

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL  
CABINET  
7<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

**REPORT TITLE: VCS Grants Prospectus – Allocation of Bristol Impact Fund 2017-2021**

**Ward(s) affected by this report: All**

**Strategic Director:** Alison Comley,  
Neighbourhoods Strategic Director

**Report author:** Jane Houben, Investment & Grants Manager

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**Purpose of the report:**

To approve the detail of investment of £3.29m grant funding to the Voluntary Community Sector, aligned to the challenges and principles set out in the Voluntary Sector Prospectus.

**RECOMMENDATION for the Mayor's approval:**

- 1. That the detail of the allocations for investing the Bristol Impact Fund is approved for the next 4 years, including the small grants allocations (2 years) and Medium/Large allocations (4 years).**
- 2. That the Mayor approves the decommissioning process for those organisations previously funded through council grant investment.**
- 3. That the Mayor approves the reserved allocation for the next 4 years to address specific equalities-led voice and influence commissioning within the Bristol Impact Fund**

## **1. Summary of the proposal:**

The City Council invests significant funding into the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to deliver services which meet many different needs across the city. Following the Council's agreement to use the VCS Grants Prospectus as our strategic guide to voluntary and community sector investment, officers and external partners have now completed the process to allocate the £3.29m funding in grants to VCS organisations.

This report lays out the process which has informed the allocation of small, medium and large Bristol Impact Fund grants, the proposed allocations themselves, and acknowledges where previously funded organisations will be decommissioned.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council made a decision on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2016 to agree the VCS Grants Prospectus (included in Background Papers). This strategic guide to our investment over the next 4 years aligns Council grant streams to form a new Bristol Impact Fund which has a clear focus on reducing disadvantage and inequality, improving health and wellbeing and increasing resilience in the city. The purpose of this is to ensure that the Council's investment makes the maximum impact on the major challenges faced by the city, that the people that need it most get the best value and the maximum benefit and that where possible, other city funders can recognise where they may be able to complement our funding to address common issues. It was also a key aim to open up Bristol City Council's grant investment as an opportunity to new organisations, where their work is focussed on the aims of the Prospectus. This has been achieved and we are recommending funding to a number of organisations never previously funded by the Council. The VCS Grants Prospectus can be found at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/32598/Grant+funding+prospectus+colour+version>
- 2.2 In designing this strategic approach it was essential to work collaboratively with the voluntary and community sector, as outlined in the previous report. Their work, close to communities all across the city, brought insight into the needs and issues faced by some of our less advantaged communities, as well as ways of working together to tackle these issues. We used a co-design process to develop the Prospectus and the Bristol Impact Fund and our aim has been to continue this approach by inviting external partners into the allocations process. We

were joined by: Quartet Community Foundation, Locality, Bristol Ageing Better, Big Lottery (South West), and Meadows Consulting (Sandra Meadows, advisor on Black and Minority Ethnic VCS).

These partners, along with senior commissioning officers in Bristol City Council, brought different expertise, knowledge of Bristol and the sector, and knowledge of grant giving, which provided the process with the broadest possible understanding and intelligence against which to make our recommendations. We thank them for their commitment and contribution to this work.

### **3. Equalities Impact:**

The purpose of developing the VCS Grants Prospectus was to shape our grant investment to specifically address disadvantage and inequality within the city. During the process it has been vitally important to have an ongoing Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), developing alongside the process. This was iterated as a result of the VCS consultation and as part of the allocations process.

In summary, the developing EqIA has:

- Informed our approach to setting the initial key challenges in the Prospectus and the ways of working
- Informed our approach to consultation, particularly in identifying the support needs both of equality led organisations and those working with and to equality groups to prepare for the new grants process. This included questions to organisations about their support needs to access the new grants process.
- Resulted in us running 7 equalities-specific consultation sessions and collating feedback from these to inform us about intended and unintended impacts for different equalities groups. This led to the commissioning of a piece of work with a number of BME-led organisations, one strand of which was looking at how the Prospectus can be developed to support BME organisations.
- Changed and informed our approach to how we intend to facilitate our Public Sector Equalities Duty.
- Changed and informed our approach to the application processes, particularly for the small grant.
- Formed part of the framework for our allocation considerations.

The full EqIA is at Appendix A.

#### **4. The Bristol Impact Fund Allocation Process:**

- 4.1 There has been a rigorous process to appraise the applications received for the Bristol Impact Fund. The following key steps were the core of the process:
- a. Eligibility Assessment: Organisational assessments to verify eligibility, check governance and financial risk– done by the internal grants team and finance officer.
  - b. Technical Appraisal: appraisal of proposals by relevant BCC subject matter experts, (10 specialist technical appraisal panels), against the considerations published in the grant guidance focused on three main areas: Impact, Quality and Value for Money. Only those proposals that met these criteria to the agreed and published level were presented to the Allocations Advisory Panel for discussion.
  - c. Allocations Advisory panel: This panel was made up of senior BCC officers and external partners, bringing expertise in grant awarding and in depth knowledge of and expertise in the voluntary community sector in the city. This panel followed an innovative process (detail of the process is at Appendix B) to ensure that we achieve a balance in allocating grant to proposals across:
    - i. Impact against the key challenges outlined in the Prospectus
    - ii. Beneficiary groups (including communities of interest)
    - iii. Geographic spreadTo achieve this, the panel used a series of mapping tools to visualise what impact their decisions were having on the above 3 issues, to check for balance across the city, communities and challenges. The final version of this tool is included at Appendix D.

#### **5. Impact**

- 5.1 As a result of this process we are recommending that the Council grant funds 70 organisations to deliver 49 proposals. A list of the 20 small grant proposals and the 29 medium and large grant proposals is included at Appendix C.
- 5.2 This recommendation will deliver a strong positive impact with activities delivered across the city, both city-wide and specifically targeted at particular wards. The geographic spread of the allocations, shown in the

map at Appendix D (page 7), gives coverage both to the inner city wards, and those on the outer rim of the city in the North and South. The Panel has worked to ensure that all deprived wards will benefit from some relevant activity and we will ask those organisations which have identified a number of wards to focus their work on those have the highest levels of disadvantage and the least targeted activity (the outer estates in the North and South of the city)

5.3 The Panel has considered how the activities will address the range of our Key Challenges. Many of the proposals will address several Key Challenges, demonstrating the connectivity between the challenges, all of which address disadvantage and inequality. To clarify this we have identified what we believe to be the primary and secondary Key Challenge for each proposal so that we can show grant spend against each (Appendix D, page 4). The Panel has also considered how the mix of proposals will target a range of beneficiary groups and equalities communities. The main beneficiary groups targeted are people with mental health difficulties, low income families, unemployed people, single or lone parents and refugees and asylum seekers. In terms of Equalities groups we have worked to ensure that we fund a range of proposals to benefit people across all Protected Characteristics. We have provided detail about the impact across equalities groups, beneficiaries, our key challenges and the city in Appendix D and in our Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix A.

5.4 In order to grant fund as many proposals and organisations as possible to achieve the right balance of investment, we have not been able to offer the full amount requested by Medium and Large grant applicants. We looked across all the applications to consider how and where we could make a considered reduced offer. This included:

- specific recommendations for reduction where relevant: for example, where part of a proposal would not directly address a key challenge or duplicated other activity or provision
- looking at the financial level of the applications, proposing proportionate 10%, 15% or 20% reductions across the piece, within which organisations would be able to scale their activity to the offer.

This will mean some negotiated changes to the outputs and level of delivery for some of the proposals but will enable us to support a larger number of organisations offering important and relevant services to communities. Organisations will of course also be able to use our contribution as a lever to draw in other investment.

## **6. Who & what we will cease funding & mitigations**

- 6.1 Of the 70 VCS organisations currently funded through grants streams being pooled to form the Bristol Impact Fund (BIF):
- 6 organisations did not apply for a BIF grant
  - 9 organisations applied for a small grant (one organisation applied for both a small and a medium/large grant). We are recommending allocating grant funding to 5 of these organisations.
  - 56 organisations applied for one or more medium/large grants. Of these -
    - 1 organisation withdrew their grant application.
    - 3 organisations did not pass the Part 1 eligibility checks.
    - 14 organisations did not pass each of the Impact, Quality and Value for Money elements of the Part 2 Technical Appraisals and their proposals were not considered by the Allocations Advisory Panel.
    - 39 organisations were part of at least one proposal that passed the Stage 2 Technical Appraisal process and were considered by the Allocations Advisory Panel.
    - We are recommending allocating grant funding to 34 of these organisations.
- 6.2 Our grant funding relationship with 27 organisations will end on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017. The impact of ending the grants to these organisations is outlined in our Equality Impact Assessment. Each organisation will be offered a Decommissioning Impact Assessment to be undertaken with the relevant council officer before the grant ends. This process aims to flag up any risks for the organisation and service users and to mitigate these where possible through providing advice and information.
- 6.3 The VCS Grants Prospectus was designed to refocus our grant to address the City's current challenges and open the opportunity for funding to a wider group of organisations. We were therefore aware that this was likely to result in changes to the activities we grant fund, and we regularly raised this issue with the VCS during all of our consultation work over the past 12 months. This does not mean that those unsuccessful grant applications were necessarily poor or not of value – but that their proposals were not prioritised in the context of seeking balance across beneficiaries, geography and key challenges as outlined in the Prospectus.
- 6.4 We will be ending our funding relationship with these organisations and want to thank them for their previously grant funded activities, the work

they all do to benefit their communities and the value they bring to the city through their positive contributions as part of the local voluntary and community sector. Where possible, we will also be enabling these organisations to connect with other funders in the city, with whom we have been working on this process, and where there may be potential for some funding opportunities.

## **7. Commissioning Voice & Influence:**

- 7.1 Many of the applications being recommended for funding include an explicit element of Voice & Influence for their service users, or their localities. This is a very helpful development through the new focus on ways of working in the Prospectus.
- 7.2 However, one of the key aims of the Prospectus was to strengthen the voice and influence of protected characteristic (equalities) communities across the city. This has not been delivered effectively across all of the key equalities areas through the applications process on this occasion, (we are only making a funding recommendation for one application, Bristol Women's Voice), and because this is a vital issue for the city, we have looked at an alternative way of ensuring this work is delivered.
- 7.3 We have reserved £140,000 annual investment to enable us to fund the work on Voice & Influence that we need in the city. We are proposing to begin a focused commissioning process led by The Cabinet lead for Neighbourhoods and senior officers to deliver increased reach and voice of equalities communities in the city. We will aim to complete this process within the time frame of the wider Prospectus allocations. If this is not deliverable, we will seek to continue to support the individual existing Voice and Influence organisations until the process is complete.

## **8. Financial Information: Budget and allocations:**

- 8.1 We have a total Bristol Impact Fund budget for 2017/18 of £3,289,120 based on our identified 2016/17 allocated grant streams. In order to financially manage the Fund we intend to create a 'pooled' service and to move the existing budgets under the new service. This will be used to finance the Bristol Impact Fund, making grant payments to the voluntary and community sector over the next four years.
- 8.2 The Bristol Impact Fund grants will start on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017. We are recommending that:
- 20 small grant proposals are funded at a total cost of £156,510 in year 1 and in year 2. These grants will end on 30th June 2019. We intend to re-run the small grants round, opening the allocated **£156,510** fund

for new applications for grants starting on 01/07/2019.

- 50 organisations delivering 29 medium and large grant proposals are funded at a total cost of **£2,982,600** in year 1.
- **£740,410** of this is allocated to fund local community transport proposals and these allocations may be subject to the agreement of the new West of England Combined Authority (WoECA) in its transitional year. We recommend that grant agreements for this work are put in place for 1 year for the affected organisations with the potential to extend, subject to the agreement of WoECA, until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- All other medium and large grants will end on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- A fund of £140,000 is retained to commission equalities voice and influence work until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

### 8.3 Grant Allocations and savings

£2,982,600	Medium/large grant allocations
£ 156,510	Small grant allocations
£ 140,000	Retained to fund Equalities Voice & Influence
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<b>£3,279,110</b>	<b>Total allocation</b>

- 8.4 Bristol Impact Fund grants will be for a period of four years and a significant proportion (with a value of **£2.24m**), **will have a tapered reduction of 10% from the initial value in year 3 and 15% from the initial value in year 4**. This means that the revenue budget profile of the Bristol Impact Fund would be as per the table below.

**Table 1: Revenue budget profile of the Bristol Impact Fund**

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Small grants not subject to taper	£0.16m	£0.16m	£0.16m	£0.16m
Retained Equalities Voice & Influence fund	£0.14m	£0.14m	£0.14m	£0.14m
Community Transport related grants transferred to WoECA	£0.74m	<i>£0.74m subject to WoECA agreement</i>	<i>£0.74m subject to WoECA agreement</i>	<i>£0.74m subject to WoECA agreement</i>
Medium & large grants subject to taper	£2.24m	£2.24m	£2.02m	£1.91m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3.28m</b>	<b>£3.28m</b>	<b>£3.06m</b>	<b>£2.95m</b>
Annual reduction	-	-	£0.22m	£0.11m



## **9. Timeline**

- 9.1 Bristol Impact Fund grants will start on 1 July 2017. Existing grants were due to end on 31 March 2017 and as agreed by Cabinet in August 2016 we have extended grant funding to existing recipients by three months to 30 June 2017.
- 9.2 All organisations will be informed of Cabinet's allocations decisions and the outcome of their application(s) by the 31 March 2017. This will give them 3 months' notice as required by the Bristol Compact.

### **Consultation and scrutiny input:**

#### **a. Internal consultation:**

This work has been developed with the Cabinet lead for Neighbourhoods and senior BCC commissioning leads. The BCC officers have a lead on all the grants amalgamated through the VCS Grants Prospectus from all directorates, and they have worked alongside the external stakeholders in the co-design group. Therefore consultation and shaping has been ongoing throughout the process.

Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission was actively engaged with this development work throughout the process with input at November 2014, July 2015 (testing the vision and values) in January 2016 (as part of the consultation).

Place Scrutiny Commission was engaged in the consultation in January 2016 regarding the inclusion of community transport grants in the pooled fund.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods has also been involved in the developing allocations process for both small and medium/large grants throughout the process, since June 2016.

#### **b. External consultation:**

The process of designing the VCS Prospectus and the resulting Bristol Impact Fund has itself been a 14 month co-design process with key stakeholders in the voluntary sector.

There was then a three-month consultation period on the draft

Prospectus and Grants Process with the Voluntary Community Sector, co-designed and co-led with Voscur, as the Councils VCS Infrastructure organisation. 265 local people were consulted face-to-face through 14 events and meetings. In total over 170 organisations engaged in the consultation via these events, electronic survey, small group meetings. There was also targeted consultation with Equalities led organisations across all protected characteristics.

The process was amended in line with some of the key findings from the consultation process including:

- Designing these grants processes differently so that the allocations decisions are not based exclusively on scores but on how we can achieve the best mix and balance of services or activities for the city to best meet the aims of the Prospectus. This means that it is not a purely competitive process.
- Considering the focus of other funders and the services the council provides and commissions. We decided to focus the Bristol Impact Fund on early intervention/early help because we think this is where this grant funding can make the biggest impact. We also invited key external funders to join our Allocations Advisory Panel to bring this expertise into our decision making.
- Including tapers for our medium and large grants (which will be 4 year grants) but not for our small grants (which will be 2 year grants). Funded organisations will have time to plan for the reductions in years 3 and 4 once funding has been agreed – and we are proposing these reductions at a percentage level that should mean organisations can realistically seek alternative funding, reduce costs through new ways of working or scale down their service delivery.
- Setting out the challenges faced by people in the city based on the revised Joint Strategic Needs Assessment with information about needs in the city. We co-designed our approach which tells people what our aims are (our impacts) and what our focus is (addressing five key challenges). We invited VCS organisations to apply telling us how they want to address the challenges.

**Other options considered:**  
**Risk management / assessment:**

**FIGURE 1**

**The risks associated with the implementation of the (subject) decision :**

No.	RISK  Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report	INHERENT RISK		RISK CONTROL MEASURES  Mitigation (i.e. controls) and Evaluation (i.e. effectiveness of mitigation).	CURRENT RISK		RISK OWNER
		(Before controls)			(After controls)		
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	
1	The strategic focus is likely to result in changes to the current patterns of investment, which may lead to currently funded organisation being unsuccessful in their applications. Some of these organisations may find themselves without other funding and therefore ceasing their services.	High	Med	Extensive consultation has provided 12 months of notice of change. All groups on current funding have also received direct communications advising them that their current funding has been extended and will end on 03 June 2017. Voscur as our funded infrastructure organisation will be offering support to groups to help them diversify their funding income	Med	Med	Di Robinson
2	There is a risk of significant political lobbying from unsuccessful organisations, which has potential to undermine the strategic process.	High	High	Politicians across the parties have been engaged in this development since its' inception and the work has been through Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Asst. Mayors during its development. This level of engagement and transparency should provide confidence to Cabinet that an appropriate process has been followed.	High	Med	Di Robinson
3	There is a risk that we do not achieve the right mix and balance of provision across the issues to be tackled, across geographic areas and across communities if we apply a system that only considers the best written applications and a risk that we may be challenged if we do not.	High	High	We have designed a process that does not allocate against application scores but which considers the best mix of fundable applications against key challenges, beneficiaries and geographic areas. We are making this process and our considerations clear in order to reduce the risk of challenge.	High	Med	Di Robinson

**FIGURE 2**

**The risks associated with not implementing the (subject) decision:**

No.	RISK  Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report	INHERENT RISK		RISK CONTROL MEASURES  Mitigation (i.e. controls) and Evaluation (i.e. effectiveness of mitigation).	CURRENT RISK		RISK OWNER
		(Before controls)			(After controls)		
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	
1	That the grant investment for BCC does not focus on the highest level of need for the city, and therefore mitigating against some of the impacts of the wider budget reductions for the next 4 years.	High	High	The evidence based used for developing the Prospectus and the co-design process involving key VCS partners will provide confidence that the focus of the investment is right. The ongoing involvement from Cabinet and Scrutiny Commissions in developing this work, coupled with the level and commitment to consultation and informing the wider VCS will provide the confidence to support the findings.	High	High	Di Robinson

**Public sector equality duties:**

Many of the council's VCS funding agreements help the council to deliver their public sector equalities duty as contained within section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- \* eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- \* advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- \* foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

The VCS Grants Prospectus and the Bristol Impact Fund grant allocations are highly relevant to the 3 parts of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) because the fund is focussed on reducing disadvantage and inequality. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) demonstrates how equalities have been factored in to allocation of Bristol Impact Fund grants as well as demonstrating mitigation of the impact of decommissioning.

We have given due regard to all 3 duties in the design and execution of the process by ensuring the following:

- the co-design of the VCS Grants Prospectus and Bristol Impact Fund based on consultation feedback
- an open grants process with information and support available from Voscur
- a nine week period to apply for grant
- objective assessment criteria that appraised evidence of need and impact (theory of change), quality and value for money – without favouring existing groups over new groups or vice versa
- working with the Allocations Advisory Panel to make funding recommendations
- adherence to Bristol Compact and the council's baseline standards to ensure fair treatment of the VCS and that all funded organisations have an effective equalities policy
- a portfolio of funded organisations that will deliver to a range of equalities communities and disadvantaged groups – contributing to equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination
- open and regular communication to ensure community cohesion and good relations were not negatively affected and that people understood our process and rationale, even if they are unhappy with the result.

The full EqlA is at Appendix A

## **Eco impact assessment**

The environmental impacts arising from this proposal relate to the delivery of services resulting from the allocation of Bristol Impact Funding. One of the five criteria for acceptance of the proposals is to demonstrate commitment to environmental sustainability. Related social benefits will include addressing fuel and food poverty, access to transport and resilience. Additionally, there will be environmental benefits from the expectation to reinvest surpluses in social, environmental & cultural services.

Whilst it is not possible to assess the cumulative effect of the successful proposals, the council's award criteria and appraisal process should ensure that the net effect of this proposal is improved sustainability within the city.

**Advice given by** Steve Ransom – Environmental Project Manager  
**Date** 9/2/17

### **Resource and legal implications:**

#### **a. Financial (revenue) implications:**

The approval of allocations for investing the Bristol Impact Fund has revenue implications for the Council for the next four financial years from 2017/18 to 2020/21. The profile of expenditure against budgets is set out in section 8 of the report.

The total to be approved in 2017/18 is £3.28m and budgets are in place to support this level of expenditure. As set out in section 8, existing budgets are to be moved under a new service (with the exception of £0.74m of Community Transport budgets that are due to be transferred to the West of England Combined Authority from 2017/18).

Large and medium grants totalling £2.98m and the £0.14m Voice and Influence fund are to be approved for a period of period of four years and small grants totalling £0.16m for a period of two years.

The amount of expenditure to be approved for 2018/19 is £3.28m noting that £0.74m of this relating to Community Transport will also be subject to the approval processes of the West of England Combined Authority.

For 2019/20 and 2020/21 the expenditure to be approved relates to the continuing Voice and Influence fund of £0.14m and the large and medium grants, which will reduce by 10% in 2019/20 (from £2.24m to £2.02m) and by

15% in 2020/21 (from £2.24m to £1.91m). These amounts exclude the £0.74m for Community Transport residing with the West of England Combined Authority.

As set out in the report the reductions set out in section 8 in 2019/20 and 2020/21 would be revenue budget savings and will be incorporated into the Council's medium term financial plan.

There is no impact on 2016/17 budget performance as a result of this decision.

<b>Advice given by</b>	Robin Poole, Finance Business Partner
<b>Date</b>	9/2/17

**b. Financial (capital) implications:**

**None**

<b>Advice given by</b>	Robin Poole
<b>Date</b>	9/2/17

**c. Legal implications:**

**Procurement**

Whenever the Council enters into a contract for the provision of goods, works and/or services where the value is over a certain threshold, the Council must comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and procure the contract via a regulated tender process.

When the Council enters into a grant agreement, it is not obliged to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations. Provided the proposals in this report constitute grant agreements rather than contracts, the Council will not be obliged to carry out regulated procurements, and this will be low risk vis a vis the Public Contracts Regulations.

**State Aid**

Whenever the Council grants a benefit to another organisation, it needs to assess whether that it is conferring a selective advantage on an organisation that operates in a market, which does or may affect trade between member states (if it does, the benefit will constitute State aid which is prohibited under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). Provided the grants do not constitute State aid, the proposals will be low risk.

**Advice given by**        **Sinead Willis**  
**Date**                      9/2/17

**d. Land / property implications:**

The recommendations in this report will have no material impact on our current situation, which is that BCC provides a wide range of buildings to organisations in receipt of Grants at nil or peppercorn rents, which equate to an unrealised rental value of £1.5 million.

**e. Human resources implications:**

No significant internal impacts arising from this proposal

**Appendices:**

Appendix A	Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix B	Summary of Allocations Advisory Panel process
Appendix C	Summary of recommended allocations
Appendix D	Summary to show balance achieved across key challenges, beneficiary groups and geographic spread

**Link to VCS Grants Prospectus**

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/32598/Grant+funding+prospects+colour+version>

**Access to information (background papers):**

- i) 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014 Cabinet Paper – VCS Strategic Grants Approach
- ii) June 2015 Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission minutes
- iii) January 2016 Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission minutes
- iv) January 2016 Place Scrutiny Commission minutes
- v) 11<sup>th</sup> August 2017 Cabinet Paper – VCS Grants Prospectus