

## VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING REVIEW GROUP

4 December 2017

**PRESENT** – The Mayor, Councillor J Taylor; Councillors Crichlow, Copeland, Newall, EA Richmond and Scott.

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Grundy and Tostevin.

**OFFICERS** – Christine Shields, Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Transformation and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillor S Richmond.

**Declarations of Interest** – Councillor Newall declared an interest due to her involvement with Citizens' Advice Bureau.

**Purpose of the Meeting** – The Group met to give consideration to the current position in relation to allocation of funding to the Voluntary Sector which was identified in the Futures Fund of the MTFP.

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and in doing so stressed that there was a need to ensure that the funding would be allocated to where there was most need. A further report would be submitted to the meeting of Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on 14 February 2018.

### Points Discussed and Considered

- The Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Transformation advised that work was ongoing to ensure that funding of £72k would be utilised to provide support to the Third Sector.
- The amount of £72k was made up from £20k by Darlington Borough Council which was match funded by NHS Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), a further funding contribution of £32k was made by the County Durham Community Foundation.
- A consultation exercise had been undertaken with the Voluntary Sector to outline the bidding process and a Panel was established comprising members of DBC, CCG and CDCF to determine any bids made.
- Five bids were received resulting in three successful awards, leaving the amount of £28k unallocated which has now been amalgamated into the Voluntary Sector Development Fund.
- The Voluntary Sector Development Fund of £100,000k was split into two separate funds – one for Transformation and Efficiency Work within the

Voluntary and Community Sector and one focusing on developing new initiatives to support vulnerable young children.

- Two awards were made from the Transformation and Efficiency Fund leaving a balance of £42,179 which has been added to the £28k underspend to provide a sum of £70k for allocation to future Voluntary and Community Sector Development Activity.
- The Strategic Implementation Group (SIG) was made up of 15 local voluntary and community sector providers although smaller community groups and churches were needed as they had a big impact on the locality.
- The SIG were aware of the money and that it was ring-fenced to be used only for community services.
- The (SIG) were asked to consider how the £70k could be utilised to ensure that the money was allocated to the areas with most need. It was confirmed that the aims and objectives of the Funding had been outlined to community groups and that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment also showed where need was required. iMPOWER, a values led consultancy dedicated to the reform of the public sector, had provided the evidence base to the need. To date no suggestions had been forthcoming on what the money could be allocated to.
- Members questioned the use of iMPOWER and the required criteria to make a bid for funding which some Voluntary Sectors reported they had not met.
- It was reported that one area of need was social isolation and it was accepted that community groups and churches had made little headway to tackle social isolation within their areas.
- It was stated that if social isolation could be avoided it would lead to less illnesses and falls resulting in less hospital and social care.
- In relation to children's funding it was reported that the outcome of remodelling of early help centres was awaited before a decision on funding allocation was made.
- Members were informed that the criteria - a maximum bid of £5k and the organisation had to show it was sustainable - was very narrow resulting in few bids being received.
- It was stated that some organisations had made bids for the amount they had lost through the MTFP.
- It expressed that there was a need for collaboration bids and for communities to work together and stop competing against each other.
- Following a question it was confirmed that funding had been awarded to three organisations.

- It was stressed that smaller groups needed to know how to make a bid and that larger groups could support smaller groups to make bids.
- Concerns were raised that whilst Darlington did not currently have a homeless situation there could be a problem at a later date.
- Members also had concerns that Darlington organisations did not apply for funding to the joint fund of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner and County Durham Community Foundation which allocated funding to support the community and voluntary sector of County Durham and Darlington.
- Particular reference was made to King William Street and Wesley Court Community Centres which were very well used by elderly residents for activities such as bingo sessions, Christmas dinners and summer outings. The Community checked on each other and were always inviting people to get involved to avoid social isolation.
- Reference was made to the cultural commissioning work that was being done and to the Arts Council encouraging young people to make bids.
- It was hoped to include all local groups and events into an online directory of services which was soon to be launched.
- It was envisaged that all groups should be aware of external bids and work together for a bid agreed by DBC and the CCG.
- It was suggested that known groups in need of funding should be targeted, for example, Top Deck Young Peoples Club which was in need of new premises and was somewhere for young people to meet and socialise. To lose the Club could result in anti-social behaviour and young people socialising on the streets.
- The Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Transformation advised Members that there was still a lot of work to be done with small organisations and it was hoped to run a pilot scheme which, if successful, could be rolled out to all areas of the Borough.
- It was suggested that all Councillors be asked to log any known activities or groups within their Wards to assist with the Directory of Services; an article be placed in One Darlington; and links be made with the Volunteer Fair.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the thanks of this Review Group be extended to the Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Transformation for her informative and detailed account.

(b) That the current position be noted.

(c) That this Review Group supports the work that is being undertaken.

(d) That a report be submitted to Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 14 February 2018 providing an update on Voluntary Sector Funding.