



Committee Report

PURPOSE: Final Decision Report

KEY OR NON-KEY DECISION: Key decision affects 2 or more wards

COMMITTEE: Public Health and Communities Committee

DATE: 23 August 2024

TITLE: Community Resilience Fund Extension

Ward(s): Citywide

Officer presenting the report: Penny Germon **Job title:** Head of Service, Communities

Committee Chair: Councillor Stephen Williams

Executive Director lead: Hugh Evans: Executive Director for Adult and Communities

Proposal origin: BCC Staff

Purpose of Report:

This report seeks approval to work within the approved budget to:

1. Extend the timeline of the Community Resilience Fund for 18 months, from 1st April 2026 to 30th September 2027, allowing a minority of community and voluntary sector organisations to complete capital work.

Evidence Base / Options to consider:

1. Community organisations and community buildings are vital to the wellbeing, health and community resilience of citizens. They are at the forefront of mitigating the corrosive impact of poverty and inequity, demonstrated through the sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis. These organisations form a key part of the foundation of community life. They run with very little capacity. Many are kept running by a small group of committed volunteers.
2. On 8th February 2022, Cabinet approved the Community Resilience Fund investing £4m capital funding and £2.4million revenue. Its purpose is to build the resilience of the community and voluntary sector, and in doing so, grow the power of communities experiencing the greatest inequity.
3. The Community Resilience Fund is a one-off grant fund responding to the recommendations of the report *Designing a New Social Reality*.
4. One of the aims of the CRF was to put communities at the heart of decision-making and to learn about participative and deliberative decision-making.
5. A collaborative process led to a list of recommended projects for funding. This process involved 125

people, including 25 ward councillors and 18 representatives of community and voluntary groups, alongside Bristol citizens.

6. 55 projects were approved. Each of these projects improved one or more of the following: access for Disabled people and young people, energy efficiency, opportunities for income generation, digital infrastructure, and environmental sustainability. A full list of the approved projects is available in appendix A.
7. To receive the funding organisations must meet Bristol City Council baseline standards and have a business plan.
8. 31 projects are underway, with three completed. It is anticipated a total of 43 projects will be completed by 31st March 2025. An estimated 8 projects will need the additional 18 months to deliver their project.
9. If the committee approves the extension, organisations will have until September 2027 to spend their grant.
10. There are multiple reasons why a capital project might be delayed, such as lease negotiations, organisational capacity, planning permission, securing the right people to do the work or other professional input. Organisations working with multiple levels of structural inequity face the greatest hurdles to progressing their projects.
11. An evaluation of the capital projects will be available at the end of the programme.
12. If the committee decide not to grant the extension:
 - Funding will be withdrawn from the projects that cannot complete by the deadline of September 2025. These projects will lose this opportunity to make their organisations stronger through enhancing important community facilities.
 - Withdrawing CRF could put at risk a larger project e.g. Bristol Somali Resource Centre, who need to raise the full amount for the build of their community space to secure the contract with their housing partner.
 - Withdrawing CRF could contribute to an organising or community space closing.
 - The funding would be reallocated to existing projects in a position to complete work by the deadline.
13. The table below shows the capital budget and indicative forecast:

	Year 1 22/23	Year 2 23/24 (actual spend)	Year 3 24/25	Year 4 25/26	Year 5 26/27 (extension)	Year 6 27/28 (extension)
Capital grants	0	£1.1 million	£1.9 million	£0.8 million	£0.2 million	0

Officer Recommendations: -

That the Committee for Public Health and Communities

1. Approve an extension to the Community Resilience Fund so that grant funded organisations have a further 18 months to 30th September 2027 to spend their capital grant.
2. Authorise the Executive Director for Adults and Communities in consultation with the Chair of the Public Health and Communities Committee to take all steps required to amend the project grant agreements, where required, to enable to the extension.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. The Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 objective HC5 'Community Participation' outlines a commitment to make "significant investments in community-based organisations and local infrastructure to strengthen the role of VCSE partners to build community capacity, support sustainability of their business models, and to enable equitable access to funding opportunities". This proposal responds directly to objective HC5.
2. The challenges facing citizens, communities, and the city in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic include growing inequity, the climate emergency, pressure on NHS and Adult Social Care services, and emotional distress (including loneliness and isolation). These are set out in the Corporate Strategy. Community infrastructure which enables social connection, self-organisation, access to support and being part of decision-making is a crucial building block for city resilience and our ability as citizens, communities, and anchor institutions to meet these challenges.

City Benefits:

1. This proposal is about investing in the sustainability and resilience of the community and voluntary sector working with citizens and communities experiencing the greatest inequity. We have seen in the COVID-19 pandemic that these community groups are a vital part of the city and community ecosystem. The proposed extension protects funding which is allocated for specific communities experiencing the greatest inequality, and helps ensure community infrastructure is sustainable, accessible, and resilient for the future.

Consultation Details:

1. The CRF was designed to respond to the findings and recommendations of the VCSE (voluntary, community, social enterprise)-led research 'Designing A New Social Reality', and the resulting strategic action plan.
2. The approach to allocating the funding was developed with VCSE partners and Councillors.
3. CRF funding decisions were made by 100 residents and 25 Councillors from across political parties.
4. Bristol City Council's Finance Capital Group Accountant was consulted in the development of this proposal and advised that there are no financial implications of the proposed extension.

Background Documents:

1. Cabinet paper February 2022, Item 12: [ModernGov - bristol.gov.uk](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/moderngov/2022/02/12/cabinet-paper-february-2022-item-12)
2. Community Resilience Fund: Award of Capital Grants, July 2023 [ModernGov - bristol.gov.uk](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/moderngov/2023/07/23/community-resilience-fund-award-of-capital-grants)
3. [Community Resilience Fund narrative film](#)
4. [Participatory democracy in practice: evaluation of the Bristol City Council Community Resilience Fund](#)
5. [Designing a New Social Reality report: https://www.blacksouthwestnetwork.org/s/VCSE_Report.pdf](https://www.blacksouthwestnetwork.org/s/VCSE_Report.pdf)
6. [Bristol City Council Baseline Standards for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/3194-baseline-standards-revised-april-18/file](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/3194-baseline-standards-revised-april-18/file)

Revenue Cost	£	Source of Revenue Funding	Insert specific service budget name
Capital Cost	£4m	Source of Capital Funding	Capital Programme, prudential borrowing
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> If yes - existing or new saving? Choose an item. OR Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	

Professional comments section: *When draft report written, seek comments from Finance/Legal/IT/HR/Procurement & PR. Reports will not be considered without professional comments.*

1. Finance Advice: This report seeks to extend the timeline of the Community Resilience Fund for 18 months from 1st April 2026 to 30th September 2027 to allow community and voluntary sector organisations to complete their capital work. This remains within the approved £4m budget envelope and is not a material change moving £0.2m from 2025/26 into 2026/27. There are no significant financial implications in regard to re-phasing of Prudential Borrowing funding.

Finance Business Partner: Denise Hunt, Finance Business Partner for Adults and Communities, 4th July 2024.

2. **Legal Advice:** There are no specific legal implications arising from the request to extend the time for organisations to spend the funding allocated to them. Legal Services will advise and assist in relation to any amendments to the grant agreements where required.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor, 21st June 2024.

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT regarding this activit

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson, Lead Enterprise Architect, 24th June 2024.

HR Partner: The report is seeking approval to extend the timeline of Community Resilience Fund for 18 months from 1st April 2026 to 30th September 2027 which will allow a minority of community and voluntary sector organisations to complete their capital work. There are no significant HR implications arising from this report.

HR Partner: Lorna Laing, HR Business Partner, Adults and Communities /Children and Education, 25th June 2024.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	YES
Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	YES
Appendix C – Environmental Impact Assessment YES	
Appendix D – Risk assessment	YES
Appendix E – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix F – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix G – Options appraisal matrix	NO
Appendix H – Business case / financial analysis	NO