

Report to Portfolio Holder: Communities and Place

Subject: Approval of Gedling ‘Strength In Community’ Grant Scheme 2023/24 and 2024/25

Date: 28th September 2023

Author: Community Partnerships Manager

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To request approval to launch and administer the Gedling UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) ‘Strength In Community’ Grant Fund.

Key Decision This is not a key decision.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

1. The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Place approves the launch and administration of UKSPF ‘Strength In Community’ Grant Awards to Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups providing services to vulnerable people in Gedling.
2. The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Place delegates authority to the Head of Communities and Leisure to give final approval on grant applications, following rigorous assessment by a panel established from within the GBC Communities Team.

1 Background

- 1.1 In December 2021 the Council was successfully awarded £2.86m in UKSPF Grant Funding to deliver a range of capital and revenue projects designed to enhance facilities and increase opportunities and services to the public in the Borough, in this case providing interventions in the areas of **Communities and Place** and **People and Skills**. The UKSPF funding effectively replaces grant resources previously available through

membership of the European Union.

- 1.2 **‘Gedling Strength In Community’** (SIC) is a project that aims to extend the reach and enhance the service offer of Gedling based Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Organisations and Commissioned Partners operating in Gedling, thereby increasing and ‘levelling up’ access to opportunities for our local citizens, encompassing those recognised as having disadvantage or vulnerability in society.
- 1.3 The SIC Grant Fund will enable Gedling VCS led community hubs and other community sector partners to enhance internal capacity and broaden their offer to encompass events delivery, employability, life skills, household financial resilience, health and wellbeing services and bespoke solutions to specific communities and vulnerable residents recognised as having protected characteristics in the Equalities Act, including wider target groups identified by the LRF Humanitarian Assistance Group.
- 1.4 Successful applicants will be required to submit periodic monitoring returns detailing outcomes and outputs that align with targets set in the Gedling UKSPF delivery plan. These include (not exclusively) numbers of citizens taking up volunteering opportunities, life skills, employability and financial resilience support, as well as the provision of community connection, health and wellbeing and training opportunities.
- 1.5 The SIC Grant Scheme sits alongside a separate commissioning process, that will target wider charities and other commissioned partners that have specific expertise to enable the development of a model for Voluntary Sector Support; to encourage coproduction with the local VCS in the delivery of dedicated support to refugees; multicultural/faith communities; people who are frail, elderly and/or suffering with dementia; young people; people with substance misuse issues; homeless people; individuals and families most impacted by financial insecurity and other cohorts identified as having protected characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act.
- 1.6 Further detail on how the VCS Grant Scheme fits within the wider ‘Strength In Community’ UKSF project can be reviewed in the attached Scope: Appendix 1.
- 1.7 The grant scheme will be launched in October 2023, with application criteria and forms made available online and in word document form available via email. The funding opportunity will be promoted via the Gedling Community Hubs and Partners Network, commencing with a meeting of that network scheduled on Thursday 28th September; at the Parish Conference taking place at Richard Herod Centre on Wednesday 11th October, and via our Community and Health and Wellbeing E-Newsletters.

- 1.8 Any allocation agreed will be governed by a grant agreement between Gedling Borough Council and the recipient organisation.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Place:
- approves the launch and administration of UKSPF 'Strength In Community' Grant Awards to VCS groups providing services to vulnerable people in Gedling.
 - delegates authority to the Head of Communities and Leisure to give final approval on grant applications, following rigorous assessment by a panel established from within the GBC Communities Team.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 Not to deliver the Strength In Community VCS Grant Fund 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Gedling Borough Council recognises the importance of community resilience in terms of supporting community inclusion, cohesion and wellbeing, therefore this option does not support the current corporate priority '**To enable a resilient, empowered, connected, inclusive and healthy community**'.

- 3.2 To deliver a different approach to achieve VCS resilience and support for community cohesion in Gedling.

Gedling is recognised by the National Lottery Community Fund and other bodies as being underrepresented in successful grant awards. Additionally, the Borough does not have a dedicated local CVS resource offering support and local conduits to funding, training, volunteering, governance and service development.

This Grant fund and the wider package of VCS Resilience Support offered by the UKSPF Strength In Community programme sets out a system approach to such support, a platform for coproduction between the voluntary sector and commissioned partners and most importantly a voice for the Voluntary Sector in Gedling Borough.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Council has approved UKSPF budgets in place for the 'Strength In Community' Grant Fund as follows:

- **2023/24: £50, 000**
- **2024/25: £50, 000**

The combined 'Strength In Community' UKSPF and NCC Social Recovery

Fund Budget is **£189, 800**

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The GBC Legal Team has supported the development of the application form and agreement, additionally ensuring that the process meets the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act.
- 5.2 The UKSPF programme manager has approved the process in terms of its compliance with UKSPF guidance. Performance of the Strength in Community programme as a whole is monitored via monthly meetings of the UKSPF Steering Group.
- 5.3 Grant applications will be assessed by a small panel made up of Communities Team officers, taking advice where needed from GBC Finance and Legal Teams. Signoff of award decisions is delegated to the Head of Communities and Leisure, and successful applicants will be required to sign and comply with a grant agreement. The agreement stipulates the condition that the organisation is expected to submit periodic monitoring returns to the Council on request.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 Both the 'Strength In Community' Grant Fund and wider programme are fully consistent with the principles of Equal Opportunities, providing resource and resilience support to charities and voluntary organisations to enable them to address the needs of those at risk of marginalisation in society.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 As part of the Grant Agreement, VCS organisations are required to adhere to the Council's Environmental Sustainability policies.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Strength In Community Programme Scope

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 None

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 To enable the timely launch and delivery of the Council's UKSPF 'Strength In Community' VCS Grant programme 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- 10.2 To enhance VCS capacity to encompass events delivery, employability, life skills, household financial resilience, health and wellbeing services and

bespoke solutions to specific communities and vulnerable residents recognised as having protected characteristics in the Equalities Act, including wider target groups identified by the LRF Humanitarian Assistance Group.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Monitoring Officer