

Commissioning Specification

LAA 55-08 Operation of a Community Grants Scheme 2009-10

Expressions of Interest are invited from potential Delivery Agents for:

LAA 55-08 Operation of a Community Grants Scheme 2009-10

1. Introduction

The Strong Communities Strategy Group, (SCSG), was established by The Oldham Partnership, under the auspices of the Local Area Agreement's Safer and Stronger Communities Block, to take responsibility for the approval and implementation of cohesion, engagement and cultural activity work commissioned under Oldham's Local Area Agreement, (LAA).

In recent years, there have been opportunities for Oldham's voluntary, community and faith groups to apply for grants from a variety of sources. However, many such groups have no formal constitution or bank account or may only have been in existence for a short time, which can be a barrier in terms of accessing such funds.

Therefore, in order to address this situation, Oldham Council's Communities Unit proposed the commissioning of an independent Delivery Agent to operate a Community Grants Scheme, aimed specifically at benefiting such groups. Originally, it was hoped to commission this work during 2008-09 but, due to a combination of circumstances, this did not prove possible during the year in question.

However, following a further submission by the Communities Unit to the Public Service Board in January 2009, approval has now been secured for the commissioning of a Community Grants Scheme to be operated during 2009-10.

The underlying aim of the Community Grants Scheme is to assist eligible groups to contribute to these Local Area Agreement National Indicators:

- **NI 6** Participation in regular volunteering
- **NI 7** Environment for a thriving Third Sector
- **NI 8** Adult participation in sport and active recreation
- **NI 11** Engagement in the arts

Therefore, in terms of the National Indicators detailed above, the Community Grants Scheme will enable eligible groups to do the following:

- Provide opportunities for local people to participate in activities
- Continue the provision of existing activities for local people
- Expand existing activities for local people
- Undertake new activities
- Meet the costs involved in setting up a new group
- Purchase equipment for use in community-based activity

The intended beneficiaries will be **small voluntary sector and community-based organisations, which operate within the Borough of Oldham, with total funds of less than £20,000 at their disposal during this financial year.**

The Community Grants Scheme will focus in particular on targeting new and embryonic groups, although grant awards will not be confined exclusively to groups of this nature. New groups will be defined as those which have come into being in the twelve months immediately preceding the commencement of the Community Grants Scheme.

Groups, at the time when they apply for grants, will therefore not need to have a formal constitution or bank account, although any award of a grant will obviously necessitate the setting up of a bank account. **The maximum grant available will be £5,000. No group will be eligible for more than one grant.**

N.B.

Should there prove to be an insufficient number of grant applications during the year from groups, which satisfy the eligibility criteria detailed above, Oldham Council's Communities Unit will reserve the right to determine broader eligibility criteria in collaboration with the chosen Delivery Agent.

It is expected that the Community Grants Scheme will deliver the following Outputs:

Output Description	Annual Total – (BME figures in brackets)
Number of grants awarded	14 (minimum)
Number of groups benefiting from grant assistance	14 (minimum)
Number of individuals taking part in regular, (at least once per month), volunteering activity as a result of grant assistance	100 (28)
Number of adults participating in sports as a result of grant assistance	250 (30)
Number of adults participating in arts activities as a result of grant assistance	150 (35)
Community Grants Scheme evaluation/final report produced	1

Expressions of Interest are therefore invited from potential Delivery Agents for:

LAA 55-08 Operation of a Community Grants Scheme 2009-10

- **£80,000** has been allocated to this Commissioned Activity

N.B.

A maximum of £10,000 only can be deployed to cover the operational costs of delivering the Community Grants Scheme. All remaining funds, **(at least £70,000)** will be available to be allocated as grants for eligible groups.

- The Commissioned Activity must be completed **by March 31st 2010 (i.e. all grants issued and deployed and their impact monitored and evaluated)**
- The intellectual property rights of material, associated information and all reports specifically produced for, and resulting from, this Commissioned Activity will belong to the Oldham Partnership.

Role of the Delivery Agent

The successful Delivery Agent will be responsible for the following:

- Managing the Community Grants Scheme in its entirety
- Producing publicity material and undertaking effective promotional activity to raise awareness and ensure widespread take-up of the Community Grants Scheme
- Formulating, publicising and applying clear criteria to determine the eligibility of:
 1. the groups seeking grant aid
 2. the activities/grant usage proposed by the groups
- Designing, producing and distributing appropriate documentation for all aspects of the operation of the Community Grants Scheme, (guidance notes, grant application forms, asset register forms for purchases of £500 or more etc)
- Providing a point of contact for grant applicants
- Setting up, organising, servicing and documenting Community Grants Panels, (comprised of impartial members with relevant expertise).
- Communicating Community Grants Panel decisions to successful and unsuccessful applicants
- Dealing with all queries, enquiries and correspondence relating to the Community Grants Scheme
- Maintaining adequate records for each grant awarded in terms of its deployment, impact, beneficiaries and outcomes
- Collating relevant information and submitting Quarterly Monitoring Returns to the LAA Commissioning Unit
- Completing an end of scheme evaluation for the commissioning body

2. Programme Specification

Elements of the Activity to be Commissioned	LAA 55-08 OPERATION OF A COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME 2009-10
<p>ESTABLISHING, PUBLICISING, IMPLEMENTING, OPERATING, MANAGING, MONITORING, AND EVALUATING A COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME UNTIL 31 MARCH 2010</p>	<p><i>The Strong Communities Strategy Group has no wish to be prescriptive about the approach to delivering this activity and its content and scope. However, it is envisaged that potential Delivery Agents will address the following issues as a matter of course in formulating their Expressions of Interest:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach to be adopted in publicising the Community Grants Scheme to potential beneficiaries – channels of communication, type of promotional material to be used, methods to be employed, coverage to be achieved in order to stimulate applications from small voluntary sector organisations and community groups which operate within the Borough of Oldham with total funds of less than £20,000 at their disposal during this financial year. Eligible groups will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embryonic groups New groups, (in existence for less than 2 years) Groups with or without constitutions and/or bank accounts • The way in which a point of contact will be provided for grant applicants throughout the operation of the Community Grants Scheme • The criteria that will be applied to determine the eligibility of applicant groups and the eligibility of their proposed use of grant aid, (maximum £5,000 per group) • Details of the documentation to be used in relation to the grants application process – guidance notes, application forms, eligibility criteria, application forms, appeals etc • The proposed membership and composition of Community Grants Panels – timetable for Panel meetings, procedures for assessing grant applications and informing applicants of results, records to be kept • The processes for dealing with enquiries, correspondence etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The records that will be kept in relation to grant applications received, Community Grants Panel meetings/ proceedings, grants awarded, appeals etc • The information that will be kept regarding each Community Grant awarded – details of successful applicants, usage of grant, asset register forms, activities undertaken, beneficiaries involved, outputs achieved etc. • The type of information that will be collated for inclusion in the Quarterly Monitoring Returns to be submitted to the LAA Commissioning Unit • The nature, scope, timing and content of the evaluation that will be undertaken at the termination of the Community Grants Scheme
Partnership Working	The successful Delivery Agent will be expected to cooperate and collaborate, where appropriate, with other Delivery Agents undertaking activity commissioned on behalf of the Oldham Partnership
Duration of programme	The Commissioned Activity must be completed by 31st March 2010 - (i.e. All grants issued and deployed and their impact monitored and evaluated).
Deadline for receipt of Expressions of Interest	Potential Delivery Agents are invited to submit Expressions of Interest for undertaking the Commissioned Activity by 1.00 pm Thursday 14th May 2009.
Area Based Grant Funds available	£80,000 of Area Based Grant has been allocated to this Commissioned Activity. N.B. A maximum of £10,000 only can be deployed to cover the operational costs of delivering the Community Grants Scheme. All remaining funds, (at least £70,000) , will be available to be allocated as grants.
Intellectual Property Rights	The intellectual property rights of material, associated information and all reports <u>specifically produced for, and resulting from,</u> this Commissioned Activity will belong to the Oldham Partnership.

3. Further Information

Potential Delivery Agents should bear in mind that the Strong Communities Assessment Panel, which will consider their submissions, will expect to see the following detail:

- Measurable, quantifiable Outputs, which demonstrate the effectiveness, scope and scale of the work undertaken
- A fully costed Expenditure Profile, which demonstrates value for money and effective use of financial resources. **The profile must clearly identify the expenditure categories relating to the management / operating costs of the Community Grants Scheme.**
- A work schedule, which shows clearly how the Commissioned Activity will be completed within the designated time scale
- Contingency plans / risk assessments to cover eventualities such as the departure or sickness of key staff during delivery of the Commissioned Activity
- Evidence that equality and diversity issues have been taken into account in planning the delivery of the Commissioned Activity

4. Deadline for Submission of Expressions of Interest

Electronic versions of the Expressions of Interest should be submitted on the template provided and e-mailed to:

shirley.allen@oldham.gov.uk

In addition, a **hand-signed, hard copy** of the Expression of Interest, (on the template provided), must be sent to the address listed below.

All Expressions of Interest, (electronic and hard copy version) **must be received by 1.00 pm Thursday 14th May 2009**. Submissions received after the stated deadline will not be considered.

It is the responsibility of the potential Delivery Agent to ensure that a signed, hard copy of their Expression of Interest has been received at the following address within the stated deadline.

**Private and Confidential
LAA 55/08ComGrantsScheme
Shirley Allen
LAA Commissioning Unit
Level 2
Oldham Business Centre
Cromwell Street
Oldham
OL1 1BB**

All Expressions of Interest received from potential Delivery Agents within the stated deadline will be considered by an Assessment Panel, which will meet during the week commencing **May 18th 2009**.

Applicants will be informed of the Assessment Panel's decisions within 21 days of the Assessment Panel meeting.