

North East Derbyshire District Council

Communities Scrutiny / Cabinet

13th May 2026

Funding to Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Organisations - 2025/26

Report of Councillor Jayne Barry, Portfolio Holder for Growth and Assets

Classification: This report is public

Report By: Louise Taylor, Healthy & Sustainable Communities Officer

Contact Officer: Louise Taylor, Healthy & Sustainable Communities Officer

PURPOSE / SUMMARY

To provide an overview of the funding to voluntary and community sector infrastructure support organisations in 2025/26.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Approved by the Portfolio Holder – Cllr. Jayne Barry

IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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

DECISION INFORMATION

Decision Information	
Is the decision a Key Decision? 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: NEDDC: Revenue - £125,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £310,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
District Wards Significantly Affected	All
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Cabinet <input type="checkbox"/> SMT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes Details: Cllr. Jayne Barry and Steve Lee, Assistant Director, Regeneration and 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.
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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. Prior to 2024/25, Cabinet received an annual officer summary report. It was agreed that Communities Scrutiny Committee would receive the report from 2025 onwards and that the Committee would retain the option of requesting organisations to present 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/beneficiaries year on year. Ensuring support is available has become increasingly important due to the ongoing cost of living challenges. The following illustrates the Council's investment and households/beneficiaries assisted for the last five years:

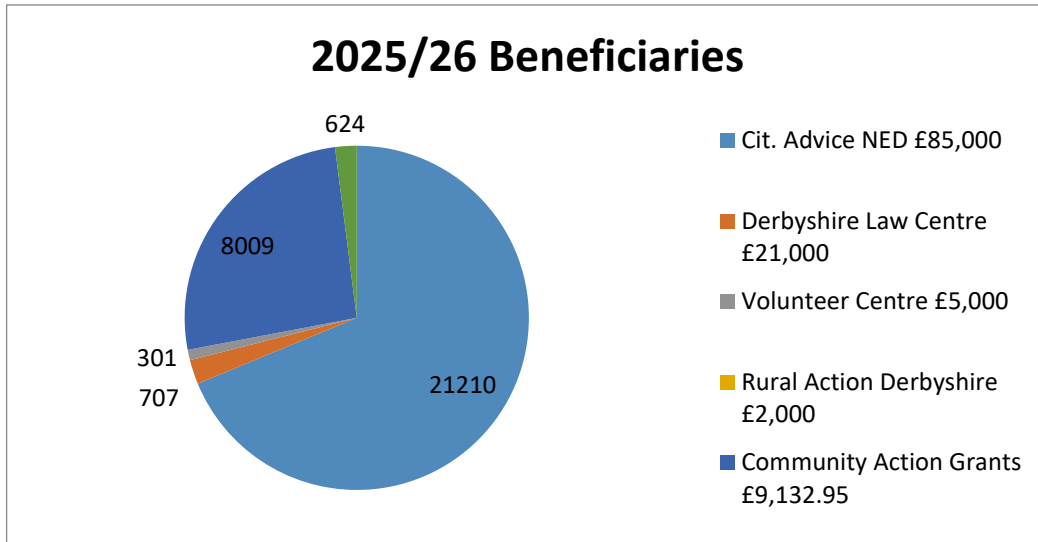
<u>Council investment</u>	<u>Households/beneficiaries assisted</u>
2021/22: £136,085	19,096
2022/23: £136,085	23,594
2023/24: £136,085	22,499
2024/25: £136,085	26,364
2025/26: £149,377	30,851

It is noted that the number of households/beneficiaries supported has consistently increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. It is likely that the ongoing cost of living challenges is a key driver for people seeking advice and support. Please also note that the full year monitoring figures from Rural Action Derbyshire remain outstanding at the time this report was written, so the final figure is likely to increase.

2.2 The monitoring process tracks the number of households/beneficiaries 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 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:

- £7.13 per household in 2021/22
- £5.77 per household in 2022/23
- £6.05 per household in 2023/24
- £5.16 per household in 2024/25
- £4.84 per household in 2025/26

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:



Additional funding for this budget was increased to fund the reinstated grant to Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre to continue in 2025/26.

2.4 The VCS infrastructure organisations funded during 2025/26 have provided information on how their organisation have supported residents. The outcomes of the current commissions for 2026/27 will be reported in spring/summer 2027. Please be aware that Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre will be presenting further details regarding their activity and achievements during 2025/26, as asked for by Communities Scrutiny Committee last year.

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

2.5.1 Citizens Advice - North East Derbyshire (CANED)

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 21,210 beneficiaries in 2025/26, the top issues identified were:

- 1) Benefits
- 2) Debt
- 3) Charitable support (including foodbank referrals)

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 707 beneficiaries in 2025/26, the top 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 624 beneficiaries in 2025/26, the top 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. To promote, support and develop volunteering to make a positive impact on the quality of the volunteering experience. To deliver the Home from Hospital Service.

Assisting 301 beneficiaries in 2025/26, the top issues identified were:

- 1) Finding volunteers through outreach work, 26 events attended during 2025/26
- 2) People accessing volunteering opportunities through Volife on-line system which is a 'recruitment' tool for volunteers and host organisations/groups
- 3) Home from Hospital service – 175 North East Derbyshire residents supported upon discharge

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.

Awaiting end of year monitoring form. Between April to September 2025, 51 beneficiaries were supported and the top issues identified were:

- 1) Food Poverty
- 2) Digital Inclusion
- 3) Village Halls

2.5.6 Community Action Grants

22 community groups and organisations were awarded funding in 2025/26 totalling £9,132.95. Funding has been used to support activities that support bio-diversity, community fun days, exhibitions and floral displays for the community. Grants were also paid to venues, enabling them to become a Warm Space over winter.

So far, a total of 8,009 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.

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
Background Papers (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)	