

Agenda Item 6.

TITLE	Review of the Voluntary/Community organisations that are working in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 15 June 2015
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Brian Grady, Head of Strategic Commissioning

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Wokingham Borough Council works with a wide range of community and voluntary community organisations.

RECOMMENDATION

The committee is asked

1. To note the report and proposed review process;
2. To recommend to the Lead Member other voluntary and community organisations to visit as part of the review, in particular those outside bodies where Councillors are appointed;
3. To agree that a report on the findings of the review are brought back to overview and scrutiny in the Autumn.

Introduction

Wokingham Borough Council has a long history of supporting the local community and voluntary sector, which is particularly vibrant in our Borough.

The Executive of the Council have agreed to formalise lead member responsibility for community and voluntary sector to give councillors visibility of voluntary and community activity in the borough and give voluntary and community organisations visibility of councillors, recognising the important work these organisations do.

Mark Ashwell has been confirmed as the lead member and will be leading a review of our support to the voluntary sector through a series of meetings with individual organisations and through the voluntary and community sector network and representative meetings we have across the Borough. This review will:

- 1) Review the impact of funded voluntary and community organisations to ensure our investments are making the most impact for residents;
- 2) Proposals for a revised funding approach for voluntary and community organisations.

Background and Analysis of Issues

Wokingham Voluntary and Community organisations provide a wide range of support and activities across Wokingham and its parishes, towns and villages and make a significant impact to the cultural and societal fabric of our Borough.

Wokingham Borough Council commissions a significant number of services from the voluntary and community sector for children, families, vulnerable adults and older people, helping deliver strategies and priorities across both Children's Services and Health and Wellbeing Services and these sit outside the scope of this report.

Wokingham Borough provides a range of grants to organisations to promote their charitable aims. It is this support that forms the basis of this report and a summary of these are included in Appendix 1.

Examples of some of the impact that two of these organisations make, Wokingham Volunteer centre and Wokingham Involve, are set out below.

Wokingham Voluntary and Community organisations engaged with Wokingham Involve, our Voluntary and Community Infrastructure organisation, have been successful in winning £181,397 via funding applications for the last quarter as at year end 2014/2015. The recent feedback from organisations also identified £45,000 in bids awaiting a decision.

There has been an increase in the number of enquiries to Wokingham Involve about potential funding opportunities with more Individual Funding Searches being carried out and more telephone support sessions delivered

Communication and information sharing via Wokingham Involve's website, networking meetings and via the Wokingham Involve WB CHAIN newsletter which is sent out to 600 organisations.

Development and support work has been administered to Voluntary and Community organisations in a number of work areas such as; Start-ups, Employment, H&S, governance and sustainability.

In the past six months, Voluntary Sector Network themed meetings have considered:

- The future of infrastructure support in Wokingham (Needs Analysis);
- Diverse Funding Methods to meet funding challenges;
- Future infrastructure support for 2015/16 and Communications & Digital engagement.

The future of these events will be to shift to focus on supporting and working with Trustees, CEO's and Managers whilst the Development Workers Forum will focus more on networking and grassroots work.

Wokingham Volunteer Centre have helped approximately 180 potential volunteers with advice and information, with a high number of new volunteer roles registered.

Almost 900 local elderly and disabled supported by Wokingham Volunteer Centre transport service to get to their essential medical appointments. Over 110 have gardening help from our volunteers. Around 30 of the most immobile, not all elderly,

retain their independence through their use of our mobility scooters.

A series of training events have been held for the sector covering everything from DBS checks to fire wardens. Five detailed training bulletins have been sent out to over 300 contacts. The bulletins have been well received with a number of groups getting in touch enquiring about training which would be of use to them. Each bulletin contains over 30 different organisations' training, enabling information to be added on a wide variety of courses/workshops taking place both locally and further afield.

Next Steps

- The first step in the coming months will be visits to funded voluntary and community organisations to build relationships at a councillor level and to understand better the issues facing the voluntary and community sector;
- Members of the Community Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider other organisations that should be visited, including those outside bodies where Councillors are appointed;
- Proposals for a revised funding approach for voluntary and community organisations by September 2015 will require decisions on grant funding going forward.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
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None

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Appendix One

Voluntary and Community Organisations funding

Organisation & Contact Details	Service
Wokingham Citizens Advice Bureau John Ferguson, Manager	CAB services borough-wide for debt/benefits advice, incl. Wokingham and Woodley offices.
Wokingham Involve Phil Cook, Chief Executive	Infrastructure support, Training and Funding Advice services
Wokingham Volunteer Centre Christine Knox, Manager	Volunteer Development Coordinator and accommodation
Wokingham Borough Sports Council Sports Sponsorship Fund Roland Mear, Chairman Beverley Thompson, WBC Sport and Leisure Manager	Safeguarding and first aid training for clubs to ensure compliance with legal requirements and national standards Sports sponsorship
Community Council for Berkshire Tim Parry, Chief Officer	Rural advice service Village halls advice service
Berkshire Community Foundation Andrew Middleton, Chief Executive	General contribution - important for wider Berkshire and LEP connection small grants via Local Giving
Cultural Partnership Gwynneth Hewetson, Chair	Network for arts and culture, access to arts accreditation and funding opportunities; More Arts Website and publicity Exhibition schedule, including Mall Gallery, Local Arts Loan Empty Shops Hands-on-Arts performance schedule
Earley Crescent Community Assoc Kate Long, Manager Tel: 0118 9210 555	Mobile Information Service (MICE bus)
Earley Help Shop Earley Town Council	One-stop shop

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