

Report of: Executive Member for Community Development

Meeting of:	Date	Wards
Executive	30 April 2020	All



SUBJECT: Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. The Council's current VCS Partnerships Grants programme is due to end on 31 September 2020.
- 1.2. The current grant budget totals £2,696,000 per annum.
- 1.3. Since the launch of the Council's VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020, 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.
- 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. This paper sets out details of the current programme and recommends that authorisation is given to extend the current programme within a framework set out below in light of the recent COVID 19 outbreak.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. To approve an extension to the current VCS Partnerships Grant Programme in line with the timetable detailed in Appendix 1 and authorise letters to be sent to all current grant recipients notifying them of the extension.

3. Background

- 3.1. £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 2016-2020, a programme that provides core funding to strategic VCS partners. This programme was designed around the Council's Corporate Plan 2014-2018 and the Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2016-20, and the funding provides the foundation for a strong, vibrant and independent VCS in the borough.
- 3.2. In the current programme funded organisations receive grants in the following strands (details of awards in Appendix 2):
 - Advice Strategic Partners Programme
 - Neighbourhoods Strategic Partners Programme
 - Borough-wide Strategic Partners Programme
 - Volunteering Strategic Partners Programme
 - Delivery Partners Programme
- 3.3. The outbreak of COVID 19 has been an exceptional event which is having an enormous impact on services across the borough. The VCS have been challenged with protecting staff, service users and the general public while responding to the crisis in the community. This has meant that the support the Council is providing to the sector has had to adapt acknowledging that the VCS plays a key role in our community offering vital services, often with limited resources.
- 3.4. The Council has signed up to the London Funders commitment statement joining other Local Authorities and organisations standing with the sector during this difficult time. The statement reassures organisations affected by the COVID 19 outbreak that the Council, as funders, will commit to four ways of working:
 - Adapting activities – acknowledging that agreed outcomes may not be achieved in the timeframes originally set.
 - Discussing dates – not adding pressure on organisations to meet tight reporting deadlines.
 - Financial flexibility – allowing organisations to use money differently e.g. buying equipment and covering staff sickness.
 - Listening – encouraging frank conversations between funders and grantees, with funders being supportive of their needs.

4. Extension of Current Partnerships Grants Programme 2016-2020

- 4.1 The current Partnerships Grants programme is due to end on 30 September 2020 with the new programme coming into place on 1 October 2020.
- 4.2 The recommendation is to extend the current Grants Programme for a further 3 months as detailed in the proposed timetable (Appendix 1) to end on 31 December 2020.
- 4.3. The Partnerships Grant offers core funding to organisations who are working across the borough often with those most in need of support. In this current situation many organisations are being faced with loss of income, closure of centres and changes to how they deliver activities which will have a direct impact on the financial resilience of the sector across the borough.
- 4.4. Extension of the current programme would enable funded organisations to continue to deliver vital services in the community and adapt to the uncertainty of these challenging times, offering assurance that, as funders, the Council is both supportive and flexible in its approach to the current crisis.
- 4.5. This will mean that the current grants programme will be extended from 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020 with the new Partnerships Grants Programme commencing on 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2024. This will result in a shortened grants programme of 3 years and 3 months.
- 4.6. Assessments of applications for the new Partnerships Grants Programme will continue with recommendations for decisions going to the VCS Committee on 8 September 2020.

5. Implications

5.1. Financial Implications

The Council seeks to provide funding to VCS organisations to a total of £2,696,000 per year over the financial years: 2020/21, 2021/22, 2020/23, and 2023/24. The reduction in the length of the 2020-2024 grants programme does not have an impact on the amount of money paid out in any one of the financial years as 2016-2020 programme will extend to cover the shortfall for the same amount.

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 2020-2024 programme.

It is intended that grant commitments will be protected for a four-year period although the awards will be issued with a mid-programme review as per the last grants programme.

The Council's MTFP incorporates a continuation of the scheme as proposed.

5.2 Legal Implications

The Council has power to provide grants to voluntary and community sector organisations under the general power of competence set out in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

The Voluntary and Community Sector Committee is a sub-committee of the Executive and has delegated authority, in Part 5 of the Council's Constitution to 'oversee the Council's engagement with the Islington community and voluntary sector and to ensure value for money and fairness in the allocation of Council resources to the sector' and to 'be responsible for the allocation off the Islington Community Fund including allocating the VCS Partnership Grants Programme.'

The provision of these grants is likely to be associated with state aid. The Council can provide state aid in relation to 'services of general economic interest' (SGEI) as detailed in Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Schedule 3 paragraph 4 of the Competition Act 1998.

Aid of up to €500,000 (approximately £438,000) may be provided to an organisation for SGEI so long as that organisation has not received de minimis aid from any other source in the last three fiscal years which would result in the total de minimis aid to that organisation exceeding the €500,000 (Commission Regulation No 360/2012, the "de minimis Regulation").

In the event that an organization has received other de minimis aid that takes it over the threshold of £438,000, there is an alternative regime for SGEI exemption for high value compensation that may be used. This was established by Commission Decision (2012/12/EU, the "Decision") that came into force on 31 January 2012. Should this be necessary the detailed rules on calculation of cost and record keeping and reporting set out in the Decision will need to be complied with.

5.3 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. These impacts will be considered during the award process and detailed in the VCS Committee report for the new Grants Programme. The extension of the current programme is unlikely to lead to any new environmental impacts compared to the original delivery schedule.

5.4 Resident Impact Assessment

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 and when considering proposals, the VCS Committee will take relevant equalities implications into account.

Organisations recommended for VCS grant awards are particularly focussed on serving poor and vulnerable residents and those with protected characteristics. The criteria for grant awards were drawn up specifically to support organisations that create a fairer Islington by delivering the commitments in Islington's corporate plan.

6. Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 6.1 The Council has a strong partnership with the voluntary, community and not-for-profit sector and values highly the role that local organisations play in meeting the needs of some of Islington's most disadvantaged communities.
- 6.2 Extension of the current grants programme will ensure we can continue to support the VCS during this extremely challenging time, demonstrating flexibility and providing assurance that we stand with the sector.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Proposed timetable for extension of current grant round 2016-2020
- Appendix 2: Organisations currently funded through the Partnerships Grants Programme 2016-2020

Background papers: none

Final report clearance:



Signed by: Councillor Una O'Halloran
Executive Member for Community Development

Date: 9.4.2020

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Appendix 1

Proposed timetable for extension of current grant round 2016-2020

Detail	Key Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Executive – To approve extension of current grants programme and timeframe	30 April 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Notification of extension of grant awards to existing recipientsCommunication to all those applying for the new grants programme notifying of extension of current programme for a further 3 months	May 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none">VCS Committee – Decisions on final grant awards for new Partnerships Grants Programme 2021 - 2024	8 September 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Notification of end of grant awards to existing recipientsNotification of awarding of new grants to VCS	September 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none">End of current grants programme 2016-2020	31 December 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Start of new grants programme 2021-2024	1 January 2021

VCS Organisations Funded through the VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020

Organisation	Strand	Funding Per Annum
Help on Your Doorstep	Advice	£229,000
Islington Law Centre	Advice	£460,000
Citizens Advice Bureau	Advice	£470,000
Islington People's Rights	Advice	£230,000
Evelyn Oldfield Unit - Islington BAMER Advice Alliance	Advice	£25,000
Camden LGBT Forum	Borough-wide	£25,000
Islington Pensioners Forum	Borough-wide	£10,000
Every Voice	Borough-wide	£25,000
Islington Refugee Forum	Borough-wide	£20,000
Manor Gardens Welfare Trust	Borough-wide	£25,000
Octopus Community Network Limited	Borough-wide	£35,000
Voluntary Action Islington	Borough-wide	£40,000
Disability Action Islington	Borough-wide	£40,000
Islington Faiths Forum (IFF)	Borough-wide	£25,000
All Change	Delivery	£20,000
Alone in London	Delivery	£20,000
Asian Women Lone Parent Association (AWLPA)	Delivery	£15,000
Centre 404	Delivery	£20,000
Community Language Support Services	Delivery	£20,000
Copenhagen Youth Project	Delivery	£15,000
Eritrean Community UK	Delivery	£20,000
Healthy Generations	Delivery	£5,000
Holloway Neighbourhood Group	Delivery	£20,000
IMECE Women's Centre	Delivery	£20,000
Islington Bangladeshi Association	Delivery	£20,000
Islington Centre for Refugees	Delivery	£15,000
Islington Chinese Association	Delivery	£15,000
Islington Community Theatre	Delivery	£15,000
Islington Somali Community	Delivery	£20,000
Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation	Delivery	£15,000
Light Project International	Delivery	£15,000
Little Angel Theatre	Delivery	£15,000
One True Voice	Delivery	£15,000
The Parent House	Delivery	£15,000
The Pilion Trust	Delivery	£20,000
The Stuart Low Trust	Delivery	£20,000
Tollington Parish Church	Delivery	£20,000
Caledonian Ward Neighbourhoods – Help on Your Doorstep	Neighbourhood	£27,000
Hanley Crouch Community Association Ltd	Neighbourhood	£60,000
Highbury Roundhouse	Neighbourhood	£50,000
Highbury Vale Blackstock Trust	Neighbourhood	£40,000
Hilldrop Area Community Association	Neighbourhood	£40,000
Holloway Neighbourhood Group	Neighbourhood	£40,000

Hornsey Lane	Neighbourhood	£40,000
Mildmay Community Partnership	Neighbourhood	£60,000
Muslim Welfare House	Neighbourhood	£40,000
Peel Institute	Neighbourhood	£40,000
St Luke's Parochial Trust	Neighbourhood	£60,000
Caxton House Community Centre	Neighbourhood	£40,000
Whittington Park Community Association	Neighbourhood	£60,000
Voluntary Action Islington	Volunteering	£35,000
Other – Unallocated		£10,000
	Total	£2,696,000