

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
<b>Date:</b>	9 March 2018
<b>Title:</b>	Annual core infrastructure grants to Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations
<b>Report From:</b>	Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Services

**Contact name:** Antonia Perkins

**Tel:** 01794 835308

**Email:** antonia.perkins@hants.gov.uk

### 1. Recommendation(s)

1.1. This report requests the following approvals from the Executive Member for Policy and Resources:

- Approval of one year's grant funding of £17,980 for Relate South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
- Approval of one year's grant funding of £70,000 for Citizens Advice Hampshire
- Approval of one year's grant funding of £551,100 to Community First for voluntary sector infrastructure support within Hampshire, in accordance with paragraph 5 of this report

### 2. Executive Summary

2.1. The purpose of this paper is to allocate annual grant funding to support core services within the voluntary sector and to approve the move to fund a single Council for Voluntary Services to be responsible for the delivery of voluntary sector infrastructure support within Hampshire. This new approach builds on work with the voluntary sector to streamline the delivery of infrastructure support and to reduce the risk of service duplication across the nine CVS and Action Hampshire.

### 3. Context

3.1. The County Council provides core funding to the voluntary sector via the Policy and Resources budget to Councils of Voluntary Service (CVS),

Citizens Advice Hampshire and Relate South West Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

- 3.2. The County Council works closely with CVS to encourage efficient voluntary sector infrastructure support through improved collaboration and joined-up working. Significant progress has been made by reducing the number of separate grant-funded organisations down from nine district-based CVS organisations to three CVS 'clusters' alongside Action Hampshire, who provide county-wide support.
- 3.3. Over the last year, the County Council has been working with the CVS to determine the best way in which it can use its funding to support the Sector to become more resilient and effective. At the heart of this work has been the co-design of the funding specification for this year, with an agreed set of criteria. This includes activities to promote closer working across the CVS in order to streamline some functions and to remove existing levels of competition and duplication – with the clear intention of moving towards a single lead organisation accountable to the County Council for delivery for 2018/19.

#### **4. Background to funding for voluntary sector infrastructure support**

- 4.1. CVS organisations provide a variety of support services to Hampshire's voluntary and community sector. This support includes organisational support, training, local networks and collaboration, developing a voice for the sector and Volunteer Services. There are currently nine local CVS organisations across Hampshire which are organised into three CVS 'clusters' for the purpose of the County Council's awards, together with Action Hampshire. Voluntary and community organisations that operate at district level, or below, are able to access support from their local CVS. Countywide organisations tend to receive support from Action Hampshire, which covers all of Hampshire.
- 4.2. In 2015/16, the County Council stopped funding the individual district based CVS organisations and moved to funding four self-selecting CVS clusters (Northern, Central, South West and South East). Subsequently the South East cluster joined the Central cluster. Each cluster has a lead CVS organisation accountable for delivery against an agreed development plan, aligned to County Council priorities, and for distributing funding within the cluster. Action Hampshire was awarded a separate grant to support county-wide working, complementing the work of local CVS – and as such, is increasingly collaborating with the clusters to enable join-up in the level and type of support provided. This includes participating in the quarterly review meetings between the Council and the CVS.
- 4.3. The County Council is supporting and encouraging CVS organisations to become more self-sufficient and less reliant on grant funding. The expectation has been that this could be achieved through sharing services, becoming more streamlined, and looking at new ways of working to reduce costs and generate income. The County Council highly values its strategic partnership with Hampshire's CVS, and is fully committed to strengthening it

further, recognising the important role it undertakes across Hampshire's communities – particularly at a time when public sector services are under financial strain.

- 4.4. For this reason, the level of grant awarded for 2017/18 was not reduced - it was maintained at the same level as the previous year (£551,100 in total). This was intended to support CVSs in becoming more efficient and financially self-sustaining through greater joint working.

## **5. Proposal for relationship with single lead Council for Voluntary Services**

- 5.1. The CVS clusters and Action Hampshire have made good progress throughout the year in identifying opportunities to streamline delivery, for example by developing one Hampshire-wide website for training opportunities and governance advice.
- 5.2. It is recommended that, building on this work to date with Hampshire CVS, the County Council distribute grant for voluntary sector infrastructure funding via one lead organisation. This single organisation will be responsible for ensuring the mutually agreed funding specification is delivered and provide a single point of contact for the County Council with regard to these services.
- 5.3. The nine CVS, as well as Action Hampshire, have now agreed to nominate Community First as the single organisation which will receive voluntary sector infrastructure funding grant from the County Council. The County Council will agree the funding specification collaboratively with all Hampshire CVS, and the funding agreement will ensure the new process is fair and transparent.
- 5.4. It is proposed that a grant of £551,100 is awarded to Community First for voluntary sector infrastructure support within Hampshire. This is at the same level as grant funding awarded in 2017/18, recognising that there will be a period of adjustment to the new approach and an additional administrative burden placed on Community First to performance manage the grant.
- 5.5. The single grant for infrastructure support will continue to be managed by the Assistant Chief Executive. Service specific grants will continue to be managed by departments.

## **6. Citizens Advice Hampshire**

- 6.1. Citizens Advice Hampshire delivers training and development to around 220 paid employees and 1000 volunteers across 14 local Citizens Advice offices. It also provides specialist advice lines on employment and welfare and maintains a single point of contact between Local Citizens Advice and wider strategic partners.
- 6.2. Its annual impact report states that the County Council's funding enables the Service to support around 59,000 people each year – who are often among the most vulnerable residents in Hampshire's communities.
- 6.3. It is recommended that a grant of £70,000 is awarded to Citizens Advice Hampshire for 2018/19, representing a reduction of 19% from last year. This

is in line with wider budget reductions across the County Council and is in line with expectations from Citizens Advice Hampshire due to ongoing dialogue with the voluntary sector about the County Council's financial position.

## 7. Relate South West Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (SWH&IW)

- 7.1. Throughout 2017/18, Relate has continued to provide relationship counselling, therapy and life skills training at venues across Hampshire. Relate has seen an increase in enquiries and initial referrals from the CAMHS team, Children's Services and GPs across the area, although clients themselves continue to be the main source of referral.
- 7.2. During 2017/18 Relate SWH&IW has developed significant links with the County Council's Supporting Families Programme and provided counselling and mediation services to a number of families with complex needs who are included in the Programme.
- 7.3. Relate SWH&IW is actively pursuing significant collaborative opportunities to enhance its offer and achieve efficiencies which will assist in reducing the long term dependency on grant funding from the County Council. In light of this and ongoing work with the County Council to source alternative venue for Relate to reduce accommodation costs, a grant of £17,980 if recommended, reflecting a 19% reduction from 2017/18.

## 8. Finance

- 8.1. The **total amount** of the grants recommended for approval is **£639,105**, which can be accommodated within the budget allocation for 2018/19. This is consistent with the amount of funding awarded in 2017/18 for the reasons detailed in this report. The proposed allocations are set out in the table below.

Organisation	Funding in 2017/18	Recommended award for 2018/19
Local Councils of Voluntary Services	£470,614	
Action Hampshire	£80,496	
Voluntary sector infrastructure grant to Community First		£551,100
Relate South West Hampshire and the Isle of Wight	£22,199	£17,980
Citizens Advice Hampshire	£86,432	£70,000
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>659,741</b>	<b>639,080</b>

## **9. Consultation and Equalities**

- 9.1. Extensive consultation has been undertaken with the CVS within Hampshire during this year, working towards the allocation of grant to a single CVS for the provision of infrastructure support across Hampshire. A number of meetings have been held at the end of 2017/beginning of 2018 to discuss implications and to gain consensus to this approach.
- 9.2. Continuous dialogue with voluntary sector partners has taken place about the County Council's financial situation, and notice given about the potential reduction to grant funding for 2018/19. Responses were received from Relate and Citizens Advice Hampshire accepting a potential reduction, and the County Council will continue to work with organisations to support them in reducing their reliance on grant funding.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	yes

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**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.)**

Document

Location

None

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **10. Equality Duty**

10.1. 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:**

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) 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.

### **11. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

11.1. The purpose of the County Council's financial support to voluntary sector infrastructure organisations is to ensure that groups and organisations are helped to develop their effectiveness, particularly in supporting vulnerable groups. It also promotes individual voluntary action to benefit vulnerable people including those who participate and those who receive help as a result of that activity. The health of the sector and level of voluntary action is fundamental to the wellbeing of residents including the most vulnerable and consequently to the demand on public services.

11.2. The equality impact of the change to CVS funding is deemed to be low because the comparatively significant proposed total investment remains unchanged. The proposed changes to the way this funding is applied is the result of a process of partnership development with the existing providers, facilitated by the County Council, the object of which has been to ensure this investment generates increased value and effectiveness. This will therefore deliver an even greater positive impact on vulnerable groups including those with protected characteristics.

11.3. Work will continue to prepare a detailed delivery specification and will take into account priorities of service departments in supporting their voluntary sector partners and provider markets. The specification will include a

requirement for voluntary organisations to promote equality, diversity and inclusiveness within the voluntary sector for example through training and the development of supported volunteering.

**12. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

- 12.1. The grants support capacity within the community to develop resilience and the effectiveness of local voluntary groups to support strong and safe communities.

**13. Climate Change:**

- 12.1 By continuing to work closely with the VCS infrastructure organisations, the County Council may have greater ability in the specification to influence these organisations, and their members, to support the County Council's aims with regard to climate change.