

Executive Committee

15 December 2016

One year extension of West Dorset Local Area Partnership and Voluntary Organisation Service Level and Grant Agreements

For Decision

Portfolio Holder(s)/ Briefholder

Cllr Mary Penfold
Cllr Ian Gardner

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

S Hill, Strategic Director

Report Author:

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Statutory Authority

The Localism Act, 2011

Purpose of Report

- 1 To seek approval to extend for one year only, all service level agreements and grants to community and voluntary organisations that expire in March 2017.

Officer Recommendations

- 2 To approve the extension of respective service level and grant agreements for one year only from 1 April 2017 with the following community & voluntary organisations:
 - a) The five West Dorset Local Area/Community Partnerships in Beaminster & Villages, Bridport, Dorchester, Lyme Regis & Sherborne.
 - b) Dorchester, Sherborne and District Citizens Advice Bureau, the Bridport and District Citizens Advice Bureau.
 - c) The three West Dorset Youth Advice Centres in Dorchester, Lyme Regis and Sherborne.
 - d) Dorset Community Action and,
 - e) Dorset Race Equality Council

Reason for Decision

- 3 The existing one year service level agreements with the West Dorset Local Area/Community Partnerships, Citizens' Advice Bureaux and Youth Advice Centres and the grant agreements with Dorset Community Action and

Dorset Race Equality Council expire on 31 March 2017. The council needs to decide therefore, whether or not to continue the agreements taking account of the council's current financial position. The agreements would, if continued, provide funding for specified services to West Dorset residents throughout the 2017-18 financial year until 31 March 2018.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4.1 West Dorset District Council provides financial support of £6,000 a year to each of the five local area/community partnerships located in Beaminster & Villages, Bridport, Dorchester, Lyme Regis and Sherborne.
- 4.2 The service level agreements for each community partnership set out management targets and performance outcomes which are reported three times a year and via an annual report to West Dorset Partnership, their umbrella organisation.
- 4.3 The council also provides core financial support to the two citizens' advice bureaux, (CABs), operating in West Dorset. These are the Dorchester, Sherborne and District CAB and Bridport and District CAB which also provide outreach services to West Dorset communities. Bridport and District CAB currently receives a grant of £69,867 a year and Dorchester, Sherborne and District CAB receives an annual grant of £139,734 a year.
- 4.4 Both CABs 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. The nature of the assistance provided depends on a client's needs and ranges from the provision of information to formal representation. The service level agreement between the council and both bureaux covers face-to-face, written, online and telephone advice to members of the public.
- 4.5 Dorchester, Sherborne and District CAB provides offices in both towns with outreach services in Chickerell, some GP practices and through home visits. Bridport and District CAB has Bridport offices and provides outreach services in Lyme Regis, via appointment at Beaminster and through home visits.
- 4.6 West Dorset District Council provides core funding to both bureaux and is their largest single financial contributor. A West Dorset District Councillor sits as an ex officio observer on each CAB.
- 4.7 Payment of funding is subject to management targets which include receipt of CAB monitoring information indicating delivery of specified services, accessibility of services, Member representation on their respective management committees, provision of information of their policy work, provision of annual reports and an annual review of their work.
- 4.8 It should be noted that negotiations have been started on a proposed between Dorchester, Sherborne and District CAB and North Dorset CAB. However, due to a North Dorset District Council budget option currently under consideration to cease funding to North Dorset CAB these negotiations are on hold. At the time of preparing this report North Dorset District Council decisions on this option have not yet been made.

- 4.9 The council has also funded three Youth Advice Centres in Sherborne, Dorchester and Lyme Regis for over 12 years. These receive grant funding of £4,438 each a year and a service level agreement monitoring meeting is held annually with each youth advice centre. The centres provide free, confidential and impartial advice to young people aged 13-25 years.
- 4.10 West Dorset District Council provides funding support to Dorset Race Equality Council via a service level agreement for £2,000 a year. The services covered by the joint grant agreement are to:
- act as an independent third party reporting centre for Black Minority Ethnic (BME) people who experience prejudice and discrimination, and provide a signposting service to those affected by such prejudice and discrimination
 - work with community and voluntary sector and statutory partners to promote the participation of BME people in Dorset life
 - challenge and provide strategic support to statutory agencies in the delivery of the race equality agenda.
- 4.11 The council also has a grant agreement with Dorset Community Action that is slowly reducing over three years. The current grant for 2016-17 is for £6,020 and this is set to reduce to £5,351 in 2017-18. This contributes to core funding costs covering networking and consultation with and advice and training for local groups and organisations and development work on priority needs. Annual monitoring meetings are held with both Dorset Race Equality Council and Dorset Community Action and each submits an annual report to the council.
- 4.12 At Executive Committee in January 2016, it was decided to grant this funding for one year only pending a further review of the council's financial position. This means that the current grants expire on 31 March 2017. A decision on this funding is therefore required so as to provide sufficient notice should any changes be made to current arrangements.

Implications

5. Corporate Plan

The organisations cited in this report impact on the following corporate plan priorities:

- Empower Thriving and Inclusive Communities
- Improve Quality of Life
- Develop Successful Partnerships
- Contribute to a Stronger Local Economy

6 Financial

The respective grants to each organisation are included in paragraphs 4.1, 4.3, 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11 of this report. Each current SLA is subject to the availability of WDDC finance. Whilst the financial projections for the council in 2017-18 indicate that funding is secure, a further review of discretionary

spend will be required within the year to ensure expenditure within future budget. Consideration will also be required in relation to future funding under local government reorganisation.

7. Equalities

The provision of services covered by the specified service level agreements ensures delivery to all those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act and each provider is required to have a current Equality Policy.

8. Economic Development

Community partnerships are involved in projects relating to their respective local economies and Lyme Regis and Bridport have delivered Coastal Communities Funding. CABs provide financial advice and support to their clients

9. Risk Management (including Health & Safety)

The respective service level and grant agreements mitigate risk to the council by clearly stating responsibilities of each party to the agreement and specifying the management requirements expected by the council to safeguard public money.

10. Consultation and Engagement

The council engages with each organisation receiving council grant funding at least once a year and officers attend their Annual General Meetings.

Background Papers

- Service Level and Grant Agreements with all the community and voluntary organisations mentioned in this report.
- Annual Reports for all community partnerships, the CABs, Dorset Community Action & Dorset Race Equality Council
- Monitoring reports for Youth Advice Centres

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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