

Draft Equality Impact Assessment – Community Partnerships Budget Implications

1. Introduction

1.1 Service:	Community Partnerships
1.2 Name of proposal, policy, strategy or project:	Suspension of small and medium grants schemes, and reduction to partnerships projects budget
1.3 This is:	A change to an existing activity (including ceasing that activity)
1.4 Completing officer's name:	Justine Chatfield
1.5 Date initially completed:	08/11/2021

2. About the proposal

*** Note that the term 'proposal' is used here to include any new services proposed for introduction, changes to an existing service, withdrawal of an existing service, any new policy or strategy or change to an existing policy or strategy, and any project ***

2.1 What is the main purpose of the proposal? <i>Please explain in one or two short paragraphs</i>
The small grants scheme is a £45k per annum budget providing local voluntary and community orgs with access to grants of up to £2k, when nominated by Councillors. The medium grants scheme is a £50k per annum budget providing local voluntary and community orgs with grants of between £2k and £10k. The partnerships projects budget primarily funds statutory community safety work but has historically also enabled us to contribute to voluntary and community sector Surrey wide initiatives. The budget proposal would represent a 14% reduction in the partnerships projects budget.

2.2 Why is it being introduced / reviewed / changed now? <i>This could be, for example, because of new government legislation or guidance, because of changing service user needs, or for financial reasons.</i>
It is proposed to pause these grant schemes and reduce the partnerships projects budget due to budgetary pressures

2.3 Who is the intended audience or target group(s) for the proposal?
Internal audience or group: N/A
External audience or group: Multiple (please specify below)
<i>If other, please specify. Please also use the section below to provide more details about the audience or target group(s):</i> Voluntary, community and faith sector – who will be unable to apply or access grant funding Residents – who would have benefited from services, activities and support that grants enabled Partner organisations – who utilise local VCS services

3. Assessment of potential impact

Information about the protected characteristic groups as defined by the Equality Act is available [here](#). You should also use this assessment to consider impacts on other vulnerable groups such as those on low incomes.

In undertaking your assessment, please think about every stage of your process, including the design phase, any consultation, the delivery phase and once the proposal is up and running.

Who could be affected by your proposal?

3.1 Will the proposal affect people - service users, employees or the wider community?	Yes	<p><i>If yes, please identify which group(s):</i></p> <p>More than one of the above</p> <p>The local voluntary sector may struggle to sustain services and functionality if they can't access funding. This means that residents that benefit from the local VCS offer may face a reduction in services, activities if VCS services are unable to secure alternative funding.</p>
3.2 Will the proposal introduce a change which will significantly affect how services or functions are delivered?	Yes	<p><i>Please briefly explain your answer:</i></p> <p>Service will be suspended / withdrawn</p> <p>The revenue budget reduction proposed for 2022/23 means that the Community Partnerships team will need to pause its medium and small grants offer. Resumption of the service will be subject to securing replacement funding in future years. During the pause, the Council's ability to support and shape the local offer to meet Council priorities will be lost and the Council's relationship with the VCS may be impacted which in turn may indirectly impact residents.</p>

Data and evidence

In undertaking this assessment, you will need to consider relevant data and evidence, depending on the people the proposal will affect, for example:

- Relevant information about service users held by your service
- Relevant information about staff (eg, the workforce equality information published on the [website](#), staff surveys etc)
- Relevant information about borough residents (eg the borough equality information published on the [website](#), service user surveys etc)
- Relevant information published by third party organisations (eg data, research studies etc)
- Feedback or information from organisations representing target equality groups

<p>3.3 Please list the evidence / data sources you have considered in assessing the likely impact of your proposal</p>	<p>Small Grants have been delivered since 2019/20 and since then £120,000 of funding has been provided to local VCS partners. Medium Grants have provided £100,000 of funding to local VCS organisations over the same timeframe. The grants have enabled a variety of activities to take place including 24 advice and support services, 20 repair and upgrades to community buildings, 8 activity groups or events, 5 food poverty projects and 5 supporting charity development. The grants will often benefit people experiencing deprivation, vulnerable people, older people, people with disabilities, pregnant women and those with young children. VCS partners have told us that funding has become more of a challenge since Covid.</p>
<p>3.4 Are there any significant gaps in the evidence base that mean it is difficult to assess the likely impact of your proposal?</p>	<p>Yes <i>If yes, please explain what the gaps are and suggest how those gaps could be filled in the future</i> We do not have a full picture of alternative funding streams available that offer similar funding and monitoring to Small and Medium Grants. Further work in this area would help us understand existing or potential future alternative funding options for our VCS partners.</p>

Potential impact

<p>3.5 Does your proposal relate to a service or function which information indicates is important to those with protected characteristics?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><i>If yes, please outline the issues – these could include (for example) access to information or ability to use or access a service.</i> Small and medium grants provide important funding opportunities: (1) for local projects in disadvantaged communities; (2) for local charities with established track records in supporting people with protected characteristics (e.g. disability, age, ethnicity)</p>
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3.6 Will the proposal intentionally target any particular protected characteristic group?	No	N/A
3.7 Will the proposal intentionally exclude any particular protected characteristic group?	No	N/A
3.8 Will the proposal be able to be equally accessed by all at every stage of the process? Or are there barriers that might inhibit access for some people?	May be barriers that could inhibit access	<i>Please identify any barriers. These could be physical, digital, social or cultural:</i> The withdrawal of the grant funds has the potential to impact different voluntary and community sector organisations differently and therefore some communities may be more affected than others.
3.9 Does the proposal have the potential to reduce inequalities or improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups?	No	N/A

3.10 Considering the above information, please summarise the likely impact on protected characteristic groups (within the organisation, outside the organisation or both) This may be direct, indirect or differential impact. Use the above link for definitions, and consider issues such as physical access to services, different cultural or social practices and how people are able to access information.

	Nature of impact	Please briefly explain your answer
Age including children, young people or older people	Negative	Small and medium sized grants are often awarded to organisations / groups whose work supports a particular age cohort such as the elderly or young people. Pausing small and medium grants may indirectly impact these groups as there will be reduced external funding available for VCS organisations which could lead to the reduced local services or activities for them.
Disability including physical, sensory or learning disability or long-term health impairment	Negative	Small and medium sized grants are often awarded to organisations / groups whose work supports disabled residents. Pausing small and medium grants may indirectly impact these groups as there will be reduced external funding available for VCS organisations which could lead to the reduced local services or activities for them.

Gender reassignment	Neutral	
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	Small and medium sized grants have previously been awarded to organisations / groups whose work supports expectant / new parents. Pausing small and medium grants may indirectly impact these groups as there will be reduced external funding available for VCS organisations which could lead to the reduced local services or activities for them.
Race or ethnicity	Negative	Small and medium sized grants have previously been awarded to organisations / groups whose work supports minority ethnic communities. Pausing small and medium grants may indirectly impact these groups as there will be reduced external funding available for VCS organisations which could lead to the reduced local services or activities for them.
Religion or belief	Neutral	Faith sector organisations are eligible to apply for these grants when their proposal has clear wider community benefits. The removal of these grants should not therefore have an adverse religious impact.
Sex	Negative	Small and medium sized grants have previously been awarded to organisations / groups whose work supports women. Pausing small and medium grants may indirectly impact these groups as there will be reduced external funding available for VCS organisations which could lead to the reduced local services or activities for them.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	
Deprivation	Negative	Small and medium sized grants are often awarded to organisations / groups whose work supports activities in an area of deprivation. Pausing small and medium grants may indirectly impact these groups as there will be reduced external funding available for VCS organisations which could lead to the reduced local services or activities for them.
Other vulnerable group	Negative	Small and medium sized grants are often awarded to organisations / groups whose work is focussed on supporting vulnerable residents. Pausing small and medium grants may indirectly impact these groups as there will be reduced external funding available

		for VCS organisations which could lead to the reduced local services or activities for them.
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<p>3.11 Has there been any consultation with relevant interested parties or is any consultation planned? <i>This could include consultation, further evidence gathering or changing or amended the proposed approach. Give consideration to both consultation within the Council (eg staff) and outside the Council (eg residents).</i></p>
<p>Yes, planned</p>
<p><i>If yes, please explain the nature of the consultation that has been undertaken or is planned. If no, please explain why consultation is not considered necessary. How were protected characteristic groups consulted or how will they be consulted?</i></p> <p>Consultation will be undertaken as part of the corporate budget setting consultation</p>

<p>3.12 What actions have been, or could be, taken to increase the positive impacts for people with protected characteristic(s) or other vulnerabilities? <i>This could include changing or amending the proposed approach.</i></p>
<p>Not applicable</p>

<p>3.13 What actions have been, or could be, taken to reduce potential negative impacts on people with protected characteristic(s) or other vulnerabilities? <i>This could include changing or amended the proposed approach, or allowing the proposal to be tailored to fit different individual circumstances</i></p>
<p>Seeking to strengthen and support routes to other funding sources by offering enhanced support/volunteer support with fundraising and providing ongoing and up to date information on local funding opportunities.</p> <p>Reviewing resources across Community Partnerships next financial year to see if any work could be undertaken to create a separate grant budget.</p> <p>Develop a VCS strategy with partners in order to identify other forms of in-kind support or resource that could help sustain and develop their offer to vulnerable groups and those with protected characteristics.</p>

3.15 Are there any remaining negative impacts for people with protected characteristic(s) or other vulnerabilities? *For example, physical, cultural or information access issues that cannot be resolved.*

This question will be considered taking into account the outcomes of the consultation when this equalities impact assessment is finalised

3.16 Is any remaining negative impact legal or intended? *The Equality Act says discrimination can be justified if it can be demonstrated that this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim (for example, see [here](#)). However, this should always be a last resort.*

This question will be considered taking into account the outcomes of the consultation when this equalities impact assessment is finalised

IMPORTANT:

Any remaining negative unintended impacts must be drawn to the attention of the decision-maker (for example, the relevant Board or Committee).

The following must be considered by decision-makers before any final decision is made:

- **Does the assessment indicate any direct discrimination? If yes, the proposal would be unlawful and must be rejected.**
- **Does the assessment indicate any indirect discrimination? If yes, the proposal should be rejected unless it can be justified under legislation, for example:**
 - It is necessary to the Council effectively carrying out its function
 - The Council has been unable to find an alternative method of achieving its aims and objectives with a decreased discriminatory effect
 - The decision-maker considers that the means employed to achieve its aims and objectives are proportionate, necessary and appropriate.

In the event that there are negative impacts remaining and it is concluded that the proposal should still be agreed/implemented, it is highly recommended that consultation is carried out (including with representatives of the affected group) before the final proposal is agreed.

4. Monitoring and review

4.1 How do you propose to monitor and review the impact of your proposal? *Please outline how you will monitor the impact of your proposal, once implemented, on protected characteristic groups, and what the mechanisms for review are (for example if any negative impact is found to be occurring)*

We have strong working relationships with VCS partners. This will give us an anecdotal sense of the impacts.