

Name of meeting: Cabinet

Date: Tuesday 15 December 2020

Title of report: VCS Support Funding over the Christmas Period

Purpose of report:

To consider a proposal to provide Ward Councillors with additional resources to support voluntary and community groups in their Ward who may be impacted by a loss of funding over the Christmas period.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u>?	Not Applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Rachel Spencer Henshall, Strategic Director for Corporate Strategy, Commissioning and Public Health – 7 December 2020
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Eamon Croston, Service Director, Finance – 8 December 2020
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft, Service Director, Legal, Governance and Commissioning – 8 December 2020
Cabinet member portfolio	Councillor Cathy Scott Councillor Paul Davies

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: As part of a wider piece of work all Ward councillors have been given the opportunity to provide details of the challenges faced by community groups and organisations in their Ward. The outcomes of this work will inform a more strategic response to those challenges as part of wider recovery work

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Not applicable for this report.

1. Summary

We know from national, regional and local research that the pandemic has impacted adversely on the voluntary and community sector (VCS). Whilst they have been fundamental to the partnership work that has taken place to meet the challenges presented by covid-19, many groups and organisations face their own financial challenges.

A strategic piece of work is nearing completion which will set out the full extent of those challenges along with a series of recommendations intended to provide a systematic response designed to support and enable groups to survive and thereafter flourish over the next 6 months and beyond.

This report focusses on the ways in which immediate support can be provided to those groups whose ability to operate will be particularly impacted by covid 19 restrictions over the Christmas period resulting in losses in income.

2. Information required to take a decision

In light of the recovery conversations that have taken place with Ward councillors we know that local groups and organisations play a very active and important part in local communities. This is particularly true in the run up to and including the Christmas period.

This year, unlike any other, those groups have found it increasingly difficult to rely on some of the consequential opportunities to generate income. For example, Christmas lights switch ons, luncheon dates, Christmas fairs and carol concerts (amongst many others) have all but disappeared and as a consequence will impinge on the financial security of some groups and organisations.

With this issue in mind it is proposed that a budget of £50k is identified to assist in meeting such challenges. Such money will be added to the current Members Local Project Fund alongside the additional resources added to this budget to address specific issues within Wards as a result of covid-19.

Past experience has illustrated the importance of placing councillors at the heart of such decisions as it is they who know the communities they represent. Subject to Cabinet approval it is proposed that design of the process and criteria be delegated to the Head of Democracy and Place Based Working in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio holders.

In so doing Cabinet should be reassured that any such process will build on what is already there, be proportionate and be used in such a way as to ensure that groups receive the support they need as swiftly and efficiently as possible. Work will be carried out at pace in order to ensure that groups and organisations can access the funding as a matter of priority.

3. Implications for the Council

- **Working with People**

We know that local communities and organisations are at the heart of our local places and as such valued by local people who live there. In seeking to provide immediate support for those groups we are acknowledging both their importance and the contribution they make to improving the lives of local people.

- **Working with Partners**
Our ongoing work with Third Sector Leaders both as part of the community response and in the context of understanding and addressing the challenges faced by the VCS is evidence of our commitment to partnership working strategically. This report, and the wider piece of work referred to above, are intended to reflect our determination to work alongside each other in addressing both immediate and longer term challenges.
- **Place Based Working**
The main focus of this report is to intentionally seek to understand VCS challenges in a place based way. It is for this reason that insight from Ward based recovery conversations are being used as a basis and that Ward councillors will make decisions as to where the resources are best deployed within their Wards.
- **Climate Change and Air Quality**
Not directly applicable for this report.
- **Improving outcomes for children**
Not directly applicable for this report.
- **Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**
If agreed, the £50k will come from the COVID risk reserve which was set up in part for the purpose of supporting enhanced local measures above and beyond the additional funding national government has given the council to support the national effort.

If agreed councillors will be supported by staff in the Active Citizens and Places Team to ensure that groups are able to access the support being made available in a timely and responsive way.

Do you need an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)?

An IIA is not needed for this report.

4. Consultees and their opinions

Insight gained from Ward Councillor recovery conversations has informed the proposal set out in this report.

The following have been consulted on the information set out in this report and support the proposals contained therein:

- Hilary Thompson, Chair of Third Sector Leaders;
- Noreen Abbas, Community Investment Manager;
- Vina Randhawa, Active Citizens and Places Manager.

5. Next steps and timelines

Subject to Cabinet approval officers will:

- Draft, finalise and communicate the criteria and process to facilitate the above;
- Work with Ward councillors and local groups and organisations to facilitate swift and timely access to the funding,

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

In order to support local community groups and organisations impacted over the Christmas period Cabinet is asked to:

- Approve a budget of £50k for the purpose set out in the report;
- Delegate to the Head of Democracy and Place Based Working responsibility for the design of the criteria and supporting process.

7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

That Cabinet:

- Approve a budget of £50k for the purpose set out in the report;
- Delegate to the Head of Democracy and Place Based Working responsibility for the design of the criteria and supporting process.

8. Contact officer

Carl Whistlecraft, Head of Democracy and Place Based Working

Carl.whistlecraft@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Outcomes of Ward based recovery conversations between September and November 2020.

10. Strategic Director responsible

Rachel Spencer Henshall,

Strategic Director for Corporate Strategy, Commissioning and Public Health