

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

**Report of Tandra Forster
Executive Director, Adults and Communities
To
Cabinet
On
3rd November**

Report prepared by:
Benedict Leigh (interim Director of Commissioning)

**Agenda
Item No.**

Southend Together Southend Community Investment Fund Proposal

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report sets out proposals for community investment and support designed to create a stronger and more resilient local voluntary and community sector by creating a £1.5 million community investment fund for local services.
- 1.2. The community investment fund will be controlled by local people, creating a culture of community ownership and resilience, and building co-production capacity in local organisations. It will shift control from the Council to the community, and will create a culture of collaborating to achieve outcomes and deliver impact
- 1.3. This Community Investment Fund will replace all existing grants for community activity and would be controlled by local people.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. **The creation of a £1.5m Community Investment Fund for three years for Southend as outlined in this paper**
- 2.2. **The extension of existing grants as per appendix 1 to support this process**

3. Background

- 3.1. Southend Borough Council (SBC) is an integral part of the community of Southend. One of the key roles the Council plays is in commissioning services that support local people.
- 3.2. We want to make sure that our commissioning of services enables the voice of residents to be clearly heard and valued, to support people and communities to be resilient and independent, and to deliver better outcomes for everyone who lives in or visits Southend.
- 3.3. We also want to be sure that our resources, and the broader effort of the community, is targeted to where it can have the biggest impact and support people and organisations most effectively. This means using the evidence we have, both numerical and from the lived experience of people who use services and their families.

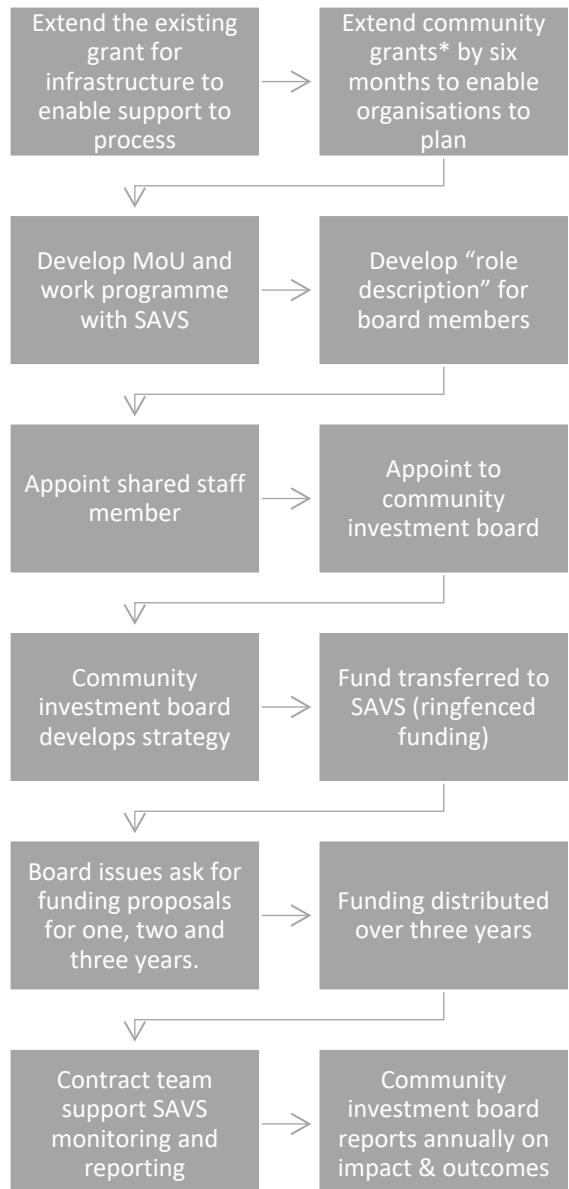
- 3.4. Southend 2050 also provides a clear rationale for change. Individuals and communities need to be supported to become more resilient, and less reliant on statutory services. The third sector is seeing increasing demand for its services and the Coronavirus crisis has shown that they are ready, willing and able to step up and respond to the needs of Southend's diverse communities.
- 3.5. Part of the existing relationship between the voluntary sector and SBC is based around the in-year and community grants programmes. The in-year one-off grants have an annual total value of £25,000 and community grants £673,682 although the latter are awarded for 3 years and are due for renewal by 1st April 2021 (although they can be terminated with 3 month's notice). Further details of these grants are provided in Appendix 2.
- 3.6. There is evidence to suggest that the way in which SBC in-year and community grants are awarded and administered needs updating. Engagement with the third sector, experience from Thurrock Council and other places, and the work of organisations such as Nurture Development Ltd around the field of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) suggests there is an appetite and a need to fundamentally rethink the relationship between the Council, the third sector and grant funding.
- 3.7. This is especially important because SBC's relationship with third sector partners is key to delivering Southend 2050 and as part of that vision, developing our locality model. It is hoped that this new model will help to achieve more resilient and sustainable communities and the Safe and Well, Active and Involved and Opportunity and Prosperity themes of Southend 2050.
- 3.8. In January 2020, SBC embarked on a project to redesign the process for awarding in-year grants as a precursor to doing the same for community grants. The in-year grant redesign process included significant engagement with the third sector and provides some useful initial evidence and starting point for further engagement for the redesign of the community grants programme.
- 3.9. The results of the early engagement suggested that these processes need to be more inclusive and collaborative and less confrontational. New application and award processes for in-year grants were therefore developed in collaboration with voluntary sector partners.
- 3.10. We have seen the response of the community, of our own staff, and of staff across social care providers in Southend to the covid-19 crisis. We want to build on the appetite for change and the innovative and agile developments as people supported each other.

4. **Proposal**

- 4.1. As part of building on the learning from the Covid-19 crisis, and on learning from our redesign of the community grants process we are proposing a **Community Investment Fund** for a significant element of our community investment that supports the most vulnerable.
- 4.2. Currently available funds for community resilience and infrastructure are around £650,000. These are currently invested in grants to a range of local community

groups. These grants are broadly delivering the outcomes that were designed by the council several years ago. However, they represent a top down approach to decision making and investment.

- 4.3. All grants are due to end in March 2021 and a new process for allocating this funding to achieve outcomes is required. This process was delayed due to the need for both the local community and voluntary sector, and the local authority to respond to the COVID 19 pandemic.
- 4.4. As such, the recommendation is that the majority of existing grants are extended to August 2021 (a six month extension).
- 4.5. We are proposing setting up a **Community Investment Board** consisting of local experts by experience (people who use services and their families), supported by an additional advisory group made up of local voluntary and community organisations, local health and care providers, and clinical and social work professionals.
- 4.6. The proposal cedes control of substantial funding to the local community, whilst retaining the skills of the council in procurement and monitoring to ensure value for money.
- 4.7. The Community Investment Board will work collaboratively to agree what matters, what types of service and support they would like to exist, and how it could best be delivered. The board will jointly design and agree the bidding process with the support of the commissioning function in Southend Borough Council.
- 4.8. The Community Investment Board will use the agreed outcomes in Southend 2050, developed collaboratively with the local community, to guide their development of criteria for services and support.
- 4.9. The Board will then score and evaluate bids and will provide ongoing monitoring and oversight of the delivery of the agreed outcomes. Technical, legislative, and administrative support will be provided by the Council to deliver this. This will include supporting contract monitoring and performance reporting.



The board and the reference group

- 4.10. The Community Investment Board will consist of 15 local experts by experience (people who use services and their families).
- 4.11. The Board will not include people who work for (staff) or run (trustees) organisations who may wish to benefit from the community investment. The Board will not include SBC employees or elected members.
- 4.12. Southend Borough Council will work with Southend Association of Voluntary Services to jointly design a role description for board members and to support the appointments process. SBC and SAVS will design and deliver a training and support programme for board members.
- 4.13. Alongside the Board, a Providers and Professional's Reference Group, bringing together local voluntary and community groups, local health and care providers, and local health and social care professionals will support the process.
- 4.14. Both the Board and the Reference Group supported by a joint post sitting between SAVS and SBC commissioning function.

Reporting

- 4.15. The community investment board will produce an annual report outlining the impact the community investment fund has had on the residents and communities of Southend.

5. Other Options

- 5.1. Other options were reviewed as listed below. None of the reviewed options are recommended as they fail to deliver the Council's strategic objectives.
- 5.2. **Do Nothing:** end all existing grants
- Requires no administration and delivers saving (£766k / year)
 - Substantial impact on services and on relationship with the community
 - Does not deliver innovation or change
 - Will exclude new providers and organisations
- 5.3. **Do Statutory Minimum:** end all grants except those delivering statutory services
- Requires minimal administration and delivers saving (£531k / year)
 - Substantial impact on services and on relationship with the community
 - Does not deliver innovation or change
 - Will exclude new providers and organisations
- 5.4. **Continue existing grants:** Renew the existing grants for a further 3 years.
- Requires minimal administration time
 - Does not deliver innovation or change
 - Will exclude new providers and organisations
- 5.5. **Run a new grants programme:** Run another application programme
- Requires increase in administrative time
 - Doesn't increase community capacity
 - May fail to deliver innovation

6. Reasons for Recommendations

6.1. The recommendations are as set out:

- 6.1.1. The creation of a £1.5m Community Investment Fund for three years Southend as outlined in this paper.
- 6.1.2. The extension of existing grants as per appendix 1 to support this process.
- 6.2. Implementation of the recommendations will shift the relationship from engagement and consultation towards **community ownership and coproduction**, support then development a **culture of community ownership and resilience**, and build on **learning and community energy** generated in response to the Covid-19 crisis

7. Corporate Implications

7.1. Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map

7.1.1. The proposal develops elements of Southend 2050 outcomes as outlined below

Pride & Joy	An effectively supported voluntary and community sector Local provision for local people Developed community capacity
Safe & Well	Safe services providing high quality social care Effective care governance and assurance of the quality of provision
Active & Involved	An effective voluntary and community sector Increased voluntary sector input
Opportunity & Prosperity	An effectively supported voluntary and community sector Increased investment in local services
Connected & Smart	Training for local residents in the use of commissioning frameworks and tools

7.1.2. Alongside the Southend 2050 road map we have considered the commissioning principles developed in Southend. The impact is mapped in the table below:

SBC Commissioning Framework Principles	Link to Third Sector Relationship
Focused on outcomes for residents	Role of third sector in supporting delivery of Southend 2050 outcomes
A consistent commissioning approach	Designing, production, delivery and evaluation is collaborative, ensuring 'right sourcing' is achieved. Demanding high quality and consistent standards of all those involved.
The right people involved at the right stage of commissioning	Harnessing the skills and expertise of the third sector, placing trust in their contribution and working together to deliver the difference required for our communities.
Driving innovation	Embracing new opportunities and emphasising social value to deliver innovation.
High quality, robust evidence informing our decisions	Recognising and respecting the expertise, feedback and knowledge of our third sector to tell the story of Southend.
Collective accountability	Improving communication and transparent decision making for our community grants.
People at the heart of what we do	Continuous engagement and transparent decision making, identifying new and diverse opportunities to engage with our partners to co-design and co-produce a grant system that supports delivery of our shared ambition.
A commitment to building capacity	Working with the third sector to develop existing assets that our communities offer ensuring cohesion through co-design, co-

	production, co-delivery and evaluation.
Optimising social value	Optimising grants to drive social value, considering long term impact and wider benefits to promote an integrated and coherent approach to delivering Southend 2050 ambition.
Sustainability	Working with our partners to make best use of grants to develop and embed sustainability.

7.2. Financial Implications

- 7.2.1. We currently identified budgets of £772k invested in a range of grants to support community and voluntary organisations. This is current Southend Borough Council base budget funding. Most of these grants come to an end in March 2020 and we can rethink their use.
- 7.2.2. The table below outlines current grants, excluded elements and grants, and the six month extension costs and shows that **£1,500,758** will be available for a fund covering October 2021 to September 2024.

Current Grant recipient	2020/2021	Apr 21 - Sep 21	Notes
	Full Year	Six months	
Active Southend	£ 5,000	£ 2,500	
Age Concern, South East Essex Advocacy for Older People and Trinity Family Centre	£ 40,000	£ 20,000	
Citizens Advice Southend and Royal Association for Deaf People	£ 235,382	£ 117,691	60% excluded and subject to IAG review
HARP and Southend Vineyard	£ 160,000	£ 80,000	
Mencap and Trinity Family Centre	£ 40,000	£ 20,000	
Small grants (Southend Emergency Fund)	£ 25,000	£ 12,500	
Menorah support	£ 2,000	£ 1,000	
Metal	£ 50,000	N/A	excluded until end of current SLA
SAVS	£ 78,000	N/A	excluded and extended until Sept 2022
South Essex Community Hub, Age Concern, Family Mosaic and Southend Vineyard	£ 120,000	£ 60,000	
Southend Arts Council	£ 3,000	£ 1,500	
Southend Carnival CIC	£ 3,000	N/A	grant runs to June 2021
Southend Choirs	£ 11,100	£ 5,550	
	£ 772,482	£ 308,241	

Exclusions

Infrastructure

- 7.2.3. The infrastructure element of the current community grants (Social Care) has been removed. (£78k/year). This is for the provision of infrastructure support. This is because of the need for a stable infrastructure support body to enable the delivery of the Community Investment Fund.

Information Advice and Guidance

- 7.2.4. The information advice and guidance element of the current community grants (Social Care) has been removed (60% of current CAB/RAD grant at £141,229). This for is the provision of information, advice, and guidance. This is because a desktop review of information advice and guidance funding indicates multiple funding for

overlapping services through a mixture of grants and contracts. We will carry out a full review of all IAG services funded and offered by the council with a view to reducing duplication, increasing efficiency, and being clear about statutory outcomes.

Ongoing Arts Agreements

- 7.2.5. There are two ongoing Service Level Agreements with existing arts providers. These are £50k for Metal and £3k for Southend Carnival CIC. These are both excluded until the end of current service level agreements.

7.3. Legal Implications

There are minimal legal implications. The creation of a grant agreement between the Council and the holder of the Community Investment Fund, together with support for the delivery of a memorandum of understanding are required.

7.4. People Implications

This recommendation creates an additional joint post between the Voluntary Sector infrastructure body managing the community investment fund and the council

7.5. Property Implications

There are no property implications.

7.6. Consultation

This proposal builds on work started in January 2020 when SBC embarked on a project to redesign the process for awarding in-year grants as a precursor to doing the same for community grants. The in-year grant redesign process included significant engagement with the third sector and provides some useful initial evidence and starting point for further engagement for the redesign of the community grants programme. The results of the early engagement suggested that these processes need to be more inclusive and collaborative and less confrontational.

7.7. Equalities and Diversity Implications

There are no equalities and diversity impacts of this proposal. Use of the grants will be monitored for equalities and diversity impact.

7.8. Risk Assessment

Delivery

- 7.8.1. There is a risk that the Community Investment Board will fail to deliver the ambition of the programme. This will be mitigated by the creation of an additional support role for the board, plus extensive training and development work in conjunction with SAVS.

Control

- 7.8.2. There is a risk that the lack of local authority control will lead to decisions that we would not fully agree with. This will be managed by agreement on the principles and impact with the board, and by the process of setting the investment fund outcomes.

Reputational

- 7.8.3. There may be reputational risks associated with changes to funding for particular organisations. This will be mitigated by the shift to community control for the fund and by the extension of existing grants to give people time to plan for any change.

7.9. Value for Money

Use of the grants will be monitored for delivered impact and value for money.

7.10. Community Safety Implications

There are no community safety impacts of this proposal. Use of the grants will be monitored for community safety impact.

7.11. Environmental Impact

There are no environmental impacts of this proposal. Use of the grants will be monitored for environmental impact.

8. Background Papers

8.1. There are no background papers

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: extensions to existing grants

Note: extensions are dependent on negotiations with existing recipients

Grants to be extended by six months to September 2021

Grant recipient	Full Year Amount	6 Month extension
Active Southend	£5,000	£2,500
Age Concern, South East Essex Advocacy for Older People and Trinity Family Centre	£40,000	£20,000
Citizens Advice Southend and Royal Association for Deaf People	£235,382	£117,691
HARP and Southend Vineyard	£160,000	£80,000
Mencap and Trinity Family Centre	£40,000	£20,000
Menorah support	£2,000	£1,000
South Essex Community Hub, Age Concern, Family Mosaic and Southend Vineyard	£120,000	£60,000
Southend Arts Council	£3,000	£1,500
Southend Choirs	£11,100	£5,550
	£616,482	£308,241

Grants to be extended by eighteen months to September 2022

Grant recipient	Full Year Amount	18 Month extension
SAVS	£78,000	£117,000

9.2 Appendix 2: Existing Grants

The intention is that all grants across all areas in Southend should form part of the fund. There is the opportunity to continue to add to the fund.

Community Grants (2020/2021)

Description	Desired Outcomes	Awarded to	Amount
To identify and provide early intervention and support to those at risk of losing tenancy/income that enables self-sufficiency and independence.	Families and individuals are provided with appropriate support to sustain tenancies and income (prevention). Empowered displaced individuals live independently and positively participate in the community (reactive).	HARP and Southend Vineyard	£160,000
To provide good quality, easily accessible and legally based advice and support services.	Better informed and empowered individuals through the provision of wider locality based general, and specialist, impartial advice and supporting services.	Citizens Advice Southend and Royal Association for Deaf People	£235,382
To provide over 60s with a spread of accessible, positive opportunities to stay independent, active and well.	An empowered, independent, informed and socially included over 60s community aligned to the Southend System wide agreed Locality approach.	Age Concern, South East Essex Advocacy for Older People and Trinity Family Centre	£40,000
To provide effective and robust positive opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged people to stay active in the community.	Vulnerable and disadvantaged people become integrated members of the community, aligned to the Southend System wide agreed Locality approach, through the provision of social activities and volunteering.	Mencap and Trinity Family Centre	£40,000
To provide an engagement route to the Third Sector in Southend-on-Sea.	An active Third Sector that is better connected through wider representation to key decision making.	SAVS	£78,000
To provide a locality based	Improved economic and social health of	South Essex	£120,000

community hub service that is community solution led.	individuals and communities through holistic community led responses that support community cohesion, inclusion and development aligned to the Southend System wide agreed Locality approach.	Community Hub, Age Concern, Family Mosaic and Southend Vineyard	
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There is also a small grants fund of £25,000. This went to Southend Emergency Fund to support coronavirus resilience in 20/21.

Culture / Tourism Grants (2020/2021)

There is a total grants budget of £75,500

Menorah support	£ 2,000
SOUTHEND Choirs	£11,100
Southend Arts Council	£ 3,000
RNLI	£ 1,400
Metal	£50,000 (<i>excluded until end of current SLA period</i>)
Southend Carnival CIC	£ 3,000 (<i>excluded until end of events SLA June 2021</i>)
Active Southend	£ 5,000