

Report to Portfolio Holder for Community Development

Subject: Proposals for distribution of 'Giving For Gedling' and 'Feeding Gedling' Funding balances and other external funding received by the Council to support community resilience.

Date: 21th May 2021

Author: Community Investment Manager

Wards Affected

All

Purpose

To seek approval for the proposed management and distribution arrangements for remaining 'Giving For Gedling' and 'Feeding Gedling' balances, and other external sources of funding that have been secured for the purpose of building community and voluntary sector resilience and extend the provision support to vulnerable people.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation(s)

THAT: The Portfolio Holder for Community Development

- 1)** Approves the distribution plan for Gedling Borough Council's 'Giving For Gedling' and 'Feeding Gedling' fundraising balances, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Covid-19 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV)/ Vulnerable People (VP) support allocation and remaining Social Prescribing Reducing Isolation In Gedling (SPRIING) Pilot budget, as detailed in this report
- 2)** Delegates authority to the Director responsible for Communities and Leisure to apportion the funding between local Community Hubs and community based services as detailed in this report.

1 Background

- 1.1 As Covid -19 restrictions are reduced and services begin to reopen, demand for emergency food and other essential supplies has steadily fallen away, with only a small number of requests received over the first five months of 2021.
- 1.2 The Richard Herrod Food Hub, established in the early stages of the pandemic in collaboration with local Church and Food Bank leaders, with the unanimous agreement of those partners has recently ceased its operations. Remaining clients and stocks have been redirected to the Gedling Food Bank network.
- 1.3 The two Gedling Fundraisers, 'Giving For Gedling' and 'Feeding Gedling' are also closed, having provided necessary resource to support the most vulnerable households and families during 2020/21.

1.4 The 'Giving For Gedling' fundraiser

This fundraiser launched by the Council in April 2020, raised £37,000 for emergency food support to vulnerable people in lockdown without the means or ability at that stage to access food and essential supplies from mainstream sources. Outcomes have included:

- individuals classified as Clinically Vulnerable supported
- in collaboration with local Food Bank and Church leaders, the fund enabled the establishment of the Richard Herrod Food Distribution Hub
- Hub provided 80 to 100 households a week with enhanced food support at a time when supermarkets were unable to meet emergency demand
- back up to the Food Banks in Gedling at a critical time and created a strong and lasting partnership
- enabled further joint work on the Giving For Gedling 'Good Neighbour Guide' and partnership delivery with Food Banks and local Community Hubs of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Winter Grant Scheme

Remaining Funds

- £9,124.64: Giving For Gedling
- £2,497.30: 'One off' budget for Richard Herrod Hub initial supplies
- **Total: £11,622**

1.5 The 'Feeding Gedling' fundraiser

This fundraiser was launched by the Council in Autumn half term 2020 in response to concerns around free school meals and holiday food support. Outcomes have included:

- £14,668 raised for food support to vulnerable children, and has had a similar dynamic effect to the initial fundraiser, with £6,028 being directed at a pre-Christmas 'Festive Family Parcel' initiative.
- over 600 most vulnerable families in the Borough benefitted from enhanced food parcels that included recipe cards and home activity ideas, along with festive craft packs provided by the Gedling Play Forum
- positive outcome of the Festive Family Parcels initiative has been our emerging partnership with Children's Centres, Schools and specialist family services, where the development of sustainable approaches to family food insecurity in the form of Family Food Clubs is underway

Remaining Funds

- **£8,639.50**

1.6 Closure of the Richard Herrod Centre (RHC) Food Hub

As we emerge from the pandemic, emergency response requirements have diminished. Agreement of the Leader of the Council and Church and Food Bank partners has been secured for Richard Herrod Food Hub to cease operations in May 2021. Remaining stock and a small number of remaining clients are being redirected to local Food Banks. Leisure centres are reopening, but the RHC will continue to operate as a Community Vaccination Centre until the Autumn.

1.7 Gedling Plan delivery: emerging priorities, partnerships and projects

The Giving For Gedling and Feeding Gedling fundraising and local community response have sharpened the Councils' focus upon food and other health and wellbeing inequalities in the Borough, highlighting the need for sustainable solutions and wider collaboration as we move towards recovery over the forthcoming year. The significant proactive response to the Covid-19 pandemic in Gedling has provided a legacy of:

- Increased Gedling volunteer registration with GBC, NHS GoodSam and Nottm and Rushcliffe CVS'
- The emergence of new hot food kitchens, befriending schemes and extended community advice services in churches and other community led facilities across the Borough
- A more integrated working relationship between the GBC Customer Services, Community Relations and Leisure Services Teams, and with community partners.

1.8 There is a recognised need for wraparound resilience support, which can include food where needed, however should also provide a range of other measures to enhance community wellbeing, recovery and social mobility.

These priorities are reflected in the Gedling Plan, and this proposal aims to support the following specific Gedling Plan Priorities:

- Deliver a programme of community events and youth activities reflecting Gedling Plan priorities
- Develop, engage and support the voluntary sector to increase participation
- Develop a strategic approach with partners to enable a strong and resilient voluntary and community sector
- Work with local organisations to improve people's life chances and reduce levels of poverty
- Identify and facilitate delivery of key interventions in agreed locality areas
- Develop and work with key stakeholders to embed a sustainable social prescribing programme across the borough
- Directly support local groups to tackle loneliness and isolation

1.9 Mental and physical wellbeing

Recent national and local consultations have highlighted the mental and physical health and wellbeing impact of sustained isolation brought about by Covid-19 upon those in the community that were, prior to Covid, 'getting by'. This has enabled the Council to have greater insight on local need:

- many were under the radar for interventions and benefits, and made more vulnerable by the pandemic, meaning that more complex solutions are needed that support vulnerable people and families towards independent wellbeing
- meetings of the Gedling Seniors and Youth Councils, Food Banks and Church Leaders have borne this out, raising issues of digital exclusion, utilities, credit card and other debt, anxiety, loneliness, mental health issues in the young, including young parents, and older people, many of the latter group living alone without family support
- it has been recognised there is heightened vulnerability across all cohorts within black and ethnic minority communities

1.10 Churches, Food Bank and Community Hub partnership

Our recent collaborative delivery of the Gedling DWP Winter Grant scheme with local Food Banks, the St Georges Centre and The Ark Welfare Rights service enabled £40,800 to provide over 620 households with food, supermarket vouchers and/or winter utilities support between January and March 2021.

This collaboration has further cemented and broadened operational delivery partnership with essential community support groups and hubs.

1.11 Work with vulnerable families

Following a successful Countywide NCC funding bid, GBC is working with local Children's Centres and charity 'Family Action' to roll out a total of 5 Family Food Clubs in Children's centres and other community settings in the borough, commencing with Netherfield and Killisick. Food Clubs can be developed and hosted in a variety of settings, and the model provides a combination of weekly healthy Fairshare food parcels comprising of fresh fruit and veg, meat/vegetarian options and non-perishables, family cook and eat opportunities, recipes and activities that foster lifestyle improvements, volunteering, employability support, specialist intervention where needed and above all exceptional value for money. Member families pay just £1 per year membership and £3 per week for a food package valued at £20.

- 1.12 Strong interest has been demonstrated by Netherfield and Killisick Children's Centres and local partner Schools, which are still benefiting from the receipt and distribution of ongoing, regular seasonally themed Gedling Play Forum family craft packs. This will have clear sustainable benefits to vulnerable families, and has created opportunities for further shaping and directing our annual family play events provision to those families that can gain most benefit from them.

1.13 GBC Customer Services Community Hubs Outreach proposals

Customer Services played a pivotal role in contacting and triaging NHS designated CEV/VP clients during the pandemic. The Service has developed and extended its knowledge of community based and commissioned support and referral options, and is proposing to extend current outreach to wider community hubs across the Borough. This proposal, currently being scoped, has the potential to increase local access to support and help build the resilience of local VCS organisations.

1.14 Gedling DEFRA funding allocation

There has been a recognition of the role districts have played managing local proactive response calls and triage of NHS designated vulnerable clients during the height of the pandemic. Nottinghamshire County Council has awarded a £20,000 allocation of its DEFRA funding to each District to support response and recovery initiatives. These initiatives can include support for Family Food Clubs and Community Support Hubs providing sustainable solutions for vulnerable people's support and recovery.

- 1.15 It is therefore proposed that we use the Gedling allocation to offer grants and commissioning opportunities to community hubs and grass roots health and wellbeing groups, to shore up community recovery infrastructure in the coming months as they reopen and develop their services.

1.16 SPRIING Social Prescribing Project underspends

In addition to the DEFRA allocation, we have a remaining unspent balance of £7,624 in the SPRING project, which has now closed and is replaced by the ICP funded Social Prescribing Link Worker and Community Development initiative. It is proposed that the SPRING remaining funds are also reallocated to the grants and commissioning opportunities fund.

1.17 Breadth of Humanitarian Support in Gedling

Throughout the pandemic the Council, Foodbanks and Churches and spontaneous community response groups have supported residents, in the form of food parcels, prescription collections, shopping, support and advice, befriending and access to financial support, on more than 10,000 occasions.

2 Proposal

2.1 Amalgamation of Covid 19 and other response funds

In recognition of the aim and purpose of the funding resources detailed above, which is to support those most vulnerable in the community to access essential support and social connection, and taking account of the Gedling Plan priorities and strong community collaboration as we emerge from Covid -19 restrictions it is proposed that:

- The Giving For Gedling, Feeding Gedling, DEFRA CEV Support funding and remaining SPRING balance are amalgamated into a Community Hubs and groups Grants and Commissioning Fund.
- This provides a resource of £47,885.50 to help build resilience in the Gedling Voluntary and Community Sector as we move into recovery.
- The fund to be roughly apportioned at 70% direct grant awards to community hubs, 30% commissioning of community led health and wellbeing activities to grass roots community groups.

Examples of grass roots commissioning might include the provision of an activity or service at one of the Council's programme of events, or to develop a collaborative offer with our Leisure Services or Health and Wellbeing commissioned partners.

2.2 In recognition of their ongoing response efforts, it is further proposed that initial awards are made to key community hubs as follows:

- Netherfield Forum, Netherfield: £6,000
- St Mary's Church Food Club, Arnold: £4,000
- Emmanuel Church, Bestwood St Albans: £3,000

Final amounts to be determined based on immediate and ongoing needs, and mutually agreed in discussion with the leads for each organisation.

Further grants to be distributed based on a simple application process.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 Not to amalgamate Covid-19 response and other external funds directed at supporting vulnerable people. This option is not recommended, as it would result in vulnerable residents in Gedling being disadvantaged in relation to support being provided, due to limitations in the capacity of community hubs and services to provide or sustain that support.
- 3.2 To deploy these funds in a different way, i.e. contracting out to external non - voluntary sector providers, or to create temporary posts. This option is not recommended as it is not sustainable. By investing in our local Gedling voluntary and community infrastructure we are supporting the future resilience of our communities and providing opportunities for local VCS growth and greater collaboration in the direction of services to those in most need.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There is no additional cost associated with this proposal. The Communities and Leisure Service Area has existing grant distribution resources and processes in place for grants agreed as part of the 2021/22 budget. The proposed payment of grants detailed in section 2 of this report are additional to these and funded by external contributions, therefore, the proposals will have no impact on current approved budgets.
- 4.2 The Council will comply with any requirements associated with the DEFRA fund allocated by Nottinghamshire County Council as agreed with Local Resilience Forum partners.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 In accordance with the Leader of the Council decision, 14 April 2020, on the Administration of the Giving for Gedling fund, reallocation of the Giving for Gedling funds as proposed in this report has been discussed with the Church and Food Bank Leaders Group, and all have responded positively to the proposal.
- 5.2 The Feeding Gedling Fund must provide meals and support for families, therefore a proportion of grants totalling the balance of that fund will be directed to organisations providing that service.
- 5.3 The Council will require commissioned grass roots delivery organisations to hold all necessary governance, expertise, risk assessments and public liability insurance as a condition of receipt.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 This report seeks to provide additional financial support to voluntary and community organisations in the Borough and has no anticipated negative equalities impact in respect of the various protected characteristic groups.
- 6.2 The purpose of providing financial support to local VCS organisations is to extend the reach of their services to those in most need, with the proposed approach to distributing the funding ensuring best practice for maintaining equality of access to community based support across the Borough.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 There are no negative Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability implications.

8 Appendices

None

9 Background Papers

None

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 To enable the Council to amalgamate existing external funding aimed at supporting vulnerable people, and to direct that resource to community groups and organisations providing that support in a timeous and equitable manner.
- 10.2 To support the delivery following specific Gedling Plan Priorities:
- Deliver a programme of community events and youth activities reflecting Gedling Plan priorities
 - Develop, engage and support the voluntary sector to increase participation
 - Develop a strategic approach with partners to enable a strong and resilient voluntary and community sector
 - Work with local organisations to improve people's life chances and reduce levels of poverty
 - Identify and facilitate delivery of key interventions in agreed locality areas
 - Develop and work with key stakeholders to embed a sustainable social prescribing programme across the borough
 - Directly support local groups to tackle loneliness and isolation

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Monitoring Officer