

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 7 March, 2023

Grants to Third Parties: Third Sector Interface and Equality and Rights Network 2023/24

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Agree to the financial proposals set out at paragraphs 4.3 and 4.6.
- 1.2 Agree to receive a further report on the outcomes for the Third Sector Interface, to take account of the priorities within the Council's new Business Plan.
- 1.3 Agree to invite the Third Sector Interface to present on their achievements at a Committee meeting early in the new financial year.

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Grants to Third Parties: Third Sector Interface and Equality and Rights Network 2023/24

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out the Council's proposed funding for the Third Sector Interface (TSI) and Equalities and Rights Network (EaRN) for 2023/24.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Edinburgh Third Sector Interface (TSI) was established in 2009 as part of a Scottish Government initiative to realign Scotland's third sector infrastructure organisations. The aim was to ensure a co-ordinated approach to volunteering, social enterprise development, and the management and influence of third sector organisations.
- 3.2 This report details proposed funding from the Corporate Services Directorate budget to support Edinburgh's TSI, which is delivered in partnership by three organisations: Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC), Volunteer Edinburgh (VE) and Edinburgh Social Enterprise Network (ESEN). Each contributes to the delivery of the TSI objectives through leading work in their specialist area.
- 3.3 The role of the TSI is to deliver volunteering, social enterprise and third sector development and support, together with supporting the participation of the third sector in community planning arrangements in the city. Support in this latter category includes the contribution of sector views through representation on community planning structures, such as the Edinburgh Partnership Board and Locality Community Planning Partnerships, together with support for a range of networks and forums at both city and locality levels. The role is important in ensuring that partnership working and collaboration with the third sector can support strategic planning and service delivery. For example, EVOC provides support to the Voluntary Sector Forums in the city, enabling third sector engagement on policy and service issues at a local level. The TSI through its involvement in a variety of groups, provides a third sector perspective and through its community role, advocates for service users, many of whom are the most vulnerable in the city.

- 3.4 Funding for the current financial year was agreed by the Culture and Communities Committee in March 2022. One year’s funding was approved at that time to allow further work to be carried out by the Council and partners, under the auspices of the Edinburgh Partnership, to develop a sustainable model of infrastructure support. Although a shared outcome agreement with Education and Children’s Services Directorate and the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board is in place, further work is required to explore the potential for a shared investment approach across the different funding streams.
- 3.5 This report proposes the continuation of funding at current levels for 2023/24 to allow the outstanding work to be taken forward. Within this, there is scope to consider the outcomes being sought through this funding and how it can more effectively help in the delivery of the Council’s priorities as set out in the new Business Plan.
- 3.6 The report also recommends the continuation of funding at the current year’s level to the Equality and Rights Network (EaRN), which is managed by VE.

4. Main report

TSI Funding

- 4.1 EVOC is the city’s anchor organisation working to enable a strong, resilient, enterprising and sustainable third sector. VE is the city’s anchor organisation for growing volunteering and supporting organisations who use volunteers. ESEN is the city’s main anchor organisation for advancing social enterprise.
- 4.2 All three organisations have previously been funded to support the development and delivery of the Council Business Plan priorities and community planning arrangements in the city. As noted above, with the approval of a new plan consideration needs to be given to the outcomes sought through this funding to ensure consistency with these new priorities. It is proposed to provide a further update to Committee on these proposals. In addition, each organisation is subject to end year reporting, and it is proposed, on this basis, and as with last year, to invite the TSI to present to Committee on their achievements early in the new financial year.
- 4.3 Funding for all three organisations is recommended to continue in the new financial year at 2022/23 levels as follows:

Organisation	Award 2023/24
Edinburgh Voluntary Organisation’s Council	£53,500
Volunteer Edinburgh	£70,907
Edinburgh Social Enterprise Network	£10,000

- 4.4 The continued investment in these organisations will provide notable benefits, including:
- 4.4.1 Public and third sector relations in the city will continue to be positively progressed through relationship building and joint working on key policy and service issues.
 - 4.4.2 Third sector strategic input and participation in the Edinburgh Partnership will continue at strategic and local levels through membership on a wide variety of groups including Edinburgh Partnership Board, the strategic partnerships and Local Community Planning Partnerships.
 - 4.4.3 The Council will be better informed of third sector issues in developing its strategic approach, for example the response to COVID recovery and the current work in relation to Warm and Welcoming Spaces.
 - 4.4.4 Capacity building and development of the sector will be advanced.
 - 4.4.5 Support to volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations will continue.

EaRN Funding

- 4.5 The aim of EaRN is to enable individuals, groups, organisations and communities of interest to work in partnership with public services to advance equality, promote human rights and tackle poverty and inequality. The EaRN service assists the Council to better deliver equality and rights outcomes and the public sector duties of the Equality Act 2010, through ensuring the involvement of people from protected characteristics in policy development and service delivery. EaRN supported the development of the current Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-25 and continues to support the active engagement of people with protected characteristics in its review and delivery.
- 4.6 Funding is recommended as follows:
- 4.6.1 £40,000 to VE for 2023/24 to manage EaRN
- 4.7 The continued investment will support the ongoing engagement on the Equalities and Diversity Framework approved by the Policy and Sustainability Committee in April 2021, together with capacity building and promotional activities on equalities to inform strategic policy, planning and decision making in the city, for example by providing the community of interest member on the Edinburgh Partnership Board and its various sub structures.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Following the Committee report, and subject to approval, letters of award and funding agreements will be put in place with each of the organisations.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The proposed investment as set out in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.6 is contained within available budgets.
- 6.2 Any risks associated with the awards of grant to EVOC, VE, ESEN and for EaRN will be mitigated by grant monitoring and annual assessment and reporting arrangements with these set out in the funding agreement.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Engagement relating to the above has been the subject of discussion with EVOC, VE and ESEN as part of the annual assessment process.
- 7.2 The proposals will assist the Council to better deliver its equality and rights outcomes and the delivery of the Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- 7.3 The proposals will support and strengthen engagement and capacity building activity with third sector organisations and communities, including groups involved in tackling poverty and inequality and promoting and protecting human rights.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None

9. Appendices
