

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL**

**Cabinet**

**2 February 2009**

**Report of:** Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods

**Title:** Voluntary and Community Sector Investment Budget –  
Allocation of Funding 2009/10

**Ward:** Citywide

**Officer Presenting Report:** Gillian Douglas, Equalities and Community  
Cohesion Manager

**Contact Telephone Number:** 0117 922 2664

**RECOMMENDATION**

To agree 2009/10 funding levels to the voluntary and community sector (VCS) from the Community Development Investment Budget.

**Summary**

Community Development has an allocatable VCS budget of £2.4M. This report describes the application and evaluation process carried out to ensure that allocations to the VCS are made on the basis of need, value for money and relevance to the council's priorities for this budget. A list of the groups recommended for funding and the corresponding amounts is set out at appendix A.

**The significant issues in the report are:**

A total of 39 groups would be funded under these proposals. Existing groups would receive a 1.5% rise in line with the inflationary increase in the budget and are offered 3 year agreements. 5 groups funded in 2008/09 are not recommended for funding in 2009/10. 7 groups would be funded for the first time from this fund. In addition, 13 groups will be rolled over pending

commissioning processes.

20 groups appealed the investment panel recommendations. The results of the appeals process are integrated within this report.

## **Policy**

1. This funding is administered under the priorities set out in the Community Development Voluntary and Community Sector Investment Strategy 2008-11 as agreed by Cabinet in November 2006.

This funding is administered in accordance with the council's Corporate Plan priorities 2008-11 :

Our City – Ambitious Together – building cohesion, tackling inequality.

Our City – Making a Difference – for efficient, responsive services.

Our City – Better Neighbourhoods.

## **Consultation**

### **2. Internal**

Relevant council departments have been consulted about specific groups where they have a policy interest or are also a funder of the organisation.

Care and Safer Communities Scrutiny Commission (6 January 2009).

### **3. External**

Regular updates on changes to the process have been provided through the Compact Steering Group (includes Black Development Agency, Voscur, The Care Forum and Volunteering Bristol), through the Joint Planning Board for Advice Services (on which a number of ACFA Advice Centres for Avon are represented) and through 3 open meetings held in July 2008 and attended by 60 VCS groups. At these open meetings groups were presented with detailed information about priorities and process.

In September one to one advice sessions were held with new applicants who sought further guidance on how to complete the application and to ask questions about their eligibility. 18 groups took up these appointments.

## Context

### 4.

4.1 The Grants and Investment Budget is allocated annually to the VCS in Bristol through a process administered by Community Development. It is a unique funding pot within the city council in that any local Bristol based voluntary organisation can apply. Most other funding to the sector from the council is allocated through commissioning processes.

4.2 In 2006 the priorities set out in the Investment Strategy were reviewed. The current Strategy 2008-11 sets out the following priority outcomes :

- Strengthen and build capacity in the VCS to provide direct services to the most deprived communities in the city and strengthen local communities through volunteering
- strengthen and promote community cohesion in the city, particularly in new communities, faith communities and promoting understanding and respect across community divides
- champion community innovation
- delivery of a limited range of direct services e.g. advice services, community resource facilities which deliver direct support to local communities
- delivery of defined infrastructure support to all VCS organisations, including supporting representation role to the Bristol Partnership and major public agencies

4.3 The strategy lays out the objectives for the CD Investment Grants. We are continuously refining the process based on learning from last year's investment round and proposals to move to a commissioning model for some services (advice and infrastructure services).

The council is also committed to moving to three-year funding agreements with appropriate VCS organisations in order to meet our Compact commitments. The following points explain how each of the strategic objectives in the 2008-11 strategy have been further implemented to improve the process during this year's funding round :

Strategic objective 1 : **Strengthen and build capacity in the VCS to provide direct services to the most deprived communities in the city**

**and strengthen local communities through volunteering.**

Within this objective we consider applications from community centres (including City Farms) and prioritise community engagement organisations in the specified deprived neighbourhoods in the city and those serving disadvantaged equalities groups. We advised existing community centres that they should cap their applications at £100k. New applicants were advised that applications for more than £50k were unlikely to be approved. This was done to manage the expectations of applicants and make clear the pressures on this funding stream.

**Strategic objective 2 : Strengthen and promote community cohesion in the city, particularly in new communities, faith communities and in promoting understanding and respect across community divides.**

This element of the work needs to be more flexible to allow groups to respond to the demographic changes in the city. To enhance this flexibility and to allow us to respond to emerging need after the grants round, a 'ring-fenced' contingency fund of £20k has been set aside for 2009/10 i.e. a fund that is not utilised during the grants round. This can be used for commissioning one-off pieces of work identified by the Community Cohesion Manager and allow us to respond to needs flexibly during the financial year. Our priorities will link to the community cohesion strategy and intelligence from the multi-agency Tension Monitoring Group led by Safer Bristol. Supporting services that respond to hate crime – the existing funding agreement for SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents) has been rolled over to 2010/11. Community Development is the lead funder for SARI. £25k has been ring-fenced to commission hate crime support services in 2009/10.

We strengthened our cohesion requirements for all organisations and produce guidance for applicants on appropriate community cohesion activity.

**Strategic objective 3 : Delivery of a limited range of direct services e.g. advice services and community resource facilities which deliver direct support to local communities.**

Advice Services: Existing funding agreements have been rolled over to 2009/10 and Advice Services notified of our intention to commission services from 2010/11.

**Strategic objective 4 : Delivery of defined infrastructure support to all VCS organisations, including delivering a representation role to the Bristol Partnership and major public agencies.**

We have rolled over existing funding agreements to 2009/10 and notified all Infrastructure Services of our intention to commission services from 2010/11. Commissioning of infrastructure organisations will involve consultation with all council directorates through the VCS Project Board and with Bristol

Partnership to ensure 'buy-in' from partners who also commission from and consult with the VCS.

Strategic objective 5 : **Champion community innovation.**

Any application received under objectives (1), (2), (3) or (4) above that demonstrated that it champions community innovation scored an additional assessment mark in the process.

#### 4.4 Process

The investment process was advertised in July 2008. Existing groups and previous applicants were written to directly. The process was advertised on the council website. All documentation could be downloaded from the web.

The closing date was 5pm on 19<sup>th</sup> September. A preliminary check on applications resulted in some applications being excluded from the process e.g. due to lateness, lack of essential information (e.g. financial) or because the application was not eligible for this fund (e.g. national organisations).

A panel of 4 officers comprising the Equalities and Community Cohesion Manager and 3 Community Development Managers evaluated the applications between 8<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October.

Organisations were then notified of the officer recommendations and all groups were advised of the appeals procedure and given 3 weeks to submit an appeal. 20 appeals were submitted. The appeals panel comprised the Head of Service and Finance Manager and deliberated on 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December with groups being advised of the outcomes w/c 22 December.

Only one organisation was successful on appeal. Southmead Community Association was recommended for £15k funding for 1 year on the grounds that the original panel had not sufficiently taken in to account levels of deprivation in this part of the city. The Investment Team has been advised to negotiate community engagement targets for the Association based on the £15k. The other 19 appeals were rejected on the grounds that the Grants Panel had acted fairly and in accordance with procedures.

The Appeals Panel considered seriously the cash flow issues faced by St Werburgh's Community Association during the capital building works that are currently underway and may result in some loss of rental income. The panel agreed that the £180k funding over 3 years should be 'frontloaded' to provide £70k in year 1, £60k in year 2 and £50k in year 3. Income generation is expected to increase from early 2010 once the refurbishment and new annex

are completed.

## **Proposal**

### **5. Proposals**

5.1 The proposal is to fund the organisations listed in the attached spreadsheet (appendix A). This means allocating the full budget.

5.2 Existing groups that have performed well and presented strong applications have been offered 3 year funding agreements with a 1.5% inflationary rise in the first year in line with the increase in the total budget.

5.3 Appendix A includes 7 groups recommended for funding for the first time :

**Bread Youth Project** – this application was exceptionally strong, offering volunteering opportunities leading to increased employability, the development of an educational resource aimed at improving inter-cultural relationships, 900 young people participating in workshops about rights/responsibilities and challenging stereotypes and increased engagement of young people in BREAD decision-making. Outcomes will be negotiated in line with the £50k recommended funding level. BREAD has already secured £52k for 2009/10 from Children, Young People and Skills directorate (Youth and Play).

**Somali Resource Centre** – This too was a strong application, demonstrating an in-depth understanding of the Somali community, particularly in Barton Hill where the service is based. The Centre's proposals include empowering Somalis to participate in neighbourhood partnerships and other decision-making structures, targeted activities to deliver measureable increase in the integration of Somali community with other local communities, relationship building between Somali residents and tenants associations/neighbourhood watch schemes/parent and toddler groups and provision of a resource base.

**Upper Horfield Community Trust** – this is an area of major housing regeneration that has seen its population almost double with major demographic change e.g. Somali communities settling in the area alongside long term residents. This has brought with it tensions and risks to cohesion. The Trust has positive proposals and is in a good position to be able to build cohesion through engagement of diverse groups of residents, building improved understanding between groups through volunteering and events and a community newsletter that reflects all communities.

**Family Centre (Deaf Children)** – the Centre supports the 'community' of

families with Deaf children who are frequently the subject of exclusion and prejudice due to society's ignorance of deafness. The funding will be used to better support and integrate Deaf children by developing the British Sign Language skills and understanding of Deaf culture among hearing parents and grandparents of Deaf children.

**Freeways** – the funding will be targeted at supporting people with learning difficulties in to employment both with Freeways itself ( a care organisation for people with learning difficulties) and in the wider labour market.

**Southmead Community Association** – the funding will support the Association to resource activities for the benefit of the local community at Southmead Community Centre in Greystoke Avenue, one of the most deprived areas of Bristol.

In addition the **City Academy (Beacon Centre)** has taken on the 3 year contract for managing Easton Community Centre. This contract was negotiated at short notice in 2008 following the withdrawal of ToCH, the previous managing agent.

5.4 Under these proposals 5 currently funded (2008/09) organisations would no longer be funded from 1 April 2009:

**British Francophone Migrant Community Development** – provides advice and support to French-speaking African communities in Bristol. No accounts, financial projections or proof of insurances submitted. Did not appeal.

**Kuumba** – Kuumba is fundamentally an arts based project which is no longer attracting arts funding nor delivering a substantial programme of activities. Kuumba as it now stands does not appear to meet our priorities and does not demonstrate value for money or significant community benefit.

**Linksan** (formerly Servicelinks) – advice service to Somali community in Easton. This organisation has been funded for 18 months and baseline standards have still not been met. This is the reasonable amount of time available to all newly funded groups. Linksan had been previously advised about inadequate financial management, lack of insurances and the support options available to rectify this. Appealed. The Appeals panel made recommendations about identifying the service needs of older Somali people - see equalities impact assessment.

**Refugee Women of Bristol** – Baseline standards not met after 18 months and concerns about financial management. We will look at how to strengthen this group so that it can be sustained and in a position to attract sources of

funding in the future. Appealed.

**Windmill Hill City Farm** – application not received by the deadline. Following several contacts by officers an application was received but was out of time for panel consideration. No appeal was received from this group.

5.5 Appendix B shows those groups rolled over on existing funding plus 1.5% pending commissioning processes.

### **Other Options Considered**

**6.** None - the recommendations are the result of an in depth scoring and assessment process based on council priorities, evidence of need, financial healthcheck, capacity to deliver, value for money, engagement of users/communities and contribution to community cohesion.

### **Risk Assessment**

**7.** The main risks are to those groups that have been previously funded but have been unsuccessful in this round. In each case Community Development will advise on other possible sources of funding and support. Groups have been given enough notice to advise staff that might be impacted upon negatively by the discontinuation of funding from April 2009.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

**8.1** The changing demographics of Bristol have been taken in to account in assessing the need for particular services put forward for funding. Evidence of need within deprived areas of the city has also been taken in to account e.g. the size of the Somali community in Barton Hill has been considered in recommending the Somali Resource Centre for funding.

**8.2** Every group, whether targeted at a particular community/neighbourhood or not was asked to provide figures on the gender, disability and BME proportion of their service users. Successful groups have demonstrated an inclusive approach with a diverse customer base and in some case actions in place to become more accessible to particular groups.

**8.3** In order to maximise the accessibility of the grants process to the VCS the following actions have been taken :

2008-11 Investment Strategy, application form and supporting guidance all provided on the web and in hard copy/other formats where required.

3 open meetings in July where VCS groups came to be briefed on priorities



and process

surgeries offered to any new group considering applying to the Fund (5 surgeries with a total of 18 groups attending)

open invitation to raise queries/questions by e-mail or phone throughout the process

joint workshops held with VOSCUR to share information

8.4 There is likely impact on equalities groups under these recommendations as follows :

5 groups receiving funding in 2008/09 will not receive funding in 2009/10.

**British Francophone** – small numbers of service users (about 200) who need to be directed to mainstream advice providers.

**Kuumba** – African-Caribbean Arts organisation. Both the Arts Council and Cultural Services ceased to fund this organisation in 2008/09. It is no longer viable as an arts organisation and has very few activities for communities. Although a symbolic organisation in the city it has lost focus and its connections to local communities and would need to change focus and direction if it is to attract funding to rebuild the organisation.

**Linksan** (formerly Servicelinks) – advice service to Somali community in Easton. Development work needed to assess and quantify needs.

**Refugee Women of Bristol** – needs capacity building to sustain support to refugee women from diverse backgrounds.

**Windmill Hill City Farm** – the organisation generates most of its income from provision of services and other funders and is likely to be able to sustain its operation.

8.5 For all successful groups a funding agreement will be negotiated based on the funding application, the actual grant awarded and outcomes that represent value for money for the equalities groups/communities in question.

8.6 Of the 39 groups recommended for funding 13 are BME led organisations or whose client group is BME, 3 are Disabled people's organisation or delivering to Disabled people, 6 are women's organisations, 1 is an LGB organisation, 1 is an older people's organisation and 3 are faith organisations. However, all groups have to demonstrate how they deliver outcomes to

disadvantaged groups/equalities communities and how they promote cohesion.

8.7 There are 3 Somali organisations delivering to similar target groups whose applications have failed on the grounds of weak financial information, management arrangements and lack of clear needs analysis. These are Linksan, Iftinn and Somali Disabled and Elderly Association. At the same time meetings with the Somali community have highlighted the need for the council to have a better understanding of the needs of older and disabled Somali people in Bristol and the numbers of people in the community. The community has requested that the next meeting with the Deputy Leader of the council should focus on this issue. These groups will be invited as will Health and Social Care and equalities representatives. The council will need to look at how mainstream services meet or do not meet the needs of this client group and whether specialist provision needs to be commissioned.

8.8 Nine of the funded organisations in appendix A deliver services citywide as do the infrastructure and advice services. Other organisations are mainly targeted at more deprived areas of the city By neighbourhood partnership area :

Ashley/Easton/Lawrence Hill (16), Hartcliffe/Whitchurch Park/Bishopsworth (3), Knowle West/Windmill Hill/Filwood (4), Avonmouth/Kingsweston (6), Southmead/Henbury(4).

## 9. Environmental Impact Assessment

9.1 The application and assessment process have been made electronic, reducing the need for hard copy information to be used. Most of the monitoring processes for funded groups are also carried out electronically. Updating our processes and introducing the DIGITs database for storing information about VCS organisations has significantly reduced our dependence on paper copy information.

## Legal and Resource Implications

### Legal

10. Section 2 Local Government Act 2000 gives the council the power to do anything it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. This includes the allocation of grants to the voluntary sector where no specific legal power exists. In exercising the s.2 well-being power, the council must have regard to its community strategy and be satisfied that the allocation of these particular grants reflects its own

priorities.

Allocation of funding must be done in a fair and transparent way and in accordance with the council's published process and evaluation criteria. Any grant funding must also be safeguarded by way of a properly monitored service level agreement or contract between the council and the voluntary body.

Further legal advice will be necessary in relation to the 2009/10 funding proposals to ensure that any single-sex provision that the council funds is consistent with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

Joanna Roberts, Solicitor, Legal Services.

## **Financial**

### **(a) Revenue**

It has been accepted policy in the last few years that to allow a small element of over allocation of resources is reasonable given the potential with voluntary groups to not require all of their funding or not to perform to agreed standards. This policy has been continued in 2009/10 with all of the available resources apart from those ring fenced mentioned in 4.3 above being allocated plus a further 1.5% of 2009/10 funds (above that already committed to rolled over groups). It is considered that this is prudent given past experience to ensure full spend.

Simon Merrett, Community Development Finance Manager.

### **(b) Capital**

n/a

### **Land**

n/a

### **Personnel**

n/a

## **Appendices:**

A, B : Spreadsheet of voluntary organisations and recommended funding levels

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

### **Background Papers:**

Appendix A: Groups recommended for funding 2009-10

	Organisation Name	Project Name (w/a)	Panel recommendation	New org	Engagement	Cohesion	Direct Serv	Area Where Based	NP areas service will be delivered in
1	Bread Youth Project		£ 50,000.00	1		1		Ashley	KA, SoH, FVEH, EALH, HWPB
2	Barton Hill Settlement		£ 92,084.00		1			Lawrence Hill	EALH
3	City Academy & Easton Community Centre	Easton Community C	£ 51,875.64	1	1			Easton	EALH
4	Somali Resource Centre		£ 24,500.00	1		1		Lawrence Hill	EALH
5	Bristol Muslim Cultural Society		£ 50,000.00			1		Easton	EALH
6	Humdard		£ 11,496.58				1	Ashley	EALH
7	Lawrence Weston Community Farm		£ 27,405.00		1			Kingsweston	KA
8	Bristol Refugee Rights	Drop-in for Refugees & Asylum Seekers	£ 20,604.50				1	Lawrence Hill	EALH
9	Knowle West Health Association		£ 20,300.00		1			Filwood	KWHF
10	Avon (US) Community Association		£ 4,060.00				1	Avonmouth	KA
11	Shirehampton Community Action Forum		£ 13,195.00		1			Avonmouth	KA
12	Upper Horfield Community Trust		£ 15,000.00	1		1		Horfield	LH
13	Association		£ 70,000.00		1			Ashley	EALH
14	Signpost & Rite Direkshon		£ 30,000.00				1	Lawrence Hill	EALH (but also some citywide activities)
15	Mede Centre		£ 79,170.00		1			Filwood	KWHF
16	Next Link	Telephone Help Line	£ 20,374.50				1	Cabot	Citywide (telephone advice)
17	Hartcliffe Health & Environmental AG		£ 30,450.00				1	Hartcliffe	HWPB
18	Bristol & Avon Chinese Womens Group		£ 30,951.41				1	Ashley	Citywide (advice - home visits)
19	Family Centre (Deaf Children)	Outreach worker	£ 14,000.00	1			1	Southmead	Citywide (outreach & home visits)
20	Shirehampton Public Hall CA		£ 5,000.00		1			Avonmouth	KA
21	Southville CDA	Southville CDA	£ 10,000.00		1			Southville	BS
22	St Werburghs City Farm		£ 35,525.00		1			Ashley	EALH
23	BLGB Forum		£ 30,450.00		1			Cabot	Citywide
24	Awaz Utaoh		£ 27,405.00				1	Easton	EALH
25	WECIL	DIAS	£ 60,000.00				1	Frome vale	Citywide (telephone advice & home visits)
26	Malcolm X Centre		£ 69,324.50		1			Ashley	EALH
27	Bristol Pakistani CWO		£ 21,968.00				1	Easton	KWHF, EALH
28	ACTA		£ 5,050.00			1		Horfield	LH
29	Freeways	Freeways Employment Service	£ 10,000.00	1			1	Redland	BRC, FVEH
30	Sikh Resource centre		£ 27,660.78				1	Easton	EALH
31	Bangladesh Association		£ 40,600.00				1	Eastville	Citywide (outreach)
32	Child Poverty Action Group		£ 12,784.94				1	Avonmouth	KA, SoH
33	CEEIS		£ 33,746.72				1	Clifton East	Citywide (telephone advice & home visits)
34	Bristol Multi Faith Forum		£ 26,991.90		1			Easton	Citywide
35	Community Resolve		£ 35,525.00			1		Easton	BRC, SoH, LH, FVEH, SGE&W, EALH, KWHF, BS, BE&W
36	Southmead Community Association		£ 15,000.00	1	1			Southmead	SoH
37	Bristol Older Peoples Forum		£ 30,450.00		1			Lawrence Hill	Citywide
38	Bristol Bangladeshi Womens Organisation		£ 13,849.68				1	Easton	EALH
39	Hartcliffe Community Park Farm		£ 27,405.00		1			Whitchurch P	HWPB
		TOTAL	£ 1,194,203.15						

Appendix B: Groups whose funding will be rolled forward to 2009-10

	a) Infrastructure Services		
1	Voscur	£ 162,400.00	
2	BDA	£ 125,729.07	
3	BDA	REHRS £ 103,022.50	
4	Volunteering Bristol	£ 46,046.49	
5	Bristol CAP	£ 12,574.84	
	b) Advice Services		
6	A&BLC	£ 231,730.59	
7	CAB	£ 184,892.40	
8	North Bristol Advice Centre	£ 54,798.84	
9	South Bristol Advice Centre	£ 49,710.64	
10	East Bristol Advice	£ 19,623.00	
11	Debt Advice	£ 48,557.60	
12	St Pauls Advice	£ 85,768.52	
13	SARI	£ 50,385.62	
	c) Development Grant		
14	Quartet (small grants budget)	£ 100,000.00	
		TOTAL	£ 1,275,240.11

Key: Neighbourhood Partnership Areas	
Kingsweston (Including LW) & Avonmouth	KA
Westbury-on-Trym, Henleaze, Stoke Bishop	WHSB
Bishopston, Redland, Cotham	BRC
Clifton, Clifton East, Cabot	CCC
Southmead, Henbury	SoH
Lockleaze, Horfield	LH
Frome Vale, Eastville, Hillfields	FVEH
St George East, St George West	SGE&W
Easton, Ashley, Lawrence Hill	EALH
Hartcliffe, Whitchurch Park, Bishopsworth	HWPB
Knowle, Windmill Hill, Filwood	KWHF
Bedminster, Southville	BS
Brislington East, Brislington West	BE&W
Stockwood, Hengrove	StH

