

LEADER DECISION – 13TH JANUARY 2022

Report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services Lead Member: Cllr Leigh Harper-Davies

Part A

ITEM CHARNWOOD GRANTS STRATEGIC PARTNERS 2022/23 – 2023/24

Purpose of Report

To put forward proposals for the Strategic Partner Grant Scheme funding for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Recommendations

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

Organisation	Amount Awarded 2022/23 (Year 1)	Provisional Amount 2023/24 (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	£17,513	£17,513
Syston Volunteer Centre	see recommendation 2 below	see recommendation 2 below

2. That a Strategic Partner Grant of £9,537 for 2022/23 provisional amount be awarded in principle to Syston Volunteer Centre, subject to them continuing to work with the Council and receipt of evidence demonstrating that they have revisited their business plan and are moving towards further community engagement/ volunteering activities, by the end of March 2022 and that the Head of Neighbourhood Services be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Lead Member, to determine the most appropriate way forward, including the reallocation of funding to other Strategic Partners if Syston Volunteer Centre are not able to meet those conditions.

3. That the Head of Neighbourhood Services be given delegated authority to finalise the terms and conditions of the Strategic Partner Grants awarded and Service Level Agreements
4. That it be noted that Clockwise Credit Union did not apply for a Strategic Partner Grant for 2022/23 – 2023/24 and that the amounts set out in recommendations 1 and 2 include the redistribution of the £7,883 that Clockwise Credit Union were invited to apply for between the remaining Strategic Partners.

Reasons

1. To provide appropriate levels of financial support to those organisations that have submitted applications and been assessed as meeting the criteria for the Strategic Partner Grant Scheme.
2. To ensure that the organisation is developing and progressing before any funding is awarded.
3. 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.
4. To clarify the way in which the funding previously provided to Clockwise Credit Union will be used.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

Strategic Partner Grants were last approved by Cabinet in January 2020 (Min. 79) for a period of two years. At that time, nine Strategic Partners were awarded a Strategic Partner Grant. As the current Service Level Agreements will be coming to an end in March 2022, Strategic Partners have again been invited to apply for funding for a further two-year period (2022/23 and 2023/24). 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 2024. All Strategic Partners, with the exception of Clockwise Credit Union who were unable to meet the application deadline and decided not to reapply to be a Strategic Partner going forward, submitted applications. Clockwise Credit Union's Strategic Partnership with the Council will end at the end of March 2022; however, they will continue to deliver their services across the borough as part of their overarching service across the County.

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 2022/23 from 1st April 2022.

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 Neighbourhoods and Partnerships 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 2023/24.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

Strategic Partner Grant Scheme Funding

It has been proposed as part of the 2022/23 budget that the Strategic Partner Grant amounts will be reduced from what was awarded in 2021/22, and Strategic Partners were therefore invited to apply for up to 95% of the amount they received in 2021/22. The maximum amount that each Strategic Partner could apply for is set out in Appendix 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 2023/24 budget setting process.

The cost for the Strategic Partner Grant Scheme for 2022/23 will be £277,885, this is within the budget of £280,700. However due to the withdrawal of Clockwise Credit Union from the application process, the total amount has now been allocated across the remaining 8 Strategic Partners.

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

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Risk Management Actions Planned
				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 3.

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. Officers undertook a full review in 2017 of the current Strategic Partner Grant Scheme, looking at its financial support to community and voluntary organisations. The review included information taken from a consultation with all current Strategic Partners and an analysis of delivery against the corporate objectives.
2. The findings showed that for many years the Council has allocated funding to support the delivery of services across the borough by key voluntary and community sector organisations and groups. The majority of these organisations became Strategic Partners after delivering a particular piece of work or service on the Council's behalf on an ongoing basis. As a Strategic Partner they have received an agreed level of funding based on a Service Level Agreement (SLA).
3. Following the consultation and review it was agreed:
 - 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.)
 - That all organisations wishing to access the Strategic Partner Grant Scheme will need to 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
4. As part of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 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 2).

5. 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 2022/23 and 2023/24 to each organisation.
6. Clockwise Credit Union informed the Grants Panel, that due to some significant organisational changes they were unable to meet the application deadline and withdrew from the Strategic Partner Grants programme. They confirmed that they would continue to deliver in Charnwood and work with the Council to provide their services across the borough. Clockwise Credit Union will remain a Strategic Partner with the Council will end at the end of March 2022.
7. As a result of Clockwise Credit Union withdrawing from the process the Grants Panel recognised the impact of the proposed reduction in funding and agreed that that the funding for Clockwise Credit Union be reallocated across the remaining Strategic Partners.
8. The Grants Panel recognised the resilience of the Strategic Partners during the last 18 months and the significant contribution they have made in supporting Charnwood Community Action and their wider communities and their continuing work to support the ongoing recovery across Charnwood.
9. Appendix 1 provides detail of the current Strategic Partners and proposed grant amounts for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Strategic Partner Grant Scheme Application Process

10. 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
11. 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.

12. 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?

13. 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)

14. 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 grant for
More than 50+	Most or all of funding applied for

15. 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.

16. 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 2 shows the Grants Panel's assessment of delivery against the Council's corporate objectives for each of the applicants.

Strategic Partner Grant Scheme Applications

17. Nine applications for funding were invited, and eight applications were received and assessed. They have been assessed against the Strategic Partner Grant Scheme criteria and all eight have been recommended for support, with Syston and District Volunteer Centre being recommended for support subject to meeting specific conditions of the Panel, as detailed below.

Grants Panel Recommendations

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

Charnwood Citizens' Advice Bureau – Score 72.6 - Recommendation to award £86,705 (£61,530 for CAB element and £25,175 for specialist money management and debt advice work) in 2022/23 (amount for 2023/24 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

19. 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.

20. The main enquiry areas are benefits, debt, employment, housing, and relationships and family. They offer casework for debt, having the benefit of a specialist debt team. They also have the advantage of professional volunteers who offer their expertise for the benefit of Charnwood residents. Additionally, membership of Citizens Advice provides them with the opportunity to deliver complementary services such as Help to Claim, the Energy Advice Programme and the existing Citizens Advice partnership telephone service (Adviceline).

21. Since the outbreak of the pandemic they have changed their main access channel to telephone, and have a local enquiry line operating 2.5 days a week. This is in addition to Adviceline which operates 5 days a week 9am-5pm. Furthermore, they reopened for appointments as soon as government guidance allowed, to assist those whose enquiry required face to face intervention. In late August they reopened their drop-in service 1 day a week for urgent enquiries that cannot be resolved by telephone.

22. It has become apparent that with ongoing Covid-19 concerns among both their clients and volunteers their local enquiry must continue to be their primary access channel. Inevitably, their capacity to return to full drop-in has been compromised, and they continue to monitor their operational model.

23. To increase drop-in opening hours while maintaining local telephone advice will require additional volunteers, and to this end they have an ongoing recruitment drive.

24. Will enhance quality of life, especially those with long term health problems, by improving socio-economic conditions. Will combat poverty by maximising income.
25. There are approximately 4,000 service users, 40 volunteers and 9 members of staff.
26. They continue to deliver outreach sessions at Syston Volunteer Centre and in identified Priority Neighbourhoods.
27. The organisation were invited to apply for £84,481 (£59,307 for the Citizens Advice element and £25,175 ringfenced for their Specialist Money Management and Debt Advice (SMMDA) element).
28. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 72.6 and recommends that a grant of up to £86,705 is awarded for 2022/23. Funding for 2023/24 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1, and will be subject to budget approval.
29. Panel comments on Application:
- The organisation's application and presentation was strong and it was enlightening to hear from a volunteer of the service, about their journey in volunteering throughout the pandemic.
 - The effort that the organisation is putting into supporting volunteers and responding to their needs is evident.
 - The Panel feel that the organisation is ahead of other Citizens Advice organisations, in the way that they have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - 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 70 – Recommendation to award £20,454 in 2022/23 (amount for 2023/24 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

30. 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.

31. They are currently delivering casework for Leicestershire County Council and the Community Justice Fund, and are working with Charnwood Borough Council in supporting Syrian families with immigration advice and indefinite leave to remain in the UK.
32. They aim to tackle the inequalities and barriers Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities face around physical and mental health. The project meets these aims by educating groups on physical and mental health matters, improving the skills of individuals, and offering social support.
33. This year they have been part of two local NHS consultations with the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group, as well as working with CBC during Covid-19 with reaching the BAME communities, gathering feedback and creating localised targeted vaccine videos.
34. 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. They have spent the Covid-19 period strengthening links with local BAME groups, for example Shree Ram Krishna Centre, Loughborough Gurdwara and Black Excellence offering support, advice, and guidance throughout what has been a difficult year.
35. Those from BAME backgrounds were disproportionately affected by the pandemic which in turn heightened the need for their services. The casework and project support were vital to their beneficiaries during this time; enabling them to understand what was happening, navigating the guidelines and supporting those who were isolating. The pandemic has heightened this need and highlighted inequalities to access when it comes to education. They worked throughout the pandemic to support schools help families with laptops donated by the community, and they aim to continue tackling the Digital Divide through access and training.
36. The organisation has over 250 regular service users, 7 volunteers and 12 members of staff.
37. The organisation were invited to apply for up to £19,929.
38. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 70 and recommends that a grant of up to £20,454 is awarded for 2022/23. Funding for 2023/24 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1, and will be subject to budget approval.

39. 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. For example, Living Without Abuse need help to promote their support services within certain communities
- The Panel recognises that the organisation continues to work towards engagement with other communities, including beginning to work towards equality for LGBT 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 including training.

Fearon Community Association – Score 89.8 – Recommendation to award £29,727 in 2022/23 (amount for 2023/24 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

40. 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 Lemyngton and Hastings Wards. FCA works from and manages Fearon Hall. Their work covers three key areas: People, Place, and Space.
41. There is no other community Centre on the East side of Loughborough, where Fearon Hall is located, that has the flexible space to offer such a broad variety of opportunities to the community. Many of their services are unique to the needs of the Lemyngton and Hastings wards. There are other community centres in the Borough that deliver services such as community lunches, exercise and keep fit, mental health support groups, parent and toddler play opportunities and a space for community groups to come together. However, none are as integrated or accessible to their target users as Fearon Hall.
42. In 2020 they were successful in securing funding from the National Lottery for a period of 5 years. The purpose of this is to introduce the human resources needed to take the Association to the next level by developing and building on opportunities for income generation. The grant pays for two full-time positions; an Activities and Bookings Manager, which is also the assistant Centre Manager role, and a Café Manager. These roles are to support the only current full-time member of management staff, the Centre Manager. The roles will build capacity, ensure organisational resilience and strengthen their financial stability.
43. During the pandemic they could offer large rooms to ensure they were able to keep their delegates safe and socially distanced. They forged links with the Headteacher of Rendell Primary School, providing space for face-to-face parents' evenings during Covid. They also now provide cooking sessions for

families, and have run three cooking courses so far, in partnership with the Cobden and Rendell Primary schools.

44. Room hire has decreased since Covid, which has had a detrimental effect on their income. At the same time, the hall's electricity bill has increased by almost double. They need to target the people who use the building in order to increase room hire again, and work on their business model including opening hours/days of their café, balancing the benefit and need against their ability to deliver.
45. They found that during the pandemic, their volunteer levels increased, as people were desperate to come back to them to volunteer, needing a structure and a purpose. They have therefore increased their support for volunteers and are mindful of making sure it's a worthwhile experience for them. Fearon Hall is a much-needed support in a community where people don't always have access to online services, and may not even have a telephone.
46. The organisation has approximately 3,000 service users, 12 volunteers and 7 members of staff.
47. The organisation were invited to apply for up to £28,964.
48. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 89.8 and recommends that a grant of £29,727 is awarded for 2022/23. Funding for 2023/24 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1, and will be subject to budget approval.
49. 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 people supported throughout the pandemic including befriending and advice
 - 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
 - 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 71 - Recommendation to award £19,922 in 2022/23 (amount for 2023/24 to be confirmed subject to budget approval)

50. 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 9am-9pm Monday to Friday with a commercial coffee bar open 9.30am-1.30pm enabling local people to “drop in”. 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.

51. 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, Kids club supports families with primary school age children and SMART Creative & Performance Art is an inclusive youth provision for 4-16 year olds. Health and Wellbeing issues are supported by the provision of many themed support groups such as Heart Rehab, Parkinson’s UK, and Slimming World.
52. Their income generation has over the last 5 years or so been mainly through room hire with the Strategic Partner Grant as the only grant funding. Through 2020 they managed to secure grant funding from Leicestershire County Council, the National Lottery and Business Rates grants to ensure their survival. They are also received a grant through Charnwood’s Covid-19 Recovery Grant scheme. Their main source of income has been through room-hire.
53. During the Covid pandemic the Centre had to close the doors to staff and groups, and became involved with food deliveries to isolated and vulnerable residents in the community. The Centre provided free masks for people, and became a Covid testing centre. During the pandemic, levels of social isolation in the community became more apparent. There was a homeless man in the car park outside of the Centre, and there became more issues with ASB with young people, due to a lack of youth engagement in the area. Going forward the new facility at the side of the building could be used as a provision in the evenings for youth engagement work, which is something they are keen to look into.
54. Moving on from the pandemic, they are looking to develop new staff and volunteers. A number of new groups have started, and they are looking to engage with further groups. They would like to continue partnership working, in the local area, with 3-close Tenants, Altogether Place, Ashby Road Community Association, and the Dishley Residents Group. They have established a casual group on a Tuesday for older members of the community, that has been successful and they would like to keep going.
55. They would like to bid for a member of staff to run activities on a part-time basis, freeing up time for the Centre Manager. The old playgroup room is now being renovated, along with an ambient toilet. It will be a totally self-contained facility, which can be used without the rest of the building being opened up.

56. After lockdown they lost a major booking, which has been a concern regarding the loss of income. They are gaining new customers, but replacing the income generated from those that have left will likely take some time. They will therefore be focussing on improving their offer to local businesses and going for core funding grants that enable them to deliver relevant services to their community.

57. There are approximately 3,154 service-users, 8 members of staff and 6 volunteers, including 5 trustees.

58. The organisation were invited to apply for up to £19,410.

59. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 71 and recommends that a grant of £19,922 is awarded for 2022/23. Funding for 2023/24 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1, and will be subject to budget approval.

60. 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 Panel acknowledge the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on numbers of volunteers, and recommend that the organisation approaches John Storer Charnwood and Fearon Hall for support;
- The community centre building is an outstanding facility for the community, and the Panel would like to support the organisation moving forward;
- The Panel feel that there is further work to be done with the organisation to strengthen their Business Plan and funding strategy.

John Storer Charnwood – Score 101.5 – Recommendation to award £84,490 in 2022/23 (amount for 2023/24 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

61. 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.

62. 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.

63. 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, befriending and provide community transport.
64. 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.
65. Just prior to the government lockdown, John Storer Charnwood was approached to act as the lead VCS organisation to host and participate in supporting the residents of Charnwood with information, guidance and help via a centralised hub based at John Storer House. This became Charnwood Community Action, a partnership between Charnwood Borough Council, Fearon Community Association, Gorse Covert, The Bridge East Midlands and John Storer Charnwood. Within the first week of lockdown, it became apparent that the Charnwood Food Poverty Network was at severe risk of collapse, due primarily to the age and vulnerability of its own workforce. Therefore, JSC requested all foodbanks provide data regarding their clients and stocks so that Charnwood Community Action could set up John Storer House as a centralised hub to provide support to those in hardship, particularly those who were also shielding.
66. In September 2021, 'Your Store' Community Shop was opened.
67. The organisation has approximately 500 service users per week (pre-Covid 1,000), 120 volunteers (pre-Covid 241), and 22 members of staff.
68. The organisation was invited to apply for up to £82,323.
69. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 101.5 and recommends that a grant of £84,490 is awarded for 2022/23. Funding for 2023/24 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1, and will be subject to budget approval.
70. 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 note the organisation's outstanding commitment and delivery of services to the community during the pandemic, as well as adapting and continuing to deliver their usual services;

- 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 the contribution that John Storer Charnwood made during the response to the Covid Pandemic
- 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
- The Panel are pleased to hear about the Consortium of community centres that John Storer Charnwood is currently leading, and the benefit it has brought other community centres in the area

Shepshed Volunteer Centre – Score 88.5 – Recommendation to award £9,537 in 2022/23 (amount for 2023/24 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

71. Shepshed Volunteer Centre (SVC) has been established for over 30 years initially as an independent organisation. In 2007 it merged with John Storer Charnwood (JSC).

72. 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.

73. The office is open daily from 9am – 12pm for information, signposting and services and remains at the heart of the community.

74. The main services provided by their volunteers are:

- A social car scheme. In 2018-2019 the scheme provided 1,410 journeys covering 8,467 miles for health appointments, shopping, etc;
- A gardening scheme which helped to maintain 20 gardens which would otherwise have become a major burden;
- A befriending scheme which has supported 14 isolated individuals, providing 1,400 hours of support through the year. Where possible the scheme is helping them to become more involved with their local community;
- A wellbeing garden is open at regular intervals for members of the community with additional needs, including those living with mental health issues, physical disabilities and dementia. Last year providing over 40 adults with additional needs a space to learn new skills or just have a conversation with their staff and volunteers.

75. Throughout the pandemic, the organisation worked hard to adapt, with their befriending moving to telephone calls, to keep the relationships and interactions

going. Many of the befrienders/befriendees have found this rewarding at a time when all became isolated due to lockdown restrictions. This is an area that they would like to do more work on, as many are continuing to self-isolate, with the rising cases of Covid.

76. The demand for their services is increasing, with social isolation a larger problem than it has ever been. They have a waiting list for befriending that is currently longer than their active list of clients who have befrienders.

77. The activity shed in the well-being garden is currently being refurbished. Once finished they will be holding various different groups each morning, suggestions from the community for groups to run there have been scrabble, knit and natter, and military history.

78. They want to see the activity shed used every morning the volunteer centre is open, this is most likely going to be seasonal, April to end of September, mainly because of the weather. Also, the limitations of toilet facilities on site.

79. The organisation has approximately 39 service users per week, 26 volunteers (pre-Covid 100), and 2 part-time staff.

80. The organisation was invited to apply for up to £9,291.

81. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 88.5 and recommends that a grant of £9,537 is awarded for 2022/23, and funding for 2023/24 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval.

82. 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, and are optimistic that with the organisation's new leader, there will be fresh ideas for how they will move forward
- 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 82.8 – Recommendation to award £17,513 in 2022/23 (amount for 2023/24 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

83. 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.

84. 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.
85. 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.
86. They run five support programmes, the Freedom Programme followed by the Recovery Toolkit; the Unbroken programme followed by 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 shows that these groups were invaluable to their recovery.
87. In addition, they support partner organisations through the provision of face-to-face and online training and they have recently developed e-learning packages.
88. Domestic Abuse has been a massive issue during the pandemic, numbers dropped off to begin with because of the lockdown, and people not feeling they could leave domestic abuse situations in case of being arrested etc. The organisation had to get word out there that people could still leave their homes if unsafe, and they would be provided with support. Telephone support was offered initially, and they then returned face to face for people who really needed it. Online groups/coffee mornings, and breakout rooms were created to provide support, as well as befriending services to provide support for people with anxiety regarding the pandemic.
89. There were concerns with children during lockdown. Schools are now finding that children are starting to talk about issues they had at home during the pandemic.
90. The organisation has approximately 3,700 adult service users and 450 children, 45 volunteers, and 48 members of staff.
91. The organisation was invited to apply for up to £16,306.

92. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 82.8 and recommends that a grant of £17,513 is awarded for 2022/23. Funding for 2023/24 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval.

93. Panel comments on Application:

- The Panel feel that the organisation is well placed to continue delivering, despite changes in the structure and where LWA sits with its partners;
- The Panel recognise the dedication and commitment of the volunteers and staff, and how they have coped and adapted during the Covid-19 pandemic;
- 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.

Syston and District Volunteer Centre – Score 62.2 - Recommendation to award £9,537 in 2022/23 (amount for 2023/24 to be confirmed and subject to budget approval)

94. Syston and District Volunteer Centre provide social transport for the elderly, disabled and rurally isolated in Syston and the surrounding villages. They operate as a member charity.

95. They own two wheelchair adapted vehicles and two 16-seat minibuses that are also wheelchair adapted. Their social car service is operated using volunteers in their own cars. This provides a door-to-door service and although 58% of the trips that they make are medical/health related, if they have the volunteers, they will take people wherever they want to go. Their minibuses are used to take people out every month for day trips to a variety of venues. They also supply transport for the weekly Birstall lunch club and run their own monthly community lunch where to satisfy demand, they take both minibuses. They also have a range of mobility aids such as wheelchairs and walking frames that they lend to members of the community as and when they require them.

96. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, journeys have decreased by 50%. The organisation had 5-6 drivers doing the majority of the work, however there are now only 3 drivers. There will be a backlog of health journeys as Covid restrictions continue to lower, and people become more confident at leaving their homes.

97. Volunteering is still something the organisation would like to work on, and they would continue to work with Age Concern and Age UK. Most current volunteering opportunities are with driving and computers and they want to expand and provide more volunteering services. They are also looking at working with the Baldwin Trust.

98. The organisation has 590 service users, 27 volunteers, and 2.6 members of staff.

99. The organisation was invited to apply for up to £9,291.

100. The officer assessment scored this scheme at 62.2. The Grants Panel are recommending that a Strategic Partner Grant of £9,537 for 2022/23 be awarded in principle to Syston Volunteer Centre, subject to them continuing to work with the Council and receipt of evidence demonstrating that they have revisited their business plan and are moving towards further community engagement / volunteering activities, by the end of March 2022. Should a grant be awarded for 2022/23, funding for 2023/24 will be confirmed following an evaluation at the end of Year 1 and will be subject to budget approval.

101. Panel comments on Application:

- The Panel recognise the important work that this organisation does in the community and that there is evidence of need;
- The Panel feel that the amount of direct community work and development of wider volunteering has reduced and that the organisation currently is operating as a community transport organisation only.
- The Panel feel that the organisation is open to suggestions, and eager to work with Officers and other organisations to develop their remit, and therefore there is potential for this to be revisited;
- The Panel would like to see the continued development of wider services for the South Charnwood area;
- The Panel would like the organisation to focus on progression and development of wider community projects / activities that they demonstrated during their presentation and reflect this in their revised business plan;
- The Panel recommend that the organisation visits and works with Shepshed Volunteer Centre to see how they might expand and develop their remit.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Strategic Partner Grants

Appendix 2: Delivery Against Corporate Objectives

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

APPENDIX 1

Organisation	Amount Awarded 2021/22	Amount Invited to Apply for (5% reduction)	Amount Awarded 2022/23 (Year 1)	Provisional Amount 2023/24 (Year 2)
Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau	£88,928	£84,481	£86,705	£86,705
Clockwise Credit Union	£8,298	£7,833	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
Equality Action	£20,978	£19,929	£20,454	£20,454
Fearon Hall Community	£30,489	£28,964	£29,727	£29,727
Gorse Covert Community	£20,432	£19,410	£19,922	£19,922
John Storer Charnwood	£86,656	£82,323	£84,490	£84,490
Shepshed Volunteer Centre	£9,781	£9,291	£9,537	£9,537
Living Without Abuse	£17,165	£16,306	£17,513	£17,513
Syston Volunteer Centre	£9,781	£9,291	£9,537 (to be confirmed)	£9,537 (to be confirmed)
TOTAL	£292,508	£277,828	£277,885	£277,885

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 or 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	Julie Robinson
Date EIA started	November 2021
Date EIA completed	December 2021

■ **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 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 overall in relation to the protected characteristic of Race.
Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)	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. 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.
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.	J. Robinson	March 2022

■ 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 (Service Head): Julie Robinson

Date: 14.12.2021

[Please send completed & signed assessment to Suzanne Kinder for publishing.](#)