

# Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 29 February 2024

## Grants to Third Parties: Third Sector Interface and Equality and Rights Network 2024/25

Executive/routine  
Wards

### 1. Recommendations

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It is recommended that Committee:

- 1.1 Agree to grant fund Edinburgh's Third Sector Interface which comprises the Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council, Volunteer Edinburgh and Edinburgh Social Enterprise Network.
- 1.2 Agree that officers should evaluate the role of the Third Sector Interface in Edinburgh and provide further advice to members.
- 1.3 Agree to grant fund the Equality and Rights Network and that future work delivered through this grant should be aligned with the Equalities Framework for 2025-29 which is under development.

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## Grants to Third Parties: Third Sector Interface and Equality and Rights Network 2024/25

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report sets out the Council's proposed funding for the Third Sector Interface (TSI) and Equalities and Rights Network (EaRN) for 2024/25. It also proposes to evaluate the impact this funding has had over successive years and to provide further advice to members in advance of any future grants to the TSI and EaRN.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The Edinburgh Third Sector Interface (TSI) was established in 2011 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 The Scottish Government provides core funding to TSIs, which in Edinburgh comprises three organisations: Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC), Volunteer Edinburgh (VE) and Edinburgh Social Enterprise Network (ESEN). Each contributes to the delivery of the TSI National Outcome Framework published in 2018 through leading work in their specialist area.
- 3.3 The Government framework sets out the expectations for the TSI including:
- 3.3.1 ensuring a strong third sector voice locally and nationally;
  - 3.3.2 developing the capacity of volunteering, community and voluntary groups and social enterprise; and
  - 3.3.3 providing leadership to the sector to better respond to local and national priorities through collaboration and partnership working.
- 3.4 Funding from the Government to TSIs has been relatively static with there being one inflationary uplift since 2011 and an additional one-off increase to support activity during the pandemic. The Government recently wrote to TSIs proposing to continue funding at current levels but with the intention of providing two years of funding certainty covering 2024/25 to 2025/26.

- 3.5 The Council has always provided additional funding to Edinburgh’s TSI in recognition of their importance in supporting the development and capacity building of the sector, and sector participation in community planning arrangements across the city. Between 2016/17 to 2020/21 the Council agreed to five years of grant funding to Edinburgh’s TSI. Since then, the grant has been agreed by Committee on an annual basis. Funding for the current financial year was agreed by the Culture and Communities Committee in March 2023. This report proposes the continuation of this TSI funding for a further year.
- 3.6 The report also recommends grant funding to the Equality and Rights Network (EaRN), which is managed by Volunteer Edinburgh. The Network supports the Council to develop and deliver equalities, diversity and inclusion work by engaging with people and groups with protected characteristics. They also carry out awareness raising, training and provide advice to Council services on best practice and involving people with protected characteristics in policy and service development and delivery. This report proposes the continuation of this EaRN funding for a further year.

## 4. Main report

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### TSI Funding

- 4.1 Edinburgh’s TSI consists of three anchor institutions which collectively support the development and delivery of the Council Business Plan priorities and community planning arrangements in the city:
- 4.1.1 EVOC works to enable a strong, resilient, enterprising, and sustainable third sector.
  - 4.1.2 Volunteer Edinburgh both grows volunteering and supports organisations who use volunteers.
  - 4.1.3 ESEN advances social enterprises.
- 4.2 Appendix 1 sets out an interim summary of Edinburgh’s TSI activity for 2023/24. An annual report requires to be submitted in April 2024 in line with the conditions of grant.
- 4.3 On this basis funding for all three organisations is recommended to continue as follows:

<b>TSI Grant Distribution</b>	<b>Award 2024/25</b>
Edinburgh Voluntary Organisation’s Council	£53,500
Volunteer Edinburgh	£70,907
Edinburgh Social Enterprise Network	£10,000

- 4.4 This investment will enhance the work of the Council by:
- 4.4.1 Progressing public and third sector relations in the city through relationship building and joint working on key policy and service issues.
  - 4.4.2 Enabling third sector strategic input and participation in the Edinburgh Partnership at strategic and local levels.
  - 4.4.3 Building the capacity and development of the sector.
  - 4.4.4 Providing support to volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

### **Evaluating the impact of the TSI**

- 4.5 Over the course of 2024/25, we will design and deliver an evaluation of Edinburgh's TSI to date. As part of this, we will seek to align ourselves closer with the Government's TSI Framework, assess local requirements for a TSI and look at best practice from elsewhere. We will work collaboratively with colleagues in the TSI, Edinburgh Partnership and the wider sector.

### **EaRN Funding**

- 4.6 EaRN is part of Volunteer Edinburgh and aims 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. For the Council this primarily means ensuring the involvement of people from protected characteristics in policy development and service delivery. Examples this year include:
- 4.9.1 Supporting the delivery of the Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-25 through engaging people with protected characteristics.
  - 4.9.2 Advising on the Council's Physical Activity and Sport strategy and engagement.
  - 4.9.3 Delivering integrated impact assessment training for Council Equality Rights and Diversity Advisors.
- 4.7 Further information on key delivery during the year is provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.8 Funding of £50,000 to EaRN is recommended for 2024/25. This will enable EaRN to continue to support delivery of the Council's Equalities and Diversity Framework in addition to the development of the 2025-29 framework,

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Subject to Committee approval, letters of award and funding agreements will be put in place with the TSI and EaRN.
- 5.2 An evaluation will be designed to assess the impact of the TSI with the intention of a further report to the Culture and Communities Committee.

- 5.3 Work on future support for EaRN will be considered as part of the development of the new Equalities Framework and overall Council approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion with the oversight of the Members Equalities Working Group.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The proposed investment as set out in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.8 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. Equality and Poverty Impact**

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- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications**

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- 8.1 It is anticipated that the activities delivered by the organisations will have positive impacts the climate and nature emergency.

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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- 9.1 It is envisaged that activities will have positive impacts on the community and support the Council in advancing equality.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 [The Equality and Diversity Framework 21-25](#)

## **11. Appendices**

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- 11.1 Summary of Delivery 2023/24.

**SUMMARY OF DELIVERY 2023/24****Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council**

The funding enables EVOC to provide support to the third sector in engaging with the Council and community through the delivery of capacity building; supporting and developing approaches to strengthen and increase the involvement and impact of the sector; and, through representation, ensuring voluntary sector perspectives are articulated.

During the year, EVOC delivered the following activities to meet these aims:

- Supported 5 geographical Voluntary Sector Forums (VSFs) across the city with 11 meetings taking place. This facilitated the sharing and dissemination of information on local and national policy developments, research, and funding opportunities, together with learning and peer support. Attendance at the Forums ranged from 9 to 15 organisations.
- Supported 'Small Area Networks' in Oxfgangs, Pentlands and Wester Hailes and contributed to three independently run networks in Leith, Restalrig and Dumbiedykes.
- Produced a range of information including blogs, bi-weekly bulletins/newsletters – 'Sector Update' and 'EVOC News'.
- Planned and delivered a North-based community services and EHSCP networking event. 85 registered for the event across services as well as practitioners in Occupation Therapy and Social Work and related services.
- Provided a range of learning sessions including two in-depth online question and answer events allowing Astley Ainslie Hospital staff to meet and learn about community services, sessions on Unpaid Carers and Mental Health and a Place Based Approach to Homelessness Prevention workshop.
- Held or contributed to a range of events and networks including a Community Wealth Building – Annual Conference, online engagement workshop with South East organisations around Community Benefits for the new Liberton High School, Food Poverty network, Poverty Network of Networks, the Advice Partnership and Warm and Welcoming' Summit.
- Carried out the EVOC Sector Survey in October 2023 with 108 responses. This showed the work in supporting the VSFs and small area networks was well received and provided positive benefits for participants.

**Edinburgh Social Enterprise Network**

ESEN provides capacity building activities for social enterprises and enterprising third sector organisations to engage with the Council and in community planning; and through a representative role, ensure the voice of the sector is articulated.

To this end, key activity delivered during the year included:

Culture and Communities Committee – 29 February 2024

- Supported social enterprises and enterprising third sector organisations through delivery of a variety of capacity building events and training. Examples include sessions on partnership building, procurement readiness and ‘storytelling’, together with training focused on volunteer management, branding and marketing. The NHS Meet the Buyer event was particularly focused on procurement readiness and the skills needed to engage with a partner the size of NHS Lothian or CEC. Feedback on these has been positive with 97% of respondents identifying they had made useful contacts at the events and 100% leaving feeling excited to work with ESEN / The Good Stuff Community.
- Continued development of ‘The Good Stuff Community’ with a large increase in membership and new or strengthened relationships established with NHS Lothian, the Chamber of Commerce, the University of Edinburgh, Balfour Beatty and PwC.
- Membership increased by 15% overall from 180 to 207. Details of membership categories are 142 full members (up 12%), 41 new and aspiring members (up 11%), 15 associate members (up 60%), 9 SE Partners (up 13%).
- Fulfilled the representative function for the sector through involvement in the Regional Enterprise Council (REC), SESCRD Joint Committee, Economic Development Strategy Group. ESEN remains a lead partner for TSI SE Practitioners Forum and TSI COs SE working group which has secured funding for work supporting the knowledge and skills of SE practitioners across Scotland.
- Due to participate in ‘The Gathering’ by co-hosting the Buy Social Business Edinburgh event taking place in February 2024.
- Currently assisting the Capital City Partnership (CCP) in developing a ‘social enterprise directory’ of procurement ready businesses to work with CCP’s construction partners.
- TSI SE Practitioners Forum funding has enabled the development of a skills framework that will soon be moved to an online portal.
- Engaged with members via network events, 1-2-1 meetings, roundtables, surveys, social media campaigns, e-newsletter.

## **Volunteer Edinburgh**

VE takes a strategic leadership role in promoting and developing volunteering and active citizenship within community planning and to meet the needs identified for the city. It carries out a range of research and activities to inform strategic policy, planning and decision-making, together with capacity building support to strengthen volunteering in the city. It also delivers the Lord Provost’s Inspiring Volunteering Awards.

On this basis, key deliverables during the year included:

- Fulfilled its strategic leadership role on volunteering by representation on a range of partnerships and groups including the Edinburgh Community Learning and Development Partnership, Disability Forum, Mental Health Forum, Older Peoples Providers Forum, Edinburgh Community Health Forum, Joined up for Jobs Steering Group and Edinburgh Drugs and Alcohol Partnership.
- Developed and promoted volunteering in the city with 87,792 visits to the city’s volunteering portal, representing 55,749 unique users. Organisations who advertise

opportunities via the portal secured an average of 182 views per opportunity, resulting in an average of 11 notes of interest per opportunity.

- During April to December 508 volunteers were deployed in response to the Ukraine crisis.
- The strategy website has been reworked to align to the Scottish Government Volunteering Action Plan. This will be launched in quarter four in 2023/24.
- Commissioned research was carried out on the role of volunteering in developing the NHS workforce. This publication “Developing the Mental Health Workforce/the role of volunteering at the REH in employee development” will be published February 2024. This will be augmented by a scheduled survey into Volunteer Involving Organisations being carried out in quarter four.
- Delivered the Lord Provost’s Volunteer of the Year Awards in June 2023 with 42 individual awards, 21 Team awards and 3 Special Recognition awards. Media coverage was secured with 7520 impressions on Twitter, a Facebook reach of 2839 and Instagram reach of 463. Testimonials received were positive about the event.
- From April to December 2023, 984 enquiries about recruitment and management from volunteer involving organisations were dealt with.
- [www.volunteerwiki.com](http://www.volunteerwiki.com) was maintained and developed and had 7864 users with 12635 page views.
- A range of training was provided, for example, 45 volunteer managers attended volunteer management training and 43 volunteer managers attended regular INSPIRE peer support sessions.
- E-newsletters on volunteer management and best practice were produced and distributed to 1844 subscribers.

### **Shared TSI objective applicable to all three organisations**

In 2023/24, and in recognition of the collective function of the three organisations forming the TSI, an objective was identified for work to be carried out to inform a future model of third sector support in community planning. Work on this is being taken forward as part of the Edinburgh Partnership Transformation and Improvement Programme.

### **Equality and Rights Network**

EaRN supports the implementation of the Council’s equalities outcomes. It seeks to expand its membership of the organisation, targeting under-represented groups and/or individuals with protected characteristics and those in poverty. It provides capacity building and promotional activities to raise equalities awareness and influence practice in the city, taking a strategic leadership role.

Activities delivered during the year have included:

- Advised on Physical Activity and Sport strategy and engagement.
- Active member of Women’s Safety in Public Places Community Improvement Partnership which successfully delivered the #RespectHerSpace publicity campaign in Nov/Dec 2023.
- Contributed to the planning for the Integrated Impact Assessment on the Future Library Strategy.



- Increased representation from individuals and groups with a 5% rise in membership to 220. This includes new links with religious organisations which have previously been under-represented in the city.
- Secured three new volunteers for the organisation taking forward work on promotion, including a series of blogs on the experiences of a wheelchair user, research into areas such as homelessness, loneliness and the disproportionate effects on people with protected characteristics and training on mental health.
- Increased number of newsletter subscribers by 5% to 630.
- Delivered a range of training for the sector including Building Diversity into Volunteering, Disability Awareness and integrated impact assessments for Council Equality, Rights and Diversity Advisors.
- Member of the new Accessibility Commission.
- Represented the views of the sector in community planning by participating on the Edinburgh Partnership Board and Local Outcome Improvement Plan Delivery Group.