

REPORT TO: Grants Advisory Committee

24/08/2023

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Cllr John Williams

LEAD OFFICER: Gareth Bell

Mobile Warden Scheme Grant Review 2024-28

Executive Summary

1. To agree the Council's approach to supporting the Mobile and Community Warden Schemes in South Cambridgeshire for 2024-2028. This includes agreeing the sum of grant funding available (subject to the approval of the Council's budget in February 2024), and details of further development work required to support the sustainability of the schemes.

Key Decision

2. This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Grants Advisory Committee (GAC) makes a recommendation to the Lead Member for Resources to:
 - Approve the sum of £100,000 to provide a one-year extension in funding for 2024-25 to Mobile and Community Warden Schemes operating in the district currently in receipt of funding (and to include a contingency fund for any new schemes expressing an interest in setting up in the 2024-25 period).
 - Approve the principle of offering a three-year grant scheme from April 2025 to March 2028, which will include adapted criteria and an annual report at the end of each year.
 - Agree that further development work required to support the sustainability of the schemes, to include an in-depth review of service delivery, any barriers to promotion and expansion, and exploring a collaborative approach between public sector funders in advance of a decision on the allocation of South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) funds for the next three-year funding cycle (2025-28).

Reasons for Recommendations

4. Enabling older and/or vulnerable people to have greater access to a local warden scheme is a key priority of the Council's Business Plan 2019-2024. This priority is aligned to the predicted high growth in the over 65-year-old population over the

next 20 years. It recognises that with age comes increased risk of deteriorating physical and mental health, including feelings of loneliness and isolation, as well as a desire on the part of most older people to live independently in their own homes.

5. An analysis of the population projections for South Cambridgeshire from 'Nomis' (a service provided by Office for National Statistics) shows an increase in the number of people aged over 75 years (the age at which enhanced care needs become more pronounced) by 42% - a net increase of 7,184 people by 2043. This demonstrates that there is likely to be a significant future scope for the maintenance and extension of the Mobile and Community Warden Schemes in the district.
6. The Health Foundation think tank has recently stated that by 2040 nearly one in five people will be living with major health conditions such as dementia and cancer, up from one in six in 2019 and that this population shift would have a major impact on the NHS. The report also stated there is a requirement for a radical shift, with more care in the community, rather than hospitals.
7. Mobile and Community Warden Schemes aim to extend the independence of older people and to stave off the need for (or can complement, not replace) the care packages put in place by statutory agencies. The complementary nature of Mobile and Community Warden schemes to clinical and care interventions will continue to be part of the shift to community-based support for older people. These schemes directly deliver against the Integrated Care System Healthcare Strategy goals and objectives (including 'increasing the number of years people spend in good health', 'creating an environment that gives people the opportunities to be as healthy as they can be', and 'promoting early intervention and prevention measures to improve mental health and wellbeing').
8. Almost all Mobile and Community Warden Schemes have felt an impact on client numbers following the Covid pandemic and as a result of the current cost of living crisis. This has, in many cases, adversely affected their finances. Additional funding as proposed would help to ensure the sustainability of the schemes at a reasonable cost to the client.
9. The core budget for supporting the schemes has remained static for many years except for annual inflationary uplifts. However, over the last four years a project using additional funding has been run to try and encourage more schemes. This has successfully seen the number of schemes increase to 19, covering 50 parishes, and a review of this project was always planned at this stage.
10. The recommended grant levels for 2024-25 reflect the Council's ongoing commitment to supporting and growing Mobile and Community Warden Schemes. The amount of £100,000 is proposed for one year only as the review carried out so far has shown that further development work is required with mobile and community warden schemes and partners to devise an appropriate and sustainable future scheme.
11. The one-year proposal is based on:

- funding of £71,708 provided to the 19 schemes in 2023-24
- additional funding to reflect average inflation rates over the last five years.
- a small contingency fund for any new schemes wishing to set up and express an interest in receiving funding for 2024-25
- additional funding for schemes to build their capacity and increase membership, over and above what other funding sources, including the Care Together funding, will by then have achieved.

Details

12. Mobile Warden Schemes were developed in recognition that there was a need to provide a service to support and take care of older, more vulnerable members of communities. Schemes within some parishes of South Cambridgeshire have been in existence for over 20 years.
13. The schemes serve several purposes: including enabling older people to remain living at home independently for longer; avoiding earlier transfer into care; avoiding unnecessary hospital admission; enabling more expedient hospital discharge; providing daily contact to people who would otherwise live in isolation and/or away from their families.
14. The Council's Mobile and Community Warden Scheme grants are administered on a three-year cycle. The current cycle runs from April 2021 until March 2024.
15. The schemes have historically been community-led and this has resulted over time in inequitable cover across the district with large geographical areas including some of our most isolated parishes, or parishes with greater numbers of older people, without a scheme. To help address this, a further six new schemes were introduced. These received full funding from October 2020 until September 2022 and thereafter part funding until March 2024.
16. Currently there are 19 funded schemes covering 50 parishes across the district; 13 are run by Age UK and 5 are independent community schemes (4 are charities and 1 is run by the Parish Council). Some schemes operate to support one Parish, whereas others provide support to multiple parishes. The level of service and support offered by schemes also differs. **Appendix A** lists the total client numbers, financial status and individual grant awards for 2023-24 for all schemes receiving funding from SCDC (*figures as of May 2023*).
17. A total of £71,708 was provided by the Council to contribute toward schemes for the financial year 2023-24. All schemes are encouraged to fundraise and seek funding from other sources to sustain their schemes. Some parish councils contribute towards the cost of their local scheme, and some do not.
18. On 27 July 2023 Grants Advisory Committee approved the allocation of £21,000 of Care Together Seed Funding, in accordance with the grant funding agreement in place with Cambridgeshire County Council, to create a one-off grant scheme administered by SCDC.

19. Development work is already underway to help us better understand the issues and barriers faced by Mobile and Community Warden schemes in South Cambridgeshire. The Council has commissioned the independent organisation 'Rose Regeneration' to undertake a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) analysis, and to assess the value-for-money delivered by Mobile and Community Warden Schemes in South Cambridgeshire. This estimates that schemes have a BCR of £1.33/£1. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) appraisal guide (2023) ranks BCR, with anything greater than 1 as delivering appropriate value-for-money.
20. Early indications from Rose Regeneration also show that there is likely to be a significant future scope for the maintenance and extension of the Mobile and Community Warden Schemes in the district.
21. A one-year extension to Mobile and Community Warden scheme funding will provide the necessary time to develop a closer partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, the Integrated care system (ICS) and parish councils and complete a more in-depth review of barriers to service delivery and funding options, incorporating the recommendations from the Rose Regeneration report, and to make any necessary amendments to the grant criteria in advance of the next funding cycle (April 2025 - March 2028).
22. SCDC officers are already working to increase the promotion of the schemes to those organisations with a direct link to the elderly residents of South Cambridgeshire. An online toolkit for the setting up of a new scheme is currently being developed and a workshop held on 27 June 2023 provided an opportunity for schemes to share their experiences - both good practice and barriers to service delivery and expansion, and to better understand this Council's commitment to these schemes. The session highlighted the challenges that schemes are facing and that additional funding is needed for the schemes to remain viable. This is another reason why a more detailed review is required.
23. In the past, when deciding on grant awards for the schemes, the following factors were taken into account:
 - a) The amount of grant funding requested.
 - b) The fees charged to the client.
 - c) The number of clients supported in the previous year.
 - d) Income and expenditure for the previous year.
 - e) The scheme's finances.
 - f) Amounts of reserved and unreserved funding.
 - g) Increases to operational costs over the 3-year period
 - h) Plans to promote schemes and build capacity to meet the needs of more clients throughout the term of the grant.
24. Proposed timelines are as follows:
 - After GAC, call-in passes 31/08/2023
 - Comms issued to advertise our approach and offer the opportunity to Expressions of Interest.
 - Organisations receive a letter offering them a grant and are asked to confirm acceptance in writing.

- Council budget setting process – end February 2024
- Grant agreements for 2024-25 drawn up and agreed / signed.
- Grants paid – first week in April 2024
- Schemes have from April 2024 to 31 March 2025 to spend their grant
- End of project reports to be received by the end of June 2025
- Ongoing review will be undertaken from now until early Summer 2024.
- Grant scheme launch for the 2025-28 cycle – Summer 2024

Options

25. The Grants Advisory Committee may agree to recommend to the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources to:

- approve the sum of £100,000 to provide a one-year extension in funding for 2024-25 to Mobile and Community Warden Schemes operating in the district currently in receipt of funding (to include a contingency fund for any new schemes expressing an interest in setting up in the 2024-25 period).
- approve the principle of offering a three-year grant scheme from April 2025 to March 2028, which will include adapted criteria and the requirement for an annual report at the end of each year detailing outputs and outcomes.
- agree that further development work is required to support the sustainability of the schemes and this work will include an in-depth review in advance of a decision on funding allocation for the next three-year funding cycle.
- Defer a decision if further information is required
- Reject the proposal and not recommend it to the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, stating the reason for this.

Implications

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

Legal

27. The Lead Cabinet Member's decision will be made subject to Council's approval of annual budgets in February 2024. The proposal has been discussed with the Council's Chief Finance Officer and Lead Cabinet Member for Resources but should the amount of funding available within the 2024-2025 period be amended at any point it may be necessary for the Lead Cabinet Member to reconsider the total amount of funding available for the schemes.

Consultation responses

28. A workshop for schemes was held on 27 June 2023 to better understand the challenges they face and share good practice. This event gave officers, District and County Council elected members and local organisations alike a better understanding of the issues faced in delivering support services to older

residents.

29. Conversations about resources and promotion are ongoing with Mobile and Community Warden schemes and with the County Council's Care Together and Communities Service Teams.

Risks/opportunities

30. If funding for 2024-25 is not provided it is likely that schemes will not be financially viable. If funding is provided, Mobile and Community Warden schemes will need to agree to the grant conditions before funds are released.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

31. Ensure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents: the grant programmes promote a good quality of life for all residents, assisting directly or indirectly through voluntary organisations schemes which help overcome the challenges faced by residents imposed by age, infirmity, disability, low income or rurality.

Background Papers

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=2002>

<https://www.health.org.uk/publications/health-in-2040>

Grants Advisory Committee Meetings:

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=1096&Year=0>

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary table of SCDC funded schemes

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