

Feedback on the proposals received from voluntary organisations

Introduction

As part of the ongoing consultation on making changes to the grants process, the council published details of the draft report recommendations and draft application for comment. The information was published on 20 June 2012, 9 weeks before the Cabinet meeting to finalise the grant awards process.

Feedback received by 27 July 2012 has been included in the report and appendices. Any feedback received after this date will be tabled at the Cabinet meeting in an updated version of this appendix. The feedback received will also inform the guidance notes to completing the application form.

Consultation methods

All existing grant recipients were sent a letter and email with details of the draft report recommendations on 20th June. Other voluntary organisations on our mailing list, including those who unsuccessfully applied for a grant in 2011/12 were notified of the draft report recommendations by email. The draft report recommendations and draft application documents were also available to view or download from the council's website from 20th June 2012.

Two informal drop-in sessions were held – Monday 09 July 2012, 11am to 1pm and Tuesday 10 July 2012, 4:30 to 6:30pm – with council officers available to answer queries about the proposed new process and draft report recommendations.

For organisations that had queries but were unable to attend either of the drop-in sessions the council arranged phone conversations.

Key findings

- As with earlier phases of the consultation, there were different responses depending on whether or not an organisation currently receives a grant from the council.
- Organisations not currently funded were supportive of the new scheme as it will ensure a more level playing field and offers hope to smaller organisations that have been left out in favour of larger ones.
(all organisations not currently funded)
- Organisations not currently funded sought assurance that this would be a genuine opportunity to apply for funding. Some had tried previously and had been turned down due to lack of funds.
(all organisations not currently funded)
 - Officers explained that it is aimed to give existing grant recipients notice allowing the council to consider all applications equally, regardless of whether they had been funded previously.
- Existing grant recipients are anxious about the changes as they could potentially lose some or all of their funding, which could put their organisation at risk.
(SCRATCH, Southampton Advice and Representation Centre, Southampton Women's Aid)
 - Officers explained that there will be the opportunity to give information on the impact of having reduced or no funding in the application form and throughout the assessment process to inform the Cabinet decision in January.

- Existing grant recipients sought reassurance that they still had the opportunity to apply for funding under the new scheme.
(Art Asia, City Reach Youth Project, SCRATCH, Southampton Advice and Representation Centre, Southampton Citizens Advice Bureau)
 - Officers worked through the draft outcomes with individual organisations and were able to highlight several outcomes that their work may contribute to. Applicants only need to meet 1 outcome to be eligible for funding. All the existing grant recipients who did this were reassured about the new process.
- Existing grant recipients were concerned that the move three year funding would mean a lot more paperwork as part of the application process.
(City Reach Youth Project, SCRATCH)
 - Officers explained that while some additional information will be requested for years 2 and 3 the council has actually simplified the application forms slightly. Also, the council expects information given for years 2 and 3 to be broad outlines rather than in detail. Grant recipients will then work with the council to refine the details for years 2 and 3 through the monitoring process.
- Existing grant recipients were concerned that even if notice has been given, when considering how much to fund an applicant the council will start with their previous grant.
(Southampton Women's Aid, SVS Shopmobility)
 - Officers explained that the council will treat all applicants the same and will use the amount the applicant has requested as the starting point when considering any grant award.
- It is challenging at first for some voluntary organisations to consider their work in terms of the final outcomes. However, this is quickly resolved through conversation with council officers.
(Art Asia, City Reach Youth Project, SCRATCH, Southampton Advice and Representation Centre, Southampton Citizens Advice Bureau)
 - There will be guidance notes in the application packs and support will be available throughout the application period for applicants to discuss how their work potentially meets the outcomes.
- All respondents were supportive of three year funding.
- All respondents felt the proposal for a 'grants surgery' during the application period to offer applicants advice on their individual applications was a good idea.
- All respondents would like clear guidance about what they can apply for, i.e. is it core costs (infrastructure) or project funding?
 - Officers explained that the funding could be for either or both. Though if an applicant has not previously received funding for core costs they will need to explain in their application why they need core costs now. This will be made clear in the guidance notes.
- Several respondents were concerned that the new criterion about innovation mean only new projects will be funded.
(Age Concern, Southampton Citizens Advice Bureau, TWICS, Wheatsheaf Trust)
 - Innovation is part of the added value that the voluntary and community sector brings to the city. Existing work/projects and core funding will be eligible; however, the council feels there is always room for improvement. The council is

not asking for change for the sake of change but does want the best and most efficient work/projects to meet the needs of residents and this means work/projects that evolve when needed.

- Respondents were largely in favour of grants being awarded against outcomes derived from the Southampton Profile (needs assessment) rather than the broad council priorities.
- General comments received:
 - The new process “will encourage the new ways of working that those involved will need to address when improving the way we deliver collaborative ventures across agencies through innovation.”
 - The new process “can provide greater flexibility to managing changes in local need as well responding to national economic and political changes. One of the biggest strengths of most third sector organisations is the ability to change far quicker than the statutory sectors.”
 - “Some agencies in the city are already embracing outcome based commissioning, and it is starting to take shape in others. We consider your proposal will help continue the cultural journey and help change and the behaviour of people from all sectors to move us in the right direction.”
 - Outcome-based commissioning “will give a more honest and grassroots idea of what is happening in the city and will help both council and organisations to pinpoint specific needs in specific areas rather than broader priorities that may not capture ‘need’. It will also give a clearer picture for strategic planning in the future.”
 - “The consultation process and during it the availability and willingness of the Grants staff to answer questions and clarify issues raised has been extremely helpful.”

Organisations that provided feedback

Existing grant recipients

Art Asia
 City Reach Youth Project
 SCRATCH
 Southampton Advice and Representation Centre
 Southampton Citizens Advice Bureau
 Southampton Voluntary Services
 Southampton Women’s Aid
 SVS Shopmobility
 Training for Work in Communities (TWICS)
 Wheatsheaf Trust

Potential new applicants (not currently funded)

Age Concern
 Awaaz FM Community Radio
 SoCo Music Project
 Stepacross CIC
 the Environment Centre
 Victim Support

Ongoing consultation on changes to grant awards process from 2013/14

Date/s	What	Who
2011		
22 July	1 August 2011 Cabinet report published. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list SCC website Letter sent to existing recipients and 2011/12 unsuccessful applicants
27 July	Details of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting sent via email. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list
28 July	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting	Public meeting
1 August	Cabinet meeting	Public meeting
2 August	Update on Cabinet decision sent via email	Grants mailing list
11 August to 6 October	Feedback on proposal for a roll forward year for existing grant recipients in 2012/13 invited. Multiple reminders sent during this time encouraging organisations to take part. Also advertised Southampton Voluntary Services sector only meeting, 27 September.	Grants mailing list SCC website Social media
19 October	Report for Delegated Officer Decision published online. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list SCC website
27 October	Delegated Officer Decision made	n/a
4 November	Update on Delegated Officer Decision sent via email	Grants mailing list
8 November 2011 to 03 February 2012	Feedback on proposal to move to outcome-based commissioned grants from 2013/14	Grants mailing list SCC website Social media
22 November	Consultation meeting, 6:30 to 8:30pm at Southampton Voluntary Services offices	Invitation sent to Grants mailing list and published on SCC website
02 December	Consultation meeting, 9:30 to 11:30am at Southampton Voluntary Services offices	Invitation sent to Grants mailing list and published on SCC website
05 December	Notes of 22 November consultation meeting sent for comment	22 November meeting delegates

14 December	Notes of 02 December consultation meeting sent for comment	02 December meeting delegates
2012		
01 February	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee report on 2012/13 roll forward published. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list
03 February	Cabinet report on 2012/13 roll forward published. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list
09 February	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting	Public meeting
13 February	Cabinet meeting	Public meeting
29 February	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee report on moving to outcome-based commissioned grants from 2013/14 published. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list
02 March	Cabinet report on moving to outcome-based commissioned grants from 2013/14 published. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list
08 March	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting	Public meeting
12 March	Cabinet meeting	Public meeting
20 June	Letter providing information on the new grant awards process and likely recommendations to Cabinet in August report (hard copy and email)	All existing grant recipients
20-25 June	Details of new grant award process and likely recommendations to Cabinet in August report published	Grants mailing list SCC website Social media
09/10 July	Drop-in sessions to answer queries about draft documents and recommendations	Grants mailing list SCC website Social media
16 July	Reminder about how to give feedback on the proposals	Grants mailing list
02 August	Reminder that there is still an opportunity to give feedback, which will be tabled at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting and the Cabinet meeting.	Grants mailing list

Upcoming key dates

All dates are provisional and subject to change

Date/s	What	Who
08 August	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee report on grants process from 2013/14 published. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list
13 August	Cabinet report on grants process from 2013/14 published. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list
16 August	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting	Public meeting
21 August	Cabinet meeting	Public meeting
31 August to 26 October	Commissioned Grants Programme 3 year funding open for applications	Grants mailing list SCC website Social media
02 November	Applicants notified of preliminary assessment	All 2013/14 grant applicants
18 December, approx.	Applicants notified of initial recommendations. Representations invited.	All 2013/14 grant applicants
2013		
16 January	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee report on grants process from 2013/14 published. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list
21 January	Cabinet report on grants process from 2013/14 published. Representations invited.	Grants mailing list
24 January	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meeting	Public meeting
29 January	Cabinet meeting	Public meeting
13 February	Budget Setting meeting	Public meeting

Grants mailing list

The mailing list consists of:

- Existing grant recipients
- Unsuccessful applicants to the 2011/12 Running Costs and New Projects Funds – unless they have asked to be removed
- Anyone who has taken part in any stage of this consultation – unless they have asked to be removed
- Anyone who has asked to be added to the mailing list

- 2013/14 grant applicants – added as they apply if not already on list
- SCC grant appraisers

Social media

Includes:

- @SouthamptonFund twitter account - <http://twitter.com/#!/SouthamptonFund>
- @Southamptoncom twitter account - <http://twitter.com/#!/southamptoncom>
- Southampton Communities Facebook page - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Southampton-Communities/353796474268?ref=nf>