

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

30 JUNE 2020

Title:

COVID-19 Response and Recovery
Voluntary Organisations and Community Resilience

Portfolio Holder: Cllr David Beaman, Portfolio Holder Health, Wellbeing and Culture

Head of Service: Andrew Smith, Housing Delivery and Communities

Key decision: No

Access: Public

1. Purpose and summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the members of Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny on:
- a. the 12 SLA organisations and the arrangements for the 2nd tranche of funding for 2020/21 (1 October to 31 March)
 - b. the community response through the pandemic
 - c. The recovery phase, reviewing the impact of COVID-19 on voluntary organisations across the borough and the long-term impact this will have on their resilience and how their services may change.

1.2 Service Level Agreements

SLA Organisations' response to the pandemic

- 1.3 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had formed a working group to review the SLAs process to determine if it is still fit for purpose. Does the process reflect/contribute to the changing landscape? Should a tender/procurement process be considered going forward?
- 1.4 In parallel to this review each SLA organisation had been asked to complete an Organisational Health Check to help Waverley Borough Council as a key funder understand how each organisation is performing and inform future funding decisions. The outcomes of the Health Checks were to be fed into the SLA Review.
- 1.5 Both these pieces of work were put on hold during the response phase. The Organisational Health Checks have now been superseded by the Community Resilience Project and the SLA Review is a key item to be delivered in partnership with the Community Resilience Project, discussed further in this report.

- 1.6 Community Meals Service – Brightwells Gostrey, Farncombe Day Centre, Hasleway and Rowleys Centre for the Community suspended their normal day centre service, including their ancillary services such as hairdressing. They have continued to deliver the Community Meals Services.
- 1.7 Farncombe Day Centre had been working towards taking on the Godalming area Community Meals Service, which is delivered through the Council's restaurant, in May 2020. However, from the first day of lockdown the Centre started to deliver meals to their own clients and then expanded to meet requests from local residents who were self isolating. The Centre will be taking on the Godalming area clients from 1 July.
- 1.8 In the height of the pandemic the Community Meals Services were delivering up to a 1,000 meals a week across the borough.
- 1.9 The Clockhouse suspended all services one week before the start of lockdown due to many of their volunteers being over the age of 70. The Manager took the opportunity to take early retirement and the remaining staff have been furloughed.
- 1.10 All 5 centres are currently determining how and when they will be able to resume their previous services. Some are already about to reconvene their chiropody services and then possibly hairdressing. Clients are missing the centres but it will be a huge challenge to start services within guidelines and to keep staff and vulnerable clients safe.
- 1.11 Age UK Surrey –funding is provided towards the delivery of an Information and Advice Service and Making Connections Service. Although each of these services has seen a reduction in demand Age UK Surrey have reported a 300% increase in telephone calls from residents for support during lockdown. Staff have been redeployed to support this increase in demand.
- 1.12 Hoppa – The Dial A Ride service has been suspended, which is the service element the Council funds. Hoppa is busy transporting patients out of hospital as part of a contract with the Royal Surrey and expanding to deliver medications and transport hospital staff. Some school children continue to be transported to school through existing contracts.
- 1.13 Citizens Advice Waverley – all offices closed at on the first day of lockdown. However, after a short transition all staff and volunteers have continued to deliver advice services from home. Initially CAB noted a reduction in demand for the service which they feel is due to clients receiving payment holidays for mortgage payments, credit cards, rent etc. As lockdown is eased they are anticipating a significant increase in demand due to the long term impact of the pandemic.
- 1.14 Farnham Assist – normal services have been suspended but they are regularly calling existing clients to see if they are well. They are taking new enquiries and also helping with shopping.
- 1.15 Voluntary Action South West Surrey – established the community welfare line in partnership with the Council although enquiries needed to move across to the council due to technical difficulties and volume of calls. However, officers complete referrals to VASWS for people that need support and signposting to voluntary

organisations. VASWS helped co-ordinate volunteering in the community and supported the establishment of the new COVID support groups, as well as continuing to deliver the Social Prescribing service.

- 1.16 Cranleigh Arts Centre and The Maltings – all services have been suspended. The Maltings is heavily involved in supporting the community response through the Farnham COVID group.

SLA Funding 2020/21

- 1.17 On 30 April the Head of Housing Delivery and Communities wrote to the 12 SLA organisations to inform them that the COVID crisis is expected to impact the Council's finances with a deficit of between £3-6million this financial year and subsequently having long lasting effect on future years budgets (see Annexe 1).
- 1.18 As a gesture of goodwill and to support the ongoing fixed costs of organisations, the Council made all grant payments as normal in April to support the organisations' cash flow.
- 1.19 The letter informed the organisations that the arrangements for the second half of this year (1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021) will need to be considered in line with the Council's overall finances and the services the organisations provided to support the response element of the pandemic.
- 1.20 The annual SLA review meetings have been taking place virtually and this has provided a good opportunity to understand the services organisations have or have not provided through the pandemic.

1.21 Community Response

- 1.22 Waverley Borough Council's community response to the pandemic has exceeded all expectations. Local communities were eager to mobilise and volunteer to support residents who had to self isolate due to their age, medical condition or displaying symptoms etc.
- 1.23 This local response was intuitive, immediate and flexible without the constraints of statutory involvement. Localities across the borough set up coordination groups to manage and support volunteers. VASWS provided support with procedures where necessary to ensure groups safeguarded their volunteers and residents. Officers from the Communities Team have been providing support to these groups, attending meetings and feeding back information to Waverley's senior management team. With this support embedded in the local community, that local support is more likely to continue longer term unlike other boroughs where council officers are moving back to their daily responsibilities.
- 1.24 The Council's Housing Customer Service Team has been operating the Waverley Helpline (non NHS Shielded Residents) and signposting callers to the community offer in the area in which they live.
- 1.25 NHS Shielded Residents were called by officers from a wide range of services across the Council and signposted to the support they needed. Many, however, were receiving support from their families and neighbours, with the most pressing

need being for food and medication. Some are still wanting regular phone calls to ensure they are coping. The greatest cohort of people requiring support were those living alone or older people.

1.26 Community Recovery - Community Resilience Project

- 1.27 As part of the Recovery, Change and Transformation Programme initiated as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Community Resilience Project has been implemented to give a clear understanding of the impact of the pandemic on the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector, record the responses that have been implemented, demonstrate the outlook for the future and recommend long term plans for community engagement and partnering.
- 1.28 Suggested key items to be delivered:
- a. Evaluate and determine the development of initiatives / projects with partners to provide services / activities for residents impacted by COVID-19 in the recovery phase.
 - b. Develop a structure to support Waverley's voluntary organisations to provide services to residents to those still required to self-isolate and social distance following the lifting of lockdown restrictions.
 - c. Building a support structure with partners to help residents who are financially impacted due to covid-19 – this will include advice and support on financial management / simple budgeting / access to benefits / universal credit etc.
 - d. Utilise the outcomes of research on the impact of COVID-19 on voluntary organisations across the borough to feed into the work of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee that is reviewing the council's Service Level Agreement funding process.
 - e. Work in partnership with Citizens Advice Waverley to explore the development of a COVID-19 hardship fund for those residents impacted by COVID-19.
 - f. Review the impact of COVID-19 on voluntary organisations across the borough and the long-term impact this will have on their resilience and how their services may change, in partnership with Voluntary Action South West Surrey.
- 1.29 The Project Board have sent out a SWOT Analysis (see Annexe 2) to community groups / voluntary and faith organisations and key stakeholders and partners to find out how the pandemic has affected their community / organisation and what they feel the future may hold. This vital information will help the council evaluate the success of the community involvement in the response to COVID-19: what worked well, what has not worked so well and how they see the future as we come out of lockdown.
- 1.30 The results will help create the Council's long-term plan for community engagement and partnering that builds on the successful measures implemented during the pandemic.
- 1.31 The Project Board consists of council officers and key partners and stakeholders. The first meeting of the Project Board is on 30 June 2020 and at this meeting they will be analysing the results of SWOT Analyses which will be informing the key objectives to be delivered.
- 1.32 Officers will report on progress at future meetings of the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note this report and provide observations that could support/shape the delivery of the Community Resilience Project.

3. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

- 3.1 The council's partnerships and relationships with the voluntary sector helps ensure that Waverley delivers against all of its Corporate Priorities. The voluntary sector delivers vital community services to some of the Borough's most vulnerable residents, some of which the council might otherwise not be able to provide. All SLA funded organisations deliver services in alignment with the council's corporate priorities as part of their funding arrangement.

4. Implications of decision

4.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)

There are currently no HR implications associated with this report.

4.2 Risk management

A risk has been introduced as part of the project management for the Community Resilience recovery project. The risk log will be monitored through the Project Board and the Programme Board.

4.3 Legal

There are possible legal implications with the SLA funded organisations due potential changes in funding and the renewal of SLAs for the period 2021/2024.

4.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the Community Resilience recovery project which will cover all areas discussed in this report.

4.5 Climate emergency declaration

As part of the COVID-19 recovery project environmental and sustainability objectives will be identified and built in to the workstreams.

5. Consultation and engagement

- 5.1 As part of the recovery workstream Community Resilience partners / stakeholders / community leaders and Community / Voluntary and Faith organisations have been asked to complete a SWOT Analysis (Annexe 2) to find out how the pandemic has affected their community / organisation and what they feel the future may hold.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that there will further consultation as the Community Resilience project develops and identifies

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Letter Template SLA Funding organisations April 2020

Annexe 2 – Community Resilience – COVID-19 SWOT Analysis

Background Papers

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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