

Appendix A: Community Resilience Fund

Introduction

The Community Resilience Fund is a one-off capital grant fund established in response to recommendations of the Bristol Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Strategy Group and as part of an overall goal to **build city resilience by growing the power of communities experiencing the greatest inequality.**

In June 2020 the City Council joined with partners (Black South West Network, VOSCUR, Locality, a Disability Equality Adviser, City Office and City Funds, Quartet Community Foundation, Power to Change Trust, Sirona, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group) to establish the VCSE Strategy Group with the aim of understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community and voluntary sector and develop a strategic response.

Black South West Network (BSWN), working with Locality and Voscur, were commissioned to *analyse the impact of COVID-19 on the VCSE Sector in Bristol in order to assess how to foster and embed greater community resilience in the new operating environment, and ultimately provide evidence for planning a thoroughly informed and strengthened VCSE Sector recovery strategy that looks beyond COVID-19 and to the long-term future.*

The research aimed to break the mould by looking through an equity lens:

It is undeniable that COVID-19 and the lockdown have thrown into stark relief the inequalities that have existed in our society for many hundreds of years. Inequalities that, despite innumerable initiatives and campaigns to address them, persist to this day at a deeply structural level. In reflecting on this reality, we are seeking to explore and understand how we build new ways of working that focus on the root causes of inequality and not just the symptoms, and on how we build equitable inclusion into our social infrastructure's modus operandi from the outset. 'Designing a New Social Reality' BSWN 2021

Over 300 organisations took part in the research which is a celebration of resilience, the art of the possible and values-driven leadership, whilst also setting out the challenge and the opportunity to design a new social reality.

There are 8 recommendations:

1. Equitable: Cultural Shift Towards Equity
2. Well Funded: Fund and Commission Equitably
3. Enabled to Plan Long Term: Fund and Commission for the Long-Term
4. Inclusive Decision Making: Create a Democratic Forum
5. Rooted in Community: Build Community Agency
6. Resilient: Asset Based Mapping
7. Connected City-wide: Develop a Digital Inclusion Strategy
8. Equitable: Create a Shared Vision

The City Council is committed to working with partners, as one city, to meet these recommendations with action.

The Community Resilience Fund (CRF) is part of this commitment.

Community Resilience Fund

CRF will invest £4 million capital funding in community and voluntary sector organisations from 2022 to 2026.

The fund will support recovery and longer-term resilience, responding to the recommendations from ‘Designing a New Social Reality’ to create more capital, allowing revenue streams to be re-established and assets to be managed effectively by community organisations and anchors, social enterprises and community businesses.

The focus will be on both geographic (¹indicative allocation of £3.2m) and citywide communities of interest (indicative allocation of £800k) who experience the greatest inequity. This is because we know exclusion and inequity undermine community resilience.

In alignment with Bristol Impact Fund 2, this grant fund will facilitate stronger connections between people and enable community-led action by investing in the sustainability of important community facilities and infrastructure. The funding allocation process will aim to increase participation in decision making, build connections and shared understanding through deliberative conversations.

‘Designing a New Social Reality’ challenges us to continue to develop more collaborative ways of working. We are committed to designing the process with community and voluntary sector partners and communities and build on the learning from the Citizens Assembly 2020 to increase participation through deliberative processes.

The approach to allocating CRF takes learning from the Port Community Resilience Fund, the Bristol Impact Fund and the approach to spending of the devolved Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). CRF will not involve an application or bidding process. Instead, communities of greatest deprivation (defined as Lower Super Output Areas in the 30% most deprived in Bristol Indices) and communities with shared experience of inequity will be allocated an indicative budget and will be invited to work together to identify their top priorities for investment.

Community-led decision making

The process will start with community conversations about the opportunities and priorities. We appreciate that communities will be in different places – some may already have a good idea of local assets and opportunities for investment, while others may be at an earlier stage in identifying what their priorities are.

This stage of identifying priorities will be led by a community or voluntary organisation with strong connections and roots in the community. We will encourage organisations to partner with others, to reach a diverse network of people, and so that collaborations between small and larger organisations can build community capacity where it is limited. The process will need to be inclusive and equitable, considering levels of deprivation. Once priorities are identified, the lead organisation will bring residents and local ward councillors together to deliberate and agree their priorities. Funding will be made available for those leading the conversations and facilitating. These organisations will also be invited to take part in training to co-design the approach which balances

¹ In the process of bringing forward priorities and developing funding agreements it may be necessary to move funding from one area to another – see section on funding approach

consistency across the city and ability to adapt to local conditions. This training will be delivered by an organisation with expertise in participatory and deliberative decision making. Once the priorities have been approved, the City Council will then work with shortlisted organisations to develop a funding agreement to deliver the community priority.

The overall aim is to widen participation in decision-making and give power to communities to consider how they can make the biggest impact. This approach has positive impacts on community cohesion and community building.

The proposed process is set out fully below.

Principles

CRF will support the recovery and resilience of the community and voluntary sector in areas of greatest deprivation, and self-organised equality groups, so they are better placed to:

- address inequity, by recognising past injustice, understanding power, and taking positive action to make a change.
- take an asset-based approach by building on and strengthening what already exists to build community connection and community action

Funding Priorities

CRF will build resilience of community and voluntary sector organisations by investing in the following priorities:

A. Accessibility improvements

Access is a major barrier to Disabled people of all ages preventing participation in community life. Accessibility improvements will increase inclusion but also create a more viable space. This could include accessibility improvements to community buildings and equipment.

B. Environmental sustainability

- Energy efficiency improvements to save money on bills, make spaces more usable, increase environmental sustainability
- Energy generation projects to create an income, save money on bills, increase environmental sustainability

C. Financial sustainability

- Space improvements or expansions to bring in and maximise income
- Changes to increase usage and increase viability

D. Digital infrastructure

- Upgrading digital capability and future proofing

E. Equipment which contributes to any of the above

F. Other – Stage 1 will consider and identify community priorities. It is very possible other ideas will surface and we want to allow for this. It should be noted that accessibility can be viewed more widely, for example, how can a community facility appeal to people of ages and different cultures.

Who will be eligible for CRF?

- Neighbourhood funding: VCSE organisations physically located within LSOAs which are 30% most deprived in Bristol. Eligible areas are outlined below in Diagram 4. (Organisations that need a delivery partner/responsible body can be supported by an organisation outside the area).
- In **exceptional** circumstances a proposal will be considered from an organisation outside the eligible LSOA area, but this will only be considered if there are no other viable organisations, it is clear the organisation has deep roots in the community and is the preferred choice during deliberation.
- Equalities funding: organisations 'of' the communities they work with and support. These organisations could be working citywide, or in a specific neighbourhood and will not be required to be physically located within an eligible LSOA. An organisation 'of' should be demonstrably led and managed by the community it serves.
- The types of eligible organisations are listed in the eligibility checklist in appendix 1
- All community organisations seeking funding from the CRF will be required to evidence:
 - Their capacity to manage a capital project
 - Their assessment of organisational strengths and weaknesses and those of the community they are serving and to describe a clear, plausible 'theory of change' for how their project will deliver improved sustainability and resilience for their organisation and its impact on their community of benefit
 - The sustainability of their project. The grants awarded will be one-off funding and will not imply any ongoing financial commitment from BCC. Through the assessment and deliberation process, those seeking funding will need to demonstrate sustainability of the project.
- Strong components of all successful projects will include: improved accessibility; improved energy efficiency; improved income-generation and partnership working; and increased impact on local deprivation and health outcomes. Funded projects will offer better quality and more cost-efficient services to the community.

Process and timetable

Stage 1

April - July 2022- Community Conversations/identifying priorities

- City wide training and agree way forward for VCSE organisations and councillors involved.
- Facilitated community conversations and information gathering to understand priorities and opportunities for capital investment to support VCSE recovery and resilience.
- Conversations to involve as many small groups, community hubs, existing meetings etc as possible.
- Organisations, asset owners and residents to input into this process, identifying priorities together.
- This stage could lead to people having specific projects in mind but could also draw out priorities/opportunities which need further scoping.
- Technical expertise will be made available to inform decision making
- Findings from stage 1 will inform how we proceed in stage 2. It is important local areas are connected to the conversation and there is the opportunity for joint funding across boundaries.

Stage 2

July- December 2022 - Deliberative Process

- Priority neighbourhoods/Areas of Multiple deprivation come together at Area Committee level as peer networks made up of councillors, residents and VCSE organisations, to consider the priorities identified in stage 1.
- Deliberative, facilitated process to refine priorities and decide which to take forward
- Technical advice will be available to advise on equity, viability and cost, and to support the deliberative process
- There will be the option of a community vote at the end of this process which will extend this stage to end of December 2022. This will depend whether the peer network has been able to identify clear priorities within the budget or whether they want to seek public opinion to reach a shortlist.
- Evaluation of deliberative process throughout stage 1 and 2

Stage 3

January 2022- April 2023

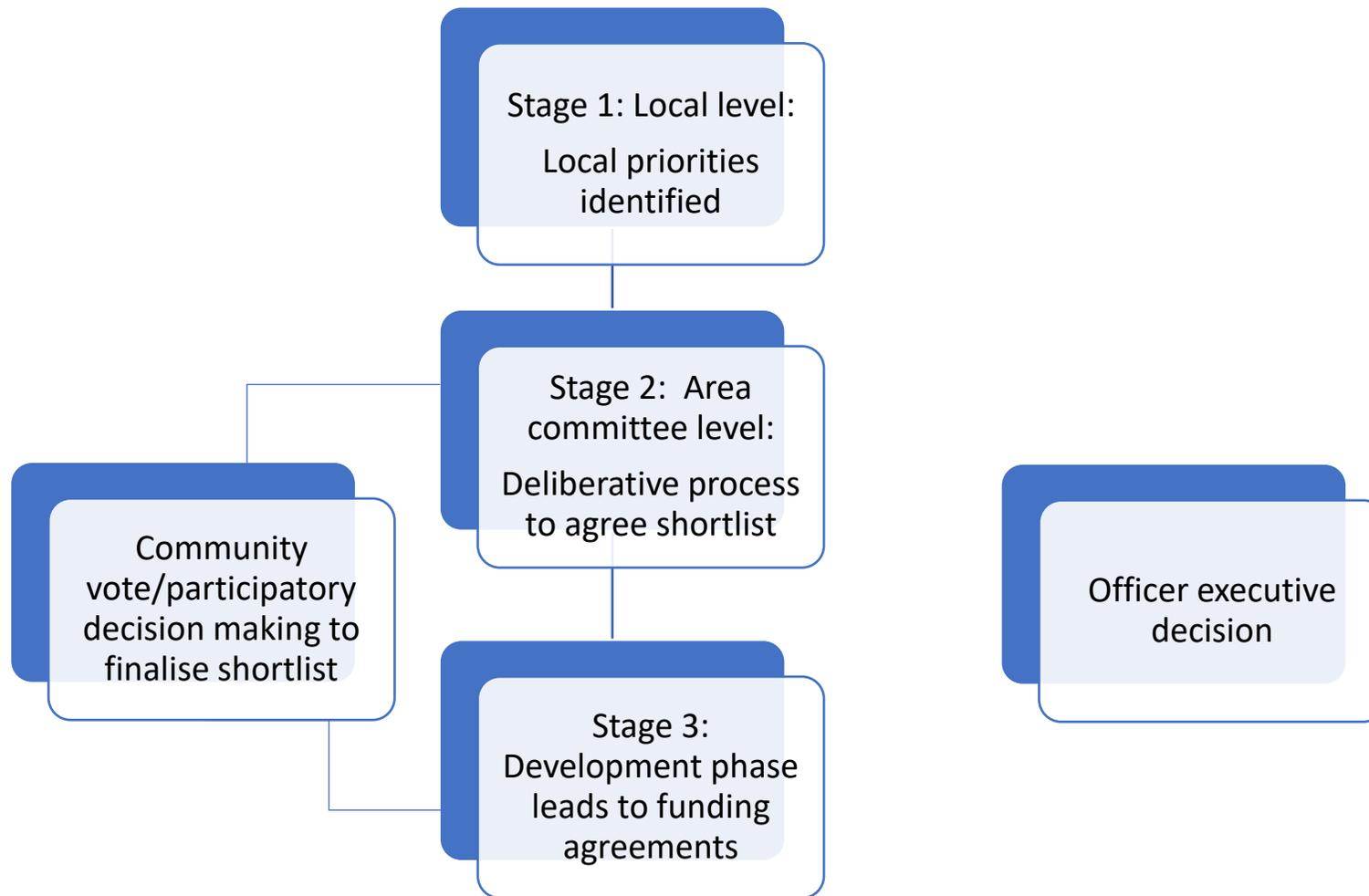
- Funding approval will be made under delegated decisions
- Development of funding agreements – for some organisations seeking smaller amounts of funding this may include a developmental approach, providing support to organisations so that they can meet baseline standards within an agreed timescale
- Revenue funding will be made available for technical input, project capacity and loss of earnings whilst capital works are undertaken.
- Non-competitive

Stage 4

April 2023- March 2026

- Funding agreements in place
- Project implementation
- Ongoing monitoring
- Final evaluation
- Close 31st March 2026

Diagram 1: Decision making and funding allocation process



Governance

A CRF Oversight Group will be made up of Community and Voluntary Sector partners, other funders, Councillors and BCC officers with technical expertise.

This group will support and guide the process to achieve its aims, seek alignment with other areas of work including devolved CIL, and will harness and share learning.

A CRF Partnership Group will bring together organisations involved in the delivery and ensure a coherent city-wide approach which is respectful of the local/community context.

Programme outcomes

The overall outcome of the programme will be that community and voluntary organisations are more resilient and better equipped to continue and grow their work to tackle inequality and build community.

Diagram 2: The impact of CRF will be evaluated against the following outcomes

CRF Outcome	How will it be evidenced?
Capital investment in VCSE organisations rooted in communities experiencing the greatest inequity	Number of community organisations who receive capital investment
Increased resilience VCSE organisations will be better equipped to continue and grow their work to tackle inequality and build community, increasing local resilience and the sustainability of the city's vibrant VCSE sector	Achievement against intended targets of grant recipients will be collated through monitoring throughout the programme, to evidence overall impact on resilience.
Added value VCSE organisations secure additional/match funding NB. Match funding is not a requirement	Record of additional funding secured by grant recipients, gathered through monitoring and evaluation.
To pilot community participation and deliberative decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people trained in participatory decision making and facilitation. • Number of participants in co-design process to establish a sound deliberative process. • Number of participants in decision making process. • Evidenced through programme evaluation and monitoring. • Investment in community-led/participatory decision making is supported by the community and leads to other opportunities

Project outcomes

Diagram 3: Organisations who are funded through the CRF will be asked to measure the outcomes of investment and report on their achievements against targets. We are committed to developing this with our VCSE partners as part of the evaluation framework and community priorities. Where possible we will seek to align with other funders. Potential project outcomes include the following:

Outcome	Potential Evidence
Increased use of community spaces	Bookings/usage increases
Diversification of use and increased accessibility of community spaces	Collecting evidence about building/space users (this could be new bookings)
Reduced energy costs	Energy bills
Energy generated	Energy generation data
Increased revenue	Annual accounts
Additional funding leveraged	Annual accounts and monitoring/ reporting
Improved digital inclusion	Collecting data/evidence about users of hardware, software or digital inclusion activities

Monitoring and evaluation

- All projects will be required to complete 6 monthly monitoring returns.
- In year 1 there will be an evaluation of the process of allocating funding, including the deliberative approach.
- In year 3 there will be a project evaluation to understand the impact of the investment

Funding approach

Please note that the following outline of our approach to the capital funding profile and revenue budget is for illustrative purposes only and will be subject to a degree of flexibility to respond to priorities and deliver the programme.

Capital funding for grants

£4 million capital²

- Capital neighbourhood grants: **£3,200,000**
- Capital equalities grants: **£800,000**

This budget consists of one-off grant funding and does not represent any ongoing financial commitment.

Grant size

Grants will be a minimum of £50,000. An exception will be made as part of our commitment to take positive action on inequality; up to 10% of the equalities grant budget will be available as smaller grants of minimum £10,000.

To ensure the processes and portfolio of projects funded can be managed with the resources available and the programme achieves its intended outcome of investing to increase long term resilience, for the neighbourhood fund, a maximum of 6 projects is funded in each area or equivalent across the city.

² What do we mean by capital expenditure? Capital funding can be spent on buying, replacing, enhancing or constructing roads, buildings and other structures as well as land, in order to lengthen the life of the asset, make it more valuable or make it more usable. It can also be spent on movable things like equipment and machinery or ICT infrastructure such as computer hardware and software.

Areas to receive funding

Funding will be available to those Lower Super Output Areas which fall within the 30% most deprived. Area Committee boundaries have been used for administrative purposes only.

Diagram 4 shows the indicative budget which will be available and the LSOAs which will be eligible within each area committee. This is illustrative and will be subject to change based on local need and circumstances and will form part of the delegated decision.

Diagram 4:

Area Committee	Eligible Areas	Indicative budget
Area 1	Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston (Lawrence Weston South, Lawrence Weston Parade, Lawrence Weston West, Lawrence Weston East, Shirehampton Centre, Barrow Hill, Avonmouth Village) Stoke Bishop (Sea Mills South)	£294,000
Area 2	Horfield (Horfield Common, Sheridan Road) Southmead (Southmead Central, Trymside, Fonthill, Southmead North, Southmead West) Henbury and Brentry (Crow Lane, Henbury, Crow Lane South)	£410,000
Area 3	Hillfields (East Hillfields and Hillfields North) Frome Vale (Gill Avenue) Eastville (Greenbank, Eastville Park, Speedwell) Lockleaze (Lockleaze South, Lockleaze North, Filton Avenue South, Filton Avenue North)	£444,000
Area 4	Easton (St Marks Road, Gilbert Road) Ashley (St Pauls Grosvenor Road, St Pauls City Road, St Agnes, St Pauls Portland Square, Lower Montpelier) Lawrence Hill (Easton Road, Cabot Circus, St Philips, Newtown, St Judes, Barton Hill, Stapleton Road, Old Market and Temple Meads) St George Central (Whiteway, Clouds Hill) Central (Redcliffe South, Stokes Croft West)	£887,000
Area 5	Southville (Bedminster East and Bedminster West) Brislington East and West (Broomhill Road, Hicks gate, St Anne's Park)	£260,000
Area 6	Hengrove and Whitchurch Park (Whitchurch Park west, Hengrove west, Wharnecliffe Gardens) Filwood (Inns Court, Filwood Broadway, Throgmorton Road, Leinster Avenue, Glyn Vale, Markbury Road, Wedmore Vale, Novers) Knowle (Ilminster Avenue West, Ilminster Avenue East) Hartcliffe and Withywood (Hareclive, Bishport Avenue, Bishport Avenue East, Fulford Road North, Whitchurch Lane, Bishport Avenue West, Four Acres, Fair Furlong, Withywood, Sherrin Way, Highridge Common) Bishopsworth (Highridge) Stockwood (Burnbush Hill and Burnbush)	£903,000

Indicative profile of capital budget

Grants will be phased so that grantees receive capital investment in three instalments:

- 1: 30% of grant once funding agreement is signed
- 2: 50% of grant following satisfactory evidence of progress on receipt of first monitoring information
- 3: 20% of grant to allow project completion

Budget

Diagram 5:

Expense	Development 21/22	Year 1 22/23	Year 2 23/24	Year 3 24/25	Year 4 25/26
Capital Budget			£1.7m	£1.7m	£600k

*Allocation of revenue grants will be discretionary, as we anticipate that some projects may require financial support, for example, for project management, surveys etc, while others may have sufficient capacity and resource. All organisations who receive a capital grant will be able to request revenue support.

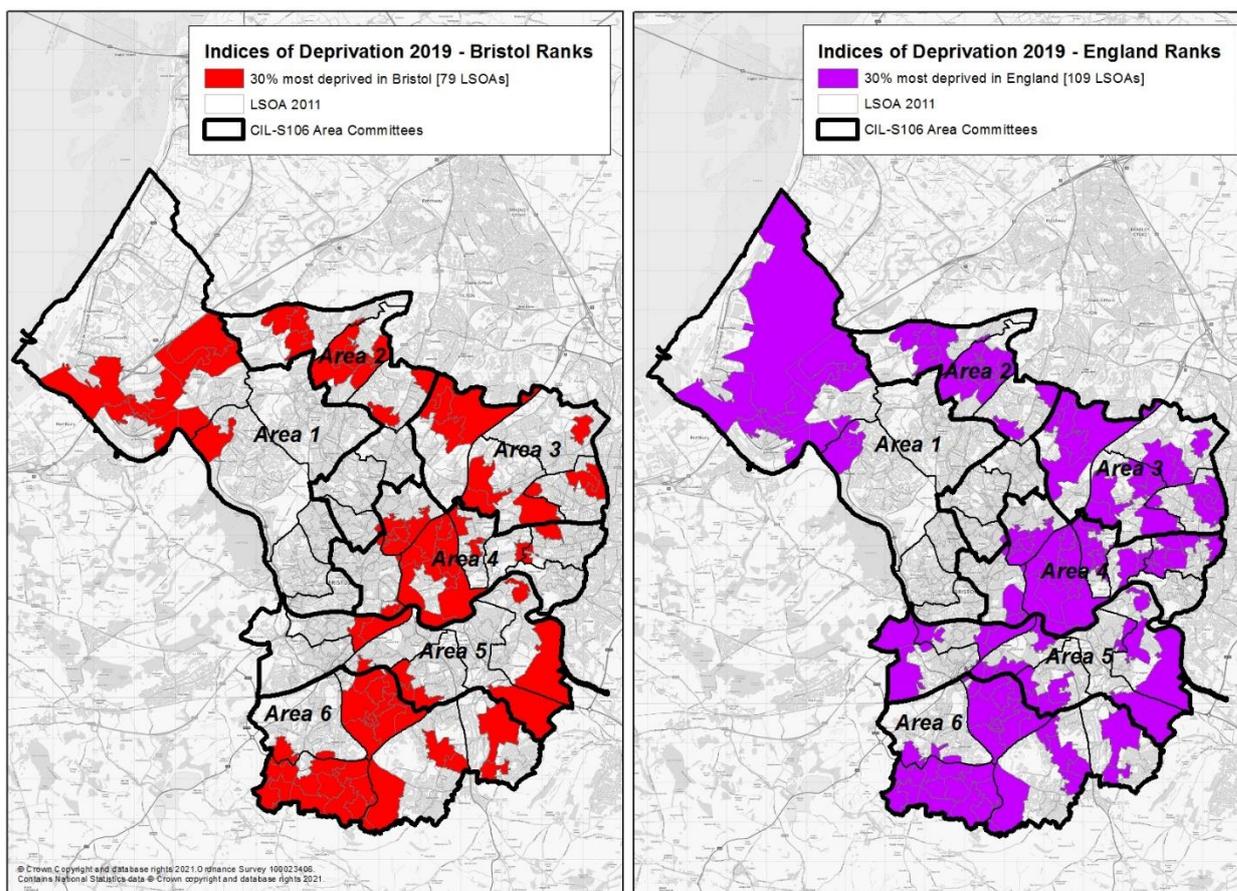
Budget Allocation- Options Considered

Diagram 6:

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Option 1: City-wide budget which organisations competitively bid for	Simple process, open to everyone. Minimal administration which maximises funding for grants.	Does not respond to the findings of the VCSE research. Less intentional in terms of responding to need, tackling inequity and funding communities with high levels of deprivation.
Conclusion:	Not proposed as disadvantages outweigh advantages	
Option 2: Local allocation of funding linked to amount of devolved CIL received	Responds to some areas receiving lower amounts of devolved Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	CIL priorities and funding criteria are very different to those of CRF so do not align and will over complicate the process. Proposed allocation of CRF does not dramatically change using this methodology.
Conclusion:	Not proposed as disadvantages outweigh advantages	
Option 3: Local allocation of funding based on Bristol IMD data for 30% most deprived areas, weighted to ensure areas of higher deprivation	Bristol data is more reliable than national IMD data. Equalities communities without a geographic hub are not excluded from capital investment.	Fewer LSOAs are eligible for funding. Resources required to support decision making process

receive greater proportion of funding. Ringfenced funding for equalities communities.	Includes less deprived areas of the city which are often ineligible for funding, yet still have high deprivation levels and lacking investment. Enables local/community-led decision making	
Conclusion:	Proposed as advantages outweigh disadvantages	

Diagram 7: Map of areas of Bristol which fall within 30% most deprived, to compare eligible areas when using city-wide data and England wide data.



Engagement and co-design

Since September 2021, we have been developing our proposed approach to the Community Resilience Fund through a co-design process with partners and colleagues. This has included conversations, meetings and workshops with the following key stakeholders:

- Voscur, Locality and Black South West Network
- Senior managers from VCSE organisations across the city
- Councillors who have the role of Area Committee Chair
- 15 Councillors from eligible wards attended one of three workshops

- Representatives of key strategic equalities organisations including Bristol Women’s Voice, Bristol Disability Equality Forum, Learning Partnership West and Black South West Network
- BCC teams and colleagues:
 - Property team
 - Climate change team
 - Economic development team
 - Community development team
 - Senior managers from across teams who have a strategic interface with VCSE sector
- Bristol Funders Network
- VCSE Strategy Group

The following themes and issues arose during this co-design process and have contributed to the proposed approach to allocating funding set out in this paper.

Diagram 8:

Theme / issue	Response
Comments on the process of allocating funding	
Complexity of the process – concerns about lengthy application forms which are time consuming to complete	<p>CRF proposes to invest upfront in a community conversation to identify priorities, the aim being to make the process as accessible as possible. Many community centres, for example, are volunteer run, they don’t have workers to attend meetings. Organisations interested in funding will need to express an interest and then shortlisting will be undertaken by a deliberative process facilitated by a VCSE host organisation. A funding agreement will be developed to deliver the agreed priorities with relevant organisations.</p> <p>We are currently undertaking an evaluation of the BIF2 application and allocation process and will apply learning from this when finalising our approach to CRF.</p> <p>We will ensure guidance provided to VCSE organisations is clear and thorough.</p>
Designing an inclusive process which is accessible to smaller groups as well as established organisations- possibly ringfencing some funding for smaller groups or providing additional support.	Proposing a light touch expression of interest. There will be the option of a development phase to reach baseline standards for smaller projects. We are working with VCSE infrastructure organisations so that support will be available to the organisations through the process.
Need to be more radical and intentional with funding approach, directing investment where we know it is needed and will have an impact.	We are proposing to take a different approach to allocating this fund, responding to priorities identified within neighbourhoods and equalities communities and building in development time to avoid lengthy application forms, and using deliberative processes and taking an action learning approach.

	Intentional design of equalities fund to ensure it is distinct and has additional impacts in terms of addressing inequity.
Conflict of interest for organisations involved in community conversations and facilitating the process, who may also wish to be considered for capital funding	We are in conversation with the organisations who are likely to lead community conversations and facilitation of the process. We will codesign a decision-making process which ensures they are able to be fairly considered for capital funding without a perception of an advantage. We are discussing the option of these lead organisations facilitating deliberative process in a different area of the city, where they don't have a vested interest. This would create a network of skilled facilitators of Deliberative Democracy across the city, and is preferable to paying for external facilitators, which is not a sustainable model.
Capacity within the sector to carry out community conversations and facilitation may be limited	Organisations will be paid to do this work, meaning they could buy in additional capacity. Collaboration to do one piece of work across an area but very much rooted in communities is encouraged. We are also consulting with organisations about the expectation, commitment involved and their ability to do the work to ensure there is capacity to cover all eligible areas of the city and equalities communities.
There is not a lot of funding allocated to some communities. Need to manage expectations rather than raising them through wide participation.	Community conversations and the principles of participatory budgeting and deliberative democracy being applied help communities to make difficult decisions about funding, and to understand the constraints. By engaging residents and VCSE sector in decision making, trust in the process is increased. We will be open and transparent about the funding available throughout the process.
Equality	
Ensuring the whole fund is about addressing inequity, not just the equalities fund	Addressing inequity is a key principle behind the fund. We are committing to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities input/ advice to feed into neighbourhood fund deliberative processes • Diverse groups of people to be involved in deliberative processes- recommendations will be provided for guidance on makeup of group. • Equalities focus within training • Equalities policy as baseline standard for grantees

<p>Ensuring equalities strand is distinct and clearly defined with supported organisations being ‘of’ the community they serve</p>	<p>CRF equalities strand will fund organisations of the communities they serve. We will use learning from BIF and discussion with equalities groups to agree eligibility criteria. Equalities groups will not need to be based in eligible neighbourhoods and could be working citywide without a geographic base, but they are also free to apply for neighbourhood funding if they are based in a priority area.</p>
<p>Equalities organisations are often small, with limited capacity, and many do not own an asset which could make it difficult for them to benefit from funding.</p>	<p>Organisations without an asset would be able to partner with a larger organisation who own an asset on a project which is beneficial to both. We have included funding priorities which allow for this. Equipment projects are not reliant on organisations owning a space or building.</p>
<p>Alignment and avoiding duplication</p>	
<p>Working in alignment with other funders and internal grant schemes to ensure timescales are manageable to VCSE organisations and match funding opportunities are identified</p>	<p>We have consulted with Bristol Funders Network and several internal teams currently administering or developing grant funds to ensure any potential for collaboration is explored and overlap is avoided. We are doing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with colleagues in Public Health with Sports Funding from Section 106 on engagement in their priority areas • Identifying links between Area Committee process and CRF to maximise potential for match funding and referrals/signposting across the two sources of capital • Speaking to Public health, economic development, climate change teams and Learning & Skills about emerging funds, potential cross over and avoiding duplication • Communicating with Bristol Funders Network about possible aligned or match funding, revenue support and sharing learning from the process
<p>Eligibility</p>	
<p>Including parts of Bristol within eligible neighbourhoods, which often miss out on opportunities for capital investment</p>	<p>Funding will be allocated to 30% most deprived areas of the city, to ensure we include areas sometimes overlooked.</p>
<p>Concerns that organisations who have previously benefitted or are likely to benefit from BIF2 or devolved CIL funding could be unfairly excluded by those making deliberative decisions</p>	<p>We have considered the timing of CRF and devolved CIL decision making and will encourage decisions to be made based on how projects meet priorities and how viable they are. Rather than allocating a project either devolved CIL or CRF we will encourage people</p>

	to think about how the two funds could be used together to increase the impact of a project. We will ensure those involved in deliberative process have a clear understanding that CRF is additional, distinct investment to BIF2 as it provides capital funding rather than revenue.
Comments from Councillors	
Councillors are elected for the purpose of making decisions on behalf of residents	This was the view of a minority of councillors consulted. Most councillors were supportive of the proposals.
Community engagement should be inclusive and organisations leading it should have a good reach into the less vocal, often more deprived communities. Engagement of organisations is often not as good as we would like.	Councillors provided suggestions of organisations we could work with to lead engagement in their areas. They will also be invited to play a role in supporting engagement and communication to ensure all those who need to know about the community resilience fund are made aware of it. Many councillors saw CRF as a good opportunity to expand their own engagement and encourage the VCSE sector to do the same.
Clear guidance and outcomes will be needed for VCSE organisations wanting funding.	We will provide clear guidance on the types of projects which can be funded, the eligibility criteria and the expected outcomes of projects. VCSE organisations involved in the process, Councillors and those doing the deliberation will all be well briefed on this. The oversight group will ensure we are fulfilling the intended outcomes.

Additional social benefits and added value

Grant recipients will be required to demonstrate additional social benefit from the grant investment by choosing from a menu of social value indicators. For example, additional funding, local people employed, value of volunteers.

Strategic fit

One City Approach: Over the past four years Bristol has been collaborating on a long-term vision and [One City Plan](#). It is rooted in the understanding that we will only make real progress in achieving our ambition for the city – equity, thriving economy, health-wealth, zero-carbon by working together and maximising our collective assets. The community and voluntary sector is a vital part of this city ecosystem.

VCSE Strategy: In August 2020, the VCSE Strategy Group was established, bringing together community and voluntary infrastructure organisations – Locality, Voscur and Black Southwest Network together with partners including City Funds³, Quartet Community Foundation, Power to Change, a disability equality adviser, Bristol North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, Sirona Health and senior leaders from Bristol City Council.

³ City Funds is a collaboration between Bristol & Bath Regional Capital; Quartet Community Foundation & Bristol City Council

The group commissioned significant research to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the sector, priorities and the aspirations for the future. An [interim report](#) was published in September 2020 which began to set out the scale of the challenge and the opportunity, and was followed by the report [‘Designing a new social reality’](#). This research, led by BSWN, made recommendations about how the sector can be strengthened going forward, and recognised the importance of the VCSE sector in building resilient communities.

A strategy for VCSE recovery and resilience has been developed from the research findings. The VCSE Strategy is part of the one city approach and informed the [Economic Recovery Strategy](#).

Along with the report of the Director of Public Health and the City Council’s own Corporate Strategy, there is a universal acknowledgement that empowering those communities most impacted by systemic inequality is essential for our longer-term city resilience.

Draft Corporate Strategy 2022-27: Our aim for the programme aligns with the emerging [Corporate Strategy 2022-27](#), in which Principles from the council’s current Corporate Strategy, to “build city resilience, improving our ability to cope with environmental, economic or social ‘shocks and stresses’” are also weaved into our approach and funding priorities. The Corporate Strategy outlines the council’s role as that of the enabler “using our assets to creatively support communities...to provide practical assistance...the focus is on creating self-sufficiency”. The CRF will support communities to develop practical projects which will allow greater self-sufficiency, in increasing their ability to generate income, save money and continue to connect people in well maintained, accessible community spaces. This fits with the core empowering and caring theme, which sets out an aim to increase independence of both communities and individuals. By allocating funding to neighbourhoods within the 30% most deprived, we will ensure we are also aligning this work with the Corporate Strategy which acknowledges the disparities throughout the city exacerbated by the pandemic and is founded on a goal to close the gap between people living in deprived areas of the city and those in affluent areas, so that the city is more resilient to future shocks whether they be health, climatic, economic, or social.

In accordance with the Association of Charitable Foundations’ August 2020 [‘Good Practice Recommendations for Funders in a Covid-19 Context’](#) we will focus the equalities strand of this fund on “organisations led by people with direct lived experience [3][4] of injustice or inequalities, as they have community reach and trust. These organisations are sometimes called organisations ‘of’ communities of identity or experience. These organisations are led and controlled by a majority of people who have relevant lived experience and so reflect and are ‘of’ the communities that organisation works with. These organisations have a majority of people with lived experience at all levels of their organisation including trustees, senior management, staff and volunteers. Simply engaging with a beneficiary group doesn’t mean an organisation is led by people with lived experience.” This is in line with recommendations received throughout our consultation with the VCSE sector that our approach to funding should be intentional, with a strong focus on equity.

BCC’s [Corporate Property Strategy](#) acknowledges that the land and buildings within the council’s estate can be used to increase community resilience. A key part of the strategy for property leased to the VCSE sector is to look into efficient use of property and explore options for co-location of services. This fund has the potential to contribute to this corporate objective by investing in community facilities which are seeking to increase opportunities for shared use and multi-functionality. This reduced the risk of loss of services such as libraries, community venue hire etc.

The Citizens Assembly: In 2021, the Citizen’s Assembly concluded that neighbourhoods need to be people centred and more liveable. The CRF supports this aim through investment in local community facilities that will support vital VCSE organisations to continue and develop work which brings people together, to enhance spaces which are often central to community building activity.

[Investing in Bristol’s mental wealth: The theory and practice of Thrive-o-nomics](#) The recent report by the Director of Public Health, Christina Gray, sets out the case for building community capacity and power as a major contribution to the mental health of the city.

The report talks about “opportunities to invest in creating healthy homes and urban spaces and places which support us to connect, be active, be safe and to thrive” and states that “We can invest in positive, connected, communities which will provide the resilience against future economic and social shocks.”

The funding environment

The Community Resilience Fund is just a small part of the VCSE funding landscape. The City Council is having to make very difficult financial decisions. We know we cannot fund everything and everyone – we must be targeted. We want our grant funding to be part of a working relationship with the VCSE sector to strengthen its capacity and impact.

Bristol City Council is part of the Bristol Funders Network. We are committed to working with other funders to find ways to align our approaches, learn from the Community and Voluntary Sector and each other. For example, our approach reflects the priorities set out in Quartet’s Coronavirus Recovery Phase Proposal: Quartet have published a strategic four-point plan to bring new resources in to support the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in the West of England. Estimating a cost of £30million, the report sets out 4 key areas to address: Stabilisation; Sector Support; Addressing long-standing inequalities and support for local action and social cohesion.

Quartet, City Funds and Power to Change are partners in the VCSE Strategy Group and the ambition to align funds to support the recovery of the VCSE and deliver the VCSE strategy.

In developing this proposal, we have consulted with colleagues and partners currently offering grant funding in the city to ensure we are responding to needs and filling gaps with the criteria we set out. Alongside Bristol Impact Fund 2, the Community Resilience Fund forms a significant part of BCC’s commitment to empower the VCSE sector to build back better.

Appendix 1: Eligibility Criteria Checklist

The Community Resilience Fund will be open to applications from voluntary and community sector and social enterprise organisations that have one or more of the following structures or forms. Organisations will be asked to confirm that at least one of the structures or forms applies to them:

The organisation is:
A registered charity
A Community Interest Company limited by guarantee
A Community Interest Company limited by share (Schedule 2 with 100% asset lock only)
A company limited by guarantee
A community benefit company registered as an Industrial and Provident Society
A Charitable Incorporated Organisation
An unincorporated organisation - We will accept applications from unincorporated organisations. Any organisation that is awarded a Community Resilience Fund grant and is not incorporated will be encouraged and signposted to support to become incorporated in order to protect the management committee members.

The Community Resilience Fund will be open to voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations which meet the specified criteria.

Organisations will be asked to ensure that **all** the statements below apply to them before taking part in the process of seeking funding.

Criteria
Your organisation is already based in or delivering services in Bristol (it already has an established presence in Bristol and the work your organisation does is for the benefit of Bristol people).
Your organisation is non-governmental.
Your organisation is constituted (it has a governing document – a set of rules - either constitution or a Memorandum and Articles of Association).
Your organisation has a set of objectives that allows it to undertake the activities you are proposing. (The constitution must allow your organisation to undertake the activities you are requesting funding for).
Your organisation is value driven, for the social good.

Criteria
Your organisation is non-party political.
Your organisation has at least three trustees or directors or management committee members (who are not related to each other and are not paid shareholders).
Your organisation reinvests any financial surpluses to further objectives that bring a significant community benefit to Bristol.
Your organisation is 'not for profit': it does not distribute any of its surpluses or assets through share dividends to individuals or shareholders.
Your organisation has a bank account in its own name. Payments from this account should be authorised by at least two signatories (who are not related or living at the same address).

What we won't fund

Proposals that will not address our two principles of addressing inequity and taking an asset-based approach, or which cannot clearly evidence a community priority.

Revenue costs (for example ongoing staffing costs or costs towards running a service)

Spaces used for solely political or religious activities.

Projects in inaccessible venues. It is essential that disabled people can access spaces funded through the Community Resilience Fund.

Buildings or infrastructure/ equipment that the state or a statutory body has a legal obligation to provide

Activities that happen or start before the start date of the grant and the council's funding agreement

Endowments (to provide an income)

Loans or interest payments