



Policy and Resources Committee – 8 April 2013

Voluntary Sector Grants

Purpose of report

To ask Members to decide how this council provides Voluntary Sector Grants beyond 31 March 2014.

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1 – Equalities Impact Assessment (initial screen)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 East Northamptonshire Council has provided voluntary sector grants for several years. Following a comprehensive review of the process in 2009/10, Policy and Resources Committee approved the implementation of the current model (8 November 2010 minute 259). This model invests in delivery of the service rather than the overheads of the individual organisations.
- 1.2 The three grants were awarded following a detailed application process. A Member Panel comprising the Deputy Leader, Vice-Chair of Policy and Resources Committee and Councillor Wendy Brackenbury, was appointed to oversee the application process. The panel also made the recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee on the awards of the grants, which were approved at its meetings 9 June 2011 (minute 32) and 4 July 2011 (minute 83)
- 1.2 The table below details the current grants by theme:-

Theme	Grant Agreement service description and outcomes to be achieved	Amount per annum £	Provider
Advice and Information	Provide an advice and information service for tackling debt across East Northamptonshire which will deliver the following outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced debt across East Northamptonshire • Maximising available income of the district's most financially deprived communities • Increased access to financial and legal advice • Increased benefit take up across the district. 	50,000	Community Law Service (Northampton and County)
Counselling and Support	Provide a counselling and support service to individuals and families across East Northamptonshire. Priority will be given to areas where the	20,000	Service Six

	<p>council has specific legal duties. This theme will deliver the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of support available • Increased access to counselling and support to families and individuals • Increased take up of a range of specialist advice and counselling services for all individuals that may be experiencing issues/difficulties with regards to: equalities; family breakdown and relationships; mental health issues; and victims/witnesses of crime across the district. 		
Community Transport	<p>Provide a community transport service across East Northamptonshire to enable residents to access basic services at an affordable price, with medical services trips as the first priority. This theme will deliver the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to medical services as a priority. • Improved access to other basic services • Reduced isolation for residents in communities who have a high "Index of Deprivation" score for "access to services". 	20,000	<p>Consortium led by Serve and includes Nene & Ouse Community Transport and Volunteer Action Oundle</p> <p><i>(This grant theme started 1 December 2011.)</i></p>

1.4 The grants for the advice and information and the counselling and support theme both commenced on 1 October 2011. The community transport theme commenced on 1 December 2011. All three grants will terminate on 31 March 2014.

2.0 Progress and monitoring

2.1 The council has formal Grant Agreements with each of the providers. Quarterly monitoring meetings are held to discuss progress against the outcomes and targets set out in each of the agreements. To date all three grants have achieved the targets set and in the majority of cases, exceeded them. The results of the quarterly monitoring meetings are published on the council's website.

2.3 The following table highlights the key areas of achievement with each grant so far:-

Theme	Key areas of achievement
Advice and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured £318,500 of additional benefits to date for clients in East Northamptonshire • Reduced the debt of 250 clients (end of quarter 3)

	<p>in year 2) in East Northamptonshire through Debt Relief Orders and personal financial management plans. 125 clients at end of year 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81 clients (end of quarter 3 in year 2) supported through the benefit take-up programme. 35 at end of year 1 • 32% of the East Northamptonshire casework now coming from clients seen at outreach venues
Counselling and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7642 hits recorded (end of quarter 3 year 2) on the web-based counselling service. 229 at end of first quarter in year 1. • 70 clients (end of quarter 3 year 2) provided with counselling programmes. 16 at end of first quarter in year 1. • 80% of enquiries (end of quarter 3 year 2) now from the targeted areas of East Northamptonshire (all 6 towns, Kings Cliffe and eastern villages) • Referring protocols now in place with 11 agencies/service providers for referring clients who need specialist counselling services
Community transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,191 medical trips provided to clients across East Northamptonshire (end of quarter 3 year 2). 6,362 end of year 1. • 20% increase (end of quarter 3 year 2) in the number of venues advertising the East Northants car scheme. Material used: joint leaflet detailing the services of all 3 providers, posters and electronic information boards. • Medical trips for clients in those areas identified as being transport disadvantaged (Indices of Multiple Deprivation) increased by 5% (end of quarter 3 year 2)

3.0 Moving forward

3.1 The grants move into their third and final year from 1 April 2013. Members are asked to consider whether this council should continue with voluntary sector grant funding beyond 31 March 2014, and if so determine the way forward.

3.2 If Members are minded to continue with voluntary sector grants from 31 March 2014, it is recommended that the Member Panel be re-appointed to consider the points below. The Member Panel's recommendations would be presented to Policy and Resources Committee in June 2013 for approval.

3.2.1 Thematic areas:

Should the three thematic areas of the current model (advice and information, counselling and support and community transport) be retained or different ones pursued?

3.2.2 Financial value of the grants:

The annual amount for grants under the current model is £90,000. Is the balance of the financial amounts between the three current themes appropriate or should different amounts be applied to the themes?

3.2.3 Application and award process:

Should the process for awarding the grants be the same as before? It was:-

- Member Panel develops and agrees the specification and outcomes to be achieved with each theme and agrees the application material.
- The Council advertises that grants are available across certain thematic areas.
- Member Panel evaluates the applications against set criteria and receives presentations from the applicants.
- Member Panel makes recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee regarding the awards of the grants.
- Policy and Resources Committee approves the awards.
- Grant Agreements for the 3 years completed.

3.3 If all of the above is agreed the following outline timetable would apply:-

- Member Panel considers the points in 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 above and their recommendations be presented to Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting in June 2013.
- Member Panel would work with officers to prepare the application process by end July 2013.
- We will advertise the new grants (2014 to 2017) in the week commencing 1 August 2013 for an 8 week period, inviting applications from the sector.
- Member Panel to evaluate the applications, including receiving presentations from the applicants, by 18 October 2013.
- Member Panel makes recommendations on awards to Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting December 2013.
- Applicants notified of committee decision.
- Grant Agreements completed by end February 2014.
- Grants commence 1 April 2014.

4.0 Equality and diversity implications

4.1 Members are asked to carefully consider the Equalities Impact Assessment set out at Appendix 1.

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 The council does not have any legal obligation or statutory duty to provide funding to the voluntary sector.

5.2 Each Grant Agreement specifically states that the council gives no undertaking whatsoever to continue with funding or voluntary sector grants beyond 31 March 2014.

6.0 Risk management

6.1 Members are asked to keep in mind that withdrawing support for voluntary sector grants could impact negatively on the council's reputation and potentially reduce services to residents in East Northamptonshire.

7.0 Financial implications

7.1 The current voluntary sector grants will terminate on 31 March 2014 and provision has been made in the 2013/14 budget for the full amounts set out in 1.3 above.

7.2 Depending on Members' decision regarding grants from 31 March 2014, the necessary provision may need to be included in the budgets for 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17.

7.3 As noted in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2013/14 report to Council on 27 February 2013 there is a gap that needs to be bridged in the Council's financial plans over the period until 2016/17. In arriving at their decision Members need to be cognisant to the implications of committing £270,000 of resources over this period.

8.0 Corporate outcomes

8.1 Currently, voluntary sector grants contribute to our corporate outcomes as follows:-

Good quality of life: Specialist support is available to local people affected by debt problems, family and relationship breakdowns and accessing key services. This helps them to enjoy a better quality of life now and in the future.


Good value for money: Investing in one organisation per grant theme avoids funding duplicate services and reduces the pressure on officer resources required to monitor the grants.

9.0 Recommendations

9.1 Members are recommended to:-

1. Carefully consider the Equalities Impact Assessment (initial screen) set out in Appendix 1.
2. Confirm their support for providing voluntary sector grants beyond 31 March 2014.
3. Confirm the appointment of the Member Panel as set out above.
4. Note that a report detailing the recommendations of the Member Panel on the points set out in section 3 above, will be submitted to the June 2013 meeting of this committee.

Reason: to support a voluntary sector whose services help us to achieve our corporate outcomes.

Legal	Power: Local Government Act 2000				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers:					
Person Originating Report: Mike Greenway (Community Partnerships Manager) Tel. 01832 742244 mgreenway@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk					
Date: 20 March 2013					
CFO		MO		CX	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)



EIA Initial Screening Form – Committee Decision

Voluntary Sector Grants

Name and Job title/role of person completing Initial Screening	Mike Greenway – Community Partnerships Manager			
What is the main purpose of the policy decision under discussion?	<p>Policy and Resources Committee (Committee) is being asked to consider how East Northamptonshire Council provides Voluntary Sector Grants beyond 31 March 2014.</p> <p>The current grants are set out in the section below and will end 31 March 2014. If Members are minded to continue it is being recommended that the Member Panel for Voluntary Sector Grants (the Panel) be re-appointed to consider how the grants should be awarded. The Panel will make its recommendations to Committee.</p> <p>Depending on the recommendations from the Panel, Members may be minded to either retain the current themes (set out below) or adopt different ones. In addition to this Members may decide to change the financial amounts or the balance of the finance between each theme.</p>			
List the main activities of the Service or Policy under discussion	Theme	Grant Agreement service description and outcomes to be achieved	Amount per annum £	Provider
	Advice and Information	Provide an advice and information service for tackling debt across East Northamptonshire which will deliver the following outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced debt across East Northamptonshire • Maximising available income of the district's most financially deprived communities • Increased access to financial and legal advice 	50,000	Community Law Service (Northampton and County)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased benefit take up across the district. 		
	Counselling and Support	<p>Provide a counselling and support service to individuals and families across East Northamptonshire. Priority will be given to areas where the council has specific legal duties. This theme will deliver the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of support available Increased access to counselling and support to families and individuals Increased take up of a range of specialist advice and counselling services for all individuals that may be experiencing issues/difficulties with regards to: inequalities; family breakdown and relationships; mental health issues; and victims/witnesses of crime across the district. 	20,000	Service Six
	Community Transport	<p>Provide a community transport service across East Northamptonshire to enable residents to access basic services at an affordable price, with medical services trips as the first priority. This theme will deliver the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to medical services as a priority. Improved access to other basic services Reduced isolation for residents in communities who have a high "Index of Deprivation" score for "access to services". 	20,000	<p>Consortium led by Serve and includes Nene & Ouse Community Transport and Volunteer Action Oundle</p> <p><i>(This grant theme started 1 December 2011.)</i></p>
Who are the main beneficiaries of the Service or Policy under discussion?	Local residents in East Northamptonshire.			
How is the success of the Service or Policy under discussion measured?	Currently through Grant Agreements with each provider			
Are equality monitoring systems for the Service or Policy under	No			

discussion in place?	
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The current voluntary sector grants provide positive impacts in the thematic areas as set out below.

	Advice & Information	Counselling & Support	Community Transport
Gender	The services under this theme are provided to all groups regardless of their gender. Each service has a provision for signposting or referring clients with particular gender-related issues to specialist agencies		
Sexual Orientation	The services under this theme are provided to all groups regardless of their sexual orientation. Each service has a provision for signposting or referring clients with particular sexuality issues to specialist agencies		
Race/Ethnicity	The services under this theme are provided to all groups regardless of their race or ethnic background. Each service has a provision for signposting or referring clients with racial or ethnicity-related issues to specialist agencies		
Disability	The services under this theme are provided to all clients regardless of any disability Each service has a provision for signposting or referring clients with disability-related issues to specialist agencies		The services under this theme are provided to all clients regardless of any disability. There is provision for signposting and referring clients with disability-related issues to specialist agencies. The community transport schemes are able to utilise specialist transport facilities for clients with physical disabilities.
Age	The services under this theme are provided to clients regardless of their age Each service has a provision for signposting or referring clients with age-related issues to specialist agencies		
Religion/Belief	The services under this theme are provided to all groups regardless of their religion or beliefs Each service has a provision for signposting or referring clients with religion or belief-related issues to specialist agencies		
Rural Isolation – People who live in rural areas e.g isolated geographically, lack of internet access	Advice and debt management services are provided through a range of outreach venues in areas of the district where people have difficulties in accessing such services.	Counselling services are provided through a range of outreach venues in areas of the district where people have difficulties in accessing services.	The voluntary car schemes have increased access to medical-related trips in those areas of the district where people have difficulties in accessing services.
Socio-economic Exclusion – e.g.	All three grants contain provision for outreach work across East Northants, particularly in those areas identified as having		

people who are on benefits, have low educational attainment, single parents, people living in poor quality housing, people who have poor access to services, the unemployed or any combination of these and the other protected strands.	difficulties accessing services.
If you have indicated that there is a negative impact on any group:	
a) Is that impact against legislation?	N/A
b) What is the level of impact?	
Could you minimise or remove any negative impact that is of low significance?	N/A
Could you improve a positive impact of the decision?	N/A
If there is no evidence that the decision promotes equality of opportunity or improved relations, could it be adapted so that it does?	N/A

If you have indicated that there is a negative impact on any protected group you must complete a Full EIA Assessment

Head of service signature	
Date of initial screening	22 March 2013