Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of the Chief Executive
to
Grants Strategy Working Party & Cabinet
On
19th June 2014 & 1st July 2014

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Community Commissioning Prospectus 2015-18
Policy & Resources Scrutiny – Executive Councillor: Councillor I. Gilbert
A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report
1.1 To inform and seek agreement from Grants Strategy Working Party and Cabinet for the Community Commissioning Prospectus 2015-18.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that Grants Strategy Working Party & Cabinet:

2.1 Note the criteria used to draft the Community Commissioning Prospectus 2015-18 in 3.6

2.2 Agree the proposals put forward for a Community Commissioning Prospectus 2015-18 – to be tabled at Grants Strategy Working Party.

3. Background

3.1 The Third Sector Commissioning Strategy was approved and agreed by Council on 20th October 2011. The Community Commissioning Prospectus for 2012-15 was launched on 24th October 2011.

3.2 Following an application and decision making process, recommendations from Grants Strategy Working Party were endorsed by Cabinet on 26th January 2012 and 18th June 2013 for funding of projects up until 31st March 2015. In total £661,554 funding agreements were awarded.

3.3 To inform the redrafting of the Community Commissioning Prospectus 2015-18, during December 2013 an outline of events was put in place to gather intelligence from Voluntary & Community Sector groups. This was in response to evaluated feedback of the 2012-15 programme around consultation with the wider sector regarding evidence of Community needs.

3.4 A workshop took place on the 19th February 2014 “The Changing Face of Southend”. It was held at SAVS and was facilitated by Aston Mansfield, an
independent not for profit organisation based in the London Borough of Newham. Aston Mansfield worked with Southend Borough Council previously on the 2012-15 programme. This provided the Council with continuity of support and is also an organisation the Southend Voluntary and Community Sector knew. The purpose of the workshop was to review the current 2012-15 prospectus, to highlight the needs, trends or changes since it was put in place.

3.5 Following the workshop, a survey was circulated to extract information from Voluntary & Community Sector groups with evidence of change or growing need in the community. The survey went live on 24th February for one month and closed on 24th March. The survey link was sent to all those Voluntary & Community Sector groups on the Council database and was also included in the SAVS weekly newsletter for three weeks. We received 37 valid responses.

Appendix 1a – Southend Community Commissioning Consultation (Survey)

Appendix 1b – Summary of findings of the Southend Community Commissioning Consultation (Survey)

3.6 Following the findings from the workshop and the survey, a criteria was set to support establishment of the 2015-18 Community Commissioning Prospectus

- Firstly a mapping exercise was carried out looking at what was in the current 2012-15 prospectus
- This was overlayed with the Voluntary & Community Sector evidence from the workshop and survey
- National evidence was highlighted wear relevant
- And finally information was added on what other Council funding was also supporting these areas

We then evaluated which areas of need were currently led by Council Service Strategies; and where funding was needed to support the infrastructure of the Southend Voluntary and Community Sector.

3.7 Lastly, following the above criteria some draft proposals for the 2015-18 prospectus have been drawn up identifying desired outcomes and objectives.

Next Step.

Following approval from Grants Strategy Working Party the Draft 2015-18 Community Commissioning Prospectus will be recommended to Cabinet in July 2014 for sign off. During the last week of June we will be offering Southend Voluntary & Community Sector groups further training on “Commissioning & Collaboration” with Aston Mansfield. The Prospectus is proposed to go live in September/October 2014 with drop in session being made available for those groups needing further support. Expression of interests will be requested first with a further six week for full application.
Officers will initially score all applications using an agreed criteria with recommendations to Grants Strategy Working Party. Presentation evenings are proposed in January 2015 to allow Elected Members an opportunity to make informed recommendations to Cabinet following presentations around suitability to meet the outcome.

4. Corporate Implications

4.1 Contribution to Council’s Vision & Corporate Priorities

The Council is committed to developing and supporting a thriving Third Sector in Southend. We recognise that Voluntary and Community sector organisations provide vital capacity through the provision of independent and cost effective resources at grass roots level. All the outcomes in the Community Commissioning Prospectus were mapped considering the Council’s Corporate priorities and Strategies.

4.2 Financial Implications

The prospectus outcomes will be budgeted using the 2012-15 Prospectus but taking into account savings may be required but is dependent on budget approval by full Council.

4.3 Legal Implications

None

4.4 People Implications

None

4.5 Property Implications

Through various agreements, either free of charge or at peppercorn rate, Third Sector organisations have occupied a number of Council owned assets for a number of years. Should this change it would be necessary for these organisations to find suitable, affordable premises, therefore impacting on the clients and volunteers accessing and supporting these services.

4.6 Consultation

“The Changing Face of Southend” workshop which took place in February 2014 and then following this we carried out a survey to gather evidence from
the sector for one month. Internally we consulted with Group Managers regarding Council funding to Voluntary & Community Sector groups across the Borough.

4.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

There are around 174,300 people living in Southend-on-Sea. By 2021 the estimated number of people living in Southend-on-Sea will rise to 186,400. The Council needs to be vigilant on the impact this has on demands for future services and decreasing funds available to provide them. By supporting these Organisations the Council is demonstrating its commitment to valuing the contribution of the Voluntary and Community sector in helping to support the vulnerable and diverse communities of Southend.

4.8 Risk Assessment

None

4.9 Value for Money

Since many of the activities and groups supported address needs that would otherwise be met by the public sector significant withdrawal of funding from these third sector organisations would have a knock on effect to Council services. Many of the funded organisations provide a cost effective service on limited budgets, are best placed to deliver at a local, grass root level and help reduce the burden on other Council resources.

4.10 Community Safety Implications

None

4.11 Environmental Impact

None

5. Background Papers

None

6. Appendices

6.1 The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix 1a – Southend Community Commissioning Consultation (Survey)
Appendix 1b – Summary of findings of the Southend Community Commissioning Consultation (Survey)

Draft 2015-18 Community Commissioning Prospectus – to be tabled

Community Commissioning Criteria 2015-18 – to be tabled