

REPORT TO:	CABINET 19th September 2016
AGENDA ITEM:	8
SUBJECT:	The Community Fund 2016 - 19
LEAD OFFICER:	Richard Simpson, Executive Director Resources (Section 151 Officer) Sharon Godman, Head of Strategy and Community
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Hamida Ali Cabinet Member for Community, Safety and Justice
WARDS:	
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:	
This report contributes to all Corporate Plan priority areas and the Community Strategy reflecting the commitments set out in Ambitious for Croydon. The Council will help to achieve a stronger, fairer borough where no community is held back where there is a vibrant and connected community by focussing the efforts of the new Community Fund.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT	
The proposed Community Fund allocation will result in savings of £260k compared to the 2015/16 budget.	
KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: this is not a key decision	

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Cabinet is recommended
- 1.1 to note the individual grant funding agreements proposed to be made from the Community Fund by the relevant decision makers as set out in section six of the report.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is provide a summary of the commissioning process and the proposals, subject to the relecant decision makers being satisfied in accordance with the Constitutional processes, to make individual grants for services to address the outcomes of the new Community Fund 2016 – 19.

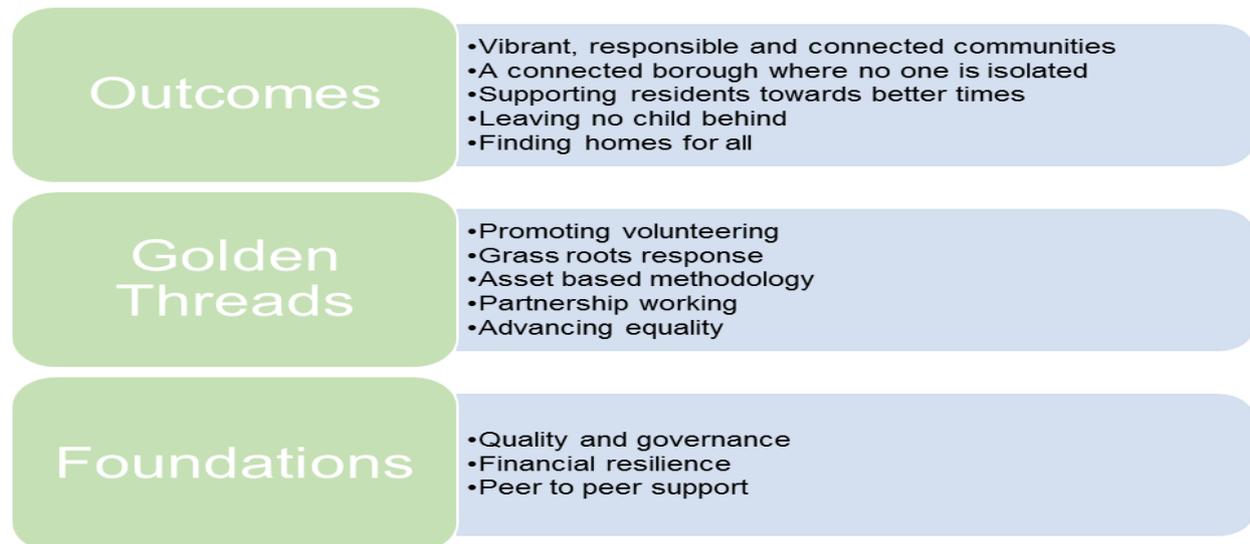
- 2.2 Croydon's Voluntary and Community Sector has a strong history of innovation and enterprise, providing imaginative, community based solutions. This approach continues to be important particularly at a time of financial uncertainty and increasing need. The Council like other public sector organisations want to work with the voluntary and community sector to build a new partnership based on innovative and transformative change to ensure collectively we deliver better outcomes for local people.
- 2.3 The London Borough of Croydon is no different from other councils. In order to balance its budget the Council has already delivered over £100m in efficiency savings and cuts so far with a 43.5% cumulative reduction in government funding up to 2015-16 in cash terms. This equates to 54% in real terms and has come at a time when many of our citizens are experiencing hardship and need support in their daily lives.
- 2.4 Croydon's public services face similar financial challenges. In the next few years the Council will continue to identify new ways to reduce costs in all of our services but, faced with a further period of unprecedented financial contraction, efficiency alone will not achieve the necessary outcomes by 2018 and beyond.
- 2.5 Working with partner organisations, the Council has had to respond in a fundamentally different way utilising collective resources to reduce the demand for public services by putting in place preventative measures and supporting our communities to take charge of their own lives.
- 2.6 During 2015 the Council commissioned the Opportunity and Fairness Commission to recommend ways to reduce inequality. The work of the Commission was one of the widest conversations with the community of any London Borough. The findings from the Commission reported to Cabinet in January 2016 have influenced the outcomes the Council is seeking to achieve through the new Community Fund.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At present the Council has a number of funding programmes supporting a wide range of activities and services in the voluntary and community sector. These programmes have been brought together to focus on key outcomes for the borough influenced by the findings and detailed research of the independent Opportunity and Fairness Commission. The way these programmes had been structured did not fully reflect current needs of local communities. This means that the Council moved away from the previous funding model which funded service areas or infrastructure towards one that is focused on outcomes. The new approach is a more effective use of resources and has a greater impact on the outcomes for the people of the borough.
- 3.2 The individual awards that form the Community Fund have been informed by the Opportunity and Fairness Commission outcomes as set out in figure one. Organisations have the opportunity through their applications to set out how their proposals that help to achieve these outcomes and build on the strengths of the voluntary and community sector. The new framework also requires

organisations to set out how they advance equality that are grass roots community responses to issues.

3.3 Figure one – Community Fund Framework



4. SUPPORT FOR THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

4.1 In 2014 the Council recognised that recommissioning of a grants programme in the voluntary and community sector could lead to some instability and where possible has aimed to provide the requisite support at all stages. This has included extending the original funding agreements in 2014 through to September 2016, as well as encouraging organisations to participate in the Opportunity and Fairness Commission in order to shape the final recommendations. In 2016 the Council provided support with training and guidance offered at all stages of the commissioning process. Some of the support offered through various engagement sessions included the following:

- A focus on outcomes
- Bidding process
- Bid writing
- Partnership and collaboration
- Presenting financial information

4.2 The Council received applications to the new Community Fund totalling approximately £5 million. Council officers including external representatives from National Association of Community Voluntary Organisation (NAVCO) and Big Lottery have been involved at stages of the process which included financial assessments along with service evaluations. The final stage involved discussions and negotiations with organisations that has resulted in indicative offers being made to a broad range of potential providers. Working with the sector, officers will continue to explore opportunities for further collaboration and partnership as well as the possibility of sharing resources and assets. This is in addition to the support for transition that will take place of the coming few

months and ensure robust contract management arrangements are established.

5 THE COMMUNITY FUND 2016 - 19

- 5.1 The Community Fund has clear outcomes that are aligned with the recommendations made by the Opportunity and Fairness Commission as well as the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan. The Community Fund is a three year outcome focused programme that builds on the assets of the voluntary and community sector, promoting enterprise, volunteering, and social value.
- 5.2 Over the next three years the Council is proposing to invest approx. £6.2 million to the Community Fund to deliver the outcomes that focus on early prevention and intervention.
- 5.3 The proposed Fund offers a good range of projects delivering across the five outcomes set out in figure one including those from new organisations. The Council was targeting a budget reduction of £400k, however as a consequence of the quality of the applications and subsequent evaluation process the Council is proposing an allocation of £2.040 million per annum to community groups. Which will result in a full year budget reduction of £260k. This is detailed further in section 11 of this report.
- 5.4 The Fund will support 35 organisations including 15 new initiatives that total approximately £815,000 over the next three years as well as retain £300,000 for Croydon’s Community Grants programme (small grants under £5,000). All organisations that received funding previously have been offered funding. Tables 2 - 4 set out the full list of projects along with indicative allocations. These indicative allocations are subject to the relevant decision maker being satisfied, when they are requested to consider award, that these meet the necessary criteria and that the decision is in accordance with that decision makers delegation authorisation. Table one sets out the indicative allocations across each outcome and excludes the small grants. In addition any voluntary and community sector organisations will either be paying the London Living Wage or working towards this over the life of the Fund.

5.5 Table one

Community Fund Outcome	Allocation
Vibrant, responsible and connected communities	3 year allocation of approx. £2.138,000
A connected borough where no one is isolated	3 year allocation of approx. £1,840,000
Supporting residents towards better times	3 year allocation of approx. £738,000
Leaving no child behind	3 year allocation of approx. £817,000
Finding homes for all	3 year allocation of approx £282,000

6 AWARD PROCESS FOR THE COMMUNITY FUND

6.1 The awarding of grants over £100k in total are subject to the Council's Tenders and Contracts Regulations (2016). These regulations provide a clear framework for awarding the individual grant funding agreements and the decision making routes are set out below.

6.2 Table two sets out the proposed grants below £100k (total value) – award decisions to be considered for award by the Director of Strategy, Communities and Commissioning under Delegated Authority in line with the Council's financial scheme of delegation and relevant constitutional provisions.

6.3 Table two

Phase 1 Enterprise training CIC	Empowering mothers/carers of Croydon target those most at risk of exclusion and disadvantage	£93,000.00
METRO Bridge	METRO Bridge: a holistic service for LGBTQ young people	£84,840.00
The Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre	Provision of an Independent Domestic/ Sexual Violence Advocate in the Family Justice Centre	£80,610.00
South West London Law Centres	Legal Action for Local Communities	£75,000.00
The Family Centre	Promoting healthier cooking methods, utilising fruit and vegetables grown locally	£75,000.00
Play Place Innov8 CIC	The family community fund programme providing family and residents community engagement activities across 10 neighbourhoods in Croydon	£64,050.00
Purley Cross Centre	Community gateway information service	£60,000.00
Good Food Matters and Revivify community food initiative	Enhance the lives of women, youths and those sometimes excluded people in our local community, through community involvement and development training	£60,000.00
Shpresa Programme	Helping young Albanians reaching their potential	£60,000.00
St Francis Monks Hill	Youth Action - provide Monks Hill Youth Club, Monks Hill Football Academy and a Mentoring service to young people	£36,999.00
The Conservation Volunteers	The Croydon Natural Health Service connecting people with green spaces to improve health and wellbeing	£30,000.00
Croydon Disability Forum	Providing a stronger voice for disabled people as well as ensure	£30,000.00

	participation in civic life	
Oasis Community Hub Ashburton Park	Developing friends of oasis groups and supporting communities to be healthy, safe and full of opportunity, where each individual is supported to reach their full potential in life	£29,817.00
Royal Association for Deaf people	Croydon; Deaf Choice, in the Community	£29,532.00
Croydon Borough Neighbourhood watch Association	Supporting community safety in Croydon	£15,000.00
Reaching Higher	Summer Blitz Full Circle Life Skills Programme	£30,000.00
Sir Philip Game Youth Centre	Wellbeing Youth Community – Meeting Fitness, Health & Vocational Aspirations	£14,212.23

6.4 Table three sets out the proposed grants between £100k and £500k (total value) – award decisions to be considered by the Director of Strategy, Communities and Commissioning on the recommendation of the Contracts and Commissioning Board.

6.5 Table three

Croydon Voluntary Action	Three projects including capacity building & enterprise; partnership & civil engagement; Team Croydon volunteering brokerage & support.	£473,750.00
Asian Resource Centre	The Asian Resource Centre proposal brings together 19 organisations to deliver a comprehensive service including activities relating to healthy eating, exercise, tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence, the arts, refugee support, food growing, digital inclusion etc.	£470,000.00
Croydon BME Forum	Stronger voice for the BME community and a project that encourages the community to connect with the borough's green spaces	£244,500.00
Help for Carers	Carers assessment service	£390,000.00
Help for Carers	Croydon Homecare: free short breaks (respite) for carers.	£294,198.00
The Metro Centre Ltd HIV	Healthy living service - community based support for people with HIV	£210,000.00
Play Place Innov8 CIC	Social Franchise' approach to providing estate based universal and targeted youth programmes/	£210,000.00

	constructed youth offer	
Horizon Care and Welfare Association	Carers Support Project providing respite care	£180,000.00
Croydon Drop IN	Talkbus Outreach health and information service	£180,000.00
MIND IN CROYDON LTD	Improving social networks, wellbeing, recovery through various healthy lifestyle group activities, one to one support	£165,000.00
Croydon Community Mediation	Providing a holistic mediation service	£162,000.00
Crystal Palace FC Foundation	Develop through Sport Community Programme	£120,000.00
CRISIS UK	Skylight Croydon's first steps away from home homelessness	£120,000.00
Croydon Accessible Transport	Accessible community transport training and pooling of services	£105,000.00
Croydon Neighbourhood Care	Volunteer and Carers Community Outreach Service	£105,000.00

6.6 Table four sets out the proposed grants between £500k and 5m (total value) – award decisions to be considered by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury.

6.7 Table four

Croydon Citizens Advice Croydon	Croydon Citizens Advice: free, independent, impartial and confidential advice service.	£780,000.00
Carers Support Partnership*	Carers information service <small>*contract between four organisations including Whitgift Foundation, Mencap, MIND, and Parents in Partnership</small>	£735,390.00

7 GOVERNANCE

7.1 The Stronger Communities Partnership Board, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice will receive regular performance reports relating to the Community Fund including the small grants programme to ensure high standards of accountability, transparency and best use of resources with success being measured through robust contract management on improving outcomes for our residents.

8 ADDITIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORT

- 8.1 The Council through the work of the Stronger Communities Partnership will seek to leverage additional funding to sector, as well as explore better ways of utilising assets and sharing resources. The voluntary sector sub group and the external funding sub group chaired by the representatives from the voluntary and community sector will have an important role in growing and mobilising community resources.

9 CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 The commissioning of the Community Fund represents a different approach for the Council with an enhanced focus on delivering outcomes and creating real and tangible improvements for some of the borough's most vulnerable communities. In order to support and enable this change, the Council will need to develop more strategic relationships with Community Fund providers which may necessitate a change for those providers who have previously been funded by the Council.
- 9.2 The development of a contract management framework that supports a focus on outcomes, measures impact and provides assurance regarding the Council's investment decisions will be central to supporting the evolution of these relationships and the delivery of improved outcomes. The Commissioning team will work with all recommended providers to agree a contract management framework that is proportionate and risk-based. The team will also continue to support recommended providers through the transition to the new fund and for the lifetime of the fund. The Council will work organisations to transition any contractual arrangements.

10. CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Council has engaged with the voluntary and community sector throughout the process and where appropriate considered the issues raised at each stage of the process.
- 10.2 The new programme is informed by the report of the Opportunities and Fairness Commission and the outcomes it seeks to achieve are drawn from the Council's corporate strategy, Ambitious for Croydon as well as the Community Strategy.
- 10.3 The Opportunities and Fairness Commission undertook an extensive consultation exercise, engaging with over 3,000 Croydon residents. The consultation also included many voluntary and community organisations as well as public bodies and businesses. The themes and conclusions of the Commission's final report are therefore the result of one of the most extensive community conversations undertaken in Croydon in recent years.
- 10.4 Ambitious for Croydon has also been the subject of extensive discussion and the priorities and outcomes set out in that strategy have been endorsed by the Council's Public, private and voluntary sector partners in the Local Strategic Partnership.

- 10.5 Since the proposal to establish a new funding programme was first mooted in the autumn of 2015 there have been discussions on the proposals with stakeholders in a variety of forums. There have been a number of meetings with the wider voluntary sector and more focussed areas within the sector. All organisations directly affected by the change in funding have had the opportunity to have individual meetings with officers. Organisations and individuals have also been invited to submit written comments on the new programme.
- 10.6 A draft framework for the new programme was published in January. Stakeholders were invited to comment and, in particular, suggest ways in which the voluntary and community sector might best be able to help achieve the outcomes set out in the draft prospectus.
- 10.7 Responses made by stakeholders have been incorporated into the frequently asked questions published on the Council's website at www.croydon.gov.uk/communityfund

11 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 In 2015/16 the budget and spend on the Community Fund was £2.3m. As set out in paragraph 5.3 a reduction in spend of £400k was targeted when the fund was launched. Based on recommendations within the report the spend is to be £2.040m per annum. The 2016/17 budget included a saving of £200k which represented an estimated 6 months saving.

Details of these budgets and savings can be seen in the table below :-

	2015/15	2016/17	2017/18
Budget	£2.3m	£2.1m	£2.04m
Spend	£2.3m	£2.17m	£2.04m
Overspend	£0m	£0.07m	£0m

- 11.2 The overall saving as a result of the recommissioning is £260k. The shortfall of £70k in 2016/17 will be funded from other savings within the Resources department.
- 11.3 The payment profile for these grants is currently being finalised and may result in some minor adjustments to the profile of payments to the beneficiary. However, they will not receive more than their total grant over the three year period.
- 11.4 Savings/ future efficiencies
- The new Community fund will be established from the 1st October 2016 for a three year period and during this time will be monitored to ensure value for money is achieved.

11.5 Risks

If funding to these Community groups is reduced or ceased it will result in large areas of service under provision which will in turn impact on different services within the Council.

(Approved by: Lisa Taylor, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer)

12. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

12.1 The Acting Council Solicitor comments that there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations with the report.

(Approved for and on behalf of Jacqueline Harris -Baker Acting Council Solicitor and Acting Monitoring Officer.)

13. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

13.1 There are no immediate HR considerations arising from this report for Croydon Council staff or workers.

(Approved by: Jason Singh, HRBP on behalf of Heather Daley, Director of Human Resources)

14. EQUALITIES IMPACT

14.1 A detailed equality analysis is provided through the work of the Croydon's Opportunity and Fairness Commission and is a qualitative evidence base relating to the equality and inclusion issues in Croydon. Equality analysis of geographic inequality and that related to people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not is embedded in the Borough Profile that was published by the Council in autumn 2015. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation for Croydon and other borough-wide documents such as the annual health report, crime analysis or workforce profile also provide a robust evidence base on which to determine and set the Council's equality policy and objectives which were agreed at Cabinet in April 2016. These are:

- To increase the rate of employment for disabled people, young people, over 50s and lone parents who are furthest away from the job market
- To increase the support offered to people who find themselves in a position where they are accepted as homeless especially those from BME backgrounds and women
- To reduce the rate of child poverty especially in the six most deprived wards
- To improve attainment levels for white working class and Black Caribbean heritages, those in receipt of Free School Meals and Looked After Children, particularly at Key Stage 2 including those living in six most deprived wards

- To increase the percentage of domestic violence sanctions
- To increase the reporting and detection of the child sexual offences monitored
- To reduce the number of young people who enter the youth justice system
- To reduce social isolation among disabled people and older people
- To reduce differences in life expectancy between communities

14.2 The Council has considered the equality impact of the proposed new Community Fund outcomes especially projects that potentially meet the requirements of the equality objectives. A number projects will have a positive impact on aims of the Equality Act and address the Council's equality objectives are set out below:

Social exclusion

Many of the proposed projects aim to address social exclusion and inequality in particular work of Crisis, Citizens Advice Bureaux and Croydon Mediation Service.

Age

Many of the proposed projects are general access services that will relate to the direct and indirect needs of older people – e.g. Carer's Support Partnership and Horizon Care (Respite for Carers) as well as young children through the services provided at The Family Centre Community Café. Some of the projects are directed specifically to young people, such as PlayPlace Innov8, Reaching Higher and St Francis (Youth Action) Monks Hill.

Disability

New potential funding awards will also be provided to umbrella organisations such as the Croydon Disability Forum and specific service providers such as the Royal Association for Deaf People and Croydon Accessible Transport.

Marriage and civil partnership

Domestic abuse and sexual violence affects all parts of the community, including people in marriages and civil partnerships. The proposed funding allocation to Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre will support independent advocacy to victims of domestic abuse.

Pregnancy and maternity

The Empowering Mother of Croydon project is an innovative mother/carer-led project to identify and support other mothers/carers at risk of exclusion and disadvantage.

Race

A proposed funding award to Croydon BME Forum aims to provide a strong voice for the BME community in the borough as well as the Asian Resource Centre Croydon who are bringing together 19 individual projects in a holistic programme. One of the proposed new projects provided by Shpresa aims to address the needs of young Albanian

migrants.

Religion and belief

A proposed funding award to Croydon Voluntary Action will support partnershi and civil engagement activity that includes the work of Faiths Together in Croydon. This is one of the groups the Council works with to promote interfaith activity and build bridges and greater understanding/tolerance between faiths and the non-faith community.

Gender

A proposed funding award to the Empowering Mother of Croydon and the Good Food Matters and Revivify Community Initiative are aimed at enhancing the lives of women (and young people) through community involvement and development activities.

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment

A proposed funding award will be made to the Metro Bridge project which provide support for people who are LGBTQ as well as HIV Healthy Living service provides community based support for people with HIV.

15. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 15.1 A number proposed projects will have a positive impact on the environment through especially the natural health service which seeks to connect people to Croydon's green spaces.

16. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 16.1 A number of proposed projects will have a positive impact on reducing crime and disorder in particular the proposed award to Croydon's Neighbourhood Watch, and Croydon's Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre.

CONTACT OFFICER: Sharon Godman, Head of Strategy and Community

Background documents: none