

7. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

REPORT OF: HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Cabinet – 24 September 2018

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Cabinet on the Partnership Agreements with key Social Sector partners and to seek approval to extend grant funding arrangements to provide ongoing support.

Summary

2. Five Social 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 contribute to strong and resilient communities. The paper provides information about these Services and the funding commitments needed to retain them in 2019-22.

Recommendations

3. Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) **award Action in Rural Sussex an annual grant of £7,226 for a three year period, from April 2019 - Mar 2022**
 - (ii) **award Age UK East Grinstead an annual grant of £17,823 for one year, from Apr 2019 - Mar 2020, with an option to extend one year**
 - (iii) **award Age UK West Sussex an annual grant of £53,470 for one year, from Apr 2019 - Mar 2020, with an option to extend one year**
 - (iv) **note the funding commitment to Citizens Advice**
 - (v) **sign up to the Countywide VCSI Alliance proposal and award Mid Sussex Voluntary Action £38,471 pa. for a three year period, from April 2019 – Mar 2022**
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Background

4. The Council currently has Partnership Agreements in place with the following five Social 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 (2018-19) - £119,404 pa.
 - Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (2016-19) - £37,553 pa.
5. The term Social Sector refers to volunteers, charities and social enterprises that are at the core of civil society. 'Civil society refers to individuals and organisations when they act with the primary purpose of creating social value, independent of state control. By social value we mean enriched lives and a fairer society for all' (Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone, Cabinet Office 2018). Mid Sussex has a vibrant Social Sector that provides a wide variety of services to the residents of the District.

Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS)

6. AiRS is required to provide a village hall advisory service, networking and training events and carry out a members survey each year. 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.
7. The Council has commissioned LUC consultants to produce a Community Buildings Strategy by January 2019. At a recent stakeholder workshop, organized to support the development of the strategy, voluntary village hall trustees expressed their appreciation of the community buildings service provided by AiRS. They made a number of suggestions regarding ongoing support needs which could be facilitated by AiRS through a service specification for a future funding.
8. It is recommended that Cabinet approves a Partnership Agreement award to AiRS of £7,050 pa. (plus a 2.5% inflationary increase) from Apr 2019 – Mar 2022. Grant funding will provide the organization with a secure revenue stream to support the ongoing provision of the Village Halls & Community Buildings Advisory Service. The details of the Partnership Agreement Specification will be finalized when the Community Buildings Strategy is submitted to help deliver the recommendations.

Age UK East Grinstead and Age UK West Sussex

9. Age UK East Grinstead and Age UK West Sussex 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. Age UK East Grinstead is based at Swanmead, Age UK West Sussex runs two activity centres in Mid Sussex; one in Haywards Heath and one at the Cherry Tree in Burgess Hill.
10. WSCC is the primary funder of these services and currently makes an annual contribution of £33,680 to Age UK East Grinstead and £133,351 to Age UK West Sussex. The County has issued interim contracts with both organisations which run from October 2018 for six months with an option to extend for one year, up to March 2020 (subject to 2019/20 budget approval).
11. WSCC has reviewed the current contractual arrangements for Social Support services and is proposing to undertake a competitive open tender process during 2019 to commission Day Activity Services, subject to funding.

12. The commissioning will be carried out on a District or Borough wide basis so Age UK East Grinstead and Age UK West Sussex will be obliged to work in partnership if they want to bid for these funds. WSCC intends to equitably fund services across the County in relation to demographic needs which may alter the current funding allocation for Mid Sussex.
13. It is proposed that the Council continues to grant fund Age UK East Grinstead and Age UK West Sussex in 2019-20, with an option to extend for one year, to allow time for WSCC to complete the commissioning process. In the longer term it will be necessary to review these funding arrangements to either 'buy-in' to the WSCC service delivery arrangements or fund a complementary local offer.
14. It is recommended that the grant to Age UK West Sussex should remain the same at £52,166 pa. (plus a 2.5% inflationary increase and an ongoing 50% rent reduction for the Cherry Tree to Mar 2020) the grant to East Grinstead Age UK should be increased to £17,388 pa. (plus a 2.5% inflationary increase) to give parity with Age UK West Sussex.

Citizens Advice

15. West Sussex County Council (WSCC) has commissioned Central & South Sussex Citizens Advice (CaSSCA) and Arun & Chichester Citizens Advice (ACCA) to work in partnership to provide a Countywide Service which is funded through contributions from West Sussex County, District and Borough Councils. The current joint funding agreement runs until March 2019
16. In January 2018, Cabinet agreed to recommission Citizens Advice in 2019-21 (with an option to extend for a further 2 years). Work is currently underway to update the specification, to include Local Delivery Plans, and WSCC intends to undertake a single tender exercise in the Autumn due to the unique nature of the service.
17. The exact funding levels will need to be reviewed before entering into contractual arrangements but they will not exceed the current contribution of £119,404 (plus a 2.5% inflationary increase). The new contract will be effective from April 2019.

Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA)

18. The Council currently has two funding agreements with MSVA which both come to an end in March 2019. A three-year agreement for £37,533 pa. and a one-year agreement for £36,844 which is paid for by WSCC.
19. In 2017, WSCC established a Task and Finish Group with District and Borough representatives, to review of its relationship with the voluntary sector. The outcome of this work is that it has been collectively agreed that the Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure (VCSI) support services across the County should work together to create a formal Alliance.
20. The Alliance will consist of Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester (VAAC), MSVA, Community Works (Adur and Worthing), Crawley Community & Voluntary Service and Horsham District Council.
21. This will improve the offer by allowing them to share resources, achieve some economies of scale, develop specialisms and respond to commissioning opportunities. It will also strengthen the 'voice' of the social sector in conversation

and consultation with statutory bodies.

22. Subject to funding commitments from all the District and Borough Councils, WSCC intends to provide funding to the Alliance through a lead partner (to be decided) with effect from April 2019, subject to budget approval. The Alliance will be required to distribute WSCC funds amongst the network members under the present model, which will ensure MSVA continues to receive a WSCC contribution.
23. It is recommended that the Council supports the VCSI Alliance proposal and agrees to fund MSVA £37,533 pa. (plus a 2.5% inflationary increase) for three years from Apr 2019 – Mar 2022. WSCC will prepare an agreement document for all funders to sign to support the development of the Alliance.

Policy Context

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

Financial Implications

25. The financial implication of these recommendations is outlined in the table below:

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
Action in Rural Sussex	7,226	7,226	7,226	21,678
Age UK East Grinstead	17,823	17,823		35,646
Age Uk West Sussex	53,470	53,470		106,940
Mid Sussex Voluntary Action	38,471	38,471	38,471	115,413
TOTALS	116,990	116,990	45,697	279,677

26. The funding commitment to Citizens Advice was previously agreed by Cabinet on 15 January 2018.

Risk Management Implications

27. AiRS, MSVA, Age UK East Grinstead and Age UK West Sussex will be invited to submit funding applications to clearly outline the services they will provide during the funding period.
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 social 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

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