Committee(s)		Dated
Resource Allocation Sub Committee	For decision	28 May
Policy and Resources	For decision	28 May
Open Spaces	For decision	8 June
Finance	For decision	9 June
Establishment	For decision	11 June
Epping Forest and Commons	**For decision**	6 July
General Purposes Committee of Aldermen	For information	8 July
City Bridge Trust	For information	9 July
Community and Children's Services	For decision	10 July
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For decision	13 July
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park	For decision	20 July
Education Board	For information	23 July
West Ham Park	For decision	27 July
(*Policy & Resources – if necessary)*	*(For decision)*	*(24 September)*
(Court of Common Council – if necessary)	*(For decision)*	*(15 October)*
Subject **GRANT GIVING:** **Report of cross-cutting Service Based Review**		**Public**
Report of: Deputy Town Clerk (on behalf of Chief Officers Group)		**For Decision**

Summary

A cross-cutting review of the grant giving activities of the City Corporation was commissioned as part of the Service Based Review programme. The objectives of the review were to identify the grants programmes which are offered by the City Corporation, to suggest how to improve value for money and drive up impact.

The review was undertaken from November 2014-January 2015, with a final report cleared by Chief Officers Group in April 2015. Summaries of the review report and its recommendations are attached at Appendices 1 and 2.

The review identified approximately £13.2m awarded in 2013/14 by the City Corporation across 15 different grants programmes, although by far the largest programme was the City Bridge Trust (these are listed in Appendix 3). The review concluded that there is no consistent approach across the City Corporation to governing or managing disbursements. This potentially exposes the City Corporation to financial, organisational and reputational risks.

Accordingly, a set of core principles have been identified to drive a more consistent, coherent and co-ordinated approach to grant giving across the City Corporation and several high level changes of direction are proposed:

1. **Strategic allocation of resources**

   - Resource Allocation Sub Committee to set the annual quantum for City's Cash and City Fund grants programmes prior to the start of each financial year according to their relative priority, taking advice from the relevant grant-giving committees and Finance Grants Sub Committee.

2. **Streamlined governance**

   - Finance Grants Sub Committee to adopt the more strategic role of performance managing and benchmarking all City Corporation grants programmes, rather than directly allocating a sub-set of programmes.
   - The City Corporation's grants programmes to be consolidated under a smaller number of distinct themes which reflect the City Corporation's priorities (for example: Education; Social Inclusion; Employment Support; Open Spaces and Culture/Arts).
   - Smaller charities (controlled by the City Corporation) sharing similar purposes to be merged (e.g. the five separate funds aimed at poverty relief, numbered 9 to 13 in Appendix 3).
   - Where a grants programme relates specifically to the remit of a particular committee, that committee to have responsibility for the policy and operation of the programme in order to ensure alignment between policy and investment. Committees to avoid allocating funds to initiatives which cut across the remit of other committees.
   - A more structured approach to be taken to the ad hoc (City's Cash funded) grants awarded by the various Open Spaces Committees – a formalised grants programme to be jointly governed by all Open Spaces committees and managed / publicised as one of the City Corporation's suite of grants programmes.

3. **Consistent and proportionate customer experience**

   - All City Corporation grants programmes to be managed in a consistent way in relation to their spending, outcomes and risks.
   - Monitoring and evaluation of individual grants to be consistently proportionate to the scale of individual awards.
   - The spirit of the Government's Transparency Code and the Charity Commission's best practice guidelines to be followed in relation to public information, even where there is no legal requirement to do so for City's Cash grants: stakeholder expectations will be set by practice elsewhere.

4. **Efficient and effective management**

   - Administrative and professional expertise on grants to be consolidated within the organisation to improve consistency of approach, drive economies of scale and promote best practice.
   - Staff and other costs (e.g. legal, finance and audit) to be recharged to individual grant programmes to avoid unintended subsidy.

The benefits from adopting a more consistent, coherent and co-ordinated approach to grant giving across the City Corporation will include:

- Improved corporate grasp and transparency of the City Corporation's range of grant giving activities;
- Grants from City's Cash and City Fund better strategically aligned with the City Corporation's corporate objectives and policy priorities;
- Best practice identified and spread in terms of the prioritisation, assessment and governance of grants;
- Consolidation of expertise within the City Corporation to administer and manage grants, especially where these involve handling charitable grants;
- Reduction in operating costs resulting from the rationalisation of administrative services managing grants.

Recommendations

Resource Allocation Sub Committee

Members are asked to

- Consider the proposed change of approach to grant giving as outlined above and as set out in detail at Appendix 2.
- Make appropriate recommendations to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Policy and Resources Committee

Members are asked to

- Agree the proposed change of approach to grant giving as outlined above and as set out in detail at Appendix 2, subject to the comments of the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.
- Agree that Resource Allocation Sub Committee sets the annual quantum for each City's Cash and City Fund grants programme (including for City's Cash funded open spaces grants).
- Agree that Resource Allocation Sub Committee considers annual performance reports for all grants programmes from the Finance Grants Sub Committee.

Finance Committee

Members are asked to

- Agree that Finance Grants Sub Committee adopt a strategic oversight / performance management role in respect of all City Corporation grants programmes and relinquish its direct grant giving role.

Establishment Committee

Members are asked to

- Agree to take over responsibility from the Finance Grants Sub Committee for prioritising the (City's Cash) funds to support welfare initiatives (e.g. staff annual lunch and Guildhall Sports Club).

Community and Children's Services Committee

Members are asked to

- Agree to take on governance of the Combined Relief of Poverty charity (from Finance Grants Sub Committee) and of the various 'poverty relief' charities proposed for merger.
- Agree to review with the Education Board the most appropriate governance arrangements for the Combined Education Charity and City Educational Trust Fund (proposed for transfer from Finance Grants Sub Committee) in relation to the role of both Committees.

Education Board

Members are asked to

- Review with the Community and Children's Services Committee the most appropriate governance arrangements for the Combined Education Charity and City Educational Trust Fund (proposed for transfer from Finance Grants Sub Committee) in relation to the role of both Committees.

Open Spaces Committee
Epping Forest and Commons Committee
Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee
West Ham Park Committee

Members are asked to

- Agree to adopt a more structured approach to grant giving which is jointly governed by all Open Spaces committees and which is publicised and managed as part of the City Corporation's suite of grants programmes.

Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee

Members are asked to

- Agree to take on governance of a formal grants programme encompassing the current range of cultural / arts awards currently made by other committees (such as Finance Grants Sub Committee) provided the proposed overall change in direction is agreed by Policy and Resources, Resource Allocation Sub and Finance Committees.

City Bridge Trust Committee

Members are asked to

- Note that administrative management of the City Corporation's various programmes be consolidated under the Chief Grants Officer to improve consistency of approach, drive economies of scale and promote best practice.

Main Report

Background and Scope of Review

1. As part of the Service Based Review exercise it was identified that there was potential to improve the many different grant-giving functions across the City Corporation to achieve better transparency and accountability, improved value for money, greater traction and administrative efficiencies. In September 2014, the Policy and Resources Committee approved a proposal for a cross-cutting review of grant giving.

2. The review covered grants programmes funded from City's Cash, City Fund and the charitable grant-giving trusts which are either wholly or majority-controlled by the City Corporation. This excluded charitable grant-giving trusts with which the City Corporation is involved (e.g. via nomination rights to the governing board of trustees) but which the City Corporation does not control via majority control of the board – except for cases in which the City Corporation finances the activities of the trust from City's Cash.

3. The definition of a 'grant' for the purposes of the review was "*an award to an external organisation or individual to undertake an activity or produce an outcome which the City Corporation is not required to do under statutory obligation – or which furthers the charitable objects of the charity from which the payment is made - and which has been (or should be) awarded as a result of an openly publicised and transparent process of prioritisation against clearly pre-defined objectives*." This definition excludes internal transfers between different parts of the City Corporation, commissioned services, discretionary donations, subscriptions, sponsorship, ongoing legal commitments and unallocated Community Infrastructure Levy.

Current Position

4. Applying the definition in paragraph 3 above to expenditure in 2013/14, the City Corporation awarded approximately £13.23m from 15 different grants programmes, under nearly 20 different themes. These are listed in Appendix 3. Around 90% of that figure was given out through City Bridge Trust (the grant giving arm of the Bridge House Estates charity). Also shown in Appendix 3 is the distribution of grants by theme from the City Bridge Trust and the other grant programmes for 2013/14. (Figures for 2013/14 for City Bridge Trust grants were untypically low.)

5. A further £7.8m was paid to external organisations as discretionary donations and strategic initiatives (including strategic initiatives funded by City Bridge Trust and the Policy Initiatives Fund). In addition, more than £0.5m was paid out as regular, ongoing payments (but not from grants programmes or via contracts or procurements) although the figure could be considerably higher. These payments are excluded from this review.

Key Findings – The Case for Change

6. A high level summary of the review report: *A More Strategic Approach to Grant Giving*, is attached as Appendix 1.

7. The review noted that the bulk of the City Corporation's grants are disbursed through the City Bridge Trust which has sound systems and processes in place for managing disbursements. However, there is no consistent approach to governing or directing the *totality* of the City Corporation's grants programmes in relation to each other. This gives rise to a number of challenges, which are discussed in section 3 of Appendix 1.

8. The review also identified financial, organisational and reputational risks and opportunities in not taking this opportunity to reform the City Corporation's grant giving activities. The financial risks centre on the unnecessary costs arising from a failure to achieve value for money, economies of scale, and drive appropriate due diligence. The organisational risks centre on the missed opportunities to set common purpose, achieve greater corporate coherence, and drive professional best practice.

9. The reputational opportunities arise from the potential for the City Corporation to:
    - Offer a strong and complementary suite of grants programmes which reflect its priorities;
    - Communicate clearly what grants can be applied for, how to apply and manage City Corporation grants;
    - Manage the grant applications and monitoring process in a consistent way;
    - Conform consistently to expectations of transparency and best practice (e.g. as set by the Charity Commission);
    - Publish a strong story about the difference made by City of London grants, and
    - Make a strategic impact on London.

10. The review concluded that in an environment in which public sector grants are coming under tighter pressure and closer scrutiny, the City Corporation has an opportunity to set a benchmark of good practice by channelling and directing its substantial grants offer in a more focussed way.

Core Principles – Seven Steps to Success

11. The review identified seven core principles, detailed in section 6 of Appendix 1, which would form the basis for a more consistent, coherent and co-ordinated approach to grant giving across the City Corporation. These were to:

12.
    1) Set out a clear, corporate offer
    2) Allocate resources strategically
    3) Streamline governance
    4) Establish a common identity and branding for City Corporation grants
    5) Provide a consistent 'City of London' customer experience

6) Review all City Corporation grants programmes in a consistent and proportionate way
7) Manage City Corporation grants more efficiently and more effectively

13. These core principles were supported by a set of more detailed systemic and procedural changes and recommendations, which are summarised in Appendix 2. These were approved by the Chief Officers Group following a presentation on the review at their meeting in April 2015. The majority of these are operational changes, which will be implemented as part of the revised overall approach to grant giving, for which the approval of the Policy and Resources Committee is being sought.

14. However, there are a number of recommendations which require Member approval as they have an impact on the roles and remits of certain Committees. These are as follows:

- Resource Allocation Sub to gain setting of the annual quantum for each City Fund and City's Cash funded grants programme.
- Finance Grants Sub to gain strategic oversight / performance management of all City Corporation grants programmes but relinquish direct grant awarding functions.
- Community and Children's Services to gain Combined Relief of Poverty charity (from Finance Grants Sub) and the 'poverty relief' charities proposed for merger. To retain Combined Education charity and gain City Educational Trust Fund (from Finance Grants Sub Committee) but to explore the potential to transfer these to the Education Board.
- Education Board to explore with Community and Children's Services the potential to take on Combined Education charity and City Educational Trust Fund.
- Open Spaces committees to establish a formal grants programme which is jointly governed and accessible to all (based on levels of current payments made to external organisations).
- Culture, Heritage & Libraries *potentially to* establish a formal grants programme encompassing the current range of cultural / arts awards made by other committees (incl. Finance Grants Sub and the Policy Initiatives Fund).
- Establishment to take control over funds from Finance Grants Sub Grants Programme for payments made to staff (and former staff) to support welfare initiatives (e.g. staff annual lunch and Guildhall Sports Club).

Implementation

15. Assuming implementation starts once all relevant Committees have agreed the recommended changes (i.e. summer 2015), it should be possible for the new arrangements to commence from **1 April 2016**. (Merging the smaller charities will take 6-9 months.) A full implementation plan will be developed with appropriate resourcing to meet this this start date.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. The review was commissioned as part of the cross-cutting Service Based Review exercise, with the primary aim of improving service delivery. Proposals to streamline the City Corporation's grants offer in line with the stated priorities of the organisation are consistent with the Corporate Plan.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: SBR Grants 2015: Summary of Final Report
- Appendix 2: SBR Grants 2015: Summary of Recommendations
- Appendix 3: Pie charts of grants expenditure 2013/14 and list of grants programmes

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