



**REPORT TO:** Grants Advisory Committee

April 2021

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER:** Cllr John Williams

**LEAD OFFICER:** Jeff Membery

---

## **Creating a one-off fund to Support Older People**

### **Executive Summary**

1. The purpose of this paper is to present the options for the use of the remaining grant funding from the Mobile Warden Scheme Grants Applications for 2021-2024. Grants Advisory Committee had agreed an uplift to the normal funding amounts over this financial period to provide further support and to build capacity in existing schemes following the Covid Pandemic in 2020. The remaining sum of c. £30,000 could be directed towards other programmes and initiatives which support older people to live independently and improve quality of life, with a particular emphasis on psychological and physical rehabilitation throughout the Covid recovery period.

### **Key Decision**

2. No. This report seeks to provide options to GAC for recommendation on to the Lead Member for Finance.

### **Recommendations**

3. It is proposed that Grants Advisory Committee recommends to the Lead Cabinet Member how to share the funds equitably with a range of organisations which support the elderly, more vulnerable members of our communities.

## Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Grants Advisory Committee's role is to consider options and make recommendations regarding grants to the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance (or to Cabinet as appropriate), including, but not limited to:
  - a) Reviewing the Council's grants schemes to ensure they reflect Council priorities;
  - b) Designing new or revising existing grants schemes, including consideration of criteria;
  - c) Consideration of applications made under the Council's grants schemes.

## Details

6. Grants Advisory Committee agreed to provide additional funding to the grant scheme for existing Mobile Warden Schemes for the period 2021-2024. Despite existing schemes being awarded the full sums for which they applied, approximately £30,000 remains unallocated.
7. Officers met with Members in March 2021 and it was agreed to explore how this money could be repurposed to continue to support older people, particularly as 12 months of lockdown and, in some instances, 12 months of isolation is lifted.
8. Early research undertaken by Age UK<sup>(1)</sup> has found that as well as a psychological deterioration in older people, physical function and strength and balance, due to lack of movement, have also worsened leaving many older people frail.
9. Officers contacted over 12 local community organisations and charities to understand the types of issues older people were facing and explored how these organisations could be supported to deliver schemes to ease the difficulties and challenges older people would face in returning to 'normal life' post-Covid. This research has influenced the criteria for a one-off grant scheme.
10. The themes emerging from the research included (but were not limited to):
  - a. Encouraging older people, who may not have left their homes for over a year, back outside and reconnecting them to their communities via a range of community-based initiatives.
  - b. Opportunities to reconnect via common interests in a phased return, beginning with conversations by telephone and progressing to face to face involving topics such as gardening, crafting and woodwork.
  - c. Offering community groups, such as lunch clubs, support to re-open safely e.g. risk assessing buildings and community gatherings.
  - d. Offering older people a range of options to reconnect by telephone or in person, ensuring those people with no desire to connect via wifi are not excluded.

- e. Opportunities to be physically active. As a result of lockdown restrictions and ongoing fear of going outside, many older people have suffered from a decline in physical function and muscle mass. Engaging older people in fun interactive ways to regain function will be key in gaining confidence to venture beyond their homes.
- f. Loss of interest in food preparation and eating as a result of low mood, increased pain and increased sedentariness. Opportunities to revive an enjoyment of eating through the instigation of lunch clubs or delivered hot meals could help older people enjoy their food again and avoid malnutrition.

## **Options**

18. The Grants Advisory Committee may consider the options set out in this report and recommend to the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance to:
- a) agree to set up a one-off grant for older people to help organisations and or community groups tackle directly the themes emerging from the research outlined above;
  - b) agree to subsume the £30,000 into the existing Service Support Grant budget which will be reviewed this financial year, ready for new applicants in 2022; or
  - c) defer a decision if further information is required.

## **Implications**

19. 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:-

## **Risks/Opportunities**

20. Applicants are required to provide supporting documents including copies of their constitution, financial accounts and quotes where applicable. Applicants must agree to the grant conditions before funds are released.

## **Consultation process**

23. A number of charitable organisations were approached which support older people to garner views on the issues emerging from lockdown and the best ways to provide ongoing support which would enable older people to regain confidence socially and physically. These views

will be used to define the criteria for grant applications. A panel of Officers will be invited to review the applications and make recommendations to GAC.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **A modern and caring Council**

This one-off grant has been designed to promote the health and wellbeing of the older population as society emerges from Covid lockdown restrictions. This demographic has been particularly affected as many of the over 65's were identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, living in isolation for over a year and at greater susceptibility of poor outcomes from infection.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1

### **References**

1. [Age UK research on impact of the pandemic on our older population's health](#)

### **Report Author:**

Lesley McFarlane. Development Officer, Health Specialist

Lesley.mcfarlane@scambs.gov.uk

Telephone: (01954) 713443