

<b>Committee:</b> Finance Committee	<b>Date:</b> 12 April 2016
<b>Subject:</b> Decisions taken under Delegated Authority since the last meeting of the Committee	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk	<b>For Information</b>

### Summary

This report advises Members of action taken by the Town Clerk since the last meeting of the Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order Nos. 41(a) and 41(b). This action was:

- to agree to make a grant of £50,000 to UKCF to contribute to its New Beginnings Fund, a pooled fund to provide support to frontline organisations and community groups working with refugees and people seeking asylum in seven key areas in the UK. The ultimate beneficiaries of the donation to be children who are refugees/seeking asylum and the donation to be spent in London and Northern Ireland (focused in Londonderry), split equally.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

### Main report

#### Background

1. The Syrian conflict has given rise to a significant increase in refugees and people seeking asylum arriving in Europe over the last 12 months (in 2015 an estimate of 1m people arriving by sea and land). This has been described by many commentators as 'a refugee crisis'. In the UK the number of new arrivals increased by 10% to the year-end June 2015 with a 46% increase in the number of unaccompanied children seeking asylum during this period.
2. In response to the refugee crisis, a number of philanthropic foundations have come together to form 'the New Beginnings Fund', a pooled fund to provide support to frontline organisations and community groups working with refugees and people seeking asylum in 7 key areas in the UK. Grants are to be modest and short-term but it is hoped that they will enable groups with expertise and local knowledge to respond to the opportunities presented by the current context. This fund is welcoming proposals that offer guidance, counselling, community integration and welcoming activities to refugees and people seeking asylum where they can demonstrate an increased demand for their services.

3. The New Beginnings Fund is hosted and administered by the UK Community Foundations (UKCF). This is the umbrella organisation for the 48 Community Foundations across the UK. It is a registered charity, well-known to the City Bridge Trust and is a current grantee.
4. The other foundations involved in the New Beginnings Fund include Comic Relief, BBC Children in Need, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and the Rayne Foundation. These foundations and City Bridge Trust have all undertaken due diligence on UKCF.

### **Financial Implications**

5. The Finance Committee's contingency funds include a £100,000 allocation each year for disaster relief donations. In 2015/16, only £20,000 was spent from this allocation. The Finance Committee report elsewhere on the agenda proposes to carry forward this £80,000 underspend. If approved, that would mean that £180,000 remained in the Committee's 2016/17 Disaster Relief Fund prior to this donation.

### **Action Taken**

6. That the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, agreed to make a grant of £50,000 to UKCF to contribute to its New Beginnings Fund, to be spent in London and Northern Ireland, split equally. The ultimate beneficiaries to be children who are refugees/seeking asylum, and within the Northern Ireland allocation of the grant, priority should be given to those children based in Londonderry.

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