

<b>Committee(s):</b> Community and Health Committee	<b>Date:</b> 16 March 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Review of Grant Funding for Voluntary Sector Partnerships	<b>Wards Affected:</b> ALL
<b>Report of:</b> Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author/s:</b> Lucy Gill, Community, Leisure and Wellbeing Officer Telephone: 01277 312500 E-mail: <a href="mailto:lucy.gill@brentwood.gov.uk">lucy.gill@brentwood.gov.uk</a>	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

There has been an active and admirable response to the COVID-19 pandemic by voluntary organisations. The response has offered the opportunity to consider and review the current partnership arrangements the Council holds with voluntary sector organisations and how these can be more effective going forward.

### Recommendation(s)

**Members are asked to:**

**R.1 Agree for officers to undertake a review of current partnerships arrangements with voluntary sector organisations, and;**

**R.2 Agree to continue current funding and partnership arrangements for the forthcoming financial year of 2021/2022, whilst a comprehensive review of grant funding and other voluntary sector contributions is undertaken.**

**R.3 Agree for a full review to be brought to the Community and Health September committee.**

### Main Report

#### **Introduction and Background**

1. Currently, the Council has partnership and grant funding agreements which are reviewed every 3 years with three key voluntary sector organisations:
  - Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services
  - Brentwood Community Transport
  - Citizens Advice South Essex (formally Citizens Advice Brentwood)
  
2. These current arrangements were due to be reviewed by March 2021 for another three years. Due to the pandemic, and Essex County Council pausing their funding review, it was felt that Brentwood would do the same so that

funding is aligned with relevant KPI's and that a review is now undertaken and that a report is brought back to the September Community and Health Committee.

3. The Council also makes a number of additional contributions to the voluntary sector annually by way of delivering the Brentwood Community Fund, the Mental Health Small Grants Scheme, Active Essex and the Health and Wellbeing Board coordination and delivery, plus general support for third sector organisations on development, promotional and support.

### **Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

4. The pandemic has changed the landscape of local need and how this can be met by the voluntary organisations we support.
5. Additionally, the community response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been invaluable to supporting vulnerable residents with the development of new support hubs and volunteer networks. As we move into the recovery phase of COVID-19 it is important to harness this development to continue to support our residents and needs that have arisen or become more prevalent as a result of the pandemic.
6. Similar review work is also being undertaken by Essex County Council and Brentwood Borough Council should ensure that we are working together to align agreements and KPIs for ease of reporting moving forward.
7. Upon review, Council officers will consider a number of areas, such as feedback from existing initiatives and programmes, delivery of desired outcomes and their continued relevance and accessibility of service such as the use of digital technology and those in more rural locations.

### **Reasons for recommendation**

8. To ensure that the Council's voluntary sector partnerships continue to be relevant, efficient and deliver outcomes appropriate to the landscape.

### **Consultation**

9. None is required at this stage – voluntary partners, service users and stakeholders will be consulted as part of the wider review and the Council will consider work of partner organisations such as Essex County Council.

## References to Corporate Plan

The review supports a number of priorities under the Developing Communities strand, supporting the most vulnerable in our community and ensuring residents can access the right services in the right way.

## Implications

### Financial Implications

**Name/Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Director of Corporate Resources**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312829/jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk**

The extension of current agreements for an additional financial year will be met by existing budgets:

Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services	£10,000 (General Fund)
Citizens Advice South Essex	£ 59,000 (£56,000 General Fund, £3,000 Housing Revenue Account)
Brentwood Community Transport	£26,000 (General Fund)
Brentwood Community Fund	£16,300 (General Fund)
Mental Health Small Grants Scheme	£10,000 (General Fund)

### Legal Implications

**Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312500/amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk**

The Council must when providing grant monies ensure that there is a fair process in place and that the monies available are distributed to ensure the best value for the Borough.

The Council should in making decisions ensure that it follows good governance, transparency and ensure that any application process for grant funding does follow the policies and procedures in place. Having these in place will mitigate challenges to decisions being made by the Council.

### Economic Implications

**Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director of Planning and Economy**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk**

Voluntary organisations and partnership working provides a vital component to the local economy both directly and indirectly. A review of partnership arrangements and voluntary sector contributions should strengthen the efficiency of our local offer, benefitting the local economy.

### Equality and Diversity Implications

**Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Partnerships, Leisure & Funding Manager**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312634/kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk**

The Council ensures that the allocation of funding to community organisations supports all in the community including those with protected characteristics.

**Health & Wellbeing Implications**

**Name/Title: Jo Cory, Corporate Health & Wellbeing Officer**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312688/jo.cory@brentwood.gov.uk**

Providing support and access to services for residents through these community organisations and funding programmes is vital to promote good health and wellbeing across the community, helping to reach the most vulnerable residents who may be more at-risk following the impact of the pandemic.

**Other Implications**

None

**Background Papers**

None

**Appendices to this report**

None