

AGE UK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

REPORT OF: HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No

Purpose of the 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, with Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove and Age UK East Grinstead, for a further financial year to run from April 2021 to the end of March 2022. This will bring these agreements into line with the other agreement in place with Voluntary Sector partners and allow for a comprehensive refresh of these agreements to take place during the course of 2021-22.

Summary

2. On October 19th, 2020 the Cabinet Grants Panel endorsed a proposal to extend the annual partnership grants to Age UK West Sussex Brighton & Hove and Age UK East Grinstead. It was agreed the proposal would be presented to Cabinet in February 2021 for decision.
3. 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.
4. Existing partnership agreements with Mid Sussex Voluntary Service, Citizens Advice and Action in Rural Sussex run until March 2022 with Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove and Age UK East Grinstead partnership agreements expiring in March 2021.
5. The paper provides information about the vital services Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove and Age UK East Grinstead provide and the funding commitments and requests a one-year extension to bring them in line with the other partnership agreements which currently run to March 2022.

Recommendations

6. Members of the Cabinet are recommended to:
 - (i) Extend Age UK East Grinstead an annual grant of £18,269 for one year, from Apr 2021 - Mar 2022.
 - (ii) Extend Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove an annual grant of £54,807 for one year, from Apr 2021 - Mar 2022.
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Background

7. The Council currently has Partnership Agreements in place with the following five Social Sector organisations:

- Age UK East Grinstead (2019-21) - £17,823 pa.
 - Age UK West Sussex (2019-21) - £53,470 pa.
 - Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (2019-22) - £38,471 pa.
 - Action in Rural Sussex (2019-22) - £7,226 pa.
 - Citizens Advice (2019-22) - £119,404 pa. (joint funding agreement with WSCC and other District Councils in West Sussex - option to extend 1 further year 2022-23)
8. 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.
9. Mid Sussex District Council has a long history of collaborative community development and engagement with a strong local CVS as well as other local statutory and private sector partners. The impact and legacy of this work and the powerful relationships it has fostered, have been realised in recent months as this Council, its partners and its communities, mobilised to respond to the Covid19 pandemic, attending to the needs of and supporting the vulnerable communities of our District.

Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove and Age UK East Grinstead

10. 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 Glen Vue, Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove runs two activity centres in Mid Sussex: Lamb House, Haywards Heath and Cherry Tree, Burgess Hill.
11. The Two Age UK brands are trusted, well-established charities with a strong delivery reputation in Mid Sussex and wider West Sussex. The two organisations provide a range of services which include, home from hospital, information and advice, home visiting, take home and settle, help at home, dementia support, catering, as well as many physical and social activities at the centres. Ordinarily, the three centres are busy with daily activities engaging with clients on a face-to-face basis, but the coronavirus pandemic has made this type of interaction impossible.

Response to Covid-19 Pandemic

12. The pandemic, ensuing lockdowns and social distancing measures have resulted in an immediate stop business as usual for the three Age UK centres. This include a shutdown of facilities, temporary furlough of staff and significant loss of volunteers who were required to shield for their own safety. Despite these significant challenges and impacts to core business, all three centres ensured they were still here for older people in Mid Sussex offering: information and advice, signposting, telephone befriending, hot meals, doorstep deliveries, wellbeing checks, welfare and safety support and wellbeing advice. These vital services ensured some of our most

vulnerable residents, many of which were on the NHS shielding list, where able to access support for food, medicines and physical and mental health issues.

13. Both services also played a key role in the immediate community support response ensuring no one was left behind during one of the country's most challenging periods in recent history. As a well trusted brand and partner, the Age UK services were able to work with other key voluntary sector partners to ensure essential community referral pathways were timely, efficient and available to those most in need in our local communities.
14. In recognition of the ongoing challenging environment in which the local CSV sector are operating in, the Cabinet is recommended to agree short term extensions to these two essential community support organisations, so they may continue to support the most vulnerable in our communities during the COIVD19 pandemic. This funding assurance will also help these organisations to build and adapt for the future in uncertain times.

Financial Implications

15. The total required budget for 2021/22 for both Age UK bands is £73,076 which includes a 0.5% increase for inflation. Separately this would be £54,807 for Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove & £18,269 for Age UK East Grinstead. This is covered by the proposed budget for 2021-22 which will considered by Council in February.
16. 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, Brighton & Hove. The WSCC contracts with both organisations run until 30th June 2021. The WSCC are currently conducting an open tender process for the renewal of these contract post June 2021.
17. Where in the past these services were jointly commissioned by WSCC and MSDC, in the future, starting with the new WSCC contract in July 2021 and future MSDC tender processes (post March 2022) the contracts will be independent of each other.

Risk Management Implications

18. A Contract is signed at the application stage by organisations seeking funding that details the terms and conditions under which the partnership grant is given, including the return of all monies to the Council should the purpose for which the funds are awarded not materialise.

Equality and customer service implications

19. As part of the assessment process, all organisations applying for funding from the Council have complied with the required conditions of funding and have the requisite policies and procedures in place including any other relevant legislation.

Legal Implications

20. The Council is not obliged to provide grant funding, but by virtue of section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, it is able to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area. This includes the incurring of expenditure, giving financial assistance to any person (or organisation) and entering into arrangements or agreements with any person.

Background Papers

21. Cabinet Grants Panel report of 19th October 2020 including agreed Covid19 Recovery Grant Criteria (Appendix A)
22. Copies of the original partners grant applications are held on file by the Community Service team