



Prosperous Communities

Tuesday, 19 March 2024

Subject: Voluntary & Community Sector Funding 2024/25

Report by:	Director – Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Contact Officer:	Grant White Communities Manager grant.white@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	To approve Voluntary & Community Sector core funding for 2024/25.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Committee approve Voluntary and Community Sector core funding grants for 2024/25 as follows:

- **Call Connect (LCC) - £30,000**
- **Citizens Advice Lincoln & Lindsey - £60,200**
- **Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association - £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

2. Committee approve to undertake a review of Voluntary and Community Sector core funding as set out in Section 6 of this report and present a report to the Prosperous Communities Committee by December 2024.

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/156/24/PC/SL

There is ongoing budget provision within the MTFP of £184,700 for Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) grants, to reflect the grant allocations proposed at section 5.

Organisation	2024/25 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

Staffing :

The management of Voluntary & Community Sector funding will be delivered using existing staff resources within the Council's Communities Team.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Grant funding activity will be delivered in accordance with the 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 :

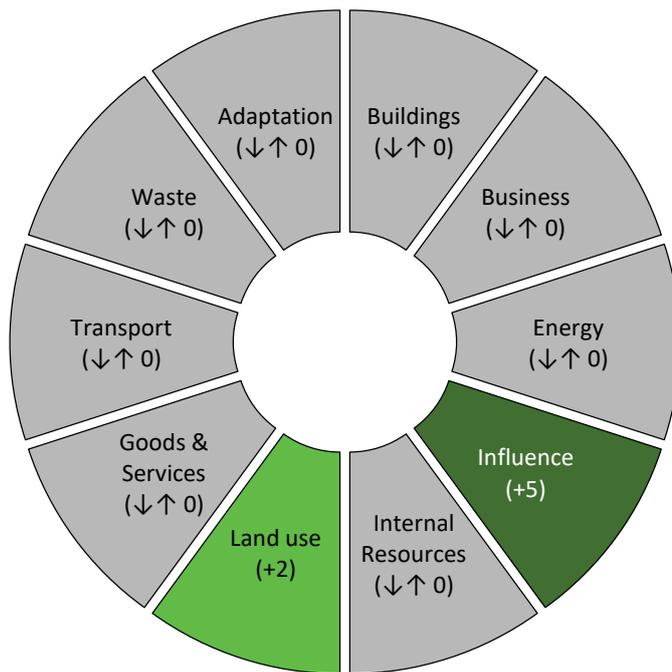
Grant funding activity will comply with all necessary data protection requirements. Data collected for grant awards will be stored securely including financial information for grant payments.

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.



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 :

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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 Core VCS grant agreements end on 31st March 2024. The current core funding VCS grants were approved by Prosperous Communities Committee on 6th December 2022 for a 1-year period beginning 1st April 2023.
- 1.3 Officers have completed in-year monitoring of current VCS grants. Monitoring information and recommendations in this report have been shared with the Community Grants Panel (a Member Working Group) and they have endorsed the recommendations in this report. This report summarises our monitoring of VCS grants and recommends continuation with 1-year grant agreements.
- 1.4 An additional recommendation in this report is to undertake a review of VCS grants to inform future recommendations on funding. This report sets out the planned process of completing the review.

2 Monitoring

- 2.1 Officers completed monitoring 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 monitoring work included meetings with organisation leaders, data collection and case studies.
- 2.3 Monitoring information will continue to be collected into the 2024/25 financial year for services delivered during the current financial year.
- 2.4 Monitoring requirements for VCS grants during 2024/25 will be incorporated into grant funding agreements.

3 Core VCS Grants

- 3.1 The council provides core funding for identified organisations that are critical to achieving its corporate plan objectives. The historic arrangements for these grants are based on identified need and shared objectives.
- 3.2 The following core funding grants have been provided during 2023/24:

Organisation	2023/24 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 A summary of service provision provided by each funded organisation is contained in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 – VCS Grants Summary

- 3.4 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

4 VCS Landscape Nationally

- 4.1 National research on the status of the voluntary and community sector is highlighted in the Civil Society Almanac 2023:¹

- The number of micro voluntary organisations increased, but with a decline in the number of small and medium-sized organisations.
- The combined effects of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis continue to impact the sector as a whole.
- Growth within the VCS has slowed since 2019/20 and fell during the pandemic. Income fell by 6% with spend decreasing by 8%.
- Volunteer retention for older and socio-economically disadvantaged groups has become challenging.

¹ <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/uk-civil-society-almanac-2023/> NCVO – UK Civil Society Almanac 2023

- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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

5 Financial Profile 2024/25

- 5.1 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	2024/25 Funding
Call Connect (LCC)	£30,000
Citizens Advice (Lindsey & Lincoln)	£60,200
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- 5.2 The budget within the MTFP from 2024/25 onwards is a total of £184,700 for core VCS Grants.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-role-of-voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-vcse-organisations-in-public-procurement> (Accessed February 2024)

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 February 2024)

6 VCS Grants Review 2024

- 6.1 This report recommends that committee approve to undertake a review of VCS Grants during 2024/25. The review will be undertaken by the Community Grants Panel (a member working group) with support from officers within the Communities Team.
- 6.2 The review will include an analysis of priorities, needs and demands in relation to the type of services and activities our VCS grants support. Engagement with members, partner organisations and key stakeholders will be incorporated into the review.
- 6.3 The review will conclude with the production of a report containing future recommendations for Prosperous Communities Committee by December 2024.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 Committee approve Voluntary and Community Sector core funding grants for 2024/25 as follows:

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- 7.2 Committee approve to undertake a review of Voluntary and Community Sector core funding as set out in Section 6 of this report and present a report to the Prosperous Communities Committee by December 2024.