



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission	13 March 2025
Executive	26 March 2025

Wards affected: All wards

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS) PARTNERSHIP UPDATE AND COMMISSIONING OUTCOMES 2023/24

Report of Director, Community Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update Executive on the key achievements arising from the Borough's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Partnership arrangements and supporting activities.
- 1.2 To report on outcomes of the VCS commissioning programme for April 2023 – March 2024.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Executive acknowledges and endorses the positive impact, outcomes and contribution of the voluntary and community sector and its many volunteers, enabled via the VCS partnership arrangements and the ongoing direct commissioning of VCS frontline service provision.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector 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. The partnership delivers the following provision:
 - Delivery of a VCS forum, which meets at least once annually, enabling learning and development, networking and collaboration and acts as a key link with the community.

- Manages the VCS Commissioning Board, which provides a robust and fair mechanism through which the council can commission services from the VCS. Proactively supports applicants through the application process.
- Maintenance of a comprehensive database of VCS contacts which enables members to share information with each other and also provides a key mechanism to share information from the local authority and other partners and also provides an opportunity for Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council to engage and consult.
- The delivery of an online and physical volunteering hub, a central point of contact within the borough where organisations can promote their volunteering opportunities and the community can find more information about volunteering.
- Bi- annual VCS e-newsletters which keep the VCS up to date with current relevant information and enables VCS organisations to communicate with each other.

3.2 The Borough Council annually ring fences funding to directly support the work of our VCS organisations. For the year 2023–24 £70,000 was ringfenced. There was a further £16,244 available in 2023-24 due to agreed carry forwards from the pandemic period. The money is distributed via a panel called the VCS Commissioning board. The current board is made up of VCS partners, the Rural Community Council and has two elected member representatives, Councillor Michael Mullaney and Councillor Martin Cartwright.

4 VCS Commissioning 2023-24

- 4.1 VCS commissioning money is split into two separate funds: Making a Difference and Community Volunteering Fund.
- 4.2 The Making a Difference Fund, offers community grants of between £500 to £3,000 to kickstart new projects within the VCS network (volunteer & community sector) or to boost the impact of VCS groups across Hinckley and Bosworth Borough. The Community Volunteering Fund offers community grants of up to £500 to support grassroots volunteering and community activity across the borough. Although anyone can apply, projects that supported communities impacted by the cost of living and those that supported the reduction on the impact of climate change were actively encouraged. Grants up to a value of £500 were also invited to celebrate the Kings' Coronation in 2023. Appendix 1 details projects commissioned in 2023-24.
- 4.3 £86,244 of Making a Difference and Community Volunteering grants were approved for VCS groups in Hinckley and Bosworth between April 2023 and March 2024. This equated to 81 projects, events or activities successfully

delivered through the grants and over 10,000 local residents benefitting from the activities of voluntary and community sector groups funded by the grants.

- 4.4 In 2024, to mark the 50th Anniversary of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, the council launched an additional one-off fund inviting VCS groups operating within the borough of Hinckley and Bosworth to apply for a grant of up to £500 to help commemorate the milestone. 20 grants were distributed to local VCS groups totalling £9042. Grants ranged from £100 up to £500 in value. Grants approved are detailed in Appendix 2.

5. Broader VCS Partnership Outcomes

- 5.1 A new delivery plan is jointly developed with the Rural Community Council (RCC) on an annual basis to comprehensively drive delivery and continually assess the impact of the partnership and its contributions.
- 5.2 The partnership held two VCS forums in 2023-24; a focussed session on the cost of living was held in September 2023 which was well attended and provided an opportunity for the sector to come together, share good practice and hear key updates from different partners and one in February 2024 on Mental Health Awareness & Support in the VCS Sector. An annual forum has been delivered more recently in January 2025, the forum was in response to a survey that was completed by the VCS, who advised they would like a forum that gave them an opportunity to network, but also to learn more about funding opportunities. In response to the survey the forum held workshops, led by Voluntary Action Leicestershire, Leicestershire County Council and Rural Communities Council on grant funding and volunteering.
- 5.3 The physical volunteering hub, a contact within the borough where organisations can promote their volunteering opportunities and where the community can find more information about volunteering has continued with a drop in at Atkins in Hinckley every Tuesday. In 2023/24 the hub started visiting different parts of the borough with locations covered such as Burbage Millennium Hall, Burbage Common car park, Markfield Sport and Community Centre, Market Bosworth Battlefield car park and Barwell George Ward Centre. The plan going forward is to continue with the hub in Hinckley alongside continuing to take the hub to other areas of the borough on a regular basis.
- 5.4 Work has been ongoing to continually promote the VCS partnership. The number of community groups based in Hinckley and Bosworth signed up as members to the VCS network as of March 2023 was 248, in March 2024 this had increased to 273.
- 5.5 Another successful Making a Difference Awards event was held at Hinckley Rugby Club in November 2024, to recognise and celebrate volunteers in the borough. Members of the community were invited to nominate individuals or groups who they felt should be recognised and publicly thanked for their help and support to their community. To help celebrate the 50th year of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council a special category was created for an

individual or group who had been volunteering for 50 years. The event was extremely well attended.

- 5.6 The volunteer led Hinckley and Bosworth Sport & Health Alliance, supported by the Council's Cultural Services Team, hosted a very successful Sports Awards evening in January 2025. With an audience of over 200 guests, a host of talented athletes, volunteer sports coaches and support volunteers received a variety of trophies acknowledging and celebrating their commitment to improving sport and wellbeing in our Borough.

6. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

- 6.1 The report is to be taken in open session.

7. Financial implications [CS]

- 7.1 There was a commissioning budget of £70,000 in 2023/24. As per Appendix 1, £86,244 was awarded in making a difference grants.
- 7.2 The RCC held unspent commissioning monies of £16,244 as at March 2023. This funding was used to support the grants awarded in 2023/24.
- 7.3 For 2024/25, there is a £70,000 commissioning budget.

8. Legal implications [ST]

- 8.1 None

9. Corporate Plan implications

- 9.1 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 commitments 'Work with partners to develop the capacity of the local voluntary sector'

10. Consultation

- 10.1 This report has taken account of the ongoing consultation undertaken by the Rural Communities Council through the established VCS Development Forum, Commissioning Board, and database.

11. Risk implications

- 11.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 11.2 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.

11.3 No risks identified.

12. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

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

12.2 No action necessary

13. Climate implications

13.1 In direct response to the authority's Climate Change Strategy, VCS Commissioning Funds for 2023/24 included volunteering/community activities, specifically in relation to climate change initiatives.

14. Corporate implications

14.1 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

Background papers: Appendix 1 – VCS Commissioning Report 2023-24
Appendix 2 – 50th Anniversary fund allocations

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