



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Policy and Resources Committee 10 March 2014

Community Transport Voluntary Sector Grant 2011-2014

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the additional work undertaken by Volunteer Action Oundle as part of the consortium arrangements for delivering our current Community Transport Voluntary Sector Grant. VA Oundle has been covering the central area of the district following the demise of Nene & Ouse Community Transport, which was part of the consortium. This report seeks Members' approval for meeting the additional one-off establishment costs associated with setting up the new arrangements by VA Oundle.

Attachment(s)

None

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The current voluntary sector grant for community transport was awarded in 2011 and will terminate on 31 March 2014. It was awarded to a consortium, at the time comprising three organisations: Serve, Volunteer Action Oundle (VA Oundle) and Nene & Ouse Community Transport (NOCT).
- 1.2 In the summer of 2012, NOCT ceased trading, which had implications for the future of the community transport consortium. Essentially NOCT provided the services across the central part of the district being based in Thrapston. This covered the whole of the town of Thrapston and the surrounding villages.
- 1.3 On being notified of NOCT's closure, officers discussed the future of the consortium with the remaining partners: Serve and VA Oundle. It was agreed that the areas covered by NOCT would be absorbed by the remaining partners on a trial basis, with the vast majority of it being undertaken by VA Oundle. It was recognised by officers that additional costs would be incurred by the remaining partners as part of the work to recruit and establish the volunteer drivers.
- 1.4 Policy and Resources Committee approved the awards of new voluntary sector grants 2014-17 at its meeting on 2 December 2013 (minute 271). These will commence on 1 April 2014 and the consortium arrangement between Serve and VA Oundle will be delivering the community transport theme.

2. Additional costs incurred by VA Oundle

- 2.1 It was recognised that, in order to make the new arrangements work, VA Oundle would have to recruit more volunteer drivers to their establishment. The majority of the former NOCT drivers have come on board. One or two others have been recruited to ensure sufficient resources are in place to maintain the cover across the central areas. Officers have reviewed the new arrangements with the consortium partners and are satisfied that they are effective.
- 2.2 As a result of putting in place the new arrangements, VA Oundle incurred additional costs over and above their allocation from the grant monies paid to the consortium. The profile of this additional work is:-
 - Initial meetings with the former NOCT volunteer drivers to discuss opportunities for joining VA Oundle's volunteer driver base.

- Interviewing the new drivers to be established on VA Oundle's volunteer driver base.
- Seeking references for the new drivers.
- Preparing and commissioning enhanced disclosure and barring checks for the new drivers (formally Criminal Records Bureau checks).
- Inducting the new volunteer drivers (11 in total) to ensure activities and services are in-line with VA Oundle's operating framework.
- Inclusion of the newly-recruited volunteer drivers on VA's operating insurances

2.3 The costs associated with the activities listed above are £1,400. Officers have reviewed the arrangements with the consortium and are satisfied that the coverage in the central area is in place. The consortium has maintained service delivery across the other parts of the district and met the Grant Agreement targets.

3. Equality and diversity implications

3.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report. Services continue to be provided in a way that supports the needs of people with protected characteristics.

4. Risk management

4.1 With the demise of one of the three consortium partners there was a risk of the consortium arrangement breaking down. This would have had implications for the provision of community transport services in the district. This was averted by VA Oundle picking up the services in that area and avoided the need for us having to consider alternative options for the remainder of the final year of the community transport grant 2011-14.

5. Financial implications

5.1 As stated above, the additional costs total £1,400. Provision exists within the current revenue budget to meet these costs. Because the community transport grant commenced later than the other two voluntary sector grants, an under spend of £3,336 has been carried forward and remains uncommitted.

5.2 In summary the voluntary sector grant allocation for the community transport theme in 2013/14 is as follows:-

Item	£
Total funding available for the community transport theme in 2013/14	23,336
Grant paid to the consortium in 2013/14	20,000
Uncommitted funds carried forward from previous financial years (5.1 above refers)	3,336
Additional costs by VA Oundle	1,400
Remaining under spend	1,936

5.3 It is recommended that Members give approval for meeting the additional one-off costs and note that the remaining £1,936 will be recognised as revenue savings in 2013/14.

5.4 Although NOCT ceased trading during the grant period, the grant agreement makes no provision for recovering any of the monies paid to the consortium for the work undertaken by NOCT. In putting the new arrangements in place, the grant has been redistributed between the two remaining consortium partners (Serve and VA Oundle).

6. Corporate outcomes

6.1 Our voluntary sector grants support the delivery of the following corporate outcomes:-


- **A good quality of life** – providing specialist services that help local residents in East Northamptonshire enjoy a better quality of life. Specifically the community transport grant provides transport solutions for accessing important services.
- **Good value for money** – all three grants focus on the achievement of specific outcomes relevant to their individual themes. Rigorous monitoring ensures that the performance expected by the providers is achieved. With the current grants (2011-14) performance has often exceeded the targets agreed.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Members are recommended to:-

1. Approve the payment of £1,400 to Volunteer Action in respect of the additional costs incurred as set out in this report.
2. Note that the remaining underspend of £1,936 will be recognised as savings in the current financial year.

Reason: to maintain our commitments to improving access to community transport in East Northamptonshire, through an effective consortium arrangement involving Serve and VA Oundle.

Legal	Power: Local Government Act 2000				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers: None					
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