

Title: Voluntary Sector Support Services

Committee: Operational Services

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1.0 Issue

1.1. To consider the outcome of a review of the grant awarded to Voluntary and Community Action East Cambridgeshire (VCAEC) for 2024 to 2026 and determine whether to award a new grant for 2026 to 2028.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1. Members are asked to:

- (i) Note the review findings.
- (ii) Award a grant to VCAEC to support the delivery of services via a Service Level Agreement from 1 April 2026 until 31 March 2028.

3.0 Background/Options

3.1 In January 2024, the Council awarded a grant of £39,530 to VCAEC to support the delivery of services via a Service Level Agreement from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2026. Services included the provision of 'a 'one stop shop' which delivers quality services (including the delivery of a social car scheme and volunteer gardening scheme) through volunteers, to local people; and advice and information to voluntary and community groups and volunteers; and to act as an umbrella organisation providing generic infrastructure support to voluntary and community sector organisations within East Cambridgeshire.

3.2 Reviews of previous grants awarded to VCAEC have been carried out in 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2023-24, and have been shared with this committee.

3.3 A review of the grant for 2024-26 has been carried out and is located at Appendix 1.

3.4 The review included the undertaking of a procurement exercise to determine best value for money and evaluate responses of bidders against a specification that set out the Council's requirements going forward. One bid was received, which was from VCAEC; VCAEC intend to subcontract aspects of the work out to Support Cambridgeshire. Details of the bid are set out in Appendix 1.

4.0 Arguments/Conclusions

- 4.1 The Review at Appendix 1 includes an Options Appraisal which sets out two options available to the Council.
- 4.2 For the reasons set out in the Review at Appendix 1, and Option 1 of the Options Appraisal, Members are recommended to award a grant to VCAEC from 1 April 2026 until 31 March 2028, and enter into a new SLA, the targets of which will be informed by VCAEC's tender response. Members are making a decision on the award of a grant to VCAEC and not signing off the SLA. Annual briefing notes will be circulated to Members of the Operational Services Committee to provide an update on VCAEC's performance.

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

5.1

Financial Implications No	Legal Implications No	Human Resources (HR) Implications No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Yes	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) No	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) No

5.2 Financial implications

The grant will cost £39,530 and will be funded from resources in the Communities and Partnerships budget.

5.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The recommendation is to provide grant funding for services to benefit local community and voluntary sector organisations, volunteers, and communities. Users of the car and gardening schemes may include people with disabilities and the elderly.

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Review of Voluntary Sector Support Services grant

7.0 Background documents

SLA between ECDC and VCAEC 2024-26
VCAEC's tender response (exempt)