

Equality Impact Assessment

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Section 1: Introduction and background

What is being assessed?	Removal of funding for Small Community Grants
Business unit	Community Wellbeing
Job title of assessor	Executive Head of Service - Community
Strategic Management Lead	Executive Head of Service - Community
Date of assessment	November 2021
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing

Description of the function or policy, including:

- The aims and scope
- The main beneficiaries or users
- The main equality issues and barriers, and the protected characteristics¹ they relate to (not all assessments will encounter issues relating to every protected characteristic)

By promoting alternative sources of funding and signposting to additional avenues that support the identification of grants, including the recently launched Mole Valley Community Lottery, the Small Community Grants fund could be removed

Background

In 2017, MVDC established a Small Community Grant fund supporting local community and voluntary groups with grants of up to £5k for one-off project funding. This fund has seen applications for a wide range of initiatives that have included sports and wellbeing activities, children's playgroups and befriending projects. Whilst the fund has grown from £18,500 in the first year, there has been £48,500 available annually since 2019/20. £131,000 has been awarded across those first 4 years. On average over the 4 years, £33,000 has been awarded each year. The scheme is promoted by ourselves and by our partners in the voluntary sector. Across this period, 48 awards have been made in total from the fund.

MVDC is proposing the removal of funding for small community grants.

There are a number of other funding sources available to community groups, MVDC promote these on the main corporate website and via Central Surrey Voluntary Action (CSVA), whom MVDC directly core fund. CSVA provide advice and guidance to the same local groups seeking funding. MVDC has also recently set up a Community Lottery which provides a way for community groups to raise money.

Impact on protected characteristics

The protected characteristics are age, sex, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, religion and belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership (Source: Equality Act 2010)

The main beneficiaries of this grant funding have been organisations that support the following protected groups:

- Age
- Disability
- Carers

On this basis it is expected that these groups could be negatively impacted by the removal of this grant funding. However, it is worth noting that these grants cannot be awarded to the same organisation for the same purpose more than once.

Given that other sources of funding are available and that, in the past, not all of the grant funding has been allocated (in 20/21, £34,000 of the £48,500 was paid out to 13 applicants) it is expected that any negative impacts to people with protected characteristics will be minimal.

No positive impacts have been identified in this assessment.

Description of how the function or policy fits into the Council's Corporate Priorities or other local, regional or national plans and priorities

Council Strategy 2019-2024

The provision of grants to community and voluntary sectors has contributed to the priority of Community Wellbeing by supporting the specific actions to:

- Promote opportunities for residents of all ages to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Foster community spirit, encouraging individuals, families and communities to support each other especially in times of particular need
- Promote opportunities for people with special needs

The proposed removal of this funding will contribute to the delivery of the following guiding principles in the Council Strategy:

- Living within our means: Be mindful of current and future costs in our approach to delivering and developing services.
- Acting sustainably: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising future generations requires responsible decision making and innovation.

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 (to 2024/25)

The proposed removal of this funding will also enable MVDC to deliver against the Financial Objective in the Medium Term Financial Strategy: "To ensure a balanced budget, without any budgeted use of reserves to support underlying spending, from April 2022, in order to: ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of MVDC; protect services to Mole Valley residents, communities and businesses; and recognise the needs of Council Tax payers."

Section 2: Analysis and assessment

Indicate for each protected characteristic whether there may be a positive impact, negative impact, a mixture of both or no impact – using a tick <input type="checkbox"/> in the appropriate columns				
Protected characteristics	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reason
Age		✓		12 grants have provided support to pre-school and school age children or older people
Sex			✓	
Disability		✓		9 grants have been awarded for projects for people with disabilities
Pregnancy and maternity			✓	
Race and ethnicity			✓	
Religion and belief			✓	
Gender reassignment			✓	
Sexual orientation			✓	
Marriage and civil partnership			✓	
Other aspects to consider	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reason
Carers		✓		2 grants have been awarded for projects specifically for carers
Rural/urban access issues			✓	
HR issues (how will staff with protected characteristics be affected?)			✓	

What can be done to reduce the effects of any negative impacts?

Where negative impact cannot be completely diminished, can this be justified, and is it lawful?

There are a number of other funding sources available to community groups, MVDC promote these on the main corporate website and via Central Surrey Voluntary Action (CSVA), whom MVDC directly core fund. CSVA provide advice and guidance to the same local groups seeking funding. MVDC has also recently set up a Community Lottery which provides a way for community groups to raise money.

Where there are positive impacts, what changes have been or will be made?
Who are the beneficiaries? How have they benefited?

Not applicable.

Section 3: Evidence gathering and fact-finding

What evidence is available to support your views above?

Please include:

- A summary of the available evidence
- Identification of where there are gaps in the evidence (this may identify a need for more evidence in the action plan)
- What information is currently captured with respect to usage and take up of services.
- What the current situation is in relation to equality and diversity monitoring (where relevant)

The fund was established in 2017 and £131,000 has been awarded across those first 4 years. On average over the 4 years, £33,000 has been awarded each year. Across this period, 48 awards have been made in total from the fund.

Of the 48 awards granted, 12 have provided support to pre-school and school age children or older people. 9 for projects for people with disabilities and 2 for carers specific projects.

With regards to usage and take up of the grant funding, not all of the grant funding has been allocated in previous years, for example in 20/21, £34,000 of the available £48,500 was paid out to 13 applicants.

How have stakeholders been involved in this assessment?

Who are they, and what is their view?

Central Surrey Voluntary Action (CSVA) will be consulted as part of this assessment at the start of 2022.

Recommendations

Summary of the main recommendations (if any) arising from the assessment

There are no recommendations arising as a result of this assessment.

Section 4: Action Plan

Actions needed to implement the EqIA recommendations (if any)

Issue	Action	Expected outcome	Who	Deadline for action
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a