

COMMUNITY FUND 2020-21 ALLOCATION

URGENT DECISION

WDA/10/20

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note the urgent decision made by the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Chairperson, to progress the Community Fund 2020-2021 in consideration of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Urgent Decision made was that project delivery be extended by three months to June 2021 and the payment mechanism for issuing funds be amended to a series of interim payments, paid in advance, with further interim payments made dependent upon the successful delivery of projects.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK

COMMUNITY FUND 2020-21 ALLOCATION**URGENT DECISION****WDA/10/20****Report of the Chief Executive****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 Members are asked to note the Urgent Decision made by the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Chairperson, to progress the Community Fund 2020-2021 in consideration of the Covid-19 pandemic, extending the project delivery date by three months, to June 2021 and amending the payment mechanism for issuing funding, to be made by interim stage payments, paid in advance and dependent on the successful delivery of the project.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its February 2020 Authority meeting (WDA /03/2020) Members approved an increase to the Community Fund budget to £150,000, with the contribution from Veolia ES of £15,000, to give a funding pot for 2020-2021 of £165,000. This increased the allocation for regional projects, i.e. those which cover at least three district areas, to a maximum of £30,000 per project, giving potential for two to four larger scale projects that could achieve greater impact across the region. The remaining funding would be allocated for district projects to a maximum of £8,000, which could support seven to nine individual District projects.
- 2.2 At the meeting, Members also confirmed the arrangement of delegating powers of the Authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairperson, to approve Community Fund projects to be awarded funding in 2020-21
- 2.3 Community Fund 2020-2021 was launched on 17th February 2020 with a submission window of four weeks and applications returned by 15th March.
- 2.4 Assessment of the applications began on the 23rd March and was completed on 14th April. In line with the available funding, and ensuring there was at least one project per District, a list of the projects with the

highest scores from the evaluation was compiled to recommend options for funding.

2.5 Assessment of the 2020-2021 Community Fund coincided with the very start of the lockdown period issued by Government on 23rd March 2020 to contain the Covid-19 virus. At this time, because the consequences of the pandemic were not known, the assessment process continued, and applications assessed in line with the approved scoring criteria.

2.6 In usual circumstances, The Chief Executive would use the powers delegated to him, in consultation with the Chairperson, to approve projects to receive funding in 2020-21.

3 Initial Assessment

3.1 The results of the initial assessment recommended a total of 16 projects to be supported with Community Funding. A list of the projects is in Appendix 1. The total proposed expenditure on the recommended projects is £159,823.25.

4 Review

4.1 Whilst the Authority's approach for Community Fund remained as practically possible 'business as usual' it became clear that lockdown, social isolation, and containment measures would significantly impact the Community Voluntary Sector's ability to progress projects.

4.2 Once the initial funding assessment was completed on 14th April it was felt sensible to consult with all of the Community Voluntary Sector (CVS) applicants to review the situation and consider the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 measures. Also to determine if Organisations would need to cancel their project; which Organisations would need a scope or plan realignment; and which Organisations were able to accept Community Funding and complete their project delivery more or less to plan, albeit with an extension of time.

4.3 All 34 applicants responded to the request for further information due to the Covid-19 situation. Applicants were asked, as best they could know at this point, their ability to proceed with their submitted project.

Review	
1. Confirm you can still proceed with your current project and, with some time adjustment, can expect to complete by March 2020	16

2. That you would require a time extension to complete your project, potentially after March 2021	15
3. That you would prefer to scale down your project so you can complete before March 2021.	2
4. You are no longer in a position to proceed with your project	1

4.4 Once identified above in 4.3, CVS Organisations were asked how they would deliver their project adapting to the containment measures if they were offered Community Funding.

Evidence to proceed	Summary of responses
4. Which elements of your project you will need to change to deliver your project	No significant change other than updating H&S, social distancing measures etc.
	Delay start until after lockdown finishes in line with Gov guidance.
	Move to more on-line deliver and provide on-line resources as appropriate.
5. How you plan to work with Volunteers	Continue to support remotely through digital platforms, online (zoom, you tube etc) and telephone conferencing.
	Ensure working within any Gov. guidelines or best practice that has been advised. Continue with social distancing measures.
	Adapt training for Volunteers to online and provide updated downloadable guidance/manuals/protocols.
	Provide full personal PPE, gloves, and sanitiser as necessary.
6. How you will progress all of your activities	Activities will be progressed as part of a revised project plan. Adjust the project timescale and meet the needs of the local community.
	Due to later start we will double up on workshops from one a week to two a week.
	Expand online presence and recruit more volunteers to online training or awareness sessions over Zoom (or similar).
7. How you will update your risk assessment to factor in the challenges the current situation poses for your delivery.	Regular handwashing and PPE provision consisting of sanitiser, gloves & masks will be available for everyone and used in accordance with Public Health England and Government guidelines.
	Risk assessment will be updated to reflect the situation.
	Strictly address social distancing needs as they apply during the project.
	Risk assessment to incorporate stronger safeguarding measures around online platform use – ensuring two adults on a call, awareness of online safety e.g. password access.
	Continuous review of risks in line with Public Health England and Government guidelines to ensure safety of all involved.

	Consult with Insurers as to the practices they would like us to follow to keep policy conditions.
9. Other Comments (summarised)	<p>Timescale is somewhat dependent on what the landscape looks like as we move through and beyond Covid-19.</p> <p>We believe that following the lifting of some of the current restrictions the amount of waste and donations will increase significantly, we want to be well placed to ensure that these donations don't find their way to disposal.</p> <p>Thank you for the support of the Community Fund, as now, more than ever, the residents of Merseyside will need to make the best use of the resources available to them, to support them through these challenging times.</p>

5 Options Going Forward.

5.1 The Chief Executive In consultation with the Chairperson and the Executive Management Team considered looked at a number of options and considered that the following two options could achieve the Community Fund's planned outcomes taking account of the Covid-19 pandemic;

5.1.1 To not financially support the CVS with Community Funding in this 2020-2021 year. To then launch the 2021 – 2022 Community Fund for application in November 2020, subject to Authority approval at its budget setting meeting. This would be with a view to awarding funding for 2021-2022 in April 2021 for a 12 month project delivery period.

5.1.2 Continue with 2020 – 2021 Community Funding, supporting the recommended projects (see Appendix 1), and incorporating the factors within the review. Awarding funding to Organisations would be delayed until after lockdown has finished (potentially June/July 2020) and projects would be extended by 3 months until June 2021. Most CVS aim to use best endeavours to complete by March 2021 but with the continuing Covid-19 situation it should be assumed delays will be inevitable. To minimise the risk of financial default, awards will be made by interim stage payments, in advance, and be dependent of the successful progress of the project.

5.2 Consideration was given to both options however, it was agreed that the preferred option was to continue with the 2020-2021 Community Funding as outlined in paragraph 5.1.2 above.

6 Risk Implications

6.1 There is no standard risk management procedure for dealing with a worldwide pandemic. The Authority has adapted to events as they have happened. Going forward, it is difficult to predict what the ongoing impact will be. There can be no doubt that supporting Community Fund this year has high risk due to these unprecedented times. However, this could also be an opportunity for the Authority to show ongoing support for the Community Voluntary Sector. The following risks have been considered.

Risk	Impact	likelihood	risk rating	Remarks / mitigation
	1. insignificant	1. Very Unlikely	impact x likelihood	
	2. low	2. Possible	1-6 low	
	3. medium	3. Likely	7-12 medium	
	4. high	4. Very Likely	13-25 high	
	5. critical	5. Certain		
COVID-19				
lockdown continues into summer months (past June/July)	4	3	12	Signs indicate measures to phase opening from lockdown could potentially start end of early June.
				Applicants are continuing with preparation /adjustments for project delivery during lockdown.
				Applicants have revised timescales for delivery to later in year wherever possible.
Resurgence due to lockdown ending too soon	4	3	12	Project delivery will maintain regular handwashing and PPE provision, sanitiser, gloves & masks available and will comply with social distancing measures in accordance with Public Health England and Government guidelines.
Project Lead and/or Volunteers, facilitators become unwell / die from virus	4	3	12	Could stop or significantly delay project until replacement can be in place (if possible). Most applicants indicate that teams will deliver projects and others would cover absences.
2 nd Peak of virus in Oct/Nov	4	4	16	Measures can be put into place quickly to stem the effects of 2 nd phase of virus. Advice will be guided by Public Health England and Government guidelines.
				Review project progress at such time and explore alternative delivery mechanisms e.g. digital platforms.
Projects don't complete by March 2021	4	4	16	Agree an extension until June 2021 to compensate for the 3 months delay due to lockdown. Where possible projects revise timetable to make up time aiming to complete as close to March 2021 as possible.

Projects accept funding but projects don't go ahead or significantly complete	3	3	9	Funding should be released in interim payments with next stages dependent on progress completion to revised plan.
				There is an improved service level agreement. If it becomes necessary a % of funding could be retained/clawed back, determined by amount of progress achieved.
Difficulties in Projects attracting Volunteers	3	3	9	Applicants indicate they are currently providing support for volunteers (telephone, zoom etc) and Volunteers appear keen to get back to normal as soon as possible.
				CVS intend to use multiple communication methods to attract existing Volunteers back and recruit new Volunteers.
Projects that depend heavily on movement / travel, will be affected	3	4	12	CVS intend to use communication methods and digital software (e.g. zoom, Microsoft Team Meetings) to hold online workshops, training, events etc. Many CVS are experienced in being creative with small resources.
Suspend funding award in 2020-21, resume 2021-2022.	3	4	12	It is unknown if the pandemic will be over within the next year. Adaptation to social requirements are ongoing and likely to be in place for significant time.
Authority suffers loss of reputation if funding is suspended or withdrawn	4	4	16	There could be negative media if funding is /suspended withdrawn. CVS /Volunteers have been providing support (e.g. food banks, food / medical deliveries etc) during the pandemic. Suspending funding could damage the Authorities reputation.
				There is risk that suspending funding will negatively impact on any future uptake of Community Funding.
				There is a risk that other behavioural change initiatives (circular economy club, reuse network) could lose future support from CVS and SMEs.

7 HR Implications

7.1 The Authority has sufficient internal staff resources to ensure the delivery of the 2020-21 Community Funding programme. Monitoring visits for determining project progress will be in line with social distancing measures and will use digital meetings to liaise with CVS wherever possible.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 The policy framework and the funding procedure ensures the Community Fund is in line with the Authority's Best Value and fiduciary obligations and supports the Authority's statutory duty to address the Waste Hierarchy in

line with regulation 12 of the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

9 Environmental Implications

- 9.1 Projects that are awarded Community Fund make a major contribution towards the Authority's response to the declaration of a climate emergency, which Members declared in 2019.
- 9.2 Projects awarded funding in 2020-21 will deliver against the Authority's corporate objectives. They offer clear environmental benefits for sustainable waste and resource management by reducing, reusing, and recycling more material and increasing the quality of recyclates. There is potential to encourage wider environmental benefits including reducing litter, fly-tipping and to improve environmental quality in neighbourhoods.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1 Members are asked to note the payment of funding for 2020-2021 will be paid in stages. The Interim payments will be scheduled through the year. The first payment will be awarded in advance so that Organisations can begin project delivery in July.
- 10.2 To reduce the financial risk to the Authority if projects cannot be progressed due to any unavoidable consequences of the pandemic, further interim payments to Organisations will be dependent upon the successful progress of projects through the year.
- 10.3 The final interim payment, subject to successful progress, will be made in March 2021 to complete the Community Fund spend within the 2020-2021 budget year.
- 10.4 This funding procedure for 2020-2021 will ensure that the control measures proposed are commensurate to the budget and the risks associated with achieving value for money.

11 Conclusion

- 11.2 Members are asked to note the urgent decision made by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairperson, to progress the Community Fund 2020-2021 and agreeing that the project delivery be extended by three months to June 2021 due to the delay caused by Covid-19. In addition the issuing of funding for 2020-2021 will be by interim payments and will be dependent upon the ongoing successful delivery of projects.
- 11.3 This will reduce the financial risk to the Authority if projects cannot be progressed due to any unavoidable consequences of the pandemic.

The contact person for this report is Chris O'Brien
7th Floor
No 1 Mann Island
Liverpool L3 1BP

Email: chris.obrien@merseysidewda.gov.uk

Tel: 0151 255 1444

Fax: 0151 227 1848

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

Regional	Organisation and Project.	Key Material	Area	£ award	Organisation Comments from the Review
CF003	United Together- United Giving Ltd	Furniture, Textiles, WEEE HH collections and others, refurbishment and training	6 Districts	£10,297.00	Our plan would be to adjust the timescale for once lockdown is lifted and to do the 12 month plan. We can confirm the project will proceed. The new target commencement date of 3rd August (subject to government conditions)
CF004	Let's Get Merseyside Saving - British Dietetic Association	Food Cooking sessions, education resources and Community Fridges	6 Districts	£29,971.25	We would still like to be considered for funding for 2020-2021, but feel that an extension to complete our project to June/ July 2021 would be helpful to achieve the best outcomes possible.
CF016	10 tonne clothing challenge - Liverpool World Centre	Textiles and Food Schools challenge textiles and food education programme	Knowsley.Lpool, St Helens	£18,070.00	Liverpool World Centre would like to deliver the project in its entirety. However, LWC would like to extend the project until the end of the next academic year (July 2021), bearing in mind the late start (most likely June 2020), and the staggered return of pupils to school. Proposal: Project runs from June 2020 until mid-July 2021
CF010	Your Food Needs You - Global Feedback Ltd	Food Partnership food education and awareness programme	Knowsley.Lpool, Sefton	£19,900.00	We would require a time extension to end of May 2021 to complete all elements of our proposed project.
Total Regional				£78,238.25	

District	Organisation and Project.	Key Material	Area	£ award	Organisation Comments from the Review
CF007	The Community Reward Scheme - Wirral Change	Textiles, Food, Collections for donation to other Organisations. Reward scheme	Wirral	£7,998.00	We will have to change the time scale to 11 months for project delivery from May 2020 till March 2021
CF013	The Big Community Glean Up - Regenerus	Food (general recycling) Innovative, vegetable cooking from gleaning Community meals	Sefton	£7,892.00	We confirm we anticipate being able to proceed with the current project and, with some time adjustment, can expect to complete by March 2020.
CF009	Reuse Hub Halton - Halton Play Council Ltd	Textiles, Furniture, Cardboard, WEEE Skills workshops in textiles and furniture reuse and repair	Halton	£7,969.00	The start date is delayed by 3 months until August/September 2020 and the end date is extended to June 2021. We take the current view that this would allow us to complete the project and deliver the outcome measures we originally proposed for tonnages and participation.
CF017	Let's Speke about Food - Groundwork	Food meal cooking sessions , shared knowledge and workshops and competition	Liverpool	£8,000.00	To confirm Groundwork are still planning to go ahead with Let's Speke about Food and with a slight adjustment in the plan would still aim to complete the project by March 2021 with some key changes to the delivery timetable
CF036	ReStore St Helens - Changing Communities	Furniture Reuse, repurpose repair of furniture and other items.	St Helens	£8,000.00	Unknown timescale but likely to complete by June dependant on return to normal work and reinstating volunteers.

CF030	Around the World in 80 Dishes - Family Refugee Support Project	Food Cooking facilities, recipes and cooking sessions with Refugee and asylum families, meals from around the world	Liverpool	£4,220.00	We would be able to complete the project and can begin the construction phase ASAP. We would delay the classes but all sessions would still be complete before March 2021.
CF022	Waste Not Want Not @ The Hive - Wirral Youth Zone	Food Cooking and food management skills with young people	Wirral	£7,826.00	We can confirm that we will be able to deliver the project by March 2021 by making some simple adjustments. Our proposal includes 3 x 2 hour sessions per week for 40 weeks but as we operate our universal youth work for an average of 5 ½ hours per day, 7 days per week we can easily introduce additional weekly sessions in order to deliver the same number of hours.
CF018	Remake Yourself - Centre 63	Furniture, Food (general recycling) Refurbishment and repair furniture and textiles, cooking skills with	Knowsley	£8,000.00 Adjusted to £6,500 based on 6 months (not 10)	Would prefer to scale down your project so you can complete before March 2021.
CF002	Waste Not Want Not - Hoylake and West Kirby Sea Cadets	Textiles, (general recycling) WEEE Sea Cadets Recycling collection and education programme	Wirral	£1,000.00	We would scale down our project so we can complete before March 2021. there is only a small adjustment - the 'scaling down' only refers to the shorter time left on the project plan for monitoring and reporting of the weekly waste.
CF001	Recycle Reuse and Relove - Wirral Hospice St Johns	Textiles	Wirral	£7,680.00	We would need to do an adjustment for the education element of the project as we were hoping to go into local schools to highlight our project and encourage donations but I feel schools will have other

		Textile collections. Education programme 6 th form and college students creating fashion for Charity shop display			priorities in the months after reopening but we can reassess this later in the year (beginning of 2021) and see if we can restart this aspect of the project. We were also hoping to approach a local 6th form college and liaising with their students to design some upcycled outfits and window dress our shops to promote the project but feel this may not be priority for the college or students. This can be reassessed later in the 12 months.
CF023	From Disposable to Sustainable Fashion - Acronym Community Empowerment	Textiles Sew and mend, swap events, repurposing of textiles	Liverpool	£8,000.00	Originally scheduled at May 4 th completing 28th November 2020. New proposed dates are to start project planning from November 1st - November 15th. Project delivery will run from 15th November - ceasing 21st February 2021. Final evaluations and final reporting completed between 7th January - 14th February 2021.
CF032	Reuse crafting courtyard - Emmaus	Furniture, Textiles Deconstruction and reuse of materials, available for public purchase.	Sefton	£6,500	It would be prudent to request more time to deliver the project given that we hope to work with the local community and engage local schools and as yet we don't have information when schools will be open and restrictions lifted.
Total District				£81,585.00	
Grand Total £159,823.25					