

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 8 DECEMBER 2011

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE – COMMUNITY DIRECTION

RE: PROGRESS REPORT FOLLOWING VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT SERVICES REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform scrutiny members of the progress and impact of the delivery of voluntary and community sector infrastructure support services, following revised arrangements for the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth, from April 2011

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. -That members note and endorse the progress report
- That members support the recommendation to continue to pool funding to support similar delivery arrangements for 2012/13

2. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1. In April 2009, a new model of voluntary and community infrastructure services came into operation in Leicestershire, with Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL) providing infrastructure support services across the county, with existing Voluntary Actions changing roles to Community Hubs.
- 3.2. Delivery was enabled by a pooled funding arrangement between the following agencies: Leicestershire County Council, Police, PCT, Connexions and District Councils, with total funds allocated to support the Central Infrastructure Organisation, and the seven community hubs.
- 3.3. The new structure was supported by a new performance management regime to monitor whether the services of both VAL and the Community Hubs were delivering the level of support expected of the new service, with 2009/10 seen as a transitional year for all partners in moving to the new delivery model.
- 3.4. However, during 2009/10 the public sector funding environment began to change fundamentally, resulting in a forecasted £230k reduction in pooled funding, to support these arrangements from April 2011.
- 3.5. Therefore, a further review of arrangements for the delivery of voluntary and community sector infrastructure support services was undertaken during 2010. This resulted in a new agreement from January 2011 of a single contractual model bringing together Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL), and the Community Hubs into one virtual delivery vehicle.
- 3.6. Alongside this, Leicestershire County Council announced the creation of a one year Transition Fund for 2011/12, to support Community Hubs seeking to restructure their organisation to an alternative business model, with a move away from the provision of infrastructure support services.
- 3.7. Subsequently, HBBC supported Community Action Hinckley and Bosworth (CAHB), in submitting a bid for transition funds. CAHB were successful in this application and awarded £47,500 for the development of a Social Enterprise Organisation,

specialising in regeneration/community development and direct delivery of services, where it sees its particular strengths.

3.8. Therefore, with effect from 1st April 2011, HBBC continued to pooled its annual contribution of £26,670, for the delivery of VCS Infrastructure Support Services, and subsequently agreed a SLA with VAL for delivery of these services across the Borough. A copy of the SLA is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

3.9. A detailed delivery plan underpins the SLA, a performance report is presented at quarterly officer review meeting, to monitor delivery. The approach to performance management has improved over time, and particularly during the current financial year, with VAL responding positively to requests for more detailed information on input and outcomes at the District level. Appendix 2 details the quarter two performance report, July – September 2011.

3.10. Monitoring Information

2009/10	Q1 – April – June 2009	Q 2 – July – Sept 2009
Volunteering:		
Drop in sessions	23	26
Enquiries	120	130
Placed	60	56
Group Support:		
Phone advice sessions	43	27
Face to face sessions	25	34

2010/11	Q1 – April – June 2010	Q2 – July – Sept 2010
Volunteering:		
Drop in sessions	22	23
Enquiries	140	150
Placed	13	15
Group Support:		
Phone advice sessions	9	12
Face to face sessions	11	29

3.11. It is important to emphasis that delivery of provision is significantly enhanced through partnership working, with VAL officers working closely with HBBC Community Safety/Development Officers, and CAHB Stronger Communities Team, delivering work within (and outside) of our priority neighbourhoods, and increasingly, utilising the Borough Council’s community houses as a multi agency community hub.

3.12. An ongoing challenge is to ensure all voluntary and community groups are aware of and accessing the VAL provision. Therefore, a number of improvements were agreed at the last quarterly review meeting including:

- VAL District Development Officer, and District Volunteer Advisor to have a presence every 6 weeks at an agreed community hub base (i.e. a library or community centre) across the Borough including more rural localities, to improve awareness and accessibility.
- To enhance the quarterly performance report, detailing key issues/gaps in support identified, VAL response, and outcomes as a result of support
- An annual celebration event profiling “achievements in the community”, enabled through multi agency partnership working and community ownership – Big Society in practice
- An enhanced role for the VCS VOICE Forum in shaping the design of local services as a result of the evolving new locality management arrangements

3.13. In addition to the HBBC/VAL officer review meetings, there is a quarterly VCS Funders Meeting, chaired by Sandra Whiles, Chief Executive, Blaby District Council.

Through this funders group it was agreed that the VAL infrastructure contract be extended for 2012/13 (subject to sub-contracts being extended for the same period, in those Community Hubs still providing Infrastructure Support Services), to enable recent service developments to be established. This will enable VAL's performance in the districts to be assessed in accordance with district priorities.

- 3.14. It was also agreed that partner contributions to the pooled budget for 2012/13 will be agreed in February 2012 following organisational budget setting processes.
- 3.15. It is therefore recommended that scrutiny members support the proposal to continue to pool our annual contribution of £26,670, for 2012/13, for the delivery of VCS infrastructure support services within the Borough.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (DB)**

The local authority's annual contribution to support VCS Infrastructure Support Services is £26,760.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (LH)**

None arising directly from this report

6. **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

The contents of the report relate to and support the following strategic aims:

- Thriving Economy
- Safer and Healthier Borough
- Strong and distinctive communities

7. **CONSULTATION**

The established work within our priority neighbourhoods, through our Neighbourhood Action Teams and supporting plans, (informed through ongoing engagement and consultation) provided the evidence base for the establishment of this provision.

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

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

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.

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
No net red risks		

9. **KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

The specific purpose of this facility is to provide additional resources to focus on a priority need within Hinckley and Bosworth i.e. within a priority neighbourhood.

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

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

- Community Safety - None
- Environmental - None
- ICT - None
- Asset management - None
- Human Resources - If recommended, the rolling out of this provision to other priority neighbourhoods may require a commitment from the local authority for additional resources

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