

Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

8 January 2019

Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support

1. Contacts

Report Author

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Cabinet agrees, subject to continued partner funding, to Chichester District Council's participation in a funding partnership with West Sussex County Council, Clinical Commissioning Groups and other West Sussex district and borough councils to agree joint funding principles of West Sussex Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support services.**
- 2.2 **That the Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Housing and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Services, to agree a service specification and signing of a three-year funding agreement and delegates to the Grants and Concessions Panel the annual monitoring of performance.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Chichester District Council (CDC) recognises the importance of a successful and resilient voluntary and community sector made up of charities, social enterprises and community groups that support residents, particularly those who are more vulnerable. CDC has historically funded support to ensure that the organisational and development needs of the sector are met. This is achieved by funding the local 'infrastructure support' organisation.
- 3.2 In the Chichester District, the service is delivered by Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester (VAAC). VAAC is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. VAAC was formed in 2012 following a merger of the voluntary and community sector support organisations that served Arun and Chichester. VAAC is a membership organisation led by and answerable to local groups. They currently have 248 member organisations from Chichester.
- 3.3 The service is currently under a funding agreement that ends in March 2019, this was a one-year agreement to allow for countywide discussions about how the service might be commissioned and delivered in the future. Over the previous three years West Sussex County Council (WSCC) has chosen to fund this service

by 'passporting' their grant funding to Districts to procure a suitable local service. VAAC's performance supporting groups and volunteers in Chichester District is monitored quarterly, with annual reports to the Grants and Concessions Panel (GCP). The GCP has been satisfied with performance.

- 3.4 Since December 2017, district and borough council officers have met with WSCC officers to review the Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure (VCSI) support services across West Sussex. These meetings have also included two Clinical Commissioning Groups.
- 3.5 WSCC has identified, following internal consultation and consultation with the wider voluntary and community sector across the county, a need for it to have a closer relationship with the sector. As a result it wishes to have a greater ability for strategic engagement and representative VCS 'voice' through their funding of this service. It has therefore encouraged discussion of how this could be achieved through a collective approach.
- 3.6 The voluntary sector infrastructure delivery providers have been engaged with and independently have proposed working together through an alliance. They report that this will enable them to maintain their independent local service, meeting the needs of district and borough funders, respond to the challenge to offer a 'countywide' representation role and also benefit from shared expertise or opportunities for collaborative work.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1 Continued support for the infrastructure needs of the voluntary and community sector in the Chichester District. In the context of increasing demand ensure the continued availability of:
 - Governance advice
 - Volunteer recruitment assistance
 - Training
 - Fundraising guidance
- 4.2 To endorse the direction of travel of the proposed formal alliance between the service providers by committing funds to see through their three year strategy for alignment.
- 4.3 Funding for the constituent service providers comes from a range of sources and the commitment of CDC is seen as valuable in securing the commitment of funding from other partners. WSCC is minded to support the alliance on the basis that the local service providers are well supported by their respective District or Borough.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 Under the current contract, CDC contributes £44,000 'core funding' to VAAC, with a further £28,382 received from WSCC paid to VAAC. Arun District Council (ADC) pays VAAC a further £48,760 (with an equivalent contribution received from WSCC). ADC has confirmed their intention to fund the service with £50,000 from 1 April 2019 for three years. WSCC has said that they will look to maintain the

current funding levels awarded for a period of two years (with the possibility of extension for two years) and are proposing to fund the service through the alliance.

- 5.2 It is proposed that funding of £47,600 (maintaining the current value of the funding plus an inflation allowance) is confirmed to VAAC for a period of up to three years subject to continued partner funding. Direct funding to VAAC would allow for local accountability regarding the continuance of the current service levels.
- 5.3 The alliance model proposed will maintain the existing local infrastructure delivery organisations so services are delivered locally, but ensure a shared vision and greater collaboration between the service providers across the county.
- 5.4 A number of formal or informal arrangements continue to be discussed, but all funders have committed to a shared monitoring framework for the service with key performance indicators. However, the local agreement with VAAC will continue to be reviewed locally to ensure local priorities are being met.

6. Alternatives Considered

- 6.1 Funding for this support could be discontinued, however the voluntary and community sector face increasing demand to sustain or increase the services they provide to the local community. Fundamentally the infrastructure support provided is essential to the “health” of the sector, and is support that might otherwise be expected from CDC.
- 6.2 Consideration of the best way to jointly procure a VCSI service for West Sussex has generated a number of more formalised options. The aligned approach that has been proposed does require CDC to echo the approach being taken by other districts and boroughs, and the Council could choose not to follow suit (for example only funding year by year based on budget availability). However, it is the longer term commitment that is most likely to secure corresponding commitments from others, which is the best chance to sustain this local service.

7. Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1 Funding for the service of £47,600 per annum is within base budget with an inflationary increase for 2019-20 (subject to the Council’s approval of the budget in March 2019).
- 7.2 WSCC will be leading on the Funding Partnership co-ordinating terms and monitoring. There is a staffing resource benefit to all other funding partners in this arrangement and the provider organisations will benefit from a standardised reporting approach.
- 7.3 The ultimate arrangements for aligned funding are yet to be agreed, but any Memorandum of Understanding or similar will be reviewed by Legal Services to ensure that the interests of CDC are protected.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The GCP has received annual reports regarding the performance of VAAC and have historically been supportive of their work and activities. In advance of its meeting of 30 January 2019, this report has been circulated in draft form. Members of the GCP have indicated their support for VAAC and this funding proposal.

9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1 WSCC is yet to make a formal decision about the allocation of their funds to VCSI, and an award to the alliance is predicated on the existence of the local delivery organisations (including VAAC) and their self determination to come together as an alliance.
- 9.2 The impact on the community is deemed to be positive as support will be provided to voluntary organisations to continue their work.

10. Other Implications

| Are there any implications for the following? If you tick "Yes", list your impact assessment as a background paper in paragraph 13 and explain any major risks in paragraph 9 | | |
|---|-----|----|
| | Yes | No |
| Crime and Disorder | | X |
| Climate Change and Biodiversity | | X |
| Human Rights and Equality Impact | | X |
| Safeguarding and Early Help Part of the role of the service to support training in Safeguarding for local community groups and charities | X | |
| General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Any new Agreement and the Alliance agreement will cover responsibilities under GDPR | X | |
| Health and Wellbeing Access to support and guidance from a trusted organisation will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of many groups' beneficiaries | X | |
| Other | | |

11. Appendices

- 11.1 None

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 None