

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	THE CITY COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT		
DATE OF DECISION:	19 OCTOBER 2016		
REPORT OF:	THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
None

BRIEF SUMMARY

Southampton has a thriving voluntary sector with a long and successful track record. The Council has played a significant role over the years in providing direct support to communities to enable them to develop local services and build pride in our city. The Council now faces unprecedented funding challenges. Supporting local communities to look after their neighbourhoods and become more resilient is a critical part of the Council's ambition to reduce demand and become sustainable.

This report proposes an approach to community development which is focused on our commitment to prevention and early intervention and which supports our ambition to attract more resources into the city to build on the community assets we already have. The report also recommends doubling of the budget for the Community Chest small grants scheme for one off grants to small community groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Having complied with paragraph 15 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules.

- (i) To approve the model for facilitating community development as detailed in this report and delegate authority to the Chief Strategy Officer, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Leisure.
- (ii) To approve the doubling of the budget for the Community Chest grants scheme to £100,000 and delegated authority for grant allocations to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Leisure who will chair a new cross party Member Panel to make recommendations.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This report is submitted for consideration as a General Exception under paragraph 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the City Council's Constitution, notice having been given to the Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Panel and the Public

2. Current grant recipients have had their funding extended to 31/03/17 to enable consultation and consideration on how the grants awards could be managed in the future to ensure alignment with city council priorities. There is an urgency in proceeding with the proposals so that grant recipients can have timely information on future funding and undertake their own business planning
3. The proposals maximise the benefits from the significant investment the Council makes in the voluntary sector and to ensure that this is directed towards the key Council priorities and that it can be used in a more strategic manner to lever in external funding to the city.
4. The proposals provide more opportunities for small groups to access one off funding as this type of support has delivered significant benefits to many citizens and supports the efforts of volunteering in the city.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. Continuing with the current arrangement has been considered and rejected because:
 - We have not maximised the contribution within the city to build more resilient communities and deliver on the Council's outcomes as set out in the approved Council Strategy 2016-2020
 - While there are a number of services in the city providing a valuable service with a good return on investment, this is variable across organisations
 - Activities are not always co-ordinated leading to both overlaps and gaps which means that impact is not targeted or maximised.
 - There is no capacity for 'scaling up' within current arrangements to secure more external funding for the city.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

6. The Council has reviewed all of its investment in the voluntary sector and the findings are contained within a separate report elsewhere on this agenda. The review has provided an opportunity to consider the support we give to community development activities and the outcomes we want to get from this investment. It also provides an opportunity for the Council to define its priorities as well as its role in community development and engagement. This is an essential part of our commitment to prevention, building more resilient communities and coordinating activities more effectively to secure more funding for the City.
7. The proposals in this report are in the context of increasing funding challenges and a need to support local people in their efforts to do more for their neighbourhoods and communities and take more responsibility for finding their own solutions – 'doing more for themselves'.
8. The proposed community development model focuses on supporting existing groups, as well as developing new groups, building on their city pride and not only getting people to do more for themselves but also more 'for each other'. As such, the model is based on clearly defining what we mean by community x community development and community engagement, and being explicit about the outcomes the Council is expecting to achieve from both of these

activities.

9. Community development, in this model, is defined as 'the process whereby a group or community is supported to enable a specific objective to be met'. Examples could include supporting the establishment of a new community group, supporting an existing group with a new project or reviewing current practices to improve outcomes. Development work can be done in a variety of ways but ultimately aims to build the capacity of the project or group so that it is self-sustaining.
10. Community engagement, in contrast, focuses on dialogue with community groups and other key stakeholders to better understand their views, perspectives and the issues that affect them. Depending on the situation, 'engagement' can cover consultation, communication, education, public participation, participatory budgeting/decision making or information sharing. Unlike community development or support, which tend to be more time limited and specific, community engagement focuses on building ongoing relationships.
11. The aim is for a new community development service to act as a catalyst for change resulting in an increase in locally based activity which supports people to live well and independently, promotes self-help and promotes a culture where people also help others in their community. This would include developing an infrastructure to support individuals and groups to pro-actively participate within their own communities. The local model for Southampton would build on the assets we already have including:
 - skills, knowledge, commitment of community members
 - friendships, community cohesion and neighbourliness
 - local groups & organisations, informal networks
 - physical, environmental and economic resources
 - assets of external agencies
 - geographical communities and communities of interest.
12. The outcomes we would expect to see include:
 - More community led activities, groups and services in the city
 - More volunteers /volunteering activity
 - Significantly greater levels of external funding into the city
 - Reducing loneliness and social isolation through support to individuals in communities
 - An infrastructure of support to local groups and networks to enable them to thrive
 - Co-ordination of information and resources to support community development and community participation.
 - Engaging local businesses to be involved in these developments, encouraging corporate responsibility approaches to support communities in which they operate.
13. The detailed service specification would be developed through co-production with voluntary and community groups. We can also learn from good practice elsewhere as a number of other councils have prioritised community development approaches as a way of addressing funding challenges and increasing demand.

14. The local model being proposed has community development and community engagement operating as two complementary aspects, managed separately but with clear links established:
- Community development could be provided either directly by the Council or externally and the intention is to seek a wide range of views before a final decision is made.
 - In relation to community engagement, it has been decided that this would be provided in-house, alongside consultation and market research. As well as providing consultation, engagement and ongoing dialogue with groups and communities, it would include responsibility for work on Prevent and community cohesion issues.

Community Chest and small grants scheme

15. Community Chest is the Council's small grants scheme. It has been supporting community groups and small voluntary organisations in the city for more than 30 years. The current budget is £50,000 per year, which is split roughly equally between two rounds, closing in May and November each year. Grants of up to £2,500 are awarded against priorities in the Council Strategy.
16. Approximately 60% of grants are awarded to groups with beneficiaries in two or more wards and the other 40% of grants are awarded to groups whose beneficiaries live in individual wards (this ratio changes from round to round, depending on the applications received). Grants are awarded for a broad range of projects, including: residents and community projects, sports, health and wellbeing, arts and crafts, children and young people, play, early years, older people, environment and employment and training.
17. These small grants enable communities to help themselves and are a complementary component of the community development proposals. For example, a lunch club set up and run entirely by volunteers to provide older people in their area with a low cost hot meal was awarded a grant for a new fridge freezer and cooker. The new fridge freezer has meant the group can bulk buy and store food in the freezer to stretch their money further and the new cooker has expanded the range and number of meals the group is able to provide.
18. Currently the grant recommendations are made by a panel of Council officers and community representatives, including Southampton Voluntary Services. The Council officers provide a city-wide overview and specialist knowledge of the different subject areas and the community representatives bring an outside perspective. The recommendations are submitted to an officer with delegated authority who makes the final decision, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Leisure.
19. In view of the positive returns gained from the modest levels of investment, it is proposed that the Community Chest budget is doubled to £100,000 per year from April 2017. It is also proposed that award decisions are delegated to a cross party Member Panel chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Leisure. These proposed changes are to be subject to a 12-week public consultation period before any final decisions are made.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

20. The amount the City Council invests in voluntary sector organisations through grants is approximately £2.2M per annum This includes £1.54M within the corporate grants programme of which £50,000 is the Community Chest small grants programme.
21. The proposal in this report requires an increase of £50,000 for the Community Chest scheme from the existing corporate voluntary sector grants budget.

Property/Other

22. There are no property implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

23. Section 2 Localism Act 2011 and various Local Government Acts.

Other Legal Implications:

24. The Council must be mindful of the Southampton Compact and the Best Value Statutory Guidance in all its work with the voluntary sector. The Southampton Compact provides a code of good practice to build on existing good practice and continue to improve relationships between statutory, community and voluntary organisations. It covers five key areas with undertakings for both the public sector and voluntary sector in each area:
 - A strong, diverse and independent civil society;
 - Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public service
 - Responsive and high-quality programmes and services
 - Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services
 - An equal and fair society
25. The Best Value Statutory Guidance was issued by central government in 2011, revised in 2015. The Guidance provides a code of good practice for local authorities considering funding reductions that may affect the voluntary sector. It complements the Southampton Compact minimum consultation and notice periods
26. The Council needs to recognise its equalities duties and in making decisions will pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality and to undertake Equality and Safety Impact Assessments (ESIAs).

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

27. The recommendations in this paper support the delivery of outcomes in the current and refreshed Council Strategy, due to be considered at Full Council on 21 September 2016. It also contributes to the current City Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

KEY DECISION?	Yes
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WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
	None
Documents In Members' Rooms	
	None
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out?	No
Privacy Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to be carried out.	No
Other Background Documents Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:	
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	