



Voluntary Organisations Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

18 September 2020

A meeting of the **Voluntary Organisations Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Webex Virtual Meeting Room** on **Thursday 24 September 2020** at **9:30am**.

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

Public Session

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest - Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest
3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business and declarations of interest in any urgent business
4. Confirm Draft Minutes of Meeting of Voluntary Organisations Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday 19 March 2020 (herewith)
5. Report on West Lothian Voluntary Organisation Modernisation and Improvement Programme - Report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)
6. West Lothian Response to COVID-19 - Report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)
7. West Lothian Food Network Video
8. Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian Update - Report by Head of

DATA LABEL: Public

Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)

9. West Lothian Social Enterprise Network Update - Report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)
10. Third Sector Partnership and Voluntary Organisations Budget 2021/22 - Report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)
11. Workplan (herewith)

NOTE **For further information please contact Anastasia Dragona on tel. no. 01506 281601 or email anastasia.dragona@westlothian.gov.uk**

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

This form is to help members. It is not a substitute for declaring interests at the meeting.

Members should look at every item and consider if they have an interest. If members have an interest they must consider if they have to declare it. If members declare an interest they must consider if they have to withdraw.

NAME	MEETING	DATE

AGENDA ITEM NO.	FINANCIAL (F) OR NON- FINANCIAL INTEREST (NF)	DETAIL ON THE REASON FOR YOUR DECLARATION (e.g. I am Chairperson of the Association)	REMAIN OR WITHDRAW

The objective test is whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your discussion or decision making in your role as a councillor.

Other key terminology appears on the reverse.

If you require assistance, please ask as early as possible. Contact Julie Whitelaw, Monitoring Officer, 01506 281626, julie.whitelaw@westlothian.gov.uk, James Millar, Governance Manager, 01506 281695, james.millar@westlothian.gov.uk, Carol Johnston, Chief Solicitor, 01506 281626, carol.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk, Committee Services Team, 01506 281604, 01506 281621, committee.services@westlothian.gov.uk

SUMMARY OF KEY TERMINOLOGY FROM REVISED CODE

The objective test

“...whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your discussion or decision making in your role as a councillor”

The General Exclusions

- As a council tax payer or rate payer or in relation to the council's public services which are offered to the public generally, as a recipient or non-recipient of those services
- In relation to setting the council tax.
- In relation to matters affecting councillors' remuneration, allowances, expenses, support services and pension.
- As a council house tenant, unless the matter is solely or mainly about your own tenancy, or you are in arrears of rent.

Particular Dispensations

- As a member of an outside body, either appointed by the council or later approved by the council
- Specific dispensation granted by Standards Commission
- Applies to positions on certain other public bodies (IJB, SEStran, City Region Deal)
- Allows participation, usually requires declaration but not always
- Does not apply to quasi-judicial or regulatory business

The Specific Exclusions

- As a member of an outside body, either appointed by the council or later approved by the council
- The position must be registered by you
- Not all outside bodies are covered and you should take advice if you are in any doubt.
- Allows participation, always requires declaration
- Does not apply to quasi-judicial or regulatory business

Categories of “other persons” for financial and non-financial interests of other people

- Spouse, a civil partner or a cohabitee
- Close relative, close friend or close associate
- Employer or a partner in a firm
- A body (or subsidiary or parent of a body) in which you are a remunerated member or director
- Someone from whom you have received a registrable gift or registrable hospitality
- Someone from whom you have received registrable election expenses

MINUTE of MEETING of the VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 19 MARCH 2020.

Present – Councillors Kirsteen Sullivan (Chair), Andrew McGuire, Tom Conn, David Dodds and David Tait (substituting for Councillor Moira Shemilt)

Apologies – Councillors Bruce Fairbairn, Chris Horne and Moira Shemilt; Eleanor Blair, West Lothian Joint Forum of Community Councils

In attendance – Ian Buchanan (Senior People's Forum Representative), Alan McCloskey (Voluntary Sector Gateway Representative)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2 MINUTE

The panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 19 December 2019 as a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

3 REPORT ON WEST LOTHIAN VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION MODERNISATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration updating members on the £200,000 West Lothian Voluntary Organisation Modernisation and Improvement Programme and the additional £450,000 allocated by West Lothian Council.

The panel was advised that funding applications were being assessed and results would be announced to applicant organisations in due course.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. Note that 44 applications had been received;
2. Note that the total funding requested was £360,629;
3. Note that the panel was currently considering the applications and intended to inform applicants of the outcome before the end of the month; and
4. Note the additional resources of £450k (£150k per year from 2020/21) for the next three financial years.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

4 REPORT ON WEST Lothian Voluntary Sector Fund Arrangements for 2020/21

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration updating members on the West Lothian Voluntary Sector Fund 2019/20 following the Council Executive's decision of 29 October 2018 and the decision to roll over the existing funding grant for an additional year to allow for the conclusion on future approaches to funding being agreed.

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Note the decision to roll over the funding awarded in 2019/20 for an additional 12 months; and
2. Note the ongoing work to develop a new approach to be introduced in 2021/22.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

5 VOLUNTARY SECTOR GATEWAY WEST Lothian

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration updating members on the current activities being undertaken by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in providing an effective single point of access for support and advice and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

Officers provided an update on the contents of the report in light of the current coronavirus situation and advised that the local authority was working closely with the sector to address resource and other challenges; they also highlighted the dynamic nature of the situation and the required flexibility in response. In that context, it was noted that organisers of local voluntary groups should contact the council's Regeneration Team to contribute to the team's identifying and mapping community support by indicating any gaps in their resources.

It was recommended that the panel note the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in supporting and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report.

2. To note that organisers of local voluntary groups should contact the council's Regeneration Team to contribute to the team's identifying and mapping community support by indicating any gaps in their resources.

6 AN ENTERPRISING THIRD SECTOR

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration updating members on the current activities being undertaken to support a more enterprising third sector in West Lothian.

It was recommended that the panel note the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by West Lothian Social Enterprise Network in supporting enterprising third sector organisations.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7 GALA AND OTHER EVENTS FUND BUDGET ALLOCATIONS 2020–21

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing members of changes to the methodology to calculate the allocations for the Galaday Committee Grant in 2020–21.

Officers provided an update on the contents of the report in light of the current coronavirus situation and undertook to provide a further report at the next meeting.

It was recommended that the panel note the changes to how the budget was allocated for 2020/21 and the plans to update the Operating Scheme for 2021/22.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To provide an update report at the panel's next meeting.

8 COMMUNITY CHOICES PILOTS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing members on progress of the Community Choices pilots.

It was recommended that the panel note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9 WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

REPORT ON WEST LOTHIAN VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION MODERNISATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the panel on the allocation of the £200,000 West Lothian Voluntary Organisation Modernisation and Improvement Programme funding which was available in 2019/20 and to provide an update on the £150,000 available in 2020/21.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Notes that £173,590 was allocated to 20 organisations;
2. Notes that a balance of £26,410 remains uncommitted and has been carried forward into 2020/21;
3. Notes the effect of COVID-19 on the decisions made; and
4. Notes a total of £176,410 available for 2020/21 remains unallocated and is currently being retained as a contingency in case further COVID-19 support is needed.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Appropriate assessments will be carried out as required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None, although the report details delegate a specific delegation which is already in place for the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to approve and disburse grant funding.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	An agreed method of assuring quality and continuous improvement is an integral constituent of the move to funding voluntary organisations to deliver agreed outcomes, and should increase performance against agreed indicators.

V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	£650,000
VII	Consideration at PDSP	The Voluntary Organisations PDSP is updated on a regular basis.
VIII	Other consultations	Consultation has been carried out with the Third Sector.

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

At the meeting of West Lothian Council on 24 September 2019 a report providing an update on the Review of the Loans Fund, Insurance Fund and Modernisation Fund proposed an allocation of £200,000 from the one off resource to create a fund for voluntary organisations to help modernise their operations.

This funding support was to be delivered through an application based Voluntary Organisations Modernisation and Improvement Fund open to all voluntary organisations operating within West Lothian. The focus of the fund was to support voluntary organisations to:

- modernise and improve to make it more sustainable in the medium term;
- encourage partnership working within the sector;
- demonstrate how it will support the council in meeting its agreed priorities

It was further reported that an additional £450,000 (£150,000 per year) had been identified to support the programme in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

At the time of the last Voluntary Organisations PDSP it was reported that 44 applications for funding had been received and that these were being assessed and a decision would be made by the end of March.

The allocation of funds from the Voluntary Organisations Modernisation and Improvement Fund is delegated to the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration.

D.2 Decisions on the 2019/20 Fund

At the time the decisions on the funding applications were being made the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to become clear and that the third sector was responding to urgent needs within their community. The Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration decided, in accordance with the delegation given to him and in consultation with the Executive Councillor, that consideration of supporting the response to COVID-19 should be factored in to the final decision on the allocation of the funding.

With this added to the process it was agreed that £173,590 should be allocated to 20 organisations both on the fit with the original intent of the fund but also their role in supporting communities at this time.

In awarding the funding all 20 successful applicants were informed that given the urgency of the situation that the funding, whilst awarded to support the work identified in their application the council, also understood that the situation on the ground had changed from the time of the applications were submitted. Therefore, the council both understood and was supportive if the recipient used the award to focus in the immediate needs of the organisation and how it supported its community during the pandemic.

D.3 Business Improvement Programme

As previously reported part of the original intention was to provide a Business Improvement Programme that provided specific programmes to support and strengthen the sector in general. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 it has not been possible to progress this at this time. It would be the intention to revisit this when the situation allows and will be shaped in partnership with the third sector and the need identified.

D.4 Funding for 2020/21

No decisions have been taken on the disbursement of the £150,000 currently allocated for 2020/21, plus the additional £26,410 carried forward from 2019/20. Given the continuing response to COVID-19 the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Councillor, has agreed to hold this funding as a contingency for the moment should it be needed to support the on-going COVID-19 response.

E CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has seen an unprecedented response to our communities needs and has been a factor in the decisions made to allocate the Modernisation and Improvement Fund for 2019/20. The ongoing effect of this will need to be considered with regard to the use of the fund in 2020/21.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Voluntary Organisations PDSP, 19 March 2020

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=45577>

Appendices/Attachments: none

Contact Persons:

Alice Mitchell, Economic Development and Regeneration Manager, tel: 01506 283079; email alice.mitchell@westlothian.gov.uk

Douglas Grierson, Regeneration Team Leader, tel: 01506 281088; email douglas.grierson@westlothian.gov.uk

Craig McCorriston,
Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

24 September 2020

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WEST LOTHIAN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the panel of the work done to support communities across West Lothian during the COVID-19 crisis.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Notes the role and partnership work carried out between West Lothian Council and the Third Sector to support our communities through COVID-19;
2. Notes the funding directed to support the Third Sector in its response; and
3. Notes the opportunities to build on this partnership working in the future.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Appropriate assessments will be carried out as required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None, although the report sets out a one-off delegate for the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to approve and disburse grant funding in April 2021.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The proposal does not raise any matters of conflict with the single outcome agreement.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Funding and staffing resources in the COVID-19 response are detailed in the body of the report.
VII Consideration at PDSP	This is the first consideration of the COVID-19 response by the PDSP.

VIII Other consultations

Extensive consultation has been carried out with the Third Sector and communities in framing the council's response.

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

In March 2020 it became clear that the effects of COVID-19 would have a dramatic impact on our communities with lockdown rules put in place and over 5,000 of our most vulnerable people placed on a Shielding List. This saw an unprecedented response from the council and our Third Sector partners to support our most vulnerable people and communities. Community organisations responded quickly to the situation with other communities coming together through local helping hands and similar local support networks. The number of people looking to volunteer increased significantly. West Lothian Council itself played a key role in supporting those shielding and in need of support and advice. This report provides an overview of the support provided by West Lothian Council and some of the work done in partnership with the Third Sector to support our communities.

D.2 Partnership Approach

West Lothian Council worked closely with Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) in the initial stages to recognise that the Third Sector had responded quickly with new groups coming together in communities, existing organisations adapting their services to support their communities and their clients. The Community Planning and Regeneration Team worked with VSGWL to develop an online directory of all know groups, their activities and locations, circulate regular newsletters and information to help and support both local community organisations and community members around latest local and national information, PPE advice, risk assessments etc. effectively creating a one stop shop for information on third sector support and volunteering.

D.3 West Lothian Council support

Council officers, in the main, focussed on support for the shielding group, coordinated by the Shielding Coordination Team. Appendix 1 shows an overview of the support provided which saw 5,500 shielding people contacted and supported through the contact centre. 1,012 prescriptions delivered by the Community Planning and Regeneration Team; 556 food boxes delivered through Operational Services, in the main filling gaps or delays when required with the national food parcel programme and specific emergency situations; and 425 general inquiries that in the main were dealt with through the Advice Shop around financial advice and food support.

The Advice Shop was also working to an increased demand for its existing support around poverty related advice service and links to the Food Network.

As shielding was eased in early August the specific support to those shielding was wound down. However, the national Shielding Lists are being maintained in case of future lockdowns.

D.3 Funding support for the Third Sector

There has been considerable funding made available to the Third Sector through a number of sources; national Government programmes such as the Third Sector Resilience Fund and The Wellbeing Fund, often administered on their behalf by third parties such as Corra Foundation, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and locally via the VSGWL. A full picture of the amount of funding coming in to West Lothian through these routes is known to be significant but will take time to fully understand given the various avenues.

On top of this West Lothian Council directly allocated funding to support a number of community organisations to deliver support.

A Third Sector Hardship Fund of £327,000 allocated £96,570 to 25 local Third Sector organisations, and another £177,000 was allocated to support the approach to food insecurity, see Section D.4. A balance of £53,430 remains available to support future work as we move forward.

As part of the council's Hardship Fund a £150,000 Food Fund was created to support community organisations to respond to immediate food insecurity needs due to lockdown with funding going to 28 local community providers.

Other funding whilst originally identified prior to the pandemic to reduce food insecurity, was brought forward to develop the Food Network and £173,590 from the Modernisation and Improvement Fund was essentially utilised to respond to the immediate effects of the pandemic.

Additional money was utilised to address food insecurity, separate from the shielding group, as detailed in Section D.4.

D.4 Food Insecurity

The council received £1.045m as its share of Scottish Government Funding to alleviate food insecurity during COVID-19. This was topped up with £177,000 from the Third Sector Hardship Fund to create a fund of £1,222,000. This was used to ensure that all children entitled to free school meals/clothing grants were able to go to a school and pick up either a hot cooked meal to go, or a packed lunch, a snack and some cereal. Added to this a direct payment of £10 per week, per eligible child, was made to help with the wider household food needs. This was continued through the school holidays and ended once schools re-opened.

The other focus of this funding was the development of significant partnership working was around food support. This built on existing strong partnership work on food insecurity which had been mapped out prior to COVID-19. When the response to the pandemic kicked in £150,000 previously committed to support the development of a food network, as mentioned in Section D.3, was used to support the COVID-19 response, for example allowing small organisations to apply for membership to Fareshare which provides surplus food to community groups.

West Lothian Food Bank had to close all of its 10 distribution centres as a result of lockdown resulting in West Lothian Council becoming a full time food bank distribution centre with all referrals for a crisis food parcel being directed through either the Advice Shop or Citizens Advice to ensure that those in crisis receive a benefits health check, are helped to complete an application for a crisis grant and/or support to access an Universal Credit Advance payment.

West Lothian Food Network, with the Food Bank the lead partner, submitted a bid to provide a community based response to those experiencing food insecurity through the lockdown through the creation of Food Hub, currently a network of 34 community providers. They provide food parcels, chilled and frozen meals as well as operate food pantries. They have received three tranches of funding which will cover provision of support to the end of September when Government funding comes to an end. In total this amounts to £379,517 which has supported just over 4,000 people every week to access food.

The Food Network has received over 55 tonnes of food surplus from over 33 businesses; often food has been saved from being disposed of as waste and instead re-directed to West Lothian Food Network member organisations. The Food Network has also purchased 45 tonnes of food to ensure food supplies help to provide balanced, nutritious meals.

D.5 Economic Development and Regeneration

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic West Lothian Council's Business Gateway service has been working closely with the third sector and has delivered business advice and support to over 60 individual social enterprises and third sector organisations. This has supported them to continue to deliver their services or adapt their services to support many of the people most affected by the pandemic. Organisations were supported from across the third sector, delivering services in supplying emergency food, mental health services, social care, drug and alcohol support, community development, arts culture and sport and financial services.

Support delivered since the end of March has included assistance to access funding from a range of sources, as mentioned in Section D.3, and Business Support Grants. Advice and support was also delivered to assist organisations to adapt and remodel some of their services in response to the restrictions created by the period of lock down. This included the need for a number of organisations to move some of their services online to allow their client groups to continue to access support remotely. One to one support was also provided to review existing business plans, develop business continuity plans, review property requirements, and develop new strategies to allow organisations to respond to the impact of the pandemic. Advice has also been given to a number of individuals who have been looking to start up new charities and social enterprises since April. Business Gateway officers have also been working in close partnership with a number of other key support providers such as The Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian and West Lothian Social Enterprise Network to ensure third sector organisations have been able to access key information and advice when required.

As detailed in Section D.4, in March 2020, 26, now 34, West Lothian based charities and community organisations began working together under the banner of West Lothian Food Network to develop a collaborative and coordinated response to helping people that were not able to access food as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The network was supported by West Lothian Council officers from the Anti-Poverty Service and Economic Development and Regeneration to assist them to develop a proposal for the creation of a Community Food Hub. Business Gateway assisted them to develop plans for their day to day operations and to develop processes to record the impact measurement of the reporting of their activities and develop funding bids. Ongoing business support continues to be delivered to the Food Network and Hub to support them to develop their plans for future service delivery.

E CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has seen an unprecedented response to our communities needs and West Lothian Council had worked closely with our third sector partners to ensure that our communities have access to the support they need. By keeping in constant contact with our partners the council has tried to ensure that people were able to understand the support available and had the information on how to access it and target funding where it was most needed. There is a belief that no one who has needed support should have been unable to get that support through the structures in place, although it is appreciated that this is not fully quantifiable.

After six months there remains a great deal of uncertainty as to how the pandemic will play out but it is clear that it will have implications for both West Lothian Council and out voluntary organisations for some time to come. Much of the support provided in the first six months, particularly those affected by income, job loss, mental health and other drivers of poverty will continue to be required by our most vulnerable community members.

The response for our third sector and possibly even more form the surge in volunteering provide opportunities to strengthen the third sector going forward bit in the continuing response to COVID 19 but also over the longer term.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Council Executive, 26 May 2020,
<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=45727>

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1: WLC Shielding infographic

Contact Persons:

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Douglas Grierson, Regeneration Team Leader, tel: 01506 281088; email douglas.grierson@westlothian.gov.uk

Craig McCorriston

Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

24 September 2020

Data label: OFFICIAL



COVID 19 Shielding Update

Protecting and Supporting West Lothian

Data as at 14 September 2020



5,761 calls for shielding support answered

5,550+ shielded people contacted by WLC

5,130+ shielded people phoned by WLC

2,834 closed requests for assistance or advice

8,032 enquiries/registrations managed for the national SMS service



Council support



Food boxes

requests **579**

fulfilled **556**



Medication deliveries

requests **1,017**

fulfilled **1,012**



Other support

Including food and financial assistance

requests **449**

fulfilled **425**

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

VOLUNTARY SECTOR GATEWAY WEST LOTHIAN UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the panel on the current activities being undertaken by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in providing an effective single point of access for support and advice and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Notes the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in supporting and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.
- 2.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The report does not raise any health or risk assessment issues. No strategic environmental assessment is required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live in resilient, cohesive and sae communities.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	£48,770 has been awarded to VSGWL from the Voluntary Organisations budget for 2020/21.

VII Consideration at PDSP

The Voluntary Organisations PDSP is updated on a quarterly basis.

VIII Other consultations

None.

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

The role of the third sector interface (TSI) is to provide an effective single point of access for support and advice for the third sector within a local area. It is expected that the TSI will provide a strong cohesive conduit between the third sector and the local authority and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and that it is well managed, governed and effective.

The TSI operating in West Lothian is the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL). The VSGWL is a member of the West Lothian CPP. VSGWL receives a grant from the Scottish Government Third Sector Unit and received £48,770 from West Lothian Council in 2019/20.

D.2 Current update

An update from the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian is attached as Appendix 1.

E CONCLUSION

The panel is asked to note the report but the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian and that the PDSP will receive regular updates going forward.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: none

Contact Person:

Douglas Grierson, Regeneration Team Leader, tel: 01506 281088; email douglas.grierson@westlothian.gov.uk

Craig McCorriston,
Head of Planning Economic Development and Regeneration

24 September 2020



Promoting, Supporting and Developing

West Lothian's Voluntary Sector

Progress report on Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL)

To be presented at Voluntary Organisations Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on the 24th September 2020.

- We continue to deliver on our outcomes on building capacity of the sector, volunteering and capturing the voice of the sector.
- Representatives from the Third Sector are continuing to work closely with Council Officials as part of a funding Working Group. The Group has been continuing to review the learnings from last year's Voluntary Orgs Revenue Budget decision-making process and discussing ways of improving the arrangements moving forward.
 - Focus over recent months has been on developing the wider Third Sector strategy and supporting future funding arrangements.
 - Working Group has also been assisting to develop criteria and timelines around the revised application process and will be working alongside with Officials to develop guidance.

Covid-19 update - VSGWL and third sector response to Coronavirus outbreak

VSGWL secured new offices in Bathgate and relocated in March 2020, just prior to lockdown, but had to close the office almost immediately following lockdown. Following the office closure, all staff have been working effectively from home. All staff have been provided with a range of IT equipment and furniture to enable them to work safely from home and provide support to the sector. VSGWL received welcome financial support from WL Council Hardship's Fund to help us pay for this additional expenditure.

VSGWL is leading the Third Sector response to the pandemic. We are continuing to work closely with our Third Sector colleagues and West Lothian Council to support individuals and communities during this Coronavirus crisis. We put out a survey to third sector colleagues about the support that they might be able to help during this crisis and published this Directory of Services on our website. We have linked this to information gathered by WL Council about informal groups that have come together locally and incorporated this into our Directory.

We have created a Covid-19 Resource information hub on our website with links to key agencies, volunteering, health and well-being resource and funding opportunities. We have been very active on social media to sure important news and funding opportunities are communicated quickly.

There has been an incredible community response to the pandemic, supported through formal and informal groups and organisations. The sector responded at speed, particularly during the early weeks of the pandemic with many moving quickly to provide necessary help and support services online to those in need.



Promoting, Supporting and Developing

West Lothian's Voluntary Sector

Sharing knowledge and information exchange

In association with all other Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs), we conducted a survey of Third Sector orgs into the impact of coronavirus on them and local communities. Chief Officers from all TSIs meet every fortnight via Zoom. We significantly increased the frequency of Third Sector Strategy Group (TSSG) meetings to every 2-3 weeks to share best practice, knowledge and identify risk and opportunities. TSSG held a virtual session for the Clerks from the Equalities and Human Rights Committee to help inform the Committee's Inquiry into the impact of Covid-19.

Throughout the crisis, we have worked closely with WL Council to coordinate communications and helped to jointly provide the best possible support to individuals and communities.

Coordination of volunteering opportunities

Over 1200 people from across West Lothian have signed up to volunteers during the crisis. We have created a volunteering database that allows us to manage and respond to requests from partners for volunteers. We have signposted individuals to our online Directory of Services which has details about all organisations providing help and support during the crisis.

Individuals have secured opportunities with a range of third sector partners including Carers of West Lothian, Safe Families, Food Train, NHS Lothian, The Larder and WL Foodbank. Individuals have been helping with food parcel deliveries to those in need, PPE supplies to carers, medicine pick-ups and support as ward helpers in St John's. It is hoped that individuals will be able to secure long term volunteering opportunities post Covid-19. One particularly (and unexpected) outcome has been the number of individuals expressing interest in volunteering as trustees. To date, over 60 people have been sign-posted to third sector partners to help with the important role Boards play in governing and supporting voluntary organisations.

Angela Constance MSP submitted a Parliamentary Motion highlighting the surge in volunteers and congratulating VSGWL on our work. The Motion was supported by several MSPs from all parties.

Volunteers` Week 1-7 June 2020

In the absence of the annual Volunteer celebration, we ran a publicity campaign to recognise and thank volunteers. We created a dedicated Volunteer's Week page on our website and ran a mixture of online videos, and social media messages throughout the week to thank everyone that volunteered throughout the year and to those who had signed up to help during the pandemic. We got a lot of positive feedback about our material and received a lot of messages of support.

£52k VSGWL Covid-19 fund, WLSen and National Lottery partnership

VSGWL and WLSen made a successful bid to partner with The National Lottery to provide a £52K emergency to support local, grass roots organisations and groups that are responding to the Covid-



Promoting, Supporting and Developing

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19 pandemic. We launched the fund on 28 May inviting organisations to apply for grants of £600 – £2,400 to help them with their plans to support local communities.

- By the closing date of 5 June, we had received 39 applications requesting funds totalling £70.5k.
- Following a robust assessment process and tight timeline, we identified 20 organisations to receive awards and ensured that monies were distributed extremely quickly. We secured agreement from the National Lottery to run a second round of funding which we are currently determining.

We have developed a very positive, effective relationship with the National Lottery, and we are both keen to work closely with each other on future opportunities that will benefit local communities.

Helping to secure third sector funding

To help support the response, it is estimated that around £900k of emergency funding and grants has been provided to West Lothian voluntary organisations from sources including Scottish Government and WL Council. VSGWL has played an important role in highlighting all available funding for the sector through our website and social media. While this funding has proved extremely welcome, there is concern about the long-term sustainability of this monies and the work still required in the months ahead.

Third Sector Covid-19 recovery Summit

VSGWL chaired an important partnership summit on 7 September to showcase the work of the third sector during Covi9-19. The online event attracted 100 participants, including elected members, MPs, MSPs and a host of third sector partners. The event received very positive feedback and widespread recognition of the importance of the sector in the economic and social recovery and the partnership approach required to create a new West Lothian. Plans are actively being considered to hold a follow up summit early in 2021.

There is still much work still to be done by VSGWL and the third sector in supporting vulnerable individuals and communities in the short, medium and longer term. We look forward to playing an important role in leading this activity and working with partners to bring about positive change for all.

Presented by Alan McCloskey, Chief Executive Officer

VSGWL

14 September 2020

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DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WEST LOTHIAN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the panel on the current activities being undertaken by West Lothian Social Enterprise Network (WLSSEN) in providing an effective single point of access for support and advice and representing the interests of social enterprises within West Lothian.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Notes the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by West Lothian Social Enterprise Network in supporting and representing the interests of the social enterprise sector within West Lothian.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The report does not raise any health or risk assessment issues. No strategic environmental assessment is required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	£31,500 has been awarded to WLSSEN from the Voluntary Organisation budget for 2020/21.

VII Consideration at PDSP

The Voluntary Organisations PDSP is updated on a quarterly basis.

VIII Other consultations

None.

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

West Lothian Council is committed to supporting the development of more enterprising and sustainable third sector that contributes to the key Community Planning Partnership outcomes.

D.2 Current update

A report from WLSen on the activities they have undertaken since the previous meeting of the panel is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

E CONCLUSION

The Panel is asked to note the update report but the West Lothian Social Enterprise Network (WLSen) that the PDSP will receive regular updates going forward.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: WLSen update

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Craig McCorriston
Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

24 September 2020



Report to Voluntary Sector Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
24th September 2020

Social Enterprise challenges during COVID

It has been a difficult time for social enterprises, who have often experienced an increase in demand for the services they provide to their beneficiaries, while at the same time suffering a significant decrease in trading income.

Fortunately, in West Lothian, many, although not all, social enterprises operate on a mixed income model basis so have grant funding as well as trading income. In addition, many grant funders have shown a significant level of understanding allowing the repurposing of funding. However, like many organisations in the private sector, social enterprises do face uncertainty in the coming months as the Furlough Scheme ends and it is possible that we will see redundancies.

At WLSSEN, we have and will continue to support our members and keep them up to date with relevant information to ensure they have the best chance of survival.

Support to members

In the very early stages of lockdown we hosted a number zoom get-together for our members although as things settled, we re-focused on communication by email and social media. We are also engaged in the bi-weekly TSSG meetings, often attended by over 20 organisations both social enterprises and third sector organisations.

We undertook a refresh of our website and are now in the midst of updating member data to ensure it is a valuable source of information re social enterprise in West Lothian – please see [here](#). With a view to ensuring we are fully meeting the needs of our members we are in the midst of a strategic review. 26 members completed a recent survey with a further 10 engaging in in depth interviews.

WLSSEN Covid Support Fund

We were able to put together a small pot of money to help members who required dedicated business support under one of 2 categories - Emergency Support and Future Scenario Planning.

12 organisations have accessed this support which was delivered by another of our social enterprise members, Community Enterprise. This support has in turn leveraged in funding and additional support from the likes of Just Enterprise.

One-to-one support

In recent months we have supported 3 new members to establish their social enterprises with a further 2 at the pre-start up stage. A further 6 of our more established social enterprise members have been supported by the WLSEN Coordinator.

Despite this positive news we do foresee a drop off in the number of social enterprises in the coming months simply due to the current market conditions.

Covid funding brought in by members

In the early stages of lockdown, our support shifted away from trading to helping our members access funding to enable them to survive. A summary of grants awarded to members is below:

Fund name	Amount	No. of orgs
Resilience FirstPort	£363,718.09	9
Resilience Corra	£53,777	10
Lottery	£8,727	2
Foundation Scotland -RRR	£35,970	9
Supporting Communities – Development Trusts plus 2	£236,140	6
VSGWL	£12,050	6
Total	£712,382.09	43

Online Communication

Our move to a weekly newsletter, entitled Three Things for Thursday, has enabled us to share the most relevant pieces of news in a very timely manner.

Newsletters	Number	Ave. open rate	Ave. click rate
Three Things for Thursday / Infomail	29	51%	48%
Monthly Round-up	5	54%	51%

Our social media presence has increased over recent months with resultant growth in engagement by our members as well as profile raising more widely of the good work being carried out.

Social media	Posts	Views /Tweets	Engagements
Facebook	106	3910	217
Twitter	248	609 Unique / 179 Retweets	8089

Connection nationally

We continue to engage nationally with social enterprise intermediary organisations including SENSCOT, Social Enterprise Scotland and Just Enterprise. Throughout Covid, we have attended 29 meetings with a dual focus i.e. 1/ to share challenges being experienced by organisations here in West Lothian and 2/ to hear about and help shape the support available.

Being linked in nationally has been valuable in relation to knowledge and understanding re support e.g. the Third Sector Resilience Fund, Business Support Grant and the upcoming Third Sector Recovery Fund. We were also able to campaign for groups in our areas to be included in certain funds e.g. Community Action Blackburn & Stoneyburn & Bents Future Vision Group were subsequently invited to apply for Communities Fund monies after we identified them as community anchor organisations.

We also engaged in the “Social Enterprise Reset Week” which took place between 11th to 15th May and shared best practice and discussed challenges amongst social enterprises from across Scotland.

Working with VSGWL

We have worked closely with VSGWL over the past 6 months particularly to share information with our respective members and to ensure a consistent message. This included working in partnership on the £52k Lottery funded VSGWL Covid 19 fund.

Working with WLC

We continue to play an active role on the TSSG Working Group representing the social enterprise sector in West Lothian but also around grant giving as our Coordinator has experience in this area. We also work closely with our link officer, Martin Thomson from Business Gateway to provide a full package of support to new and established enterprises and we engage with the Anti-Poverty Action Group.

West Lothian Third Sector Mental Health Support Providers Collaborative

WLSN is playing a coordination role for a group of our members and other third sector organisations who provide support to those with mental health needs. The members of the group are keen to work collaboratively and with partners including WLC and the NHS to ensure that needs are being fully met and to ensure appropriate referrals. We are engaged with Martin Higgins and Greg Stark from the NHS, both keen to work with the group going forward. See link [here](#)

West Lothian Third Sector Summit

The WLSN Coordinator was part of the Working Group behind this recent online event which showcased both the Third Sector and partnership working with WLC and the NHS.

Thanks go to those who gave up their time to develop the event - Karen Nailen at CAB, Angela Moohan at The Larder, Joanna van den Berg at Firefly Arts, June Dickson at Environ-mental Health CIC, Silence Chihuri at FJSS Group and of course to VSGWL for supporting it to come to fruition.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THIRD SECTOR PARTNERSHIP AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS BUDGET 2021/22

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the panel of the ongoing discussion with Third Sector representatives in West Lothian and to consider the arrangements for the disbursement of the Voluntary Sector budget in 2021/22. These arrangements will have to be reported for approval to Council Executive.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that panel considers the following recommendations which are intended to be reported to Council Executive together with any comments arising from discussion at PDSP:

1. Notes the role and work of the Third Sector Working Group as detailed in the report;
2. Agrees the proposed changes of the revenue budget to allow for an interim extension of the grants to the organisations listed in Section D.5.1;
3. Agrees that the Twinning Grants will not be allocated in 2021/22 allowing for the roll over to the grants awarded in 2020/21; and
4. Agrees the process outlined in Section D.5.2 for the allocation of the remaining £400,000 through an application approach focussing on supporting our communities through the on-going challenges from the COVID 19.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Appropriate assessments of projects will be carried out as required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None, although the report sets out a one-off delegate for the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to approve and disburse grant funding in April 2021.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.

V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	CPP's are now required to prepare a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) in place of Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). The proposal does not raise any matters of conflict with the SOA/LOIP.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Revenue funding of £944,000 is available for 2021/22
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Regular reports are provided to PDSP on the Vol Orgs budget. This is the first report dealing specifically with the allocation for 2021/22.
VIII	Other consultations	Third Sector Working Group, Finance, Social Policy

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

A change to the current allocation process for Voluntary Organisations Budget through a grant process was agreed at Council Executive in 2018.

A new application process was implemented in 2019/20 which included funding for a Community Choices pilot. The pilot was to inform further revisions to the disbursement of the funding in 2020/21. However, the pilot was delayed and as a result the funding agreed for 2019/20 was rolled forward to 2020/21 with the intention that future funding would be done, either wholly or in part, through Community Choices should the pilot prove a successful model.

To help the council and start a process of working more closely with our third sector partners, a working group was established between council officers and third sector representatives to develop a joint approach to look at the new funding model as well working towards providing a way to work through other funding streams, community choices which would in turn strengthen and develop the working relationship between the Council and Third Sector. This has covered not just the Voluntary Organisations Budget but also how we are building on existing relationships to develop a more strategic relationship going forward through grant funding, commissioning, advice & support with access to specialist expertise where possible.

D.2 Strategic Approach

West Lothian Council recognises that the Third Sector, comprising Voluntary Organisations and Social Enterprises, plays a hugely important role in the fabric of society. The Third Sector is varied, adaptable, agile and solution focussed. Services are designed to support service users and disadvantaged communities across West Lothian and to be responsive to meeting their changing needs.

They are directly linked with our local communities both through their work within specific geographical communities or with a particular thematic group complimenting and adding value to public sector support provided by the council and our Community Planning Partners. They have the skills and expertise to support people in those communities and empower them to be more resilient. This has been further evidenced not only by the sector's response to the COVID-19 crisis and in the way organisations have responded but also by community members through the

incredible level of volunteering witnessed in recent months.

The working group agreed a set of guiding principles around which to work, set out below:

- Council funding is strategic and will be aligned to identified priorities;
- We are all focused on investing in our communities and local services to protect the most vulnerable people in West Lothian;
- We will develop and maintain partnership approaches to supporting our communities/people;
- We all recognise the unique added value that the Third Sector brings, which enhances the public pound;
- We are focused on local spend in grassroots, community organisation and recognise the impact this can have on local communities/people;
- We are all committed to finding joint solutions through maintaining open and constructive dialogue, no matter how difficult the issues may be; and
- We will all model the behaviours that we would wish from all of our peers

These principles will apply to all joint discussions and offer a framework for honest and forthright engagement between the Council, Community Planning Partners and the Third Sector.

Both West Lothian Council and the Third Sector are keen that the relationship is built on an investment and resourcing model. This approach will move us forward together and enable the sector to support the council with the delivery of its agreed priorities and achieve better outcomes for people and communities.

This approach needs to be viewed in the round as all sides recognise the constraints continuing to be placed on council budgets. This financial pressure is also a fact of life for our Third Sector partners. It is recognised by all parties that in developing and supporting the Third Sector, investment will not simply be around financial support, thus, the relationship needs to be more holistic and partnership based. Through engagement we need to work with each other to maximise support for our communities. To do this we need a mix of approaches that provide a coherent package of support and meaningful ongoing dialogue around how we best provide support to residents of West Lothian.

D.3 The Voice of the Third Sector

The Third Sector is generally well represented on key fora and decision making bodies including Council PDSPs and within the Community Planning Partnership (and the various groupings that sit within this (Economic, Community Safety, Anti Poverty, Children and Families etc.) The importance of this representation is recognised and will develop and be strengthened as we move forward. This will give the Third Sector a clear role and voice in the strategic planning bodies both in terms of shaping priorities, developing actions and helping to deliver on these.

We will look to pull this work together through a commitment to an annual report to be produced with the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian. This will show progress and articulate the overall financial value of the various methods of support and Council's ongoing investment in the sector, as well as how this work has met the priorities and needs of our communities, including highlighting issues that need to be addressed moving forward.

D.4 Funding support for the Third Sector

It is recognised that whilst it will never be possible to provide the levels of direct funding support that the sector may desire, as evidenced to an extent by the over subscription to grant schemes and various funding pots in recent years, that where budgets allow West Lothian Council will continue to put direct funding into the sector through a range of mechanisms. These in the main will be through:

- Direct Grants
- Commissioning/Procurement
- Service Level Agreements

Through the working group it is clear that where possible the sector would welcome multi-year funding rather than from year to year. West Lothian Council is supportive of this approach in principle but given both the uncertainty caused by COVID 19 on existing budgets and the existing one year budget arrangements in place for local authorities from the Scottish Government, this approach is not feasible at this time. Should multi-year funding for local authorities be reintroduced this can be revisited.

An example of where there will be opportunities in the coming months and years, particularly for our Social Enterprises Sector, can be seen with the increased target set by the Jobs Taskforce to increase local procurement to 40%. Whilst procurement is open to the private sector this will bring opportunities for the third sector and part of that will be to ensure that the sector has the appropriate skills to engage fully in this process.

This last point will be a major area for the joint working and one where council expertise and skills can also be developed to offer advice and training as part of a package of support over and above the funding elements mentioned above. Whilst Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) and West Lothian Social Enterprise Network (WLSN) provide many elements of this in their role and can pull in expertise directly, the council will also look to support this by identifying gaps where its own expertise could be drawn upon. Initial examples being support with funding applications, building on our links with funding bodies, sharing best practice from other council areas, procurement advice, business planning, identifying relevant local data, joint events/training.

D.5 Voluntary Organisations Funding 2021/22

As set out in D1 the future development of the Voluntary Sector Budget was one part of a wider discussion but also the initial driver. In addition, this starting point directly linked any new scheme in part to the community choices pilot. This pilot was further delayed due to COVID-19 so there is no evidence yet to gauge the suitability, or otherwise, of using a Community Choices approach for the wider budget. Indeed, it should be pointed out that the Third Sector input into the Working Group did not see this as a desirable model for the wider budget. This view does, however, have to be balanced against the Scottish Government's requirement for a percentage of the council's revenue budget to be delivered by a Community Choices approach.

The working group has continued to meet virtually in recent months to discuss future funding arrangements. Various scenarios and discussions have taken place and the COVID-19 crisis has also shaped thinking. From early on in the discussion there were concerns that some groups previously funded through the grant scheme were not suitable for the process that was in place at the time and that other arrangements were needed for those if the council decided that it had commitments or requirements to do so.

In 2021/22 the overall pot remains £944,000 and the proposed approach for allocation is set out below:

D.5.1 Service Level Agreement/Commissioning interim phase

As a result of analysis of the previous funding a number of areas of work have been identified as unsuitable for an application based programme as these services are required by the council to be supported and delivered and that services have a commitment to do so. Those areas of work include transportation, museums, some advice provision and some aspects of youth provision.

This will see £586,004 allocated for this provision as broken down below. It is likely that this will result in new Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between West Lothian Council and the recipient directly with the services requiring the provision agreeing what services it requires. This may also see this taken to a direct commissioning process to test the market around this provision should services wish to do this. The timescales does not allow for this to be fully developed in time for 2021/22 but will be in place for 2022/23. As an interim measure the following organisations detailed in the table below will be offered a one year roll over grant as a stepping stone to allow time to investigate this more fully and agree the right approach. This will see a slight reduction if the award to allow for the remaining funding to be put out to an open process. It should be noted that the organisations listed will not be eligible for the fund set out in Section D.5.2.

Service Required	Organisation affected	Award 20/21	Proposed 21/22	Lead Service
Youth Services covering West Lothian including focus on community safety and Children and Families work	WLYAP	£190,000	£190,000	Tim Ward (Social Policy /Children and Families) and Beverley Akinlami (Education – Learning, Policy & Resources, CLD Youth Services) (with input from Community Safety and Community Planning and Regeneration) Note: Social Policy currently provide additional funding for Children and families work over and above this funding
Community Transport	HcL	£182,156	£182,156	Nicola Gill (Operational Services - Transportation)
Provision of a Third Sector and social enterprise interface to support the	VSGWL WLSEN	£80,270	£80,270	Douglas Grierson (Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration – Community Planning and Regeneration)

third sector across West Lothian.				
Additional Advice services across West Lothian in alignment with the Anti Poverty Strategy	Citizens Advice Bureau	£76,266	£76,266	Elaine Nisbett (WLC Finance and Property Services – Anti-Poverty Service)
Provision of Museum Services in Linlithgow and Bathgate	Linlithgow Heritage Trust Bennie Museum	£57,312	£57,312	Emma Peattie (Museums Development Officer)
Twinning	5 Twinning Associations	£11,920	Roll over 2019/20 award. No new grant award 2021/22	Steven Gray (Education - Learning, Policy and Resources)
	TOTAL	£597,924	£586,004	

The development of a robust Service Level Agreement or incorporating into a commissioning process will be developed over the course of the next 12 months and implemented in 2022/23 to ensure the council is clear on what it requires of the provider and that the provider can deliver to those council priorities identified by the appropriate council service. This will also be dependent on future budget arrangements.

It may also be the case that following further consideration the lead service decides that this work is no longer required. In this case the funding will remain within the Voluntary Organisations Budget going forward, again pending future budget decision for 2022/23 and beyond.

Should the lead service proceed with the Service Level Agreement / Commissioning process in 2022/23 then the funding, to the maximum set out above, will be transferred over to the lead service to manage for the duration of the agreement/contract. Should this require less funding then any balance will remain within the Voluntary Organisations budget. Should the service decide that it no longer requires the service at any point then the funding will be returned to the Voluntary Organisations Budget.

In relation to Twinning West Lothian Council remains committed to support this. It is proposed that this will continue to be managed by Education as a separate budget going forward. However, with the five twinning associations having received funding of £11,920 (covering 5 associations) for 2019/20, as part of the previous roll over of

awards, their ability to carry out twinning activities due this year have been curtailed by the effects of COVID 19. It is proposed to allow the 2019/20 award to rollover into 2020/21 to allow that to be utilised in the next financial year. Therefore, there will be no new additional 2021/22 allocation. This will be picked up again in 2022/23.

D.5.2 Third Sector Community Support Fund 2021/22

The remaining £357,996 will be used to create a new £400,000 Third Sector Community Support Fund. The additional balance of £42,004 has been identified from rolling over the unallocated 2019/20 £40,000 Gala Grant and £2,004 from the Modernisation and Improvement Fund. The new fund will be used for a new open grant scheme focused on resilient communities recovering from COVID 19. This will address key areas identified through the Community Planning process as the key short and medium term priorities for partners as we move through COVID 19. The focus is primarily around health and wellbeing, particularly around supporting our most vulnerable communities, those in the bottom 20% SIMD data zones, and aligning applications to the Economic Recovery Plan and Health and Wellbeing/Anti-Poverty Action Plan, currently being finalised.

The priorities identified by partners and confirmed through an online survey of community organisations and partners will see the focus of the funding aligned to the following themes, with some examples, though not exhaustive, given of areas we would wish to see applications address:

- income and employment;
 - supporting people into work/into positive destinations;
 - young people (attainment/education/ training etc)
 - projects that address poverty related matters.
- physical and mental health and wellbeing: including:
 - addressing long term illness
 - isolation/loneliness
 - general health (prevention)
 - young people
 - older people,
 - people with protected characteristics
 - children and families with disabilities
- housing and homelessness issues;
 - projects that address local homelessness issues

Within these three broad headings applicants will be able to apply for new projects as well as ongoing core costs that allow them to continue to support their communities through this time. It is clear that new approaches have and are being developed, more partnership working has been clear and these are likely to have long term implications for our communities and how they are supported.

Applications should not exceed £50,000 per organisation, although consortium bids may apply for more funding and will be considered on the merits of both the additional value for money and on the effect on the overall pot of supporting a larger bid.

Applicants will be encouraged to show how this funding will support delivery of a service or projects that utilise other funding brought in by the applicant thereby showing how the contribution of the council helps to deliver that larger service provision. There is no specific percentage for this but it will be part of the decision

making process.

If agreed the process will be launched in early October with a November deadline for applicants. A panel will then meet to make recommendations and applicants will be informed of the final decisions in December. Draft copies of the guidance and application form are attached as Appendices 1 and 2.

As with previous years allocations it is proposed that the award of funding is delegated to the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration.

D.6 Modernisation and Improvement Fund 2019/2020

It should be noted the council had also agreed to extend the Modernisation and Improvement Fund into 2020/21 with £150,000 allocated. Due to the response to COVID-19 no funding has been committed from this budget. During this time other new funding had been utilised to fund the Third Sector response during the crisis which has seen just under £900,000 allocated to West Lothian based organisations since the pandemic started.

Due both to the uncertainty and the alternative funding in place, the Modernisation and Improvement Fund has been held back as a contingency fund if needed to respond to the effects of COVID 19 over the coming months as some of the initial funding comes to an end. There remains uncertainty at this time about how things will develop but it would be hoped to take a more formal decision on this funding in the coming months once things are clearer as to how the money can be best utilised.

As set out in Section D.5.1, to ensure that the Third Sector Community Support Fund can be rounded up to £400,000 there has been a small allocation of £2,004 from the Modernisation and Improvement Fund.

E CONCLUSION

West Lothian Council recognises that the third sector plays a hugely important role in the fabric of society and both compliments and adds values to the work of West Lothian Council in delivering the support our communities need. It is vital that our working relationship is as strong as it can be and that partnership working is central to this, both for the council to understand the sector but also for the sector to work with and understand the council. Whilst the council's ability to fund the sector is important it is not the only way for us to work in partnership. The voice of the sector and the support that can be provided where possible can be part of building that overall relationship. Grant funding is one element of a wider, more strategic partnership.

In relation to the allocation of the Voluntary Organisations budget for 2021/22 as detailed this will see £586,004 allocated to continue to support areas of work that the council is seeking to commission or see delivered to a Service Level Agreement going forward. This will see interim outcomes agreed, updating their existing outcomes where necessary to ensure that the required service is provided in 2021/22. This will allow for more detailed work to take place to move to a new commissioning or Service Level Agreement arrangement for 2022/23.

A new £400,000 Third Sector Community Support Fund 2021/22 will be launched which will be an open application process available to all third sector organisations that meet the criteria.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Council Executive, 29 October 2018
<http://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=40192>

Voluntary Organisations PDSP, 21 March 2019
<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=41887>

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 Third Sector Community Support Fund 2021/22 Draft Guidance

Appendix 2 Third Sector Community Support Fund 2021/22 Draft Application Form

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Third Sector Community Support Fund 2021/22

Background

In 2019-20 West Lothian Council agreed to an interim grant process, ring fenced to those organisations who had received funding through the rolling Service Funding Agreement process that had been in place up until 2018/19. This would last for one year and would be replaced by a new approach for 2020/21, one that would be open to a wider number of local third sector organisations. Timescale constraints meant that this was not achieved and funding was rolled over for one more year to cover 2020/21 to allow time to agree a replacement process for 2021/22.

The new process has been agreed following consultation with representatives of the third sector around the overarching principle to provide time limited investment in organisations best placed to deliver for the communities of West Lothian, addressing both key Community Planning priorities and ensuring that the recipient has the resources it needs, within the confines of the funding available, to support our communities. The priorities identified are also the result of the effects that the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic has had on our communities and the issues that are coming from that or are likely to do so.

The total funding available for 2021/22 is £400,000.

What are the priorities that we are looking to address?

The new grant scheme is open to all properly constituted third sector organisations in West Lothian that can delivery work that support the aims of the funding. The fund aims to support resilient communities recovering from COVID 19 with the focus of the key areas identified through the Community Planning using both identified data and feedback as the areas of focus in the coming months and possibly years.

The priorities identified will see the focus of the funding aligned to the following themes, with some examples, though not exhaustive, given of areas we would wish to see applications address:

- income and employment;
 - supporting people into work/into positive destinations;
 - young people (attainment/education/ training etc)
 - projects that address poverty related matters.
- physical and mental health and wellbeing: including:
 - addressing long term illness
 - isolation/loneliness
 - general health (prevention)
 - young people
 - older people,
 - people with protected characteristics

- children and families with disabilities
- housing and homelessness issues;
 - project that address local homelessness issues

Partners are also focussed on supporting the economy and business. This is being addressed through the West Lothian Economic Recovery Plan and partnerships are in place to support much of this work. However, innovative ideas that provide clear additionality will be considered.

Whilst not specifically detailed we are aware that many third sector organisations have, due to the circumstances adapted to the use of new and existing digital approaches and again this is an area that is likely to develop going forward.

Applications should aim to support our most vulnerable communities, those in the bottom 20% SIMD data zones, or key thematic groups, for example young people, families, older people, people with protected characteristics.

We are keen that applications help develop/strengthen partnership working between public, third sector and business. As such we will look for evidence of this and how your work or project fits. For example, you could explain how it links with the Anti-Poverty Action Plan, Economic Recovery Plan, local Regeneration Plans and the Health and Wellbeing issues that are clearly coming through.

Factoring in the effect of COVID 19

It is understood that the effects of COVID 19 are going affect us for some time and this funding is targeting support at these key areas that partners and communities have identified. We understand that things can change quickly and as such it is appreciated that some flexibility is likely to be needed and that asking applicants to definitively identify what they will deliver between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 is not straightforward at this time.

It is appreciated that applicants can only apply based on how their organisation anticipates what they can deliver during the funding period but that they may have to adapt and change depending of the position at the at time. Therefore, we will be mindful and flexible around this in practice. However, you should be as clear as you can be to how you may adapt, essentially a level of scenario planning. Part of the decision making process will take this into account as what we will not want to do is to fund is something that can't be adapted or be deliverable if changes happen in the coming months that affect delivery. An example might be around face to face contact requiring a venue versus digital contact.

How much can I apply for?

Whilst you will need to cost your application to suit your identified needs. You must clearly show why you are asking for the amount identified. However, you should be aware that applications in excess of £50,000 will not be considered.

One caveat to this relates to consideration of innovative consortium bids. Such bids may apply for a higher amount and in such cases will be considered on the specific merits and how this might affect the ability to support a range of applications. We have not specified a top level for this to allow for applicants to make a value for money case. Consortium bids must have a lead partner.

Balance of Funding

Given the amount available and the likely high level of demand we are also looking for applications that maximise the funding being made available to support our communities. It is unlikely that an applicant looking for 100% funding will be successful. Applicants will be expected to show how the funding will support delivery of a service or how it can enable projects that utilise other funding identified by the applicant thereby showing how the contribution of the Council through this fund helps to deliver that larger service provision. There is no specified percentage for this but this will be considered as part of the decision making process.

To be clear we will expect to see either:

- where it is a new project that should be funded through a mix on funding (external/self generated etc.) with the Council contributing a percentage of the total cost: OR
- That the council is contributing a percentage to a vital part of the service being provided but not funded directly. This may involve some core costs for example.

You will need to evidence this in the application.

You should think about proportionality when putting your application together to be clear that the amount being asked for is justified by the number of beneficiaries or level of support, and clearly shows value for money.

What can the funding be used for?

You can only use the funding to pay for costs associated with delivering what is set out in your application. This can be for a wide range of costs both to develop and run a new project or can also cover core costs to help the organisations deliver ongoing work as long as it delivers to the above priorities. It is essentially a revenue grant scheme but some capital costs can be considered. These can include the following items:

- Staffing
- Core costs such as office management and administration
- Volunteer costs e.g. travel expenses
- Equipment and materials where clearly evidenced as crucial to delivery of the work as outlined in the application
- Hire of venues or rental of premises and related costs
- Other costs, including core costs

If you are including core costs you should itemise these to be clear what these are:

- how this is currently funded;
- why it is required;
- why it is important; and
- the difference it makes to your work.

How to apply

To ensure each organisation has an equal opportunity to demonstrate how the work it wants funded in 2021/22 will impact on the priorities identified, applications for funding must be made using the application form which accompanies this guidance document.

Completed applications to the fund should be returned no later than:

- **17.00 p.m. on Monday, 9th November 2020.**

Any application received beyond that date/time will not be eligible for consideration unless in exceptional circumstances.

All applicants will have to show what the funding will be used for. A maximum word count has been set per section. You **must** stick to this and be clear, concise and where possible, use bullet points. To be fair to all applicants any words over the word limit will not be considered. If your project comprises more than one discrete element please treat and describe them individually.

As part of the application process you will be asked to provide the following information:

A general summary of your project which outlines and identifies:

- The need for the funding support;
- Who will benefit;
- How it will align with and contribute to the priorities that you have selected.
- How it links to other funding you have identified and/or other projects you will be delivering, and
- How you have considered the sustainability of the work

Outcomes for the project which outline:

- What you want to achieve; what changes or difference will the funding we give you make to the people and communities that you are targeting?
- Your planned activities: What measurable programmes, projects or activities you will design, use and deliver to achieve your outcomes? (For example a training course is an activity; community engagement is also an activity. You should also show how the project is going to be advertised and promoted and beneficiaries recruited/targeted/accessed).

Outcome indicators for the project which demonstrate:

- How you will measure your success?
- How you will show you are achieving or will achieve your stated outcomes?

Costs which clearly show:

Your application should clearly show how you have costed your project with a general breakdown of the resources you require e.g. staff, rent, equipment, training/course materials etc.

However, as stated above we accept that the effects of COVID 19 mean flexibility will be necessary so again we accept that the initial breakdown may be indicative and open to changes. The key is the delivery of the work.

As public money you will be asked to report back at the end of the funding period to show how the funding has been utilised and be able to provide supporting evidence (i.e. pay slips, timesheets, invoices, bank statements etc.) should you be asked.

How will the application be assessed?

All applications will be assessed by a panel made up of council officers and external representatives. That panel will draw on expert advice from officers, Council or Community Planning partners to ensure that the application being considered addresses local strategic priorities, builds on or complements other provision and does not duplicate other provision already in place. The clearer you can be in your application on this will make this easier for the panel to consider.

The panel will also consider the applicant's financial health and governance arrangements.

Please be aware that you **must** submit all requested documentation by the deadline or your application will not be submitted to the panel for assessment.

Officers may contact you with supplementary questions for the purposes of clarification both before the panel meets and possibly after.

The panel will meet in late November / early December and applicant informed of the outcome by the week ending 18 December 2020

What happens if the application is successful?

If you are successful, you will receive an offer letter from us via email that will outline how much we are investing, the terms of the offer and the methods of monitoring our investment.

Please note that you may not be offered the full amount requested. However, where this is the case officers will detail the panel's reasoning for this decision.

All funding is reliant on you signing a Conditions of Grant agreement. Funding will be paid directly into your bank account. Please note that no funding will be provided until the Conditions of Grant agreement is signed.

Monitoring

All organisations that receive funding will be required to complete a monitoring form. Details of which will be included with the award letter; that must be completed and submitted at the end of the financial year.

Copies of the monitoring form will accompany your funding award letter and conditions of grant so you will be clear of the requirements before you sign the offer. **This will cover both your performance in relation to your outcomes and financial monitoring.**

What happens if the application is unsuccessful?

If you are unsuccessful in your application, feedback will be provided as to the reasons why.

However, the decision that we make is final and there is no process for appeal. Council officers will offer support and provide advice on alternative sources of funding.

Additional conditions

Additional conditions that will apply to the offer will include:

- Right of access to organisation's financial records to ensure the funding is being used for the purposes it is granted for
- The council can reclaim funding if it can be shown that it has not been used in accordance with the application and with conditions of funding agreement. We will not reclaim funding if it can be shown that there is no fault on the part of the organisation.

Other conditions appropriate to our investment may also be included in the Offer Letter and Funding Agreement.

Help and Advice

If you require further information or advice on your application please contact the Community Planning and Regeneration Team at (regenerationteam@westlothian.gov.uk) and we will get back to you.

Where your service is based on a specific geographical location it is likely to be your local Community Regeneration Officer.



**Third Sector Community Support Fund
Application Form 21/22**

Project /Service to be delivered	
Name of organisation	
Contact for this application:	
Position in Organisation:	
Confirm current number of Board Members	
Address	
Telephone & e-mail:	

Priorities

The priorities identified will see the focus of the funding aligned to the following themes, with some examples, though not exhaustive, given of areas we would wish to see applications address:

- income and employment;
 - supporting people into work/into positive destinations;
 - Young people (attainment/education/ training etc)
 - projects that address poverty related matter.
- physical and mental health and wellbeing: including:
 - addressing long term illness
 - isolation/loneliness
 - general health (prevention)
 - Young people
 - older people,
 - people with protected characteristics
 - children and families with disabilities
- housing and homelessness issues;
 - project that address local homelessness issues

Partners are also focussed on supporting the Economy and Business. This is being addressed through the Economic Recovery plan and partnerships are in place to support much of this work. However, innovative ideas that provide clear additionality will be considered.

Which of the above priorities will your service project deliver? (<i>maximum of 50 words</i>)
What areas of West Lothian does your service/project cover? (i.e all of West Lothian or specific communities. If the latter please specify (and include any areas in the bottom 20% SIMD data zones (<i>maximum of 50 words</i>))
Fit with relevant local plans (<i>maximum of 50 words</i>)

PROJECT SUMMARY. This should identify the need for the project; who / what will be supported, where and how; the change(s) this will make; and how this contributes to tackling social-economic inequality in West Lothian. If your project delivers several pieces of work please detail separately below (you should also to break the costs in the relevant section). It is possible that parts of the application will be supported and others not; breaking the project down will make it clearer and easier to assess and score.

Maximum of 500 words, using bullet points and heading to make as easy for the panel to understand as possible. Anything over this limit will not be considered.

What are the planned OUTCOMES from this project?

(OUTCOMES are the changes / differences made to individuals or groups resulting from activities or interventions e.g. a participant completing a training course is better able to access employment opportunities is an OUTCOME)

Maximum of 500 words, using bullet points and heading to make as easy for the panel to understand as possible. Anything over this limit will not be considered.

<p>What are the planned ACTIVITIES? (ACTIVITIES are programmes, services or projects designed to make a change to target groups or individuals e.g. a training course is an ACTIVITY)</p> <p><i>Maximum of 500 words, using bullet points and heading to make as easy for the panel to understand as possible. Anything over this limit will not be considered.</i></p>

<p>How will you measure success?</p> <p>Measurables (indicators) that help determine if you are achieving or have achieved your outcomes e.g. number of course participants moving into work)</p> <p>For you should show what systems are in place to record and monitor, activities, outcomes etc to evidence how you are reaching your target group?</p>			
1	Measurable (indicator)	number, %, other	How will you evidence (i.e. systems, attendance records/questionnaire etc.)

COSTS for this service/project (Please include all relevant elements that contribute to the delivery of a service e.g. money, staff, equipment. A trainer, course materials and a venue are all resources)			
Total budget (This should be the total cost of your project/service including all relevant costs, i.e. other external funding, your own funding etc.)		£	
Please list the other sources of funding (i.e. lottery/trust/own finances):			
Total amount you are applying for from WLC		£	
Total percentage of overall cost being requested from WLC		%	
Please break down the cost of the service in more detail. As noted in the guidance given the potential for Covid 19 to require changes to provision this is generally indicative to show how you have come to the figure above and to give the panel an understanding of the components that make up the work.			
Item of expenditure	Total cost of item	Council contribution	How would this be evidenced? (i.e. invoice, payslip, bank statement, accounts)

Total (this should equate to the amount awarded)			

SUSTAINABILITY

Please show what consideration you have given to how the work might be made sustainable beyond the end of the funding. he what steps you will take to become more sustainable.

This could be through identified alternative sources of funding, i.e. lottery funding or by developing a social enterprise model with a view to increasing or developing clear income streams going forward.

Maximum of 200 words, using bullet points and heading to make as easy for the panel to understand as possible. Anything over this limit will not be considered.

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Supporting information (please provide copies of the following along with your application. This is a required part of the application and **MUST** be submitted along with)

Memorandum of Association or Constitution	
The most recent audited or independently examined accounts	
Cash flow forecast 2021/22	

Please do not include any additional documentation not requested above, for example Annual Reports etc.

Declaration	
I confirm that I am authorised to submit this application on behalf of my Organisation's Board of Trustees. I also confirm that all information given is accurate and that, if awarded funding the group will comply with West Lothian Council Conditions of Grant funding.	
Signature	
Organisation	
Position in organisation	
Date	



VOPSP Workplan 2020/21

Issue	Purpose	Responsible Officer	Frequency	Date
Modernisation Fund	Update on the Modernisation Fund 2019/20 and future years	Douglas Grierson	As required	TBD
Voluntary Organisations Fund 2021/22	Update on funding arrangements for 2021/22	Douglas Grierson	As required	TBD
Presentation from National Lottery	To inform members of the funding opportunities available	Douglas Grierson / National Lottery	One off	TBD
Presentation from local CDT (TBD)	To inform members of the work of local CDTs in West Lothian	Douglas Grierson / CDT	As required	TBD
Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian	To update members on outcomes from joint working	Alan McClosky	Quarterly	TBD
An Enterprising Third Sector	To inform members of ongoing progress in developing more enterprising third sector organisations	Diane Cameron	Quarterly	TBD