

Q1 Do you agree or disagree with the Council's proposal to no longer award grant funding without a scheduled end date?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

If 'Yes', please explain why

The proposal creates uncertainty for the VCS at a time when increases in the cost of living, and the on-going impact of the Covid pandemic, places increased demand on the Sector.

The proposal suggests that the changes in funding will give services a more stable platform to grow, but we suggest that the reverse is true and that the changes will create uncertainty, require organisations to spend increased time on accessing funding and the associated bureaucracy rather than service delivery, and make it more difficult for the Sector to access external funding without guaranteed County Council funding for leverage.

It is not clear what "future funding to be secured through commissioning" means for the Sector in practice. However the proposal does note that: *"there would be an expectation that organisations would apply and re-apply for future funding in the future in line with agreed timescales, with no guarantee of success";* which emphasises the uncertainty that the proposal creates for the Sector.

Q2 Do you agree or disagree with the Council's proposal to specify an end date for each existing recurring grant?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

If 'Yes', please explain why

A distinction should be drawn between core funding to ensure that the Sector thrives, and funding for specific activity.

Q3 Do you have any alternative suggestions to this proposal?

Yes

No

Don't know

If 'Yes', please outline your suggestion below:

The County Council should recognise that the New Mills Volunteer Centre, The Bureau and Connex are not primarily infrastructure organisations. This creates a flawed approach to the allocation of the infrastructure support funding and means that some of the services provided by these organisations will fall through the gap. The services delivered by these organisations should be recognised and quantified, and allocated to the grant funding pot rather than infrastructure support funding.

The County Councils should clarify what its future commissioned arrangements will look like to allow stakeholders to make informed decisions.

A distinction should be made between core funding and grant funding. Both types of funding should be subject to periodic reviews with an option to terminate in the case of service delivery failure.

Q4 Is your organisation likely to be affected by this proposal?

Yes

No

If 'Yes', please outline how your organisation would be affected:

The proposed changes will reduce the support that can be provided to local communities by the VCS at a time where some sections of our communities are increasingly struggling to cope with the increased costs of living, and whilst we are still recovering from the Covid pandemic.

The loss of VCS support is likely to increase the demands on, and thus the costs to, statutory services offered by both the Borough Council (such as housing, benefits), the County Council (Adult and Young Person's Social Care, Public Health) and others (such as the health sector and police). It may also exacerbate the complexity and seriousness of the cases being presented, and thus the cost of responding appropriately.

Q5 Do you agree or disagree that the Council should consider whether to commission the activities to which existing recurring grants relate?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Please explain why:

The pattern of current service provision is likely to have grown over time in an unstructured way. The failure to review the current nature and cost of service delivery across the County would be a missed opportunity. For example, grants for local befriending services range from £250 (New Mills) to £33,858 (South Derbyshire) and not all parts of the County appear to be covered by such services. Similarly, grants for 50+ Forums range from £352 to £1,330 but not all areas are covered by this provision (the only such provision in High Peak is in Glossop) and grants to lunch clubs vary from £629 to £20,282 and only cover certain areas of the County (no large lunch clubs receive funding in High Peak).

It is unclear what the County Council wishes to achieve across Derbyshire through its grant funding and the proposed criteria do not assist in this respect.

Q6 Do you agree or disagree that critterion one should be used to assess whether the activity to which a recurring grant relates should be commissioned?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Please explain why:

The proposals do not provide any indication of which legal obligations the County seeks to deliver by funding the VCS (Criteria 1). The process would be more transparent, and assist the Sector to plan, if greater clarity was provided as to what the County wishes to achieve through its grant funding.

Q7 Do you agree or disagree that criteria two should be used to assess whether the activity to which a current recurring grant relates should be commissioned?

Criteria Two

The activities to which the grant relates:

- *Meets the Councils strategic aims and priorities and;*
- *Provides value for money and;*
- *Supports fair and equitable allocation of resources.*

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

Please explain why:

The second criterion is unhelpfully broad and vague.

'Strategic priorities' are defined as those within the Council plan. 'Strategic aims' is not defined but possibly relates to the defined ambition of the County Council ("*We will work together with our partners and communities to be an enterprising council, delivering value for money and enabling local people and places to thrive*")? Or perhaps relates to the three key areas described as part of its strategic approach: Vision Derbyshire, Enterprising Council and Thriving Communities?

Whilst a service can demonstrate how it would provide value for money, it is suggested that a service would not be able to show how it supports a fair and equitable allocation of resources if it operates at a local, rather than County-wide level.

This lack of clarity makes it difficult for the VCS when applying for funding, and also makes it more difficult for the County Council to demonstrate a transparent, fair and equitable distribution of resources.

It is unclear how the application of the criteria has led to the High Peak services being allocated to Pathway 2. Each of the projects appears to meet Criteria 2, which would allocate them to Pathway 1:

- The Volunteer Car Scheme operated by Connex, which helps to deliver the key priority of creating "*resilient, healthy and safe communities*";
- The Glossopdale Furniture Project accepts referrals from social services, housing charities, women's refuges and many other local organisations who support individuals and families in need and thus helps to create "*resilient, healthy and safe communities*"; and the recycling and repurposing aspect of the service also helps to deliver the priority of creating a "*green Derbyshire*" (and thus also support the aims of Vision Derbyshire: "*Live and Work Sustainably*").
- High Peak Community Arts provides arts therapy and supports healthy communities and, as with the Buxton Festival (and Live and Local that also operates in High

Peak) helps to deliver “*thriving communities*”.

As noted previously, some of the activity within High Peak is currently funded through the infrastructure support funding rather than through the Adult Care Grants, Policy and Research Grants, or Arts Service Grants. This means that this activity has been excluded from the process.

This lack of clear criteria hampers the County Council's aim of achieving a fair and equitable allocation of resources, and makes it difficult for VCS organisations to plan and bid resources. The large variation in cost and limited geographic spread of some of the services that have been allocated to Pathway 1 also seems to be incompatible with the criteria relating to value for money and allocation of resources.

Q8 If you have any other suggestions for assessment criteria, or other factors which should be part of determining whether proposed activities should be commissioned, please provide details below:

The County Council need to be clearer and more specific about what it seeks to achieve by providing funding to the VCS. The criteria would then flow from that proposition.

Q9 Would your organisation be directly affected by the proposed criteria?

Yes

No

If 'Yes', please outline how your organisation would be affected

The criteria would lead to the cessation of funding for some very important activity in High Peak, which will increase demands on statutory organisations

Q10 Do you agree or disagree with the proposal that, if the Council were to decide not to commission an activity to which an existing recurring grant relates, the Council would no longer provide grant funding for that activity?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

Please explain why:

This would lead to the cessation of funding for some very important activity in High Peak, which will increase demands on statutory organisations

Q11 Would your organisation be directly affected by the proposal no longer to provide grant funding in respect of activities that are not commissioned?

Yes

No

If 'Yes', please outline how your organisation would be affected:

This would lead to the cessation of funding for some very important activity in High Peak, which will increase demands on statutory organisations

Q12 Are there are any specific communities or groups of people that would be directly affected by these proposals?

Yes

No

Don't know

If 'Yes', please provide details below:

The proposals have the biggest impact on the communities of High Peak, since they will face the highest levels of cuts in services.