



## Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission                      26 November 2020

Wards affected:                              All wards

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### **VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMMISSIONING OUTCOMES 2018/19**

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Report of Director, Community Services

#### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. To update members on outcomes arising from the 2018/19 round of Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Commissioning
- 1.2. Please note this report relates to the outcomes of the commissioning round October 2018 to October 2019. The outcomes of the commissioning round October 2019 to October 2020 will be reported in 2021.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 To note the positive impact in improving the quality of life for communities, resulting from the ongoing direct commissioning of front line services via our local VCS commissioning arrangements.

#### **3. Background to the report**

- 3.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partnership is a collaboration between the local authority and the VCS, and has been in place since 2013, with the overall aim of helping to sustain and grow the vital work delivered by the VCS and its many volunteers. HBBC commissions Next Generation (one of the Borough's leading VCS organisations), to oversee the development and delivery of our local VCS support arrangements, which includes:

- overseeing the VCS Development Forum, which meets regularly, enabling learning and development, networking and collaboration, and acts as a key link with the community

- supporting the VCS Commissioning Board, which provides a robust and fair mechanism through which the council and other sectors, can commission services from the VCS

- maintaining a comprehensive VCS database, through which the different community groups can share information with each other, and a key mechanism for HBBC and other key partners to communicate, engage and consult with the VCS

- overseeing the development and delivery of an online and drop in volunteering service, a central point of contact within the Borough where organisations can promote their volunteering opportunities and the community can find out about volunteering (please note from March 2020 this reverted to an online only service)

3.2. The Borough Council's Community Planning team works in partnership with Next Generation to deliver the overall aims of the partnership, support its ongoing development, as well as undertaking an ongoing overview and monitoring role. However, it is important to note the ongoing development of our local arrangements is enabled through the commitment of VCS representatives often in a volunteer capacity, who continue to give considerable time to help deliver this model of working.

3.3. In addition HBBC annually ring fences funding to directly commission services via our VCS, this funding has increased from £20,000 in 2013/14 when we were testing the model, rising to £45,000 for 2016/17 and 2017/18, and then £70,000 for 2018/19. The VCS Commissioning Board made up of 8 VCS representatives and 2 HBBC Executive Members (currently Councillor Keith Lynch and Councillor Martin Cartwright, but Members from the previous Administration during 2018/19), who assess applications and allocate funding following a robust assessment process.

3.4. VCS Commissioning 2018/19

3.5. The VCS is particularly well placed to support the Borough's health and wellbeing priorities, providing cost effective and practical frontline services, which compliments statutory provision. They are often closest to the community, and based on this insight, have the flexibility to tailor their approach to meet diverse needs in a timely way, not always afforded by the statutory sector, and specifically in relation to:

- Reducing the impact of social isolation and loneliness, and
- Helping maintain good mental health and wellbeing within our communities

Therefore the focus for commissioning during 2018/19 reflected these two themes.

- 3.6. Whilst we continue to encourage new, and both larger and smaller VCS organisations to benefit from commissioning funds, it is important that we continue to support our more established VCS projects, to enable them to become self sustaining longer term. Therefore the work commissioned in 2018/19 reflects a mix of both new and established projects, as well as supporting projects in both urban and rural areas across the Borough.
- 3.7. Furthermore, based on feedback from the sector, and specifically via the regular VCS Forums, during 2018/19 we moved to introducing two rounds of commissioning, rather than one, enabling VCS groups to have access to funds on a more regular basis. VCS groups were invited to submit applications for projects of either up to £1000 or £3000. In addition we also introduced a new Community Volunteer Fund, to support very small groups of volunteers, to access up to £250, which is available on an ongoing basis. This is reflected in the allocation of funding during 2018/19 as follows:
- 3.8. **Appendix 1** provides a summary of the projects commissioned in 2018/19, funds allocated, key outcomes delivered, and numbers of direct (and indirect) beneficiaries. These funds were allocated during the 2 rounds of commissioning for either up to £1000 or £3000, totalling £39,312.
- 3.9. **Appendix 2** provides a summary of feedback from some of the beneficiaries and those involved in delivering the projects detailed in appendix 1
- 3.10. The new Community Volunteer Fund proved to be extremely popular, resulting in £15,000 being allocated to this fund. The types of projects supported include a comprehensive range of very grass roots community work, which again support good mental health and wellbeing and tackle loneliness, examples include: arts and craft groups, gardening and village planting projects, friendship groups – coffee mornings, luncheon groups, parents and toddlers, bereavement, and cancer support groups.

These smaller volunteer community led groups are often seeking very small amounts of money to buy materials, refreshments, pay for venue hire, etc. so having access to this fund enables them to continue their great work. The application process is very simple and straight forward, groups don't have to be constituted, and we don't require them to complete a comprehensive evaluation report in the same way we expect from groups accessing the £1000 or £3000 funding pot. Some of these very small volunteer groups go on to become constituted groups, having recognised the need/demand for their support.

- 3.11. Alongside this, the remaining funds were ring fenced to support young people's volunteering, and community sector Climate Change initiatives, which will be reported on in next years annual VCS commissioning outcomes report.
- 3.12. The VCS Commissioning Board, undertake a rigorous assessment process, only applications which fully meet the criteria are successful in receiving funds, including applications for the Community Volunteer Fund, and only with

the authorisation of the HBBC VCS Lead Members. Any remaining commissioning funds are ring fenced and carried forward for the next commissioning round, including a small contingency pot to fund any emerging developments. A full break down of the allocation of funding during 2018/19 is detailed at paragraph 6.

#### 4.0. Ongoing development of our local VCS arrangements

##### 4.1. As previously indicated the HBBC Community Planning team work in partnership with Next Generation, to continually improve our local offer to the VCS and its volunteers, which in 2018/19 included:

The ongoing development of dedicated VCS partnership website, accessible at <http://nextgenhinckley.org/> which is supported by a strong and established brand, profiling all of the work delivered by the partnership. This includes up to date case studies celebrating the great work of our many VCS organisations and their volunteers, and projects who have benefited from the commissioning funds.

The ongoing development of the Volunteering Hub, offering a central point of contact service for anyone wanting to volunteer within the Borough, and for VCS organisations wishing to recruit volunteers. This service is available on line, (as well as a face to face service during 2018/19), based at Next Generation. This is in response to feedback from our VCS, that fundamentally their sustainability is reliant on retaining a good volunteer base.

The ongoing development and delivery of the Borough Council's Annual Making a Difference Awards to recognise and celebrate our volunteers, which is now aligned with our VCS partnership work and branding, and also profiled and celebrated on the VCS website.

## 5. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

### 5.1. The report is to be taken in open session.

## 6. Financial implications (DW)

### 6.1 During 2018/19 the local authority allocated £130,000 to support the development and delivery of our VCS partnership arrangements, for the following activities:

£60,000 - SLA with Next Generation to oversee and deliver a broad range of responsibilities in supporting the development and sustainability of our VCS partnership, including our VCS Commissioning arrangements, and

£70,000 - for direct VCS commissioning via the VCS Commissioning Board arrangements

### 6.2. Of the £70,000 allocated for the commissioning element: £39,312 - was committed to projects as detailed in Appendix 1.

£15,000 - was committed to the Community Volunteer Fund.  
 £7,000 - ring fenced for young people and climate change activities.  
 £2,000 allocated to the volunteering hub branding, pull up banners, posters, leaflets, new screen and projector for VCS Forum and specific volunteering events  
 £6,688 - ring fenced as a contingency for emerging needs/priorities

**7. Legal implications (MR)**

7.1 None

**8. Corporate Plan implications**

8.1 The contents of the report relate to and support the People, Place and Prosperity corporate priorities, and will specifically support the delivery of the following ambition: ‘Support an effective and viable voluntary and community sector.’

**9. Consultation**

9.1 This report has taken account of the ongoing consultation undertaken by Next Generation through the established VCS Development Forum, Commissioning Board, and database.

**10. Risk implications**

10.1 It is the council’s policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

10.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer’s opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

10.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Lack of sustainability of key VCS organisations within Hinckley and Bosworth, resulting in no VCS infrastructure arrangements within the locality, and significant reduction in frontline delivery of essential provision	Sustainability of the H&B VCS locality arrangements	Edwina Grant

## **11. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications**

11.1 The utilisation of up to date evidence sources and data, informed via the VCS Development Forum, and VCS database, has helped to inform the ongoing development of our VCS arrangements. These mechanisms also ensure resources are aligned with Borough priorities, and gives VCS organisations from all areas of the Borough, including rural areas, access to the VCS partnership provision and commissioning funds.

11.2 No action necessary

## **12. Climate implications**

12.1 In direct response to the authority's Climate Change Strategy, during 2018/19, VCS Commissioning Funds of £7,000 have been ring fenced to support young people's volunteering/community activities, and specifically in relation to climate change initiatives.

## **13. Corporate implications**

13.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

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Background papers: None

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