



Report of: Executive Member for Community Development

Meeting of:	Date	Agenda item	Ward(s)
Voluntary and Community Sector Committee	29 January 2019		All

Delete as appropriate		Non-exempt
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SUBJECT: Islington Council's Community Chest: Continuation of Council's commitment.

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 Small voluntary and community organisations play an important role in Islington, helping to build resilient communities and support residents who are experiencing poverty and isolation. Islington Council's Community Chest (ICCC), one of the borough's most popular grant programmes, has proved to be a very effective way of funding grassroots activity and developing the capacity of local groups.
- 1.2 This report recommends that Islington Council continues to supporting Islington Council's Community Chest (ICCC) for the second year of its current three-year agreement with Cripplegate Foundation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree Islington Council's contribution of £200,000 for the second year (2019-2020) of Islington Council Community Chest.
- 2.2 To agree for the Voluntary and Community Sector Development team to work with Cripplegate Foundation to establish a partnership framework and priorities for Islington Council Community Chest.

3. Background

- 3.1 ICCC is a partnership between Islington Council and Cripplegate Foundation. It is a small grants programme that funds grassroots activity and brings additional capacity building, networking and development support to local voluntary and community organisations. By providing resources for local groups ICCC helps to build community resilience and to tackle poverty and isolation.

- 3.2 Islington Council is committed to working to working with the VCS. The council solely awards grant-funding to organisation that are a paying employees London Living Wage and has amended our procurement approach so that we only procure services from organisations that pay their staff at least the Living Wage.
- 3.3 ICCC is one of the borough's most popular grant funding programmes and is available to local organisations with a turnover of no more than £100,000 per year – in most cases less than £50,000 per year. Organisations can apply for one grant of up to £5,000 per year. The priority is to support applications from the most deprived areas of the borough with a focus on:
- Advise and support people
 - Educating people and improving their skills and employability
 - Improving people's mental and/or physical health
 - Improving the local environment and making communities safer
 - Reduce isolation and increasing people's involvement in the community
- 3.4 Community Chest programmes in Islington have been successfully managed by Cripplegate Foundation for many years. Established in 2011, the council contributes £200,000 per year and Cripplegate Foundation adds £50,000 per year (from which £36,000 per year is deducted to cover the costs of managing the programme).
- 3.5 Cripplegate Foundation commits up to £2,500 a year (inclusive of VAT) towards the costs of holding an annual celebration event to promote the achievements and impact of activity supported through ICCC. This helps to raise awareness of the council's role as main funder of ICCC. Cripplegate and the council will work together to plan these events and to secure in-kind contributions for venue and refreshment costs where possible.
- 3.6 A panel made up of representatives from Islington Council, Cripplegate Foundation and the local voluntary sector (nominated by Islington Community Network). Chaired by the council's Executive Member for Community Development, the panel meets three times a year to consider applications.
- 3.7 The ICCCP also considers issues of wider relevance to the local voluntary and community sector and reviews priorities annually to ensure that the programme continues to meet the needs of Islington's most vulnerable and isolated residents. In addition, the panel track application trends and identify any gaps in the programme that should be addressed.
- 3.8 In April 2017 VCS Committee decided to transfer full responsibility to ICCCP regarding confirming the awarding of grants to VCS Organisations, rather than been required to decide on recommendations made by the panel. This change has helped to streamline the decision making process and reduce delays in notifying VCS organisations of the outcome of their applications. The Council's interests are protected by having the Executive Member for Community Development as Chairperson of the ICCCP. The VCS Committee continues to receive reports to note decisions made by ICCCP in respect of awards through the programme. However, the Council has reserved the right to adjust this arrangement if deemed necessary.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications

4.1.1 The 2019-2020 VCS budget contains provision for £200,000 commitment to the Islington Council Community Chest programme. Renewing our commitment for 2019-2020, therefore not resulting in any additional budgetary pressures.

4.1.2 Cripplegate is a long-standing organisation with substantial funds available at its disposal. In the rare event that Cripplegate did have financial difficulties, we would need to clarify any financial liabilities we may have for the remaining projects. As the Council are providing a large share of the total funding (£200,000 out of £250,000), the risks would be minimal.

4.2 Legal Implications

4.2.1 The council has power to provide grants for the voluntary and community sector under the General Power of Competence set out in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. The provision of grants for the voluntary and community sector as described in this report is not subject to any other statutory provision. In providing these grants the council must ensure that it complies with its duty to secure best value (Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999).

4.3 Environmental Impact

4.3.1 One of the priorities of ICCC is 'improving the local environment and making communities safer'. Funding proposals in this report support grassroots community activity which will have a positive impact on the local environment.

4.4 Resident Impact Assessment

4.4.1 The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

4.4.2 ICCC provides resources for small community organisations, many of which are volunteer-led and wouldn't meet the criteria for funding under other programmes. It enables some of Islington's poorest residents to access community-based services and activities including through newly established groups who offer the potential for adding to existing provision locally or who can reach communities that may not otherwise be supported. Analysis of previous grants demonstrates ICCC's success at meeting the needs of groups with protected characteristics, for example people from black and minority ethnic and refugee backgrounds, young people and older people, women, and people with disabilities.

5. Conclusion

5.1 ICCC helps to nurture and sustain an innovative and resilient voluntary and community sector in Islington, in particular providing resources for smaller organisations that find it hard to access funding from other programmes. ICCC is an effective way of developing grass roots activity across the borough and building capacity in local organisations to support residents who are experiencing poverty and isolation.

5.2 Islington Council's Community Chest is an effective way of developing grass roots activity across the borough and building capacity in local organisations to support residents who are experiencing poverty and isolation. Agreeing the continuation of the council's commitment and for Cripplegate Foundation to provide valuable programme management. Continuing this successful partnership that has a direct benefit for local VCS organisations and communities it is recommended that Cripplegate Foundation continues to award on behalf of the council funding contributions.

Background papers: none

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kaya Comer-Schwartz', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz
Executive Member for Community Development

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