

# Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet 14 June 2016

## Commissioning of support for Cheltenham's VCS organisations

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Flo Clucas, Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Richard Gibson, Strategy and Engagement Manager</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>Cheltenham Borough Council has had a long standing relationship with Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action (GAVCA). Over the past five years, the council had allocated a £34,000 grant per annum into GAVCA through a Community Investment Grant so that it was able to provide support for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in Cheltenham.</p> <p>Since the Trustees of GAVCA announced their decision to cease operations from 31 May 2016 onwards, the council set about finding a suitably-placed host organisation in order that the support to Cheltenham's VCS organisations can be sustained.</p> <p>Following a grant application process, a delegated decision was made on 5<sup>th</sup> May to award a 4 month grant to Gloucestershire Rural Community Council. This report brings forward the decision to allocate the remaining funds.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>To allocate a grant of £24,058 to Gloucestershire Rural Community Council in order that it can provide support to Cheltenham's VCS organisations.</b>
<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>An allocation of £34,000 for the financial year 2016-17 is available to the Council to support Cheltenham's VCS organisations.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Sarah Didcote</b> <b>GO Business Partner Manager (West)</b> <b>Telephone: 01242 264125</b> <b>Mobile: 07769243179</b> <b>Email: Sarah.Didcote@Cheltenham.gov.uk</b></p>
<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>The recipient of this grant will be required to enter into a Community Giving Grant agreement with the borough council prior to payment being made.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Shirin Wotherspoon</b> <b>Head of Law (Commercial) – One Legal</b> <b>Shirin.wotherspoon@tewkesbury.gov.uk</b> <b>01684 272017</b></p>

<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	None identified
<b>Key risks</b>	If funding is allocated to an organisation that subsequently goes onto use the funding for unintended purposes. This risk is held on the Commissioning Division Risk Register.
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	The grant to provide support to Cheltenham's VCS organisations will help deliver the council's corporate outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People live in strong, safe and healthy communities</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	None identified

## 1. Background

- 1.1** The Trustees of Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action (GAVCA) recently announced their decision to cease operations from 31 May 2016 onwards.
- 1.2** Cheltenham Borough Council has had a long standing relationship with GAVCA. Over the past five years, the council has allocated a £34,000 grant per annum into GAVCA through a Community Investment Grant so that it was able to provide support for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations in Cheltenham.
- 1.3** A review of the organisation was carried out by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2016. Members publicly acknowledged the excellent work of GAVCA, commending their Cheltenham officer in particular and proposed that the Council continues to support the VCS.
- 1.4** On 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the council promoted a grant that it would provide to a suitably-placed host organisation in order that the support to Cheltenham's VCS organisations can be sustained.
- 1.5** "Suitably-placed" means an organisation that has the right constitution to deliver borough-wide support whilst also upholding the principle of independence and impartiality in the delivery of support to VCS organisations.
- 1.6** The closing date for the applications was Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May and three applications were received.

## 2. What we were looking to commission

- 2.1** A review of GAVCA was carried out by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2016. As part of this review, the council undertook a survey of local VCS organisations that has helped us be clear about what we want to commission:

What do you see are your organisation's main challenges for the future?	Most common references were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to fundraising (52%)</li> <li>• Access to volunteers (16%)</li> <li>• Coping with demand / growth (12%)</li> <li>• Harnessing the benefits of collaborative working (8%)</li> </ul>
What external support do you	Most common references were:

feel you need to address these challenges?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to fundraising skills and resources (52%)</li> <li>• Access to communications and marketing skills (16%)</li> <li>• Harnessing the benefits of collaborative working (12%)</li> <li>• Harnessing the benefits of innovation (8%)</li> <li>• Access to volunteers (8%)</li> </ul>
What external support would you look to CBC to commission via a grant?	<p>Most common references were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to fundraising skills and resources (50%)</li> <li>• Harnessing the benefits of collaborative working (19%)</li> <li>• Continue with GAVCA funding (19%)</li> </ul>

**2.2** We have therefore defined the outcomes the Council wishes to achieve from the grant as follows:

Overall outcome: Cheltenham has a thriving and vibrant VCS

<b>Supporting outcomes</b>	<b>Key areas of interest</b>
Building resilience within the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting VCS groups with fund-raising activities</li> <li>• Supporting VCS groups with marketing and promotion efforts</li> <li>• Developing skills with the sector</li> <li>• Making links between the sector and businesses</li> <li>• Promoting and supporting good governance</li> </ul>
Tapping into other resources and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting organisations ready to use volunteers</li> </ul>
Helping the sector work well together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising and hosting quarterly VCS forum meetings</li> <li>• Issuing regular email bulletins</li> </ul>
Working with commissioners, partners and stakeholders to support them identify key needs and deliver collective outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising the quarterly CBC round table meeting</li> <li>• Organising Cheltenham Partnerships VCS representatives</li> <li>• Facilitating collaborative working opportunities</li> <li>• Ensuring that the sector is able to respond to commissioning opportunities</li> <li>• Supporting CBC with the delivery of its community-based projects particularly in regard to fund-raising</li> </ul>

### **3. Reasons for recommendations**

**3.1** Following an assessment of the three applications, it was agreed to award a grant to Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC). Their application was felt to be a strong application that coupled a good working knowledge of Cheltenham's VCS, with the added value of being able to link local work in Cheltenham with GRCC's experience of working within county-wide structures and organisations. GRCC was the only applicant that picked up on our particular interest in fund-raising which local VCS organisations told us was very important in the survey.

**3.2** As financial allocations over £10,000 are reserved for Cabinet, the Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles agreed to make a delegated decision to award a grant £9,942 to ensure that the transition from GAVCA to GRCC could commence and that the support would continue beyond 31<sup>st</sup> May.

**3.3** The transition is underway and a grant agreement is in place covering the £9,942.

**3.4** Cabinet are now asked to make a decision to award the remainder of the £34,000 to GRCC (£24,058) to ensure that the support will be delivered for the full year; May 2016 to May 2017. This will then be subject to a further grant agreement.

**4. Consultation and feedback**

**4.1** A review of the organisation was carried out by the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2016. Members publicly acknowledged the excellent work of GAVCA, commending their Cheltenham officer in particular and proposed that the Council continues to support the VCS. The officer concerned has since TUPE’d across to GRCC to do the same role but clearly there has been continuity on service despite this change of contact.

**5. Performance management – monitoring and review**

**5.1** A review of progress being made against the outcomes will be held at two points in the year. In addition, a project monitoring report, summarising project achievements, outcomes and lessons learnt will be submitted to the council by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council on completion of the project.

**6. Future arrangements**

**6.1** Discussions will be held between CBC commissioners and relevant Cabinet members to explore opportunities for joint commissioning across various council grant schemes.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer: Richard Gibson Strategy and Engagement Manager richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 235 354</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	1. Risk Assessment
<b>Background information</b>	1. A review of the Community Investment Grant given to Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action (GAVCA), Report to Overview and Scrutiny, 25 January 2016. 2. Commissioning of support for Cheltenham's VCS organisations – a delegated decision taken by cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles on 5 May 2016.

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
CD.17-	If division does not put proper controls in place for the management of small grants funds, then we run the risk of funds not being used for the purposes for which the grant allocation was intended	Strategy and Engagement Manager	Feb 2015	3	2	6	Reduce	implement and monitor small grants protocol	ongoing	Strategy and Engagement Manager	Commissioning Division
<p><b>Explanatory notes</b></p> <p><b>Impact</b> – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)</p> <p><b>Likelihood</b> – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)</p> <p><b>Control</b> - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close</p>											