



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	12 March 2024
<b>Lead Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources	
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Jeff Membery, Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services	

## Mobile Warden Schemes - additional grant funding to support Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough schemes for 2024-25

### Executive Summary

1. On 28 February 2024 Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough met with Council Officers to inform the Council that the Charity is experiencing significant financial pressures, including loss of statutory grant funding.
2. The Council grant funds Mobile and Community Wardens Schemes (MCWS) in the district, including the 11 schemes Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough runs in the area. This paper outlines a request to Cabinet to fund an additional sum of £99,965 (as detailed in the Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough summary of financial position at Appendix A). This sum would provide continuity of service to the 11 Age UK South Cambridgeshire MCWSs during 2024-25. A review and development work are currently underway through Rose Regeneration for all MCWSs the Council grant funds. The additional funding would ensure all schemes remain viable whilst the review is carried out and completed by the summer of 2024.
3. The review will result in a complete picture of the schemes' viability, including an assessment (and improvement) of the data collected by schemes, their value for money, the preventative elements of their service, the positive impact on carers and their role in the expedition of hospital discharges.

### Key Decision

Yes

### Recommendation

4. It is recommended that Cabinet agrees a supplementary estimate of £100,000 to fund Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to provide continuity of service to the 11 South Cambridgeshire Mobile and Community Warden Schemes during 2024-25. The decision will need to be reported to, and confirmed by, full Council at its next meeting.

## Reasons for Recommendation

5. MCWS offer a lifeline to older residents in South Cambridgeshire and to their families and carers. It is well-known that there are benefits to keeping older people living independently in their own homes in the communities they know. MCWSs offer a relatively low-cost opportunity for some older people to maintain their independence; offering an opportunity for social contact, falls prevention, medication assessment, respite and relief for carers and families and, in some cases, the opportunity to expedite discharge from hospital which reduces bed-blocking. This results in improved health and wellbeing for residents and is likely to save greater costs in other parts of the health system. The current review being carried out by Rose Regeneration is expected to provide more data to demonstrate the value-for-money of the schemes and make recommendations for how schemes can become more self-sustaining.

## Details

6. On 24 August 2023 the Grants Advisory Committee reviewed the MCWS 2024-28 report as detailed in [agenda item 6](#) of the meeting reports pack. A decision was made by 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.
7. The Council's approved budget for 2024-25 has allocated £100,000 for the one-year extension to the MCWSs in South Cambridgeshire and Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is due to receive £64,435 of the total.
8. On 28 February 2024 Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough met with Council Officers to inform the Council that the charity is experiencing significant financial pressures, including loss of statutory grant funding and notification of some loss of grant funding, by other funders, being made to them at short notice.
9. Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough currently provide 19 MCWSs across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. All 11 Age UK schemes in South Cambridgeshire are supported, both financially and strategically, by South Cambridgeshire District Council.
10. The Age UK schemes in South Cambridgeshire have been running at a deficit which has been absorbed by the charity. However, the recent reduction in income has led Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to review all their operations and organisational structure. They have informed the Council that they are no longer able to operate the 11 schemes at a loss.
11. Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has entered a consultation period with their colleagues which could result in redundancies and a loss of service to some of our most vulnerable residents. During the consultation period Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be working with funding organisations to seek resolutions to service deficits.
12. The overall shortfall for all the Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough MCWSs in South Cambridgeshire is £99,965. This takes account the £64,435 Council grant already approved for

2024-25. The additional funding is urgently needed to provide certainty for 2024-25, and to allow the time for the in-depth review being carried out by Rose Regeneration to be completed and assessed.

13. With the agreement of the Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, this decision, which is outside of the budget approved by full Council on 27 February 2024, may be taken by Cabinet, as it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the full Council. This is in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework, paragraph 4.1.
14. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure: Access to Information, paragraph 15, the Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee has also been informed that a general exception has been invoked to allow for the decision to be taken without being included on the Notice of Key Decisions for at least 28 clear days.
15. With the agreement of the Chair of Scrutiny and Overview Committee and the Chair of Council, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure: Scrutiny and Overview, paragraphs 13.19 to 13.21, this decision shall not be subject to call-in, as to do so would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.
16. These procedures have been invoked because Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are in a consultation period with colleagues, including Wardens, and a delay until the next full Council meeting would not allow for service continuity. A report will be submitted to the next full Council setting out the decision and reasons for urgency.

## **Options**

17. Cabinet could:

- a) agree to fund Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with an additional £99,965 to provide continuity of service to the 11 South Cambridgeshire Mobile and Community Warden Schemes in 2024-25.
- b) agree to allow Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to use the Council's previously approved £64,435 grant for 2024-25 to continue to deliver Mobile and Community Warden services to the areas they assess as most viable.
- c) agree an alternative additional grant amount to Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, giving reasons, to provide continuity of service to named South Cambridgeshire Mobile and Community Warden Schemes in the 2024-25 period.
- d) defer a decision ask officers for further specific information. This option would result in a likely disruption to services and potential staffing difficulties as Wardens have been placed at risk of redundancy.

## **Implications**

18. 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:-

## **Financial**

19. The amount is not within the 2024/25 budget that was agreed at full Council on 27 February 2024. Therefore, a supplementary estimate will be needed to fund this. The estimated surplus on the general fund of £4.5m will now be £100,000 lower at £4.4m. The Council will, at its next

meeting, need to confirm the urgent decision made. The grant agreement would be for one year only whilst a detailed review of MCWSs is completed.

## **Legal**

20. The Council's Monitoring Officer has been consulted to ensure the correct constitutional process is followed for this urgent decision.

## **Staffing**

21. There are no significant staffing implications of the decision for the Council.

## **Risk/Opportunities**

22. There is a risk to the continuity of service to vulnerable residents who use MCWSs if the current Age UK shortfall in funding cannot be filled in the short term. This will allow for a full review of the service to be completed, which aims to make the service more sustainable in the future.

## **Health & wellbeing**

23. The MCWSs can support people to live more independently in their own homes. They also reduce isolation for some residents that has a big impact on health and wellbeing.

## **Consultation responses**

24. Consultation has taken place with the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, the Chair of the Grants Advisory Committee and with colleagues in Adult Social Care at Cambridgeshire County Council and in the Integrated Care System. Elected members with Age UK schemes in their wards have been notified of the current situation.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **A modern and caring council**

25. The Council has made a commitment to the MCWSs in its 2024-25 and has said a review of schemes will be carried out to see how they can be made more sustainable into the future.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's assessment of Mobile and Community Warden Schemes for 2024-25.

## **Report Author:**

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