



REPORT TO: Grants Advisory Committee

May 2021

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Cllr John Williams

LEAD OFFICER: Jeff Membery

Gamlingay Guardians Community Warden Scheme Update – Proposed change to delivery model.

Executive Summary

1. Grants advisory committee (GAC) is asked to review the report and make recommendations to the Lead Member for Finance regarding amendments to the delivery of Gamlingay Guardians Community Warden Scheme.
2. The Scheme was awarded grant funding in September 2020 to set up and deliver a new Community Warden Scheme.
3. The Scheme has struggled to attract members in the face of increased volunteer community support which emerged as a result of the Covid pandemic. Although positive for vulnerable residents, this increased activity has negatively impacted on demand for a paid service.
4. The scheme would like to adopt a different approach, which will sustain the service for the medium term.
5. This proposal will negate the need for the additional c £8k funding that was set aside to bring it in line with other recipients of Mobile and Community Warden Scheme funding for 2021-2024.
6. Instead this funding could be used to supplement the Service Support Grants along with the remaining unallocated Mobile Warden Scheme grant funding (please refer to recommendation made at GAC 30 April 2021). GAC is asked to consider this and make a recommendation to the Lead Member for Finance.

Key Decision

7. No. This report to GAC seeks to make recommendations to the Lead Member for Finance regarding minor alterations to the terms and conditions of a grant agreement that is already in place and seeks to re-allocate previously re-distributed funds.

Recommendations

8. It is proposed that GAC recommends to the Lead Member for Finance, both the following:
 - i. to leave in place the grant that was allocated to Gamlingay Guardians Community Warden Scheme and approve the alteration to service delivery to clients, including the service fees charged; and
 - ii. to reassign the c. £8k funding that was ring-fenced for the Gamlingay Guardians Community Warden Scheme and use it instead towards the agreed increase in Service Support Grants for 2022-25 (along with the remaining unspent Mobile Warden Scheme funding agreed at GAC 30 April 2021);

Reasons for Recommendations

9. 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

10. Since lockdown, community volunteers in Gamlingay have continued to provide assistance to the most vulnerable residents and whilst this is very positive the consequence has been that no-one has wanted to sign up to a paid Warden service.
11. The Warden feels that post-covid, the support provided for the most vulnerable by neighbours and community groups will continue for some time.
12. Live, promotional events have not been possible since the service began due to lockdown measures and this may also have negatively impacted on recruitment.
13. The Warden has made very close links with the various community groups and is providing an umbrella service, drawing different types of support together for residents.
14. The Warden does feel that many vulnerable people and their extended families would be interested in a less intensive scheme, one which offers support once or twice a week and/or provides holiday cover.
15. This new service would be offered at a reduced rate (less than the minimum £7.50 suggested in our offer letter) but yet to be agreed.

16. It is felt that a much lower client contribution may be more appropriate and attractive at this point in time.
17. The committee meets every 8 weeks to review outcomes and would like to adjust its plans for the Service as it sees fit, including working with local voluntary groups to provide a paid service to those who request it.
18. It is felt that the Scheme can continue to offer a warden going forwards without the need for further funding once their initial grant expires in October 2022. This will be reviewed and reported annually.

Options

18. The Grants Advisory Committee is asked to consider the following options with regard to the 2 elements of this report, and make recommendations to the Lead Member for finance as follows:
19. With regard to recommendation i) the committee could agree to:
 - a) continue to support the service in accordance with the new proposal, i.e. fewer client contacts, reduced fees (and with no requirement for additional funding); or
 - b) withdraw support for the Gamlingay Guardians Community Warden Scheme and reallocate the grant; or
 - c) defer a decision if further information is required.
20. With regard to recommendation ii) the committee could agree to:
 - a) reassign the c. £8k funding that was ring-fenced for the Gamlingay Guardians Community Warden Scheme and use it instead towards the agreed increase in Service Support Grants for 2022-25 (along with the remaining unspent Mobile Warden Scheme funding agreed at GAC 30 April 2021); or
 - b) reassign the c. £8k funding that was ring-fenced for the Gamlingay Guardians Community Warden Scheme and use it for another purpose, to be recommended by GAC.

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