



## **DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES**

**6 March 2023**

#### **Report of the Interim Director – Organisation Development and Policy (ODP)**

##### **Interim Grant for the Provision of BME Community Support and Consultation Services (Cabinet Member for Health and Communities)**

#### **1. Divisions Affected**

County-wide

#### **2. Key Decision**

This is not a key decision.

#### **3. Purpose**

To seek approval to continue payments to BME Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations from the Policy and Research Voluntary Sector Grants budget from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 whilst funding is redesigned and commissioning plans are developed and implemented.

#### **4. Information and Analysis**

- 4.1 The Council currently awards five annual grants to BME VCS organisations, outlined in Appendix 1 to this report, totalling £13,316. Grants support core costs in recognition of the Authority's commitment to each group's community of interest whilst strengthening the capacity of the BME sector. An annual grant, totalling £13,224, is also paid to

Links CVS to facilitate a sustainable method of consultation and engagement with BME communities in Derbyshire through the BME Forum.

- 4.2 Since November 2019, the Council has been reviewing all grants provided to the voluntary and community sector. On 28 July 2022, Cabinet considered the findings of the consultation and proposals on the voluntary sector grants review and approved the recommendations as follows:
- The Council adopts the principle of no longer supporting the award of grant funding to any organisation in the future without a fixed or scheduled end date (save for in exceptional circumstances).
  - The Council will commission identified activity where appropriate.
  - Agree the criteria for grant assessments, to be used to determine whether funding should be secured in the future through commissioning.
- 4.3 Grant assessments undertaken in August 2022, concluded that the activity and outcomes achieved through the provision of BME community groups and consultation services should continue and be considered together in a thematic redesign of similar and interrelated activity. Reducing discrimination and tackling inequality is a key priority for the Council in its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion whilst listening to and engaging residents and making consultation accessible to seldom heard groups is also part of the Council's key values. For these reasons it was recommended that activity within the thematic review should be secured through commissioning.
- 4.4 During the next stage of the thematic review process, the current grants to BME VCS organisations will be considered together to facilitate a coherent appraisal of current provision and future requirements. A thematic approach will ensure that funding for BME consultation and BME community groups is spent effectively to secure the best outcomes, whilst maintaining positive activity and expertise built and developed over time.
- 4.5 Officers are currently working with existing groups and the wider sector through the BME forum and with the current consultation service provider, to develop a consistent commissioned approach in line with new agreed policies and processes relating to grant funding. The thematic review will be finalised by December 2023 to ensure that any changes can be communicated in advance of implementation by April 2024. The Cabinet Member for Health and Communities will receive updates on progress throughout the year.

4.6 Current funding arrangements with BME groups and Links CVS end on the 31 March 2023, and therefore, to ensure the sustainability of organisations until a future commissioned approach has been agreed and implemented, the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities is asked to consider an interim funding arrangement, until 31 March 2024 to bridge this gap. To adhere to the Council's new funding policy regarding grants, it will be made clear to providers that future funding beyond the agreed period is not guaranteed.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 Not required.

## **6. Alternative Options Considered**

6.1 Option 1 - The Council could do nothing and allow the current grants to end on 31 March 2023. This would impact those organisations currently delivering BME support activity, potentially leaving some vulnerable residents without support. It would also impact the organisation delivering consultation and engagement services and could result in the loss of valued activity that supports the Council's core values.

## **7. Implications**

7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

## **8. Background Papers**

8.1 Report to Cabinet - Voluntary and Community Sector Review 30 July 2020

8.2 Report to Cabinet – Voluntary and Community Sector Review 29 July 2021

8.3 Report to Cabinet – Voluntary and Community Sector Review 6 December 2021

8.4 Report to Cabinet – Voluntary and Community Sector Review 28 July 2022

8.5 Report to Corporate Management Team – Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review and Infrastructure Provision Update 15 November 2022

## **9. Appendices**

### 9.1 Appendix 1 – Implications

## **10. Recommendation**

That the Cabinet Member approves the continuation of payments to VCS organisations providing BME support and consultation services for a twelve- month period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 as set out in this report.

## **11. Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

11.1 The assessments completed for the BME activity determined that future funding should be secured through commissioning. The commissioning process will not be in place by 1 April 2023.

11.2 Extending the funding for a finite period will bridge the gap between the current position ending and the development of alternative arrangements. The interim arrangement would align to the agreed grant policies and processes, with no expectation that funding would continue beyond the stated bridging period. This would allow time for a fair and robust process to be put in place by no later than 31 December 2023, for funding to be made by no later than 1 April 2024.

## **12. Is it necessary to waive the call in period?**

12.1 No

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**Implications****Financial**

1.1 There is no movement in departmental expenditure. The budget remains the same with no further costs incurred.

1.2 Grant funding table:

<b>BME support activity</b>	<b>Grant 2023-2024 (£'s)</b>
Asian Association	3,744
Chesterfield African Caribbean Community Association	3,744
Chesterfield Muslim Association	1,821
Derbyshire Chinese Welfare Association	2,186
Muslim Welfare Association	1,821
Consultation and Engagement (Links CVS)	13,224
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,540</b>

1.3 All the proposed allocations are based on funding agreed in respect of the 2023-24 year and can be met from existing Policy and Research budgets.

**Legal**

2.1 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.

2.2 The Council's Financial Regulations state that grants below £0.100m require Cabinet Member authorisation.

2.3 The Council's standard grant agreement shall be used to set out the terms and conditions for which the grant is made. This includes conditions for clawback of funding in certain circumstances and states that the Council is not liable for any employment liabilities.

**Human Resources**

3.1 The voluntary and community sector organisations currently funded by the Council as part of this report are independent of the County Council and therefore there are no human resources considerations.

- 3.2 As funding is redesigned or withdrawn, then there could be a specific HR impact on the individual organisations which were fully ascertained through the review process. There may also be structural and resourcing implications for internal services which will be fully scoped as commissioning plans progress.

## **Information Technology**

- 4.1 There are no Information Technology considerations associated with this report.

## **Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 The Council must meet statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Act sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat individuals. The Council has due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty which sets both general and specific duties to which public bodies are legally bound. In relation to the general duty this means having 'due regard' to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between all people
- Foster good relations between people, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding. BME grants within this theme support the Council to meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Activity within this theme supports the Council to meet these duties and deliver on its equality, diversity and inclusion ambitions as set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Derbyshire. Continuation of this funding through a new, commissioned approach will support the Council to continue to meet its legal duty.

- 5.3 Where grants are commissioned, the Council believes that this would have a positive effect through providing a more stable funding platform by which organisations can grow and enhance their offer.
- 5.4 Where funding is proposed to be thematically redesigned, it is anticipated that this would have an overall beneficial impact on Derbyshire residents as it would put in place a longer term funding approach and emphasis on better outcomes with the funding provided.
- 5.5 As commissioning plans are executed, individual exit plans will be developed for affected organisations to manage the potential loss of grant funding or for the preparation of commissioning arrangements.

This would also ensure individual beneficiaries impacted are supported through any transition.

- 5.6 With any change, it is anticipated that regardless of the outcome, there will be a level of anxiety in respect of the recommissioning of funding, especially as some of these groups have been long standing and provide activities to vulnerable groups. The Council will work closely with organisations ensure that plans and timeframes are clear and any transitions can be managed as effectively as possible.

### **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 6.1 Making an interim grant this will assist those organisations to retain volunteers and staff, who otherwise may begin to look for alternative opportunities or employment. This would ensure continuity of service for those people supported which in turn would reduce dependency on other services. As it is expected to have longer term funding arrangements in place in the new process, this will assist with staff retention for those successful providers.

### **Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)**

- 7.1 In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: human resources, health, environmental, transport, and crime and disorder considerations.