

REPORT TO: Scrutiny and Overview Committee

18 October 2018

LEAD OFFICER: Head of Sustainable Communities & Wellbeing

Mobile Warden Scheme Grants Review 2018

Purpose

1. To consider minor changes to the Mobile and Community Warden Scheme Grants for 2019/20 as recommended by Grants Advisory Committee, and to make comments on the proposals prior to consideration by Cabinet.
2. This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

3. Grants Advisory Committee is recommending that Cabinet
 - (a) approves the proposed changes to the Mobile and Community Warden Scheme Grant criteria and guidance notes for 2019/20, as set out at Appendix A; and
 - (b) agrees to Grants Advisory Committee carrying out a further review that will include geographical coverage of the schemes and the impact of further promotion of mobile and community warden schemes.

It is recommended that Scrutiny and Overview Committee considers this report and makes comment prior to consideration by Cabinet.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The terms of reference for the Grants Advisory Committee state that the Committee's function is:

"To consider and make recommendations to the Portfolio Holder responsible for grants, or Cabinet as appropriate, including, but not limited to:

- Review of the Council's grant schemes to ensure they reflect Council priorities.
- Design of any new or revised grants schemes, including consideration of criteria and guidance applicable in respect of each scheme.
- Consideration of applications made under the Council's grants schemes."

5. Following a workshop of the Committee, which also included substitutes and officers, this report sets out proposed amendments to the existing Mobile and Community Warden Scheme Grants, which were agreed for recommendation by Grants Advisory Committee on 28 September 2018. The workshop looked at the current grant fund in detail, whether Committee members felt the Council should continue to grant fund Mobile and Community Warden Schemes and the criteria / guidance notes for the fund.

Background

6. Mobile and Community Wardens Schemes (sometimes called Community Care Schemes) exist in South Cambridgeshire to support older people to live independently in their homes and in the community they know, and which knows them.
7. The warden schemes are complementary to statutory care services and do not duplicate or replace the medical or social care services that individuals may also require. They can help to combat loneliness and social isolation and can provide significant benefits to clients at low cost (the total average weekly cost of operating the schemes is £12.70 per client). They are seen by clients and their families as a vital community-based service.
8. South Cambridgeshire District Council has been providing grant funding to Mobile and Community Warden Schemes for many years.
9. The Council's Mobile and Community Warden Scheme grant funding has historically been an annual grant funding programme. The scheme is usually launched in the Autumn, to allow time for applications to be made and assessed, and decision-making carried out in a timely manner prior to the beginning of the following financial year. All funding is awarded subject to Council approval of the budget.
10. The amount of funding in the grant fund has remained fairly stable and is fully committed each year. An inflationary increase has been added over the previous few years. The 2018/19 budget was 20,110 and has been fully spent.

Year	Amount (£)
2018/19	20,110
2017/18	19,250
2016/17	19,250
2015/16	19,000
2014/15	18,550
2013/14	17,900

11. The schemes funded in 2018/19 were:

Name of Scheme	Villages Covered	Operating Model
Cottenham	Cottenham	Community-led
Harston	Barrington, Harston, Hauxton, Newton, Orwell	Community-led
Haslingfield	Haslingfield	Community-led
Melbourn	Melbourn, Meldreth, Shepreth	Community-led
Milton	Milton	Parish-led
The Mordens & Litlington	Guilden Morden, Steeple Morden, Litlington, Bassingbourn	Community-led
Histon & Impington	Histon & Impington	Age UK
Swavesey	Swavesey	Age UK
Small Villages	Balsham, Western Colville, West Wrattling, Horseheath, West Wickham, Castle Camps, Shudy Camps	Age UK
Teversham	Teversham	Age UK
Linton	Linton	Age UK

A scheme has also recently been set up in Waterbeach (Age UK) and Stapleford is looking to set up a scheme.

Considerations

12. A workshop of the Grants Advisory Committee plus substitutes was held on 11 September 2018. Those able to attend were:
- Councillor Jose Hales
 - Councillor Clare Delderfield
 - Councillor Sue Ellington
 - Councillor Peter McDonald
 - Councillor Shrobona Bhattacharya
 - Councillor Bill Handley
 - Councillor Heather Williams
 - Gemma Barron, Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing
 - Katherine Southwood, Project Officer
13. Following an in-depth discussion about the purpose of the mobile and community warden schemes, the group also looked at how the schemes operate. The group strongly supported the Council continuing to grant fund local schemes. The main reasons given were that the schemes support some of the most vulnerable members of the community and that the schemes supported over 250 people in the previous year. The Council's funding helps to support the schemes continue to operate and keep costs at an affordable for clients (the average weekly charge to a resident across the schemes is £6.43). In 2017/18 the Council's funding equals approximately 11% of the funding for the schemes operations, which generally also includes funding from parish councils, village charities, occasionally corporate donations and also client charges.

14. The different operating models were discussed. The group agreed that the various models allow for local difference. It was acknowledged that the schemes often deliver slightly different services, but that this was also seen as a positive because they have evolved for the local community in which they operate.
15. The group discussed the possibility of lengthening the scheme to be a three-year scheme rather than annual scheme. The benefit of a three-year scheme would be to provide assurance to the operator, however, it was felt that the number of clients and size of each scheme can vary significantly from year to year, and new schemes are also regularly being established. On balance it was felt that the fund should remain as an annual fund.
16. A few minor tweaks to the existing criteria / guidance notes were proposed (see Appendix A for complete tracked changes):
 - (a) State that charities should follow Charity Commission guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission/about/publication-scheme>
 - (b) Require appropriate training for paid and voluntary staff, and the management committee or board of trustees e.g. safeguarding, scams awareness
 - (c) Add a reference to Making Tax Digital to ensure that relevant organisations are adhering to requirements.
17. The Council currently promotes mobile and community warden schemes via the new loneliness toolkit and also via the patch-based Development Officers. Whilst Grants Advisory Committee believes that more schemes, covering more of the district, are desirable, this will result in pressure on the current budget and could put existing schemes under pressure. Grants Advisory Committee would like to carry out a further review that will cover the geographical coverage of the scheme and the impact of further promotion of mobile and community warden schemes.

Options

18. Scrutiny and Overview Committee could review the report and make comments on the recommendations prior to consideration by Cabinet to inform their decision making.

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: -

Financial

20. This report is not seeking to amend the amount of funding available in the Mobile Warden Scheme Grants fund. It is assumed that the fund would be a similar level in 2019/20 should the grant fund continue. Grants Advisory Committee would like to carry out a further review of the Grant funding that will cover the impact of further promotion of mobile and community warden schemes.

Risk Management

21. Risk to the Council is managed via the documentation that is required of applicants plus agreement of the grant conditions. Annual monitoring takes place via the application process, or separately if a scheme does not apply the following year.

Equality and Diversity

22. Depending on the amount of changes recommended it may be necessary to carrying out an EQIA screening.

Consultation responses

23. None.

Effect on Strategic Aims

24. The recommended changes continue to reflect the Council priorities.

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