

Core Grant Proposals, (Community Development, Chantal Noble)

Synopsis of report:

This report outlines the recommendations for the four Runnymede Borough Council Core Grants and seeks Corporate Management Committee's approval to action these recommendations which will enable voluntary sector organisations to continue the work they are doing within the borough whilst also ensuring a degree of uniformity when it comes to monitoring.

The report requests Corporate Management Committee to approve an indicative 10% uplift on the grant amounts, subject to full Council approval where appropriate at the budget setting meeting.

Recommendation that:

Members recommend Corporate Management Committee to approve:

- a) the proposal to award an annual core grant to the sum of £103,700 + 10% for a period of three years (subject to approval at full Council) to Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne on receipt of completed application documentation, with the monitoring conditions outlined in section 2 of this report;
- b) the proposal to award a core grant to the sum of £33,700 + 10% for a period of three years (subject to approval at full Council) to Voluntary Support North Surrey, on receipt of completed application documentation, with the monitoring conditions outlined in section 2 of this report;
- c) the proposal to award a core grant to the sum of £1,500 + 10% to Runnymede Access Liaison Group, for a period of three years, on receipt of completed application documentation, with the monitoring conditions outlined in section 2 of this report; and
- d) the proposal to award the core grant sum of £2,900 + 10% to the Addlestone Community Association for a period of three years, on receipt of completed application documentation, with the monitoring conditions outlined in section 2 of this report.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 This report on Core Grant Proposals has been prepared as part of the wider work around voluntary sector grants, which is an identified priority of the Health and Wellbeing Member Working Party. Officers have particularly focussed on the monitoring requirements of each core grant recipient which has been noted by Officers to be inconsistent across the recipients and the sum of the core grants.

- 1.2 Runnymede Borough Council currently provides 4 core grants:
- Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne (CARS) - £103,700
 - Voluntary Sector Support North Surrey (VSNS) - £33,000
 - Runnymede Access Liaison Group (RALG) - £1,500
 - Addlestone Community Association (ACA) - £2,900
- 1.3 Officers began work on engaging with these four organisations around what the core grant funds and the current monitoring that is in place for these awarded sums.
- 1.4 Based on this information, Officers developed a series of initial proposals which were presented to Members of the Health and Wellbeing Member Working Party on 26 January 2023. The Member feedback from these proposals has been used to guide the recommendations within this report.

2. Core Grant Proposals, 10% uplift and grant duration

- 2.1 The purpose of this process had been to understand the need for each grant and the purpose that the grants serve to the respective organisations given the limited information that is available to the Council. Following an initial research and engagement exercise, Officers have developed the recommendations set out below and are seeking this Committee's approval to action them, subject to the approval of Corporate Management Committee and full Council, where appropriate.

Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne (CARS)

- 2.2 The Council awards a grant sum of £103,700 to CARS each year for a period of three years. As per the intention of the core grant, this sum goes towards the operational costs of running their services, with the core grant sum enabling CARS staff and volunteers to support residents with advice through a range of channels including in-person, face-to-face and via telephone and email. In addition, staff conduct up to 50 home visits for those with access challenges which prevent them to visit CARS in person.
- 2.3 In terms of monitoring, CARS provide monitoring at the end of each quarter which provides information on: the number of Runnymede residents supported, demographic information and the main issues that are discussed such as debt, benefits and housing.
- 2.4 Officers recognise, through the information provided by CARS, that the grant amount given to them generates a large amount of social value, particularly given the issues that CARS support residents in the borough with.
- 2.5 Members are asked to note that the £45,000 funding awarded via the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) sits outside of this core grant and KPI specific information for this project is provided separately to the information relating to this core grant sum.
- 2.6 Officers are recommending that Corporate Management Committee approves the following recommendation:

The core grant sum of £103,700 + 10% (subject to budget approval at full Council) continues to be paid to the Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne with the following conditions:

- A) *A quarterly report will continue to be submitted to the Corporate Head of Community Services, the Community Development Manager and the Chair of the Community Services Committee, providing monitoring information on the use of the grant funds*
- B) *CARS will be required to present to Members annually, highlighting the work of the organisation and the impact that the core grant has had on their function*
- C) *A Runnymede Borough Council Councillor continues to be appointed to the CARS Board*

2.7 Conditions 'A' and 'C' are already carried out by CARS, with the only monitoring addition being condition 'B'.

Voluntary Support North Surrey (VSNS)

2.8 The Council awards a grant sum of £33,700 to VSN each year for a period of three years as part of the tripartite agreement between Surrey County Council (SCC) and the CCG. The core grant sum is intended to be a contribution towards their core costs which in turn enables VSNS to go about their operational focusses which include recruiting normal and corporate volunteers, run networking opportunities and carry out a range of events and training sessions.

2.9 With regard to monitoring, VSNS provides a quarterly monitoring scorecard which provides information on the number of corporate volunteers and events run. Officers have noted that whilst the information provided is useful the Runnymede specific insights are limited.

2.10 In assessing the grant for its social value, Officers recognise the contribution that volunteers make to a number of organisations across the borough and the benefit the core grant provides to VSNS in enabling it to deliver volunteer related activity across the borough for the benefit of other organisations.

2.11 Members are asked to note that the £80,000 awarded to VSNS by way of COMF funding to deliver the befriending service sits outside of this core grant. KPI information had been agreed with VSNS as part of this project.

2.12 Officers are recommending that Corporate Management Committee approves the following recommendation:

The core grant sum of £33,000 + 10% (subject to budget approval at full-Council) continues to be paid to Voluntary Sector Support North Surrey with the following conditions:

- A) *A quarterly report will continue to be submitted to the Corporate Head of Community Services, the Community Development Manager and the Chair of the Community Services Committee, providing monitoring information on the use of the grant funds*
- B) *VSNS will be required to present to Members annually, highlighting the work of the organisation and the impact that the core grant has had on their function*

2.13 Officers will work with VSNS to scope out the KPIs that are reported to the Council, but in principle will be seeking the following information from VSNS:

- Number of voluntary community groups within the borough who are registered with VSNS or who have engaged with VSNS
- Number of volunteer opportunities in the borough being promoted
- Number of volunteers placed within organisations in Runnymede

- Number of young volunteers placed within organisations in Runnymede
- Number of corporate volunteer projects or events delivered in Runnymede
- Number of community groups in Runnymede who have been supported in their development or formation by VSNS

2.14 Previously Runnymede Borough Council was part of a tripartite funding agreement for VSNS, along with SCC and the CCG. Following consultations with neighbouring Councils who had left such arrangements it is recommend that the grant award is between the Council and VSNS only, to further improve strong relationships through focussing on local outcomes against the grant funding provided.

Runnymede Access Liaison Group (RALG)

2.15 RALG are currently awarded a grant of £1,500 and this has been stated to support the financing of its operations through funding room hire, providing transport assistance for disabled committee members to committee meetings and site accessibility visits.

2.16 RALG currently provide no formal monitoring. However, in accordance with the terms of the Service Level Agreement, RALG has always had two serving RBC Councillors on its Committee. Currently, these are Councillors S Jenkins and M Harnden. Councillor D Clarke is a member of RALG but not appointed by the Council.

2.17 Officers recommend that this Committee approves the following recommendation:

Corporate Management Committee approve the proposal to continue awarding a core grant to the sum of £1,500 + 10% to Runnymede Access Liaison Group, with the following monitoring condition:

- A) *To provide a brief annual overview of what the money was spent on and what was achieved*
- B) *RALG may be requested to present to Members annually, highlighting the work of the organisation and the impact that the core grant has had on their function*
- C) *The arrangement whereby two RBC Councillors are appointed to the Committee are continued*

2.18 Officers recognise that there is a significant amount of social value generated through the relatively small amount of the grant and are keen to continue to recognising and developing the already strong links that the Council has with RALG; hence the nature of the above monitoring conditions.

Addlestone Community Association (ACA)

2.19 The ACA are awarded a grant sum of £2,900 annually. Officers understand that they do not apply for this grant and instead are written to by Democratic Services each year outlining that they have been awarded the grant.

2.20 Having engaged with the ACA it is apparent that the exact conditions and purpose the grant had been awarded under are not known to the present committee and from internal records within the council it is apparent that this grant has been paid since at least 2005.

2.21 Members are asked to note that the ACA have been awarded separate grant amounts as part of the work to reprovision elements of the former Eileen Tozer Centre at the ACA.

2.22 Whilst no formal monitoring is provided as part of the grant agreement for this sum officers recognise the social value that the ACA generates through its role as a community centre and note the additional social value that the ACA is anticipated to generate once their full community café provision has been launched. It is also important to note that the ACA is a key partner of the Council in Addlestone serves the community of Addlestone through a range of social provisions such as being a warm-hub for local residents and facilitating the delivery of health-related activity such as work around diabetes prevention and management.

2.23 Officers are recommending that this Committee approves the following recommendation:

Corporate Management Committee approve the proposal to continue awarding a core grant to the sum of £2,900 + 10% to the Addlestone Community Association, with the following conditions:

A) *To provide a brief annual overview of what the money was spent on and what was achieved*

B) *The ACA may be requested to present to Members annually, highlighting the work of the organisation and the impact that the core grant has had on their function*

C) *Officers are invited to attend the annual general meeting (AGM) of the ACA*

10% uplift proposal

2.24 In anticipation of the potential to continue to fund the four organisations and understanding the pressures voluntary and community sector partners have experienced as a result of inflation and in their recovery post-pandemic, a business case seeking growth of 10% for the four core grants sums had been submitted.

2.25 This business case was approved and has been included in the budget for the 2023/2024 financial year, which is awaiting approval from full Council. Should the budget be approved, Officers are recommending that each of these grants will receive a 10% uplift which will remain fixed for three years.

Duration of grants

2.26 Officers are working to ensure a level of consistency when awarding the grant sums and are therefore recommending to Corporate Management Committee that the grants are awarded for a period of three years, subject to the following conditions:

A) That the Council can, with six-months' notice, cease the core grant funding arrangement where there is an unavailability of council finances to continue with such levels of financial support.

B) Subject to Member approval, the Council can cease the core grant funding arrangement where it is felt, through review, that the grant investment does not deliver the intended outcomes or benefits to Runnymede residents or communities. Six months' notice would be given to allow for organisational adjustments.

2.27 Subject to approval of Corporate Management Committee, Officers will work with Officers in the legal team to ensure that the Council is compliant in stipulating these conditions upon formally awarding the core grant sums.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The work on core grants aligns with the Community Services service unit plan and forms the first stage of the work around reviewing the voluntary sector grants process.
- 3.2 Reviewing the voluntary sector grant processes is an identified key focus of the Health and Wellbeing Member Working Party and ties into the Council wide desire to work more closely with voluntary sector organisations to deliver positive outcomes for residents.
- 3.3 The organisations which have been recommended to continue receiving the core grants, plus a 10% uplift, are noted to have had a tangible impact on those they engage with. The desire to enhance the monitoring will enable their work to be demonstrated more profoundly, whilst also highlighting the Council's contribution to enabling the organisation to carry out its core functions.

4. Resource implications/Value for money

- 4.1 The current grant sums are already accounted for within the finances of the Council. As part of the recommendations listed within this report, Corporate Management Committee is requested to approve the grants being awarded for a period of three years and to approve an up-lift of 10% which had already obtained business-case approval.
- 4.2 The 10% uplift will be subject to the approval of full Council during the budget setting process.
- 4.3 Supporting voluntary sector organisations provides access to key services for residents and community organisations that support individual health and wellbeing and the empowerment/development of communities. If the recommendations are not approved it will likely be of significant detriment to the concerned voluntary sector organisations which in turn could increase the pressure on the Council to deliver some of the services which are provided by these organisations.
- 4.4 No additional staffing resource is needed to action the recommendations of this report. The relationship between these organisations and the Council will be co-ordinated by the Community Development team within the Community Services Business Unit.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Should Members wish to provide these grants subject to monitoring conditions, Officers will need to engage with Legal colleagues to review the best options to do so and understand the additional works required to produce such legal agreements than then the necessary oversight provisions to ensure that oversight of the grants meets the conditions of this Committee's approval.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 There are no equality implications which arise directly from this report. Officers have completed an initial Equalities Impact Assessment and will action any feedback received when taking forward the recommendations.

6.2 Officers recognise that should any of these grants not continue to be paid then it may have an indirect impact on equalities in the borough through a reduction in scope and services of voluntary organisations who may negatively be impacted by such a decision.

7. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

7.1 There are no environmental implications that arise from this report.

8. **Timetable for Implementation**

8.1 Subject to approval being granted, officers will work to action the recommendations and inform the concerned organisations of the outcome of this meeting.

8.2 Officers will work with each organisation to agree a monitoring template that will be used for the period of the grant.

9. **Conclusions**

9.1 Given the expiry of the current grant agreements in March 2023 and as part of a review of how the Council supports voluntary sector organisations through grant awards officers have prioritised core grant funding.

9.2 The recommendations set, if approved, will enable recipient local voluntary sector organisations to continue delivering their services and provisions, whilst also providing an opportunity to further strengthen links between the council and its voluntary sector partners.

(To resolve)

Background papers

None.