

21 January 2019

TITLE OF REPORT: Review on Helping to Increase Support /Capacity of the Voluntary Sector: Evidence Gathering Session No. 2

REPORT OF: Anthony Alder, Acting Strategic Director Communities and Environment

Summary

Committee will receive two presentations at this evidence gathering session that demonstrate the impact and value of community organisations whom have received support provided by the Council.

The session will feature a presentation by the chair of Brighton Ryton and a trustee representing the committee that operates Dunston Activity Centre.

1. Introduction

1.1 At its meeting in October 2018, Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the scope for a review to help develop the understanding of the type of support required by Gateshead's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), where it is needed the most and why, and in the light of this, where the Council's role, support and resources may best be focussed to maximise impact. The aims of the Review were agreed as:

- establish the extent and nature of the types of support the Council currently provides to the VCS across a spectrum of service areas
- how this activity is resourced and coordinated
- assess the effectiveness of this Council support in helping the VCS address the needs of Gateshead residents.

2. A summary of Evidence Gathering Session 1.

According to the Charity Commission website, there are currently 876 registered charities that are either based in Gateshead or name Gateshead within their charitable objects (therefore including regional and national organisations). There are also an estimated 750-1,000 smaller groups, many of them constituted, without funds or staff providing a range of valuable activities within their communities. The term "grassroot" organisation is often used to describe a particular type of voluntary organisation; for the purposes of this Review, this will be considered as referring to those organisations that are Gateshead based or delivering activities and services into Gateshead, with under £250,000 annual income – a description aligned with the eligibility criteria for the main Council funding scheme supporting Gateshead's VCS, the Thrive Fund.

2.1 Whilst the level of direct and indirect support provided by the Council has diminished since 2010, the Council still provides a wide range of support.

a summary of which is set out below. Financial support is provided through grants from the Gateshead Thrive Fund, small grants through the Local Community Fund and more recently significant investment through the Gateshead Innovation and Development Fund. In addition, contracts in Adult and Childrens social care, total £10.6m, Public Health provide grants and contract payments to deliver services relating to drug and alcohol, obesity, and mental health, totalling £144,820. The *Make Every Contact Count* (MECC) programme supported 19 community organisations with a total of £235,251

National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) Relief, totals £4.6m made available to Charities who are entitled to up to 100% relief on non-domestic property, which is wholly or mainly occupied for the purposes of the charity (as pf November 2018).

2.2 The Council provides a promotion, coordination and brokerage role for volunteers and volunteering in Gateshead.

- Around 50 Council services and Council-led projects promote an estimated 2,000 active volunteer roles and volunteers
- 170 external partners promote an estimate of 4,770 active volunteer roles and volunteers
- There are 66 organisations promoting group volunteer roles, with an average of 660 active volunteer roles and volunteers
- There are 40 “Friends of” groups that have 600 active volunteer roles and volunteers

2.3 Information, Advice and Guidance, several services provide advice and guidance that helps raise the level of participation of residents with / within community-based activities, improving the health and wellbeing of residents and the viability of community organisations, these include GO Gateshead Sport and Leisure, Culture, Economic Development and Housing Growth, Environment, Housing & Planning, And Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering.

3. The context for Evidence Gathering Session 2

3.1 This evidence gathering session will cover the following, a little bit about to the two organisations, their journey, their work, projects and activities delivered, how these meet local needs, the impact of you work, particularly in terms of those people that need the most help, what’s next and finally what if anything could the Council help with.

3.2 Brighton Ryton – A community organisation based in the Ryton, Crookhill and Stella Ward, the group of volunteers help restore and maintain the local environment. They co-ordinate the activity of local on-going restoration, including flower beds and litter picking and maintenance of open spaces and cemetery. The group communicate and engage with residents though social media and regular meetings seeking feedback on improvement and views on local priorities for the volunteers. The group have received a range of support from the Council including capacity building, volunteer recruitment, equipment and environmental advice.

3.3 Dunston Activity Centre – a former Council leisure centre and community library transferred to Dunston Family Church in 2016. The group obtained charitable status in January 2017. The charity operates the centre, which continues to provide a small gymnasium, sports hall, meeting / activity spaces and the community library. The Council provided support to the organisation to

successfully transfer the centre in the form of a lease, advice on volunteer polices, management of a building, financial support and ongoing support to implement the organisations delivery plan.

4. Recommendation

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- Comment on the information provided by representatives of Brighton Ryton and Dunston Activity Centre in the context of the review of Council support.

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