

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE LEADER DECISION RECORD

The following decision was taken on 05 January 2021 by the Leader of the Council.

Date notified to all members: 5 January 2021

The end of the call-in period is 4:00 pm on 11 January 2021

Unless called-in, the decision can be implemented from 12 January 2021

1. **TITLE**

Investing in Grants to the Voluntary and Community Sector 2021-2022

2. **DECISION TAKEN**

Agreed that:

1. approval be given for the extension of the existing Grant Aid Strategy (2017-20) for 12 further months from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 as outlined in the report.

2. approval be given to the Grant Aid budget for the extension period of £1.437m for the financial year 2021-2022, as detailed within the report.

3. approval be given to the individual grant awards, as detailed within the report, and delegated authority be granted to the Head of Communities to enter into any such funding agreements, where no such authority exists under the Leaders Scheme of Delegations (LSOD).

4. approval be given to the re-launch of the Tackling Inequality Fund for applications, in line with the report. Where no such authority exists under the LSOD, delegated authority be granted to the Head of Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety to award and manage such grant awards in line with the report.

5. approval be given for the extension of the Lunch Club fund for a 12 month period for 2021/22, and where no authority exists under the LSOD, delegated authority be granted to the Head of Communities to agree such changes to the use of the grant by the recipient, to support changes to their activity due to the impact of Covid 19.

6. approval be given to the support for the development of a Sheffield Voluntary Sector Strategy in line with the report.

7. where no existing authority exists under the LSOD, delegated authority be granted to the Head of Communities authority to:

(i) agree the amounts, purposes and recipients of any individual grants

awarded in year from the Grant Funds including any additional sums received, returned or unpaid and to carry out such management and award and withdrawal of such funding as necessary and in line with this report.

(ii) allocate any other additional sums that may be received in year from other parts of the Council or other partners as part of the Voluntary Sector Grant Aid process to fund local voluntary sector activity.

(iii) move the budgets between the stated grant streams if an underspend is identified during the financial year or to respond to needs during Covid Recovery.

(iv) make any necessary changes to the 'outcomes and delivery' of grants for 2021/22, in line with the objectives of the report.

3. Reasons For Decision

Council officers have seen first hand that the voluntary sector has experienced an increase in demand for its 'services' during the Covid-19 pandemic and although some of the sector has been able to access short term funding to respond to emergency situations, there is a real threat that the city's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) may not be sustainable in either the short term (to cope with another wave) or the long term. Investment is therefore needed for activity to support the citizens of Sheffield and the groups and organisations that provide that support.

All existing grant recipients have stepped up to the challenge of 2020 and contributed to the city's response to Covid-19. With the onset of lockdown, staff and volunteers worked hard to establish the immediate needs of their service users, identifying vulnerable clients and offering direct support where necessary. Organisations have worked in partnership with both statutory and VCS partners to help set-up and deliver key Covid-19 support services. All have played a critical role in helping to disseminate essential public health information and key messages to our diverse communities across the city. This in parallel with the huge efforts they have taken to ensure they can continue to provide their own services in different and innovative ways now and into the future.

Extending existing arrangements for a year into 2021/22 allows us to continue to support the valuable work of the VCS, tackle inequalities in Sheffield in the most cost effective way and undertake a thorough review of the Councils investment in Grant Aid.

We wish to continue to fund the Voluntary Sector through Grant Aid whilst understanding the financial constraints. We want to show the voluntary sector we value the excellent and wide-ranging support they provide to a diverse range of Sheffield residents.

Relaunching an open pot, part of the overall Grant Aid monies, allows us to invite new organisations in the city to bid for funding to allow for innovative support to the City's diverse communities sector.

4. Alternatives Considered And Rejected

None. There has always been a danger that even for groups and organisations with

a strong organisational infrastructure, rapid growth and demand for their work can leave them vulnerable as their staffing/volunteers, skills, IT, office space and reserves are not able to cope with demand (Esme Fairbairn Foundation). The pandemic has not necessarily created new problems, but it has put pressure on the VCS in areas it was already struggling with. To cut or change grant funding support to our existing grant beneficiaries would be detrimental at this time.

5. **Any Interest Declared or Dispensation Granted**

None.

6. **Respective Director Responsible for Implementation**

Executive Director, People Services

7. **Relevant Scrutiny Committee If Decision Called In**

Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee