

## **Delegated Officer Report**

**Decision Maker:** Rebecca Fletcher, Director of Public Health

**Date of Decision:** 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024

**Subject:** Priority Programme Fund Community Grants

**Report Author:** Rachel Dyson, Thriving Communities Lead

**Ward (s):** All

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**Reason for the decision:** To allocate grant funding from the Priority Programme Fund (PPF) to community grants for one year (24/25).

**Summary:** The purpose of this report is to allocate funding from the Priority Programme Fund for grants to Werneth & Freehold Community Development Project, Greenacres Community Centre and Oldham Credit Union for one year until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, at a total cost of £84,000.

***What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):*** Option 1 – Decommissioning: This is not regarded as a viable option. For the organisations funded this would represent the loss of their core funding and may result in a significant reduction in the services they are able to offer, or possibly result in closure of the centres or services.

Option 2 – Allocate grants for one year (24/25): This would provide a contribution to their core funding supporting them to continue to provide services to residents.

***Consultation: including any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted.***

Consultation has been carried out with the recipient organisations and with Cabinet members as part of the wider budget reduction process.

***Recommendation(s):***

Option 2 – Allocate grants for one year (24/25): This would provide a contribution to their core funding supporting them to continue to provide services to residents.

**Implications:**

*What are the **financial** implications?*

The 2024/25 revenue budget for the Priority Programme Fund (PPF) is £594,940. Action Together have been awarded a grant of £270,500 in 2024/25 which leaves a remaining balance to commit of £324,440.

The report recommends renewing the grant agreements for 2024/25 to the following:

Greenacres CA £24,000  
Werneth & Freehold CDP £24,000  
Oldham Credit Union £36,000

The grants renewals totalling £84,000 can be met from the PPF budget.

This leaves a balance of £240,440 to be allocated in 2024/25.

(Waheed Rehman – Accountant)

*What are the **legal** implications?*

Previously Sukie Kaur had advised in respect of the 2023/2024 year that renewal of the grant agreements for one year would be in accordance with both the Council's own CPR's and also the public procurement regulations and that the funding would enable the recipient organisations to continue the same level of services for the residents of Oldham.

Since the circumstances relating to the 2024/2025 year are the same then the identical considerations and conclusions apply. Providing that the funds in question are not provided to the Council by an external source for some other and particular purpose the Council may allocate funding as it deems appropriate in discharge of its functions.

All such allocations are subject to application of the budgetary provisions within Part 4F of the Constitution as checked and determined by the Finance Department. In addition since the payments proposed are grants paragraph 20.9 of Part F does require such payments to accord with the Council grants policy, a full financial

appraisal, execution of a legal agreement, compliance with Council grant support procedure and evident delivery of Corporate Objectives.

(Mike Bentley – Consultant/Locum Solicitor, Commercial Team, Legal Department)

What are the **procurement** implications?

There are no Procurement implications as this report concerns grant funding, However, as always when paying out monies to external organisation, we should ensure an open and fair process has been followed that will comply with any scrutiny and are in line with the specific grant funding conditions, as the grant can be clawed back if the conditions are not met. A grant agreement must be formalised.

(Mohammad Sharif 14/03/2024)

What are the **Human Resources** implications?

None

**Equality Impact** attached or not required because (please give reason)

No vulnerable group will be disproportionality affected from the proposals contained within this report. However, an EIA was undertaken as part of the wider Council budget proposals in relation to these grants.

What are the **property** implications

None

**Risk assessments:**

The report details the allocation of the Priority Programme Fund to three organisations for the 24/25. This is an opportunity for the Council to support VCFSE organisations deliver the Councils cooperative ambitions. The service should ensure that the terms of grant enable these organisations to be allocated, this is mitigated as these grants were allocated in this way in previous years. The service should also ensure that all organisations have the appropriate insurance in place to deliver the funding and that they provide updates to the Council in relation to the use of funding as required.

Vicki Gallacher (Head of Insurance and Information Governance)

**Co-operative implications**

The grant funded VCFSE organisations are key partners in delivering both the Council's ambition to be a co-operative borough and the Oldham

Partnership's ambition for Oldham 'to be a productive and cooperative place with healthy, aspirational and sustainable communities.' All the organisations have a key role in empowering residents and communities to help themselves by supporting them to make healthy life choices and being better connected to support that is available in their local community.

(Amanda Richardson, 05/03/2024)

**IT implications** None

**Environmental and Health and Safety implications** None

**Community cohesions, including crime and disorder implications** None

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? No


**There are no background papers for this report**

<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
	R. Dyson
<b>Date:</b>	03/06/2024

Please list and attach any appendices:-

<b>Appendix number or letter</b>	<b>Description</b>

In consultation with Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director/ Director



Signed :

Date: 01.08.2024

## Background

1.1 The Council has, for a number of years, funded a range of voluntary, community and faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector organisations through its Priority Programme Fund (PPF). The fund has had three main strands, alongside supporting a small number of community events:

- Voluntary Sector Infrastructure
- Community Centres and Organisations
- Legal and Advice Services

The focus of this report is grants to Community Centres & Organisations. Legal and Advice Services is subject to a separate report. A grant for Voluntary Sector Infrastructure is in place until 2025.

1.2 **Oldham Credit Union** exists to promote greater financial equality in Oldham Borough by providing accessible, secure savings and an ethical source of credit at fair and reasonable rates of interest. It particularly benefits people who otherwise would be financially excluded and therefore have difficulty accessing mainstream financial services and might otherwise become dependent upon loan sharks charging extortionate rates of interest.

1.3 **Werneth and Freehold Community Development Project and Greenacres Community Centre** provide opportunities and venues for interaction and engagement within communities and for communities to engage with other stakeholders. They provide a means for residents to engage in a range of positive and creative activities, which enhance their quality of life and provide access to opportunities to further life chances. Building strong communities and community engagement are central components of the work of the organisation. Participation by local residents in such activities supports the principle of building cohesive communities by encouraging individuals to engage and interact with others through shared common interests. Furthermore, it provides significant opportunities for local people to develop their skills and contribute to their community by partaking in a range of volunteering opportunities. Both organisations utilise the core funding to attract inward investment to deliver services (e.g., early years provision).

## 2 Current Position

2.2 The Council has provided core grant funding to several smaller voluntary, community and faith sector organisations, through the Priority Programme Fund, for many years. The allocations have been reviewed at regular intervals and there are now only a small number of organisations who receive funding as a result of budget reductions, changing Council priorities and the need to seek greater efficiencies and value for money.

2.3 In 23/24 grants were awarded as follows:

Organisation	Funding Allocation 21/22
Greenacres Community Association	£32,000
Werneth & Freehold CDP	£32,000

Oldham Credit Union	£36,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£100,000</b>

### 3 Proposals & Conclusions

3.1 A proposal was agreed at Budget Council on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 to reduce the Priority Programme Fund budget by £16,000, with agreement to reduce each of the grants to the community centres by £8,000. Therefore, the total cost of the community centres and organisations grants for 24/25 will be **£84,000**.

3.2 Proposed allocations are as follows:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Funding Allocation (24/25)</b>
Greenacres Community Association	£24,000
Werneth & Freehold CDP	£24,000
Oldham Credit Union	£36,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£84,000</b>