

# Equality Impact Analysis Record Form 2024 – Derbyshire County Council

## Introduction and context

Policy/ Service under development/ review	Discretionary Grant Funding – VCS Infrastructure		
Department/ Corporate	Corporate Services and Transformation / Adult Social Care and Health		
Lead officer	Rob Lowe – Policy Manager (CST)		
EIA Team:	<p>Jodie Harrison, Senior Policy Officer (CST)</p> <p>Sue Whetton, Group Manager (ASCH)</p> <p>Phil Wall, Commissioning Manager (ASCH)</p> <p>Rachel Moss, Senior Commissioning Officer (ASCH)</p> <p>Representative from Derby &amp; Derbyshire ICB has reviewed the EIA</p> <p>Critical Friend from the Voluntary Sector has reviewed the EIA</p>		
Date analysis commenced:	28/05/24	Date completed:	24/10/24
		Date approved:	

## Part 1. About the service/ policy or function and the reason for the EIA

What is the purpose of the service, policy or function?
<p>The Council has supported the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Derbyshire for a significant period of time, helping to ensure that local people can continue to contribute to and improve their communities.</p> <p>The Council supports local people and communities in many different ways, including by providing services directly and by commissioning other organisations (including VCS organisations) to provide them, either on its own or in partnership with other key stakeholders. Another way in which the Council supports local people and communities is by providing funding to organisations (usually VCS organisations) by way of grants.</p>

All Council departments utilise the sector to support the delivery of its services, to some extent. The VCS has been a key partner and stakeholder for the Council in developing and delivering community-based activities and delivering commissioned services.

Whilst many voluntary organisations and charities operate effectively without any assistance, some groups have required varying levels of support to establish themselves, grow and thrive. VCS organisations use a variety of business and delivery models to provide activities and services in a community setting. Some organisations have mixed funding models, some have mixed delivery models and some have both, however some groups exist solely for one purpose and/or rely heavily on grant funding to maintain their activity or service provision.

In broad terms, a grant is a gift of funds which is provided by the Council to an organisation, usually to enable it to engage in a specific, pre-agreed activity. The activity usually involves the provision of goods or services to known or unknown third parties (such as members of the public or members of a particular group or community). Generally, the recipient of a grant is not under an obligation to provide specific goods or services, although a grant might be subject to conditions, such as a condition which allows the Council to claw back any part of the grant which has not been spent on the specific activity for which it was intended or if the grant has been incorrectly used.

Six separate equality impact assessments have been completed for each area of funding due to the variety of services and activity funded and the level of feedback received to ensure that the impact has been fully considered. All six equality impact assessments have been considered alongside one another to allow for the cumulative impact to be understood.

### **VCS Infrastructure funding**

Eleven Infrastructure VCS grants are currently funded from the CST budget and 10 from the ASCH budget. The infrastructure funding supports the core business of 13 VCS organisations and their activities. Organisations have received uncontested direct award annual grants for a significant period (some for up to 30 years), meaning that grant recipients have not had to apply for this funding or take part in a competitive award process – although this funding has been subject to previous review. Funding is generally provided for the same activity each year and is awarded to the same organisations.

Below is a table of the VCS infrastructure grants included within the discretionary grants proposal and consultation:

<b>VCS Infrastructure (Joint funded ASCH and CST)</b>	<b>Grant per annum (£)</b>		<b>Area</b>
	<b>ASCH</b>	<b>CST</b>	
Amber Valley CVS	32,518	15,378	Amber Valley
Bassetlaw CVS (Bolsover District)	7,110	34,390	Bolsover
Chesterfield Volunteer Centre	N/A	23,471	Chesterfield

Connex Community Support	27,236	N/A	High Peak
Derbyshire Dales CVS	21,515	15,378	Derbyshire Dales
Derbyshire Voluntary Action	18,166	5,305	Chesterfield
Erewash Voluntary Action CVS	57,095	15,378	Erewash
High Peak CVS	4,124	15,378	High Peak
Links CVS	N/A	36,058	Chesterfield
New Mills Volunteer Centre (High Peak)	21,513	N/A	High Peak
South Derbyshire CVS	36,884	15,378	South Derbyshire
The Bureau (Volunteer Centre Glossop)	19,175	N/A	High Peak
Rural Action Derbyshire	N/A	15,378	Countywide
BME Infrastructure (Links CVS)	N/A	15,400	Countywide

Organisations receive funding to 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. The ICB also commissions VCS infrastructure support with a total separate investment of £595,575 per year.

Each funded organisation is subject to an annual grant agreement which sets out the terms and conditions on which funding is provided by the Council and the purpose of the grant, which is to provide a contribution towards VCS infrastructure support. The grant agreement sets out the expectations on each organisation in relation to basic principles such as financial control and monitoring, confidentiality and data protection. The agreement also provides a description of services to be provided and the high-level outcomes and objectives of infrastructure support in delivering this which are:

1. **Sector Support** - Derbyshire's Voluntary Community Sector is supported to grow and develop, enabling residents to contribute to social and cultural opportunities which enhances their lives and the lives of others.
2. **Volunteer support** - There are increased pathways to volunteering which give opportunities to individuals to contribute to their community and enhances the sectors contribution across the county.
3. **Volunteer support** - VCS organisations can be supported to contribute to the strategic priorities of the funding organisations.

The agreements state that the grant contributes towards costs such as staffing, heating and lighting, subject to, and in accordance with, the terms of the Agreement. Funding that can be used in this way is often referred to as 'core' or 'unrestricted' funding and can include any spend that contributes to essential organisational and administrative costs. This type of funding is particularly valued by the sector because it offers greater flexibility, encourages investment and enables organisations to adapt and grow. However, it does not appeal to many grant makers as it requires trust and confidence that funding will be spent in a way that aligns to the intended objective and it is often more challenging to accurately ascertain the results of core spend in terms of impact.

As well as general sector wide support, two infrastructure providers are funded to work with specific communities. Links CVS receive grants to provide general infrastructure support and BME infrastructure support and Rural Action Derbyshire (RAD) receive a grant to provide specialist rural infrastructure support across the county.

Are there any proposals to change these?

### **Financial position of the Council**

Since the 2022 VCS Funding Review was concluded and the new commissioning approach agreed, the Council has faced significant financial challenges. The Council has a legal obligation to deliver a balanced budget and a projected overspend for 2024-25 has significantly changed the context within which the Council allocates its budget and funds the provision of services.

It is anticipated that there will be further budget challenges, and all areas of the Council are required to deliver in-year financial savings and propose further areas for budget savings. The current financial position and requirement to make additional efficiencies and budget savings means that activity which directly contributes to the delivery of the Council's statutory duties within a balanced budget, must now be prioritised.

As the Council does not have a specific statutory duty to provide grant funding, this spend has been identified as discretionary and non-essential.

It was proposed that given this context, VCS discretionary grant funding is ceased and no longer provided to current grant recipients beyond the current award end date of 31 March 2025. This includes grant funding for the provision of infrastructure support. A period of consultation was authorised by Cabinet from 28 May 2024 to 20 August 2024 to help the Council understand the impact of this proposal which will affect support to some community based preventative services.

### **Culminative effect of other Proposals submitted to for consideration by Cabinet**

It is important to note that there are other proposals which may also impact on some of those people who are considered as part of this equality impact assessment. These include:

- Proposed redesign of residential care and day opportunities for older people (Adult Care) - to be decided by Cabinet on 14 November 2024
- Proposed redesign of day opportunities and short breaks for people with a Learning Disability and/or Autism – to be decided by Cabinet on 14 November 2024
- Future Options for the Derbyshire Healthy Homes Project for Adult Social Care & Health 2024 – to be decided by Cabinet on 14 November 2024
- Options to deliver design services for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) 2024 – to be decided by Cabinet on 5 December 2024

The Cabinet papers and EIA outlining those proposals and assessing their impact needs to be considered and understood by decision makers. The proposals set out would cease Local Authority grant funding support for befriending services, social activities and luncheon clubs and VCS Infrastructure across Derbyshire. Feedback given by Providers of these services during the consultation highlighted concerns about their ongoing sustainability.

The proposals for the redesign of Day Opportunities for older people and for those with a learning disability and/or who are autistic both recommend the reduction of building based day opportunities and whilst there are fewer people accessing the learning disability service than before the simultaneous implementation of recommendations, if approved, would result in increased demand on the Community Connector Service and the wider VCSE. However, the proposal to end Discretionary Grants could impact on the number of community-based services available, which may create a cumulative impact on older people and people with a learning disability or who are autistic.

Whilst the proposals for the redesign of the Healthy Home Project provides for a continuation of the service by the Council the recommendations, if approved, would result in the eligibility criteria being strictly enforced and an adapted low level support approach being implemented to access central government financial grant support monies.

The proposals for the redesign of the Disability Design Team which, in part, supports the delivery of the Disabilities Facilities Grants (DFGs) (this aspect of the service being provided at the Council's discretion), acknowledges the service supports the major adaptation projects exceeding the DFG financial threshold that the County Council provides 'top up' funding for, and outlines future options for working collaboratively with the responsible District/ Borough Council in respect of DFG projects.

The EIA's supporting each proposal and recommendation identify both positive and negative impacts across the same protected characteristics. There may be a culminative impact of all these proposals, if implemented, and consideration of each proposal should not be made in isolation.

It should be noted that anyone can request an assessment of need under the Care Act at any time and if found to have eligible needs, these will be met through an appropriate support planning process.

The table below shows which organisations are currently in receipt of multiple grants that are under consultation:

Name	Grants per annum (£)				Total
	Infrastructure Grants	Social activity & Luncheon club grants	Befriending grants	BME Consultation (BME forum)	
<b>Amber Valley CVS</b>	32,518 15,378		6,457		54,353
<b>Connex</b>	27,236	16,306	3,000		46,542
<b>Chesterfield Volunteer Centre</b>	23,471		17,036		40,507
<b>Erewash CVS</b>	57,095 15,378		3,000 31,711		107,184
<b>New Mills Volunteer Centre</b>	21,513		250		21,763
<b>South Derbyshire CVS</b>	36,884 15,378	7,406	33,848		93,516
<b>Links CVS</b>	36,058 15,400 (BME)			13,224	64,682

The data shown in the above table also illustrates the inequitable nature of the current grant funding arrangements. The grants supplied bear no relation to the market demand in each locality or relate to the level of the service provided.

Have previous changes been made due to budget savings or restructuring and did they have any adverse impact upon your customers or employees etc? Please describe any potential cumulative impact or impact arising out of other proposals elsewhere to ensure this EIA alerts decision makers to the full context for any proposals now being made.

In 2020 the Council conducted a review of infrastructure provision which considered the support provided across Derbyshire and the development of a new model for allocating funding which supported the Council's ambitions and priorities.

An extensive programme of consultation and engagement was completed and in response to feedback received about the inequity of funding allocations, strong opposition to options to redistribute available funding (which would have resulted in some organisations/areas in receipt of higher levels of funding experiencing a reduction) and recognition of the voluntary sectors role in pandemic recovery, additional funding was committed to 'level up' provision in those areas with the least resources. It was however acknowledged that funding allocations remained inequitable, and a new allocation model would need to be implemented in the future as part of a programme of continuous development of the approach alongside the ICB who also fund infrastructure provision.

Following consultation Cabinet agreed a new approach underpinned by:

- District level funding allocations, with providers working together where there are multiple providers within a district.
- New Service Level Agreements (SLA) on an organisation/district basis, outlining the funding providers receive and how it is spent with a commitment from providers to deliver core VCS support through a shared outcomes framework.
- A comprehensive list of co-designed Key Performance Indicators with providers, which seek to understand and measure impact and what is being achieved.

Since the review, the Council and the ICB have worked to explore the needs of the VCS in Derbyshire, consider whether that need is being met, identify any gaps in provision and work to develop a more joined up approach to outcomes and performance management.

In 2022 the Council completed a review of all VCS grant funding and adopted the principle of no longer supporting the award of grant funding to any organisation without a fixed or scheduled end date.

This has ensured all organisations in receipt of Council funding understand that funding is finite in nature and therefore should not have expectations that further grant funding would be available or continue, following the current award allocation. This change meant that the Council could commission or decommission activities in the future where appropriate.

Due to financial pressures the commissioning pathway was not implemented and the grants system has remained in operation.

## **Part 2. Supporting evidence about impact**

What is presently known about how the current service or policy impacts upon people with a protected characteristic, people from disadvantaged communities, armed forces personnel and other groups outlined in the Council's guidance for EIAs?

The Council has worked with funded organisations for a significant period and therefore has good baseline data on current awards. Two consultations were also carried out in 2020 and 2022 which increased our understanding of the activity delivered.

### **VCS Infrastructure**

Whilst the funding outlined in this report does not fund the provision of direct services to residents, monitoring and feedback from the 2020 and 2022 grants review consultations indicated that the VCS groups that access infrastructure support, advice and guidance at that time included those that work with protected characteristic groups and people from disadvantaged communities. All VCS groups working with members of any community including protected characteristic groups should be able to access infrastructure services and therefore people could be indirectly impacted by the proposals to end infrastructure discretionary grant funding.

A key challenge in ascertaining the level of potential impact on protected characteristic groups is to accurately identify the extent to which the activity and support provided through this funding would change if a cessation of discretionary grants for infrastructure activity were to be implemented. Whilst the potential impact of changes to funding provided for a specific project, activity or service can be easily articulated, it becomes more complex when funding supports, or provides a contribution to, core operating costs. Whilst monitoring and engagement with groups and the 2020 consultation has given a good understanding of the activity, services and support offered, it is still not always clear how core funding is actually spent, over and above contributing to the whole organisation's activities. This in turn makes it more challenging to identify opportunities for possible mitigation of impact.

Due to the outcomes-based approach used to ensure infrastructure support is tailored to local sector priorities, the specific activity delivered by each organisation does vary depending on the needs of the local sector, the organisations delivering infrastructure in that area, the specialisms of each organisation and the amount of funding an organisation receives. Monitoring information confirms significant variations in the support delivered by each organisation, although differences in how data is interpreted and recorded may also contribute to this. A new joint monitoring form between the Council and the ICB was introduced in April 2023 to ensure a more consistent approach was applied across the two grant funding organisations and to reduce duplication for providers, however this approach was still under development, so the full benefits of improved monitoring data have not yet been realised.

Below are the five priority areas that support achievement of the high-level outcomes and a summary of the key activity organisations deliver against each priority for infrastructure.



Priority 1: Sector Support – Maintain a local presence by developing and maintaining a variety of local communications and signposting opportunities.

- Hold a database of VCS groups in their area.
- Distribute newsletters, ebulletins and maintain websites and social media presence to disseminate information and promote activity.
- Collate requests from the sector and signpost to appropriate organisations/provision/support.

Priority 2: Build sector capacity by supporting voluntary and community sector organisations to develop.

- Support the development of new VCS groups including support to become constituted.
- Provide support with funding including assistance with funding applications and the provision of funding workshops or events.
- Deliver training sessions in response to local sector need.

Priority 3: VCS Volunteer support - increased pathways to volunteering gives opportunities to individuals to contribute to their community and is accessible to all.

- Support volunteers to access volunteering opportunities in the sector.
- Provide training and support for volunteers.
- Deliver activity which supports and promotes volunteering.

Priority 4: Strategic support - Voluntary and community sector has a strong voice and is actively engaged in the decision-making process is of Derbyshire County Council and the ICB

- Participate in consultation and engagement and promote consultations across the sector.
- Carry out activity to identify the needs of local communities.
- Engage with the sector and provide representation at key partnerships and meetings.

Priority 5: Effective information and collaboration within the sector

- Share information, collaborate and carry out joint working between infrastructure organisations.
- Facilitate networking, collaboration and asset sharing between groups.
- Support groups to participate in Council and ICB procurement processes.

This activity suggests that the most significant impact of the proposal would be on the voluntary sector both in terms of the organisations funded to deliver infrastructure support and the wider sector that access the provision. It is also likely that volunteers would be impacted if volunteer coordination and support changed because if the proposal is implemented, there is a possible additional impact on VCS groups if fewer volunteers were available to support activity. This could culminate in an indirect impact on those residents that access the activity that supported groups provide if this volunteer activity is, in turn, impacted by loss of infrastructure and volunteer support.

Where available, 2023-24 monitoring data suggests that Infrastructure providers:

- Had a total of around 4,000 VCS groups, organisations and other individuals in their contact databases - each database generally includes VCS groups and other individuals who regularly access or have accessed some level of support from the infrastructure provider including members, individual contacts and those affiliated with the sector.
- Provided one to one support to 1,854 groups (two organisations did not provide data) including general enquiries, offering advice and delivering training.
- Supported 280 funding applications with external funders (one organisation did not provide data).
- Supported the establishment of 75 new groups, both constituted and non-constituted (one organisation did not provide data).

Each infrastructure organisation is structured differently, with different levels of activity and provision. While some organisations may be more reliant than some on the funding outlined in this report to ensure their sustainability, others have more diverse financial arrangements and receive funding from a range of sources, potentially making their activity more resilient to changes in funding.

Many of the organisations funded for infrastructure provision also deliver commissioned services and grant funded projects, both on behalf of the Council and partner organisations such as district and borough Council's and the ICB. From previous work with infrastructure organisations to develop the infrastructure outcomes framework as part of the VCS grants review, the Council is aware that for most providers, service delivery and the provision of infrastructure support are closely linked and some may use core infrastructure funding flexibly to offset the delivery of wider projects and support.

Analysis of funded organisations annual accounts demonstrates that infrastructure organisations financial structures and income streams vary significantly. Combined DCC infrastructure funding from both ASCH and CST contributes between less than 1% up to 22% of funded organisations total income (using 2022-23 annual accounts). DCC infrastructure funding tends to contribute a bigger percentage of income in those organisations that have a comparatively lower total income due to having a specific focus on infrastructure delivery and therefore deliver fewer projects and services. All the funded 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 is noted that several organisations have more recently reported deficit budgets due to reduced funding availability and increased delivery costs and have reported the increasing reliance on reserves to offset this.

Whilst the impact on sustainability of each organisation will vary, it should not be assumed that ceasing funding will mean that the activity associated with that funding will stop or the organisation receiving funding will close, although this is a possibility. It should also not be assumed that the VCS groups that access infrastructure support would close or reduce activity, but it is accepted that this is also a possibility. As with many other voluntary groups, available evidence suggests that infrastructure providers play a significant role in supporting and developing the community sector within local areas, however they do not provide a statutory function.

Please detail the sources for the above information

Analysis has been completed through a range of methods and techniques:

- Council grant funding database of current awards
- Current and previous monitoring reports
- Ongoing discussions with VCS infrastructure providers
- Organisations annual accounts
- Discussions with other key stakeholders
- Engagement meetings with current grant recipients
- Consultation feedback from 2020 and 2022
- Organisation's websites.

Is consultation planned/ has consultation take place? If Yes, what is this telling us about the likely impact on the protected characteristic and other communities/ groups etc.?

The Council carried out a 12-week public consultation between 28 May 2024 and 20 August 2024.

The consultation included the following elements:

- Identification of people, groups, organisations and other stakeholders who should be informed of and included in the proposed consultation.
- Consultation meetings.
- Online information and survey, including easy read format.
- Information and survey available in hard copy or alternative language / format, on request.
- Equality Impact Assessment.

The purpose of the consultation was to:

- 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.

**Consultation responses**

Between 28 May and 20 August, stakeholders were able to complete a questionnaire online or by post regarding the consultation, with alternative formats available on request. Questionnaires were also available for stakeholders to take from listening events and could be sent to providers on request.

The questionnaire had 23 questions in total, including four questions with open text boxes allowing respondents to supply their own views/comments; four questions with tick boxes to determine mass views on the proposals; four optional questions to understand the different demographics; and nine questions to identify in what context each respondent was completing the questionnaire i.e. on behalf of an organisation, as a resident etc.

A range of content, thematic and narrative analysis techniques were used to analyse comments made by respondents to each of the open text box questions, to identify the impact on groups with protected characteristics and other stakeholders. Quantitative data was analysed systematically to provide a range of statistics and figures in relation to respondents' views.

The council received 1374 responses to the consultation questionnaire (online & written) of which 152 were specifically in relation to VCS infrastructure support.

- 33 (21%) of the 152 respondents identified themselves as having a disability.
- Four people identified themselves as Asian or Asian British and one person identified themselves as from other ethnic group.
- 90 (59%) of the 152 respondents identified themselves as female and 47 (30%) identified themselves as male.
- 51 (33.5%) of the 152 respondents identified themselves as being over 65 years old.
- 110 (8%) of the 1374 respondents identified an impact on VCS groups and organisations particularly those that support vulnerable residents who may be unable to access alternative provision.
- 24 (1.75%) of the 1374 respondents identified an impact on volunteers due to potential reduced volunteering opportunities and reduction in volunteer coordination and support.
- 54 (3.4%) of the 1374 responses were concerned about the possible closure of organisations including infrastructure organisations and those that access the support they provide.
- 66 (4.8%) of the 1374 respondents suggested that they would be directly affected by a loss or reduction in VCS infrastructure support due to a reduction in support for community groups, volunteering opportunities and capacity to deliver support to vulnerable residents.

For VCS infrastructure funding several possible key impacts were identified through the consultation including:

- Impact on wider VCS and volunteering capacity due to lack of support, coordination and development of community groups, volunteering and activity.
- Some core infrastructure funding is intrinsically linked with service delivery and may have a wider impact on the Council, partners and commissioned service delivery (notably Public Health).
- Long-term impact/pressure on statutory services if VCS capacity and services are reduced or organisations close.

- A loss of trust and strategic relationship with the Council and reduced VCS contribution at partnerships/meetings.
- Emergency support and coordination would not be available in the future if/when required (e.g. Covid community response)
- Possible that some organisations could close or make redundancies which could result in the loss of expertise and knowledge developed over time.

### **Listening events and engagement**

In addition to being invited to take part in the formal consultation through the questionnaire, currently funded organisations were offered a meeting with Council officers to discuss the proposal, consultation and decision-making processes and provide feedback. Officers also attended Derby and Derbyshire Infrastructure Alliance (DDIA) and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Alliance meetings to discuss the proposals. Key impacts identified during these discussions are summarised below.

Infrastructure organisations told us:

- Providers were concerned for the VCS's long-term sustainability due to consistent financial pressures as well as the loss of volunteers, skills, and capacity, emphasising that this could also increase the strain on statutory services and could not be easily rebuilt.
- The impact on smaller community organisations could be significant, with many relying on the specialist advice, support, and community grants from local infrastructure organisations.
- People who draw on the relevant services could be impacted as soon as winter 2024 when they are most vulnerable.
- The demographics and characteristics of residents varies in each area, thus centralised services are not suitable for all.
- Growing populations and increased risk of deprivation/ crime in communities, has already impacted on VCS and it is predicted that demand will continue to increase.
- Providers were anxious about the consultation timescales, with concerns that time to implement decisions would be limited.
- Most providers acknowledge that infrastructure support requires a review and encourage innovative approaches, but this would not be possible if funding ceases.

DDIA told us:

- There are significant interdependencies for core activities funding and service/project commissioning, between statutory services, infrastructure providers and the wider voluntary and community sector.
- Funding which supports the core is a key and essential part of the funding economy for providers and shouldn't be reviewed/withdrawn in isolation.
- Funding offsets costs which support the delivery of a wide range of activity and will make it increasingly difficult or reduce the ability for providers to deliver other contracts and support the commissioning of services across the sector, which different parts of the system are reliant on providers to undertake.
- Support given to communities which encourages volunteering or provides a platform from which small, grass roots organisations are supported should not be seen as discretionary.

- The social value of service potentially impacted by the proposal is disproportionate to the financial cost of providing them – less than 0.13% of the Councils total budget.
- The proposal would result in a loss of community resilience that will impact on the statutory sector the next time there is an emergency, and you can't only have the sector when you need it.
- They felt that the consultation does not align with the Memorandum of Understanding developed by JUCD VCSE Alliance which highlights co-production and co-design as the method for planning, changing, and investing or disinvesting.
- Infrastructure providers are critical to engaging and developing the wider VCSE sector, especially in transformational activities which align to statutory needs and which infrastructure providers can achieve in partnership.
- A smaller VCSE sector could increase demand on costlier statutory interventions and on front line services, including:
  - Early ICB initiatives.
  - Keeping people in their own homes.
  - Discharge from hospital.
  - Work on health inequalities.
  - Local emergencies (floods, cold weather, heatwaves).

Written responses from several voluntary and community sector organisations:

- Concern that the proposals would affect the sustainability and resilience of the sector in the medium to long term, with the damage being irreparable. It was noted that this could affect Derbyshire's response to national/ county emergencies.
- Many providers highlighted the detrimental impact on their individual organisations, with opinions that some would cease to operate whilst others would have reduced capacity and/ or job losses.
- It was felt that the social value of the services far exceeded the cost.
- Providers were anxious that vulnerable people would be impacted as soon as winter 2024 when demand for services is at its peak. Additional concerns were highlighted that with reduced preventative services, health needs of individuals would increase significantly, creating additional demand for already stretched frontline health and social care statutory services.
- Partners felt that the proposals were disrespectful of the sector, and implied that the Council's reputation had already been damaged by the proposal and could be impacted further dependent on the outcome.
- Could affect collaborative working going forward.

A formal response was received from the JUCD VCSE Alliance (See Appendix 8 for full list of participants) and the key themes from their response were:

- The removal of all grants could have a long-term impact on statutory services.
- VCSE advocates play a vital role in stimulation and supporting 'grass roots' organisations.
- The proposals do not support the priorities included in the council Health & Wellbeing strategy to be resilient and independent, support good mental health, and tackling the four main risk factors leading to poor health.

- Recommendation to collaborate with system partners in producing a health inequalities assessment.
- ICB/ ICS would be impacted by the cessation of grants with higher demand for primary and secondary healthcare services.
- Infrastructure organisation's ability to secure alternative funding will be impacted which will also affect smaller organisations.
- There could be a higher usage of emergency services and increased hospital admissions.
- The Council's reputation and future collaborative working could be impacted.
- Some infrastructure organisations are currently facing resilience and sustainability challenges.
- There could be worsening health outcomes particularly for older adults, disabled people, and those with chronic conditions.
- People's mental health could deteriorate.
- There could be an increased pressure on social care services with potentially; longer waiting times, reduced quality of care, and more expensive costs.
- The proposals could increase the burden on informal/ unpaid carers.
- It will be more difficult for the ICB to coordinate care; thus, they may be required to adjust strategic plans.
- There will be broader public health implications.

#### **Impact on organisations financial resilience**

The possible closure of VCS organisations in receipt of discretionary grant funding was mentioned frequently by respondents to the consultation as a significant concern. It is important to acknowledge that many respondents were residents and did not base these comments on detailed knowledge of the financial position of the impacted organisations. Although some respondents stated that the organisations they access support from could be at risk of closure, more common impacts were around a reduction in activity/support and a wider impact of the services they deliver (even though this wider service delivery is not directly delivered through the provision of discretionary grant funding). Some funded organisations also told us that the proposal would have a destabilising effect that could impact the future sustainability of their organisation.

While the proposal could impact on the financial sustainability of funded organisations, the true impact could vary significantly due to the wide variations in organisational structure and delivery models. Organisations and stakeholders have expressed concern about a wider impact due to the close relationship between core funding and the capacity to deliver wider services. However, developing a service delivery platform is not a desired outcome of infrastructure funding and these elements should be distinct within each organisations operating model.

It is understood that core funding has provided a stable basis from which to deliver wider services, however not all voluntary sector organisations receive this funding and therefore do not have the same opportunity to develop this offer. All commissioned projects and activity should include full cost recovery including reasonable core/management costs, therefore wider service delivery and financial resilience should not necessarily be reliant on the provision of infrastructure funding. However, some VCS organisations (including infrastructure providers themselves) do access the volunteering support and capacity provided through infrastructure funding to deliver

commissioned services, so even where there is full cost recovery there could be an indirect impact on wider service delivery if the proposal results in fewer volunteers in the sector.

Where organisations do deliver activity beyond core infrastructure support, it is therefore anticipated that whilst capacity could be indirectly impacted, these services will continue. If organisations have used infrastructure funding flexibly to support the development of a wider service delivery offer, then these costs should be recovered through the commissioning process as with other VCS organisations, rather than a continued reliance on core grant support. Some infrastructure organisations already charge for some services and a number of consultation respondents commented that this approach could be further developed along with seeking alternative funding to ensure the future sustainability of support.

It is anticipated that the most impacted organisations in terms of financial resilience could be those that do not have a strong focus on wider service delivery and therefore have a greater reliance on the outlined funding, although this was not explicitly stated during the consultation.

The ICB also commissions infrastructure support with a total separate investment of £596,532 per year. It is therefore likely that some infrastructure provision would still be available in the short term if the proposal was implemented, although consultation respondents indicated that the scope and level of support would be significantly impacted. In the longer term the impact on infrastructure provision and possible reduction in outcomes achieved by providers could result in the ICB reviewing and changing their funding approach which could in turn result in impacts on the sustainability of organisations in the future.

When suggesting alternatives to the proposal 79 consultation respondents suggested that the VCS could diversify funding to increase sustainability and reduce reliance on Council grants. Suggestions included applying for grants from other funders, encouraging businesses to contribute to the sector, charging for services and asking for donations.

### **Impact on protected characteristic groups**

Respondents indicated that the groups supported by VCS infrastructure organisations, predominantly support people from protected characteristic groups including older people, people who are isolated, people living with a disability and people with poor mental health. Respondents also stated that any 'vulnerable' or 'marginalised' groups could be impacted which could also include people from protected characteristic groups.

Respondents also referred to specific impacts relating to direct services delivered by infrastructure organisations that are included within the discretionary grants proposal such as befriending and transport services. These services are subject to a separate EIA.

Much of the activity supported by discretionary grants utilises volunteers to deliver community support at low cost. Support and coordination of volunteers is funded through infrastructure provision. Consultation respondents expressed concern that if this support was to stop, the sector would be unable to recruit, train and retain volunteers potentially leading to a significant reduction in capacity across the sector.



Volunteers themselves also indicated concern about the impact that losing volunteering opportunities could have on their own mental health and wellbeing.

### **VCS organisations working with protected characteristic groups**

Consultation responses clearly suggest a significant impact on VCS groups, many of whom support people from protected characteristic groups. Through the consultation some VCS groups have told us that their own sustainability and activity could be impacted if there was no support from infrastructure organisations, including support with facilities and equipment. While it is difficult to accurately ascertain the extent of this impact, it is important to acknowledge that while some groups access support from infrastructure providers there are groups and organisations that operate without accessing this support. There is extensive national VCS support and advice available online, although it is accepted that this may not be accessible to all groups or tailored to specific local issues.

### **Older people**

407 (29.6%) of the 1374 responses highlighted older people as being most likely to be impacted by the proposals. This view was also shared at listening and engagement events. Although this infrastructure funding does not specifically support organisations to provide direct support to older people, we know that VCS support is predominantly accessed by older people.

While it is impossible to know exactly how many older people access activity provided by the wider VCS, data from the 2021 census tells us there are nearly 175,700 people aged 65 and over in Derbyshire representing 22.1% of all residents, a higher proportion to that seen in England (18.4%).

### **BME**

73/1374 (5.3%) of respondents identified BME residents as being impacted by the proposal to cease discretionary grants.

One organisation (Links CVS) receives funding to deliver specialist infrastructure provision for BME VCS groups throughout the county (Links CVS also receive a grant for general infrastructure provision). Monitoring information indicates that Links CVS have 12 BME groups on their database. Generally, consultation responses referenced a general impact on BME communities and also loss of support through the BME forum. This suggests that the delivery of support in these areas of activity (BME infrastructure and BME forum) are closely linked.

While it is impossible to know exactly how many BME residents access activity provided by the VCS, data from the 2021 census tells us that there are 50,300 residents in the county from BME backgrounds, representing 6.3% of the total population locally. Although this represent significant growth in Derbyshire's BME population with 17,600 more BME residents than 10 years ago, it is significantly lower than the national average of 26.5%.

### **Rural**

18/1374 (1.3%) of respondents identified rural communities as being impacted by the proposal to cease discretionary grants.

One organisation (Rural Action Derbyshire) receives funding to deliver specialist infrastructure provision for rural VCS groups throughout the county. RAD told us through the consultation that impacts could include a reduction in core activity to tackle fuel poverty and support community buildings in rural communities. They also stated that they would no longer be able to take part in community resilience planning or respond to future crisis’.

RAD’s website suggests that nearly 20% of Derbyshire homes are not connected to the mains gas network, and as high as 40% in Derbyshire Dales. These figures were collated in conjunction with Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and are based on 2011 census data and an estimate of off/on-gas grid properties using 2013 location details relative to the gas grid. All other sources reviewed, including more recent estimates, indicate that rates are not as high as this overall, and that less than 10% of properties in Derbyshire and just over 20% of properties in Derbyshire Dales are not connected to the mains gas network.

Many rural homes, often use heating oil and LPG as their main source of energy. Gov.uk highlights that households that are not connected to the mains gas network were more likely to be fuel poor. The governments annual fuel poverty statistics highlight that rural homes had the highest fuel poverty rate of 15.5% and largest fuel poverty gap at £778 (2023) when compared to urban and semi-rural homes. In response to these issues, RAD has told us that they use infrastructure funding to operate a not-for-profit community oil buying scheme which aims to reduce the cost of heating oil by negotiating with oil suppliers for a bulk order. In 2023/24, RAD delivered 443,154 litres of oil with 638 orders, citing that whilst their prices were less competitive than some organisations, it remains good value particularly for people who can’t negotiate for their own oil. Eight responses to the consultation questionnaire referred to the oil buying scheme with concern that should the scheme end, more people would be at risk of fuel poverty.

The table below highlights that there are a number of residents who are deemed “fuel poor” as they reside in a home; with an energy efficiency rating of band D, E, F, or G and have a disposable income (income after housing costs and energy needs) which is below the poverty line.

Area	% of people deemed “fuel poor”
Amber Valley	14.2%
Bolsover	15.8%
Chesterfield	14.7%
Derbyshire Dales	15.9%
Erewash	13.4%
High Peak	13.8%
North East Derbyshire	13.1%
South Derbyshire	11.5%
Derbyshire	13.9%
England	13.1%

(Derbyshire observatory, Census 2021)

RAD also use infrastructure funding to deliver a Community Buildings Advisory Scheme to develop community assets in rural communities. In 2023-24 RAD responded to 115 enquiries from village halls. In their consultation response RAD indicated that the scheme would close if infrastructure funding was stopped. Nine consultation respondents expressed concern about a loss of support and community facilities if the scheme stopped.

### **Impact on stakeholders and partners**

Throughout the consultation and engagement with grant recipients, respondents indicated that the proposal would result in a reduction in support and would therefore impact on the activity and capacity of any VCS organisations that access current infrastructure provision. Respondents suggested that many of these groups support residents who are in some way 'vulnerable' including older, isolated or disabled people.

During engagement meetings, infrastructure providers told us that cessation of discretionary grant funding would not only have a direct impact on the sector support they deliver but would also indirectly impact their wider service and project delivery work. These wider service delivery areas often provide targeted support to protected groups such as older people or those who are in some way vulnerable including those from protected characteristic groups. Infrastructure providers have told us that infrastructure funding and service delivery are closely linked and where organisations are also commissioned by Public Health and other stakeholders to provide preventative services (often linked to health outcomes), this provision could also be impacted by a cessation of infrastructure funding.

Consultation feedback from partners demonstrated a broad understanding of the Council's financial position and the prioritisation of statutory services, however partners generally disagreed with the proposal and expressed a strong sense that the Council would need to ensure full consideration of the potential impact on wider stakeholders when making a decision.

Partners including District and Borough Councils and the ICB told us that they were concerned about the resilience, capacity and long-term sustainability of the sector and the impact this would have on their areas of work. Health partners were particularly concerned about potential increased long-term demand for primary and secondary healthcare services which they suggest would be unaffordable given their own budgetary pressures. Partners also suggested that social care services could also face increased demand, potentially resulting in longer waiting times and reduced quality of care. Possible reputational damage and an impact on future collaborative working were also raised as potential impacts and there were suggestions that the proposals could negatively impact the response to emergency situations in the future.

There was also concern amongst partners that the proposal could affect the ability of infrastructure organisations to advocate for the sector by attending partnerships and strategic meetings and could reduce the extent to which the VCS is able to influence the strategies and

priorities of statutory organisations. The possible reduction in the capacity of infrastructure organisations to support volunteers and the potential impact on service delivery costs if there is a greater reliance on paid staff in the future, was also identified as a potential impact.

It is understood that core funding has provided a stable core structure from which to deliver wider services, however not all voluntary sector organisations receive this funding and therefore do not have the same opportunity to develop this offer. Also, infrastructure funding is not awarded for this purpose (although it is acknowledged that the Council has awarded commissioned contracts to infrastructure organisations to deliver activity where they have submitted the most economically advantageous tender bid through a competitive procurement process) Commissioned contract budgets include full cost recovery including reasonable core/management costs and providers have a responsibility to deliver specified services within the contract value, demonstrated by open book accounting as part of the contract management process.

If the proposal results in reduced sector and volunteer support it is possible that partners and stakeholders could be impacted by reduced capacity and skills within the sector to deliver commissioned activity. However, all organisations that rely on the VCS to support their core outcomes have a responsibility to contribute to support and development of the sector in whatever way they think appropriate.

If there is insufficient information to determine likely impact, what information is needed and how will it be obtained in the future?

The information gathered is sufficient to understand the likely impact of the proposal to end discretionary grants to VCS infrastructure support and those that access it.

The actual impacts of the proposal will only be known following a Cabinet decision to implement the recommendations.

### **Part 3. Analysing and assessing the impact by equality Protected Characteristic group**

Use the information, customer feedback and other evidence to determine upon whom the policy/ service and any proposed changes will impact upon and how, highlighting where these have a negative, positive or no impact, including where this could constitute unfair treatment, limit access, or result in additional inequality or disadvantage, hardship, or exclusion.

For any identified negative potential impact, you must provide details of any action or options which could mitigate against this, and in serious cases, you should highlight where the Council would be advised not to proceed with a new or changing policy or service, including any proposals which are being considered.

Please use your action plan towards the rear of this document to record the action and the monitoring that will take place to deliver or identify appropriate mitigation.

<b><i>Protected Characteristic or Group</i></b>	<b><i>Positive impact</i></b>	<b><i>Negative impact</i></b>	<b><i>No impact</i></b>
<b>All protected characteristics</b>		<p>Infrastructure organisations provide support to the sector including to organisations that work with protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>Consultation feedback indicates that the VCS work across a wide range of communities and residents and that the groups they support and services they provide often support vulnerable people.</p> <p>Infrastructure organisations are also commissioned by other stakeholders to deliver support and services that are accessed by protected characteristic groups and have indicated that due to the nature of core funding, these services could also be impacted.</p>	
(Please describe)	<p>It is likely that the cessation of discretionary grants including infrastructure provision would have a general impact across the VCS and an indirect impact on residents that access the activity provided. Consultation feedback indicates significant concern about the long-term potential impact of the proposal including reduced capacity to respond to possible needs and emergencies that could arise in the future.</p>		

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
<b>Age</b>		<p>Whilst infrastructure organisations do not specifically support age related activity, the data available suggests that there is likely to be an impact on those with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Older people were identified in the consultation as a group that would be significantly negatively impacted by the proposed cessation of discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>Young people and families were also identified as a group that could be impacted by the proposal.</p> <p>Reduction in support to the sector which may include organisations that support specific groups including older people and young people.</p> <p>Older or younger people could be indirectly impacted by a reduction in community activity/support.</p>	
(Please describe)	407/1374 (29.6%) consultation respondents identified older people as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.		

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
	<p>80/1374 (5.8%) consultation respondents identified young people including families with young children as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>The 2021 Census informs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 175,687 people aged over 65 years old residing in Derbyshire which equates to 22.1% of the total population.</li> <li>• 415,689 people aged between 25 and 64 years old which equates to 52.3% of the total population</li> <li>• 77,100 people aged between 15 and 24 years old which equates to 9.7% of the total population</li> <li>• 87,846 people aged between 5 and 16 years old which equates to 11.1% of the total population</li> <li>• 38,314 people aged between 0 and 4 years old which equates to 4.8% of the total population.</li> </ul> <p>Derbyshire has an older population when compared to the national averages.</p>		
<b>Disability</b>	<p>Whilst infrastructure organisations do not specifically support disability related activity, the data available suggests that there is likely to be an impact on those with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>People living with a disability were identified in the consultation as a group that would be significantly impacted by the cessation of discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>VCS groups that support people living with a disability could experience a reduction in support.</p>		

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
		<p>Beneficiaries of VCS groups could be negatively impacted if activity is impacted.</p> <p>Possible indirect impact on commissioned services delivered by infrastructure organisations, some of which may be accessed by people living with a disability.</p>	
(Please describe)	<p>208/1374 (15.1%) consultation respondents identified people living with a disability as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>The consultation also identified an impact on people with a learning disability or other neurodivergent people, especially those with conditions such as autism. These impacts were largely related to other discretionary grants impacted by the proposal (BWE and OVOF), and this was not identified as a significant area of impact for infrastructure organisations either through engagement meetings or through the consultation.</p> <p>The 2021 Census informs us that one in five Derbyshire people (20.1%) reported having a disability as defined under the Equality Act that limited day-to-day activities in some way at the time of the 2021 Census. This is equivalent to 159,400 people and is higher than the England average of 17.3%.</p>		
<b>Gender re-assignment</b>			<p>Infrastructure organisations do not specifically support activity to this group.</p> <p>Consultation responses did not reference gender re-assignment.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that people considering, undergoing or having completed gender re-assignment will be specifically impacted by the proposal.</p>



<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
(Please describe)	There is no available data for people considering, undergoing or have completed gender re-assignment		
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership<sup>1</sup></b>			<p>Infrastructure organisations do not specifically support activity to this group.</p> <p>This was not highlighted as a group likely to be impacted by the cessation of grants in the consultation.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that people in this group will be specifically impacted by the proposal.</p>
(Please describe)	<p>The 2021 Census informs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 311,143 people in Derbyshire are married which equates to 47.2% of the Derbyshire population, which is higher than the English average of 44.5% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Of these marriages 99.5% of people are married to someone of the opposite sex</li> <li>○ 0.5% of people are married to someone of the same sex.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 1,237 people in Derbyshire are in a registered civil partnership which equates to 0.2% which aligns with the English average of 0.2% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Of these civil partnerships, 31.4% of people are in a civil partnership with someone of the opposite sex</li> <li>○ 68.6% people are in a civil partnership with someone of the same sex.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>			Infrastructure organisations do not specifically support activity to this group.

<sup>1</sup> Under EA 2010 – someone in a CP must not be treated less favourably than a married person

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
			<p>This was not highlighted as a group likely to be impacted by the cessation of grants in the consultation.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that this proposal will specifically impact anyone in this group.</p>
(Please describe)	There is no available data for pregnancy and maternity.		
<b>Race &amp; ethnicity</b>		<p>Loss of infrastructure support to BME community groups.</p> <p>BME VCS groups could be impacted by a loss of tailored support.</p> <p>Beneficiaries of groups that access support could be impacted by a loss or reduction in activity.</p> <p>Reduced capacity within the BME community sector.</p> <p>Consultation responses identified BME residents as being impacted by the proposal.</p>	
(Please describe)	<p>74/1374 (5.4%) respondents identified BME residents as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>The 2021 census informs:</p>		

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 744,378 people identify as White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British which equates to 93.7% of the population which is significantly higher than the English average of 73.5%.</li> <li>• 50,256 people identify as Black and minority ethnic which equates to 6.3% of the Derbyshire population which 20.2% lower than the English average.</li> <li>• 20,918 people identify as White other which equates to 1.5% of the total population which is 8.1% lower than the English average.</li> <li>• 11,670 people identify as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh which equates to 2.6% of the population which is lower than the English average of 7.5%.</li> <li>• 10,851 people identify as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups which equates to 0.5% of the population which is 3.7% lower than the English average.</li> <li>• 4,085 people identify as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African.</li> <li>• 2,732 people identify as other ethnic group which equates to 0.3% of the Derbyshire population.</li> </ul>		
<b>Religion/ belief<sup>2</sup></b>		<p>Some communities in Derbyshire identify both by their religion and their ethnicity so could be impacted by loss of support from BME infrastructure.</p> <p>One Muslim group receives infrastructure support from Links CVS and could be impacted by changes to BME infrastructure support.</p>	This was not highlighted as a group likely to be impacted by the cessation of grants in the consultation.
(Please describe)	<p>The 2021 Census informs us that around 395,200 of Derbyshire's population identified as having a religion, representing just under half (49.8%) of residents. This is significantly below the national average of 57.3%. Christianity is the religion given by most people locally, at 47.8% of the population, followed by Muslim and 'Other religion', both at 0.5%.</p> <p>2021 Census tells us that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 380,102 people identify as Christian</li> <li>• 354,595 people identify as having no religion</li> </ul>		

<sup>2</sup> Under EA 2010 – must also consider non-religious belief

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,657 people identify as Muslim</li> <li>• 3,375 people identify as Sikh</li> <li>• 2,071 people identify as Hindu</li> <li>• 1,904 people identify as Buddhist</li> <li>• 385 people identify as Jewish</li> </ul> <p>Across Derbyshire there has been a considerable decline (21.0%) in people who identify with a religion since 2011, this equates to 105,000 fewer individuals and is more than double the decline seen across England (10.3%).</p>		
<b>Sex or gender<sup>3</sup></b>			<p>Infrastructure organisations do not specifically support activity to this group.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that this proposal will specifically impact people with specific sex or genders as opposed to other groups as there are no specific groups.</p> <p>This was not highlighted as a group likely to be impacted by the cessation of grants in the consultation.</p>
(Please describe)	<p>The 2021 Census informs us that more than 1,900 residents (0.29% of population aged 16 years and over) across Derbyshire identify with a gender different from their sex registered at birth. This compares with the national average of 0.55% (the question on gender identity was voluntary and 5.1% of Derbyshire's population did not answer).</p>		

<sup>3</sup> Sex and gender can be used at different times depending upon whether you are referring to the EA 2010 and the different duties which exist

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
	90 of 152 (59%) people who responded to the consultation questionnaire in relation to infrastructure, identified themselves as female.  47 of 152 (30.9%) people who responded to the consultation questionnaire in relation to infrastructure, identified themselves as male.		
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		A small number of consultation respondents identified LGBTQ residents as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.	Infrastructure organisations do not specifically support activity to this group.  There is no evidence to suggest that this proposal will specifically impact people with specific sexual orientation as opposed to other groups.
(Please describe)	Derbyshire LGBTQ+ works across Derbyshire as well as Derby City.  4/1374 (0.3%) respondents identified LGBTQ residents as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.  The 2021 census informs us that nearly 16,600 Derbyshire residents are a part of the LGBTQ+ community, representing 2.5% of the Derbyshire population, below the national average of 3.2%. In Derbyshire, Gay or Lesbian residents make up a large portion of the county's LGBTQ+ community (8,800 residents), followed by Bisexual residents (6,500).		
<b>Human Rights</b>		There is the potential for some VCS groups to close or reduce activity as a result of this decision. Some VCS groups provide an opportunity for social activity within their local communities. There could be a negative impact for some people	

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
		in terms of their relationships with other individuals who use/support the relevant VCS service. Article 8 Human Rights Act 1998 could be engaged due to the potential impact on the ability to establish and develop relationships with other human beings and the outside world.	
(Please describe)			
<b>Armed Forces personnel/ households</b>			<p>Activity does not specifically support people from this group.</p> <p>This groups was not highlighted in the consultation as a group that would be significantly impacted.</p> <p>The proposal will not specifically impact people who have served or are serving in the UK armed forces as opposed to other groups as there are no specific groups.</p>
(Please describe)	<p>1/1374 (0.1%) respondents identified residents belonging to the armed forces community as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>Support is being developed to support through the Armed Forces Covenant rather than via funding provision.</p> <p>The 2021 Census informs us that nearly 27,100 of the county's residents have previously served in the UK armed forces, equating to 4.1% of the population, slightly above the England figure of 3.8%.</p> <p>In 2021 Census informs that in Derbyshire:</p>		

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20,850 (77.0%) of those serving had previously done so in the regular UK armed forces</li> <li>• 5,050 (18.7%) had previously served in the reserve UK armed forces</li> <li>• 1,150 (4.3%) having previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces.</li> </ul>		
<b>Users of British Sign Languages</b>			<p>This is not known to be a significant issue in relation to the grants outlined. Current monitoring does not include data on this protected characteristic. We do know that there are no funded groups that specifically target this protected characteristic and it was not highlighted as a group likely to be significantly impacted by changes to provision in previous consultations.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that this proposal will specifically impact people who use British Sign Language as opposed to other groups as there are no specific groups.</p>
(Please describe)	<p>1/1374 (0.1%) respondents identified residents with hearing impairments as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>Rather than grant funding this provision the Council has arrangements with Action Deafness via another commissioning arrangement to provide interpreting and support to the deaf community.</p>		
<b>DCC Employees</b>		<p>Collaborative working with VCS in the future may become more difficult for DCC employees.</p> <p>Demand for statutory services may increase if preventative</p>	

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
		services reduce resulting in some frontline workers being impacted by an increase in workload.	
(Please describe)			
<b>Community and Voluntary sector organisations working with protected characteristic groups</b>	The proposal 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.	<p>The proposals, if approved will have a negative impact on the income for organisations and their financial resilience and decisions which may need to be made (re. charging), will remain challenging.</p> <p>Some of these impacts may include:</p> <p>Closure of the organisation.</p> <p>A reduction in volume of service.</p> <p>Potential staff redundancies</p> <p>A reduction in the number of volunteers and in volunteer support</p> <p>There may be fewer opportunities for providers to collaborate and develop services.</p> <p>There could be an indirect impact on the VCS groups supported by</p>	



<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
		infrastructure organisations and their beneficiaries if support is reduced/ceases.	
(Please describe)	110/1374 (8%) respondents identified the VCS as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.		
<b>Socio-economic/ financial inclusion/ deprived communities/ Thriving communities</b>		<p>The consultation identifies those on a low income, including people in receipt of benefits and the unemployed as being impacted by the proposal.</p> <p>People with low incomes/unemployed may not be able to access services should charging for the services be introduced.</p> <p>Some localities are considered to have areas of significant deprivation, although it is not known how many people who access services reside in these areas.</p> <p>Services supporting those at risk of rural poverty could end.</p>	
(Please describe)	85/1374 (6.2%) consultation respondents identified residents living on a low income including people in receipt of benefits and the unemployed, as being impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.		

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
	Infrastructure organisations are required to provide support to the whole sector and the VCS often disproportionality provide support to low-income residents, those who are unemployed and in areas of relative deprivation and this was identified in the consultation as a group likely to be impacted by the cessation of discretionary grants.		
<b>Carers (Unpaid and paid)</b>		Consultation respondents suggested there could be a negative impact and increased burden on paid/unpaid carers if community services are reduced.	
(Please describe)	<p>22/1374 (1.6%) respondents highlighted carers as a group that would be impacted by the proposal to end discretionary grant funding.</p> <p>There were limited comments about the impact on carers through the consultation, although where mentioned this was largely in relation to specific services under the consultation and not infrastructure provision.</p> <p>The 2021 Census tells us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 678,889 people provide no unpaid care which equates to 89.8% of the Derbyshire population</li> <li>• 28,580 people provide 9 hours or less unpaid care a week which equates to 3.8% of the Derbyshire population</li> <li>• 10,620 people provide 10 to 19 hours of unpaid care a week which equates to 1.4% of the Derbyshire population</li> <li>• 6,963 people provide 20 to 34 hours of unpaid care a week which equates to 0.9% of the Derbyshire population</li> <li>• 7,824 people provide 35 to 49 hours of unpaid care a week which equates to 1% of the Derbyshire population</li> <li>• 23,446 people provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week which equates to 3.1% of the Derbyshire population.</li> </ul> <p>Across Derbyshire, 10.2% (77,500) of residents provide some level of unpaid care, higher than the England average of 8.8%. The proportion of people providing unpaid care across Derbyshire has fallen by 1.9% since 2011, this is a steeper decline than England, where the fall was 1.4%.</p>		

<b>Protected Characteristic or Group</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>	<b>Negative impact</b>	<b>No impact</b>
<b>District &amp; Borough Councils in Derbyshire</b>		<p>Fewer services available in their local communities.</p> <p>Providers may look to other councils for alternative funding.</p> <p>Reduced opportunity for collaborative working if organisations close.</p> <p>Services delivered by infrastructure providers on behalf of other Councils could be impacted by reduced capacity/closures.</p>	
(Please describe)			

#### **Part 4. Summary of main findings**

The Council has grant funded VCS infrastructure support for a significant number of years, to 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.

A review of VCS infrastructure funding resulted in the implementation of a new approach to funding infrastructure underpinned by district level funding allocations, new service level agreements and a comprehensive list of key performance indicators. Several key challenges were also identified, and work has been ongoing alongside the ICB address these and develop a more joined up approach. In 2022 the Council completed a review of all VCS grant funding and adopted the principle of no longer supporting the award of grant funding to any organisation without a fixed or scheduled end date which meant that the Council could commission or decommission activities in the future where appropriate.

Since completion of the review, the Council has faced significant financial challenges and to set a balanced budget, activity which directly contributes to the delivery of the Council's statutory duties, must be prioritised. Several grants including VCS infrastructure provision were identified as discretionary, resulting in a 12-week public consultation on the proposal to cease discretionary grant funding.

The proposal means that each organisation currently in receipt of a grant would experience a change in future. If implemented the proposal would mean that funding to each infrastructure organisation as detailed in this report would cease at 31 March 2025. Seven organisations would be impacted by both the ASCH proposal and the CST proposal as infrastructure support to these organisations is joint funded by both departments.

Feedback received through the consultation along with information collected through listening events and engagement meetings has identified a number of possible key impacts affecting funded organisations, internal and external stakeholders, volunteers, the wider VCS and the residents which organisations support both directly and indirectly.

These impacts include:

- Reduced infrastructure support activity and reduction in staff leading to reduced capacity and a loss of expertise and skills developed over time.
- Concern about the destabilising effect of the proposal and the impact on the financial sustainability of funded organisations and long-term sustainability of the sector.
- Loss of volunteers, skills and capacity.
- Increased demand for statutory services/interventions.
- Interdependencies between core infrastructure activity and service/project commissioning.
- Reduction in sector community resilience and ability to respond to emergencies as they arise.
- Reputational damage to the Council and negative impact on future relationships and strategic collaboration.

The consultation also identified a number of possible impacts on protected characteristic groups, the most significant of which include:

- VCS groups and organisations including those that work with protected characteristic groups could be impacted by a reduction in available infrastructure support including a possible reduction in capacity due to fewer volunteers.
- All protected characteristics – all residents that access support either directly delivered by infrastructure organisations or from groups that access infrastructure support could be impacted if the proposal results in reductions or cessation of activity.
- BME groups and their beneficiaries could be impacted by the possible loss of tailored infrastructure support.
- People whose socio-economic status is affected by rural issues could be impacted by a possible loss of tailored infrastructure support.
- Older people and those living with a disability were mentioned frequently through the consultation as a group likely to be significantly impacted as many VCS groups support this group.
- Stakeholders and partners could be impacted if capacity to deliver services and projects is reduced by loss of core funding.

While significant impacts have been identified, the breadth and complexity of this funding makes it challenging to ascertain the true extent to which each area of possible impact would be realised. Many of the identified impacts are indirect and relate to the nature of core funding and the role it has in strengthening an organisation's capacity to bid for contracts and deliver activity beyond the funded provision.

Funded organisations have told us that the proposal would impact on their organisations, resulting in redundancies and a reduction in capacity, services and support. Whilst some organisations expressed concern about long-term sustainability, it is not possible for officers to accurately determine the future sustainability of individual organisations given the number of variables, including monies held in reserves or the current financial climate.

The Council remains committed to maintaining partnerships with VCS organisations and will continue to collaborate wherever possible and promote any commissioning opportunities that arise.

### Are there any recommendations for changes to proposals?

There are no recommendations for changes to the proposal. The Council does however intend to retain £25,000 of funding in the CST budget to support the Council's strategy and partnership objective.

### Part 5. Proposed Equality Action Plan

Please complete this Action Plan to outline any mitigation you intend to take.

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact/ mitigate	Timescale and responsibility	Monitoring and review arrangements
Providers who are at risk of financial instability/closure	Action by the Council:  ASCH to continue to work with Joined Up Care Derbyshire (JUCCD) integrated care board and engage in any system discussions about the future	Following Cabinet decision and before the grants end on 31 March 2024.	Commissioners to work with partners to promote positive transitions for providers.

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact/ mitigate	Timescale and responsibility	Monitoring and review arrangements
	<p>sustainability of VCS infrastructure.</p> <p>Signpost to public health locality grants from April 2025 – noting that funding priorities are locally determined and vary by health and wellbeing partnership and that funding supports the development of new initiatives rather than ongoing delivery.</p> <p>Action by providers:</p> <p>Diversify funding - a range of other grants are available from different organisations including the National Lottery.</p> <p>Providers to consider the introduction or increase of charges to access services.</p> <p>Providers to consider using funds from alternative sources and/or reserves whilst they consider how to alter their operating model.</p> <p>DDIA can consider collaborating and bidding for</p>		

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact/ mitigate	Timescale and responsibility	Monitoring and review arrangements
	<p>different sources of funding for future infrastructure provision.</p> <p>DDIA can also explore diversifying investment via community shares and corporate sponsorship.</p>		
<p>VCS groups that are unable to access infrastructure support.</p>	<p>Signpost new and existing groups to national sources of support and guidance for the voluntary sector such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Council for Voluntary Sector Organisations (NCVO)</li> <li>• The Charity Commission.</li> <li>• Directory of Social Change</li> </ul> <p>Signpost to local infrastructure provision not funded by the Council (ICB funded provision).</p>	<p>Following Cabinet decision.</p>	<p>Commissioners to work with providers to promote positive transitions for the wider sector that access infrastructure support.</p>
<p>Impact on support and coordination of volunteers.</p>	<p>Signpost new and existing volunteers to national sources of volunteer support and coordination such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)</li> <li>• NHS Volunteering</li> </ul>	<p>Following Cabinet decision.</p>	<p>Commissioners to work with partners to promote positive transitions for volunteers.</p>

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact/ mitigate	Timescale and responsibility	Monitoring and review arrangements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach Volunteering</li> <li>• Volunteering matters</li> </ul> <p>Signpost VCS groups to national sources of information and guidance about the recruitment and management of volunteers, such as NCVO.</p>		
Impact on wider services delivered by providers.	<p>Action by the Council:</p> <p>Continue to commission the VCS to provide services and deliver projects where it supports the Council to meet a legal duty.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership with the statutory and voluntary sectors to deliver shared objectives that support the Council to meet its legal duties.</p> <p>ASCH to continue to support Joined Up Care Derbyshire (JUCCD) integrated care board in working with the VCS.</p> <p>Action by providers:</p> <p>Providers to review their costings to ensure</p>	Following Cabinet decision.	Commissioners to work with partners to promote positive transitions for providers.



Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact/ mitigate	Timescale and responsibility	Monitoring and review arrangements
	<p>commissioned services cover the full cost of delivery.</p>		
<p>Indirect impact on availability of VCS community support for people from protected characteristic groups.</p>	<p>Signpost to ASCH commissioned services where appropriate including but not limited to, Low Level Support Service, Home from Hospital Service, Derbyshire Recovery and Support Service, Derbyshire Dementia Service.</p> <p>In-house services including community connectors and enablement workers will continue to support people to access their communities.</p> <p>Public Health commissioned and directly delivered services are available to residents including Health &amp; Wellbeing Coaching and Live Life Better Derbyshire.</p> <p>Ensure that both in house and commissioned services come together to respond to and support any changing need.</p> <p>Continue to provide assessments of need under</p>	<p>Following Cabinet decision.</p>	<p>Officers to work with partners to promote positive transitions for those that access impacted support.</p>

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact/ mitigate	Timescale and responsibility	Monitoring and review arrangements
	the Care Act and plan support for those with eligible needs.		
Risk to strategic relationship with the sector	<p>The Council intends to retain £25,000 of funding within the CST budget to support the Council's strategy and partnership objective.</p> <p>The Council to undertake work to support the future allocation of retained funding.</p> <p>Continue to explore opportunities to work alongside the sector and involve VCS organisations in strategic partnerships where appropriate.</p>	Following Cabinet decision.	Officers to work with the sector to promote positive transitions.

**Date and outcome of any Cabinet/ Cabinet Member or Council Report to which this was attached and their decision:**