

**Report of The Head of Resources****VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT – DAYLIGHT CENTRE FELLOWSHIP****1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider a request by the Daylight Centre Fellowship (DCF) for financial support toward the fixed costs incurred by operating the Queen's Hall building as a drop in centre for vulnerable people and the local foodbank scheme.
- 1.2 The report seeks, through provision of a community grant, to meet the council priorities of:
- Reducing crime and antisocial behaviour by reducing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol, and helping to ensure that people are kept safe.
  - Delivering efficient and responsive services by working with partners to make sure services are accessible and affordable to all.

**2 Executive summary**

The report outlines the current situation of the Daylight Centre Fellowship and considers the current financial context of the DCF in relation to the services they provide. It explains the current status of the council's voluntary and community grants process and recommends a 'one-off' grant be awarded the DCF to help to overcome current financial pressures.

**3 Appendices**

None

**4 Proposed action:**

- 4.1 **The committee is invited to RESOLVE that a 'one-off' unconditional grant of £4,500 is awarded to the Daylight Centre Fellowship for 2015-16 as a contribution towards the running of The Queen's Hall and 10 High Street Place**

**5 Background**

- 5.1 The Daylight Centre Fellowship run a number of projects in Wellingborough mainly through a drop in centre for vulnerable people and the management of the local food bank.
- 5.2 The organisation leases The Queen's Hall building at 8 High Street, and 10 High Street Place from the council as their main base for running a drop in centre and foodbank services.

- 5.3 The organisation has been funded through a number of sources over previous years but is struggling in the current climate to replace lost or time limited funding and to meet increased needs from the community.
- 5.4 DCF did not receive a grant as part of the council's voluntary sector funding scheme for 2012-15 which was carried forward into 2015-16, as a result of changes made to make the available funding more targeted towards specific outcomes. Due to the 3 year nature of the scheme, since extended, there has been no opportunity to bid for fresh funds for 2015-16.
- 5.5 In July 2015 the council received a letter outlining the pressures facing DCF in terms of revenue funding, including the pressure to cover the rental payments. These pressures have mounted as the year has progressed.

## **6 Discussion**

- 6.1 In the current challenging funding climate, DCF relies mainly on donations, grants and one-off bids to support the services it offers. The vulnerable client group it serves has limited ability to pay for services, and the uncertainty over the long term availability of the building also acts as a barrier to attracting funding.
- 6.2 Representatives from the Foodbank service are members of a wider network in order to try and increase efficiency and work towards sustainability and self-sufficiency. However, the project is not yet sustainable.
- 6.3 The organisation now finds itself in a position at the busiest time of year in terms of client numbers where is struggling to meet rental payments on time.
- 6.4 Should DCF decide to surrender the lease on the two buildings, it would leave the council with two unoccupied buildings, putting the properties at further risk of vandalism and disrepair, as well as the council incurring business rates, security and insurance costs. Should the services run by DCF discontinue, the council may incur an increased demand for help with benefit assessments and other social welfare advice.
- 6.5 In order to keep the buildings available for DCF to continue their services and to keep the financial burden on the council to a minimum, it is suggested that DCF be offered an in year grant of £4,500 as a contribution towards running costs. This equates to approximately six months rental payments.
- 6.6 A grant such as this would help to relieve the immediate financial stress of the organisation and give time for other funding opportunities to be investigated and developed. However, as a grant, any payment would have to be unconditional and whilst the council would expect it to be used to fund fixed running costs of the buildings, actual expenditure would be at the discretion of DCF.
- 6.7 There is a slight underspend in the current voluntary sector grants budget for 2015-16 that whilst it has been reported as an anticipated saving, could be used to fund such a grant out of the original 2015-16 budget allocation.

## 7 Legal powers

- 7.1 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables local authorities to do anything, including incurring expenditure, borrowing or lending money or acquiring or disposing of any property or rights, which facilitate or are conducive or incidental to the discharge of their functions.
- 7.2 Section 137(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended permits a local authority to incur expenditure on contributions to the funds of any charitable body in furtherance of its work in the United Kingdom; or the funds of any body which provides any public service (whether to the public as a whole or to any section of it) in the United Kingdom otherwise than for the purposes of gain.
- 7.3 These powers are complemented by the general power of competence given to the Council by section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. The general power of competence gives local authorities the same power to act that an individual generally has, subject to certain restrictions.

## 8 Financial and value for money implications

The proposed grant for the Daylight Centre Fellowship has come about as a result of a direct request for support from the organisation. It is therefore not within the scope of the current voluntary sector grants and would have to be found from elsewhere within the council's budgets. However, if the lease were to be relinquished, the council would still have to meet any business rates liability along with the costs of securing the building if closed.

## 9 Risk analysis

<b>Nature of risk</b>	<b>Consequences if realised</b>	<b>Likelihood of occurrence</b>	<b>Control measures</b>
The Daylight Centre Fellowship cease to trade and/or relinquish the leases held on The Queen's Hall and 10 High St Place	Loss of community run services for vulnerable members of the community  Loss of goodwill of community volunteers  Liability for the council in terms of lost rent, building security and new tenant search	Very likely	Agree a grant for 2015-16 to relieve the immediate financial pressures  Encourage DCF to find more sustainable funding and more suitable premises for future service delivery

**10 Implications for resources**

None arising directly from this report

**11 Implications for stronger and safer communities**

The services provided by DCF contribute towards national targets for health improvement and community safety, as well as local priorities such as debt management and helping to lift families out of poverty.

**12 Implications for equalities**

There are no implications arising directly from this report, although the service users will have particular needs.

**13 Author and contact officer**

Gill Chapman, Principal Community Support Manager

**14 Consultees**

Liz Elliott, Head of Finance

**15 Background papers**

None