

REPORT TO: Grants Advisory Committee

15 October 2019

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Cllr John Williams

LEAD OFFICER: Lesley McFarlane / Gemma Barron

Mobile Warden Scheme funding

Executive Summary

1. To extend the duration of grant funding for Mobile Warden Schemes from twelve months to a minimum of two years
2. A key decision is required.

Recommendations

3. To agree to extend funding contracts beyond twelve months on the proviso that schemes are compliant with up-to-date Safeguarding, First Aid and Deprivation of Liberty (DOLs) training and that service charges to clients are set at a minimum of £6.50/week to maximise sustainability of the scheme.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. Providing funding for more than one year at a time would:
 - a) provide greater financial security to schemes, their employees and service users
 - b) reduce the burden of applications on the service provider;
 - c) bring this scheme in line with others run by the Council, many of which are delivered over a 3-year period.
 - d) ensure that the Council had played its part in ensuring wardens are trained to the highest standards and consistent, high quality services are delivered for our residents.

Details

5. There are currently 14 mobile warden schemes across the District in receipt of annual grant funding. The funding agreed for the smaller independent schemes range from £250 to £2500 per scheme per year. The average cost per scheme provided by Age UK is approximately £1885.

6. Each scheme is required to re-apply for funding each year and amounts are awarded based on set criteria including:
 - the service charge to clients
 - the level of unrestricted reserves
 - the level of restricted reserves
 - the amount of funding requested
7. Each scheme employs wardens, many of whom have been in post for many years. However, each year there is uncertainty over the continuation of their employment contracts as well as uncertainty about the continuation of the service to clients as a result of short-term funding.
8. Extending the grant period to a minimum of two years and possibly three would provide greater job security for the wardens and reassure clients of the continuation of the service in an environment where many services affecting the elderly are being reduced.
9. The provision of up to date 'key' training for mobile wardens improves performance, enhances confidence and helps employees feel valued; it's also an opportunity to network beyond what is an otherwise isolated role. It also provides greater protection for vulnerable clients and confidence to those organisations that are investing in the service.

Options

- I. Maintain the status quo. Continue to review and fund the schemes on an annual basis.
- II. Provide funding for 2 or 3 consecutive years with an annual report after 12 months with immediate effect i.e. contracts starting in 2020.
- III. Maintain annual grant funding for 2020 and begin funding for 2 consecutive years with an annual report after 12 months from 2021.
- IV. Maintain annual grant funding for 2020 and begin funding for 3 consecutive years with an annual report at the end of each year to avoid overlap with Service Support Grant funding.

Implications

10. Of option 1: Schemes will continue to operate business as usual and funding amounts will be negotiated on an annual basis.
11. Of option 2: Service Support Grants will be open for application in 2020 to begin in 2021. If the Mobile Warden Schemes are extended to two-year contracts with immediate effect, this would create an intensive workload for Officers administering both the Service Support Grants and the Mobile Warden Schemes concurrently.
12. Of option 3 Schemes can apply for a three-year funding contract with immediate effect to avoid the scenario outline in point 11 above.

Financial

13. An uplift would need to be worked into contracts extending beyond 12 months, as is the case with other revenue grants that contribute towards salary costs. Schemes in receipt of grant funding will need to provide evidence of up-to-date safeguarding, first aid and DOLs training to ensure they are compliant with latest evidence and legislation.
14. Funding for the schemes has not been increased in the past few years. If an uplift was to be provided as part of the new contract a small increase in the total amount available would need to be increased. [is this the same point as above in effect?]

Effect on Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

This piece of work helps to deliver the provision of grants to community and voluntary groups to help them carry out projects which benefit local vulnerable people.

Background Papers

None

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