

# Overview of Grant Allocations and support for the voluntary sector

## Community Services Committee Thursday, 8 September 2022

Report of: Head of Communities and Partnerships

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Purpose: For decision

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Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

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### Executive summary:

- This report is being brought to Committee to note the allocation of its grants budget for 2022/23
- It outlines the grants currently provided to local organisations from the Committee's budget and highlights the contributions these voluntary sector organisations play in delivering services to residents.
- The Committee is asked to consider whether these recipients and levels of funding remain appropriate or whether they should be reviewed as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24.

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**This report supports the Council's priority of:** Building a better Council

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### Recommendations to Committee:

- A. The current levels of funding allocations for 2022/23 be noted.
- B. Consider whether the level of funding remains appropriate or should be reviewed as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24.

- C. Consider whether the management and administration of community grants could be funded from the current grant allocation as part of the future Tandridge Programme review.
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### **Reasons for recommendations:**

The current approach for the allocation of voluntary grants is similar to previous years. Officers believe the voluntary organisations provide a vital role in delivering services to the residents, but the Committee is invited to consider whether:

- the allocations from the budget remain appropriate
- it wishes to scrutinise any aspects of the current funding streams in greater detail
- any new recipients should be considered and, if so, what existing funding streams could, potentially, be withdrawn to release the necessary revenue provision

With changes to staffing in the last year, it is important that the administration and management of grants is costed and resourced appropriately. Officers will review this as part of the Future Tandridge Programme. Currently there are no resources allocated to undertake this work.

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### **Introduction and background**

- 1 The Council historically provided grant funding to several voluntary sector organisations. A report on funding was last taken to the Community Services Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020.
- 2 Given the financial pressures facing the Council and the increase in demand for voluntary sector services, it is important to ensure Members are aware of the current funding provisions. This report will help inform any future review by Members and whether current funding streams should be maintained beyond the current financial year.

### **Agreed grant allocations for 2022/23**

- 3 Outlined in the table below is a summary of the current provisions for grant related expenditure within this Committee's budget for 2022/23.

	<b>Organisation / initiative</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership (ESRTP)	£58,000	£58,000	£68,000	<p>A service level Agreement (SLA) with ESRTP is in place. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £20,000 for the provision of a dial-a-ride service</li> <li>- £38,000 for the provision of a community transport advice line</li> </ul> <p>Further information is provided in section 4.</p>
2 a	Caterham & Warlingham Citizens' Advice Bureau	£64,386	£64,386	£64,386	<p>Individual annual service level agreements were in place with each of the two former bureaux which have now merged into 'Tandridge District Citizens Advice'. However, the new organisation continues to operate from the SCC owned library sites in Caterham Valley and Oxted (although TDCA's administrative HQ is in Caterham Valley).</p> <p>These annual revenue grants have been paid for many years, adjusted for inflation until 2016/17. Since then, the grants have been frozen at the amounts shown to the left.</p> <p>Oxted CAB also benefits from the provision of 6 free business permits for the Ellice Road car park (for the use of CAB staff).</p> <p>Further information is provided in section 5.</p>
2 b	Oxted Citizens' Advice Bureau	£55,434	£55,434	£55,434	
3 a	Tandridge Voluntary Action	£17,500	£17,500	£16,950	<p>Grant funding has been provided to TVA (previously known as the Tandridge Voluntary Services Council) since 2009/10.</p> <p>Funding is provided as part of an annual partnership agreement with together with contributions from Surrey County Council and the East Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group.</p> <p>Further information is provided in section 6.</p>
3 b	Tandridge Voluntary Action	£7,108	£6,428	£6,428	<p>The Oxted Community Hub is the name for the office and meeting room space above the Oxted library</p>

	<b>Organisation / initiative</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	- payment to cover SCC's service charge in respect of the Oxted Community Hub				<p>building. It is currently utilised by Citizens Advice Tandridge (for its Oxted base) and TVA.</p> <p>TDC has been paying this charge (uprated each year for inflation) since the Community Hub was established in 2010 as part of an agreement with Surrey County Council (the freeholder) and following approval by this Committee on 27th Jan 2009.</p> <p>SCC does not charge the voluntary sector tenants for rent and made a significant capital contribution to the original conversion of the premises, including the installation of a lift to ensure the CAB services are accessible to clients with disabilities.</p> <p>TVA receive this annual payment as the Head Lessee of the Community Hub, although the CAB also benefits from the arrangement as they become exempt from the service charge liability. The same could be said for any other voluntary organisation which might rent space in the Community Hub.</p>
4	Subscription to Surrey Community Action's village hall advisory service	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	<p>This is an annual subscription to Surrey Community Action for access to its 'Community Buildings Advice and Guidance Service'. It helps to fund the cost of a Surrey Community Buildings Advisor.</p> <p>This service offers information, advice and guidance to community building managers. Topics include governance issues; health &amp; safety; safeguarding; other regulatory compliance matters; access to funding; and sharing best.</p> <p>The Community Buildings Advisor also provides an 'in person' consultancy service</p> <p>Members have previously supported this subscription in lieu of direct grants to village halls which TDC</p>

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					made available until 2017/18 when the County-wide Community Buildings Grants Scheme was withdrawn by SCC.
5	East Surrey Museum	£4,400	£4,400	£4,400	The building is owned by the District Council and is accounted for via the 'Housing Revenue Account' (HRA) as opposed to the 'General Fund'. The Museum has been occupying the ground floor rent free. However, on 11.01.22 the S&R Committee agreed a new 15-year lease with stepped rent of £1,500 from Year 3; £3,000 from Year 4 and rent reviews in years 5 and 10. The first floor is used as Temporary (Housing) Accommodation.
6	Surrey Museums Consultative Committee subscription	£2,987	£2,987	£2,987	The annual membership subscription seeks to ensure that the East Surrey Museum remains eligible for grant aid from various other sources, including the Lottery. However, Officers intend to test the benefits of on-going membership of the Consultative Committee to ensure this continues to deliver value for money.
7	Surrey Youth Games Awards	£6,000	£6,000	£6000	In 2018, all the Surrey Chief Executives signed up to participate in the Specsavers Surrey Youth Games every summer until 2021.  The event did not take place in 2021 due to the pandemic but resumed in June 2022.  £3,500 is paid annually to Active Surrey to take part and £6,000 is paid to Freedom Leisure to organise and coach a team of young athletes.
8	High Sheriff Awards	£500	£500	£0	Every year the High Sheriff Youth Awards (HSYA) provides grants (totalling over £50,000 pa) to youth charities in Surrey. This is only possible through the support provided by the Borough/District Councils, Surrey County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

	<b>Organisation / initiative</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>Comments</b>
9	Lingfield & Dormansland Meals on Wheels				Grants were stopped to Meals on Wheels groups in 2017 where there were extensive catering costs. TDC have continued to fund the mileage costs for volunteers to enable the charity to maintain the service. Lingfield & Dormansland MOW is run using volunteer chefs. There is no current budget allocated to this grant.

## Updates from each Organisation

### 4 East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership (ESRTP)

4.1 A service level agreement is in place between Tandridge District Council and ESRTP to run the following services in Tandridge:

- a Buses 4U demand responsive bus service funded by SCC
- a dial a ride service in the north of the district
- the North Tandridge Voluntary Car Scheme
- a Taxi scheme where ESRTP cannot deliver what is requested

4.2 The community transport booking and advice line is operational on weekdays from 08:30 to 17:00 and enables residents to book services or be signposted to alternative providers if appropriate. On average, 500 calls are taken per month.

4.3 In April 2021, a new booking and scheduling system was installed which provides all the records of passengers and journeys on the minibus services.

4.4 In 21/22, the Tandridge Community Transport Information and Advice service dealt with 7,173 enquiries for transport from Tandridge residents. This resulted in 5,159 single journeys on the Tandridge Buses 4U service and 2,014 on the Dial a Ride service.

4.5 From September 2021, ESRT began working collaboratively with East Surrey Dial-a-Ride in Caterham over the hire of two of their buses for use on SCC contracts - an arrangement with mutual benefits.

4.6 Surrey County Council provide Tandridge District Council with a grant of £20,000 per annum towards the provision of community transport services. This is agreed for 2022/23 but is subject to an annual review by Surrey County Council.

## 5 Tandridge District Citizens Advice

- 5.1 As stated in the table above, the Council provides funding for the ongoing provision of core advice and information services from locations in Caterham and Oxted which, until recently, were constituted as two separate bureaux.
- 5.2 The organisation's objective is to provide free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to enable local residents to deal with a wide range of issues, including benefits, housing, money advice, employment, consumer, relationships and taxation.
- 5.3 Performance is monitored by TDC Officers on a quarterly basis and performance measures are in place which follow the standards of service set out in the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureau (NACAB) Membership Agreement and Advice Quality Standard.
- 5.4 The former Caterham & Warlingham and Oxted bureaux merged with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.
- 5.5 In future, one payment will be paid to Tandridge District Citizens Advice. It is not considered that the merger delivers operational cost savings to justify a reduction in the Council's annual grant. It does however increase the stability of the operation to deal with the demand for advice which has seen an increase as a result of the pandemic.

## 6 Tandridge Voluntary Action

- 6.1 Tandridge Voluntary Action is the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) for the Tandridge area. This organisation acts as the 'umbrella body' for the Tandridge voluntary sector and operates from the Oxted Community Hub. It offers various services to local voluntary groups, including matching volunteers to charity groups, funding / governance advice; training; DBS checking; networking opportunities; a monthly publication; and use of its meeting room and copying facilities. It also represents the local voluntary sector in responding to relevant consultations and attending meetings.
- 6.2 TVA also provides the Tandridge Befriending Scheme. This supports lonely or isolated people within the District by matching them with a volunteer friend. They have recently started a partnership with the Titsey Foundation who have offered funding to enhance befriending connections within the community.
- 6.3 A tri-partite Partnership Grant Funding Agreement is in place and renewed each April. Performance is monitored through an agreed performance scorecard and performance management system. Surrey County Council leads on collating and disseminating performance information to all partners. An annual review meeting is held with all parties.

## 7 Surrey Youth Games

- 7.1 In recent years all District and Boroughs have participated in the Surrey Youth Games ('SYG'). The event did not take place in 2021 due to the pandemic but resumed on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022.
- 7.2 The objective of the SYG is to provide young people across Surrey with opportunities to be active by trying a new sport or physical activity.
- 7.3 The targeted outcomes are:
- Increased positive engagement of less advantaged young people
  - More young people reporting a positive attitude towards sport and active lifestyle through participation
  - Increase in sustained levels of physical activity in inactive young people
- 7.4 The SYG model involves offering 6 weeks of free activity in all of 7 selected sports for 6- 8 weeks in the lead up to the festival and celebration at the Surrey Sports Park in Guildford. The Games are open to all children and young people aged 6 to 16 who live or go to school in the County. On event day, they wear distinctive T-shirts to show which District / Borough they are representing. This year, all Districts and Boroughs delivered a more targeted approach towards children from lower socio-economic groups who have less opportunities.
- 7.5 The findings from the post games review suggested that only 50% of registrations actually made it to the event day. On discussions with Officers who delivered the games, we believe it may be more cost effective for Tandridge to support our partnership with Active Surrey by supporting local initiatives such as funding free swimming places and activity sessions held at local centres which achieves the same outcomes for the young people in a targeted way.

It is also suggested that, instead of holding a celebration event at Guildford, we hold an event more locally, which would ensure more Tandridge young people were able to participate and attend.

## 8. Lingfield and Dormansland Meals on Wheels

- 8.1 Lingfield & Dormansland Meals on Wheels has been providing meals to elderly and disabled residents of the 3 parishes of Lingfield, Dormansland and Crowhurst for a period of over 30 years.
- 8.2 In January 2017 the Council sold the Lingfield Day Centre to Lingfield Parish Council. As part of this agreement the Parish Council helped the Meals on



wheels service set up as a Charity fully staffed by volunteers including chefs.

- 8.3 The charity has evolved and offers more than just a hot meal each day. The volunteers help with social isolation and help keep residents to live independently in their own home. Vulnerable residents have daily contact with a volunteer, many of which would otherwise have not social contact at all.
- 8.4 Tandridge has continued to support the charity by providing a grant of £7k pa. This contributes to the mileage costs for volunteers who carry out 15-20 miles per round twice a day. There is no forecasted budget to cover this grant after 22/23.

## **Key implications**

### **Comments of the Chief Finance Officer**

With no certainty on the level of Government funding beyond the current financial year and escalating financial pressures, particularly from inflation, the Council should review all of its expenditure to ensure that it is appropriate and provides value for residents.

It should be noted that the grants noted in this report are discretionary and any reduction in the grants would contribute towards delivering a balanced budget in future. This should be set against the benefits provided by the grants and any financial and non-financial implications of reducing them.

### **Comments of the Head of Legal Services**

Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a power of general competence which provides local authorities with the power to do anything that individuals may generally do. It includes the power for Council to make grant payments to voluntary organisations.

The Council must continue to take a prudent approach to balancing budgets, maximising all funds available to fulfil core statutory responsibilities. Reviewing grant funding is a challenging topic, given the potential impact on residents. Nevertheless, funding is limited and it is essential to consider those that will directly benefit residents.

### **Equality**

By continuing to provide financial support to voluntary sector organisations, we are able to support the elderly and most vulnerable residents within the district. There are no proposals within this report to reduce the levels of grants provided.

## **Climate change**

ESRTP have the main environmental impact. They have an environmental policy which states:

*"East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership is committed to the reduction of pollution and will work to minimise the impact of its operations through a continuous improvement program. In particular, we will:*

- *Comply with all relevant existing environmental legislation and other requirements*
- *Reduce harmful emissions wherever practicable*
- *Seek to reduce consumption of materials in our operations and promote recycling and the use of recycled goods*
- *Manage energy and water usage wisely in all our operations*
- *Incorporate environmental considerations into the procurement of goods and services"*

## **Appendices**

None

## **Background papers**

None

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