

**COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (COMMUNITIES AND CUSTOMERS) – 5th January 2016**

**VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT FUNDING 2016/17 – 2019/20**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Customers) was informed that as the current three year funding programme is coming to an end on 31st March 2016 and with the need to make substantial savings the Council should take the opportunity to review its procedures, criteria and priorities for future support to voluntary sector organisations.

Members were acquainted with the five funding options for voluntary sector organisations, the current organisations in receipt of funding and the three options for future allocation of funding. Members noted that in addition to the voluntary sector grant funding the Council provides Cambridgeshire County Council also allocates just under £19k.

The Panel expressed their disappointment that the report was not presented months earlier and emphasised that the short timescale does not allow for Members to give full consideration to the proposals. Members thought it was unfair that the voluntary sector organisations in receipt of funding would not have sufficient time to source alternative funding if the options were to be adopted.

There was concern that the report does not contain the effect a reduction of funding would have upon the six organisations in receipt of voluntary sector grant funding. Members noted it would be useful if the report contained information concerning the benefit the organisations have upon the District as a result of the funding.

Members expressed the preferred outcome which would be for the Cabinet to set the priorities it would like the voluntary sector organisations to achieve, allocate funding and then invite voluntary sector organisations to bid for funding. However Members emphasised that this could only occur once a full analysis of the existing arrangements has been completed.

The Panel does not support any of the options presented within the report and instead would like to see funding remain at its current level for 2016/17 in order for a working group to carry out and complete work on finding an alternative funding arrangement which will be in place for 2017/18.