

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	Carole Stephenson Community Services Manager	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
Wards Affected	All	7 th June 2016	
Title	VOLUNTARY SECTOR TASK AND FINISH GROUP - RECCOMENDATIONS		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree the outcomes of the review of voluntary sector funding, for the period 2017-21.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Council has funded a range of voluntary sector organisations through service level agreements (SLAs), in order to secure certain services and support for residents and businesses in the Borough, recognising that other organisations are better placed to provide these than the Council. In order to provide certainty and to reduce the burden on sometimes modestly resourced organisations, the Service Level Agreements have been for a period of four years, an approach which has been very much welcomed by the sector.
- 2.2 The Council spends £295,000 on funding voluntary sector organisations under Service Level Agreements, and this figure has been retained at this level for 8 years, as part of the Council's overall budget strategy; the funding has been protected from reductions experienced by all other parts of the Council's operations.
- 2.3 The current four year funding period ends in March 2017. At the Research and Development Committee meeting on 16th February 2016, it was agreed that the Council adopt the approach which has served it well previously which was to carry out a review of the effectiveness of the current SLAs and to look at future needs via a member level task and finish group.
- 2.4 This review has now been carried out and recommendations to this committee are made in this report. These recommendations, if agreed will go forward to the Executive Committee for ratification. In line with the agreed timetable this will ultimately ensure that final decisions would be made on successful bids by the end of the year. This would provide time to embed decisions in the following year's budget and give adequate notice of any changes in funding to the voluntary bodies concerned.
- 2.5 The agreed timetable is attached showing how that review is being conducted (**Appendix A**) and a set of terms of reference are attached at **Appendix B**.

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- 2.6 The Task and Finish Group met six times in April and May 2016, during which time visiting speakers attended the meetings to give the background to the different subject areas and how the landscape has changed in the last few years. This has helped inform the recommendations set out in section 3.0 of the report.
- 2.7 Many agencies have talked about the need to have more person-centred services, rather than interventions which deal with just one aspect of someone's life experience. This recognises, for example, that someone with poor mental health may be struggling to manage their finances, that poor housing conditions might be contributing to poor mental health and that someone with a poor credit history is likely to struggle to find or maintain a tenancy.
- 2.8 The Task and Finish Group have endorsed the idea that organisations with an SLA in future should be obliged to engage in the Kettering Futures Partnership, and the local Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure the continued development of person centred, joined up services wherever possible.
- 2.9 Finally, the Task and Finish Group were aware of the extent to which reductions in Northamptonshire County Council and other government funding for voluntary sector organisations is not only impacting on the sector but on the client base they serve. This will increase the risk that more people who go unsupported or fall into a cycle of need, would, ironically, put more pressure on statutory services dealing with more people in crisis.

3. SLA RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The SLA recommendations are as follows:

- Debt and Money Advice – **The impact of Welfare Reform** – it is likely that when Welfare Reform is fully implemented it will have a significant impact on the finances and workload of statutory and voluntary agencies. There is likely to be an increase in the support needs of those directly affected by Welfare Reform. It is for this reason that it is recommended that there is an increase in funding to help to provide this service. It is also recommended that there should be a greater emphasis on providing financial education to young people as this seems to be an unmet need. **Funding – Increase from £70,000 to £80,000**
- Healthy Living (previously Green Services) – The opportunities to tackle **poor physical and mental health** through socially based activities had been evidenced and some of the interventions are being taken up by NHS organisations. Facilities which provide an outdoor environmental experience have the capacity to contribute to employability and mental health objectives.

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Modest exercise regimes run for those in need of a healthier lifestyle have been growing in popularity. Stronger links to prescribing habits by GPs would also be beneficial. **Increase from £5,000 - £10,000**

- Independent Living – **Elderly people** are supported by voluntary bodies in a number of ways, through day centres, outreach services, and with financial advice. There is an increasing tendency by those bodies to try and provide joined up help and advice services in order to maintain people in their own homes, to prolong independent living by offering small but important interventions, and in maintaining social contact. The pressure on organisations has increased as the numbers of elderly people have increased, and as access to statutory services have been reduced or removed. **Funding - £40,000**
- Housing Options – **Housing debt** has increased amongst those transferred onto Universal Credit and the risk of homelessness has increased. The incidence of homelessness has also increased in the private sector as landlords choose not to provide tenancies to those on benefits and rents increase at the same time as housing-related benefits are reducing. There is a potential crisis of housing for a section in society if it cannot be ameliorated in some way. The service provider is to be asked to have a greater presence in the council's customer services area. **Funding £30,000**
- Activities for Young People – There is a recognition that wider social trends means there has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour because most young people get their social interaction from social media than by gathering in public places. The need is less for youth outreach services than for focusing on the smaller numbers of young people whose circumstances and background meant that they were of greater risk to themselves and the community because of shortcomings in their education or socialisation. This risk has been manifested in areas such as cyber bullying, sometimes leading to low self-esteem, self-harm and online sexual exploitation. **Funding £26,500**
- Upcycling (previously Furniture Recycling) – the project was set up initially to provide free or inexpensive goods for those in need, this has been widened to include more household goods and can be linked more strongly to other services such as food banks and benefit advice services to secure a wider awareness. In this way many families have been helped to set up home using similar services and considering the likely impact of Welfare Reform (see 3 paragraph 1) demand for this service is likely to rise. **Funding £20,000**
- Shopmobility – no change to the current SLA. **Funding - £13,000**
- Community Watch – No change to the current SLA. **Funding - £5,000**
- Voluntary Sector Infrastructure (previously Volunteering Co-ordination) –

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Support to the voluntary sector is provided now through the council's SLA for volunteering but a wider degree of support would make the sector stronger, more able to share learning and provide joined up approaches to service provision, funding bids, and the identification of needs. However, there are almost no voluntary sector infrastructure organisations in the county and the county wide LIO had funding only until June 2016. Some of the community cohesion work which the Council was separately funding could be usefully combined with funding for the wider sector. **Funding increase from £11,000 to £19,000**

- Discrimination Casework – Equalities, hate crime and community cohesion work was distinct from casework around cases of discrimination, and the latter could usefully be funded separately from wider community engagement objectives. Work to combat radicalisation, hate crime and improved interaction and understanding between ethnic and national communities is underway. There are no major police concerns in Kettering although there is always potential for community conflicts to arise and education and awareness-raising are ways to prevent these. **Funding £5,000**
- Business Support/Employability – The council had funded its own business support service under an SLA at £30,000 per annum since 2013. Since then both LEPs had developed their own growth hubs providing small business information services in the Kettering area. There is now an opportunity to support and help individuals and organisations that would otherwise not receive a tailored intervention and secure sustainability for the programme by seeking European Social Fund (ESF) funding through a focus on identified activities and beneficiaries

The aim of the support package would be to provide targeted groups as set out below with access to pre-employment/enterprise coaching and support to enable them to access employment (including self – employment).

- Benefits claimants
- Mental health needs
- Over 50s
- Long term unemployed
- Women returners and Lone Parents
- Migrant Communities
- Rural communities

A number of potential options were presented to the working group, and it was decided that the best option was that KBC would provide 75% (£22,500) of existing funding that would be match funded by the ESF, to a total of £45,000. This would not only benefit funding for this specific SLA but would allow the potential re-allocation of £7,500 into the general SLA funding pot.

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Members recognised that this recommendation, if accepted, would effectively pre-allocate £22,500 of the overall budget for business advice services and a recommendation was made and accepted by the Executive Committee in April. **Funding £22,500**

3.2 The table below therefore clarifies the changes that are recommended:-

Subject	Specification	Current funding (or nearest equivalents)	Future funding (proposed)
Debt and Money Advice	Continue with previous specification and add young people's financial education	£70,000	£80,000
Healthy Living (previously 'Green Services')	Target those with obesity, low physical activity, low self-esteem and mental health needs through an increase in physical activity and group activity outside. Stronger links to social prescribing	£5,000	£10,000
Independent Living	More outreach and help for people in their own homes with advice & information	£28,000 + £12,000	£40,000 – possibly two organisations as before
Housing Options	Homelessness advice – more hours in Customer Services	£30,000	£30,000
Activities for Young People	In centre targeted work with young people in relation to mental health, self-harm and cyber bullying	£26,500	£26,500

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Upcycling (previously 'Furniture recycling')	Teaching basic skills through upcycling old furniture, cooking skills. Links to mental health issues, well being	£20,000	£20,000
Shopmobility	As before	£14,000	£13,000
Community Watch	As before	£5,000	£5,000
Voluntary Sector Local Infrastructure	Work with volunteers, assist with co-ordination of community engagement and cohesion, voluntary sector forum, funding advice, involvement with Kettering Futures Partnership	£11,000	£19,000
Discrimination Casework (previously Community Cohesion and Equality)	Issues for the whole community in challenging discriminatory practices	£11,000	£5,000
Business Support/Employability	Funding to put towards a match EU bid for business advice set up in the Borough	£30,000	£22,500
Help to Victims of Crime and ASB	Voice (now ceased)	£8,500	£0
TOTALS		£271,000	£271,000

3.3 A full set of the draft specifications apart from the Business Support/Employability specification which will be the subject of an Executive Committee decision, are attached at **Appendix C**.

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4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Task and Finish Group have considered the policy objectives that are best served by voluntary sector funding agreements in the light of evidence and changing circumstances locally.

5. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 5.1 Consultation was carried out in March and April with the voluntary sector, previous SLA link officers and relevant KBC colleagues. Comments received back were fed into the working group for consideration.
- 5.2 Consultation with the voluntary sector is currently being undertaken regarding the new specifications and comments will be shared with the committee once they are known.

6. FINANCE and HR RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The recommendations of the review are that the current level of funding is maintained for the new specifications. This amounts to a total of £271,000.
- 6.3 A stand still budget has been assumed for the next four years, given the wider pressures on the authority,
- 6.4 The total support for the voluntary sector, including rate relief, support for accommodation costs, and other forms of support, amounts to nearly £1m a year.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has a duty to properly consider the impacts of its decisions on third party organisations, to ensure equality impact assessments are carried out and to make informed decisions about funding allocations.
- 7.2 Draft specifications attached at Appendix C are currently also with Legal and Democratic Services for legal verification

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8. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:-

- Agree the specification amendments for Voluntary Sector SLAs 2017 – 2021
- Agree the amounts to be paid for each specification as detailed in the table at Paragraph 3.2

Background Papers:

Research & Development report 16th February 2016
Task and Finish Group minutes

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Appendix A

Voluntary Sector SLA Funding Timeline 2017-2021



*Please note dates may be subject to slight changes

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Appendix B

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR TASK AND FINISH GROUP 2017 – 2021 SLAS

Members:

Cllr Titcombe (Chair)
Cllr Scrimshaw
Cllr Davies
Cllr Rowley
Cllr Talbot

Supported by:

Deputy Chief Executive
Head of Public Services
Community Partnerships Manager
(Others as appropriate)

Aims

To identify ways that the Voluntary Sector can be supported and encouraged during times of pressure on public sector funding

Objectives

To ensure that the Voluntary Sector in the Borough of Kettering is able to provide a sustainable service to those most in need.

- Understand the present situation with regard to NCC and KBC funding agreements
- Identify other sources of support /funding available to the voluntary sector now and in the future
- Establish and capture what is known about current needs within the borough – both of the sector and their customers
- Investigate how other areas support the voluntary sector
- Develop options for sustainable service delivery for future years

Completion date (as per timetable attached)

The current Kettering Borough Council Service Level Agreements (SLAs) run for 4 years (01/04/2013 – 31/03/2017)
New SLAs will run from 01/04/2017 and any work to influence them will need to be completed before July 2016.

* For the purpose of this scrutiny, the Voluntary Sector is defined as constituted voluntary bodies providing a range of advisory and practical support services to local people;