

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

29 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 community response through the pandemic
 - b. the 12 SLA organisations and the arrangements for the 2nd tranche of funding for 2020/21 (1 October to 31 March).
 - 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 Community Response

1.3 Service Level Agreements

The Council is acutely aware of the impact that the pandemic is having on all of its partner organisations. I am writing to you at this early stage to explain that over the coming weeks the Council will need to agree its position in relation to the Service Level Agreement funding for this year. We are estimating that our response to the COVID crisis and the measures we have taken to support the local community will impact on the Council's finances by between £3-6m this financial year and this will also have long lasting effect on our budgets, which will not be covered by government funding. We are having to react to this pressure by examining every cost and income to see how we can cut our cloth and still deliver our services at this time of heightened demand.

All Service Level Agreement partner organisations are currently delivering either a different or reduced service, and some are closed. Given the circumstances and the need to comply with government guidelines we understand the obligation you

have to ensure the safety of your service users, staff and volunteers. As a gesture of goodwill and to support the ongoing fixed costs of organisations, the Council will be making all grant payments as normal in April to support your cash flow. This guarantees your funding for the first 6-month period of 2020/21. If you have not already done so, please submit your invoice to claim your normal April grant payment.

On the subject of the arrangements for the second half of this year, the Council will need to consider its position regarding grant payments from 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021. Even during these difficult times, the Council has a duty to ensure that the services it funds are being delivered. Although we do not know how long the pandemic will affect the delivery of organisations' services, our Executive will consider options for the release of any future payments for the second half of this financial year on an individual basis in light of closure periods and which services some organisations are continuing to deliver, complementing other Council priorities.

For organisations that receive a smaller grant in one tranche in April, this may mean clawing back some grant if appropriate. This may mean that a retrospective recalculation of the funding will be necessary which could result in a repayment to the Council of some of the grant paid. Our aim is to continue to hold the six month Service Level Agreement review meetings virtually, if possible, or by telephone, which will assist with these decisions. We will be in touch with you soon to make the necessary arrangements.

These are difficult times and I know that you will be very concerned about your organisation's future. Staff and volunteers work tirelessly to support some of our most vulnerable residents and we continue to be grateful for all their efforts. None of us could have anticipated the serious position we find ourselves in and regrettably we cannot avoid the need for the Council to review its funding arrangements given that some organisations are continuing to deliver services and incur costs, whilst some remain closed or have significantly reduced their

1.4 Community Recovery - Community Resilience Project

1.5 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.

1.6 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 to 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 and create 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.

1.7

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that

3. Reason for the recommendation

4. Background

4.1

5. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

5.1

6. Implications of decision

6.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)

6.2 Risk management

6.3 Legal

6.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

“There are no direct equality, diversity or inclusion implications in this report. Equality impact assessments are carried out when necessary across the council to ensure service delivery meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.”

6.5 Climate emergency declaration

7. Consultation and engagement

7.1

8. Other options considered

8.1

9. Governance journey

9.1

Annexes:

Annexe 1 –

Background Papers

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

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Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: date

Head of Finance: date

Strategic Director: date

Portfolio Holder: date