

Report of: The Office of the Director of Public Health

Report to: Director of Public Health

Date: 26th September 2014

Subject: To seek approval to set up a Winter Wellbeing small grants scheme which requires the Council to provide funding in advance to Leeds Community Foundation to deliver the administration of the small grants scheme.

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		

Summary of main issues

1. In November 2013, the Office of Director of Public Health agreed a recurrent £200,000 Winter Wellbeing Fund, as part of its ring-fenced budget. This fund would replace the national 'Warm Homes Healthy People' fund, which was abolished in September 2013. A small grants scheme had been successfully delivered over the past 3 years and it is proposed to re-start a similar scheme which would be available to community groups to support low value local projects and initiatives.
2. Due to their track record, Leeds Community Foundation (LCF) will deliver the small grants scheme. LCF is the largest independent grant maker in Leeds and has given out £20million in grants to local community projects since 2005. The cost for LCF to administer the grants scheme is £3,000 per annum for a period of 3 years.
3. The small projects grants fund would be £58,000 per annum and will be used for grants of up to £5,000. Grants of up to £2,500 would be made available for community groups working in a specific neighbourhood, wanting to test pilot projects or replicate good practice. Grants of up to £5,000 would be available for more established projects, generally serving city-wide and a larger population, or where there is an opportunity to increase the scope or reach of an initiative.
4. The decision-making about the grant fund will be made by an independent panel. The panel would consist of both Council officers and LCF staff.

5. The projects will support the city's Winter Wellbeing agenda, which is based on guidance from Public Health England's Cold Weather Plan, and therefore should support those most vulnerable to adverse effects of cold weather and/or cold and damp housing.

Recommendations

6. The Director of the Public Health approves setting up a Winter Wellbeing small grants scheme which requires payment of the grants fund and the administration fee in advance by;
 - awarding a contract to Leeds Community Foundation for the administration of the scheme (£3,000 per annum (*equivalent of 5.17% of annual small grants allocation*)) ;
 - Provide an annual grant contribution of £58,000 which will be paid in advance annually for the scheme for 3 years.
 - Provide £3,000 funding for LCF to administer the small grants scheme which will be paid in advance annually for administering the scheme for 3 years

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for setting up a Winter Wellbeing small grants scheme by awarding a contract Leeds Community Foundation for the administration of the scheme (£3,000 per annum (equivalent of 5.17% of annual small grants allocation)) and the provision of an annual grant contribution of £58,000 for 3 years which will be paid in advance each year.

2 Background information

- 2.1 In November 2013, the Director of Public Health agreed a recurrent £200,000 Winter Wellbeing Fund, as part of its ring-fenced budget, in order to replace the national 'Warm Homes Healthy People' Fund, which was abolished in September 2013.
- 2.2 A small grants scheme had been successfully delivered over the last 3 years and it is now proposed to re-establish a similar scheme, which would be available to community groups to support low value local projects and initiatives. It is recommended that the small grants fund is administered by an outside agency, Leeds Community Foundation (LCF).
- 2.3 The 2012/13 Winter Warmth Campaign delivered partly by LCF has been evaluated by Leeds Metropolitan University (Woodward et al, 2013). This review concluded that the scheme represented value for money with vulnerable people across Leeds being helped by the Winter Warmth Scheme. Beneficiaries experienced improved levels of emotional and physical comfort, less susceptibility to cold related illnesses and felt less socially isolated. A significant need for a similar scheme in subsequent winters was demonstrated and highlighted in the report's recommendations in order to ensure vulnerable people in Leeds are not left living in unhealthy, cold and socially isolated, environments.
- 2.4 LCF are considered to be the only realistic provider for the delivery of this scheme, as they have a good track record in administering small grants and are well respected by the organisations in Leeds likely to be seeking financial support from the fund.
- 2.5 LCF have agreed to charge 5.17% of the value of the Winter Wellbeing small grants fund to cover the costs of their work. For a grants fund of £58,000 the cost to administer would be £3,000 per annum and this report seeks agreement for both the administration and grant funding costs.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 LCF is the largest independent grant-maker in Leeds. Since 2005 they have given out over £20 million in grants to nearly 3,000 community groups and charities. Their reputation is also demonstrated by partnerships with national and international bodies including Comic Relief, Sport Relief, The Henry Smith Charity and the European Union's Regional Development Fund. They have considerable experience (10 years as LCF, 30+ years in terms of experience of individual staff members) of setting up, managing and monitoring similar programmes.
- 3.2 LCF have a considerable understanding of the local community: in particular the important work of community groups and charities that are helping to provide innovative solutions to tackle local issues. Many of these groups are quite small and not always well known yet, every day, they are providing vital services and support in the heart of our local communities.
- 3.3 LCF already work closely with Leeds City Council and other public sector bodies. They are able to play a key role in helping shape change locally, acting as an advocate for the work of local community groups and, where required, standing up for key issues in the city. Staff members sit on a number of strategic committees involving statutory and third sector partners.
- 3.4 LCF are Quality Accredited by the UK Community Foundations, a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. They are governed by a board of Trustees from public, private and third sector backgrounds.
- 3.5 LCF would provide all the administrative support and expertise required to set up and manage the Scheme. This would include:
- Liaising with LCC regarding agreeing the terms and conditions of the scheme
 - Promoting the scheme by means of a promotional flier, social media, information on the LCF website and by means of notifying local groups via other voluntary sector organisations (in particular through Voluntary Action Leeds / Doing Good Leeds)
 - Providing telephone advice to applicants looking to apply for a grant
 - Drafting the application form, gaining agreement from LCC and making this available to applicants via the website and electronically
 - Receiving all applications, vetting and due diligence including contacting the groups directly with any queries, and checking eligibility
 - Recruiting and supporting an independent grants panel
 - Producing papers for the grants panel, taking minutes
 - Liaising with the groups after the panel to convey the decisions
 - Sending payments to successful groups and ongoing monitoring of the project
 - Disseminating End of Grant Report templates and collating these from all successful groups after the end of the completion date (i.e. end of winter period).
 - Summarising End of Grant Reports, supplying summary report to LCC, chasing up outstanding queries where necessary.
- 3.6 Although all the administration is provided by LCF, the final decision-making will lie with an independent panel. This panel would usually include LCC Officers so as to ensure fairness and transparency. The group would be chaired by an LCF trustee / senior representative. Third sector groups that are potentially applying for a grant would not be eligible to join the panel.
- 3.7 A total of £58,000 will be made available with grants at two levels:
- a) Grants of up to £2,500 would be for community groups working in a specific neighbourhood, wanting to test pilot projects or replicate good practice.
 - b) Grants of £5,000 would be available for more established projects, generally serving city-wide and/or a larger population or where there is an opportunity to increase the scope or reach of an initiative, which has demonstrated its effectiveness through evaluation.

- 3.8 LCF would support a broad range of activities but priority will be given to those projects that support:
- People who are most vulnerable to the adverse effects of cold weather e.g. those with long-term medical conditions, children up to 5 years, disabled, frail and elderly, and those on low incomes.
 - A focus on reducing social isolation.
- 3.9 The small grants scheme will be operated in line with Public Health England's Cold Weather Plan recommendations, and where possible be evidence-based, for example:
- Improving access to information and services via social media/digital communications as well as door-knocking and other innovative promotion
 - Training for volunteers to deliver winter preparation advice services in the form of mentoring and buddying roles
 - Winter Warmth items (new or recycled) but not Winter Warmth packs on its own.
 - Practical 'hands-on' support e.g. handypersons, shopping support, community transport, provision of hot meals.
 - Reaching vulnerable people that are not yet engaged beyond existing/active members of groups or clubs.
- 3.10 The expected outcomes are:
- 20 – 30 community projects of a value of up to £5,000 to be funded through the small grants scheme to provide practical assistance and support to vulnerable people during the cold weather, to reduce social isolation by way of services to individuals, face to face contact or material assistance and to refer to the other projects and grants where appropriate.
- 3.11 The fund will only support projects that are either delivering new activity or increasing the reach of existing activity. This might be by working in a different way; implementing new ideas and methods; working in partnership to tackle an issue; or working with different partners. All applicants would need to explain how the local communities are involved in the development and delivery of successful projects.
- 3.12 The groups likely to be beneficiaries of projects funded will primarily be supporting the city's Cold Weather Plan agenda and should support those most vulnerable to the adverse effects of cold weather.
- 3.13 This is not a general grants scheme that can provide core funding to cover current running costs or activities, nor can it be used purely to replace funding streams that are no longer available.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 There is ongoing engagement about the development, implementation and evaluation of the LCF-administered scheme through the Cold Weather Plan 2014/15 Group and city-wide Affordable Warmth Partnership.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 The projects undertaken are aimed at a diverse range of vulnerable groups and use established networks of professional referrers, as well as links with community organisations in the voluntary sector to ensure that a wide range of vulnerable groups will be positively impacted.

4.2.2 An Equality and Diversity/ Cohesion and Integration screening has been completed on the proposals to form the Winter Wellbeing Fund and has previously been reported to the Cold Weather Plan Group and Affordable Warmth Partnership. This highlights that the formation of the Winter Wellbeing Fund can have positive impacts on local communities, particularly for socially and economically excluded citizens in the city. Previous schemes showed that people who may benefit positively from the small grants fund include low income households and other marginalised communities such as the homeless, transient communities (Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Migrant Communities). Furthermore draft NICE guidance confirmed that those most vulnerable to the adverse effects of cold weather e.g. those with long-term medical conditions, children up to 5 years, disabled, frail and elderly, and those on low incomes.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The Vision for Leeds is committed to making sure that everybody lives in a decent home and can stay warm by 2030. In addition, the City Priority Plan to 2015 commits the council to “support more people to live safely in their own homes” and “improve housing conditions and energy efficiency”. This project will help the city achieve both aims.

4.3.2 Affordable Warmth and Benefits Advice have been included as priorities in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013 – 15, and fall under outcome 5 ‘People will live in healthy and sustainable communities’. This project will contribute to that outcome in particular, as well as outcome 1 ‘People will live longer and have healthier lives’ and outcome 2 ‘People will live full, active and independent lives’.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The 2012/13 Winter Warmth Campaign jointly delivered by LCF has been evaluated by Leeds Metropolitan University (Woodward et al, 2013). It highlighted that this scheme represented value for money with vulnerable people across Leeds being helped by the Winter Warmth Scheme.

4.4.2 The small grants scheme, as part of the recurrent Winter Wellbeing Fund, will be funded by the Public Health ring-fenced budget.

4.4.3 The grant allocation (£58,000 per annum) will be paid to LCF in advance to ensure that the funding is available to be awarded to the VCFS groups/agencies prior to projects/works taking place. LCF will provide quarterly reports detailing the grants awarded, fund transactions and any unspent funding.

4.4.4 Should the grant funding element not be allocated by the end of the financial year, the Council reserves the right to recall any unspent funding at its discretion and any associated administration fee.

4.4.5 LCF will receive payment for their administration fee upfront. This will be paid on the 1st October for each contract year. This is in line with other LCC Directorates which have grant funding agreements with LCF, where it is common practice to pay LCF’s administration fee upfront.

4.4.6 Consultation with the Director of Resources has taken place as per Financial Procedure Rules to enable this funding to be paid in advance, recommendations have been included in this report

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 Due to the contract value it will not be subject to call-in and there are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential within the Council’s Access to Information Rules.

5 Risk Management

- 5.1 There is a potential financial risk if LCF hit financial difficulties, this could put the Public Health funding which has been paid in advance at risk.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The Winter Wellbeing Fund means that the small grants scheme can be re-established, and community groups can apply for funding to support low value local projects and initiatives. Based upon their local knowledge and extensive past experience administering similar schemes, it is proposed that LCF will administer the scheme.
- 6.2 It is proposed that the fund is operated for three years. Public Health will provide a grant allocation of £58,000 per year, and also cover the LCF administration costs of £3,000 per year. A formal contract with LCC terms and conditions will be set up with LCF for the administration of the scheme.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 The Director of the Public Health approves setting up a Winter Wellbeing small grants scheme which requires payment of the grants fund and the administration fee in advance by;
- awarding a contract to Leeds Community Foundation for the administration of the scheme (£3,000 per annum (*equivalent of 5.17% of annual small grants allocation*)) ;
 - Provide an annual grant contribution of £58,000 which will be paid in advance annually for the scheme for 3 years.
 - Provide £3,000 funding for LCF to administer the small grants scheme which will be paid in advance annually for administering the scheme for 3 years

8 Background documents¹

Elbers, M. and Curtis, R. et al (2014). **Report on 2013/14 winter warmth campaign**. Leeds City Council.

Public Health England (2013). **Cold Weather Plan for England 2013. Protecting health and reducing harm from cold weather**. London.

Woodward, J., White, J., Kinsella, K., Giuntoli, G., and Roexe, A. (2013) **The Leeds Winter Warmth Campaign: Stakeholder Evaluation**. Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.