

Our reference RA CDT budget proposal 2024
Date 22nd February 2024



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Residents Association

Public Health
Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Glebe Street
Civic Centre
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 1HH

Dear Residents Association

Re: Community Development Team Budget Proposal 2024/25 (ASCHIW2425-E)

On 8th January 2024 we (the Council) commenced its consultation to set out a balanced budget. As part of the consultation we have received feedback on the Community Development proposal from Residents Associations and community groups.

This letter has been prepared following feedback received and intends to provide answers to the questions raised during consultation and set out how we will work together in the future.

- Why is a different model of community development required?
- What will happen to the support provided to Residents Associations and other community groups supported by the Community Development Team?
- How will residents and groups access council services which the existing Community Development Team currently facilitate?
- How will the council engage effectively with residents on key strategies, plans and policies in the future?

Why is a different model of community development required?

A review of the current Community Development model was undertaken, in advance of the preparation of this Budget Proposal. The review included looking at best practice and what works, as well as, a review of the council's overall investment into the voluntary sector. Based on this review, a new model of locally-based Community Development was put forward. Essentially, we recognise that the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector has a breadth and depth of knowledge, experience and skills and is best placed to work with and through our communities. Therefore, direct and sustained investment with wider city support into communities through Voluntary Community and Faith organisations is proposed through this model. This aligns with our new Corporate Strategy which is also out for consultation.

The new model of locally-based Community Development is part of a bigger intension to work with communities. As described in the open letter, published here [Budget 2024 - 2025 | Stoke-on-Trent](#), our intention is to invest further into independent Voluntary Community and Social

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Enterprise Sector infrastructure support and a renewed Voluntary Community and Faith sector concordat. Residents Associations and other community groups are an important part of this new model.

What will happen to the support provided to Residents Association, and other community groups supported by the Community Development Team?

Residents Associations and other community groups will be able to continue to receive information and practical support from VAST, as we have agreed an expanded role with them. VAST will continue to be the City's independent Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector infrastructure support organisation. This support will include the current £100 micro-grants provided to Residents Associations.

Where the existing Community Development Team has undertaken certain tasks for Resident Associations, such as signing off accounts or chairing Annual General Meetings, a transition to self-sustainability will be required. For example, working with VAST and other Residents Associations to share learning and ensure these skills are present within all organisations.

Following feedback from the consultation the proposal has changed. The updated business case will retain one officer to support the transition to the new model, for 12 months. This role will not pick up the work of the other officers, however will ensure that the knowledge, skills and experience of the Community Development Team is not lost during the transition to the new model.

How will residents and groups access council services which the existing Community Development Team currently facilitate?

Residents Associations and community groups will also be able to access to council services through a number of front doors, which residents and groups can contact the council. This includes the website, Contact Centre and community buildings, including Libraries and Community Lounges. Service requests, such as reports of litter, antisocial behaviour or potholes can be reported via the Council's website directly to the relevant teams. Further information can be found at: [Contact us | Stoke-on-Trent](#).

How will the council engage effectively with residents on key strategies, plans and policies in the future?

The voice of local residents in the development of the council's strategies, plans and policies is a key commitment made within the Council's proposed Corporate Strategy. To fulfil this promise we will carry out meaningful engagement, through a number of routes. The council service responsible for the strategy will develop a comprehensive engagement plan and utilise appropriate methods of engagement. The locally based community sector teams will share information, as well as VAST.

The proposed model is different to the current model and aligns with a new approach of working with, and through communities as set out in our draft Corporate Strategy. We recognise the change will require a different way of working.

Yours sincerely



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