

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

DECISION NO:

21/00074

For publication

Key decision: NO

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

To fund a Volunteering Infrastructure pilot and Strategic Recovery Fund to support the Voluntary sector over the next 12 months.

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services I agree to: fund a pilot for Volunteering Infrastructure across the County and the Strategic Recovery Fund to support the voluntary sector in Kent.

Reason(s) for decision:

This funding is intended to provide support to the Voluntary Sector over the next 12 months until the adoption of KCC's Civil Society Strategy in December, which will set out the framework for our longer-term infrastructure support.

The Council's Interim Strategic Plan (ISP) set out our commitment to meeting the challenges identified during Recovery and to:

Develop a support offer for the VCSE which responds to the challenges identified during COVID-19 recovery to help maintain the local VCSE network whilst supporting it to be sustainable and revitalised within a post COVID-19 environment.

There are two elements to this funding:

The Strategic Recovery Fund was run in 2020 as emergency support to the Voluntary Sector providing small grants to organisations to help them adapt their business plans and organisational model to meet the demands of Covid.

This Fund was run by Kent Community Foundation (KCF) as a recognised, grant making organisation. It is proposed to run this fund again with KCF for 2021 given the success of the Fund and as result of the challenges voluntary organisations are now facing particularly with the ending of Covid emergency grants and an increase in demand for services. Organisations have also had to adapt to the use of digital platforms and remote working. The impact monitoring provided by this Fund, for both rounds will be used to inform our future, long term business support to the Voluntary Sector.

Volunteering infrastructure Pilot.

The need for a well-resourced and co-ordinated volunteering network across the County was highlighted in the VCS Recovery Cell action plan developed in response to Covid as part of the Kent Resilience Forum Architecture. The Volunteer Centres provided advice and support to hubs supporting those that are shielding, whilst continuing to co-ordinate those that volunteered within their local communities throughout the pandemic. They also supported volunteers who were not able to volunteer for health reasons; ensuring they remained connected and engaged.

To deliver against the action plan and the ISP we intend to work with the volunteering infrastructure to develop a pilot for county wide volunteering infrastructure, that is sustainable but offers some consistency of resource across the County. This will be run as a grant funded pilot led by Ashford Volunteer Centre so that we can develop the best approach alongside the organisations themselves. This approach will be embedded in the Civil Society Strategy (once adopted) and future arrangements for supporting volunteering infrastructure will be informed by the pilot's evaluation findings and in line with the strategy framework


Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Proposed and agreed by Cabinet on 24th June.
This decision was taken between meetings of the cabinet committee in accordance with the procedure set out in Sections 12.31-12.36 of the Constitution.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

N/A

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:



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signed

3rd September 2021

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date