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**STRATEGIC GRANT PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Scrutiny of the performance delivered from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 by this grant programme and to update members about the infrastructure review currently taking place.

**Summary**

2. It was agreed by Scrutiny following the work of the Scrutiny task and finish group last year that the strategic grant programme needed to be performance managed in a more robust way. A report was presented to Scrutiny on 10 December 2013 which included a recommendation for an end of year performance report to be brought to Scrutiny at the end of the financial year.
3. This report provides end of year performance information and analysis but also informs Scrutiny of the infrastructure review work taking place to inform the MTFP budget decisions to be put before Council later this year.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) Scrutiny note the performance report and that they acknowledge the work that has been achieved through this grant programme over the past year.
  - (b) Scrutiny agrees to receive the outcome of the infrastructure review.

**Ada Burns  
Chief Executive**

**Background Papers**

- (i) Darlington Borough Council Cabinet Paper dated 1 July 2013
- (ii) Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Paper 10 December 2013

Mary Hall : Extension 6053

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no direct benefits for crime and disorder but many of the issues of this report are of secondary benefit in reducing crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	Many of the strategic Grant outcomes support improved health and well-being.
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impacts
Diversity	Some of the outcomes for organisations in receipt of Strategic Grant support access to services for protected characteristic groups
Wards Affected	All wards are affected by delivery funded through Strategic Grant.
Groups Affected	The whole population will potentially be impacted upon by the use of Strategic Grant
Budget and Policy Framework	Strategic Grants are part of the support given to the Voluntary Sector and are also part of the Medium Term Financial Plan budget proposals.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Strategic Grants support a number of vulnerable people in Darlington and will help to reduce inequalities.
Efficiency	This report aims to identify value for money.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. Each organisation in receipt of strategic grant was asked to submit a performance report for the final six months of the year and this has been amalgamated with the previous six months data to give a full year report.
6. The evidence provided by organisations has been analysed and summarised in **Appendix 1** of this report. It should be noted that this information is based on how organisations have met the outcomes and outputs required in the funding agreement. In some case other funding may have been levered in by the organisation and it is therefore difficult to identify how much of the delivery can be attributed solely to the Strategic Grant funding.
7. Organisations have delivered a wide range of outcomes throughout the year that have:
  - (a) Increased the number of active volunteers by over 500
  - (b) Brought in nearly £4.5million through benefit maximisation advice
  - (c) Set up and supported a range of new community groups to work in neighbourhoods
  - (d) Levered in over £30,000 for environmental projects and supported other successful bids for over £200,000
  - (e) Prevented over 300 households becoming homeless
  - (f) Encouraged nearly 4,000 residents and organisations to save over £860,000 which can support affordable loans for the most vulnerable.
  - (g) Supported individuals to develop and to participate in their community and influence change at a national, regional and local level
  - (h) Supported organisations to become financially secure or to take on employees.
8. All frontline organisations are continuing to over perform and this is particularly the case where the welfare reform changes have triggered increased demand.
9. The infrastructure needs of the sector are of course affected by the financial and social policy environment in which organisations are working. It is important to note that that advice and support in relation to governance and funding are increasing and also whilst some new organisations are setting up there are also organisations that need support to make staff redundant or dissolve.
10. It is important that we do not simply look at the financial gains that the strategic grant programme delivers but also at the achievements of the volunteers that recipient organisations work with. The performance reports show the number of hours that people are willing to give to support their community through:
  - (a) giving advice,
  - (b) co-producing new services,
  - (c) inspecting existing services to improve them,
  - (d) setting up community projects;

- (e) undertaking personal development to learn how to lead others in the community.

## **Infrastructure Support**

11. An infrastructure review is currently taking place to look at what will be needed in the future to support the community and voluntary organisations in the Borough and how this could be best provided. This will then form part of the wider debate about the Council's budget and whether this is a priority moving forward.
12. The infrastructure review will look at national policy changes and what this may mean in terms of demand for infrastructure, what would be needed and what would no longer be required and what models of provision would deliver value for money and efficiency. The review also looks at current best practice across the country and whether it could be applied in Darlington.
13. The specification for the review has been agreed with Evolution and the review will involve a wide range of individuals who have experience or knowledge relevant to infrastructure support. The report of the infrastructure review will be available at the beginning of July and Scrutiny is asked to consider how they would wish to receive this report. One option would be to re-convene the task and finish group that looked at Strategic Grant or a Special Meeting could be arranged prior to Council recess.
14. It is important that consultation on the report takes place to inform future detailed proposals on the use of Strategic Grant. This consultation will take place with the Council and its partners within the public and voluntary and community sectors and will need to look at the demands for frontline delivery as well as infrastructure. A paper will go to Cabinet by the end of the year to put forward options for the future and it will be important that the implications of each option are set out clearly including equality impacts on protected characteristic groups.