

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
9 JUNE 2022**

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**STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with information on the spend and use of the Stronger Communities Fund during the 2021/2022 financial year.

**Summary**

2. This report sets out the final spend against the £50,000 for the 2021/2022 financial year, together with information on what has been delivered in wards on an individual Councillor basis (**Appendix 1**).
3. Members will recall that this Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 6 January 2022, when considering the six-monthly spend and use, supported the continuation of the pilot scheme in the 2022/23 financial year.
4. Following feedback from Members, Officers and the Credit Union, the process for administering the fund has been reviewed and this report sets out the revised arrangements for its administration.

**Recommendation**

5. Members are requested to :-
  - (a) note the final spend against the £50,000 for the 2021/2022 financial year;
  - (b) note the use of the Fund during the 2021/22 financial year; and
  - (c) note the administration process for the fund in the 2022/23 financial year.

**Luke Swinhoe**

Assistant Director Law and Governance

**Background Papers**

There were no background papers used in the preparation of this report other than those referred to

Shirley Wright: Extension 5998

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific crime and disorder implications in this report.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues relating to health and well being which this report needs to address.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no specific carbon impact issues in this report.
Diversity	The report does not contain any proposals that impact on diversity issues.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected.
Groups Affected	No specific groups are particularly affected.
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	The report does not require a key decision.
Urgent Decision	The report does not require an urgent decision.
Council Plan	The subject matter of the report, the Councils financial standing and financial management, is critical to delivery of the SCS, but this report does not contain new proposals
Efficiency	The report contains updated information regarding efficiency savings contained in the MTFP.
Impact of Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. Following the establishment of the Stronger Communities Fund, Members each Councillor was allocated £1,000 with the aim of :-
  - (a) supporting individuals and groups to enhance access to opportunities to improve health and well being outcomes;
  - (b) investing in environmental improvements that enhance the local area to the benefit of the local community.
7. In agreeing to the establishment of the fund, each Member was required to enter into an agreement with the Council regarding the use of the funds which, amongst other things, stipulated that :-
  - (a) the process of awarding grants is open and transparent
  - (b) grants are made without prejudice or favour
  - (c) the funds will not be used for Members' personal or political gain
  - (d) Members will be responsible for ensuring as far as possible that the grant has been used for the purpose that it was provided
8. Councillors are able to pool their budget with other Councillors within their wards if they wish.
9. Appendix 1 sets out sets out the final spend against the £50,000 for the 2021/2022 financial year, together with information on what has been delivered in wards on an individual Councillor basis and details of paperwork received to date.
10. There has been good use of the fund, with only £2,116.50 of the £50,000 remaining unspent, which will be reclaimed by the Council.
11. At its meeting held on 6 January 2022, this Scrutiny Committee assessed the value of the Fund and supported the continuation of the pilot scheme in the 2022/23 financial year, and, as such, each Councillor will be allocated £1,000 to deliver the objectives of building stronger communities.
12. Members should note that during the 2022/23 financial year, due to the use of Council resources in the run up to the local elections in 2023, any funding should be given over to the grant recipient before the commencement of Purdah.
13. Following feedback from Members, Officers and the Credit Union, Officers have reviewed how the scheme should be administered going forward and Members are requested to note that for the 2022/23 financial year :-
  - (a) a single account in the name of Darlington Borough Council will be set up at the Darlington Credit Union with £1,000 allocated against each Member;

- (b) Members will sign the 2022/23 Stronger Communities Fund Agreement and return it to the Democratic Manager (**Appendix 2**);
- (c) Members will advise the Democratic Manager, in writing, of their grant recipient, amount of funding, purpose;
- (d) on receipt of (c) above, the Democratic Manager will write to the grant recipient advising them of the success of their application and requesting them to read and sign the agreed terms and conditions of the funding (**Appendix 3**); and
- (e) on receipt of (d) above, the Democratic Manager will advise the Darlington Credit Union to transfer the funds as agreed.