



Prosperous Communities

Tuesday, 7 December 2021

Subject: Voluntary and Community Sector Grants 2022/2023

Report by:

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Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To approve a one year extension of grant funding and begin a broader review of future VCS grants.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. Committee approve Voluntary and Community Sector Grants for 2022/23.**
- 2. Committee approve a broader review of all Voluntary and Community Sector Grants and present findings and recommendations back to Committee before the end of 2022.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Grant funding agreements used meet legal requirements and have been approved for use by Legal Services. All grants awarded will comply with necessary legal regulations and same requirements will be placed on projects and organisations funded.

Any consultation activity conducted as part of the VCS Grants review will adhere to any legal requirements and principles such as the Gunning Principles.

(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO

Financial : FIN/137/22/SL/PC

There is ongoing budget of £122.2k within the MTFP for VCS grants.

In 2021/22 an underspend of £9k is reported, £1k Arts Act Now Project not drawn down, and £8k Churches Festival grant which did not go ahead during the year due to Covid19 restrictions. It is proposed to carry forwards £4k into 2022/23. This will increase the budget allocation in 2022/23 to £126.2k.

As detailed at 4.4 the proposed grant allocations for 2022/23 total £121.2k, plus a requested £5k for commissioning work to support the VCS grants review work in 2022.

Revised Budget 2022/23	126,200
Total Grants Payable 2022/23	121,200
Commissioning Work	5,000
Total Spend 2022/23	126,200

The ongoing budget of £122.2k will remain unchanged within the MTFP from 2023/24, pending the review of VCS grants in 2022.

Staffing :

The management of VCS Grants will be delivered using existing staff resources within the Council's Communities Team. The same staffing resources will be used to undertake VCS Grant review work.

(N.B.) Where there are staffing implications the report MUST have a HR Ref

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Grant funding activity will be delivered in accordance with Council's equality and diversity policies. Organisations receiving funding will be required to meet the same standards and protections are included within grant funding agreements.

Data Protection Implications :

Grant funding activity will comply with all necessary data protection requirements. Data collected for grant awards will be stored securely including financial information for grant payments.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

The delivery of VCS Grants will utilise a digital first approach with use of electronic forms, documents and e-mail to avoid the need for printing.

The organisations receiving VCS Grants may have a direct impact on carbon reduction and environment through the work they deliver. For 2022/23 additional monitoring requirements will be introduced to capture this information for reporting and evaluation purposes.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations :

There are no considerations for this report however some organisations funded may have a direct or in-direct impact on helping to reduce the risk of crime and disorder. Where possible this will be captured in any monitoring and evaluation reporting.

Health Implications:

VCS Grants support targeted services across West Lindsey which all have a direct impact on health and wellbeing of service users. The impacts can be wide ranging and some cases are in-direct benefits as a result of a service being delivered.

For 2022/23 additional monitoring requirements will be introduced to capture information about the health & wellbeing impact of their work. This will include both quantitative and qualitative data (i.e. statistics and case studies).

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

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Risk Assessment :

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Grant funding agreements have a range of mechanisms in place for raising any concerns or issues during the delivery of a service/project. Specific risk assessment activity would be undertaken by Officers in the event of a concern or issues being identified to fully understand the situation and mitigate likelihood and impact.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

X

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

X

No

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council provides a range of Voluntary and Community Sector Grants to support the delivery of projects and services for the benefit of our communities and residents. The delivery of these services helps contribute towards the Council's Corporate Plan priorities.
- 1.2 Current VCS grant agreements end on 31st March 2022. The current VCS Grants were approved by Prosperous Communities Committee on 23rd October 2018. This report recommends a one year extension to VCS grants.
- 1.3 An additional recommendation approved at the 23rd October 2018 Committee was to undertake a more detailed Community & Voluntary Sector Funding review during the next 3 years. This review would have taken place during the final year of the three year grant period but has not been able to proceed.

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the re-deployment and priority tasking of Community Officers. The organisations being funded were also operating in response mode helping to support pandemic response and recovery work.

This report recommends commencing a broader review of VCS grants to be completed and presented back to Committee by the end of 2022. Conducting the review during 2022 will enable Officers to take into consideration new strategies that have recently been adopted (i.e. Carbon Reduction) and ones currently in development (i.e. Health & Wellbeing Strategy).

- 1.4 This proposed approach is in-line with other Local Authorities that also provide this type of VCS grant funding. For example Lincolnshire County Council and Nottingham City Council are proposing a 1 year extension to current grants with a more detailed review to take place during 2022.

2 Impact of VCS Grants

- 2.1 **Citizens Advice (Lindsey & Lincoln)**
Citizens Advice Lindsey covers all the district. Some areas such as outlying Lincoln villages are served by a telephone advice service. Actual appointments for clients in the Lincoln surrounding areas are then provided by the Lincoln service. Citizens Advice provide free, confidential and impartial advice to residents.
- 2.2 **Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association (GAPA)**
GAPA provides a range of services that benefit children and families in the Gainsborough and surrounding area. Service users also attend with other challenges that GAPA staff and volunteers support. The organisation has a well-built reputation amongst children and families in the Gainsborough East Ward. The wider impact they have helps to tackle

social issues such as isolation, mental health issues and crime & disorder.

2.3 Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride (LADAR)

LADAR provide services within a 6 miles radius from Lincoln. This includes a number of populated areas in West Lindsey including Saxilby, Welton, Nettleham, Cherry Willingham. The district has a higher population of older people so transport services such as this are essential for access to other services such as the hospital whilst enabling people to remain more independent for longer. LADAR are also supported by Lincolnshire County Council, City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council.

2.4 Voluntary Centre Services

Voluntary Centre Services offer a very wide range of services that benefit residents, volunteers and community groups in the district. Provide a range of training which helps to enhance the wider community sector and thus help many other organisations to grow and develop. Services provided help to attract and encourage people to volunteer for roles and organisations across the district. This then represents added value in volunteer time, local communities getting involved and people doing things for their own physical and mental wellbeing. In addition to these services Voluntary Centre Services also deliver a range of specific interventions linked to public health such as Social Pre-scribing across West Lindsey.

2.5 West Lindsey Churches Festival

The West Lindsey Churches Festival offers excellent value for money in delivering a well-known event spanning 4 days each year. The festival provides a key opportunity for churches to raise vital funds. This is important to enable churches to be maintained for the benefit of both worship and wider community use. Funding from WLDC is used to cover costs such as publicity and brochure printing which are critical to the success of the festival. The organisers have a long track record of delivery and the local support is demonstrated with nearly 100 churches now taking part in the festival each year.

2.6 Due to the size of all the monitoring and impact information produced by the above organisations, these reports have not been included as Appendices with this report. Further impact information is available to view on request and published on the Council's website.

3 Corporate Plan

3.1 The current VCS grants focussed on supporting themes identified in the previous version of the Council's Corporate Plan. These were:

- Theme 1: Open for Business
- Theme 2: People First
- Theme 3: Asset Management

- Theme 5: Partnerships/Devolution
- Theme 6: Excellent Value for Money Services

3.2 Any future VCS grants will require a clear demonstration of how the services delivered will contribute towards the Council's current Corporate Plan priorities. The proposed 1 year grant extensions will fund service delivery that will directly support the following Corporate Plan priorities:

Our Council

- Partnerships

Our People

- Health & Wellbeing
- Leisure
- Skills
- Vulnerable Groups & Communities

Our Place

- Economic Growth
- External Investment
- Social Regeneration
- Enhanced Environment

3.3 New grant funding agreements put in place for VCS Grants will identify which of the above priorities that organisation will contribute towards and how it will be measured to demonstrate impact.

4 Financial

4.1 The table below show the allocated funding for the current VCS grants, over the 3 year period from 2019/20 to 2020/21:

Organisation	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	TOTAL
Act Now	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£3,000
Citizens Advice (Lindsey & Lincoln)	£60,200	£60,200	£60,200	£180,600
Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association (GAPA)	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£45,000
Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride	£11,000	£12,000	£13,000	£36,000
Voluntary Centre Services	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£75,000

West Lindsey Churches Festival	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£24,000
TOTAL	£120,200	£121,200	£122,200	£363,600

4.2 The grant amount allocated to Act Now has not been drawn down by the organisation in any year. It is not proposed to provide a 1 year extension of this grant, however the organisation will continue to be eligible to apply to other Council community grant schemes.

4.3 The West Lindsey Churches Festival did not take place in 2020/21 due to the COVID19 Pandemic. The £8,000 grant allocation for 2021/22 can be carried forward to support the event resuming in 2022.

4.4 Financial Profile of 1 Year Extension - 2022/23

Original Budget 2022/23	122,200
Carry forward from 2021/22	4,000
Revised Budget 2022/23	126,200
Citizens Advice (Lindsey & Lincoln)	60,200
Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association (GAPA)	15,000
Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride	13,000
Voluntary Centre Services	25,000
West Lindsey Churches Festival	8,000
Total Grants Payable 2022/23	121,200
Commissioning Work	5,000
Total Spend 2022/23	126,200

4.5 The budget within the MTFP from 2022/23 onwards is a total of £122.2k for VCS Grants.

4.6 It is proposed to carry forward £4k of the £9k VCS Grant underspend from 2021/22 into 2022/23, which will increase the budget to £126.2k.

4.7 The extension of the schemes detailed at 4.4 total grant payments in 2022/23 of £121.2k.

4.8 It is also proposed that an allocation of £5k be made from the existing budget provision to support costs associated with the VCS Grants review work. This would include any commissioning of agencies to conduct engagement and research activity on behalf of the Council. The use of an external professional organisation to support engagement activity will help provide additional assurance around independent findings.

- 4.9 Any unallocated budget is to be included, alongside any unclaimed grants, in future funding provision shaped by the proposed Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review.
- 4.10 The ongoing budget of £122.2k within the MTFP from 2023/24 to remain unchanged pending the outcome of the review of VCS Grants in 2022.

5 Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review

- 5.1 As the Council faces new challenges and changing needs it is important that any community grant funding activity is fully aligned to current needs and helping to deliver our Corporate Plan priorities and other strategic objectives.
- 5.2 By undertaking a full review of all VCS grants we can ensure funding is awarded to services with clearly identified need and ensure best value for money. The review will be able to take into consideration new and emerging strategies focussed on key areas such as health & wellbeing.
- 5.3 As such, the scope for the review will include the following:
- Voluntary and Community Sector Core Grants
 - Community Grants (e.g. Councillor Initiative Fund and Match Funding Grant)
 - Ad hoc agreements with organisations (e.g. Lincolnshire County Council Call Connect)
- 5.4 The review will engage all key stakeholders within West Lindsey. Internally, Officers will be working alongside the Community Grants Panel and with all members to understand the needs of our communities. Externally, the whole sector will be consulted to gauge the current levels of provision and needs across the district.
- 5.5 Trends in all surveys and consultations throughout the whole process will be highlighted, and recommendations will be made aligned to the Corporate Plan and key strategies.
- 5.6 Therefore, any funding awards will be closely linked to relevant priorities ensuring best value for money and outcomes aligned to community need.
- 5.7 The proposed milestones of the review are:
- Identify Council priorities for funding – April 2022
 - Corporate Plan and strategies
 - Member engagement
 - Officer engagement
 - Voluntary & Community Sector Engagement – August 2022
 - Consultation and surveys
 - Engagement events/activity

- Analyse findings and prepare recommendations – October 2022
- Committee and final approvals – December 2022

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Committee approve Voluntary and Community Sector Grants for 2022/23.
- 6.2 Committee approve a broader review of all Voluntary and Community Sector Grants and present findings and recommendations back to Committee before the end of 2022.