

Meeting	Cabinet Resources Committee
Date	4 November 2013
Subject	Community Focus – Extension of Funding Agreement, 2014/15
Report of	Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships
Summary	This report seeks approval to extending funding of Community Focus through an existing agreement to 31 March 2015.

Officer Contributors	Ken Argent, Grants Manager, Finance, Commissioning Group Stephen Evans, Assistant Director, Strategy Anisa Darr, Head of Finance, Commissioning Group
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Key decision	No
Enclosure	None
For decision by	Cabinet Resources Committee
Function of	Executive
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in	Not applicable

Contact for further information: Ken Argent, Grants Manager, Finance, Commissioning Group, 020 8359 2020

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That, subject to the council's Standard Conditions of Grant Aid, the existing funding agreement with Community Focus, subsidising places on its courses for older and disabled people to improve their resilience and capacity to live independently, be extended for a further twelve months beyond 2013/14 to 31 March 2015.
- 1.2 That a grant of £59,300 to Community Focus be approved in principle for 2014/15, subject to adequate provision being made in the council's budget for that year.
- 1.3 That the Chief Operating Officer & Director of Finance be authorised to finalise terms and conditions in relation to the grant in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships.

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 CRC, July 2008: approval of a Third Sector Commissioning Framework.
- 2.2 CRC, March 2011: approval of a new model of funding Community Focus on a tapered basis over three years to 31 March 2014.

3 CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan, 2013/14-2015/16 includes the following strategic objectives:
 - To create the right environment to promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough
 - To support families and individuals that need it – promoting independence, learning and well-being
 - To improve the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study
- 3.2 The Older Adults Strategy, 'Living Longer, Living Better', and the Older People's Commissioning Strategy, 2008-17, 'Independence, Choice and Control', focus on developing preventative services; tackling inequalities; and the wider well-being agenda. The Prevention Framework seeks to promote the health and well-being of older and disabled people, helping them to achieve key outcomes, including the best possible quality of life, and to remain part of the community.
- 3.3 The commissioning strategy espouses the development of more day care choices for individuals and carers. The provision of educational and creative activities, such as by Community Focus, supports this objective whilst promoting social integration; community cohesion; and pride in the borough.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 All grants to voluntary and community organisations are made subject to the council's Standard Conditions of Grant Aid. Amongst other things, the conditions cover how awards are spent, allowing council officers a right of access to proof thereof, and requiring notification of any change in an organisation's circumstances which significantly affect its grant entitlement. The council reserves the right to withhold payment of any approved grant, or to demand full or partial repayment, if it appears that the organisation has failed to comply with any of the conditions attached to the award.
- 4.2 The council has a longstanding funding relationship with Community Focus. A new model based on subsidy per person has successfully replaced an annual core grant. Although grant payments cannot be enforced in law in the same way as a contract, any risk is mitigated in this case as the subsidy is paid only on the basis of individual attendances recorded.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 The core provisions of the Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1 October 2010 and the public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Act) came into force on 5 April 2011. Pursuant to section 149, the council must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation prohibited under the Act and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those with protected characteristics and those without.
- 5.2 The protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. They also cover marriage and civil partnership with regard to eliminating discrimination.
- 5.3 Any organisation providing public sector services is subject to scrutiny by the council to ensure that the delivery of services complies with the public sector equality duty. The funding agreement with Community Focus involves regular client monitoring in relation to the protected characteristics, a procedure that is scrutinised on a termly basis as a key output measure linked to borough demographics.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance, Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 The council's funding of Community Focus has declined year on year since adoption of the new subsidy-orientated model as follows:

2010/11 * (£)	2011/12 (£)	2012/13 (£)	2013/14 (£)	3-year change
87,300	83,300	75,300	67,300	-22.9%

* final year of annual core grant

The tapered reduction has reflected the constraints on public expenditure and the pursuit of more clearly defined outcomes and value for money through the conversion of grants into funding through commissioning.

- 6.2 A grant of £59,300 is recommended for 2014/15 subject to approval of the council's budget for that year and embodies a reduction of £8,000 on the current year's award in line with the progressive reduction of funding under the existing funding agreement.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 Grant funding will be provided to Community Focus subject to the council's Standard Conditions of Grant Aid.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 Council Constitution, Part 3, Responsibility for Functions - paragraph 4.6, as amended, reserves to the Cabinet Resources Committee the power to approve grants to voluntary and community organisations to the value of £20,000 or more.

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 Community Focus (CF), a registered charity formed in 1978, is a unique and specialised resource in Barnet aimed at encouraging disabled and older people to participate in the arts in pursuit of personal development; social interaction; equality; and lifelong learning. It offers courses and workshops to a range of disadvantaged people whose participation in the arts is limited and who lack stimulation and are at risk of social exclusion.

Funding Agreement, 2011/14

- 9.2 In April 2011, in line with the phasing out of core funding of voluntary and community groups, an annual revenue grant awarded to CF towards running costs was replaced by commissioning an outcome-based programme of art work targeted at specific groups of people. A three-year agreement, extending to 31 March 2014, was negotiated with CF based on subsidising the fees payable for attendance on its courses by:

- older people (over 55s)
- people with disabilities including sensory impairment
- people with mental health problems including dementia
- people with learning disabilities

- 9.3 The primary aim of the agreement is to help clients build individual resilience and continue to live independently as far as possible through involvement in arts-based activities. It focuses resources on the key client groups compared to only about two thirds of the funds previously invested in the organisation through the annual core grant. The funding formula pays £126.21 towards each

subsidised place, leaving CF with a similar sum or more to defray from fundraising to cover the full cost.

- 9.4 The agreement requires CF to provide a personalised service to disabled people and people with special needs, with staff and volunteers facilitating severely disabled users. This means that courses cater for small numbers of people – in most cases a maximum of fifteen at a time – and that CF maintains a staff-client ratio of at least one tutor and one to two volunteers to ten to twelve service users in each activity, depending on the needs of the client group.
- 9.5 The agreement is also geared towards the development and delivery of courses on an outreach basis in the community to improve access to residents living in all parts of the borough, especially more deprived wards in the west of the borough. Two thirds of the annual subsidy is linked to attendances at courses away from CF's base at the Arts Depot, primarily in Burnt Oak, Childs Hill, Colindale, Edgware, Golders Green, Hale, Hendon and West Hendon Wards.
- 9.6 The main outcomes measured are that people feel more able to deal with challenging life circumstances; feel able to access appropriate support mechanisms where needed; are less likely to access statutory services; are ready to work or volunteer in mainstream settings; and / or feel that their participation on courses has helped them to attain their own personal goals or develop skills to do so.

Performance

- 9.7 In 2011/12 (year 1), it was agreed to modify the outreach-related target for the year by removing the discrimination between outreach places in the selected west of borough wards and those in other parts of the borough because of the length of time involved in creating new outreach locations. With the benefit of that goodwill gesture, CF was able to claim the full subsidy (of £83,300) for the year on the basis that 456 out of 660 clients eligible for subsidy attended courses delivered through the emerging outreach programme.
- 9.8 In 2012/13 (year 2), CF was better able to comply with the division of subsidy in delivering outreach courses, although it was agreed to relax the attendance threshold for claiming such because of a problem of maintaining participation throughout a ten-week or a twelve-week course by clients with senile dementia, who constituted a high proportion of clients at a number of new outreach locations. Of 597 clients eligible for subsidy, 397 attended courses in the community, enabling CF to claim the full subsidy for the year of £75,300.
- 9.9 In 2013/14 (year 3), the agreement prescribes that the council will subsidise the fees of up to 213 clients at courses in the west of borough of wards; up to a further 134 at courses anywhere else in the borough (except CF's premises); and up to a further 186 at any location, including CF's premises. CF's data returns for term 1 (April to July) indicate that it is on target to claim the full subsidy, which this year is £67,300.

- 9.10 Courses this year (both in-house and in the community) include creative writing; drama; dance; drumming; singing; watercolour painting; ceramics; jewellery making; textiles and print making; photography; visual arts; and computing.
- 9.11 Client satisfaction surveys and tutor evaluation of courses are analysed on a termly basis in the interests of quality assurance. Feedback demonstrates a high level of satisfaction with service delivery. Regular dialogue with managers of residential care homes and other outreach settings is highlighting how CF's work with some of the most severely disabled clients, in particular those with learning difficulties or suffering from dementia, is positively affecting their quality of life.

Extension of Agreement

- 9.12 The funding agreement with CF has re-modelled the council's financial relationship with CF in line with the Third Sector Commissioning Framework, which seeks to harness third sector capacity and strengths in support of corporate priorities; maximise value from funding arrangements with the sector; and bring consistency across the council in how it engages with voluntary and community organisations.
- 9.13 The agreement has brought about greater clarity of what the council's funding achieves, focusing, as it does, on older and disabled people with the greatest needs. It has resulted in diversification and expansion of the service across the borough through development of an outreach programme, which has enabled CF to engage with a larger number of clients with significant disabilities who are unable to access the in-house courses.
- 9.14 It is recommended that the agreement be rolled forward for a further twelve months beyond 31 March 2014 to the end of 2014/15, subject to imposition of a further grant reduction of £8,000 and to adequate provision being made in the council's budget next year. The committee's consent is also sought to delegating authority to the Deputy Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships to finalise the terms and conditions of the grant.
- 9.15 The extension will facilitate a further review of CF's work in the context of future procurement options for supporting and maintaining the independence of older and disabled people, to be carried out in 2014.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Funding agreement with Community Focus, 2011/14.
- 10.2 Analysis of data collected on a termly basis over the period.
- 10.3 Anyone wishing to inspect the background papers should telephone 020 8359 2020.

Cleared by Finance (Officer's initials)	KP
Cleared by Legal (Officer's initials)	RP

G:\Grants Unit\Reports 2013-14\CRC 4.11.2013 - Community Focus - Extension of Funding, 2013/14.doc