



Prosperous Communities

Tuesday, 17 March 2026

Subject: Voluntary & Community Sector Funding

Report by:	Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities
Contact Officer:	Grant White Communities Manager grant.white@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	To present recommendations and approve future voluntary & community sector core funding awards.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That Committee approve Voluntary & Community Sector funding for 2026/27 as follows:
 - Call Connect - £30,000
 - Citizens Advice Lincoln & Lindsey - £60,200
 - Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association - £15,000
 - Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride - £13,000
 - Live & Local - £3,500
 - The Conservation Volunteers - £30,000
 - Voluntary Centre Services - £25,000
 - West Lindsey Churches Festival - £8,000
2. That Committee approve to undertake a review of Voluntary & Community Sector funding as set out in Section 5 of this report and present a report to the Prosperous Communities Committee by December 2026.

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.

Financial: FIN/164/26/PC/AP

There is ongoing base budget within the MTFP of £184,700 pa in relation to the current commitment for Voluntary & Community Sector funding grants, which matches the proposed grant awards for 2026/27.

Staffing :

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

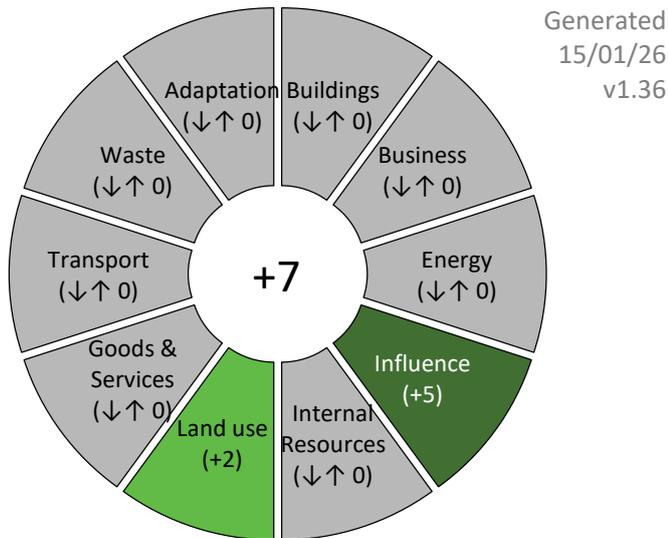
Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

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 :



West Lindsey District Council will be net zero by 2050 (23)

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.

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

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 help 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:

None

Risk Assessment :

None

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

Key Decision:

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

Yes

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 and various other strategies.
- 1.2 Current VCS funding agreements end on 31st March 2026. The current core funding awards were approved by Prosperous Communities Committee on 3rd December 2024 for a 1-year period beginning 1st April 2025.
- 1.3 At the Prosperous Communities Committee meeting on 3rd December 2024, a second recommendation approved was to continue VCS Funding Review work already completed with further engagement and site visits for Councillors during 2025. Review work is still required, and this report proposes conducting further engagement and review work during 2026 taking into consideration key developments such as Local Government Reorganisation.
- 1.4 This report provides a summary of organisations currently receiving core VCS funding and makes recommendations for continued funding in the 2026/27 financial year along with additional funding review work involving Councillors during 2026.

2 Monitoring

- 2.1 Officers conduct monitoring of core VCS grants to ensure projects and services being delivered contribute to Corporate Plan priorities, address identified community needs and achieve value for money.
- 2.2 Monitoring includes meeting with organisation leaders, data collection and case studies.
- 2.3 Monitoring information will continue to be collected into the 2026/27 financial year for services delivered during the current financial year. This information will be used to support funding review work carried out during 2026.

3 Core VCS Grants

- 3.1 The Council provides core funding for identified organisations that are critical to achieving our corporate plan priorities. The historic arrangements for these grants are based on identified need and shared objectives.

3.2 The following core VCS grants have been provided during 2025/26:

Organisation	2025/26 Funding
Call Connect (LCC)	£30,000
Citizens Advice (Lindsey & Lincoln)	£60,200
Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association (GAPA)	£15,000
Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride	£13,000
Live and Local	£3,500
The Conservation Volunteers	£30,000
Voluntary Centre Services	£25,000
West Lindsey Churches Festival	£8,000
TOTAL:	£184,700

The total core funding value for all grants listed above is £184,700.

3.3 Monitoring information from organisations supported is being collected by officers to cover the 2025/26 period. This information will be available in April 2026 and can be used to support future review work.

3.4 The following is a summary of what each organisation delivers:

Call Connect (LCC)

Provision of Call Connect demand responsive bus services to all eligible areas within West Lindsey. WLDC funding is specifically utilised to provide a second Call Connect vehicle operating in the Gainsborough rural catchment area.

Citizens Advice Lincoln & Lindsey

To support the following areas of work and delivery:

- Advice and support to residents in West Lindsey wishing to access advice and support commensurate with services offered through the Citizens Advice.
- The provision of face-to-face services through existing premises.
- The provision of telephone services accessible to West Lindsey residents.
- To work in partnership with the Council to support joint projects and delivery.

Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association (GAPA)

To support the following areas of work and delivery:

- A safe environment for children of school age to undertake adventurous play.
- A structured play environment to assist child development, learning and experiences.
- Positive parenting experiences through family activities/events.
- Opportunities for children to make a positive contribution to their community.
- Pre-foundation stage learning and outreach activities.

Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride

To support the provision of Dial-a-Ride services to eligible residents in West Lindsey. Service users include the elderly and those with a physical or mental disability that prevents them from using public transport. The dial-a-ride service covers a 10-mile radius from Lincoln city centre which covers large village areas in West Lindsey such as Saxilby, Welton, Dunholme, Cherry Willingham and Scampton.

Live and Local

Deliver Live & Local rural touring programme delivering arts, culture, and theatre events in village halls across West Lindsey. During a programme year around 14 unique events are delivered with attendance averaging over 1,000. Events are delivered at locations across the district to maximise rural accessibility such as Welton, Caistor, Glentworth, Tealby and Nettleham.

The Conservation Volunteers

To support the following areas of work and delivery:

- Maintain Council owned woodlands and green spaces with volunteer led activity. Sites and work schedules to be agreed and maintained in the on-going delivery plan.
- Provide conservation volunteering opportunities for all sector of society with a particular focus on:
 - People with health issues
 - The educationally disadvantaged
 - The unemployed
 - The isolated, vulnerable and/or disabled
- Promote local conservation and volunteering through relevant publicity, marketing activity and social media.
- Support the Council on other environmental projects as appropriate.

Voluntary Centre Services

To support the following areas of work and delivery:

- Volunteer Centre management and development including:
 - Provide a drop-in for general advice and support on volunteering
 - Provide a quality-accredited volunteer brokerage scheme
 - Market and publicise volunteering opportunities using national and local networks
 - Develop new volunteering opportunities
 - Provide training and information on volunteer management
- Provide support to the local voluntary and community sector (VCS) including:

- Provide support to the local voluntary and community sector on key topics such as funding advice, training, governance support, group development and networking
- Organise events and activities for and with the VCS to ensure best use is made of available resources
- Maintain an influencing role with key-decision-makers at all levels to address issues around voluntary sector resilience and volunteering.

West Lindsey Churches Festival

To support the following areas of work and delivery:

- To increase awareness of Church and Heritage Tourism in West Lindsey.
- To encourage additional out of county visitors.
- To promote wider usage of all local tourism facilities during the festival dates and encourage repeat visitors to the area.
- To engage more people from the local community to enter and celebrate the history and significance of churches.
- To promote the festival as an example of good practice regionally and nationally.

4 VCS Funding 2026/27

4.1 Organisations funded in 2025/26 continue to deliver projects and services that contribute towards the Council's corporate plan priorities. Whilst the corporate plan is being reviewed, it is anticipated that all funded services would continue to contribute towards one or more priorities in an updated corporate plan.

4.2 A budget of £184,700 is agreed within the MTFP for 2026/27. This report recommends the following core VCS grants are approved for 2026/27:

- Call Connect - £30,000
- Citizens Advice Lincoln & Lindsey - £60,200
- Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association - £15,000
- Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride - £13,000
- Live & Local - £3,500
- The Conservation Volunteers - £30,000
- Voluntary Centre Services - £25,000
- West Lindsey Churches Festival - £8,000

4.3 Any reduction of core funding to any of our existing grantees may impact on service delivery and beneficiaries in West Lindsey. This ranges from a possible cessation of activities in the district to a reduction in activities which may impact some residents. A summary of possible impacts is included in **Appendix 1**.

Appendix 1 - Impact of reduced or cessation of funding.

5 VCS Funding Review 2026

- 5.1 During 2026, officers will conduct a VCS Funding Review with engagement and input from Councillors. The review will be conducted following the adoption of an updated corporate plan to align fully to council priorities.
- 5.2 The review will be undertaken by the Community Grants Panel (a member working group) with support from officers within the Communities team.
- 5.3 Additional engagement sessions, meetings and site visits (where appropriate) will be used to support the review work. These will be open for Councillors on the Prosperous Communities Committee to attend.
- 5.4 Key elements of the review will include:
 - Refine and approve a final VCS Core Funding definition, purpose and principles to inform future funding decisions.
 - A draft of this has been produced following engagement with the Community Grants Panel members and is included as **Appendix 2**.

Appendix 2 - Draft VCS Core Funding Definition, Purpose and Principles.

- Engagement with current core funded organisations to identify and better understand longer term impacts on their services.
- Site visits and/or project meetings for members of the Community Grants Panel and Prosperous Communities Committee to meet with core funded organisations.
- Assess the impact of core VCS funding in the context of Local Government Reorganisation.
- Explore additional engagement opportunities with other organisations not currently core funded.
- Identify other sources of advice and support that may be required for organisations that are not core funded by the council in future years.
- Present a report with future core funding recommendation to the Prosperous Communities Committee by December 2026.

6 Recommendations

6.1 That Committee approve Voluntary & Community Sector funding grants for 2026/27 as follows:

- Call Connect - £30,000
- Citizens Advice Lincoln & Lindsey - £60,200
- Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association - £15,000
- Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride - £13,000
- Live & Local - £3,500
- The Conservation Volunteers - £30,000
- Voluntary Centre Services - £25,000
- West Lindsey Churches Festival - £8,000

6.2 That Committee approve to continue the work of the VCS Funding Review as set out in Section 5 of this report and present a report to the Prosperous Communities Committee by December 2026.