



Author/Lead Officer of Report: Dave Luck
North LAC Community Services Manager
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Report of: Community Services Manager
Report to: North Local Area Committee
Date of Decision: 26th September 2023
Subject: North LAC Budget 2023-24

Has appropriate consultation been undertaken? Yes No

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? Yes No

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 2149

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

*“The (**report/appendix**) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (**insert relevant paragraph number**) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”*

Purpose of Report:

Each Local Area Committee has a budget to address local priorities. This report

- Sets out details of the spend in respect of the initial budget of £100,000 for 2022/23 that has been authorised by the Community Services Manager, in consultation with the LAC Chair and in accordance with the delegation granted in September 2021.
- Describes funding allocated to the LAC for 2023/24 and sets out proposals for its allocation and expenditure for 2023/24 in line with the North LAC plan.

Recommendations:

That the North Local Area Committee:

- Notes the expenditure against the £100,000 budget to address local priorities in the North LAC as detailed in the report.
- Agrees the use of the 2023/24 LAC budget of £25,000 per ward as described in the report.
- Agrees the use of the 2023/24 £37,100 LAC Cost of Living budget as described in the report namely that 50% of the North's allocation (£18,550) is awarded as a grant to Citizens Advice Sheffield to support its advice line with the remaining 50% (£18,550 used to create a new North Cost of Living fund).
- Authorises the Community Services Manager, in consultation with the Local Area Committee Chair, to finalise the eligibility criteria and make decisions, following engagement with the relevant Ward Members, on the award of the grant funds proposed of up to £5,000.

Background Papers:

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Adrian Hart
	Legal: Petra Der Man
	Equalities: Bev Law
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	Head of Service who approved submission: Carl Mullooly
3	LAC Chair consulted: Cllr Alan Hooper
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the Head of Service indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.

Lead Officer Name: Dave Luck	Job Title: North LAC Community Services Manager
Date: 26 September 2023	

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Background

Local Area Committees (LACs) were established by Full Council in May 2021. Their Terms of Reference are set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution and include:

- To agree a Community Plan setting priorities for the area of the committee, monitor delivery of that plan and keep it under review; and
- To make decisions relating to funding as delegated from time to time by the Council to fit with the priorities set out in the Community Plan and following engagement with the community.

In 2021 each LAC was allocated an initial budget of £100,000 to be spent in line with their Community plan. The North Lac Community Plan was agreed in March 2022 and the unspent portion of the £100,000 budget was carried forward to 2022/23. A new community plan has been drafted for 2023/24 and will be presented at this meeting – once the plan has been agreed this will be the basis for future LAC funding decisions.

To enable decisions to be taken quickly and to respond to emerging issues, in September 2021 the LAC granted delegated authority to the Community Services Manager to make decisions on expenditure from any budgets allocated to the Local Area Committee provided that:

- The decision is taken in consultation with the Local Area Committee Chair
- Spending is in line with any specific purposes of the allocated budget
- The decision may not approve expenditure of more than £5,000
- A report detailing the delegated spending decisions taken by the Community Services Manager is presented to the next Local Area Committee meeting.

1.2 2023/24 budget allocation

Full Council resolved at the Budget Meeting in March 2023 that *“additional spending amounting to £25,000 per ward, overseen by ward councillors and delivered through the Local Area Committees process, is provided as an additional spend for 2023/24”*. Though not the intention, the effect of this resolution was that these monies were designated Ward Pot budgets. The intention to create LAC budgets has now been put into effect by a decision of the Finance Committee on 11th September 2023 to agree a virement of the full £700,000 into the LAC budget, amounting to £100,000 per LAC. This budget will be spent on projects benefiting all the wards in the North East LAC area.

At its meeting of June 27th 2023 the North LAC Members agreed to the following:

- To treat the four ward budgets of £25,000 as a single LAC budget of £100,000
- To establish two new funds, both of £25,000 – the Greatest Need fund to support work amongst those in demonstrable need and the Big Idea fund to support new approaches to meeting the priorities of the North LAC.

The North LAC has been advised that as the decisions made in June occurred before the virement agreed on September 11th it is necessary for the LAC to formally approve them at its September meeting.

It is proposed to develop two new grant funds of £25,000 each to be allocated in 2023/24 from the total LAC budget of £100,000.

The first grant fund is the 'North LAC Greatest Need fund'. This contributes to the LAC priority of vibrant community life and the goal in the Community Plan of the North becoming a connected place where people can access what they need to play an active part in their community – within this the fund supports the North LAC's commitment to supporting those in greatest need.

Grants of up to £5000 will be awarded for those proposing projects that address needs facing residents in the North in areas such as

- Areas of deprivation – the North has a number of pockets in poverty in areas such as High Green and Stocksbridge
- Cost of Living
- Social isolation – the area has a higher than average proportion of older people and issues with people accessing services due to the distance from the centre of town
- Healthy living
- Community safety

If approved, funds will be awarded between September and December 2023.

Should the fund have unallocated funds at this point, remaining funds will be reallocated to other projects that address priorities within the North LAC plan.

The second fund is the 'North LAC Big Idea Fund'. Grants of up to £5000 will be awarded for those proposing projects that contribute to addressing one of the three LAC priorities:

- Safe roads and effective transport links
- Clean and attractive environment
- Vibrant community life

Applicants should demonstrate new approaches to developing community projects in the North in areas such as:

- Connecting people in the North
- Raising aspirations
- Building community life

As before, if approved, funds will be awarded between September and December 2023.

Detailed eligibility will be developed for both funds with support from the Voluntary Sector Liaison Team but core criteria will include:

- Activity must take place in the North LAC area.
- The need for a clear evidence base for proposed activity
- Applicants with no track record of delivery in the North of the city will need to demonstrate a sound approach to how they develop a project in the North of the city.
- Applicants will need to demonstrate that existing funds are not already in place for the activity they are applying for.
- The fund will be open to not for profit organisations with a bank account in the organisation's name and at least two signatories who are not related.

It is proposed that the Community Services Manager, in consultation with the LAC Chair, is authorised to finalise the eligibility criteria and make decisions on expenditure relating to the grant applications received as set out above. Bids will be assessed by the LAC team and agreed. Applications will be shared with the relevant Ward Members for comment in advance of decisions being taken. Expenditure being reported to the next meeting of the LAC.

Should the fund have unallocated funds at the end of the calendar year, remaining funds will be reallocated to other projects that address priorities within the North LAC plan.

The two further items to note agreed under delegated powers since the last meeting are:

- Operations budget £2500 (consultation with Chair 29/06/2023)
- Tree guards Ecclesfield park £960 (consultation with Chair 19/08/2023)

On this basis, funds remaining for the LAC would be £44,960.

1.3 Cost of Living

In its budget setting the Council agreed a sum of £400,000, allocated by Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), to LACs for Cost of Living related work. Of this amount £37,100 was allocated to the North LAC.

The following recommendations are made:

- That 50% of the North's allocation (£18,550) is awarded as a grant to Citizens Advice Sheffield (CAS) to support its city-wide freephone advice line. The advice line is the primary means that CAS supports people with a range of advice. This is vital to the North of the city where its distance from the centre of the city makes it harder for people to access in person services. Investment in the service will increase call capacity.
- That the remaining £18,550 is used to create a new North Cost of Living fund

The fund will be open to those providing support to people in North Sheffield with cost of living related issues, such as:

- Providing food & practical items
- Providing advice
- Operating a welcome place

Detailed eligibility will be developed but core criteria will include:

- Activity must take place in the North LAC area.
- The ability to deliver activity by the end of March 2024
- Applicants with no track record of delivery in the North of the city will need to demonstrate a sound approach to how they develop a project in the North of the city.
- Applicants will need to demonstrate that existing funds are not already in place for the activity they are applying for.
- The fund will be open to not for profit organisations with a bank account in the organisation's name and at least two signatories who are not related.

It is proposed that the Community Services Manager, in consultation with the LAC Chair, is authorised to finalise the eligibility criteria and make decisions on expenditure relating to the grant applications received as set out above. Bids will be assessed by the LAC team and agreed. Applications will be shared with the relevant Ward Members for comment in advance of decisions being taken. Expenditure will be reported to the next meeting of the LAC.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 Local Area Committees directly support the Communities and Neighbourhoods and Our Council commitments in the 'Our Sheffield: One Year Plan' but to be effective they need to have the capability to respond quickly to emerging local issues.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 The Community Plan has been developed through community consultation that has comprised of an online survey through the Council's Citizenspace platform; a paper-based survey for those less digitally enabled; engagement activity with representative organisations and in-person meetings.

Partner organisations and Council departments that have been identified as offering potential solutions to some of the issues identified have also been consulted, to establish whether suggestions can be realistically implemented.

Further online and in person consultation is taking place in June and July in order to give Members information to consider any changes required to the LAC and Ward priorities at the September LAC meeting.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 Decisions need to consider the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

The overall impact of this decision is likely to be positive and not disproportionate from an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective. In developing a Community Plan, local communities have been given the opportunity for a greater say in local decision making for services which impact their daily lives.

The devolution of responsibilities will improve inclusion for local people and the work of the Sheffield Equality Partnership will support and enhance the approach from a citywide and underserved communities' perspective.

However, in order to ensure this approach takes into account people who share protected characteristics under the Public Sector Duties the Local Area Committee Community Plan will be supported by appropriate equality monitoring of budget.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA 916) was previously carried out in respect of the establishment of Local Area Committees.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 This report concerns expenditure of the LAC's allocated budgets of £100,000 prior to 2023/24, and £100,000 (£25,000 per ward) and £37,100 (cost of living) in 2023/24. These budgets must not be exceeded.

Procurement of supplies and/or services and the award of grant aid will be carried out in line with the Council's Contracts Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 The LAC must operate in accordance with its Terms of Reference, approved as part of the Council's updated Constitution, reflecting the committee system of governance, by Full Council at its Annual Meeting

on 18th May 2022. In accordance with the provisions of section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Constitution provides that a Committee may delegate to a Council Officer.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 This report is in line with the previous decision of September 30th 2021 regarding expenditure below £5000, the North Community Plan agreed on March 9th 2022 and the proposed new North Community plan for 2023/24.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The North LAC is asked to note the use of funding as per the previous decision of September 30th 2021 and agree further expenditure to address the identified local priorities.