

Decision Pathway – Report

PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 03 March 2020

TITLE	Grant Funding for Information Advice and Guidance services		
Ward(s)	City wide		
Author: Penny Germon		Job title: Neighbourhoods & Communities Service Manager	
Cabinet lead: Asher Craig		Executive Director lead: Mike Jackson	
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member			
Decision forum: Cabinet			
Purpose of Report: To approve the extension of the Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) Grant for IAG services for one year from 1 st November 2020 to 30 th October 2021 with the option to extend for a further two and a half years to 30 th April 2024. The financial commitment will amount to a total of £1.96 million for the three and half year period.			
Evidence Base: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Bristol City Council has grant funded community information, advice and guidance services through an outcomes-based grants process, open to Bristol based voluntary sector providers since 2011-12.These services currently support some of poorest and most excluded citizens in the city. Effective triage at advice centres ensures that advice is targeted to those who need it most.Austerity and Welfare Reform have placed significant pressures on the advice sector whilst marked reductions in local authority budgets have necessitated a reduction in the funding for advice provision.With these challenges in mind, a new grant funding plan was developed for 2019-2020 (see Appendix A) for externally funded advice services. The time frame of the grant was 18 months in order to tie in with a wider corporate project and to test the approach.This proposal is about building on the positive impact of the new model and providing stability to an important sector. Going forward the intention will be to ensure the work of VCSE advice organisations is part of the city council strategic approach to advice and ethical debt. It is therefore proposed there is the opportunity to review the grant arrangement to align with the strategic direction of the council.The current IAG grant relates to advice provision around 5 main types of advice including: Welfare benefits, Housing, Employment, Money and Debt, Immigration, including specialist provision of disability and legal advice in relation to the categories above.The grant period April 2019 to October 2020 provided a ‘step-change’ towards a ‘whole system’ model of integrated, referrer/citizen friendly system with:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Centralised and shared elements of advice service and deliveryA shared set of outcomes to describe the combined impact of the servicesExploration of up-skilling a wider network of informal, ‘first line’ providers to triage service The user			

<p>need accurately and provide a basic level of support as part of a three-tier model approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exploration of options for information sharing across a more integrated system ○ Support the step-change among external BCC funded services into a coherent, clearly-articulated set of services that can contribute to a wider system review. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The funding model created a consortium with a strategic lead organisation. ● The current grant has been awarded to the Bristol Advice Partnership (See appendix A for details) ● Performance of current grant: Bristol Advice partnership has put considerable time and effort into the new arrangements, which are now delivering benefits to the sector and the citizens of Bristol. In the first 9 months of the grant there was a total of £2,393,364 financial gain for clients and for every £1 spent over the year, Citizen's Advice calculates that clients benefit by £13¹. A breakdown of the impact in the first 9 months of the grant can be found in Appendix A. ● More strategically the partnership reports that the new grant arrangements are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Driving improvement in the advice sector, providing stability, giving confidence to funders ○ Supporting the development of a more integrated approach to bidding for additional funding ○ Creating a stronger and more strategic approach to city wide provision resulting ○ More intelligent use of advice resources across the city
<p>Recommendations:</p> <p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the extension of the grant funding plan using existing arrangements for Information, Advice and Guidance Services for a maximum annual grant of £560,000 from 1st November 2020 to 30th October 2021 with the option to extend for a further two and a half years to 30th April 2024. 2. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, to award the extended grant funding.
<p>Corporate Strategy alignment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empowering and caring: Reduce the overall level of homelessness and rough sleeping, with no-one needing to spend a 'second night out' 2. Fair and Inclusive: Help develop balanced communities which are inclusive and avoid negative impacts from gentrification. 3. Well connected: Reduce social and economic isolation and help connect people to people, people to jobs and people to opportunity. 4. Wellbeing: Tackle food and fuel poverty.
<p>City Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain tenancies in social and private housing and preventing homelessness ● Support the poorest and most excluded individuals and families to maintain sustainable finances and maximise their income ● Support the poorest and most excluded people to achieve positive results at tribunals and appeals ● Reduce financial, food and fuel poverty ● Through the grant investment to the voluntary sector additional benefits to social and economic capital e.g. VCSE organisations are more likely to spend their money locally and invest in volunteer capacity.
<p>Consultation Details:</p> <p>A significant amount of consultation was done when the original grant fund was designed. The consultation ran from 28th June to 9th August 2018. Please see consultation report attached (appendix C)</p>

Background Documents:

Advising in Austerity: The value of good advice; Professor Morag McDermont, University of Bristol
Ben Crawford, Knowledge Exchange Fellow, University of Bristol Sue Evans, Director, Bristol Citizens Advice
November 2017

[State of Bristol Key Facts 2019](#)

[Advice Needs Assessment 2017](#)

Revenue Cost	£560,000 p.a.	Source of Revenue Funding	£484,000 General Fund and £76,000 public health
Capital Cost	£	Source of Capital Funding	
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/>		Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>		Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

Finance Advice: This report requests approval of an extension to the IAG grant for IAG services for 1 year plus option to extend for further 2.5years (3.5 years in total) from November 2020. The service aims to bring some stability to the scheme (reducing recommissioning activity) after the recent period of review and re-shaping and to encourage a longer term strategic approach with partners. It also requests approval for the Executive Director – Resources to approve the funding model and award planned grants.

This proposal would require up to £0.56m per annum (totalling up to £1.96m over the 3.5 years). The funding is confirmed as included in the relevant proposed Budgets for 20/21.

Finance Business Partner: Jemma Prince, Finance Business Partner 13/2/20

Legal Advice:Procurement

Provided these are genuine grant agreements and not contracts for services, they do not give rise to procurement issues under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Council's own procurement rules. However the Council still requires a clear and fair policy on the selection of grant recipients. Client officers will also need to seek legal assistance to ensure the arrangements are grant agreements and incorporate the review arrangements proposed from May 2022.

Equalities

The Public Sector Equality duty requires the decision maker to consider the need to promote equality for persons with "protected characteristics" and to have due regard to the need to i) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; ii) advance equality of opportunity; and iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The Equalities Impact Check/Assessment is designed to assess whether there are any barriers in place that may prevent people with a protected characteristic using a service or benefiting from a policy. The decision maker must take into consideration the information in the check/assessment before taking the decision.

A decision can be made where there is a negative impact if it is clear that it is necessary, it is not possible to reduce or remove the negative impact by looking at alternatives and the means by which the aim of the decision is being implemented is both necessary and appropriate.

State Aid

Whenever the Council gives a benefit to a third party, there is a risk that benefit may constitute State aid, which is prohibited (unless it falls under one of the available exemptions). Legal advice will need to be sought to ensure that no part of the funding to any third parties constitutes State aid (or alternatively falls under one of the available exemptions, e.g. de minimis).

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Solicitor, 21/01/20

3. Implications on IT: No anticipated impact to IT Services

IT Team Leader: Simon Oliver, Director of IT, 14/01/20

4. HR Advice: There are no anticipated HR implications

HR Partner: Celia Williams, HR Consultancy Manager), 15/01/20

5. Procurement Advice: Provided these are genuine grant agreements and not contracts for services, then there are no procurement implications.

Category Manager: Gina Smalley, Procurement Manager , 23rd January 2020

EDM Sign-off	Mike Jackson	22/01/20
Cabinet Member sign-off	Asher Craig	23/01/20
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	03/02/20

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	YES
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	YES
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	YES
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO
Appendix L – Procurement	NO