

Cabinet

12<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport – Councillor K Caan

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Business, Investment and Culture

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Approval of Sport England Commonwealth Active Communities Funding Awarded to Coventry City Council

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**Is this a key decision?**

Yes – affects all wards of the City

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**Executive Summary:**

Coventry City Council has successfully bid to Sport England for a grant of up to £624,624.00 as part of the Commonwealth Active Communities Fund programme. The Commonwealth Active Communities Fund was awarded to four West Midlands areas in total – Coventry, Solihull, Birmingham, and the Black Country – to support the creation of a wide range of opportunities to help people get active in their local spaces as part of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games legacy.

The focus of the funding for Coventry, will geographically be on the whole of the city. However, the project will focus primarily on the individuals and groups that are suffering from social isolation – a particularly acute issue in the city heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic and successive lockdowns. Through the development of the successful Active Communities funding application, the aim of the project has been focused to reach those who are most inactive and those least engaged, to create opportunities and fundamental behaviour changes that will increase activity, reduce isolation and address social and health inequalities.

‘Coventry Moves’ is the name of the funded project. A project oversight group has been established, on behalf of Coventry City Council in partnership with Coventry Sport & Physical Activity Strategic Board, to support delivery of the project.

The funding secured will focus on three key themed areas and will further support delivery of the International Children’s Games to be hosted in Coventry in August 2022. The three areas are focused on young people’s participation taking place around local parks; closing a number of streets in local communities to engage with people around sport and physical activity; and an adult social care project that will develop pilot work around ‘Commonwealth care homes’ that aims to increase physical activity amongst older residents.

This report is seeking retrospective approval for acceptance of a grant of up to £624,624.00 from Sport England as part of the Commonwealth Active Communities Fund programme.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended to retrospectively approve the acceptance of the Commonwealth Active Communities funding in the sum of £624,624.00 awarded to Coventry by Sport England.

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Background papers:**

None

**Other useful documents**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

The funding request has been developed in partnership with Coventry Sport & Physical Activity Strategic Board (an external group of partners within the city).

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title:** Approval of Sport England Commonwealth Active Communities Funding Awarded to Coventry City Council

**1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 Sport England's Commonwealth Active Communities Fund aims to tackle inactivity in local communities and engage underrepresented groups across the West Midlands as part of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games legacy.
- 1.2 As such, Coventry City Council applied to Sport England for funding for the 'Commonwealth Active Communities: Coventry Moves' project. This project aims to harness the power of the Games to provide sustainable opportunities and improve access to sport and physical activity for local people, boosting community connections and activity levels across the city.
- 1.3 Following the pandemic, the effects of isolation across the city have heightened and emerged as one of the more significant barriers to participation in physical activity. Therefore, isolation was identified as the overarching issue that the project will aim to address through the development of active communities. As a result, this has become the focus of the project's objectives, to tackle isolation and inequalities, to better support local people to become more physically active.
- 1.4 The main objectives of the fund are:
  - ❖ Tackle isolation as the overarching theme by bringing local people together.
  - ❖ Understand and address how the effects of isolation across the city have compounded inequalities, exacerbating pre-existing barriers to physical activity.
  - ❖ Decrease inactivity levels across the city by supporting communities to engage with sport and physical activity.
- 1.5 Using data correlated from the household survey, Mental Health Needs Assessment, the Joint Cultural Needs Assessment, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and from the City of Culture Trust, it is clear that younger people are more likely to report being lonely (especially through and following the pandemic) and older people are more likely to experience loneliness.
- 1.6 The programme will focus on these objectives as a priority and the approach will geographically cover the whole city. Coventry is a city with a lower median age compared to the national average and by its very nature, isolation is an issue which remains excluded from public view, with many people affected left unidentified. Working across the city will provide the best opportunities to engage with those most at risk of isolation and facing the biggest barriers to an active lifestyle.
- 1.7 Further analysis of the data supports this approach, identifying a number of non-geographical factors which have the highest impact on loneliness. The findings in Coventry are in line with the literature review on factors influencing loneliness and social isolation.
  - ❖ 16-24's score highest on loneliness
  - ❖ Women are more likely to be lonely than men
  - ❖ Carers, disabled and unemployed people are more likely to be lonely
  - ❖ Fewer than half of adult social care users report having as much social contact as they would like to.

- 1.8 Correlating and sharing data from multiple sources and gathered from multiple sectors has enabled the development of the Commonwealth Active Communities programme to be focused on providing the most impact and benefit to residents, further allowing the development of a more detailed understanding of community activation within the city. This insight has also been important to establishing learning from the Coventry City of Culture Trust's work in local communities.
- 1.9 There is still much more activity to map and understand. This approach supports additionality not duplication in the programme or in use of resources. It also safeguards the capacity of small organisations in the city, enabling a better understanding of the demands of their time and their wider needs (providing distributive leadership to smaller organisation), not just those focused on sport and physical activity.
- 1.10 From both quantitative and qualitative data gathered, it has been possible to draw the following conclusions:
- ✓ There is opportunity to connect younger and older people in the city through a programme addressing loneliness and social isolation.
  - ✓ Events and activities should be focused on connecting opportunities to areas where people have fewer opportunities.
  - ✓ Connections must be built between people needing specialist health/social care services and others to maximise benefit.
  - ✓ Hyper-local, street focused activity is essential to the approach.
- 1.11 The key areas identified from the development work which underpin the programme are:
- ❖ Children, young people, and the elderly will form the focus demographics as these are the populations most likely to report feeling lonely and most likely to experience isolation.
  - ❖ Hyper-local activity is essential, both in relation to activation programmes and creating active environments. The programme will take place throughout the city, but activities and developments will be street-focused and co-created with communities.
  - ❖ Further themes for the initial stages of the funding will include the development of the Go Parks programme and connecting communities with their local green spaces; developing the local workforce through a collaborative approach and distributed leadership across the city and throughout communities; and developing effective monitoring and evaluation.
  - ❖ The programme will continue to develop alongside the Coventry Sports and Physical Activity strategic network, ensuring the number of organisations involved with and benefitting from the funding continues to increase.
- 1.12 In December 2021, Sport England confirmed Coventry's bid had been approved. A formal award letter was subsequently received in January 2022 and an activation programme has been developed to support mobilisation of the programme in the build-up to the Commonwealth Games.

## **2 Options considered and recommended proposal**

### **Option 1 – Reject the Grant Funding (not recommended)**

- 2.1 The funding will have a benefit across the city to the whole community to help to bring communities back together following the pandemic. In addition, the funding will target local people who are isolated in their local communities and without the funding it would not reduce the scale and impact possible.

- 2.2 The funding is to develop activation in the build up to the commonwealth games, whilst delivering for 18 months after the games finish, creating a local legacy. Not accepting the funding would reduce the impact of the Commonwealth Games on the local community.
- 2.3 Not accepting the funding would reduce the impact that the council and its partner organisations would have in local communities.

### **Option 2 – Accept the Grant Funding (recommended)**

- 2.4 The value of the ‘Commonwealth Active Communities: Coventry Moves’ Grant is such that the Council’s Constitution requires formal approval prior to acceptance. There is no additional financial requirements from the council as part of the grant funding.
- 2.5 As time did not allow for Cabinet approval in advance of accepting the grant agreement, acceptance of the grant was approved in accordance with the provision of paragraph 2.3 of Part 3F of the Council Constitution by the Director of Business, Investment & Culture, following consultation with Councillor K. Caan (Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport) and Councillor Clifford (Chair, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board), with the decision to be reported to Cabinet retrospectively.
- 2.6 The Commonwealth Active Communities grant will enable thousands of local people to engage in the Commonwealth Games with a specific focus of activation on their doorstep in a hyper local approach.
- 2.7 The funding will support the Council’s aim to reduce health inequalities targeting local people who have been affected by the pandemic, whilst utilising Sport and Physical Activity to help to improve wellbeing.
- 2.8 The “Go Parks” theme of the project will support young people to access many green spaces across the city to become physically active through a range of engaging activities supported by the Coventry Youth Partnership.
- 2.9 The focus on local streets within local communities will enable people to try a variety of physical activities and work with communities and local organisations to continue these over the two-year period and be driven by local people and partners.
- 2.10 As part of the grant funding, the project focussed on Adult Social Care will create physical activity opportunities that are developed by local people to create Commonwealth Care homes to celebrate the Commonwealth Games in 2022 coming to Coventry. The focus will also support integrated living facilities and community settings to become more active and to reduce social isolation.
- 2.11 The funding is for a two-year period and will have a huge impact locally but in addition will continue to build the profile of Coventry and its place-based approach with national partners such as Sport England who are providing this grant funding to the City Council.

### **3 Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 The Council’s Sports, Culture & Destination team consulted with stakeholders and partners, including the Coventry Sport & Physical Activity Strategic Board, in developing the approach taken for the bid. A series of workshops and one to one sessions took place with a variety of partners across this city. This helped to guide the principles within the proposal, drawing on feedback, local knowledge and understanding of what local people were feeding back to organisations who were working closely with local people during the pandemic.

- 3.2 Data, as previously highlighted, was supplied by the Council's Insight Team, including information from the Household Survey, Mental Health Needs Assessment, the Joint Cultural Needs Assessment and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- 3.3 Prior to submission, the bid received sign off from the Cabinet Member for Sport and Public Health, the Strategic Lead (UK City of Culture and Commonwealth Games) and Acting Head of Sports, Culture and Destination Services, and the Commonwealth Games Officers Group.

#### **4 Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 The 'Commonwealth Active Communities: Coventry Moves' Grant Award Letter was received January and approved in February 2022 by the Director of Business, Investment and Culture, following consultation with Councillor K Caan, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport and Councillor Clifford, Chair of Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5). Consultations with stakeholders, partners and relevant organisations were underway prior to this - and the applicable commissioning of projects and grants is now underway.

#### **5 Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Governance**

##### **5.1 Financial implications**

The Commonwealth Active Communities: Coventry Moves Grant offer is valued at £624,624.00 for spend to December 2023.

A sum of up to £624,624.00 will be transferred to the City Council as per the grant terms and conditions set out in the grant agreement. Claims will be made to the awarding body at six monthly intervals for the duration of the programme – in line with expenditure. A final payment will be subject to any evaluation requirements from the awarding body, who are providing external consultants to deliver the monitoring and evaluation framework for the project

There is no match funding required from the Council.

##### **5.2 Legal implications**

The grant funding will contain terms and conditions which are legally binding. The Council will need to ensure that it is able to comply with the same.

Any works and services required to deliver the schemes must be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the procurement legislation (as appropriate).

#### **6 Other implications**

- 6.1 How will this contribute to the achievement of the council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan / scorecard) / organisational blueprint / LAA (or Coventry SCS?)

The services supported by the grant programme will contribute to the One Coventry Corporate Plan's vision to help to improve the health and wellbeing of residents by helping them to lead healthier lifestyles.

The project will increase access to arts, sports and cultural opportunities including leisure activities, music and events.

The project will also contribute to raising the profile of Coventry through promoting Coventry as a visitor destination and centre for arts and culture; sports and leisure; music and events.

The service will support the plan to reduce health inequalities by working towards becoming an age friendly city and helping support people facing multiple and complex needs.

## **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

The Sport team at the Council will work closely to understand and mitigate risks in relation to the Commonwealth Active Communities Sport England Funding. A key requirement from the Sport England Grant Conditions is for the Council to keep a Risk Register and regularly update to Sport England officers. There are steering groups built into the governance structure. The Council is required to agree and manage the procurement / award of project funding to partners. Council officers will brief relevant Cabinet member(s) on key updates through regular (fortnightly) informal briefings, as required.

A project plan has been developed to use for all areas of the work including the three themed areas. This plan will feed into relevant steering groups and allow for regular updates, tracking of progress and reporting of project milestones.

The external consultancy provided will provide capacity to externally review the project on an ongoing basis and will allow for reporting to reduce any risk and understand the learning from the project.

## **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

The grant provides for additional resources within the Sports, Culture and Destination team at the City Council to deliver a Commonwealth Games legacy for the City and local people.

## **6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

The provision is targeted at supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our communities – especially those impacted by the pandemic and most at risk of isolation.

The provision will also be targeted city-wide but will focus on areas that are identified at highest risk of stubborn inequalities.

## **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment**

There are no implications.

## **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

A number of partners across the city have helped to develop the bid in partnership with the City Council.

Partners such as CV Life, Think Active and Positive Youth Foundation (representing Coventry Youth Partnership) are being commissioned by Coventry City Council to support delivery and distribution of the Commonwealth Active Communities Sport England Funding – engaging a range of wider delivery partners via themed programme commissions.

One of the main aspects of the award will be to demonstrate distributive leadership. This is a requirement for all the commissioning organisations – leading to a range of smaller organisations, charities and Community Interest Companies that will support the delivery of the project. This will be cascaded down via a number of delivery partners such as Think Active, CV Life, and Positive Youth Foundation. By doing this, it will provide added resource and capacity for the Council to deliver the project as a whole in a focused, place-based approach.

**Report author(s):**

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