



Working Better Together to Support our Voluntary and Community Sectors (VCS)

A Review of our Current Approach

March 2019

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This document reviews our approach to supporting our voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners. It sets out the range of ways in which we currently do this, considering the strengths and weaknesses of each.
- 1.2 The report considers the local and Surrey context, as well as considering good practice and national research into supporting a thriving VCS.
- 1.3 To date our VCS support has focussed around our grant giving. This review identifies a wealth of opportunities to strengthen and support our VCS alongside our cash funding, which will improve the impact and value for money of our cash funding, the sustainability of our VCS partners and the positive impact of our VCS support on our residents. Section 7 identifies a range of opportunities to improve our support to our VCS partners, namely:
 - To overhaul our grant giving and financial support to increase efficiency and impact.
 - To offer in kind support, in some instances in lieu of some grant funding.
 - To improve our dialogue with our local VCS.
 - To increase skills based volunteering.
 - To work with Voluntary Action Reigate & Banstead (VARB) to raise public awareness of the activity in our VCS and to recognise the value of volunteering to our residents.
 - To develop the skills and performance of our VCS.
- 1.4 Section 8 of the report makes a number of recommendations, grouped around these 6 opportunity areas. The recommendations include:
 - Reconfiguring the financial support that we currently offer (namely core funding, Councillor community awards and capital grants) into the three funding pots as detailed in the table overleaf, in order to improve the impact, effectiveness and accountability of the financial support.
 - Increasing our emphasis on in kind support, including skills based volunteering and use of space.
- 1.5 Delivering these recommendations would facilitate and enable a stronger VCS through partnership working with both individual organisations and with Voluntary Action Reigate & Banstead (VARB), our VCS infrastructure organisation. It would also encourage our business and resident communities to strengthen our VCS, through greater skills based volunteering.
- 1.6 The next steps (section 9) summarise the priorities for the Community Partnerships service in the coming months to implement the review's recommendations, subject to Member approval. We will regularly consider the effectiveness and impact of this new approach in order to fine tune it where

necessary and maximise the positive impact of our cash, service and other in kind resources on our residents.

Summary of proposed RBBC funding streams

	Small Grants Fund	Medium Grants Fund	Commissioning Fund
What is it for?	Smaller grants to enable community groups & voluntary organisations to deliver activities or projects which support our key priorities.	Medium sized awards aimed at supporting groups that are already working with local people and communities.	Commissioning selected key VCS partners whose services are central to our corporate priorities, especially those seeking larger financial contributions.
Budget	£45,000 pa from 2020/21 £30,000 for 2019/20	£50,000 pa from 2020/21	£285,000 pa ¹ from 2020/21
Value of award	Up to £2,000	£2,000 - £20,000	Over £10,000
Length of award	Up to 1 year	Up to 1 year	Up to 3 years
Key criteria	All of our financial support, whether commissioned or via grant applications, will be focussed on supporting the delivery of our corporate priorities, and will prioritise services which provide value for money and have a demonstrable positive impact on our communities. We will not fund individuals.		
	Members will be encouraged to identify opportunities to support community groups / voluntary organisations whose work supports our corporate priorities. In some instances applications may be accepted which are not instigated by Member contact with VCS organisations. We will use 2019/20 as a trial period.	Applications may be for core costs, pilot projects or capital works. Applications with match funding / in kind support from other sources will be given more weight in the assessment process.	RBBC will specify services sought and invite the selected VCS partners to enter into a commissioned contract, and work together on a service level agreement.
Potential Examples	Foodbank, holiday activities for vulnerable young people	Kitchen upgrade in a community building	VARB, ESDAS, Community Debt Advice

¹ This figure includes £85,000 to the Banstead Commons Conservators

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The purpose of this document is to review of our approach to engaging with and supporting our voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners. There are over 300 voluntary and community organisations and over 60 faith groups operating within the borough.
- 2.2 As a Council, currently we support our VCS partners directly or indirectly in a number of ways, including:
- Our Core Grants annual funding programme
 - Our Councillor Community Awards programme
 - Our Capital Grants programme
 - Rental Grant Subsidy
 - National Non-Domestic Rate Relief
 - Direct funding from specific teams' budgets
 - Ad hoc in kind staff time
 - Ad hoc free use of space for meetings
 - Facilitating support for our VFCS partners from our business community
- 2.3 In the main, we have delivered this support in the same way for a number of years. It is therefore timely to review our approach, to consider if we should refresh our approach to increase the impact and effectiveness, both for us and for our VCS partners.

3.0 Approach

- 3.1 This report has been produced through researching good practice and talking to our VCS partners and our internal colleagues through a range of methods:
- The use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to gain their insights and understand the impact of the current arrangements.
 - Voluntary Action Reigate and Banstead (VARB) hosted a consultation meeting where we gathered the views of many of the agencies that are supporting our residents.
 - Research into the approach of other local authorities.
 - The report also takes into account the different factors that influence our grant making; agreements such as the Surrey Compact and national research highlighting the perspective of the grant holders.

4.0 How we currently support our Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners

- 4.1 The following tables outline the different ways we currently support our VCS partners. Each one summarises the purpose, current budget, impact, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities associated with each type of support.

Table 1: Core grants annual funding

Description	<p>Core funding costs are essentially running or operational costs, including support costs, and governance activities. Whilst there is no statutory responsibility to grant fund our VCS, it is recognised that our support for the VCS helps us to deliver the priorities in our Corporate Plan. The Council has provided core funding for many of the same organisations in the same way for a number of consecutive years. A review of core funding in 2014 recommended moving from three year funding to annual applications.</p> <p>Appendix A provides a list of 2019/20 core funded organisations.</p>
Current Budget	£334,000 per annum
Impact	<p>The funding is intended to meet our corporate priorities for our residents. In reality some of the organisations we fund are much more closely aligned with our corporate priorities than others. Historically, measurement of the impact of core funding is limited; therefore it is difficult to determine whether our funding is achieving what the applicants said it would.</p>
Strengths	<p>Core funding sustains some of our key partner organisations, contributing to their essential running costs. Typically it is harder for VCS partners to secure charitable grants for core / back office costs than to secure funds for projects. Core funding is often an advantage for partners when applying for project funding from other sources.</p> <p>For 2019/20 we have introduced new grant agreements, prepared by our legal team to ensure that there is a clear expectation on the part of the grantee to achieve the outcomes stated.</p>

Weaknesses	<p>Consulting with our partners has revealed the annual process and the length of time that it takes for the application to be processed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes financial insecurities and detracts from the day to day operations. (Applications are submitted in September with decisions made in January / February.) • Affects recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers. • Limits the amount of time they have left to make alternative bids if their core funding bid is unsuccessful. This is especially problematic where our funding is crucial to their existence.
Opportunities	<p>New networking opportunities have been successfully established by the Community Development team. Our VCS partners are telling us that they want to have more communication and are keen to work with us and with each other. We could improve the effectiveness of our core funding by shortening the application process, lengthening the funding period, changing how we measure impact and how we monitor and provide support to build resilience and expertise.</p>

Table 2: Councillor Community Awards

Description	This is an award of £500 per Councillor, available annually, established to assist Councillors in their community leadership role and help with engagement locally. Councillors can choose to make a single award, divide the allocation among a number of projects within their ward or combine their award with other Councillors.
Current Budget	£26,000 per annum.
Impact	The impact has not been measured.
Strengths	Some worthwhile projects are supported; such as a shower being installed at The Renewed Hope Trust for use by homeless people and the part funding of a pop up restaurant, a project for our Syrian Refugee Families.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is administratively intensive, especially for the small amounts of money involved in each application and particularly when a Councillor uses his / her allowance on more than one project. • Not all Councillors choose to nominate, leaving some monies left over. At the time of the 14 December 2018 funding application deadline, approximately £9000 had not been applied for by Councillors. • Not all applications are completed with necessary detail, with some Councillors expecting Council staff to fill out the forms. Councillors are not necessarily aware if other Councillors have awarded funding to the same organisation. For example, one organisation has received 4 separate Councillor Community Award payments at different points in the year.
Opportunities	More local networking opportunities between the VCS and our Councillors might ensure that funding is applied to a wider variety of projects, potentially with a closer alignment to corporate priorities.

Table 3: Capital Grants

Description	<p>Capital grants either create a new asset for the local community, or substantially enhance an existing one. Examples of recent projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changing rooms at the YMCA Inclusive Sports Facility • St John's Church Community Facility (enabling match-funding to be accessed through Surrey Community Buildings Grants Scheme).
Current Budget	£20,000 per annum
Impact	Given the nature of the projects which have been funded we believe that these funds will have had real impact, however, we have not historically gathered evidence of this from the funding recipients.
Strengths	It can provide community organisations with the ability to access match funding for capital projects.
Weaknesses	<p>Due to the nature of capital projects often taking longer than planned, funding awards often have to be carried forwards to subsequent financial years. This is a finance administrative issue only.</p> <p>There is limited awareness of the fund.</p> <p>The scale of the budget is small given the fund is for capital works.</p>
Opportunities	<p>The application process could be improved to allow for better measurement of outcomes. We need to be sure that there is a clear methodology around the decision making process, and that there is clarity for potential applicants of the fund's availability. In addition, we could improve measurement of the impact that the funding has made</p> <p>We can explore the potential for greater coordination with allocation of Section 106 funds.</p>

Table 4: Rental Grant Subsidy (RGS)

Description	A subsidy paid to those tenants who occupy land or buildings that we own that they are using under lease or licence.
Current Budget	Currently around £60,000 per annum (Note it is effectively foregone income rather than a cash budget.)
Impact	This subsidy supports community use of our buildings and land, which through a wide range of clubs and organisations meet a diverse range of needs. This improves the wellbeing and quality of life for our residents inclusive of those with additional needs.
Strengths	Subsidies are granted for the length of the lease or until the lease rent review date, allowing the tenant the security they need to plan ahead. Supports a thriving voluntary and community sector.
Weaknesses	The application form needs to be updated to ensure that it captures all the information necessary in order to assess the application.
Opportunities	Not applicable

Table 5: National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR) Recovery

Description	<p>This is relief for not for profit organisations on business rates, which is applied for every two years.</p> <p>All charities are entitled to mandatory 80% relief. We have discretion to give further relief above the mandatory level, dependent on how they score against our criteria. We currently automatically award recipients of core funding the additional 20%.</p>
Current Budget	There is no ceiling.
Impact	Several of our partners have commented on how valuable this is to them and it is particularly important to a lot of smaller organisations.
Strengths	<p>This process follows government legislation. The documentation is stored separately securely, and is audited externally. The good practice guidance ensures fair decision making and consistency.</p> <p>It is also efficient as any money rebated is shared between central government, Surrey County Council and us.</p>
Weaknesses	None
Opportunities	<p>To improve NNDR Recovery information on our website to clearly state our policy.</p> <p>As the cost of this rebate is shared with SCC and central government, we could consider awarding this to more than core funded partners.</p>

Table 6: Direct funding from specific teams' budgets

Description	Direct funding occurs when there is a close working relationship between a Council team and a partner who can help us to deliver our specific objectives. These payments which are made to single agencies, with an expectation that they work with us to achieve a certain outcome. The directly funded organisations include ESDAS from the Community Safety budget and Community Debt Advice from the Housing budget. ²
Current Budget	Circa £30,000 per annum.
Impact	This expenditure is targeted to support the objectives of specific Council services and has clear positive impact on the delivery of relevant teams' service plans.
Strengths	Direct funding demonstrates good mutual working relationships and is very efficient. There is good communication between the Council team and the recipient partner.
Weaknesses	Allocating money in this way places the burden of funding responsibility on an individual Council service area when the benefits of the partner's service may be felt across several Council service areas.
Opportunities	To review how these financial commitments complement core funding and whether or not this expenditure could be incorporated into a different funding stream.

² CDA and ESDAS also receive core funding

Table 7: Ad hoc support in kind

Description	<p>A variety of ad hoc, in kind support, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering available space for meetings at the Town Hall or the Harlequin • Offering our own staff time to provide free, specialist support. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A recent talk by our Data Protection Officer on GDPR was very well received. - Members of our Housing team have also sat in on Housing Drop-in consultations at CAB, which was also found to be extremely useful for both parties. <p>Other types of in kind support not currently offered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential use of office space or co-location • Consideration of preferential rates for paid-for services (e.g. theatre tickets as raffle prizes, discounted fees for waste collection services etc.)
Current Budget	N/A
Impact	This supports our VCS partners by making their budgets go further or increasing the effectiveness of the services they offer.
Strengths	It enables limited VCS budgets to go further.
Weaknesses	The current RBBC offer is inconsistent.
Opportunities	<p>To have a consistent position and to raise awareness of any offer to VCS partners.</p> <p>Has the potential to enable us to support a broader range of VCS partners without requiring an additional budget.</p> <p>There is an opportunity for us to offer our own staff skills to work with VCS partners, and to extend the range of support, e.g. supervision for those working on the frontline with vulnerable members of the public, or IT skills. This is something we are exploring with our Human Resources colleagues. As well as supporting our VCS partners it would support the personal development of our staff.</p> <p>The Council could lead by example in encouraging support from the business community for VCS.</p> <p>We could explore opportunities to offer premises which provide a stable base, possibly in lieu of some cash support in some cases.</p>

Table 8: Facilitating support for our VCS partners from our business community

Description	<p>Our Economic Prosperity Team has been working for some time with VARB and Crispin Blunt's office to encourage our business community to support our VCS partners.</p> <p>More recently, Skylark, a small group of local volunteers with management consultancy backgrounds, have collaborated with VARB to offer pro bono diagnostic assessments of some of our VCS partners and identify projects where this would be most valuable.</p> <p>VARB has then matched the projects to suitable corporate volunteers. Some examples include a new website for Age Concern Merstham, Redhill, Reigate and a strategic review for ESDAS.</p> <p>Skills based volunteering matches professional volunteers with charities who will benefit from their professional advice and expertise. Ambitious employees, keen to test their abilities in new environments and expand their networks, usually warmly welcome these opportunities.</p>
Current Budget	N/A
Impact	This is very valuable and could have wide-reaching and mutual benefits. This supports our VCS' partners to address a long- held challenge which improves their long term sustainability.
Strengths	<p>The advantage is that local businesses are helping with local projects and their expert advice is contributing to our VCS' partners' capacity for growth.</p> <p>The sharing of specific expertise has been well received, evidenced in the partner network meeting feedback.</p>
Weaknesses	Skills based volunteering offer is currently limited and ad hoc.
Opportunities	<p>VCS partners are very keen that this area of support is expanded. Skills-based volunteering can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the professionalism and productivity of VCS organisations. • Enhance opportunities for staff development, which would strengthen the local economy. • Create short term and or explicitly defined opportunities for volunteering might encourage more people to be involved. • Explore the possibilities of other types of in kind support, such as free print services.

5.0 Surrey and Wider Context

- 5.1 An important part of this review has been to understand the Surrey and wider context to our support for our VCS partners.

5.1 Voluntary Action Reigate and Banstead (VARB)

- 5.1.1 VARB is the umbrella organisation for the VCS in Reigate and Banstead. VARB are an important partner to Reigate and Banstead and receive £20,000 from core funding annually. We are part of a tripartite Partnership Grant Funding agreement – the other funders are Surrey County Council and East Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group. VARB's performance is measured through an agreed performance scorecard (included as Appendix B) and regular performance monitoring.
- 5.1.2 VARB's objectives are
- To increase successful volunteering opportunities within the Borough
 - To improve VCS organisations' access to diverse forms of funding and to make better bids.
 - To support improvements in the VCS's governance and business development
 - To support VCS organisations to respond to evidence led needs and trends
 - To influence policy affecting the VCS in Reigate and Banstead
 - To work with statutory agencies to recruit and prepare volunteers for an emergency situation.
 - To work with partners in local forums to build resilient communities
- 5.1.3 This is a successful organisation despite having limited resources of funds, staff and premises. Recruiting volunteers is harder because of a lack of footfall to their offices at the back of the Belfry Shopping Centre. In comparison, Mole Valley CAB and Central Surrey Voluntary Action are co-located just off the high street in Dorking.
- 5.1.4 VARB has the knowledge of the sector that is needed to support the changes recommended in this review.

5.2 Surrey Community Action (SCA)

- 5.2.1 Surrey Community Action are a countywide independent charity which supports voluntary and not-for-profit groups with advice and services to help them to operate more effectively. SCA is both a Rural Community Council and a Council for Voluntary Services. This allows them the knowledge to be an expert in the sector and influence the agenda. They have developed a wide range of services and resources for use in the VCS, including the Surrey Compact and the Impact Framework which can be used to measure impact. (See Appendix C)

5.3 The Surrey Compact

- 5.3.1 We are signed up to The Surrey Compact. Its basic principles should guide our practice. To demonstrate its relevance an extract from the guidance is reproduced below. This review will reference guidelines from the Compact as best practice examples.

The Surrey Compact is a commitment to continually improve relationships between the public, voluntary, community and faith sector and organisations representing service users and carers. It is an agreement that changes how partners behave, engage and work together at all levels. It helps us provide better services to the people of Surrey by:

- *Making sure we are open and respectful in how we work together*
- *Understanding each other, build trust and foster openness*
- *Involving the right people and appreciate that voluntary action is an essential component to a democratic society*
- *Sharing information between best practice and partners*
- *Giving an equal voice to all*
- *Simplifying and improving processes, including funding*
- *Preventing and resolving disputes.*

Figure 1: Extract from the Surrey Compact

- 5.3.2 There are six codes within the Compact, all of which in some way are relevant to this review:
- Working with Communities Code,
 - Equality and Diversity Code,
 - Funding and Procurement Code,
 - Volunteering Code and Communication,
 - Consultation and Engagement Code.
 - Positive Disputes Resolution Code

5.4 Surrey County Council

- 5.4.1 Surrey County Council has, since a review in 2012/13, developed their commissioning role with Surrey's volunteer bureaux³ which has a strong focus on measurable outcomes. The process involves annual meetings with phone calls each quarter. It has developed a scorecard which is a visual tool capturing all the outcomes on one sheet. (See Appendix B)

5.5 The Reigate and Banstead Community Fund

- 5.5.1 The Community Foundation for Surrey has recently set up a Reigate and Banstead Community Fund. We have invested £5,000 into this fund, which has levered in £2,500 of top up funding from an anonymous benefactor. The initial target for the fund is £300,000, of which about 40% has been raised

³ VARB is the volunteer bureau for our area.

already. Below is an extract from Community Foundation for Surrey's webpage, announcing the new fund which will launch in 2019.

The proposed new fund, which will be the 8th borough/district Area Fund across the county managed by the Community Foundation for Surrey, has been developed in partnership with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, the Community Foundation for Surrey, and representatives from the local community.

The Reigate and Banstead Community Fund will build a significant and sustainable fund for the long-term benefit of local projects across the borough. The fund will act as a collective, allowing residents and businesses to combine their giving into one place, which will then make grants to local groups in our borough.

Figure 2: Extract from the Community Foundation for Surrey's webpage

- 5.5.2 A panel will make decisions on use of the monies held in the Reigate and Banstead Community Fund. We are represented on that panel by our Head of Community Partnerships. This gives us the opportunity to influence the allocation of those grants towards organisations and projects which are aligned to our corporate priorities.

5.6 Social Value

- 5.6.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act came into force on 31 January 2013. It requires commissioners to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. The Act helps us to get more value for money out of our procurements. It urges us to think about facilitating better designed services, with new and innovative solutions.
- 5.6.2 Social value is defined as '*The benefits to the community from a commissioning/procurement process over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes*'. This is best approached by considering each local context and needs. Examples of this include the employment of ex-service users in delivery and contractors required to employ local youngsters and long term unemployed.

5.7 The Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR)

- 5.7.1 The IVAR is an independent charity that works with local and national organisations that are striving for social change. It uses research to develop practical responses to the challenges being faced. We are examining this research to better understand these challenges, helping us to develop our strategies to better support our VCS partners in line with our approach of 'working better together'.

- 5.7.2 It has produced a study that looked at life for voluntary organisations in 2018 called '**Duty to Care? How to ensure grant-making helps and doesn't hinder.**' (See Appendix D) Below is an extract summarising their findings:

Life for voluntary organisations in 2018

- 1. The instability we described in our 2012 Duty of Care study feels like a permanent fact of life*
- 2. After recent scandals, the public and media have higher expectations of transparency and professionalism*
- 3. Organisations are trying hard to adapt and it is an ongoing journey (e.g. investing more in measuring and evidencing outcomes/impact; taking steps to diversify funding sources; and broadening service offers.)*
- 4. Organisations struggle with commissioning and procurement processes*
- 5. Organisations have been able to keep going thanks to the determination of their people*
- 6. Maintaining services is more common than growth and more organisations feel vulnerable.*

Figure 3: Extract 1 from IVAR's Duty to Care study

- 5.7.3 In addition, the IVAR has identified three areas of practice where funders might consider adapting or innovating for the benefit of grant holders they seek to support.

Considering how to adapt or innovate

- The first is to take a risk with an organisation that may be facing an uncertain future – the grant may give them the 'breathing space' they need.*
- The second is to simplify the funding process to make it more purposeful and less burdensome for the organisations we fund.*
- Thirdly is that we build relationships and have better conversations with our grantees to build mutual understanding and honesty.*

Figure 4: Extract 2 from IVAR's Duty to Care study

5.8 Skylark

- 5.8.1 Skylark is a pro bono consultancy, based in Reigate and Banstead, focused on helping local charities to improve their effectiveness. Skylark completes an initial diagnostic assessment using business management theory and strategies, to identify priority projects which could be delivered through skills based volunteering support. They then work closely with VARB to match corporates' offer of employees for skills based volunteering to projects.
- 5.8.2 Skylark in some instances offers direct support with strategic planning and governance.
- 5.8.3 They have worked successfully with local organisations including Age Concern Merstham, Redhill, Reigate and East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service. Their offer of intensive, targeted, skills-based support could have huge benefits for some of our key partners.

6.0 Good practice elsewhere

- 6.1 We have considered good practice in other authorities' approach to supporting their VCS partners to inform our findings. The following paragraphs provide some relevant examples.

6.2 Brighton and Hove

- 6.2.1 As part of their community and voluntary sector support, Brighton and Hove have a **Third Sector Investment Programme** which is made up of two parts.
- 6.2.2 The funding is divided into a three year commissioning programme and smaller annual grants of up to £15,000. The Third Sector Investment Programme recognises and builds on the assets of the voluntary and community sector. The programme focuses investment on the changing pattern of need across the city. It challenges the voluntary sector to show the evidence of impact of their work to their beneficiaries.

Brighton and Hove Communities and Third Sector Commissioning Prospectus			
<p>This is a three year strategic programme. It facilitates investment into key organisations working in partnership to provide services and activities that deliver against council priorities.</p> <p>Before each new tranche of funding, they hold a consultation event so that organisations can find out more about the council's principles, outcomes and processes.</p> <p>They also publish a table of the projects funded which groups the projects according to strategic outcome. In addition to this they publish a yearly update on the progress of each project, which is externally evaluated.</p>			
Brighton and Hove Communities Fund			
What is it called?	The Engagement Fund	The Resilience Fund	The Collaboration Fund
Who is it for?	Open to applicants with an income of up to £20,000 per annum	Open to applicants with an income of up to £100,000 per annum	The Collaboration Fund supports existing community and voluntary organisations and not-for-profit social enterprise to form operational and strategic partnerships to support the city's most vulnerable residents.
What is it for?	The Engagement Fund supports groups to engage and empower local people, communities or neighbourhoods in the city.	The Resilience Fund aims to support groups already working with local people and communities.	For joint projects. Applicants need to complete a simple expression of interest form, requiring a named third sector lead, supporting partners and support from council officers.
How much is it for?	Awards of up to £2,000.	Awards up to £10,000.	Awards up to £15,000.

Table 9: Brighton and Hove: Funding and Commissioning

6.3 Wigan

- 6.3.1 As part of the Wigan Deal, Wigan BC has created “The Deal for Communities’ Investment Fund. There are different levels of funding available (see Table 10 below) ranging from small investments of up to £2000 to ‘Big Idea investments’ of three years for innovative and developed ideas with grants over £10,000.

Levels of funding available

Tiers of investment				
	Small investments	Start up investments	Cultural education investments	Big idea investments
What is it for?	A small investment to do new things to address key priorities and outcomes.	An investment and support package to nurture a great idea that needs developing further.	New to 2018 , this is a one-off investment to support cultural education in the borough, as part of our new Cultural Strategy.	A 3 year investment for innovative, developed ideas.
How much can I apply for?	Up to £2000	Up to £10,000	Up to £20,000	Greater than £10,000
How long is the investment for?	1 year	1 year	1 year	3 years

Table 10: Wigan’s Deal for Communities Investment Fund

- 6.3.2 Wigan BC match funds (up to £1000) for new and creative projects which raise their own funds through crowdfunding.
- 6.3.3 Wigan BC strongly encourages its entire staff to volunteer in work time for 5 days per annum for organisations / projects within their borough.

7.0 Opportunities

7.1 Our research has identified a number of opportunities to improve our support to our VCS partners. The following paragraphs consider each of these in turn.

7.2 To overhaul our grant giving support to increase efficiency and impact

7.2.1 We propose to increase the efficiency and impact of our grant administration through:

- Moving core funding from an annual grant to outcome focused commissioning of up to three years (**the “Commissioning Fund”**), for organisations receiving more substantial sums. We would align this more closely with our corporate objectives and where appropriate we would require agencies working in the same service area to submit joint bids.
- Creating two new funding streams for small grants of up to £2,000 (**the “Small Grants Fund”**) and larger grants of between £2,000 and £20,000 (**the “Medium Grants Fund”**).
- Moving away from the current arrangements for Councillor Community Awards to a new model (the “Small Grants Fund”), where the administrative burden is more proportionate to the sums being awarded, and where the use of funds is more targeted, and impact can be demonstrated.
- Incorporating some social value principles into the assessment of funding applications.
- Taking into account the recommendations of The Institute for Voluntary Action Research ‘Duty to Care?’ study (see section 5.7), reducing time frames for decision making.

7.2.2 Table 11 overleaf summarises these three proposed new funds. The total budget which would be required for these funds equals the current cash commitment to supporting our VCS through our current grant giving arrangements.

Summary of proposed RBBC funding streams

	Small Grants Fund	Medium Grants Fund	Commissioning Fund
What is it for?	Smaller grants to enable community groups & voluntary organisations to deliver activities or projects which support our key priorities.	Medium sized awards aimed at supporting groups that are already working with local people and communities.	Commissioning selected key VCS partners whose services are central to our corporate priorities, especially those seeking larger financial contributions.
Budget	£45,000 pa from 2020/21 £30,000 for 2019/20	£50,000 pa from 2020/21	£285,000 pa ⁴ from 2020/21
Value of award	Up to £2,000	£2,000 - £20,000	Over £10,000
Length of award	Up to 1 year	Up to 1 year	Up to 3 years
Key criteria	All of our financial support, whether commissioned or via grant applications, will be focussed on supporting the delivery of our corporate priorities, and will prioritise services which provide value for money and have a demonstrable positive impact on our communities. We will not fund individuals.		
	Members will be encouraged to identify opportunities to support community groups / voluntary organisations whose work supports our corporate priorities. In some instances applications may be accepted which are not instigated by Member contact with VCS organisations. We will use 2019/20 as a trial period.	Applications may be for core costs, pilot projects or capital works. Applications with match funding / in kind support from other sources will be given more weight in the assessment process.	RBBC will specify services sought and invite the selected VCS partners to enter into a commissioned contract, and work together on a service level agreement.
Potential Examples	Foodbank, holiday activities for vulnerable young people	Kitchen upgrade in a community building	VARB, ESDAS, Community Debt Advice

Table 11: Summary of proposed RBBC funding streams

⁴ This figure includes £85,000 to the Banstead Commons Conservators

- 7.2.3 Longer term funding awards would be accompanied by SMART targets, reviewed regularly, and the use of a quarterly scorecard, such as we have seen used by Surrey County Council (Appendix B). Longer term agreements could possibly also include phased funding to reduce dependency.
- 7.2.4 We could begin the process of transferring from grant funding to commissioning from 2020/21 with our key partners such as ESDAS, VARB, CAB and CDA. This would allow us to begin more quickly and pilot this new approach. (Under current arrangements, core funding applications for 2020/21 would need to be submitted by September 2019.)
- 7.2.5 We could make more explicit our use of the Surrey Compact's Funding and Procurement Code to demonstrate our adherence to best practice guidelines and give confidence to VCS partners.

7.3 To offer in kind support, in certain instances in lieu of some grant funding

7.3.1 This in kind support could include:

- Providing staff time / expertise, in a broadly similar way to employee skills based volunteering
- Free / discounted use of Council meeting rooms or discounted rates for our chargeable services (subject to the financial impact of those services).
- Exploring the potential to offer office premises to selected VCS partners for example in underutilised areas of the Town Hall

7.4 To improve our dialogue with our local VCS

- 7.4.1 We firmly recognise the value of our VCS in supporting our communities, and recognise the importance of regular communication across the sector, irrespective of whether we directly fund or provide other support to an organisation. We propose to have more regular dialogue with the VCS organisations which we fund, focussed on understanding the impact of our financial investment, and facilitating and enabling our VCS partners to achieve more for our residents and to rely less on cash funding from us.
- 7.4.2 Organisations across the VCS, irrespective of whether or not we fund them, have indicated that they would like greater clarity about who to contact at the Council and opportunities to collaborate. We will identify a single point of contact for VCS organisations and will develop new and more productive ways of working better together. This will improve the effectiveness of our contact with the VCS by building relationships and developing knowledge and expertise.
- 7.4.3 Through this new type of relationship, we will be able to help the VCS to find better and different ways to articulate their successes. As the IVAR report states, we can 'take the burden away from grant-holders to explain

themselves by actively enquiring about them'. Closer mutual understanding would also allow us to identify synergies and increase cross-referrals and enable the services to be more accessible to staff across the Council.

- 7.4.4 Forging better links between the VCS and elected Members would also be beneficial. We could support this through offering networking opportunities and more showcasing for the VCS services on offer. Some key partners have told us they have not met their ward Councillor. They would like Councillors and staff to come and see what they do and how they do it and be better informed about the decisions they are making. In order to facilitate this we should think carefully about opportunities, perhaps marketplace type events, which would bring together ward Councillors with their local VCS.

7.5 To increase skills based volunteering

- 7.5.1 We propose to place greater emphasis on encouraging skills based volunteering to support our VCS partners through:

- Exploring the scope to introduce a Council employee volunteering scheme, with a focus on skills based volunteering
- Working with VARB, Skylark and our Economic Prosperity colleagues to encourage more businesses to get involved in the same way

- 7.5.2 There is also potential to harness the skills of many of our residents of all ages, for example through links with local churches, to encourage more of our highly skilled residents to offer some of their professional skills on a pro bono basis to our local VCS. This could particularly apply to residents who have retired or parents who have taken a career break. We also need to develop more of a 'pipe line' of volunteers by encouraging younger people to get involved. Younger trustees would be particularly welcomed.

- 7.5.3 We could encourage the VCS to offer short discrete pieces of work or opportunities for those who are new to volunteering. Many people are afraid to volunteer as they think it will be a long term commitment. We could exploit our social media platforms to highlight this type of opportunity for voluntary work in the borough.

7.6 To work with Voluntary Action Reigate & Banstead (VARB) to raise public awareness of the activity in our VCS and to recognise the value of volunteering to our residents

- 7.6.1 By identifying opportunities for our VCS to speak for themselves, especially those we directly fund / support, we can celebrate the good work that is done and assist in attracting additional volunteers to these organisations. We could look to do more to articulate the voices and experiences of those who give and receive the support in our VCF sector. VARB and our Community Development Workers are ideal starting places for this.

- 7.6.2 By working with VARB and the Mayor's Office, we could explore ways of potentially enhancing the Mayor's Volunteer Awards to broaden the recognition of the important role of volunteering in our communities.
- 7.6.3 We should explore the use of the internet and social media to highlight the work of our VCS partners. For example:
- We could demonstrate the value of the work with case studies or 'stories' which are designed to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities.
 - We could publicise the local nominations for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, which is the highest award given to Volunteer groups across the UK.
 - We could look at highlighting the work of our partners, perhaps having a 'Charity of the Month', raising the profile of its work and opportunities to get involved on our staff intranet, on e-members and social media.

7.7 To develop the skills and performance of all our VCS partners

- 7.7.1 Our research shows that there are noticeable differences in the skill and knowledge levels amongst our VCS partners, in terms of paid staff, volunteers and trustees. Reducing reliance on Council funding will only work if we can help to facilitate improvements where appropriate to the VCS's skills and knowledge. There are several ways this can happen:
- **Facilitating regular networking opportunities for information sharing and regular digital information updates to all parties.** Many have expressed a lack of knowledge about other support and services offered in the community. The Community Development Team's partner network meetings have been extremely well received, as was a recent network meeting organised by VARB.
 - **Working with VARB and Skylark on initial diagnostic assessments of some of the VCS partners which we currently fund.** This would be a natural progression from the improved regular dialogue referred to in paragraph 7.4.
 - **Identifying opportunities for VCS organisations to work in partnership with agencies across the public and VCS sectors, and make joint funding bids.** More access to fundraising training could enable all VCS partners to become much more sustainable but also to learn to collaborate better.
 - **Providing joint training opportunities.** Surrey County Council, through VARB, offers up (for free) any spare spaces on staff training courses to the VCS when they are available. SCC has told us that these opportunities are always taken up. We could explore the potential for us to do the same. In

addition, we are having conversations with VARB about the potential to deliver fundraising training which both Council and VCS staff could attend.

- **Working with VARB to help existing and potential Trustees to be more effective and recognise their key role.** We should also be looking at ways of recruiting new trustees through skills based volunteering.
- **Encouraging peer support amongst the VCS.** The strengths in skills and knowledge inevitably varies between VCS organisations. As well as encouraging more skills based volunteering and in kind support from the public and private sectors, there are opportunities for certain VCS organisations to offer peer support, thereby making our local VCS more robust and resilient.
- **Working with our partners to deliver improved skills and performance.** Organisations like Voluntary Action Reigate & Banstead (VARB) and Skylark could have a role in this. (See paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4.) As far as possible we would look to VARB to take a lead on much of this work.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 The tables overleaf summarise the recommendations and the anticipated impact of these changes if they are implemented. To maximise the positive impact of these recommendations, they need to be implemented together – the sum is greater than its component parts.

8.2 Recommendation 1: To overhaul our grant giving and financial support to increase efficiency and impact

	Recommendations	Explanation	Anticipated impact
a.	To move from annual grant applications to longer term commissioning with service level agreements for those VCS partners who are most aligned to our corporate priorities, with a greater focus on demonstrating impact.	These service level agreements should be led by the most relevant service, in particular, our commissioning of the Banstead Commons Conservators should move to Neighbourhood Services, who are the best placed to oversee the BCC's work.	More certainty and stability for our key VCS partners – those partners whose services are fundamental to us being able to deliver our corporate priorities.
b.	For approximately £285k per annum of our current core funding budget to be allocated to a new Commissioning Fund . Where applicable, to coordinate this commissioning with both internal and external partners such as SCC and the CCGs (as is already the case with our financial support for VARB).	Where there is more than one VCS organisation in a particular sector who currently receives funding from us, we could move to a lead agency model so that we have one service level agreement to cover our support for those organisations. These awards should be focussed on core support rather than project support.	Greater collaboration between VCS partners who are working with similar client groups. Clear expectations of our VCS partners and focus on impact.
c.	The Councillor Community Awards budget (£26k) plus some of the remaining core funding budget (£19k) be combined to form a Small Grants Fund (£45k per annum from 2020/21, £30k for 2019/20) to create smaller grants to enable community groups & voluntary organisations to deliver activities or projects which address our key priorities. Awards would be up to a maximum of £2000. To provide 2 or 3 windows for applications during the financial year, in order to better manage the grant administration and availability of funds throughout the year.	Members will be encouraged to identify opportunities to support community groups / voluntary organisations whose work supports our corporate priorities, without a per ward budget restriction. In some instances applications may be accepted which are not instigated by Member contact with VCS organisations. We will use 2019/20 as a trial period.	To make the grant administration proportionate to the amount of funding being sought in an individual application. To provide greater oversight of what is being applied for, and therefore more robust decision making and impact. To increase equality of opportunity for VCS organisations to secure smaller grants.

	Recommendations	Explanation	Anticipated impact
d.	<p>The existing Capital Fund (£20k) plus the remainder of the Core Funding budget (£30k) be combined to create a Medium Grants Fund. Awards would be for between £2,000 and £20,000.</p> <p>To review the application process and create a new way of measuring the outcomes.</p>	<p>This would be aimed at supporting organisations that are already working with local people and communities, and may include some organisations currently in receipt of core funding. This could be capital contributions towards refurbishments of village halls, or investment to support the development or sustainability of a service.</p> <p>Applications would be invited in 2019/20 for expenditure in 2020/21.</p>	Increasing the VCS's ability to secure external funding, as many external funders require match funding.
e.	To continue to give the opportunity to apply for Rental Grant Subsidy (RGS)	RGS is an effective way to support VCS partners using our premises/land.	N/A
f.	To review the criteria for discretionary National Non-domestic Rate (NNDR) relief.	In the light of proposed changes, some organisations may fall inside or outside of scope for discretionary NNDR relief so the criteria may need to be updated to reflect our desired outcomes.	Ensure that our corporate priorities inform the targeting of support.
g.	Improve our web information about our grant offer.	To take into account new arrangements and ensure all those who are seeking information can access it.	Clearer information.
h.	To review direct funding from individual service area budgets to complement core funding and determine whether or not it could be incorporated in a different way.	Direct funding occurs when there is a close working relationship between a Council team and a partner who can help us to deliver our specific objectives. These payments are made to single agencies, with an expectation that they work with us to achieve certain outcomes.	That the money allocated is spent fairly in relation to how those services are then accessed.

8.3 Recommendation 2: To offer in kind support, in certain instances in lieu of some grant funding

	Recommendations	Explanation	Anticipated impact
a.	To develop a policy for offering free / discounted use of Council meeting rooms	This would increase the support we can give to some VCS partners at no / limited cost to us, and without this support being reliant on how well a VCS partner knows RBBC.	More VCS partners supported.
b.	To work with Human Resources to develop an employee volunteering policy.	This would encourage greater staff volunteering to support VCS partners in our borough	Greater staff understanding of the communities they are employed to serve. Greater staff satisfaction.
c.	To work with key service areas (primarily in the Finance and Organisation Directorate) to respond to specific in kind support requests from VCS partners	We already have examples of where we have done this for one off situations which has provided real benefits for VCS partners with limited RBBC staff time.	Increase the skills and knowledge of our VCS partners.
d.	To explore the potential to offer office premises to selected VCS partners for example in underutilised areas of the Town Hall	This would increase the financial stability of selected VCS partners and increase their opportunities to secure external grant funding. Any such offer of premises would need to be made in the context of charging market rent with the potential to secure rental grant subsidy.	It would increase collaborative opportunities with RBBC staff, to increase the positive impact on our residents. Improved space and facilities for some of our VCS partners.
e.	To explore offering discounted rates for our chargeable services	For example, commercial waste collection	This could be a significant saving for our VCS partners.

8.4 Recommendation 3: To improve dialogue with our VCS partners

	Recommendations	Explanation	Anticipated impact
a.	That we commit to improving communication between the Council and the VCS organisations we fund.	A Partnerships Officer could be responsible for developing new and more productive ways of working better together. They could monitor the desired partnership improvements and manage quarterly review meetings. This would also allow for referral routes to the services provided to be better shared and accessed by all Council staff.	Better, regular communication with a single point of contact could improve the effectiveness of our relationship with the VCS sector. This would build relationships on a personal level and develop maximum knowledge and expertise for the role.

8.5 Recommendation 4: To increase skills based volunteering

	Recommendations	Explanation	Anticipated impact
a.	To place greater emphasis on encouraging skills based volunteering to support our VCS by raising the profile of volunteering. This could be for a specified period only.	This would encourage more of our highly skilled residents, young and old, to offer some of their professional skills as volunteers and trustees.	A significant increase in the amount of volunteer hours given to our partners, boosting their capacity to meet the needs of our residents.
b.	For Community Partnerships and Economic Prosperity to continue working with VARB and Skylark to increase VCS needs diagnostics and skills based volunteering of our business community. This could involve shared training and new and increased forms of publicity.	Our Economic Prosperity Team has been working for some time with VARB and Crispin Blunt's office to encourage our business community to support our VCS partners.	More awareness could increase the number of businesses offering skills based volunteering through short and long term volunteering/trusteeships and more in kind support.

8.6 Recommendation 5: To raise public awareness of the activity in our VCS and recognise the value of volunteering to our residents

	Recommendations	Explanation	Anticipated impact
a.	Raise public awareness of the activity in our VCS sector through increased publicity and exploring the use of social media to highlight the work that our VCS partners do.	We could look to do more to articulate the voices and experiences of those who give and receive support in our VCS to share on digital platforms such as our webpages and all social media.	That our employees, Members, residents and local businesses are more aware of the work that is being done and how they could contribute their support.
b.	To improve ward Councillors awareness of their local VCS organisations and vice versa.	Partners have expressed a wish to meet and have more dialogue with elected Councillors so that they can become more familiar with what they do for our residents. This could help to publicise the work being done to draw in funding and much needed new volunteers.	Councillors will be better informed about services in their areas.

8.7 Recommendation 6: To develop the skills and performance of all our VCS partners

	Recommendations	Explanation	Anticipated impact
a.	To facilitate improvements where appropriate to the VCS's skills and knowledge.	<p>Regular networking opportunities will enable joint working and create opportunities for some of our VCS partners to share their expertise with their peers.</p> <p>The same networking could facilitate access to joint training opportunities. A focus on fundraising training would improve resilience and promote better working together.</p> <p>Trustees may also need some support to contribute effectively to an organisations' development.</p>	Our VCS partners will have the skills to fundraise, collaborate where appropriate, improve impact recording and recruit enough volunteers. This will improve their resilience and performance.

9.0 Next Steps

- 9.1 The following sets out the next steps, all of which are subject to securing the political support for the recommendations:

What	When
a) Set up regular dialogue with VCS partners	From April 2019
b) Launch new funding arrangements including current core funded organisations of the new approach	Post-election
c) Scope service requirements for proposed initial tranche of commissioned VCS services	By July 2019
d) Improve public awareness of our VCS through greater RBBC communications and collaboration with the VCS organisations themselves, especially Voluntary Action Reigate & Banstead	From Spring 2019
e) Work with Voluntary Action Reigate & Banstead and Skylark to strengthen opportunities to develop the skills and performance of our VCS partners	From Spring 2019
f) Determine the realistic timescales for developing Council policies around employee volunteering, use of subsidised Council space, providing discounted rates for chargeable services such as waste collection	Summer 2019
g) Complete initial tranche of commissioning of VCS services (to relate to 2020/21 onwards)	December 2019
h) Review effectiveness of new small grants fund to inform 2020/21 arrangements.	March 2020

Appendices

Appendix A

Core funded partners 2019-20

Name of organisation	Amount of core funding
Voluntary Action Reigate & Banstead	£20,000
Citizens Advice Reigate & Banstead	£118,336
ESDAS ⁵	£20,314
Community Debt Advice ⁶	£10,000
Reigate and Redhill Live at Home Scheme	£15,000
Age Concern Banstead	£15,000
Age Concern Merstham Redhill Reigate ⁷	£15,000
Banstead Commons Conservators	£85,500
Reigate & Banstead District Sports Council	£5,500
Borough of Reigate & Banstead Arts Council	£4,000
Home-Start East Surrey	£3,000
Loveworks ⁸	£3,000
Stripey Stork	£2,500
Lucy Rayner Foundation	£2,500
Reigate & Banstead Women's Aid ⁹	£5,000
East Surrey Community Mediation	£1,500
Furnistore	£1,500
Susy Radio	£250

⁵ In 2018/19 and 2019/20, ESDAS has received / are receiving £1000 for its Sanctuary Scheme from the Housing budget

⁶ In 2018/19 and 2019/2020, Community Debt Advice has received / are receiving £10,000 from the Housing budget

⁷ In 2018/19, Age Concern MRR also received £10,000 in capital grants

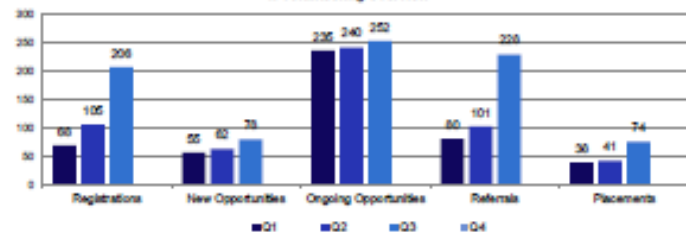
⁸ In 2018/19, Loveworks received £1,000 from Councillor awards

⁹ In 2018/19, R&B Women's Aid received £250 in Councillor awards

Quarter 3 Voluntary Action Reigate & Banstead (VARB) Scorecard

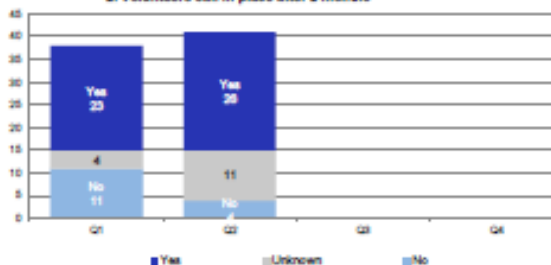
January 2019

1. Volunteering Overview



Registrations requiring no further action	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	26	52	53	0

2. Volunteers still in place after 2 months



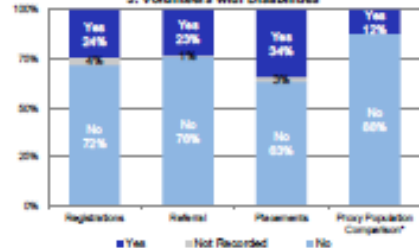
Top Three Achievements this quarter.

1. VARB held a Volunteer Fair for young people at Reigate College in October. Over 140 young people attended and met with 22 different organisations - all with opportunities suitable for 16 to 18 year olds. (VARB has also promoted volunteer opportunities at the Big Bang event for young people and the Surrey Ethnic Minority Job fair.)

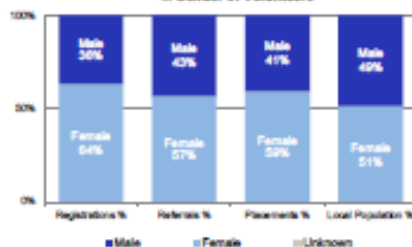
2. Working in partnership with other local charities and Pforer, VARB ran a publicity campaign #letsGaveChristmas, to generate public donations for local Christmas appeals. VARB received over £1000 of donations in cash and in kind to support our Festive Feast - a free community Christmas day meal for people facing Christmas alone. Over 140 local people took part in the Festive Feast this year.

3. Corporate volunteering is continuing to expand in Reigate & Banstead. In the last quarter VARB helped to match 228 volunteers from 17 different teams on a range of placements. These included fundraising, environmental tasks, marketing and volunteering with people with support needs. There is growing interest in skills based volunteering and VARB is helping to promote more opportunities in this area.

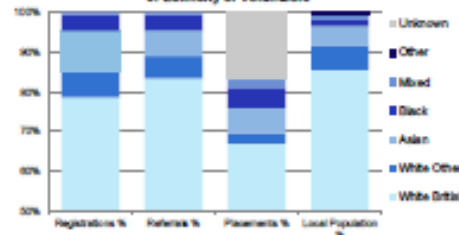
3. Volunteers with Disabilities



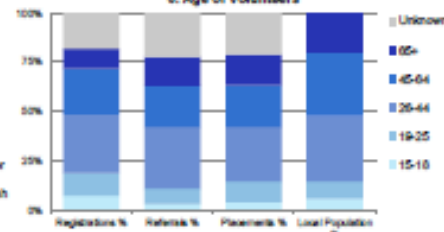
4. Gender of Volunteers



5. Ethnicity of Volunteers



6. Age of Volunteers

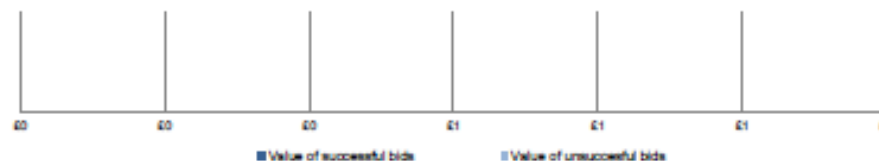


Corporate Volunteering	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of events	7	11	17	
Number of volunteers	80	133	228	
Volunteering England 2013/14 Accreditation	✓			
POASGO Level	None	1	2	3
	✓	✓	✓	✓

One Off Volunteering	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of events	1	2	4	
Number of volunteers	1	2	82	
Volunteering hours				

Frontline Survey Responses

28 out of 571 organisations stated they had used VARB in the last 12 months	Have used service in the last 12 months	Very/ fairly satisfied with service
Providing information, guidance & support on volunteer recruitment		
Support for your organisation in the last 12 months by providing funding advice, information or searches?		
Support with governance advice		
Support with back office functions eg DBS checks		
Support through local businesses		
Support through training / conference / networking etc		



*Proxy population comparator is based on individuals aged 16+ living in a household who answered that their daily activities were limited a lot or a little by a long term health problem or disability. This includes problems related to old age. Source: 2011 Census

Appendix C

To view the Surrey Compact, please visit: <https://www.surreyca.org.uk/surrey-compact/>

Appendix D

To view the IVAR report – Duty to Care? Report, please visit: <https://www.ivar.org.uk/our-research/duty-to-care/>