

REPORT TO: Cabinet

5 September 2018

LEAD OFFICER: Director of Health and Environmental Services

Service Support Grants to the Voluntary and Community Sector

Purpose

1. To examine the justification and scope for a further three year programme of Service Support Grant funding to the Voluntary and Community Sector, 2019/20 to 2021/22.
2. This is not key decision because funding for each year will be agreed through the annual financial planning process. It was first published in the July 2018 Forward Plan.

Recommendations

3. Cabinet is recommended to:
 - a) approve a further three year programme of Service Support Grants (subject to annual funding agreements) to run from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022, and
 - b) approve continuation of current themes and allocations for the Service Support Grant fund, and
 - c) accept the proposed schedule for operation of the scheme.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. Funding from Service Support Grants enables Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to deliver work in pursuit of the Council's corporate objectives which these organisations would not otherwise be able to deliver.
5. The Grants Advisory Committee considered proposals at their meeting on 27 July 2018 and recommends that the themes and funding allocations in operation for the 2016-19 scheme are continued, but that the funding allocations are approximate rather than fixed so as to allow flexibility once applications have been received.
6. The proposed schedule allows three months notice of changes to funding arrangements to organisations in receipt of funding through the Council's 2016-19 Service Support Grant scheme. This is in line with Cambridgeshire Compact guidelines. (Cambridgeshire Compact is the partnership agreement between statutory bodies and the voluntary and community sector.)

Background

7. The Service Support Grants scheme has been running for a number of years. In 2013-2016 the themes were:
 - (a) Generalist and Specialist Advice
 - (b) Community Transport

- (c) Independent Living
 - (d) Supporting Parishes and Communities
 - (e) Homelessness Prevention
8. A new theme 'Fit to Learn' was added to the scheme for 2016-19. This was as a result of a review undertaken by a member-led Task and Finish group in 2014 of the work that the Council undertakes with regard to Localism, Health and Wellbeing, Ageing Well and Children and Young People. This review identified a need for support for families to ensure children are 'fit to learn' when starting school.
9. Members of the Grants Advisory Committee discussed the Service Support Grants scheme at a workshop held on 12 July 2018:
- (a) Community transport was discussed, in particular, the importance of ensuring that all areas of the district are covered by one or other community transport schemes; the need for transport schemes to provide transport for social as well as medical needs, and the value of linking with existing public transport such as the Busway.
 - (b) The need for support for families to ensure children are 'fit to learn' when starting school was also discussed. The need for such support to be available to families across the district was highlighted.

Considerations

10. The grant programme to support services provided by the voluntary and community sector should align with the Council's corporate objectives.
11. Recommended themes and approximate funding allocations are presented in the table below. Allocations to each theme are presented as a percentage of the total allocation to the Service Support grant budget with the total sum awarded over the three years of the 2016-19 scheme provided in brackets.

Theme	Services supported	Approximate Funding allocation (sum awarded over the course of the 2016-19 scheme is noted in brackets)
General Welfare Advice	Independent, confidential and impartial advice provided to residents free of charge on their rights and responsibilities in the following areas: debt, benefits, employment, housing, legal, relationship and family matters	55% (£240,000)
Specialist Welfare Advice	Independent, confidential and impartial advice and advocacy provided to residents who are disabled, to carers and to families with disabled children, free of charge	3.5% (£15,000)
Community Transport	Delivery, development and promotion of community transport services	10.5% (£45,000)
Independent Living	Delivery of services that: allow residents to maintain their independence; reduce rural isolation;	11% (£48,000)

	tackle loneliness, depression and isolation; and provide support to carers.	
Fit to Learn	Delivery of services that help pre-school children to develop strength, co-ordinations, language and communications skills and good mental health.	5.5% (£24,000*)
Supporting Parishes and Communities	Delivery of services to support and enable effective, sustainable and legal operation of community and voluntary sector organisations and their representation at a strategic level.	7% (£30,000)
Preventing and Tackling Homelessness	Delivery of services to reducing homelessness through being proactive in preventative measures and ensuring sufficient suitable accommodation available to people who are or may become homeless, and working in partnership to provide housing advice so that people understand their housing options, help them to sustain their current home or access alternative suitable accommodation.	7.5% (£33,000)
Service Support Grants Total		100% (£435,000)

* £8,000 of the Fit to Learn allocation was not granted/returned due to changed circumstances leading to non-delivery of intended services.

12. Funding for supporting parishes and communities is proposed in order to support the voluntary and community sector to flourish and function well, for example, adhering to Cambridgeshire Compact principles.
13. A scheme of three years duration is proposed in order to encourage and allow longer term planning on the part of the community and voluntary organisations and in line with Compact guidelines.
14. The proposed schedule for operation of the scheme is provided in the table below:

Activity	Date
Scheme launched and open for applications	Monday 1 October 2018 or earlier
Scheme closed for applications (after 8 weeks)	Friday 23 November 2018 or earlier
Applications assessed, meeting of officer panel and consultation with relevant Portfolio Holders	w/c 26 November 2018 or earlier
Recommendations brought to Grants Advisory Committee and Finance Portfolio Holder	W/c 3 December 2018 or earlier
Call in period	w/c 10 December 2018 or earlier
Organisations notified of decisions, subject to confirmation of budgets at Council	w/c 17 December 2018 or earlier
Council meeting	21 February 2019
Funding agreements signed	By end of March 2019
First funding instalments payable	April 2019

Options

15. Cabinet could approve or vary the proposal for a further three year programme of Service Support Grants (subject to annual funding agreements) to run from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022.
16. Cabinet could approve, vary or reject the proposed themes and allocations for the Service Support Grant fund.
17. Cabinet could approve or vary the proposed schedule for operation of the scheme.
18. Cabinet could reject in principal the renewal of the three year service support programme. If conforming to Compact principles this decision should be the subject of general consultation, to include the community and voluntary sector.

Implications

19. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

20. ***Financial***

None, as funding for each year will be agreed through the annual financial planning process.

21. ***Legal***

21. Arrangements would be put in place with grant recipients that would allow variation or termination of the grant under certain circumstances.

22. ***Staffing***

22. The proposed programme requires that staff time continues to be made available to monitor and oversee the work of the grant recipients, report on activity and administer payments. This is programmed into current work plans.

23. ***Equality and Diversity***

The proposed grant scheme would promote equality of opportunity by supporting community and voluntary organisation schemes which help overcome challenges faced by residents due to age, infirmity, disability, low income or rurality.

24. **Consultation responses**

None

25. **Effect on Strategic Aims**

Aim 1 – We will support our communities to remain in good health whilst continuing to protect the natural and built environment

The proposed grant scheme supports our communities to remain in good health by enabling community and voluntary organisations to help residents to overcome social isolation, mental ill health and other challenges faced by reason of age, infirmity, disability, low income or rurality.

Background Papers

Grants Advisory Committee meeting, 27 July 2018

<http://scams.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1096&MId=7342&Ver=4>

Cambridgeshire Compact Agreement

http://www.cambridgecvs.org.uk/app/webroot/media/cms/files/cambridgeshire_compact.pdf

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