DRAFT

Review of Voluntary & Community Sector Grant Allocations

August 2021 – April 2022

CLIMATE CHANGE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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Chair's Foreword

While the nature of this review has been quite different to those addressed previously by Committee, Members welcomed the challenge of reviewing such a vital service area. The review has resulted in many detailed discussions about both our current approach and potential ways of future delivery based on the research we carried out of neighbouring authorities.

During the course of the review, Members have identified various issues which required further investigation, extending the timescales of the review. However, given the nature of our recommendations and the impact anticipated as a result of the review, Members feel is has been right to take sufficient time to ensure robust evidence-based recommendations are put forward for implementation.

We look forward to seeing the impacts of the review on our approach to partnership delivery of vital services to our more vulnerable residents, and to our approach of evaluating the impact of our investments.

Cllr Nick Clarke
Chair of the Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

As part of the call for review suggestions for 2021-22 municipal year, Members of the Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee were presented with the suggestion of reviewing our approach to the allocation of Voluntary & Community Sector Grants. The suggestion came direct from the Executive and Partnerships Team and Members agreed to consider this alongside other work carried over from the previous year.

1.1 Our current process

Our current allocation process and how we promote the grant funding, including any criteria applicants must meet.

Bolsover District Council has awarded grants to third sector/voluntary organisations over a number of years, each receiving an agreed amount annually to support the objectives of that organisation.

The current grants given to voluntary organisations have been the same organisations for a number of years, previously administered by a different department, how this was allocated has not been clear due to historical records and processes. The Executive and Partnership Team became responsible for managing the grants some time ago and developed and implemented a performance monitoring framework for the allocations given, including service level agreements and monitoring forms. Over the recent year (2020-21) voluntary and community sector organisations have come under immense pressure and a number of them have recently been requesting additional funds.

The last review of the programme took place in 2013/14. As such the service felt it was timely to review the whole process to ensure it is current; meets the needs of the sector; meets the ambitions of the Council; and if the allocation to any of these organisations needs to alter, given the current climate and anticipated needs emerging in our communities. It was noted that to-date, all organisations have provided an excellent service and incredible value for money based on the evaluation of investments.

Current recipients and outcomes achieved

Current grant recipients include:

- Derbyshire Law Centre
- Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre
- Groundwork
- Junction Arts
- North East Derbyshire Citizens Advice Bureau
- Rural Action Derbyshire
- Trade Union Safety Team

The table below shows the annual financial contribution and the Social Return on Investment (SROI) for each financial year – the estimated value of outcomes by individual organisations achieved through the services provided (N.B. within this analysis it is known that other funding of each organisation has contributed to the outcomes achieved; the Council's investment is not therefore 100% attributable).

Organisation	Annual Award	SROI 2014/ 15	SROI 2015/ 16	SROI 2016/ 17	SROI 2017/ 18	SROI 2018/ 19	SROI 2019/ 20	SROI 2020/21
Derbyshire Law Centre	£18,000	£967,829	£1,206,724	£459,413	£471,664	£496,165	£373,655	£578,860
Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre	£19,900	£422,541	£564,027	£611,972	£712,173	£730,608	£890,279	£1,306,592
Groundwork	£13,600	£31,968	£31,032	£45,288	£24,408	£57,492	£252,787	n/a – award ceased
Junction Arts	£16,000	£135,231	£172,950	£151,978	£135,354	£163,610	£133,155	£754,746
North East Derbyshire Citizens Advice Bureau	£42,230	£1,860,577	£1,995,379	£1,495,602	£1,496,421	£1,261,557	£1,285,724	£970,252
Rural Action Derbyshire	£2,265	£345,112	£287,386	£70,074	£165,483	£402,821	£349,816	£79,797
Trade Union Safety Team	£3,650	£476,941	£535,022	£616,649	£135,383	£242,537	£178,623	£106,386

Clarification of the current monitoring process

The monitoring of outcomes currently takes place six-monthly and annually dependent on the size of the allocation given. Any allocations under £10,000 are monitored yearly, those above £10,000 are six-monthly. This consists of output and outcome measures such as 'number of residents supported from the Bolsover District' as an example, and these are dependent on the organisation and what they provide. The service level agreements with the organisations also acknowledge which of the Council aims the work supports.

The outcomes and outputs achieved are allocated a Social Return on Investment (SROI) value where appropriate and this is calculated within the Executive and Partnership Team to demonstrate a pound for pound ratio of social outcomes achieved as a result of the Council grant. This is currently reported in the biannual and annual Bolsover Partnership performance reports, but not directly within budget monitoring reports.

1.2 Comparison with neighbouring authorities across the East Midlands

An information request was sent out to the East Midlands Scrutiny Network to ascertain the current approaches within the region. Councils were asked:

- *Does your local authority run a VCS grants budget?*
- *What is your current budget allocation for this?*
- *How do VCS organisations access the grant scheme – is it via a commissioning process or general application (first come, first served)?*
- *Do you publicise your scheme, and if so what mechanisms do you use?*

Unfortunately, while this is usually a useful method of gathering benchmarking data, on this occasion there was no response.

A quick internet search has shown that many neighbouring councils are using an application-style process for grant schemes that they run, even where the grant is as little as £500(max). As such if Bolsover DC were to choose not to alter their current approach to grant funding, then a clear evidence-based allocation process would be needed to justify the decision processes for all future grants and the service level agreements negotiated.

As part of the research Members looked at a similar review completed by Bassetlaw DC back in 2016 and were able to learn from their approach to creating a revised clear set of criteria for the scheme and revised application and evaluation process for applicants.

In some cases there has been a move to stop providing Grant Aid and a move to a commissioning model. A commissioning and funding framework improves transparency in the process, and would allow the Council the flexibility to re-direct funding to newly identified areas of need in the community.

Authorities researched included:

Chesterfield Borough Council	https://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/home/latest-news/vital-funding-for-community-groups-confirmed.aspx https://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-permission-and-development-management/community-infrastructure-levy/community-infrastructure-levy-funding.aspx https://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/your-council/coronavirus-information-hub/community-support-information.aspx
Mansfield District Council	https://www.mansfield.gov.uk/finance/grant-aid-1
Newark & Sherwood District Council	https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/grantsandawards/
Bassetlaw District Council	https://data.bassetlaw.gov.uk/council-grant-aid-programme/voluntary-community-grants/
North East Derbyshire District Council	https://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/community/community-action-grants

1.3 Meeting our Best Value Duty

If the Council is to vary its major grants budgets, it will need to take into account its Best Value Duties as set out in the Statutory Guidance.

The Guidance clearly states that:

> *'5. Authorities should be responsive to the benefits and needs of voluntary and community sector organisations of all sizes…….*
>
> *7. Authorities should avoid passing on disproportionate reductions – by not passing on larger reductions to the voluntary and community sector and small businesses as a whole, than they take on themselves and in particular:…*
>
> - *An Authority intending to reduce or end funding (where 'funding' means both grant funding or any fixed term contract) or other support to a voluntary and community organisation or small business should give at least three months' notice of the actual reduction[1] to both the organisation involved and the public/services users.*
>
> - *An Authority should actively engage the organisation and service users as early as possible before making a decision on the future of*

[1] Where on the basis of past practice the organisation might have some basis for expecting the funding or contract to be continued.

the service; any knock on effect on assets used to provide this service; and the wider impact on the local community.

- *Authorities should make provision for the organisation, service users, and wider community to put forward options on how to re-shape the service or project. Local authorities should assist this by making available all appropriate information, in line with the Government's transparency agenda.'*

In order to achieve a proportionate approach to any changes in our grant allocation process, the Council are *'under a Duty to Consult*[2] *representatives of a wide range of local persons*'. As outlined in point 3 of the Best Value guidance:

> *'….Authorities should include local voluntary and community organisations and small businesses in such consultation. This should apply at all stages of the commissioning cycle, including when considering the decommissioning of services. ……'*

As such, following completion of this review, further engagement will be needed with the sector, to ensure they understand the reasons for the review and any recommendations for improvement in the Grant Allocation Scheme.

[2] Section 3(2) of the Local Government Act 1999.

2. Recommendations

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
CCCSC21-22 2.1	That further communication takes place as part of the refresh of the allocation scheme to ensure new contracts are aligned to the Council's new Ambitions and Priorities, in order for VCS organisations to submit valid applications.	Greater knowledge and understanding of Council Ambitions and Priorities by VCS partners	Aug 22 - Dec 22	Executive and Partnerships Team	Officer time	Due to a clash in timings of the Ambition refresh and negotiation of annual contracts, the opportunity to refresh existing SLAs was missed. This can easily be rectified as part of the development of the new allocation process. This will also be incorporated in to future allocations post local elections in 2023 when new priorities will start to be

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
						developed for 2024 onwards.
CCCSC21-22 2.2	That as part of any revised allocation scheme, the additional areas outlined in the report are listed as areas the Council wishes to see additional local delivery via grant allocation, and that the revised scheme remains flexible to accommodate emerging issues.	Wider scope to impact of VCS grants following the pandemic and current financial/social impacts.	Aug 22 -Dec 22	Executive and Partnerships Team	Officer time	This can easily be incorporated in to any new scheme developed. It may be that a number of the areas identified can be addressed via incorporation to targeted approaches to advice and guidance
CCCSC21-22 2.3	That BDC move to a commissioning process outlining set clear areas of delivery which assist achievement of BDC Ambitions and Priorities, with local organisations able to tender for contracts/SLAs.	Establish an allocation process for VCS grants that eliminates any possible duplication. This should be an annual process allowing flexibility for amendment if required during	Aug 22 - Dec 22	Executive and Partnerships Team	Officer time	The service could accommodate either an application form style scheme or a full commissioning approach and are happy to look to implement

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
		the delivery and monitoring phase.				whichever solution Members feel would be the best solution. Service experience tells us that a commissioning approach is more robust and allows the greatest flexibility should a contract need to be varied during the delivery/ monitoring phase.
CCCSC21-22 2.4	That following the review, a consultation process takes place with existing recipients and wider sector on the proposed changes to allocation, as required by the Best Value Guidance.	Compliance with the Councils Best Value Duty and engagement of VCS partners in the development of the new Allocation Scheme.	Jan 2023	Executive and Partnerships Team	Officer time	This would be standard practice by the service for any significant changes to the scheme, and is essential to remain

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
						compliant. Ensuring full engagement and buy-in from key contacts in the sector will be crucial to the success of the revised scheme.
CCCSC21-22 2.5	That the current contract with a VCS Infrastructure provider is extended and integrated in to the wider VCS grants allocation process, to ensure all grants and monitoring are centralised.	Continued support to VCS organisations and streamlined internal monitoring.	July 22	Executive and Partnerships Team	Officer time	This has been completed during the course of the review due to a requirement to address the expiring contract. The current contract has been extended for a further 3yr period to allow current infrastructure development to continue. The contract is performance based enabling

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
						release of funding based on achievement of agreed outcomes.
CCCSC21-22 2.6	That other VCS grants from across the Council are incorporated in to the main VCS Grants process, in compliance with the HRA ring-fence where required, to centralise allocation and monitoring, with appropriate involvement of services outside of the Executive and Partnerships team in relation to monitoring of any grants.	Reduced duplication of funding; streamlined monitoring function; improved communication between service areas.	Aug 22 – Mar 23 – development of revised scheme. Monitoring from Apr 23 onwards	Executive and Partnerships Team Assistant Director of Housing Management & Enforcement Finance team	Officer time	While the review has predominantly found duplication linked to Housing services, it will be of greater benefit to ensure this recommendation is widened to all VCS grant allocations council-wide to ensure there is one central process.
CCCSC21-22 2.7	That the Council clearly define set allocations to a single organisation for the following areas of delivery to avoid any further chance of duplication:	Reduced duplication of funding; streamlined monitoring function; clearly	Mar 23	Executive and Partnerships Team	Officer time Revised grant allocation	This can be incorporated as part of the revised scheme developed.

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
	• Debt advice/benefits claim support • Employment advice/case support • Housing advice/case work – General housing/homelessness (General Fund) • Housing advice/case work – Council tenants (HRA Fund)	defined delivery outcomes for grant recipients.		Assistant Director of Housing Management & Enforcement	guidance/ criteria	
CCCSC21-22 2.8	That the new process includes a clear section where applicants must declare other funding and evidence there is no duplication.	Reduced chance of duplication of funding.	Jan 23 – Mar 23	Executive and Partnerships Team	Officer time (production/ processing of form)	This is undertaken as part of the existing SLA negotiations and would be an essential part of any revised process.
CCCSC21-22 2.9	That consideration be given to the Council negotiating positions as a representative on the management committee of grant recipients, to ensure there is transparency for the duration of the grant period.	Greater transparency over spend, monitoring and identification of duplication of funding.	Apr 23 onwards	Executive and Partnerships Team	Officer time Member time	A number of the current organisations in receipt of grant already have a representative of the Executive linked to the organisation. See current

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
						Appointments to Outside Bodies (Executive Functions). This Appointments list can be reviewed once the new grant allocations have been agreed.
CCCSC21-22 2.10	That Officers ensure the procurement process for a SV calculator tool takes in to account the criteria identified by Members during the review process.	Procurement process meets Members requirements in relation to mitigating potential risks associated with software procurement	May 2022	Executive and Partnerships Team Development Team	Officer time	This was completed during the course of the review with the criteria agreed by Members forming part of the RFQ for the procurement of the evaluation tool.
CCCSC21-22 2.11	That the Council completes the required procurement process for an improved social value evaluation tool which will support improved analysis and reporting functions, and enable wider	Procurement of enhanced social value calculator tool to enable Council to embed social value	May 2022	Executive and Partnerships Team Development Team	Officer time	Procurement process complete in May 2022. Initial training and roll-out of software

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
	use across multiple service areas and by external partners.	analysis across all services areas.				to commence in July 2022.
CCCSC21-22 2.12	That performance reports for the VCS allocations be submitted to Executive/Council on a six-monthly basis, with periodic attendance of the individual recipients.	Enhanced monitoring of outcomes, greater interaction with grant recipients; improved transparency of monitoring within Council governance structure.	Oct 22 onwards	Executive and Partnerships Team	Officer time VCS partner time (attendance)	Current reporting is via the Bolsover Partnership Annual Reports to Executive and Council on a bi-annual basis.

3. Scope of the review

The Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a Review of Voluntary & Community Sector Grant Allocations, as part of the 2021/22 Work Programme.

The issue was initially raised via a service suggestion from the Executive and Partnerships Team due to length of time since this operational area was last reviewed and changing circumstances in the sector due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The review supports the Corporate Ambition of 'Customers' and the Priorities of 'Actively engaging with partners to benefit our customers' and 'Promoting equality and diversity and supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people', but does not link directly to any Corporate Targets.

The aim of the review was:

- To ensure the VCS Grant Allocation Programme remains fit for purpose, value for money, and sustainable.

The objectives agreed were:

- Review existing SLAs and allocations, including how they support delivery of the current Council Ambitions.
- Analysis of integration of VCS Grant Programme with additional VCS contracts.
- Analysis of BDC Grant Allocation against other funding received
- Assessment of existing performance monitoring – is the SROI method the best approach

The key issues identified for investigation were as follows:

- The existing scheme is not a result of open commissioning of providers to deliver outcomes on behalf of the Council.
- Lack of change in grant recipients – there has been no recent assessment of whether the current amounts allocated are still adequate and that the organisation that the Council is engaging with are best placed to meet our needs.
- Value for money of existing grant levels and consideration of any adjustments
- Potential for duplication/double funding
- Gaps in delivery as a result of the pandemic that cannot be addressed through core service delivery or existing VCS Grants.

The Committee comprised the following Members:

Councillor N. Clarke (Chair)	Councillor A. Clarke (Vice-Chair)
Councillor J. Tait	Councillor D. Salt
Councillor E. Parkin	Councillor D. Bullock
Councillor D. Dixon	

Support to the Committee was provided by the Scrutiny & Elections Officer.

4. Method of Review

The Committee met on six occasions to consider the scope of the review, key issues they wanted to discuss and to carry out interviews and evidence gathering.

The Committee sought evidence by way of:

- Internal enquiries to establish existing procedures used by the Partnerships Team and analysis of recent monitoring reports;
- External enquiry to establish approaches to VCS Grant Allocations across East Midlands authorities. This was supplemented by additional web-based research of neighbouring authorities schemes due to low response rate;
- Survey of Parish Councils to establish which had grants schemes in place and whether any duplication could be identified
- Brief survey with current recipients assessing how they meet the Councils Ambitions and Priorities.

A document review was completed of the following as part of the evidence gathering process:

- Summary of outcomes from existing grants 2014-2021
- Interim Monitoring Reports Q1/Q2 2021/22
- Review of Bassetlaw CVS contract and monitoring reports
- Bolsover Partnership Monitoring Reports
- Revised Best Value Statutory Guidance
- Derbyshire Compact

Equality and Diversity

Within the process of the review, the Committee has taken into account the potential impact of any changes to the current scheme in terms of the impact on the sector. It is essential as stated in section 1 that the Council complies with its Best Value Duty when progressing changes to current policies and procedures in terms of grant allocations to the sector. This is addressed further in section 5.

5. Analysis of evidence and key findings

5.1 Review existing SLAs and allocations, including how they support delivery of the current Council Ambitions.

Alignment to Council Ambitions

On assessing the existing outcomes that have been agreed with each organisation through SLAs, it was apparent that the SLAs linked to old Aims and Priorities and this therefore needed to be addressed.

As part of the review process a summary sheet of the current BDC Council Ambitions and Priorities was produced. A brief exercise was completed to try and match existing recipients and to the Ambitions and Priorities, based on the outputs in the current SLAs. An additional stage was then completed asking the organisations themselves to determine which areas they felt their work supported (see Appendix 4).

The responses received from partner organisations did not entirely match to the Members analysis of the SLA requirements. This indicates that there is potential misunderstanding in relation to the revised Ambitions and Priorities of the Council. It has also become apparent that due to the timing of refreshing the Council Ambitions, the agreement of refreshed SLAs for 2020/21 was based on old priorities. Furthermore, an opportunity to amend the SLAs for 2021/22 to link with the new Ambitions/Priorities was missed.

Recommendation:

That further communication takes place as part of the refresh of the allocation scheme to ensure new contracts are aligned to the Council's new Ambitions and Priorities in order to submit valid applications.

Potential additional areas of delivery

Added to this, Members discussed the current issues communities were facing post-pandemic and have agreed the following additional priority areas, which could be supported through a partnership approach with the voluntary and community sector:

- Impact of Covid – health/mental health, debt, employment implications leading to increased service demand
- Impact of welfare changes – increased service demand
- Anticipated rise in utility costs – impact on debt, housing
- Foodbank provision – sustainability of service, ability to cope with increased demand.

The first three areas to some extent highlight that extra consideration needs to be given to the provisions/outcomes of our existing grants, as a number of them relate

to these areas of delivery. It may be that once current demand is reviewed, that the Council needs to consider the amounts allocated for such support.

Recommendation:

That as part of any revised allocation scheme, the additional areas outlined in the report are listed as areas the Council wishes to see additional local delivery via grant allocation, and that the revised scheme remains flexible to accommodate emerging issues.

Analysis of our allocation process

A range of other local authorities have been researched, as noted in section 1, and a number of application forms have been found which could aid the Council in production of a similar form and application process. Given the size of the grants currently allocated, Members feel that greater transparency as to the amount allocated and desired outcomes to be achieved would be an improvement. This is particularly vital now, as we move to increased pressures on budgets in the current financial climate.

On further discussion with officers from the Executive and Partnership team, it became clear that through their experience of managing a range of funding streams over the last 20 years that a commissioning process based on evidence of need was far beneficial to a process where organisations are bidding for funding in competition. Officers felt a commissioning approach created greater sustainability and a legacy to the objectives delivered. Past funding streams that had used a bidding process tended to result in time-limited outcomes specific to the period of the grant, without the desired longer-term impact

Members also considered the potential for an extended contract period of 2-3 years which could enable greater stability for both the organisation and the sector. Advice from Finance officers was that while there was nothing official to stop this from happening, it may not be prudent to commit large amounts of expenditure for future years, given that local government funding is currently uncertain. Should the Council find themselves in a position where we had to cut expenditure because our own position made it necessary and we'd committed non-salary expenditure for a number of years our only option in that case would be to cut salary costs. That is not something Members or senior officers would want to do as it creates additional risk to service delivery. It was agreed that allocation on an annual basis, as per the current scheme, with regular monitoring enabled sufficient flexibility to adapt allocations based on both performance and evidence of increased service demand.

Recommendation:

That BDC move to a commissioning process outlining set clear areas of delivery which assist achievement of BDC Ambitions and Priorities, with local organisations able to tender for contracts/SLAs.

As discussed in section 1, any changes the Council makes to its current process will require consultation with the sector as to how they can be supported to engage with the revised grant funding process. There will also need to be further work to define the outcomes to be achieved from each contract.

Recommendation:

That following the review, a consultation process takes places with existing recipients and wider sector on the proposed changes to allocation, as required by the Best Value Guidance.

5.2 Analysis of integration of VCS Grant Programme with additional VCS contracts.

VCS Infrastructure Support

Members considered the current contract with BCVS including:

- Monitoring Return (spreadsheet for 3 years – just started the third year 2021/22)
- Latest progress report (Jul-Sep)
- Tender specification and response

Members were satisfied that the outcomes of the grant to BCVS were clear and acknowledged that operational issues early on in the contract now seemed to be resolved.

A key concern for Members was around sustainability of the support being provided and whether sufficient capacity has been built within the District to replace that lost when Bolsover Community Voluntary Partners (CVP) ceased. If there is insufficient capacity, Members have considered whether the SLA with BCVS needs to continue in some form, or a revised contract with another VCS Infrastructure provider is required, and if so, whether this should be integrated to the wider VCS Grants allocation.

Recommendation:

That the current contract with a VCS Infrastructure provider is extended and integrated in to the wider VCS grants allocation process, to ensure all grants and monitoring are centralised.

Additional BDC Grants/Potential duplication

On completing a search of the finance system, it transpired that Housing Services had an additional contract with Derbyshire Law Centre (DLC) for approximately £34,000. Around two thirds of this allocation seems to be a long-standing agreement and potentially requires review and a more formal arrangement. The funding covers:

- Homeless prevention/Homeless Reduction Act cases – £10K per year
- Court duty desk – this covers rent and mortgage cases, £12K per year
- Disrepair – a joint-funded post with NEDDC and BDC for a disrepair solicitor, £12K per year (this is new as of this year, the others are longstanding arrangements)

When comparing against the outcomes required as part of the SLA for the core grants allocation, DLC are also required to have 50% of the cases for Bolsover linked to Housing. It is not clear if any cases counted for the core grant are in fact double counted, as a result of the additional monies from Housing Services. To avoid any question of double counting of outcomes, Members agree it is essential that only one grant for housing casework support is made going forward and that a commissioned service for such provision may be a more transparent approach.

Furthermore the current grant to North East Derbyshire Citizens' Advice Bureau (NEDCAB) is in fact made up of contributions from both General Fund (Partnerships Team budget) and HRA (Housing services). There is concern here as there is no negotiation with Housing services for the outcomes delivered or direct monitoring information. There is also a chance that this duplicates the grant to DLC for housing related casework. Members questioned if there was sufficient workload to fund this at both agencies.

The following table summarises the current allocations linked to advice and guidance services. This represents a large percentage of the overall grant allocations currently given by the Council:

Grants for Advice and Guidance			
Organisation	**Amount**	**Outputs**	**BDC Funding source**
DLC	18000	No. of enquiries from Bolsover residents	General Fund - Partnerships
		No. of cases from Bolsover residents (50% of cases housing related; 50% of cases employment, debt and immigration)	
		Deliver 2 marketing campaigns to raise profile of DLC and services offered	
		PLUS	
	10000	Homeless prevention/Homeless Reduction Act	General Fund - Housing
	12000	Court Duty desk (rent/mortgage cases)	General Fund - Housing
	12000	Disrepair solicitor	General Fund - Housing
NEDCAB	42230	Support a minimum of 5500 debt/benefit enquiries	19000 General Fund - Partnerships; 23,230 HRA
		750 housing enquiries (with 157 given advice on homelessness)	
		350 volunteer hours	
DUWC	19900	150 Appeals tribunals (Secure £200k in lump sum arrears for Appeals tribunals; Secure £250k in additional ongoing weekly payments from Appeals tribunals)	General Fund - Partnerships
		2000 people advised from within Bolsover area (Secure £250k from advice work at Shirebrook Office and Outreach)	
		2 volunteers recruited or retained delivering 1000hrs per year (last couple of updates does not show number of hours?)	
		2 Strategic meetings	
TOTAL	**114130**		

One way of ensuring there is no opportunity for duplication in the future would be to define that we will offer set allocations to a single organisation for specific delivery. This could then be dealt with by either an application form process whereby the agency outlines how they would deliver, or via a more formal commissioning process

Recommendations:

That other VCS grants from across the Council are incorporated in to the main VCS Grants process, in compliance with the HRA ring-fence where required, to centralise allocation and monitoring, with appropriate involvement of services

outside of the Executive and Partnerships team in relation to monitoring of any grants.

That the Council clearly define set allocations to a single organisation for the following areas of delivery to avoid any further chance of duplication:

- **Debt advice/benefits claim support**
- **Employment advice/case support**
- **Housing advice/case work – General housing/homelessness (General Fund)**
- **Housing advice/case work – Council tenants (HRA Fund)**

5.3 Analysis of BDC Grant Allocation against other funding received

Comparison with Parish Council Grant Schemes

As outlined in Appendix 3, a survey of all 17 parishes was completed in November 2021 to establish alternative funding sources that may be available and also to identify any potential duplication with our existing grant recipients:

> *The Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee is currently reviewing our approach to voluntary and community sector funding/grants. Members are interested to know if your Parish Council runs a system where your Parish Cllrs receive a small budget to allocate to local organisations. If this is the case, could you clarify which local organisations receive funding from the Parish as we are trying to ensure there is no duplication of funding by the District Council?*
>
> *Members are also conscious that the pandemic has significantly changed local need for a number of groups and would like to ensure that any future approaches to funding accommodates this. As such Members would be interested to know if your Parish has been approached by any specific local organisations seeking additional funding to deliver services as a result of resource pressures they are facing. Finally, if you are unable to provide funding support from the Parish, do you signpost the organisation elsewhere?*
>
> *Members appreciate that Parishes are often a first point of contact and would welcome your input.*

Responses received from Clowne Parish Council; Blackwell Parish Council and Whitwell Parish Council. No duplication of funding was found and all Parishes responded regularly signposted contacts to other agencies better placed to support with advice, guidance and additional funding. In addition, all parishes used an application form style scheme requiring clear outcomes to be delivered and clarity around other funding, even for the small amounts of grant available. As such, as mentioned above in section 5.1 it seems pertinent that the Council moves to a more

robust allocation process with a clear application form and appraisal process or a commissioning style approach.

Recommendation:

That BDC move to a commissioning process outlining set clear areas of delivery which assist achievement of BDC Ambitions and Priorities, with local organisations able to tender for contracts/SLAs.

Analysis of Monitoring Reports

The information gathered for the first two quarters of 2021/22 shows that a number of the recipients have secured additional monies to support their work as a result of the capacity created by our grant support.

As noted in section 5.2, there is potential overlap with monies to DLC particularly in relation to housing related casework. However, their last report shows they have secured a substantial additional grant to support housing disrepair work which brings in to question whether the amount from BDC needs to remain as high.

DUWC have recently reduced their staffing due to reductions in core funding from local authorities (not including BDC) and rely more on volunteers. They point out the potential rise in service demand as a result in changes to Universal Credit. They have secured additional funding over the next 3 years from a charity to support further promotion of DUWC services and extra support to volunteers. Again this needs to be taken in to consideration with any redesign of the Grant Allocation Scheme and level of grant agreed and it will be crucial that this information can be captured from agencies applying for funding/bidding for contracts.

Recommendation:

That the new process includes a clear section where applicants must declare other funding and evidence there is no duplication.

That consideration be given to the Council negotiating positions as a representative on the management committee of grant recipients, to ensure there is transparency for the duration of the grant period.

5.4 Assessment of existing performance monitoring – is the SROI method the best approach?

Within the current monitoring process, there are regular audits of the grant recipients to check that the outputs being reported relate to Bolsover residents. This is a crucial element of all current service level agreements related to VCS grants, in order to ensure the benefit of the investment is seen within the District.

The Executive and Partnerships Team were the first section within the authority to trial evaluating the social value outcomes of programmes and investments, initially using an in-house approach. This was then replaced with the adoption of the HACT[3] model through the UK Social Value Bank, which was used successfully when delivering the NG20 Programme in Shirebrook. A limitation to the approach was found unexpectedly however, when the Executive and Partnerships Team trialled using the HACT model with partners, it did not lend itself to be compatible across multiple organisations.

As use of this evaluation method has developed within BDC over the last few years, external software providers have been slower to create a system that would meet a corporate way of analysing social value. However, as local authorities have developed their approaches to social value as a result of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 which came into force in January 2013, forming policies/strategies and reviewing their procurement/commissioning processes, development of other evaluation tools/software has accelerated.

During the course of the review it transpired that there was overlap with the review being completed by Local Growth Scrutiny – Review of Integration of Social Value to BDC Policy and Delivery. This review was also looking at options for evaluation of social value outcomes. On further investigation of the review by Local Growth Scrutiny, it was clear an initial exercise had been completed by officers within Development and the Executive and Partnerships Team to review 3 different software/evaluation systems.

Members received a demonstration of one of the systems and saw first-hand the range of reporting options, analysis potential and how this compared with the current HACT model used by the Executive and Partnerships Team. The system demonstrated also had greater potential for use by external partner agencies, reducing double-handling of information and speeding up the completion of monitoring forms.

Following the demonstration, Members agreed a set of criteria to be incorporated in to the future RFQ (Request for Quotation) for a Social Value calculator tool:

- Unlimited partner access
- Options for both specified number of user licenses and unlimited user licenses
- Ability to export reports in a range of formats compatible with Microsoft i.e. Word, Excel and Adobe PDF.
- Ability for all services to see an individual Dashboard of projects/SV outcomes and well as a Corporate Dashboard
- Potential to be able to run a pilot phase before full roll-out of system to an expanded list of users.
- Provision of full list of KPIs that can be monitored by the system – to allow comparison to existing calculator tool.

Members were also clear that any tool procured should be run alongside the existing HACT tool initially so a comparison of the two systems in possible, to truly judge the benefits.

[3] HACT is registered as the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust, charity number 1096829, company number 04560091

The RFQ commenced during the course of the review with the Scrutiny & Elections Officer involved in the evaluation of tenders to ensure the Members views from both Committees fed in to the procurement process. As such the following two recommendations were enacted prior to completion of the review, to ensure there was no delay to the procurement process.

Recommendations (Implemented during the review):

That Officers ensure the procurement process for a SV calculator tool takes in to account the criteria identified by Members during the review process.

That the Council completes the required procurement process for an improved social value evaluation tool which will support improved analysis and reporting functions, and enable wider use across multiple service areas and by external partners.

Members also discussed how monitoring reports were presented within the organisation and which body was best placed to receive them. As the scheme was in fact Council grants, rather than area-based Partnership grants, it was raised whether the reporting should be separated out from the wider Partnership reporting, to ensure transparency of Council activity. Members reviewed an example of the existing monitoring report that is submitted to Executive and Council on a six-monthly basis and felt that the approach was sufficient and would be further improved once the new social value software system was operational, with revised more advanced reports produced. Moving forward, Members felt further opportunities should also be made available for grant recipients to attend committee to update Members on delivery.

Recommendation:

That performance reports for the VCS allocations be submitted to Executive/Council on a six-monthly basis, with periodic attendance of the individual recipients.

6. Conclusions

The Committee have put together twelve recommendations which will hopefully assist the Council in ensuring grant allocations to the voluntary and community sector are transparent; have clear outcomes and monitoring arrangements and meet the current needs of the Council and local residents.

Members are clear that the proposed changes should ideally, as a minimum, be in place for the 2023/24 financial year. It was hoped that the possibility of in-year changes for 2022/23 could be considered if a shorter initial grant period was used at the beginning of the financial year. However due to additional service pressures and timing of the completion of the review, Members appreciate that this is unlikely to be viable given the complexity of devising a replacement allocation process.

The key findings arising from the review are:

- The review has proved both timely and invaluable in identifying potential duplication and assessing the advantages/disadvantages of different allocation processes.
- A refreshed approach to centralising grant allocations will ensure better communication between service areas and eliminate duplication.
- That the use of SROI as an evaluation tool gives the Council a clear indication of value for money on the investment made. While our existing mechanism of calculating this via the HACT model achieves this, it is clear that evaluation tools have significantly advanced and it is an appropriate juncture for the Council to look to use a more advanced evaluation tool.
- That existing reporting mechanisms are sufficient and will be further strengthened by the ability to create more detailed evaluation reports using the new software.

Appendix 1: Stakeholders

Stakeholders engaged during the Review:

- Portfolio Holder – Cllr Moesby (Finance)
- Assistant Director of Leader's Executive, Partnerships & Communications
- Executive and Partnerships Team
- Assistant Director Treasurer and Section 151 Officer
- Finance Team
- Local Growth Scrutiny Committee
- Assistant Director of Development and Planning
- Development Team
- Assistant Director of Housing Management & Enforcement
- Loop – The Social Value People

Stakeholders impacted by the Review:

- Bolsover residents
- Portfolio Holder – Cllr Moesby (Finance)
- Assistant Director of Leader's Executive, Partnerships, Governance & Communications
- Executive and Partnerships Team
- Assistant Director Treasurer and Section 151 Officer
- Finance Team
- Assistant Director of Development and Planning
- Development Team
- Assistant Director of Housing Management & Enforcement

Appendix 2: Grants to Voluntary Organisations Output/Outcome Summary

Derbyshire Law Centre

Output/Outcome Description	*Target*	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual
Derbyshire Law Centre enquiries from residents of the Bolsover District	*654*	648	665	646	626	532	489	377
Derbyshire Law Centre cases for residents from the Bolsover District	*153*	158	197	150	154	162	122	131
To undertake two marketing campaigns including the voluntary sector and local press to raise the profile of Derbyshire Law Centre	*2*	2	2	2	2	0	3	3
Achieve 50% of the cases being housing related HOM1601, HOM1604, HOM1606, HOM1610	*78*	95	84	58	66	18	67	34
Achieve 50% of the cases to be employment, debt and immigration related HEA1601, HEA1602, HEA1603, HEA1605, HEA1607, FIN1605	*76*	63	110	92	109	46	55	97

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre

Output/ Outcome Description	***Target (14/15 – 15/16)***	**2014/15 Actual**	**2015/16 Actual**	***Target (16/17 – 20/21)***	**2016/17 Actual**	**2017/18 Actual**	**2018/19 Actual**	**2019/20 Actual**	**2020/21 Actual**
150 Appeals tribunals	*£450,000*	£342,583	£209,679	*£200,000*	£334,832	£357,173	£512,348	£931,438	£463,511
2000 people advised	*£250,000*	£409,213	£789,249	*£780,000*	£1,036,622	£1,237,150	£801,091	£669,053	£624,130
2 volunteers recruited or retained (Delivering 1000 hours per year)	*1,000 (hours)*	1,094 (hours)	1,000 (hours)	*1,000 (hours)*	1,000 (hours)	1,612 (hours)	4 (volunteers)	3 (volunteers)	5 (volunteers)
£200,000 in lump sum arrears from Appeals tribunals	*£200,000*	£166,166	£88,633	*£80,000*	£140,560	£149,627	£213,290	£331,639	£220,582
£250,000 in additional ongoing weekly payments from Appeals tribunals	*£250,000*	£176,417	£121,046	*£120,000*	£194,272	£207,546	£299,058	£599,799	£242,928
£250,000 from advice work delivered at Shirebrook Office and Outreach	*£250,000*	£409,213	£789,249	*£780,000*	£1,036,622	£1,237,150	£801,091	£669,053	£624,130

Groundwork

Output/Outcome Description	*Target*	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual
Development of one open space for recreation, which is implemented in the year.	*1*	1	1	2	0	25
Work with 10 young people who are excluded from school and re-engage back into education.	*10*	16	23	36	11	24
Working with 20 young people aged 16-18 who are NEET and have 1 or less GCSE's at A-C and mentor them to achieve sustainable outcomes.	*20*	35	21	4	0	N/A
Deliver 15 accredited qualifications to pupils who are on the verge of exclusion.	*15*	16	21	28	15	40
Bring back into use 3 Empty homes in private sector in the district. (one homeless person to benefit)	*3*	11	9	N/A	N/A	N/A

Groundwork

Output/Outcome Description	*Target*	2019/20 Actual
Working with 10 regular volunteers on the Clowne Branch Line and Archaeological Way.	*20*	20
Working with 1 person individuals from Bolsover District who has been excluded or at risk of being excluded from School.	*1*	1
Deliver 4 accredited qualifications to pupils from Bolsover District who are on the verge of exclusion.	*8*	10
Deliver employability support programmes to support 11 long term unemployed individuals from Bolsover District move into full time employment	*11*	11
Deliver employability support programmes to support 15 long term unemployed individuals from Bolsover District move into part time employment	*15*	15

Junction Arts

Output/Outcome Description	***Target (14/15 – 16/17)***	**2014/15 Actual**	**2015/16 Actual**	**2016/17 Actual**	***Target (2017/18)***	**2017/18 Actual**
Increase Community Cohesion: No of Participants in Bolsover District	*2250*	3355	3893	5299	*2100*	3437
No of Attendees in Bolsover District (Events and Exhibitions)	*3600*	22,458	6512	19,317	*5750*	29,420
Leverage of other funding into the district	*£218,600*	£234,780	£241,600	£217,314	*£190,000*	£208,508
Volunteer hours in Bolsover District/proxy wage	*150*	389	151	248	*150*	582.5
Teacher hours in Bolsover District/wage savings for schools workshops	*£1,000*	£1,069.96	£50,996	£3,026	*£1,100*	£1,923.86

Junction Arts

Output/Outcome Description	***Target***	**2018/19 Actual**	**2019/20 Actual**	**2020/21 Actual**
Member of a social group – SOC1601	*£2,100*	£88,393	£71,913	£18,346
No of Attendees in Bolsover District (Events and Exhibitions)	*5750*	6898	13,904	4333
Feel belonging to neighbourhood – ENV1609	*£190,000*	£167,446	£232,508	£91,928

Citizens Advice North East Derbyshire

Output/Outcome Description	***Target***	**2014/15 Actual**	**2015/16 Actual**	**2016/17 Actual**	**2017/18 Actual**	**2018/19 Actual**	**2019/20 Actual**	**2020/21 Actual**
5500 debt/benefits enquiries dealt with	*5500*	5302	5724	6200	5847	5440	5609	3101
750 housing enquiries dealt with (157 people given advice on homelessness.	*750*	829	854	898	979	710	709	128
350 volunteer hours	*350*	416	448	600	672	450	420	250

Rural Action Derbyshire

Output/Outcome Description	*Target*	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual
Ways to Work assisting Bolsover residents with transport	*20*	32	26	6	15	37	32	4
Community / Neighbourhood Planning Support promoted to Parish Councils	*5*	0	16	0	9	21	12	0
Oil Buying Scheme	*10*	10	20	11	11	18	18	12
Suicide Awareness Training	*20*	54	43	25	53	18	29	16
Rural Matters	*15*	21	21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Financial Action & Advice Derbyshire	*10*	21	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

TRUST (Trade Union Safety Team)

Output/Outcome Description	*Target*	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual
100 Enquiries from people experiencing ill health or health and safety issues	*100*	95	165	140	100	90	103	20
To support 10 people with Tinnitus	*10*	28	11	15	26	80	20	30
Instrumental in recovering £50,000 in benefits and compensation	*£50,000*	£213,875	£239,920	£356,524	£60,710	£108,761	£80,100	£373,767

Appendix 3: Survey of Parish Councils

A survey of all 17 parishes was completed in November 2021 to establish alternative funding sources that may be available and also to identify any potential duplication with our existing grant recipients:

> *"The Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee is currently reviewing our approach to voluntary and community sector funding/grants. Members are interested to know if your Parish Council runs a system where your Parish Cllrs receive a small budget to allocate to local organisations. If this is the case, could you clarify which local organisations receive funding from the Parish as we are trying to ensure there is no duplication of funding by the District Council?*
>
> *Members are also conscious that the pandemic has significantly changed local need for a number of groups and would like to ensure that any future approaches to funding accommodates this. As such Members would be interested to know if your Parish has been approached by any specific local organisations seeking additional funding to deliver services as a result of resource pressures they are facing. Finally, if you are unable to provide funding support from the Parish, do you signpost the organisation elsewhere?*
>
> *Members appreciate that Parishes are often a first point of contact and would welcome your input."*

Responses received were as follows:

Parish Council	Individual Parish Cllr Grants	Community Grant Programmes	Application form and monitoring	Signposting	Notes
Clowne Parish Council	No	Yes Section 137 Grants Scheme Wind Farm Grant Allocation	Yes	Yes	Section 137 Grants allocation for 2021/22 is £5000 Wind Farm Grant allocation for 2021/22 is £8375

Parish Council	Individual Parish Cllr Grants	Community Grant Programmes	Application form and monitoring	Signposting	Notes
					Average award ranges from £150 to £250 per applicant but we have awarded more if there is a strong case.
Blackwell Parish Council	No	Yes Section 137 Grants Scheme	Form and guidance notes	Frequently get asked for advice around Funding Pots available, I often direct enquiries to our District and County Councillors and also to the National Lottery funding helpline.	The Grants under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 are generally small in size, usually below £1,000. Our allowance for such grants would usually be for around £8,000 for the financial year, however, following Covid and the fact that Groups were slow to recommence their activities, the budget is just £5,000 for the current financial year. So far, this year we have helped Newton Carnival Team with funds towards a Parish Firework Display, as they have not been able to hold the usual fundraising events due to Covid Restrictions, we have also helped Hilcote Environments and Leisure Project, to purchase Wild Flower Seeds and to make some repairs

Parish Council	Individual Parish Cllr Grants	Community Grant Programmes	Application form and monitoring	Signposting	Notes
					caused due to Vandalism on the Royal Oak Meadow which they manage. Many Community Groups have been severely compromised financially due to the inability to hold Fundraising events/activities, but as life returns to normal hopefully this will improve.
Whitwell Parish Council	No	Whitwell Parish Council precepts an amount each year so that it can grant funding for the benefit of the parish to not for profit voluntary groups	Yes	The parish council will signpost organisations elsewhere for funding/additional funding, if it is aware of funding availability.	The Parish Council has not been approached by any organisation seeking funding to deliver services, but any organisation must be not-for-profit and any funding granted must be for the benefit of the whole community. So far in this financial year the parish council has given small amounts to the Whitwell Playgroup and the Friends of Whitwell Primary School.

Appendix 4: Assessment of Grant recipients against Council Ambitions

During the course of the review, Members reviewed the current outputs/outcomes from each grant recipient and tried to match these against the Ambitions/Priorities they helped to deliver. Separately the grant recipients were contacted and asked to complete the same exercise, in case we weren't aware of areas where they could support delivery.

As can be seen from the table below, there is quite a difference in the results. This may be due to the Members familiarity with the Ambitions/Priorities and what the Council is trying to deliver, and the recipients' lack of familiarity with the Ambitions.

Ambition/Priority	Member Review Assessment	Current Grant Recipients Assessment
Economy		
• *Working with partners to support enterprise, innovation, jobs and skills*	Derbyshire Law Centre Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre TRUST Rural Action Derbyshire	Rural Action Derbyshire
• *Unlocking Development Potential: unlocking the capacity of major employment sites*		
• *Enabling Housing Growth: increasing the supply, quality and range of housing to meet the needs of the growing population and support economic growth*		
• *Making the best use of our assets*	Rural Action Derbyshire – Neighbourhood Planning	TRUST
• *Ensuring financial sustainability and increasing revenue streams*		Derbyshire Law Centre
• *Promoting the District and working with partners to increase tourism*	Junction Arts	Junction Arts Rural Action Derbyshire

Ambition/Priority	Member Review Assessment	Current Grant Recipients Assessment
Environment		
• *Reducing our carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same*		Rural Action Derbyshire
• *Increasing recycling*		
• *Ensuring a high standard of environmental cleanliness, undertaking appropriate enforcement activity where required*		
• *Enhancing biodiversity and developing attractive neighbourhoods that residents feel pride of and take responsibility for*		
• *Working with partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour*	Junction Arts	Rural Action Derbyshire
• *Actively engaging with partners to benefit our communities*	Junction Arts	NEDCAB Derbyshire Law Centre Junction Arts Rural Action Derbyshire
Customers		
• *Increasing customer satisfaction with our services*		Derbyshire Law Centre
• *Improving customer contact and removing barriers to accessing information*		NEDCAB Derbyshire Law Centre TRUST
• *Actively engaging with partners to benefit our customers*	Derbyshire Law Centre Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre NEDCAB	NEDCAB Derbyshire Law Centre

Ambition/Priority	Member Review Assessment	Current Grant Recipients Assessment
		Rural Action Derbyshire TRUST
• *Promoting equality, diversity and supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people*	Derbyshire Law Centre Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre NEDCAB Rural Action Derbyshire	NEDCAB Derbyshire Law Centre Junction Arts Rural Action Derbyshire TRUST
• *Providing good quality council housing where people choose to live*		Derbyshire Law Centre
• *Improving health, wellbeing and increasing participation in sport and leisure activities*	Rural Action Derbyshire NEDCAB	Junction Arts Rural Action Derbyshire TRUST

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