

Report to:	Grants Advisory Committee	25 November 2022
Lead Cabinet Member:	Lead Cabinet Member for Resources Cllr John Williams	
Lead Officer:	Gareth Bell, Service Manager, Comms and Communities	

Grants to the Voluntary Sector – Service Support Grants: 6 month progress report

Executive Summary

1. To examine the delivery of grant programmes funded by the Council for 2022.
2. 6-monthly reports have been requested from organisations in receipt of sums greater than £15,000 per annum unless specifically requested by the Council.
3. The reports provide a review of activity for Q1-Q2 only.

Key Decision

4. No

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

5. The Grants Advisory Committee is asked to review the report and make recommendations to the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance to inform his decision making in respect of service support grants to the voluntary sector. Reports have been requested specifically for those organisations in receipt of £15,000 funding per annum or greater or due to a specific request by the Committee Members.

Reasons for Recommendations

6. All organisations in receipt of funding are on track to deliver the agreed outputs on time and to budget, achieving the objectives of individual grant agreements.

Details

7. The scope of this report covers the following grant funds:
Voluntary Sector Advice and other grants
 1. Service Support Grants:
 - a. Community Transport
 - b. Independent Living
 - c. Generalist and Specialist Advice

8. Q1 and Q2 requested reports have been received from
 - Care Network Cambridgeshire
 - Citizens Advice

9. A summary report of progress during quarters one and two for these grant programmes is provided in appendix A. The summary also gives an officer opinion on the status against targets agreed within the grant agreements. Full organisational reports can be made available on request.

10. Funding agreements for grants provided through the Service Support Grants programme are for three years, subject to satisfactory performance at annual review. This report covers the first two quarters of the previously agreed extension year (2022-23) for funding agreements for 2019-2022.

11. Monitoring grants takes place at six monthly intervals for organisations in receipt of funding sums greater than £15,000 per annum. Monitoring takes place annually for organisations in receipt of funding sums less than £15,000 per annum unless specifically requested otherwise.

12. This report also presents some key updates regarding Disability Cambridgeshire who received a grant of £5000 this year.

13. Grant recipient Disability Cambridgeshire (2019-22), have had ongoing operational and structural difficulties. Since April 2022, they have had no paid employees owing to large numbers of employees on long-term sickness and have been reliant on one casework volunteer to deliver their service, who themselves then became ill. After two unsuccessful recruitment drives, they were unable to recruit to key positions. On 3 October 2022 the trustees, having sought to keep the service nominally open, took the unfortunate decision to

close the charity and will ratify this decision at an Extraordinary General Meeting, to be arranged.

14. Disability Cambridgeshire received £5000 from South Cambridgeshire District Council in 2022-23. In the first half of the year, they have provided a service to 10 South Cambridgeshire clients, of which 8 cases are now closed. Two cases relating to Personal Independence Payments remain open, and Disability Cambridgeshire have agreed with Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum (CECF) that these clients are a priority and will be supported by a CECF case worker. Disability Cambridgeshire intends to make the necessary legal arrangements and to reimburse CECF for the costs associated with this work.

15. Disability Cambridgeshire have requested that South Cambridgeshire District Council permits them to transfer the remaining £2,500 of their grant, for the second half of the 2022-23 financial year, to Disability Huntingdonshire (DISH) who also receive funding from South Cambridgeshire. DISH will use this to extend their support, advice and advocacy service to clients in South Cambridgeshire in the remaining months of the 2022-23 period.

Options

1. With regard to the Disability Cambridgeshire grant, Grants Advisory Committee could:
 - a) request that unspent funds of £2,500 be returned to the Council; or
 - b) agree to the transfer of the remaining £2,500 to DISH, subject to agreement with DISH about how the funds will be used to increase capacity for their work to support South Cambridgeshire residents

2. With regard to the remainder of the report, Grants Advisory Committee could:
 - a) Note the progress of funded projects within the scope of this report, including officer summaries, as presented and/or
 - b) Highlight any concerns for further investigation or action.

Implications

16. There are no significant implications.

Legal

17. Arrangements are in place with grant recipients, which should be followed if a variation or discontinuation of funding is agreed.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and Caring Council

South Cambridgeshire District Council will provide their customers with high-quality services, strive to reduce costs, build on what they are good at to generate their own income and make decisions in a transparent, open and inclusive way. The ongoing objectives into 2022-23 include continuing to work with public sector partners and a network of parish councils and voluntary groups to support the most vulnerable people in the district throughout the phases of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council is committed to creating and supporting local community groups and organisations to deliver services for South Cambridgeshire residents. The Service Support Grant funding scheme to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) has been designed as a contribution to meeting this commitment.

Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix A: Officer report

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Appendix A

Grant Programmes 2019-22 (with extension year 2022-23) Q1 & Q2

Service Support Grants to the Voluntary Sector

Care Network

Community Transport

Funding is provided for the delivery, development and promotion of Community Transport Services with South Cambridgeshire and for its residents.

Care Network to report Q1, Q2 outcomes as they fall within the funding criteria of granting funding exceeding £15,000 per annum.

Community Transport – Specific Measures:

- Deliver a community car schemes sustainability project via community-based participatory research activity
- Develop an area-based initiative and collaborative approach to community transport via Care Network Transport membership scheme
- Raise awareness of Care Network and other local services and connections to all community car schemes in South Cambridgeshire to enable them to identify and signpost lonely service users to Care Network
- Use social network theory to increase awareness of community car schemes
- Redesign the annual community car schemes survey
- Provide 1-1 support for community car schemes as required
- Provide 6 networking and training events /year for community car schemes

Achieved so far:

- **April** CNC meeting with Community Transport Network – fuel price increase, HMRC mileage rate remains the same since 2012 so CTA advocacy for review of current rate, working with local car schemes on this.
- **May** Updated Coordination Pack distributed, Car scheme leaflet updates, South Cambridgeshire District Council & CNC/ CPCA updating online directory
- **June** Presentation given on recruitment & retention of volunteers
- **July/Aug** Hot weather warning and management, follow up CTA meeting with national petition information.
- **Sept** Safeguarding updates and signposting, Parkinson's UK meeting, GCP congestion charge discussions.
- **Oct** Liaising with South Cambridgeshire District Council re transport for Ukrainians; connecting with Cambridge Dial a Ride and St Ives Volunteer Bureau. Stagecoach has pulled out of a number of villages therefore there was an urgent bus service retender by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority– resulting in all bar one route being covered. CN worked to distribute information re the retender and also managed an enquiry re Caldecote, Dry Drayton and Hardwick car schemes to help villagers should the need arise.

Challenges:

Ongoing pandemic volunteer numbers have dropped, therefore not all schemes returning to capacity. Concerns re Cambridge Congestion charging.

STATUS: ON TRACK

Care Network

Independent Living / Support for Parishes and Communities- Specific Measures:

- Offer support to established community groups as well as new, responsive, informal community groups, and in so doing, provide information and support to 100 South Cambridgeshire residents/year on how to increase their community involvement. (186 contacts made).
- Trial ways of connecting self-isolating and / or vulnerable residents and carers with community groups and activities. via a range of different communication methods. (Face to face and access to Zoom)
- Set up 6 intergenerational befriending and good neighbour projects, (2 formally structured and 4 informally structured)/year.
- Offer general support and information regarding formal and informal volunteering to help combat social isolation and loneliness to all parish councils within South Cambridgeshire. (All parishes contacted).
- Develop a profile of informal group activity across South Cambridgeshire.
- Support communities with a consistent presence for community development activity across the district.

Care Network's Project Catalyst – supports people who may have been shielding or who may be anxious about getting back out and about in their community, helping to boost their confidence and independence. It provides free, short-term support for people not already receiving similar support elsewhere and not living with more complex and enduring mental ill health. Project Catalyst volunteers can accompany individuals to go out for a walk, take their first trip to the local shops, get back to a group or social activity or to take their first steps in attending a group. It also includes the Check-in-and-Chat Service.

Achieved so far:

- The Project Catalyst wellbeing team received 19 referrals from South Camb: 7 did not progress to support. 12 supported: 5 in depth support and 7 accessed Check and Chat service.
- Example wellbeing scores of one client dealing with an adult child with mental health issues, before and after support offered:

Wellbeing Scores	Before	After
Social Relationships	2	4
Social Activity	2	4
Positive Outlook	2	4
Maintaining Independence	3	5
General Wellbeing	1	4

Challenges:

Client health is pausing or preventing service provision. Training new staff members

STATUS: ON TRACK

Citizens Advice (CABx)

General Welfare Advice and Specialist Advice

Funding is provided to give free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to residents of South Cambridgeshire. To develop, deliver and publicise advice service to residents in a manner which takes account of the rural nature of the district.

We ask CAB to log outcomes from the advice given, recording the value of income gained, problems resolved and homelessness prevented as well as detailing the range of issues dealt with including demographic data.

Summary of key statistics:

South Cambridgeshire DC people helped = 2,679

Amount of work generated by clients = times seen (most need more than one session to get to point of resolution) = 4,371

Questions answered/ advice issues = 5,310

Of those questions asked the top topic areas:

Welfare rights = 1,268

Debt and money advice = 638

Housing = 537

Income gains and debts written off for clients:

Total = £1,342,141

North Herts: Main issues: Accessing of social care especially around mental health in South Cambs for vulnerable adults. Increased energy, benefits and housing enquiries due to the ongoing "Cost of Living Crisis". Increased numbers of clients who do not have access or capability to use the internet in applying for blue badges and bus passes etc as paper forms no longer available. Returned to delivering face to face appointments at the Melbourn Hub when they reopened. They have moved away from drop-in sessions and now offer face to face appointments to those people who really need them.

Cambridge and District:

Continued to deliver all services including outreach by phone, email, Webchat and video. All workers – volunteers included – have been fully kitted up with secure IT and have been hybrid working. They have a small contingent in the main office but that is growing and now have appointments in the main office every day and have opened up face to face at outreach locations.

All outreaches continue to have their own dedicated email for direct email into the specialists and this has proved useful and they get a steady flow of requests. An advantage of delivering services remotely is that it has cut down a lot of travel – lowering our carbon footprint. They know that there is still a need for face to face work and are gradually opening this up e.g. will be visiting John Huntingdon Charity in Sawston once a month and hope to extend that when they are able to accommodate it. They have now added in a local (rather than worldwide) webchat. At present that is reserved to admin only but will roll out advice when they have completed a staffing restructure. They continue to provide debt appointments referred from SCDC at Cambourne on Tuesdays. They plan to open up their face to face service there in the not too distant future.

Additional outreach (other funding sources):

CAB have agreed to an updated contract with John Huntingdon Charity in Sawston to deliver debt appointments (funded by that charity)

Bar Hill: new outreach initiated by one of very experienced advisers during lockdown who lives there. They continue to service the Northstowe and Willingham outreach and are in negotiations with the Foodbank to provide CAB advice at their Cambourne and Northstowe sites – funded by the Trussell Trust.

STATUS: ON TRACK

Organisations' reports are available on request