

REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY FUND 2012
WDA /11/12

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to approve changes to the current Community Funding scheme by implementing Option 2 of the improvement recommendations at paragraph 5 of the report.
2. Members are further asked to approve the Chief Executive's intention to redistribute monies within the Strategy Section Budget to increase the Community funding pot, from £20,000 to £50,000, and allocate the funding in 3 categories to maximise the benefits and opportunities for the Authority as it works with the Community Voluntary sector on Merseyside.

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Report of the Chief Executive

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Members are asked to approve changes to the current Community Funding scheme by implementing Option 2 of the improvement recommendations at paragraph 5 of the report.
- 1.2 Members are further asked to approve the Chief Executive's intention to redistribute monies within the Strategy Budget to increase the Community funding pot, from £20,000 to £50,000, and allocate the funding in 3 categories to maximise the benefits and opportunities for the Authority as it works with the Community Voluntary Sector on Merseyside.

2. Background

- 2.1 Community and Voluntary Sector (CV sector) on Merseyside is a well established core sector which is estimated to benefit 2,755,000 people¹ it is suggested there are 5,600 voluntary and community sector groups in Merseyside with a predicted income of £450 million. Over 100,000 people work in the sector. In this report reference to the CV sector in Merseyside includes all of the following;

- 3rd sector not-for-profit,
- Community Interest Companies (C.I.C's),
- Community work of faith groups,
- Companies limited by guarantee,
- Constituted groups,
- Co-Operatives,

¹ Source – Voluntary Sector North West 2007

- Friendly Societies,
- Neighbourhood groups,
- Provident Societies,
- Registered Charities,
- School projects,
- Social Enterprises,
- Voluntary groups.

- 2.2 Since 2002 the Authority has supported grass root projects delivered by Merseyside Community Organisations and the recycling 3rd sector through a Community Funding scheme.
- 2.3 In 2008 Members approved changes to the scheme, Authority Report WDA/47/08 – Consultation for the Provision of a Grant Scheme 26th September 2008. At that time the financial limits of the funding was increased from £5,000 (with maximum individual grant award of £500) to a funding pot of £15,000.
- 2.4 Members also approved changes to the Financial Procedural Rules by amending Section E – external arrangements, Partnerships 1.4, which approved a service level agreement arrangement for payment in advance of goods and services being received.
- 2.5 This service level agreement provides associated caveats on spend and deliverables being achieved and a mechanism for recompense if the project outcomes are not realised.
- 2.6 The ability to pay ‘up front’ within the rules of this agreement has meant many CVS organisations have successfully completed local community projects with support of the Community Funding scheme. This mechanism demonstrates the Authority’s commitment of supporting the CVS in a realistic and appropriate manner.
- 2.7 For each of the past three years, through the WMRC contract, Veolia E.S has provided a £5,000 contribution to the Community Funding scheme. Veolia have been part of the assessment panel and the process of allocating the funding, whilst the general administration and project management has been undertaken by Authority Officers.
- 2.8 The focus of waste management and the aim of the Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy – RESOURCE Merseyside, require new ways for dealing with Merseyside’s waste. The Authority continues to look for new and better ways to design and deliver services. The Voluntary and

Community Sector carry out some of the most innovative and effective re-use and recycling work and it makes good business sense to explore further opportunities to support the potential of social enterprises and community groups to deliver projects in the local community.

3. Changes in the Community Voluntary Sector

- 3.1 As shown in 2.1 above the CV sector in Merseyside includes a wide and varied range of organisations, from the small local informally constituted group, to the pioneering not-for-profit social enterprise with a turn-over in excess of £50M.
- 3.2 There has been a marked increase in the last 12 months in applications to the Authority's Community Funding scheme. The high increase in applications from 2009/10 to 2011/12 reflects the reduction of funding now available to the CV sector. Applications to the Community Funding scheme were;
 - 2011/12 for funding up to £3k there were 46 applications and 11 projects were supported. Only 75% of the requested funding was awarded to the successful organisations. This amendment enabled the Authority to support 11, rather than 7 projects, and so achieve better value from the funding support.
 - Over 40 of 2011/12's applications had to be turned down; the vast majority had good merit and, if monies had been available, would have satisfied the assessment criteria. Only 4 projects were excluded due to not meeting the criteria. There was a 657% increase in applications compared to 2010/11.
 - It should be mentioned that over the past 3 years the same level of invitation, promotion and advertising of the Community Fund has taken place.
- 3.3 Providing effective support to the CV sector under the current Community Fund is limited. The current 'one fit for all' criteria is not providing opportunity to support the diverse CV sector organisations equitably.

4. Review of the Community Funding Scheme

4.1 Officers have conducted a review of the current Community Funding scheme to evaluate its success and to determine if the current scheme can effectively support the changing nature of the CVS sector.

4.2 The review provided;

- comparisons with other WDA's Community Funding schemes,
- the outcomes of previously supported projects,
- consideration of changing agenda's
- the direction that the Authority needs to achieve through the funding, and
- Identified improvement opportunities for the future.

4.3 Full details of the outcomes and success of the past three years are attached in Appendix A. Highlights from 2011/12 are;

- 114 people trained in varying skills including furniture collection re-use, WEEE refurbishment and sewing skills,
- 28 Volunteering jobs created,
- CVS / housing association partnership, establishing a 'Dream Team' to address fly tipping and anti-social behaviour,
- 3 food growing projects involving the local community and including awareness raising, addressing inclusion and anti-social behaviour,
- 7 projects included textile diversion from landfill, clothing collections, exchange and awareness events,
- Support for an Eco Resource Network with 500 schools engaged through on-line information, through which 30 schools supported with increased knowledge and support from 10 environmental organisations.

4.4 The review indicates a strong case for strengthening the Community Fund to gain further benefits from projects funded. This will maximise the experience of the community sector in the delivery of the Authority's objectives and offer appropriate opportunities for support. Opportunities would include;

- Training / skills development
- Support for CV sector jobs secured
- Maximising volunteers. The economic value of volunteering is often not recognised but saves organisations money on staffing costs and frees up resources to be used more effectively for service delivery

- Reduction in carbon and resource impacts
- Increased diversion of specific materials away from landfill
- Awareness raising and encouragement of changes in behaviour.
- Support for longer term business stability by capital funding for repairs, refurbishment and replacing worn out equipment to ensure sustainability
- A reduction in 'one off' projects by developing more sustainable, enterprising approaches which could retain project benefits for the longer term.
- For certain project delivery support for CV sector / partnerships that utilise the strengths and experience of other sectors.
- Greater community engagement and awareness through supporting the CV sector through improvements to the application process.

5. Improvements options

5.1 A number of options for improvement to the criteria for the community fund have been considered based upon the evidence of the review. Evaluations of each of the options are identified in the table below.

	Funding Options	Reasons for	Reasons against
Option 1	The Community Fund to remain broadly as the current scheme with minor changes to criteria and increase funding pot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current scheme is known by CV Sector • One funding pot • Equal criteria for all • Can prioritise yearly depending on required needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not equitable – the most experienced organisations usually score high within this criteria • The 'one fit for all' does not maximise the CV sectors diverse nature. • All projects are in competition leaving no scope to support - smaller or inexperienced organisations against the more experienced. • Lack of wider partnership support (i.e. from other experienced organisations, statutory bodies etc) • Lack of sustainability – tends to encourage 'one-off' projects.
Option 2	Split the funding into 3 categories that reflects the CV sector organisations, as per paragraph 9.5. Application process revised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support improves equability for 'like – for like organisations (e.g. schools only competing against 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in application process'

	<p>appropriately for the level of funding involved in each category.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School pots for small projects, requiring minimum criteria, application and assessment process • CV sector capacity support, criteria, application and assessment process • Public /CVS partnership support for up to 3 years for appropriately qualifying projects. Thorough criteria, application, project plan and assessment process 	<p>other schools)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can prioritise the criteria and application process appropriately for each of the 3 categories • Can direct and determine types of projects to support • Can prioritise yearly depending on required needs. 	
Option 3	<p>Split funding into 6 specific themed categories that reflect the objectives of the JMWM Strategy.</p> <p>Support for projects that address these themes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green waste / composting • Textiles • WEEE • Food Waste • Waste Prevention • Improved Recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can direct and determine type of project to support • Can change yearly depending on needs/priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't improve equitability or fit the nature of the CV Sector • Oversubscription for one theme – under for others? Potentially funding not spent in some categories. • A CVS organisation applying to all 6 categories would incur an increase in project management.

5.2 After consideration of the options shown above it is recommended that Option 2 form the basis of improvements to the Community Funding scheme. It is considered that option 2 offers the flexibility and improvement in terms of support for the CV Sector, improvement to the assessment process and resource requirements for administrating the scheme.

5.3 These changes would also allow improvements to evaluation and monitoring of the success of projects. It is the intention to include specific performance indicators, e.g. tonnes diverted, tonnage re-used, employment, training, social inclusion, carbon reduction, increased monitoring of deliverables, as a standard to measure the effectiveness of the Community Fund support.

6. Risk Implications

6.1 Part of the reason for revising the community funding is to address some of the challenges and risk of the current scheme. These have included resource implications due to oversubscription and the lack of support to smaller organisations as they compete with the more established CV sector that are experienced in completing funding application. Option 2 would best reduce the risks associated with the present scheme.

Identified Risk	Likelihood Rating (L)	Consequence Rating (C)	Risk Value (L x C = RV)	Mitigation	Mitigated Risk Value
Over subscription to the fund	4	4	16	Split the funding pot into categories which can support CV sector organisations in the most appropriate way	8
The CV sector not being supported in the right way	3	4	12	Improvement to the process and mechanism to ensure they are appropriate for the funding allocation for each of the 3 categories.	6
Making the funding process too complicated and deterring potential applicants	3	3	9	Seek audit advice to simplify the application process that satisfies transparency and audit.	5
Risk that each category has unsatisfactory uptake	3	3	9	Can't pre determine which CVS will apply – but suggestion is, due to less overall funding opportunities, that interest will be high. However, this risk cannot be mitigated	9
School category- risk of uneven applications from each District	3	3	9	Ensure communication is across all Districts and education networks.	6
Opportunities for working / supporting the CV sector are missed.	3	2	6	Improve communication process to signpost more CV sector groups to funding availability.	2

7. HR Implications

7.1 By addressing the mechanism and the process by which applications are determined, Officer time and efficiency will be improved to manage the funding.

8. Environmental Implications

8.1 The overall aim of the improvement to the Community Fund Scheme is to support and encourage grass roots sustainable solutions at the community level for addressing waste issues relating to the local environment. These improvements will help towards this aim.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 The Community Fund has provided worthwhile and effective local projects. Details of the outcomes and success of the past three years are attached in Appendix A. The increased financial provision would provide the opportunity to support larger more sustainable projects that demonstrate partnership collaboration, as well as continuing with smaller community focused projects.

9.2 There could be opportunity to increase the funding from external sources e.g. the Authority's Waste Management Contracts, (e.g. Veolia E.S, WRG) these possibilities will be explored in the future.

9.3 An opportunity has arisen due to the ending of funding of £30k to Envirolink Programme to redistribute this funding to the Community Fund.

9.4 £20,000 has been earmarked in the Authority's approved revenue budget 2012/13. The Chief Executive recommends that a further £30,000 from within the Strategy Section budget be redistributed to further support this programme, with any category that is under-subscribed being utilised to support categories that are over-subscribed, subject to projects meeting maximum quality standard.

9.5 There will be a report to Members reviewing the achievements of the Community Fund prior to budget setting for 2013/14.

9.6 For 2012 /13 the proposed £50,000 Community Fund to be apportioned as;

Category	Criteria	Funding
Schools projects	Up to £500 for a school project that demonstrate sustainable improvements for the school community. Application on a 'first come first served' basis that satisfy funding criteria.	20 schools Total £10,000
CVS support	Up to £3,000 support for the Community Voluntary Sector One application period per year, evaluation of bids by panel	Minimum of 5 projects supported with maximum £3,000 Total £15,000
CVS partnership projects	£3,000 to £7,000 Expression of interest prior to approval to develop robust project plan Two application periods per year, full project plan evaluated by panel that includes Members. Requirement for projects to demonstrate sustainability. Encouragement that CVS work in collaboration with partners, statutory authorities or other organisations.	Minimum of 3 Projects supported with the maximum of £7,000 Total £25,000

10. Assessment of projects

- 10.1 The Chief Executive has delegated powers to determine the applications. A series of panels will make recommendation for approval.
- 10.2 For those larger project applications, of between £3,000 and £7,000 there will be two application periods per year and will involve an expression of interest stage which, after measuring against criteria, suitable projects will be invited to develop a robust project plan. Members will be invited to participate at a Larger Projects Assessment Panel, alongside Authority Officers and Veolia personnel.
- 10.3 For projects up to £3,000 there will be one application period per year and projects will be assessed according to agreed criteria by a panel of Authority Officers and Veolia personnel. In relation to larger projects and

projects up to £3,000, Authority Members will be consulted prior to final approval of funding awards.

- 10.4 The schools pot, for projects up to £500, will be assessed by merit against agreed criteria and monies allocated on a first come first served basis, again by an Authority officer/Veolia panel.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 Evidence from the Authority review of the Community Fund indicates that improvement to the scheme provides an opportunity in which MRWA can effectively strengthen connections and support the CVS to deliver greater impact in terms of the Authority's overall waste strategy objectives than it could achieve alone. The support will provide a stronger platform for collaboration and partnership working and make funding prospects more equitable.
- 11.2 It will also offer the Authority further opportunity to utilise the experience and knowledge from grass root community organisations who demonstrate successful community led work.
- 11.3 It will provide the opportunity to improve evaluation and monitoring of the success of projects supported from which the Authority will demonstrate efficiencies, performance and the social, environmental impact of the Community Fund for the Authority's stakeholders.

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The background documents to this report are open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of The Local Government Act 1972 - Nil.

Community Fund - Projects Supported

Appendix A

In 2011/12 46 applications to the Community Fund were received and 11 projects were supported by up to 75% of the original funding request. This enabled more projects to be supported than in previous years.

Organisation	Project	Community Funding Award	Benefits
Wirral Partnership Homes	From old to new	£1,283	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing clothes to landfill; Teaching sewing skills to youngsters including life skills Increasing life of products that may otherwise be disposed; Collecting unwanted clothes from community which then remodelled to new designs. Post-project review to evaluate participant's knowledge of re-use and recycling.
15th Fairfield Scouts	Compost and Grow	£2,250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching community how to compost and be self sustainable Wormeries and composters available for residents to use. The products of the decomposed material used to maintain vegetable patches and encourage community grow their own veg. Area of land reclaimed for a wildflower garden and wildlife habitat. Raise environmental awareness. Undertake a habitat survey -phase 1 and then a further 4 times to identify flora fauna and species
North Birkenhead Development Trust	Fashion for Friendship	£1,669	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching both children & adults how to re-work textiles for wear; Increase local recycling; 're-worked' clothes will be exhibited then sold in the St James Op Shop. Raise recycling awareness Encouraging creation of social cohesion 'Volunteer exchange' experience of other best practice community recycling projects. Create environmental consciousness and waste reduction
Working Worms	T.H.R.E.A.D.S	£969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in partnership with housing association to promote carbon benefits. Development of a clothing exchange for recycle textiles; Development of a 'Green Dream Team' of local Volunteer young people. Increase recycling and re-use. Raise awareness and change behaviours.

Organisation	Project	Community Funding Award	Benefits
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversion of textiles from landfill.
Knowsley Community Recycling Services	WIP (working in partnership)	£2,250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme for Volunteers to gain work experience, training and & skills in the furniture re-use sector. • Enhance the present re-use services in Kirkby for the community, securing local jobs. • Divert from household items from landfill. • Reduction in the fly-tipping of unwanted furniture / bulky items.
Weatherhead High School	Weatherheads Eco Schools Action Team	£1,961	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Eco-schools action team and establish 'Recycling Champions' • Embed sustainability further into the school Ethos. • The monitoring and evaluation of the increase of cans and plastic bottles recycled at school; • Change attitudes and habits in school to develop change of habits outside of school. • Promote use of re-useable plastic bottles; • .Decrease amount of school waste sent to landfill
Liverpool World Centre	Building Capacity for Sustainable Schools	£2,216	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a 'Hub' of provider organisations who can advise and deliver environmental themes for schools • Raise awareness of the support and resources available to schools through online survey in 500 schools. • 10 environmental organisations and 30 schools increased knowledge of waste prevention/re-use and recycling schemes and needs. • Conferences and publicity to support provider organisations sign posting help for schools in waste prevention.
Furniture Resource Centre	Coppermine	£2,250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 unemployed trained in 25 days work experience • Skills development in equipment handling, recovery techniques and develop soft skills. • The increased recycling of electrical cables (copper wiring is a precious metal) by segregating into separate recovery stream
Create	Landfill Diversion for Reuse	£2,246	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed adults develop skills and confidence by assisting refurbishment of goods diverted from landfill and re-sold. • Diverting items from landfill. • Refurbishment and safety checks of goods at local re-use shop and making available to low income households.

Organisation	Project	Community Funding Award	Benefits
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and community benefit. • Diversion of precious metals from landfill and use as a secondary resource.
Green Community Shop and Centre	De-junk, rejunk' in the community	£2,250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skills training to the local community on the creative potential of waste • Communal mosaic piece • Workshops for public to learn to create art items through household waste • Expertise and knowledge passed on by local artists'. • Encouraging the re-use of items not currently recycled • re-use by up-cycling through creative endeavours. • Community and social benefit. • Recycling awareness
Hillside Primary school	Creating a Kitchen Garden at Hillside	£600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills for children and adults on growing own food. • Children learning about gardening, team work benefits to the environment • Supporting the Eco-committee to action use of kitchen garden to grow organic vegetables. • Composting of the school kitchen waste to be used in garden. • Recycled rainwater will be used in the garden. • Raise awareness of composting and being sustainable. • Encourage children to eat school dinners so reducing packaging from lunchbox food. • Diverting food waste and packaging from landfill.

In 2010/11 There were 7 applications for Community Funding, 4 projects were supported

Organisation	Project	Community Funding Award	Benefits
Faiths4Change	Simply Living	£4,950.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Green family networks set up • Support for young parents - including advice on food waste, recycling , swap shop of nursery equipment •
Local Area	SHRINE (St Helens	£5,000.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School project developing web-based idea for a recycling challenge game

Partnership for Creative Play	Recycling Initiative for the Neighbourhood)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school parliament conference relating to waste issues.
Love and Joy Ministries Ltd	Lighthouse Green Community	£4,720.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run by Liverpool Lighthouse and partnered by more than 25 other organisations, • 5 workshop / events it successfully engaged with over 2500 people from all sections of Anfield /Everton Communities. • Urban Recycle Fayre Open Day & Clothes Swap Shop, Save Money Save energy Open Day, Green Information Hub, Best Deal Energy – Workshop, Environment Sustainability-Workshop. • Impacts on participants - Committed to increasing their re-use of household items and general recycling 119 adults; • Number of people that made big changes responding to our activities;- Change tariffs, loft insulations, water meters, energy bulbs, buying second-hand furniture, recycling bins etc 50 people; • Change of attitude resulting from attending open days and workshops - from feedback form 125 people; • Expressed social benefit such as saving money, healthy environment, re-use/recycling, warmer homes. 85 adults
Black Box CIC Ltd	More Rubbish!?'	£4,755.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive support for 5 schools over 10 weeks to provide love food hate waste themes in an innovative way, linked to drama, maths and Ks2 curriculum activities. • An end of year showcase performance from each of the schools at the CIC Urban Centre theatre watched by audience of over 400 parents.

In 2009/10 There were 23 applications for Community Funding, 5 projects were supported

Organisation	Project	Community Funding Award	Benefits
Bulky Bob's Ltd	WEEE project	£5,000.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing a difficult material to reuse / recycle. • All operatives skills training in WEEE regulations and recovery practice requirements • Maximising the reuse and recycling potential of televisions and computer monitors collected through the Liverpool City Council bulky household waste collection service
Black Box Creative Communities	Rubbish?!	£4,983.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 Full day workshops in 16 schools across Merseyside • 16 School waste audits • Creative interpretation of recycling issues.

Organisation	Project	Community Funding Award	Benefits
CIC Ltd			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children produced artwork from recycled materials • Performance of drama to whole school.
North Birkenhead Development Trust	Waste Not Want Not	£940.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Community Partnership working together to provide a full week of environmental activities • Re-use swap event • End of week recycling fashion show • Production of project DVD of the events (including match funding) • Locally led community project
Eco Glass Liverpool	Creative Glass Re-use	£5,000.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct recycling but in a unique way. • Majority of money to purchase a refurbished glass kiln. • Skills and training for staff • Recycling project with 4 schools to design then make recycled glass objects. (Potential to extend further in future years).
Live Wirral Wardens	Reducing food waste through the promotion of vermi-composting (wormeries) in schools.	£4,000.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique design for school wormeries built with recycled wooden pallets. • Construction by ex-offenders, • Wormeries used for school awareness raising project to encourage composting and food waste composting