

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	15 July 2020
Subject:	Annual Report on the Grant Funding provided to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Leanne Purnell, Community Wellbeing Officer		
	Email: leanne.purnell@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel:	396069
Appendices:	1. List of Groups Funded		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To outline the Council's financial contributions towards the voluntary and community sector during the year 2019-20.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the report be noted, and the same approach be endorsed for the 2020/21 year.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council adopted the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) model in 2012 and this has underpinned our approach to working with communities and partner agencies. ABCD is a philosophy and approach that seeks to identify and mobilise individual and community 'assets', rather than focusing on problems and needs.
- 3.2 The premise of ABCD is that communities can drive the development process themselves by celebrating existing strengths, responding to challenges and creating local social and economic improvements. To enable this, they often need a small amount of seed funding.
- 3.3 The Council's role is to support communities to recognise strengths and catalyse activity for themselves, as opposed to being more passive recipients of public services and our approach to funding supports this.
- 3.4 Funding is available through the funding arrangements identified in 4.1 below.

- 3.5 It is important to note that many of the activities funded in 19/20 (see appendix 1) have led to a dynamic and organic growth of projects, events, activities or support – without any additional intervention from the Council.
- 3.6 Community groups are supported by officers to achieve sustainability by making connections with other groups and organisations and sharing venues and equipment or assets. These connections are sometimes made by officers but often happen organically.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

4.1 Our vision for Asset Based Community Development is a guiding principle for investing our voluntary and community sector budget. At present we invest in the following activities:

- **Grant Funding to advice agencies** (The Law Centre; CAB; Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS)) – who provide advice and very specific support to vulnerable people and communities.
- **Councillor Community Fund** – a fund to enable councillors to support community led projects within their own wards.
- **Gloucester Lottery** – a weekly online Lottery where local good causes can register to raise additional funds. There is a central pot of funding which the Council redistributes as small seed funding for residents who wish to deliver new activities or projects in the City.
- **COVID-19 Funding**- this was set up in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Full details of this funding and the community support will be detailed in a separate report.

4.2 We have distributed £84,858.90 towards the voluntary and community sector in 2019/20 with £46,015 of that total towards the community response to COVID-19 which will continue into 2020/21.

4.3 The Gloucester Lottery funding has provided several groups with much needed seed funding to support the innovation and strength of new groups and projects. Young Thinkers Gloucester is an exciting new project for the Al Ashraf Primary School with the aim of delivering multiple exciting educational projects to the local community the funding provided much needed educational resources and equipment. The Redwell Centre Serenity Garden project transformed a derelict piece of land away from the main children's and family garden to ensure calmness and sometimes much needed isolation. It will be a peaceful and calm area for people with anxiety and depression and somewhere to also get involved with growing vegetables and flowers, sitting reading or listening to music for relaxation.

4.4 The Councillor Community funding is allocated to support projects or activities that benefit the communities within each ward. The funding has contributed towards a broad range of projects from improvements to community centres to outdoor equipment storage, community benches and gardens to play equipment and event support.

4.5 The Community Resilience funding was launched to support local voluntary sector agencies and community groups in supporting vulnerable people during the COVID-19 crisis to cover additional costs they may incur due to increased activity or functions that they have insufficient resources to meet. It was quickly identified by local groups that keeping children occupied during lock down was going to be a challenge, the resilience fund supported several of those local groups to make up and distribute activity packs containing arts & craft equipment and activity ideas.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 No longer providing grant funding in any form is an option, however this does not help to realise the ambitions we have for our City and build on the excellent progress which has been made in previous years through small investments in our communities.

5.2 Other Districts in Gloucestershire deliver support to the VCS in a variety of different ways which are similar to Gloucester but reflect the local context and approach. The amount of grant funding available to community groups is similar across the County, however, we are confident that our approach fits with our ethos around ABCD which adds benefit to our residents.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 Cabinet are asked to note the contents of this report and endorse the same approach for the coming year.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

7.1 Where possible, Community Wellbeing Officers look out for additional funding from a variety of sources.

7.2 Future grants from the City Council will be made through Councillor's Community Fund and the Lottery.

7.3 Community Wellbeing Officers will continue to signpost groups to other local grant funders such as the Barnwood Trust, Gloucestershire Funders and signpost to Gloucestershire VCS Alliance monthly funding bulletins.

7.4 A separate report will be brought to Members regarding the Advice Services grants as they are agreed through a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

7.5 In the wake of COVID-19 Gloucestershire County Council released £50k to each local authority, Gloucestershire Resilience Funding's purpose is to support local voluntary sector agencies and community groups who are supporting vulnerable people during the COVID-19 crisis to cover additional costs they may incur due to increased activity or functions that they have insufficient resources to meet.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 Members Grant allocations have been included in the Council Budget for 2020/21 as have the grants to advice agencies. The funds from the Gloucester Lottery are monitored and distributed on a case by case basis subject to funds being available.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report)

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 None directly relating to this report.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 10.1 There are no risks associated with this update report.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 11.1 This is an update report and not PIA is required.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 12.1 The work done through community projects can help increase social interactions and add to a feeling of security thus reducing the fear of crime.

Sustainability

- 12.2 The nature of the grant funding available encourages community groups to sustain themselves and promotes the sharing of resources, equipment and volunteers. The seed funding grant has been successful in terms of sustainability as none of the groups who applied to it since it became available in 2015 have asked for further funding for their core costs.

Staffing & Trade Union

- 12.3 Not applicable

Background Documents: None