



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

14 November 2024

**Joint Report of the
Executive Director - Adult Social Care and Health
Executive Director - Corporate Services and Transformation**

**Outcome of the consultation on the cessation of Adult Social Care and
Health and Corporate Services and Transformation Discretionary Grant
funding**

(Cabinet Member Health and Communities)

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 County-wide

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is a key decision because, if the proposed changes are made, it is likely to:

- a) result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function concerned, which is currently defined as £500,000; and
- b) be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions in the county area.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 To summarise the feedback from the recent consultation in relation to the potential cessation of Adult Social Care and Health ('ASCH') and Corporate Services and Transformation ('CST') discretionary grants.
- 3.2 To inform Cabinet of the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessments.
- 3.3 To make recommendations to Cabinet regarding the (ASCH) and (CST) allocation of discretionary grants.

4. Information and Analysis

- 4.1 The Council has a wide range of services through commissioned and directly provided approaches which actively promote well-being and independence. The funding relating to this report is only a small proportion of all services and spend which is delivered by voluntary and community sector organisations.
- 4.2 Like all councils across the country, Derbyshire is facing increasing financial pressures that are outside its control including inflation and an increase in demand for services. This position has significantly changed the context within which the Council allocates its budget, and activity which directly contributes to the delivery of the Council's statutory duties must now be prioritised.
- 4.3 Two reports were approved by Cabinet on 29 April 2024, proposing a consultation on the cessation of discretionary grants as part of the required efficiencies for the period 2024-2029.
- 4.4 Adult Social Care and Health currently provide the following discretionary grants:

Grant Recipient(s)	Grant per Annum (£)
Telephone and 1:1 Befriending Activity	0.161
Social Activity Grants	0.091
Luncheon Clubs	0.007
Bolsover Woodlands Enterprise	0.188
Our Vision, Our Future	0.030
ASCH Infrastructure Grants	0.245
Total	0.722

Corporate Services and Transformation currently provide the following discretionary grants:

Grant Recipient(s)	Grant per Annum (£)
CST Infrastructure Grants	0.207
BME Community Support	0.027
Specialist Advice Services	0.100
Total	0.334

- 4.5 A detailed breakdown of the grants currently awarded to Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) organisations can be found at Appendix 2. Some of the organisations are in receipt of a grant from both ASCH and CST.
- 4.6 For many grants within this proposal, each organisation has a different model of operation and service delivery, responding to the differing needs of the people who draw on their services. There are also other organisations which deliver support and activities in Derbyshire, without receiving any funding from the Council.
- 4.7 Some people who receive or access support through these grants may have eligible needs under the Care Act 2014 and other people who receive or access support through these grants may find this support prevents or delays their needs from becoming eligible under the Care Act 2014. The specific duties under the Care Act 2014 are detailed in Appendix 1 paragraphs 2.2 – 2.15, below.
- 4.8 Following a previous consultation in 2022, Cabinet agreed that all grant funding to groups related to this report would cease, and the Council would instead commission services where required. However, due to budget pressures, commissioning was unable to be carried out. The Council continued to provide grant funding to organisations and those organisations were made aware that this was an interim arrangement, having specific reference to a scheduled end date, and that the organisation should not expect funding beyond the agreed period of the grant.
- 4.9 The Council, like all local authorities up and down the country, is facing significant financial challenges that are outside of its control. These include inflationary pressures; reduced funding from Central Government; high borrowing costs; lack of a financial multi-year settlement which affects planning, and continuing increasing demand on our services, particularly in Adult Care and Children’s Services.

- 4.10 In particular, demand for adult social care support has risen dramatically, with the cost of providing care and support accounting for 48% of the Council's overall spending.
- 4.11 In order to set a balanced budget, as it is legally obliged to do, the Council has implemented a series of financial controls, including tight control over non-essential spend. This position has significantly changed the context within which the Council allocates its budget and it is anticipated that there will be further budget challenges in future years. All areas of the Council are required to deliver in year financial savings and propose further areas for budget savings in future years.
- 4.12 The current financial position and requirement to make additional efficiencies and budget savings means that the Council's statutory duties must now be prioritised.
- 4.13 The Council does not have a specific statutory duty to offer grant funding to the organisations outlined in this report, therefore this spend had been identified as discretionary. A period of consultation was agreed by Cabinet in relation to the potential cessation of these grants.

The Consultation Process

- 4.14 The consultation period lasted for 12 weeks, commencing on 28 May 2024 and closing on 20 August 2024.
- 4.15 The consultation included residents of Derbyshire, people who draw on care and support, current grant recipients and other key stakeholders. All current grant recipients were also contacted and offered one-to-one, or group meetings and a publicly available questionnaire was published online. The questionnaire was available in standard and easy read format and paper copies were provided to organisations and potential respondents, as requested.
- 4.16 The purpose of the consultation was to:
- To consult with the public and others who may be affected by a proposed change, including organisations, people who draw on care and support and other relevant stakeholders.
 - Enable participants to give their views on the proposal to cease discretionary grant funding, and how it may impact upon them, someone they support, their organisation and the wider health and social care system.
 - Enable officers to gain an understanding of the potential impacts of the proposal.

- Enable participants to suggest alternatives to the proposal.
- Enable officers to identify how the potential impacts of the proposal could be mitigated.
- Provide relevant information to inform several Equality Impact Assessments and the content of this report.

4.17 All providers and stakeholders were invited to attend an in-person or online listening event, the purpose of the events was to:

- Ensure stakeholders understood the proposals.
- Gain an understanding of the impact of ceasing discretionary grant funding from relevant stakeholders.
- Enable stakeholders to outline how the policy will impact residents.
- Enable stakeholders to offer viable alternatives within the parameters of the current position for how impact can be mitigated.
- Enable the public to give a view on proposals.

4.18 Engagement included:

- Drop-in public sessions in libraries across the county (12 Sessions).
- Service specific face-to-face or virtual meetings with all infrastructure providers impacted by the proposals (13 meetings).
- Listening events held for the different grant recipients to attend and give feedback (seven events).

Consultation Responses

4.20 The Council received 1,374 responses to the consultation survey form (online and written) and around 120 people attended listening events and engagement meetings.

4.21 91% of all survey respondents either 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' with the proposals.

4.22 A small number of respondents supported the proposal and agreed that statutory services should be prioritised, and the grant recipients should work to diversify funding.

4.23 Responses by grant type:

Grant Type	Number of responses
VCS Infrastructure	152
Befriending	206

BWE	21
Luncheon Clubs	72
OVOF	36
Social Activity	248
BME	104
Specialist Advice	24

4.24 A number of key feedback themes were identified from qualitative responses, including:

- The proposal was shortsighted, and the consequences had not been fully considered.
- The value of the VCS in promoting independence and preventing isolation.
- The potential destabilising impact on the future of the wider sector.
- A reduction in access to VCS support and activities.
- The potential impact on the Council's relationships with the VCS.
- Concern about the potential impact on the mental health and wellbeing of those that access support.
- Suggestions of increased demand for statutory services.
- Concerns about potential reduction in the number of volunteers.

4.25 The full consultation report, with additional analysis, can be found at Appendix 3 and should be read alongside this report. The feedback through consultation has been carefully considered prior to the recommendations within this report being made.

4.26 On 26 August 2024 an e-petition titled 'Save Local Charities and Community Organisations' was submitted. The petition requested a Full Council debate on the proposal. The Council's Petition Scheme (Appendix of the Constitution) states that 7,500 signature are required to trigger a Full Council debate and therefore the 561 signatures received were not sufficient to trigger this. Although the petition was received after the formal consultation closed, the contents of the petition have been noted and considered alongside consultation feedback.

Equality Impact Analyses (EIA)

4.27 In response to the consultation, six EIAs have been completed to understand the impact on protected characteristic groups who may be receiving a service from the currently grant funded organisations across:

- VCS Infrastructure provision (joint CST and ASCH)

- BME Community Support
- Specialist Advice
- Befriending
- Social Activities and Luncheon Clubs; and
- Bolsover Woodlands Enterprise and Our Vision Our Future.

4.28 The EIAs utilise the data from the consultation report to help populate the impact analysis and to develop appropriate mitigations to reduce the impact of any proposed changes, if agreed.

4.29 The EIAs were shared with representatives from Public Health, Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and two Critical Friends to ensure these were accessible and to invite third party feedback on the identified impacts and mitigations.

4.30 The EIAs are set out in Appendix 4 - 9 and should be read alongside this report. The EIAs have been carefully considered (both individually and collectively) prior to the recommendations within this report being made.

Key Considerations

4.31 Whilst the Council is committed to meeting its statutory responsibilities under the Care Act 2014, the spend associated with these grants is considered to be discretionary. The Council has a wide range of services through commissioned and directly provided approaches which actively promote well-being and independence. The grant funding relating to this report is only a small proportion of all services and spend which is delivered by voluntary and community sector organisations.

4.32 Cabinet need to consider that any agreed proposals, actions and mitigations should have a longer-term view on funding. Whilst consultation on funding for the VCS is a key and necessary protection for organisations in receipt of funding and the people who access these services, grant recipients and key stakeholders highlighted that lengthy consultation could become an unconstructive process within a concurrent short budget setting and decision-making window.

4.33 Short term funding was not favoured generally by grant recipients who told us they would prefer longer term funding agreements which offered more security and stability.

4.34 Despite Council officers having spent a significant amount of time reviewing the consultation feedback and potential impact, the depth and breadth of activities and organisations funded through these

discretionary grant payments makes it extremely complex and difficult to make broad statements about the impact of grant cessation. It is recognised that this can be very different for individual organisations and their beneficiaries within the same proposal or thematic area.

- 4.35 Organisations who directly provide services or activities generally find it easier or more straightforward to assess and express the impact of proposals on affected residents, especially where the cessation of funding may subsequently lead to that specific service or activity no longer being provided. Mitigations in these circumstances are also generally more straightforward to understand and develop.
- 4.36 A more complex issue and significant challenge for impact assessment is where discretionary grant funding is being utilised to support or contribute to an organisation's 'core' funding – which can include any spend that contributes to essential organisational and administrative costs. This is especially relevant to the VCS infrastructure grants and those generally funded through the CST budget.
- 4.37 Core funding is particularly valued by the sector because it offers greater flexibility in way that funding can be utilised. However, it is often more challenging to disaggregate spend in a way which supports the Council to accurately ascertain the results of core spend in terms of impact on residents.
- 4.38 Council funding which supports core costs has become an essential part of the funding economy for providers (especially VCS infrastructure). Core funding offsets many costs which support the delivery of a wide range of activity. Some providers indicated that withdrawing core funding will make it increasingly difficult to deliver other commissioned services for the Council and other stakeholders (especially health services). The Council is confident that where it holds commissioned contracts with VCS organisations, they incorporate full cost recovery including reasonable core/management costs. Providers have a responsibility to deliver specified services within the contract value.
- 4.39 Generally, funding for infrastructure provision from both ASCH and CST grants contributes between less than 1% to 22% of infrastructure organisations total income (using available 2022-23 annual accounts). All funded infrastructure organisations hold reserves equating to between three months and more than 12 months running costs as per published annual accounts reviewed through the monitoring process. It should be noted however that several organisations have more recently reported deficit budgets due to reduced funding availability and

increased delivery costs, with an increasing reliance on reserves to offset these.

- 4.40 Whilst the impact on sustainability of each organisation will vary, some respondents reported that organisations may need to reduce services or close altogether if grant funding is withdrawn. For many groups the impact of these proposals is unclear and to some extent unknown – a natural consequence of having these long-term funding payments. Removing a small part of funding across an organisation’s entire business profile is hard to measure through tangible and real term outcomes.

General options and potential mitigations

- 4.41 It is recommended that Cabinet take a consistent and clear approach to managing this provision moving forward, which is to cease any further grant funding to the value of £1.106M. When current funding arrangements expire on 31 March 2025 for all affected organisations, they would not be extended beyond this date. The Council would write to notify all affected organisations, providing them with a minimum of twelve weeks’ notice.

- 4.42 Cabinet should consider how the Council could mitigate the negative impacts of implementing proposals as much as possible, whilst recognising the Council’s need to meet its savings targets.

- 4.43 Potential mitigating actions could be:

- Setting aside funding to commission future activities when the impact of implementing proposals is better understood.
- In-house or third-party organisations delivering similar services or activities in the event that any of the affected organisations close or reduce their capacity.
- Accepting and/or addressing increased costs in other areas of delivery.
- Signposting organisations to other funding opportunities appropriate to the organisations aims and activities.

- 4.44 Adult Social Care and Public Health also have a wide range of other preventative services through commissioned and directly provided approaches, some of which are delivered by voluntary and community sector organisations. These are generally available across the whole of the county and are designed to prevent, reduce and delay the need for more formal support. These include but are not limited to, Home from Hospital Service, Low Level Support Service, Hard of Hearing and

Visual Impairment Support Services, Independent Advocacy, Mental Health Recovery & Peer Support, Health & Wellbeing Coaches, Dementia Information and Advice, Carer information and Advice, Public Health Advisory Service, Better Off Derbyshire, Derbyshire Discretionary Fund and Live Life Better Derbyshire.

- 4.45 The Council also funds locality health and wellbeing partnerships via annual grants. Health and wellbeing partnerships may use their allocated funding to support local groups and initiatives. VCS organisations affected by these proposals may be eligible to apply for short term health and wellbeing funding if their goals align with locality priorities. Applications would be assessed and determined on their own merit.

Impacts and specific mitigations

- 4.46 It is important that where mitigations are developed/agreed, thought needs to be given to ensuring that future work is undertaken by those most affected or best placed to commission activities in the future.

VCS Infrastructure (Joint ASCH & CST)

- 4.47 ASCH currently have 11 infrastructure support grant arrangements and CST currently have 10 grant arrangements with infrastructure providers across 13 organisations throughout the county. The total cost of infrastructure support is currently £452,228.
- 4.48 VCS infrastructure organisations provide the sector with a single front door to offer support as and when needs arise. Organisations provide information, support, guidance, training, funding advice for groups, support to recruit and manage volunteers, promote good practice and provide a VCS perspective to the statutory sector at strategic level forums. These infrastructure organisations can also reach new, small and marginal organisations across the county, and generate feedback and intelligence about the sector.
- 4.49 Consultation highlighted the value placed on the role of these organisations in their ongoing support and development of the sector. Infrastructure providers also support the direct and indirect delivery of community-based services and a withdrawal in funding could have possible operational consequences for other departments and key stakeholders.
- 4.50 This is because these grants contribute towards 'core' or essential organisational and administrative costs, such as staffing, heating and

lighting. Withdrawing funding could impact the long-term financial sustainability of infrastructure organisations which could result in the future closure of some organisations.

- 4.51 Providers also indicated a close relationship between core funding and the capacity to deliver commissioned projects and services and suggested that withdrawing infrastructure funding could therefore impact on other elements of their support offer. This however is difficult to measure overall and developing a service delivery offer is not a desired outcome of infrastructure funding. Any separate contracts commissioned by the Council to Derbyshire VCS organisations have service specific budgets and are subject to open book accounting.
- 4.52 Infrastructure organisations support volunteering and provide a platform from which small grass roots organisations are supported. Volunteering may reduce if funding is withdrawn however there are alternative opportunities for volunteers to engage in other key projects.
- 4.53 Responses to the consultation indicated that infrastructure grant funding enables a VCSE response to provide a contingency for emergencies in localities. It also supports the presence of VCS representatives at strategic meetings on behalf of the sector.
- 4.54 The proposal to withdraw funding for VCS infrastructure would mean it is likely there may be less support for new community start up initiatives. There could also be increased demand for statutory interventions to support people to remain living independently in their own homes.
- 4.55 Despite these potential impacts, infrastructure providers do receive funding from other sources. Providers can also access a variety of alternative sources of funding and new and existing organisations in the VCS can access support online.
- 4.56 All infrastructure organisations appear to have adequate levels of reserves to avoid immediate closure, but these organisations are independent from the Council and should have their own reserves policies which will be monitored and agreed by their trustees.
- 4.57 Officers in ASCH would continue to support Joined Up Care Derbyshire (JUCD) Integrated Care Board conversations to consider the future need for infrastructure, what this should look like and how it should be funded. Whilst the Council would no longer be contributing grant funding to these services, it is committed to being part of these discussions. Considerations should also include discussions on full cost recovery

and reasonable costs associated with the development and delivery of commissioned services.

- 4.58 In line with the JUCD VCSE Alliance Memorandum of Understanding it would be appropriate to co-produce / co-design any future options for infrastructure alongside the VCS sector.
- 4.59 Corporately, VCS infrastructure organisations do have a role to play in strategic and partnership working and the Council does recognise the need for the sector to have a voice and be supported in working with the Council when opportunities arise. If the proposal to withdraw grant funding is agreed, it is proposed that £25,000 of funding is retained in the CST budget to support strategy and partnership objectives. It is recommended that work is undertaken to support the future allocation of this funding.

BME Forum and BME Community Support

- 4.60 CST currently awards a grant to Links CVS to facilitate a method of consultation and engagement with BME communities in Derbyshire through the BME Forum. The Council also makes five annual grants to BME VCS organisations. These grants support core costs for each group which supports the capacity of the BME sector.
- 4.61 The grant to Links CVS funds costs associated with the Forum and also funds specific projects to address gaps in provision/support as identified by the BME forum.
- 4.62 Direct grants to BME Groups contribute to core running costs. Each grant recipient is subject to a set of funding conditions and a service level agreement which outlines basic requirements, such as attending and engaging with the BME Forum and submitting regular monitoring information about their activity and the communities they work with.
- 4.63 Due to the nature of BME consultation funding, it is likely that the proposal would impact on the Council's ability to access BME communities when developing/changing services or carrying out consultation, if the BME Forum were to change or cease as a result of withdrawing funding. Council departments and other stakeholders regularly use the Forum to engage and consult with BME communities on a range of issues including when policies or services are being initiated or changed. The Council risks becoming disconnected from these BME communities, leading to policies and services that did not reflect their cultural needs and concerns. There would be a significant

loss of cultural competence within the Council and reduced engagement levels would impact the diversity of voices in public consultations, community initiatives, and local governance.

- 4.64 In the Council's strategic approach to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion, which Cabinet approved on 13 June 2024, the Council agreed the following statement:

'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Derbyshire County Council means that all colleagues and our communities will have a voice, ensuring we listen and engage, shape and respond to enable an inclusive culture. As a result, our inclusive culture will ensure equality, diversity and inclusion underpins our planning and service delivery leading to improved outcomes for our communities.'

- 4.65 The Council's equality objectives have a key commitment to understand all of our diverse communities and use that understanding to shape organisational policy and practice. Engaging and consulting with the BME community is key to supporting this principle within our corporate approach to resident's voice and EDI.
- 4.66 Whilst grants would be withdrawn from these organisations, it is proposed that £25,000 of funding is retained in the CST budget to support the equality objective as described. It is recommended that work is undertaken to support the future allocation of this funding.

Specialist Advice Services

- 4.67 CST currently awards three annual grants for specialist advice services to Derbyshire Law Centre and Citizens Advice Mid Mercia. Citizens Advice Mid Mercia receive an annual grant to support its core costs in providing specialist legal advice and assistance in South Derbyshire. Derbyshire Law Centre receive an annual grant to support its core costs in providing specialist legal advice, assistance and representation throughout the county. They also receive an annual grant to support core costs in providing specialist employment advice services within the county.
- 4.68 Specialist advice services enable some disadvantaged or vulnerable residents to access free of charge legal support, advice and representation on a range of issues.
- 4.69 Citizens Advice Mid Mercia provide specialist employment advice and assistance in South Derbyshire, equating to 67 cases annually.

- 4.70 Derbyshire Law Centre ('DLC') receive two annual grants to support its core costs in providing specialist legal advice, assistance and representation throughout the county supporting around 500 cases annually and provide specialist employment advice services within the South of the county (Derbyshire Dales, Amber Valley and Erewash) supporting 134 cases annually.
- 4.71 Whilst support is not targeted at specific groups, monitoring information from DLC and previous consultation feedback as part of the VCS grants review indicates that clients receive support on a range of issues that are likely to impact protected characteristic groups.
- 4.72 Both organisations receive funding from a range of sources and available monitoring information generally reflects all provision from the funded organisations rather than activity specifically facilitated through the application of DCC core funding.
- 4.73 Monitoring information indicates that funding assists DLC to supports more than 1000 cases per year, providing both face to face and remote consultations in a variety of formats depending on the needs of clients. DLC also provides daily specialist telephone advice in housing, homelessness, discrimination and employment and weekly specialist telephone advice service in debt and Immigration law. DLC also operate Legal Aid Agency contracts in housing/homelessness, discrimination law and immigration.
- 4.74 Withdrawal of funding could lead to change to service provision to guard against long term deficits in core expenditure. This will place further pressure on DLC's ability to operate legal aid contracts across Derbyshire for the benefit of those on low and unstable incomes.
- 4.75 Advice service grants are awarded by CST as part of a mixed economy approach with services delivered by both the Council and the VCS.
- 4.76 Where appropriate, Derbyshire residents could continue to access Council commissioned services including the Welfare Rights service and Low Level Support service which offer a mixture of practical support, signposting and advocacy support.
- 4.77 There are other specialist advice services that are not funded by the Council which residents may be able to access. Residents can also access alternative local and national organisations that provide legal advice including but not limited to Derbyshire Citizens Advice, Law Works and Advice Now. There are also legal firms in and around

Derbyshire which offer legal aid contracts in appropriate circumstances. Specialist employment advice can be accessed through organisations such as ACAS - Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service and organisations including Migrant Help UK and the Red Cross can offer support with immigration and asylum issues.

Befriending Services

- 4.78 ASCH provides discretionary grant funding to 11 voluntary sector organisations across Derbyshire to provide befriending support. Befriending services seek to decrease social isolation for those who may be isolated through illness, disability, mental illness, old age or social disadvantage. The grant from the Council is currently the sole funding stream for these eleven services with some supplementing this income with charitable donations and some levying a charge to individuals receiving a service. However, many of the organisations are brought together by South Derbyshire CVS as the 'Derbyshire Befriending', a Community Benefit Society, which includes other organisations who are not funded by the Council and enables them to seek alternative funding as a joint legal entity.
- 4.79 The proposal to withdraw funding for Befriending is likely to have a negative impact on residents, as capacity for this type of support may reduce. Some of those receiving befriending support are likely to experience the loss of social contact leading to increased social isolation and mental ill health. Carers of those receiving these services are also likely to be impacted by having to give up more time to support their loved ones.
- 4.80 Providers have reported that not all residents who access befriending live alone and some do have alternative social networks. There are other telephone befriending services such as the Silver Line which is a national free befriending telephone helpline. There are also a range of community groups that support people with social isolation.
- 4.81 The Ready Call Service operated by Connex in High Peak and Derbyshire Dales offer befriending support to those with life limiting conditions. They have recently been awarded funding from the National Lottery to sustain their offer for a further three years and this service could be accessed by some residents who meet the criteria.
- 4.82 People can also be signposted to other adult social care commissioned services including but not limited to, Low Level Support Service, Home from Hospital Service, Derbyshire Recovery and Peer Support Service,

Derbyshire Dementia Information and Advice Service which all have capacity to take additional referrals and people are able to self-refer. These services offer a mixture of practical support, wellbeing, signposting and advocacy support. We would work with current grant funded providers to support signposting individuals to these services if any services were to end.

- 4.83 Current befriending provision is not equitable across Derbyshire and if proposals to withdraw grant funding are approved, it is likely to have a different impact across different areas, especially if some providers also lose infrastructure grant funding at the same time.
- 4.84 The inequity in grant funding has needed to be addressed for some time and this is acknowledged by both the Council and by providers of befriending services.
- 4.85 For those people who meet the relevant criteria, in-house ASCH services including Community Connectors and Enablement workers could support people to access activities in their local communities providing a further mitigation.
- 4.86 Derbyshire residents would also be able to access the Derbyshire Day Service Framework to purchase day support and wellbeing support or seek companionship through the Public Health commissioned Time Swap scheme.

Social Activities and Luncheon Clubs

- 4.87 ASCH provides a discretionary grant to seven voluntary sector organisations across Derbyshire to provide social inclusion activity. These grants fund a range of different social activity support, outreach information and advice to increase independent living across Derbyshire.
- 4.88 The Council also provides small grants which contribute towards supporting 54 small Luncheon Clubs across Derbyshire. The Luncheon Clubs are led by volunteers and provide an opportunity for members to come together to socialise and have a meal.
- 4.89 The proposal to withdraw funding to current social activity providers and luncheon clubs is likely to affect their sustainability and may result in some service provision ending including:
- Information and advice roadshows in community settings.

- Social opportunities and peer support for people in Chesterfield, Glossop and Swadlincote.
 - Social car schemes in South Derbyshire and High Peak.
 - Drop in advice and assisted shopping in Glossop.
 - Access to luncheon clubs and warm spaces over winter.
- 4.90 Withdrawing funding for Social Activities and Luncheon Clubs would likely result in a negative impact on residents as capacity for this type of support may reduce. Those receiving this support are likely to experience the loss of social contact leading to increased social isolation and potentially mental ill health. Carers of those receiving these services are also likely to be impacted by having to give up more time to provide additional support to those they care for.
- 4.91 Despite these potential impacts, there are other social activities, befriending schemes, luncheon clubs and self-help groups that are not funded by the Council which residents may be able to access. The Derbyshire Directory contains information about a whole range of social and community groups.
- 4.92 VCS providers can apply for funding from other sources which may enable them to continue providing this type of support.
- 4.93 Many luncheon clubs indicated during the consultation they would look to continue their offer by increasing charges to their members. Community car schemes indicated they may also increase their charges to help cover additional costs, but with no indication of what those increases would be.
- 4.94 Many Derbyshire residents receive a transport component of their Disability Support benefits that could pay for transport. Derbyshire residents would also be able to access the Derbyshire Day Service Framework to purchase day support and wellbeing support.
- 4.95 The proposal to end this grant funding would reduce the inequity of discretionary grant funding and enable the Council to focus its available resources on statutory Care Act duties via commissioned services.

Bolsover Woodlands Enterprise (BWE)

- 4.96 BWE is a unique and specialist service which currently has the capacity to support up to 36 people with learning disabilities to develop and promote their independence and gain practical work-based skills and

experience in teamworking, health and safety, conservation, woodlands management and woodworking.

- 4.97 People spoke about the positive impact BWE has on the people with a learning disability who access the service and everyone's contribution to the local community and Derbyshire residents, derived from the work they complete. People also told officers about the wider potential financial impact which could result in increased costs to DCC and other organisations.
- 4.98 To potentially mitigate against closure if the proposal is approved, BWE have stated their intention to introduce a daily charge to access the service - currently estimated to be £75 per day – the final figure will depend upon how many people could afford to pay the charge, either personally or via a personal budget derived from an assessment of needs under the Care Act 2014.
- 4.99 Some people may have Care Act eligible needs which generate a personal budget sufficient to cover the full cost of their existing place(s) at BWE. However, others expressed their concerns about not being able to afford to pay for their place(s) if charges were introduced.
- 4.100 People expressed concern about:
- The loss of friendships and social contact leading to increased social isolation and mental ill health.
 - Reduced ability to learn skills and being proud of the work and team's accomplishments.
 - Not being able to find a comparable alternative which meets people's needs.
- 4.101 Carers expressed concern about a possible reduction in respite from their caring role, they may need to leave work to care for the person they support and the financial impact if they need to self-fund continued attendance at BWE.
- 4.102 If the proposal to withdraw discretionary grants is approved, the primary mitigations which could have the most beneficial impact could include, subject to consent, working towards maximising people's personal budgets (where applicable) and other income to generate sufficient funding to maintain existing levels of attendance, subject to confirmation of eligibility and need and/or working with individuals to support them to access alternative opportunities in their local community This may include:
- Referrals to the Welfare Rights Service to ensure benefits are maximised; and

- Completion of needs assessments (or reviews of existing assessments where applicable) in accordance with the Care Act 2014; and
- Completion of Carers assessments or review of existing assessment in accordance with the Care Act 2014.

Our Vision, Our Future (OVOF)

- 4.103 OVOF is a user led, independent, self-advocacy organisation which currently supports sixty-one adults with a learning disability. The group works to promote independence, organise activities, champion self-help, self-advocacy, prevention and provides opportunities for professionals to improve their understanding of people with a learning disability and their needs, through ‘experts by experience’, i.e. training delivered by people who attend OVOF.
- 4.104 The listening event and survey responses illustrated the importance of this service to the people who access the service and their supporters, including their frustration and anxieties around the proposal to withdraw OVOF’s grant funding and the potential for the service to close if approved. In common with BWE, OVOF is considered to provide a specialist service which cannot be found elsewhere in Derbyshire.
- 4.105 To mitigate against the potential impacts of the proposal, OVOF could continue to apply for alternative sources of funding to support the service but have also said they may have to consider increasing their current daily charge from £10, to £20.
- 4.106 Some people may have Care Act eligible needs which generate a personal budget sufficient to cover the full cost of their existing place(s) at OVOF. However, others expressed their concerns about not being able to afford to pay for their place(s) if an increase in charges were introduced and may not be able to attend as often as they do now.
- 4.107 People attending OVOF expressed concern about the potential loss of friendships and activities, skills and confidence, increased isolation, loss of motivation and increased dependency on other services.
- 4.108 Carers told us of their concerns that they need groups such as OVOF to enable them to have some respite and other carers suggested may need to leave work to care for the person they support.
- 4.109 If the proposal to withdraw discretionary grants is approved, the primary mitigations which could have the most beneficial impact would include, subject to consent, working towards maximising people’s budgets

(where applicable) and other income to generate sufficient funding to maintain existing levels of attendance, subject to confirmation of eligibility and need and/or working with individuals to support them to access alternative opportunities in their local community. This may include:

- Referrals to the Welfare Rights Service to ensure benefits are maximised; and
- Completion of needs assessments (or reviews of existing assessments where applicable) in accordance with the Care Act 2014; and
- Completion of Carers assessments or review of existing assessment in accordance with the Care Act 2014.

4.110 The Council will continue to offer an assessment of social care need and this will be offered as part of the transition towards ending the BWE and OVOF grants if these proposals are agreed.

5. Consultation

5.1 The Council conducted a public consultation exercise, including consultation with the current recurring grant recipients, between 28 May 2024 and 20 August 2024. The detail of the responses received, and analysis has been described in the body of the report with full analysis and consultation findings set out at Appendix 3.

5.2 The Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – ‘People’ were given the opportunity to consider the consultation and provide its views to Cabinet. On 30th October 2024, the Committee considered and noted the public consultation undertaken and the key themes raised.

6. Alternative Options Considered

6.1 Do Nothing: The Council could continue to fund all current discretionary grants. This option would not allow ASCH or CST to achieve the budget savings set out in the 11 January 2024 Budget Cabinet report and could impact on the Council’s ability to meet its statutory duties.

6.2 Reduce Grants: The Council could continue to fund some or all of the discretionary grants at a reduced level. This option would not allow ASCH or CST to achieve the budget savings set out in the 11 January 2024 Budget Cabinet report and could impact on the Council’s ability to meet its statutory duties.

- 6.3 Commission: The Council could consider replacing discretionary grants with commissioned services. This was the outcome of the previous consultation; however, the current budgetary position does not allow for this option as this would not achieve the efficiencies required to be made by ASCH or CST as outlined in the January 2024 Budget Cabinet Report and could impact on the Council's ability to meet its statutory duties. The Council will continue to engage with the VCS around future commissioning opportunities and encourage them to bid for these where possible via the usual procurement processes.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Report to Cabinet – Voluntary and Community Sector Review 30 July 2020
- 8.2 Report to Cabinet – Voluntary and Community Sector Review 29 July 2021
- 8.3 Report to Cabinet – Voluntary and Community Sector Review 6 December 2021
- 8.4 Report to Cabinet – Voluntary and Community Sector Review 28 July 2022
- 8.5 Report to Corporate Management Team – Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review and Infrastructure Provision Update 15 November 2022
- 8.6 Report to Cabinet Member ASCH - Interim Grant for Befriending Services - 7 December 2023
- 8.7 Report to Cabinet Member ASCH - Interim Grant for Social Activity Services - 7 December 2023
- 8.8 Report to Cabinet – Budget Savings Proposals 2024/25 to 2028/29, 11 January 2024
- 8.9 Report to Cabinet Member ASCH – Interim Grant for Our Vision our Future – 29 February 2024
- 8.10 Report to Cabinet – VCS Infrastructure Provision 2024-25 14 March 2024
- 8.11 Report to Cabinet – Proposal to consult on the cessation of ASCH Discretionary grants 29 April 2024

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Implications
Appendix 2 – List of current grants

10. Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the outcomes of the full report on the consultation responses and detailed analysis of the feedback in Appendix 3 and the Equality Impact Analyses in Appendix 4-9.
- b) Approves the recommendation to cease all existing discretionary grant funding arrangements set out in this report after 31 March 2025 totalling £1.106M.
- c) Notes that £25,000 of funding will be retained in the CST budget to support the Council's strategy and partnership objective.
- d) Notes that £25,000 of funding will be retained in the CST budget to support the Council's equality objective.

11 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 11.1 Many of the discretionary grants outlined in this paper were originally awarded over twenty years ago. Since then, Derbyshire's population has changed and people's aspirations, needs and preferences for support have also changed. There has been inequity in terms of discretionary grants for some time now.
- 11.2 The current financial challenges facing the Council means it's essential that the limited funding available is spent on statutory duties. Delivery of the savings and efficiency proposals is critical to the financial sustainability of the Council.
- 11.3 The consultation has gathered the vital intelligence needed to inform Cabinet's decision making. The Equality Impact Analyses have demonstrated the potential impacts of removing discretionary grants. The Council is satisfied that there are sufficient services available in the wider market to meet the Council's duties under the Care Act.

12 Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

- a. No

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Implications**Financial****Adult Social Care and Health**

- 1.1 The 2024-25 Approved Revenue Budget includes efficiencies of £0.881m over the financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26, in relation to the discretionary grants outlined in this report. The efficiencies can be partly realised through withdrawing uncommitted voluntary sector grants - £0.159m for 2024-25 and ongoing. For 2025-26, achieving the proposed efficiencies will depend on withdrawing the grants totalling £0.722m as set out in the tables below.

Total Discretionary Grant Expenditure	Grant per annum (£)
Telephone and 1-1 Befriending Activity	0.161m
Social Activity Grants	0.091m
Luncheon Clubs	0.007m
Bolsover Woodlands Enterprise	0.188m
Our Vision, Our Future	0.030m
ASCH Infrastructure Grants	0.245m
Total	0.722m

- 1.2 The total discretionary grant funding by individual service is detailed in the tables below.

Telephone and 1-1 Befriending Activity	Grant per annum (£)
Age Concern (Chesterfield, NED, Bolsover)	10,741
Age UK Derby & Derbyshire (Erewash)	4,500
Age UK Derby & Derbyshire (High Peak and Dales)	48,099
Amber Valley CVS	6,457
Connex Community Support (High Peak and Dales)	3,000
Derbyshire Dales Careline	2,010
Erewash Voluntary Action CVS	3,000
Erewash Voluntary Action CVS (extended service)	31,711
New Mills Volunteer Centre (High Peak)	250
South Derbyshire CVS	33,848
The Volunteer Centre (Chesterfield)	17,036
Total	160,652

Social Activity to prevent Isolation	Grant per annum (£)
African Caribbean Community Association	20,282
Age UK Information for Older People Roadshow	19,547
Borrowbrook Homelink	2,800
Mencap Swadlincote Gateway Club	2,675
The Bureau (Volunteer Centre Glossop)	21,936
Connex Community Support	16,306
South Derbyshire CVS	7,406
Total	90,952

Luncheon Clubs	2023/24 (£)
54 small luncheon clubs across Derbyshire	6,557
Total	6,557

Bolsover Woodlands Enterprise	Grant per annum (£)
Bolsover	188,310
Total	188,310

Our Vision Our Future	Grant per annum (£)
Chesterfield	30,375
Total	30,375

ASCH Infrastructure Grants	Grant per annum (£)
Amber Valley CVS	32,518
<i>This organisation is also in receipt of a CST infrastructure grant as highlighted at paragraph 4.3</i>	
Bassetlaw CVS (Bolsover District)	7,110
<i>This organisation is also in receipt of a CST infrastructure grant as highlighted at paragraph 4.3</i>	
Connex Community Support	27,236
Derbyshire Dales CVS	21,515
<i>This organisation is also in receipt of a CST infrastructure grant as highlighted at paragraph 4.3</i>	
Derbyshire Voluntary Action	18,166
<i>This organisation is also in receipt of a CST infrastructure grant as highlighted at paragraph 4.3</i>	
Erewash Voluntary Action CVS	57,095
<i>This organisation is also in receipt of a CST infrastructure grant as highlighted at paragraph 4.3</i>	

High Peak CVS	4,124
<i>This organisation is also in receipt of a CST infrastructure grant as highlighted at paragraph 4.3</i>	
New Mills Volunteer Centre (High Peak)	21,513
South Derbyshire CVS	36,884
<i>This organisation is also in receipt of a CST infrastructure grant as highlighted at paragraph 4.3</i>	
The Bureau (Volunteer Centre Glossop)	19,175
Total	245,336

Corporate Services and Transformation

- 1.3 The 2024-25 Approved Revenue Budget for CST includes efficiencies of £1.595m over the 2025-26 financial year. In relation to the discretionary grants outlined in this report the efficiencies can be partly realised through withdrawing funding set out in the tables below.

Total Discretionary Grant Expenditure	Grant per annum (£)
CST Infrastructure Grants	0.207
BME Community Support	0.027
Specialist Advice Services	0.100
Total	0.304

- 1.4 The total discretionary grant funding by individual service is detailed in the tables below.

VCS Infrastructure	Grant per annum (£)
Amber Valley CVS	15,378
Bassetlaw CVS (Bolsover District)	34,390
Chesterfield Volunteer Centre	23,471
Derbyshire Dales CVS	15,378
Derbyshire Voluntary Action	5,305
Erewash Voluntary Action CVS	15,378
High Peak CVS	15,378
Links CVS	36,058
South Derbyshire CVS	15,378
Rural Action Derbyshire	15,378
BME Infrastructure (Links CVS)	15,400

BME Consultation and Community Support	Grant per annum (£)
Asian Association	3,744
Chesterfield African Caribbean Community Association	2,744
Chesterfield Muslim Association	1,821

Derbyshire Chinese Welfare Association	2,186
Muslim Welfare Association	1,821
Links CVS	13,224

Specialist Advice Services

	Grant per annum (£)
Derbyshire Law Centre	90,124
Citizens Advice Mid-Mercia	10,400

- 1.5 As outlined in the report, the Strategy and Policy Budget will retain an allocation of £50,000. This funding can be utilised to support work associated with strategic partnership working and it will be for the Strategy and Policy to fund some activities which were previously delivered through a grant.
- 1.6 This funding has not yet been committed and no spend has been made against this allocation to date. It will be for the Strategy and Policy team to determine and agree a future approach through appropriate delegations.

Legal

- 2.1 The Council has the power to provide grants to voluntary and community sector organisations under the general power of competence set out in section 1 Localism Act 2011, but there is no statutory duty to provide grants to these voluntary organisations.
- 2.2 Whilst there is no statutory duty to specifically award these grants, it is noted that the majority of these organisations provide preventative services, and some provide support to individuals with eligible care and support needs. The Care Act 2014 places statutory duties on local authorities in this respect. Section 78 Care Act 2014 provides that a local authority must act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State; the Care and Support Statutory Guidance ('the Statutory Guidance'). Local authorities must follow this guidance unless they have very strong reasons for not doing so. A departure from the guidance would be unlawful unless there is cogent reason for it, and the greater the departure, the more compelling the reason must be.
- 2.3 Section 1 Care Act 2014 places a general duty on local authorities to promote an individual's well-being whenever it exercises a function under Part 1 Care Act 2014. This duty is triggered in relation to these proposals.

- 2.4 Well-being is not defined within statute, but it is a broad concept. Section 1(2) Care Act 2014 lists nine particular aspects of well-being as follows:
- a) personal dignity (including treatment of the individual with respect);
 - b) physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
 - c) protection from abuse and neglect;
 - d) control by the individual over day-to-day life (including over care and support, or support, provided to the individual and the way in which it is provided);
 - e) participation in work, education, training or recreation;
 - f) social and economic well-being;
 - g) domestic, family and personal relationships;
 - h) suitability of living accommodation;
 - i) the individual's contribution to society.
- 2.5 The Care and Support Statutory Guidance states that the well-being principle applies equally to those with eligible social care needs and those who do not have eligible social care needs but come into contact with the system in some other way. It should inform the delivery of services to the community as a whole and should be considered when the local authority undertakes broader, strategic, functions such as this proposal.
- 2.6 In exercising a function under Part 1 Care Act 2014, local authorities must also have regard to (amongst other things) the importance of preventing or delaying the development of needs for care and support or needs for support and the importance of reducing needs of either kind that already exist.
- 2.7 Section 2 Care Act 2014 reiterates this duty and states that local authorities must provide or arrange for the provision of services, facilities or resources, or take other steps, which it considers will:
- a) contribute towards preventing or delaying the development by adults in its area of needs for care and support;
 - b) contribute towards preventing or delaying the development by carers in its area of needs for support;
 - c) reduce the needs for care and support of adults in its area;
 - d) reduce the needs for support of carers in its area.
- 2.8 This preventative duty is owed to all adults, including those who do not currently have any care and support needs, those with eligible needs and carers. The policy aim is to reduce the future burden on local authorities of more substantial support packages.

- 2.9 The Statutory Guidance is very clear that prevention is critical to the vision in the Care Act and that the system should actively promote well-being and independence, not just wait to respond when people reach crisis point. It also advocates the ‘co-production’ of preventative approaches, not just in relation to individual support packages but also when services are designed, commissioned and delivered so as to ensure services reflect what the people who use them want.
- 2.10 There is no single definition for ‘prevention’ but the Statutory Guidance breaks it down into three approaches:
- a) Primary prevention – aimed at individuals who have no current health or care needs but services may help an individual avoid developing needs for care and support. These are generally universal services which may include, but are not limited to, befriending schemes or community activities.
 - b) Secondary prevention – more targeted interventions aimed at individuals who have an increased risk of developing needs and services may help to slow down or reduce further deterioration or prevent other needs from developing. This could include, but is not limited to, telecare services, adaptations to housing and handyman services.
 - c) Tertiary prevention – interventions aimed at minimising the effect of disability or deterioration for people with established or complex health conditions; supporting people to regain skills and manage or reduce need where possible. This could include, but is not limited to, rehabilitation/reablement services and respite.
- 2.11 Section 2(2) Care Act 2014 states that local authorities must have regard to what is already available in the authority’s area and the extent to which the authority could involve or make use of that local resource in performing this duty. These readily available services, facilities and resources may form part of the overall local approach to preventative activity.
- 2.12 The Statutory Guidance states that local authorities should develop a clear, local approach to prevention which sets out how they plan to fulfil this responsibility. Should the proposal to cease all grants be approved, the Council must take into account the potential impact on the availability of preventative services, facilities and resources in the local area. There must be sufficient services, facilities or resources to adequately fulfil the prevention duty.

- 2.13 In addition, section 5 Care Act 2014 places a further duty on local authorities to promote the efficient and effective operation of a market in services for meeting care and support needs with a view to ensuring that any person in its areas wishing to access services:
- a) has a variety of providers to choose from who (taken together) provide a variety of services;
 - b) has a variety of high quality services to choose from;
 - c) has sufficient information to make an informed decision about how to meet the needs in questions.
- 2.14 The Statutory Guidance is clear that the preventative duty under section 2 Care Act 2014 extends to how the authority facilitates and commissions services and how it works with other local organisations to build community capital and make the most of the skills and resources already available in the local area.
- 2.15 This report highlights that some of these organisations may not just be providing a preventative service but may also be meeting the needs of some individuals with eligible needs. Section 18 Care Act 2014 provides that where an individual is assessed as having eligible needs, there is a duty to meet those needs. Should the voluntary grants be withdrawn, and an organisation cease to operate or reduce their capacity, the local authority will continue to be under a duty to meet an individual's eligible needs and alternative arrangements must be made. This would need to take into account (amongst other things), the outcomes the individual wishes to achieve and the impact on their well-being. The Care Act 2014 is not prescriptive in terms of how needs should be met and the concept is a broad one. However, the statutory guidance is clear that the process should be person-centred and all reasonable steps should be taken to agree the plan with the person.
- 2.16 A period of consultation has concluded and the feedback summarised. Cabinet will need to consider the views expressed during that consultation process prior to making any decision.
- 2.17 In considering these proposals, the Council should also have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty ('PSED') under the Equality Act 2010. The PSED requires public authorities to have "due regard" to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010 (*section 149(1) (a)*).

- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (*section 149(1) (b)*). This involves having due regard to the need to:
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it (*section 149(4)*); and
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (*section 149(1)(C)*).

2.18 Regard must therefore be had to the Equality Impact Analyses (EIA), as referenced within the report, so as to ensure that any adverse impact along with any potential mitigation can be properly considered prior to a decision being made.

Human Resources

- 3.1 The voluntary and community sector organisations currently in receipt of grant funding from the Council, as described in this report, are independent of the Council and therefore there are no human resources considerations for the Council. However, there could be human resources implications for individual organisations and staff affected by the proposal. These should be considered by the employing organisation.
- 3.2 Managing the grants within the Adult Care Contracts team used to be part of an FTE G8 Purchasing Officer role. Staffing within the Contracts team has already been reduced by not recruiting to vacancies as a consequence of reduced activity, therefore no human resource implications are anticipated for ASC staffing.
- 3.3 Managing these grants within the Strategy and Policy team requires significant capacity and capability across the team. A Grade 14 Policy Manager and Grade 11 Senior Policy Officer have currently been undertaking this review as part of their role. If these grants are withdrawn, it is anticipated that capacity and capability can be reorientated towards the wider remit of the Strategy and Policy function, which is currently under resourced.

Information Technology

4.1 None

Equalities Impact

5.1 Six EIA's have been undertaken. The EIAs and their findings can be found at Appendix 4-9 of this report. Separate equality impact assessments have been completed for each area of funding due to the variety of services and the level of feedback received to ensure that the impact has been fully considered. All of these equality impact assessments have also been considered alongside one another to allow for the cumulative impact to be understood.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

6.1 The Council has to deliver a balanced budget each year and the cessation of discretionary grants following review, has been identified as necessary to deliver efficiencies to meet the requirement.