

Report of The Head of Finance

Voluntary and Community Sector Funding

1 Purpose of report

To propose a revised methodology, as recommended by the Grants Working Party, for the funding and commissioning of the voluntary and community sector to deliver specific outcomes and services.

To propose that the new methodology is adopted for the period 2016-18, for the specific areas outlined in Appendix 1, whilst a full review and consultation of the outcomes is undertaken and, if appropriate, a full procurement process undertaken.

2 Executive summary

In February 2012 a report was presented to this committee on the allocation of voluntary and community funding for a period of 3 years from April 2012 to March 2015. This was based on a consultation with the sector on the outcomes to be achieved during this period. These agreements were extended for a further 12 months as part of the 2015-16 budget process and will now expire in March 2016.

In June 2014 a further report was brought to Resources committee to create a member working party to review the process and propose a way forwards. This report reflects the recommendations from the working party on the way forward for the next two years.

It is proposed to refresh the current outcomes to reflect the present situation of the council for a further two years to expire in March 2018. This will allow time for further in depth analysis of the outcomes required, a full consultation with key stakeholders, and the commissioning of the services to be undertaken. This may be via a full procurement process or may be other contributions to partners and stakeholders, dependent on the results of the review. It will also allow sufficient time to fully evaluate the council's financial position following recent announcements about funding.

3 Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed outcomes and commissioning method
Appendix 2: Individual outline specifications for each outcome
Appendix 3: Current position on grant funding and outcomes

4 Proposed action:

The committee is invited to RESOLVE to:

- 4.1 **Agree the principle of the provision of community funding until March 2018;**
- 4.2 **Agree the refreshed outcomes and budgets as shown in Appendix 1;**
- 4.3 **Agree the outline specifications as shown in Appendix 2;**
- 4.4 **Agree to an extension of the member working party's terms of reference to carry out a further review and consultation to be undertaken to inform a further report in relation to the continuation of these services and funding from April 2018**

5 Background

- 5.1 A members' working party was created in June 2014 to review the award of voluntary and community sector funding, and the services these provided.
- 5.2 The current awards expire in March 2016 and, if a decision is made to continue funding for voluntary and community groups, a method for the allocation of such funding is needed from April 2016.
- 5.3 The working party discussed and reviewed the outcomes which would be needed from this funding, considering both value for money and procurement implications. The recommendation from the working party is to refresh the outcomes from the previous process, and the budgets associated with each, and to commission these services for a further two years up to March 2018.

6 Discussion

- 6.1 Since the award of the funding in February 2012 there have been changes in both the amount of available resources and also the way in which the council is required to commission its services and outcomes.
- 6.2 Officers have taken procurement advice on the commissioning of the proposed community outcomes and, to ensure that the funding is used and outcomes are delivered as the council would require them to be, a procurement exercise is needed rather than simply an award of a grant.
- 6.3 This is because the award of a grant cannot ensure the delivery of the outcomes, and cannot allocate funding dependent on the achievement of the outcomes. This can only now be done via a procurement process via the award of a contract to a provider of that service.
- 6.4 The working party discussed the continued need for services which are currently delivered through the voluntary and community sector with council funding, and the ongoing requirement to secure outcomes in return for that council funding.
- 6.5 The recommendation from the working party based on this discussion is to undertake a short term procurement for the next two years to allow for a further detailed review of the outcomes and the methods used to commission services.
- 6.6 The refreshed outcomes shown in Appendix 1 are broadly similar to those already in place, as shown in Appendix 3. The budgets for each have been reviewed and reallocated to each outcome. There has also been a change to the budget proposed for the small grants fund. However, overall the budget is not

more than currently spent on these areas and the detail is set out in section 8 below.

- 6.7 During the period up to March 2018 further work can then be undertaken by the working party to ensure that the funding and outcomes for the voluntary and community sector reflect the council's medium term position on both priorities and finances. This will be an opportunity for further consultation with key stakeholders so that the commissioning of services from April 2018 can be better planned and undertaken in line with council policies and meet local need.
- 6.8 The council can continue to award small grants and to fund other collaborative community initiatives, which are also shown in Appendix 3. The funding of these areas can also be included in the full review over the next two years.
- 6.9 This mix of funding and procuring services gives the council both flexibility and also adaptability to respond to the changing needs of the borough as a community, whilst encouraging community groups to take an active role in the provision of services for the people of the borough.
- 6.10 If agreement is reached on the proposed actions in this report, officers can begin the procurement process in line with the contract procedure rules outlined in the constitution. Multiple quotations will be sought from specific providers of each outcome. There will be no advertising, in line with the contract procedure rules, but other organisations will be able to express an interest in providing these services and could submit quotations. Officers will then review the quotations in line with the procurement criteria and award contracts accordingly.
- 6.11 A report to committee on the outcome of the procurement will follow in the summer of 2016.

7 Legal powers

- 7.1 Section 111 of The Local Government Act 1972 gives the Council power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.
- 7.2 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 gives the Council the power (subject to certain exceptions which do not apply here) to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the Borough.

8 Financial and value for money implications

- 8.1 The agreed spending outlined in February 2012 totalled £207,056, comprising:

Community transport	£20,000
Debt management advice	£30,000
Support for those at risk	£30,000
Employment advice	£20,000
Equalities advice	£10,000
Sector infrastructure support	£20,000
Victims of crime support	<u>£10,000</u>
	£140,000
Shopmobility	£25,000
Museum services	£19,950
Interpersonal violence	<u>£22,106</u>
	£207,056

- 8.2 The total budget for small grants is £3,691.
- 8.3 Since 2012 the museum services funding has reduced year on year and is no longer required by The Winifred Wharton Trust.
- 8.4 The proposals outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 work within the total budgets allocated for 2016-17 and there are no additional pressures on the revenue budget. However, it does commit these funding levels up to April 2018, and this therefore reduces the flexibility the council has to vary its spending in these areas over that period.
- 8.5 Appendix 1 proposes the use of £145,000 of the available budget. There is no proposal to fund either the museum services or specific rent for shopmobility premises for 2016-17. Interpersonal violence is an on-going contribution to a county wide initiative and this will continue in 2016-17. The balance of available funds will be reviewed further and proposal, such as those to increase the resources for small grants will be brought to committee at a later date.
- 8.6 The procurement process used will ensure that the delivery of outcomes is monitored in line with expectations and value for money and transparency will therefore be maintained for the council.

9 Risk analysis

Nature of risk	Consequences if realised	Likelihood of occurrence	Control measures
Future priority outcomes not met under grant arrangements	Services needed by local people not provided Poor value for money	Medium	Review funding methodology and allocation criteria
Leading voluntary sector services cease if BCW funding is reduced.	Loss of service to local people Reputational damage to Council	Medium	Liaison with sector and other funding providers
Level of funding becomes unaffordable but no flexibility to change prior to April 2018	Potential adverse revenue budget implications	Medium	A planned and controlled MTFP is in place

10 Implications for resources

This work will be achieved using existing resources of the council.

11 Implications for stronger and safer communities

Supporting organisations through longer term funding agreements enables future planning and development in becoming self-sustaining. The services delivered through this funding help to promote community cohesion, reduce crime and repeat victimisation and build a stronger sense of community.

12 Implications for equalities

All procurement will adhere to the council's equality duty. As part of the ongoing review equality impact assessments will be undertaken as necessary.

13 Author and contact officer

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14 Consultees

Bridget Lawrence Head of Resources
Julie Thomas Head of Planning and Local development
John Campbell Chief Executive
Gill Chapman Principal Community Support Manager

15 Background papers

Reports to Resources February 2012 and June 2014
Working Group notes
Procurement Regulations

Suggested themes for voluntary sector and collaborative funding 2016 to meet BCW desired outcomes

	Theme	Achieved through:	Indicative maximum annual budget	Possible service provider
1.	Advice and guidance services that help people to access employment through learning employment skills that support the needs of the local job market	Invitation to quote	£20,000	CAB Mallows
2.	Community transport services that enhance the mobility of citizens to enable people to access the services they need in the community	Invitation to quote	£25,000	Shire Community Services
3.	Voluntary and community sector infrastructure services to support the voluntary and community sector in reaching more people and promoting volunteering	Invitation to quote	£20,000	NVCA ViN
4.	Services that support victims of crime and/or discrimination and provide support to organisations to reduce discriminatory practices	Invitation to quote	£15,000	Victim Support NREC
5.	support services for citizens in times of greatest need eg debt advice, target hardening, refuge accommodation,	In house or; countywide collaborative funding or; Invitation to quote	£25,000	In house FISH CAB Community Law

6.	<p>Services that promote community cohesion and improve life chances for people in areas of high vulnerability to crime and unemployment within the borough</p> <p>eg antisocial behaviour project work, or geographically based projects that support access to services in the immediate locality</p>	<p>In house or; with partners or; invitation to quote</p>	<p>£20,000</p>	<p>In house Glamis Hall Hemmingwell Skills Centre Via Safer Stronger Neighbourhoods Project</p>
7.	<p>Services that promote community cohesion and improve community engagement opportunities for members of vulnerable communities</p> <p>eg antisocial behaviour project work, or support for community hubs that offer services to promote intercommunity relationships, including access to services for members of newly arrived communities</p>	<p>In house or; with partners or; invitation to quote</p>	<p>£20,000</p>	<p>In house Victoria Centre WACA Daylight?</p>

Total proposed spending:

£145,000

SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Community transport service

GENERAL PROJECT BRIEF:

- To provide a door to door community transport service across the borough to enable residents to access services in the community at an affordable price; the priority to be the provision of services for older and disabled people.
- To provide mobility aids across the borough to enable residents to access services in the community at an affordable price; the priority being towards older and disabled people.
- To reduce social isolation by offering arranged excursions; the priority being towards older and disabled people

SPECIFICATION:

- Promote & provide a range of 'day to day' community transport options with the emphasis on older and disabled people
- Offer a monthly programme of excursions which offer people the opportunity to socialise with others, alleviate loneliness and isolation and expand personal horizons
- Promote and provide a variety of mobility aids for hire
- Maintain a public presence within the borough

INFORMATION REQUIRED:

- A governing document, ie constitution, memorandum and articles of association
- Health & Safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- An equal opportunities statement and policy
- Discipline and grievance policy
- Complaints/compliments policy
- Insurance documents
- Most recent approved annual report
- A signed copy of the most recent accounts
- Written confirmation of any quality standards held by the organisation

SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Advice and guidance services to help people access employment

GENERAL PROJECT BRIEF:

- To provide an information and advice service for tackling worklessness in the borough
- To provide the opportunity for learning and employment skills to service the needs of the local job market
- To provide learning and support to enable people to complete an on line application process

SPECIFICATION:

- Offer access to information, advice and support around available job opportunities and the application process
- Offer training and support sessions to jobseekers in Wellingborough such as CV writing, covering letters, on line applications, interview processes etc either directly or indirectly.
- Provide access to and positively promote resources outlining volunteering opportunities and the benefits of volunteering as a precursor to employment
- Maintain a public presence within the borough

INFORMATION REQUIRED:

- A governing document, ie constitution, memorandum and articles of association
- Health & Safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- An equal opportunities statement and policy
- Discipline and grievance policy
- Complaints/compliments policy
- Insurance documents
- Most recent approved annual report
- A signed copy of the most recent accounts
- Written confirmation of any quality standards held by the organisation

SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Support for victims of crime and/or discrimination

GENERAL PROJECT BRIEF:

- To provide an information, advice and support service to victims of crime and/or discrimination in the borough.
- To provide an information, advice and support service to organisations to help to reduce discriminatory practices

SPECIFICATION:

- Promote & provide a range of easily accessible resources for individuals and organisations via the web for immediate download or on request i.e. policies, briefing papers, good practice.
- Offer access to information, advice and support around discrimination, either directly, or indirectly
- To deliver activities and events in the borough that raise the awareness of citizens' rights not to experience discrimination, and knowledge of steps to take if discrimination occurs.
- Maintain a public presence within the borough

INFORMATION REQUIRED:

- A governing document, ie constitution, memorandum and articles of association
- Health & Safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- An equal opportunities statement and policy
- Discipline and grievance policy
- Complaints/compliments policy
- Insurance documents
- Most recent approved annual report
- A signed copy of the most recent accounts
- Written confirmation of any quality standards held by the organisation

SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Voluntary and community sector infrastructure support

GENERAL PROJECT BRIEF:

- To provide an information, advice and support service to voluntary and community organisations in the borough.
- To provide a volunteering brokerage service in the borough, matching potential volunteers to suitable volunteer opportunities.

SPECIFICATION:

- Promote & provide a range of easily accessible business support resources for local VCS groups via the web for immediate download or on request i.e. policies, briefing papers, funding alerts.
- Provide a regular information e-bulletin at least twice every month
- Offer access to information, advice and support around funding opportunities and funding bids, individual or collaborative.
- Offer training and support sessions to voluntary and community groups in Wellingborough such as capacity building, fundraising etc either directly or indirectly.
- Provide access to and positively promote resources outlining volunteering opportunities, the benefits of volunteering and give advice and guidance on good volunteer management
- Promote the role and potential of the local voluntary and community sector within wider partnerships and to the statutory and business sector
- Maintain a public presence within the borough

INFORMATION REQUIRED:

- A governing document, ie constitution, memorandum and articles of association
- Health & Safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- An equal opportunities statement and policy
- Discipline and grievance policy
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SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Local hubs that give access to community services in areas of high vulnerability to crime, unemployment and social isolation within the borough

GENERAL PROJECT BRIEF:

- To offer a safe, affordable and welcoming space for local community groups to meet and hold events
- To promote and provide information, advice and guidance on services to enhance the wellbeing of residents living in the most need
- To encourage people from the surrounding area to participate in activities and take up an active role in the local community

SPECIFICATION:

- Offer community rooms for hire at an affordable rate to enable new and existing community groups to meet and hold events to increase social inclusion and community engagement
- Promote & provide, either directly or indirectly, a variety of easily accessible resources for individuals on a range of local welfare, social inclusion and leisure services
- Offer access to information, guidance and support to enhance wellbeing
- Actively seek to increase external funding to allow the development of new projects or enhanced service provision that meet the needs of existing or potential service users, either singly or in partnership

INFORMATION REQUIRED:

- A governing document, ie constitution, memorandum and articles of association
- Health & Safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- An equal opportunities statement and policy
- Discipline and grievance policy
- Complaints/compliments policy
- Insurance documents
- Most recent approved annual report
- A signed copy of the most recent accounts
- Written confirmation of any quality standards held by the organisation

SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Local hubs that give access to community services with an emphasis on helping people from newly arrived or minority communities within the borough

GENERAL PROJECT BRIEF:

- To provide a safe, affordable and welcoming space for local community groups including those from new and minority communities to form, meet and hold events
- To promote and provide information, advice and guidance on local services to enhance wellbeing for residents, particularly those from minority communities who struggle to access universal services
- To actively encourage new arrivals and people from the surrounding area to participate in activities and take up an active role in the local community

SPECIFICATION:

- Offer community rooms for hire at an affordable rate to enable new and existing community groups to meet and hold events to increase social inclusion and community engagement
- Promote & provide, either directly or indirectly, a variety of easily accessible resources for individuals on a range of local welfare, social inclusion and leisure services
- Offer access to information, advice and support focussed on, but not exclusive to, new arrivals and minority communities on a range of issues to enhance individual wellbeing and community cohesion
- Actively seek to increase external funding to allow the development of new projects or enhanced service provision that meet the needs of existing or potential service users, either singly or in partnership

INFORMATION REQUIRED:

- A governing document, ie constitution, memorandum and articles of association
- Health & Safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- An equal opportunities statement and policy
- Discipline and grievance policy
- Complaints/compliments policy
- Insurance documents
- Most recent approved annual report
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- Written confirmation of any quality standards held by the organisation

SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Debt advice and guidance

GENERAL PROJECT BRIEF:

- To provide an information and advice service for preventing and for tackling personal debt across the borough
- To maximise the income of the most financially challenged communities
- To increase financial benefit take up across the borough

SPECIFICATION:

- Give advice or guidance on personal debt, debt management and income maximisation
- Assist people to maximise income and benefit gains
- Positively promote resources helping people to reduce debt and maximise income over the longer term, such as return to work schemes
- Work with housing allocation teams to assist people prevented from holding tenancies due to uncontrolled indebtedness
- Maintain a public presence within the borough

INFORMATION REQUIRED:

- A governing document, ie constitution, memorandum and articles of association
- Health & Safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- An equal opportunities statement and policy
- Discipline and grievance policy
- Complaints/compliments policy
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BCW strategic grants to the Voluntary sector

Current Position: (Nov 2015)

There were a number of 3 year service level agreements with voluntary sector organisations that ran from April 2012 until 31 March 2015. These were extended for a single year and are due to expire on 31 March 2016

The grants were awarded under certain categories and have expected outcomes, affirmed each year at monitoring meetings, to help the council achieve its aims and objectives.

Although there have been budget pressures, and the council could have chosen to reduce the level of funding and associated outcomes, the budget has been preserved at the Year 1 rate for the full length of the agreement.

Current categories and associated annual funding are as follows:

Category	Grant pa	Grantholder
Debt advice	£30,000	Citizens' Advice
Employment advice & skills	£20,000	Citizens' Advice (with NVCA)
Dial-a-ride	£20,000	Shire Community Services - Wellibus
Support for deprived communities	£30,000	Victoria Centre £23,000 WACA £7,000
Voluntary sector infrastructure	£20,000	NVCA (Nene Valley Community Action)
Equalities advice	£10,000	Northants Rights & Equalities Council
Support for victims of crime	£10,000	Victim Support

A grant was also awarded to:

- Wellingborough Museum on a reducing balance over 3 yrs, £10,000 for 2015-16
- Shopmobility: £25,000pa for 3 yrs to pay for the Orient Way premises.

Therefore the 'biddable' grants budget was £175,000 per annum

In addition the council currently gives:

- £22,106 through a countywide agreement to deal with interpersonal violence (ie domestic abuse and high level sexual offences) – this is due to be renegotiated during 2016-17 but there is likely to be a request for an increased contribution to cover some of the cost of domestic refuge places currently covered by a short term government backed project.
- Hemmingwell Community & Skills Centre:
 - £15,000 rent pa via an 'in/out' transaction. This is linked to the lease and service conditions rather than an annual award.

- During 2012-15, a £12,000 grant to help with running costs after the Centre took longer to establish than was originally anticipated once leased to the Hope Project in 2009. This was extended into 2015-16
- A small community grant pot of c £3,500 (of which approx £2k is allocated to summer sports scheme) which provides small grants of up to £500, allocated under delegated powers. This was fully spent by month 5 of the current financial year.
- There are a number of other partnership contributions that the council pays towards partnership projects which come from different budgets, such as
 - Police Community Support Officers (c £52k)
 - Nsport partnership work (£7,500 + sports development)
 - Community safety projects
 - Arrangements with housing providers for 'move on' accommodation etc

This current grants round was a change to earlier years, being more prescriptive than previously. The outcomes are generally working well, with some agreed changes over the years to fit changing circumstances eg welfare reform.

The 'Employment' category was new and added as a response to the 'recession to recovery' position of 2011

Grant holders have been appreciative of a longer term arrangement (more than 12 months) that also gives them more credence with other funding bodies when applying for external funds.

In the intervening time, there have been changes to procurement rules that affect the procurement procedures and conditions, especially for awards totalling over £50,000.