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| Meeting of:   | <b>Cabinet</b>   |
| Date of Meeting:  | <b>Thursday, 20 March 2025</b>   |
| Relevant Scrutiny Committee:  | Corporate Performance and Resources  |
| Report Title:   | Grants to Charitable Organisations   |
| Purpose of Report:  | To seek Cabinet's approval to the awarding of grant funding to a range of charitable organisations as described in this report |
| Report Owner:   | Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources  |
| Responsible Officer:  | Tom Bowring - Director of Corporate Resources  |
| Elected Member and Officer Consultation:  | Due to the corporate nature of this report, no ward Member consultation has been undertaken.                                   |
| Policy Framework:   | This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet   |
| <p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) was awarded £97,441 by Cabinet on 14th March, 2022 for three years. Following a review of the services and further to discussions with GVS the Council is proposing to increase the allocation for 2025/26, by 3.8% (£3,703) to £101,144 for 2025/26. This is in line with the Council's settlement from Welsh Government. It is proposed that changes in funding for 2026/27 and 2027/28 be in line with the settlements for those years (excluding additional funding resulting from the transfer of any new responsibilities) which are currently projected to be 1% in each year as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Should the Council receive a negative settlement the funding would remain as per the previous year and increases would not exceed 5% in any one year.</li> <li>On 14th March, 2022 Citizens Advice, then known as Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) was awarded £187,335 in 2022/23, £157,335 in 2023/24 and £157,335 in 2024/25. Cabinet agreed on 19th October, 2023 to award additional funding of £30,000 in 2023/24 and 2024/25 from the Council's cost of living reserve in recognition of the additional pressures on the service and in particular the increased need for housing advice. Following a review of the service and further to discussions with Citizens Advice the Council is proposing to continue the existing level of funding of £157,335 for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28. In addition to this it is proposed that a further £30,000 will be allocated from the Council's cost of living reserve for 2025/26 in recognition of the continuing demand for housing advice. Further work will be undertaken in 2025/26 to consider future provision of advice and support services.</li> </ul> |  |

## **Recommendations**

1. That a grant be awarded to Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) of £101,144 for 2025/26 in line with the Council's settlement from Welsh Government and for changes in funding for 2026/27 and 2027/28 to be in line with the settlements for those years (excluding additional funding resulting from the transfer of any new responsibilities) which are currently projected to be 1% in the Medium Term Financial Plan. Should the Council receive a negative settlement the funding would remain as per the previous year and increases would not exceed 5% in any one year.
2. That a grant be awarded to Cardiff and Vale Citizens Advice of £157,335 in 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 with an additional payment of £30,000 for 2025/6 from the cost-of-living reserve.
3. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Corporate Resources in consultation with the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources to develop and agree Service Level Agreements with Glamorgan Voluntary Services and Citizens Advice.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

1. To award monies to support Glamorgan Voluntary Services.
2. To award monies to support Cardiff and Vale Citizens Advice.
3. To have appropriate service level agreements in place for the provision of services and support.

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 There are still a small number of organisations for which the Council provides grant funding to support the core operations of the organisation, and this includes Cardiff and Vale Citizens Advice and Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS).
- 1.2 The most recent funding awarded to these organisations was made by Cabinet on 14th March, 2022 where Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) was awarded £97,441 in 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 and Cardiff and Vale Citizens Advice was awarded £187,335 in 2022/23, £157,335 in 2023/24 and £157,335 in 2024/25. Citizens Advice were awarded a further £30,000 in 2023/24 and 2024/25 from the Council's cost of living reserve in recognition of additional pressures linked to the cost-of-living crisis and in particular advice about housing as agreed by Cabinet on 19th October, 2023.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1** The Council has met with representatives of GVS and Citizens Advice and these conversations highlighted the importance of continuing to offer the planning surety of making three-year awards. This is in line with the Council's stated position having lobbied for multi-year settlements in funding from Welsh Government. This approach will enable each organisation to plan and manage their service with a better understanding of the resources available in the medium-term. It was also noted as part of these conversations that there was a need to adopt slightly different approaches to the funding of the two organisations linked to the different types of services and support, they offer.
- 2.2** Discussions about funding with GVS and the Council have recognised the key role the organisation is playing supporting and delivering voluntary services in the Vale of Glamorgan. The proposal to continue with a commitment to funding over a three-year period enables GVS to forward plan and provides some surety regarding the level of funding. The proposal to link the funding to the settlement from Welsh Government demonstrates the value the Council places on the relationship with GVS and their work as the local voluntary sector council. The Director of Corporate Resources will continue to meet monthly with the Chief Executive of GVS to discuss key priorities and concerns for the Council and the sector.
- 2.3** It is proposed that a grant be awarded to GVS of £101,144 for 2025/26 in line with the Council's settlement from Welsh Government and for changes in funding for 2026/27 and 2027/28 to be in line with the settlements for those years (excluding additional funding resulting from the transfer of any new responsibilities). These are currently projected to be 1% in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Should the Council receive a negative settlement the funding would remain as per the previous year and increases would not exceed 5% in any one year.
- 2.4** The current Deed of Grant with GVS is now out of date and will be replaced with a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which reflects the relationship between the Council and GVS, expectations and working arrangements. Discussions have already commenced between the Council's Director of Corporate Resources and the Chief Executive of GVS. The SLA will build on the Deed of Grant and focus on partnership working, raising the profile of volunteering and the work of the third sector, provision of support and guidance to the voluntary and community sector and building strong relationships between the Council and the sector. The SLA will be drafted in line with priorities within Vale 2030 and in particular with regard to the section on working with other organisations which is framed around the Council's values.
- 2.5** Discussions have taken place with Citizens Advice and the ongoing increase in demand for their services has been recognised. This was initially in the context of the Coronavirus Pandemic, and the associated economic consequences but has continued with additional pressures in the context of the cost-of-living crisis. In

recognition of these pressures and the need to review the provision of advisory services to ensure appropriate and accessible services are in place, it is proposed that core funding continues at the same level of £157,335 for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 and that a further allocation of £30,000 will be made for 2025/26 to be funded from the Council's cost of living reserve. This will enable specific work to be undertaken to explore how the Council can work more collaboratively with Citizens Advice in further joining up services such as benefits, housing and money advice services with those offered by Citizens Advice and will provide additional capacity for Citizens Advice to provide advice to residents of the Vale of Glamorgan.

- 2.6** A Service Level Agreement will also be developed and agreed with Citizens Advice to reflect the relationship between the Council and Citizens Advice, expectations and working arrangements. The SLA will be drafted in line with priorities within Vale 2030 and in particular, work to prevent and tackle poverty, reduce inequalities and supporting and protecting those who need us. The SLA will also have due regard to the statement in Vale 2030 about working with other organisations which is framed around the Council's values. The SLA will build on the current agreement and focus on the services provided by Citizens Advice for the local community.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1** The proposals consider the long-term service delivery and sustainability arrangements for key services provide by the third sector within the Vale of Glamorgan and the potential impact that these services can have on citizens.
- 3.2** The awarding of this finance is consistent with the Council's vision as articulated in Vale 2030. Working with the third sector is also a key consideration within the Council's Reshaping programme.
- 3.3** The Council will work collaboratively with the organisations referred to within this report to pursue our new well-being objectives as detailed in Vale 2030. The proposals set out in this report recognise the integration of our objectives with those of our partners. The nature of the relationships with these partners seeks to prevent future problems from arising. The activities undertaken in partnership that are funded by these proposals will seek to further involve citizens in the design and delivery of services, as well as in providing support to a range of our residents.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1** There are no direct implications arising from this report but the Council will continue to work with GVS to explore what support and guidance can be provided to the Third Sector on issues relating to climate change including work

through the Public Services Board's Climate Change and Asset Management Sub-Group which GVS are a member of.

- 4.2** Work undertaken through Citizens Advice will support people to deal with issues around fuel poverty including through reducing energy use and improving energy efficiency.

## **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

### **Financial**

- 5.1** It is proposed that GVS receive £101,144 for 2025/26 in line with the Council's settlement from Welsh Government and for changes in funding for 2026/27 and 2027/28 to be in line with the settlements for those years (excluding additional funding resulting from the transfer of any new responsibilities) which are currently projected to be 1% in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Should the Council receive a negative settlement the funding would remain as per the previous year and increases would not exceed 5% in any one year.
- 5.2** It is proposed that Citizens Advice receive the same level of core funding of £157,335 for 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 and a one off £30,000 award for 2025/26 to support the response to the cost-of-living crisis and the increased demand for housing advice.
- 5.3** This funding for the core allocations for GVS and Citizens Advice is available within the policy budget for the periods outlined in this report. The additional sum to Citizens Advice of £30,000 will be funded by a contribution from the Cost-of-Living Reserve.

### **Employment**

- 5.4** There are no direct employment implications for the Council as result of this report. The guarantee of the funding arrangements will enable these organisations to continue to employ staff to undertake the services outlined in this report.

### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 5.5** As part of these proposals, a Service Level Agreement will be required between the Council and each organisation, and a delegation is recommended to the Director of Corporate Resources to ensure these are put in place.

## **6. Background Papers**

None.