

**North East Derbyshire District Council**

**Cabinet**

**19 September 2024**

**Funding to Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Organisations - 2023/24**

**Report of Councillor J Barry, Portfolio Holder for Growth and Assets**

Classification: This report is public

Report By: Tris Burdett, Partnership Development Officer

Contact Officer: Tris Burdett, Partnership Development Officer

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**PURPOSE / SUMMARY**

To provide an overview of the funding to voluntary and community sector infrastructure support organisations in 2023/24.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Members are asked to note the content of the report.

Approved by the Portfolio Holder – Cllr. Jayne Barry

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**IMPLICATIONS**

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**Finance and Risk:** Yes  No

**Details:**

There are no financial implications in the current financial year. Any recommendations that may have future financial and risk implications will be considered later in the commissioning cycle.

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

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**Legal (including Data Protection):** Yes  No

**Details:**

The monitoring arrangements form part of legally binding Service Level Agreements with the Council. All data monitoring information and agreements are stored securely.

On Behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

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**Staffing:** Yes  No

**Details:**

There are no human resource implications as a result of this report. This activity is delivered through existing resources.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

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## DECISION INFORMATION

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Decision Information</b>   |   |
| <b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b><br>A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:<br><br><b>NEDDC:</b><br><b>Revenue - £125,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Capital - £310,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i> | No  |
| <b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b><br>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)   | No  |
| <b>District Wards Significantly Affected</b>  | All   |
| <b>Consultation:</b><br><b>Leader / Deputy Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cabinet</b> <input type="checkbox"/><br><b>SMT</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input type="checkbox"/><br><b>Members</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  | Yes<br><br>Details:<br>Cllr. Jayne Barry and<br>Steve Lee, Assistant<br>Director, Regeneration and<br>Programmes. |

### Links to Council Plan priorities, including Climate Change, Equalities, and Economics and Health implications.

These commissions help the Council deliver key Council Plan priorities including the support to enable residents to access employment and housing, access other public services and obtain energy saving advice which contributes to a place that cares for the environment.

## REPORT DETAILS

### 1 **Background** *(reasons for bringing the report)*

- 1.1 At Minute No. 186 (2013/14), Cabinet approved new commissioning and monitoring arrangements following a review of funding to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. Cabinet receives an annual officer

summary report whilst retaining the option of requesting the organisations to present to Cabinet as required.

## **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

2.1 Historically, the Council has committed to supporting vulnerable households through investment in voluntary and community sector infrastructure support organisations. The aim is to support in the region of 20,000 vulnerable and disadvantaged households year on year. Support for households has become increasingly important due to the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing cost of living challenges. The following illustrates the Council's investment and households assisted for the last 6 years:

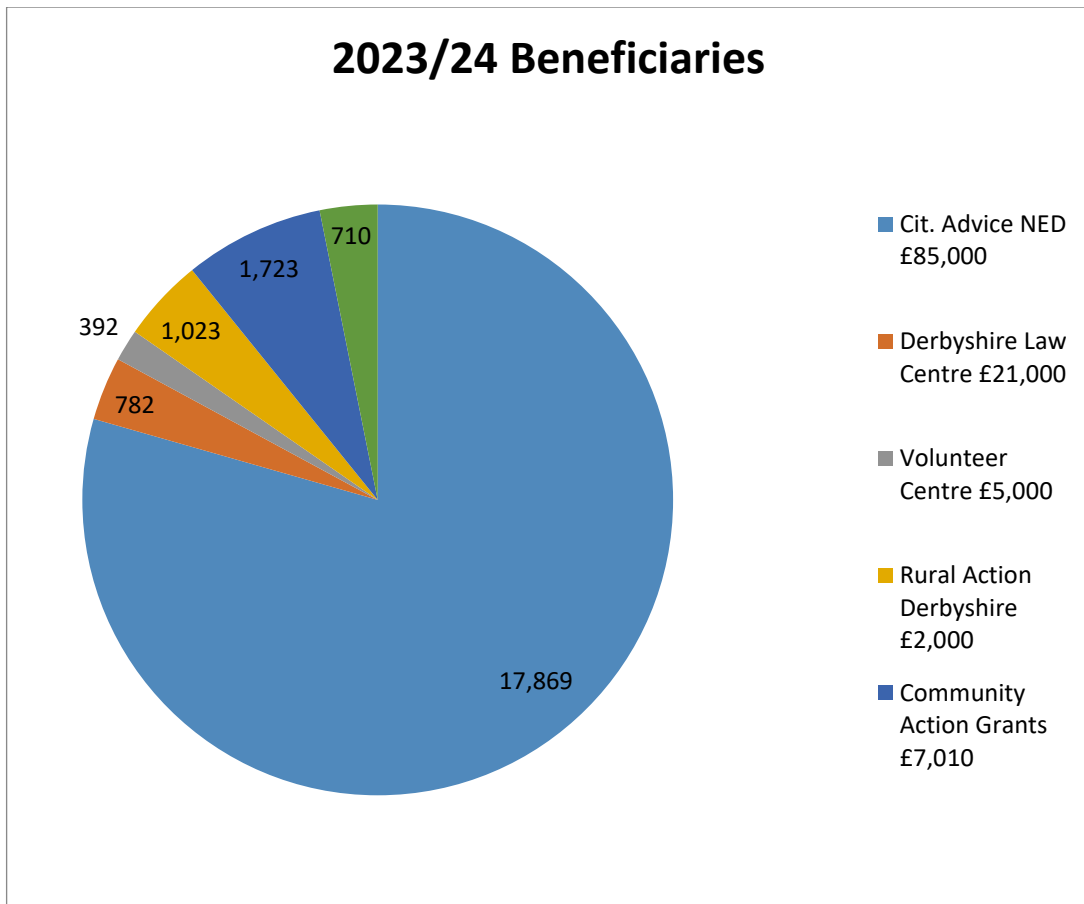
| <u>Council Investment</u> | <u>Households assisted</u> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2018/19: £132,799         | 22,944                     |
| 2019/20: £135,752         | 29,896                     |
| 2020/21: £136,085         | 18,981                     |
| 2021/22: £136,085         | 19,096                     |
| 2022/23: £136,085         | 23,594                     |
| 2023/24: £136,085         | 22,499                     |

It is noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic there were fewer people undertaking community group social activities and presenting for assistance and advice on matters due to social restrictions and temporary closures of non-essential services and the Government suspension of eviction processes. As well as stopping group activities this reduced households seeking support on issues such as consumer rights and imminent threats of homelessness.

2.2 The monitoring tracks the number of households assisted and any variation in customer demand for these services. In recent years, demand from households seeking advice and support has varied slightly. Further details on the top three reasons help and advice was sought can be found in section 2.5. In terms of cost per household, the yearly average can be tracked as follows:

- £5.79 per household in 2018/19
- £4.55 per household in 2019/20
- £7.17 per household in 2020/21
- £7.13 per household in 2021/22
- £5.77 per household in 2022/23
- £6.05 per household in 2023/24

2.3 The data collected helps to highlight demand on specific issues and services within communities. The data also includes beneficiaries from the Community Action Grants, which is funded via this VCS budget. The chart below illustrates the number of households/beneficiaries each organisation or grant has supported, together with the total funding received:



Please be aware that additional funding was secured to enable the grant to Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre to be re-instated.

2.4 The VCS infrastructure organisations funded during 2023/24 have provided information on how their organisation have supported residents. The outcomes of the current commissions for 2024/25 will be reported in autumn 2025.

2.5 A summary of the core aims of the organisations and the top three issues as to why households sought advice or support is as follows:

2.5.1 Citizens Advice - North East Derbyshire (CA NED)  
 Provides free, confidential, impartial and independent advice on a wide range of issues including money, housing, employment, consumer issues, income maximisation and specialist energy advice. Services are accessed via telephone, email or in person through a variety of methods including drop-in and outreach sessions, GP surgeries, foodbanks, libraries and in-home visits for housebound clients. The funding also contributes to a part-time volunteer co-ordinator to recruit, train and retain volunteers.

Assisting 17,869 beneficiaries in 2023/24, the top three issues identified were:

- 1) Benefits
- 2) Debt
- 3) Charitable support and food bank

2.5.2 Derbyshire Law Centre (DLC)

A not-for-profit legal practice providing free legal advice and representation to disadvantaged people. This ensures local communities, in particular disadvantaged communities, have access to the law and legal redress to enforce their civil rights. The work is also key to avoiding homelessness within the District.

Assisting 782 beneficiaries in 2023/24, the top three issues identified were:

- 1) Housing
- 2) Debt
- 3) Employment

### 2.5.3 Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre

To provide free confidential, impartial and independent advice to enable local residents to deal with unemployment, under waged or underemployed issues, including welfare rights, poverty, housing, money advice and employment. To also represent residents at appeals and tribunals.

Assisting 710 beneficiaries in 2023/24, the top three issues identified were:

- 1) Personal Independence Allowance
- 2) Universal Credit
- 3) Attendance Allowance

### 2.5.4 Volunteer Centre

Operating as a local volunteering development agency working independently to support organisations from the voluntary, community and public sector across North East Derbyshire. Supporting the most vulnerable residents, services range from befriending to reduce social isolation and providing volunteers for the Home from Hospital Service. Residents are helped on a regular basis so it is likely that many will have support from the Volunteer Centre multiple times.

Assisting 392 beneficiaries in 2023/24, the top three issues identified were:

- 1) People looking to access volunteering
- 2) People being referred into the Home From Hospital Service and providing assistance with shopping
- 3) People being referred into the befriending service.

### 2.5.5 Rural Action Derbyshire (RAD)

Offers a range of services and co-ordinated activity to support communities in North East Derbyshire District which includes tackling food poverty, digital inclusion, domestic abuse, oil buying scheme and wheels to work. RAD provides services to the whole of Derbyshire and represents the interests of the rural community countywide. In recent years, the RAD has provided a greater focus on economic partnerships and the needs of the rural economy, particularly food and farming.

Assisting 1023 beneficiaries in 2023/24, the top three issues identified were:

- 1) Cost of living
- 2) Transport needs
- 3) Digital isolation

### 2.5.6 Community Action Grants

15 community groups and organisations were awarded funding in 2023/24 totalling £7,010. Funding has paid for community fun days, King's Coronation celebrations and equipment/materials for local activities including local history preservation.

So far, a total of 1,723 beneficiaries were directly impacted and these activities were likely to have had a wider community impact. This number is likely to be higher as groups can submit their monitoring information up to a year after receiving the grant. The total number of beneficiaries supported through CAGs in 2022/23 totalled 4,783.

## 3 Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 To ensure that the Council maximises efficiencies and outcomes through commissioning voluntary sector organisations to help achieve the Council's Priorities.

## 4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 No alternative options are considered appropriate as the aim of the review was to increase transparency and accountability of commissioned services.

## DOCUMENT INFORMATION

| Appendix No   | Title |
|---|-------|
|   | n/a   |
| <b>Background Papers</b> (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet you must provide copies of the background papers) |       |
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