Understanding and Views and Aims of the GCF

	Key Findings	Response/Discussion	Proposed Next Steps (where appropriate)
1.1	Most survey respondents (74%) felt that the information provided about the purpose of GCF had been 'very' or 'fairly' clear. Similarly, 78% felt information about eligibility criteria had been clear. However, unsuccessful applicants were more likely to feel information had been unclear in both respects - 37% said information on the purpose of the fund had been unclear (compared with 10% of successful applicants), and almost identical proportions felt that information about eligibility had been unclear (37%/9%).	Noted	We will ensure details of a future phase, including its purpose and the application and eligibility arrangements are clearly documented and communicated to all stakeholders.
1.2	Participants in the focus groups and interviews appreciated the intention of the GCF to 'open up' Council funding to a wider range of organisations than had been funded through the IGF. However, there was less consensus - in both the survey and the qualitative findings - over how successful it had been in achieving this aim in practice, although on balance more survey respondents felt it had succeeded in opening up funding than felt it had been unsuccessful. In spite of an awareness of the aim of 'opening up' Council funding beyond IGF recipients, there was an ongoing impression that the GCF and IGF remained essentially the same schemes with different names, and that neither fund had developed in a particularly coherent or strategic manner.	Noted	We will ensure that the purpose and objectives of a future phase of the Fund are clear.
1.3	A perceived lack of 'joined up thinking' between the GCF and wider Council strategy and goals was a recurrent theme. This was reflected in a lack of certainty among survey respondents as to whether or not the fund had succeeded in helping the Council deliver on its strategic priorities for 2020-23.	Noted. An assessment of the success of the Fund in this regard will be undertaken at the end of the current funding round.	We will consider the link between the Fund and the Council's strategic objectives as part of the development of a future phase of the Fund.

1.4	Survey respondents were also divided over whether the Fund had met its other objectives, such as addressing inequality and helping the Third Sector to meet unmet needs across Glasgow. More respondents felt that the Fund had been unsuccessful than successful in promoting partnership working between the Council and the Third Sector.	Noted.	The monitoring and evaluation framework currently being developed for the GCF will provide a mechanism for publicising the outcomes of funded projects after the end of the current Fund in April 2023. Through the Social Recovery Taskforce Third Sector Workstream, senior officers from across the Council family will work with workstream members to review and finalise the recommendations in the "Better Relationships, Better Outcomes" report and develop an implementation plan and reporting processes.
1.5	Respondents who had not been allocated funding were more negative than those who had been funded about the impacts of the GCF. Respondents from organisations with lower annual incomes were also less positive than respondents from organisations with higher incomes.	Noted. We acknowledge that applicants who were unsuccessful are more likely to have a negative view of the GCF, and smaller organisations are likely to be impacted by a potential GCF award than larger ones.	–
1.6	Among the small numbers of survey respondents and focus group participants who were from organisations that had not applied for funding, the main reasons for not applying were: thinking they would not be eligible, not having heard of the fund, and the perceived level of administration that would be involved in applying.	Noted	We will ensure details of a future phase, including eligibility criteria and monitoring requirements, are well publicised and explained.

Views and Experiences of the GCF Process

	Key Findings	Response/Discussion	Proposed Next Steps (where appropriate)
Communication			
2.1	The survey indicated that, on balance, more applicants felt that communication and information about the purpose of the fund, eligibility criteria, and guidance on the application process were clear than felt they were unclear.	Noted	We will ensure all key details regarding a future phase are clearly documented and communicated to all stakeholders.
2.2	In contrast, views around the scoring process and feedback on applications were viewed more negatively, with over half in each case saying either that communications and information was either unclear, or that they had not received any communication at all on these.	Noted. All unsuccessful applicants were provided with their scores against the criteria. When launching the Fund, officers considered a range of options for how feedback could be provided to applicants but were unable to specify this at the outset without knowing the level of overbid and applications that would be received and therefore the level of staff resources that would be required to provide it. Any approach to feedback needs to take into account the level of staff available to assess applications (core of 6 FTE) and therefore who would then be able to provide feedback, in whatever format, to applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful.	We will discuss the approach to feedback with GTSIN and explain this in the application documentation.

2.3	Views on all aspects of communication about the GCF were more negative among respondents whose applications had not been funded, and among smaller organisations (in terms of income). Across the qualitative interviews and focus groups, criticism of perceived poor communications around the GCF was a recurrent theme. Early consultations with the Third Sector were appreciated, but in some cases perceived to be tokenistic, and had set expectations around co-production of the Fund that were not fulfilled. At the other end of the process, there was considerable dissatisfaction around a perceived lack of direct communication and feedback to the Third Sector around funding decisions.	Noted.	We will ensure all key details regarding a future phase of the Fund are clearly documented and communicated to all stakeholders.
2.4	There was a perceived 'disconnect' between Council Officials and elected members, which was seen as contributing to disjointed or inconsistent messaging around the GCF at key points.	Noted.	For any future phase the approach for the application and assessment process, including roles of councillors and officials and scoring methodology, will be communicated.
Applying to the GCF			
2.5	On balance, most survey respondents felt the timescales for submitting an initial application to the GCF had been about right (although unsuccessful applicants were more likely both to say it had been too short, and to say it had been too long). However, views on the time allowed for clarifications were much more mixed, with no consensus over whether this had been too long, too short, or about right.	Noted.	We have developed a draft high level timetable at **Appendix 3** to this report.

2.6	Focus group participants and interviewees expressed particular frustration with the decision to re-open applications in January 2020 to allow incomplete applications to be corrected. This was viewed as reflecting inappropriate political interference in the process and created unacceptable delays for those who had submitted the correct information in October 2019. At the same time, however, there was some sympathy with organisations who had made mistakes, given the problems experienced with the application form (discussed below). The initial decision to limit the Fund to organisations with Charitable Incorporated Organisation status also received some criticism.	Noted. The decision was taken to inform applicants in December 2019 that their applications had not met the completion requirements and would not therefore proceed to full assessment. Since 25% of applicants had not met the eligibility or completion requirements, it was considered reasonable to allow extra time to enable completion.	An online application process should be developed to ensure that relevant documentation is included to provide a complete application. It should be noted that any additional steps – e.g. going back to applicants who had met completion requirements but provided inadequate information – would elongate the assessment window.
2.7	There was a perception that the amount of information requested in the application form was excessive compared with participants' experience of other funders, while the questions on the form were not seen as well aligned with the scoring criteria. In addition, participants identified various technical aspects of the application form that they felt had not worked well and needed to be improved before any future funding round.	Noted in particular that technical improvements need to be in place for the next phase. When launching the Fund, officers considered a range of options for the level of information to be provided and at what stage e.g. should certain documentation only be sought from applicants awarded grants. Given this was a brand new Fund, all applicants (even those in receipt of IGF for many years) were asked to provide the same (up to date) information with their GCF application.	We will review the application and assessment process to ensure that only necessary evidence is requested.
Decision Making and Feedback			

2.8	Most (83%) of survey respondents felt that the time between submitting an application and receiving a decision had been too long. There was no difference in the views of those whose applications had been funded and those who had not in this regard. Participants in the focus groups described how the delay in decision-making had created substantial uncertainty and difficulties for some organisations.	Noted. The extension to allow incomplete applications more time resulted in more applications being eligible for full assessment. Covid then brought challenges in working from home and lack of sufficient IT systems (e.g. MS Teams) in the early stages affected all aspects of the assessment process and also Funding Panels.	We will ensure that in any future timetable decisions are made at least 3 months before the start of the next phase of the Fund thereby enabling planned exit and start-up. Any timetable needs to take into account the numbers of applications, staff resources and IT systems.
2.9	Focus group participants raised a number of interlinked concerns about the scoring and decision-making process including: who was involved in scoring applications; a perceived lack of clarity about scoring criteria early on in the application process; a belief that the actual funding decisions did not always fairly reflect the scores given; concerns about the re-allocation of applications to different geographic sectors; and a perceived lack of information about how scores were actually arrived at.	Noted.	Scoring methodology and process for any future phase of the Fund will be developed and communicated.
2.10	There were mixed feelings about the decision to offer part-funding to as wide a range of organisations recommended for funding as possible. While some were happy to have been funded and were able to maintain or expand their services for others the impact of not receiving full funding (particularly when they had been asked to base their calculations on Full Cost Recovery) was impacting on their ability to deliver the services they had applied to the GCF to fund.	Noted.	In developing any future of phase of the Fund, the impact of providing partial awards will be considered.

	While some participants reported being able to make-up the shortfall, others were facing uncertain or negative outcomes. Participants (both successful and unsuccessful applicants) described having to reduce or, in some cases, close services, and reduce or lose posts as a result of GCF funding decisions. Organisations reported challenges convincing other funders to support them, as they had been told by other funders that the services they provided should be funded by the Council.		
2.11	Participants across focus groups and interviews raised concerns about the fact that there had not been an Equalities Impact Assessment on the funding decisions that were made under the GCF.	Noted. Whilst officers could EQIA each individual **application** this would not provide an assessment of the impact of **decisions** which are made by the relevant Committee. Any EQIA of decisions and their potential impact for people with protected characteristics would need to be made at the time when decisions were already made. This would cause unnecessary concern for organisations as to whether their applications would be approved and would delay decision making.	We will engage with GTSIN and partners to develop best practice in equalities aspects of application documentation and assessment criteria.
2.12	Survey respondents' perceptions of communication of feedback were particularly negative, with just under half saying feedback was unclear and a further one in five (both successful and unsuccessful) saying they had not received any feedback information at all. The importance of receiving feedback for being able to understand	Noted. Whilst all unsuccessful applicants were provided with the scores for their application against the published criteria, we recognise the desire for more insightful feedback.	We will discuss the approach to feedback with GTSIN and explain this in the application documentation.

	scores and improve applications in the future was emphasised in the groups.	As above, any approach to feedback needs to take into account the level of staff available to assess applications and therefore who would then be able to provide feedback, in whatever format, to applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful.	
Monitoring and Evaluation			
2.13	Successful applicants to the GCF were divided in their views on guidance on monitoring and evaluation of the Fund - around half felt information on this had been clear, while half either felt it had been unclear, were unsure how clear it had been, or indicated they had yet to receive any information on this.	Noted.	Guidance on monitoring and evaluation with a focus on outcomes and impact for any future phase will be developed and communicated.
2.14	Participants commented on their impression that information collected in the past, as part of the monitoring and evaluation of the IGF, had not been used effectively by the Council to assess impact and plan for the future.	Noted.	As above
2.15	Focus group participants suggested that future monitoring and evaluation should be: proportionate to grant and organisation size and digital capability, appropriate in terms of confidentiality and level of detail requested, capture qualitative information as well as quantitative data, and link to strategic outcomes of the fund.	Noted.	As above

Future Options for Council Funding of the Third Sector in Glasgow

	Key Findings	Response/Discussion	Proposed Next Steps (where appropriate)
3.1	The most commonly suggested improvement to the Council's approach to funding the Third Sector in Glasgow related to improving communication; streamlining and/or adhering more closely to timescales; ensuring funding is fairly and equitably distributed; and enhanced transparency and feedback on decisions.	Noted.	Responses to these suggested improvements are outlined above
3.2	Suggestions for how the Council could take a more strategic approach to setting priorities for Third Sector funding included ensuring the aims are based on analysis of existing evidence of local need, building in more effective consultation with communities, and ensuring that priorities are set on a cross-departmental basis and with the involvement of all relevant partners.	Noted.	We anticipate that the strategic direction of any future phase of the Fund will be determined by the City Administration Committee by June 2022 as set out in the draft high level timetable at **Appendix 3** to this report.
3.3	However, while there was a consistent desire for the Council to set clear and robust priorities for funding, there was no clear consensus on how wide or narrow these priorities should be.	Noted.	–
3.4	Suggestions for improving the operation and implementation of the Fund included: o Improving communications across the entire process, from initial consultation to feedback and ongoing support, learning from how other funders approach this. o Clarifying the respective roles of Councillors and Officials in the process.	 Noted. Noted.	 See proposed next steps above (Section 2) See proposed next steps above at 2.4

o Ensuring that the timetable set out at the beginning is adhered to.	Noted.	See proposed next steps above at 2.5
o Improving the application form to address known technical issues and to reduce the scope for organisations to inadvertently submit an incomplete application.	Noted.	See proposed next steps above at 2,6 and 2.7
o Ensuring the application form reflects assessment criteria more clearly.	Noted.	See proposed next steps above at 2,6 and 2.7
o Developing a simplified form / application process for organisations applying for smaller amounts of money.	Noted. The current Area Partnership Grants fund smaller projects.	See proposed next steps at 2.7. This will also be taken into account as part of the review of Area and Sector Partnerships in particular the principle that the updated "model will enable resources to be directed by local people on their priorities and as outlined in the Community Empowerment Act".
o Transferring responsibility for assessing applications and making decisions to an external independent body, separate from the Council, and/or involving local panels in assessing applications.	Noted. The costs for transferring responsibility for assessing applications and making decisions to an external independent body, separate from the Council, could potentially be significant, subject to a procurement process and such costs may require to be funded from the grants budget.	We anticipate that the strategic direction of any future phase of the Fund, including outsourcing, will be determined by the City Administration Committee by June 2022 as set out in the draft high level timetable at **Appendix 3** to this report.

	o Conducting an Equalities Impact Assessment of GCF funding decisions.	Noted.	See proposed next steps above at 2.11
3.5	Suggestions that would involve a more substantial change to the design or model of Council funding for the Third Sector in Glasgow included:		
	o Tighter minimum standards (there was majority support for tighter standards for applicants on equalities and inclusion and also governance aspects).	Noted.	See proposed next steps above at 2,6 and 2.7
	o Moving away from a single 'discretionary' fund to funding different services in different ways - either through 'core funding' of some services, splitting the GCF into different funds with different outcomes, and/or ring-fencing of funding for particular types of services or of services for specific groups.	Noted.	See proposed next steps above at 1.4
3.6	A majority of survey respondents favoured some sort of ring-fencing, and there was strong support for this within focus groups and interviews. However, there were also some reservations about what this would mean for organisations that serve cross-cutting needs. It was also clear from the survey and discussions that agreeing how funds should be ring-fenced and for which areas, user groups, or services would be challenging.	Noted.	–
3.7	There was no consensus on whether the minimum and maximum grants sizes should be changed, although there was more support for removing or reducing the minimum than for increasing the maximum.	Noted.	–
3.8	There was a strong view that the Council needed to look again at the amount of money it invests in the Third Sector, and that the money currently allocated to the GCF should not be the only source of funding for the services they provide.	Noted.	See proposed next steps above at 1.4