

**COMMUNITY FUND 2023-24 OUTCOMES AND THE ZERO WASTE COMMUNITY
FUND 2024- 25 PROGRAMME**
WDA/44/24

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. Note the outcome of the 2023-24 Community Fund Projects.
2. Note the projects supported with Zero Waste Community Funding in 2024-2025.
3. Confirm 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 Zero Waste Community Fund being apportioned in line with the agreed funding allocation method.

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ZERO WASTE COMMUNITY FUND 2024-25**WDA/44/24****Report of the Chief Executive****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the outcome of the 2023-24 Community Fund programme.
- 1.2 Members are asked to note the projects supported with Zero Waste Community Fund for 2024-2025 as approved by the Chief Executive under delegated powers of the Authority.
- 1.3 Members are asked to confirm 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 Zero Waste Community Fund being apportioned in line with the agreed funding allocation method.

2. Background

- 2.1 Community Funding supports MRWA's Corporate Plan 2024-25 "To ensure that we reduce the impact of our actions on climate change and improve the sustainable management of waste and resources". Community Funding is also part of the Authority's Behaviour 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).

3. 2023-24 Community Fund Programme outcomes

- 3.1 The Community Funding for 2023-24 was launched on 20th February 2023 and was open for submissions from the Voluntary Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector for 5 weeks, closing on 26th March 2023. 58 bids were received and the assessment process, using the approved criteria, completed.
- 3.2 13 Organisations received the £165,000 funding: this supported 4 Regional and 9 District projects. In-kind support was also provided by the VCFSE.

3.3 Projects addressed one or more of four priority household waste materials: Food, Furniture, Textiles, and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE). Some projects also included other household waste materials e.g. paper, card, metals.

3.4 Projects finished on 31st March 2024. The end of project reports for each of the Organisations funded can be viewed by request. A booklet “23-24 Zero Waste Community Fund Summary” is available which outlines the success of each project.

The table below shows the total outputs from the thirteen projects.

Outputs	Target	Actual	% Achieved
Tonnes Diverted	534	467.39*	87.40%
Direct Engagement	16,386	16,533	100.90%
Volunteer Hours	16,747	14,547	86.86%
Community Events	95	130	136.84%
Training Sessions	558	601	107.71%
Wider Engagement	65,490	81,348	136.84%

The tonnage of materials is broken down as,

	Achieved tonnage
Food Waste Prevention	344.88
Furniture Repair / Reuse	24.76
Textiles Repair/Repurpose	71.62
WEEE	6.91
Other	19.22
Total	*467.39 Tonnes

3.5 Media Coverage

The media coverage generated by the 2023-24 projects included 26 media articles, counting national and local press, trade press, web-news and included 4 BBC Radio Merseyside appearances. There were 4,582 Facebook articles and 11,344 Twitter impressions. The value of this free press coverage is equivalent to more than £10,415 paid for coverage.

3.6 Social Value

MRWA has developed a draft Social Value Framework, we will be working with a Social Value provider to do a gap analysis and establish a set of relevant metrics which can be used to measure social value across the organisation. Once this is done the Zero Waste Community Fund 23/24 social value will be retrospectively measured and going forward there will be a consistent and reliable metric. Members will be kept updated on social value progress.

3.7 Members will be interested to know that in October 2023 MRWA/Veolia won the “Best Waste Minimisation or Prevention” award for the Community Fund 2022-23 programme at the prestigious Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) annual conference.

4. Zero Waste Community Fund 2024-2025

- 4.1 Members approved improvements to the funding in November 2023 (see report WDA/24/23) including a change to the name of the fund to the Zero Waste Community Fund.
- 4.2 Before the Covid pandemic, Members requested MRWA hold a celebration event (see report WDA/03/20) to highlight successful projects from past years. The event was held this year on the 6th of February 2024 at the Florence Institute in Liverpool. Twenty Organisations attended and the feedback was positive. The VCFSE appreciated the event, the chance to celebrate the funding and the opportunity to network with other organisations.
- 4.3 The Zero Waste Community Funding 2024-25 was also launched at the event. Applications were open for submissions from the 6th February until 5th March 2024.
- 4.4 56 applications were received and the assessment process, using the approved criteria, completed. Projects addressed one or more of five priority household waste materials: Food, Furniture, Textiles, Plastics and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE).

- 4.5 The Chief Executive continued with the policy of consulting Members on the list of recommended projects on the 16th to 19th April 2024. Under delegated powers of the Authority, the Chief Executive approved 16 projects for support, comprising 3 Regional projects and 13 District level projects. See Appendix for a summary of the projects supported.
- 4.6 The total funding approved was £164,995.21. The financial practice of issuing the grants in two or three stage payments, with the first stage funding being paid in advance, will continue for 2024-25 projects. Each subsequent stage will be dependent on the successful ongoing progress of a project.
- 4.7 In terms of monitoring performance VCFSE Organisations are required to provide regular information on project key outputs, monetary spend and evidence of any added value achieved during the delivery of projects.
- 4.8 The final outcomes for those receiving Zero Waste Community Funding in 2024-2025 will be reported to the Authority in 2025.

5 Risk Implications

- 5.1 The following risks were considered for the 2024-2025 Zero Waste 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 an early networking event so that VCFSE can share best practice, lessons learnt and ideas. MRWA is exploring suitable Social Value framework, which will be used to measure the ZWCF at the end of the 2024-25 programme
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 is given to unsuccessful applicants. Detailed feedback will be provided upon request.
Lack of funding requests because using an 'on-line' application on Authority website	3	3	9	Promotional schedule used, including CVS funding days. Clear guidance given with the application. An automated receipt is 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 Funding 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 put in place.

Identified Risk	Likelihood Rating	Consequence Rating	Risk Value	Mitigation
				Most Organisations work in teams to deliver projects and others will cover absences.
Difficulties in Projects attracting Volunteers	3	2	6	<p>VCFSE will provide additional support for volunteers (telephone, zoom, mental health resilience, etc).</p> <p>VCFSE intend to use multiple communication methods to help existing and recruit new Volunteers.</p> <p>MRWA Communication Team will support project promotion with press releases, social media, promotional booklet and other available methods.</p>
Projects don't complete by March 2025	4	4	16	Where possible revise timetable to make up time aiming to complete as close to March 2025 as possible.

6 HR Implications

6.1 The Authority has sufficient internal staff resources to ensure the delivery of the 2024-2025 Zero Waste Community Funding programme.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The policy framework and funding procedure ensures the Zero Waste 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).

8 Environmental Implications

8.1 Projects awarded Zero Waste 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.

8.2 Projects awarded funding in 2024-25 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.

9 Financial Implications

9.1 To minimise the risk of financial default, awards will be made by interim stage payments, the first paid in advance, and further stages released dependent upon continued successful progress of projects.

- 9.2 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.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 Members are asked to note the outcome of the 2023-2024 Community Fund projects.
- 10.2 Members are asked to note the projects supported with Zero Waste Community Fund in 2024-2025. Projects will provide waste prevention, re-use and recycling activities, and will deliver core objectives and best value outcomes.
- 10.3 The Zero Waste 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).
- 10.4 The final outcomes for Zero Waste Community Fund projects in 2024-2025 will be reported to Members in 2025.
- 10.5 Any future recommendations to changes to the policy framework and apportionment of the funding will continue to be the subject of a report to the Authority.
- 10.6 Members are asked to confirm 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 Zero Waste 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