



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission 14 March 2024

Wards affected: All wards.

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS) PARTNERSHIP UPDATE AND COMMISSIONING OUTCOMES 2022/23

Report of Director, Community Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update Scrutiny 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 2022 – March 2023.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To note 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 Partnership is a collaboration between the local authority and the VCS, and has been in place since 2013, with 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 the VCS forum, which meets bi-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.
- 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 development 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.

3.2 The Borough Council annually ring fences funding to directly support the work of our VCS organisations. For the year 2022–23 £70,000 was ringfenced. There was a further £70,900 available in 2022-23 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 and has two elected member representatives, Councillor Michael Mullaney and Councillor Martin Cartwright.

4 VCS Commissioning 2022-23

- 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 war in Ukraine and those that supported the reduction on the impact of climate change were actively encouraged. Appendix 1 details projects commissioned in 2022-23.
- 4.3 £109, 677 of Making a Difference and Community Volunteering grants were approved for VCS groups in Hinckley and Bosworth between April 2022 and March 2023. This equated to 82 projects, events or activities successfully delivered through the grants and over 20,000 local residents benefitting from the activities of voluntary and community sector groups funded by the grants.
- 4.4 In 2022-23 a special funding round was offered for VCS or not for profit organisations offering a warm space provision in the borough of Hinckley & Bosworth during the period Oct 2022 – March 2023. Funding of up to £1200 could be utilised to support energy costs, refreshments, food provision, and associated activities (not salary costs). Appendix 2 details projects funded and outcomes.

4.5 To mark the Coronation of King Charles III, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, in partnership with the RCC, launched a new fund, grants of up to £500, to help established community groups across Hinckley and Bosworth to celebrate and commemorate this historic occasion. This funding round was launched towards the end of 2022-23 and ran into the 2023-24 financial year. Up until the end of 2022-23 16 community groups had been supported with a Coronation grant.

5. Broader VCS Partnership Outcomes

5.1 In 2023, the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) remit was transferred to the Community Services and Safeguarding team. Early in the transition a new delivery plan was jointly developed with the Rural Community Council (RCC) to comprehensively drive delivery and continually assess the impact of the partnership and its contributions.

5.2 The partnership holds two VCS forums a year, each focusing on a different topic. This year 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. The next VCS forum in February 2024 is on Mental Health Awareness & Support in the VCS Sector.

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 every Tuesday. This year the hub has started visiting different parts of the district with locations covered to date at Burbage Millennium Hall, Burbage Common car park, Markfield Sport and Community Centre, Market Bosworth Battlefield car park and Barwell George Ward Centre.

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, more recent data shows this is increasing, and current membership is 296.

5.5 Another successful Making a Difference Awards event was held at Hinckley Rugby Club in November 2023, 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. The event was extremely well attended.

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 £110,000 in 2022/23. This includes a £40,000 carry forward from 2021/22. As per appendix 1, £109,677 was awarded in making a difference grants.
- 7.2 The RCC held unspent commissioning monies of £30,900 as at March 2022. This funding was used to support warm space and coronation grants.
- 7.3 For 2023/24, there is a £70,000 commissioning budget.

8. Legal implications [MR]

- 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 ambition: 'Support an effective and viable voluntary and community 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 2022/23 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 2022-23
Appendix 2 – Warm Space Commissioning Report 2022-23

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