

RBC SLA Monitoring Report 2024/25 Executive Summary

Introduction

It is widely accepted that Local Authority and Hampshire County Council's (HCC) grants jointly contribute to the delivery of the core function of Hampshire Councils of Voluntary Services, including Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS). The RBC SLA from 2023/24 was rolled forward pending the priorities and the funding allocation from HCC – via a contract with Community First – for 2024/25. It was expected that a reduction would be achieved in line with the Hampshire wide Infrastructure Grant allocation. Last month, RVS was advised that the funding from HCC would be reduced by 27% to £27,500 for 2024/25 against revised priorities:

- To develop volunteer capacity across Hampshire, attracting new volunteers and promoting flexible volunteering opportunities.
- Maintain a CVS network recognising and responding to the challenges and needs of the Voluntary Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector.
- To provide a voice for and engagement with VCSE sector and HCC and align VCSE capacity with HCC Adults' health & care and Children's services priorities.

Although no longer the same, the outcomes of the SLA still align with HCC's priorities:

1. Community and voluntary groups are able to access appropriate support and guidance enabling them to strengthen their governance, financial/ organisational sustainability and volunteering practice.
2. To facilitate increased funding for a wide range of voluntary and community sector organisations.
3. Enhanced capability, capacity and resilience in the sector, which reflect the diversity and breadth of Rushmoor communities and activities
4. Council and partner organisations value the strengths of the community and voluntary sector and understand the scale and nature of the challenges faced.
5. Increased volunteering to meet and respond to local need.

RBC maintained a grant of £64,877 for 2024/25 (following a 5% reduction in 2023/24 and 10% reduction in 2022/23).

Service Delivery

Some efficiencies have been made by streamlining the data capture and reporting against our SLAs by aligning our reports.

Outcome One - More significant efficiencies have been made in how we respond to requests for support by our 337 member groups. We have created a portfolio of on-line resources which we signpost enquiring organisations to. Only if they are unable to resolve their enquiry, or if it is a larger issue, we have provided additional personalised support. An example of this is RVS taking on a role on the Management Committee of the new Farnborough Foodbank to support good governance for this valuable community project.

Our quarterly Voluntary Sector Fora provides an efficient opportunity to share information, education and updates across the sectors and to facilitate valuable networking. The new Leader of RBC and Frimley ICB's new Director for Partnerships & Communities for North East Hants & Waverley Place used these opportunities to meet members of the local VCSE sector.

Outcome Two – Information about funding opportunities are shared via our website, newsletters and in-person events.

The increased financial pressure on the sector and concern for the future is reflected in the increased number of funding bids that we supported this year. The total value of bids supported (£797,233 has been inflated by one bid for three-year funding for a valued mental health support service which is under threat of closure.

We are waiting to learn of the outcome of most of the bids but know that £356,766 has been achieved. We also learned of the success of bids supported by RVS in the previous year including £200,000 National Lottery funding for Greater Rushmoor Nepali Community and we also supported the distribution of £135,907 via representation on the panels of Frimley ICB's Innovation Grants and Rushmoor Community Lottery.

Outcome Three – Significant support has been provided to four new groups being established in Rushmoor. Assisted by introductions to key organisations, one successfully launched in July and has seen noteworthy benefit of cross-sector partnership working. Andy's Man Club is already planning development to encourage engagement from our Nepali community and has been adopted as the Motor Show's Charity of the Year.

Essential training courses (inc First Aid and Food Hygiene) have been delivered locally whilst signposting to accredited organisations is encouraged to maximise resources.

Outcome Four – RVS is one of six VCSE organisations which makes up the Leadership Group of the recently launched Frimley VCSE Alliance. Our mission is to create a partnership between the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise Sector and the Health and Care System.

We intend that the VCSE sector is party to producing and shaping strategies, plans and services with the ICB, to deliver improved health and wellbeing for populations, delivering solutions to reducing inequalities.

RVS have promoted this widely to our members and the wider VCSE sector. The launch event in July was a success and more than 20 local groups have signed up as members.

Outcome Five – 79 volunteers have been placed within Rushmoor VCSE groups. Using the Institute of Volunteer Research's model, this equates to an estimated economic value of £129,237 per annum.

An average of 146 opportunities were listed on our Volunteer North Hants website - [Volunteer North Hampshire - Volunteering opportunities in North Hampshire \(volunteernorthhants.org\)](https://volunteernorthhants.org).

Additionally, 56 'bite-size' opportunities were completed by RVS Responders. These included supporting Rotary at the Donkey Derby and conservation roles with Rowhill Nature Reserve and at Queen Elizabeth Park.

Donna Bone
October 2024