

<b>Decision maker:</b>	<b>Cabinet member health and adult wellbeing</b>
<b>Decision date:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 18 December 2019</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Community Seed Funding Grant</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Community capacity and wellbeing manager</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Non-key

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose and summary**

To approve the launch of a community seed funding grant scheme.

The aim of the grant is to help address local wellbeing challenges by working through community hubs and other means focusing on how people support themselves, and can be supported in their local communities.

The council is working with communities to help them support people at a local level by providing access to information, advice and signposting within their own community settings. The grants will help people to connect with each other and to engage in activities in their community, through a community group/hub supporting people to help themselves and each other to remain well and independent.

The purpose of the seed funding is to help communities to provide local signposting, information and activities in a local hub or community setting, promoting wellbeing and independence.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- (a) the community seed funding grant scheme as detailed in Appendix A and Appendix B be approved with a non-recurring scheme budget of £125,000; and**
- (b) the director of adults and communities be authorised to determine grants in accordance with the scheme criteria and having regard to the recommendations of the established panel.**

## **Alternative options**

1. Not to approve the grant scheme. This is not recommended as it will put the development of local community signposting and support at risk. The seed funding is to enable communities to make the necessary investment to enable them to support people locally in their community.
2. The grant could ask for match funding. This is not recommended as the groups involved are often emerging and will vary in size and so need the seed funding to help in getting them started. Therefore it is unlikely that potential community settings will have the necessary resources initially to provide match funding and apply for the necessary grant funding to help them get started.
3. Target the grant at areas where there are higher levels of need. This is not recommended as the initiative is focussed on being community led. Therefore groups and hubs are being identified through engagement with communities and some of this engagement will be based on where there are potentially higher levels of need. However, the project needs to be community focussed, community driven and community led, not driven by the grant.

## **Key considerations**

4. Demand for formal health and social care has continued to grow as resources have diminished sharply. It is generally acknowledged that formal care and support must now be focused on those with the most substantial and complex needs. These issues are likely to be particularly felt in Herefordshire due to a rurally dispersed population and an older and ageing profile. Therefore, in the context of national policy, local strategy must be directed to enabling people to stay healthy and independent for longer.
5. Herefordshire's redesigned adult social care pathway is centred around strengths based practice and innovations including community brokers, which is driving reductions in formal care packages and driving up widespread take up of informal, volunteer and community based support for vulnerable people.
6. Herefordshire Council recognises that the resources, leadership and wider strengths of Herefordshire's communities can have a powerful benefit in enabling people who are not yet vulnerable to stay active, well and independent so reducing potential demand on public services in the future.
7. The following are all examples taken from the Understanding Herefordshire website illustrating the need for such an initiative:
  - Fuel poverty is a significant problem in Herefordshire, affecting a greater proportion of households than nationally. Fuel poverty impacts on health and wellbeing through associated financial hardship as well as increased risk of conditions such as respiratory illness, high blood pressure and hypothermia.

- The proportion of people in Herefordshire who are overweight or obese is increasing and of particular concern is that nearly 23% of reception year children are overweight or obese and this rises to nearly 35% by year six.
- People who live alone are at a higher risk of loneliness and although loneliness can affect any age group, a greater proportion of older people in Herefordshire live alone than nationally.

These are multiple examples of need and a community hub is ideally placed to recognise this, identify the needs of their community, raise awareness at a local level, signpost to support and provide/develop activities that can help tackle some of these issues.

8. Following on from the community broker led hubs it is recognised that communities are best placed to connect with people through their own community settings and support the following aims:
  - Help people in communities to stay well, active and independent.
  - Help reduce and defer the need for formal health and social care/support and enable people with existing support needs to stay independent and living at home for as long as possible.
  - Help reduce loneliness and isolation within our communities.
  - Enable communities to build their resilience and support their local vulnerable people.
  - Facilitate / enable people to be supported by their communities, within their communities, at the places where they go. This could be a village hall, existing community centre, a community pub or shop.
9. To achieve this the grant will help grow capacity in communities through collaboration, development, training and seed funding to support the provision of extended information, advice and signposting that can be accessed through a network of groups and places which is consistent and joined up. It will also support the development of community led activities to help people connect to each other and to their community, helping to address some of the key challenges and needs of the community.
10. Each community group/hub can apply for a maximum of £2,500 over the life time of the project (2 years) to support the establishment and development of their community group/hub. In order to maximise the grant funding, grant spending will be reviewed towards the end of the grant period. If some grant funds remain uncommitted, community groups/hubs will be invited to make a further bid for a grant. To be successful in a second bid, the group/hub would need to demonstrate additional benefit to the community over and above what is already being delivered and clearly demonstrate they are meeting a specific need(s) e.g. tackling loneliness and isolation or supporting mental health and wellbeing in the community. Consideration could also be given to pooling of resources when applying for grant funding e.g. where a number of communities collaborate and provide a mobile offer for instance covering a wider area.
11. Eligibility for the proposed seed funding grant will be restricted to groups/hubs which are engaged with Herefordshire Council's adult and communities' project team. The project team will support the eligible community groups/hubs to set out the outcomes that will be achieved through the grant and how these will be measured. They will support the group/hub during the lifetime of the grant and after it has been spent to help ensure future

sustainability. Currently there are ten community groups/hubs engaged directly with the project team and there has been significant interest in the project from local communities.

12. The grant itself will be managed and administered through the council's usual grant processes (through the delegated grants team) and as detailed in Appendix A and Appendix B. All grant applications will reviewed by a panel before being approved by the director of adults and communities. The panel will comprise senior officers from public health, adult social care, communities and finance services.
13. As part of the application process, each eligible community group/hub will be required to outline what outcomes they will achieve and how these will be measured. This will be monitored through the project team along with other project measures to demonstrate impact and success of the community projects. The outcomes the project is aiming to achieve are as follows:
  - Creating healthy and supportive environments that prevent or delay ill health and the need for formal care.
  - People generally remaining well, active and independent within their local communities.
  - More people better informed and supported to self-care and self-help.
  - Vulnerable people being supported informally in their communities.
  - Fewer people feeling lonely and isolated.
  - Increased resilience and capacity in communities.

In the event that the community group/hub or project does not continue, there will be a requirement that any assets purchased through the grant are dispersed to another charitable organisation with similar objectives should the hub not continue.

## **Community impact**

14. Launching this grant scheme will, for a small investment for each group/hub, enable Herefordshire Council to support some of its priorities. It will help enable residents to live safe, healthy, independent lives, help keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life. This will be achieved through supporting community led activities and solutions through local communities that contribute to meeting these priorities and by extending access to information, advice and signposting across Herefordshire's communities that support and promote health and wellbeing within their communities.
15. 14% of Herefordshire households comprise a person over 65 living alone, compared to 12% nationally. There are 16,600 older people living alone in the county and this number is expected to be 20,000 by 2025. From 2012 to 2018, the proportion of local people having contact with friends or family once a month or less rose from 5% to 6%. Over the same period, the proportion of people reporting feeling lonely most of the time rose from 5% to 8%. (Source – Understanding Herefordshire).
16. The project will enable and facilitate communities to engage with their wider community and connect people to each other and to their community through their hub helping to reduce loneliness and isolation within communities. As well as connecting people to wider support to help them remain independent and well.
17. As is the case nationally the proportion of people in Herefordshire who are overweight or obese is increasing. Of particular concern is that nearly 23% of reception year children are overweight or obese and this rises to nearly 35% by year six. (Source Understanding Herefordshire).

18. The council's community development initiatives are integral to supporting communities to build capacity and resilience to help tackle some of these issues and the challenges facing Herefordshire as highlighted in the JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) by promoting and supporting health and wellbeing through these groups/hubs.
19. The project will support the volunteers running local activities to recognise and be aware of some of the issues facing their local communities and how they might support their local community and have a positive impact on that community.
20. There are no specific implications for the council's corporate parenting responsibilities. The hubs are about supporting people of all ages and will be developed for all sorts of activities which may include supporting care leavers, looked after children and children/families on the edge of care.
21. In developing new services and working with all partner organisations, the council places great importance on health and safety. In awarding seed funding to projects, it will be clear that community groups are responsible for health and safety in any community buildings used and arising from activities which are funded, including the recruitment and training of volunteers.
22. The community seed funding programme supports the council's digital strategy by utilising digital devices to provide access to information, advice and signposting for local residents. A digital device(s) can be applied for through the seed funding grant and the project team will work with the individual project to ensure they are purchasing the most appropriate device(s) to suit their needs within that setting. The project team are also linked into Fastershire to support volunteers develop their IT skills where needed to ensure they are equipped to provide access to information, advice and signposting through a digital device. Community groups are also well placed to support Fastershire around digital inclusion within communities through delivery of training sessions such as 'Introduction to the internet'.
23. This grant scheme also supports the council's communication and engagement strategy, one of the key messages of which is empowering the local community and helping local communities stay independent and resilient, providing them with the tools needed to independently resolve their issues. This approach gives ownership and responsibility to individuals, families and the community which is the focus, so empowering and enabling communities to support people to help themselves.

## **Equality duty**

24. The proposed seed funding grant scheme will help address the public sector equality duty as set out below.

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 25. The projects funded will be required to be fully inclusive and open to everyone in the community so there will be more local participation and engagement. There will be no detrimental impact on the protected characteristics, there is likely to be a positive impact for people who share protected characteristics such as older people and disabled people. Also, the training provided to the volunteers involved in a community group covers equality as part of the training.
- 26. Herefordshire Council is committed to supporting people to live full and independent lives within their local communities and will monitor the impact of the project to ensure they support council's commitment to the Equality Duty.

## **Resource implications**

- 27. A budget of £500,000 was approved at a full Council meeting in February 2019 for the adult and communities directorate to deliver this. Within this budget £125,000 has been allocated for the seed funding grant to support up to 50 hubs across Herefordshire.
- 28. The seed funding grant will be administered through the delegated grants and programmes team.

## **Legal implications**

- 29. Setting of the budget and the general delegation arrangements is the responsibility of the Council as referred to in the table of functions at Part 3 Section 1 of the Constitution and laid out in The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000/2853. This allocation of grant funding was agreed at full council in February 2019.
- 30. The Cabinet member health and adult wellbeing has been given delegated authority from Cabinet in exercise of its functions under Part 3 Section 3 of the constitution to approve the scheme criteria and authorise the director for adults and communities to make the grant awards in line with those criteria.
- 31. Grant applications will be assessed against the relevant criteria and each grant award will be the subject of a grant funding agreement between the Council and the grantee to ensure the funds are used for the purposes for which they are intended.
- 32. The grants will need to be awarded in compliance with State Aid legislation. However, the grants are likely not to constitute "aid" (because they are not made to economic operators or do not in any event distort competition) or to constitute aid but be within the de minimis limits of the State Aid rules. The grant funding agreements will contain an obligation on the grantee to comply with the State Aid rules and to repay the grants if they do not.
- 33. Subject to the above, there are no legal implications with the Cabinet member doing what is proposed

## **Risk management**

34. In establishing the grant scheme it is important to ensure funds are administered correctly. This grant scheme will be administered by the delegated grants team who have significant experience in managing and administering grant schemes of this nature.
35. Each grant application will be reviewed against a clear set of criteria by a panel and recommendations put forward to the director of adults and communities who will consider each application for approval / rejection.

36.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
That items purchased through the grant are not consistently used for the purpose with which they were bought.	There will be ongoing monitoring of the community hubs and there will be clawback as per the terms and conditions of the grant offer.
That the grant scheme is under subscribed.	The adults and communities project team will be working with each hub to promote and utilise the seed funding grant and working with them to help identify how the grant could be best used to support them.
Not every community hub uses the full amount of grant available to them.	Regular monitoring of the hubs through the project team will identify where there is likely to be underspend and a case made where this underspend could be utilised elsewhere within the project.
That the grant funding is over-subscribed / more than 50 community hubs want to establish and apply for the grant.	Through regular project monitoring, budget monitoring and grant monitoring, the grant funding will not be over subscribed. The grant is only available to the 50 community hubs being established through the project team and this will be monitored closely and regularly by the project team.

37. Through the seed funding, and by supporting the community hubs to establish, this in turn provides significant mitigating activity against a number of risks in the adults and communities risk register such as demographic pressures, market pressures and future of adult social care funding.
38. The risks will be managed at service level and monitored through the project team risk register and escalated to the director of adults and communities if appropriate.

## Consultees

39. None

## Appendices

Appendix A – Community seed funding grant criteria

Appendix B – Community seed funding grant application form

## Background papers

None

## Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms

- Community hubs – could be a village hall, community centre, community pub, community shop that want to develop and enable access to information, signposting and activities to support wellbeing and independence.
- Community group – a like-minded group of individuals coming together in a community that want to establish/develop a hub to enable access to information, signposting and activities to support wellbeing and independence.
- Understanding Herefordshire – a Herefordshire Council website that provides a wide range of information and statistical data about the county and its people.
- Community broker – an existing community focused role within the commissioning section of the adults and communities directorate
- Adults and communities project team – a team of project managers in the adults and communities directorate at Herefordshire Council delivering community projects.
- Digital device – IT equipment such as a tablet, iPad, laptop or desktop computer.
- Corporate parenting – when a child comes into care, the council becomes the corporate parent and has a responsibility to provide the best possible care and safeguarding for looked after children and young people so they grow towards adulthood equipped to lead independent and successful lives.
- JSNA – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a process by which local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups assess the current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of the local community to inform local decision making
- Fastershire – is a partnership between Herefordshire Council and Gloucestershire County Council to bring faster broadband to the two counties, the project also includes social and digital inclusion activities.