

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

North Area Council Meeting:

29th November 2021

Agenda Item: 5

Report of North Area Council
Manager

North Area Council Connecting Communities Grant Update

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update members about the North Area Council Connecting Communities Grant Fund - application and allocation process.
- 1.2 To update members on the outcome of the grant panel moderation meeting and the projects approved for funding.
- 1.3 The report also outlines the performance management and monitoring arrangements for successful projects.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Members note the NAC Connecting Communities Grant update.
- 2.2 Members note the projects that have been approved for funding.
- 2.3 Members agree the performance and monitoring arrangements outlined in Section 7.
- 2.4 Member note that there is allocated budget remaining.

3. Background

Having noted the success of the Connecting Communities Grant funded projects which have been delivered throughout 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21; but reviewing the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic it was agreed it was agreed at the Area Council Meeting on the 19th July 2021 that the North Area would run a new grant opportunity Connecting Communities Grant for the project delivery from December 2021 to March 2024.

The NAC Connecting Communities Grant was established as a grants programme totalling £100,000 per annum, initially for a two year period to address loneliness and isolation in the North Area. Applicants can bid for up to £40,000 per annum. The grant is aimed at developing the capacity of community groups and organisations, social enterprises and not for profit organisations, with a strong

emphasis on legacy. This build on the Stronger Communities Grant 2021/22, where the Panel particularly welcomed bids that supported communities with recovery from Covid-19.

Aims and Objectives of the Connecting Communities Grant Fund:

- Reduce loneliness and isolation
- Increase the confidence of individuals
- Improve the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals
- Re-connect communities

As a new opportunity the Area Council Manager and Procurement colleagues felt that a Market Engagement Event was an important milestone in the development of the grant opportunity. The event was held on 10th September 2021. 29 attendees registered for the event from 22 different local and national organisations. attendees were asked to provide feedback which helped to shape the final grant criteria.

The grant opportunity was advertised at the end of September 2021 and the final date for submission was the 22nd October 2021. A total of 9 applications were received before the deadline totalling £615,710.39.

The Grants Panel Member received their moderation materials w/c 25th October. This included electronic copies of the applications and an evaluator template which needed to be completed and scored prior to the panel meeting. Stage one moderation took place on the 1st November and 4 organisations were invited back to present their projects on the 8th November.

The Wards were represented by the following Councillors.

Darton East	Cllr Steve Hunt
Darton West	Cllr Trevor Cave
Old Town	Cllr Clive Pickering (no evaluation scores received)
St Helen's	Cllr Jenny Platts

4. Recommended Projects

The scoring evaluation matrix provided a robust qualitative and quantitative basis upon which to identify suitable applications. The panel was independently chaired by the Category Manager Tim Whitam and Procurement Officer Kerry Dalby-Wyatt and supported by the North Area's Senior Link Officer, Area Manager and the Area Team.

3 applications were recommended for funding. At the time of writing the providers have not been notified. The total allocated amount for these 3 projects was £186,766.44.

The recommended projects are as follows (they are in no particular order):

Age UK Barnsley – North Area Social Inclusion Service - £79,600.20

Age UK Barnsley are a local charity that works only for the benefit of the people of Barnsley Borough and our Resource Centre/Head Office is based within the Town Centre. We have been providing successful, innovative, area-wide services addressing social isolation in Barnsley for more than 5 years. Age UK Barnsley work with older people with a wide range of needs and health conditions including dementia, mental health problems, physical health conditions and limited mobility.

The Team- The team will consist of 1 FTE Social Inclusion Worker, 1 day weekly of a designated, accredited Information and Advice Worker, 40 volunteers, local management, administration support, and support from a Volunteer Coordinator.

Our Aim

Our overall aim is to reduce the current level of social isolation and loneliness in people aged over 50 in the North Area. We will do this by:

- Developing and supporting personalised plans and support to enable individuals to tackle their social isolation.
- Developing community responses to provide innovative solutions to barriers to inclusion and involving local volunteers.
- Working with a wide range of partner agencies to increase the number of sustainable community activity opportunities available within the North Area
- Apply Age Friendly principles to increase involvement of older people in community development and ensuring their full social value is appreciated.

Gaps that We Will Address.

- 1:1 Person Centred Planning and support from a Social Inclusion Worker
- A range of interventions that will support socially isolated older people to overcome the barriers to involvement e.g., transport, money, confidence, health problems etc.
- Mapping, promotion and support for Community Groups and Activities
- Developing new sustainable Community Activities through consultation and partnership working post-Covid. Especially those activities where gaps have been identified such as groups for men and Digital Inclusion projects as well as those activities that promote mental and physical wellbeing e.g. Tai Chi.
- Enable older people to come together and have a voice in community developments.
- Bring Community Groups together for mutual support, clear pathways and sharing resources.

Examples of Activities and Interventions to be Delivered

- Mapping and Promoting
- We will provide 1:1 support

- Befriending from Good Neighbour Volunteers.
- Community Car Service.
- Developing new groups and activities in the community.
- Providing home-based Information and Advice
- Delivering Celebration Events and Seasonal Campaigns.
- Consultation and Working Together.

DIAL Barnsley – Connection Hubs - £66,450.00

Aim of the Connections Hub

We wish to support individuals, especially those with long term health conditions or disabilities, to recover from the longer-term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic by re connecting them with their community through the creation of a weekly hub providing opportunities for people to meet, share and learn

Building on the proven successful Happy Café model (both national and in the north area) the hub will deliver a varied programme of activities and events and provide opportunities for increasing social capital through volunteering and establishing a concept of membership amongst participants.

The Team- The team will consist of 1 FTE Social Inclusion Worker, and DIAL aim to recruit and train 10 new volunteers.

The gaps we will address:

Loneliness and isolation is not a new challenge for disabled people particularly for those who live in areas of deprivation.

As far back as 2016/ 2017 the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in their Community Life Survey, identified that people at particular risk from loneliness were unmarried middle-agers with long-term health conditions.

The Community Life Survey 2018/19 found that 14% of people with a limiting long term illness (LLTI)/disability reported feelings of loneliness compared to 4% of those with no LLTI/disability.

The majority of adults whom DIAL works with have particular complex and/or challenging needs due to long-term ill health or disability including physical disability, mental ill health, sensory impairments and terminal illness.

Examples of activities and interventions to be delivered:

Based on the Happy café model the hub will run weekly across the 4 wards in the north area and offer a rolling programme of events based on past experience in the NAC Happy Café, feedback from participants and ongoing consultation Providing the opportunity for connecting sharing and learning with a varied calendar of activities with examples such as:

Wellbeing Hour - How to keep active in Winter - with free exercise band

Chat & Make - Sharing your crafting skills and making new friends

Photography Club - Bring your snaps and get some tips and techniques

Easy Being Green - How to reduce your own carbon footprint

Bake Off - bring your home made cakes, share recipes and learn some new ones

Group leaders Connect - swap ideas and cultivate sharing the learning

We will look to develop the streaming of events for those who are unable to physically attend due to personal limitations or in the event of further lockdown restrictions along with the offer of digital activities to be included in the programme

Reds in the Community – Reds Connect - £40,716.24

Our projects help to improve wellbeing and alleviate social isolation and loneliness by providing opportunities for people to get active, make friends and connect. Our original Reds Connect programme, launched April-2021, in the Central Area is a prime example of this: attendance is rising steadily, participants are now engaging in local festivals and fixtures and even a monthly lunch-club is taking place. One participant recently commented, “After so many ups and downs mentally to now be exercising and chatting together is a huge boost.” Another added: “The social side is fantastic, to go out, meet other people and exercise as a group.” Although the activities we propose to deliver in the North differ to Central, the ambition and opportunity to reduce social isolation and loneliness remains constant.

Aims

- Reduce social isolation and loneliness among local people
- Increase the number of local people participating in local activities
- Improve physical and emotional wellbeing
- Increase confidence and self esteem

The Team

A dedicated Project Coordinator, Sean Margison, will be responsible for monitoring and reporting with monthly updates provided to Head of Health & Participation, Kieron Campbell.

Target Groups

Older people: In the North, people aged 65+ account for 19.6% of the population with 12.8% of residents in this age bracket living alone. Furthermore, Age UK report that almost 5,000 older people in Barnsley do not see or speak to other people from one week to the next while 4,603 feel lonely and isolated.

Long-term health conditions: The North has the highest number of obese adults in Barnsley (16.8%). Almost ¼ of residents live with a long-term illness or disability. Compared to borough levels, COPD rates are comparable whereas prevalence of diabetes is lower. There are 4,060 North residents at risk of a heart

attack or stroke who are unaware they have high blood pressure and 1,055 diagnosed but not prescribed the right treatment to minimise the risk.

Men: Men of all ages are increasingly struggling with their mental health and account for 85% of suicides in Barnsley. At just 21% compared to 79% for women, they are less likely to attend organised activities and do not make friends as easily as women. Our experience echoes this with men less willing to try new things and/or non-traditional activities.

Activities

Reds Connect will create new opportunities for local people in the North Area to get active, take part and make friends. It combines physical, recreational and wellbeing activities with peer support and group socials to help address social isolation and loneliness, engender new relationships and encourage local people to get active and involved.

We will deliver 3 sessions per week for the 2-year period. Each session will involve a different activity and be aimed at a different target audience. We will engage 60 unique users per activity (180 total) with an anticipated throughput of 3,960 attendances based on 15 participants per session (264 total sessions). Sessions will be:

Session	Target Group	Description
Team Talk (evening)	Men-all ages	<p>A low-level mental health initiative where men can meet, open up, take some time out and talk about issues in a relaxed, supportive environment.</p> <p>Sessions will comprise two distinct elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An informal 'safe space' with facilities including pool, table tennis, darts, cards and computer games and, of course, a steady supply of tea and biscuits. Beneficiaries will have the opportunity to take part in shared activities aimed at encouraging social engagement and, in time, relaxed, open discussion. 2. A separate "chat room" for beneficiaries wanting to open up and talk about their mental health with their peers. These peer-support sessions, facilitated by our coaches, will enable beneficiaries to share their experiences, discuss their concerns or anxieties, support one another and offer suggestions for self-care and support.

Extra-Time Hub (daytime)	Older people	<p>A programme of varied social interaction sessions for retired/semi-retired people to combat loneliness and inactivity and improve mental and physical wellbeing.</p> <p>Participants select the activities they engage in from a suite of options including bingo/quizzes, walk and talk, coffee mornings, fitness and stability, table tennis, book clubs, Zumba, movies, tea dances and reminiscence sessions.</p>
Exercise Classes (evening)	Open to all	<p>Group exercise classes designed to help participants reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation while improving their physical health. Each session will last between 30-45 minutes inclusive of warm-up and cool-down.</p> <p>Activities will cater for all abilities, ages and fitness levels albeit gentle exercise, walking or a more energetic circuits or football activity. Coaches will model different levels for some exercises, e.g. star jumps with a step out or a full jump, to ensure accessibility.</p> <p>Exercise types will include circuits, chairobics, yoga, strength & conditioning and soccercise.</p>

5. Lessons Learned

- 5.1. The process was coordinated by BMBC Procurement colleagues. The evaluation process required panel members to complete additional information compared to the stronger communities grant paperwork. This created additional complexity and required a greater time commitment for panel member.
- 5.2. The inclusion of the Five Ways to Wellbeing in the scoring criteria have helped the Panel understand how the North Area Funding contributes to the wider determinants of health and wellbeing.
- 5.3. The fund was heavily oversubscribed.
- 5.4. This situation shows the growth financial pressures that the voluntary and community sector are currently facing.

6. Project Development Work

The Area Manager will now meet with all the successful project leads to ensure that all the projects are robust: deliverable within the timescales, and outcomes/outcome indicators and targets developed.

7. Grant Awards and Performance Monitoring/Management

Once approved, all organisations will be notified and asked to sign Grant Agreement which, together with a detailed application form, will form the basis of the contractual agreement between the Council and the organisation for the grant awarded.

All successful applicants will receive grant funding on a quarterly basis.

All applicants have submitted a monitoring/performance framework and quarterly payment schedule as part of their application. Where a quarterly payment is agreed the payments will only be released once the North Area Council Manager is satisfied that monitoring/performance targets for the previous quarter have been met, or if not met, a satisfactory reason is given as to why this is the case and revised targets for the following quarters agreed.

Progress on all grant projects will be reported back to North Area Council on a quarterly.

8. Next steps

8.1. Members are asked to note that the grant funding was oversubscribed. This led to greater scrutiny of the applications in accordance with the scoring criteria.

8.2. The funding remaining from this allocation is £13,233.44. This will remain in the Area Care Councils budget awaiting future allocation.

Officer Contact:
Rosie Adams

Tel. No:
01226 773583

Date:
15/11/2021