

**4 March 2019**

**TITLE OF REPORT:**           **Review on Helping to Increase Support / Capacity of the Voluntary Sector: Evidence Gathering Session No. 3 – Financial Assistance**

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

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### **Summary**

Committee will receive brief presentations from representatives of three, prominent local funding organisations at this evidence gathering session. The session will help committee to understand the variety of funding programmes that are available and range of financial assistance available to community and voluntary groups in Gateshead.

The funders presenting are Community Foundation Tyne and Wear and Northumberland, The Ballinger Charitable Trust and the National Lottery Community Fund.

Each will cover how they support Gateshead's VCS (financially or otherwise) and how the Council be able may help to increase the success of community and voluntary organisations secure additional funding to support their activities, particularly within the context of the Council's "Thrive" agenda.

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#### **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.

This will be facilitated through a series of Evidence Gathering sessions.

#### **2. A summary of the first two Evidence Gathering Sessions**

2.1 Session 1 (held 3 December 2018) provided Committee with a summary of Gateshead VCS infrastructure and the Council support still available to the sector. The information provided highlighted the estimated number of charities (876

registered with the Charity Commission) and other similar organisations (750-1000 other VCS organisations) operating in Gateshead's communities. It outlined the Council's significant financial support available for organisations through grants, contracts and commissions and Non-Domestic Rate relief. It also highlighted the Services offering Information, Support and Guidance and the Council's role in promoting, co-ordinating and brokering over 8,000 volunteer roles and volunteers.

Dr Jo Price, Chair of Trustees at the Comfrey Project, also presented to Committee offering an insight into the work of her charity in Gateshead, and how working together with the Council is making a difference to the lives of Gateshead's refugees and asylum seekers.

- 2.2 Session 2 (held 21 January 2019) included presentations from Brighten Ryton and Dunston Activity Centre highlighting the excellent work that both organisations undertake in their respective localities. Committee discussed how the organisations could work better with the Council and other partners.

Aiden Lawson, Chair of Brighten Ryton, informed Committee of its role in supporting the Council to improve the local environment in Ryton, highlighting examples of work in local cemeteries, parks and improvements for some local heritage sites. The Group has provided almost 9,000 volunteer hours and fund raised more than £30,000 in its first two years of operation. It aims to expand its scope and increase its impact in future years and highlighted some areas where its efficiency could be enhanced through an improved interface with the Council.

Ed Nicholls, Chair of Dunston Family Church, talked about the Church's steep learning curve after taking on the responsibility for Dunston Activity Centre (and volunteer library) following a recent Asset Transfer from the Council. The Church through its volunteers and employees aims to improve the well-being of the local community through local activities and the provision of community space. Ed talked about how the organisation has had to learn about Governance, due diligence, health and safety, financial and business planning, developing capacity and operating a community café. Whilst the Centre is doing well, financial sustainability remains a challenge as the Church always looks to offer services at lower cost or free.

### **3. The context for Evidence Gathering Session 3**

- 3.1 This evidence gathering session will include presentations from three key local funders (Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, The Ballinger Charitable Trust and the National Lottery Community Fund). The funders will aim to cover:
- What they do and the opportunities they provide
  - How they currently support the sector
  - What outcomes/priorities they would like to see
  - How Gateshead compares regionally/nationally regarding their funding programmes
  - How could their impact in Gateshead be increased?
  - What can partners (like the Council) do to maximize take up/increase effectiveness of their resources in Gateshead
  - What can/should VCS organisations do themselves/collectively to increase take up/effectiveness - highlighting any common failings that restrict local take up.

3.2 The presentations will be followed by a short Q&A discussion, an opportunity to discuss some of the collective learning and recommendations to maximize our combined potential for working with Gateshead's communities. This part of the session should aim to cover:

- What synergy there is to work more strategically together
- What would help us deliver more effectively with/in Gateshead's communities
- Any emerging priorities and ways of working (agreed and/or desired)
- What additional support we feel our communities may require (to maximize financial assistance)
- Where the gaps are/may be

Appendix 1 provides supplementary case studies that demonstrate examples of how funding has been accessed for the benefit of Gateshead's communities

#### **4. Recommendation**

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- Consider and comment on the information provided in the case studies and by representatives from Community Foundation Tyne and Wear and Northumberland, The Ballinger Charitable Trust and the National Lottery Community Fund in the context of the review of Council support.

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