



Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 March 2021
Subject:	Annual Report on the Grant Funding provided to the Voluntary Sector		
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 2020/21

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the report be noted and the same approach be endorsed for the 2021/22 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 a number of the activities funded in 20/21 (see appendix 1) have led to a dynamic and organic growth of projects, events, activities or support – without any additional intervention from the Council and supported the voluntary sector to respond and adapt to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 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 Social Value 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 Resilience Funding** - this was set up in March 2020 to support the community response to the Covid 19 pandemic. £50,000 was granted by Gloucestershire County Council for district distribution and £30,000 was made available through Gloucester City
- **Covid Recovery Funding** - is a onetime opportunity for those who might be at risk of financial sustainability and need one off support to adapt their activities to the impact of Covid-19, a total of £10,000 was made available
- **Covid Compliance Funding** – £25,000 was made available to encourage and support communities with measures to aid understanding of the covid regulations

- 4.2 We have distributed a total of £124,473.80 in support towards the voluntary and community sector in 2020/21. Of that amount £23,750 was distributed in March 20.
- 4.3 The Councillor Community funding is allocated to support projects or activities that benefit the communities within each ward or as we have seen this year in particular with reduced activity by regular community groups City wide efforts have been supported such as the food consortium. The funding has also contributed towards a broad range of projects from improvements to community centres, to community gardens to play equipment and event support.

- 4.4 The Community Resilience funding was launched to support local voluntary sector agencies and community groups in supporting their community 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. Support ranged from activity packs to food support to projects to prevent isolation and so much more.
- 4.5 Following an intelligence gathering exercise about the impact of the pandemic with the voluntary and community sector in Gloucester, a one-off fund of £10k was created to support Gloucester's VCS in moving beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a onetime opportunity for those who might be at risk of financial sustainability and need one off support to adapt their business to the impact of Covid-19. It was aimed primarily at small community groups, grassroots organisations and community centres to cover lost revenue from premises hire or cancelled fundraising activities, IT/Technology making premises Covid compliant – signage etc and to support with adaptations to the way they work.
- 4.6 In a bid to address the Covid-19 case increases in Gloucester City, Gloucester City Council were awarded £67k to oversee a covid compliance plan. We made £25k available to encourage and support communities with measures to aid understanding of the regulations and invited applications from community groups for their own creative ideas to encourage covid compliance in their community.
- 4.7 The Gloucester Lottery funding was used by The Nelson Trust to create an online craft group for their vulnerable women. Due to the pandemic the funding stream wasn't in high demand due to reduced community activity and creation of new projects and will carry over into next year which we will be promoting to encourage community activity and neighbourhood cohesion.

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 Gloucester 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).

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 Members Grant allocations have been included in the Council Budget for 2021/22 as have the grants to advice agencies.
- 8.2 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 of 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.

Staffing & Trade Union

- 12.3 Not applicable

Background Documents: None