

8. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS 2016/17

REPORT OF: HEAD OF LEISURE AND SUSTAINABILITY
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Cabinet
14 March 2016

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to request Cabinet to agree the Partnership Grants for the period 2016/2017, which are provided to Horsham & Mid Sussex Voluntary Action, Action in Rural Sussex, Age UK West Sussex, Age UK East Grinstead and Central and South Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau.

Summary

2. Five key third sector organisations are currently provided with core funding as part of the Partnership Agreement programme. As a result of their specialist knowledge and understanding of the local community, these organisations play an important role in helping the Council to fulfil its Corporate objectives as outlined in the Sustainable Communities Strategy by enhancing the creation of stronger communities, providing opportunities and a quality of life for all and contributing to the development of a sustainable local environment.
3. The agreement with Central and South Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau is a pan County commissioned contract which commenced in April 2015 until March 2018.
4. Due to potential changes in WSCC funding and commissioning, it is proposed that the remaining agreements are agreed on a three year basis which both provides a level of certainty for the organisations and confirms the Council's support for these organisations, in difficult times.

Recommendations

5. **Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of this report and agree to the following payments for the existing Partnership Agreements with:**

(i) Central and South Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau £119,404

Enter into three year agreements, as detailed below, at the following recommended level of support,

(ii) Action in Rural Sussex £7,050

(iii) Age UK East Grinstead £15,071

(iv) Age UK West Sussex £52,166

(v) Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action £37,553

Background

6. The term third sector, or voluntary sector, is generally applied to those organisations that further social, environmental or cultural objectives and principally reinvest their surpluses. Mid Sussex has a vibrant third sector that provides a wide variety of services to the residents of the district.

7. The five key partner organisations are well placed to deliver the support required by local communities and individuals with the greatest needs. The contribution they make to the wider society is important alongside their understanding of local needs and issues.
8. The new Central & South Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) three year jointly commissioned contract commenced in April 2015. During 2015-16, the three CAB Advice Centres in Mid Sussex have assisted clients with 7,987 enquiries, involving 10,274 issues (as many present with multiple issues) via face-to-face, telephone and email. The top five 'trends' for advice provided in Mid Sussex were benefits and tax credits, housing, employment, relationships and debt.
9. Action in rural Sussex (AirS) is funded by the Council to provide support for village halls through a subscription service and to organise the Mid Sussex Rural Links which provides training and networking opportunities. In 2016/17 AirS will undertake a facilities and services mapping exercise to assist with an audit of community buildings in the District to inform strategic planning.
10. Around 800 older people in Mid Sussex are members of the Age UK Activity Centres in Haywards Heath (Redwood Centre), Burgess Hill (Cherry Tree Centre) and East Grinstead (Swan Mead). The Centres provide activities and services that promote, influence and improve wellbeing and quality of later life.
11. Mid Sussex (South) Council for Voluntary Service and the East Grinstead Council for Voluntary Service merged to form Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (HAMSVVA) in 2015. HAMSVVA provides a wide range of services to 215 third sector member groups in Mid Sussex to enable them to carry out their work, achieve their aims and become more effective.
12. The table below summarises the Commissioned Contract/Partnership Agreements that are currently in place between the Council and the key partner organisations and the recommendation on the level of financial assistance to be awarded.

Organisation	Description of Service	Length of agreement	Proposed Payment
Central and South Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau	Free, independent, confidential, advice service including debt problems, welfare benefits, housing and employment issues in Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and East Grinstead Advice Centres.	Year two of three year contract	£119,404
Action in Rural Sussex	Provision and support of local rural communities including advice to village hall operators within the district.	Three years	£7,050
Age UK East Grinstead & District	Provision of services at Swan Mead Day Centre to support independent living of older people in East Grinstead and surrounding villages	Three years	£15,071
Age UK West Sussex	Provision of services at the Redwood Activity Centre and The Cherry Tree Activity Centre to support independent living of older people in Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and surrounding villages.	Three years	£52,166
HAMSVVA	Support, advice and development service to voluntary sector organisations in Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and surrounding villages.	Three years	£37,553

13. Further information regarding these services and the outcomes provided by the organisations can be found in Appendix A.

14. In view of the on-going reductions from Central Government and the resulting challenges faced by the Council, no increase in grants is recommended for 2016/2017.

Current and Future Issues

15. Appendix A details services provided by the five partner organisations and the outcomes achieved.
16. The following is a summary of current and future issues which may have an impact on the way in which services are delivered in the District and also the likely repercussions of proposed changes to organisations that are jointly funded.

Action in Rural Sussex

17. Action in Rural Sussex requested a three year funding agreement and have submitted a five year strategy which confirms their intention to continue to support rural communities and village halls, it is proposed to support AiRS by providing a three years agreement to give certainty over the next few years.

Older Peoples Day Activity Centres (AGE UK West Sussex and East Grinstead)

18. West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) is proposing to commission services that tackle social isolation and loneliness under a new Day Activities Contract which is likely to support peripatetic activities rather than building based services. The new Day Activities Contract will identify service outcomes for vulnerable adults aged 18 plus to provide meaningful activities during the day and also programmes that tackle social isolation and loneliness. Currently these services are mainly locally provided by the Age UK's and funded jointly by the Council and WSSCC (whose contribution for Mid Sussex is currently £172,686).
19. The future commissioning programme will impact on the existing funding agreements between WSSCC and the Age UK day centres and they are currently on a rolling 6 months' notice period. It is anticipated that there will also be funding changes in WSSCC's funding ratios between District and Borough council areas which may have a negative effect on funding for the Mid Sussex area.
20. The timing of the new contractual arrangements, is uncertain at this stage, which is disconcerting for these two organisations. It is therefore suggested that the Council considers a three year funding arrangement for the two grants to add some certainty for a period of time.
21. Age UK West Sussex intends to vacate the Redwood Centre (built by Age Concern on MSDC owned land) in 2017 to move to a new purpose built facility in Butlers Green Road, Haywards Heath. They also intend to actively seek new premises, nearer the town, in Burgess Hill in 2017. Age UK East Grinstead are also considering moving out of the Swan Mead centre to larger premises in 2017.
22. Age UK East Grinstead (AUKEG) requested an increase in funding of 25% to £20,000 in 2016/17 however there was no explicit information as to the reason for this other than the need to address a £25k loss in 2014/15. AUKEG are currently projecting a breakeven for 2015/16 and therefore it is suggested that the present level of funding is maintained.

Support for Voluntary Organisations (Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action)

23. The Council has a three year agreement with WSCC (2013-16) for the transfer of funds to commission a Local Voluntary and Community Sector Support and Development Service for the District. The Council used these funds to provide grant aid for the East Grinstead Council for Voluntary Service and Mid Sussex (South) Council for Voluntary Service, who have now merged with Horsham Voluntary Action to become Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (HAMSVA). This arrangement expires on the 31st March 2016.
24. At present WSCC wish again to set up devolved funding arrangements with District and Borough Councils for voluntary sector infrastructure support on a rolling six month notice period. However, these funds are made available through the WSCC Public Health budget which underwent 2.04% in year cuts in 2015-16 and will be subject to further reductions until 2019-20. As a result a reduction in the overall funding available in 2016-17 is expected to reduce although at this stage it is unclear what impact that reduction may have on the current service.
25. Once the situation is clearer within the two months, the Cabinet Member for Health & Community will be consulted upon whether a devolved funding arrangement should be entered into.
26. When the County Council announces the level of funding available the Council will be required to notify HAMSVA of any reduction. Under the terms of the West Sussex Compact, the District Council is obliged to give a minimum of three months' notice in writing when reducing or ending funding with a clear rationale for the decision.
27. HAMSVA requested three year funding due to the current budgetary constraints faced by WSCC and the uncertainties about the devolved and match funding arrangements, the Council is seeking to support the organisation by proposing a three year funding package to support their work with community and voluntary groups in Mid Sussex.

Contribution to local economic development

28. The voluntary and community organisations in Mid Sussex have the potential to generate economic value in a number of ways. Directly they are significant employers and part of a large supply chain, in addition they add value to the economic through use of volunteers. They also provide activities which encourage enterprise development, the development of skills and reduction of worklessness, as well social issues and community cohesion which are all directly linked to contributing to a healthy and sustainable local economy.

Policy Context

29. The services provided by these organisations supports the Council's stated Corporate Plan priorities under the Better Lives theme, and contribute specifically to providing Opportunities and Quality of Life for All and Healthy Lifestyles.

Financial Implications

30. There are no financial implications as the recommendations contained within this report will be funded from the current allocations within the Community Services budget for 2016/17.

Risk Management Implications

31. The risks identified with these proposals are:
 - risk that the funding is not used in the way stated by the applicant
 - risk that the outcomes are not delivered
 - risk that Council funds are allocated to financially unstable organisations

32. These risks are mitigated by the management of grant funding through a Service and Funding Agreement that sets out the Council's expectations for financial and management controls to be in place to manage the funds and deliver the agreed outcomes.
33. The review process assesses the extent to which these controls are in place and provides an opportunity to identify any issues regarding the use of grant funding.
34. There is officer representation at Trustee Board Meetings at which reports are presented covering matters such as service delivery and financial accounting, consequently, any significant issues would be identified at an early stage.
35. It is considered that these measures would alleviate the main risks from materialising and indicate a low-risk to the successful outcomes arising from this report. However, should a funded organisation cease to operate, for whatever reason, the agreement will terminate immediately and any uncommitted monies will be returned to the Council.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

36. As part of the assessment process all of the organisations applying for funding from the Council have complied with the required conditions of funding and have the requisite policies and procedures in place, such as Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding Policies, and including any other relevant legislation.
37. These services specifically target key groups including older people, residents in rural areas, and those on low incomes. Working in partnership with the third sector organisations provides an opportunity for engagement with diverse groups across Mid Sussex.
38. Individual performance details are included within each service and funding agreement and reviews are conducted with each organisation. Performance is measured through key indicators specifically numbers of those supported, accessibility and development activities.

Other Material Implications

39. There are no other material implications arising from the proposed actions contained within this report.

Background Papers

Funding requests and associated documentation are held in the Leisure Operations, Community Services and Culture Section.

Services Provided and Outcomes Achieved

Central and South Sussex Citizens Advice Bureaux (Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and East Grinstead Advice Centres)

As part of a joint contract involving the County Council and all the West Sussex Districts & Boroughs, the Central & South Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau have been contracted to deliver community advice services for a three year period from 1 April 2015 - 31 March 2018. There are three advice centres in Mid Sussex in Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and East Grinstead.

The CAB provides a generalist advice service that is available to all residents of the County, including those who live in rural and isolated areas and particularly those who are socially excluded. The following citizens are priorities for the delivery of the service:

- those experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse
- those at imminent risk of losing their homes
- people from Local Neighbourhood Improvement Areas who are from low income households.

The Central and South Sussex CAB employs 37 staff and has 265 trained volunteers who each work for 2-3 days per week to deliver a service at eight centres across the County. They have fundraised for a Homelessness / Debt Worker to work two days per week in the Mid Sussex Area. Telephone assistance is available Monday – Friday, 10am – 4pm and the Mid Sussex advice centres are all open to the public for 4-5 days per week between 9.30 – 4pm.

Over a quarter of enquires from the Mid Sussex area were in relation to benefits and tax credits, housing was also key issue, followed by employment, relationships and debt. During the first three quarters of 2015-16, the Mid Sussex Citizens Advice Bureaux has dealt with 7,987 customer enquiries and held 2,880 face to face appointments.

Action in Rural Sussex

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is the national voice for 38 rural community councils. Action in Rural Sussex (AirS), established in 1931 as Sussex Rural Community Council, is the local ACRE network member.

The role of AirS is to provide practical help and support to communities across East and West Sussex enabling them to be vibrant, living and working places. Action in rural Sussex aims to:

- a) directly tackle disadvantage in rural areas of Sussex
- b) build the capacity of rural communities in order to help them identify and meet local needs
- c) create a strong voice for rural communities in policy development and work closely in partnership with others to achieve this

AirS is funded by the Council to provide targeted support through the Village Halls and Community Buildings Advisory Service that provides legal, organisational and development advice to trustees and management committees. The service includes workshops, networking opportunities, advocacy and unique access to information sheets and topic notes. There are currently 19 subscribers to the village halls service in Mid Sussex.

In 2015/16 AirS provided a two tier service for village halls and the subsidy allowed Mid Sussex members to benefit from an uplift to Tier 2 support. AirS provided targeted support

to the Haven Centre and the Ansty Village Hall Trust and responded to queries or requests for support from nine village halls. In 2016/17 AirS will undertake a facilities and services mapping exercise to help identify and summarise the range of services and activities available.

AirS also organises the Mid Sussex 'Rural Links', a broad network comprising representatives from parish and town councils, rural community groups and voluntary sector organisations. There will be three forums in 2016/17; the first event will be primarily a social mapping exercise to help identify assets, successes and challenges in community provision and services. This will provide the context and consultation for two follow-on events.

Age UK East Grinstead & District (Swan Mead Day Centre)

Age UK East Grinstead was established in 1950 and still provides services to older people in East Grinstead and the surrounding areas including Turners Hill, Copthorne, Crawley Down, Ashurst Wood and West Hoathly. They aim to help people remain in their own homes and keep as active as possible by providing a range of classes, activities and outings at the Swan Mead in East Grinstead. The organisation employs 18 paid staff and has 53 volunteers plus seven trustees. Membership costs £15 per annum and there are currently 320 members.

The charity provides three main services

- an activity centre for older people can meet in a social environment, enjoy a cooked lunch and participate in a variety of activities and services that are available throughout the week.
- a 'Saturday respite' service twice a month for persons living with dementia to give carers a break. There were 204 attendances during the last financial year and the funding for this service is provided by West Sussex County Council.
- the 'Help at Home' service which offers support with tasks such as cleaning, ironing, shopping, bed making and laundry assistance.

The Council only funds core activities, whilst the Saturday respite service is part-funded by a County Council Short Breaks Carers Grant and the Help at Home service is self-financing through earned income.

To date, during the current financial year (2015-16), 2,966 lunches have been served at Swan Mead. Card Bingo is the most popular weekly activity with over 1,000 attendances, the quiz and music events were also well attended with over 800 attendances and there were 662 attendances at the organised outings and trips. Other regular activities included Chess, Tai Chi, Computer Classes, Exercise Classes, Zumba, Chiropody, Arts and Crafts.

The 2015/16 mid-year review raised questions about the ongoing service and finances and these are currently being addressed. Importantly the organisation now expects to break even at the year-end. They have received several donations which has helped both cashflow and the bottom line but this is not a long term solution and the Committee are currently producing a new business plan and fund-raising strategy to ensure the organisation becomes more sustainable in the future.

The Swan Mead activity centre has limited space and Age UK East Grinstead is investigating the potential for relocating to an alternative venue in 2017 which may be more suitable.

Age UK West Sussex (Cherry Tree, Burgess Hill and Redwood Centre, Haywards Heath)

Age UK West Sussex runs the Cherry Tree Centre in Burgess Hill and the Redwood Centre in Haywards Heath. The Centres provide opportunities for older people (aged 50+) to socialise, learn new skills, keep active and enjoy nutritious home-cooked lunches to eat in or take away. They also provide a venue for healthcare providers such as Action for Deafness,

4SIGHT, Falls Prevention Teams, Wellbeing checks and flu jabs. The charity employs 11 staff (excluding senior manager and admin/finance) and has 88 volunteers.

Age UK West Sussex runs a range of daily activities at the Cherry Tree and Redwood Centres such as short mat bowls, quizzes, arts and crafts, curling, computer skills, book club, scrabble, knit and natter, Spanish language, dance and exercise classes, bingo and healthy walks. They also organise trips and outings for members and run 'Help At Home', 'Home from Hospital' and 'Take Home and Settle' services which provide support for independent living. They also run a Short Break service on alternate Saturdays for carers of people with dementia.

Age UK West Sussex has 453 members in Mid Sussex and 50% of customers live alone so these activities make a major contribution to supporting those in social isolation in the District. Membership costs £25 per annum and many activities are free of charge. Non-members can access services through a day membership which enables them to take part in activities at a discounted rate. There were 59 day members during the first half of the year 2015-16. Age UK West Sussex provides door-to-door transport for members plus holistic therapies, beauty treatment, chiropody, showering facilities and hairdressing at subsidised rates.

In the coming year they intend to develop a partnership with Bluebird Community Transport, introduce new classes, increase membership and food sales, survey members and expand fundraising opportunities. Age UK West Sussex is committed to being a main provider of services for people in later life in Mid Sussex.

Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (HAMSVA)

The East Grinstead Council for Voluntary Service, Mid Sussex South Council for Voluntary Service and Horsham Voluntary Action merged in April 2015 to become Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (HAMSVA). HAMSVA was established as a Community Interest Organisation in April 2015 and has been jointly funded by Horsham District Council, Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council.

HAMSVA supports emerging and established charities, voluntary and community groups, not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises to deliver services to residents in Horsham and Mid Sussex. Membership costs £15 per annum per organisation and there are 215 member groups in Mid Sussex who receive regular e-bulletins. Many of these groups are volunteer led with limited income and resources and HAMSVA can support them to develop and flourish. The objectives of HAMSVA are to:

- a) Provide support to emerging and established groups to enable them to meet the needs of their communities - by offering practical one to one support covering advice on funding, employment law, charity governance, finance regulations and by running subsidised training courses (first aid, trustee responsibilities, safeguarding), networking and forums to exchange knowledge and ideas e.g. Mid Sussex Liaison Group events.
- b) Promote the value and impact of volunteering - by assisting local voluntary groups in developing appropriate volunteer recruitment and management systems and by bringing together volunteers and groups needing volunteer help.
- c) Be an empowering voice for the voluntary sector - by championing the voluntary sector at local events, forums and strategic meetings, and by liaising between statutory bodies, voluntary groups and local communities to promote knowledge and understanding between the sectors.
- d) Understand the needs of our communities and the voluntary sector organisations that support them - by identifying the needs of local communities and voluntary groups in order to target activity and draw any gaps in provision to the attention of relevant voluntary and statutory bodies.

HAMSVA employs 8 part time staff and currently has low rent office space in Burgess Hill which is provided by Burgess Hill Town Council although the lease is due to expire in May 2016 so they are actively seeking alternative accommodation. They also have an office in in East Grinstead and the rent is covered through a grant from East Grinstead Town Council.

To date, during 2015-16 HAMSVA have sent out more than twelve e-news bulletins to members and provided eleven networking and training sessions in fundraising, governance, first aid, safeguarding and risk management. They organised a volunteer event in Burgess Hill in October (a second is planned for East Grinstead) and they have dealt with over 400 volunteering enquiries in total which has resulted in over 100 people being placed with local voluntary groups.

HAMSVA is a member of NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action), the national voice of local support and development organisations in England and the NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations) which champions the voluntary sector and volunteering.