



Committee Report

PURPOSE: Final Decision Report

KEY OR NON-KEY DECISION: Key decision over £500k spend/save & impacts more than 2 wards

COMMITTEE: Public Health and Communities Committee

DATE: 21 June 2024

TITLE: Extension of Bristol Impact Fund 2

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 extend Bristol Impact Fund 2 (BIF2) medium and large grants to community and voluntary sectors organisations for 6 months from 1st October 2025 to 31st March 2026.

This extension will give time to work with the new administration on the approach to Bristol Impact Fund 3 (BIF3) with a view to a committee decision in January 2025.

Evidence Base / Options to consider:

1. In 2016 Bristol City Council (BCC) pooled grants from several Departments to create a strategic fund focused on addressing inequity and supporting BCC priorities. This fund is called the Bristol Impact Fund. Medium to large grants administered over four years give recipient organisations greater stability to develop their work and secure additional funding.
2. The community and voluntary sector is vital to Bristol's wellbeing, health and economy. The sector is also vital in supporting the council to meet its obligations and strategic objectives. The context of current funding is one of growing inequity exacerbated by austerity, cost of living, the climate crisis and other complex factors.
3. On 25 February 2021, an overall investment of £8.8m was approved for grants to community and voluntary sector organisations in Bristol.

4. Of this £6.4m was allocated to the second Bristol Impact Fund (BIF2) called 'Growing the Power of Communities' for the period 1st October 2021 – 30th September 2025. £2.4m was allocated to enable the recovery and resilience of the sector through the Community Resilience Fund capital grants programme.
5. The Bristol Impact Fund has been developed in collaboration with the community and voluntary sector. BIF 2 was informed by voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) research *Designing a New Social Reality* (see 'Background Documents'). It prioritises organisations and approaches to grow the capacity and resilience of both neighbourhood communities where there is greatest inequity, and of city-wide equality-led groups.
6. BIF 2 included a learning and evaluation fund of £277,000. A year two, mid-point report will be published this summer. Some key learning points to date are noted in Appendix A.
7. If the Committee approve the six month extension, a decision to invest in a third Bristol Impact Fund will need to be made by the Public Health and Communities (PH&C) Policy Committee in January 2025 according to the following indicative timetable:

Activity/ Milestone	With extension of 6 months
Public consultation with community and voluntary sector and key stakeholders, taking positive action to speak to equality-led groups	6 weeks September/October 2024
Committee decision on approach	January 2025
Pre-application workshops and support to applicants	January/ February 2025
Application window	March – June 2025
Assessment and final allocations	August - October 2025
Grant award decision	December 2025
BIF 3 grants start	April 2026

8. It is not possible to start BIF 3 on 1st October 2025 because of the time needed to achieve the key milestones set out in the table above. If the committee decide against an extension there would be a significant gap between the end of BIF2 and the start of a future BIF3. This would present significant risks to voluntary and community organisations, BCC and city infrastructure.

Officer Recommendations: -

That the Committee for Public Health and Communities:

1. **Approves an extension to BIF 2 medium and large grants programme of 6 months, from 1st October 2025 to 31st March 2026, at a cost of £766,340.**
2. **Endorses the proposed indicative timeline and suggested date for a decision to be brought to Committee to approve the approach to Bristol Impact Fund 3.**
3. **Authorise the Head of Service for Communities , in consultation with the Chair of the committee, to take all steps required to award the grants and ensure the timetable is met.**

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. The challenges facing citizens, communities and the city in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis include increasing inequity, the climate emergency, pressure on NHS and Adult Social Care services, emotional distress (including loneliness and isolation). These are set out in BCC’s Corporate Strategy 2022-2027. Community building activities which enable social connection, self-organisation, access to support and participation in decision-making are a crucial building block for city resilience and our ability as citizens, communities and anchor organisations to meet these challenges.
2. The corporate strategy outlines in objective HC5 ‘Community Participation’ 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.

City Benefits:

1. BIF2 focuses explicitly on empowering and supporting both communities of place, and communities of people with shared experience of inequality. It has been clear through the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis that these community groups are a vital part of the city and community ecosystem. The proposed extension would allow this work to continue without a break in funding, while also allowing time for consultation and engagement, giving the VCSE sector the opportunity to shape a future BIF3, and ensuring its relevance and value for the city.

Consultation Details:

1. As outlined above, this report seeks approval to run a public consultation in September 2024. Through both an online consultation and in-person consultation events, this would provide an opportunity to hear from VCSE sector partners, equalities groups, current BIF grant recipients, VCSE infrastructure organisations, and other funders in the city, among others.

Background Documents:

1. BIF 1 Evaluation Report (Bristol City Council Website) [Bristol Impact Fund 1 Evaluation of first 2 years \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-impact-fund-1-evaluation-of-first-2-years)
2. BIF2 Cabinet Paper February 2021 [Bristol Impact Fund 2 Cabinet papers \(ModernGov - bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-impact-fund-2-cabinet-papers) Item 21
3. Black South West Network 2021, Designing a New Social Reality (BSWN website) [VCSE Research — Black South West Network](https://www.bswnetwork.org.uk/vcse-research)

Revenue Cost	£766,340	Source of Revenue Funding	General Fund and Public Health Grant (PH Grant is 37% of the total)
Capital Cost	£0	Source of Capital Funding	NA
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:

1. Finance Advice: This report seeks approval to extend BIF 2 medium and large grants, with the payment of 6 months of grant funding from 1st October 2025 to 31st March 2026, at a cost of £766,340. This figure is based on paying all organisation two more quarterly payments for (October 2025 and January 2026). This will be funded from a combination of general fund monies of £482,794 and Public Health Grant funding of £283,546. Committing funding until 2026 does potentially reduce the flexibility of the Council overall to respond to the risk of reduced funding over the medium term.

Finance Business Partner: Denise Hunt, 13 May 2024

2. Legal Advice: Provided the proposed arrangements comprise grant agreements (and not contracts for services), the proposed extensions and future grants will not be subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Client officers should seek legal assistance to ensure this is the case.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones Team Manager/Solicitor, 4 June 2024

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

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson – Senior Solution Architect, 14th May 2024

4. HR Advice: The report is seeking to extend BIF2 grants for 6 months for community and voluntary sector organisations, from 1st October 2025 to 31st March 2026, to allow time to work with the new administration on the approach for BIF3 and a committee decision in January 2025. There are no significant HR implications arising for BCC employees.

HR Partner: Debbie Hunt, HR Consultancy Manager (on behalf of Lorna Laing HR Business Partner), 14 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