



Overview and Scrutiny Our Manchester VCS Fund Task and Finish Group

Date: Thursday, 31 January 2019

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Council Antechamber - Level 2, Town Hall Extension

Everyone is welcome to attend this Task and Finish Group meeting.

Access to the Council Antechamber

Public access to the Council Antechamber is on Level 2 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension. That lobby can also be reached from the St. Peter's Square entrance and from Library Walk. **There is no public access from the Lloyd Street entrances of the Extension.**

Membership

Councillors – Andrews, Clay, M Dar, Kirkpatrick, Rawlins (Chair) and Russell

Agenda

1. **Minutes** 3 - 6
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 3 January 2019.

2. **Final Report and Recommendations** 7 - 18
Report of the Our Manchester VCS Fund Task and Finish Group

This report presents the findings and conclusions of the Our Manchester VCS Fund Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group carried out an investigation into the implementation of the new Our Manchester VCS Fund programme and the first funding round. Once agreed by the Task and Finish Group, the final report will be submitted to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee.

Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact the Committee Officer:

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This agenda was issued on **Thursday, 24 January 2019** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 3, Town Hall Extension, Manchester M60 2LA

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector Fund Task and Finish Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 January 2019

Present:

Councillor Rawlins – In the Chair
Councillors Andrews, Clay, M Dar and Russell

Councillor S Murphy, Statutory Deputy Leader
Councillor Craig, Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing

Apologies:

Councillor Kirkpatrick

CESC/OMVCSF/19/01 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2018.

CESC/OMVCSF/19/02 Recap of Previous Meetings

The Programme Lead (Our Manchester Funds) provided an overview of the Task and Finish Group's previous two meetings, noting that Members had received a lot of background information at its first meeting and had then, at its second meeting, heard from guests from Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations about their experience of the process.

Decision

To note the overview provided of the previous meetings.

CESC/OMVCSF/19/03 Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Decision Making and Communications

The Task and Finish Group received the following documents for consideration:

- The Decision Making Flow Diagram;
- The Co-design of Grant Programmes Policy;
- The Grants Programme Booklet;
- An example of the Our Manchester VCS Fund newsletter; and
- An example of the Our Manchester VCS Fund Twitter account.

The Programme Lead informed Members that he had been planning to bring the Draft VCS Infrastructure Recommendations to this meeting but that they had not been available in time. He reported that he would circulate them to Members after the meeting.

Members discussed the way in which decisions from the first funding round had been communicated to unsuccessful groups. The Programme Lead reported that one of the lessons learnt from the first funding round was that the communication of the outcomes to organisations, particularly those which had been previously funded, could have been better and that this needed to change for future funding rounds. Members also discussed the timing of the communication of the information, before Christmas, but noted that it was important to give sufficient notice (current guidance 90 days) and not to delay informing the relevant groups.

Members discussed at what stage local Ward Councillors should be involved in the process, including when they should be informed of the decision made in relation to VCS organisations in their ward. The Programme Lead proposed that they be informed after the group had been informed but before the information was shared more widely. He advised that grants were awarded subject to a due diligence process and that Ward Councillors could provide evidence-based feedback as part of this. Members noted that this would only give Ward Councillors the opportunity to provide evidence to prevent an unsuitable group from obtaining funding, not to provide evidence to support a suitable group to obtain funding. A Member also expressed concern that it would be politically difficult for a Ward Councillor to intervene to stop a group obtaining funding. The Chair advised Members that decisions were taken based on evidence submitted and would not be influenced by lobbying from Ward Councillors. She also reported that groups were informed that any grants awarded were subject to a due diligence process.

The Programme Lead reported that the process had been co-designed by a range of stakeholders and that decisions were made based on this process and the evidence provided. The Deputy Leader advised that Members had been invited to be involved in the co-design process. The Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing informed Members that the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee had received reports on the co-design of the new process so Committee Members had been aware of what was happening; however, other Members might not have read this information, despite it being available to them. Therefore, she advised that it was important to communicate effectively with all Members, rather than assume that they were aware of this, and she suggested that a fact sheet for Members could be helpful. She emphasised the importance of clarity about when and how Ward Councillors would be engaged in the process and also highlighted that some groups were based on communities of interest rather than geographic areas. The Deputy Leader reported that, although information had been provided to Members during the co-design process, it had been a long process and the information had been sporadic and that it was important to have a better flow of information and for it to be more straight-forward.

Members discussed whether other Ward Councillors could feed into the review of the process, highlighting the issues that this could raise, for example, noting that some Members were dissatisfied because of the outcome of the funding applications, rather than the process. A Member advised that Ward Councillors should only be able to have their say on the future process for the fund, not on any decisions which had already been taken. He further advised that having a clear procedure for Members' involvement in the process should remove the problem of Members trying to obtain information or have influence outside of that process.

A Member expressed concern that smaller local groups could be disadvantaged when competing for grants against groups which were part of larger national organisations. The Programme Lead reported that the grant application process had been designed to enable all groups to demonstrate their work, rather than to favour organisations which had expertise in writing grant applications. He also advised that it was important to have support sessions for local groups at different times and in different locations. The Chair suggested that anonymised versions of successful bids from the first funding round could be used as examples to show to groups in future funding rounds. She also suggested that some groups might benefit from presenting their application orally rather than through an application form.

In response to a Member's question, the Programme Lead reported that it was valuable to have a wide representation of different groups, such as large and small organisations, and groups from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities involved in the co-design and assessment processes. The Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing advised that it could be useful to involve people with particular expertise on the Assessment Panel, for example, people with knowledge of a particular community or area of the city which had received less funding or people with expertise on carers. This could be done via briefings leading up to the Assessment Panel itself.

The Deputy Leader reported that the right decisions had been made regarding the groups which it had been unsuccessful but that the Council had learnt how to work with these groups to strengthen them and she reported that some of them were now in a stronger position than if they had just been awarded a grant.

Decision

To note that the Programme Lead will circulate the draft VCS infrastructure recommendations to Members of the Task and Finish Group.

CESC/OMVCSF/19/04 Improving Communications with Members

This was discussed as part of the previous item.

CESC/OMVCSF/19/05 Final Recommendations

A Member advised that the Task and Finish Group was not in a position to agree final recommendations at this meeting. He recommended that the Chair and the Programme Lead work together on a final report and recommendations, based on the discussions at the three meetings, which could be discussed and agreed at a further meeting of the Task and Finish Group. The Chair agreed to this.

Decision

To ask the Programme Lead and the Chair to work together on a final report and recommendations which can be discussed and agreed at a further meeting of the Task and Finish Group.

CESC/OMVCSF/19/06 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

The Task and Finish Group considered the Group's Terms of Reference and Work Programme.

Decision

To have a further meeting on 31 January 2019 at 2.00 pm to agree the Task and Finish Group's final report and recommendations.

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Our Manchester VCS Fund Task and Finish Group – 31 January 2019

Subject: Final Report and Recommendations

Report of: Our Manchester VCS Fund Task and Finish Group

Summary

This report presents the findings and conclusions of the Our Manchester VCS Fund Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group carried out an investigation into the implementation of the new Our Manchester VCS Fund programme and the first funding round. Once agreed by the Task and Finish Group, the final report will be submitted to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations

The Our Manchester VCS Fund Task and Finish Group are asked to:

Note the findings of the Task and Finish Group and agree the recommendations as set out in the report.

Wards Affected: All

Contact Officers:

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact the officer above.

None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference of the Task and Finish Group

Appendix 2 – Work Programme of the Task and Finish Group

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) sector is commonly regarded as a 'vital part of the fabric of the city, embodying many of the principles of Our Manchester,' (Cllr Sue Murphy, VCS Grant Prospectus 2018-2021); providing connections between local residents, their communities and a range of services and opportunities within local neighbourhoods.
- 1.2. The Our Manchester VCS (OMVCS) fund, was developed in recognition of the role of the VCS has in city, investing £2,466,033 a year for 3 years (£7.4m in total) into 62 organisations. The programme went live in April 2018 after an almost 2 year co-design process that involved representatives of the VCS, Members and Council and Manchester Health & Care Commissioning (MHCC) officers.
- 1.3. At the meeting of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on 4 January 2018, following the first round of funding through the OMVCS Fund, Members raised some concerns about the process which had been carried out.
- 1.4. At its request, the Committee received additional information on this and discussed it further at its meetings on 1 February 2018, 1 March 2018 and 24 May 2018. At its 1 February 2018 meeting, the Committee decided that a group of Members should work with officers to review the process before the next round of funding applications. It was subsequently agreed at the Committee's 24 May 2018 meeting that this should take the form of a Task and Finish Group.
- 1.5. The Resources and Governance Scrutiny (RAGS) Committee also discussed this issue at its 1 February 2018 meeting and it was agreed that Members of the RAGS Committee be included in the membership of the Task and Finish Group.
- 1.6. The objectives of the Task and Finish Group were:
 - To identify and explore Members' issues with the process used for the first round of funding applications.
 - To identify and explore the issues VCS groups experienced.
 - To recommend improvements to address these issues in future funding rounds. To include consideration of:
 - a) How local intelligence, including Ward Councillors' knowledge, could be incorporated into the process.
 - b) how information and decisions can be communicated to Members in a timely and appropriate way
 - c) any other mechanisms which could be built into the process to improve it.

1.7. The Task & Finish Group has met on three occasions (as outlined within the Terms of Reference and Work Programme) focused on the following key areas:

- Overview of the first funding round;
- Evidence from stakeholders, specifically VCS organisations that applied successfully and unsuccessfully for the grant; and
- Communication with Members.

2. The Members Task & Finish Group Recommendations

2.1. The discussions from the Members Task & Finish Group have been consolidated into the following recommendations:

2.2. Communication

- The Programme Team (OMVCS) is the central management and communication point for all OMVCS grant funding rounds. This includes information on all aspects of the process, assessment, decision making, monitoring and evaluation.
- General communication about the OMVCS programme and grant funding rounds to be sent to all 96 Members, including (but not limited to) –
 - Information on consultations, co-design processes and opportunities
 - Funding round information e.g. workshops, launch events, prospectus, links to application packs
 - Successful and unsuccessful applicants
 - Activity updates, newsletters, Twitter feeds
- The Programme Team to produce and send a ‘Fact Sheet’ for all Members prior to the launch of new grant funding rounds, with simple bullet point reminders, key messages, information and dates.
- Communication relating to funding decisions/decision making process to be updated to include simultaneous communications to organisations and all Members (in addition to scrutiny committees).

2.3. Co-design

- VCS co-design policy to be developed by Programme Team, working with stakeholders to include the involvement of designated Members and the Executive Lead Member (for VCS). This policy is to be recommended by the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee and any other Scrutiny committee deemed appropriate before being signed off by the Executive, to allow Members to clearly identify their role in the process.

- The Programme Team to ensure that a number of assessment options such as video evidence supporting applications, are considered as part of the co-design process for future grant funding rounds.
- Subject to funder's agreement, co-design processes to consider holding funds back for allocation for (geographic) areas and communities underfunded/underrepresented on funding rounds.
- All OMVCS grant funding documents to be reviewed regularly with a view to simplifying and minimising the number of documents used in each funding round such as the prospectus, guidance material and application forms.

2.4. **Decision Making and Programme Management**

- Briefings for assessment panels to include information from commissioners/funders, thematic specialists and Members where possible and appropriate and relevant to the funding round.
- The Programme Team and VCS infrastructure service to work together to organise and deliver information and advice workshops for organisations as part of future funding round application periods, including evenings and weekends, different venues and areas of the city.
- OMVCS grant tools to be produced for future funding rounds (using the information from the first round) on what makes a 'good' and 'bad' application.
- The Programme Team to continue to build in sufficient notice periods as per best practice (90 days current guideline) into decision making processes and funding in line with communications to organisations. This is to be delivered in an appropriate manner, mindful of the relationship the organisation may already have with the Council.
- Consequences/scenario planning for organisations that are funded by the Council but unsuccessful in their applications, to be developed as part of the process to help inform communications with the organisations and Members.
- The VCS infrastructure service provider to assist where appropriate in the scenario planning directly with organisations falling out of funding processes and/or deemed at risk.
- Members to have the opportunity to be involved in future grant development and co-design processes but not in the assessment and decision making process.

2.5. **Strategic Development**

- The Programme Team and VCS infrastructure service to work together and with other partners to continue to support and develop VCS provision in (geographic) areas and communities underfunded/underrepresented across the funding programme.
- VCS strategy for the city to be developed in partnership with the VCS and other key stakeholders by 2021 - action to sit with Executive Lead Member (VCS).

3. The Next Steps

- 3.1. The Chair of the Task & Finish Group, to present the recommendations in this paper to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on the 7 March 2019, with a view to any further actions being progressed and reported on by the Executive Lead Member (VCS) and Programme Lead (for OMVCS).
- 3.2. The Members of the Task & Finish Group are asked to consider this report and agree to the recommendations described in point 2 (2.2. To 2.5) and the next steps in point 3.

Title	Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Fund Task and Finish Group
Membership	Councillors Andrews, Clay, M Dar, Kirkpatrick, Rawlins (Chair) and Russell
Lead Executive Members	Councillor S Murphy Councillor Craig
Strategic Directors	Lynne Ridsdale - Director of HR & OD
Lead officer	Michael Salmon - Programme Lead (Our Manchester Funds)
Contact officer	Rachel McKeon – Scrutiny Support Officer
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To identify and explore Members' issues with the process used for the first round of funding applications. 2. To identify and explore the issues VCS groups experienced. 3. To recommend improvements to address these issues in future funding rounds. To include consideration of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) how local intelligence, including Ward Councillors' knowledge, could be incorporated into the process. b) how information and decisions can be communicated to Members in a timely and appropriate way. c) any other mechanisms which could be built into the process to improve it.
Key Lines of Enquiry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To examine the process used for the first round of funding applications, including communication with Members. 2. To hear from VCS organisations which applied for funding, including groups which were successful and groups which were not, to learn from their experience of the process. 3. To review the distribution of funding across different geographical areas of the city and different communities of interest.
Operation	This Task and Finish group will report its findings to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee by submitting minutes to the Committee. The Task and Finish Group's final report will be submitted to the Committee, which will be asked to endorse its recommendations.
Access to Information	<p>Meetings of the Task and Finish Group will be open to members of the media and public except where information which is confidential or exempt from publication is being considered.</p> <p>Papers for the Task and Finish Group will be made available to members of the media and public on the Council's website and in the Rates Hall of the Town Hall Extension except where information which is confidential or exempt from publication is being considered.</p>
Schedule of Meetings	<p>Thursday 12 July 2018</p> <p>Thursday 27 September 2018</p> <p>Thursday 3 January 2019</p> <p>Thursday 31 January 2019</p>
Commissioned	June 2018

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**Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee
Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector Fund Task and Finish Group
Work Programme**

Meeting 1 - Thursday 12 July 2018 at 2 pm				
Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Lead Officer	Comments
Overview of the first round of funding applications	To receive an overview of the process for the first round of applications and to invite Members to identify and explore issues. To also receive information on the distribution of funding allocated in the first round across different geographical areas of the city and different communities of interest.	Councillor S Murphy Councillor B Craig	Michael Salmon	
Terms of Reference and Work Programme	To review and agree the Task and Finish Group's terms of reference and work programme, and consider any changes or additions that are necessary.		Rachel McKeon	

Meeting 2 – Thursday 27 September 2018 at 2 pm				
Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Lead Officer	Comments
Evidence from external stakeholders	To invite external stakeholders to talk about their experience of the process, to include Macc and VCS organisations which applied for funding, including groups which were successful and groups which were not.	Councillor S Murphy Councillor B Craig	Michael Salmon	
Terms of Reference and Work Programme	To review and agree the Task and Finish Group's terms of reference and work programme, and		Rachel McKeon	

	consider any changes or additions that are necessary.			
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Meeting 3 – Thursday 3 January 2019 at 10 am				
Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Lead Officer	Comments
Recap of Previous Meetings	To review the two previous meetings of the Task and Finish Group.	Councillor S Murphy Councillor B Craig	Michael Salmon	
Our Manchester VCS Fund Decision Making and Communications	To consider the decision making and communication processes relating to the Our Manchester VCS Fund.	Councillor S Murphy Councillor B Craig	Michael Salmon	
Improving Communications with Members	To consider how communication with Members could be improved, including how local intelligence could be obtained at an earlier stage in the process and how better quality information could be provided to Members.	Councillor S Murphy Councillor B Craig	Michael Salmon	
Final Recommendations	To agree the Task and Finish Group's final recommendations.		Rachel McKeon	
Terms of Reference and Work Programme	To review and agree the Task and Finish Group's terms of reference and work programme, and consider any changes or additions that are necessary. To consider whether the three substantive meetings that the Task and Finish Group has had have been sufficient to meet the Group's objectives, or whether further meetings are necessary.		Rachel McKeon	

Meeting 4 – Thursday 31 January 2019 at 2 pm

Item	Purpose	Lead Executive Member	Lead Officer	Comments
Final Report	To agree the final report and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group		Rachel McKeon	

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