

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Action Taken Under Delegated Powers

Establishment of Vision 2030 Grants Programme

1 Summary Statement

- 1.1 It is proposed that elements of the small grants scheme be managed by SCVO in line with Vision 2030 values and the aims of the Sandwell Voluntary Sector Compact.
- 1.2 The small grants scheme within the council is currently delivered by the Neighbourhood Engagement team of the Business Excellence service within the Neighbourhoods Directorate. The team administer and manage the small grants for the council, deliver strategic engagement events such as Safer 6 and play a positive role in engaging with new voluntary and community sector groups across the six towns. The proposed arrangements for the Vision 2030 small grants programme would not impact significantly on the roles of the Neighbourhoods Engagement team and therefore there are no transfer of undertakings (TUPE) implications.
- 1.3 Business Excellence took on responsibility three years ago for the management of small grants from the Sandwell Locals to ensure independence, improve quality of bid submissions and to demonstrate a critical friend role. The process has been subject to two internal audits from the council's internal audit team in 2017 and 2018 respectively.
- 1.4 Following the internal audit in 2017, a report containing eight recommendations was developed and agreed. The key recommendations identified; the need for standardised documentation across all grant streams, a central register be maintained, monitoring arrangements put in place and a clear mechanism for approval for grant awards be established. Since April 2018, all of the recommendations contained within the internal audit report have been delivered and subsequently signed off by the internal audit team.

- 1.5 In August 2019, a further review of the small grants managed by the council and also the small grants managed by Sandwell Community and Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) was undertaken. The purpose of the review was to evaluate the administration and management of small grants against the key principles of; alignment with Vision 2030; compliance against the Sandwell Compact; visibility and accessibility to all voluntary and community groups; making Sandwell a better place and how current arrangements work against SCVO's small grant schemes.
- 1.6 The outcome of the review found best practice in working arrangements from both SCVO and the council. Approaches to grant administration by SCVO were felt to be light touch and proportionate, which supports the principle of visibility and accessibility to all voluntary and community sector groups. Cash for Sports Clubs and Play is Making a Difference which are council managed are functioning well, but it is identified that these would benefit from increased collaboration between SCVO and the council. Although the current town grants process managed by the council meets internal audit recommendations, there is a recognition that to ensure compliance against Sandwell's compact and further improve visibility and accessibility across the strong voluntary sector within Sandwell, of which SCVO is a fundamental element, the development of a new, people focussed small grants fund managed by SCVO would be beneficial.
- 1.7 Therefore, it is proposed to devolve the Vision 2030 small grants fund in January 2020 to SCVO. The grants will be administered and managed by SCVO and will complement their existing small grants process. Pilot arrangements will commence in 2019/20 to ensure arrangements are effective prior to proceeding to a Cabinet report which will seek approval for the Vision 2030 small grants programme for 2020/21 and 2021/22. A review of these arrangements will be undertaken after 12 months.
- 1.8 To support making Sandwell a better place, the council will retain funding for place based small grants under the leadership of the Town Leads.
- 1.9 The funding arrangements for Vision 2030 small grants until 31st March 2020 consist of;

Local Area Budget/Town Grants	£34,500
Healthier Towns	£87,414
Youth Offer	£16,614
Community Chest	£23,239
GRANT TOTAL	£161,767
Administration of programme grant (initial set up costs and publicity)	£8,000
FINAL TOTAL	£169,767

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 A grant of £161,767 is made to SCVO for the period until the 31 March 2020 to support voluntary and community groups in Sandwell as part of the Vision 2030 small grants programme.
- 2.2 That a further grant of £8,000 is made to SCVO for the period until March 2020 to cover the initial set up costs and administration of the Vision 2030 small grants programme.

In accordance with the authority delegated to Chief Officers to act on matters within the authority delegated to them under Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, I intend to take the action(s) recommended above.

I ~~do~~ do not have an interest to declare in this matter

SIGNATURE REMOVED FOR DATA PROTECTION PURPOSES

Alison Knight Executive Director Neighbourhoods

Date 9 - 1 - 20

I confirm that I have been consulted on the above proposals and have no objection to their proceeding.

SIGNATURE REMOVED FOR DATA PROTECTION PURPOSES

Darren Carter - Executive Director -Resources

Date 9 - 1 - 20

I confirm that I have been consulted on the above proposals and have no objection to their proceeding.

SIGNATURE REMOVED FOR DATA PROTECTION PURPOSES

Lisa McNally Director of Public Health

Date 6 JAN 2020

Contact Officer

Heather Chinner, Voluntary Sector Liaison and Development
Manager

heather_chinner@sandwell.gov.uk

0121 569 3020

3. Background Details

- 3.1 A desk top review of small grants under the value of £5k was undertaken by the Voluntary Sector Liaison and Development Manager, supported by the Chief Executive Officer of Sandwell Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations (SCVO) given his role of representative for the sector.
- 3.2 Further to this, recommendations were presented by the Voluntary Sector Liaison and Development Manager as part of a report to Councillors Yvonne Davies and Maria Crompton in August 2019 and it was agreed that this would be taken forward via the decision process.
- 3.3 The review identified differing approaches to the administration and management of grant funds across the council. Some of the grants funds have been subject to audits from the council's internal audit team in recent years, which has led to the introduction of new application and monitoring processes.
- 3.4 For those grant funds with a specific focus, such as Cash for Sports Clubs and Holiday Play schemes they sit within service areas with a specific remit and specialist knowledge of service delivery and can demonstrate best practice. This funding is currently more visible and accessible to the voluntary and community sector.
- 3.5 The review has made recommendations for the future administration and management of small grants. These are namely;
- Subject to a successful pilot of the Vision 2030 grants fund, SCVO continue to manage this grants fund and a core budget of £155k per annum is established and transferred for a 2-year period; commencing 2020/21. Any current underspend will be transferred to SCVO, in order to create a high impact in the first year of Vision 2030 small grants. There will be a review of allocation and spend after year one.
 - A grant of up to £33,250 pa is proposed to enable SCVO to manage the Vision 2030 small grants programme.
 - A place-based grants fund of £90k per annum is established using existing Town Grants budget. The Making Sandwell a Better Place fund will be administered and managed by the Neighbourhood Engagement Team within Business Excellence under the leadership of the Town Leads.

- Both the Making a Sandwell a Better Place and Vision 2030 small grants funds will be subject to review after a period of 12 months.
- The management of the Cash for Sports Club Programme funding is retained by the Council with support from SCVO in the publicity and promotion of funding, including listing on Route2Wellbeing and Sandwell Family Life. Cross-referrals of applications from sports groups for both funding and support will be promoted.
- The management of the Play is making a Difference in Sandwell fund is retained by the Council with the support of SCVO to promote the availability of grants including listing on Route2Wellbeing and Sandwell Family Life.
- In conjunction with SCVO develop application forms and guidance which reflect the council's continued support for the voluntary and community sector.

Vision 2030 small grants programme

- 3.6 The Vision 2030 small grants programme has clear priorities; building social connections including tackling loneliness, community asset building and social prescribing; youth activities and Healthy Sandwell which include micro grants and on-going engagement activity. Applications for funding will be required to reflect these priorities.
- 3.7 Clear principles have been established for the administration including a light touch application process; a mix of decision making processes which include a council officer and proportionate monitoring arrangements.
- 3.8 Grants of up to £5k will be provided to groups and the spend period will be extended from one year currently to a period of up to 2 years. The extension of the spend period will provide stability to smaller groups. This does not apply to stage 1 Healthy Sandwell grants for a one-off engagement activity.
- 3.9 Grants will be publicised widely via SCVO's range of networks and the council's website (Resilient Communities webpage) and activities will usually be listed on Route2WellBeing and Sandwell Family Life.

- 3.10 Monitoring arrangements for those grant funds administered and managed by SCVO will consist of an annual report providing details of the grants awarded which will be reviewed by the council's voluntary sector support team.
- 3.11 One of the key benefits of the new approach to small grant funding administration and management is an assurance of Compact compliance. Further benefits include; a simpler, less time consuming process, less risk of funding duplicate activities, improved visibility and accessibility of funding to the voluntary and community sector and a joined-up approach to both funding provision and much needed support to voluntary and community groups.

SCVO

Vision 2030 Small Grants
£155,500

EPIC
£900,000
over 3 years

Community Partnership
£29,800

Youth Mentoring
£80,000

Sandwell Council

Making Sandwell a Better Place
£90,000

Cash for Sports Clubs Programme
£24,000 tbc

Community Infrastructure Levy
£tbc

Holiday Play Schemes
£41,800

