

5 November 2020**Agenda Item: Urgent Item****REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****RE-OPENING OF THE COMMUNITY FUND****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval for the Covid-19 Community Fund to be re-opened for the period until 1 January 2021.

Information

2. The £1m Covid-19 Community Fund opened in March 2020 as part of the Council's response to support communities impacted by Covid-19.
3. Grants awarded through the Fund helped with the additional costs of delivering essential local support to those most affected by the pandemic, such as collecting and delivering food and medicines for those who were self-isolating/shielding and couldn't leave their homes.
4. The Communities Team managed the delivery of the funds through a robust process which encouraged voluntary and community groups, councils and other organisations to access the Fund to meet immediate need and help those who struggling to afford food and essentials due to COVID-19. The Fund supported a range of projects including food banks, food clubs, cooking clubs, advice groups and food shopping and delivery.
5. The Fund was closed on 17th September 2020 as the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Fund for Food and Essential Supplies was made available to provide similar support to those organisations engaged in supporting those struggling to afford food and other essentials due to Covid-19. At the point of closure, 247 projects had received a total of £668,181 in funding, leaving a residue of £331,819. This funding remains available.
6. However, in the light of the latest Government announcement regarding the re-imposition of a range of national measures to help combat the second wave of the pandemic through November into early December, it is appropriate that consideration be given to re-opening the Fund to applications. This will provide local groups with renewed access to additional funding support, in anticipation of resident demand for additional help increasing in the period up to Christmas. If the proposal is approved, the Fund will be immediately relaunched and publicised on a county-wide basis.

Other Options Considered

7. The Fund could remain closed. However, this option would not maximise the support available to local groups to support vulnerable residents.

Reason for Recommendation

8. To ensure the Council is maximising the financial support available to local voluntary and community groups to help vulnerable residents.

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

10. These are set out in Paragraph 5.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee approves the immediate re-opening of the Covid-19 Community fund for the period to 1 January 2021.

Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE
Leader of the Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Mark Walker, Group Manager Trading Standards & Communities, Tel: 0115 977 2173

Constitutional Comments (HD 04/11/2020)

11. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Communities and Place Committee.

Financial Comments (NS 04/11/2020)

12. The funding as set out in paragraph 5 to support the Community Fund will be funded from contingency.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All