

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	11 March 2014
Title:	Annual Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations
Reference:	5595
Report From:	Director of Policy and Governance – Corporate Services

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report recommends the approval of annual grants in 2014/15 from Policy and Resources budget to the following voluntary and community organisations:

- Community Action Hampshire (CAH)
- Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS)
- Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)
- Winchester and District Relate
- Victim Support (VS)
- Citizens Advice Hampshire (CitAH)

1.2 The report also makes a number of other specific recommendations about future arrangements for the annual grants to these organisations.

2. Background

2.1 Grant funding is awarded on an annual basis from the Policy and Resources budget to a range of voluntary organisations, with whom we have one year grant agreements. In 2013 /14, the total funding allocation amounted to £1,004,500. This report proposes allocations for 2014/15.

2.2 The proposed awards include support to a range of “infrastructure” organisations which support the health and development of the wider voluntary community sector.

2.3 It remains of strategic importance to the County Council to support and develop the sector since:

- It is a significant part of the local provider market for public services, providing significant added, social value.

- It includes a vast range of local individuals, groups, and organisations, most of which operate largely independently of County Council funding and which represent an enormous reserve of social capital supporting the well-being of local communities and vulnerable groups.
- 2.4 The capacity and resilience of the voluntary and community sector is especially important as demand for help increases and the County Council faces difficult choices in the targeting of its own resources.
- 2.5 As public service funding levels come under pressure, the commissioned voluntary sector, local groups and volunteers are playing an increasingly important role in supporting vulnerable people in our communities. Whilst Council funding is more limited, the voluntary and community sector is also operating in a wider context of reduced funding from many other sources.
- 2.6 In terms of existing grant agreements, the currently funded organisations are monitored on a six-monthly basis, as a condition of the grant award.

3. Finance

- 3.1 The total amount of the grants recommended for approval in 2014/15 is £967,201 which can be accommodated within the existing budget. The proposed allocations for 2014/15 are set out in the table below. For the most part this represents a 2% reduction on the awards in 2013/14.

Organisations	Funding in 2013/14	Recommended award for 2014/15
Community Action Hampshire	£262,748 (-2%)	£257,493
District Councils of Voluntary Service	£515,683 (-2%)	£505,371
Hampshire Association of Local Councils	£70,000 (-7.5%)	£70,000
Winchester and District Relate	£25,099 (-2%)	£24,597
Victim Support	£14,255 (-2%)	£13,970
Citizens Advice Hampshire	£97,724 £19,000 (transition of welfare reforms)	£95,770
Total	£1,004,509	£967,201

- 3.2 In respect of Hampshire Association of Local Councils, a 7.5% reduction was agreed in 2013/14 in return for a fixed three year agreement. 2014/15 will be the second year of that agreement. The organisation has however been notified to expect significant further reductions beyond 2015/16.
- 3.3 The Director of Corporate Resources has assessed the financial health of the applicants and is satisfied that the recipients of the funding will be able to operate during 2014/15.
- 3.4 In line with expected further reductions in the budget in the order of 10% from 2015 /16, the Council has provided advance notice to the

organisations of likely equivalent reductions and that it will remain important to review best value and alternative options for the future. The Council has complied and continues to comply with the statutory Best Value Guidance in the provision of advance notice of funding changes and the offer of support to help transform services.

4. Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS's)

- 4.1 Applications for continued funding have been submitted by the ten Councils of Voluntary Service in Hampshire. The grants provided are for their core funding which enables them to fulfil their role to support and build capacity with front line voluntary and community organisations in the wider sector. This includes:
- Assistance with grants, fundraising or submitting bids;
 - Brokering volunteers for organisations;
 - Providing networking opportunities;
 - Providing training and staff development
- 4.2 The County Council's financial support for district CVS core services (excluding Winchester District) represents 41% of total local authority core funding. A number of CVS receive other income in the form of grants and contracts with the County Council. Support to 5 of the 10 CVS's is being maintained and 1 is being increased by the district and borough councils. Others are reducing their award by as much as 15%. Winchester City Council are taking a significantly different approach (see paragraph 4.7). In overall terms there has been a significant cumulative reduction over the past three years which raises the issue of the impact on the effectiveness of the existing delivery structure moving forward.
- 4.3 The majority of the CVS's have met or exceeded their target performance as set in the grant agreements for 2013 /14. There has been a steady increase in performance against the previous year's figures. Some have fallen short of over ambitious targets which will be reviewed for 2014/15.
- 4.4 For some of the County Council's departments and services the CVS's are a valuable link to local organisations and provide a mechanism through which to make better connections with the voluntary and community sector. The departments also work with some of the CVS's who are also providers of services such as community transport, day care or youth provision.
- 4.5 The County Council has worked with the CVS's and district and borough co-funders over the last year to understand the complexity of these arrangements, to take soundings from front line organisations regarding their priority support needs and to explore how delivery of support services can deliver better value for money. There have been some limited structural developments within the CVS's to achieve greater efficiency and some co-funders are moving towards different models of funding. Both of these will help to inform the County Council's options for ensuring optimal value for investment in future years and to support the Council's objectives.

- 4.6 The CVS network have been encouraged to put forward proposals for the best way to provide future efficient and effective support for voluntary and community groups throughout Hampshire, initially focussing on future provision of volunteering services. There is also learning from the merger in 2012 of East Hampshire and Havant CVS's which can inform future proposals.
- 4.7 Some district / borough co-funders are considering different ways of providing financial support for the voluntary and community sector. Notably, Winchester City Council has invited competitive bids for the provision of support services to the VCS from April 2014 at a reduced level of funding.
- 4.8 The current provider of the support service is Winchester Area Community Action (WACA). The County Council's objective is to understand the implications of the Winchester commission and to ensure that the changes will not adversely impact on the County Council's Community transport contracts being delivered currently by WACA.
- 4.9 Depending on the effectiveness of Winchester's new commissioned arrangements the County Council might want to be part of a joint and more significant commissioned arrangement from the beginning of 2015 /16. In the meantime it is recommended that for 2014 /15 the County Council continue to core fund the CVS and that the core funding for Winchester Area Community Action is reviewed after six months.
- 4.10 The county-wide review is set to continue and conclude over the first half of 2014/15. The outcome of the review will inform the County Council and partners as they explore further the value and cost of services and develop longer term support options for the sector which will include more tightly define the outcomes required from the CVS's.

5. Community Action Hampshire

- 5.1 CAH is a Council for Voluntary Service operating on a county-wide basis. Their role is to identify needs in the local community and assist county-wide voluntary and community organisations to function more effectively and efficiently in order to deliver better quality services. CAH is also the Rural Community Council for Hampshire.
- 5.2 The organisation is on track to achieve, or in many cases exceed, the majority of the targets set for 2013/14. There has been a significant 9% increase to CAH membership over the past year.
- 5.3 The funding application from CAH is to deliver its core services to the voluntary and community sector in Hampshire and act as the Rural Community Council. The core funding is supplemented by other specific project related grants from the County Council including £40,000 for Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing HARAHA. This funding enables CAH to generate additional income.

The grant award will enable CAH in 2014/15 to:

- Facilitate effective communication, networking and collaboration between voluntary and community groups; including supporting 12 VCS networks and forums
- Complement the activity of local CVS's
- Represent the diverse views of the VCS to external bodies and promoting effective partnership working. Serving 660 members, an increase of 130 over the previous year
- Provide 26 training opportunities for 465 learners
- Support the development of social enterprise and social entrepreneurialism including 16 new social enterprises
- Enhance the VCS role as an integral part of local planning and policy making;

Carry out core functions as Hampshire's RCC:

- Support the development of community-led planning amongst rural communities, involvement in 18 rural projects
- Ensure the voice of rural communities is heard by decision makers
- Assist rural communities to find the resources that they need.

6. Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)

6.1 The Hampshire Association of Local Councils supports and represents the interests of parish and town councils throughout the county. The organisation currently works for and supports 242 of the 262 parish and town councils (93%) and 22 parish meetings. HALC represent, and pass essential information to, all councils, whether members or not. 42% of HALC's income is from membership fees and 18% from sold services.

6.2 The core aims of the service supported by the County Council funding are to:

- Develop and increase the capacity of local councils to lead local communities;
- Promote the efficiency of local councils;
- Support effective service delivery through partnerships between local councils and the County Council and other public services.

6.3 HALC has reviewed its operations and reduced its overheads and a 7.5% reduction was agreed in 2013/14. The award was set at a fixed level for three years in order for HALC to achieve and sustain the efficiency reductions, and to create the necessary time for a more fundamental transformational review.

7. Winchester and District Relate

- 7.1 The annual grant from the County Council contributes to the rental of suitable premises and enables the organisation to hire accessible venues in which to see disabled clients.
- 7.2 Clients referred to the organisation by Hampshire Council Departments are often supported by bursaries offered by the organisation. Through the County Councillor Grants programme, Winchester & District Relate were awarded an additional £3,550 for Psychosexual Therapist Training.
- 7.3 In Spring 2014 Winchester and District Relate intend to merge with Solent Relate to make the organisation more efficient by reducing one Chief Executive Officer position. The merger will have no immediate affect on the need for the organisation to retain rented premises in Winchester.

8. Victim Support

- 8.1 All residents in Hampshire are entitled to access the support offered by the local Victim Support (VS) service. The service provides free and confidential help to victims of crime, witnesses and their families.
- 8.2 The County Council grant goes towards the recruitment, training, retaining and support of volunteers who deliver the service. In 2012/13, a total of 39,500 Hampshire residents were supported, of these, 29,000 were via the service working in the community and 10,500 through the witness service. There has been an increase of 4% in the number of people supported over the previous year.
- 8.3 The national funding of victim support services has been under review with key funding for this role being part of the responsibility for the Police and Crime Commissioners beyond 2014/15. The continued funding of this service is a matter which the County Council would wish to explore with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police and Crime Commissioner during the coming year.

9 Citizens Advice Hampshire (CitAH)

- 9.1 The Citizens Advice Service provides free, impartial advice to ensure that vulnerable people are aware of their rights and responsibilities. They also run targeted services for specific marginalised groups. Most local Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) receive substantial financial support from their respective district or borough council.
- 9.2 Citizen's Advice has an important role in helping to deliver a number of major programmes led by the County, such as the Supporting (Troubled) Families Programme and support for armed forces veterans. The County Council will work with CitAH in its support and development role across the county and with the wider advice network to assist in the delivery of the objectives of these programmes.

10. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The annual grants in 2014/15 from the Policy and Resources budget be awarded to the voluntary and community organisations as set out in section 3 of this report.
2. The grant agreements with the Councils of Voluntary Service and Community Action Hampshire, which come to an end in 2013/14, are extended by a further year to enable time for the County Council to consider the findings from the review of support to the voluntary and community sector and to assess the approach adopted by Winchester City Council.
3. Winchester Area Community Action are allocated 12 months core funding provisionally, to be reviewed at six months, to give the County Council time to assess the outcome of Winchester City Council's new commissioned service.
4. A report on the review of support to the voluntary and community sector and future options be presented in mid 2014 /15.
5. Any future, funding for Victim Support should be reviewed in consultation with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Corporate Strategy but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> P & R Executive member decision day	<u>Reference</u> 4677	<u>Date</u> March 14 th 2013
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>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.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector Hampshire County Council Policy Statement	Corporate Services
Monitoring the Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure bodies	Corporate Services
CVS Review – Web Pages	http://www3.hants.gov.uk/voluntarysector.htm

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

- **Equalities Impact Assessment:**

Voluntary & Community Organisations (VCOs) are ideally placed to promote equality and the annual support provided to infrastructure organisations funding is aimed at promoting policies on equality and diversity with front line organisations. It also supports capacity, co-ordination and representation from the sector to better inform public services on a wide range of equality and diversity issues.

The overall reduction in funding to the grant applicants of 2% in 2014-15 is not disproportionate to the general reductions for the County Council and it is recognised that there is scope for collaboration between the infrastructure bodies to achieve efficiencies which should ensure that there is little or no impact on the promotion of equality. If there are very specific areas of work within the sector which require further specific support, there are a range of additional on-going grant opportunities available.

The County Council were involved in a specific equality impact assessment undertaken by Winchester City Council in view of the change to their funding proposals.

Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- The grants support capacity within the community to develop resilience and the effectiveness of local voluntary groups to support strong and safe communities, including services for victims of crime such as domestic abuse.

- **Climate Change:**

How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint/energy consumption?

By awarding grant funding to support the core functions of the Infrastructure organisations the Council will have an improved opportunity to ensure these organisations support our aims to reduce carbon footprint/energy consumption. This should have a long term positive impact. CAH deliver an energy advice programme.

How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

By working more closely with the infrastructure organisations and improving their accountability the Council will have an improved opportunity to ensure they and ultimately their members support our aims to tackle climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts.