

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Central Area Council Meeting:

26th April 2021

**Report of Central Area Council
Manager**

Central Area Council Stronger Communities Grant Update

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update members about the Central Area Council Social Isolation and Loneliness Challenge Fund application and allocation process.
- 1.2 To update members on the outcome of the grant panel 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 CAC Social Isolation and Loneliness Challenge Fund 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.

3. Background

A positioning paper was presented at a workshop of elected members on 19th August 2020. It was then agreed at the Area Council Meeting on the 7th September 2020 that the Central Area would run the Social Isolation and Loneliness Challenge Fund project delivery for two years from April 2021 to March 2023.

The CAC Social Isolation & Loneliness Challenge Fund was established as a grants programme totalling £200,000 (2021-23) to address the identified Central Area Council priority to Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness in Adults and Older People.

A Market Engagement Event was held on 13th October 2021.

The Challenge Fund opened on YorTender on 3rd November 2020 and the final date for submission of applications was the 8th January 2021.

A total of **12** applications were received before the deadline.

The Grants Panel Members received their panel packs w/c 11th January 2021. This included copies of all the applications and a 'Scoring Matrix' which needed to be completed prior to the panel meeting.

The panel was made up of the following Councillors and Barnsley Council Officers:

1. Cllr Kevin Williams (Area Chair)
2. Cllr Wayne Johnson
3. Cllr Peter Fielding
4. Sarah Blunkett, Central Area Council Manager
5. Cath Bedford, Public Health Principal, Safer, Stronger Healthier Communities
6. Charlotte Moulds, Central Area Community Development Officer

4. Recommended Projects

The Members had an opportunity to independently score each application before meeting for the Evaluation Panel on 10th and 11th February 2021. The scoring matrix provided a robust qualitative and quantitative basis upon which to identify suitable applications. All applications required a majority recommendation from the panel in order to be successful. The panel was independently chaired by Jade Popplewell, Category Manager, Health, Care & Communities. The approval process can be found as Appendix 1.

Due to the exceptionally high quality of applications and the narrow difference between application scores; 4 organisations were invited to give a presentation to the panel on 26th February 2021. The presentations were scored individually by the panel and then moderated. This was independently chaired by Jane Lee, Procurement Officer.

A consensus between panel members was reached and a total of 3 applications were recommended for funding. The total allocated amount for these 3 projects was £188,604.81

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

Age UK – Name of Project-My Community, My Life

Cost from April 2021 to March 2023: £79,186.68

Summary

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 Central Area. They have been providing successful, innovative, area-wide services addressing social isolation in Barnsley for more than 4 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 overall aim is to reduce the current level of social isolation and loneliness in people aged over 50 in the Central Area. They will do this by:

- Developing and supporting personalised plans to enable individuals to tackle their social isolation.
- Developing community responses to provide innovative solutions to barriers to inclusion.
- Working with a wide range of partner agencies to increase the number of sustainable community activity opportunities available within the Central Area
- Apply Age Friendly principles to increase involvement of older people in community development and ensuring their full social value is appreciated.
- 1:1 Person Centred Planning and support from a Social Inclusion Worker
- A range of interventions that will support the most socially isolated 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 that get people moving. Men's Group Activities and Digital Inclusion projects.
- 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.

RMB Mind – Thriving Communities Project

Cost from April 2021 to March 2023: £ 79,165.17

Working across the Central Area Council area:

The Thriving Communities Project will develop community initiatives across the Central Area enabling diverse, marginalised and isolated communities to come together to learn,

collaborate and create networks of support, generate activities and build cohesive communities. They will engage with hard-to-reach communities who are isolated and lonely, explore the reasons behind loneliness and create opportunities for people to get involved, make a difference and build networks of support within their communities, co-producing activities.

Loneliness is often associated with social isolation, but people can and do feel lonely even when in a relationship or when surrounded by others. Loneliness affects people of all ages and from all backgrounds – from the school child who struggles to make friends, to the new parent coping alone, to the older person who has outlived her friends and immediate family.

The Thriving Communities Project will work with any individual who identifies as being isolated and impacted by loneliness. However, the project will particularly target the following communities:

- Older People who are experiencing isolation and loneliness and are further impacted by COVID-19 restrictions;
- Men – aged 30-55 – two in five men admit to regularly feeling low (particularly those who are facing job insecurity as a result of Covid-19);
- BAME community – that report feeling marginalised, isolated and lonely and who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19;
- Homeless individuals – to re-engage with a community and receive support to access services.

Reds in the Community – Reds Connect

Cost from April 2021 to March 2023: £30,252.96

Working across the Central Area Council area:

- To reduce social isolation and loneliness among local people
- To increase the number of local people in the Central Area participating in local activities
- To improve physical and emotional wellbeing

Target Groups

Older people: In the Central Area, people aged 65+ account for 18.9% of the population with 31.2% 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.

Dementia: There is 0.97 prevalence of dementia in the Central Area. Local providers, Age UK and Butterflies, both feel more provision is needed to not only support people with dementia and their carers but also, as a preventative intervention for older people.

Men: Men of all ages are increasingly struggling with their mental health and account for 85% of suicides in Barnsley. At 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.

Wider population: The report, Social Isolation and Loneliness in the Central Area indicates high levels of social isolation and loneliness in the Central Area across all ages, genders and groups including new and single parents, refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants, LGBTQ and carers. Respondents to our consultation survey identified mental health, poor health and diet, lack of things to do and support for older people as the most pressing needs in Barnsley.

There is a clear need to provide more support and opportunities that will actively reduce loneliness and social isolation among the aforementioned targeted groups and the wider local population. We believe that Reds Connect will help to do this by:

- Creating more opportunities for local people in Central to engage and connect with others
- Using physical activity and exercise as a vehicle to break down barriers and enable participants to connect and socialise
- Using physical activity to improve emotional and mental wellbeing
- Employing a delivery model we know to be successful based on other projects such as Safety Nets, Fit Reds and Feel Good to Lose

5. Lessons Learned

5.1. The inclusion of the Outcomes Star offer ensured that all applications gave consideration to achieving comparable outcomes.

5.2. The fund was heavily oversubscribed.

6. Project Development Work

The Area Manager has met with all successful project leads to ensure that all the projects are robust: deliverable within the timescales, and outcomes/outcome indicators and targets developed. The next step is for the 3 successful projects to meet together with the Area Manager to discuss their projects, identify joint working opportunities and shared learning. They will also be agreeing shared performance measures and processes.

7. Grant Awards and Performance Monitoring/Management

All organisations have now signed their Grant Agreements 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 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 Central 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 projects will be reported back to Central Area Council on a regular basis and a full evaluation report about the CAC Stronger Communities Fund process and projects will be presented to Central Area Council after one full year delivery.

8. Next steps

8.1. Members are asked to note that this grants call was significantly over subscribed. Many of the unsuccessful projects that were submitted were of extremely high quality and would certainly add value to the 'all age' approach of the challenge fund (working in partnership with successful applications). Should the opportunity to fund these via an alternative route be identified then applications from unsuccessful applicants from this grants call would be welcomed.

Appendix 1: Central Area Council

Social Isolation and Loneliness Challenge Fund - Approval Process

