

North East Derbyshire District Council

Cabinet

10th June 2021

Recommissioning Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support to Groups in North East Derbyshire

Report of the Cllr. A Powell, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Communities and Communication

Classification: This report is public

Report By: Tris Burdett, Partnership Development Officer

Contact Officer: Tris Burdett, Partnership Development Officer

PURPOSE / SUMMARY

- To recommend to Cabinet revised criteria when commissioning the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure support to groups in North East Derbyshire, in particular to help groups to re-establish and sustain during post-COVID recovery, in accordance with the priorities of the Council Plan 2019-2023.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For Cabinet to agree the commissioning of an external organisation to deliver an outcome based approach to support the Community and Voluntary Sector in North East Derbyshire for an initial period of six months, from 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022.
2. To agree the flexibility to extend the contract into 2022/23 subject to budget availability and regular three month reviews to measure impact.

Approved by the Portfolio Holder – Cllr. A Powell

IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Risk: Yes ☐ No ☒

Details:

The budget available for this work is up to £9,187 from the 2021/22 allocation of the Grants to Voluntary and Community Sector budget, approved by full Council in February 2021. The approach recommended is mindful of the financial challenges

faced by the Council and is therefore planned within existing budgets. There could some reputational risk to the Council should financial support not be provided to the VCS infrastructure for the District as County and other District and Borough Council's provide financial contribution to VCS infrastructure support.

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection):

Yes ☐

No ☒

Details:

All Council legal and data protection policies will be adhered to. All data monitoring information and agreements are stored securely as per Council policy.

On Behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing:

Yes ☐

No ☒

Details:

There are no human resource implications, with commissioning and contract management to be undertaken within existing capacity.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

Decision Information	
Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: BDC: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
District Wards Significantly Affected	All
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Cabinet / Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SAMT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes Details: Cllr. A Powell Matt Broughton Steve Lee

Links to Council Ambition (BDC)/Council Plan (NED) priorities or Policy Framework including Climate Change, Equalities, and Economics and Health implications.
All. An equalities impact assessment has been completed. Currently awaiting sign off from the Equalities Team.

REPORT DETAILS

1 **Background** (reasons for bringing the report)

- 1.1 For several years the Council has provided a financial contribution to bodies that form the infrastructure support for voluntary and community sector organisations, Cabinet Minute No. 186 (2013/14). This report looks to explore viable options as to how best to provide the group-specific VCS infrastructure support, both in general, for groups and activities that align with the Council Plan 2019-23, but also recognising the emerging needs of the immediate post-COVID recovery period. The 2021/22 budget available for this activity is £9,187 which has been allocated from the Grants to Voluntary and Community Sector budget, approved by full Council in February 2021.
- 1.2 For the financial year 2021/22 £2,445 was awarded to Links Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) to provide this support until 30th September 2021. Therefore consideration is required on the Council's potential aspirations and

support approach from 1st October 2021. Although some VCS organisations are self-sustaining, many parts of the sector will require varying levels of financial and operational support to fulfil core functions. The Council recognises this and understands that this will always come at a cost. Commissioning specific group-support for the Voluntary and Community Sector through an outcomes based approach will enable the Council to meet some of the aspirations identified in the Council Plan 2019-23 and ensure the local groups receive the support needed in order to build their capacity and sustainability.

- 1.3 Through discussions with partner organisations, there is an expectation that the activities of VCS groups, unable to operate remotely, will recommence following the lifting of Government COVID restrictions. There is also recognition that new groups are likely to be formed following the lockdown period to support local people through post-COVID recovery, as well as pursuing general interests and collective support not met through existing provision.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 The main objective is to build sector capacity by delivering the following through an outcome based approach:

- Establish new and enable existing groups/organisation to grow and sustain
- Provision of good governance and constitutional advice and support
- Provision of good support and advice regarding on organisational development matters
- Support groups'/organisations' access to funding
- Distribute knowledge at a local level.

Due to limited resources, it is expected that the support provided will be for groups which are based in, or operate in, North East Derbyshire District, whose activities meet the aspirations of the Council Plan 2019-2023 and are not of a political or exclusively religious nature or duplicate or replace statutory activity.

Providing this level of advice and support can be resource intensive but done correctly it will lay strong foundations to ensure long term sustainability, independence, inclusivity and achieve greater impact for communities as a whole. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a summary of the outcome based approach.

- 2.2 Impartial and independent District-level voluntary and community sector infrastructure support is important to enable the delivery of outcomes, enabling existing groups to re-start and new groups to establish and grow, therefore creating a mechanism to develop local solutions to local problems.

- 2.3 Commissioning a third party organisation to deliver an outcome based approach will deliver the required support, allowing for a flexible and adaptable delivery mechanism which will meet the needs of the sector. It will enable the Council to move away from the core funding approach, giving the Council greater control and delivering best value whilst ensuring that the activity supported meets the principles of the Authority. The commission will be open to any new or existing providers that demonstrate they will deliver the outcomes required.
- 2.4 With the budget available, a six month pilot from October 2021 to March 2022 could be commissioned to deliver the outcomes based approach, which would initially be reviewed in December 2021. Retaining the option within the contract to extend the commission for a longer time period, subject to regular monitoring reviews, would ensure that the Council's expected outcomes and operating standards are being met and the sector is receiving the required support.
- 2.5 This flexibility within the contract length would enable greater opportunity for future synergy with other core funders within the locality. For example, Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)/Integrated Care System (ICS) are considering a joint approach to meet the needs of the sector, whilst dialogue is already underway between the Council and DCC on potential areas of co-operation in this issue. Participation through Vision Derbyshire will also enable other local authorities to be part of this wider discussion. Due to on-going complexities it is likely these discussions will continue into 2022. However, the proposed short term and flexible contracting approach enables the Council to adapt to the immediate needs of the sector whilst maintaining communication with other countywide partners to develop a joint approach and align, if deemed appropriate.

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 For the Council to continue support for the VCS infrastructure to enable groups to re-start and grow therefore ensuring longer term sustainability, independence, inclusivity and achieve greater impact for communities as a whole. This in turn will enable better community cohesion, reduced social isolation and better quality of life for residents.
- 3.2 To meet the emerging needs of the sector and provide adequate infrastructure support, commissioning a third party to deliver on an outcome based approach would provide the best value for money, allowing the Council to have control over what is delivered whilst allowing for a flexible approach to further explore alternative delivery options with other local authorities and partners.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The option to 'do nothing' and not utilise our allocated funding could undermine our ambition to deliver the post-COVID recovery plan and support local communities in the longer term. Potentially successful groups are unlikely to develop therefore impacting on the ability for communities to 'bounce

'back. It would also have a negative impact on the work undertaken in partnership, such as with Healthy North East Derbyshire Partnership, whose aim is to reduce social isolation, increase digital inclusion and support community led groups at a grass roots level.

- 4.2 An alternative option to share funding between the groups direct would adversely impact those requiring structured support to start, grow and sustain. Although some groups would see benefit from receiving direct financial support, many groups would unlikely become self-sustaining without the additional advice and support needed to achieve this.
- 4.3 To provide this support in-house would either require additional resources to fulfil this duty or reprioritisation of the Partnership Strategy Team priorities. At present there is minimal capacity to fulfil the required level of support groups will require during post-COVID recovery and beyond. Whilst this option will allow for complete control as to how the outcomes are delivered, this will come at an additional financial cost which cannot be provided for at this time. High demand would also impact on other priorities of the team.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1	Outcomes Based Approach Summary
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Click here to enter text.	