

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	18 January 2019
Title:	Annual core infrastructure grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations
Report From:	Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Services

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1. Recommendation(s)

1.1. This report recommends that the Executive Member for Policy and Resources approves the following grant funding allocations:

- two year's grant funding of £1,102,200 to Community First Wessex for voluntary sector infrastructure support within Hampshire
- one year's grant funding of £70,000 for Citizen's Advice Hampshire.

2. Background

Strategic partnership with Hampshire's Councils for Voluntary Service

2.1. The County Council continues to recognise the vital contribution of the

voluntary and community sector (VCS) to delivering its [Strategic Plan](#) and, in particular, preventing and managing demand for County Council services. To support a vibrant and sustainable sector within Hampshire, the County Council has a strategic partnership with Hampshire's Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) organisation, which serve to support and develop the capability and capacity of the VCS.

2.2. As part of this partnership arrangement, the County Council provides core infrastructure grant funding to Hampshire's CVSs through the Policy and Resources budget. The County Council highly values its partnership with Hampshire's CVS, and remains fully committed to strengthening it further. This is reflected, in part, by the fact that core grant funding has been maintained for the previous two years, despite significant, ongoing spending reductions across its services.

2.3. An important focus of the partnership is to ensure that the infrastructure support offer in Hampshire is both efficient and effective, delivering impact and positive return on investment. To this end, the County Council and

Hampshire's CVSs have been working together to streamline the delivery of infrastructure support, reduce the risk of duplication and increase collaboration. Significant progress has been made in recent years, reducing the number of separate grant-funded organisations from nine to one.

Background to CVS funding

- 2.4. In 2015/16 the County Council stopped funding individual district-based CVS organisations and by 2017/18 had moved to funding three self-selecting CVS clusters (Northern, South East and Central and South West). In addition, Action Hampshire was awarded a separate grant to support county-wide working, complementing the work of local CVS.
- 2.5. During 2017/18, good progress was made to identify and implement opportunities to streamline delivery, which paved the way for the County Council to distribute infrastructure grant funding through one lead organisation for 2018/19. The nine CVSs and Action Hampshire nominated Community First as the single organisation to receive grant funding of £551,100. This was the same level as 2017/18 to allow for a period of transition and additional administrative burden placed on Community First to performance manage the grant.

3. Progress made during 2018/19 against the grant purpose

- 3.1. On the whole, Hampshire's CVS organisations have responded very positively to the new funding arrangement. Community First has worked closely with each CVS organisation, plus Action Hampshire, to manage the onward distribution of funds, and put in place localised agreements which support the overarching grant purpose. Quarterly review meetings have been held throughout the year to review evidence and impact. Highlights from the most recent review meeting covering the first half of the year are as follows:
 - CVSs have supported VCSE organisations to secure £640,636 funding from other sources
 - 1,380 VCSE organisations have been supported by their local CVS
 - 629 volunteers have been placed into local VCSE organisations, representing an annual economic value of £704,285 (plus 26 volunteers placed into Hampshire County Council run settings)
 - CVSs are modernising and diversifying their communication channels with the wider sector, including through social media
 - 51 new VCSE organisations or projects have been delivered, including projects that support dementia awareness, carers, LGBTQ community and an online specialist cancer support network
 - 150 training sessions have been delivered to 1,763 learners.
- 3.2. Moving forward, Community First plan to capture wider intelligence on the quality and value of support being offered to the wider VCSE through a regular members' satisfaction survey - the first of which was issued during

Quarter three 2018/19. CVSs also recognise the need to keep modernising their offer – for example, further exploiting digital channels including social media, and encouraging the uptake of ‘informal’ volunteering.

4. Proposal for 2019/20 and 2020/21

- 4.1. Recognising the good progress that has been made to date, as detailed above, this report recommends that the County Council continues with the current arrangement and awards the same level of grant funding to a single organisation for both 2019/20 and 2020/21. This is based on feedback from CVSs that a two-year funding period would provide greater certainty and enable time to plan and deliver a more ambitious programme of transformation, supporting greater collaboration, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 4.2. It is further recommended that funding be awarded to Community First Wessex, providing further continuity and time to embed new ways of working, in line with the County Council’s priorities. During 2019/20, Community First worked successfully with Hampshire’s CVSs and Action Hampshire to lay a strong foundation for future joint working. Looking to the future, Community First will have an important role to play in ensuring that the expertise of individual CVS and CVS clusters is maximised, potentially encouraging different organisations to lead on specific areas. It will also be critical to ensure that where CVSs are themselves direct providers, this does not prevent effective infrastructure support being provided to the wider sector as a result of competition.
- 4.3. The single grant for infrastructure support will continue to be managed by the Assistant Chief Executive. Service specific grants will continue to be separately issued and managed by departments.

5. Citizen Advice Hampshire

- 5.1. Citizens Advice Hampshire delivers training and development to around 220 paid employees and 1000 volunteers across 14 local Citizens Advice offices. It also provides specialist advice lines on employment and welfare and maintains a single point of contact between Local Citizens Advice and wider strategic partners.
- 5.2. County Council’s funding enables the Service to support around 59,000 people each year – who are often among the most vulnerable residents in Hampshire’s communities. Citizens Advice offers a holistic service, addressing complex issues regarding welfare benefits, debt, housing and, increasingly, mental health.
- 5.3. In line with national work, Citizens Advice Hampshire is exploring opportunities to do more to support residents with mental health challenges, including through embedding case workers within professional mental health teams.
- 5.4. This is one way that the Service offers much more than advice by impacting on hospital admission and discharge, patient recovery and support, and future service demand. For example, Citizens Advice Hampshire undertook local

research demonstrating the positive impact of advice on people's health and wellbeing. Of the 142 clients surveyed both before and four-six weeks after receiving advice, three out of five had higher wellbeing scores after receiving advice and one in three had a 20% or higher increase in scores. Local bureaus also support a number of community and health-based partnerships, including wellbeing centres.

- 5.5. In order to enable these opportunities to be explored in full, and to ensure the future viability of Citizens Advice Hampshire, it is recommended that core grant funding is retained at £70,000 for the 2019/20 financial year.

6. Finance

- 6.1. The **total amount** of the grants recommended for approval is £1,172,200, which is broken down as follows:

Organisation	Recommended award 2019/20	Recommended award for 2020/21
Community First Wessex	£551,100	£551,100
Citizens Advice Hampshire	£70,000	Funding allocation to be agreed in 2019/20
Total funding	£621,100	£551,100

7. Monitoring arrangements

- 7.1. The County Council maintains ongoing, open dialogue with Hampshire's CVSs regarding the organisation's financial situation, and delivery against the agreed grant purpose document. This includes through regular monitoring meetings between the County Council's Assistant Chief Executive and the Chief Executive of Community First, as the lead CVS organisation, and of Citizen's Advice Hampshire.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

- 1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 2.1. The purpose of the County Council's financial support to voluntary sector infrastructure organisations is to ensure that groups and organisations are helped to develop their effectiveness, particularly in supporting vulnerable groups. Core grant funding also promotes individual voluntary action to benefit vulnerable people, including those who participate and those who receive help as a result of that activity.
- 2.2. The health of the sector and level of voluntary action is fundamental to the wellbeing of residents including the most vulnerable and consequently to the demand on public services. For this reason, this report recommends grant funding remains at a consistent level.
- 2.3. The Assistant Chief Executive will continue to work closely with the Chief Executives of the CVS clusters, Action Hampshire and Citizen's Advice Hampshire to ensure that the revised grant purpose documents continue to be directed towards supporting vulnerable communities. The grant purpose will take into account the priorities of service departments in supporting their voluntary sector partners and provider markets and will include a requirement for voluntary organisations to promote equality, diversity and inclusiveness within the voluntary sector.

2.4. Further emphasis will be given to closer collaborative working across Hampshire's CVSs. In this way, the County Council will continue to support CVS organisations to transform - releasing resources

3. Impact on Crime and Disorder

3.1. The grants support capacity within the community to develop resilience and the effectiveness of local voluntary groups to support strong and safe communities.

4. Climate Change:

12.1 By continuing to work closely with the VCS infrastructure organisations, the County Council may have greater ability in the specification to influence these organisations, and their members, to support the County Council's aims with regard to climate change.