

## 5. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

REPORT OF: HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES  
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Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Cabinet – 15 January 2018

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### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Cabinet on the Partnership Agreements with the Voluntary Sector and to seek approval to extend the existing funding arrangements with Citizens Advice and Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action for another year. It also outlines a proposal for the future funding arrangement for Citizens Advice with effect from April 2019 and seeks a financial commitment to participate in a joint procurement exercise.

### Summary

2. Five Voluntary Sector Organisations are currently provided with core funding as part of the Partnership Agreement Programme. These organisations help the Council fulfil its corporate priorities by providing effective and responsive services which help bring about strong and resilient communities. The paper provides information about these Services and the funding commitments needed to retain them in 2018-19. It also outlines the future procurement arrangements needed to secure an ongoing Citizens Advice Service in the District.

### Recommendations

3. ***Cabinet is recommended to agree to:***
  - (i) ***Enter into a one-year Voluntary and Community Sector Funding Agreement with West Sussex County Council to secure additional funds to grant aid to Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action;***
  - (ii) ***Sign up to a 'bridging contract' with Citizens Advice to fund the Service in 2018-19;***
  - (iii) ***Commit to recommissioning the Citizens Advice Service in 2019-21 (with the option to extend for a further 2 years).***

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### Background

4. In March 2016, Cabinet noted the Council's commitment to an existing County wide funding agreement with Citizens Advice and resolved to enter into new three-year Partnership Agreements with four voluntary sector partners to provide revenue funding toward key services for residents.
5. The Council currently has the following funding agreements in place with five voluntary sector organisations:
  - Action in Rural Sussex (2016-19) - £7,050 pa.
  - Age UK East Grinstead (2016-19) - £15,071 pa.
  - Age UK West Sussex (2016-19) - £52,166 pa.
  - Citizens Advice (2015-18) - £119,404 pa.

- Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (2016-19) - £37,553 pa.
6. The term voluntary sector is generally applied to organisations that principally reinvest their surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives. Mid Sussex has a vibrant voluntary sector that provides a wide variety of services to the residents of the district.
  7. Further information regarding these services and the outcomes provided by the organisations can be found in Appendix A.

#### *Action in Rural Sussex*

8. Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) receives revenue funding to provide a Village Halls and Community Buildings Advisory Service in Mid Sussex. They also deliver an annual event, training and networking meetings to support community venues in the District.
9. The current funding agreement runs until March 2019. The Council's ongoing budgetary commitment and funding arrangement to provide support for AiRS Services will be reviewed in 2018/19.

#### *Age UK East Grinstead and Age UK West Sussex*

10. Age UK East Grinstead and Age UK West Sussex are two independent local charities. They are both members of the Age UK network and abide by their 'Brand Partnership' guidelines which direct national initiatives and quality standards.
11. These organisations are funded to provide Services to tackle social isolation and support older people aged 50+ years, living independently and at risk of loneliness in the three main towns and surrounding villages. The Service should promote independence, good health and wellbeing. They are required to offer a varied programme of activities, services, lunches, transport, information and advice.
12. WSCC is the primary funder of these Services and makes the following annual contributions of £33,680 to Age UK East Grinstead, £69,949 to Age UK West Sussex; Burgess Hill and £69,737 to Age UK West Sussex; Haywards Heath. Both Age UK East Grinstead and Age UK West Sussex are currently on a six month rolling contract with WSCC prior to the introduction of a new 'Day Activities Contract' which will replace the current agreements.
13. WSCC intends to recommission Social Support Framework Services which tackle social isolation and loneliness through the provision of day activities or befriending schemes; services that increase independence at home through practical assistance and support; services that provide practical support for people with low level needs coming out of hospital; and information and advice in alignment with the County Council's Care Act responsibilities.
14. When these new contracts are introduced Mid Sussex is likely to experience a reduction in funding as we understand that WSCC intends to re-allocate resources across the County in relation to demographic needs.
15. Mid Sussex District Council's current funding agreements run until March 2019. Ongoing budgetary commitment and funding arrangements with Age UK East Grinstead and Age UK West Sussex will need to be reviewed in 2018/19 in conjunction with WSCC's contractual arrangements for Day Activities across the District.

### *Citizens Advice*

16. West Sussex County Council (WSCC) has commissioned Central & South Sussex Citizens Advice and Arun & Chichester Citizens Advice to work in partnership to provide a Countywide Service which is funded through the following contributions from West Sussex County, District and Borough Councils:

- West Sussex County Council - £350,000
- Adur & Worthing Councils - £163,653
- Arun District Council - £117,020
- Crawley Borough Council - £132,500
- Mid Sussex District Council - £119,404
- Horsham District Council - £93,000
- Chichester District Council - £74,000

17. The existing joint funding agreement comes to an end in March 2018 and WSCC has offered to take the procurement lead on a commissioning exercise for a new two year contract with effect from April 2019, with an option to extend for up to two more years. This will most likely be a single tender exercise due to the limited number of potential providers (subject to approval by WSCC Cabinet).

18. The funding levels will need to be reviewed before entering into new contractual arrangements but WSCC requires a commitment in principle from all the District and Borough Councils before they will undertake the work needed to recommission the contract. Work is required to revise the current Service Specification with a view to going out to tender in Summer/Autumn 2018.

19. In the meantime, it is proposed that the current agreement is extended for one year until March 2019, with no financial uplift.

### *Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action*

20. Mid Sussex District Council has a three year funding agreement with Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (HAMSVVA) which runs until March 2019, to provide support to the voluntary sector (£37,553 pa).

21. Mid Sussex District Council also has a two year funding agreement with WSCC for an additional £36,844 per annum (2016-18) toward the cost of commissioning Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure (VCSI) Support Services. These funds were awarded to HAMSVVA to provide an enhanced Service through an Executive Decision in 2016 (MIS141).

22. WSCC is proposing to extend the existing funding agreement with Mid Sussex District Council to provide additional VCSI funding for an additional year (April 2018-March 2019). It is recommended that these funds are awarded to HAMSVVA to enable them to continue providing support to not-for-profit organisations in Mid Sussex.

23. HAMSVVA recently lost match funding from Horsham District Council with effect from April 2018 and will be withdrawing Services in this area. The extra funding from WSCC is essential to enable the organisation to continue to provide a valuable Service which helps build the capacity of the voluntary sector.

24. WSCC intends to undertake a review of its relationship with the voluntary sector post March 2019 and has established a Task and Finish Group, with District and Borough representation, to consider the issues.

## **Policy Context**

25. The Services provided by these organisations supports the Council's stated Corporate Plan priorities under the 'effective and responsive services' and 'strong and resilient communities' themes.

## **Financial Implications**

26. There are no financial implications in relation to recommendations i) and ii) contained within this report. Recommendation i) will be directly funded by WSCC and recommendation ii) will be funded from the current allocations within the Community Services, Policy and Performance Business Unit budget, subject to approval of the annual 2018/19 budget by Council on 28 February 2018.
27. Recommendation iii) requires the Council to make a commitment to provide a financial contribution of up to £119,404 per annum (plus an inflationary increase) for a four year period from 2019-2023.

## **Risk Management Implications**

28. 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.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. 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.
32. 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**

33. 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.
34. 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.

35. 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**

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

**Background Papers**

37. Funding requests and associated documentation are held in the Community Services, Policy and Performance Business Unit.

### **Services Provided and Outcomes Achieved**

#### **Action in Rural Sussex**

Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) is required to provide a village hall advisory service, five networking or training events and carry out a consultation each year to monitor the needs of members.

There are fifteen Mid Sussex subscribers to the Village Halls and Community Buildings Advisory Service. Advisory Service members benefit from workshops, training and networking events, a monthly newsletter and e-bulletins providing information and updates on all aspects of managing multi-purpose community facilities such as insurance, hire charges, employment, budgeting and fire safety.

AiRS has organised four networking events focusing on aspects of fundraising including commissioning and proving impact in partnership with the Mid Sussex Liaison Group, which consists of representatives of HAMSVA, AirS, WSCC and MSDC. They have also delivered a number of 'Rural Links' events such as Active Villages, evidencing your need for funding, dementia awareness and PAT Test training for village halls.

AirS has provided consultancy services to community buildings in Bolney, Balcombe and Crawley Down on a range of issues such as transfer to CIO status, creating a business plan, making detailed changes to constitution and governance.

In 2016-17 they carried out a community buildings consultation and presented the findings at a network meeting in Haywards Heath which generated a lively discussion about the need for village halls to have development and improvement plans and good communications with Town and Parish council representatives.

The West Sussex Village Halls Conference was held in November 2017 which explored a range of topics including the challenges facing village halls (namely volunteers, leaders, funding and red tape), providing a safe environment and the role of trustees. There were also workshops on CIO status, marketing, health and safety.

#### **Age UK East Grinstead**

Age UK East Grinstead, based at Swan Mead, employs nine core staff plus an Outreach Co-ordinator, Saturday Club and Help at Home Assistants and a Freelance Fundraiser. They are supported by thirteen regular volunteers and the Board of seven Voluntary Trustees. A new Chair and four new Trustees have been appointed during 2017-18 and working groups established to help with fundraising and marketing.

They offer a programme of activities including chess, computer class, games, chair exercise, bingo, music and quiz. They also run a programme of entertainment and have recently hosted performances by a harpist, a 1940-50's singer, therapeutic music sessions and speakers from the East Grinstead Museum to talk about the Guinea Pig Club and the Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance. Age UK East Grinstead has secured additional project funding to develop a Village Agent Project to develop more outreach work, village networks and signposting to local Services.

They also organise a range of community based clubs such as board games at East Grinstead Library, cinema club, swimming club Cake & Co in Crawley Down, walking, tai chi and Zumba gold at Chequer Mead. Trips arranged during July to December 2017 include visits to Eastbourne bandstand, Harrods/London museums, Greyhound racing, Christmas

lunch in Eastbourne (most decorated pub) and holidays at Sinah Warren, Yorkshire and Littlecote. Further outings are planned to go to the Blue Water Shopping Centre, War Horse (Brighton Centre), Amberley Museum, Weald and Downland Museum and a number of holiday destinations.

Over 2,800 lunchtime meals were provided during the first half of 2017-18 with an average of 347 meals a month. They also offer chiropody, information and advice and have dealt with over 1,000 general enquiries between April and September 2017. Transport is provided by Bluebird Community Transport. There are approximately 300 members and membership costs £15 per annum.

### **Age UK West Sussex**

Age UK West Sussex provides a range of activities and services and is currently based at the Cherry Tree in Burgess Hill and the Haywards Heath Centre on Butlers Green Road. They announced that they would be moving out of the Cherry Tree in April 2018 with a view to delivering a programme from various venues in the Burgess Hill area. This situation is currently under review and the premises notice is held in abeyance to allow time for further consultation and forward planning. Positive discussions have already taken place between Council Officers and Age UK West Sussex representatives. Age UK have undertaken further consultation with their membership and there is every confidence that the future delivery model will continue to meet the specification requirements and meet the needs of the community.

Age UK West Sussex currently employs twelve core staff consisting of a Centre Manager, Centre Co-ordinator, two Activity Workers, Head Cook and Kitchen Assistant at both sites. There are 15 volunteers at the Haywards Heath Centre and 18 at the Cherry Tree.

The Haywards Heath Centre has 377 members with 50-60 people attending daily. It is open Monday to Friday and offers a full programme of activities including chairbics, gardening, Spanish language, pilates, yoga, knit and knatter, flowercraft, scrabble, choir, IT, curling and healthy walks. They also offer acupuncture, massage, foot clinic, hairdressing and beauty sessions each week. The programme is designed to appeal to men and women and to encourage physical activity. Special events have included the grand opening day, a Silver Sunday afternoon tea and Harvest Festival. An Elderberry Service for carers of people with dementia uses the centre on two Saturdays each month.

The Cherry Tree has 120 members and an average daily attendance of 30-40 people. It is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday each week and runs a range of activities including crafts, short mat bowls, tai chi, cross stitch, chairbics, quiz, flower arranging, bingo, art club. In May a group of members enjoyed a trip to the Bluebell Railway, supported by the Lions followed by a trip from the Burgess Hill Rotary to Sheffield Park for cream teas. There was also a visit from the Rah Rah Theatre Company for a swinging 60's show. Country and Western was the theme for a June luncheon, in July members enjoyed a Summer Rock 'n' Roll party and indoor balloon tennis and there was a musicals luncheon in August.

Holistic massage is regularly available on Tuesdays, hairdressing on Thursdays and Chiropody appointments on Fridays. Also on Thursdays, the Sussex Caring Pets visit the Cherry Tree with a black labrador.

Membership costs £30 per annum and members pay a small fee to participate in activities which cost up to £4, with some activities (such as walks, short mat bowls, quiz and gardening) offered free of charge. Day visitors are welcome to use the centres and take part

in activities. Both centres provide home cooked lunches as well as sandwiches, cakes and hot or cold snacks at affordable rates of approx. £5 for two courses.

Members and visitors can access Help at Home, Home from Hospital and Information and Advice Services. Bluebird operates community transport to take people to the centres.

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

Citizens Advice offers free, independent advice to everybody, whatever the problem. Mid Sussex residents are served by Central and South Sussex Citizens Advice (CASSCA). The centres are staffed by well-trained volunteers who are carefully supervised and managed by 43 paid staff who work across eight locations and 18 outreach sites. In 2016-17, CASSCA engaged 277 volunteers who donated staff hours to the value of £1,353,510.

Services can be accessed by telephone, email, web chat, submitting an online form or in person at one of the three drop-in centres. The Haywards Heath office is open Monday to Friday 9.30-4pm. In Burgess Hill, the Advice Centre is open for appointments and telephone enquiries Monday-Thursday and there is a drop-in service at the Town Hall on Tuesday-Thursday 10am-1pm. The East Grinstead Service has moved to the library and is open Monday to Friday 10am-4pm.

During 2016-17 Citizens Advice dealt with 10,930 enquiries in Mid Sussex. The top advice categories were benefits and tax credits (29%), employment (13%), housing (12%), relationships and family (10%) and debt (9%). During the current year benefits and tax credits remains the top issue and Citizens Advice is preparing for more enquiries in 2018/19 following the introduction of Universal Credit

The majority of CASSCA clients are of working age and are almost five times more likely to be on a low income than the general population of England and Wales. In the current financial year, CASSCA has helped them secure additional income of £75,436 through advice regarding unclaimed benefits and other entitlements.

In total CASSCA helped 24,608 people in 2016/17 and dealt with 55,646 as most clients have multiple issues. Nearly 3 out of 4 clients said their problem affected their lives, causing anxiety and financial difficulty so these support services make a real difference to wellbeing. Two in every three clients reported their problem solved, four in five said the advice improved their lives including reducing stress and improving finances.

### **Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action**

Membership of Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (HAMSVVA) is free of charge and open to not-for-profit organisations (charities, social enterprises, community and voluntary groups) operating in the Horsham and Mid Sussex area, or those thinking of setting one up. HAMSVVA currently has 282 voluntary sector member groups working in Mid Sussex and in the first six months of 2017/18 seventeen new groups joined up.

HAMSVVA provides:

- affordable training and networking events;
- help with finding and keeping volunteers;
- information services about grants funding, job opportunities and events;
- support and information for trustees, charity staff and volunteers;
- regular updates about local and national issues which affect the voluntary sector and;
- discounted resources and facilities e.g. photocopying, audio visual equipment and community room hire.



During the current financial year, HAMSVA has facilitated five training courses which were fully subscribed. The topics covered were First Aid, Bid Writing Basics, Good Governance for Trustees, Developing Your Fundraising Strategy and Lone Working. HAMSVA also offers e-learning opportunities in Fire Marshalling and Food Safety in Catering.

Volunteering opportunities are advertised on the website, Facebook page, Twitter, at events and in the local press. Volunteering displays have been held in Burgess Hill Library, Haywards Heath Library and East Grinstead Library. HAMSVA also work with local businesses to encourage corporate social responsibility and has good links with the local business associations.

To date this year, HAMSVA has circulated twelve informative e-bulletins to the membership, statutory bodies, Town, District and County Councillors and Parish Councils. Topics covered include fundraising, training, job opportunities, resources, general information and events. They have also provided one to one support for members to assist with governance issues and legal issues, funding bids, training needs, policies and good practice guidance.