



VOLUNTARY SECTOR LIAISON COMMITTEE – 19TH MARCH 2014

SUBJECT: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUND SCHEME UPDATE

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on slight modifications to the Technical Assistance Fund Guidelines, and the new draft terms of reference.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This paper informs members of the minor revisions made to the guidelines for administering the Technical Assistance Fund, and presents new draft terms of reference for the funding scheme.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Technical Assistance Fund was introduced in 2000 to provide voluntary and community groups with a way of obtaining technical advice needed to put together bids for the funding of capital projects. The Technical Assistance Fund is a proactive scheme, which facilitates subsequent bids from other sources, for example the Big Lottery Fund, and the new Community Facilities Programme capital grant fund.
- 3.2 Voluntary and community groups play a significant role in regenerating local communities.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Technical Assistance Fund (TAF) is now in its 14th year of operation, and has an annual budget of £28,000 for funding voluntary and community groups with obtaining technical advice needed for developing capital schemes. The fund has proved highly successful in drawing in extra sources of funding into the borough, and over a ten year period drew in over £8 million. However, for the last few years there have been difficulties in organisations allocated funding, spending the sum in the financial year awarded. Since 2013-14 it has no longer been permissible to carryover funding allocated to projects between financial years.
- 4.2 Except for the current financial year the TAF has always been managed by the Council's Policy Unit, and will again be administered by the Council, after being administered by GAVO for this financial year.
- 4.3 A meeting has recently taken place with officers playing a key part in making observations of the funding applications received, and Cllr. Ken James (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development) who sits on the funding panel. Following the meeting a number of minor changes have been made to the application form, which are italicised and in green for ease of reference. These have been run by the officers who are happy with the changes made. A description of the project is now required clearly stating the purpose of the

project, and for an assessment of the financial viability to be made, and brief details to be given of any project business case and wider community benefits. Applicants are also asked to clearly state what they are seeking technical assistance funding for, such as, surveyors fees, or the preparation of plans etc. Further comments on these guidelines are welcome by the Committee Members up to 28th March 2014. The finalised guidelines will be circulated to the Committee Members in April 2014. Please see Appendix 1 for the revised TAF Guidelines.

- 4.4 For the first time ever, a terms of reference has been drafted for awarding Technical Assistance Funding, in ensuring good and transparent governance. In drafting this terms of reference it states the Head of Service for Legal and Democratic Service is responsible for making the funding decisions under delegated powers following the advice under recommendatory powers of the Technical Assistance Fund Panel. The membership of the TAF Funding Panel has been reviewed and along with Cllr. Ken James Chair of the TAF Panel will sit: Alison Palmer (Community Planning Co-ordinator representing GAVO for an interim period), and Jackie Dix, Policy and Research Manager, CCBC. Comments are welcome by the Committee Members up to 28th March 2014 on this draft terms of reference. The finalised terms of reference will be circulated to the Committee Members in April 2014. Please see Appendix 2 for the draft Terms of Reference for the Technical Assistance Fund.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A consideration of equalities and sustainable development principles is included into the Technical Assistance Fund application through the completion of a project appraisal tool by applicants.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The total fund for the Scheme is £28,000

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None arising

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Cllr Ken James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development and Chair of Technical Assistance Funding Panel
Gail Williams – Monitoring Officer and Principal Solicitor
Lisa Lane – Solicitor
Paula Beaman - Senior Accountancy Assistant - Taxation & Control
Tina McMahon - Community Regeneration Manager
Mike Headington - Principal Officer Outdoor Facilities & Bereavement Services
John Thomas - Client Liaison Officer
Steve Hawkins - Community Leisure Officer
Gareth H Evans - Senior Manager Education and Leisure
Dave Phenis - Sport and Leisure Services Manager
John Elliott – Research Officer
Bridie Biddle – Administrative Assistant

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To note the minor modifications made to the Technical Assistance Fund Guidelines, and the new draft Terms of Reference for the Technical Assistance Fund. Further comments are

welcome by Committee Members on both documents by 28th March 2014.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Papers are provided for both information, and further comment. The final version of the Technical Assistance Guidelines, and the Technical Assistance Fund Terms of Reference will be circulated to the Committee Members in April 2014.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000

Author: Jackie Dix, Policy and Research Manager
Consultees: As included under Section 8 of the report: Consultations

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Technical Assistance Fund Guidelines
Appendix 2 Draft Terms of Reference - Technical Assistance Fund