

# Decision Pathway – Report Template



**PURPOSE:** Key decision

**MEETING:** Cabinet

**DATE:** 01 September 2020

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Grant Extension</b>		
<b>Ward(s)</b>	All		
<b>Author: Penny Germon</b>	<b>Job title: Neighbourhoods and Communities Service Manager</b>		
<b>Cabinet lead: Asher Craig</b>	<b>Executive Director lead: Mike Jackson</b>		
<b>Proposal origin:</b> <i>BCC Staff</i>			
<b>Decision maker:</b> Mayor <b>Decision forum:</b> <i>Cabinet</i>			
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>  This report is seeking agreement to extend the current grant funding agreement (VCS Infrastructure Support Service grant) with Voscur for voluntary and community and social enterprise (VCSE) infrastructure and capacity-building support for a further 12 months ending 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022. This will allow the time to invite VCSE organisations to apply for the new 'Enabling VCSE Sector Support Grant' providing capacity building and infrastructure support to the community, voluntary and community business sector over a period of four years from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2022, maintaining the current funding of £316,608 p.a. £1266,432. Applications will be invited from VCSE organisations with the track record and depth of experience to build on the journey so far and crucially maximise the city's assets (expertise, skills, knowledge, buildings).			
<b>Evidence Base:</b>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In <u>December 2019 Cabinet</u> agreed to invite applications to provide infrastructure support to the community and voluntary sector with a view to a new grant arrangement being in place 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020-30th Sept 2024.</li> <li>2. This process started in January 2020 but was stopped due to the Covid19 emergency. This report is seeking approval to extend the current grant agreement with Voscur until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and commence the new 4 year grant agreement from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 due to the delays created by the unplanned and unavoidable impact of Covid19.</li> <li>3. There is no change to the substance of the proposal agreed by Cabinet or the annual cost.</li> <li>4. The community and voluntary sector has been a vital part of the response to Covid19.</li> <li>5. The current grant funding agreement is with Voscur who have played a leading role during the crisis: providing information and support to struggling community and voluntary groups through to organising testing for VCSE key workers and working with health and social care to establish integrated/cross sector response.</li> <li>6. Having a point of contact and a coordinated mechanism to work with a large network of VCSE organisations has been invaluable at this time of crisis.</li> <li>7. Whilst VCSE organisations have been at the heart of the community response it is also the case that parts of the sector are in crisis. A sustainable voluntary organisation will not rely on grants alone but will have a mix of income streams from renting out buildings, running cafes, nurseries and organising events. Income streams have dried up. Just like businesses in the private sector many voluntary organisations now have significant deficits and will be making very difficult decisions. These organisations are part of the economic, environmental and social fabric of the city.</li> <li>8. It is the community and voluntary sector which does so much of the heavy lifting in tackling inequality. The well-reported disproportionate negative impact of Covid19 on Black and Minority Ethnic communities, Disabled people, poor and low waged people has put into sharp focus the need for urgent action to tackle inequality.</li> <li>9. Consistent advice, support and capacity building over the next 12 months will be essential.</li> <li>10. From crisis comes opportunity too. The groundswell of community action, the creativity and innovation are tremendous assets.</li> <li>11. To fully understand the impact and the opportunity a VCSE Strategy Group has been established. A strategic partnership of BCC, Voscur, Locality, Black Southwest Network (BSWN), Power to Change, Clinical Commissioning Group, Office of</li> </ol>			

the Police Crime Commissioner, City Office, City Funds, Quartet and a Disability Equality Adviser.

12. BSWN in collaboration with Locality and Voscur is undertaking research which will inform a longer term recovery and strengthening plan. The research will share findings September – Dec 2020.
13. Through this process there will be a conversation with the community and voluntary sector in all its diversity leading to a transformation in the way we work together, how we nurture community action, act on the commitment to tackle inequality and create the right conditions for the VCSE sector to make its full contribution to the city.
14. As we reflect, learn and plan for recovery it is important to maintain consistency in leadership and support.
15. The revised timescales allow for this important strategic work to inform applications for the VCSE infrastructure and capacity building support grant whilst also ensuring continuity of support to the VCSE at this very difficult time.
16. To achieve the proposed timescales the invitation to apply would open up no later than September '21.
17. To protect the revenue position of the council should it be necessary, grant agreements contain a clause to cover for any possible future reductions in funding. The terms and conditions of the grant include options to revisit (annually) the value of that grant funding.

### Cabinet Member Recommends

The Cabinet

1. Approve the extension of the current grant funding arrangement with Voscur by a further 12 months from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 at a cost of £316,608.
2. Note the delay in the approved new grant arrangements which will now be in place from April 2022
3. Authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member - Communities (Public Health, Public Transport, Libraries, Parks, Events and Equalities) to take all steps required to enter into a grant agreement with the successful applicants.

### Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. Corporate Strategy: 'Bristol's diverse and creative community and voluntary sector is one of the city's great assets....We need to work closely together in the spirit of constructive support and challenge, maintaining a sector which is strong and sustainable in its own right.'
2. Empowering and Caring Theme 4: Prioritise community development and enable people to support their community; it is a direct support to 'citizen- and community-led action'.
3. The strategic work will inform and be informed by the City Council's recovery plans and corporate strategy.

### City Benefits:

1. This proposal enables the VCSE to work with partners to agree strategic approach to recovery and transformation of VCSE and its role in the city and for this to inform and be informed by One City recovery plans in particular the Economy, Health and Wellbeing Boards.
2. The community and voluntary sector has a crucial role to play in tackling inequality, empowering self-organised, equality-led groups. The strategic work will shine a spotlight on these groups and the conditions that will enable them to thrive.

### Consultation Details:

1. There was full consultation which informed the proposal approved by Cabinet in Dec '19. This proposal is not looking to change the substance of the proposal but is seeking a change to the implementation timescales due to the unplanned and unavoidable impact of Covid19.

### Background Documents:

[Enabling the VCSE sector support grant, 3rd December 2019 Cabinet meeting](#)

[ONS Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain](#)

[Local Heroes: How to sustain community spirit beyond Covid-19 5th May 2020](#)

[We Were Built for This: How community organisations helped us through the coronavirus crisis – and how we can build a better future.](#)

[Impact on the charity sector during coronavirus - research report June 2020](#)

[The impact of COVID-19 on black, Asian and minority ethnic communities](#)

[Covid-19: People in most deprived areas of England and Wales twice as likely to die](#)

<b>Revenue Cost</b>	£316,608 p.a. £1,583,040 for 5 years in total	<b>Source of Revenue Funding</b>	General Fund Directorate 2, Div 38, Service 336, CC10574
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<b>Capital Cost</b>	N/A	<b>Source of Capital Funding</b>	N/A
<b>One off cost</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Ongoing cost</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Saving Proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Income generation proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

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

**1. Finance Advice:**  
This report requests approval to extend the current Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise funding arrangement for a further 12 months to 31st March 2022 at a cost of £316,608 and thereafter to invite VCSE organisations to apply for a 4 year grant to build capacity and provide infrastructure support. This grant would commence 1 April 2022 and be for a further £1,266,432.  
This process had been commenced but has faced delays due to Covid-19.  
The budget for 20/21 (as approved January 2020) is confirmed as holding sufficient funds to cover this commitment however due to the financial pressures which Covid-19 is presenting for Bristol City Council’s Budget for 2020/21 and ongoing it is recommended that these values are approved as ‘not to exceed’ values and that the terms and conditions of the grant include options to revisit (annually) the value of that grant funding.

**Finance Business Partner:** Jemma Prince, Finance Business Partner, 30 June 2020

**2. Legal Advice:**  
**Procurement**  
Legal Services will advise and assist in relation to the extension of the current grant agreement. Provided the agreement is a grant agreement and not a contract for services, it will not need to be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Client officers will need to seek legal assistance to ensure the agreement is a grant agreement.  
**State Aid**  
The level of funding proposed would suggest a risk that this grant would or could amount to provision of state aid. Charities, social or community organisations, or awards for the purpose of providing social benefit, are not exempt from the EU State Aid Rules.  
However as the purpose of the grant is to benefit VCS organisations only local to Bristol, this would strongly suggest that provision of the grant is unlikely to attract international applicants and if so, then it would not amount to EU State Aid.

**Legal Team Leader:** Sinead Willis, Commercial and Governance Team 18 August 2020

**Implications on IT:** No anticipated impact on IT services

**IT Team Leader:** Simon Oliver, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**3. HR Advice:** No HR implications evident

**HR Partner:** James Brereton (People & Culture Manager), 30th June 2020

**4. Procurement Advice:**  
Not applicable

<b>EDM Sign-off</b>	Mike Jackson	8 <sup>th</sup> July
<b>Cabinet Member sign-off</b>	Councillor Asher Craig	1 <sup>st</sup> July
<b>For Key Decisions - Mayor’s Office sign-off</b>		3 <sup>rd</sup> August

<b>Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix D – Risk assessment</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal</b>	<b>YES</b>

<b>Appendix G – Financial Advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix H – Legal Advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix I – Exempt Information</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix J – HR advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix K – ICT /</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix L – Procurement</b>	<b>NO</b>