



Subject:	Community Support Plan 25/29 including a Review of Community Support Large Grants
Date:	3 December 2024
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer, Community Provision

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

- Information relating to any individual
- Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
- Information in connection with any labour relations matter
- Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
- Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
- Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

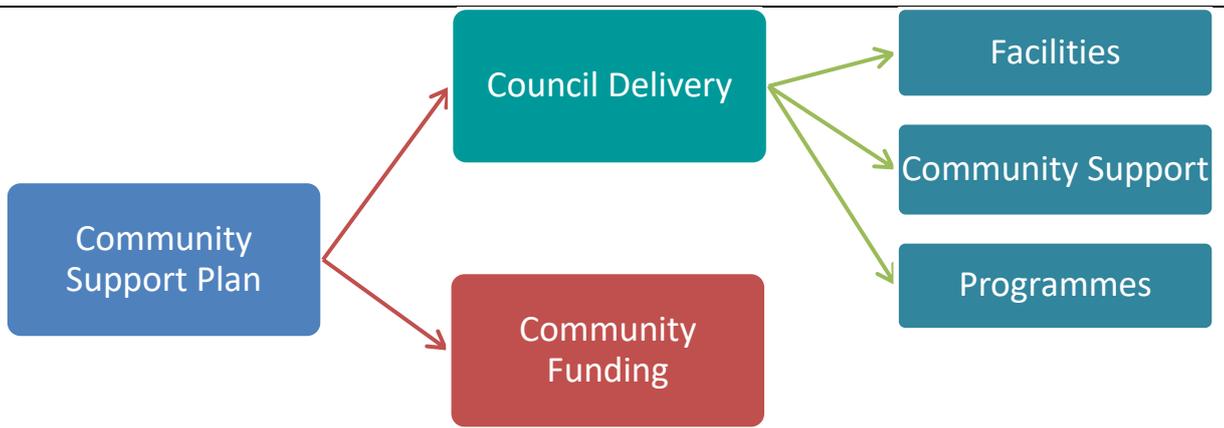
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	To update members on ongoing work to produce a Council Community Support Plan (CSP) (25/29) and review of existing Community Support large grants (which form part of our Community Support Plan).
2.0	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the contents of the report. ii. Make comment on and agree the draft community support plan document (Appendix i). This will include agreement on a preferred option for the Community Support funding programme. (Options are provided in Appendix ii) iii. Approve that the draft CSP plan, including the funding approach, will undergo an equality screening and rural needs screening and that the required consultation approach will be applied in Spring/Summer 2025. iv. Agree that following completion of required screening/consultation exercise a paper will be brought to committee in summer 2025 outlining feedback and seeking agreement on the final Community Support Plan. v. Agree that a final detailed update on the Funding Programme is brought back to members in advance of going to open call in Summer 2025.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>In January 2024, the People and Communities committee agreed to the following – “That officers produce a Council Community Support Plan (25/29) and at the same time, undertake a review of current community support large grants schemes”.</p> <p>3.2 This decision was made on the basis that the Council needs to review and articulate its position in terms of its community support priorities and service provision, as these will inform resources required, including funding priorities and approaches. Council provides a range of community support grants to the community/voluntary sector across the city, coming directly from Council and the Department for Communities (DfC) funding via their Community Support Programme.</p> <p>3.3 As part of this offer, Council has to provide DfC with a Community Support Plan which sets out how, via our Community Services Unit, we provide community support and service provision within communities. The Council’s last Community Support Plan was completed in 2014.</p> <p>3.4 A further update was brought to members at October P&C Committee which detailed progress to develop the CSP including priorities for Council Delivery and Funding that will be included in the plan. The plan and funding options are provided in Appendices i and ii.</p> <p>By way of illustration, the diagram below outlines what is included in the Community Support Plan.</p>



- 3.5 The new plan outlines how:
1. The Council will directly support the local community/voluntary sector and the communities that it serves through our;
 - community support,
 - our assets,
 - our people and programming
 2. Our funding will support community activity

- 3.6 The current programme of Community Support delivered by Council through the Plan in 23/24 included: -
- **£5.61m** external funding to VCSE organisations (including funding from DFC)
 - **over 150** staff supporting communities, managing facilities and grant funding and delivering programmes
 - **27** Council community centres and **8** Independently managed community centres.

3.7 Staff
 Members will be aware that these staff do not work in isolation from the rest of the Neighbourhood Services team and other council depts. They proactively collaborate to better design and deliver services and neighbourhood support. Likewise, in addition to the CSP funding, a number of other teams deliver thematic grant programmes which support community-based activity in local neighbourhoods.

3.8 CSP Funding
 The table below provides more detail on funding levels.

Current Funding included in the Community Support Plan

Grant	Annual Award	No. Groups Currently Funded
Under Review		
Capacity Building (up to £50k)	£1.85 Million	43
Revenue for Community Buildings (up to £20k)	£1.43 million	87
Not under review but included in Community Support Plan		

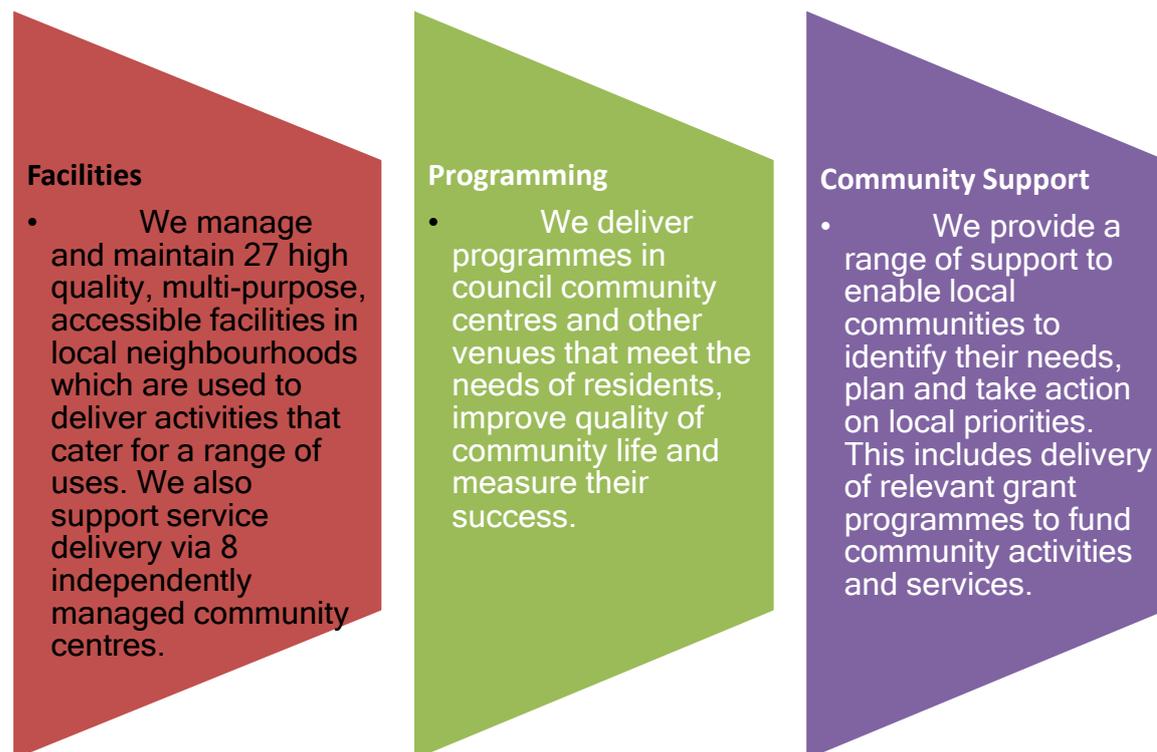
Summer Schemes	£0.2 million	98
Advice Services	£1.46 million	14
Social Supermarkets	£0.78 million	21

CSP Current status

3.9 Work on the development of the CSP has progressed and officers are now asking members to approve the draft Community Support Plan 25/29. It is important to note that once the CSP is agreed, officers will develop implementation plans which will drive the delivery of activity from 25/29.

3.10 Since June 2024, officers have undertaken significant engagement with external stakeholders, officers and members on the development of the CSP. As mentioned in previous reports brought to committee, the general feedback at our engagement sessions was that stakeholders value Council support, but advised on areas where we could improve. They also advised that the funding we offer should be more flexible and should include an offering for small grants which would support smaller groups who require support to develop.

3.11 The key work that will be contained in the CSP can be broken down into 3 distinct areas:



3.12 In summary the CSP will;

- Improve what we do within our wider Community Services offering
- Better articulate who we are, what we do and how we engage better with local residents and elected members
- Outline how we allocate our funding

3.13 Through the new CSP we need to ensure that we have a focus on what our staff deliver in local areas. Research and consultation feedback has informed the development of key Council service delivery priorities, which include;

- Leading networking / co-ordination & partnership development in local communities to create active, engaged and resilient communities.
- Supporting volunteering by creating new and better opportunities for people to give their time and make a difference to their communities and the issues they care about.
- Providing access to mentoring / training for community organisations
- Reviewing the current programmes within council facilities across the city to ensure that they meet identified need.
- Delivery and co-ordination of activity programmes.

3.14 Funding Review and proposed options

While the funding element within this plan is only part of our overall offering it is of particular interest to stakeholders. For the purposes of this work, we are reviewing our large, multi-annual capacity and revenue grants which currently provide £3.3million to 130 groups across the city. Feedback on funding priorities suggested a need to include the following when developing the new funding approach;

- Funding levels to include small grants
- Funding levels for revenue related costs should increase
- Funding should be available for both core revenue/running costs and activity/programmes
- Applications should be assessed against the impact that they make to overall outcomes
- Application requirements should be proportionate & timely
- Focus on more active and engaged communities

3.15 Based on this feedback, officers have developed 3 options for funding programme delivery including the status quo. To continue with what we currently allocate, there would be 2 funding offerings of Capacity (£50k) and Revenue (£20k). Members should note that the majority of the feedback received during engagement stressed that the current scheme required change to adapt to the current environment in which the sector is operating.

Further detail on proposed options including eligibility criteria is included in Appendix ii. The draft CSP which goes to consultation will need to detail the proposed funding programme as it is a key element and driver of the plan. Therefore, members are asked to discuss and approve a preferred funding option. Members should note, that while any new funding programme will not be open until Summer 2025 and allocations for new funding will be from April 2026, there are tight timeframes for development of a new scheme.

3.16 **Updated Timelines**

Action	Completion Date
Community Support Plan (CSP) Drafted for members consideration (including options on funding programme)	Dec 24
Equality & Rural Needs Screening and Consultation	Spring 25
Final CSP agreed including new funding programme which incorporates Equality screening & feedback from consultation	Summer 25

Community Support Plan published	Summer 25
New funding programme open	August / September 25
Funding allocated to groups	April 26

Once a preferred option is agreed, further detail will be worked up including consideration of administration and staffing within CNS and the Central Grants Unit. Members should note that if the option to include a small grant programme is selected, this would operate in Year 2 of the new funding programme and that Year 1 would focus on the operation of the new Community Support Large Grant.

3.17 Further Engagement with Stakeholders
 It is important that we continue to engage with stakeholders on the development and implementation of the CSP. As part of this work, officers will hold an information session with stakeholders in early December, further details will be provided when available. Given the potential impacts on existing grant holders of any change to the funding programme, officers will also engage with those organisations to provide information. Officers will continue to engage with organisations to provide support in preparing project ideas and will offer support to potential applicants when the new programme opens. Further detail on the programme of support will be provided in the paper to committee prior to the Scheme opening.

3.18 Additional requests from members – longer term asks.
 As advised earlier, there are limitations to what can be delivered in the context of the CSP and there are deadlines to develop both a new plan and the funding programmes as part of the plan. During the party group briefings, we received feedback on issues that are not all contained within the scope of this exercise as agreed by Council. One example is a request for a major review of our community centres and our independently managed centres to include;

- scoping of everything that happens in our centres
- what is the revenue and staffing costs associated with our centres
- what is the usage of our centre
- what programmes are delivered
- A cost benefit analysis between independently managed centres and council run centres
- What would an overall physical improvement programme look like for community centres

3.19 While these and other requests have been noted, Members acknowledged that these are not within the scope of this exercise. However, Officers via P&C committee will further consider how this work may be taken forward separately.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

4.1 Staff and financial resources to complete this work will be taken from existing budgets. The council element is included in existing budgets and the DfC contribution comes from the Community Support Programme LoO .

The CSP LoO provides a one-year commitment from DfC for funding on an annual basis, although the CSP has been in place across all councils for a number of years Members may wish to note that in 24/25 DfC is providing £831,192 toward the Capacity and Revenue grants. Council increased its financial allocation in March 2023 by almost £1.4 million per annum providing an

	annual commitment of £2,446,918. This combined amount provides the overall budget of £3,278,110.
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
5.1	Given the significant impact which any changes to the large grant funding programme will have on the VCSE sector and communities across the city, an equality screening exercise and rural impact assessment will be undertaken on any resulting change in policy/programme. Any potential additional equality considerations have been factored into the timeline.
6.0	Appendices
6.1	Appendix i – Draft Community Support Plan Appendix ii – Options on funding allocations