



AGENDA FOR THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMMITTEE

Members of the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee are summoned to a meeting which will be held in Committee Room 1 at the Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on **7 December 2023 at 6:30pm.**

Enquiries to : Ola Adeoye
Tel : (020) 7527 3044
E-mail : democracy@islington.gov.uk
Despatched : 29 November 2023

Membership

Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz
Councillor Una O'Halloran
Councillor Roulin Khondoker
Councillor Santiago Bell-Bradford

Substitute Members

Councillor Rowena Champion
Councillor Michelline Ngongo
Councillor Nurullah Turan
Councillor Diarmaid.Ward
Councillor John Woolf

Observers

Councillor Troy Gallagher
Councillor Jason Jackson
Councillor Phil Graham

Quorum: is 2 Councillors



1. Apologies for absence
2. Declaration of substitute members
3. Declarations of interest

If you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business:

- if it is not yet on the council's register, you must declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent;
- you may choose to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is already in the register in the interests of openness and transparency.

In both the above cases, you must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If you have a personal interest in an item of business and you intend to speak or vote on the item you must declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent but you may participate in the discussion and vote on the item.

***(a)** Employment, etc - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

(b) Sponsorship - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of your expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of your election; including from a trade union.

(c) Contracts - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between you or your partner (or a body in which one of you has a beneficial interest) and the council.

(d) Land - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.

(e) Licences- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.

(f) Corporate tenancies - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which you or your partner have a beneficial interest.

(g) Securities - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

This applies to **all** members present at the meeting.

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| 4. | Minutes of the previous meeting | 1 - 2 |
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| A. | Matters for decision | |
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| 5. | Voluntary & Community Sector Partnership Grants Programme 2024-2028 | 3 - 44 |
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 | | |
| B. | Matters for information | |
|
 | | |
| C. | Urgent non-exempt matters | |

Any non-exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

D. Exclusion of press and public

To consider whether, in view of the nature of the remaining items on the agenda, any of them are likely to involve the disclosure of exempt or confidential information within the terms of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and, if so, whether to exclude the press and public during discussion thereof.

E. Confidential/exempt items for information (if any)

F. Urgent Exempt Matters

Any exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes

The next meeting of the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee is scheduled for 30 January 2024

WEBCASTING NOTICE

This meeting will be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for 12 months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.

If you participate in the meeting you will be deemed by the Council to have consented to being filmed. By entering the Council Chamber you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured you should sit in the public gallery area, overlooking the Chamber.

In addition, the Council is obliged by law to allow members of the public to take photographs, film, audio-record, and report on the proceedings at public meetings. The Council will only seek to prevent this should it be undertaken in a disruptive or otherwise inappropriate manner.

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London Borough of Islington

Voluntary and Community Sector Committee - 21 November 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 21 November 2023 at 6.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** **Error! No document variable supplied.**

Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz in the Chair

31 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

There were no apologies for absence.

32 **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**

There were no declarations of substitute members.

33 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

34 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

35 **LOCAL INITIATIVES FUND AWARDS (Item 5)**

Councillor O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities introduced the report, which has been amended on submission as follows: paragraph 4.3 - Cllr Anjna Khurana is a trustee of Hanley Crouch Community Association that has been allocated £2,004.61 for a Tollington ward partnership fun day and £1780 for a women's pampering day on behalf of Cllr Saiqa Pandor

RESOLVED:

1. To note the new proposals and changes to previous proposals submitted by ward councillors as set out in Appendix A and to agree these proposals in principle subject to the Corporate Director of Community Engagement and Wellbeing being satisfied that the necessary checks have been made and any other issues resolved.
2. To note the declarations of interest made by councillors due to having a connection with organisations that they are recommending funding for. These are detailed at paragraph 4.3.

Voluntary and Community Sector Committee - 21 November 2023

3. To note the amendments to ward budgets resulting from project funding being returned. The amendments are detailed in Appendix B and are included in the budget summary on the last page of Appendix A.
4. To agree that no more than £1000 underspend per ward can be carried forward by councillors to 2024/25.
5. To continue with delegated authority to the Corporate Director Community Engagement and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Executive Member for Homes and Communities, to make changes to the use of previously awarded funding.
6. To note that further applications received for projects addressing the cost of living crisis will revert to being considered by councillors as the extra NLWA funding is now all exhausted

AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS:

Reason for decision- as specified in the report

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest/Any dispensation granted - none

The meeting ended at 6.32 pm

CHAIR

Report of: Executive Member for Homes and Communities

Meeting of	Date	Agenda item	Wards
Voluntary and Community Sector Committee	7 December 2023		All

SUBJECT: Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership Grants Programme 2024-2028

1. Synopsis

- 1.1** The council’s current four-year VCS Partnership Grants programme 2021-24 is due to end on 31st March 2024.
- 1.2** The current grant budget totals £2,696,000 per annum and currently funds 50 VCS organisations.
- 1.3** Since the launch of the council’s VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2021-24, the council has developed a new Corporate Plan - Islington Together 2030, agreed a series of missions and Corporate Values.
- 1.4** The council’s VCS Partnership Grants Programme is a key component of the council’s efforts to support the development of resilient communities and the council has committed to protect levels of council grant-giving to the local voluntary and community sector in the Labour Manifesto.
- 1.5** This report provides an overview of the VCS Grants Programme 2024-2028 outlining the programme structure, the application and assessment processes, and makes recommendations on the allocation of grant funding.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** To approve the recommendations for funding to the 51 organisations for the VCS Partnership Grants Programme across the 6 strands of the programme and detailed in appendix 1.
- 2.2** To agree the proposal to provide funding of £2,711,500 per full financial year and over the programme for four years totalling £10, 846,000.

3. Background to the VCS Partnership Grant

- 3.1** The Council, across all departments currently spends £44 million with the borough's VCS partners. £2,696,000 of the Council's £44 million spend is allocated through the Council's VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2021-2024, a programme that provides core funding to strategic VCS partners. This programme was designed around the Council's Corporate Plan Islington Together 2030 the Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2016-2020. The funding provides the foundation for a strong, vibrant, and independent VCS in the borough.
- 3.2** The current grant budget totals £2,696,000 per annum made up of £2,431,000 from the general fund (HASS and Public Health), £146,000 from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and £119,000 from Islington ICB.
- 3.3** The exact structure of the council's VCS Grants Programme was co-designed and co-delivered, with involvement of a range of Executive Members, directorates, and external partners. In July 2023 the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee agreed recommendations to provide funding to organisations across 6 strands. The table below details of the various strands and the indicative levels of funding which were made available up to a total fund of £2,696,000:

2024-2028 Strand	Indicative Total Funding	Indicative Funding Awards
Independent Advice and Navigation	Up to £1.45 million	Up to £500K
Community Hubs	Up to £600K	Up to £60K
VCS Capacity Building	Up to £80K	Up to £60K
Volunteering	Up to £35K	Up to £35K
Delivery Partners	Up to £400K	Up to £25K
Equalities and Cohesion Networks	Up to £150K	Up to £30K

4. Application and Assessment Process

- 4.1** In July 2023, the VCS Committee approved the recommendations for the launch of the VCS Partnerships Grants programme 2024-28 to take place in August 2023. A two stage process with two rounds were implemented, and some capacity building support for VCS organisations through the Big Alliance were agreed.
- 4.2** On 29 August 2023, the VCS Partnerships Grant programme 2024-28 was launched and information about the programme was widely published widely through council and voluntary sector communication channels. Nine 'Meet the Funder' events took place during the months of June – September 2023, with a total of 103 VCS colleagues attending the sessions.

4.3 Stage 1 Expression of Interest Stage - 94 applications were received, which resulted with 81 organisations being selected for the Stage 2 Full Application stage. 13 organisations were unsuccessful due to not meeting the minimum eligibility criteria outline set for the programme, which is detailed below:

- Grounds for mandatory exclusion
- Minimum Criteria
- Suitability Criteria in three areas:
 - The organisation's financial viability and their track record of securing income
 - What the organisation will use the core grant for and the difference it will make to the organisation
 - The organisation's objectives / articles of association and how these relate to the Council's Corporate Priorities

4.4 Stage 2 Full Application Stage - A total of 88 applications were received by 80 organisations requesting for a total of £4,521,774.34.

Each application for 5 of the strands were then assessed based on the following award criteria with weighting:

- Needs, Issues and Beneficiaries - 20%
- Outcomes, Services, Activities and Risks - 20%
- The Difference We Want You to Make - 30%
- Organisational Development - 20%
- Evaluating and Communicating Impact - 10%

The Advice and Navigation strand was assessed based on the following award criteria with weighting:

- Needs, Issues and Beneficiaries – 10%
- Outcomes, Services, Activities and Risks – 20%
- The Difference We Want You to Make – 30%
- Your Ability to Deliver an Integrated Advice Model for Islington – 20%
- Organisational Development – 10%
- Evaluating and Communicating Impact – 10%

A vigorous and comprehensive scoring procedure took place with each application being assessed by a minimum of two individual council officers, in line with the established criteria.

Panel meetings were held with assessors to address divergence in scoring, to undertake an additional qualitative assessment of each application, and to agree a final shortlist for each strand.

4.5 At each stage of the process officers assessed recommendations in line with the aspiration to establish a balanced and diverse portfolio working with different sections of the community with protected characteristics and across the borough. This assessment included consideration of:

- Equalities and protected characteristics
- Geographical spread across the borough
- Thematic spread

5. Applications summary

A total of 88 applications were received at Stage 2 of the VCS Partnership Grants 2024-28, with a request for £4,521,774.34.

5.1 The applications received break down into the following areas:

Strand	Total received	Not Recommended for Funding	Recommended for Funding
Capacity Building	2	0	2
Community Hubs	17	4	13
Delivery	54	18	26
Equalities and Cohesion Networks	6	1	5
Independent Advice & Navigation	8	2	6
Volunteering	1	0	1
Total	88	25	53

5.2 The recommendation is to fund 53 applications to 51 organisations amounting to £2,711,500 as illustrated in Appendix 1. There is an overspend of £15,500 which is recommended to be obtained from the underspent from the 2021-24 VCS Partnerships Grant.

5.3 Organisations recommended for funding present a good spread across the borough and are targeted in reaching equalities groups in Islington. There is a diverse range of delivery models and areas of focus, including organisations which work across the protected characteristics. The table below illustrates the allocation of funds per strand:

Strand	Number of applications funded	Funds allocated
Independent Advice and Navigation	6	£1,415,000
Community Hubs	13	£615,000
VCS Capacity Building	2	£80,000
Volunteering	1	£35,000
Delivery Partners	26	£436,500
Equalities and Cohesion Networks	5	£130,000

5.4 We currently fund 50 organisations under six strands, 3 of the organisations in the current Delivery Strand did not meet the set criteria and therefore their funding will not continue. The remaining 47 organisations will receive funding and enable the council to continue their existing partnerships.

5.5 The recommendation is to fund 6 new organisations which are not currently funded under the 2021-24 programme, these fall into the Delivery strand.

5.6 Once the recommendations have been formally agreed, all organisations will be notified in writing to confirm the decision and the level of funding agreed (where applicable). Organisations will then be required to develop an annual delivery plan before a grant agreement is issued.

5.7 There will be a support package made available to organisations not being recommended for funding which will include:

- Detailed feedback about applications, available upon request
- Access to training opportunities/sessions – Including writing funding applications
- Details of alternative funding available

6. Monitoring arrangement

6.1 To ensure that the commitments made within any established grant agreements and applications are developed and actioned, regular monitoring and partnership meetings will be held throughout the duration of the grant programme.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

The Council seeks to provide funding to VCS organisations to a total of £2,696,000 per year over the financial years: 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27, and 2027/28. Of the £2,696,000 funding per year available for VCS organisations to bid for as part of the 2024-2028 VCS grants programme, the report recommends £2,711,500 per annum (pro rata FY24/25) be awarded.

Maintaining the Council's existing financial commitment of £2,696,000 per annum to the VCS Partnership Grants Programme requires continued funding of £119,000 from the CCG. An agreement has been reached between the Council and the CCG to commit to this funding arrangement for the duration of the 2024-2028 programme. The £15,500 overspend will be met by the VCS reserve balance, drawing down a total balance of £62,000 over the four year period that this report covers. The current position of the VCS reserve is £380,563 prior to 2024-28 drawdowns. It is intended that grant commitments will be protected for a 2 period with a mid-programme review to commit another 2 years, as per the last grants programme. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy currently incorporates a continuation of the scheme as proposed. This is subject to ongoing Council wide savings discussions. The table below displays the additional money requested in the recommendations, where the funding is coming from, remaining funding, and the number of allocations in the FY24-28 period. Please note that the proposed allocations range in funding size from £35,000 to £1,450,000.

Strand	Number of applications funded	Funds allocated
Independent Advice and Navigation	6	£1,415,000
Community Hubs	13	£615,000
VCS Capacity Building	2	£80,000
Volunteering	1	£35,000
Delivery Partners	26	£436,500
Equalities and Cohesion Networks	5	£130,000

7.2 Legal Implications

The general power of competence pursuant to Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the council with very broad powers 'to do anything that individuals generally may do'. This covers the power to give grants to voluntary and community sector organisations as proposed in this report and includes anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the whole or part of its area or all or any of the persons resident or present in that area. The provision of resources through the Local Initiatives Fund is likely to promote the social and economic well-being of Islington's residents.

The council is under a fiduciary duty to ensure that its resources are used appropriately. Where the money is allocated to outside bodies, the requirements of the procurement rules may apply. In any event it will be important to maintain current practice of ensuring that the money will be used for the purposes for which it is allocated and that

individual members are made aware of the responsibility they bear in making recommendations in relation to specific groups.

7.3 Environmental Implications

The grant programme in itself has minimal environmental impacts, being limited to those associated with the office use of the staff involved. However, the grants will be used to fund activities that are likely to have a range of environmental impacts, most of which will have resulting carbon emissions. These include energy and water use in buildings, the purchase of goods with supply chain impacts and the generation of waste.

7.4 Equalities Impact Assessment

An equalities impact assessment has been completed (appendix 3) to understand the impact of the grants programme on residents in the borough, particularly those with protected characteristics. The new grants programme aims to support the overarching Council priorities of addressing inequality, promoting community cohesion and supporting the most vulnerable residents.

Key highlights from the resident impact assessment are detailed below:

- 31 of the 53 organisations recommended for funding are classified as having a 'targeted' approach and 22 with a 'universal' approach. In comparison to core grant-funding awards in 2021-2024, there has been a 5% increase in the level of funding going to organisations with a 'targeted' approach to working with residents with protected characteristics.

8. Conclusions and reasons for recommendations

- 8.1** The VCS Partnerships Grants 2024-28 process has undertaken a vigorous, fair and transparent process which has resulted in the £2,711,500,000 available in the funds from 2024-28 (£2,696,000) and underspend from 2021-24 (£15,500) to be allocated to 51 organisations. These organisations are aligned to meet our strategic priorities as set in our Islington Together Vision 2030 Plan, and has resulted in us to continue our commitment to enable services and local neighbourhoods to work together, focus on early intervention and prevention, build stronger partnerships and collaboration, and continue the creation of an integrated and connected system to support our residents in Islington

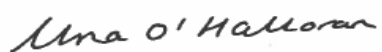
Appendices

Appendix 1: **List of organisations recommended for funding by strand**

Appendix 2: **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Background papers: None

Final report clearance:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Una O'Halloran". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Signed by: Una O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities **Date:** 29.11.23

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APPENDIX 1: LISTS OF ORGANISATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING BY STRAND

Independent Advice and Navigation	
Help on Your Doorstep	£150,000
Islington BAMER Advice Alliance	£100,000
Arachne Greek Cypriot Women's Group	£35,000
RCJ Advice and Citizens Advice Islington	£450,000
Islington Law Centre	£450,000
Islington People's Rights	£230,000
TOTAL	£1,415,000
Community Hubs	
Caxton House Community Centre	£40,000
Hanley Crouch Community Association	£60,000
Highbury Roundhouse	£40,000
Highbury Vale Blackstock Trust	£50,000
Hilldrop Area Community Association	£50,000
Holloway Neighbourhood Group	£40,000
Hornsey Lane Estate Community Association	£50,000
Mildmay Community Partnership	£45,000
Muslim Welfare House	£40,000
St Luke's Parochial Trust	£60,000
The Peel	£40,000
Whittington Park Community Association	£60,000
Light Project Pro International	£40,000
TOTAL	£615,000
Capacity Building	
Octopus Community Network	£40,000

Voluntary Action Islington	£40,000
TOTAL	£80,000
Volunteering	
Voluntary Action Islington	£35,000
TOTAL	£35,000
Delivery	
ALAG on behalf of the Autism Hub Islington	£20,000
All Change	£20,000
Chabad Ludavitch of Islington	£10,000
Community Language Support Services	£24,000
Company 3	£15,000
Claremont Project	£20,000
Eritrean Community in UK	£20,000
Finsbury Park Mosque	£10,000
Global Generations	£10,000
Healthy Generations	£10,000
Hillside Clubhouse	£15,000
Holloway Neighbourhood Group	£15,000
Imece Women's Centre	£15,000
Islington Bangladesh Association	£25,000
Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants	£25,000
Islington Pensioners Forum	£10,000
Islington Somali Community	£25,000
Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women Organisation	£20,000
One True Voice	£10,000
Maa Shanti	£15,000
Middle Eastern Women and Society Organisation	£15,000
The Lilliesleaf Trust UK	£10,000
The Margins Project	£25,000
The Maya Centre	£15,000
The Parent House	£17,500

The Stuart Low Trust	£20,000
TOTAL	£436,500
Equalities and Cohesion Network	
Disability Action in Islington DAI	£30,000
London Irish Centre	£30,000
Islington Faith Forum	£30,000
Forum+	£20,000
Islington Refugee & Migrant Forum (IRMF)	£20,000
TOTAL	£130,000
GRAND TOTAL	£2,711,500

APPENDIX 2: EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESEMENT

Equalities Impact Assessment: Full Assessment

Before completing this form you should have completed an Equalities Screening Tool and had sign off from your Head of Service and the Fairness and Equality Team.

This Equality Impact Assessment should be completed where the Screening Tool identifies a potentially negative impact on one or more specific groups but it can also be used to highlight positive impacts.

Summary of proposal

Name of proposal	Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership Grants Programme 2024-2028
Reference number (if applicable)	N/A
Service Area	Community Wellbeing & Engagement
Date assessment completed	20.11.23

Before completing the EQIA please read the guidance and FAQs. For further help and advice please contact equalities@islington.gov.uk.

1. Please provide a summary of the proposal.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

The council's four-year VCS Partnership Grants programme is due to end on 31st March 2024. The current grant budget totals £2,690,000 per annum. Since the launch of the council's VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2021-24, the council has developed a new Corporate Plan, agreed a series of Corporate Objectives and Corporate Values, and has undertaken significant work to enable us to become the best council at early intervention and prevention in the country.

The council's VCS Partnership Grants Programme is a key component of the council's efforts to support the development of resilient communities.

Our recently published Islington Together 2030 plan sets out a bold vision for working together with our communities to create a more equal future for our borough by 2030 and the [five key missions we have set ourselves](#) to achieve this.

In summary, we want Islington to be a place where people know their children will get the absolute best start in life, where people can access help and support when they need it and where wealth is created and enjoyed locally. A place where people can live sustainable, happy and healthy lives.

The council's corporate plan provides the over-arching framework for our work and the partnerships that the council forms with the voluntary and community sector, through our Fairer Together objectives.

The council has set out ambitions to adopt an early intervention and prevention approach to improve community resilience. Through this work a 'prevention' pyramid was established, segmenting services into four levels; 'specialist', 'targeted', 'universal' and 'place-shaping'. Achieving our aspiration of being the best council in the country at delivering preventative work will require a reorientation towards community resilience and a rebalance of our current spend towards early intervention and prevention work at 'universal' and 'place shaping levels'. This means investing through grant funding and commissioning in universal services, to prevent residents in Islington reaching crisis point. Islington's VCS are key partners in delivering an interconnected system of preventative services in community settings across the borough.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

The Islington Compact is a written agreement outlining a shared commitment to working together effectively to meet the changing needs of Islington's communities. The Compact which is currently being redeveloped and will come into effective in 2024 is the framework in which the Council and the VCS sector form alliances to enhance the relationship and equity in which we work. This provides a tool where the VCS are seen as partners in delivering our ambitions of a 'fairer Islington'.

VCS PARTNERSHIPS GRANT FUNDING 2021–24

£2.7 million of the council's current annual £44 million spend with the borough's VCS is allocated through the council's VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2021-24, a programme that provides core funding to our strategic VCS partners. Islington's VCS Partnership Grants Programme serves as an enabler, ensuring that the borough has a strong, independent VCS that is able to respond to the needs of our local communities and to attract resource into the borough. The council's VCS Partnership Grants Programme is a key component of the council's efforts to support the development of resilient communities and the council has committed to protect levels of council grant-giving to the local voluntary and community sector in the Labour Manifesto.

The table below details of the various strands and the indicative levels of funding which were made available up to a total fund of £2,690,000:

2024-2028 Strand	Indicative Total Funding	Indicative Funding Awards
Independent Advice and Navigation	Up to £1.45 million	Up to £500K
Community Hubs	Up to £600K	Up to £60K
VCS Capacity Building	Up to £80K	Up to £60K
Volunteering	Up to £35K	Up to £35K
Delivery Partners	Up to £400K	Up to £25K
Equalities and Cohesion Networks	Up to £150K	Up to £30K

This paper sets out details of the programme and recommendations for the organisations which have been selected for awards under the 2024-28 programme.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

The Council's VCS Partnership Grants Programme is a corporate undertaking, requiring collaboration across the organisation to ensure that the programme responds to corporate priorities and the aims and objectives of different departments.

The exact structure of the council's VCS Grants Programme was co-designed and co-delivered, with involvement of a range of Executive Members, directorates, and external partners. The programme is structured around the following strands:

- Independent Advice and Navigation
- Community Hubs
- VCS Capacity Building
- Delivery Partners
- Equalities and Cohesion Networks
- Volunteering

In July 2023, the VCS Committee approved the recommendations for the launch of the VCS Partnerships Grants programme 2024-28 to take place in August 2023 and agreed the various recommended implications which included the application process which was previously just at one stage, be moved to a two stage process to ensure the eligibility of applicants and make the process more streamlined and efficient. This process was more equitable for smaller grassroots organisations applying, where if they did not meet the minimum and eligibility criteria, they did not have to fill out a long application form, which can be resource intense.

On 29 August 2023, the VCS Partnerships Grant programme 2024-28 was launched with nine 'Meet the Funder' events taking place during the months of June – September 2023. The success of the events was illustrated with 94 applications being received in Stage 1 Expression of Interest Stage, which resulted with 81 organisations being selected for the Stage 2 Full Application stage. A total of 88 applications were received by 80 organisations at Stage 2 and officers then assessed the applications and selected the awards based on the following scoring and weighting criteria, as detailed in the application forms:

- Needs, Issues and Beneficiaries - 20%
- Outcomes, Services, Activities and Risks - 20%
- The Difference We Want You to Make - 30%
- Organisational Development - 20%
- Evaluating and Communicating Impact - 10%

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

Once the applications were scored the Leadership Team then applied the following factors to ensure a systematic approach was implemented to the recommended groups:

- Geographical spread across the borough
- Thematic spread
- Equalities and protected characteristics
- The benefit and impact of core funding to organisations

The Council has a strong partnership with the voluntary, community and not-for-profit sector and values highly the role that local independent organisations play in meeting the needs of some of Islington's most disadvantaged communities.

The VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2021-24 builds on the overarching aim of the Council's work with the VCS to support the Council priority of making Islington a fairer place and the ambitions we have for our community through the Fairer Together programme.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

2. What impact will this change have on different groups of people?

Please consider:

- Whether the impact will predominantly be external or internal, or both?
- Who will be impacted – residents, service users, local communities, staff, or others?
- Broadly what will the impact be – reduced access to facilities or disruptions to journeys for example?

The VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2024-28 will provide grant funding for 53 applications for 51 organisations amounting to £2,711,500. This will be supplemented from the current grant programme 2021-24 underspend. Organisations recommended for funding present a fair spread across the borough and are targeted in reaching equalities groups in Islington. There is a diverse range of delivery models and areas of focus, including organisations which work across the protected characteristics.

Examination of the profile of beneficiaries that applicants have identified in their respective submissions indicate that the organisations being recommended for funding will represent the diverse communities in Islington, particularly focussing on those that are disadvantaged

as a result of their ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion/belief. Borough profile from the 2021 census.

		Borough profile
		Total: 216,589
Gender	Female	113,304
	Male	103,288
Age	Under 16	14%
	16-24	14%
	25-44	41%
	45-64	22%
	65+	9%
Disability	Disabled	16%
	Non-disabled	84%
Sexual orientation	LGBT	No data
	Heterosexual/straight	No data
Race	BME	41%
	White	59%
Religion or belief	Christian	35%
	Muslim	12%
	Other	4%
	No religion	51%

3. What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

This section of the assessment looks in detail at the likely impacts of the proposed changes on different sections of our diverse community.

3A. What data have you used to assess impacts?

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

Overview

A key aim of the VCS Partnership Grants Programme is to provide core funding to voluntary and community sector organisations working across Islington’s diverse communities to improve outcomes for residents and communities with protected characteristics.

The fund seeks, not only to pay due regard to the aims of the Equality Act 2010, but to actively support a portfolio of organisations that can pro-actively address structural

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
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inequalities within the borough, where there are voluntary and community organisations that are well-placed to reach communities at risk of exclusion.

To be eligible for funding, all organisations are required to have an Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to the Equality Act 2010.

Through the application process all organisations were required to detail how they would challenge inequality, promote community cohesion, and empower residents and communities to be resilient and feel a sense of belonging in the borough.

Application Summary and Equalities Assessment

In line with the aspirations of the VCS Partnership Grants Programme, funding is being recommended to organisations working across all protected characteristics, but which may have a specific focus on a particular group.

Every application was assessed against the nine protected characteristics and was classified as either:

- **Targeted:** Either working specifically with sections of the community with protected characteristics in a targeted way as part of their core organisational purpose or working pro-actively with sections of the community with protected characteristics
- **Universal:** Being open access, universal services that ensure access through their approach to equal opportunities

In 2024-28 VCS Partnership Grants Programme, 31 out of 53 organisations recommended for funding are classified as having a 'targeted' approach and 22 with a 'universal' approach. This is 61% recommended funding going to 'targeted' organisations, and there has been a 5% increase from 2021-24 in the level of funding going to organisations with a 'targeted' approach to working with residents with protected characteristics. This means that 81% of delivery organisations are offering targeted services to residents with one or more protected characteristic.

Of the 53 that are recommended for funding, 22 organisations provide unrestricted access 'universal' services such as legal advice agencies (3) and multi-use community hubs (11), capacity building organisations (3) and delivery (5)

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

The breakdown below is the equalities data across recommended funded organisations for protected characteristics, this is in line with the aspirations of the VCS Partnership Grants Programme, funding is being recommended to organisations working across all protected characteristics.

All organisations	Total
Age - Children and YP	28
Age - Over 55	30
Disability	23
Gender Reassignment	9
Marriage and Civil Partnership	7
Pregnancy and Maternity	12
Ethnicity	34
Religion or Belief	19
Sex	16
Sexual Orientation	18

Consideration has been given to organisations currently funded who are not being recommended for funding, because other applications working with residents with protected characteristics better demonstrated their ability to meet the assessment criteria. In appraising the impacts of these recommendations, officers have considered organisations' financial viability, the overall equalities profile of the recommendations and the allocation of wider Council funding through commissioned services. Islington council will continue to work with these organisations to support their ongoing development and viability.

Positive Impacts

Equality and Cohesion Networks Strand

The Equality and Cohesion Networks strand is a new strand created in the current 2021-2024 of the VCS Partnership Grants programme. This strand, has brought together strategic leaders working across a range of protected characteristics, ensuring that the voice and challenge of organisations who represent or work with residents with protected characteristics is elevated. Critical to this is the collaboration and partnership between

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- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

organisations who work with specific protected characteristics, to reflect the reality that many residents would identify as having more than one protected characteristic. This strand is in place for this round of funding for 2024-28. The recommendations for funding within this strand are for 5 organisations (6 applied).

This particular strand set the following objectives for organisations to:

- Act as a strategic leader in equalities and community cohesion
- Deliver, co-produce or provide signposting to services that improve wellbeing and quality of life for people with protected characteristics
- Transform attitudes and behaviours towards people with protected characteristics.
- Work collaboratively across the wider equalities agenda to ensure residents facing multiple discrimination are recognised and supported.

This funding is reflective of the Council's commitments and aspirational work with community partners to tackle structural inequality in the borough. These partners have been and will continue to be integral to the Council's Challenging Inequalities Programme.

BAME Representation Across the Portfolio

Applications received from organisations working across ethnicity, and particularly with the BAME community had a higher success rate than the overall average success rate.

All organisations recommended for funding across the new grants programme, work with BAME residents. For example, Community Hubs provide multi-use spaces and often host BAME groups and organisations. Advice services are open to all residents and close monitoring and focus is given to ensure outreach and engagement with BAME groups and organisations.

Advice and Navigation Strand

This funding stream aims to establish a whole-community approach to advice which sees outreach and engagement to those most at risk of exclusion, targeted advice for some of our most vulnerable residents, and resilient community organisations able to provide early and responsive help to sections of the community

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

A total of £1.4 million in funding is recommended to 6 organisations (including a consortium made up of 6 organisations) working to ensure that the offer in the borough is of a high quality and can provide independent advice and navigation to Islington residents.

Community Advice: Through ongoing work with community organisations, the Council recognised that residents with protected characteristics face additional challenges in accessing independent legal advice. In response to this, for the 2021-24 grants programme, the Council established a 'community advice' strand of the VCS grants programme. Organisations being recommended for funding in the Community Advice strand will be required to:

- Use data and intelligence to understand the advice needs of communities that have unmet advice needs or that face particular barriers to accessing advice services.
- Reach and engage residents that face barriers to accessing independent legal advice, particularly people with protected characteristics.

1 application is being recommended for a funding total of £100,000 per annum, this is funding for a consortium of 6 organisations working with the BAME community and funding for an organisation working specifically with women in the borough. This recommendation represents a 5% increase in the level of funding going to advice focussed organisations working with a targeted focus on supporting BAME communities to access independent legal advice.

Targeted Specialist Advice: Funding is recommended to one organisation in this strand that can offer specialist legal advice that is targeted towards residents; in particular those experiencing mental health difficulties, disabilities, ex-offenders, and those from BAMER backgrounds. This funding is at the same level as through the 2021-24 grants programme.

Under our Equalities and Cohesion Network strand, Delivery strand and Advice and Navigation strand we have allocated funds to organisations which directly support our ambition to meet our equalities priorities and we have covered all nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

3B: Assess the impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups in the table below.

Please first select whether the potential impact is positive, neutral, or negative and then provide details of the impacts and any mitigations or positive actions you will put in place.

Please use the following definitions as a guide:

Neutral – The proposal has no impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Positive – The proposal has a beneficial and desirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Negative – The proposal has a negative and undesirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
	<p>Positive</p>	<p>One organisation which is currently funded and recommended for funding, and one new organisation, so a total of 2 organisations working specifically with older residents in the borough to ensure that this population group is represented in this strand.</p> <p>A total of 31 organisations recommended for funding offer services for older people. This includes Community Centre Hubs who provide universal services in a geographical place, advice organisations who offer free independent legal advice and smaller organisations who offer direct delivery in areas such as The Arts.</p>	<p>Engage equality and cohesion networks and key VCS organisations through Islington’s Challenging Inequalities Programme.</p> <p>Through our grant monitoring relationship with both VCS organisations working specifically with people of 55. We will build their capacity through partnerships and networks, and encourage them to collaborate to meet any emerging need of older residents in the borough.</p>

Disability
(include carers)

Positive

Within the Equality and Cohesion Networks strand, ring-fenced funding is being recommended to support a pan-disability organisation working across the borough to support residents with disabilities. The organisation's vision is to enable local disabled people to access services and entitlements and challenge exclusion and discrimination. The funding will support the organisation to deliver its vision.

A total of 24 organisations recommended for funding offer services for people with disabilities. This mainly consists of Community Centre Hubs who provide universal services in a geographical place, who may also host services to organisations who are disability led, and advice organisations who offer free independent legal advice

Engage equality and cohesion networks and key VCS organisations through Islington's Challenging Inequalities Programme.

Through our grant monitoring relationship with the pan-disability organisation, we will support them to continue to play the role of 'critical friend' holding statutory organisations to account, and advising how decisions and services can affect residents in the borough with disabilities. An example of this is the work on People Friendly Streets.

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?

	<p>Positive</p>	<p>One organisation working in the area of ethnicity is being recommended with no funding decrease in the new grants programme, recognising the organisation's role as a strategic leader in bringing together BAMER residents and organisations in the borough, with a particular focus on working with refugees and migrants.</p> <p>One organisation is being recommended who support refugees and migrants, through activities and advocacy, has had a recommended funding increase by 25%.</p> <p>One organisation is being recommended for funding to work with Islington's Irish community, recognising that this is one of the largest ethnic</p>	<p>Engage equality and cohesion networks and key VCS organisations through Islington's Challenging Inequalities Programme.</p> <p>Through the new City of Sanctuary work, we will align closely with the NRPF team and support VCS organisations, not only those funded through the grants programme, to actively take part in this important initiative.</p>
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groups in the borough, this will ensure that there is representation from this large resident group in the new programme, with a focus on further developing the work being undertaken to address inequality, and transform attitudes and behaviours towards people across the protected characteristics for this community group.

One organisation is being recommended for funding to work with Islington's Jewish community with a focus on further developing the work being undertaken to address inequality, and transform attitudes and behaviours towards people across the protected characteristics for this community group.

The recommendation is to fund 6 new organisations which are not

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
		<p>currently funded under the 2021-24 programme, these fall into the Delivery strand. This includes groups that are supporting older people in Islington and groups that support marginalised communities.</p>	

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Religion or belief (include no faith)	Positive	One organisation is being recommended with no funding decrease in funding in the new grants programme. This organisation promotes positive inter-faith relations and works with key faith leaders and organisations to promote community cohesion and positive inter-faith relations.	Engage equality and cohesion networks and key VCS organisations through Islington’s Challenging Inequalities Programme Organisation is well linked into Hate Crime Forum and Community Safety work. Further capacity is provided to this organisation to support them with some direct delivery off community cohesion work.

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Gender and gender reassignment (male, female, or non-binary)	Positive	One organisation being recommended with no funding decrease in funding in the new grants programme. This organisation works with Islington residents who face inequality and prejudice due to sexual orientation or gender reassignment.	Engage equality and cohesion networks and key VCS organisations through Islington's Challenging Inequalities Programme. Targeted work with this VCS organisation and other VCS organisations to build the capacity of the them to meet the need of residents in our borough with this protected characteristic.

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Maternity or pregnancy	Positive and Negative	<p>One organisation being recommended with a 12.5% decrease in funding in the new grants programme. This organisation works with Islington parents.</p> <p>Across the 53 recommended organisations for funding, a total of 12 offer universal services for this protected characteristic.</p>	<p>Engage equality and cohesion networks and key VCS organisations through Islington's Challenging Inequalities Programme.</p> <p>Work closely with Bright Start Team and VCS organisations that work with residents of all protected characteristics , to understand communities not engaging in services around maternity or pregnancy.</p>

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Sex and sexual orientation	Positive	One organisation being recommended with no funding decrease in funding in the new grants programme. This organisation works with Islington residents who face inequality and prejudice due to sexual orientation or gender reassignment.	Engage equality and cohesion networks and key VCS organisations through Islington’s Challenging Inequalities Programme Targeted work with this VCS organisation and other VCS organisations to build the capacity of the them to meet the need of residents in our borough with this protected characteristic.

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Marriage or civil partnership	Positive	7 organisations being recommended offer services and activities for this protected characteristics within the advice and delivery strands	Engage equality and cohesion networks and key VCS organisations through Islington's Challenging Inequalities Programme

4. How do you plan to mitigate negative impacts?

Please provide:

- An outline of actions and the expected outcomes
- Any governance and funding which will support these actions if relevant

With reference to the [guidance](#), please describe what are the equality and socio-economic impacts for residents and what are the opportunities to challenge prejudice or promote understanding?

Negative Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

There are no gaps in provision that have been identified as every protected characteristic has an organisation(s) working with residents in this area. From the VCS organisations recommended for funding, there is no specific targeted organisation delivering services and activities around maternity and pregnancy. However, any lack of support for this group specifically is mitigated by the support provided by organisations that support families as a whole.

To ensure that the VCS Partnership portfolio is fully able to support the Council's equality and community cohesion ambitions, meet existing and emerging need, the following measures are being proposed:

- Continuous conversations and proactive dialogue with VCS organisations who are experts in their field, attending existing networking meetings and facilitating meetings through Challenging Inequality programme, Community Conversations and The Community Partnership Board.
- Ongoing interaction, relational ways of working with grant funded VCS organisation and 6 monthly monitoring of business plans and thematic areas such as organisation development, services, and finances. Leading to reports to demonstrate impact and identify trends; state of the sector, to inform what capacity building support is needed

5. Please provide details of your consultation and/or engagement plans.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

The exact structure of the council's VCS Grants Programme was co-designed and co-delivered, with involvement of a range of Executive Members, directorates, and external partners. When the 2021-24 VCS Partnership Grants Programme was launched on 29 August 2023, 9 meet the funder sessions were held. This allowed engagement with over 90 VCS organisations, which allowed explanation of the prospectus, the ask of each strand, and questions and answers on application process and content. A capacity Building offer was in place, and BIG Alliance hosted two training sessions to the sector to support with the application process and explore what partnership bids might look like.

The 2021-24 VCS Partnership Grants Programme provides funding to 50 VCS organisations, designed to meet our early intervention and prevention ambitions. All partners are subject to a rigorous assessment process and ongoing monitoring as 'strategic partners'. Organisations are continuously assessed, monitored and supported through a Funder+ model in terms of; service delivery and outcomes for residents, governance, organisational management, financial management, fundraising capacity, communications, safeguarding, and data protection.

The council's VCS Partnership Grants Programme is a key component of the council's efforts to support the development of resilient communities and the council has committed to protect levels of council grant-giving to the local voluntary and community sector in the Labour Manifesto.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

The Islington Compact is a written agreement outlining a shared commitment to working together effectively to meet the changing needs of Islington's communities. The Compact which is currently being redeveloped and will come into effective in 2024 is the framework in which the Council and the VCS sector form alliances to enhance the relationship and equity in which we work. This provides a tool where the VCS are seen as partners in delivering our ambitions of a 'fairer Islington'. The Compact will engage the sector on thematic areas such as volunteering, funding and commissioning, premises, and capacity building, where statutory and voluntary sector will work in partnership for action-based solutions. The Compact will build the capacity and voice of smaller grassroots VCS organisations.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

6. Once the proposal has been implemented, how will impacts be monitored and reviewed?

Please provide details in the table below.

Action	Responsible team or officer	Deadline
Engage equality and cohesion networks and key VCS organisations in Islington's Challenging Inequalities Programme	Community Partnership Team	Ongoing 2024-2028 (grant programme duration)
6 monthly monitoring and impact reporting of the VS Grants and the grants programme	Community Partnership Team	Ongoing 2024-2028 (grant programme duration)

Please send the completed EQIA to equalities@islington.gov.uk for quality checking by the Fairness and Equality Team. All Equality Impact Assessments

must be attached with any report to a decision-making board and should be made publicly available on request.

This Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance and using appropriate evidence.

Member	Name	Signed	Date
Staff member completing this form	Pamela Aristokle	<i>Pamela Aristokle</i>	21.11.23
Fairness and Equality Team	Hezi Yaacov-Hai	<i>Hezi Yaacov-Hai</i>	28/11/23
Director or Head of Service	Billy Wells	<i>Billy Wells</i>	29.11.23