

Dear Councillor,

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT) - TUESDAY, 12TH JULY 2016

I am now able to enclose for consideration at the above meeting the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

**Agenda Item
No.**

1. MINUTES (Pages 37 - 42)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 7th and 28th June 2016.

5. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT FUNDING WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT (Pages 43 - 72)

The Panel is to receive the Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Working Group's Final Report.

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 28th June 2016.

PRESENT: Councillor T D Alban – Chairman.

Councillors J W Davies, Mrs A Dickinson, Mrs A Donaldson, M Francis, D Harty, T Hayward, Mrs P A Jordan, P Kadewere, L R Swain and Mrs J Tavener.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors K M Baker, Mrs S J Conboy, R Fuller, D A Giles, Mrs S A Giles, J P Morris, J M Palmer and R J West.

12. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor T Alban declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number 13 as an employee of a company that engage in commercial activities with Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

Councillor Mrs P A Jordan declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number 13 as an employee of Cambridgeshire Community Service based at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

13. POTENTIAL HOSPITAL MERGER

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Executive Officer of Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust, Lance McCarthy, and the Chairman of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, Val Moore, to the meeting and for agreeing to take part in a public question and answer session.

Lance McCarthy gave a presentation to the Panel. The key points were as follows:

- Hinchingsbrooke is not sustainable in its current form either clinically or financially.
- The hospital has many positives including low mortality rates, low infection rates and good patient experiences.
- Mr McCarthy advised the Panel that modern medicine is becoming more complex and, in order to provide the best care and maximum safety, clinicians are specialising more and need to work in larger teams.
- The Panel noted that Hinchingsbrooke struggles to recruit staff with the right expertise to a number of roles and this leaves some acute services with unacceptable deficiencies.
- Mr McCarthy informed the Panel that Hinchingsbrooke won't be able to maintain a full range of safe services on its own and that the focus of conversations with Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (PSHFT) has been on how to sustain services, safely and locally on all sites.
- Members were reassured by Mr McCarthy that discussions are not about moving services and patients would not be

expected to travel to a different hospital to receive treatment. Instead the expectation is that specialists will move between sites in order to provide the services.

- Hinchingsbrooke has a deficit of approx. £17m with a turnover of around £115m. Hinchingsbrooke has the largest percentage deficit in the country at 15.2%.
- Mr McCarthy informed Members that through collaboration with PSHFT the hospitals are forecast to generate savings of £9m per year, of which £4m would relate to Hinchingsbrooke.
- Current collaboration work includes working on improving the ophthalmology service. Mr McCarthy stated that both hospitals have good services but the services sub-specialise in different areas. Through collaboration a greater range of services can be offered to patients.
- The Panel were informed that both Trust Boards have appraised and scored four options and option four of merger emerged as the preferred option. The Boards will now develop a full business case (FBC) and this would detail the full benefits of the merger before the Boards decide to proceed.
- Members were informed that separate system wide transformation work would link into the development of the FBC by the end of July 2016. Following that the FBC would be considered by both Boards at the end of September 2016. If the FBC was agreed then there would be further staff and public engagement which may then be followed by changes to the FBC. A final decision would be taken by both Boards by the end of November 2016. This would be proposed to the NHS regulator and if they give approval the Trusts would merge on 1st April 2017.

In seeking clarification of the points raised a Member asked for further detail on sustainability of services would be improved if they weren't relocated. In response Mr McCarthy gave the example of the haematology service. The Peterborough City Hospital has six specialists and Hinchingsbrooke has one so rather than have a general service both hospitals would be able to offer a full service from a pool of seven specialists.

Mr McCarthy reassured Members' concerns over the accident and emergency service by stating that the service would remain at Hinchingsbrooke as 45,000 people use the service annually. The Panel were informed the service would be supported by accessing the pool of emergency department consultants at Peterborough.

The Chairman of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, Val Moore addressed the Panel. Healthwatch promotes the patient's interests and supports all the stakeholders in health sector. Patients have had good experiences of care at Hinchingsbrooke although there has been some disappointment regarding waiting times. She added that patients want integrated care and to know that their hospital is there for them.

Members were informed that Healthwatch had heard what Mr McCarthy had said but not heard a lot about the impact upon patients. Healthwatch wanted to know how local people would be involved with the Trust Board if a merger does materialise and would like information to be broken down locally so that people can access performance information in regards to services at Hinchingsbrooke.

Members of the public were invited by the Chairman to ask questions about the proposed merger of Hinchingsbrooke Health Care Trust with PSHFT. Mr McCarthy was asked why there hasn't been any public consultation about what is going to happen. In response Mr McCarthy stated that nothing has been agreed apart from the decision to develop a FBC. Both Trust Boards are committed to engaging with the public and the merger is not a foregone conclusion.

In response to a question on the wisdom of merging with a hospital that is heavily in debt through the private finance initiative (PFI), Mr McCarthy stated that Hinchingsbrooke had clinical sustainability concerns as well as financial concerns. The FBC will outline the savings that would result from a merger but the merger will not solve all the financial problems.

Mr McCarthy explained that, as outlined in the FBC, under the legal framework a merger could only be an acquisition of Hinchingsbrooke by Peterborough and the merged Trust must be a Foundation Trust. Currently only one non-executive director of the Hinchingsbrooke Board is from the area due to the need to establish the Board quickly in March 2015 following the departure of Circle. A merged Trust would have representation proportional to each area's population.

In response to a question regarding the cost of preparing the FBC and how much was spent on consultants, Mr McCarthy stated that all the work was done internally.

A Member of the Panel stated that they were concerned for staff and the pressure they were being put under. There was particular concern that the '*in your shoes, in our shoes*' staff sessions are being used to identify savings. The Panel was informed that there is not a cynical angle to '*in your shoes, in our shoes*' sessions and that the only reason they are carried out is for good staff engagement.

When asked about redundancies, Mr McCarthy stated that there would be up to 70 roles across both organisations that would no longer be needed as a result of the merger and that 11 of those would be related to Board members. Mr McCarthy explained that the turnover of staff between the two hospitals already stands at around 70 per week so this should help absorb job losses, allowing redundancies to be minimised.

A concern was raised about the language used and in particular the use of the terms merger and collaboration when in fact that under the NHS rules it would be an acquisition. Mr McCarthy recognised that further work is required to address miscommunication with the public.

In response to a request that the public be given reassurance that a merged Trust wouldn't start asset stripping from Hinchingsbrooke if the FBC didn't deliver expected savings, Mr McCarthy stated that the new Board would have responsibility for providing health care for all residents and would need to provide services at Hinchingsbrooke.

Following a question on how the Trust Board would consult with the public considering that an acquisition does not require a full three month public consultation, Mr McCarthy stated that a public

consultation exercise will be run but that the Boards have not yet agreed on what form that will take.

In response to a question on how many back office staff would be made redundant Mr McCarthy stated that this would be detailed in the FBC but that the likelihood that individuals would be affected apart from Board members would be low.

When asked if a surplus could be achieved without the merger, Mr McCarthy stated that the savings would not need to be done through a merger but that £4m is required through some form of collaboration.

When asked what he would be learning from the meeting, Mr McCarthy stated that he had learnt that there is a need for the Boards to better articulate what they are planning to do. Mr McCarthy confirmed that he would return to a future Panel meeting when the FBC had been formulated.

After the public participation session the Panel discussed what they had heard and came to the following conclusions:

- 1) Members were concerned that the timetable for developing the FBC and undertaking the merger was too short and that the Boards may be trying to do too much too soon.
- 2) It came to light that the current Board only includes one member living within the hospital's general catchment area. Members were concerned that this has resulted in a 'democratic deficit'.
- 3) Although Mr McCarthy offered Members reassurance that the arrangement would be a collaboration, Members remained concerned that a legal acquisition could result in Hinchingsbrooke being treated as the 'poor relation'.
- 4) The Panel was concerned to hear that the Trust Boards had not considered how they would like to engage with the public.
- 5) Members were concerned about the possibility of redundancies and wanted greater clarity about the impact of redundancies on members of staff.
- 6) The Panel was heartened to hear from Mr McCarthy that the focus of Hinchingsbrooke's work with PSHFT is ensuring the financial and clinical sustainability of safe, local healthcare services and that there is no intention of existing services provided at the Hinchingsbrooke site being moved to other locations or patients being required to travel elsewhere to receive care.

Following the conclusions the Panel,

RESOLVED

to agree that a response to the proposed merger of the Trusts running Hinchingsbrooke and Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals be drafted for the Panel to review at its next

meeting.

(At 9.14pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs P A Jordan left the meeting and did not return).

(At 9.21pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor T Hayward left the meeting).

(At 9.23pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor T Hayward returned to the meeting).

(At 9.34pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor A Dickinson left the meeting).

(At 9.36pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor A Dickinson returned to the meeting).

(At 10.06pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor A Dickinson left the meeting).

(At 10.09pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor A Dickinson returned to the meeting).

Chairman

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Public
Key Decision - Yes/No*
* Delete as applicable

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Voluntary Sector Funding 2017/18 to 2020/21

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny (Communities & Environment) – 11th July 2016
Cabinet – 21st July 2016

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Community Resilience – Cllr Steve Criswell

Report by: Head of Community – Chris Stopford
Cllr Terry Hayward, Chair of Member Working Group

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

In January 2016, Cabinet resolved to form a Member Working Group to review the Council's funding to the voluntary sector. The Working Group convened its first meeting in February 2016, and now presents back its report and recommendations to Cabinet.

The Member Working Group has taken evidence from representatives from the voluntary sector and the County Council, and has undertaken further research with other local authorities. In making its recommendations to Cabinet, the Working Group recognises the January 2016 Cabinet resolutions, guidance from the National Association of Voluntary and Community Action, and the Council's Corporate Plan 2016-18.

Recommendation(s):

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on, and endorse the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Member Working Group

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

1. To approve the funding and contract arrangement for the voluntary sector, and specifically
 - a. To amend the January 2016 Cabinet resolution for Option 2 of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), to Option 3;
 - b. To agree the contract award to be for 2017/18 to 2020/21,

- c. To agree the budget commitment for 2020/21 and the method of resolution for any variation of the approved MTFS 2016/17 to 2020/21, as discussed in Section 10 of the main report;

and if in agreement to,

2. To approve the establishment of a working group, comprising the Members and Officers, to progress the procurement of the voluntary sector funding arrangement for 2017/18 to 2020/21

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 At its meeting in January 2016, the Cabinet agreed the formation of a Member Working Group to review the Council's funding arrangement for the voluntary sector from 2017/18. This report provides the conclusions and recommendations emerging from the working group.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has historically supported the voluntary sector across Huntingdonshire through revenue grant funding. The existing funding arrangements ended on the 31st March 2016. January 2016 Cabinet resolved, in defined cases, to extend the funding until 31st March 2017; to establish a working group to review the arrangements for allocating Council funding to the voluntary and community sectors; and to propose any changes to funding arrangements to take effect from 1st April 2017.

- 2.2 The Council's approved Corporate Plan 2016-18 makes specific referenced to:-

2.2.1 Enabling Communities – particularly, supporting people to improve their health and well-being, and developing stronger and more resilient communities to enable people to help themselves. The plan also provides for two specific Corporate Indicators, the reduction in the number of people accessing the advice services, and the number of volunteer hours worked within Huntingdonshire.

2.2.2 Becoming a more Efficient and Effective Council – particularly becoming more efficient in the way we deliver services providing value for money services, and becoming a customer focussed organisation

- 2.3 On 25th February 2016, a meeting was convened of a Member Working Group to respond to the Cabinet resolution. The meeting was attended by Cllrs Brown, Duffy, Hayward, and Jordan, and supported by the Corporate Director (Delivery), Head of Community and Community Health Manager. Also in attendance at this initial meeting was Cllr Harrison, as Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal. At subsequent meetings, Cllr Jordan stood down from the Member Working Group.

- 2.4 During its research, the Working Group heard evidence from Sue Grace – Director, Customer Services and Transformation, Cambridgeshire County Council; Julie Farrow – Chief Executive, Hunts Forum; and Batul Dunganwalla – Chief Executive Officer, Rural Cambs Citizens Advice Bureau. Details of the meetings, and evidence obtained, can be found in the appended meeting notes.

- 2.5 Research also included a review of funding arrangements with other local authorities, insofar as internet research of published information would permit; and was supported by evidence from Council Officers regarding the current regime, and experience of previous funding regimes.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED & ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The Working Group considered all options from the continuation of the existing funding arrangements through to the creation of a single contract for the whole of the sector, and the option of terminating the funding to the sector. Options analysis, and discuss on these options are provided below.

3.2 Termination of Funding

The Working Group recognises the value that the voluntary sector can provide to the Council's Corporate Plan, and therefore would not support this as a final option.

3.3 Continuation of Existing Arrangements

At its January 2016 meeting, Cabinet were referred to the NAVCA guidance¹ *Change for good – Report of the Independent Commission on the future of local infrastructure, January 2015* made, amongst others, a recommendation that local government should 'act strategically to fund core infrastructure functions at the local level, to act as a multiplier, drawing in other resources and creating social capital'. The report continues to discuss the need for infrastructure bodies to act collaboratively for the benefit of their communities, and to be vigilant in avoiding duplication of others. In response to this, Cabinet resolved that the future funding should be a 'commissioning and outcomes' model.

This approach is supported by the Member Working Group, and therefore recognises that the continuation of existing arrangements would be opposed to this desired approach, and therefore would not support this as a final option.

3.4 Single Contract Award

The Working Group considered, and agreed that a single award would, based on the evidence it has obtained during its review, not be cost effective to provide the services required because it would necessitate significant changes in the sector.

3.5 The Award of Two Contracts – the provision of advice to Huntingdonshire communities, and the provision of infrastructure and support to the Huntingdonshire voluntary and community sector (VCS).

The Working Group believes, based on the evidence review undertaken, that this is the best option for the Huntingdonshire communities, and the Council. It recommends that the Cabinet recognise that there are two clear requirements one to provide advice that people need to solve the problems they face and the other to provide the infrastructure and support to the Huntingdonshire VCS. It also recommends recognition that there is also an urgent need to provide training and education in support of both sectors.

The Working Groups recommends that the key themes of any procurement exercise, and outcome based commissioning model, should consider the factors given in Table 1 below.

¹ **NAVCA**, the **National Association for Voluntary and Community Action**, is the national membership body for local support and development organisations in England. It was previously called the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS). NAVCA is a strategic partner of the Department of Health and the Cabinet Office's Office for Civil Society

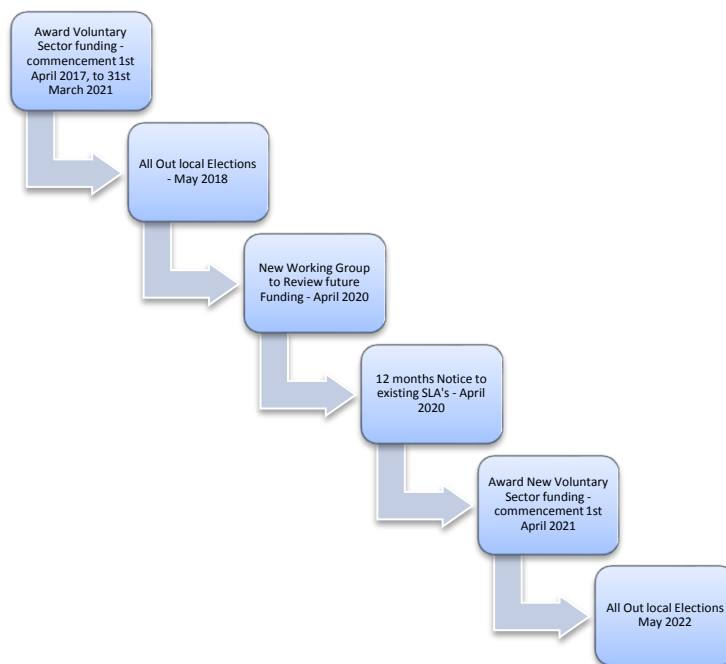
Provision of advice to Huntingdonshire communities	Provision of infrastructure and support to the Huntingdonshire voluntary and community sector (VCS)
Provide advice to all Huntingdonshire communities, through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face contact in the four major towns • Home visiting • Web and telephone access 	Provide advice and support for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Infrastructure • Community Self-management • Governance • Trustees • Charity foundation and compliance • Sources of, and application support for funding • The encouragement and recruitment of volunteers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training & Education to school, public, HDC Officers and Councillors and other advisors • Provision of funding to meet the task • Provision of Statistics and 6 monthly reports to O&S • Provision of annual accounts 	

Table 1: Outcomes of Commissioning Model

3.6 Duration of the Contracts

Various options were considered including funding to coincide with the current funding arrangements of Cambridgeshire County Council. This was discarded on this occasion as the County Council contract, due to be awarded, is for an initial period of one year commencing 1st September 2016 with the option for Cambridgeshire County Council to extend the grant period to a maximum of three years subject to annual review, performance of the Provider(s) and the availability of funding. Cambridgeshire County Council's preference at this time is that the agreement should run for a period of three years and will end on the 31st August 2019. This would mean that Huntingdonshire funding would be considered too short, in seeking to achieve a review date of 31st August 2017, the Council would have to award a six-month contract.

In order to ensure stability for the sector and to ensure that there is no political bias it is recommended that the new contracts should be for four years as shown below



3.7 Value of Contracts

Cabinet in January agreed the option 2 of the proposals as below. The Working Group reconsidered this in light of evidence and its conclusions. It recommends that in order to ensure stability and confidence for long term planning within the sector that option 3, with a one year extension to 2020/21, at 2019/20 values, be accepted by the Cabinet. This would have no budget impact on the Cabinet approved option.

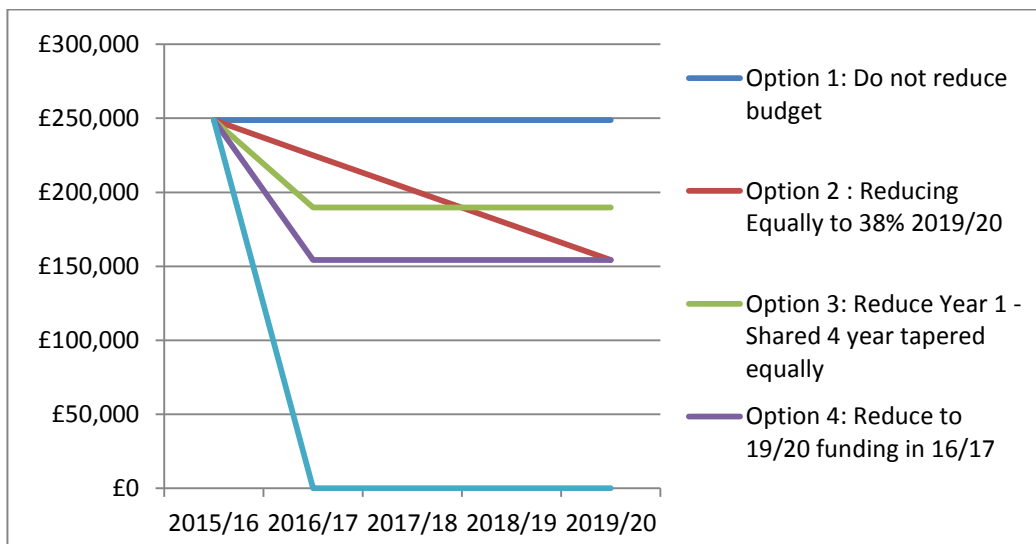


Figure 1 : Medium Term Financial Plan, from January 2016 Cabinet report

	Option 1: Do not reduce by 38%	Option 2 : Reducing Equally to 38% 19/20	Option 3: Reduce Year 1 - Shared 4 year tapered equally	Option 4: Reduce to 19/20 funding in 16/17	Option 5: Stop Voluntary Sector Grants
2015/16	£248,700	£248,700	£248,700	£248,700	£248,700
2016/17	£248,700	£225,074	£189,633	£154,194	£0
2017/18	£248,700	£201,447	£189,633	£154,194	£0
2018/19	£248,700	£177,821	£189,633	£154,194	£0
2019/20	£248,700	£154,194	£189,633	£154,194	£0
4 year budget @ 2015/16	£994,800	£994,800	£994,800	£994,800	£994,800
New 4 Year budget	£994,800	£758,535	£758,532	£616,776	£0
Saving	£0	£236,265	£236,268	£378,024	£994,800
MTFS Saving	0%	24%	24%	38%	100%
2015/16 cf 2019/20	0%	38%	24%	38%	

Table 2 : Medium Term Financial Plan, from January 2016 Cabinet report

3.8 Spilt of financial value between the two contracts

The Working Group considered the present split of funding and the likely pressures on the sectors over the contract term and recommends a 65% / 35% split of agreed funding but with flexibility through negotiated contract award of $\pm 10\%$.

3.9 Contract Award process

The Working Group recommends that Cabinet should establish a new or retain the existing Member Officer working group to develop the contract terms including performance metrics, reporting frameworks etc.; to evaluate the submissions, and to determine the award of contract in consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor.

The Contract will be advertised in accordance with the Council's Code of Procurement, and will anticipate the submission of a detailed business case with supporting outcomes and monitoring metrics. The business cases will be reviewed by the proposed Working Group, and consulted on with the relevant Executive Councillor.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

5. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 5.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2016-18 recognises with the themes of Enabling Communities, and Becoming a more Efficient and Effective Council, the value of partnerships with the voluntary and community sector in delivering a vision of improving the quality of life, deliver economic growth and provide value for money. Not providing the recommended support to the sector may adversely affect the delivery of the vision and objectives, and may result in instability within the sector.
- 5.2 The Council has historically provided support to the voluntary and community sector, the withdrawal of support may result in reputational damage to the District Council and a lack of trust for our communities.

6. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 The Working Group recognise the value provided to delivering a review of the Council's voluntary sector support, and therefore recommends that the Working Group be continued to support the procurement of the recommended contracts with the voluntary sector.
- 6.2 The Working Group will assist in the preparation of the contract specification, and support the advertising of the contract, with tender submission by end September.
- 6.3 Review of tenders October, with award of contract by end October 2016.
- 6.4 Commencement of new contract 1st April 2017, for a period until 31st March 2021.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND / OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The Council's approved Corporate Plan 2016-18 makes specific referenced to:-
- 7.1.1 Enabling Communities – particularly, supporting people to improve their health and well-being, and developing stronger and more resilient communities to enable people to help themselves. The plan also provides for two specific Corporate Indicators, the reduction in the number of people accessing the advice services, and the number of volunteer hours worked within Huntingdonshire.
- 7.1.2 Becoming a more Efficient and Effective Council – particularly becoming more efficient in the way we deliver services providing value for money services, and becoming a customer focussed organisation

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Three meetings of Working Group involved obtaining information from representatives of the voluntary and community sectors:-

Sue Grace – Director, Customer Services and Transformation, Cambridgeshire County Council gave an insight to the County Council procurement of voluntary sector infrastructure service and the facilitation of representation of the sector within the County Council;

Julie Farrow – Chief Executive, Hunts Forum; and Batul Dungarwalla – Chief Executive Officer, Rural Cambs Citizens Advice Bureau both gave information regarding the current status of the voluntary and community sector, and advise sectors within Huntingdonshire, information regarding the challenges that the sector faces and is likely to face over the next five years, and details of the information held by the sector to inform evidence to support the Council’s objectives.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 In advertising, and awarding the proposed contracts the Council must have regards to the Council’s Code of Procurement.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 In February, the Council approved a VCS Grant scheme through to 2020/21 totalling £0.907m. When this is compared to the VCS Grant scheme proposed by O&S, as shown in the table below, there would be an additional cost to the Council of £72k over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

	Council approved VCS Grant	O&S proposed VCS Grant	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
2016/17	219	219	0
2017/18	201	190	(11)
2018/19	179	190	11
2019/20	154	190	36
2020/21	154	190	36
Total	907	979	72

To balance the overall grants budget, Cabinet could either:

1. Reduce the VCS Grant scheme to £172k per annum from 2017/18.
2. Reduce the current Community Chest budget to meet the net shortfall.
3. Agree a growth item of £72k

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 None

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 12.1 The proposal for a four-year contract award will provide continued stability for the voluntary and community sector serving Huntingdonshire.
- 12.2 The proposal demonstrates the continued support from the Council to the residents of Huntingdonshire and demonstration of the council’s commitment to ensuring the development and enhancement of resilient communities.
- 12.3 The proposal supports the delivery of the Council’s corporate objectives

13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Notes of the working group meetings

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet report January 2016, Report No. 77

(<http://moderngov.huntsdc.gov.uk:8070/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=256&MId=5684&Ver=4>)

CONTACT OFFICER

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Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Working Group

Date: 25th February 2016, 2pm

Present: Councillors D Brown, Mrs L A Duffy, T Hayward and Mrs P A Jordan

In Attendance: Councillor R Harrison (Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal)

Officers: A Green (Note Taker), N McCurdy, D Smith and C Stopford

Apologies: Councillor S Criswell

Election Of Chairman

The Working Group elected Councillor T Hayward as Chairman of the Working Group.

Members' Interests

Councillor T Hayward declared that he was formerly the Chairman of the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Scoping Discussion

Councillor Harrison began discussions by confirming that he does not want to be formally a member of the Working Group however if Members would like his input then he is willing to give it. Councillor Harrison concluded by stating that he would welcome any proposals the Working Group advance.

As a starting point the Chairman of the Working Group advanced his own questions, which were:

- What do the voluntary sector organisations do that is specific to them and what are the benefits of them?
- Is there an opportunity for the organisations to collaborate and share work?
- How much benefit do the organisations bring to the local economy?
- How much does Huntingdonshire District Council save as a result of the work of the voluntary sector?
- How does the voluntary sector organisations raise funds from other sources and how much?
- What grants do the organisations receive?
- Could the organisations make savings by cutting or reorganising back office staff both paid and volunteers?
- How many volunteers do the organisations have and how many volunteer hours does that equate to?
- How are the services they provide assessed?
- If there are redundancies what are the redundancy costs?

Following a short discussion on the Chairman's questions the Working Group suggested that the focus should be on what services the Council want and then ask voluntary sector organisations to submit bids for funding.

Members were advised that the process in 2011/12 involved inviting voluntary sector organisations to submit bids and those bids that best matched the corporate objectives were successful. Favourable consideration was given to the following:

- provision of independent advice services;
- increasing capacity of voluntary sector organisations in Huntingdonshire to deliver services and activities;
- increasing the number of Huntingdonshire residents involved in volunteering; and
- supporting individuals with mobility challenges to be active citizens.

The Working Group discussed the process followed in 2011/12 and concluded that the four themes could be condensed into the following two:

- provision from HDC for independent advice; and
- building and encouraging the voluntary sector within Huntingdonshire.

The Working Group considered scrutinising the Community Chest as part of the remit of the Group however despite recognising the requirement for scrutiny Members had decided that it would be best if the Community Chest was scrutinised under its own Working Group.

(At 2.49pm, Councillor R Harrison left the meeting.)

The Working Group formulated a work plan and scheduled meetings to carry out the work. Members thought it would be useful if there was a meeting for each of the themes and that leaders within the voluntary sector are invited to give an overview of the current practice and issues affecting the sector. Members agreed that there will be a further meeting in addition to summarise what they had gained from the previous two meetings.

Members were advised that it would be useful to receive information from the County Council on their thoughts on how to allocate their voluntary sector funding. In addition the Working Group had asked for information on what advice the Council provides which could otherwise be provided by the voluntary sector. Furthermore the Working Group recognised a need for a fifth meeting to sign off the final report.

Summary

The Working Group agreed to focus on two themes, which are:

- provision for independent advice; and
- building the voluntary sector within Huntingdonshire.

The Working Group agreed to attend five meetings in the following order:

- Meeting 1, 14th March 11am to 1pm
Discussion of the advice the Council provides and County Council input.
- Meeting 2, 11th April 10am to 12pm
Focus on the theme of provision for independent advice.
- Meeting 3, 25th April 10am to 12pm
Focus on the theme of building the voluntary sector within Huntingdonshire.
- Meeting 4, 17th May 2pm to 4pm
Findings from the themed meetings (2 and 3)
- Meeting 5, 14th June 2pm to 4pm
Final Sign Off

The Working Group agreed that there needs to be clear communications with the voluntary sector organisations to explain that the objectives will be changing and there will be no guarantee of funding.

Background Reading

Change For Good, Independent Commission On The Future Of Local Infrastructure

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Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Working Group

Date: 14th March 2016, 11am

Present: Councillors T Hayward (Chairman), D Brown, Mrs L A Duffy

In Attendance: Sue Grace

Officers: A Green (Note Taker), D Smith and C Stopford

Apologies: Councillor Mrs P A Jordan

Matters Arising

Councillor Mrs L A Duffy declared an interest as she had received a £5k grant from Cambridgeshire County Council for a Community Skills Club.

The Working Group discussed the membership of the group and decided that subjected to re-election of Councillor Mrs L A Duffy the membership of the group will remain unchanged after Annual Council on 18th May 2016.

Cambridgeshire County Council Funding Arrangements

Sue Grace addressed the Working Group to discuss Cambridgeshire County Council's Customer Service and Transformation Directorate funding arrangement for the Voluntary Sector. Members were informed that the funding managed by the Directorate supports the voluntary organisations specialising in the infrastructure for the voluntary sector.

The Working Group were acquainted with the background of the Directorate's funding arrangement with the Voluntary Sector. Funding included nine service level agreements, the agreements are historically based, they are based on the sector, the funding is awarded annually with no long term contracts and each organisation would have to bid for funding every year.

Following a review of funding arrangements the County Council has decided to move from an annual funding cycle to a three year funding cycle and award grants based on outcomes in relation to the County Council's priorities as opposed to a historical reason. The priorities the County Council will focus on are; Transforming Lives, Think Family and Community Resilience.

Members were informed that the County Council will also be judging bids using geographical criteria. A successful bid would be able to coordinate the delivery of services at a County level but will deliver the services at District level.

In response to a question regarding informing the Voluntary Sector organisations of changes to funding arrangements the Working Group were informed that the County Council notified the organisations of the changes in Autumn 2015. The funding for the existing organisations has been extended by six months and the new funding arrangement will commence on 1st September 2016.

The Working Group were informed that the County Council would be 'going live' with their new tender documentation on 5th April 2016. The County Council will then deliberate on the bids and award the grant at the end of July 2016.

Following a question regarding the County Council working collaboratively with District Councils, Members were advised that the County Council are not currently looking to collaborate with District Councils as that each Council are at different stages in reviewing their funding arrangements. The County Council would be open to link up with District Councils further along in the process if the opportunity presents itself.

Members were informed that the budget of the County Council's Customer Service and Transformation Directorate funding for the Voluntary Sector is £120k per year and that this is £10k less than the budget for 2015/16. The Directorate currently have nine agreements with the Voluntary Sector and are looking at reducing this to one agreement which is anticipated to be with a lead partner as part of a consortium. Once the bids have been judged against the outcomes, the County Council will work with the lead partner on the key performance indicators. The Working Group were reminded that it is not for the County Council to determine how the Voluntary Sector work together.

In response to a question regarding the management of the bid process, Members were informed that the process is Officer led but has input from a Member champion. If the grant is awarded to a consortium then the lead group would receive the full grant and then distribute it out as appropriate.

Following a question regarding the support and requirements the voluntary sector requires, Members were informed that the response from the voluntary sector is that organisations require help developing a volunteering network. However, the organisation awarded the grant would need to be aware of the Council's strategies and the agreed outcomes before spending the grant.

After some discussion Sue Grace explained the vision of funding Voluntary Sector infrastructure organisations. Other Directorates throughout the County Council invest in the Voluntary Sector organisations to deliver services. The infrastructure organisations would assist the other Voluntary Sector organisations to be in a better position to deliver County Council objectives and be tender ready.

Members asked if the County Council are reviewing organisations funding from other sources. In response the Working Group were informed that the County Council are reviewing alternative funding arrangements but are not strict on this criteria.

The Working Group asked Sue Grace if she could provide the terms of reference that the County Council are using for the bidding process and the questions for the survey the County Council sent to Voluntary Sector organisations.

Activity Data

In reviewing the call centre activity the Working Group identified that call centre operatives are handling a high volume of calls in relation to benefits. Members thought that the benefit enquiries could be handled by the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) as they often handle people's benefits queries. The Working Group were informed that by signposting calls, such as benefits enquiries, to external agencies it could save the Council resources in terms of backroom staff.

Members were reminded that the CAB would soon be locating to Pathfinder House, Huntingdon. After a discussion around how the CAB or another provider could provide an

advice service at the Council's other locations the suggestion was made that as part of a tendering process for Voluntary Sector funding the Council could stipulate that the successful bid would require the provision of advice services at the Council's other locations.

There was a short discussion on the merits of the Disability Huntingdonshire approach whereby the organisation engages with users in their own homes.

The Working Group were advised that current signposting of calls to external agencies is a redial function however Officers will investigate if this could instead be a transfer.

Members rejected the suggestion of asking the expert witness at the next meeting how the advice sector would respond to the activity data. Instead the Working Group will ask what issues are the advice sector facing on a day to day basis and will then correlate the answers with the activity data.

Any Other Business

Members agreed to the following meeting date changes:

- Monday 11th April moved to Tuesday 12th April at 10am
- Monday 25th April moved to Tuesday 26th April at 10am

The Working Group was reminded that the CAB would attend the meeting on Tuesday 12th April as an expert on the advice sector and Julie Farrow, Hunts Forum, would attend the meeting on Tuesday 26th April as an expert on the voluntary sector.

Members were advised Officers will be providing examples of Voluntary Sector funding of other authorities to a future meeting.

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Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Working Group

Date: 12th April 2016, 10am

Present: Councillors T Hayward (TH) and Mrs L A Duffy (LD)

Attending: Batul Dungarwall (BD)

Officers: D Smith (DS), C Stopford (CS) and K Smith (KS - Note Taker)

Apologies: Councillors D Brown and S Criswell

Rural Cambs CAB

BD, Chief Executive Officer of Rural Cambs CAB spoke to the group to provide information on the impact that they consider they have on the community, to consider what information they hold and are able to present in order for the Council to could determine outcome focused performance measures.

TH outlined the subjects that the WG wanted to address, namely:

1. The current situation.
2. How will situation change over the next 4-5 years?
3. What data does CAB have to support the outcome of their work.
4. How does current and planned work impact on the HDC Corporate Plan? With an emphasis on Health and Well Being, Strong and Resilient Communities and Business Growth (specifically small businesses)

BD proceeded by informing the group that last year, CAB dealt with 13902 new issues and this year 14852, each person came in with the average of 4 new issues.

The issues are becoming more complex. The top 5 main issues in terms of number that arose this year were Benefits, Debt, Employment, Consumer Issues and Relationships. The last was for the first time in the top 5. This is believed to be the result of the end of the recession and the public being more open to talking about Domestic Violence.

All of these new issues were a combination of walk-ins and telephone contact. In 2015, 80% of all contact was via telephone and the remaining 20% were face-to-face; this is a major change from 2012 (20% Telephone and 80% face-to-face) BD stated that she believed this change was due to how people access help for their issues, as well as the Contact Centre aims to assist callers on First Point of Contact and minimise repeat contacts where possible.

The possibility of Webchat and Voice Conferencing (Similar to Skype) being introduced in the future for the more rural areas were also being considered.

TH enquired if this would have an effect on the training of advisors with new services. BD responded by stating that their training system and IT systems are adapting to cope with the new services but they still work in Contact Centres.

There was a brief discussion about the viability of CAB kiosks. Cambridge has the kiosks but because of poor reliability and the fact that the data in them could become outdated they were not considered a viable or valuable source of information.

DS then asked about the process of handing off a caller for specialist advice, BD advised the Working Group that Rural CAB does not do home visits, but have partners that can do so on

their behalf, the contact centre operative would assess if this was required and referred as required, there is a shared CRM database with the partner agencies so Rural CAB have records of what was discussed with the partners.

Following a discussion about the length of an incoming First Point of Contact call via the contact centre, BD went into detail about the process of the call and how they aim to prevent repeat calls using a "Tell Us Once" method. It was then discussed that the public are not coming forward to the CAB early enough for assistance and with the upcoming Universal Credit scheme changes on the horizon, the Rural CAB are working to encourage the public to contact earlier and provide budgeting/debt advice.

Further discussion was held regarding Universal Credit, BD explained that CAB are mandating people who come in for debt advice automatically get booked onto Budgeting Sessions to help prevent future contact and are trying to be firm with this as often advice is ignored and CAB see the same people return later in the year seeking escalated advice regarding bankruptcy. Figures were presented by BD stating that in a pilot scheme researching behaviour changes for Universal Credit, high percentages of the public needed help with issues of budgeting, bank accounts and getting online, which serves as a warning to expect increased contact volumes when the scheme launches.

The topic changed to Online Forms, the group were advised that benefit and other forms were complicated to complete and thus time consuming and sometimes difficult to provide immediate advice, as well as that the internet is most commonly used for social media purposes by the public, DS also added that there is an element of fear regarding the internet in the public as well as bringing up that rural areas have lower internet connection availability.

LD added that she has had complaints about timeouts on online forms too as some residents panic when they see they have a limited time to complete forms.

The Working Group discussed the upcoming changes to Universal Credit, BD warned the members that migration to ESA has followed the same pattern as Universal Credit, thus the rural CAB is predicting a large increase in contacts looking for assistance, but they are ready to deal with this as well. It is believed that locating CAB in Pathfinder House later this year will ease 'handover' and communication of problems and assistance.

TH then asked if CAB were expecting an increase of requests for help regarding moving to area from outside of country, in addition language barriers were brought up as these two items were not in the top 5. The Working Group discussed about the increases and the knock on effects to CAB.

The topic of staff and volunteer retention was discussed, BD informed the Working Group that CAB has a very good retention of both, usually 6-7 years and that they recruit for other roles than just advisors.

The Working Group discussed mental health issues and liaising with GPs to assist, Members were informed that CAB are doing preliminary work via surveys regarding this issue.

The Working Group then asked BD a list of questions and were informed that;

- Huntingdonshire has a higher % of payday loan issues, and that evidence collected from the area went nationally to support the ban of Wonga Adverts.
- Child Sexploitation does arise in Huntingdonshire and is on the rise.
- Businesses are engaging with CAB and will help anyone, self-employed, sole traders, and though not as much, bigger businesses would be supported also.

- Issues regarding employers are arising as well. (Non-payment of wages, redundancy)

TH then asked BD about Universal Credit in the long term and its effects; the Working Group was informed that whilst the CAB has limited information, they believe Universal Credit will lead to increased debt as the public do not have sufficient knowledge to handle the shift in responsibility of household budgeting and priority debts. There are concerns too from the CAB that they expect a large percentage of recipients of Universal Credit will spend the funds in ways not intended thus leading to eviction notices and reliance on payday loans.

Following a short discussion on how HDC and CAB can prevent the above from happening as well as preventing repeat assistance requests from the same members of the public, it was suggested that the public should be given the tools to help themselves as well as mandating that when the public approach CAB for debt advice, they should be booked onto a budgeting advice course. Also that CAB needs to not only have high street presence but to be mobile as well.

TH enquired about potential ways to get information out to the public early as a preventative measure. The Working Group discussed different methods including short YouTube clips and to look into the costs of producing CD/DVDs with guides on them for distribution, as well as looking into finding simple ways for the public to access information without hurdles.

TH advised the Working Group that the group may conclude that they want a single organisation for advice rather than fragmented. Then moved on to requesting information that CAB has got in regards to future resilience. BD advised she has a number of data points that are broken down into smaller categories and wards and these will be forwarded to DS. She then informed the Working Group that two-thirds of people who approach the CAB for advice have their issues resolved within 6 months of initial First Point of Contact, there is data for repeat contacts requesting help for the same issue, however this data is fairly new and has no comparative data to measure against.

TH suggested that this data would show the Working Group what the repeat problems are and provides a chance to review if there are services HDC can provide or ask if enough information is being relayed to the person approaching the CAB.

Finally, TH thanked BD for her contributions thus far and asked if she had anything else that she would like to inform the Working Group about, BD informed the group that she will forward sets of supporting Data to DS to distribute to the Working Group, and she thanked the group for their time.

(At 11:44am, BD left the meeting)

Any Other Business

Next meeting on the April 26th 2016 at 10am – Same format – All attendees happy with how the format is working so far.

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Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Working Group

Date: 26th April 2016, 10am
Present: Councillors T Hayward (Chairman), D Brown and Mrs L A Duffy
Attending: Julie Farrow
Officers: C Stopford and A Green (Note Taker)

Notes Of The Previous Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 12th April 2016 were confirmed as a correct record.

Question And Answer Session

The Chairman welcomes Julie Farrow, Hunts Forum, to the meeting of the Working Group and outlines that the purpose of the session is to discover the issues and problems that the volunteering side of the voluntary sector are facing. All attendees were reminded that the session was not part of the procurement exercise and that Members are currently gathering evidence in order to establish how the funding should be used.

Mrs Farrow informed the Working Group that the first problem organisations have is funding and the changes from grants to contracts. Mrs Farrow explained that public sector authorities are moving away from offering lots of little grants and are instead opting to award larger contracts. The result of this is that larger organisations from outside the area are tendering for contracts within the area thereby putting the sustainability of local organisations at risk.

Members were informed that the Hunts Forum are currently tendering for County Council funding however in order to tender they are having to purchase extra insurance with no guarantee that they will be awarded the contract.

The Working Group was warned of the dangers of the procurement process with the example of UnitingCare Partnership (UCP) being given. UCP won a five-year £800m NHS contract by undercutting rivals however the contract ended after eight months because UCP stated that it was not financially sustainable.

Mr Stopford informed Members that the public sector has to use contract finder to advertise contracts and grants over £25k. The database is national and users are able to set parameters which results in an email alert to the user once a contract appears which matches the parameters.

There was a discussion about the mechanics of a consortium in which the Working Group heard that organisations part of the consortium retain their independence and can send a representative to the board meeting. If a consortium wins a contract there would be a negotiation at board level as to how the money would be divided amongst the individual organisations. In respect to grants organisations would bid in their own right.

A further issue for the voluntary sector is that volunteers do not have the right skills to facilitate change. There is a need for infrastructure organisations to plan ahead and get their members to think about the future needs for the sector. It is therefore crucial that volunteers are trained with the right skills to manage the changes within the sector.

Mrs Farrow highlighted the further issue that financial support is decreasing whilst demand is increasing. The risk is that volunteers and paid staff could become overstretched and miss something crucial whilst dealing with a service user.

When asked about donations Mrs Farrow stated that there is a lack of donations and that is a result of the bad press charities receive as this tars all charities with the same brush.

In response to the question why is demand increasing Members were told that it could be that people, who don't meet the criteria, are currently being deflected away from the statutory services. In addition if an organisation is seen to be doing a good job then consequently they will gain more work.

During a more general discussion about the growth in demand the Working Group were informed that more people require support but also individuals expect more. Mrs Farrow informed Members that the sector is aware that the re-education of expectations is required. Hunts Forum ran a session called 'How Your Town Works' which explained to people which public bodies provides what service.

Following a question regarding getting the right individuals within the community to provide volunteering hours and enthuse others to do the same Mrs Farrow stated it was possible to get the right individuals so long as the organisation is imbedded within the community and that they know the individuals to ask.

Members queried the possibility that little individual organisations are frightened of losing their identity if they support or seek assistance from another voluntary organisation however Mrs Farrow stated that some organisations are able to provide a focused service on a shoestring budget and that all they require is the latest sector information.

In response to a question regarding what action could public bodies do to help the consortium to strike the balance between being big enough to be able to deliver the services required yet not become a faceless organisation and lose the community spirit. Mrs Farrow stated that public bodies could say 'could the consortium to provide this service and it is up to you on how to provide it' or 'could the consortium provide this service whilst fulfilling a set of key criteria'. This way the consortium knows where they stood and would be able to plan for the fulfilment of the contract.

The Working Group was made aware that the County Council have asked Hunts Forum to work with a specifically defined organisation. Members were told that a reason for this could be that the particular organisation could provide a particular service which the County Council would like to be provided. Mr Stopford stated that it could be possible to protect the principle without demanding that the consortium should work with a particular organisation.

Following the question concerning which approach works better, the umbrella approach of a consortium or individual organisations going for their own piece of funding, Mrs Farrow stated that the sector has got to change and the approach where individual organisations tendered for their own piece of funding is the old way of working. She added that it has to be an umbrella approach as one group can administer and manage the contract therefore baring the costs of doing so meaning that more funding is released for frontline services.

Another issue highlighted was that for smaller organisations demonstrating their impact can be difficult. Mrs Farrow informed Members that in most cases smaller organisations don't know how to demonstrate their impact or even know what impact they have. She added that most of the smaller organisations won't have the data to prove their impact.

In response to a question on how to resolve the issue Mrs Farrow stated that it is crucial that the smaller organisations are educated on how to measure their impact. Where a consortium is in position the larger organisation can assist the smaller organisation on how to measure their impact. The Working Group were informed that each year Hunts Forum compiles a survey and a report is produced. Last year there was a return rate of 56% and that is up to 62% this year. It was confirmed that the Hunts Forum report would be circulated at a scrutiny meeting.

Mr Stopford informed Members that education can come through multiple routes and that way the message has a better chance of reaching the intended audience. Discussion ensued regarding the use of other platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. Mrs Farrow stated that the sector does not use these platforms that well.

Following a query regarding how organisations and individuals are informed about Hunts Forum's courses, the Working Group was informed that they find out via the Hunts Forum website or the Hunts Forum newsletter. Mrs Farrow stated that organisations in receipt of Hunts Forum notifications are encouraged to cascade the information to other organisations or individuals who are not on the mailing list. Members were informed that 300 people a year attend Hunts Forum courses.

In response to the question on how well does the sector engage with business the Working Group was informed that the sector doesn't do it that well. Members were informed that the sector needs the expertise and leadership from business in order to become more effective. The issue local organisations faces is that the larger the business the more likely they are to work with larger organisations and charities.

The Working Group asked Mrs Farrow about the volunteers the service has and was informed that volunteering has changed and there is a lot of movement of volunteers that isn't tracked as opportunities arise and volunteers decide that they would like to engage a new challenge. This causes an issue with smaller organisations as there is less scope to keep volunteers engaged with the task and prevent them from jumping ship to another organisation.

Members were informed that if a volunteer is working with vulnerable adults or children or someone on their own they need a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. However currently it can take only three days to complete a DBS check. The issue could be that individuals are more mobile often living at different addresses in different areas this therefore means that there would have to be multiple checks.

The age of volunteers was raised by Members to which Mrs Farrow stated that volunteers tended to be older people as they have more time to give however there is an increase in young volunteers probably as a result of the national citizen service scheme.

In response to a question on what can the Council do to improve the sector Members were informed that the sector would find it useful if Councils developed a combined strategy of what they want out of the sector. In addition, coordinating the link between the sector and Parish Councils would be useful so that organisations are able to identify local volunteers and expertise.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Farrow for her time and for answering the Working Group's questions so clearly and fully. Mrs Farrow then left the meeting.

Discussion

The Working Group briefly recapped the question and answer session with Mrs Farrow and discussed what documentation and actions were required before the next meeting. Mr Stopford stated that he would circulate to the Working Group examples from his previous authorities of what had been done before. The contract tender for the County Council would be circulated to Members as well as Citizens Advice Bureau's (CAB) ward breakdown document.

The Chairman briefed Members that they had received the evidence that should be considered before making a decision on what they would like to do. Members agreed that they will have a difficult decision to make

Mr Stopford reminded Members that the fund is a fixed amount but should consider how to split the funding. Currently £115k is allocated to CAB, £38k to Hunts Forum and £37k to Hunts Volunteer Centre however Members were informed that the split could be 50:50 or any formula that is deemed appropriate.

The Working Group was informed that the tender document could be scored in a variety of different ways and each score could be weighted by the importance Members have placed on that particular criteria. Members were advised that the document scoring can be amended however once the Council are accepting tenders it can no longer be changed.

Any Other Business

The next meeting of the Working Group will take place on the 19th May 2016, 10am at Centenary House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon (MAGPAS).

Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Working Group

Date: 19th May 2016, 10am

Present: Councillors T Hayward (Chairman), D Brown and L Duffy

Officers: N McCurdy, C Stopford, D Smith and A Green (Note Taker)

Notes Of The Previous Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 26th April 2016 were confirmed as a correct record.

Discussion

The Chairman commenced the discussion by referring to the email he had circulated to Members. The key points would form the basis of the discussion and are as follows:

Ms Dungarwalla – Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)

- a) CAB has five main issues: benefit, debt, employment, consumer issues and relationships.
- b) The CAB have an increasing number of enquiries.
- c) The CAB believe that there is a need to provide the public with the tools to help themselves.
- d) Budgeting courses would be beneficial.
- e) CAB have identified that they have to be more agile and mobile.
- f) They recognise that at the moment they do not provide visits to elderly and disabled people in their own homes.
- g) The CAB recognise that they need greater use of phone and electronic communication.

Ms Farrow – Hunts Forum

- a) Ms Farrow raised the question of 'outside organisations' tendering for any large contracts.
- b) The Working Group noticed that demand was increasing.
- c) The issue of contracts versus grants was raised.
- d) Ms Farrow emphasised a need to educate not only the public but also Councils and Councillors.
- e) Umbrella approach was highlighted as more effective.
- f) It is recognised that there is a need to ensure that volunteers have the right skills and knowledge.
- g) Ms Farrow highlighted that smaller organisations have problems demonstrating the impact that they have.

The Chairman highlighted that both experts had emphasised the need for education in the broadest sense. Members were advised that they would have to consider the number of contracts that the Council should award to the voluntary sector.

Mr Stopford continued the introduction by summarising the work of the Working Group. He informed Members that the purpose of the Working Group is to review the voluntary sector arrangements. During the course of the review Members have received evidence including from the County Council and Kettering Borough Council. The County Council evidence outlines the detail of their voluntary sector arrangement and the Kettering Borough Council evidence focuses on the outcomes. Members were reminded that Kettering Borough Council have not adopted the umbrella approach.

In summarising the findings of the Working Group, Members stated that they found all three meetings useful and that they have learnt a lot through the review process. All Members highlighted that education and information is important however they recognised that there is would be a cost implication to it. The point was raised that education has to be the type that is overt and reaches people in their own homes as it needs to reach those people who require help but may not be able to help themselves.

The Working Group noted that the Hunts Forum have submitted to the Council a document which contains a whole section on education. In addition education for Members was highlighted as key, regret was expressed that Members have not been known to attend training or educational seminars in high numbers.

The Chairman ~~raised~~ highlighted the section within the Council's Corporate Plan 2016-18 regarding the voluntary sector. The aims as stated within the Corporate Plan are aims the Working Group are in agreement with however there is concern regarding the reference to the reduction of people accessing Citizen's Advice Bureau. Members were advised that what is meant by the aim was a reduction of repeat customers.

Members noted that the approach the Council has in regards to handling customers is old fashioned and costly. It was highlighted that the customers arrived at the front desk and in most cases the Council ends up signposting the customer to other services.

Number of Contracts

Following a discussion on the number of contracts the Council should offer, the Working Group agreed to adopt a two contract approach with education as an important component of both contracts. It was highlighted that one umbrella contract would improve efficiency and reduce administration costs for the voluntary sector however Members thought that two contracts would be more appropriate. The reasoning for this was ~~because~~ that there are two separate jobs to do and if the Council went down the one contract approach there would be concern that the end product might be diluted.

The Working Group were reminded that any decision to award contracts must be based on the organisation's capacity to manage and fulfil the requirements of the contract and not personalities.

Members noted that future funding could be awarded within the perimeter of one contract however moving from six contracts to two contracts is a significant step. The Working Group agreed that the Council would require regular feedback on the contracts.

Length of Contracts

Members were informed that historically the Council had awarded a five year contract as this linked in with the medium term financial strategy however the Council moved towards three year contracts as to allow Members to scrutinise the contract more often. The Working Group accepted the fact that it is common practice to award three year contracts. Members agreed that the contracts should be three years in length.

Split of Funding

The Working Group were informed that the current split is 61% to 39% in favour of advice with £115k awarded to Rural Cambridgeshire Citizens Advice Bureau and a combined £85k awarded to Hunts Forum, Huntingdon Volunteer Centre and the Care Network.

A discussion ensued regarding the viability of the split and whether the split should be advertised. Members agreed that the split should be advertised but that organisations should submit a budget plan. No decision was made as what the split should be and it was ~~The~~

~~Working Group~~ agreed to discuss the split further at the next meeting once the scope had been fleshed out.

Funding

The question was asked that as more people have come through the door looking for advice does the Working Group recommend that Cabinet allocate more funding to the voluntary sector. However as the process will be streamlined from six contracts to two Members thought that efficiency savings would be expected. In addition the voluntary sector has been protected from funding reductions for the last eight years.

It was agreed that Option Three of reducing the budget in year one but then providing an equal annual payment equivalent to the same total amount of spend as option two (which involves a steady decline) should be adopted. This would mean that the voluntary sector would be awarded £190k per annum and it was thought that the voluntary sector organisations would prefer to have certainty in the amount of funding they would receive during the contract period.

It was suggested that if a voluntary sector organisation delivered a service better than the Council this would mean the Council won't need to carry out the service and there is would be a saving to be made. It is then up to the Council to decide on how to realise the saving as it could be an efficiency saving or a financial saving.

Working Group Activity

Members were advised that the Working Group report would be submitted to Cabinet in July. After that Cabinet meeting there would be a need to be in a position to enter into the procurement process. The Chairman stated that he thought that the Working Group has worked very well and that he would like the Working Group to continue the work into procurement process. The Chairman believes most strongly that Members should be involved in the procurement process.

Members agreed that the Working Group should recommend to Cabinet to keep the Working Group established in order to work alongside the Executive Councillor for Community Resilience and the Executive Councillor for Strategic Partnership and Shared Services during the procurement process.

Next Meeting

Members were advised that they need to consider what should be involved in both advice and voluntary sector infrastructure. In addition it was thought that Kettering Borough Council had presented what they would like very well however Members noted that the Council did not need to follow Kettering Borough Council entirely as there are different arrangements within Huntingdonshire for Business Support and duplication of work should be avoided.

Mr Stopford will draft a report for Cabinet which would be circulated at the next meeting. Members were ~~advised to submit ideas before the meeting~~ asked to submit their views to him as soon as possible so that he can include them in his draft.

The Working Group expected that as part of the reporting process the Council should expect the voluntary sector organisations to be agile.

Any Other Business

The next meeting of the Working Group will take place on 14th June 2016, 2pm at Pathfinder House.

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