

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 16 September 2020

#DoingOurBit Community Grants Scheme



Cllr Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture said,

“We have a thriving voluntary and community sector here in Staffordshire who play an important role in helping improve the lives of people in the county.

Not only do these groups provide vital services and support within their local communities but they also help to encourage people to support each other to remain safe and well.

Throughout the pandemic we saw how people and communities came together to help each other and it's vital that we support these organisations so they are able to continue with the valuable work they do. We'll be trying to make the application process as quick and easy as possible, so I would encourage groups to see if they are eligible and apply.”

Report Summary:

Encouraging our communities to support each other to remain well and independent is one of the key priorities of the Council Strategy and an area that we have invested in. Throughout the pandemic we saw how people and communities came together to support each other. A key priority for recovery from the pandemic is to sustain community capacity to help manage demand. However, we know that the voluntary sector is facing challenges to recover operations and is concerned about their long-term financial stability. We are proposing a one-off injection of funding, £200k into a Community Grants Scheme. Applications will be encouraged from support groups and organisations that will help meet the needs of our vulnerable and older adults as well as those that will help meet the needs of our vulnerable children and families.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Note the report and the important role of the voluntary and community sector plays in supporting communities to help themselves; and
- b. Agree to the proposal for a one-off funding for a #DoingOurBit Community Grants Scheme.

Local Members Interest
N/A

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Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

I recommend that:

- a. Note the report and the important role of the voluntary and community sector plays in supporting communities to help themselves; and
- b. Agree to the proposal for a one-off funding for a #DoingOurBit Community Grants Scheme.

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities and the Director of Health and Care

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. The role of the voluntary and community sector has always been important to us and the part they play in supporting communities to help themselves. For this reason, we have invested in our contract with S2 (Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services and Support Staffordshire).
2. During the pandemic additional support and funding was directed at several organisations offering support in local communities as follows:
 - a. £30,000 was provided to Support Staffordshire to ensure they had enough funding to continue to operate.
 - b. A further £24,000 was distributed to local voluntary sector organisations who helped deliver 2,500 food parcels to our most vulnerable residents.
 - c. Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth services (SCVYS) received a grant from the Community Foundation to deliver 700 wellbeing packs to families.
 - d. The Member's Fund was used to provide support to local community groups through the pandemic. A second round of bids closes the end of October 2020.
3. Throughout the pandemic we saw how people and communities came together to support each other.
4. Although it is difficult to predict, our insight tells us that the impact of the pandemic is likely to increase demand into services. We also know that the voluntary sector is facing challenges to recover operations and is concerned about their long-term financial stability. A key priority for recovery is to sustain community capacity to help manage demand.

5. We therefore need to double our efforts and focus support at a community level to enable communities to help themselves. Based on learning from the pandemic and recovery, we are working to redevelop our place-based plans.

#DoingOurBit Community Grants Scheme

6. In support of this work, we are proposing a one-off fund of £200k to develop a #DoingOurBit Community Grants Scheme which will be targeted at voluntary sector organisation and community groups that will;
 - a. Encourage support for vulnerable people to maintain their independence at home and in their community.
 - b. Grow our network of Family Hubs/Community Help Points, across Staffordshire.
 - c. Focus on groups who are most disadvantaged, either through age, vulnerability or low income.
 - d. Focus on mitigating the significant impacts of Covid-19, particularly for older people who have become more isolated or children who have seen huge impacts on their development.
7. The Fund will be accessed via a simple online application process. The launch will be publicised through press releases, social media and via our partner networks and will be open to applicants over a four-week period.
8. There will be two funding categories available:
 - a. Support groups and organisations that will help meet the needs of our vulnerable and older adults.
 - b. Support groups and organisations that will help meet the needs of our vulnerable children and families.
9. Guidance, additional information and telephone support will be available to support applicants.
10. We intend to support as many projects as possible and have identified a maximum of £2,500 each to support projects.
11. We will administer the #DoingOurBit Community Grants Scheme, but work closely with our partners; SCVYS, Support Staffordshire and Community Foundation.
12. A panel, including our partner organisations and council officers, will use a set criterion to help identify the top best projects that meet our priorities. Successful applicants will be able to access funding before Christmas 2020.
13. We know that Support Staffordshire have accessed National Lottery funding (£66,478) and the Community Foundation have some funds. Working together collectively we can maximise the impact of these funding streams to ensure our community groups can benefit and continue to support local communities.

14. We propose to launch the Scheme the beginning of October and allocate funding before Christmas. We will use local case studies to publicise the impact of the funding.

Legal Implications

15. There are no legal considerations to consider.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

16. The £200k has been identified using of the Ring-Fenced Public Health Grant. The criteria for award will include measures of value for money and sustainability of the project.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Community Impact Assessment – Summary Document

Contact Details

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