

# Arun District Council

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Housing And Wellbeing Committee</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Voluntary Sector Grants 2025-2029</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Fraser Kidd, Leisure &amp; Wellbeing Business Manager</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Carol Birch, Chair of Housing and Wellbeing Committee
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>

**CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:**

IMPROVING THE WELLBEING OF ARUN: Develop and implement a Wellbeing Strategy to plan services, resources, amenities, activities, and places to help our community thrive

**DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:**

Arun District Council will develop a Wellbeing Strategy which the voluntary sector will feed into, to ensure that our vulnerable communities have access to transport, advice and social activities.

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:**

Within the 2024-25 budget the voluntary sector grants amount to a full year forecast outturn of £257,484.08. It is proposed to increase the grants we provide by £21,015.92 to £278,500.

An additional £12,500 is proposed for Community Transport Sussex to partially fund a local development officer in Arun, so that they can continue the development of accessible, affordable transport across the district.

See below table of grant costs 2024-25 vs 2025-26 based on the above comments.

	2024-25	2025-26	Increase
Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester	£61,982.88	£64,000	£2,017.12
Community Transport Sussex	£7,980	£20,500	£12,520.00
Arun Community Transport	£4,256.00	£5,000	£744.00
AGE UK West Sussex and Brighton	£55,000	£57,000	£2,000.00
Citizens Advice	£128,265.20	£132,000	£3,734.80
<b>Total Increase amount</b>			<b>£21,015.92</b>

From April 2026 it is proposed a Consumer Price Index increase (based on the previous September's CPI from the previous year) added to each of the grants to cover increased staffing costs, and security due the length of agreements.

The below table shows predicted amounts for budgetary purposes based on September's 2024's CPI of 1.7%.

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester	£65,088.00	£66,194.50	£67,319.80
Community Transport Sussex	£20,848.50	£21,202.92	£21,563.37
Arun Community Transport	£5,085.0	£5,171.45	£5,259.36
AGE UK West Sussex and Brighton	£57,969	£58,954.47	£59,956.70
Citizens Advice	£134,244.00	£136,526.15	£138,847.09

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the work being carried out by the voluntary sector.
- 1.2 To inform members of how the grant funding provided by Arun is spent within the community & voluntary sector and how their contracts are managed.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

### That the Housing and Wellbeing Committee:

- 2.1 Endorse the work of all voluntary sector partners and the increases in grants from 2026 as shown in the above table, with an annual CPI increase from 2026 added until the final year 2028-29.
- 2.2 Note that the Group Head of Environment and Climate Change has delegated authority to agree service level agreements within the organisation.

## 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 This report will provide members of the Housing & Wellbeing Committee an update on the work of voluntary sector and recommend the setting of new grants and contracts from 1 April 2025 until 31 March 2029. These grants include Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester (VAAC), Community Transport Sussex (CTS), Arun Community Transport (ACT), Age UK West Sussex, Brighton and Hove (AUKWSBH) and Citizens Advice (CA).

## 4. DETAIL

- 4.1 The voluntary and community sector is made up of a large and diverse range of organisations. Arun District Council recognises the importance of a vibrant and successful voluntary and community sector and provides support funding to ensure that the organisational and development needs of the sector are met. A successful voluntary and community sector is a vital component of a vibrant local economy and a partnership approach to supporting those most in need within our community. Infrastructure delivery is an essential part of ensuring that the sector is equipped to best serve Arun residents.
- 4.2 **Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester (VAAC)** is an umbrella charity that supports the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. They support, nurture and advocate for local communities, whilst working alongside public and corporate partners to instigate positive change in everyday lives and address long term social challenges. VAAC is a member of West Sussex Links (formally the Alliance) of voluntary and community sector infrastructure support organisations in West Sussex, though the service is delivered in each District and Borough with local funding to meet local needs funding received will be used to contribute to the costs incurred, including staff salaries, of running the VAAC service to supporting the sector in the district.
- 4.3 **Community Transport Sussex (CTS)** provides infrastructure support across West Sussex, and they are also a community transport provider. It is commissioned by West Sussex County Council to improve access to transport for those who struggle to access mainstream transport and particular vulnerable people.
- 4.3.1 With their relations with West Sussex transport, they managed to ensure Arun Leisure Centre was included as a stop on the new 97-flex Book a Bus Barnham service, after Six Villages Sports Centre closed in May 2024.
- 4.3.2 As detailed within the financial summary, partially funding a local development officer would improve the services within the district. The local development officer will be tasked to develop community transport links across Arun, whilst working with other local transport organisations.
- 4.3.3 Funding for this role will add value to the work that CTS provides across Arun supporting isolated people to get to medical appointments, social activities and reducing social isolation by:
- Supporting people's wellbeing by reducing social isolation
  - Collating evidence of need to highlight the gaps through local surveys and focus groups to really understand the local Community Transport need across Arun
  - Targeting the most deprived people in Arun to support them to get out
  - Working with other organisations in partnership through the Local Community Network (LCN) to reduce health inequalities
  - Supporting other community transport providers to develop themselves (e.g. training & advice) and to encourage partnership working and support through organising regular Community Transport Forums

- Promote Community Transport Services across Arun through social media
- Develop projects, fundraise, and manage these projects e.g. Digital Demand Responsive Transport from Barnham Station. Would like to develop work with the Community Hubs.

4.4 **Arun Community Transport (ACT)** are based at Dove Lodge in Littlehampton. Over the past year, they have registered 258 new clients and have provided 7200 trips. In the past 12 months they have been successful with a funding application with Barchester Charitable Foundation for a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle which is proven very popular. The funding they receive goes towards the operation to ensure they can continue to provide affordable and reliable transport for residents in local areas who cannot easily access public transport. They also offer a listening ear whilst keeping an eye on their elderly and vulnerable clients.

4.5 **Age UK West Sussex Brighton and Hove (AUKWSBH)** formal relationship with the council dates to 2006. Historically they have operated the Laburnum Centre in Bognor Regis, where they were provided a 15-year lease in 2019 and a tapering operating fee which will reduce to nil cost to the council by 2027. In return AUKWSBH were tasked to provide a thriving activity centre for older people in the heart of Bognor Regis. The centre includes a bespoke gym for over 50s and a café. The grant they receive from the council is vital to the continuation of this local work, and even more so with demands of the current co-of-living challenges. Members pay a fee to use the centre, gym and café which is imperative that they keep the pricing appropriate to support older people, but all to cover their costs.

4.5.1 For Arun residents AUKWSBH deliver several contracts in partnership with WSCC, local primary care (PCNs) and Sussex Community Foundation Trust (SCFT). These services are all free, and together all the services play a vital part in the health and wellbeing of the local older population. The grant funding will be used to continue the services for older people they offer, which includes part funding their local support officer.

4.6 **The Citizens Advice (CA)** contract is a collaborative agreement lead and managed by WSCC and includes all District and Boroughs in West Sussex. The commencement date was 1 September 2022 with the agreement ending on 31 March 2025, although there is a clause in the contract to extend the agreement until 31 March 2029. It was agreed at October's bi-annual meeting, that it would be beneficial for all D&Bs to continue with this arrangement for a further 4 years.

4.6.1 CA offer free, easy to access and independent advice to all clients in West Sussex to help address the challenges that are affecting their lives. They engage proactively in local and wider partnerships to ensure clients can access help as efficiently as possible. The service also has a role in addressing health inequalities on a local basis, for example through the Local Community Network (LCN) and the Financial Impact Group (FIG) to provide a stable and secure basis for seeking funding for additional projects in response to identified gaps in service.

4.7 Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are in place for all voluntary sector funding arrangements and will be reviewed/updated. The SLA's will be monitored by the Community and Wellbeing Manager and Wellbeing Business Manager on a regular basis. Each SLA will contain clear objectives and outcomes for service delivery. The designated monitoring offices will ensure processes are followed have control over the funding based on the organisation meeting required needs/outcomes.

4.7.1 Quarterly reports are also required to be submitted by all organisations. Officers also attend quarterly meetings for updates on agreements and are invited to board and annual general meetings.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

5.1 With the Citizens Advice contract being county wide, Arun District Council officers have had regular consultation with the lead officer at West Sussex County Council and Adur, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Mid Sussex District Councils and Worthing Borough Councils. These discussions have all supported the collaborative contract and the 4-year extension.

## **6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

6.1 Reports are provided within appendix from all organisations, with the alternative being that the council removes grant support.

## **7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER**

7.1 The additional costs of the proposals in this report equate to £21,016. Which is an increase of 8.1% on the 2024/25 base budget. This can be met within the existing base budget. The future increase of an annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) linked increase to each grant will ensure but that their values keep pace with inflation.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 If any risks to service provision are identified, interventions from contract leads will prompt earlier or more frequent service monitoring.

## **9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER**

9.1 S1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the council a general power of competence, the council has the power to receive grant funding and enter into grant agreements in accordance with the requested recommendations.

## **10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

10.1 None

## **11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT**

11.1 The management of health and safety is in accordance with the contract Service Level Agreements.

## **12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT**

12.1 VAAC is a tenant of the council based at Bognor Regis Town Hall, with a license to occupy until 31 March 2027

12.2 AUKWSBH is a tenant of Laburnum Centre, Bognor Regis, current lease until 31 March 2034.

12.3 Citizens Advice is a tenant of Bognor Regis Arcade, current lease until 18 April 2028.

## **13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE**

13.1 Within Arun District, AUKWSBH reported that they have 38 volunteers at the Laburnum Centre in a wide variety of roles and running activities for the community. 75% of their volunteers live alone, are over 65 and volunteer to combat feelings of social isolation and loneliness.

13.2 This report and its recommendations does not impact on those with identified protected characteristics under the Equalities Act

13.3 Equalities Impact Assessment provided within appendices.

## **14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE**

14.1 During the 22-23 FY Age UK were included within “purchased goods and services”. Using a spend based approach it was concluded that they were responsible for 1.26% of this category, equating to roughly 207 tco2e. It is hoped that in the future that Age UK can be engaged with more to determine emissions based on usage data rather than the spend based approach currently used.

14.2 1 tCo2e is equal to: using 5,171 kWh of electricity which could power the average mid-terrace house or flat for roughly a year and 10 months, 500 CO2 fire extinguishers or driving a small petrol car for 9,234km. In turn to remove just 1 tCo2e you would need 50 trees growing for a year (What is 1 Ton of Carbon Dioxide and how it relates to daily life? - EMSmastery)

14.3 The Laburnum Centre (where AUKWSBH is based) is an old building which would benefit from upgrade. To support this the site was included within the failed wave 5 bid of the Low Carbon Skills Fund application. However, the Council is reviewing the opportunity to undertake a heat decarbonisation plan on the site using an internal budget.

**15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

15.1 None

**16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT**

16.1 None

**17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS**

17.1 None

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**CONTACT OFFICER:**

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**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

[Appendices](#)

- [1.](#) Age UK West Sussex Brighton & Hove October 2024 report
- [2.](#) Arun Community Transport October 2024 report
- [3.](#) Citizens Advice October 2024 report
- [4.](#) Community Transport Sussex October 2024 report
- [5.](#) Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester October 2024 report
- [6.](#) Voluntary Sector Grants Equality Impact Assessment