

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 4 November 2013

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Leisure and Community
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Community Action Fareham -Service Level Agreement Review</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Community
<b>Strategy/Policy:</b>	
<b>Corporate Objective:</b>	To build strong and inclusive communities; A safe and healthy place to live and work

**Purpose:**

This report proposes extending the funding agreement with Community Action Fareham for a further six months.

**Executive summary:**

Community Action Fareham (CAF) is the local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). CAF offers support to a range of community organisations providing services and activities to meet the needs of local residents.

The current service level agreement with Community Action Fareham (CAF) expired on 30 September 2013. This report considers a proposal to extend the current service level agreement by six months until 31 March 2014. The proposed extension should enable members time to consider the results of Hampshire County Council's proposed review of the 'support to the voluntary sector', before deciding how Fareham Borough Council should direct its support to the voluntary sector in Fareham in the future.

The proposal to extend the current service level agreement with Community Action Fareham for a further six months was considered and endorsed by the Leisure and Community Policy Development and Review Panel at their meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

**Recommendation:**

That the Executive agrees to extend the current service level agreement with Community Action Fareham until 31 March 2014.

**Reason:**

To continue to provide advice and support to local voluntary organisations.

**Cost of proposals:**

The cost of extending the service level agreement with Community Action Fareham for a further six months is £20,918. This cost can be met within existing resources. Budget provision was made for this within the approved general fund budget for 2013/14.

**Appendix A:** Diagram of Core Work

**Background papers:** None

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## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

**Date:** 4 November 2013

**Subject:** Community Action Fareham Service Level Agreement Review

**Briefing by:** Director of Community

**Portfolio:** Leisure and Community

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Community Action Fareham (CAF) is the local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). As Fareham's local CVS, CAF works for the benefit of Fareham based residents, community groups and organisations. They offer support to a range of community organisations across a raft of issues, including the provision of services and activities to meet the needs of local residents engaging in or seeking support to set up community activities.
2. Support is also provided to help develop the network of community and voluntary groups operating across Fareham, this can include guiding them with things such as governance arrangements, policy development, attracting volunteers, grants and fund-raising.

#### BACKGROUND

3. CAF has held a service level agreement with the Council since 1995, for the delivery of core services. Each CVS is reliant on their local authority (FBC) and County Council (HCC) to co-fund their core functions with the provision of an annual grant. The core funding enables CVS's to provide their services free of charge and to support the infra-structure of community and voluntary activities. In particular, those who operate free of charge or on not-for-profit basis across the borough. It is recognised that in recent years, several other statutory services (such as Health agencies, NHS bodies and Adult Services) have also used the services of CAF for consultation and engagement with local users and the wider community.
4. In addition to providing core activities, Community Action Fareham also operates other valuable services such as Community Transport; Dial a Ride, Home Help Service, Shopmobility and the Volunteer Centre (VC), as well as hosting and accommodating a number of smaller organisations at their offices.

5. At the meeting of the Council's Executive on 11 February 2013, members agreed to extend the SLA with CAF for an additional period of six months, pending the outcome of the review currently being led by Hampshire County Council. In addition, in order to assist the Council to accommodate their programme of efficiency savings, members agreed to reduce the current level of core funding by approximately 4%. As co-funding partner of the service, HCC also implemented a similar reduction in funding.
6. Currently Fareham Borough Council's contribution to CAF's SLA equates to a grant of £41,836 per year (pro-rata to a figure of £20,918 for six months as provided). This reduction provided a saving of £1,743.20 towards the Council's efficiency savings programme.

## **PROMOTING GREATER TRANSPARENCY**

7. Through involvement of the Community Development Manager (CDM) in the HCC Review, it has become clear that CVS's offer many different services across the County; therefore it is not unusual for services to be dissimilar and differ substantially from one CVS area to another. Traditionally services reflect the needs of the community sector that they seek to support. But this can also be influenced by the availability of other services that may also promote community activity within the same locality or the demography and ethnicity of a local area which underpins local needs.
8. It is recognised that because of the range of activities that CAF are involved with, it has sometimes been rather difficult to establish where the Council's funding is being utilised and what difference the funding is being used to make at local level. With reduced funding available to the Council, it is especially prudent to ensure that members are clear about the benefit that council-funding makes to the local voluntary sector and ensure that it is used to maximum advantage.
9. Formal monitoring is conducted on a quarterly basis by the Executive Member for Community and the CDM. Nonetheless on some occasions there has been disparity between those activities that are considered to be core functions and other functions that the organisation may be involved with.
10. In order to strengthen monitoring arrangements, the Community Development Manager has been working closely with the CEO and Chairman of Trustees of CAF to identify a new method for promoting greater clarity. It is hoped that by providing a better understanding of the core activities of CAF, this in turn will help demonstrate how these priorities relate to the core funding provided by the Council. It is planned that by assisting with enhanced monitoring of the Council's financial contribution, this model should also help enhance members' understanding of the range and importance of the functions offered by CAF. A copy of the new model is attached at appendix A.

## **UPDATE ON HCC REVIEW OF SUPPORT TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

11. From the report presented in January 2013, members will recall the county-wide review currently being undertaken across all CVS's in Hampshire. The review is concerned with "funding to support future capacity in the voluntary and community sectors in Hampshire"; as such it is evaluating the funding provided by the County Council to local community and voluntary organisations across the county. This includes local CVS's and Community Action Hampshire as well as several other centrally funded community organisations.
12. The original terms of reference for the review appear to have changed slightly and more issues have been included into the overall assessment of support to the community. As a result, the lead for the review has moved to a different department within the County Council and consequently, the proposed options for the future delivery of services have been delayed. It is reported that the outcomes for the review are now not expected to now be finalised until March 2014 at the earliest, although further slippage cannot be ruled out.

## **FUTURE FUNDING**

13. As CAF is jointly funded by both Fareham and Hampshire County Council it would still be prudent to consider the outcomes of this awaited review. It is recognised that any future changes to the level or designation of funding from HCC will have implications for the local service and the way the Council may wish to support their CVS in future.

## **PROPOSED WAY FORWARD**

14. In order to accommodate the delay in the review results, it is proposed that the six monthly SLA (which expired on 30 September 2013) be extended by a further six months until 31 March 2014. It is hoped at this stage that County will have decided at what level they may fund CVS's in the future and have a clearer idea about the priorities for future community support.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

15. Should members wish to support this proposal, the existing SLA will need to be extended for a further six months at the cost of £20,918 for this financial year. Depending on the outcome of the review and the Council's options for future funding, it is likely that further funding will need to be set aside if the SLA is to be renewed for another three year term, as has previously been the case.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

16. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report.

## **CONCLUSION**

17. This report considers a proposal for extending the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Community Action Fareham by six months until 31 March 2014. The proposed extension will enable the delay with Hampshire County Council's 'review of support to the voluntary sector' to be accommodated and will enable members to fully consider the results of Hampshire County Council's review, before deciding how the local community sector in Fareham can best be supported in the future.

**Background Papers:** None

**Reference Papers:**

Report to the Leisure and Community Policy, Development and Review Panel, 16 January 2013, Community Action Fareham – Review of Service Level Agreement.

**Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Janie Millerchip, Community Development Manager (Ext 4597)