

Report to: **Hub Committee**  
Date: **1 November 2022**  
Title: **Key Partnership Agreements**  
Portfolio Area: **Cllr Paul Vachon**  
**Hub Lead for Communities**  
Wards Affected: **All**  
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**  
Date next steps can be taken:

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **That the Hub Committee:**

- 1. NOTE the positive contribution of our key funded partners in supporting our ambitions as set out in our Corporate Strategy, A Plan for West Devon;**
- 2. RECOMMEND to Council to AGREE to extend the funding for the following key partners for a further two years as follows:**
  - West Devon CVS £5,100**
  - OCRA Sport £1,333**
  - Okehampton Community Transport £ 6,533**
  - Tavistock Community Transport £6,533**
  - Young Devon £2,500**
  - World Heritage Site £4,000**
- 3. RECOMMEND to Council to AGREE an increase in funding for each of the next two years in recognition of the additional support required by Citizens Advice.**

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Council provides funding to a number of community and voluntary organisations that compliment delivery of our services and corporate priorities (as set out in A Plan for West Devon).
- 1.2 At it's meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Hub Committee resolved to request that officers liaise with existing key partners to request an updated application be submitted for up to a further two years of funding.
- 1.3 This report sets out the proposed way forward for funding for each of the key partners.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 For many years the Council has financially supported organisations that complement existing Councils services or that are providing other support to our communities aligned to our priorities for the borough.
- 2.2 In 2019, the Council explored (as part of its own budget setting process), a three-year funding agreement for key partner organisations with funding being agreed as follows:-

Organisation and Website	Amount per annum
Citizens Advice <a href="http://www.ruraldevoncab.org.uk">www.ruraldevoncab.org.uk</a>	£32,900
CVS <a href="http://www.westdevoncvcs.org.uk">www.westdevoncvcs.org.uk</a>	£5,100
OCRA <a href="http://www.ocrasport.org.uk">www.ocrasport.org.uk</a>	£1,333
Okehampton Community Transport <a href="http://www.odctg.co.uk">www.odctg.co.uk</a>	£6,533
Tavistock Ring and Ride <a href="http://www.tdltp.co.uk">www.tdltp.co.uk</a>	£6,533
Young Devon <a href="http://www.youngdevon.org">www.youngdevon.org</a>	£2,500
Tamar Valley AONB <a href="http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk">www.tamarvalley.org.uk</a>	£8,835
World Heritage Site	£4,000

- 2.3 Each of these key partners has played a key role in supporting priorities within our Corporate Strategy – A Plan or West Devon.

## 3. Assessment of Key Partner Updates

### Citizens Advice

- 3.1 Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of residents is an important aspect of A Plan for West Devon, specifically working with partners to pilot new approaches to tackling rural poverty.
- 3.2 They offer confidential advice and information online, over the phone, and in person, for free.
- 3.3 In West Devon last year, CA helped 2,225 people with 5,198 problems and generated £783,936 of additional household income for families in West Devon. 74% of advice given in West Devon was in relation to Welfare Benefits, Debt and Housing.

- 3.4 They are however only currently able to meet around 30% of the demand for their service, which, given the cost-of-living increases currently being seen and forecast to continue, will mean a significant shortfall in meeting the need of residents within the borough.
- 3.5 Citizens Advice have seen a significant number of increases in the online visits to their cost-of-living pages (a 27% increase in one week) and we are working with them to jointly promote the support that is available to residents – including through joint newspaper articles. In light of the increasing demand and the increased cost of service delivery, CA have requested that we consider increasing our funding to them.
- 3.6 Given that the organisation is currently only able to meet the demand of 30% of residents attempting to access their service, it is proposed that we increase the funding to Citizens Advice by £10,000 per year for the next two years (funded by the Covid-19 hardship budget) in order for them to increase capacity within the team. This is further set out in our Cost of Living Action Plan being considered by Hub Committee today.

### **West Devon CVS**

- 3.7 Through our Plan for West Devon, and the cost of living report being considered by the Hub Committee today, we have made a firm commitment to work with community groups in order to ensure our residents are supported.
- 3.8 We know that there is an incredible number of community groups in West Devon delivering truly great support and it is therefore important we do all we can to support them.
- 3.9 West Devon CVS plays an important role in co-ordinating and supporting community groups across the Borough.
- 3.10 CVS have also played a role in supporting our response for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This has seen us enter in to a Service Level Agreement for additional services including:-
  - a. £3,000 for Support for the voluntary sector groups working with Ukrainians
  - b. £9,000 for them to facilitate 'Drop-in' Style Café and networking
  - c. £1,125 for the administration of a grant fund (of £7,500) for community groups and Ukrainian families to participate in activities within the area.
- 3.11 Given the important role the CVS plays in supporting our voluntary and community sector, it is recommended that we continue with the funding for West Devon CVS for two years at £5,100 per year.

### **OCRA Sport**

- 3.12 Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA) activities, clubs and facilities provide the opportunity for over 25000 individual attendances for the parish of Okehampton, the Hamlets, Tavistock and surrounding areas. They also provide the hire of facilities for a number of clubs in the local area which reaches a further 500 plus individuals each week, 30 weeks of the year.

- 3.13 This breadth of delivery promotes physical and mental wellbeing for all those that access their services, reduced social isolation and the opportunity for all to try something as the scope expands towards the recreational remit of the charity. This includes new sessions for mums and children; male dementia sufferers; work readiness; disadvantaged children and the establishment of the Pavilion as a truly community based establishment.
- 3.14 In the coming months and years, as many residents consider how they will meet their essential bills, it will be important that groups such as OCRA are able to continue to encourage individuals to participate in these activities. Their work also directly contributes to our Plan for West Devon commitment around provision of high-quality and accessible leisure services.
- 3.15 It is therefore recommended that we continue to fund OCRA at the level of £1,333 for the next two years.

### **Community Transport Groups**

- 3.16 Both Okehampton Community Transport & Tavistock Ring and Ride schemes have seen volunteer drivers continue to offer vital transport throughout the pandemic and beyond. These services enable residents to maintain their independence and dignity and to also continue to live in their own homes whilst alleviating isolation and loneliness.
- 3.17 The Community Transport schemes has begun to see significant increases in demand for the services and been receiving more requests for evenings and weekend journeys as Hospitals implement wider hours in order to shorten waiting lists brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.18 Accessible and affordable transport will continue to be incredibly important to residents of West Devon in the coming months as the cost of living increases and they prioritise essential expenditure.
- 3.19 It is therefore recommended that we extend the funding to both groups at the level of £6,533 for the next two years.

### **Young Devon**

- 3.20 Young Devon have utilised funding from West Devon Borough Council to fund a young people's counselling service in Tavistock for 1 day per week throughout the year, enabling young people to explore issues and allowing a safe space for disclose any problems and giving advice in possible ways to tackle those issues.
- 3.21 In the day a week, 4 young people can be supported at the Abbey Surgery which is directly due to the contribution from the Council. Without the Council funding, young people would need to travel to one of Young Devon's other bases – likely Exeter or Newton Abbot.
- 3.22 Supporting the health and wellbeing of young people within the Borough is a priority for us within A Plan for West Devon. It is therefore recommended that we continue with this funding arrangement for two years at £2,500.

### **Tamar Valley AONB**

- 3.23 The Tamar Valley AONB is an important partner and one where the Council is required to provide an element of match funding contributions.
- 3.24 A report was considered by Council, and approved at it's meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 extending the current management plan for a two year period to 2025 and therefore a decision is not required as part of this paper.

### **World Heritage Site**

- 3.25 The partnership is the Steering Group for the World Heritage Site with Membership comprising Cornwall Council, Devon County Council and West Devon Borough Council – plus the National Trust.
- 3.26 The funding we provide is invested in an annual work programme which is agreed by the three Councils, for projects that deliver the World Heritage Convention Objectives.
- 3.27 The WH Convention Objectives are designed to support local communities to benefit from, and become involved in the management of, their internationally significant heritage assets.
- 3.28 The application form as set out in Appendix A sets out a number of specific activities that have been delivered using the funding provided by West Devon Borough Council.
- 3.29 The WHS is part way through its 2020-2025 Management Plan and it is therefore recommended that funding of £4,000 be extended for a period of two years to align with the Management Plan.

## **4. Proposed Way Forward**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Hub Committee recommend to Council that funding be agreed to key partners as set out below until March 2025

Organisation and Website	Current Amount per annum	Proposed amount 23/24 and 24/25
Citizens Advice <a href="http://www.ruraldevoncab.org.uk">www.ruraldevoncab.org.uk</a>	£32,900	£42,900
CVS <a href="http://www.westdevoncvvs.org.uk">www.westdevoncvvs.org.uk</a>	£5,100	£5,100
OCRA <a href="http://www.ocrasport.org.uk">www.ocrasport.org.uk</a>	£1,333	£1,333
Okehampton Community Transport <a href="http://www.odctg.co.uk">www.odctg.co.uk</a>	£6,533	£6,533
Tavistock Ring and Ride <a href="http://www.tdltp.co.uk">www.tdltp.co.uk</a>	£6,533	£6,533
Young Devon <a href="http://www.youngdevon.org">www.youngdevon.org</a>	£2,500	£2,500
Tamar Valley AONB <a href="http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk">www.tamarvalley.org.uk</a>	£8,835	£8,835
World Heritage Site	£4,000	£4,000

- 4.2 It is also recommended that each Key Partner within this report, be scheduled to present an update to Overview and Scrutiny on progress each year.

## 5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Council has no legal duty to provide financial support to the groups included within this report beyond the term of the current funding arrangement (31/03/2023). It does have a duty to ensure that public funding is spent appropriately. Carrying out the process of requiring key partners to demonstrate the contribution they make to our corporate priorities is a key element of ensuring scrutiny of funding awarded
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		This report recommends an increase in partnership funding to Citizens Advice in respect of the significant increase in demand for their services. This would be met from grant funding made available to the Council by Devon County Council Covid Vulnerability funding and therefore not impact the Councils MTFS.
Risk		Not extending the partnership funding for the key partners in this report will likely result in a negative impact on support to residents within the Borough as partners seek to identify alternative funding sources. This would likely lead to the Council being turned to by residents for additional support and therefore it is not recommended that we stop funding these groups.
Consultation and Engagement Strategy		Each of the Council's partners have been consulted with and their responses are reflected in this report and Appendix A.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		All
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
Equality and Diversity		The partners set out in this report provide valuable services to all of our residents, particularly those with protected characteristics

Safeguarding		
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		The partners in this report contribute to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of residents across West Devon
Other implications		

**Supporting Information**

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Funding Applications

**Background Papers:**

<https://mg.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s28446/Key%20Partnerships%20Report.pdf>

**Approval and clearance of report**