

**Report of: Executive Member for Homes and Communities**

Meeting of	Date	Agenda item	Wards
Voluntary and Community Sector Committee	30 January 2024		All

**SUBJECT: Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership Grants Programme 2024-2028 (Update)****1. Synopsis**

- 1.1** The council's current four-year VCS Partnership Grants programme 2021-24 is due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> 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** A new programme for the VCS Partnerships Grant 2024 -28 was launch in August 2023, and the the VCS Committee considered the recommendations for the allocation of the funds on 7 December 2023, and this report provides an update on the programme, and asks for confirmation of the awards.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** To note the update of the VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2024 -28.
- 2.2** To confirm the funding allocation of £2,711,500 per full financial year and over the programme for four years, totalling £10, 846,000, as detailed in Appendix 1.

### 3. VCS Partnership Grants 2024 -28

- 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 currently allocated through the Council's VCS Partnership Grants Programme, a programme that provides core funding to strategic VCS partners and support with our strategic priorities.
- 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** On 7 December 2023 the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee endorsed recommendations to provide funding to 51 organisations across 6 strands as detailed below:

<b>Strand</b>	<b>Number of applications funded</b>	<b>Funds allocated</b>
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

- 3.4** The VCS Partnership Grants 2024-28 totals £2,711,500 per full financial year, and £10,846,000 over the programme for four years. This exceeds the annual budget of £2,696,000 with the overspent per annum of £15,000 being allocated from the VCS Partnership Grant reserve balance.
- 3.5** Out of the 51 organisations which are being awarded (appendix 1), there are 4 organisations which exceed the total contract value of £500,000, and therefore this is deemed to be a key decision under the council's governance arrangements.
- 3.6** At the end of December 2023 all 51 organisations were sent confirmation notifications, and subject to them returning their annual work plans by 16 February 2024, their Service Level Agreements are marked to be completed by 31 March 2024, with a start date for the contracts to commence on 1 April 2024.

### 4. Monitoring arrangement

- 4.1** 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.

## 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: 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

### 5.2 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.

### **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, 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.

### **5.4 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.

## **6. Conclusions and reasons for recommendations**

- 6.1** Following consideration of the proposed grant awards at the previous VCS Committee meeting, the Committee is asked to note the update and confirm the awards made under the Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership Grants Programme. The grant awards endorsed by the VCS Committee at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December are set out at Appendix 1. Where the total value of the grant exceeds £500,000 over the four year period, this is deemed to be a Key Decision under the council's governance arrangements.


## Appendices

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

Appendix 2: **Equalities Impact Assessment**

**Background papers:** None

**Final report clearance:**



*Una O'Halloran*

**Signed by:** Una O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities **Date:** 15/01/24

Report Author: **Hinnah Gill and Pamela Aristokle**  
Tel: **07714 170190, 020 7526 4257**  
Email: [Hinnah.gill@islington.gov.uk](mailto:Hinnah.gill@islington.gov.uk)  
[Pamela.aristokle@islington.gov.uk](mailto:Pamela.aristokle@islington.gov.uk)

Financial Implications Author: **Ellena Smith**  
Tel: **020 7527 4257**  
Email: [Ellena.Smith@islington.gov.uk](mailto:Ellena.Smith@islington.gov.uk)

Legal Implications Author: **Sonal Mistry**  
Tel: **020 7527 3833**  
Email: [Sonal.Mistry@islington.gov.uk](mailto:Sonal.Mistry@islington.gov.uk)

Environmental Implications Author: **Sarah Hitchcock**  
Tel: **020 7527 5577**  
Email: [Sarah.Hitchcock@islington.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.Hitchcock@islington.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 1: LISTS OF ORGANISATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING BY STRAND

<b>Independent Advice and Navigation</b>	
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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,415,000</b>
<b>Community Hubs</b>	
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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£615,000</b>
<b>Capacity Building</b>	
Octopus Community Network	£40,000

Voluntary Action Islington	£40,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£80,000</b>
<b>Volunteering</b>	
Voluntary Action Islington	£35,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£35,000</b>
<b>Delivery</b>	
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



	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£436,500</b>
<b>Equalities and Cohesion Network</b>		
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
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£130,000</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,711,500</b>

## APPENDIX 2: EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESEMENT