

# **Community Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

## **Report of the Service Level Agreement Working Group on Proposals for Funding the Voluntary Sector**

### **The Working Group members:**

Cllr Jenny Else (Chairman), Cllr Mary Foryszewski, Cllr Michaela Gray and Cllr John Robini

### **Purpose of the report**

To present the findings, conclusions and proposals of the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny SLA Working Group review of the Executive and its proposed changes to the procedure for funding the not-for-profit and voluntary sector.

### **Recommendation**

That the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the proposals in the *“New funding process for voluntary organisations 2022 to 2025 – Thriving Communities Commissioning Fund”* and the principle of funding activities rather than organisations.

### **Reason for the recommendation**

The members of the Working Group commended the huge amount of work officers had put into producing these proposals. They feel implementing them would represent a significant improvement on the Council’s current arrangement for funding the not-for-profit and voluntary sector. They welcome the principle of funding groups on an issue rather than site specific basis.

The Working Group was especially pleased to see that the recommendations from its [interim report](#) have been taken onboard. They believe that because a commissioning model involves groups having to reapply for funding on a triennial basis that this will *“generate pressure for innovation and service improvement on the part of groups that have been funded for a prolonged period”*. They are also pleased to see that these arrangements acknowledge the extent to which the issues affecting the Borough have shifted since the awarding of the current service level agreements. While helping, for example, young people and those with mental health challenges are not statutory responsibilities of the Council, there is a valuable role for the Council to play in supporting groups that work on these issues.

In addition, they welcomed that there would be cross-party representation on the funding panel.

### **Additional points**

As well as the formal recommendation discussed above, the Working Group would also like to take this opportunity to put on record the following observations how similar processes can be improved in future:

1. It would be good practice for Executive Working Groups to be formally minuted and its membership recorded, so that even if its deliberations are kept private, it would be valuable to have a record of how its work is progressing.
2. The local connections of ward councillors should be viewed by the Council as a resource to, for example, identify small voluntary groups and encourage town and parish councils to respond to consultations.