

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	Guy Holloway, Head of Corporate and Cultural Services	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
Wards Affected	All	14 th October 2015	
Title	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT – SUSPENSION OF PAYMENT FOR VOICE (VOLUNTARY SECTOR)		

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Lesley Thurland

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a request from the Monitoring and Audit Committee that funding provided by the Council to VOICE (previously Victim Support) as part of the Council's discretionary voluntary sector grant scheme be withheld, and paid back, for the 2015/16 financial year.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 Kettering Borough Council provides a grant of £8,500 per annum to VOICE (previously Victim Support) for services that it provides in the Borough of Kettering.
- 2.2 This funding is part of a wider stream of discretionary funding that is made available to the voluntary sector through Service Level Agreements (SLA). These SLAs were originally awarded in 2013/14 and run for a period of four years, therefore expiring at the end of the 2016/17 financial year.
- 2.3 These SLAs set out core service objectives, minimum required service standards, performance indicators, key monitoring arrangements and expected added value benefits of the services that are being funded. The provision of grant funding is subject to the recipient of the grant meeting the standards set out in the SLA and the submission of routine, reliable performance reports.
- 2.4 A quarterly update on the performance of the voluntary sector funded SLAs is considered regularly at Monitoring and Audit Committee. Members, at the last meeting of that Committee, considered a report on the performance of the voluntary sector grant funded SLAs which brought to their attention issues with the performance of the VOICE (Victim Support) SLA.
- 2.5 Victim Support were provided with the full £8,500 annual grant in the first two years of the SLA funding round, having met the agreed standards and submitting timely performance reports. However, following changes to the service made in the latter half of 2014, which involved the transition of the Victim Support service

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to VOICE, the new management team have been unable to provide performance monitoring reports. Following a dialogue and a meeting with VOICE, the Council and VOICE felt it would be prudent to cease future grant payments, and recover those already made in the current financial year.

- 2.6 It is important to point out that the provision of the Council's SLA grant funding to VOICE is based purely on the content of the SLA. It is not a reflection of the wider quality of services provided by the service.
- 2.7 Discussions with the service provider have been very constructive and it is suggested that should VOICE demonstrate that it is meeting the commitments set out in the SLA in the run up to 2016/17, the grant could be reinstated for the 2016/17 financial year. This would however need to be based on an assessment of the position and would be reported to Monitoring and Audit Committee as a matter of routine for further consideration. A report would be brought back to the Executive Committee if approval is sought to reinstate the grant for 2016/17.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 3.1 The Council was buying in services for victims over and above those provided county wide. The need for VOICE to re-structure itself means that those services are not being provided at the moment.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None directly. The Council has made a policy choice to fund additional services to victims of crime and ASB and these cannot be provided with any assurance at the moment.

5. FINANCIAL RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 60% of the 2015/16 grant to VOICE was paid at the beginning of the financial year, with the remainder due to be paid in the coming weeks. This is a normal arrangement for the payment of the Council's SLA grant funding. Nevertheless, VOICE have offered to pay back the grant funding already provided this year based on the lack of performance monitoring information available.

6. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

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7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 That the Council cease the 2015/16 grant payment to VOICE (previously Victim Support) and recover the SLA grant funding already provided for the current financial year. Should the conditions exist to reinstate the grant for 2016/17 the decision will be brought back to Executive Committee.

Background Papers:

Title

Date

Contact Officer

Previous Minutes/Reports:

Ref:

Date: