
STRATEGIC GRANTS PERFORMANCE REPORT

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform scrutiny of performance of organisations receiving strategic grant as agreed in the Cabinet Report of 1 July 2013.

Summary

2. All organisations have submitted some performance reports as required and whilst there are some queries to be followed up the reports show that Darlington residents are benefitting from the use of strategic grant by the voluntary organisations.
3. The variety of activity supported through Strategic Grant illustrates the difficulty in using a single template. The system implemented for performance monitoring requires quarterly reporting against the outcomes in the funding offer letter from both the front-line organisations and the infrastructure body.
4. A number of queries have arisen during the performance management of these grants and these are currently being addressed with individual organisations. These queries relate to clarity about time periods covered in the response and some organisations have also been requested to provide more detailed evidence of activity.
5. Scrutiny representatives will continue to receive information about any actions taken as these outstanding queries are being addressed by the grant recipients.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Scrutiny notes the delivery of organisations receiving strategic grant and acknowledges that performance management arrangements have now been put in place.
 - (b) The long-term future of strategic grants continues to be examined as part of the budget processes within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
 - (c) Scrutiny receives informal updates prior to a further report being brought to Health and Partnership Scrutiny in March setting out overall performance for the year.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Resources

Background Papers

Darlington Borough Council Cabinet Paper dated 1 July 2013

Mary Hall : Extension 6053

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no direct benefits for crime and disorder but many of the issues in this report are of secondary benefit in reducing crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	Many of the Strategic Grant outcomes support improved health and well being.
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impacts.
Diversity	Some of the outcomes for organisations in receipt of Strategic Grant support access to services for protected characteristic groups.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected by delivery funded through Strategic Grant
Groups Affected	The whole population will be potentially impacted upon by the use of Strategic Grant
Budget and Policy Framework	Strategic Grants are part of the support given to the Voluntary Sector and are also one of the topics covered in the Budget Advisory Panels.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Strategic Grants support a number of vulnerable people in Darlington and will help to reduce inequalities.
Efficiency	This report aims to identify value for money from Strategic Grant

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. Each organisation in receipt of strategic grant was asked to submit a performance report covering the period until the end of September. This complies with the funding delivery against the outcomes agreed with each organisation.
8. A number of clarification questions have been asked and these have been used to measure the performance of each organisation and inform future discussions about strategic grant.
9. The evidence will also help to map where there are gaps in performance that need to be addressed. It will also highlight areas of over performance and identify whether further resources may be required in the future. Conversely evidence has also highlighted where there need to be improvement in delivery and it has also become clear that in some cases further clarity about the evidence required needs to take place.
10. Front-line organisations have delivered a wide range of outcomes and outputs which are set out in **Appendix 1**. These outcomes include:
 - (a) Over £694,000 of additional benefit has been brought into Darlington
 - (b) Young carers have been supported and a young person has been involved in the co-production of a national inspection regime for children's residential care
 - (c) 74 volunteers have given over 13,000 hours of advice
 - (d) Access to the credit union will be available in 2 locations within the Council
 - (e) 69 families have been supported to remain in their own homes
 - (f) 65 volunteers have been involved in Friends groups
 - (g) 40 organisations received support to build capacity
11. During the performance management process it has also become clear that the financial climate has had an impact on delivery of some of the outcomes. Frontline organisations providing advice and information have found that they require increasing capacity and in most cases have over performed due to increasing demands for their services.
12. The role of the infrastructure body has also been affected by the changing environment as they themselves have lost staff and have been forced to restructure as funding from other sources has reduced. Discussion is continuing about the role of the infrastructure body and the priorities for future funding.
13. eVOLution provided evidence of support offered to groups in Darlington but this is not of sufficient detail to ensure whether this provides value for money. Whilst the funding agreement clearly sets out outcomes and outputs together with reporting periods it does not set out the detailed evidence required. Discussions are currently taking place to define the evidence requirements so that eVOLution can set up the necessary systems to enable them to provide this.

14. Future discussions about strategic grant need to further investigate these issues and the work previously undertaken by the scrutiny task and finish group will inform this future work. It will also be important that the voluntary and community sector are included in this further work and that there is also external challenge to this process.

Outcome of Consultation

15. Voluntary organisations are supporting a great number of vulnerable adults and young people in Darlington. Discussions about the future use of strategic grant must be based upon best use of the limited resources that there are. This will require gathering more detailed evidence and continuing performance management.
16. The attached Summary at Appendix 1 gives an outline of the performance from the range of organisations receiving Strategic Grant. This information is just an insight into the total work that these organisations do and shows how important the sector is to the well-being of residents in Darlington.
17. Further work will take place to clarify the evidence required, timetable for submission and release of quarterly payment dates for payment subject to performance. As set out above the infrastructure support required by the sector and the local authority will be further investigated as part of the Medium Term financial Plan activities.