



Legacy Grant Review Phase 2 - Update

29th June 2023

Communities & Localism Select Committee

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Background (Phase 1)

- A review of legacy grants to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) was started in 2020/21, following a [Shadow Executive decision](#) made in February 2020. The review initially looked at £2.3m of legacy grant funding to the sector across a range of services.
- At the same time, a review of Community Prevention Grants was undertaken by the Integrated Commissioning Team, looking at grants totalling around £300k.
- These reviews were brought together and it was agreed to undertake a single review of grant funding to the sector.
- A set of principles for the review were agreed, which included a steer to move towards commissioning or multi-year funding agreements in place of annual grants. Funding for local projects or activities should be signposted to Community Boards where appropriate or to external funding opportunities.
- A Member Working Group was established to oversee the review with Terms of Reference agreed.

Background (Phase 2)

- Following the first phase of the review, a [decision was made in February 2022](#) on the next steps which would be undertaken as part of a second phase. These were to:
 - Transfer remaining legacy grants to relevant service areas to manage and review.
 - Transition the majority of grants which were strategic in nature into longer term commissioned arrangements/multi-year funding.
 - Develop a single register of VCS funding across the council.
 - Develop a comprehensive funding guide detailing national and local funding opportunities.
 - Develop proposals for the use of the Buckinghamshire Lottery.
 - Phase out Community Prevention Grants allowing for the redirection of funding to commissioned services (to be lead by the Commissioning Team).
 - Fund 5 grants from the Buckinghamshire Lottery and 5 from Government grants (Household Support Fund) for 2022/23 and support those organisations to find other sources of future funding (these have subsequently been extended for a further year to allow time to identify potential external funding sources).
 - Discontinue 2 grants and signpost to Community Boards where relevant.
 - To support the actions above a work plan was developed for phase 2 overseen by the Member Working Group.
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Phase 2 Grant Review Scope

The three key areas of work for the second phase of the review are:

Commissioning/Multi-year Funding

- Services to work with VCSOs to transition grants into longer term agreements where appropriate.
- Develop a timetable to ensure all legacy grants are replaced with new arrangements by the end of 2023/24.
- Prevention Grants to be phased out.

Single VCSE Funding Register

- Develop a single register of VCS funding to ensure visibility of all financial support to VCSOs across the council.
- Develop a comprehensive funding guide detailing national and local funding opportunities.
- Explore how rental grant subsidy arrangements may be captured as part of the overall funding register.

Buckinghamshire Lottery

- Develop proposals for the use of the Buckinghamshire Lottery Community Fund.

- The second phase of the review includes legacy grants and 6 former Prevention Grants which were transferred to other services as part of the phase 1 decision.
- The remaining Prevention Grants are being phased out by Adults & Health by the end of 2023-24 with funding redirected to a new Prevention Service. This process is being managed separately by Adults & Health.

Phase 2 Governance

- The cross-party Member Working Group provides Member oversight of the review. The group is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities and meets monthly (as required).
- A group of voluntary sector representatives also meets as required to provide feedback from a VCS perspective on the overall principles of the review, however they do not have input into decisions on individual grants.



Legacy Grants – Phase 2

- The Member Working Group has agreed a principle that all organisations should be given 6 months' notice of changes to their grants. This means that all decisions should be made and organisations notified by the end of September 2023 in order to meet the timeline as defined in the Feb 2022 phase 1 decision report.
- Service areas are responsible for reviewing grants in their areas and putting forward proposals to the Member Working Group for future approaches. Proposals should align with the principles for the review – i.e. moving towards multi-year funding and ensuring VCSE activity is integrated into service strategy.
- Once initial proposals have been developed, consultation will take place with local ward Members and proposals will be reviewed by the Member Working Group.
- Final decisions on the approaches for individual grants will be taken in conjunction with Cabinet Members.

Buckinghamshire Lottery Community Fund

- Following discussions with the Member Working Group, proposals were developed and a [key decision was taken by the Leader in March 2023](#) to utilise £100k from the Lottery Community Fund reserve to establish the VCSE Resilience Fund, which launched on 14 March.
- Further options are being drawn up to utilise the ongoing revenue generated from ticket sales which will be discussed with Members and the VCS working group.

Single VCS Funding Register

- Work is underway to produce a single register of funding to the VCS, which will provide an overall picture of funding the sector across the organisation.
- We are currently looking to use the Contract Management Application (CMA) for this purpose, which is already used by council officers to record contracts.
- Work is also underway to look at whether rental grant subsidies can be included within the overall register of VCS funding. There is currently no consistent approach to rental grant subsidies as many of the current agreements were made by legacy councils, which would have undertaken different methodologies and approaches to subsidies, and many may not have been recorded as such.

VCS Funding Guide

- The phase 1 decision referenced the need to build a comprehensive funding guide to support the sector in finding funding from the council, as well as from other local and national sources.
- There is already information on the council [website](#) regarding funding from Community Boards, the Buckinghamshire Lottery, and HW Town Committee, as well as links to the Bucks Funding Search, Community Impact Bucks, Heart of Bucks, The Clare Foundation, LEAP, Rothschild Foundation and others.
- The [Bucks Funding Search](#), hosted by Community Impact Bucks, is free to access and has details of hundreds of funding opportunities, both local and national, that all types of VCSE organisations can access. The search tool is updated as and when funding opportunities change or new opportunities open.
- Community Impact Bucks, as well as other VCSE infrastructure organisations such as the Clare Foundation, are able to provide bespoke funding advice as well as bid writing support to VCSOs and this is stated on our council website.
- The council has a dedicated VCSE strategic lead officer, as well as a Community Engagement and Development team, who can provide advice and guidance to VCSOs looking for funding and can signpost and refer into support organisations.
- Given that a large range of funding information and advice is available through the council already, and through the Bucks Funding Search and VCSE infrastructure organisations, producing a further guide would appear to duplicate the information already available. This would also present a challenge as the guide would also need to be kept up to date as funding opportunities are constantly changing. Consideration is therefore being given to dropping this aspect of the review.

Next Steps

- Review of Legacy Grants
 - Proposals to be discussed at Member Working Group
 - Consultation with local Members
 - Final sign off and notification by end of September
 - New arrangements in place from 1 April 2024
- Lottery Community Fund
 - Further options to be worked up and presented to Member Working Group for review.
 - Final approach to be signed off by Cabinet Member/Leader
- Single VCS Funding Register
 - Use of CMA to produce the register to be signed off
 - Services to begin adding grants/contracts with VCSOs to CMA

