

GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY 9TH MARCH 2023 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor M. Chacon-Dawson – Chair
Councillor T. Heron – Vice Chair

Councillors:

A. Broughton- Pettit, P. Cook, A. Gair, D. Ingram-Jones, L. Jeremiah, D.W.R. Preece, J. A. Pritchard, J. Rao, J. Reed, J. E. Roberts, J. Taylor and W. Williams.

Together with:

S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), V. Doyle (Policy Officer) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting would be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items - [Click here to view](#). The Committee was advised that voting on decisions would be taken via Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G. Enright.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 21ST NOVEMBER 2022

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2022 be approved as a correct record. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 11 for, 0 against and 2 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel held on 21st November 2022 (minute nos. 1 – 4) be approved as a correct record.

4. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Policy Officer presented the report to inform the Panel of the applications for Financial Assistance and the applications for Welsh Church Acts Fund received between 1st October 2022 and 31st January 2023.

Members were advised of the budget allocations for both the Voluntary Sector budget and the Welsh Church Acts Fund budget for 2022/23. The Panel were provided with details of the applications received and approved by the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer under delegated powers between 1st October 2022 and 31st January 2023.

A Member referred to the Welsh Church Acts Fund annual allocation from Monmouthshire County Council and concerns were raised regarding the level of underspend on the grant scheme. The Policy Officer explained how they were unexpectedly informed of an additional unallocated underspend (around £80k) held by Monmouthshire County Council, which was carried forward to the Welsh Church Acts Fund budget for 2022/23.

In response to a Members query regarding Discretionary Rate Relief, the Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer informed the Panel that a revaluation for rating purposes has been undertaken across the board by the Valuation Office Agency. The Panel was further informed that there is a potential impact on rateable values and rates that are going to be paid.

The Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel noted the applications received that met the criteria for Financial Assistance and the Welsh Church Acts Fund, which have already been approved by the Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer under delegated powers, and which are reported to the Panel for information.

5. FUTURE OPERATION OF THE GRANTS TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUND AND THE WELSH CHURCH ACTS FUND.

The Corporate Policy Manager presented the report to consult with the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel on a number of options for the future operation of the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund and the Welsh Church Acts Fund. The Panel was asked to make recommendations on their preferred options, to be taken forward for consideration by Cabinet in due course. The Panel was also asked to make a recommendation on whether to disband the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel and for all future reports to be taken to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee, which will be considered by Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and/or Full Council in due course.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 which provided a report on a workshop session with the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel, held on 18th January 2023. The Corporate Policy Manager summarised the main points of the report.

In response to a Members query, it was clarified that each recommendation would be considered separately.

Following consideration of recommendation 3.1 (a) it was moved and seconded that the Welsh Church Acts Fund should not provide funding for revenue costs. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 10 for, 3 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that: -

- (a) The Welsh Church Acts Fund should not provide funding for revenue costs.

Following consideration of recommendation 3.1 (b) it was moved and seconded that the maximum level of future grants under the Welsh Church Acts Fund be increased to a maximum of £7,500 until the underspend is fully utilised. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 13 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that: -

- (b)iii The maximum level of future grants under the Welsh Church Acts Fund be a maximum of £7,500 until the underspend is fully utilised.

Following consideration of recommendation 3.1 (c) it was moved and seconded that the General Criteria amounts for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund should be uplifted by 20% from the 2023/24 financial year and then in line with CPI inflation in future years. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 11 for, 3 against and 0 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that: -

- (c) The General Criteria amounts for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund be uplifted by 20% from the 2023/24 financial year and then in line with CPI inflation in future years.

Following consideration of recommendation 3.1 (d) it was moved and seconded that the revised list of the proposed General Criteria for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund does cover all the categories required. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 14 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that: -

- (d) The list of proposed General Criteria for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund does cover all the categories required.

Following consideration of recommendation 3.1 (e) it was moved and seconded that the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel be disbanded and future reports in relation to the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund and Welsh Church Acts Fund be made to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 13 for, 1 against and 0 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that: -

- (e) The Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel be disbanded and future reports in relation to the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund and Welsh Church Acts Fund be made to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee.

Following consideration of recommendation 3.1 (f) it was moved and seconded that subject to an amendment of recommendation (f) (ii), the recommendation be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 14 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that: -

- (f) Applications received which are outside the General Criteria for the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Fund and from 'exceptional' individuals in relation to the Welsh Church Acts Fund be discussed at the end of each Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee meeting with Councillors on that Committee.

As the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee Chair and Vice Chair rotates each year between the Council and the Voluntary Sector Representatives, the Vice Chair would preside over the part of the meeting where these applications are considered in a year where the Chair is a Voluntary Sector Representative.

Two additional recommendations were suggested by members of the Panel after the above recommendations were agreed. It was moved and seconded that an additional recommendation to publish the application form for the Welsh Church Acts Fund and the criteria on the Council's website be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 12 for, 1 against and 0 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that: -

- (g) The application form for the Welsh Church Acts Fund and criteria be published on the Council's website.

It was moved and seconded that an additional recommendation for the minimum amount of grant funding to be offered to voluntary sector organisations be set at a minimum of £200. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 11 for, 2 against and 0 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that: -

- (h) The minimum amount of grant funding offered to voluntary organisations be set at £200.

The meeting closed at 6.58 pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2023, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR