

REPORT TO: Grants Advisory Committee

30/06/2023

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Cllr John Williams

LEAD OFFICER: Gareth Bell

Mobile Warden Scheme grants - end of year progress report 2022-2023

Executive Summary

1. This report reviews the delivery of Mobile Warden Schemes to the parishes of South Cambridgeshire which were part-funded by the Council for the financial year 2022-2023.

Key Decision

2. No. This is not a key decision because it reviews expenditure within the 2022-2023 budget.

Recommendations

3. The Grants Advisory Committee is asked to review the report and make recommendations as necessary to the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance to inform his decision-making in respect of plans for future funding of Mobile and Community Warden Schemes.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. All schemes receiving grants are on track to deliver the agreed outputs – and objectives of the individual schemes – in line with the timeframes and budget agreed in the grant agreements.
5. However, most schemes are experiencing financial challenges, which have been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

Details

6. Mobile Warden Schemes were developed in recognition that there was a need to provide a service to support and take care of older, more vulnerable members of communities. Schemes within some parishes of South Cambridgeshire have been

in existence for over 20 years.

7. The Council's Mobile and Community Warden Scheme grants are administered on a three-year cycle. The current cycle runs from April 2021 until March 2024.
8. The schemes have historically been community-led and this has resulted over time in inequitable cover across the district with large geographical areas including some of our most isolated parishes, or parishes with greater numbers of older people, without a scheme. To help address this, a further six new schemes were introduced. These received full funding from October 2020 until September 2022 and thereafter part funding which will continue until March 2024.
9. The schemes serve a number of purposes: including enabling older people to remain living at home independently for longer; avoiding earlier transfer into care; avoiding unnecessary hospital admission; enabling more expedient hospital discharge; providing daily contact to people who would otherwise live in isolation and/or away from their families.
10. Enabling older and/or vulnerable people to have greater access to a local scheme is a key priority of the Council's Business Plan 2019-2024. This is aligned to the predicted high growth in the over 65-year-old population over the next 20 years and in recognition that with age comes increased risk of deteriorating health, loneliness, and feelings of isolation.
11. Currently there are 19 funded schemes covering 50 parishes across the district; 13 are run by Age UK and 6 are independent community schemes (5 are charities and 1 is run by the Parish Council). Some schemes operate to support one Parish, whereas others provide support to multiple parishes (see table at **Appendix A**)
12. A total of £71,708 has been provided by the Council to contribute toward schemes for the financial year 2023-24.
13. **Appendix A** lists the existing schemes (part of the three-year part funding cycle ending in March 2024) and the newer schemes (currently receiving part funding until March 2024), their client numbers as well as their financial status and individual grant awards for 2023-24.
14. End of Year progress reports have been received from all schemes and these are summarised in **Appendix B** (AGE UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough run schemes) and **Appendix C** (Independent and Parish Council run schemes).
15. All schemes are encouraged to fundraise and seek funding from other sources to sustain their schemes. Some parishes contribute towards the cost of their local scheme and some do not. The Council is currently reviewing the funding it allocates to Mobile and Community Warden Schemes in advance of launching a scheme for 2024-27. This review includes considering the funding available, a support workshop to gather feedback and an exercise to understand the social and financial return on investment into local schemes.

16. Almost all schemes have felt an impact following the Covid pandemic and the current cost of living crisis. This has, in many cases, affected client numbers. In particular, the sustainability of the AGE UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough schemes will need to be reviewed in the coming year.

Options

The Grants Advisory Committee could:

1. Note the activity undertaken by the schemes within this report and the financial status of each and/or
2. Highlight any concerns for further investigation or action, giving reasons, and request that a follow up report be returned to GAC within appropriate timescales.

Implications

17. 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:-

Legal

18. Agreements are in place with grant recipients, which should be followed should a variation or discontinuation of funding be proposed and agreed.

Consultation responses

19. All schemes have been asked to report on service delivery over the last year.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

Ensure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents: the grant programmes promote a good quality of life for all residents, assisting directly or indirectly through voluntary organisations schemes which help overcome the challenges faced by residents imposed by age, infirmity, disability, low income or rurality.

Appendices

Appendix A: summary of client numbers and SCDC funding contributions

Appendix B: AGE UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Progress Report 2022-23

Appendix C: Independent Schemes Progress Report 2022-23

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