

## Community Theme - Impact Assessment

### Present data in visual format where possible

Public, Community & Voluntary Sector – Supporting the community and voluntary sector and town and parish councils and increased number of volunteers in recognition of the key role they have played during the pandemic; important role they provide alongside other statutory services during recovery and important insight they provide into community issues. To identify and lobby for external funding to support the local community needs identified through Covid-19.

## What does the data identify in terms of impact? Are there any gaps in the data?

### *Voluntary Sector National Data*

The Institute for Fundraising, NCVO, and Charity Finance Group produced a report in July to assess the impact of the pandemic on the voluntary sector (**appendix A**). It draws on findings from a survey carried out between April and May this year nationwide, and notes that respondents were more likely to be national charities, so the findings are not necessarily extrapolated for smaller charities. Whilst this does not give us an accurate picture of circumstances locally, the data can be used to make assumptions about the impacts on local charities and the voluntary sector.

The findings were:

- On average charities received 29% less funding during the period than what they had budgeted for.
  - Income trading was 79% lower.
  - Voluntary giving was 14% lower.
  - Government income was 51% higher.
- However, 15% of charities reported an increase in funding during the period.
- On average, forecasted income was expected to be 24% lower for the year.
- However, 6% of charities expected it to be higher, and 2% expected no change.
- 69% of charities had used the Job Retention Scheme.
  - On average 50% of staff had been furloughed.
  - 61% said they would not be able to bring back all furloughed staff into existing roles.
- 59% said they expected to make redundancies, and 65% said they would move staff to fewer hours.
- 54% said they would not be able to continue to provide all of their services.
- However, 24% reported a *significant* increase in demand, and 23% reported an increase in demand.
- 34% of charities said they could continue to operate but with hugely reduced services. 43% said they would continue to operate with some reduced services. 5% said they would need to close. 11% said they could operate as normal. 5% said they would increase their services.

A sentiment analysis was completed by Pro Bono Economics in August 2020 (**appendix B**), which highlights that funding challenges were the main area of concern for charities. Interestingly, 'rethinking strategy and offerings' has not featured as a significant theme over the reference period. This is perhaps because it is difficult for charities to rethink strategy and offerings when their core purpose remains the same, and during a time of increasing need for that support.

### *Voluntary Sector Local Data*

In-depth interviews were undertaken in September with 11 local charities and voluntary organisations (16 were invited) to understand their current viability and funding issues, and what issues may occur with service delivery over the coming months. The organisations that

## What local knowledge do we have on the impact which is not reflected in the data?

### *Voluntary Sector*

The spreadsheet attached at appendix C provides in-depth knowledge of the local voluntary organisations within the TW area. A great deal of informal support to individuals has been provided through local church groups, but this information is not well reflected in the data that we have available.

### *Local Councils*

Local Councils have been in regular contact with the Borough Council throughout the response and recovery period, with weekly, and then fortnightly meetings held between Chairmen and the Chief Executive. This was arranged through KALC. Through these meetings Local Councils have been able to report and discuss any issues and share best practice. Through these meetings Local Councils have been able to report on any viability issues, but at this time, all Local Councils within the area are doing well, and have been able to cope with the impact so far. There was of course an impact initially on events that may have raised money during the lockdown period, but since the restrictions have been lifted, there has been local reporting of much higher than normal attendance at any events that have been delivered.

## Overall, what do you think are the biggest risks/consequences of the impact?

### *Voluntary Sector*

Without funding, one community interest company (the Forum) may cease to exist all together resulting in a range of specific types of support being unavailable. As the service delivery model centres around the benefits received from cultural and music activities, it may be difficult for this provision to be accessed elsewhere resulting in some clients missing out on opportunities.

Other organisations have funding secured in the short term. However if the funding situation remains uncertain, this may result in several voluntary organisations experiencing severe financial difficulties at the same time. The cumulative effect of this would be likely to restrict the Borough Council's ability to provide help/assistance if the need is too widespread.

The voluntary organisations have reported an increase in need and are expecting levels to continue to increase over the winter period, however some have reported difficulties with providing enough volunteers to deliver the service. Where the need is unmet, this may result in an escalation of the issues being faced, which will ultimately impact on the number of people needing critical services and support provided by government agencies and public authorities. This will be on top of the normal increase we are likely to see as a result of the economic downturn and potential new restrictions being imposed due to rising cases.

### *Local Councils*

Local Councils are in a relatively healthy position following the immediate impacts of the crisis. However, the Parish Enabling Reserve has now been spent, which means that this emergency funding can no longer be called upon. Should another emergency occur (such as widespread winter flooding) additional funding will not be available from the Borough Council.

Local Councils are able to raise their precept uncapped however, and the support provided to residents during the crisis was mainly through volunteer groups that appear to be well established and able to restart should the need arise. One volunteer group in Hawkhurst raised the possibility that they may run out of funding in October (however emergency funding has recently been provided by the Council which should help alleviate the situation).

Should it be the case that local community groups run out of funding, those that have been helped would need to find alternative provision (which is likely to be through the borough or county council).

### Overall, what do you think are the biggest opportunities?

Many voluntary organisations raised the issue that provision of services is disparate within the Borough, and that there is a lack of a strong local network. Voluntary organisations have discussed the potential of a 'community hub' model, with infrastructure being provided by the Borough Council. This will provide a 'Single Point of Access' for those seeking support from the organisations and will be able to signpost to the most appropriate service.

### Are there any quick wins?

The Borough Council can, through its communication channels and through Councillors, raise the issues discussed by local voluntary organisations, and promote their fundraising activities.

Raising the profile of local organisations and providing lobbying support to government can help the organisations to secure funding. Communication of fundraising activities to local people can help to improve the effectiveness of this. Spotlights on local voluntary sector organisations in Local, through social media and on our website could help to raise awareness.

### Is there anything we should stop doing now to aid recovery?

Nothing identified.

### Are there any media/communications issues or requirements that need to be flagged as a result?

See above under quick wins.

### Does the impact have a disproportionate impact on those with protected characteristics?

Yes. The potential impacts on the voluntary sector may result in less (or no) services being provided for their clients. For the voluntary sector organisations that have been surveyed, a high proportion of their client base has the protected characteristic of sex, age, disability and/or gender.

Sex: largely female clients for DAVSS and Protection Against Stalking

Age: largely younger clients for the Forum and Fegans. Older clients for Paddock Wood Community Support, Compaid, Age UK.

Disability: clients suffering mental health issues for the Forum, the Counselling Centre, Mental Health Resource and Crossways.

Gender: the Forum have noted that pastoral care is provided to the LGBTQ+ community.