

Classification: Private

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee

Date: 2 February 2021

Reporting officer: Service Manager (Town Centre & Cultural Services)
Community Involvement Officer

Subject: Review of Gravesham Borough Council's Support to local voluntary and community organisations

Purpose and summary of report:

To update Members on the strategic review conducted in relation to the support being provided to voluntary and community organisations by the council.

Recommendations:

1. This report is for information; to appraise Members of the process undertaken and the organisations identified for support through formal service level agreements for the 2021/22 financial year.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Gravesham Borough Council has provided financial support to a small number of local voluntary or community organisations who provide support and services to the community.
- 1.2 Times of crisis highlight the importance of local services and the way the community need to access them. During recent months the Covid-19 pandemic has raised awareness of the level of support available and being delivered across Gravesham. This led to the Council recognising that the time was right to understand more about the range of services and financial support currently available, to ensure that the right services are receiving public funds.

2 Strategic Review

- 2.1 During September and October a review was undertaken to better understand the organisations providing support across the Borough; to consider what support is required by the community and identify any gaps.
- 2.2 A range of information was used to assist with this work, including:
 - Annual Service Level Agreements
 - The Council's Register of Partnerships
 - Allocation of the Covid-19 Emergency Grant Assistance Fund

- Directory of community services compiled by the Committee Section
 - Feedback from Departments
 - Feedback from organisations about their services and emerging issues as a result of the pandemic.
- 2.3 Following review of the above, it was clear there are many organisations providing really important services and support for the community; many of which had taken steps during the pandemic to adapt their services to address changing and emerging needs.
- 2.4 It was also clear that the Council could not financially support all organisations and so consideration was given as to how best to ensure future funding was directed to those organisations who could support the widest members of the community and deliver fundamental services and support; but also how to more widely promote the range of additional funding opportunities available, such as the Community Involvement grant fund for educational or cohesive events or through external grant funding bodies.
- 2.5 The review also found substantial evidence of growing demand for domestic abuse services, for access to food, increasing demand for volunteers and a need to support and build capacity across the community and voluntary sector, including providing support, training and capacity building to develop and sustain the sector, which included skills development around accessing external funding.
- 2.6 In considering objectives for providing support to local organisations, due regard was given to:
- The organisation being local to our residents
 - Providing services that are open to all members of the community
 - Delivering services that meet current needs and emerging issues identified through the pandemic
 - Working in partnership with the Council to improve the health and wellbeing, in the broadest sense, for the community
 - Helping the Council fulfil its obligations under the Equalities Act.

3 Findings

- 3.1 As a result of this review, a list was compiled of those organisations who it was felt the Council should support through a 12 month funded Service Level Agreement. Appendix II sets out details of those organisations, the support they will provide and the funding to be allocated for the next financial year
- 3.2 Service Level Agreements will not be automatically renewed each year, but rather a similar process to that set out above will be undertaken. This will ensure that the Council can consider any changes in need and demand, but will also ensure a process where all community organisations can be equally considered for support.

4 **Recommendations**

- 4.1** As set out above, this report is to appraise Members of the process undertaken and the organisations identified for support through formal service level agreements for the 2021/22 financial year.

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
Legal	There are no legal implications
Finance and Value for Money	<p>The council has historically put in place annual budgetary provision to recognise the role community organisations have in providing support to the communities in Gravesham and delivering the council’s corporate plan objectives. Budgetary provision of £123,650 was made in the approved General Fund Budget for the current financial year; £144,990 is being proposed for this purpose within the 2021-22 General Fund Budget estimates.</p> <p>The council has made a commitment to direct income from fines arising from businesses breaching Covid-19 Government Guidance to supporting voluntary organisations. Payments received in respect of any fines issued for this reason will therefore be directed for this purpose and used to offset budgetary provisions made.</p> <p>A further £7,000 provision is included within the current year and is proposed within the Housing Revenue Account Budget Estimates.</p>
Risk Assessment	There is a risk that if some of the local voluntary and community organisations are not supported, essential services will reduce. At this time of such significant change during the pandemic and without knowing the full extent of the impact on the local community and economy, it is timely that the Council undertakes this review to ensure resilience in essential areas.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner’s Office website via the above links.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice?</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk.</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer.</p> <p>No. This report focuses on the delivery of services across all equality groups.</p>

	<p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer.</p> <p>Those organisations recommended for support all make a positive contribution to promoting equality.</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
Corporate Plan	The community organisations identified for support help the theme #Place helping build a connected community.
Climate Change	There are no direct impacts
Crime and Disorder	Community organisations support better community relationships and resilience so has the potential to help reduce crime and disorder.
Digital and website implications	No digital implications.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	All organisations supported will have safeguarding policies in place.