

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 15th October 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

PORTFOLIO: Leader

SUBJECT: Local Trust Community Wealth Alliance

WARDS: Appleton, Grange, Halton Brook, Halton Castle, Halton Lea, Hough Green, Norton South, Mersey

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Executive Board on the Community Wealth Fund Alliance campaign supported by Local Trust.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) the Board approves the Council signing up to the Community Wealth Fund Alliance**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Local Trust is the body responsible for delivering the Lottery's Big Local programme; there are 150 Big Local areas in England, in Halton Windmill Hill estate is a Big Local area. Local Trust are a place based funder who invest in communities facilitating and enabling those communities to have a key role in transforming and improving their lives and where they live.

- 3.2 Local Trust in collaboration with Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion published a report in September 2019 on 'Left Behind' areas. The report details post industrialist places in the north of England and coastal areas in the South, identifying 206 areas deemed to be left behind. Fifty-two of these are in the North West, the largest percentage out of the regions. The report considered a range of characteristics for the areas identified such as:-

Assets, Civic/Sports/Cultural/Green Spaces
Job Density
Educational achievement
Households with no car
Travel time to key services by public transport
People living alone
Broadband speed

Voter turnout
Registered Charities
Lottery Funding
Grants
SME Lending
Local relationships (Community Life Survey)
Leisure & Culture Participation

Information was drawn from the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and Community Needs Index (CNI). The report identifies eight wards in Halton as 'left behind' areas **Appleton, Grange, Halton Brook, Halton Castle, Halton Lea, Hough Green, Norton South and Mersey.**

The report made **three** key recommendations to government:-

1. To dedicate the estimated £2bn in dormant assets from stocks, bonds, shares, pension and insurance funds that will soon become available to the proposed Community Wealth Fund to support the development of civic assets, connection and community engagement in the most left-behind neighbourhoods.
2. To dedicate an appropriate portion of the £3.6bn Stronger Towns Fund and the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund to support community economic development in these neighbourhoods.
3. To establish a joint, cross-government/civil society task force to consider evidence about and develop recommendations for how left-behind areas might be levelled up.

The full report can be accessed via the link:-

https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/local_trust_ocsi_left_behind_research_august_2019.pdf

- 3.3 Local Trust commenced the Community Wealth Alliance (CWFA) to formalise the call for a Community Wealth Fund. Currently, a group of nearly 250 civil society, public and private sector organisations have signed up to be part of the call to government. Membership thus far includes national organisations such as Salvation Army, Groundwork, New Local Government Network, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and umbrella organisations National Council for Voluntary Services (NCVO), Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) and UK Communities Foundation (UKCF). Recently several Local Authorities have added their names to the CWFA; **the request is that Halton Council also commits to being a Community Wealth Alliance member. There is no resource or financial implication on the Council for doing so, it is to add strength to the growing swell of organisations in supporting the campaign to government for releasing funds to 'left behind' areas.** The process is very straight forward, it's

registering on a website with a name, email and organisation details. You can view the information following [this](#) link.

The CWFA is lobbying government to release dormant funds. The Dormant Assets Commission report, published in March 2017, recommended expanding the existing dormant assets distribution scheme beyond dormant bank and building society accounts to include insurance policies, pensions, stocks, shares and bonds. Dedicating the next wave of dormant assets to a Community Wealth Fund would enable government to use the expansion of the scheme to continue to invest money with a strong strategic intent to the issues and places that need it most. A briefing note on the CWFA is appended to the report (appendix one).

The ask from the Alliance to government is to dedicate the next wave of dormant assets (coming from bonds, stocks, shares, insurance & pension funds) an estimated value of £2bn with a possibility of this being matched by FTSE companies to double the fund to create a permanent endowment. This fund would be used to support:-

- provision of long-term funding (10 -15 years)
- investment at the hyper-local level (directly to communities of c.3,000 – 10,000 residents)
- resident-led decision making
- appropriate support provided to build community confidence and capacity

The CWFA also argues that an appropriate portion of new funds like the Towns Fund and the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund (the UK replacement for European Structural and Investment Funds) should be dedicated to community economic development and spent at the neighbourhood level.

- 3.4 An All Parliamentary Party Group (APPG) has also been established in response with cross party Membership of 40 MP's & Peers. It is committed to improving social and economic outcomes for residents living in 'left behind' neighbourhoods, through the development and advocacy of neighbourhood initiatives and policies. To inform the work of the APPG a data drive report was published in July 2020 to understand the impacts of Covid on the left behind areas. The report details how these areas are at risk of being the hardest hit, evidence already shows these areas have had the least share of financial support in Covid receiving about a third of average levels of grant. Recovery is a key concern for these areas already having less resilience with a worry they will fall even further behind. The full report, Communities at Risk is attached (appendix two).

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct policy implications.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Wealth Community Fund, if realised would support Children and Young People from the eight wards identified tackling child poverty, raising aspirations and educational achievement.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

There is potential for investment (again if the fund is realised) to support initiatives which increase skills and employability and employment opportunities.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

It is widely evidenced and acknowledged that more deprived, and excluded areas experience the poorest health outcomes. Any additional investment into these neighbourhoods & communities that supports increased resilience will positively impact on health outcomes longer term.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Investment to lift an area's community and physical environment will support communities building resilience and being better connected thus improving safe neighbourhoods.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

If the Community Wealth Fund can be realised there is potential to secure investment into Halton's eight wards identified which can contribute to improving the physical environment.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no identified risks.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.

Appendix One – Briefing Note on Community Wealth Fund Alliance
Appendix Two – Data Drive on Covid Impacts