Protocol for Grants to the Community and Voluntary Sector

Summary of Principles

Providing grants to the voluntary and community sector can be an important way of supporting our communities and the council's priorities. However, it is essential to remember that this is public money, and appropriate safeguards must always be put in place to ensure that grants schemes achieve their aims, deliver value for money and are organised in a transparent way.

The following are the key messages. A full "Protocol for Developing a Grants Scheme" is available and provides more information on the following principles, including examples and sources of further help and advice.

1. **Decide what you want to achieve**
   - Does it align with corporate priorities?
   - Is a grant scheme the best way to do it? Consider alternatives, such as commissioning the activities directly.
   - Ensure senior officer / Cabinet support, including considering whether a report to Cabinet is required at this stage.

2. **Establish what funding is available and that it is OK to use it for the purpose**

3. **Name a "Senior Responsible Owner"**
   - A named individual who takes overall responsibility for the scheme.

4. **Develop a criteria**
   - What's the money for?
   - What sort of things will you not fund?
   - What will be the minimum and maximum awards?
   - How will you take into account any Safeguarding issues?
   - How will you comply with the Prevent duty?

5. **Decide who can and can't apply**
   - Organisations or individuals? Who and what?

6. **Agree how applications can be made, and what evidence / documentation will be needed from applicants**
   - The process must be accessible – not too complex so as deter possible applicants, but including enough information to allow a proper assessment.
   - Generally, the more money that's involved, or the more sensitive the area of work, the more evidence and supporting information you should ask for.

7. **Consider how you will promote the scheme**
   - Will you target certain groups, or publicise it widely?
   - How long will the scheme be open for – is it fixed or ongoing?

- Make sure the criteria is published and widely available and understood.

8. **Agree the assessment and decision making process**
   - All grant funding decisions formally sit with Cabinet. Make sure you agree delegation if you want officers to take decisions.
   - Make sure the process is transparent, and that there are no conflicts of interest.
   - Decide who will sit on any assessment panel.
   - Decisions must be made objectively against the criteria, and should be evidenced, eg through a scoring sheet.

9. **Create a Grant Funding Agreement**
   - A set of terms and conditions, signed by us and the recipient.
   - Make sure it's proportionate to the level of funding.
   - You must take legal advice on any agreements.

10. **Establish monitoring arrangements**
    - These should be proportionate to the level of funding.
    - Should include arrangements for "clawback" of funding not used or improperly used.

11. **Keep Records**
    - Including taking account of good information governance practice.

12. **Conduct a review**
    - Once the scheme is finished, review its effectiveness.
    - Share your findings and lessons learned with appropriate officers and others.