

TITLE OF REPORT: Outcome of Bid to the National Lottery Community Fund (Partnerships) Programme

REPORT OF: Colin Huntington, Strategic Director, Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet agreement to accept a funding offer of £499,500 from the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) and its associated grant terms and conditions, to support delivery of the Partnerships project “Locality Working in Gateshead: Towards Recovery and Growth”.

Background

2. At its meeting in July 2020, Cabinet approved the community hubs approach be used as part of the route map for recovery from COVID-19 and build a more resilient Gateshead (minute C8 refers).
3. This decision was informed by the early evidence of the impact of the combined, collaborative efforts of the Council alongside voluntary and community sector partners in the early stages of the pandemic, during the first national lockdown. Since then, the support provided to the Borough’s most vulnerable households and neighbourhoods has continued to grow and evolve and has answered 9,200 requests for help and linked provision of allied support which is only possible with the active involvement of some key community anchor organisations.
4. The efficacy of this collaborative approach in tackling a crisis now provides a strong foundation upon which the Borough can move beyond the pandemic, helping communities thrive with an approach that takes us beyond partnership and ever closer equity and fellowship with far greater emphasis upon participatory and community leadership – a community led approach.

Development of the Project

5. The Council has a long-standing relationship with NLCF and Locality, two organisations that have supported the Council and its partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
6. Locality provided key support to some community organisations that manage the Council’s former community centres that were successfully asset transferred, some of which have been operating as community hubs with online advice and guidance workshop sessions, including post pandemic steps to future planning and recovery.

7. During the first lockdown, NLCF noted the effectiveness of Gateshead partnership led response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the valued involvement of community anchor organisations providing complementary service support and hosting, and key links into the community to ensure the necessary and appropriate support was available.
8. Towards the end of 2020, NLCF encouraged the Council to work with partners to submit a Partnerships bid to help support the evolution and development of this collaborative network with some of the organisations involved in the Locality workshops, to strengthen them as stronger more viable anchor organisations, and developing the role the VCS plays in delivering on the ground, community led approaches for the most vulnerable households. The organisations are Birtley Community Partnership, Chopwell Community Association, Dunston Family Church, St Chad's Community Project and the Winlaton Centre.
9. Working at locality level providing help and support for individuals is a key strength of these organisations; they have a pre-existing familiarity with their catchment area and enjoy a trusted relationship with residents that can help address requests for help and support in a timely manner, thereby securing positive outcomes at the earliest opportunity close to home as well as negating, minimising or delaying the call upon hard pressed frontline public services.
10. Through this project, the partners aim to jointly explore ways to further develop their knowledge of and relationships with their catchments to explore more community led ways to improve residents' wellbeing. It will help enhance the role community organisations play as brokers, providers and leaders of place, with the partners developing ways to monitor the difference this makes to people's lives. The project will:
 - contribute towards the financial resilience of 5 community organisations whilst they explore new and enhanced ways to deliver and host a range of activities, events and services that reflect the characteristics, needs and strengths of the communities the organisations are based within
 - develop the way partners act as points of early help, and as support gateways for residents
 - provide opportunities for residents to draw on their own knowledge and lived experiences to help tackle, mitigate and prevent crises, and fulfil their potential
 - seek to establish local learning and training shaped by residents' circumstances and ambitions, which might include pop up / workshop sessions for/with partners and residents for topics such as employability, confidence building, active listening, community organising, and digital skills
 - help residents looking for ways to be more active and connected in their neighbourhoods
 - support the growth and development of the locality-based partners, including the way they network with other local community organisations and service providers
 - support the development of local community wealth building and climate change activities
 - analyse and research ways to establish locality working that is the best "fit" for Gateshead, as a collaborative way to support the most vulnerable residents across all demographic and social groupings address inequalities.
11. The Council's Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering team coordinated the collation and submission of a 3-year, £1,209,500 project called "Locality working in

Gateshead: towards recovery and growth”, seeking £499,500 from NLCF on behalf of 5 partner organisations (Birtley Community Partnership, Chopwell Community Association, Dunston Family Church, St Chad’s Community Project and the Winlaton Centre), with the Council providing project match funding (£410k allocated in the 2021/2022 budget and £300k in-kind staffing costs). Locality will be providing advice and support to the partners as part of the project activity. Attached to this report is an outline of the project’s outcomes and aims, and the project expenditure summary.

Securing the funding

12. The Council, on behalf of its partners, has been notified by NLCF that the project as submitted has been awarded £499,500 and that it has agreed to fund the project as submitted. This is excellent news, for the Council, its partners, the communities that will benefit from this support and also bears testimony to the relationship with NLCF and Locality as well as the demonstration of the efficacy of the collaborative approach to the Borough’s response to the pandemic.
13. NLCF provided feedback to the decision, citing the strength of the project’s focus on its community driven characteristics, and how each element of the project demonstrated how there would be a bespoke, tailored approach in each of the neighbourhoods concerned rather than a one size fits all approach.

The planned impact of the project and its beneficiaries

14. The pandemic exposed greater social inequality than was previously apparent, bringing into wider consciousness inequalities in areas from healthcare to information technology. In Gateshead, these inequalities are felt along various lines, from ethnicity to income. Beyond the immediate impact of the pandemic, the recovery period will see many residents continue to struggle, with a broad range of issues associated with poverty and lack of wellbeing, such as income, welfare support, housing, fuel, and employment issues.
15. The partners are aware that supporting people at a community level in a collaborative way is a key driver to establishing impactful and valued service delivery in a person-centred, localised manner, giving them control over the decisions that are made about them by connecting them to the services and support they need. This project provides the partners with an opportunity to build knowledge and intelligence about, and with, local communities to inform and develop services that are tailored to local circumstances.
16. By building on the partners’ efforts during the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, namely:
 - helping thousands of residents with emergency food parcels
 - assistance with routine shopping arrangements
 - collection of prescriptions
 - befriending
 - tackling affordability issues with energy supply
 - help with Universal Credit and other benefits

and

- the learning gained to date through the Council’s Public Service Reform work

- the operation of the Community Hubs during the Covid-19 relief effort,

the project will make a difference by:

- supporting the growth and development of some key Gateshead organisations to become impactful and viable community anchors at the heart of the Borough's road to post pandemic recovery and growth
 - exploring together at a greater pace than could have been achieved in isolation, a feasible way to move towards an approach to locality working that works for Gateshead
 - increasing the level of shared understanding of the role community partners, active citizenship, mutual aid, participatory and community leadership plays in driving locality services and sense of place
 - supporting a cohort of the most disadvantaged households to recover from the various effects of the pandemic, provide a stable pathway through recovery and on to better wellbeing, stronger sense of belonging, more aware of the local opportunities to take part in their community, and better placed to access learning, training, and employment opportunities.
17. The core project beneficiaries will be the community anchor organisations, and the borough's most vulnerable residents that are facing daily challenges, living in the neighbourhoods supported by the community based partners:
- households living in poverty
 - people on low wages with a reliance on state benefits
 - people with health and well-being challenges
 - worklessness and barriers to training and employment
 - social isolation and a disconnect with their neighbourhoods
 - coping with sudden and unplanned life changes
 - challenges associated with parenting, schooling, old age and isolation.

Next steps

18. Before the first tranche of funding can be released by NLCF there are several actions and tasks needed from the partners.

Funding

19. The Council is required to formally accept the NLCF funding offer as lead partner by signing the offer letter thereby agreeing to its accompanying terms and conditions. The Council is also required to provide NLCF with written confirmation that:
- the matched funding is in place and ready to use for project delivery
 - the Council will inform NLCF in writing if there are any changes to the provision of the funding
 - the funding will be kept in a dedicated ring-fenced budget.

Project delivery agreement

20. Within six months of receiving the grant offer, all partners must sign a delivery agreement which outlines project governance and operational procedures. Once NLCF are advised of this having been completed, the project is able to formally commence and draw down the first tranche of funding. Discussions are underway amongst partners regarding this, and also includes establishing an agreed project baseline, monitoring framework and delivery plan.

Recommendations

21. Cabinet is requested to:

- (i) Formally accept the NLCF funding offer on behalf of the Council, as lead partner for the project and authorise Officers to agree to the terms and conditions of the award.
- (ii) Authorise Officers to provide NLCF with written confirmation that:
 - the matched funding is in place and ready to use for project delivery
 - the Council will inform NLCF in writing if there are any changes to the provision of the funding
 - the funding will be kept in a dedicated ring-fenced budget.

For the following reasons:

- To enable the Lottery Community Fund funding offer to be secured on behalf of the Council and its partners
- To enable the overall project “Locality Working in Gateshead: Towards Recovery and Growth” to be delivered in full.

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Policy Context

1. The Council is committed to supporting and helping to sustain a vibrant voluntary and community sector in Gateshead.
2. The Project “Locality Working in Gateshead: Towards Recovery and Growth” is very much part of this commitment and addresses the Thrive challenge of *Supporting our communities to support themselves and each other*.
3. Gateshead’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy asserts the need to focus community development expertise to galvanise both the power and commitment of individuals, supporting communities to take greater control over what happens in their neighbourhoods, creating relationships, improving confidence and encouraging a greater sense of belonging. It is a strategy that needs to be driven by place-based approaches that are directed and influenced by local people.
4. This NLCF-supported project is very much an example of this need and ambition, seeking as it will over a three year period to support the viability of five community anchor organisations, explore new ways of working that are shaped and led by local people, and helping our most vulnerable residents avoid, mitigate or recovery from short term challenges to improve life chances and wellbeing.

Project management

5. Although the Council is acting as lead partner for the project, all partners will be involved in the project’s delivery, decision making, achieving the outcomes and sharing the learning. The Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering team will provide overall project management and coordination of the project within its core remit as well as a continuation of its coordination and support role with the five partner organisations of the community hub operations. This will aid the project’s connectivity with wider place-based initiatives underway or in the early stages of consideration.

Consultation

6. This report has been prepared following consultations with:
 - Portfolio Holders for Communities & Volunteering and Culture, Sport & Leisure
 - Birtley Community Partnership
 - Chopwell Community Association
 - Dunston Family Church
 - St. Chad’s Community Project
 - The Winlaton Centre

Alternative Options

7. The Council could decide not to accept the funding offer from the Lottery Community Fund. This would, however, see the withdrawal of nearly £0.5 million investment from the Borough, and jeopardise the opportunity to see the development of a network of stronger community anchor organisations, and the

extent of growing community led involvement in new ways to support our most vulnerable residents.

Implications of Recommended Option

8. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director Resources and Digital confirms that the matched funding has been earmarked in the 2021/2022 budget and ringfenced as required by the National Lottery Community Fund
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – The project is supported with around £300k in kind staffing costs over the 3 year period, made up of 3% of a Grade N, and 25% of 3x Grade L, 1x Grade J and 4x Grade H posts respectively
- c) **Property Implications** - There are no property implications for the Council from the proposals.

9. Risk Management Implication - There are no risk management implications for the Council from the proposals.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications - The project will help address the main challenges facing some of the most vulnerable households in Gateshead with new ways of working, through community shaped and led services and activities, delivered by enhanced partnership working with voluntary and community sector anchor organisations

11. Crime and Disorder Implications – There are no crime and disorder implications for the Council from the proposals.

12. Health Implications - The project will help address the wider determinants of health and wellbeing at a locality level with a focus on community led solutions

13. Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications - The project will help support the sustainability of the 5 project partner organisations

14. Human Rights Implications - There are no Human Rights implications for the Council from the proposals.

15. Ward Implications – The five partner organisations are located within, and operate beyond, the wards of Birtley, Chopwell & Rowlands Gill, Dunston & Teams, Lobley Hill & Bensham, and Winlaton & High Spen

Project cash Expenditure Summary

	£000		
	Project cash Total	Council total contrib	NLCF total contrib
rent/accomodation	255.00	127.50	127.50
overheads/utilities	105.00	0.00	105.00
professional fees /sessional costs	8.00	0.00	8.00
office costs	45.00	23.00	22.00
training	34.00	0.00	34.00
volunteer costs	20.00	0.00	20.00
travel	9.00	4.50	4.50
equipment	26.00	13.00	13.00
marketing	17.00	8.50	8.50
capital	60.00	30.00	30.00
research, monitoring and evaluation	45.00	22.50	22.50
community development	135.00	67.50	67.50
crisis support	75.00	75.00	0.00
Partnership growth and development	30.00	16.00	14.00
maintenance	45.00	22.50	22.50
	909	410	499

Project Objectives and Outcomes

OBJECTIVE 1

5 community organisations that are strong, well connected and vibrant acting as trusted and impactful community anchors and hubs working in partnership

- *A closer, more effective working relationship between the key partners within the project will be in place*
- *Organisations will be growing, learning and sharing best practice approaches to locality working together*

AIM 1A) Support the growth and development of some key Gateshead organisations to become impactful and viable community anchors at the heart of the Borough's road to post pandemic recovery and growth

AIM 1B) Share power with local communities across design, delivery and ownership of services and assets to enhance their quality and produce wider benefits to communities in the form of empowerment, resilience and cohesion

OBJECTIVE 2

A community-led and delivered contribution to locality working in Gateshead will be in place

- *Featuring a support offer that is proven, evidence based, person-centred, strengths-based and solution-focussed*
- *Informed by ongoing co-production with experts by experience, shaped by continuous learning, review and feedback*
- *Learning from the project will be informing how services and support is best commissioned and delivered, and by whom*

AIM 2A) Explore together at a greater pace than could have been achieved in isolation, a feasible way to move towards an approach to locality working that works for Gateshead

AIM 2B) Continue the growth of collaboration between public service partners, local private enterprise and communities to achieve better outcomes for residents

OBJECTIVE 3

Enhanced active citizenship

- *There will be greater awareness of the value and impact of active citizenship in catalysing and delivering community recovery and growth, increased levels of volunteering and community leadership in shaping locality working and place*

AIM 3A) Increasing the level of shared understanding of the role community partners, active citizenship, mutual aid, participatory and community leadership plays in driving locality services and sense of place

AIM 3B) Increase and enhance public participation and engagement to improve decision-making and better outcomes for communities

OBJECTIVE 4

Levels of personal and community wellbeing will have increased

- *Analysis of information captured and shared during the project will demonstrate how locality working shaped, brokered and delivered by and within the community contributes to reduction in poverty, improved health and wellbeing, and community resilience*

AIM 4A) Supporting a cohort of the most disadvantaged households to recover from the various effects of the pandemic, provide a stable pathway through recovery and on to better wellbeing, stronger sense of belonging, more aware of the local opportunities to take part in their community, and better placed to access learning, training, and employment opportunities