

Equality Impact Analysis Record Form 2024 – Derbyshire County Council

Introduction and context

Policy/ Service under development/ review	Discretionary Grant Funding – BME Support and Consultation			
Department/ Corporate	Corporate Services and Transformation			
Lead officer	Rob Lowe			
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Date analysis commenced:	28/05/24	Date completed:	24/10/24	Date approved:

Part 1. About the service/ policy or function and the reason for the EIA

<p>What is the purpose of the service, policy or function?</p> <p>The Council has supported the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Derbyshire for a significant period of time, helping to ensure that local people can continue to contribute to and improve their communities.</p> <p>The Council supports local people and communities in many different ways, including by providing services directly and by commissioning other organisations (including VCS organisations) to provide them, either on its own or in partnership with other key stakeholders. Another way in which the Council supports local people and communities is by providing funding to organisations (usually VCS organisations) by way of grants.</p>
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All Council departments utilise the sector to support the delivery of its services, to some extent. The VCS has been a key partner and stakeholder for the Council in developing and delivering community-based activities and delivering commissioned services.

Whilst many voluntary organisations and charities operate effectively without any assistance, some groups have required varying levels of support in order to establish themselves, grow and thrive. VCS organisations use a variety of business and delivery models to provide activities and services in a community setting. Some organisations have mixed funding models, some have mixed delivery models and some have both, however some groups exist solely for one purpose and/or rely heavily on grant funding to maintain their activity or service provision.

In broad terms, a grant is a gift of funds which is provided by the Council to an organisation, usually to enable it to engage in a specific, pre-agreed activity. The activity usually involves the provision of goods or services to known or unknown third parties (such as members of the public or members of a particular group or community). Generally, the recipient of a grant is not under an obligation to provide specific goods or services, although a grant might be subject to conditions, such as a condition which allows the Council to claw back any part of the grant which has not been spent on the specific activity for which it was intended or if the grant has been incorrectly used.

Twenty VCS grants are currently funded from the CST budget. The funding supports the core business of a number of VCS organisations and their activities. Organisations have received uncontested direct award annual grants for a significant period of time (some for up to 30 years), meaning that grant recipients have not had to apply for this funding or take part in a competitive award process. Funding is generally provided for the same activity each year and is awarded to the same organisations. Grants from the CST budget are grouped into three main areas of support/activity which are core VCS infrastructure, BME community support and consultation and specialist advice.

Six separate equality impact assessments have been completed for each area of funding due to the variety of services and activity funded and the level of feedback received to ensure that the impact has been fully considered. All six equality impact assessments have been considered alongside one another to allow for the cumulative impact to be understood.

BME Consultation and Community Support

In 2006 a gap in Council engagement was identified and the Council asked Links CVS to develop a sustainable method for consulting and engaging with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in Derbyshire. Since then, Links VCS has received an annual grant, totalling £13,224 to facilitate a BME Forum for the county. The Forum aims to enable engagement between the Council and partner agencies so that minority communities can offer feedback on a range of consultations, policies and service developments.

The Council also awards five annual grants to BME VCS organisations, 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.

Each grant recipient is subject to a set of funding conditions and a service level agreement which outlines a number of basic requirements for groups such as attending and engaging with the BME forum and submitting regular monitoring information about their activity and the communities they work with. However, it has been identified that not all groups have fulfilled these requirements. For example two currently funded groups do not attend the BME forum and not all groups submit regular monitoring data. Conversely there are a number of groups that do not receive support funding from the Council but are active participants in the BME Forum.

BME Consultation and Community Support (CST)	Grant per annum (£)	Purpose of the grant
Asian Association	3,744	Support core costs in recognition of the authority's commitment to the Association's community of interest and to strengthen the capacity of the BME sector within the county of Derbyshire.
Chesterfield African Caribbean Community Association	3,744	
Chesterfield Muslim Association	1,821	
Derbyshire Chinese Welfare Association	2,186	
Muslim Welfare Association	1,821	
Links CVS	13,224	Support the facilitation of a sustainable method of consultation and engagement with BME communities in Derbyshire.

Are there any proposals to change these?

Financial position of the Council

The Council is facing significant financial challenges. The Council has a legal obligation to deliver a balanced budget and a projected overspend for 2024-25 led the Council to introduce a series of financial controls including controls over non-essential spend. This position has significantly changed the context within which the Council allocates its budget and funds the provision of services.

It is anticipated that there will be further budget challenges in future years and all areas of the Council are required to deliver in year financial savings and propose further areas for budget savings. The current financial position and requirement to make additional

efficiencies and budget savings means that activity which directly contributes to the delivery of the Council's statutory duties within a balanced budget, must now be prioritised.

As the Council does not have a specific statutory duty to provide the activity relating to these grants, this spend has been identified as discretionary and therefore non-essential.

It was proposed that given the context of the financial position of the Council and the requirement to focus available resources on meeting the Council's legal and statutory obligations, that VCS discretionary grant funding is ceased and no longer provided to current grant recipients beyond the current award end date of 31 March 2025. This includes grant funding for the provision of BME consultation and community support.

A period of consultation was authorised by Cabinet from 28 May 2024 to 20 August 2024 to help the Council understand the impact of the proposal which will affect a number of organisations.

Culminative effect of other Proposals submitted to for consideration by Cabinet

There are a number of areas within the discretionary grants proposal and other proposals to be considered by Cabinet which may impact on those who are affected as part of this equality impact assessment. These include:

- Proposed redesign of residential care and day opportunities for older people (Adult Care) – to be decided by Cabinet on 14 November 2024
- Proposed redesign of day opportunities and short breaks for people with a Learning Disability and/or Autism – to be decided by Cabinet on 14 November 2024
- Future Options for the Derbyshire Healthy Homes Project for Adult Social Care & Health 2024 – to be decided by Cabinet on 14 November 2024
- Options to deliver design services for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) 2024 – to be decided by Cabinet on 5 December 2024.

Proposed changes in these areas could have an impact on other providers and people who may use multiple services.

The Cabinet papers and EIA outlining those proposals and assessing their impact needs to be considered and understood by decision makers. The proposals set out would cease Local Authority grant funding support for befriending services, social activities and luncheon clubs, specialist advice services, VCS infrastructure and grants to support two organisations that provide activities for people with a learning disability. Mitigation is proposed but consultation feedback has expressed concern about the ongoing viability of some activity.

The proposals for the redesign of Day Opportunities for older people and for those with a learning disability and/or who are autistic both recommend the reduction of building based day opportunities and whilst there are fewer people accessing the learning disability service than before the simultaneous implementation of recommendations, if approved, would result in increased demand on the Community

Connector Service. Should the outcome of the Discretionary Grants proposal result in the ceasing of funding, whilst the full impact upon the community based services impacted is not certain, there would be an inevitable collective impact upon older people across these communities and it is acknowledged that, in some cases and localities, these proposals may result in a reduction of available services which may have been included in consideration of alternative support for people using the day services affected by these proposals.

Whilst the proposals for the redesign of the Healthy Home Project provides for a continuation of the service by the Council the recommendations, if approved, would result in the eligibility criteria being strictly enforced and an adapted low level support approach being implemented to access central government financial grant support monies.

The proposals for the redesign of the Disability Design Team which, in part, supports the delivery of the Disabilities Facilities Grants (DFGs) (this aspect of the service being provided at the Council's discretion), acknowledges the service supports the major adaptation projects exceeding the DFG financial threshold that the County Council provides 'top up' funding for, and outlines future options for working collaboratively with the responsible District/ Borough Council in respect of DFG projects.

The EIA's supporting each proposal and recommendation identify both positive and negative impacts across the same protected characteristics. There may be a culminative impact due to all these proposals, if implemented, and consideration of each proposal should not be made in isolation.

It should be noted that anyone can request an assessment of need under the Care Act at any time and if found to have eligible needs, these will be met through an appropriate support planning process.

Have previous changes been made due to budget savings or restructuring and did they have any adverse impact upon your customers or employees etc? Please describe any potential cumulative impact or impact arising out of other proposals elsewhere to ensure this EIA alerts decision makers to the full context for any proposals now being made.

In 2022 the Council completed a review of all VCS grant funding including a public consultation lasting 12 weeks and subsequently adopted the principle of no longer supporting the award of grant funding to any organisation without a fixed or scheduled end date.

This has ensured all organisations in receipt of Council funding understand that funding is finite in nature and therefore should not have expectations that further grant funding would be available or continue, following the current award allocation. This change meant that the Council could commission or decommission activities in the future where appropriate.

All groups receiving funding were told that grants would cease, and the council would instead commission services where required.

Due to financial pressures the commissioning pathway was not implemented and the grants system has remained in operation.

Part 2. Supporting evidence about impact

What is presently known about how the current service or policy impacts upon people with a protected characteristic, people from disadvantaged communities, armed forces personnel and other groups outlined in the Council's guidance for EIAs?

BME communities in Derbyshire

The 2021 Census indicates that there are now 50,300 residents in the county from BME backgrounds, representing 6.3% of the total population locally. While there has been a significant growth in the BME population in Derbyshire with 17,600 more BME residents than ten years ago, this is less than the national average of 26.5%.

The biggest contribution to the BME population locally is from the census category Other White, which comprises 20,900 residents, representing 2.6% of the total population and 41.6% of the BME population. This is followed by Asian/Asian British which, with 11,700 residents, accounts for 1.5% of the overall population, then the mixed ethnic group, with 10,900 residents, representing 1.4% of the county's population, and then the black British, Caribbean or African community which makes up 0.5% of the total population with 4,100 residents. The remaining BME communities are from the census category Other ethnic groups.

Across the county, South Derbyshire (9.9%) has the largest BME population equating to 10,600 residents. This is followed by Erewash (7.5%), Chesterfield (6.9%) and Bolsover (6.7%). North-East Derbyshire (4.3%) and Derbyshire Dales (4.5%) have the smallest BME populations.

There is extensive evidence of the health, social and economic inequalities people from BME backgrounds experience including discrimination and racism, barriers in accessing jobs and services, over-representation in the criminal justice system and health inequalities.

BME Forum

The Forum has developed to deliver a range of activity which aims to build capacity and resilience in the BME community sector and enable feedback to the Council and relevant stakeholders on policy and service developments. The BME forum is now attended by 12 organisations:

- Asian Association of Chesterfield and N Derbyshire
- Chesterfield Muslim Association

- African and Caribbean Community Association
- Chesterfield and NE Derbyshire Muslim Women's Group
- Chesterfield Filipino Community Association
- Chesterfield Senegambia Association
- Chesterfield and NE Derbyshire Chinese Elders Group
- Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group
- North Derbyshire Refugee Support Group
- Polonia Chesterfield
- Verba: Ukrainian Social Group of Chesterfield, Derbyshire
- Long Eaton Indian Association

In addition to coordinating the forum, Links CVS also receives funding to provide both VCS infrastructure support and BME VCS Infrastructure support which are also impacted by the discretionary grants proposal (both grants are included in a separate EIA on infrastructure funding).

As well as paying for any costs associated with the forum, Links CVS use a proportion of the BME consultation grant to provide attendees with financial compensation for attendance at meetings (around £12.50p/hr), to cover basic expenses. Links CVS have indicated that this approach has been successful in encouraging attendance and has enabled groups to engage more effectively with the forum. Links CVS also use the grant to fund specific projects to address gaps in provision/support as identified by the BME Forum. For example, the grant has been used to fund a freelance engagement link worker from a refugee background, a member of the Ukrainian community to ensure members are not marginalised and a worker from the Chinese Elders Group. This has helped to ensure that consultation and engagement with the forum reflects the diversity within BME communities locally.

Monitoring information shows that the forum has been used to facilitate discussions about a range of topics including:

- Hate Crime reporting
- Your Council Your Voice consultation
- Alzheimer's services and support
- Coproduction of Public Health Resources
- Translation of materials for the Derbyshire Safeguarding Adults Board
- Multi agency project to develop sitting service for BME carers
- Pilot of BME youth forum with Childrens Services
- Insight to inform the development of drugs, alcohol and smoking support services
- Engagement to address gaps in end of life care for BME communities
- Improving the flow of information on employment and skills to support inclusive recruitment in the economy.

BME community Support

Alongside funding to support the BME forum, the Council pays five BME community groups an annual grant to support 'core costs in recognition of the Council's commitment to each groups community interest and to strengthen the capacity of the BME sector'. The grants do not support specific activity or services and groups do not provide a detailed breakdown of how funding is allocated. Whilst current monitoring information is limited, past engagement indicates that funding contributes to core running costs such as premises and other running costs.

Since these grants were initiated, there have been changes in the BME community sector and the wider BME population, which has created gaps, duplication and an inequitable allocation of BME community funding across the County.

Each group is subject to a short service level agreement and grant agreement, which states that organisations in receipt of funding are expected to attend the BME forum and engage with the Council when required. While three of the currently funded groups are active participants at the forum, two groups (Muslim Welfare Association and Derbyshire Chinese Welfare Association) do not attend or engage with the forum. Nine groups involved in the forum do not receive funding from the Council.

Impact

It is likely that ceasing discretionary grant funding could impact on funded community groups (as outlined in this report) and the people who access the support, activities and services they provide. There could also be an impact on unfunded groups if the proposal results in changes to the BME forum. In addition to impacting on consultation and engagement activity, the forum has played a role in building community resilience, providing opportunity for the development of close relationships between different participating BME organisations.

Due to the nature of BME consultation funding, it is likely that the proposal would impact on the Council's ability to access BME communities when developing/changing services or carrying out consultation, if the BME forum were to change or cease as a result of a cessation of funding. Monitoring indicates that Council departments and other stakeholders regularly use the forum to engage and consult with BME communities on a range of issues including when policies or services are being initiated or changed. This means that there could also be an indirect impact on wider stakeholders. Monitoring indicates that stakeholders that have recently used the forum include Joined up Care Derbyshire, Public Health, Community Safety, ASCH, the ICB and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

We also know through monitoring and engagement that much of the activity offered by funded community groups supports older BME community members. Some of this activity is also linked to other areas impacted by the proposal to cease discretionary grant funding, such as luncheon clubs (subject to a separate EIA). Groups have also reported that they have a significant role in signposting residents to Council and partner services to help overcome language and cultural barriers that might otherwise prevent people accessing the support they require.

Whilst there is understanding that BME residents including those from other protected groups such as older people could be impacted, it is important to acknowledge that the BME population in Derbyshire and their needs may have changed significantly since the funding was initiated more than 20 years ago and that current funding arrangements and allocations were identified as inequitable and were likely to change following the outcome of the 2022 VCS grants review, which identified these grants for thematic review and development of a future commissioned approach.

Please detail the sources for the above information

Analysis has been completed through a range of methods and techniques:

- Council grant funding database of current awards
- Current and previous monitoring reports
- Ongoing discussions with VCS grant recipients
- Organisations' annual accounts
- Discussions with other key stakeholders
- Engagement meetings with current grant recipients
- Previous consultation feedback
- Organisations' websites

Is consultation planned/ has consultation take place? If Yes, what is this telling us about the likely impact on the protected characteristic and other communities/ groups etc.?

The Council carried out a 12-week public consultation between 28 May 2024 and 20 August 2024.

The consultation included the following elements:

- Identification of people, groups, organisations and other stakeholders who should be informed of and included in the proposed consultation.
- Consultation meetings.
- Online information and survey, including easy read format.
- Information and survey available in hard copy or alternative language / format, on request.
- Equality Impact Assessment.
- Report to Cabinet containing the consultation findings and recommendations.

The purpose of the consultation was to:

- Gain an understanding of the impact of ceasing discretionary grant funding from relevant stakeholders.
- Enable stakeholders to outline how the policy will impact residents.
- Enable stakeholders to offer viable alternatives within the parameters of the current position for how impact can be mitigated.

Consultation findings

Between 28 May and 20 August, stakeholders were able to complete a questionnaire online or by post regarding the consultation, with alternative formats available on request. Questionnaires were also available for stakeholders to take from listening events and could be sent to providers on request.

The questionnaire had 23 questions in total, with 4 questions being open text boxes allowing respondents to supply their own views/comments, 4 questions being tick boxes to determine mass views on the proposals, 4 voluntary questions to understand the different demographics, and 9 questions to identify why they were responding i.e. on behalf of an organisation, a resident.

A range of content, thematic and narrative analysis techniques were used to analyse comments made by respondents to each of the open text box questions, to identify the impact on groups with protected characteristics and other stakeholders. Quantitative data was analysed systematically to provide statistical analysis in relation to respondents' views.

The council received 1374 responses to the consultation questionnaire (online & written) of which 102 were in relation to BME funding. The majority of these responses were from people associated with one of the BME community groups that attend the BME forum.

- All 102 of the responses directly relating to BME grants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. Comments received indicated that key concerns of respondents included the closure of BME community groups, the loss or reduction of community support, a loss of coordination, support and information sharing through the BME forum and a reduction in culturally appropriate communications, support and activity.
- 98 of the 102 respondents indicated that they or someone they support would be affected by the proposal.
- 98 of the 102 respondents indicated that they believed that specific communities would be affected by the proposal.
- BME grant respondents most commonly identified the following communities as being impacted by the proposal in relation to BME consultation and community grants:
 - VCS BME community groups that access support, advice and guidance through the BME forum.
 - BME residents particularly in relation to language and cultural barriers, barriers to accessing alternative services, those at risk of social isolation, refugees and immigrants.
 - 'Vulnerable' people including those less able to advocate for themselves due to cultural or language barriers.
 - Older people from the BME communities, who often access the support provided.

- 97 BME grant respondents indicated that the organisation they support would be affected by the proposal. Comments indicated that they could be impacted in a number of ways including:
 - Possible closure of groups and community facilities.
 - Reduction in capacity and community activity.
 - Loss of information sharing and advice through the BME forum.
 - Loss of partnership working and communication with the Council.
- Eight of the BME grant respondents referred to the need for specialist carers support and provision through the BME sitting services (developed and facilitated by the BME forum in partnership with DCC and partners).
- 11 BME grant respondents indicated that they considered themselves disabled.
- 21 of the 102 respondents were aged 65 or over.
- Of the 102 respondents:
 - 59 identified themselves as 'other ethnic group'.
 - 22 identified themselves as 'Black, Black British Caribbean or African'.
 - Nine identified themselves as 'Asian or Asian British'.
 - Four identified themselves as 'White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British'.

BME Forum

- BME Forum is valued and well attended but could close as a result of the proposal.
- There would be a significant gap in residents accessing information on service provisions, which may further marginalise these groups, further deteriorate their health and wellbeing, increase structural racial inequality and social integration.
- BME community members frequently faced racially motivated hate crime, discrimination and social injustice. Losing the Forum would mean losing a vital source of solidarity for the groups who attend, increasing social fragmentation and a weakening of community bonds across Derbyshire.
- The Council risked becoming disconnected from these BME communities, leading to policies and services that did not reflect their cultural needs and concerns.
- There would be a significant loss of cultural competence within the Council and reduced engagement levels would impact the diversity of voices in public consultations, community initiatives, and local governance.
- The loss of engagement with BME communities would not only affect immediate service delivery but could also have long-term repercussions, making it challenging for the Council to rebuild relationships and regain the trust and participation of these communities in the future.

BME community support

- Loss of funding could impact community activity, ability to support BME residents and in some cases could result in the closure of groups.

- The ability of groups to secure additional funding could be impacted by the loss of stable recurring funding.
- A potential loss of preventative activity with BME residents, translation services and signposting including assistance to access statutory services could have a negative impact on public sector organisations.
- Groups suggested it was likely that there would be significant impacts on older BME residents resulting in a decline in mental and physical health.
- It would become increasingly difficult for groups to plan effectively without stable funding.
- Current support is well used and demand from communities is growing.

Listening events/engagement

In addition to being invited to take part in the formal consultation, currently funded groups were offered a meeting with Council officers to discuss the proposal, consultation and decision-making processes and provide feedback. Officers also attended the BME forum to discuss the proposals.

Meetings took place with ACCA and the Asian Association of Chesterfield and NE Derbyshire. From these discussions several possible key impacts were identified including:

- Loss of contribution to core funding which has enabled groups to build activity and support over time in response to the changing needs of communities.
- Could impact community activity, ability to support BME residents and capacity to engage with the forum.
- The ability of groups to secure additional funding could be impacted by the loss of stable recurring funding.
- A potential indirect loss of preventative activity with BME residents, translation services and signposting including assistance to access statutory services could have a negative impact on public sector organisations.
- Groups suggested it was likely that there would be significant impacts on older BME residents resulting in a decline in mental and physical health.
- The Asian Association's support to several other BME groups through the provision of meeting spaces and facilities could be impacted.
- ACCA indicated that they would be at risk of closure as a result of a cessation of funding.

Discussions at the BME forum also identified the following possible key impacts:

- Members reported that the Forum promotes equality, diversity and inclusion.
- BME groups indicated that they value and rely on the Forum as a useful source of information and advice and learn about DCC services.
- The forum provides meaningful engagement with DCC and provides a platform for sharing issues and barriers to accessing services with the Council.

- Cessation of funding could impact on the availability of culturally appropriate support for BME residents both for directly funded groups and those groups that access support through the Forum.
- Some attendees suggested groups could close as a result of the proposal.
- Groups reported that their members could be left without support and described current activity as a 'lifeline' to some vulnerable or elderly residents.

Links CVS submitted a report on behalf of members of the BME Forum, for consideration as part of the consultation. The report highlighted the following impacts:

- Estimates that the 12 groups that attend the forum support approximately 6,000 BME residents.
- Loss of service information through the forum could result in further marginalisation of BME residents and a negative impact on their health and wellbeing.
- If the forum were to stop it could mean:
 - No representation of the needs of BME communities in local decision-making processes.
 - Loss of activity that fosters community cohesion.
 - End of cultural awareness raising activity potentially leading to increased social tensions.
 - More difficult for the Council to engage and consult with hard to reach BME groups.
 - Reduced ability for BME groups to effectively advocate for their communities.
- Loss of trust and relationship with BME communities developed over time.

Financial sustainability

A key challenge in identifying the potential impact of the proposal is ascertaining the extent to which activity and support would change if a cessation of funding was implemented, for organisations in receipt of core business funding. Whilst the impact of changes to funding provided for a specific project, activity or service can be easily articulated, it becomes more complex when funding supports core operating costs. Whilst monitoring and engagement with groups has given a good understanding of the activity, services and support offered by groups, it is still not always clear how they spend the funding provided. This in turn makes it more challenging to identify opportunities for possible mitigation of impact.

Each VCS organisation is structured differently, with different levels of activity and provision.

The core business of Links CVS is to deliver VCS infrastructure support to both BME organisations and the wider sector. This funding is also impacted by the proposal to cease discretionary grant funding therefore there is likely to be a significant financial impact on Links CVS and the support and activity they provide. Accounts show that when combined with infrastructure funding, Council funding made up 29% of Links CVS' total income in 2022-23. Alone, BME consultation funding as outlined in this report accounts for 6% of Links total income.

Limited information is available regarding the financial arrangements for BME community organisations. While some organisations have more diverse funding sources delivering a range of projects and charged activity, others are more reliant on regular grant funding to sustain activity. Whilst consultation respondents were concerned about the loss of services, capacity to support cultural activities and sustainability of some organisations, it should not be assumed that ceasing funding would mean that all activity associated with that funding will stop entirely or the organisation receiving funding will close (although this is clearly a possibility). Of the 12 groups that regularly attend BME forum meetings, only three receive direct grant funding.

Ending discretionary grants is therefore likely to affect the sustainability of some groups and organisations unless alternative sources of funding can be secured, however it should not be assumed that all groups would close or that activity would stop/reduce.

When suggesting alternatives to the proposal 79 consultation respondents suggested that the VCS could diversify funding to increase sustainability and reduce reliance on Council grants. Suggestions included applying for grants from other funders, encouraging business to contribute to the sector, charging for services and asking for donations.

Impact on protected characteristic groups

BME

73/1374 responses highlighted BME residents as being impacted by the proposals.

Consultation responses made clear that the BME forum is valued by those that access it and that it supports cohesion, collaboration and information sharing amongst the groups and communities that attend and the Council. Responses and discussions at the BME forum and with funded groups suggested a significant impact on BME residents, particularly those who are older, socially isolated or generally more 'vulnerable'. Many respondents were concerned that they or someone they know may become more isolated if the proposal was implemented and that there would be negative impacts on physical and mental health for those that access or rely on provision.

Respondents said they would feel 'unsupported', they would 'struggle' and they would have 'nowhere to go' if the proposal resulted in changes to provision of the BME forum that impacted community support or events. There were also references to 'negative consequences' for BME residents, particularly in relation to those facing language and cultural barriers or trying to adapt to life in the UK.

Some respondents were also concerned about the loss of community support and activities from some of the organisations that receive funding, and about the impact this would have on them and their communities. Grants were described as being 'crucial' in supporting core costs, enabling groups to deliver a range of support including befriending, interpretation and translation services, signposting, luncheon clubs, cultural activities and information and advice.

Older People

407 of the 1374 responses highlighted older people as being most likely to be impacted by the proposals.

Older people were also identified by consultation respondents as being significantly impacted in direct relation to BME community support. Many respondents also referenced vulnerable, isolated and disadvantaged people in relation to older residents. One group that attends the BME forum (Chesterfield and NE Derbyshire Chinese Elders Group) specifically works with older residents. They could be impacted by a reduction in support and opportunities to engage through the BME forum.

Impact on the Council, partners and other stakeholders

Consultation responses indicate that if funding were to end, the BME Forum would also cease. The Forum is well used across the Council when departments are seeking to develop or make changes to service arrangements or needs arise to engage with BME communities about specific issues. If the forum were not available, consultation respondents indicated that there could be an impact on the Council's ability to engage with hard to reach communities and that services could become less accessible to these communities as a result.

Where there is alignment with DCC services, partners and other stakeholders also use the forum to engage BME residents on a range of issues and develop services and initiatives to improve outcomes for BME residents relevant to their area of interest e.g. health. Partners and stakeholders could therefore be impacted if the Forum were to cease or change as a result of the proposal. While stakeholders often provide short term project or support funding for defined pieces of work, Links CVS has reported that core funding that allows this work to be commissioned, is difficult to secure.

It may be possible to work with departments and partners who currently access BME communities through the forum to explore a more sustainable funding model that recognises the value and contribution of the Forum in providing a mechanism to inform communities about service access and also consult and gather feedback on how services and policies can reflect cultural need.

If there is insufficient information to determine likely impact, what information is needed and how will it be obtained in the future?

The information gathered is sufficient to understand the likely impact of the proposal to end discretionary grants to VCS infrastructure support and those that access it.

The actual impacts of the proposal will only be known following a cabinet decision and the potential changes being implemented.

Part 3. Analysing and assessing the impact by equality Protected Characteristic group

Use the information, customer feedback and other evidence to determine upon whom the policy/ service and any proposed changes will impact upon and how, highlighting where these have a negative, positive or no impact, including where this could constitute unfair treatment, limit access, or result in additional inequality or disadvantage, hardship, or exclusion.

For any identified negative potential impact, you must provide details of any action or options which could mitigate against this, and in serious cases, you should highlight where the Council would be advised not to proceed with a new or changing policy or service, including any proposals which are being considered.

Please use your action plan towards the rear of this document to record the action and the monitoring that will take place to deliver or identify appropriate mitigation.

<i>Protected Characteristic or Group</i>	<i>Positive impact</i>	<i>Negative impact</i>	<i>No impact</i>
All protected characteristics		<p>BME groups provide support to their respective BME communities and much of their activity supports cross cutting groups within this, such as older people.</p> <p>The BME forum coordinates support and consultation and engagement activity for the benefit of BME residents.</p> <p>People from protected characteristic groups could experience a reduction in available support.</p>	
(Please describe)	Feedback from one BME groups indicated that they offer support to all residents who need it, therefore all protected characteristics could access support.		

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
Age		<p>Older people were identified in the consultation as a group that would be significantly negatively impacted by the proposed cessation of discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>Consultation feedback indicates that BME groups provide support across their communities which includes activity that supports older people.</p> <p>Some older people and/or young people could be impacted by a reduction in BME support and activity.</p> <p>The Chinese Elders Group attends the BME forum and supports older people. They could experience a loss of information and support through the BME forum.</p> <p>Consultation and engagement activity through the forum often relates to services that may impact older residents.</p>	
(Please describe)	407/1374 (29.6%) consultation respondents identified older people as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.		

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
	<p>80/1374 (5.8%) consultation respondents identified young people including families with young children as being impacted.</p> <p>The 2021 Census informs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 175,687 people aged over 65 years old residing in Derbyshire which equates to 22.1% of the total population. • 415,689 people aged between 25 and 64 years old which equates to 52.3% of the total population. • 77,100 people aged between 15 and 24 years old which equates to 9.7% of the total population. • 87,846 people aged between 5 and 16 years old which equates to 11.1% of the total population. • 38,314 people aged between 0 and 4 years old which equates to 4.8% of the total population. <p>Derbyshire has an older population when compared to the national averages.</p>		
Disability	<p>People with a disability were identified in the consultation as a group that would be negatively impacted by the proposed cessation of discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>BME support is provided across communities which may include support to those living with a disability.</p>		
(Please describe)	<p>208/1374 (15.1%) consultation respondents identified people living with a disability as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>11/102 (10.8%) respondents in relation to BME funding identified themselves as living with a disability.</p> <p>The consultation also identified an impact on people with a learning disability or other neurodivergent people, especially those with conditions such as autism. These impacts were largely related to other discretionary</p>		

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
	<p>grants impacted by the proposal (BWE and OVOF), and this was not identified as a significant area of impact for BME grants either through engagement meetings or through the consultation.</p> <p>The 2021 Census informs that there are 159,439 people in Derbyshire who are considered disabled under the Equality Act, this equates to 20.1% of the population.</p>		
Gender re-assignment			<p>Activity does not specifically support activity to this group.</p> <p>Consultation responses did not reference gender re-assignment.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that people considering, undergoing or having completed gender re-assignment will be specifically impacted by the proposal.</p>
(Please describe)	There is no available data for people considering, undergoing or have completed gender re-assignment.		
Marriage & civil partnership¹			<p>Activity does not specifically support people from this group.</p> <p>Marriage and civil partnership was not highlighted in the consultation as a group that would be impacted</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that people from this group will be specifically impacted by the proposal.</p>

¹ Under EA 2010 – someone in a CP must not be treated less favourably than a married person

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
(Please describe)	<p>The 2021 Census informs us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 311,143 people in Derbyshire are married which equates to 47.2% of the Derbyshire population, which is higher than the English average of 44.5% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Of these marriages 99.5% of people are married to someone of the opposite sex ○ 0.5% of people are married to someone of the same sex • 1,237 people in Derbyshire are in a registered civil partnership which equates to 0.2% which aligns with the English average of 0.2% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Of these civil partnerships, 31.4% of people are in a civil partnership with someone of the opposite sex ○ 68.6% people are in a civil partnership with someone of the same sex 		
Pregnancy & maternity		<p>Perinatal and maternal outcomes are known to be worse for BME women.</p> <p>The forum is currently informing the shaping perinatal services locally.</p>	<p>Activity does not specifically support people from this group.</p> <p>This group was not highlighted in the consultation as a group that would be impacted.</p>
(Please describe)	There is no available data for pregnancy and maternity.		
Race & ethnicity		<p>BME groups and the BME forum provide targeted support to people from BME communities.</p> <p>BME residents could experience a reduction in support available from funded groups and activity coordinated through the BME forum.</p> <p>BME community groups could be impacted by a loss of information</p>	

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
		<p>and advice through the BME forum.</p> <p>BME Consultation mechanism could end meaning policies and services may not reflect the needs of BME residents. This could result in services being less accessible to BME residents.</p>	
(Please describe)	<p>74/1374 (5.4%) respondents identified BME residents as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>The 2021 census informs us that in Derbyshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 744,378 people identify as White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British which equates to 93.7% of the population which is significantly higher than the English average of 73.5%. • 50,256 people identify as Black and minority ethnic which equates to 6.3% of the Derbyshire population which 20.2% lower than the English average. • 20,918 people identify as White other which equates to 1.5% of the total population which is 8.1% lower than the English average. • 11,670 people identify as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh which equates to 2.6% of the population which is lower than the English average of 7.5%. • 10,851 people identify as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups which equates to 0.5% of the population which is 3.7% lower than the English average. • 4,085 people identify as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African. • 2,732 people identify as other ethnic group which equates to 0.3% of the Derbyshire population. 		
Religion/ belief²		Two Muslim community groups receive funding, as some communities identify both by their religion and their ethnicity.	

² Under EA 2010 – must also consider non-religious belief

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
		It is possible that people in this group could experience a reduction in community support and advice and coordination through the BME forum.	
(Please describe)	<p>The 2021 Census informs us that around 395,200 of Derbyshire's population identified as having a religion, representing just under half (49.8%) of residents. This is significantly below the national average of 57.3%. Christianity is the religion given by most people locally, at 47.8% of the population, followed by Muslim and 'Other religion', both at 0.5%.</p> <p>The 2021 census informs us that in Derbyshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 380,102 people identify as Christian. • 354,595 people identify as having no religion. • 3,657 people identify as Muslim. • 3,375 people identify as Sikh. • 2,071 people identify as Hindu. • 1,904 people identify as Buddhist. • 385 people identify as Jewish. 		
Sex or gender³		<p>Chesterfield and North-East Derbyshire Muslim Women's Group attend the BME forum.</p> <p>This group could experience a reduction in support through the BME forum.</p>	
(Please describe)	Chesterfield and North-East Muslim Women's Group are not directly funded by the grants outlined in this report.		

³ Sex and gender can be used at different times depending upon whether you are referring to the EA 2010 and the different duties which exist

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
	<p>0.26% of Derbyshire’s population aged over 16 identified their gender identity as; different from registered at birth, trans male, trans female or non-binary.</p> <p>29 of 102 (28.4%) people who responded to the consultation questionnaire in relation to BME funding, identified themselves as male.</p> <p>59 of 102 (57.8%) people who responded to the consultation questionnaire in relation to BME funding, identified themselves as female.</p>		
Sexual orientation			<p>Activity does not specifically support people based on this characteristic.</p> <p>This groups was not highlighted in the consultation as a group that would be significantly impacted.</p> <p>It is expected that there will be minimal impact for this protected characteristic.</p>
(Please describe)	<p>4/1374 (0.3%) respondents identified LGBTQ residents as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>Derbyshire LGBTQ+ works across Derbyshire as well as Derby City.</p> <p>The 2021 census informs us that nearly 16,600 Derbyshire residents are a part of the LGBTQ+ community, representing 2.5% of the Derbyshire population, below the national average of 3.2%. In Derbyshire, Gay or Lesbian residents make up a large portion of the county’s LGBTQ+ community (8,800 residents), followed by Bisexual residents (6,500).</p>		
Human Rights		There is the potential for some VCS groups to close or reduce activity as a result of this	

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
		decision. Some VCS groups provide an opportunity for social activity within their local communities. There could be a negative impact for some people in terms of their relationships with other individuals who use/support the relevant VCS service. Article 8 Human Rights Act 1998 could be engaged due to the potential impact on the ability to establish and develop relationships with other human beings and the outside world.	
(Please describe)	There is no available data for human rights.		
Armed Forces personnel/ households			<p>Activity does not specifically support people based on armed forces membership.</p> <p>Armed forces personnel/households was highlighted by one respondent in the consultation as a group that would be impacted, therefore it is expected that there will be minimal impact for this protected characteristic.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that people from this group would be specifically impacted by the proposal.</p>
(Please describe)	1/1374 (0.1%) respondents identified residents belonging to the armed forces community as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.		

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
	<p>Support is being developed to support through the Armed Forces Covenant rather than via funding provision.</p> <p>The 2021 census informs that in Derbyshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20,850 people have previously served in the UK armed forces. • 5,050 people have previously served in the UK reserve armed forces. • 1,167 people have previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces. 		
Users of British Sign Languages			<p>Activity does not specifically support people based on this characteristic.</p> <p>Hearing impairment was highlighted by one respondent in the consultation as a group that would be impacted, therefore it is expected that there will be minimal impact for this protected characteristic.</p> <p>This is not known to be a significant issue in relation to the grants outlined.</p>
(Please describe)	<p>1/1374 (0.1%) respondents identified residents with hearing loss as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>Rather than grant funding this provision the Council has arrangements with Action Deafness via another commissioning arrangement to provide interpreting and support to the deaf community.</p>		
DCC Employees		<p>Collaborative working with VCS in the future may become more difficult for DCC employees.</p> <p>Consultation feedback suggested that the demand for statutory services may increase if alternative services reduce,</p>	

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
		therefore some DCC employees may be impacted by an increase in workload.	
(Please describe)			
Community and Voluntary sector organisations working with protected characteristic groups		<p>BME groups and Links CVS could experience a cessation of funding as outlined in this report leading to possible reductions in activity or closure.</p> <p>Some impacts may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closure of the organisation. • A reduction in volume of service. • Potential staff redundancies • A reduction in the number of volunteers. <p>Feedback from BME community groups indicated that they could experience a reduction/end to activity and support through the BME forum.</p>	
(Please describe)	110/1374 respondents identified the VCS as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.		
Socio-economic/ financial inclusion/ deprived		VCS often provide support to residents on a low income.	

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
communities/ Thriving communities		<p>The consultation identifies those on a low income, including people in receipt of benefits and the unemployed as being impacted by the proposal.</p> <p>People from this group may experience a reduction in available BME support.</p> <p>People with low incomes/unemployed may not be able to access activity should charging for services be introduced.</p> <p>The forum has undertaken work on cost of living to provide a link to Council support.</p>	
(Please describe)	85/1374 (6.2%) consultation respondents identified residents living on a low income including people in receipt of benefits and the unemployed, as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.		
Carers (Unpaid and paid)		<p>Feedback indicated that some BME carers could experience a reduction in support through the BME forum.</p> <p>Wider activity such as the BME Sitting Service developed by the BME forum and partners to support BME carers could be impacted.</p>	

Protected Characteristic or Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
		BME carers could experience a reduction in available support.	
(Please describe)	<p>22/1374 (1.6%) respondents highlighted carers as a group that would be impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding</p> <p>The 2021 Census tells us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 678,889 people provide no unpaid care which equates to 89.8% of the Derbyshire population • 28,580 people provide 9 hours or less unpaid care a week which equates to 3.8% of the Derbyshire population • 10,620 people provide 10 to 19 hours of unpaid care a week which equates to 1.4% of the Derbyshire population • 6,963 people provide 20 to 34 hours of unpaid care a week which equates to 0.9% of the Derbyshire population • 7,824 people provide 35 to 49 hours of unpaid care a week which equates to 1% of the Derbyshire population • 23,446 people provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week which equates to 3.1% of the Derbyshire population. <p>Across Derbyshire, 10.2% (77,500) of residents provide some level of unpaid care, higher than the England average of 8.8%. The proportion of people providing unpaid care across Derbyshire has fallen by 1.9% since 2011, this is a steeper decline than England, where the fall was 1.4%.</p>		

Part 4. Summary of main findings

The Council has grant funded BME consultation and community support grants for a significant number of years. Links CVS receive an annual grant to provide a sustainable method for consulting and engaging BME residents through the BME forum and five community groups receive grants to 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.

These grants have been awarded to organisations annually without a competitive awards process. In 2022 the Council completed a review of all VCS grant funding and adopted the principle of no longer supporting the award of grant funding to any organisation without a fixed or scheduled end date which meant that the Council could commission or decommission activities in the future where appropriate. Although work to investigate a new commissioned approach was instigated, other operational pressures meant that a new approach was not implemented.

Since completion of the review, the Council has faced significant financial challenges and in order to set a balanced budget, activity which directly contributes to the delivery of the Council's statutory duties, must be prioritised. A number of grants including BME consultation and community support were identified as discretionary, resulting in a 12 week public consultation on the proposal to cease discretionary grant funding.

The proposal means that each organisation currently in receipt of a grant would experience a change in future. If implemented the proposal would mean that funding to BME community groups and Links CVS as detailed in this report would cease in March 2025. Links CVS also receive grants for VCS infrastructure and general infrastructure support under the proposal.

Feedback received through the consultation along with information collected through a listening event and engagement meetings has identified a number of possible key impacts affecting funded organisations, internal and external stakeholders and residents which organisations support both directly and indirectly.

Key impacts for BME consultation through the BME forum include:

- BME forum could end as a result of the proposal with a loss of information sharing, support and collaboration.
- It could result in further marginalisation of BME groups, negative impacts on health and wellbeing, increased social fragmentation and increase structural racial inequality.
- The Council could become disconnected from BME communities, leading to policies and services that do not reflect their cultural needs and concerns.
- Possible reduced engagement levels which could impact the diversity of voices in public consultations, community initiatives, and local governance.
- Challenging for the Council to rebuild relationships and regain the trust and participation of these communities in the future.

Key impacts for BME community support include:

- Reduced ability to support the needs of BME residents and in some cases could result in closure.
- The ability of groups to secure additional funding and plan effectively could be impacted by the loss of stable recurring funding.
- A potential loss of preventative activity with BME residents, translation services and signposting including assistance to access statutory services could have a negative impact on public sector organisations.
- Significant impacts on older BME residents resulting in a possible decline in mental and physical health.

The consultation also identified a number of possible impacts on protected characteristic groups, the most significant of which include:

- BME residents including those that access activity coordinated by the forum and the community groups it supports.
- Older (predominantly BME) residents that received support from BME community groups.
- Two Muslim groups would be impacted by a cessation of community support funding (some communities identify both by their religion and their ethnicity).
- One women's BME group attend the forum so might be impacted by any change to the current operation of the forum.

Funded organisations have told us that the proposal would impact on their organisations, resulting in possible redundancies and reductions in capacity, services and support. Whilst one group expressed concern about long-term sustainability, it is not possible for officers to accurately determine the future sustainability of individual organisations given the number of variables, including monies held in reserves or the current financial climate. They have also told us that the proposal would impact on the Council's ability to share information and receive feedback through the BME forum, ultimately resulting in a long term impact which could result in future policies and services which may not reflect the needs of these communities.

The Council remains committed to maintaining partnerships with VCS organisations and will continue to collaborate wherever possible and promote any commissioning opportunities that arise.

Are there any recommendations for changes to proposals?

There are no recommendations for changes to the proposal. The Council does however intend to retain £25,000 of funding in the CST budget to support the Council's equality objective.

Part 5. Proposed Equality Action Plan

Please complete this Action Plan to outline any mitigation you intend to take. Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact/ mitigate	Timescale and responsibility	Monitoring and review arrangements
Groups that are at risk of closure/financial instability	<p>Groups are able to diversify funding - a number of other grants are available from different organisations including National Lottery.</p> <p>Groups are able to introduce or increase charges to access some services.</p> <p>Groups can consider using funds from alternative sources and/or reserves and whilst they consider how to alter their operating mode.</p> <p>Signpost groups to national organisations that provide funding advice and support such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Council for Voluntary Sector Organisations (NCVO) • The Charity Commission. 	Following cabinet decision.	Officers to work with organisations and partners to promote positive transitions.
Impact on sustainable engagement with BME communities.	The Council intends to retain £25,000 of funding within the CST budget to support the Council's equality objective to	Following cabinet decision.	Officers to work with organisations to promote positive transitions.

Please complete this Action Plan to outline any mitigation you intend to take. Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact/ mitigate	Timescale and responsibility	Monitoring and review arrangements
	<p>understand diverse communities.</p> <p>Continue to carry out public consultation and engagement with all Derbyshire residents.</p> <p>Continue to ensure Council consultation and engagement is open and accessible to all communities.</p> <p>Continue to explore engagement opportunities which support the Council to meet its objectives as detailed in the strategic approach to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion.</p>		
<p>Groups at risk of being unable to access support and guidance through the BME forum.</p>	<p>National sources of support and guidance for the voluntary sector are available, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Council for Voluntary Sector Organisations (NCVO) • The Charity Commission. • Directory of Social Change 	<p>Following cabinet decision.</p>	<p>Officers to work with organisations and partners to promote positive transitions.</p>

Please complete this Action Plan to outline any mitigation you intend to take. Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact/ mitigate	Timescale and responsibility	Monitoring and review arrangements
	Local infrastructure provision not funded by the Council is available (ICB funded provision).		

Date and outcome of any Cabinet/ Cabinet Member or Council Report to which this was attached and their decision: