



Prosperous Communities

Tuesday, 6 December 2022

Subject: Voluntary & Community Sector Grants

Report by:

Assistant Director Homes and Communities

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To approve Core Voluntary and Community Sector Grants for 2023/24.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Committee approve Core Voluntary and Community Sector Grants for 2023/24 as follows:

- **Citizens Advice (Lindsey & Lincoln) - £60,000**
- **Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association - £15,000**
- **Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride - £13,000**
- **The Conservation Volunteers - £30,000**
- **Voluntary Centre Services - £25,000**
- **West Lindsey Churches Festival - £8,000**

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.

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

Financial : FIN/115/23/SL

There is ongoing budget provision within the MTFP of £151,200 for Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) grants, to reflect the grant allocations proposed at section 8.1

Organisation	2023/24 Funding
Citizens Advice (Lindsey & Lincoln)	£60,200
Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association (GAPA)	£15,000
Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride	£13,000
The Conservation Volunteers	£30,000
Voluntary Centre Services	£25,000
West Lindsey Churches Festival	£8,000
TOTAL:	£151,200

(N.B.) All committee reports MUST have a Fin Ref

Staffing :

The management of VCS Grants will be delivered using existing staff resources within the Council's Communities Team.

(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 :

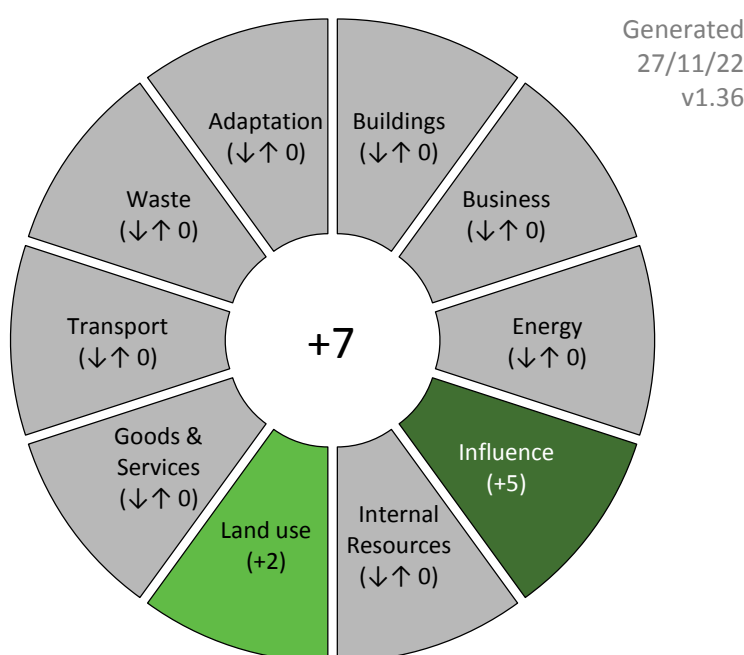
Grant funding activity will comply with all necessary data protection requirements. Data collected for grant awards will be stored securely including financial information for grant payments.

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. As part of grant monitoring and evaluation any impacts on environment will be captured.

In particular the work delivered by The Conservation Volunteers will have a direct impact on environmental protection with council owned green spaces being maintained and enhanced.



West Lindsey District Council will be net zero by 2050 (27 years and 1 months away).

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.

Monitoring and evaluation helps capture details of the impact on health and wellbeing. This is also presented in the form of case studies to help demonstrate the impact on individuals by organisations we grant fund.

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

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 core Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Grants to support the delivery of projects and services for the benefit of our communities and residents. The delivery of these services contributes towards the Council's Corporate Plan priorities.
- 1.2 Current Core VCS grant agreements end on 31st March 2023. The current core funding VCS grants were approved by Prosperous Communities Committee on 7th December 2021 for a 1-year period beginning 1st April 2022. An additional recommendation at this meeting was to undertake a review of VCS Grants which has been completed.
- 1.3 Officers have conducted a review of VCS grants. The findings of the review have been shared with the Community Grants Panel (a Member Working Group) and they have endorsed the recommendations in this report. This report summarises the review and recommends continuation with 1-year grant agreements.
- 1.4 The proposed approach of 1-year grant agreements aligns to supporting delivery against the current Corporate Plan 2019-2023. Officers will then conduct further funding review work during 2023/24 and present recommendations to a future committee aligned to a new Corporate Plan.

2 Review Methodology

- 2.1 Officers completed a review of core VCS grants to ensure projects and services being delivered contributed to Corporate Plan priorities, addressed identified community needs and achieved value for money.
- 2.2 The review work included meetings with organisation leaders, surveys, site visits, data collection and case studies.
- 2.3 The key elements of the review work have been:
 - Desktop research and review of literature (August – November 2022)
 - Data received from organisations
 - Template form completed by organisations to provide key information for review
 - Semi-structure interviews with core-funded VCS organisations and identified officers (October 2022)
 - 121 interview meetings held with all organisations
 - Detailed discussion on organisational position, challenges, financial position and future opportunities
 - State of VCS questions incorporated into funding related site visits with VCS across the district (July – November 2022)

3 VCS Landscape Nationally

3.1 National research on the current status of the voluntary and community sector is highlighted in the Civil Society Almanac 2022:¹

- The number of voluntary organisations increased as did the sector's workforce and total income.
- The combined effects of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis are likely to impact the sector as a whole but leave smaller charities particularly vulnerable.
- For the first time in 20 years, income from the public contributed half (51%) of all voluntary sector income, while income from government continued to decline.
- Volunteer retention for older and socio-economically disadvantaged groups has become challenging.

3.2 The predicted impact on the sustainability of smaller VCS organisations nationally is also likely to be the case in West Lindsey. This is evidenced by increased applications to our Community Grant schemes as well as increased enquiries for funding and governance support.

3.3 Declines in government funding, grants and foundation funding are likely not to be made up in public donations and support due to the cost of living crisis. This leaves the sector, and the people they serve, vulnerable.

3.4 The UK government commissioned research (August 2022) looking at the growth potential and barriers for VCS organisations, in particular in relation to the delivery of public services and their participation in public procurement and commissioning processes.² The report recognised the importance of place-based action by VCS organisations with strong links to their locality. It highlighted that the public procurement and commissioning processes tended to favour larger VCS organisations with income over £10m. Barriers were identified for the vast majority of VCS from accessing public funding despite delivering significant social value. The report recognised the importance of grants as part of the VCS support process alongside public procurement was required processes as well as utilisation of the Social Value Model in procurement processes.³

¹ <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/uk-civil-society-almanac-2022/#/> NCVO – UK Civil Society Almanac 2022

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-role-of-voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-vcse-organisations-in-public-procurement> (Accessed November 2022)

³ https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwinIKuF9qP7AhUUT8AKHalwD2UQFnoECAkQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F940826%2FSocial-Value-Model-Edn-1.1-3-Dec-20.pdf&usq=AOvVaw3OkwiTu7Q75HMSIzKZMV-J (Accessed November 2022)

4 Core VCS Grants from West Lindsey District Council

- 4.1 The council has supported core funding for identified VCS organisations that are critical to achieving its corporate plan objectives for many years. The historic arrangements for these grants were based on identified need and shared objectives and these have been reviewed on a 3-yearly basis with annual monitoring.
- 4.2 The following core funding grants have been provided during 2022/23:

Organisation	2022/23 Funding
Citizens Advice (Lindsey & Lincoln)	£60,200
Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association (GAPA)	£15,000
Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride	£13,000
The Conservation Volunteers	£30,000
Voluntary Centre Services	£25,000
West Lindsey Churches Festival	£8,000

The total core funding value for all grants listed above is £151,200.

- 4.3 The core funding grants play a critical role in meeting our corporate plan objectives by:
- Providing critical advice and support to all our residents and in particular those who are most at-risk, in relation to debt and any other problems they face
 - Supporting voluntary and community sector organisations to serve the most vulnerable and marginalised
 - Facilitating volunteering in the community to build skills, experience and community engagement
 - Supporting vulnerable and at-risk individuals in both town and rural areas to be independent and thrive
 - Maintaining green spaces and supporting environmental development
 - Maintaining identified community and heritage assets

5 Summary of Review Findings

- 5.1 The following key findings from the core VCS Grants review work have been identified:
- The current core funded VCS organisations are meeting significant needs and gaps relating to essential service provision for West Lindsey citizens, assets and spaces.
 - The current core funding arrangement for VCS organisations are important contributors to the council's corporate plan.
 - Any changes to the core funding arrangement in the short-term would have a major impact on the service delivery of the VCS organisations

- Changes to the existing core funding arrangement would likely have a significant impact on current council operations and outcomes.
- The impact of changes of funding streams including the end of European Social Fund and the potential UK Shared Prosperity Fund as well as current funding reviews by key regional funders all need to be monitored in relation to their impact on the VCS sector and the council's intended outcomes in 2023 and beyond.
- Other VCS organisations could benefit from core funding arrangements with the council but this would require alignment and analysis with any new corporate plan.

5.2 Impact and outcomes of VCS Grants

A table has been produced summarising the findings from the review work conducted by officers. This is included in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 – VCS Grants Impact & Outcomes

5.3 Case Studies

A series of case studies have been prepared as part of the review work conducted by officers. These are included in Appendix 2.

Appendix 2 – Case Studies

6 Financial Profile 2023/24

- 6.1 This report proposes continuing the core VCS Grants to existing organisations with a 1-year grant agreement. Based on this recommendation the following financial profile would be used:

Organisation	2023/24 Funding
Citizens Advice (Lindsey & Lincoln)	£60,200
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The Conservation Volunteers	£30,000
Voluntary Centre Services	£25,000
West Lindsey Churches Festival	£8,000
TOTAL:	£151,200

- 6.2 The budget within the MTFP from 2023/24 onwards is a total of £151,200 for core VCS Grants.

7 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 7.1 All core VCS grants will be awarded with a grant funding agreement containing monitoring and evaluation requirements. Organisations receiving funding will

be required to provide regular monitoring information to demonstrate the impact of services and activities being delivered.

- 7.2 Monitoring information will be collected to help support future core VCS grant review work during 2023/2024. Regular updates will be shared with Members as appropriate and promoted through our Communications Team.

8 Core VCS Grants beyond 2023/24

- 8.1 Officers will utilise monitoring and evaluation information obtained during 2023/24 to help prepare future funding recommendations for Members. This will include engagement with the Community Grants Panel.
- 8.2 Future recommendations for core VCS grants beyond 2023/24 will be aligned to a new Corporate Plan and any relevant strategies at that time.

9 Recommendations

- 9.1 Committee approve Core Voluntary and Community Sector Grants for 2023/24 as follows:
- Citizens Advice (Lindsey & Lincoln) - £60,000
 - Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association - £15,000
 - Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride - £13,000
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