Review of Community & Voluntary Sector Grants

Report by a Working Group of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel

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Summary:

This working group was set up by the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel to investigate the processes and mechanisms used across Bracknell Forest Borough Council for the application, award and monitoring arrangements for discretionary grants to the community and voluntary sectors. In so doing, the working group sought to:

- Develop greater understanding and awareness of the Council’s systems for voluntary and community grants;
- Examine the range and scale of the Council’s grant aid and ensure that the application process is suited to achieving the purposes for which grants are provided and supports the voluntary sector, and;
- Make recommendations to the Executive/Council relating to improving outcomes for residents in matters relating to voluntary sector grant aid.

This report summarises the working group’s findings and conclusions. The recommendations of the working group are set out at Section 8.

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1 Throughout this report Bracknell Forest Borough Council has been abbreviated to BFBC or referred to as “the Council”
1. Introduction

At a meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel on 25 November 2003 a Member’s working group was established to investigate the processes and mechanisms used across BFBC for the application, award and monitoring arrangements for discretionary grants to the community and voluntary sectors.

The working group’s aim was to:

- Develop greater understanding and awareness of the Council’s systems for voluntary and community grants;
- Examine the range and scale of the Council’s grant aid and ensure that the application process is suited to achieving the purposes for which grants are provided and supports the voluntary sector, and;
- Make recommendations to the Executive/Council relating to improving outcomes for residents in matters relating to voluntary sector grant aid.

In taking this forward the working group sought to:

- Clarify the overall level of grant payments made by Departments and the Council as a whole;
- Examine the application, assessment and monitoring processes to ensure that they are transparent, fair, accessible and consistent and recommend amendments;
- To ensure that the most effective use of our resources to the Voluntary Sector is enabling them to deliver a high quality, best value service to the community. This is in the spirit of the Bracknell Forest Voluntary Sector Compact;
- Make best use of finances.

The working group agreed that the scope of the review would not cover occasional emergency support to voluntary organisations. Neither would it consider which organisations received funding from the Council or the amount of any awards.

The intention of the review was to look objectively at the Council’s current procedures and practices, using the skills and experience of the panel to draw on a wide range of witnesses involved with these processes, whether in their administration or as grant applicants. The review aims both to acknowledge good practice and provide suggestions or recommendations for further improvement.

2. History

Grant Aid has been offered by the Borough in a number of forms and guises since 1997. Before this there was no set pattern. To obtain funding for your local charity, a very nice letter to the Borough Treasurer was usually successful. Whilst there was Joint Finance and Joint Funding, this was administered by the then Berkshire County Council.
In October 1998 the Strategy and Policy Committee agreed to a corporate process for the allocation of grants to the Voluntary sector. The decision prescribed:

- A corporate process, the administration, management and development of which should be seated centrally within the Policy Development Unit within the Chief Executive’s Department;
- The evaluation, monitoring and management of individual grants should be the responsibility of service departments under appropriate Grant Officers;
- A common application form;
- A set of general criteria applicable to all grants supported by public documentation to explain the grants and processes;
- Monitoring of awards by way of a Letter of Memorandum, Service Level Agreement or Contract;
- An annual scheme for awarding grants;
- Withdrawal or amendment of grants and changes to the scheme to be decided by Strategy and Policy Committee.

By and large, this is the policy and administrative framework that exists today.

The Local Government Act 2000 part 1, section 2 enabled the Council to make grants to certain bodies. This can be seen as a very broad and flexible power which suits most circumstances. Known as the “well being” powers, they enable the Council to do anything which the Council considers is likely to achieve the:

- promotion or improvement of the economic well being of its area;
- improvement of the social well being of its area;
- promotion of the environmental well being of its area.

Today the Council offers a number of grants through Grant Aid. In accordance with the emphasis of the “well-being powers”, these funding streams exist as vehicles to support the particular objectives of our Service Departments in their work towards the Council’s medium-term objectives and responsibilities to the Borough-wide Community Plan.

3. Current Procedures

Community Grant Aid is the term used to describe the funding for community and voluntary sector groups through discretionary grants made under the well-being powers in section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as mentioned above)

By definition, there is no statutory obligation on the Council to provide funding through discretionary grants. However BFBC makes a range of grants available to fund services and activities delivered by voluntary and community groups which are of particular value to the Borough, for example in improving the quality of life of local people.

Individual service departments are responsible for determining the criteria for assessing these grants (by agreement between senior officers and the relevant Executive Member). Funding is made available via a range of grants, which include:
a) Revenue Funding by way of grant (Corporate Services)
b) Capital Funding by way of grant (Any department as necessary)
c) One-off Grants (Leisure Services)
d) Environmental Improvement Schemes - including Small Awards (Environment)
e) Education Grants (Education)
f) Social Well-being Grants (Social Services and Housing)
g) Community Travel Grants (Environment)

Figure 1: Schematic diagram of grant funding sources

In addition to these discretionary grants, some Council Departments also fund community groups or voluntary organisations from their core budgets. This is usually for larger grants to organisations that are providing specific services in line with Departmental objectives. These are often services that the Council is required to provide or would consider providing itself if a community or voluntary sector group were not able to do so. Furthermore the Council also administers some grant funding to these groups on behalf of central Government (most frequently as “ring-fenced grants” for the provision of certain social services). Neither of these sources of funding is covered in the terms of this review. Figure 1 (above) indicates the various sources of grant funding provided by BFBC.

In providing support via Community Grant Aid, the Council seeks to:

   a) Ensure a consistent approach is taken to provision of grants (in line with corporate and departmental objectives and priorities);
   b) Manage and monitor grant distribution as effectively as possible;
   c) Ensure that the voluntary sector’s role in supporting the Council’s objectives is clear to the voluntary sector, Council officers and Members;
d) Maximise the benefits the Council derives from its relationship with the voluntary sector.

An illustration of the grant application, award and allocation process is summarised in figure 2 below. This example is based on the approach taken in the Corporate Services Department.
Evaluation and Decision Making Process 2004-2005
Corporate Revenue Grants
4. Other Council’s Policies and Procedures

As part of our research we met an officer from Reading Borough Council to discuss their arrangements for dealing with grants to the community and voluntary sector. The following are extracts from their annual report 2002-2003.

The Reading Voluntary Sector Support Unit (VSSU) was formed in 1986 under the name of Community Development. It was set up to formalise the support that Reading Borough Council gave to voluntary organisations working within the Reading community. Following local government re-organisation in 1998 the unit was named the Voluntary Sector Support Unit to give a much clearer idea of what it did.

The staff structure of the unit is:-

- Voluntary Sector Support Manager
- Voluntary Sector Support Officer
- Voluntary Sector Support Administrator
- Pakistan Community Centre Administrator

The VSSU is placed within the Performance and Policy Section, in the Chief Executives’ Section of Reading Borough Council. Its strategic aims are:

- That Reading’s communities and individuals develop and realise their full potential;
- That members of the community are encouraged to participate fully in decisions that affect their lives and their futures. The grants service promotes social inclusion, equality and a safe and healthy environment for all;
- To promote partnership working with the voluntary and community sector;
- To help secure the most effective use of the unit’s resources in the delivery of a high quality, best value public service.

The VSSU achieved these aims principally through the provision of £2.4 million in grant aid to the voluntary and community sector in 2002-2003.

Community grants

One of the ways in which Reading BC gives money and help to the voluntary sector is through Community Grants. They aim to give financial assistance to voluntary and community groups to help them to run projects and services for the benefit of Reading residents.

Reading’s Community Grants are one-off grants available during the year to assist voluntary groups in the early stages of development and for specific project costs.

Community Grants have helped local groups in Reading with a variety of projects and support groups, ranging from environmental projects, disabled access, toys and equipment to set up new play groups, events to raise awareness and many more. Figure 3 below gives an indication of the target groups for Community Grant in 2002/03.
In 2002/03, like many local authorities throughout the county, Reading BC helped local communities celebrate the Queen’s Golden Jubilee by supporting the infrastructure costs of street parties.

Figure 3. Reading Borough Council’s Community Grant Target Groups 2002/03

Core Funding Grants

The Core Funding service is the other main way in which Reading BC makes grants available to the voluntary sector. The Council seeks to give financial assistance to voluntary and community groups in order to help them run projects for the benefit of Reading residents.

Core funding grants are awarded on an ongoing basis to voluntary—run organisations as a contribution towards general running costs. This enables the groups to provide a valuable service for Reading BC to Reading’s residents. Grants are awarded as a priority to groups that meet the Council’s strategic aims. An indication of the range of activities funded by Reading is given in figure 4 below. Most organisations have a Service Agreement in place that outlines the work that is supported by the grant.

Figure 4 Activities Receiving Core Funding from Reading BC in 2002/03

Discretionary Rate Relief may be available to voluntary organisations that occupy rateable premises and are liable to pay non-domestic rates and if the rate charge is
not included in the rental costs. Core funding grants criteria and priorities apply and awards are made through the same process.

When providing core funding grants Reading BC reserves the right to change the nature of the relationship with a voluntary organisation from a grant to a contract basis, or even consider in-house provision. For example, in 2003/03 Reading BC’s grant to Age Concern in Berkshire was put out to tender and part of the grant to Pre-School Learning Alliance was taken back to fund in-house provision.

The VSSU produces an annual report covering its activities and listing all the organisations and projects that it has provided funding for over the year. Alongside this they also list Help In Kind provided either directly via the VSSU or from other parts of the council. This includes support with or provision of:

- Meeting space
- Office Space
- Payroll Services
- Access to training
- Staffing
- Office administration.

It was apparent when interviewing the officer from Reading that their policies were similar to ours but that their procedures differed greatly. All contact with the voluntary sector it seems is made through the VSSU. This unit also handles all voluntary and community sector grants, with grant funding being transferred by the awarding department to a budget heading administered by the unit itself. This enables the VSSU to track all grant payments to the community and voluntary sectors quickly and easily.

5. Investigation and Information Gathering (Questions to Officers)

The working group gathered information through a series of interviews and discussions with officers from all Council Departments and representatives of community and voluntary sector organisations receiving grants from the Council.

The questions we posed to officers and an outline of their responses are summarised below. The responses have not been edited and in several cases differing or contradictory views are offered. This illustrates to some extent the complexity of the issues and diversity of systems or approaches taken across the Council. Text in square brackets [ ] is included to clarify the context of certain responses.

a. Are the council’s aims in making grants to voluntary organisations understood by the voluntary sector partners?

- The council makes much information (e.g. forms & guidance) available through a variety of sources and publications.
- Groups do not recognise the reasons for funding.
- There is potential for smaller applicants to be scared off by the perceived size
or complexity of the process.
  o The sector is very diverse, with differences in scale and size of organisation or group, the amount of funding sought and also whether or not they have previously applied for funding or are known to the Council etc.
  o Grant giving should be a partnership between the Council and the group.

b. How are grants advertised or published?
  o An officer [from the Department concerned] gives talks to groups.
  o Previous grant receivers are mailed.
  o Advertise in local paper and council publications.

c. How are the overall funding levels for community and voluntary sector grants determined?
  o This is part of a complex process. The overall funding level is determined annually as part of the Council’s budget setting process. Like all elements of the Council’s budget, this is dependent on the Government’s finance settlement for local government. This in turn can have a knock on affect to the funding available for the sector (particularly for organisations receiving revenue or core funding).
  o In compiling their budget bids, individual Departments take account of historic levels of grant funding as well as current priority areas.
  o Funding criteria for individual grants are set out in guidance.
  o Decisions [on overall funding levels] are taken on a corporate basis.
  o There is an informal framework for dealing with [small] grants.
  o Greater emphasis [is needed] on the distinction between discretionary/non-discretionary funding.

d. What are current (and recent past years) funding levels?

This issue demonstrates the diverse range of discretionary funding provided by the Council with the amount available and size of individual grants differing between Departments. Examples included:

  o [Amount available from this Department is] £50,000 for 2002/03, £40,000 for 2003/04 and £46,000 for 2004/05
  o [Grants offered as] two streams: grants up to £5,000 [made available on an annual basis for a] maximum of 2 years; grants over £5,000 [are available] for 3 year term with a Service Level Agreement (SLA)
  o 2004/05 budget for grants is £287,000 [for another Department]
  o Only £15,000 for 2004/05 [for this particular grant]

e. How does the application process work, for all grants and across all departments?

  o [Department undertakes a] mailshot to previous grant receivers.
  o Officer gives talks to groups, which helps to advertise availability.
  o A common form is used for all applications. On receipt applications are logged on a database according to size of grant applied for
  o A ranking process is used for the initial stage of the application process
Once application is sent to funding Department a tailored approach is taken.

Applications are assessed on criteria that match individual Departmental objectives.

Whilst the Chief Executive's Department is the central core to the Voluntary Grant Scheme and is answerable as such, that fact is not always recognised by other departments.

f. How are applications assessed and on the basis of what information and using what criteria?

On receipt, all applications are assessed to check that they fulfil the Council’s general criteria for discretionary grants. Following that they are sent to individual Departments for processing. Here a range of approaches are taken, including:

- [Use of] departmental criteria [to assess applications].
- Uses ranking process [for assessment of applications].
- Decision [on level of award] is made by the Director and Portfolio holder.
- Grant applications for £500 or less are decided by Chairman of Panel and Director; applications for over £500 are a Panel decision (with officer advice).
- [In this Department grants of] up to £5000 are [made on the basis of an] officer recommendation to Director and Panel.
- SLA for grants of over £5000 but not signed until after 30th April
- All forthcoming decisions by Executive Members appear on the Executive Work Programme and are available for consultation [this includes decisions by Executive Members on discretionary grant awards].

g. Is the application and assessment process fair, transparent, accessible and equitable

- [Yes] this is a requirement for audit purposes.
- Councillors should not be personally involved with applicants.
- The Member/officer protocol might be updated to address potentially embarrassing situations, e.g. where a ward councillor is approached by a member of the public about a grant and inadvertently gives the impression that one may be made, although in due course it transpires that funding is either not available or a subsequent application is not accepted.

h. What is the voluntary sector applicants’ view of these processes?

- The application form is very long, which is too involved for small groups.
- Small groups may not have year end [accounts] or be charity registered [making it difficult to respond to some of the more specific financial questions].
- They do not understand that different Departments deal with different applications.

i. Are there any gaps in your service due to financial constraint or lack of manpower and how can these be addressed?

- We stopped paying out for rents.
- Funding now goes on mainstream activities only.
We could broaden the funding criteria.

6. Investigation and Information Gathering (Questions to Voluntary Sector Representatives)

In addition to interviews and discussions with officers, the working group met a number of representatives of community and voluntary sector organisations receiving grants from the Council. They were asked a similar range of questions to which their responses are summarised below:

a. How did you find out about the BFBC Community Grant Aid?
   - Information is available in the press and on the web.
   - Form was sent to us – indeed it was received by four people within one particular organisation.
   - Phoned and requested an application pack which was sent promptly.

b. Did you find it easy to obtain an application form?
   - Yes, but lack of clarity whether a form would be sent to us [to an organisation that had received funding the previous year]
   - Yes, obtained it from the Web.
   - Yes, it was sent automatically.

c. Did you find the application form straightforward and easy to fill in? If not why?

This question prompted varied responses, in part reflecting the scale and experience of the group seeking funding and how familiar they were with the processes and terminology. They included:

   - Questions not straightforward.
   - Is it right for the same form to be used for small and large groups?
   - [Irritated that] the same documents are asked for every year [e.g. copies of constitution, accounts etc] even though they have not changed.
   - Corporate Services asked for an extra list [further information] after application form had been sent in.
   - Question(s) on financial matters not clear [to one particular organisation].
   - Application refused twice because form was filled in incorrectly [and directed to wrong Department].
   - It is slanted towards too many organisations.
   - Needs to be simplified.
   - One of the easiest forms to fill in across the County.
   - Filled it in on the Web. Very easy.
   - Confused by the difference between Revenue and Social Well Being Grant.
   - Received e-mail acknowledgment.
d. Did you find the papers on “Community Grant Aid Explained” and “Help to Complete the Application Form” helpful?
   o Questions not clear in spite of the guidance.
   o Yes, very helpful.
   o Could be more information for new applicants on BFBC’s expectations of funding.

e. Did you receive acknowledgement of your application?
   o Yes – promptly [same response from all 4 representatives]
   o Yes - received e-mail acknowledgement.

f. What is your view of the Community Grant Aid Process?
   o Good if it works [i.e. application is successful!]
   o [Concerned that] assessment process involves no dialogue with the applicant.
   o Meeting with a junior officer was a waste of time
   o [Surprised that] decisions taken by only one officer and one Councillor
   o Notification to groups should be well before year end.
   o Too much paper work asked for. e.g. job descriptions
   o Choice of referees is restricted. Not asked for in other Boroughs
   o [The Council] should notify groups when [to expect a] decision will be made.
   o Confusion as to which grant to apply for.
   o Requested a meeting with officer to discuss the application, but this was refused.
   o Bad communication and little feedback.
   o Process is non-existent.

Again these contrasting answers illustrate the diverse range of groups and experience across this sector.

g. Do you enter into an SLA? If so, how do you find the process?
   o Timescale for agreeing an SLA can be a problem, particularly for organisations that have to agree a draft SLA with their Board of Trustees.
   o Surprised that there was no monitoring visit [to follow up on progress against the SLA]
   o Received letter of memorandum, which is acceptable.
   o Lack of clarity about level of input or flexibility in agreeing content of SLA.
   o Concerned that some Departments show a limited understanding of what the organisation or group can offer (and forms do not allow this to be easily demonstrated).

7. Findings & Specific Recommendations

This section outlines the working group’s findings. Specific recommendations arising from them are highlighted in **bold** text.

The aims of Community Grant Aid are well published and documented. These
are explained earlier in this report. However discretionary grants made under the well-being power are only one form of support or assistance provided to the sector from or through the Council. The terminology is often confusing with “grants” encompassing funding from Department’s core budgets as well as discretionary grants.

The promotion of grants has changed over the years and the decision to “direct mail” to known groups rather than to advertise in the media may have cut costs, but could be seen as being too exclusive. We do advertise in Town and Country and on our Web Site and therefore target a wide range of people and businesses throughout the Borough, but we must be equally accessible to all Groups in the sector – new or experienced.

Comments on the application form were diverse, reflecting the size and experience of the group being interviewed and their success.

The panel felt it was confusing for groups, especially first timers, to decide which of the boxes to tick as being the most appropriate for the type of grant being sought. In the past a tick in the wrong box has led to some groups being refused a grant (although this has been a limited occurrence).

The application form and explanatory accompanying papers have undergone extensive review and consultation over the last 2 years. This has made them more user-friendly and has underlined our commitment to the Voluntary Sector Compact. On the whole, our application form was seen as easy and simple to complete. One comment described it as the most simple to fill in throughout Berkshire! However the use of the same form for both large and small grant applications was criticised. The panel felt that to use two separate forms for large and small grants would be even more confusing. The same form could be adapted to suit all groups. For example, groups applying for a grant under £5000 might only fill in first 2 pages and last page.

Groups that apply every year should not be required to re-submit supporting documents, such as Constitutions, unless they have been updated.

The initial processing of the application form is documented efficiently, but the communication system breaks down when forms are sent to departments. Acknowledgements are sent to groups very quickly, but then there is no further feedback. Very often groups have no knowledge of what is happening to their application until the final notification of success or failure is received which may be many months after the application was submitted and acknowledged. It should be the responsibility of the Partnership Officer to ensure that the whole procedure is documented and tracked. This officer’s name should be made known to applicants in the acknowledging letter.

We found that departments deal with applications in different ways and at different times. The general public see our Borough as one big department, not a number of small departments. This can lead to confusion amongst the Voluntary Sector when one Group hears the outcome of their application weeks before another Group. “Voluntary Sector groups do talk to one another and compare notes!” All departments should be singing from the same song sheet! It should be the Partnership Officer’s responsibility to ensure arrangements are made to monitor grant procedures throughout the process.
The panel also found that due to varying times that decisions were made, the process became fragmented with some groups finding the decision affecting them on our web-site before they were officially notified. Also some decisions are being made long after the start of the new financial year. This has implications if a group has paid staff.

Service Level Agreements and Letters of Memorandum are being agreed long after the amount of funding has been decided. This issue has also been picked up by internal audit. SLAs are being presented to organisations or groups after the grant decision has been taken with no opportunity for discussion or negotiation. **SLAs or Letters of Memorandum should be negotiated and drafted alongside the grant decision making process.** This process should be the same throughout the Borough: once a decision has been made and the group notified they should have 10 days in which to appeal (in accordance with the Council’s agreed practice). The Executive’s decision should be final after the 10 days, whether or not an appeal has been made. A Service Level Agreement or Letter of Memorandum should then be sent out and signed before any money is released.

The panel found that once an SLA (or Letter of Memorandum) had been put in place, monitoring had been spasmodic. The monitoring process is made very clear in the draft SLA we were given. This is not always being carried out and we could find no reason why this should be so. **Funding Officers should be responsible for monitoring the delivery of voluntary groups against their SLA or Letter of Memorandum.**

The panel also looked at the formal process for applications of under £5000. We suggested earlier in the report that the application form should be altered to suit both large and small grant applications.

We found the decision making process for small grants confusing and opaque. We found that small grants were being dealt with in different ways by individual Departments. We also could not understand why a very large grant was being decided by one portfolio holder (Executive Member) and a director, when small grants of under £5000 had a panel of 3 portfolio holders and one director to make the decision. **All small grants should be decided by one portfolio holder, an officer and the Voluntary Sector Champion.**

It became apparent that whilst one Department had decided to agree to three year funding for larger groups with an SLA, groups being awarded large grants from other departments were only being offered one year funding. This has caused an element of discord amongst the voluntary sector. **We believe that the Council should adopt a policy for three year funding, monitored and reviewed on an annual basis, for larger grants to groups with an SLA in place.** All Departments should keep to this policy.

8. Recommendations

In our recommendations we have recognised that the Chief Executive’s department must be at the centre of the Voluntary Grant scheme and be in overall control. This should lead to easier monitoring and enable us to know at a glance exactly what the overall level of funding is to the Voluntary Sector.
The working group recommends that:

1. The level of grant awarded be decided by each Department in accordance to its budget;
2. The application form should be adapted to suit both small and large grant applications;
3. Documents such as constitutions need not be required again if it has been submitted with a previous application and not changed;
4. Partnership Officer to take responsibility for checking forms, sending out acknowledgments and deciding which Department is to deal with the application;
5. Partnership Officer to be responsible for monitoring grant procedures at all times;
6. Department Funding Officers to process grant applications in usual way, but to keep to the timetable set by the Partnership Officer. When the Portfolio Holder has signed off recommended grants, all relevant forms and papers to be sent to the Partnership Officer for implementation (3rd stage in figure 3 below);
7. Partnership Officer to be responsible for notifying all groups on the outcome of applications and level of grant decided;
8. Partnership Officer to be responsible for dealing with 10 day appeal process and monitoring Executive decisions;
9. Partnership Officer to be responsible for putting final grant decisions on the Council’s web-site, publishing in Town and Country and informing all Members;
10. Partnership Officer to check and approve all SLAs and Letters of Memorandum, which have been negotiated and prepared by the department Funding Officers prior to the grant decision;
11. Partnership Officers to notify Funding Officers when they can release grants;
12. Funding Officers to monitor the delivery of voluntary groups against their SLA or Letter of Memorandum;
13. All small grants to be decided by one Portfolio Holder, an officer and the Voluntary Sector Champion;
14. The Council should adopt a policy for three year funding, monitored and reviewed on an annual basis, for larger grants to groups with an SLA in place. All Departments should keep to this policy;
15. The Council should produce an annual report on grants to community and voluntary groups. In time this should also include an account of the council’s contributions in kind to the voluntary sector in addition to the direct funding;
16. All applications should be dealt with in three clear stages, as follows:
   - First Stage - Applying - responsibility of the Partnership Officer;
   - Second Stage - Decision - responsibility of the Department Funding Officer;
   - Third Stage - Implementation - responsibility of the Partnership Officer.

This process is outlined in figure 5 below:
Figure 5. Proposed outline process for handling all applications for discretionary grant aid

Stage 1
- Application Received
  Nov / CEO
- Application Acknowledged
  Nov / CEO
- Application Dispatched to Departmental Officer
  Nov / Dept
- Evaluate Applications
- Departmental Decision Making Process
  Dec / Dept
- Draft Recommendation Report
  Dec / Dept

Stage 2
- Circulate in Department for Comment/Amend
  Jan / Dept
- Update Recommendations
  Feb / Dept
- Finalise Recommendations
  Feb / Dept
- Submit to Executive
  Forward Plan for Public Consultation
  Feb / Dept
- Decision Made
  Feb /Member
- At end of consultation period, submit details of decision to Strategy and Partnership Officer
  Feb / Dept
- Update central database
  Feb / CEO

Stage 3
- Download and Prepare Draft SLAs
  Feb / Depts
- Finalise SLAs
  Mar / Depts
- Send SLAs to Strategy & Partnerships Officer to proof
  Mar / Depts
- Dispatch SLAs to Applicants
  Mar / Depts
- Finalise and Sign SLAs
  Apr 1
- Monitor performance
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