

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Younger Adults and Health and Wellbeing
Date:	28 March 2023
Title:	Annual core infrastructure grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations
Report From:	Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Adults' Health and Care

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for making a grant award to the voluntary and community organisations outlined in this report as part of our annual core infrastructure grants in support of the voluntary and community sector organisations.

Recommendation(s)

2. That approval be given by the Executive Member for Younger Adults and Health and Wellbeing for the following actions:
 - i) To award a grant totalling £495,990 to Community First Wessex for the financial year 2023/24 as part of the Infrastructure Grants programme in support of the Hampshire Councils for the Voluntary Sector Network (CVS Network)
 - ii) To award a grant totalling £63,000 to Citizens Advice Hampshire for the financial year 2023/24 as part of the Infrastructure Grants programme in support of the Citizens Advice Network.

Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to...
 - Set out the background to the grants
 - Set out the reason for the recommendations
 - Consider the finance for the project and the management of outcomes and returns
 - Look at key issues

Contextual information

Background

4. The County Council recognises the vital contribution of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) to delivering its Strategic Plan and goals, in particular, preventing and managing demand for County Council services. To support a vibrant and sustainable sector within Hampshire, the County Council sees an ongoing role for effective local infrastructure organisations – for example, in providing advice, building capacity, attracting funding, supporting financial resilience, brokering partnerships and providing a collective voice for the sector.
5. The importance and value of the work delivered by the VCSE in Hampshire was visibly demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic and continues, with significant support being given to Hampshire residents and organisations impacted by the rise in the cost of living and ongoing inflationary pressures.
6. In addition to specific funding, grant awards to individual organisations through numerous grant streams, the County Council corporately supports the vibrancy and sustainability of the VCSE in Hampshire through infrastructure support funding. Infrastructure support is concerned with but not limited to:
 - identifying needs and facilitating improvement in service provision across the Sector – to promote efficiency and reduce duplication;
 - assisting local organisations to function more effectively – enabling them to successfully meet their charitable objectives and secure sustainability;
 - facilitating effective communication, networking and collaboration amongst local groups and communities, including by promoting and developing voluntary action; and
 - supporting local organisations to influence policies, plans and practices that have an impact on their organisations and beneficiaries and, ensuring there is a strong voice for the Sector.
7. The County Council supports the infrastructure of Hampshire's VCSE through funding to the Hampshire Councils for the Voluntary Sector (CVS) Network. This network comprises eight organisations which cover the whole of the county. Currently Community First Wessex is funded by the County Council (for financial year 2022/23) as the single grant funded organisation to oversee the infrastructure grant award and associated requirements. Community First Wessex then works in close partnership with the other seven CVSs, passing on funding and working with them to achieve specific outcomes set out in the grant agreement.
8. The County Council also retains a longstanding partnership with Citizens Advice Hampshire (CitAH) in a separate infrastructure grant (also funded through financial year 2022/23). CitAH delivers training and development to paid employees and volunteers across 12 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.

9. Provision of Infrastructure Grants has taken place over a number of previous financial years with these grants advertised and awarded in line with the current grants process. This includes a robust scoring framework that ensures the grants are awarded to the most appropriate organisation. A voluntary organisation may be considered for grant aid from the County Council only if its services, projects or activities are in compliance with the aims and objectives, priorities and policies of the County Council.
10. Organisations will not normally be eligible for grants where they hold balances in excess of one year's running costs. Those organisations receiving recurring funding which hold in excess of three months' running costs, and where they cannot demonstrate through their reserves policy that these reserves are justified, may receive a reduced grant. To establish the level of reserves, organisations are required to provide a set of their latest accounts and annual report with their application and before grant payment is made – in the case of organisations with an income of £10,000 or above, these must be independently examined or audited. If organisations have reserves in excess of three months, we will apply the reserves policy which is in line with the Charity Commission's policy on these matters.

Finance

11. The grant proposals in this report will commit additional expenditure totalling £558,990 over one financial year (2023/24). Subject to approval of this report the total grants committed for payment will remain within the agreed, 2023/24 annual budget envelope for the Demand Management and Prevention Programme.
12. In recognition of the challenging financial context that the County Council is operating within, the funding suggested in this paper is frozen at the levels applied in 2022/23. Officers will continue to work with the organisations in order to identify efficiencies in order to continue to deliver the service despite the inflationary pressures seen in the previous 12 months.
13. Payments will be made in 2 instalments for all grants approved in this report. All Grant Agreements have conditions that enable the County Council to require repayment of the award or any part of it if it remains unspent at the end of the grant period, or if there is a material breach of the grant agreement.

Performance

14. The provision of grants to voluntary and community sector organisations by statutory bodies always presents a degree of risk. Specific risks that statutory bodies are required to manage include voluntary and community organisations accepting funding without providing any activity; organisations not delivering the service as expected; and there being an under spend on the expected activity. This applies to all grants however; larger grants represent a potentially higher risk to the County Council.

15. A number of mechanisms have been employed successfully over a number of years to mitigate and alleviate these risks. These include nominating a liaison officer from the County Council whose responsibility is to monitor how the grant is spent, specifying within the grant agreement that the grant is 'restricted' funding for the provision of the specified activity only and phasing the payment of grants over the course of the award duration.
16. Both organisations being suggested for award are longstanding partners of Hampshire County Council and were the recipient of the respective grants in the previous financial year. A robust working relationship exists between the Liaison Officer and the organisation in both instances and it is envisaged that this will continue in the event of the grants being approved for the next financial year.
17. All organisations awarded a grant sign a declaration stating they accept that grant funding can only be awarded for the given period and no commitment exists from the County Council to continue funding after this time, or in subsequent years.
18. Whilst past performance is not a guarantee of future outcomes, listed in appendix A of this report is a summary of the performance of the CitAH grant funded project for the past year. Adults Health and Care monitor the CVS Network grant award on a more regular basis which is reflective of the higher amount of funding, the frequency of monitoring is detailed in section 19 below.
19. The County Council maintains ongoing, open dialogue with both the Hampshire CVSs and CitAH regarding delivery against the agreed grant purpose documents. Monitoring includes regular monitoring meetings between the Assistant Chief Executive and representative CEOs from the Hampshire CVSs and the CEO of CitAH with additional reporting requirements outlined below;

Hampshire Councils For The Voluntary Sector Network

- Reporting will be delivered on a quarterly basis, with updates focussed on the support provided within the sector and outcomes on support previously given
- Monthly meetings will be held with the lead CVS organisation to discuss performance
- A separate quarterly meeting will be held with the heads of all 8 CVS organisations to discuss sector issues and opportunities and evaluate how the grant is performing in terms of support across the network
- On a 6 monthly basis a meeting will be held between the lead CVS organisation and the Director of Adults Health and Care to discuss performance against the outcomes set forth in the Infrastructure Grant proposal.

Citizens Advice Hampshire

- Quarterly reporting pack will be delivered outlining performance against a number of pre agree metrics, including but not limited; number of clients supported and the amount of additional benefits income realised as a result of support given.
- Quarterly meetings to be held to discuss performance against expectations and issues/ opportunities seen.

Consultation and Equalities

20. It is for the Executive Lead Member as decision maker to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
21. All grants included for consideration in this report represent additional facilities and services for those they serve and a full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed to capture the benefits for each group.

Climate Impact Assessment

22. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
23. A full assessment of climate change vulnerability was not completed as the initial vulnerability assessment showed that the project is at minimal risk from the climate vulnerabilities because the projects delivered will be operated from premises not owned by the County Council or the organisation in receipt of the grant.

Conclusions

24. The continued funding of the Core Infrastructure Grants will enable to respective organisations to continue to offer local organisations the support they need to continue to provide services valuable to residents across Hampshire. The grants proposed in this paper will fund, for an additional year the services outlined and ensure that's local voluntary and community organisations are supported through the increase in cost of living, inflationary pressures and associated increases in demand for their services.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	No
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Annual Core Infrastructure Grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations	18 March 2022
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

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.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

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 by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

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

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

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The award of grants to the voluntary and community sector to support people to live long, healthy and happy lives with the maximum possible independence, as part of the demand management and prevention programme and in-line with Adult's Health and Care Strategy 2018. Infrastructure Grants provide direct support to organisations, who in turn support other voluntary and community organisations in delivering services to residents of Hampshire and ensuring a strong voice for the sector.

Grants in this paper:

Core Infrastructure Grants which deliver provision on a county-wide basis, period April 2023 – March 2024. Total Pot: £558,990

Geographical impact: Grants in this paper are recommended for award on a county-wide basis.

Proposed Change: The Grants held within this report have been awarded in previous years. The proposal made within the report is to continue these grants with the same amount of funding as in financial year 2022/2023. The proposed grant projects will run for the duration of financial year 2023/24 and will represent a continuation of the service currently offered.

The Core Infrastructure Grants, whilst funding 2 specific organisations will, through the outcomes envisaged, support a diverse range of organisations across the county in a variety of ways. The CitAH grant, whilst not only directly supporting the district level Citizens Advice organisations will also directly support those in financial hardship poverty.

As a result of the proposals contained within this Executive Member Decision Report we do not anticipate any changes to service provision, rather these are a continuation of existing services provided in the previous financial year.

Will the proposed project/service change affect people in the protected characteristics groups or any of the other groups for consideration? No

Who does this impact assessment cover?: All

Has engagement or consultation been carried out?: Yes

Describe the consultation or engagement you have performed or are intending to perform:

Both of the grants detailed in this report were awarded in the previous financial year. Engagement undertaken includes but is not limited to, discussions with local organisations throughout the year on the level of support they have seen from the lead organisations, discussions with Adults Health and Care Teams around the value the grants have to the work they undertake and regular monitoring which measures the monetary value to residents that the CitAH grant in particular delivers.

Age Public Impact: Positive

Age Staff Impact: Neutral

Assessment Rationale: The grants recommended for award within this paper represent a continuation of services provided over the previous financial year. Whilst this is a continuation of provision, awarding the grants within this paper will enable Citizens Advice Hampshire (CitAH from here on in this EIA) and Community First Wessex to offer support and advice to new organisations and individuals across the County.

Community First Wessex supports the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS from here on in this EIA) Network support a diverse range of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations many of which support older adults to remain independent and connected to their communities. The continuation of this grant will enable the associated support to continue, with a focus being on supporting older adults organisations with the challenges of rising costs and inflationary pressures, ensuring they are sustainable and able to continue to operate.

Disability social impact: Positive

Disability staff impact: Neutral

Assessment Rationale: The grants recommended for award within this paper represent a continuation of services provided over the previous financial year. Whilst this is a continuation of provision, awarding the grants within this paper will enable CitAH and the CVS Network to offer support and advice to new organisations and individuals across the County.

CitAH and the wider Citizens Advice network work closely with a large number of residents with disabilities, supporting them to get the financial and benefits support they are entitled to; in the last year 50% of the residents supported have had a disability or a long term health condition. It is anticipated with the rise in the cost of living that there will be an increase in the number of clients with disabilities that the network will supporting in the coming year and the awarding of the grants within this paper will enable that work to continue and scale to meet the demand.

Sexual orientation public impact: Neutral

Sexual orientation staff impact: Neutral

Assessment rationale: The grants recommended for award within this paper represent a continuation of services provided over the previous financial year. Whilst we do not have data on the benefits seen by those who come within the sexual orientation characteristic there is no evidence that the grants being awarded will have a disproportionate impact on this group and so a neutral rating has been assigned.

Race social impact: Positive

Race staff impact: Neutral

Assessment Rationale: The grants recommended for award within this paper represent a continuation of services provided over the previous financial year. In the last financial year the CitAH grant found that 13% of the users of the service they offered identified as being from a black or ethnic minority background, this is significantly higher than the 7.4% which identified as black or from a minority ethnic group across Hampshire at the last census. With the continuation of this grant likely to continue to disproportionately and positively impact residents identifying as black or minority ethnic group the impact has been assessed as Positive

Religion or belief social impact: Neutral

Religion or belief staff impact: Neutral

Assessment Rationale: The grants recommended for award within this paper represent a continuation of services provided over the previous financial year. Whilst we do not have data on the benefits seen by those who come within the

religion or belief characteristic there is no evidence that the grants being awarded will have a disproportionate impact on this group and so a neutral rating has been assigned.

Gender reassignment public impact: Neutral

Gender reassignment staff impact: Neutral

Assessment Rationale: The grants recommended for award within this paper represent a continuation of services provided over the previous financial year. Whilst we do not have data on the benefits seen by those who come within the gender reassignment characteristic there is no evidence that the grants being awarded will have a disproportionate impact on this group and so a neutral rating has been assigned.

Sex public impact: Positive

Sex staff impact: Neutral

Assessment rationale: Last financial year the CitAH grant supported a significant number of residents with 54% of those supported identifying as female. This is significantly higher than the 51% of residents across Hampshire who identified as female at the last census and we envisage the project across 2023/24 to continue to disproportionately and positively impact women and so have allocated a positive impact assessment.

Marriage or civil partnership: Neutral

Marriage or civil partnership: Neutral

Assessment Rationale: The grants recommended for award within this paper represent a continuation of services provided over the previous financial year. Whilst we do not have data on the benefits seen by those who come within the marriage or civil partnership characteristic there is no evidence that the grants being awarded will have a disproportionate impact on this group and so a neutral rating has been assigned.

Pregnancy and maternity public impact: Neutral

Pregnancy and maternity staff impact: Neutral

Assessment rationale: The grants recommended for award within this paper represent a continuation of services provided over the previous financial year. Whilst we do not have data on the benefits seen by those who come within the pregnancy and maternity characteristic there is no evidence that the grants being awarded will have a disproportionate impact on this group and so a neutral rating has been assigned.

Poverty public impact: Positive

Poverty staff impact: Neutral

Assessment Rationale: The grants recommended for award within this paper represent a continuation of services provided over the previous financial year. Whilst this is a continuation of provision, awarding the grants within this paper will enable CitAH and the CVS Network to offer support and advice to new organisations and individuals across the County.

CitAH and the wider Citizens Advice network work closely with a growing number of residents across the county, supporting them with financial and debt management and access to benefits where they are entitled to them. It is anticipated with the rise in the cost of living that there will be an increase in the number of clients seeking support from the Citizens Advice Network in the coming year and the grants outlined in this report will support the local Citizens Advice organisations to be able to meet this demand.

Rurality public impact: Neutral

Rurality staff impact: Neutral

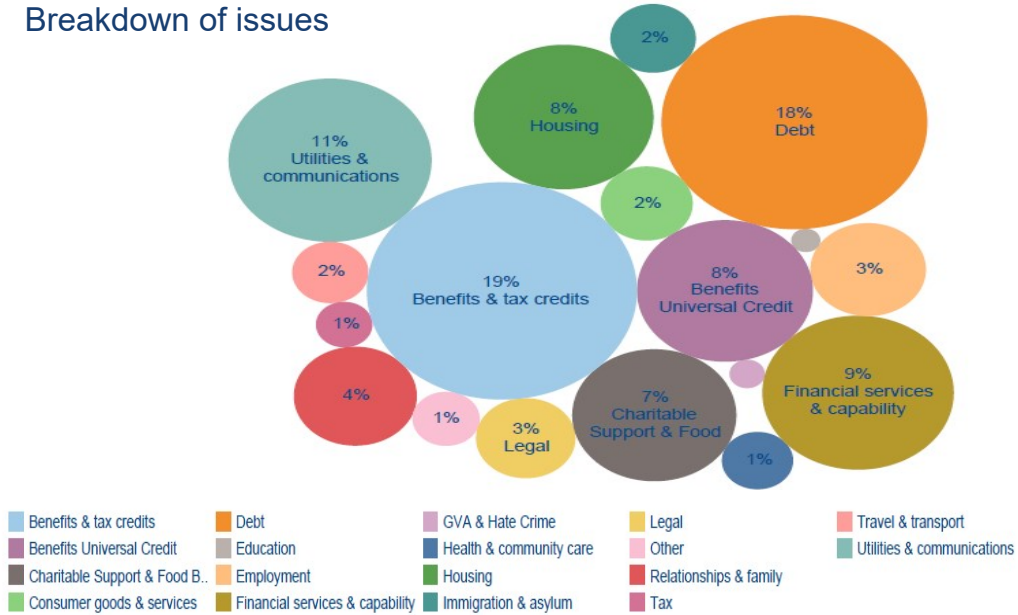
Assessment rationale: The grants recommended for award within this paper represent a continuation of services provided over the previous financial year. Whilst we do not have data on the benefits seen by those who come within the rurality characteristic there is no evidence that the grants being awarded will have a disproportionate impact on this group and so a neutral rating has been assigned.

APPENDIX A

Previous Project Outcomes

Citizens Advice Hampshire

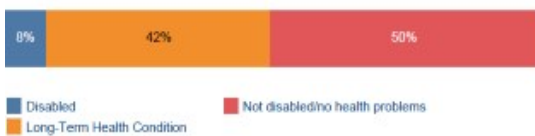
Breakdown of issues



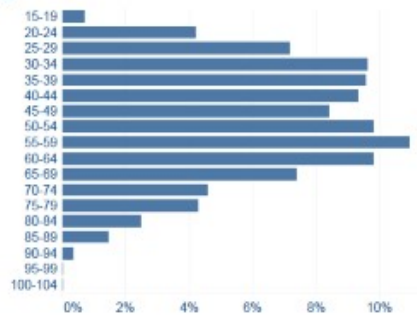
Gender



Disabled / Long term health condition



Age

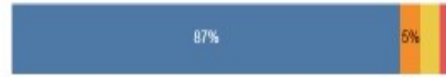


Type of disability (% of disabled clients)



- Speech Impairment
- Mental Health
- Physical Impairment (non-sensory)
- Other Disability or Type Not Given
- Multiple Impairments
- Learning Difficulty
- Visual Impairment
- Hard of hearing
- Deaf
- Cognitive Impairment

Ethnicity



- White
- Black
- Asian
- Mixed
- Other