

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	Shirley Plenderleith Head of Public Services	Fwd Plan Ref No:	
Wards Affected	All	25 th November 2020	
Title	PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT AGREEMENTS 2021-2023		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To set out the proposed Performance Indicators for the 2021 to 2023 Voluntary Sector Grant Agreements.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Council has four-year Voluntary Sector Grant Agreements (VSGA) with voluntary organisations for the provision of a range of services linked to corporate objectives. The contract length provides certainty to the organisations involved, which has been very much welcomed by the sector.
- 2.2 The VSGAs were awarded to voluntary organisations, recognising that the voluntary sector was best placed to achieve the objectives identified.
- 2.3 As part of the review prior to the funding bid process in 2016, the core service objectives and key outcomes were incorporated into the service specifications for each VSGA, details of which are provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4 These outcomes include but are not limited to:
- Increasing healthy living
 - Reducing crime, discrimination and anti-social behaviour
 - Increasing financial awareness and money management
 - Reducing homelessness
 - Reducing poverty
 - Reducing discrimination
 - Increasing access to town centre
- 2.5 Achieving these key outcomes provides better solutions for the families and individuals, enhancing the quality of life for local residents.
- 2.6 Included in the review was the recognition that the work undertaken by the voluntary organisations needed to have an increased focus on taking person-centred approach rather than an intervention on just one aspect of someone's life experience. For example, someone with poor mental health may be struggling to manage their finances; poor housing conditions might be contributing to poor mental

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health and someone with a poor credit history is likely to struggle to find or maintain a tenancy.

- 2.7 At the time of the review, there was also recognition of reductions funding for voluntary sector organisations impacting on the sector and on the client base they serve. This could potentially increase the risk that more people went unsupported or fall into a cycle of need, putting more pressure on statutory services dealing with more people in crisis.
- 2.8 When the Executive Committee agreed the four-year VSGAs at the meeting on 16th November 2016 it did so with the caveat that it would review the funding in light of its budget position for years three and four.
- 2.9 At the Executive Committee meeting on 14th November 2018 members agreed that the Council was in a financial position whereby it could continue to fund the Service Providers, at the current levels for the years 2019/20 and 2020/21. **Appendix 2** provides a summary of the Council's VSGAs and annual grant amount.
- 2.10 The Executive Committee approved funding on 13th November 2019 to extend the provision for a further two years beyond March 2021, taking the funding to March 2023 as outlined in Appendix 2. After which point in time any future service provision will be made by North Northamptonshire Council.
- 2.11 As part of the approval for extending the funding to March 2023, the opportunity was taken to review the current service specifications and agreements, to ensure they are 'fit for purpose' and that they continue to be relevant for the individuals they support across the Borough.
- 2.12 All of the voluntary organisations have a signed VSGA with the Council which sets out the obligations for both parties. These will be reissued as part of the extended funding to cover the period from April 2021 to March 2023.
- 2.13 The Council has the option of deferring or reviewing all or part of agreed grant payments where the agreement / service specification have not been met, subject to:
- A report to the Monitoring & Audit Committee and to the Executive Committee
 - Consultation with the organisation and other funders
 - The opportunity for the organisation to make a representation to the Executive Committee

3. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 3.1. All service specifications have been revised, in conjunction with Officers from the Legal Team, Council Lead Officers and are out for consultation with Providers. The sections are as outlined in Table 1.

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Table 1 – VSGA Specification Structure 2021-2023	
Heading	Comments
Core Objectives of the Project	Outlines the main focus of the Project
The Project	Key deliverables of the Project
Project Availability	Outlines the when the Project will be available and the interaction with the Council
Key Outcomes	Expectations of the Project
Performance Indicators	Targets for delivery and reporting to demonstrate effectiveness of the Project
Annual Report	Outline of the information to be provided in the Annual Report
Additional Requirements	Other expectations, including Safeguarding and Training

3.2. Proposed Core Service Objectives and Key Outcomes have been set out in **Appendix 3**. In revising these, we have taken the opportunity to consider previous performance together with feedback from the Provider.

3.3. The timetable for performance data submission for 2021/22 is set out in Table 2 below.

Quarter	Provider Performance Submission Date
April - June 2021	9 July 2021
July - September 2021	8 October 2021
October - December 2021	7 January 2022
January - March 2022 (Annual Report)	8 April 2022

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4. PERFORMANCE UPDATES AND INFORMATION

- 4.1. The proposed Performance Indicators for each specification are shown in **Appendix 4**. Each specification has a number of key performance indicators that a voluntary organisation report against.
- 4.2. During 2018/19 there was one amendment to the VSGA providing support to households requiring advice and support regarding homelessness, previously reported, due to a change in legislation.
- 4.3. Performance will continue to be monitored quarterly and Providers will now submit an annual report to review how the grant is being used.
- 4.4. The Annual Reporting proposal allows for the Provider to provide information specifically relating to their Project rather than the previous generic reporting as shown in **Appendix 5** Table 1.
- 4.5. The proposed Annual Report contents are set out in Appendix 5 Table 2 for all grants.
- 4.6. To date, all VSGA providers are performing well this year (20/21) despite the challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, Youth Works have been focussing on mental health support for young people offering a variety of services via social media.

5. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 5.1. We are taking the opportunity to strengthen the Performance Indicators and to review the service specifications, to ensure best value from the continued investment for the next two financial years (2021-2023), in consultation with VSGA holders.
- 5.2. The Service Providers are required to provide detailed information on their performance against their specification on the relevant indicators. Quarterly monitoring meetings are held between the Service Provider and Council Officers to allow the opportunity to develop a relationship with the Provider, examine any emerging issues or priorities, and manage and address any performance issues.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Grant Agreement funding to the voluntary sector continues to contribute towards the Council's corporate objectives.

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7. FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The service providers receive their grant payment annually with two thirds received in April and one third in November of each financial year subject to satisfactory performance.
- 7.2. Future service delivery and funding commitments beyond 2023 will be a decision for North Northamptonshire Council.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The Council and its partners are committed to ongoing improvements to combat climate change implications and will continue to work with them to reduce carbon footprint where possible. Several of the VSGAs make a positive contribution to climate change objectives and outcomes.

9. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee notes;

- 9.1. The proposed changes to the Performance Indicators and Annual Reports.
- 9.2. The reporting timetable for 2021/22 as set out in Table 2.

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