

COMMUNITY FUND 2022-23 OUTCOMES AND 2023- 24 PROGRAMME
WDA /20 /23 REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2023)

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. Note the outcome of the 2022-23 Community Fund Projects.
2. Note the projects supported with Community Funding in 2023-2024.
3. Note the progress of the best practice review of the Community Fund.
4. Consider whether they wish to continue the policy of delegating powers of the Authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairperson, to approve projects subject to the Community Fund being apportioned in line with the agreed funding allocation method.

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COMMUNITY FUND 2023-24**WDA/20/23****Report of the Chief Executive****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the outcome of the 2022-23 Community Fund programme.
- 1.2 Members are asked to note the projects supported with Community Fund for 2023-2024 as approved by the Chief Executive under delegated powers of the Authority.
- 1.3 Members are asked to note the progress of the best practice review of the Community Fund.
- 1.4 Members are asked to consider if they wish to continue the policy of delegating powers of the Authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairperson, to approve projects subject to the Community Fund being apportioned in line with the agreed funding allocation method.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Community Fund supports MRWA's Corporate Plan 2022-24 "To ensure that we reduce the impact of our actions on climate change and improve the sustainable management of waste and resources". The Community Fund is also part of the Authority's Behavioural Change Programme and contributes to the Zero Waste Framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outputs.
- 2.2 The Authority approved the Community Fund Policy Framework and the annual scheme in February 2015 (Report WDA 03/15).
- 2.3 In September 2022 Members agreed to a best practice review of the Community Fund (Report WD 17/ 22).

3. 2022-23 Community Fund Programme outcomes.

- 3.1 The Community Funding 2022-23 was launched on 14th February 2022 and was open for submissions from the Voluntary Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector for 5 weeks, closing on 20th March 2022. 44 bids

were received and the assessment process, using the approved criteria, completed.

- 3.2 16 Organisations received funding; this supported 6 Regional and 10 District projects. In-kind support was also provided by the VCFSE.
- 3.3 Projects addressed one or more of the four priority household waste materials: Food, Furniture, Textiles and all types of Plastics. Some projects also included other household waste materials e.g. paper, card, metals.
- 3.4 Projects finished on 31st March 2023. The end of project reports for each of the Organisations funded can be viewed by request. The table below summarises the total outputs from the sixteen projects.

Outputs	Target	Actual	% Achieved
Tonnes Diverted	114	131	115%
Direct Engagement	15,544	24,557	158%
Volunteer Hours	22,790	22,233	98%
Community Events	58	98	169%
Training Sessions	741	1,353	183%
Wider Engagement (No target is set)	0	19,006	

The tonnage of materials achieved is broken down as

Target 114 tonnes	Achieved tonnage
Food Waste Prevention	98.16
Furniture Repair / Reuse	6.74
Plastics	3.28
Textiles Repair/Reuse	16.94
Other	6.04
Total	131 Tonnes

3.5 Media Coverage

The media coverage generated by the 2022-23 projects included 40 media articles, including national and local press, trade press, web-news and radio appearances, 40 Facebook and 54 Twitter articles. The value of this free press coverage is equivalent to £28,656 paid for coverage.

3.6 Added Value

The outcomes achieved have been measured using metrics based on the average cost of waste diversion, information from studies conducted by WRAP¹ and on proportions of the national Living Wage. This estimates the level of financial investment that would otherwise have been required to achieve these outcomes. See the table in Appendix 1.

3.6.1 This 'added value' can be considered in terms of return on investment (ROI). The 2022-23 Community Fund achieved a R.O.I of 1: 4.6 i.e., for every £1 pound of investment the funding realised £4.60 in equivalent value.

3.6.2 If the 'in-kind support' and VCFSE contribution is also included, the R.O.I is 1:5.1 i.e., for every pound of funding, projects realised £5.10 in equivalent value.

4. 2023-2024 Community Fund.

4.1 The Community Funding 2023-24 launched on 20th February 2023 and was open for submission for 5 weeks, closing on 5th March 2023.

4.2 For 2023-2024, projects addressed one or more of four priority household waste materials: Food, Furniture, Textiles, and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE).

4.3 58 bids were received, an increase of 14 on the previous year and the assessment process, using the approved criteria, completed.

4.4 The Chief Executive continued with the policy of consulting all Members on the final list of preferred projects on the 3rd to 10th May 2023. Under delegated powers of the Authority, the Chief Executive approved 13 projects for support, comprising 4 Regional projects and 9 District projects.

¹ WRAP – The Waste Resources Action Programme - WRAP works with governments, businesses, and communities to deliver practical solutions to improve resource efficiency.

Regional Projects	Supporting Projects
All of the Region	2
Knowsley Liverpool, Sefton & St Helens	1
Knowsley Liverpool, Sefton & Wirral	1

District Specific	Supporting Projects
Knowsley	0
Liverpool	4
Sefton	1
Liverpool / Sefton	1
St Helens	1
Wirral	2
No applications from Halton	0

- 4.5 The total funding approved was £164,945. The financial practice of issuing the grants in stage payments, with funding being paid in advance, will continue for 2023-24 projects. Each subsequent stage will be dependent on the successful ongoing progress of a project.
- 4.6 In terms of monitoring performance and the impacts of the 2023-2024 projects, VCFSME Organisations are required to provide regular information on project key outputs, monetary spend and evidence of the social value achieved during the delivery of projects.
- 4.7 The final outcomes for those receiving funding in 2023-2024 will be reported to the Authority in 2024.

5 Community Fund Review 2024-2025

- 5.1 In September 2022 Members agreed to a best practice review of Community Fund. The purpose of the review is to ensure the programme offers best value for the Authority and the VCFSE sector; that the programme aligns with corporate aims, and better supports the behavioural change programme and the Zero Waste Framework.
- 5.2 In preparation of the review an on-line application process, on the Authority website, was trialled in 2023-2024. All Applications were submitted on-line, with no requests for a hard copy version of the application form. 58 bids were received, an increase of 14 on the previous year and feedback from applicants was positive for the on-line application.

5.3 Work has begun to consult with the VCFSE sector on future development of the Community Fund, the outcome from which will be a consideration of any improvements to the programme.

5.4 Any recommendations for changes to the Community Fund will allow sufficient time to develop the proposal, make recommendations, and implement.

6 Risk Implications

6.1 The following risks were considered for the 2023-2024 Community Fund Programme.

Identified Risk	Likelihood Rating	Consequence Rating	Risk Value	Mitigation
Projects under perform in terms of value added.	2	3	6	Continue to monitor and evaluate outputs and outcomes prior / post award. Provide support and assistance to projects. Hold a networking event so that VCFSE can share best practice, lessons learnt and ideas.
Challenge by unsuccessful applicants for the grant	2	2	4	Members have approved a policy framework and the funding criteria that must be met. This process has also been verified by audit. This ensures the evaluation process is equitably applied to all applications. Feedback will be offered to unsuccessful applicants when requested.
Lack of funding requests because using an 'on-line' application on Authority website	3	3	9	Clear guidance given with the application. An automated receipt will be generated on submission to acknowledge the received application Paper copies available for organisations not able to access on-line
Projects accept funding but projects don't go ahead	3	3	9	Funding released in interim payments with next stages dependent on progress completion to revised plan. Parties agree to a service level agreement. If it becomes necessary a % of funding could be retained/clawed back, determined by the amount of progress achieved.
Project Lead and/or Volunteers, Facilitators unavailable	4	3	12	This could stop or significantly delay project until replacement can be in place. Most Organisations work in teams to deliver projects and others will cover absences.
Difficulties in Projects attracting Volunteers	3	3	9	Additional support for volunteers (telephone, zoom, mental health resilience, etc). CVS intend to use multiple communication methods to help existing and recruit new Volunteers.
Projects don't complete by March 2023	4	4	16	Where possible revise timetable to make up time aiming to complete as close to March 2023 as possible.
Ongoing COVID-19 Risks in 22-23				
Resurgence of virus mutations	4	3	12	Project delivery will comply with measures in accordance with Public Health England and Government guidelines.
				Due to lessons learnt, measures can be put into place quickly to stem the effects of resurgence of virus. Review project progress at such time and explore alternative delivery mechanisms e.g., digital platforms.
Projects that depend heavily on movement / travel, being affected	3	4	12	CVS will use communication methods and digital software (e.g., zoom, You-Tube, Microsoft Teams) to hold online workshops, training, events etc. if travel becomes difficult.

7 HR Implications

- 7.1 The Authority has sufficient internal staff resources to ensure the delivery of the 2023-2024 Community Funding programme.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The policy framework and 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 awarded Community Funding contribute towards the Authority's response to the 'declaration of a climate emergency', which Members declared in 2019. Projects will demonstrate progress against the Zero Waste Framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- 9.2 Projects awarded funding in 2023-24 will deliver against the Authority's corporate objectives. They offer clear benefits for sustainable waste and resource management by reducing, re-using, refurbishing, and recycling more material and increasing the quality of recyclates.

10 Financial Implications

- 10.1 To minimise the risk of financial default, awards will be made by interim stage payments, paid in advance, and released dependent upon continued successful progress of projects.
- 10.2 The policy and funding procedure ensure that the control measures proposed are commensurate to the budget and the risks associated with achieving value for money.

11 Conclusion

- 11.1 Members are asked to note the outcome of the 2022-2023 Community Fund projects.

- 11.2 Members are asked to note the projects supported with Community Fund in 2023-2024. Projects will provide waste prevention, re-use and recycling activities, and will deliver core objectives and best value outcomes.
- 11.3 Members are also asked to note the progress of the best practice review of the Community Fund.
- 11.4 The Community Fund will maintain a high standard of governance and delivery of sustainable waste management projects across the Region and will contribute to solutions for the Authority's behavioural change programme, Sustainable Development Goals and the response to the declaration of a climate emergency (2019).
- 11.5 The final outcomes for projects funded in 2023-2024 will be reported to Members in 2024.
- 11.6 Any future recommendations to changes to the policy framework and apportionment of the funding will continue to be the subject of a report to Members.
- 11.7 Members are asked if they wish to continue the policy of delegating powers of the Authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairperson, to approve projects subject to the Community Fund being apportioned in line with the agreed funding allocation method.

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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