

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	8 November 2023
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
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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 2022/23.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the report be noted and the same approach be endorsed for the 2023/24 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 22/23 (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 of up to £500 for residents who wish to deliver new activities or projects in the City.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund** - The Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund (CILNF) is available to support projects being delivered within the City. The scope of projects that can be funded by the CILNF is wider than that for general Community Infrastructure Levy fund.

4.2 Gloucester City Council have distributed a total of £101,250 in funding to the voluntary and community sector in Gloucester City. This amount of funding supported a total of 71 organisations.

4.3 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 support for a food pantry, foodbank and warm space to a commemorative bench, volunteer equipment for a new Friends of group and tree planting at a local school.

4.4 The Gloucester Lottery funding central pot is allocated to support a new project or kick start or enhance community-based activities to the benefit of groups, young people, or adults within Gloucester City. We saw several new projects aimed at bringing people together, one of these was an art workshop co-created with young people from the Czech community.

4.5 The Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Funding was open to applications from VCS organisations across the city. We welcomed ideas for new and/or existing projects of up to £3,000 which supported at least one of the following:

- Improve community facilities and the environment.
- Have a wellbeing focus that actively tackle issues such as exclusion and isolation.
- Contribute to diverse and inclusive communities.
- Have an environmental focus that actively addresses climate change.
- Improve access to volunteering, training or employment opportunities.
- Celebrate cultural diversity.

And ideas for larger grants of up to £15,000 which support at least one of the following themes:

- address and combat climate change
- enhance the natural environment.
- support equality, diversity, and inclusion

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 our approach in Gloucester and 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 and support partnerships from organisations for collaborative bids.

7.2 Future grants from the City Council will be made through Councillor's Community Fund, Gloucester Lottery and Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund.

7.3 Community Wellbeing Officers will continue to signpost groups to other local grant funders such as the 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 2023-24 as have the grants to advice agencies.
- 8.2 The funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund and 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 One Legal has given advice on compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 as it needs to be considered whenever financial assistance is given by local authorities. As it is advisable that grants are given subject to conditions as to how the grant is to be spent, and provision for repayment in the event of any misuse, template grant terms have been prepared for small and larger grant amounts.

(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 local connections which can 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