



Citywide Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement
Scrutiny Commission

25 January 2017

Lead director: Miranda Cannon, Director of Delivery,
Communications and Political Governance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the arrangements for citywide support to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Council is currently in the final year of a three year agreement where we receive services from Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL) to (1) strengthen and enhance the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) across Leicester; (2) develop better collaboration between VCS organisations and establish a collective identity and voice; and (3) to identify, promote and fulfil volunteering opportunities.
- 2.2 This agreement is coming to an end (September 2017) and we are currently in the process of considering what future support arrangements might be possible given the current financial challenges faced by the Council. This report explains more fully the current position of this review.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the Scrutiny Commission considers the current VCS support arrangements in place; and
- 3.2 That the Scrutiny Commission makes any necessary representations around the future of the support arrangements which will then be formally considered as part of the consultation process.

4. Voluntary Action Leicester – current agreement

- 4.1 Our current three year arrangement with VAL concludes in September 2017, and combines three separate agreements, the detail of which is covered later in this report. The services which these agreements relate were procured as three separate opportunities, partly to encourage a variety of providers to come forward.
- 4.2 These contracts are:
- Providing infrastructure support to the city's Voluntary and Community Sector (£140,000pa);
 - Supporting collaboration & guaranteeing a collective voice for the city's Voluntary and Community Sector (£53,000pa); and

- Supporting Volunteers and Volunteering in the City (£83,000pa).

4.3 The total cost of £276,000pa is funded through a contribution of £5,000pa from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), £45,000pa from the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and a net yearly cost to the Delivery, Communications and Political Governance division of £226,000pa.

4.4 At this stage we do not anticipate that the OPCC and the CCG will continue to provide funding to the same extent as current levels for any future arrangements, if at all. This will be clarified in the coming weeks.

4.5 Each of the above agreements has some clear expected outcomes, all of which were identified at the point of commissioning and which VAL are monitored against.

4.6 **Supporting collaboration and guaranteeing a collective voice for the city's Voluntary and Community Sector**

4.7 The following outcomes are expected from this agreement:

- Bring together the city's VCS groups and organisations on matters of common concern and mutual interest, promoting collaboration and partnership working.
- Guarantee a collective voice for the city's VCS groups, organisations and service users.
- Establish and maintain effective communication and regular dialogue within the city's Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Establish and maintain effective communication and regular dialogue among the city's VCS groups and organisations collectively and Leicester City Council (and its partners and stakeholders).
- Establish and maintain effective communication and regular dialogue between the city's VCS groups and organisations collectively and relevant contacts in the Private Sector.
- Support the city's VCS groups and organisations in seeking out, evaluating and implementing ways to become sustainable (by, for example, maximising opportunities to leverage external funding).
- Share and help make sense of data and information, especially related to the City Council's policy and service development affecting the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Disseminate news and information from the City Council, especially related to policy and service development affecting the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Ensure that issues related to the city's VCS groups, organisations and service users receive appropriate consideration within the policies and operations of the City Council (and its partners and stakeholders) leading to improved design, delivery, monitoring and review of services.
- Cooperate with relevant partners and stakeholders to support engagement of the city's VCS groups and organisations across the range of protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010).

4.8 Providing infrastructure support to the city's Voluntary and Community Sector

4.9 The following outcomes are expected from this agreement:

- Offer a programme of information, advice, guidance and training aimed at establishing a baseline of knowledge and skills for groups and organisations in the city's Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Reflect the diverse and varied nature of the city's Voluntary and Community Sector by providing different kinds of support to different kinds of groups and organisations.
- Provide differentiated support, not only for frontline personnel, but also for board members, directors and trustees of groups and organisations in the city's Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Identify issues of shared concern to groups and organisations in the city's Voluntary and Community Sector and tailor support to those concerns.
- Strengthen a sense of common purpose and mutual support among groups and organisations in the city's Voluntary and Community Sector by sharing good practice and learning from experience.
- Encourage adaptability, flexibility and innovation among groups and organisations in the city's Voluntary and Community Sector, so that they might be better equipped to meet current challenges.
- Increase capacity and capability of groups and organisations in the city's Voluntary and Community Sector to deliver appropriate services more effectively.
- Help groups and organisations in the city's Voluntary and Community Sector become more self-sufficient and sustainable.
- Offer mainstream support to groups and organisations representing communities in the city which are normally considered "hard to reach" or "difficult to engage".
- Update the city's Voluntary and Community Sector on national legislation and local policy related to the Sector.

4.10 Supporting volunteers and volunteering in the city

4.11 The following outcomes are expected from this agreement:

- Brokerage: "match both individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate opportunities in the local community [holding] information on a comprehensive range of opportunities. [...] offer potential volunteers support and advice matching their motivation to volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities."
- Marketing Volunteering: "stimulate and encourage local interest in volunteering and community activity. This may include promoting and marketing volunteering through [...] events and campaigns."
- Good practice development: "promote good practice in working with volunteers to all volunteer-involving organisations, [...] deliver training and accreditation for potential volunteers, volunteers, volunteer managers and the volunteering infrastructure."
- Develop volunteering opportunities: "work in close partnership with statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies as well as community groups and faith groups to develop local volunteering opportunities. [...] understand the potential offered by the local communities and work with them to realise this potential. [...] target specific groups which face barriers

to volunteering. [...] work creatively to develop imaginative, non-formal opportunities for potential volunteers.”

- Policy response and campaigning: “identify proposal or legislation that may impact on volunteering. [...] lead and/or participate in campaigns on issues that affect volunteers or volunteering. [...] campaign proactively for a more volunteer-literate and volunteer-friendly climate.”
- Strategic development of volunteering: “As the local experts on volunteering [...] inform strategic thinking and planning at a regional and national level.”
- Recognise the value of volunteering as meeting a range of objectives (e.g. as a route into employment; supporting health and well-being; helping those who are more vulnerable as a result of mental health conditions).
- Acknowledge the different types of volunteers and more explicitly support the recruitment of those with appropriate skills to serve as Board members and trustees.
- Share and help make sense of data and information, especially related to City Council’s policy and service development affecting volunteers and volunteering.
- Give something back to volunteers.

4.12 In practical terms these outcomes can be translated into the following types of support to be provided as part of the current agreements;

- Discussing matters of common concern and mutual interest, collaboration and working in partnership with other VCS groups or organisations;
- Supporting a collective voice for the city's VCS groups, organisations and service users;
- Maintaining regular dialogue with other VCS groups and organisations about issues important to the city's Voluntary and Community Sector;
- Looking at ways to become more sustainable (e.g. maximising opportunities to leverage external funding);
- Sharing and making sense of data and information (especially related to the city council's policy and service development affecting the Voluntary and Community Sector);
- Information about setting up and running a VCS group or organisation;
- Developing funding applications;
- Sharing good practice in effective governance;
- Sharing good practice in financial management;
- Information about funding opportunities;
- Marketing and communications;
- News and information from the city council (especially related to policy and service development affecting the Voluntary and Community Sector);
- Raised issues of shared concern and received tailored support to address these concerns;
- Information about good practice of other VCS groups and organisations;
- Advice and support to change working / operational arrangements so that your group or organisations might be better equipped to meet current challenges;
- Advice, assistance and support to help your group or organisation become more self-sufficient and sustainable;
- Support for your group or organisation to reach potential clients or service

- users considered "underserved", "difficult to reach" or "hard to engage";
- Information, advice and support about changes to national legislation and local policies and practices affecting the Voluntary and Community Sector;
- Recruiting and retaining volunteers;
- Marketing volunteering opportunities;
- Sharing good practice regarding volunteering;
- Training for volunteers and managers of volunteers;
- Support to develop volunteering opportunities; and
- Recruiting and assisting volunteers to serve as board members, directors and/or trustees.

4.13 **Future proposals**

- 4.14 The Council recognises the vital role that the city's many voluntary and community organisations play in supporting positive work and providing a wide range of services in the city, and remains committed to supporting a vibrant, wide-ranging and effective voluntary sector in the city. This commitment is clearly outlined within the 2015 'Labour in Leicester' Local Government Manifesto.
- 4.15 We are currently considering the extent of any future support to the VCS and are seeking people's views now through the 'Voluntary and Community Sector Support Services' consultation (open from 18 Nov 2016 to 3 Feb 2017).
- 4.16 People can take part in this survey in one of three ways: on behalf of a local VCS group or organisation; as someone who uses services provided by a VCS group or organisation; or as a member of the public with an interest in how the city council supports the Voluntary and Community Sector in Leicester.
- 4.17 As part of this consultation exercise we are particularly interested in finding out:
- How often the support services available have been accessed
 - Whether they are considered useful
 - Which of those services are most valued
 - What outcomes, if any, have been achieved as a result of the support
 - How the Council can continue to support VCS organisations
- 4.18 The intention is to develop, where possible, a better understanding of the support services that are considered most valuable and therefore an indication of those that we should consider retaining within any future arrangements. Once this is completed and if it is decided to go to the market once again for services similar to those currently provided a formal procurement process will be undertaken.
- 4.19 The Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission is invited to consider the current arrangements and the services that have been provided to date.
- 4.20 Any views that the Commission may wish to make about the value of these services, what services (if any) should be considered for retention, and finally what other types of support should be considered for inclusion in any future

arrangements will be considered as we look

4.21 **Timeline**

4.22 In order to identify a set of new priorities and (if necessary) to commission a new provider/providers the following timeline is proposed:

Activity	Date
Report to Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission	25th January 2017
Consultation ends	3 rd February 2017
CM/Executive update and draft proposals	February 2017
Neighbourhood Scrutiny update and draft proposals	March 2017
Executive decision re future contract etc.	April 2017