

Executive Report

Proposed VCS Prevention & Wellbeing Grant Fund

Decision to be taken by: Assistant City Mayor, Adult
Social Care

Decision to be taken on: TBC

Lead director: Steven Forbes



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

- 1.1 A consultation exercise took place between 14th June and 31st August 2017 to determine if there was interest in the creation of a Prevention and Wellbeing Grant Fund. The fund was intended to give the voluntary sector better opportunity to provide diverse and innovative approaches to prevention.
- 1.2 The proposed Prevention and Wellbeing Grant Fund would be financed by using up to £750,000 one off monies from ASC budget underspends in 2016-17, creating an annual fund of £250k for up to 3 years with effect from 1st April 2019, with the fund being launched in June 2018.
- 1.3 The purpose of the grant fund was to help people who are at risk of developing social care needs to avoid or delay those needs, to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing, and to live as independently as possible. The proposed grant allowance would be for up to three projects per organisation per annum and £10,000 per project giving a maximum funding envelope of £30,000 per annum, per organisation.
- 1.4 It was also intended that the fund would provide an opportunity for organisations that may lose out as a result of ASC reducing funding to the VCS, to bid to receive funding for their current or alternative activities. However the fund would be open to any VCS groups who could evidence need and demonstrate that they were capable of responding to those needs. Separate reviews are in progress for services affected by the reductions and these will be shared with Scrutiny in due course.
- 1.5 Overall the responses indicated that there was no clear coherent perception in support of the grant. Out of 113 respondents, the majority 33% said they agreed with all of the key features of the proposal. However, 40% of respondents either didn't agree with any of the key features of the proposal, didn't answer the question or preferred not to say. A total of 27% of respondents agreed with just some of the key features of the proposals.
- 1.6 Further analysis of the responses that did not agree with some or all of the key features provided the following themes on reasons for disagreeing with the grant proposals; 44% of responses indicated that they thought the proposals were another way of imposing cost savings by the Council or that the proposed maximum levels of funding (£10k per project) were not large enough.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Executive is recommended to

- a) consider the consultation report set out in Appendix A
- b) decide whether to proceed with the proposed Prevention and Wellbeing Grant Fund in light of the consultation responses received.

3. Supporting information including options considered:

3.1 It was agreed by the Executive on 25 May 2017 to consult on the proposal to set up a Prevention and Wellbeing Grant Fund using up to £750,000 one off monies. This would create an annual fund of £250k for up to 3 years with effect from 1st April 2019, with the fund being launched in June 2018.

3.2 It was proposed that the fund would be targeted at VCS organisations to support people who are at risk of developing social care needs to avoid or delay those needs, to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing, and to live as independently as possible.

3.3 It was also intended to provide an opportunity for organisations that may lose out as a result of ASC making savings to bid to receive funding for their current or alternative activities. The consultation exercise with the VCS regarding the proposed changes was paused as a result of feedback from providers. In response to the feedback we have engaged with providers to ascertain their views on future service models. This engagement exercise is supporting the development of proposals for future services, which will be shared with Scrutiny prior to the re-launch of the consultation in the near future.

Overview of consultation responses

3.4 Overall from the responses there was no clear coherent perception in support of the grant. Out of 113 respondents:

- 33% said they agreed with all of the key features of the proposal,
- 40% of respondents either didn't agree with any of the key features of the proposal, didn't answer the question or preferred not to say.
- A total of 27% of respondents agreed with just some of the key features of the proposals :

3.5 Further analysis of the responses that did not agree with some or all of the key features of the proposal shows that 44% thought the proposals were another way of imposing cost savings by the Council or that the proposed maximum levels of funding (£10k per project) were not large enough.

3.6 There was no consensus on the type of service users that should be targeted for support through the proposed grants scheme:

- 38% suggested the grant should be targeted at all groups,
- 30% proposed that the target should be to focus on the elderly,
- 25% recommended that the grant be targeted at people with a disability; and
- 5% suggested that the grant be focused at supporting young people.

3.7 When asked what types of activities should be supported there was a broad

response with no particular type of activity proving overwhelmingly popular:

- 17(20%) stated Isolation / Communication Activities,
- 14 (16%) stated Lunch Clubs,
- 12 (14%) Carer Visits / Support,
- 11(13%) All Types of Support Needed,
- 11(13%) Other and
- 10 (11%) Vista Support. Small numbers of respondents also mentioned Mental Health, Physical Activity, Young Age Group and Finally Don't Understand / More Information.

3.8 The top three areas highlighted were Isolation / Communication Activities, Lunch Clubs and Carer Visit / Support. Vista support scored highly in the type of projects that respondents thought should be supported. Vista received additional funding from Leicester City Council to translate the consultation materials into accessible formats for the sensory impaired to assist their service users in completing the consultation survey. We are not aware that any other organisation requested similar funding so this may explain the high level of support expressed for Vista.

3.9 There was also a relatively even split when respondents answered the question on whether there should be specific areas of the City subject to targeting through the grant scheme:

- 37% agreed that specific areas of the City should be targeted,
- 28% didn't agree with this and
- 35% didn't know or weren't sure.

3.10 Respondents were asked for any further comments and a total of 51 respondents completed this section of the consultation survey, 22 of these comments did not support the proposed approach and 19 expressed support, the remaining comments were neutral. Examples of supportive comments were; "we have to agree, the alternative is nothing" and "The grant fund will allow for innovative solutions to be developed providers who have knowledge and expertise in certain fields". There were, however, a substantial number of comments that expressed significant reservations regarding the grant proposal. Comments such as "No, I think current funding should be kept as it is" and "I agree with the proposal, but this should be in addition to currently funded service/projects, not as a replacement" and "The grant fund needs to be long term to ensure continuity" demonstrate that even where respondents were supportive of the proposal there were significant concerns over whether the grant fund would be sustainable or any more effective than the current position.

3.11 Finally, respondents were asked: *Overall, do you agree or disagree with the proposal to set up a grant fund for adult social care prevention and wellbeing? Please tick one box.*

The majority of respondents (44%) agreed with the proposals but a high percentage of respondents either didn't know or weren't sure whether they agreed and when these were added to those who disagreed with the proposals, 56% of respondents did not express support for the grant scheme.

Summary of findings

3.12 As described above the consultation into the proposed VCS Prevention and Wellbeing Grant scheme did not demonstrate overwhelming support and there was little consensus around the types of beneficiaries, services and areas of the City that should be supported.

4. Details of Scrutiny

The Strategic Director for ASC presented a report to the Scrutiny Commission on 29th June 2017, which provided an overview of the proposed changes to preventative services, which included details of the prevention and well-being grant fund. The Grant fund was generally considered to be a positive initiative. Concerns were expressed that the remit of the grant should include questions about longer term sustainability of services. The Strategic Director explained that the grant gave a modest sum of money to groups to help them get their project started and it was not aimed at long term investment in specific projects. Concerns were also raised about the application process for the grant needing to be simple. Next steps from the Commission: the consultation feedback to come to a future meeting.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report. However, if we decide to go ahead with the grant scheme the one-off funding of £750k over 3 years is available.

Rohit Rughani
Principal Accountant
X37 4003

5.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report. In terms of consultation responses, in order for consultation to be meaningful, the responses must be fully considered prior to and during the making of the final decision.

In the event there are any significant changes to the proposal put to consultation which are not arrived at as a consequence of the consultation responses and which are markedly different so as to be an issue in light of the Sedley principles of fairness consultation should be considered. For the avoidance of doubt this would not include deciding to take no further action and maintaining the status quo however legal advice should be sought on the final proposal as a result of this report.

Emma Horton, Head of Law (Commercial, Property & Planning)

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

No Climate Change Implications

5.4 Equalities Implications

Under our Public Sector Equality Duty, when making decisions, the decision maker must be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, it must consider the likely impact of those likely to be affected by the recommendation; their protected characteristics; and (where negative impacts are anticipated) mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce or remove that negative impact. The outcome of the fund consultation process would need to be considered as there was no clear coherent perception in support of the grant, therefore the equality implications would need to be considered for the full range of options as part of any continuing work in relation to the grant fund being established.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:

25th May 2017: Executive: *ASC VCS Prevention Services*

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – Consultation Report

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

Consultation findings will be published on the website further to the outcome of this report

9. Is this a “key decision”?

Yes

10. If a key decision please explain reason

Due to the financial implications