

COMMUNITY GRANTS 2022/23 UPDATE

People & Places Advisory Committee – 3 October 2023

Report of: Sarah Robson, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer People & Places

Status: To Note

Also considered by:

Cabinet – 9 November 2023

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary This report sets out monitoring information about the Community Grants delivered in 2022/23.

This report supports the Key Aim of: the Council's Community Plan.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Lesley Dyball

Contact Officer(s): Jenny Godfrey x7112; Kelly Webb, Ext. 7474

Recommendation to People and Places Advisory Committee:

That Members note this report.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

(a) That Members note this report.

Reason for recommendation: Projects, services and activities have been delivered as a result of the grants awarded under the Sevenoaks District Community Grants Scheme for 2022/23. This report provides feedback on the outcomes of these initiatives.

Introduction and Background

1. The Council's Community Grant Scheme supports local charities and voluntary sector organisations that, through their work, contribute to the priorities set out in the Community Plan 2022-32.
2. For the 2022/23 period, 18 Community Grants were awarded totalling £49,800. Appendix A provides the full list of projects, services and activities funded.

3. Each Community Grant is awarded with a set of conditions which include the following for the charities and voluntary sector organisations to report back on:
 - Number of beneficiaries of the grant.
 - Number of volunteers used to deliver the project, service or activity.
 - Key Performance Indicator (KPI). Examples include: number of families benefiting from therapy; number of beneficiaries signposted to valuable information; number of beneficiaries reporting improved health and wellbeing; and; number of beneficiaries showing increased confidence.
 - Case Study demonstrating benefits of grant funding.
 - Description of any changes made when delivering the project, service or activity.
 - Any lessons learnt from the project, service or activity.
4. For all 18 grants awarded, 73% of the Key Performance Indicators were met or exceeded. This is below the target of 80%. Key reasons:
 - The KPI data return for one project was withdrawn as accurate data was unavailable. The project involved the design and creation of a specialist space targeted at a particular audience. This has been successfully achieved and the space is used and valued. A detailed case study and beneficiary feedback has however been provided and is included as part of Appendix B.
 - Volunteering issues – recruitment continues to be an issue and this affected the delivery of some of the projects, activities and services.
5. Appendix B includes example Case Studies from 2022/23. Two of these are included in the Council's September 'In Shape' Magazine to help promote the Community Grant Scheme.

Social Value Engine and its application to 2022/23 Community Grant monitoring

6. In January 2023 using funding from the UK Prosperity Fund, the Council purchased licences to use 'the Social Value Engine' ('SVE') which has been jointly developed by Rose Regeneration and East Riding Council.
7. In addition to monitoring the tangible costs (i.e. funding, resourcing including number of volunteers required) and outputs (i.e. number of beneficiaries) for a project, service or activity, the SVE assists with quantifying the wider social, economic and environmental outcomes. Social Value asks the question 'if £x is spent on delivering a project, service or activity, what is the value of that same £x in terms of wider benefits for the local community?' Examples of social value might be the value community members experience from increasing their confidence or reducing their isolation; or it could be the value to an individual of feeling like they belong in their neighbourhood/community.
8. The SVE provides:

- A systemised and academically robust assessment of social value for you to forecast, plan and evaluate your activities.
 - More than 200 peer-reviewed financial proxies derived from reliable sources, which are regularly updated, including provision of a direct link to the academic paper or report of the source of the financial proxy.
 - A description of how a project creates value and a ratio that states how much social value (in £) is created for every £ of investment.
 - An overview of how your activities are making a place better to live in and more sustainable.
 - A PDF copy of the report generated by the engine.
 - A programme function that collates all your social value together to calculate your overall social value return.
9. The data and performance indicators from the 2022/23 Community Grants has formed part of the initial exploration of the SVE. The performance indicators have been used to begin creating a menu of KPIs for future Community Grants (see paragraphs 10 & 11). By way of example, the SVE has demonstrated that based on the value of volunteering alone (using SVE proxy 'value placed by a local authority on volunteering'), the Community Grants awarded in 2022/23 (using 34,629 hours) achieved a social return that exceeded the £49,800 investment after 2 months. This equates to:
- £458k Net Present Value (in this instance relates to: the return on the initial investment minus the £49,800 initial investment).
 - £9.21 per £1 Net Social Return on Investment (measures change in ways that are relevant to the people or organisations that experience or contribute to it. It tells the story of how change is being created by measuring social, environmental and economic outcomes and uses monetary values to represent them. So here, every £1 invested delivers the equivalent of £9.21 in social value. Social Value is a value rather than money. Money is simply a common unit and as such is a useful and widely accepted way of conveying value.)
10. Going forward, each grant awarded will have social return (using proxies most relevant to the individual projects, services and activities) measured against investment and this will form part of the monitoring and reporting process.
11. The SVE proxies are now being used to develop a menu of KPIs for applicants to choose from when applying for 2024/25 grant (applications open September 2023). These will form part of the conditions of grants and be used to monitor the outcomes. This approach is beneficial not only for streamlining the reporting and monitoring but also for sharing the outcomes in a quick, simple and effective way. The charities and voluntary sector organisations will also be able to use these outcomes for presenting to others including potential funders.
12. In addition, this menu of proxies is also going to form a list that other departments in the Council can select when using the SVE to monitor their projects, services and activities.

13. Further information on the SVE and proxies will be included in the report for recommended Community Grants for 2024/25 which is presented in early 2024.

Key Implications

Financial

14. None.

Resources (Non Financial)

15. The work connected with the Community Grant Scheme administration and monitoring is being undertaken through existing resources.

Legal implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

16. There are no legal issues relating to this report. All organisations applying for and receiving funding are required to have an equalities policy (or have signed to say they will adhere to the District Council's policy) and where appropriate child protection and/or adult protection policies.
17. The following table shows the risks and their mitigation.

Risk	Mitigation
As a condition of the grant any organisation allocating onward funding on behalf of the Council to another organisation must check whether appropriate police checks and child or vulnerable adult protection policies are in place.	Condition of grant to ensure checks carried out and that application forms seek confirmation. Monitoring process confirms that an effective process is in place.
Grant allocations not spent in accordance with grant applications.	A monitoring process is in place to ensure grants are being spent in accordance with the grant applications made.

Equality Assessment

18. Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this report

directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The summary results of this analysis are set out immediately below.

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	This community grant scheme assists with the provision of services to support Sevenoaks District residents, particularly those in the greatest need. Therefore this decision being made or recommended through this paper does not have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	Yes	The grant scheme provides funding for specific groups, such as older people, families, young people and people with disabilities. The grants scheme is widely publicised (and case studies of previously funded projects, activities and services included) to ensure that groups serving a wide range of needs are able to apply.
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		No negative impacts identified

Net Zero Implications

19. The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

Conclusions

20. The work of the voluntary sector across the Sevenoaks District is highly valued. The Council's grants programme supports the dedication and commitment of the many volunteers who help the most vulnerable people in the District. Members are asked to note this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Full list of projects, services and activities funded in 2022/23.

Appendix B – Example Case Studies from 2022/23 Community Grants.

Sarah Robson

Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer People & Places