



Report of: **Executive Member for Economic and Community Development**

Meeting of:	Date	Agenda item	Ward(s)
Voluntary and Community Sector Committee	25 January 2016		All

Delete as appropriate		Non-exempt
-----------------------	--	------------

## SUBJECT: Islington VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020

### 1 Synopsis

- 1.1 The voluntary sector lies at the heart of the council's ambition for a fairer Islington. The sector plays an important role in providing a voice for our most vulnerable residents, mobilising community action, promoting community cohesions and tackling the causes and effects of poverty, inequality, and social and economic exclusion.
- 1.2 Between 2011 and 2015, 49 organisations have received grant funding of £2,328,200 per annum from the VCS Grants Fund and the Advice Fund. The Council's current VCS Grants Fund and Advice Fund programmes administered by the VCS Development Team are due to end on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The overall Islington Community Fund of £3,435,000 also includes grant funding provision for Direct Rate Relief, Local Initiatives Fund, Community Festivals Fund and the VCS Rescue Fund.
- 1.3 Since August 2014, the council, in consultation with the Voluntary and Community Sector, other public sector bodies and potential future investment partners has been examining how best to continue to support the sector and its work to meet the changing needs of residents. This work included a comprehensive review of the Council's current advice services delivered in-house or by VCS organisations, and the development of new VCS strategy for Islington "*Towards a Fairer Islington: Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2016 - 2020*", attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.4 The Strategy, ratified at the meeting of the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015 confirms the council's commitment to maintaining grants programmes in order to protect vital services and enable Islington's voluntary and community sector to continue to deliver positive outcomes for residents. The document sets out the role that voluntary and community sector organisations play in helping the Council to meet its priorities, outlines the Council's approach to working with the sector, and makes a series of commitments in the areas of funding, contracting, premises and infrastructure.

- 1.5 Future arrangements for Community Chest and Local Initiatives Fund, now administered by Democratic Services and Discretionary Rate Relief administered by Corporate Finance which form part of the overall Islington Community Fund were agreed by the VCS Committee at meeting in January 2015 and March 2015.
- 1.6 The closure of the current VCS Grant Fund and Advice Fund represents an opportunity to replace the existing programmes with a new Islington VCS Partnership Grants programme aligned to the vision and aspirations set out in the VCS Strategy, the key findings of the council's Advice Review and the changed economic and social context. The proposed Grant Programme will provide grants to VCS organisations on a two plus two year basis between 2016 and 2020.
- 1.7 This report outlines proposals for the new Islington's Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020, and the allocation of the total budget of £2,456,000 (as detailed in section 5 of this report) across the five key programme strands:
- Strategic Partners – Borough-wide Infrastructure
  - Strategic Partners – Neighbourhoods
  - Delivery Partners
  - Strategic Partner – Volunteering
  - Strategic Partners – Advice

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree that the Islington Partnership Grant Programme 2016-2020 be segmented into the following five programme strands as outlined in section 4.1 of this report.
- 1) **Strategic Partners – Borough-wide Infrastructure**
  - 2) **Strategic Partners – Neighbourhood**
  - 3) **Delivery Partners**
  - 4) **Strategic Partner – Volunteering; and**
  - 5) **Strategic Partners – Advice**
- 2.2 To agree the allocation of funding across the five proposed strands as outlined in section 5.6 of this report.
- 2.3 To agree the outline outcomes for the Partnership Grants Programme as detailed in sections 4.2 to 4.6 of this report and in the Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2016-2020 attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.4 To agree the application process and time table as outlined in section 6 and attached as Appendix 2 of this report

## 3 Background

### 3.1 Towards a Fairer Islington: Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2016 – 2020

- 3.1.1 Since August 2014, and to help the council develop its thinking around future support for local voluntary organisations, the council held a series of consultation events with the Voluntary and Community Sector, other public sector bodies and potential future investment partners. This work led to the development of a new VCS strategy for Islington. *“Towards a Fairer Islington: Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2016 –*

2020". Attached as Appendix 1 of this *report*. The Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2016-2020 was ratified at VCS Committee in November 2015.

**3.1.2** A time when central government is cutting funding for public services and cutting welfare benefits for those out of work and in work, the Strategy recognises that the need for a strong, resilient, independent voluntary and community sector, able to respond to the needs of Islington's residents, is greater than ever. The strategy recognises the key role that the sector will have over the next four years in:

- Addressing and preventing deeper complex social issues and long-term challenges that affect our residents
- Supporting residents to be independent and resilient
- Promoting community cohesion and championing equality
- Supporting neighbourhoods and communities to grow
- Providing or sign-posting residents to appropriate, high quality advice and guidance

**3.1.3** In the face of budget pressures and increased competition for funding, both the council and the VCS sector will have to find new ways of working both individually and collectively if we are to meet our shared priorities. Whilst the strategy recognises the importance of providing grant funding and small grants to the VCS, it places emphasis on developing effective outcome driven partnerships with the Sector. Delivering the strategy will require a whole council approach – overseen by the Third Sector Strategic Forum and co-ordinated by the newly formed VCS Development Team.

**3.1.4** The strategy identifies four ways in which the Council will continue to support the sector and its work in meeting the needs of residents:

- **Funding:** including partnership grants and small grants programmes, a bespoke training and capacity building fund, and discretionary rate relief.
- **Commissioning and procurement:** Commissioning organisations to deliver services, and ensuring social value is included in our approach to commissioning.
- **Premises:** developing a borough-wide premises strategy that maximises the use of our buildings, and enables organisations to share premises, reduce costs and maximise income generation.
- **Working strategically with key partners:** to build the capacity of the sector, promote volunteering, support fundraising, establish networks, maximise our collective impact in neighbourhoods, and ensure a coordinated whole-Council approach to the VCS

## **3.2 Advice Fund Review**

**3.2.1** Since August 2014 Officers in consultation with other investment partners and representatives from the VCS undertook a comprehensive review of the Council's current advice services delivered in-house by Council departments or by VCS organisations commissioned or grant funded by the Council.

**3.2.2** The Council currently spends over £1.85 million on advice services in total. £445,000 is spent on our in house Imax Advice Service (a reduction of £200K from 2014/15) and £1.406 million on independent advice services delivered by VCS organisations. Of this £1,406 Million, £1.165 million is provided as core grants. Housing and Adult Social Services (HASS) also commission specialist services at a cost of £241,000. In addition, Islington's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) currently procures advice services from Camden CAB delivered in ten GP surgeries across the borough at a cost of £149,000.

- 3.2.3** The review undertaken with other investment partners and VCS organisations examined the impact of central government’s welfare reforms (Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and the overall reduction in entitlements and level of benefits) on local residents and their future advice needs, taking in to account the context of the significant financial challenges faced by the Council and the advice organisations operating in the borough.
- 3.2.4** We estimate that more than 23,000 residents will be directly affected by welfare reforms such as the introduction of Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payments and a reduction in entitlements and levels of benefits and that this will continue to drive the need for advice in the borough over the next five years.
- 3.2.5** Future Advice services must change to cope with the large numbers of residents affected by these changes. Our advice offer will need to move to a multi-disciplinary, holistic model that provides more effective interventions and tackles a range of related issues at the same time – including employment support. The emphasis should be on enabling people to become more independent and reduce the need for them to repeatedly seek advice services.

### **3.2.6 Advice Review – Summary of Key Findings**

- 3.2.6.1** Despite high spend, the review of advice services highlighted numerous inefficiencies and inconsistencies that run from the point of access through to case resolution including:
- Incoherent commissioning and duplication of contracted services by the Council and other key partners
  - Inconsistent grant awards, especially in relation to income, and premises arrangements between advice services
  - Multiple entry points, with different assessments at each point of access
  - A need to up-skill and integrate the advice offer of smaller VCS organisations into Islington’s central advice offer
  - Inconsistent data collection that makes it difficult to gauge resident need and demand across our current grant funded advice partners
  - A lack of established referral mechanisms between key parts of the advice system, which contribute to unacceptable waiting times, and which require residents to access separate services and undertake reassessment to resolve their issues.
  - A consistent inability of services to deliver value to residents on their first, second or third contact with our services, predictably taking more than four contacts to respond to customer demand.
  - A failure of existing services to work with residents holistically or to take advantage of the full range of services in the borough designed to enable residents to develop resilience and independence.

### **3.2.7 A New model for providing Advice Services**

- 3.2.7.1** Following the review, a new model for providing advice services has been established. This model will provide the framework for the ‘Advice Partners’ Grants Programme. The proposed Future Advice Fund Model is attached as Appendix 5.
- 3.2.7.2** This model aims to improve the delivery of advice services across the following areas:
- Access and outreach
  - Primary access channel

- Detailed triage service and initial advice
- Generalist advice
- Targeted specialist advice and legal support for excluded population groups
- Specialist advice and litigation

**3.2.7.3** In order to address the issues identified through the advice review, future grant funded advice partners will need to:

- Establish a consistent common approach to assessment and referral at first point of contact.
- Assess the feasibility and work towards integrating or ensuring compatibility between organisational case management and triage systems
- Address the increased volumes of demand expected to result from major Welfare Reforms within the context of reduced public sector funding
- Reduce waiting lists and times by promoting greater collaboration and effective client referrals between agencies
- Maintain an appropriate balance between ‘access and outreach’ and ‘advice delivery’
- Maintain resident access to specialist advice and litigation in key areas such as immigration, asylum and housing where appropriate
- Prioritise a generalist holistic and preventative approach that reduces future demand on services

**3.2.7.4** In order to support the proposed increase in demand for generalist advice in the wake of Welfare Reforms, the most pressing task is to increase the funding allocated to generalist support, the area of advice most likely to see an increase in demand over the coming years.

## **4 The Islington VCS Partnership Grants Programme**

**4.1** In order to realise the vision articulated in the VCS strategy and the Advice Service Review it is proposed that VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020, will award grants covering the four year period on a two plus two year basis. The Programme will comprise of the following strands:

- 1) Strategic Partners – Borough-wide Infrastructure**
- 2) Strategic Partners – Neighbourhood**
- 3) Delivery Partners**
- 4) Strategic Partner – Volunteering; and**
- 5) Strategic Partners – Advice**

### **4.2 1) Strategic Partners - Borough-wide Infrastructure**

**4.2.1** This grant programme is to support strategic borough-wide organisations with the necessary expertise and capacity to provide leadership to Islington’s voluntary and community sector and ensure the infrastructure is in place to enable the organisations improve outcomes for Islington residents. Funded organisations will be expected to:

- Provide strategic leadership for the sector
- Ensure that Islington’s voluntary and community sector has skills and knowledge needed to sustain and grow
- Ensure that Islington’s voluntary and community sector can compete for funding and is financially secure
- Ensure that Islington’s voluntary and community sector maximises the use of its resources

### **4.3 2) Strategic Partners - Neighbourhood**

**4.3.1** This grant programme will support strategic neighbourhood partners that work with other voluntary and community sector organisations and mainstream services to develop, deliver, coordinate and sustain a high quality offer of neighbourhood-based services and activities. Funded organisations will be expected to:

- Provide strategic leadership within the local community
- Coordinate a coherent and engaging neighbourhood-based offer of services and activities for local residents
- Ensure that local community facilities and assets are utilised to their full potential
- Attract external funding that can facilitate delivery in the local community

### **4.4 3) Delivery Partners**

**4.4.1** This grant programme will support organisations that work directly with residents to improve outcomes and quality of life. Grants will be awarded to organisations that have engaged with residents and communities, undertaken effective community profiling and developed high quality services or activities that meet identified need. Organisations funded under this strand will be expected to:

- Work with residents to tackle complex social issues and long-term health challenges
- Support residents to be more resilient and independent
- Promote cohesion, reduce inequalities and champion the needs of Islington's diverse communities
- Support neighbourhoods and communities to develop and grow

### **4.5 4) Strategic Partners - Volunteering Brokerage**

**4.5.1** This grant programme is to support a strategic partner to provide a borough-wide volunteering brokerage service and support Islington's VCS organisations to manage volunteers effectively. Funded organisation will be expected to:

- Provide strategic leadership to promote volunteering across Islington
- Help identify and broker high quality volunteering opportunities to support the development and resilience of Islington's VCS Sectors
- Work in partnership with the council, other public sector partners, businesses and VCS partners to help develop pathways into employment for Islington residents

### **4.6 5) Strategic Partners - Advice**

**4.6.1** This grant programme is to support registered advice and guidance organisations to apply new working practices to provide a coherent and seamless advice system that supports Islington residents. As illustrated in section 3.2 and the new Advice Model attached as Appendix 5, this programme will comprise of six distinct strands:

- Access and outreach
- Primary access channel
- Detailed triage service and initial advice
- Generalist advice
- Targeted specialist advice and legal support for excluded population groups
- Specialist advice and litigation

## 5 Overall Budget and Allocation across the Programme Strands

- 5.1** A budget of £1,050,000 for the VCS Grant Fund was agreed by the Executive at its meeting in March 2011. Through the use of an underspend in the Islington Strategic Partnership budget and other budget contributions from other corporate departments, the total spend on grant funding allocated to VCS Organisations in the VCS Grant Fund Programme rose to £1.163 million in 2015/16 (see Appendix 3).
- 5.2** By retaining the budget levels identified in 5.1 for Islington's VCS Partnership Grants Programme strands 1-4. The council is able to maintain its commitment to continue to support the VCS as outlined "Towards a Fairer Islington: Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2016 - 2020".
- 5.3** In line with plans outlined in the VCS Strategy and as part of the Advice Review, we have established a joint approach to funding independent advice services across the Council and in partnership with the CCG. This approach has enabled the Council to establish a budget of £1,406,000 per annum for the 'Strategic Partners – Advice' strand.
- 5.4** The budget for 'Strategic Partners – Advice' (strand 5), consists of £1,165 Million from the current VCS core grant budget held by VCS Development Team, £146,000 from Housing and £95,000 from Adult Social Services. Additional resources of £100K from the CCG may be secured to bolster and extend advice services in response to identified needs from September 2016. This additional funding could be utilised to support additional capacity building and or match funding for any future funding bids.
- 5.5** As a result the total budget across the five proposed strands in the VCS Partnership Grant Programme stands at £2,456,000
- 5.6** In order to meet the priorities and aspirations set out in the Council's VCS Strategy 2016-2020, it is proposed that the following levels of funding are attached to the proposed strands illustrated in figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020 - Proposed Funding profile**

VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020 Proposed Funding profile	Source	Proposed Grant Pot Range	Sum PP&C Grant Award	No. of Orgs Potentially funded	Maximum Award	Average Award	% of Strands 1-4	% of overall Pot
1 Strategic Partners - Borough Wide Infrastructure	VCS	£170,000 - £210,000	180,000	8	35,000	22500	17.1%	7.3%
2 Strategic Partner – Volunteering	VCS	£30,000-£40,000	35,000	1	35,000	35000	3.3%	1.4%
3 Strategic Partners – Neighbourhoods	VCS	£475,000-£525,000	475,000	10	50,000	47500	45.2%	19.3%
4 Delivery Partners	VCS	£320,000-£400,000	360,000	20	20,000	18000	34.3%	14.7%
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>1,050,000</b>					
	Source	Contribution to fund	Sum PP&C Grant Award	No. of Orgs Potentially	Maximum Award	Average Award	% of Strands 1-4	% of overall
5 Strategic Partners - Advice	VCS	1,165,000						
	Housing	146,000						
	HASS	95,000						
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>1,406,000</b>					
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,456,000</b>	5	£200,000-£530,000	0	100.0%	57.2%

- 5.7** The VCS Strategy places emphasis on ensuring that Islington's VCS continues to support local residents and communities by maintaining and developing activities and services that respond to the needs of local residents and our most marginalised communities. As a result it is proposed that 79.5% of the overall budget in strands 1-4 is allocated to Strategic Partner – Neighbourhoods and Delivery Partners, organisations who are often the first point of access for local residents and responsible for developing local services.
- 5.8** The remaining 20.5% of the funding is allocated to infrastructure organisations to provide high quality leadership, capacity building and volunteering support for the wider sector.
- 5.9** In order to promote greater flexibility and transparency, it is proposed that the published Grant Funding Prospectuses provide an indication of the maximum award in any strand within the programme and an indicative range of funding available in any one programme strand.
- 5.10** As outlined *“Towards a Fairer Islington: Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2016 - 2020”*, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, the VCS Development Team will work with partners to secure additional resources from a range of sources to support the work of the VCS in delivering the outcomes identified in the strategy. Any additional resources secured will be administered through a Supplementary Partnership Grants programme outside of the main VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016-2020.

## **6 Application Process**

- 6.1** The grants programme will launch on January 15<sup>th</sup> 2016, when the VCS Partnership Grants Prospectus will be published (see Appendix 5). Applications will close March 4<sup>th</sup> 2016. A series of 'Meet the VCS Development Team - Question and Answer Sessions' have been scheduled for each of the programme strands to engage VCS organisations and answer any queries about the programme and application process.
- 6.2** The application process for the VCS Partnership Grants Programme will be run on a two stage process. In the first stage, applicants will be invited to submit a written application in response to the published prospectus. The prospectus identifies a series of minimum standards that organisations must comply with and the desired outcomes for each strand which have been established in consultation with relevant officers from other corporate departments and the wider VCS.
- 6.3** In the second stage, shortlisted organisations will be invited to meet with officers from the VCS team to discuss their application in detail. Organisational visits will take place in April 2016 to support the final assessment of applications. Organisations then have an opportunity to refine their submissions before a final assessment and recommendation for funding is made.

## **7 Additional Support - Premises**

- 7.1** *“Towards a Fairer Islington: Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2016 - 2020”* recognises that the current premises arrangements for our VCS partners lack parity. As part of the Council's work on the Corporate Premises Strategy, Officers are exploring the potential to establish VCS Hubs and other co-location opportunities.



**7.2** These proposals will take time to realise and in the interim it is proposed that grants provided for organisations include a Transitional Premises Grant, commensurate with organisations' current level of spending on accommodation. This transitional grant may be tapered to incentivise organisations to maximise co-location opportunities in alternative premises.

## **8 Implications**

### **8.1 Financial implications:**

**8.2** As Highlighted in 5.1 of this report, the Council Executive agreed a budget of £1,050,000 for the VCS Grant Fund at its meeting in March 2011. Through the use of an underspend in the Islington Strategic Partnership budget and contributions from other corporate departments, the total spend on grant funding allocated to VCS Organisations in the VCS Grant Fund Programme rose to £1.163 million by 2015/16. Maintaining the budgets highlighted in 5.1 of £1,050,000 for the Partnership Grant programme will enable the council to continue to support a wide range of VCS organisations and is affordable.

**8.3** At its meeting in February 2015, Council agreed to "Use funding from Section106 to replace (not reduce) core council funding for the Voluntary sector". This has not been possible to achieve to date as S106 is often restricted to capital works in specific localities rather than revenue funding which the various grant programmes for the VCS provide. The Council was able to secure one-off funding to bridge the £340K funding gap in 2015/16 but it is unlikely to be able to do so in future years. This results in an additional budget pressure of £340,000 per annum on core council funding for the VCS which includes the proposed VCS Partnership Grants Programme, LIF, Community Chest and Community Festivals Fund and Discretionary Rate Relief. The total budget pressures identified per annum amounts to £453,000.

### **8.4 Legal Implications:**

**8.4.1** 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.

**8.4.2** 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.

**8.4.3** Aid of up to €500,000 (approximately £407,675) 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").

**8.4.4** In the event that an organization has received other de minimis aid that takes it over the threshold of £407,675, 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.

- 8.4.5** In extending the existing grant agreements as proposed in the report the total value of grant provided to each organization over the extended period needs to be calculated in order to ensure compliance with the SGEI requirements as appropriate.
- 8.4.6** The council must also ensure that it complies with its duty to secure best value (Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999)

## **8.5 Environmental Implications**

- 8.5.1** There are no environmental implications associated with this report

## **8.6 Resident Impact Assessment:**

- 8.6.1** An Equality Impact Assessment, the predecessor of RIA's was completed in 2011 to assess the impact of Islington Community Fund on different groups of residents. The impact was found to be positive. A copy of the EIA was published as an appendix to the Islington Community Fund report to Executive Committee on 17 March 2011. "Towards a Fairer Islington: Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2016 - 2020" attached as Appendix 1 of this report builds on this existing programme of work.
- 8.6.2** A primary focus of "Towards a Fairer Islington: Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2016 - 2020" which the Partnership Grants Programme aims to support the delivery of is addressing inequality, promoting community cohesion and supporting our most vulnerable residents. The funding programme priorities those organisations which primarily provide services for local residents which will respond to their needs.
- 8.6.3** 90% of the overall Partnership Grant Funding programme, (Strands 2, 3, and 5) is targeted at direct delivery organisations, those operating at a neighbourhood level and therefore most in contact with residents or advice agencies targeting those residents most in need through changes to welfare reform. The remaining 10% of the funding (Strands 1 and 4) is targeted at organisations who can provide high quality leadership, support and capacity building including volunteering in order to help funded organisations and the wider VCS to extend their reach, improve service delivery and respond to residents and communities need. The Strategic partners – Borough Wide Infrastructure, Strand 1 is also intended to support a range of organisations that cover the relevant "protected characteristics" under the Equality Act 2010.
- 8.6.4** At present 44% of all organisations funded through the current VCS grants programme (excluding advice) support BME communities exclusively. This rises to 78% of all organisations who would be eligible to apply for the Delivery Partner Strand. In addition, organisations that receive grant funding through both the VCS Grants Programme and Advice Grants Programme work with BME communities, though not exclusively. There are some notable gaps such as the absence of funding for LGBT organisations and an under representation amongst youth organisations. The new Partnership Grants Programme provides an opportunity to address any current gaps in provision, reduce duplication of services and activities and ensure that allocated funding reflects the boroughs, demographics, structural inequalities and accurately reflects current need.
- 8.6.5** As detailed in the VCS strategy, The VCS Development team will work with VCS partners, in particular the organisations funded through strands 1 and 2 to try and secure additional external funding where possible in order to strengthen the role and work of the organisations funded through the programme and the wider VCS. Similarly the corporate premises strategy aims to ensure greater parity in terms of premises arrangements for our

VCS partners ensuring that funding is targeted at service delivery rather than premises costs.

- 8.6.6** The services currently provided by advice agencies (Strand 5) are open to all residents and the current client profile demonstrates that they are well used by residents with protected characteristics covered by equalities legislation. The advice review has highlighted the opportunity to establish a more integrated system of advice and that this will be essential if we are to mitigate the impact of welfare reform for some of our most vulnerable residents. The proposals are firmly aimed at reducing waiting times and improving client access to a broader range of support within a simpler, responsive and joined-up service within the financial constraints in which we are operating.
- 8.6.7** The model avoids placing any particular resident groups at disadvantage, and explicitly aims to maintain specialist provision for those that need advice in community languages (including BSL), and specialist casework and representation in areas of law that directly impact some BME communities such as immigration and asylum. There is a pressing need for people supported by the No Recourse to Public Funds team who need access to independent casework and specialist legal support for clients looking to regularise their immigration status such as for young people leaving council care. Around one case per month is involved, but these will need to be prioritised by the provider to reduce the financial burden on the council which has to support them under the Children's Act even though their immigration status does not entitle them to housing, benefits or to apply for a student loan.

## 9 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 9.1** The current VCS Grants Fund and Advice Fund, part of the Islington Community Fund has provided valuable resources to the voluntary and community sector since 2011. The two funding programmes are scheduled to cease on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The closure of these two funding streams and the current grant funding arrangements with VCS organisations provides an opportunity for the council to think afresh about how it wants to support the sector to help deliver the priorities of the Council.
- 9.2** The recommendations in this report reflect the priorities and services outlined in “*Towards a Fairer Islington: Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy 2016 - 2020*” and the Advice Review which identifies how and where VCS organisations can add real value and support the council in taking forward its ambitions to promote a fairer Islington.

### Final report clearance:

Signed by:

Executive Member for Economic and Community Development

11<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Received by:

Head of Democratic Services

Date

Report Author: Pete Courtie (Head of Partnerships, Place and Culture)

Tel 020 7527 3021

Email Peter.courtie@islington.gov.uk

**Appendix**

- Appendix 1 Towards a Fairer Islington VCS Strategy 2016-2020.
- Appendix 2 VCS Partnership Grants Application Process and Timeframe
- Appendix 3 Grant Awards through the 2011-2015 VCS Grants Programme
- Appendix 4 Proposed Islington VCS Partnership Grants Programme Funding Allocations.
- Appendix 5 Islington Advice Model