

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
Date:	12 March 2015
Title:	Annual Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations
Reference:	6494
Report From:	Director of Policy and Governance – Corporate Services
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1. Executive Summary

This report recommends the approval of annual grants in 2015/16 from the Policy and Resources budget to the following organisations:

- Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS)
- Action Hampshire
- Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)
- Relate South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
- Citizens Advice Hampshire (CitAH)

1.2 The proposed grant allocations take into account the outcomes of a review undertaken in 2014 which explored how the Council can invest in, and work more closely with those organisations which provide infrastructure support services to the voluntary and community sector. The purpose of the review was to determine how the future arrangements could better support the Council's priorities for helping vulnerable people and how better value for money could be achieved.

1.3 In respect of local CVSs the report recommends a funding commitment for 2015/16 and 2016/17. The recommendations for other grant recipients will be on an annual basis pending further review work to be undertaken in 2015.

2. Background

2.1. The proposed awards include support to a range of "infrastructure" organisations whose role is to promote local community resilience and to build the capacity of the voluntary and community sector.

- 2.2. As the public sector faces severe future funding reductions and increasing demographic and social pressures, there will be an increasing dependency on the voluntary and community sector to work more closely with the Council and other key public sector partner organisations to build capacity and community resilience. The Council recognises that it must work harder with organisations that are well placed and able to develop, support and cohere voluntary organisations and volunteers (at all levels) to optimise every opportunity to reduce demand on public services.
- 2.3. The sustainability of essential Council services for vulnerable children and adults and is increasingly dependent upon the Council's ability to work with the voluntary and community sector to ensure that people requiring help have improved and earlier access to very local, timely, consistent, high quality support from whoever/wherever is most appropriate to deliver.
- 2.4. The Council has begun to look much more closely at how it can work with and support the voluntary and community sector, especially at the local level. It has undertaken a detailed review of its funding and working relationship with voluntary and community sector infrastructure bodies in order to achieve this. The process has involved extensive engagement and dialogue with the organisations concerned over the past two years. Further review work will be completed during 2015 to establish how the Council should support and work more closely with the organisations which are the subject of the proposed grant awards.
- 2.5. This direction is also embedded within the development of the Council's transformation programme.

3. Finance

- 3.1 The total amount of the grants recommended for approval is £832,965 which can be accommodated within the budget allocation for 2015/16. The proposed allocations for 2015/16 are set out in the table below.

Organisations	Funding in 2014/15	Recommended award for 2015/16
Local Councils for Voluntary Service	£505,371	£487,683
Action Hampshire	£257,493	£160,933
Relate South West Hampshire and the Isle of Wight	£24,597	£23,367
CitAH	£95,770	£90,982
HALC	£70,000	£70,000
Victim Support	£13,970	£0
TOTAL	£967,201	£832,965

- 3.2 The proposed award to local CVSs will be made through four self-selecting clusters and it is recommended that this be reduce by a further 3.5% in 2016/17.
- 3.3 The proposed award to Action Hampshire reflects a 50% reduction in funding from quarter 2 of 2015/16 as explained in section 4.
- 3.4 The proposed awards to Relate and to Citizens Advice Hampshire represent a 5% reduction for each organisation.
- 3.5 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. 2015/16 will be the final year of that agreement. Further work will be undertaken during 2015 with HALC to determine a way ahead for 2016/17 and beyond recognising the role the Association can play in maximising the effectiveness of contributions local councils can make to local communities.
- 3.6 Victim Support are not seeking an award from the annual grants budget in 2015/16. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight is now responsible for the commissioning of an expanded victims service and Victim Support has been awarded the contract. This contract encompasses the training of volunteers previously funded through the award from the Policy and Resources annual award.
- 3.7 The proposed awards will result in a reduced demand on the Policy and Resources Annual Grants budget of 19% from 2014/15 in advance of any further decisions for funding beyond 2015-16.
- 3.8 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. Grant recipients were formally informed of the review outcomes and indicative awards for 2015/16 during 2014/15 as part of the on-going process of engagement.

4. Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs) and Action Hampshire

- 4.1 The review process conducted by the County Council has involved extensive dialogue with infrastructure organisations and co-funders over a period of at least two years. Throughout this process the Council has been clear to explain its key priorities for joint working and the potential scale and reducing nature of the funding available over the long term. The Council has welcomed and discussed all ideas and proposals in an open way. The Council has emphasised that it will seek to move towards a more targeted delivery plan as part of its funding relationship with infrastructure organisations. This will lead to an increased focus of future investment on building capacity and resilience which will have the greatest impact in terms of preventing poor outcomes for vulnerable adults and children.
- 4.2 The Council has sought proposals to obtain increased effectiveness and efficiency of provision through better collaboration across the network of funded infrastructure providers. Throughout this process, and a Local Government Association peer review undertaken during 2014, the Council

has also sought to understand ways in which it can better support the needs of the sector through the way it operates.

- 4.2 The most significant outcome from the review was the scope to achieve better outcomes by working more effectively at the local level with Councils for Voluntary Service. These organisations are well embedded and valued in their local communities with strong connections to the network of local voluntary groups and organisations. They are engaged in a range of existing activity which are having a direct and practical impact on key priorities for the Council and there is scope for better targeting of support to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable, thereby also avoiding high cost crisis support for public services.
- 4.3 There is also, generally, a very strong existing, operational relationship between local CVSs and their respective District/Borough Council co-funders. This provides further opportunities to optimise wider joint working arrangements between local public and voluntary services. Continued investment in these bodies will provide significant leverage in terms of external funding drawn into Hampshire communities and the generation of voluntary action to support positive outcomes.
- 4.4 The local CVSs operate at the district level, with the exception of Havant and East Hampshire where there is one CVS covering both districts. Local CVSs have formed into four self selecting clusters in a commitment to optimise efficiencies through collaboration. It is expected that this will realise efficiencies which will more than accommodate the impact of a modest funding reduction from the County Council. It is proposed that the Council fund CVSs based on the self selecting clusters reduced by 3.5% in 2016/17 and by a further 3.% in 2016/17.
- 4.5 In addition to this modest efficiency requirement, it is expected that a more targeted development plan for the CVS to build capacity of the sector to better support vulnerable children and adults and a closer working relationship with local Council services will enable a step improvement in the effectiveness and impact of the Council's overall investment in voluntary sector infrastructure support services.
- 4.6 Action Hampshire is a Council for Voluntary Service operating on a county-wide basis. Their stated 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. Action Hampshire is also the Rural Community Council for Hampshire.
- 4.7 At the overall County level, the review concluded that the evidence around existing value, added value to local infrastructure support arrangements, and the prospects for improved impact of working with Action Hampshire, do not justify a continued investment at the current level. It is proposed that this award continue at the 2014/15 level until July 2015 then reduced to 50%. At £160,993 this still represents a very significant award for strategic support to the sector across Hampshire and should be subject to a revised development plan for 2015/16 and further review to inform future investment beyond 2015/16.

5. Relate South West Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

- 5.1 Relate Winchester and District has received Policy and Resources annual grant funding for many years to enable accessibility to its services and to manage increasing demand.
- 5.2 From April 2014, Relate Winchester and District merged with Relate Solent to form Relate South West Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This will realise efficiencies to secure a sustainable operation into the future against a backdrop of increased costs of service provision, including counsellor training, insurance and office overheads.
- 5.3 The service deals with a wide range of presenting issues include domestic violence and abuse, child protection issues (child abuse/violence), substance abuse, unemployment, financial hardship, mental health, sex and internet addiction, bereavement, affairs, low self esteem, blended family difficulties, parenting difficulties and teenage pregnancies. Family and relationship breakdowns are a major factor in social housing demand, educational attainment, debt, employment and general health.
- 5.4 The Council aims to further build its relationship with Relate as a partner which is well placed to support programmes such as Supporting Troubled Families, delivering positive outcomes for families and reducing demand on high cost public services. In the meantime, the proposed award for 2015/16 will represent a 5% reduction in funding.

6. Citizens Advice Hampshire (CitAH)

- 6.1 Citizen's Advice Hampshire works with Citizens Advice Bureau across the County and with other partners from the advice sector. The annual award is directed towards supporting core activity around training provision for CAB volunteers, staff and trustees; the promotion and facilitation of best practice exchange between local bureaux and the wider advice sector. CitAH operates a specialist support line for CABs dealing with employment law and welfare benefits in an increasingly complex arena. It has also established a valuable specialist research and policy function and is pro-actively sharing intelligence and evidence with the County Council to help shape services and support vulnerable groups.
- 6.2 CitAH lead the Hampshire Advice Network, which brings together over 60 advice agencies from across the county to ensure consistency of support and quality of information and advice. It is also a delivery partner for Hampshire Healthwatch. CitAH is therefore an important partner, well placed to support the Council in engaging the wider advice network around key developments. These include the development of the Supporting Troubled Families Programme, the Hampshire's Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) offer and shaping the future approach to implementing the advice and information requirements of the Care Act which will include a contribution to the design and early testing of the specified county wide advice and information service during 2015/16.

- 6.4 The Council will seek to work more closely with CitAH on these and related programmes and to review the future investment and joint working arrangements for 2016/17 and beyond. In the meantime, the proposed award for 2015/16 will represent a 5% reduction in funding.

7. Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 HALC has worked closely with the Economy, Transport and Environment Department during 2014/15 to support improved information, supporting joint work around highways maintenance and resilience in terms of minimising flood risk and recovery operations. Further review work will be undertaken in 2015 on how HALC can support the County Council to explore further opportunities to work with local councils to optimise local resources and to support the capacity and resilience of local communities.

8. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- a) The annual grants in 2015/16 from the Policy and Resources budget be awarded to the voluntary and community organisations as set out in section 3 of this report.
- b) The grant to local CVSs be made through four self selecting clusters for two years subject to a further reduction of an additional 3.5% in 2016/17 and to an agreed annual development plan.
- c) The grant to Action Hampshire be subject to an agreed development plan for 2015-16 and subject to further review for 2016/17.
- d) The proposed awards to Relate South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Citizen's Advice Hampshire, and Hampshire Association of Local Councils be made for 2015/16 pending further work during 2015 to understand the opportunities for enhanced joint working and to determine proposed grants for 2016/17 and beyond.

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>

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;

Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

The recipients of the Policy and Resources Annual Grants include voluntary and community sector infrastructure bodies whose work is to help develop the capacity of voluntary and community organisations, many of which work with marginalised communities and individuals. There is therefore a positive indirect impact of these grants on people with protected characteristics. It is a condition of the grant that the infrastructure organisations "demonstrate proactive support for groups and organisations from marginalised communities and individuals with specific protected characteristics".

A central objective of the review has been to ensure that within a reduced overall budget, this range of indirect support provision is delivered in a more efficient and effective way for example through improved collaboration and more focused targeting of support on vulnerable adults and children most in need of support to prevent poor outcomes and the need for high cost public services. Critically, the Council has worked to understand how it can work much more closely with the grant recipients to optimise the use of resources. This provides an opportunity for a positive impact on groups with protected characteristics because it will lead to an improved and shared understanding of the needs of marginalised groups need.

The review during 2014 focused primarily on the local Councils for Voluntary Service and Action Hampshire, taking an overall view of the system of support available to voluntary and community sector organisations and groups.

The process has involved presentations, discussions and one to one meetings with the grant recipients to establish opportunities with each organisation for improved effectiveness and efficiency and opportunities to work with the Council to support vulnerable people. As a result the Council will be working with the grant recipients and co-funders to establish specific development plans, taking into account the Council's equalities responsibilities. Under the terms of the grant agreement and by working closely on the development plans, the grant recipients will be ensuring that the support services fully take into account support for groups and organisations from marginalised communities and individuals with specific protected characteristics.

The recommendations reflect the assessed effectiveness and efficiency of the broader system of support. The review outcome has been explained to all the grant recipients concerned in writing and through discussions with Board members.

The Equality Impact Assessment identified that there could be a potential medium impact on the protected characteristics Religion and Belief and Race. Action Hampshire currently deliver a number of specific initiatives which are funded through additional County Council sources, including support to the Hampshire Interfaith Network and the Independent Equality Forum. The risk of any actual impact to these particular characteristics, brought about by the core funding reduction to Action Hampshire, is however most likely to be low or none since there are alternative providers who are well placed to support these communities. For example in those areas, such as Rushmoor, which have an identified ethnic community there is strong support through the local CVS. Rushmoor borough has the largest non- white population at 15.3% mainly due to a growing Nepalese population. Across the rest of the county we see a variation of a non-white population ranging from 7.1% in Basingstoke and Deane to 2.9% in Havant.

Action Hampshire is also the Rural Community Council (RCC) for Hampshire and supported appropriately by DEFRA through Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). Any resulting impact on Action Hampshire's capacity could have an indirect impact on rural communities. This can be mitigated against by other local organisations supporting rural communities and through other specific grants to support specific initiatives including for example the Council's on-going support provided to the Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing for which Action Hampshire is the existing delivery lead.

2. 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.

3. 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.

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.