

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

08 October 2020

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 **SCOPING REPORT: RECOVERY FOR THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR**

The impact of the pandemic has had a huge impact on the voluntary sector, this scoping report will outline the work of the voluntary Sector Recovery Cell and suggest some options for the next stage of the Review.

1.1 **Background**

1.1.1 We know that the pandemic has had a huge impact on everyone and that the voluntary and community sector has been particularly hard hit. The latest Charity Sector Tracker published by Pro Bono Economics, in partnership with the Institute of Fundraising and Charity Finance Group anticipates that as many as 58% of charities nationally are set to cut back services and Covid-19 could cost the sector 60,000 jobs. This reduction in charity provision comes at a time when charities are particularly needed.

1.1.2 In Tonbridge and Malling we know that many of our local charity and voluntary sector organisations have been under extraordinary pressure since the start of the pandemic, dealing with increased demand and constrained resources. That said, we are also aware that many of these groups have been able to enhance their offers of support and have embraced a digital way of working, which has allowed them to continue to operate, maintaining excellent support for residents of the borough.

1.2 **Kent Voluntary Sector Recovery**

1.2.1 The Kent Resilience Forum operate a number of "Cells" which support recovery across the different sectors. The Voluntary and Community Sector Recovery Cell is chaired by the Chief Executive of Kent Community Foundation. Membership of this group is as follows:

- BEMIX, Medway & East Kent
- Emmaus, Dover
- Home Start, North West Kent

- Oasis, Thanet
- SEK, Kent wide
- Ashford Volunteer Centre
- Bright Shadow, Herne Bay
- CAB, Maidstone
- Children and Families Ltd, Sheerness
- Kent Coastal Volunteers
- West Kent Mind
- Catching Lives, Canterbury
- Crossroads, Kent Wide
- Ashford Vineyard Foodbank

1.2.2 Each cell has an associated Action Plan, the Voluntary Sector Recovery Action Plan is attached as Annex 1 to this report. At the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, Members may wish to hear from the Chair of this group, to discuss the work of the Cell and outline any key issues faced by the sector?

1.2.3 As West Kent Mind are represented at the Cell and operate a number of important support initiatives in Tonbridge and Malling, it may also be useful to invite West Kent Mind to attend our next meeting, to outline any particular issues that they have faced locally.

1.2.4 Citizens Advice North and West Kent (CANWK) are not represented at the Cell, but do provide vital support in Tonbridge and Malling. They are also one of the key voluntary sector bodies supported by the Council. During the pandemic they have successfully adapted their service to operate mainly as telephone and digital support. As we go to the next stage of this review, it would be useful to hear how this has been achieved? If this model is likely to continue going forward, it will be helpful to hear how it has been received so far by their clients and if they foresee any difficulty with this approach?

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 None.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 Members will be aware that the Council has received Government financial support in the form of a “Local Emergency Assistance Grant”. For Tonbridge and Malling the allocation was £47,355.61. The guidance around the allocation of these funds was to provide local support to assist vulnerable households.

1.4.2 As reported to Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on 16 September 2020, it was agreed that our approach would be to invite bids from local voluntary groups who are working in the community to sustain or supplement their service. This will go some way to supporting the local voluntary and community sector with their ongoing work to assist those most in need in Tonbridge and Malling. The

approved bids were endorsed on the 16 September and the following allocations were made:

Organisation	Use	Amount requested £
Tonbridge Baptist Church	Foodbank	10,000
East Malling Centre Larder	Foodbank	8,400
Ditton Parish Council	Foodbank	1,000
Snodland Church Food Bank	Foodbank	1,500
Wouldham Parish Council	Food vouchers	500
St Peters and St Pauls Church Aylesford	Storage facility for foodbank	500
Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge	Befriending service	2,000
Imago Community Dial 2 Drive	Community transport and befriending	4,266
Crosslight	Debt counselling caseworker	6,941
Northwest Kent Citizen Advice	Signposting and support	1,000
Crossroads Care Kent	Respite and support for carers	7,500

1.4.3 A balance of £3,748.61 remains to be held on reserve for use as necessary within the parameters of the scheme under direction of the Chief Executive or Director of Finance and Transformation.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 N/A

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

1.6.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.7 Policy Considerations

Business Continuity/Resilience

Community

1.8 Recommendations

- 1.8.1 To **APPROVE** the suggested format for the next stage of this Review, inviting speakers (as suggested in 1.2.2 – 1.2.4) to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Background papers:

contact: Gill Fox

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive