed the grants each year.
19. The council is aware that by moving to longer term funding the majority of the grants budget would be committed between April 2013 and March 2016, leaving little flexibility to respond to requests for funding during this period. It would also mean that voluntary and community organisations that were not in a position to apply for longer term funding in the autumn of 2012 would be effectively locked out until 2016. Therefore it is proposed to set aside a small portion of the budget each year for one-off, one year grants to be awarded against the same criteria and outcomes as the longer term grants.
20. It is intended that these grants would be available for voluntary and community organisations that did not receive longer term funding. The scheme would open in April each year, with grants of up to £10,000 awarded under officer delegated authority. Depending on the impact of the grant changes it may not be possible to offer this funding in 2013/14 as the budget may be needed for notice payments (see paragraph 29 for more details). Cabinet is requested to approve in principle the scheme for one-off, one year grants. The detailed process for awarding grants from this scheme will be presented to Cabinet for

approval in January 2013.

21. Cabinet is requested to propose a budget of £4,977,756 over three years (2013/14 to 2015/16) for grants to voluntary organisations subject to approval by Full Council at the annual Budget Setting meeting in February of each year. Of this £1,777,345 would be the proposed budget in 2013/14. The budget would comprise:

Year	2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	Total £
Three year funding	1,608,568	1,495,968	1,391,250	4,495,786
One-off grants	100,000	93,000	86,490	279,490
Community Chest	50,000	50,000	50,000	150,000
Housing Revenue Acct	18,777	17,463	16,240	52,480
Total	1,777,345	1,656,431	1,543,980	4,977,756
Reduction from previous year	6.81%	6.8%	6.78%	

22. In line with savings being made across the council a tapered reduction of the grants budget over the three years is also recommended. The three year funding, one-off grants pot and Housing Revenue Account contribution are recommended to reduce by 7% each year using the 2012/13 budget as a baseline (total £1,907,300). It is recommended that this reduction is applied equally to all grant recipients. It is not recommended to reduce the Community Chest budget further as it had a 50% reduction in 2011/12. The reduction to the overall budget would therefore be approximately 6.8% each year.
23. Should there be an underspend in the three year funding element of the budget or returned grant money from a voluntary organisation awarded a three year grant it will be re-allocated to the one-off grants budget to be spent in the relevant year or years.
24. The council is ever mindful of case law relating to grant funding established through the judicial reviews, namely the need for timely and meaningful consultation with voluntary and community organisations, with a clear explanation of proposals and an open, transparent, corporate, co-ordinated approach. Whilst the existing grant recipients meet the council criteria and are providing good value and much needed services in the city, other organisations do not have an opportunity to be fully considered for funding as the council has previously not had enough time to conduct the timely and meaningful consultation necessary to end the funding relationship with existing grant recipients.
25. Cabinet is requested to approve the issuing of formal notice to existing grant recipients that all applications for grant funding for 2013/14 and beyond will be considered without reference to previous grants and their current funding relationship with the council will end on 31 March 2013. This will ensure the council is fully open and transparent with voluntary and community organisations and will allow for timely and meaningful consultation and

consideration of impact assessments, including equalities and community safety. The existing grant recipients are listed in the 2012/13 Grants to Voluntary Organisations Cabinet report, 13 February 2012 (Appendix 1).

26. Giving formal notice will set a level playing field for the new outcome-based Commissioned Grants Programme and all applicants will be considered as new applicants whilst allowing existing grant recipients time to prepare for potential changes to their funding. It will also ensure that any notice payments are provided primarily from within the existing budgets.
27. It must be stressed that issuing formal notice is the **beginning** of the process for concluding the funding relationship, not the end, and is part of the ongoing consultation on changing the way grants are awarded. In line with the Compact and the Best Value Statutory Guidance, the council will actively engage with affected voluntary and community organisations, and through them service users, over the coming months giving them the opportunity to put forward options on reshaping the service or project via an application to the new outcome-based Commissioned Grant Programme. Existing grant recipients will have the opportunity to apply for funding under the new Programme.
28. A plan and timetable for issuing formal notice, subsequent consultation and completion and consideration of impact assessments is attached at Appendix 3. The impact of giving notice on individual organisations will be considered by Cabinet when awarding grants in January 2013.
29. The council will assess, on a case by case basis, if any paid notice needs to be given after the Cabinet decision. If any paid notice is necessary the budget set aside for one-off grants in 2013/14 will be used with the aim that no additional call is made on the council's stretched finance reserves. This may mean that the one-off grants may only be partially available or not available at all in 2013/14. One-off grants in years 2 and 3 will not be affected by this scenario.
30. The standard grant criteria are reviewed and amended on an annual basis to ensure they are in line with current best practice and council priorities. Three changes are recommended at this time – two new criteria and one amended.

New criteria:

- Applications will normally only be considered towards projects and activities that demonstrate innovative approaches to meeting the needs of the residents of Southampton.

This change is being recommended as innovation should underpin all the grant outcomes.

- Applications will not normally be considered for core funding from groups and organisations whose activities fall within the responsibility of schools to fund. However, contributions to jointly funded projects may be considered.

This change is being recommended as national changes to the way schools are funded means the Dedicated Schools Grant part of the grants budget has been re-allocated directly to schools to fund this work (see paragraph 32).

Amended criterion:

- Applications will not normally be considered from groups and organisations that have unsuccessfully tendered for the same project/work as a contracted service (either to the council or anyone else).

This change is being recommended following feedback during consultation that the original criterion about failed tenders needed to be made clearer. The full criteria with the amendments highlighted are available in Appendix 1.

Shopmobility

31. It had previously been agreed, in December 2010, after a detailed consultation process, to reduce Shopmobility's grant over three years to £46,000 in 2011/12, £35,000 in 2012/13 and £27,000 in 2013/14. As the proposal for the outcome-based Commissioned Grants Programme three year funding will overlap with this it is proposed to discontinue the tapered reduction and bring Shopmobility in line with the new grants process. This means that the recommendation to formally give notice to existing grant recipients that all applications for grant funding for 2013/14 and beyond will be considered without reference to previous grants and their current funding relationship will end on 31 March 2013 (see paragraph 24) will also apply to Shopmobility. Although this may be unsettling for Shopmobility, as with all voluntary and community organisations in this position, it will give them the opportunity to be considered for three year funding. Shopmobility have been consulted on this recommendation and their feedback has been included in Appendix 2.

Changes to Dedicated Schools Grant

32. National changes to the way schools are funded from April 2013 means that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) contribution to the grants to voluntary organisations budget, £55,900 in 2012/13, will no longer be available. The money will instead be allocated as part of individual school budgets. From April 2013 it will be up to individual schools to decide if they want to buy the services that voluntary and community organisations are offering and it is not for the council to decide which services schools need. Therefore, the recommendation is for Cabinet to note that the Dedicated Schools Grant contribution in the grants to voluntary organisations budget will no longer be available from April 2013.

Community Chest scheme

33. The council has been running a Community Chest small grant scheme for more than 25 years. The grants primarily support small, unfunded, volunteer led community groups across the city, for example, community fun days, health and wellbeing projects, environmental projects, sports clubs, residents associations etc and promote volunteering and getting involved with the local community. Applications are currently assessed by a Panel consisting of specialist officers across the council and a representative of Southampton Voluntary Services. The Panel makes recommendations to the Communities Team Manager who has delegated authority to decide the grant awards, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Improvement. The current budget for Community Chest is £50,000.
34. The NHS Southampton Trust also manages a small grants scheme in the city, the Health and Wellbeing grants. Applications are assessed and awarded grants by an allocation panel consisting of representatives from the NHS, the council and Southampton Voluntary Services. The current budget for this grant scheme is £75,000.

35. Following discussions with senior managers in the NHS, it is proposed to pool the council's Community Chest budget and the NHS Health and Wellbeing grants budget into a city-wide, small grant scheme, administered in a different way than either scheme current is.
36. During both consultation with voluntary organisations and the Big Society Scrutiny Inquiry, the feedback was that Community Chest could be managed differently, perhaps by a voluntary organisation. The arrangements for pooling budgets suggested in this report offer an opportunity to consider a different way of administering this scheme. This combined with the need to respond to new policy initiatives such as the 'localism' agenda is leading to more efficient ways of working, making the time right to give the voluntary sector the opportunity to take this on. Previous discussions with potential providers suggest that the costs are likely to be around 10% of the budget. Choosing an external service provider would be done via a procurement process.
37. The legal powers to award grants would not transfer to the service provider, therefore it is proposed that if the scheme was to be administered by a voluntary organisations the split in responsibilities would be:
Voluntary Organisation – administering the scheme and setting up and running an Assessment Panel to make grant recommendations.
Council – setting broad funding priorities and making final grant decisions following recommendations from the Assessment Panel.
38. It has also been suggested that the scheme could be run on a Participatory Budgeting basis. Participatory Budgeting involves the local community and intended beneficiaries of the funding in the grant decisions. This allows the community to fund the projects they feel they need, rather than the council deciding what is needed. However, it can be a resource intensive process. Determining the best model for involving the community more in a city-wide small grant scheme would be part of consultation on this matter. It is important to note that Participatory Budgeting will need to be supported by adequate community development resources.
39. A consultation process on the proposal needs to be undertaken before a final decision can be made. Cabinet is therefore requested:
- to approve in principle pooling the council's Community Chest budget with the NHS Health and Wellbeing grants budget and agree to explore alternative options for the administration of the scheme, subject to consultation with community groups and the Trade Unions
 - to delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Economy, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Improvement, to implement changes to the Community Chest scheme following the consultation with community groups and the Trade Unions.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Capital/Revenue:

40. The proposed 2013/14 to 2015/16 grants to voluntary organisations budget is made up of the following elements.

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total
	£	£	£	£
Corporate	1,758,568	1,638,968	1,527,740	4,925,276
HRA	18,777	17,463	16,240	52,480
Total	1,777,345	1,656,431	1,543,980	4,977,756

41. The council budget is set annually in February each year. Therefore the proposed budgets for 2014/15 and 2015/16 are provisional and are subject to budget setting in February of each year.

Property/Other:

42. No immediate property implications are raised by this report. If, through the development of a grant supported initiative, a property issue is generated it will be subject to detailed consultation in the usual way.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

43. The review of the grants process is undertaken in accordance with Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. The exercise of this power is subject to any pre-commencement restrictions or prohibitions contained in the statutory powers used to award individual grants as detailed in Appendix 1 of the 2012/13 Grants to Voluntary Organisations report to Cabinet dated 13 February 2012.

Other Legal Implications:

44. The council is mindful of case law established through the judicial reviews of Haringey Council in 2000, Leicester City Council in 2004, Ealing Borough Council in 2008 and London Councils in February 2011. Accordingly, the council follows four main principles during the grants process, namely timely and meaningful consultation with voluntary organisations, with a clear explanation of proposals and an open, transparent, corporate, co-ordinated approach. Decision makers must be satisfied that consultation with affected organisations has been adequately carried out and that where appropriate any notice period given before the implementation of any reduction in grant is adequate and reasonable.
45. The Council recognises its legal obligations with regard to equality and community safety in making its decision. The Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted on the move to outcome-based commissioned grants has been updated and is attached at Appendix 4.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS:

46. Grant recommendations relate to the relevant Policy Framework plans and the services provided by the grant-aided organisations will assist the council in meeting the overall aims of its policy framework including the objectives set out in the Southampton City Council Plan 2011-14.

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KEY DECISION? Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Non-confidential appendices are in the Members' Rooms and can be accessed on-line

Appendices:

1.	Prospectus (includes process, outcomes, standard grant criteria)
2.	Consultation with voluntary organisations
3.	Formal notice timetable and plan
4.	Equality and Safety Impact Assessment

Documents In Members' Rooms:

1.	Application packs
2.	Appraisal template

Integrated Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	Yes, see Appendix 4
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Other Background Documents

Integrated Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
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1.	2012/13 Grants to Voluntary Organisations Report to Cabinet – 13 February 2012	
2.	Process For Awarding Grants To Voluntary Organisations From 2013/14 – 12 March 2012	