

**TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

**DELEGATED EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION REPORT**

**Report to:** Cllr Catherine Hynes, Executive Member for Equalities and Partnerships  
**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Jane LeFevre, Corporate Director for Governance and Community Strategy

**Report Title**

**Inclusive Neighbourhoods Grants**

**Summary**

**The report summarises a proposal for a new Inclusive Neighbourhoods Grants scheme to replace the existing Voluntary Sector Grants scheme.**

**Recommendation(s)**

**That the Inclusive Neighbourhoods Grants Scheme is approved as set out in the Report.**

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Adrian Bates  
Extension: x5558

Background Papers: None

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	The proposed scheme will provide small grants to residents and community groups to enable them to deliver local action which support the Corporate Priorities, in particular around <i>Successful and thriving places</i> and <i>Pride in our area</i>
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	By funding residents and community groups, we are enabling an asset-based approach which is a core principle in the Greater Manchester Public Service Reform Strategy.
Financial	The proposed scheme proposes to allocate £120,000 over 12 months. This is an increase of the budgeted £100,000. However, there are reserves of £147,627 which will fund this whilst we pilot the new grants scheme in 2019 and assess its impact after year one.
Legal Implications:	There are no legal implications

Equality/Diversity Implications	The proposed scheme will target resources in supporting activity in our diverse communities, as well as geographic communities, including BME, Disability and LGBT. We are also striving to make communities more inclusive to address inequality.
Sustainability Implications	There are no sustainability implications (other than potentially positive impacts as the scheme could fund improvements to parks and greenspaces).
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	There are no resource implications (as the proposed scheme is replacing an existing scheme delivered by the Partnerships and Communities Team)
Risk Management Implications	There are no risk management implications
Health & Wellbeing Implications	There are no health and wellbeing implications (other than potentially positive impacts as the scheme could fund health and wellbeing activities in local communities).
Health and Safety Implications	There are no health and safety implications for Council staff

## 1.0 Background

1.1 Since 2011 Trafford Council has allocated its Voluntary Sector Grants through two schemes:

- A Locality Grants scheme, which uses a participatory budgeting model, in which community groups apply for funding and then showcase their project at a community event, where residents vote for the projects they wish to see funded in their area. These take place once a year, in each of Trafford's four localities.
- An Advancing Equality scheme, that focuses on supporting groups that work with our diverse (i.e. non-geographic) communities, such as BME, LGBT and Disability, which is decided by borough-wide panel made up of community representatives and relevant professionals (depending on the specific priority of the grant for that year).

1.2 The budget for these schemes for 2018 was £80,000 for the Locality Grants (£20,000 per locality) and £20,000 for the Advancing Equality. They were run once a year, launching in March and allocating funds in June.

1.3 The schemes have been very successful, and a vast improvement on the scheme they replaced in 2011 in which a small number of larger grants were allocated to voluntary organisations, many of whom received the grants every year with minimal evidence of impact. By offering smaller grants and opening the decision-making up to the public we attracted applications from smaller and new groups, and every year over 40% of grants went to groups that had not been funded before by the Council. The use of micro-grants was also trialled very successfully, enabling individual residents to access grants of up to £500 to kickstart new projects or hold community events.

1.4 The public voting events were more successful every year, with resident voter numbers increasing, especially as we moved into holding the events in town centres, and the community spirit showcased at the event was evident. The events enabled groups to recruit new members and volunteers, and provided the opportunity for them to meet other groups to share information and resources, as well as secure funding.

- 1.5 However, the Council schemes do not operate in isolation, and have to be considered alongside other grant schemes. Most notably, in late 2017 Trafford Housing Trust launched its new Social Investment Fund, which offers micro, small, medium and large grants through an online application. The fund has over £1,000,000 to allocate and focuses on *reducing poverty*, which is a broad topic ranging from health and wellbeing to employment and skills.
- 1.6 If individual residents and groups are able to easily apply and get a decision promptly from this scheme, we needed to consider the effectiveness and attractiveness of our schemes for community groups. As such, we delayed the 2018 Locality Grant scheme whilst we considered the impact of the Social Investment Fund. We did use the budget from the Advancing Equality scheme as part of the Community Cohesion Grants scheme, which was very successful. However it did attract larger organisations, many of whom had been funded by the SIB, reinforcing our view that micro and smaller grants would be a more effective way to spread this budget across Trafford and enable localised community activity to support our corporate priorities.
- 1.7 In addition, having worked closely with Trafford Housing Trust staff that administer the fund, analysing their throughput of grant applications to see where they are funding groups, and rejecting groups, we have identified gaps in their scheme which the Council can now target, such as community events and projects that support diverse communities, ensuring we minimise duplication and maximise use of voluntary sector resources.

## **2.0 Inclusive Neighbourhoods Grants Scheme**

- 2.1 Trafford Council values our local communities; they are strong, diverse, resilient and inclusive. We want residents to be proud of where they live, and be active in their local community. When people come together they build lasting relationships, overcome fears and have fun.
- 2.2 The Inclusive Neighbourhoods Grant will support local people to put on an event or deliver a project that brings people together, is resident led, improves a local asset or showcases community strengths.
- 2.3 We are particularly interested in events and projects that support health and wellbeing, make places safer or improve the local environment. We are also looking to support our diverse communities, who come together across geographic areas such as our LGBT, Disability and BME communities. Projects that bring different people together, across faith, generations, places or diversity, integrating residents and strengthening cohesion will be prioritised. All projects must benefit Trafford residents.
- 2.4 The scheme will offer £20,000, released every two months in grants of up to £500 for individual events and up to £2,000 for projects. This enables people to apply at the most suitable time for their project or event. The scheme is a pilot for a year and could be withdrawn at any time (for example should demand be minimal). The scheme will be launched on the 4<sup>th</sup> January, with the first closing date on 31<sup>st</sup> January. More information can be found at [www.trafford.gov.uk/inclusiveneighbourhoods](http://www.trafford.gov.uk/inclusiveneighbourhoods)

- 2.5 The application process and monitoring required will depend on the size of the grant applied for ensuring it is appropriate and not too burdensome on residents, whilst ensuring the Council secures good use of public funds.
- 2.6 The grants will be decided by an Awarding Panel, made up of Ward Councillors; three Labour, two Conservative, one Liberal Democrat and one Green.
- 2.7 In summary, this shift in approach will enable a more effective use of the Council's budget for supporting voluntary and community action aligned with our corporate priorities.

**Other Options**

The Council is committed to investing financial resources into the voluntary and community sector in Trafford, so a process to do this must be implemented. The Council could continue with its current approach although as set out above we anticipate that this would not be effective as there are other grant schemes now available which could be more attractive to residents and community groups, reducing the impact of our schemes.

**Consultation**

The proposed scheme has been developed with Executive Members to ensure effectiveness in the community, and with Trafford Housing Trust Social Investment Board to ensure that it compliments, and not duplicates, their scheme.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

**To enable the Council to establish a process for the award of grants under the Inclusive Neighbourhoods Grants Scheme.**

**Finance Officer Clearance**                    *(type in initials) PC*  
**Legal Officer Clearance**                    *(type in initials)TR.....*

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE** *(electronic)* 

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Corporate Director has cleared the report prior to issuing to the Executive Member for decision.