

CABINET – 11th JANUARY 2024

Report of the Director of Housing and Wellbeing Lead Member: Cllr Liz Blackshaw

Part A

CHARNWOOD GRANTS STRATEGIC PARTNERS 2024/25 - 2025/26

Purpose of Report

To put forward proposals for the Strategic Partner Grant Scheme funding for 2024/25 and 2025/26

Recommendations

1. That the following Strategic Partner Grants be approved, subject to budget approval:

Organisation	Amount Awarded 2024/25 (Year 1)	Provisional amount subject to budget review 2025/26 (Year 2)
Citizens Advice Charnwood	£86,705	£86,705
Equality Action	£20,454	£20,454
Fearon Hall Community Association	£29,727	£29,727
Gorse Covert Community Association	£19,922	£19,922
John Storer Charnwood	£84,490	£84,490
Shepshed Volunteer Centre (John Storer Charnwood)	£9,537	£9,537
Living Without Abuse	£27,050*	£17,513
		£9537 allocation TBC
TOTAL	£277,885	£277,885

2. That the Director of Housing and Wellbeing be given delegated authority to finalise the terms and conditions of the Strategic Partner Grants awarded and Service Level Agreements

3. That it be noted that Syston & District Volunteer Centre did not apply for a Strategic Partner Grant for 2024/25 and 2025/26 and that the amounts set out in recommendations 1 include the redistribution of the £9,537 previously ringfenced for Syston & District Volunteer Centre. The Grants panel recommend that this amount be awarded to *Living Without Abuse to help to reduce the waiting time for their clients to access support.

Reasons

1. To provide appropriate levels of financial support to those organisations that have submitted applications and been assessed by Grants Panel, as meeting the criteria for the Strategic Partner Grant Scheme.
2. To enable the grants awarded to be finalised with an approved Service Level Agreement and appropriate information to be supplied to the Council about the outcomes of the projects/services and determine final grant award amounts.
3. To clarify the way in which the funding previously provided to Syston Volunteer Centre will be used.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

Strategic Partner Grants were last approved by Cabinet in January 2022 (Min. 71) for a period of two years. At that time, eight Strategic Partners were awarded a Strategic Partner Grant. As the current Service Level Agreements will be coming to an end in March 2024, Strategic Partners have again been invited to apply for funding for a further two-year period (2024/25 and 2025/26). As part of that process a review of each organisation has taken place to ensure that the organisations are still meeting the expectations of the Strategic Partner Grant scheme, and the aims of the current Corporate Plan.

Existing Strategic Partners were invited to apply for funding for a two-year period ending in March 2026. All Strategic Partners, with the exception of Syston & District Volunteer Centre reapplied. The organisation met with the Grants Team and agreed that organisationally they would focus on their Transport Service and would continue their community offer through other avenues of funding, including Charnwood Community grants.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

Following approval of the recommendations, the Strategic Partners will be notified of the outcome and the level of funding awarded over the two years. Officers will agree their Service Level Agreement and the schedule of grant payments for 2024/25 from 1st April 2024.

Each Strategic Partner will have a Borough Council Lead Officer, who will visit the organisation at least twice a year, usually in June and November. They will complete a Monitoring Return at each meeting and submit this to the Grants Administrator. The payments will then be released subject to the Monitoring Return being approved by the Communities and Wellbeing Manager.

At the end of the year each organisation will supply overall monitoring and evaluation evidence for the full year and subject to approval, they will then receive the agreed level of funding for 2025/26.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

Strategic Partner Grant Scheme Funding

It has been proposed that Year 1 funding will remain the same as awarded in 2022/23. The maximum amount that each Strategic Partner could apply for is set out in the table on page 1.

The second year of funding will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process.

The budget for the Strategic Partner Grant Scheme for 2024/25 will be £277,885 subject to budget approval. Due to the withdrawal of Syston & District Volunteer Centre from the application process, the £9537 amount has now been allocated to Living Without Abuse.

Risk Management

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
Grants do not deliver the objectives of the Grants scheme	Unlikely (2)	Minor (1)	Very Low (2)	The grants have been assessed against the scheme's criteria and will be linked to the provision of appropriate monitoring information.
That Strategic Partner Organisations cannot demonstrate sustainability	Unlikely (2)	Significant (2)	Low (4)	That the financial profile of the organisations is reviewed at application and after the first year. Where there are concerns about sustainability further assurance is required before funds are released.

Equality and Diversity

There is a requirement in the grants criteria for each organisation that applies to either have their own Equal Opportunities Policy or provide a statement that the organisation will abide by the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. An Equalities Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 2.

Crime and Disorder

The grants criteria specifically cover crime and disorder with projects needing to outline how the proposed project reduces the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour and promotes stronger, cohesive, and balanced communities.

Sustainability

Many of the grants criteria are concerned with sustainability.

Key Decision: Yes

Background Papers: None

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Part B

Strategic Partner Scheme

1. The Council has allocated funding to support the delivery of services across the borough by key voluntary and community sector organisations and groups, that directly help to support the Council's Corporate Plan objectives. As Strategic Partners they receive an agreed level of funding based on a Service Level Agreement (SLA).
 - That grants will be awarded for two years and then reviewed to avoid running a rolling programme and allow for any changes in priorities. Year 2 funding will be subject to monitoring and evaluation of Year 1 delivery against Service Level Agreement (SLA.) and budget review.
 - The organisations complete the application form and will be assessed against the evaluation criteria. That the Council's corporate objectives will continue to serve as the overarching framework for the Strategic Partners priorities.
 - That Strategic Partners are expected to demonstrate:
 - Organisational robustness
 - That they are viable, sustainable organisations that have the resources/commitment to undertake these responsibilities
 - Produce a two-year Business or Development Plan, which includes systems for effective financial management and sustainability
 - That they can demonstrate that they do not directly duplicate services already delivered by other Strategic Partners
 - That they can deliver against a minimum of 5 of the Council's Strategic Objectives
2. As part of the 2022/23 and 2023/24 process a review of existing Strategic Partner outcomes against the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives was undertaken and it was established that all existing Strategic Partners, were still playing a key role in enhancing service delivery and were still relevant and appropriate as a Council Strategic Partner. (Appendix 1)
3. All current Strategic Partners were notified of the application process and funding levels. A Strategic Partner Grant Application Form, along with guidance notes were sent out with an accompanying letter highlighting the maximum amounts that would be awarded during 2024/25 and 2025/26 to each organisation.
4. Syston and District Volunteer Centre have been working with officers to review delivery against their SLA objectives and due to pressures on their Transport

Service and challenges against meeting these objectives, they confirmed that they would withdraw from the Strategic Partners Scheme. They will remain a Strategic Partner with the Council will end at the end of March 2024.

5. As a result of Syston and District Volunteer Centre withdrawing from the process the Grants Panel recommend that the underspend for this year be awarded to Living Without Abuse to help with their current waiting times for victim support.
6. The Grants Panel recognised the resilience of the Strategic Partners as they have rebuilt their services over the last two years to pre-pandemic levels and beyond. Meeting the new challenges and demands of the individuals and communities they support.

Strategic Partner Grant Scheme Application Process

7. The application process required the following:
 - That each organisation has a maximum amount that can be awarded
 - That the award is for two years, subject to evaluation after year one
 - That each organisation must meet at least five of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives
 - That the organisation has a robust two-year business plan
 - That the organisation delivers its services directly into Charnwood
8. All applications are assessed against two measures of need: how the project/service delivers the Council's aims and objectives in meeting identified community needs and the organisational need of the Council's grant funding to enable the project to succeed. Both measures seek to demonstrate the value for money to be obtained in providing grant funding. Twelve criteria are used to assess community need based on the aims and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and nine criteria are used for organisational assessment.
9. The twelve criteria used to assess community need are as follows:
 - Does the project promote stronger, cohesive and balanced communities (encouraging people from different backgrounds to get along together)?
 - Does the project promote well-supported volunteering opportunities?
 - Does the project promote health and well-being (in particular promoting healthy eating, physical activity, sexual health and drug and alcohol misuse)?
 - Does the project promote and support improved mental health and emotional wellbeing?
 - Does the project reduce the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour?
 - Does the project improve the quality of life of people living in priority neighbourhoods?

- Does the project improve the well-being of residents through acknowledging their diverse needs?
- Does the project enable children, young people and older people to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live?
- Does the project enable older people to live independent lives?
- Does the project promote access of local people to green spaces and the countryside?
- Does the project add value to Charnwood's commitment to reduce the impact of climate change?
- Does the project help promote local businesses and farming to prosper and develop vibrant towns and villages and support rural enterprise?

10. Nine criteria are for the Organisational Assessment. Organisations must demonstrate that their service/projects are prepared and managed well and will be encouraged to explore other funding sources where appropriate. This section has been modified from that used for the Community Development Grant Scheme to reflect what we would expect from Strategic Partners.

- That the organisation has identified a realistic total cost and timetable for the service/project? (Demonstrates that costs and timescales have been researched)
- Has provided evidence of a robust two-year business plan?
- Has demonstrated that the organisation has capacity to deliver the service/project effectively and within the agreed timescales.
- Has demonstrated that the service/project provides value for money?
- That the application has demonstrated that the service/project is not duplicated by another organisation?
 - Has joint working been considered
 - Has evidence shown how the work is different from others
- That the application provides strong evidence of how delivery of the service/project will be monitored
 - How outcomes will be monitored
 - What statistical information can be provided
 - How feedback will be collected by 'users'
 - Other evidence that can be provided
- That the balances and reserves demonstrate the stability of the organisation? (Demonstrates that it follows relevant guidance on maintaining general balances, and reserves that are earmarked reserves reflect its long-term strategy and has considered whether it can fund the activity from its balances.)
- What proportion of the cost of the service/project is the Council being asked to fund? (Demonstrates that the level of funding sought from the Council is justified.)
- Geographical location (No specific conditions or targets will be applied to grant awards but the assessment of need will take the geographical distribution of grants across the Borough into account)

11. Applications are assessed qualitatively against these criteria and rated high, medium or low. These ratings are converted to a score on the following basis

which rewards those applications which rate highly in meeting community need and provide a maximum possible score of 105.

Table 1 – Conversion of rankings into scores

Ranking	Community Need Score	Organisation Need Score
HIGH	5	5
MEDIUM	3	3
LOW	1	1
Maximum Score	60	45

Levels for funding

Score	Level of funding
Less than 35	Nil
35 –50	Some of grant applied for
More than 50+	Most or all of funding applied for

12. The Grants Panel received the applications and completed the Assessment Forms using the scoring method described above. In addition, all Strategic Partners were invited in to present their application to the Grants Panel, which gave the Grants Panel the opportunity to raise any additional questions they had / seek clarification on anything that was unclear.
13. One of the requirements for being considered for Strategic partners funding is that the organisation can demonstrate that they deliver against at least five of the Corporate Plan objectives.

Appendix 1 shows the Grants Panel’s assessment of delivery against the Council’s corporate objectives for each of the applicants.

Strategic Partner Grant Scheme Applications

14. Seven applications for funding were received and assessed. They have been assessed against the Strategic Partner Grant Scheme criteria and all seven have been recommended for support.

Grants Panel Recommendations

15. A summary of the applications and comments made by the Grants Panel are set out below:

Charnwood Citizens’ Advice Bureau – Score 80.6 - Recommendation to award £86,705 (£61,530 for CAB element and £25,175 for specialist money management and debt advice work) in 2024/25 (amount for 2025/26 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

16. Citizens Advice Charnwood offers free, confidential, independent and impartial advice to all Charnwood residents on their rights and responsibilities in law, regardless of their background or circumstances, to ensure they are not disadvantaged by a lack of knowledge or understanding. Through their work they aim to inform and influence policymakers to secure fairness and equity for all.
17. The main enquiry areas are benefits, debt, employment, housing, and relationships and family. The number of people coming in are for help with cost-of-living crisis issues and this is becoming a major part of their work.
18. They offer casework for debt, having the benefit of a specialist debt team. We also have the advantage of professional volunteers who offer their expertise for the benefit of Charnwood residents. Additionally, membership of Citizens Advice provides us with the opportunity to deliver complementary services such as the Energy Advice Programme and the existing Citizens Advice partnership telephone service (Adviceline).
19. They offer a local telephone advice service as our main access channel which operates on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 9.30am-3.00pm. Additionally, their national Adviceline operates 5 days a week 9.00am-5.00pm. For more complex cases and vulnerable clients, face to face appointments are available. They offer 20 appointment slots per week at our Loughborough office, 4 at the Shepshed office, and 2 at the Syston outreach (Syston & District Volunteer Centre). For debt advice, they have 6 available appointment slots.
20. Will enhance quality of life, especially those with long term health problems, by improving socio-economic conditions. Will combat poverty by maximising income.
21. There are approximately 3,512 service users, 41 volunteers and 8 members of staff.
22. CAB have calculated that the average cost per enquiry is £66 and the average benefit support secured is £590.
23. The organisation was invited to apply for £86,705 (61,530 for the Citizens Advice element and £25,175 ringfenced for their Specialist Money Management and Debt Advice (SMMDA) element).
24. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 80.6 and recommends that a grant of up to £86,705 is awarded for 2024/25. Funding for 2025/26 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval.
25. Panel comments on Application:
 - The organisation's application and presentation were strong and it was enlightening to hear from a volunteer of the service, about their journey in volunteering, the challenges they are facing and how rewarding it can be.

- The effort that the organisation is putting into supporting volunteers and responding to their needs is evident.
- The Panel recognise the importance of work undertaken by Charnwood CAB, and the good outcomes achieved through supporting residents in the Borough;
- The Panel recognise the extensive supported volunteer opportunities that are provided to enable the organisation to deliver services;
- The Panel notes the financial benefits gained by residents through benefit claims, appeals and write-off of debts and the positive impact this has on an individual's health, both physical and mental;
- The Panel recognise the increasing demand on the Debt Advice service due to the increase cost of living and pressures on low-income families.

Equality Action – Score 91.4 – Recommendation to award £20,454 in 2024/25 (amount for 2025/26 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

26. The organisation aims to promote equality and diversity, dignity and respect through inclusion, to eliminate discrimination, campaign for equality of opportunity and promote good relations between all persons in the Borough of Charnwood. They do this by providing confidential support and advice in person and over the phone, on a range of issues such as benefits, welfare, debt, utilities, employment, immigration, and family matters including adult social care, schooling matters and housing. They take a person-centred, holistic approach, supporting individuals through a wide range of issues, looking at their situation as a whole, far more than the presenting problem.
27. Most their beneficiaries come from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, but their services are inclusive, and they see many clients from the host community. They also support newly arriving communities, refugees and asylum seekers who have settled in our locality and work in partnership with community groups, faith groups and the Town of Sanctuary to ensure our services are accessible to all.
28. The key issues addressed are inequalities faced by their beneficiaries, this includes barriers to mainstream services because of lack of knowledge, confidence, language, and IT skills. They aim to help address these barriers by providing relevant support, bridging gaps in service, and helping raise awareness of what support is available.
29. This year they have been part of two projects Positive Minds tackling BAME community inequalities and barriers to physical and mental health and Vita Minds improving access to Psychological Therapies.
30. They work closely with a wide range of agencies across Charnwood including Charnwood Arts, John Storer Charnwood, Fearon Hall, The Bridge, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Department of Work and Pensions, and The Wellbeing Project, on joint projects and events.

31. They work to improve Community Cohesion by promoting equality/equity, diversity, and inclusion through Charnwood. They are a focal point and source of expertise on matters of equality and diversity for individuals, groups, communities, and organisations.
32. The organisation has supported over 500 service users, has 15 volunteers and 10 members of staff. Volunteer hours equate to £2080 a year.
33. The organisation was invited to apply for up to £20,454.
34. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 91.4 and recommends that a grant of up to £20,454 is awarded for 2024/25. Funding for 2025/26 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval.
35. Panel comments on Application:
- The organisation's presentation was strong, and they demonstrated evidence of need in the BAME communities;
 - The organisation reaches communities that other organisations may not and works with those organisations to help ensure the communities get access to these services.
 - The Panel recognises that the organisation continues to work towards engagement with other communities,
 - The Panel also recognised the work they have undertaken to ensure funding for targeted projects and their plans to generate additional income in the future.

Fearon Community Association – Score 90.2 – Recommendation to award £29,727 in 2024/25 (amount for 2025/26 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

36. Fearon Community Association (FCA) strives to be a vibrant and welcoming organisation that is financially viable to enable them to make a positive difference to the people of Loughborough, particularly those in the East of Loughborough. FCA works from and manages Fearon Hall.
37. Open 7 days a week Fearon Hall is a much-valued, flexible and well-resourced space for all members of our community to get together; a space for communities to hire for private events; for faith groups to meet and for community gatherings. They actively target groups to use our centre that meet identified need. These include health and wellbeing, alcohol and drug addiction support, education, training and physical activity, different faith groups for community worship, as well as being a hub for both statutory and voluntary organisations to deliver their services close to the communities they support.
38. We are well-resourced centre delivering our own community programme informed by a number of theoretical, and established practices including trauma

informed community development and the five ways of wellbeing (New Economics Foundation). This includes, connecting with people, being physically active, learning new skills, giving to others and being present, mindful.

39. The weekday Café in the Hall is the heartbeat of the Hall and a focal point for visitors providing a warm and friendly welcome and a safe space to meet and connect with others. They serve a range of delicious healthy home cooked affordable meals at their Good Grub Clubs.
40. They work closely with key partners and are a member of the NHS Charnwood Loneliness Delivery Group and the Charnwood Community Health and Wellbeing Partnership, which includes representatives from Health, Active Charnwood, the Falcon Centre, Patient Participation Groups, and the voluntary sector including Age UK and The Wellbeing Centre amongst others
41. They have set up a wide range of links with organisations and projects including Incredible Edible, Transition Loughborough and have set up an open access project to art activities,
42. They offer a range of versatile room hire for community groups, meetings, business break-out, private hire, special projects, theatre and performance based events. The rooms are a variety of sizes from the larger Main Hall and Ballroom, medium sized Pitts Room and Paget Room and the smaller Chatterbox, DJ Lounge and Preston Room. They also hire out our kitchen for special cooking/baking activities.
43. The organisation has approximately 7955 service users and visitors, 19 volunteers and 7 members of staff. Volunteer hours equate to £48,000 a year.
44. The organisation were invited to apply for up to £29,727.
45. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 89.8 and recommends that a grant of £29,727 is awarded for 2024/25. Funding for 2025/26 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval.
46. Panel comments on Application:
 - The organisation presented many examples of how they support a wide range of community members from the local area
 - The Panel noted the new groups using the hall, and the wide and inclusive range of people being supported
 - The Panel recognises that the organisation is a key community facility in a Priority Neighbourhood;
 - There are a wide range of activities and services meeting the needs within their locality, and the facilities are well used and provide access to a local venue helping to reduce barriers and links closely to the Council's priorities

- The panel recognises that there is a strong commitment and passion to help the most vulnerable.
- The ethos of the Association has the community at the heart of everything they do, and this is strongly balanced with the need to generate income.

Gorse Covert Community Association – Score 77.8 - Recommendation to award £19,922 in 2024/25 (amount for 2025/26 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

47. Gorse Covert Community Centre is the only purpose-built community facility serving Loughborough West. Based in the district centre with a major supermarket, Post Office and other retailers on our doorstep. They are open 8.30am-9pm Monday to Friday and Saturday 8am-1pm and have a commercial coffee bar open 9.30am-1.30pm enabling local people to “drop in”.

48. They have a dedicated and approachable staff team that engage with all sectors of their user groups both community and business. People feel comfortable in the centre and know they are welcome. They cater for a wide range of people including: families and children; elderly people; people with physical and mental health issues.

Their offer is mainly via third party providers. Whilst the majority of sessions are universal a number are targeted at specific groups e.g. Breathe Easy targets people with respiratory issues, Mosaic supports adults with physical and learning difficulties, and RVS runs a Memory Café. Health and Wellbeing issues are supported by the provision of many themed support groups such as Heart Rehab, Parkinson’s UK, and Slimming World.

49. Their offer is similar, but different to other community venues. The facilities are different, as is the demography of the local area which is the main driver for what they can offer. There is a small staff team focussed on making the centre relevant and accessible to the local community through third party providers. They have with the support of Shire Grants and Awards for All funding been able to create an Activities Coordinator role specifically to organise and deliver activities as Gorse Covert Community Association. Their main source of income has been through room-hire.

50. They have been supporting and working with a number of groups from the area Molly’s Gift to deliver our youth club session on Wednesday evenings, local residents groups including Dishley Residents Association, Altogether Place, 3 Closes and Gorse Covert Walking for Health Group.

51. Historically their income has been generated through the hiring of rooms and sales through their coffee bar with only a small amount from grant funding. They have experienced increased demand for room hire in recent months and although not at capacity cannot always accommodate new requests. Their coffee bar has also seen an increase in demand with a marked increase in

turnover. Over the last year they have increased our grant funding to include a third Shire Grant, The Co-op Local Community Fund, Awards for All and the UK shared Prosperity Fund and in the future – they intend to apply for Big Lottery funding to enable the development of our youth offer and the coffee bar as a social hub.

52. There are approximately 4728 service-users, 13 members of staff and 13 volunteers, including 5 trustees. Volunteer hours equate to £8,700 a year.

53. The organisation were invited to apply for up to £19,922.

54. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 77.8 and recommends that a grant of £19,922 is awarded for 2024/25. Funding for 2025/26 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval.

55. Panel comments on Application:

- The Panel feel that it is positive that the organisation is now working with new groups, and are looking to expand into possible youth engagement provision, using an area of the building that is being renovated to create a self-contained area;
- The community centre building is an outstanding facility for the community, and the Panel look forward to seeing more user groups attending.
- The Panel feel that there is further work to be done with the organisation to continue to strengthen their Business Plan and funding strategy.

John Storer Charnwood – Score 93.5 – Recommendation to award £84,490 in 2024/25 (amount for 2025/26 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

56. John Storer House is a large, vibrant well-utilised community centre, usually supported by over 200 volunteers, with JSH open to the public daily from 8am-10pm Monday to Thursday, Fridays 8am-5pm and Saturdays from 9am-2pm. It is also open on Friday evenings, Saturday afternoons and evenings and Sundays for several Faith group gatherings, private events and room hire.

57. A number of groups meet daily, weekly or monthly. JSH has a variety of rooms and facilities available for meetings, training, seminars and conferences and continues to be a very popular venue. The Café @ JSH a bright, pleasant and accessible space provides daily meals and refreshments with good quality, freshly cooked food and some locally sourced ingredients at affordable prices. JSH is also used for service delivery by a number of statutory agencies who benefit from the community location and anonymity afforded to their clients.

58. JSH is also a Well-being Centre for all and connecting people is at its heart. It is a place where people can put the world to rights, become friends, support

each other, find support, share an interest and give purpose to their lives. From JSH, SVC and at venues around the Borough JSC staff and volunteers facilitate groups, activities, lunch clubs, forums, room hire, Your Store and provide community transport.

59. JSC manages the Community Transport Service which comprises a dial-a-ride service and a fully accessible bus service which take disabled, frail and older people to a variety of activities and places in Charnwood, including JSH, to provide many well-being benefits.
60. Your Store social supermarket meets the needs of many low income households feeling the pinch of the cost of living crisis. Individuals and families have, in many cases, used the shop for a short period while they sort out their financial situation with others needing much longer support as their situations are more complex. They also support two pop-up shops, one in Mountsorrel and one in Shelthorpe.
61. Groups and individuals meet socially in the Café @ JSH as it offers a community venue where people do not feel rushed and are able to socialise in a warm and friendly environment which is accessible to everyone. Over 1,000 people attend JSC activities per month. Many volunteers run groups each day and/or evening on a self-help basis to support people and enable optimum benefits. Paid staff also provide services tailored to individual needs including indoors at JSH, as well as outdoors at the Allotment.
62. JSH house a large number of volunteers that support the running of the café, transport services, wellbeing activities, reception, Therapeutic allotment and much more. This allows the centre to offer more to the local community and help to facilitate many grassroots VCS groups, providing good value room hire, support and advice for their development journey.
63. They have established themselves as a significant organisation within the local third sector, facilitating and hosting a programme of affordable and relevant training for all VCS groups. In addition, they have an interactive news, support and information VCS page within their website
64. JSH has links with a wide network of partnerships including, Town of Sanctuary, Charnwood Food Poverty Group, Loughborough Rotary and hosts many events including, Feast of Faiths, Loughborough In Bloom and Charnwood Community Heroes.
65. The organisation has approximately 1000 service users per week 170 volunteers and 26 members of staff. Volunteer hours equate to £200,526 a year (includes Shepshed Volunteer Centre).
66. The organisation was invited to apply for up to £84,490.
67. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 93.5 and recommends that a grant of £84,490 is awarded for 2024/25. Funding for 2025/26 will be

confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval.

68. Panel comments on Application:

- The Panel feel that this is a strong application, and is high scoring against the criteria of the scheme;
- The Panel recognise the passion, energy and commitment given by the organisation's leaders and trustees;
- The Panel feel that the organisation offers varied volunteering opportunities, and supports and develops volunteers including project work
- The Panel recognises that this is a key community-based provision and the diversity of who benefits both through direct provision and from those that deliver from the venue
- There is evidence of strong partnership working, meeting a number of CBC priorities

Shepshed Volunteer Centre – Score 76.2 – Recommendation to award £9,537 in 2024/25 (amount for 2025/26 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

69. Shepshed Volunteer Centre (SVC) has been established for over 40 years, initially as an independent organisation. In 2007 it merged with John Storer Charnwood (JSC). The current structure facilitates cost savings and efficiencies which ensure effective use of public funding, including donations and from local authorities, whilst maintaining a local community hub for Shepshed and its surrounding villages.

70. The organisation provides services for vulnerable members of the community of Shepshed and the surrounding Charnwood area, supporting them to maintain independent lives in their own homes. It promotes volunteering and collaboration with other voluntary and statutory providers in the town. The centre also actively promotes and organises town events such as Shepshed Open Gardens and the Scaresheep Festival.

71. The office is open daily from 9am – 12pm for information, signposting and services and remains at the heart of the community. Currently trialling extended hours on Thursdays until 3pm

72. The main services provided by their volunteers are:

- A social car scheme. In 2022/23 the scheme provided 847 journeys covering 8,805 miles for health appointments, shopping, etc;
- A gardening scheme which helped to maintain 9 gardens which would otherwise have become a major burden;
- Supporting 5 isolated individuals, providing 305 hours of support through the year. Where possible the scheme is helping them to become more involved with their local community
- A team of 4 gardeners have spent 376 hours in 2022-23 working on the vegetable garden. Produce grown was made available to purchase, which raised funds for SVC. Produce was donated to the Shepshed

Foodbank and Your Store at John Storer House. We also had groups visiting from local care homes for well-being gardening activities.

- The activity shed has a Craft and Chat group that runs every week in which we have 5 regular attendees. They are looking to expand the use of the shed, opening it up to other interest groups

73. The organisation has approximately 157 service users per week, 36 volunteers, and 2 part-time staff.

74. The organisation were invited to apply for up to £9,573.

75. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 76.2 and recommends that a grant of £9,537 is awarded for 2024/25. Funding for 2025/26 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval.

76. Panel comments on Application:

- The Panel feel that the quality of the application was high
- The Panel are impressed with various community initiatives that the organisation has introduced.
- The Panel recognises that the organisation is pro-active in its approach to volunteering
- The organisation provides a local infrastructure support for Shepshed
- Strong links and support from John Storer Charnwood

Living Without Abuse – Score 87.2 – Recommendation to award £17,513 in 2024/25 (amount for 2025/26 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval) The Grants Panel recommend that the underspend for this year 2024/25, of £9537, be awarded to Living Without Abuse to help with their current waiting times for victim support. Making a total award of £27,050.

77. Living Without Abuse exists to relieve the distress and suffering felt by anyone who has experienced any form of domestic abuse or sexual violence. LWA provide 1-2-1 Outreach and group support across Leicester City, Leicestershire, and Rutland. They also provide IDVA support, sexual violence services including ISVA, and they specialise in children and young people's services.

78. In Charnwood they have a long history of providing one-to-one Outreach Services to male and female survivors, which offer information, advice and support on all issues relating to domestic abuse including legal options, housing, safety planning, health and wellbeing, and issues relating to children and young people.

79. They manage a Housing Link Worker, co-located in CBC's housing department, who provides information, advice and support around housing issues, such as entering refuge, making homeless and housing applications, applying for Occupation and other Civil Orders, and accessing additional security measure to secure their homes.

80. They also provide a counselling service to service users once the domestic abuse issues become historic, and a Befriending Service for clients on waiting lists or who need some additional emotional support. These are volunteer lead services.

They run four support programmes, the Freedom Programme, the Unbroken programme, Unbreakable, and Lightbulb, a two-day programme for families involved in Child Protection Proceedings. The programmes look at the abuse they have experienced, why it happened, the characteristics of a perpetrator, early warning signs, the effects on children and coping mechanisms. The aim is to build self-esteem and confidence, as well as to reduce isolation. Clients feedback that these groups were invaluable to their recovery.

81. LWA also provide a counselling service to service users once the domestic abuse issues become historic and a Befriending Service for clients on waiting lists or need who need some additional emotional support. These are volunteer lead services. In addition, they support partner organisations through the provision of face-to-face and online training, and they have recently developed e-learning packages.

82. The organisation has approximately 2781 adult service users and 191 children, 35 volunteers, and 53 members of staff. Volunteer hours equate to £3250 a year.

83. The organisation were invited to apply for up to £17,513.

84. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 87.2 and recommends that a grant of £17,513 is awarded for 2024/25. Funding for 2025/26 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval.

The Grants Panel recommend that the underspend for this year 2024/25, of £9537, be awarded to Living Without Abuse to help with their current waiting times for victim support. Making a total award of £27,050

85. Panel comments on Application:

- The Panel feel that the organisation are well placed to continue delivering, despite changes in the structure and where LWA sits with its partners;
- The Panel recognise the importance of this organisation and the work they do with vulnerable individuals;

- The organisation has robust evidence of delivery, and their ability to demonstrate outcomes is a strength;
- The Panel recognise there are insufficient funds to meet demands, and in order to keep waiting times down, the organisation needs to ensure that funding is secure. As a result, the panel has recommended the underspend for year 1 is awarded to LWA to help reduce waiting times.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Delivery Against Corporate Objectives

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

APPENDIX 1

Delivery Against Corporate Objectives

	Healthier Communities									Caring For the Environment	Thriving Economy	
	Promotes Stronger Cohesive & Balances Communities	Promotes well supported Volunteering opportunities	Promotes health & wellbeing (including reduced substance misuse)	Promotes and supports improved mental health and emotional wellbeing	Reduces the impact of crime and ASB	Improves the quality of life for people in our Priority Neighbourhoods	Improves wellbeing of residents through acknowledging their diverse needs	Enables children, young people & older people to make a positive contribution	Enables older people to live independent lives	Promotes access to green spaces and countryside	Adds value to Charnwood's commitment to reduce impact of climate change	Helps local businesses to prosper, develops vibrant towns & social enterprise
Corporate												
Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
Equality Action	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Fearon Hall	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gorse Covert Community Association	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
John Storer Charnwood	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Shepshed Volunteer Centre	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Living Without Abuse	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			

Charnwood Borough Council

**Equality Impact Assessment
'Knowing the needs of your customers and employees'**

■ **Background**

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

■ **Legislation- Equality Duty**

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

For the following protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex (Gender)
9. Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

1. Direct Discrimination
2. Indirect Discrimination
3. Harassment
4. Victimisation
5. Discrimination by association
6. Discrimination by perception
7. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
8. Discrimination arising from disability
9. Failing to make reasonable adjustments

■ **Step 1 – Introductory information**

Title of the policy	Strategic Partner Grants
Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	Verity Graham
Date EIA started	November 2023
Date EIA completed	December 2023

■ **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:**

Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives)
<p>Charnwood Borough Council recognises the value and contribution of individuals, voluntary sector organisations and other community-led projects and the benefits they provide to the residents of Charnwood.</p> <p>Through our Charnwood grant schemes we provide a range of grants including Strategic Partner grants to help organisations, groups and individuals access the funding support they need.</p> <p>Strategic Partners are those organisations are those organisations who contribute significantly to delivering key services that meet the Council’s corporate objectives.</p> <p>It is the Councils aim to ensure the grants process is inclusive of all community groups and funding supports projects targeting individuals across a range of protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.</p>
What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?
<p>It is the Councils aim to ensure that the grants process is inclusive of all community groups and funding supports projects targeting individuals/ residents across a range of protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Analysis is therefore undertaken to ensure that the grant are distributed in a reasonable and proportionate manner.</p>
Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?
<p>Evaluation takes place on successful Strategic Partner applications to analyse whether there any gaps with regards to the protected characteristics in order to ensure the grants process is fair and equal to all. In particular analysis is undertaken to determine any barriers which may prevent specific community groups/ communities of interest accessing provision.</p>

Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps

List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.

Data/information such as:

- Consultation
- Previous Equality Impact Assessments
- Demographic information
- Anecdotal and other evidence

- Analysis of Strategic Partner applications and monitoring and evaluation data and information

What does this information / data tell you about diverse groups? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)

The information tells us that the voluntary sector organisations supported provide a range of services that acknowledge individuals from protected characteristics.

It is acknowledged that some of the voluntary sector organisations support individuals with multiple characteristics and those projects supporting the wider community have a wide range of beneficiaries.

Where possible equalities information is provided as part of the monitoring data from voluntary sector organisations that are awarded a grant by the Council. There are a number of organisations that specifically cover age, disability, race, religion, sex.

Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?

In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.

However, at this stage of analysis it is felt the information currently held is sufficient to analysis trends and determine any barriers or negative impacts.

Step 5 – Assessing the impact

In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

Comments

Age	There is a reasonable proportion of grant funding awarded to projects relating to Age. Of the grants awarded, there is a reasonable proportionate spread between projects for older and younger people. The process has therefore created a positive impact in relation to the protected characteristic of Age.
Disability (Physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)	There is a reasonable proportion of grant funding awarded to projects relating to disability. In addition it is acknowledged that some of the projects funded are cross- cutting and support individuals with multiple characteristics. Therefore, creating further positive impacts for people with disabilities. The process has therefore created a positive impact overall in relation to the protected characteristic of Disability.
Gender Reassignment (Transgender)	Neutral Impact - No projects have been specifically funded to support the protected characteristic of Gender Reassignment. In addition it is acknowledged that some of the projects funded are cross- cutting and support individuals with multiple characteristics.
Race	There is a reasonably large amount of grant funding awarded to projects relating to Race. In additional it is acknowledged that some of the projects funded are cross- cutting and support individuals with multiple characteristics. The process has therefore created a positive impact overall in relation to the protected characteristic of Race.
Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)	<p>Whilst Charnwood Grants do not specifically support religious groups/ activities, it does provide funding to faith groups who are delivering activities for the wider community.</p> <p>The impact is therefore neutral with regards to the protected characteristic of religion or belief with the acknowledged that wider benefits are created for the wider community.</p>
Sex (Gender)	There is some grant funding awarded to projects relating to Gender. In addition it is acknowledged that some of the projects funded are cross- cutting and support individuals with multiple characteristics. The process has therefore created a positive impact in relation to the protected characteristic of Gender.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral Impact - No projects have been specifically funded to support the protected characteristic of Sexual Orientation. In addition it is acknowledged that some of the projects funded are cross - cutting and support individuals with multiple characteristics.
Other protected groups (Pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership)	There is some grant funding awarded to projects relating to Pregnancy & Maternity. In addition it is acknowledged that

	some of the projects funded are cross-cutting and support individuals with multiple characteristics. The process has therefore created a positive impact in relation to the protected characteristic of Pregnancy & Maternity.
Other socially excluded groups (carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, asylum seeker and refugee communities etc.)	The grants which focus on the wider community have a wide range of benefits, particularly for residents from priority neighbourhoods or areas of deprivation.

Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination. Please note: a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately. b) Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.
No negative impacts or potential barriers have been identified. However it is acknowledged that specific marketing / promotion for the protected characteristics of Gender Reassignment and Sexual Orientation may be required.
Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).
It is the opinion that the Strategic Partner Grants comply with Charnwood Borough Council's equality and diversity responsibilities. It will further promote equal opportunities and achieve positive outcomes.

■ Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review

Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?
Monitoring will continue on a quarterly and annual basis to assess the grant applications that are successful. Continuous monitoring and analysis will aim to identify gaps which may potentially highlight barriers or negative impacts towards specific community groups/ communities of interest. Further equalities monitoring will be explored for those projects which have applied and are deemed unsuccessful, for the further identification of issues or potential barriers.
How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.
Where barriers/ negative impacts are identified, the mitigating action and progress against this will be included within the relevant service plan.

■ Step 7- Action Plan

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan:

The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan

Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
001	Continue to monitor the Grants on a quarterly and annual basis to assess the grant applications that are both successful and unsuccessful.	V Graham	March 2024

Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
Employees	✓	This EIA will be published on the Council's website.
Service users	✓	
Partners and stakeholders	✓	
Others	✓	
To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?	✓	

Please delete as appropriate

I agree with this assessment / action plan

If disagree, state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales: N/A

Signed Peter Oliver



Date: 15.12.2023

Please send completed & signed assessment to Vicky Brackenbury for publishing.