

**SSOG 27 February 2008**

**Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support**

**Report of Leicestershire County Council**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Group on progress with the procurement of a single infrastructure support organisation.

**Report**

2. On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007 the Group considered the consultation draft Strategic Plan prepared by the VCS Infrastructure Consortium which contained three options for change. The County Council and the PCT are currently preparing to enter a procurement process to bring in a single infrastructure organisation by April 2009 while continuing to support existing Voluntary Actions as community hubs and service delivery organisations. They are acting in consultation with other funders (District Councils, the Police and LSC) and the VCS itself during the preparation process.
3. The proposed timetable is:
  - consultation on draft service specification (high level outcomes) (February/March 2008)
  - consultation on draft service specification (detailed indicators) (April/May/June 2008)
  - final draft service specification for approval (end June 2008)
  - procurement (July 2008)
4. The draft service specification (high level outcomes) is attached as Appendix 1. Comments should be sent to Anjana Bhatt ([abh@leics.gov.uk](mailto:abh@leics.gov.uk)) by 20<sup>th</sup> March.
5. Work will be undertaken during 2008 to assess the position of the existing Voluntary Actions and other bodies receiving infrastructure funding, once that funding is withdrawn.

**Recommendation**

6. It is recommended that the report be noted.

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## **DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

### **Leicestershire Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Outcomes**

Leicestershire County Council and Leicestershire Together Partners want to commission a Countywide Infrastructure Organisation (CIO) who will be based in the county and accessible. It will achieve the following outcomes:

#### **High Level Outcomes:**

#### **Outcome 1 – Voluntary and Community Sector Leadership, Engagement and Representation**

CIO will be able to demonstrate that it represents the diverse Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS – Appendix A) in Leicestershire. It will support the VCS to engage effectively with all appropriate strategic bodies and partnerships including the Local Area Agreement with elected representation. CIO will provide the mechanism including a range of communication strategies for Leicestershire Together partners to engage effectively with the VCS to enable them to shape future strategies, policies and practices at county, district or sub-regionally as required by the funding partners.

#### **Outcome 2 – Capacity Building and Support to VCS**

CIO in partnership with Community Hubs will support the diverse frontline voluntary and community organisations across the county to work more effectively and efficiently by developing their capacity, quality and reach to deliver services. Local VCS will be supported to develop an outcome's based approach to assess their impact on individuals and communities. CIO will support to the VCS to develop partnerships and identify opportunities to become sustainable. CIO will advice and support Community Hubs and VCS to gain additional funding to develop new and existing services

#### **Outcome 3 – Volunteering**

CIO will work with the diverse range of organisations across the county to develop a volunteering infrastructure that meets local needs including those of organisations using volunteers and that supports the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement outcomes

#### **Outcome 4 – Expert advice and support**

CIO will support the funding partners by providing expert advice and support on their behalf to the VCS and work in partnership with the agencies to deliver the programme of activities agreed annually. CIO will provide expert advice on specialist policy areas covering Health, Older people, Children and Young people, vulnerable people taking into account the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic and new communities and the need for equality in service delivery.

## High level requirements for each outcome

### Outcome 1 – Voluntary and Community Sector Leadership, Engagement and Representation

CIO will be able to demonstrate that it represents the diverse VCS in Leicestershire. It will support the VCS to engage effectively with all appropriate strategic bodies and partnerships including the Local Area Agreement with elected representation. CIO will provide the mechanism including a range of communication strategies for Leicestershire Together partners to engage effectively with the VCS to enable them to shape future strategies, policies and practices at county, district or sub-regionally as required by the funding partners.

The CIO will:

- 1) Work with the VCS in Leicestershire to ensure that it is acknowledged as the strategic representative organisation for the VCS
- 2) Act as an umbrella representative for the VCS and participate in the planning and policy formulation as required by the funding partners and partnerships.
- 3) Provide and maintain an integrated database of VCS by type of interest service provided in the sub-region that is easily accessible by all agencies
- 4) Have a marketing strategy to raise the profile of VCS and its impact with key stakeholders
- 5) Provide a range of two-way communication channels between the VCS and Leicestershire Together partners.
  - a) To assist Leicestershire Together partners by providing a range of engagement programmes and events with the VCS on relevant matters including providing policy briefings on issues of local, regional or national significance especially where specified by funding partners.
  - b) To work with partners communication programmes to co-ordinate the planning of events and activities.
- 6) Establish and co-ordinate a clear and transparent system of VCS representation and networking which provides an accountable forum for communication, discussion, consultation and election of 'voices' that reflect the issues faced by the diverse VCS including those providing specialist services.
- 7) To facilitate and support VCS representative to effectively participate in a range of partnerships including Leicestershire Together, theme partnerships and cross cutting partnerships.

- 8) Work closely with the following agencies to provide support, professional advice to:
  - a) Community Hubs in the districts to develop locality focused responses and resources
  - b) Local Involvement Network to ensure there is co-ordination of activities and responses where appropriate
  - c) Rural agencies and develop their capacity to engage effectively in the VCS and deliver quality services
  - d) Community Transport providers to develop comprehensive and quality services
  - e) Health and social care providers covering all groups including care programme groups
  - f) Specific community/interest groups to develop their capacity to engage effectively in the VCS and deliver quality services
- 9) Support the implementation of the Leicestershire Compact and its codes of good practice
- 10) Be versatile in response to changing requirements from funding partners

## **Outcome 2 – Capacity Building and Support to VCS**

CIO in partnership with Community Hubs will support the diverse frontline voluntary and community organisations across the county to work more effectively and efficiently by developing their capacity, quality and reach to deliver services. Local VCS will be supported to develop an outcome's based approach to assess their impact on individuals and communities. CIO will support to the VCS to develop partnerships and identify opportunities to become sustainable. CIO will advice and support Community Hubs and VCS to gain additional funding to develop new and existing services

The CIO will:

- 1) Work with local community hubs to identify gaps in existing VCS service coverage in terms of areas of interest, community needs and locality. To work with local partners and Leicestershire Together develop services with local groups to meet identified needs.
- 2) Support community cohesion agendas for Leicestershire particularly in relation to new communities at a local level through development of social capital and promote good community relations across and between communities
- 3) Support new and existing organisations through a range of services including Human Resources advice, ICT support, governance advice, funding advice to be 'fit for purpose' and self sustaining.

- 4) Support the VCS to actively engage their service users to help shape service delivery.
- 5) Ensure that the VCS are confident of receiving advice and support from the CIO
- 6) Work with Community Hubs, VCS and other partners to attract additional funding to Leicestershire to develop new and existing services to meet the priorities identified by Leicestershire Together through:
  - a) Provision of funding advice and support using the funding toolkit
  - b) Promoting partnership/ consortium models to enable VCS to take up procurement opportunities and make best use of resources to develop new services.
- 7) Develop and provide a wide range of training opportunities based on identified need and new developments through a co-ordinated programme with other training partners.
- 8) Work with VCS to develop outcome-based performance measures that evidence/ reflect that the objectives of people using the services are being met and achieve appropriate quality standards. Work within the single performance system for the County including its requirements for performance reporting and improvement planning
- 9) Identify, develop and promote best practice by keeping up with changes in legislation, local and national policy development across the range of services required by funders and provide a mechanism to communicate the implications of the developments in accessible formats to the VCS and funders.
- 10) To lead the VCS to develop appropriate responses to new developments and challenge the development where there may be adverse implications. To provide opportunities to network and share knowledge on these developments.
- 11) Working with community hubs to proactively identify VCS that need advice on governance and management of VCS and support them to develop strategies to strengthen their organisation.
- 12) Ensure information can be provided in sensible formats to support service analysis and policy formulation
- 13) Deliver efficiencies, directly as an organisation and working across the VCS in line with public sector efficiency targets

### **Outcome 3 – Volunteering**

CIO will work with the diverse range of organisations across the county to develop a volunteering infrastructure that is accessible and meets local needs

including those of organisations using volunteers. The volunteering strategy and infrastructure supports the Leicestershire Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement outcomes.

CIO will:

- 1) work with Community Hubs, other agencies and use new technologies and other resources to provide countywide access to potential and existing volunteers.
- 2) Provide potential volunteers including youth volunteers with support and advice to match their motivations to volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities.
- 3) Stimulate interest in volunteering with positive messages delivered about the diverse nature and conditions of volunteering with full use being made of new technologies to promote the work.
- 4) Promote good practice in working with volunteers to all volunteer- involving organisations through active support, volunteer-specific training, access to accreditation and appropriate resources to ensure that volunteers understand client needs/ conditions.
- 5) Encourage volunteer involving organisations working with volunteers who are supporting vulnerable people that they are targeted to those most in need. The volunteering involving organisations encourage and promote an ethos of promoting independence and looking at preventive support rather creating dependency.
- 6) Will ensure that capacity building teams work with volunteering teams to develop new groups or support groups through targeted volunteering to reflect the diverse community profile of Leicestershire.
- 7) Maintain awareness of local, regional and national government proposals and policies which may impact on volunteers. To provide appropriate information and training that impacts to volunteering organisations and volunteers.
- 8) Develop standardised outcome based performance measures with volunteering organisations that evidence/ reflect that the objectives of people using the services are being met and evidence equality of service delivery in relation to need, ethnicity and diversity.

#### **Outcome 4 – Expert advice and support**

CIO will support the funding partners through named contacts by providing expert advice and support on their behalf to the VCS and work in partnership with the agencies to deliver the programme of activities agreed annually (Appendix B). CIO will provide expert advise on specialist policy areas covering Health, Older people, Children and Young people, vulnerable people

taking into account the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic and new communities and the need for equality in service delivery.

The CIO will:

- 1) Work in partnership with health and social care agencies to ensure that the objectives of the care programmes as agreed with funders are delivered including those for Older people and Children and Young People
- 2) Ensure that the infrastructure, policies, procedures and activities undertaken will meet the needs of people and communities in rural areas and any adverse impacts will be challenged
- 3) Lead and support the development of groups from BME communities including new communities to enable them to meet their needs and engage with the wider communities. Challenge any adverse impacts of policies, procedures or new developments
- 4) Lead and support the development of VCS services including volunteering to meet the needs of Children and Young people across the age range up to 25 years.
- 5) Co-ordinate with the County Council, Community Hubs and Community Transport providers the development and implementation of the Community transport strategy
- 6) To promote and distribute grants on behalf of funders where appropriate in accordance with relevant funder's criteria

## Appendix A

### What defines the voluntary and community sector (VCS)?

**Voluntary organisations** are formally structured, not-for-profit; independent and not part of government; managed by unpaid, voluntary management committees or boards of trustees; have paid employees and volunteers; may be registered charities and/or companies limited by guarantee and/or friendly societies.

**Community organisations** are local community and self-help groups; more informal; often made up entirely of volunteers; any staff are likely to be part-time; independent; without regular income or funding. Community groups are often at the hub of community action and are formed in response to a local need.

**Volunteering** is an important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

**Social Enterprises** are businesses that trade in the market in order to fulfil social aims. They bring people and communities together for economic development and social gain.

**Umbrella organisations** also sometimes referred to as infrastructure organisations - are an important force in the VCS. The VCS has developed organically; it has not been centrally planned. Umbrella organisations attempt to link the different levels and type of voluntary sector activity. They fulfill four main functions; development, services to other organisations, liaison and representation. However it is also acknowledged that not all Umbrella organisations perform all of these functions (Deakin Commission 1996).

**Trustees and Management Committees** are the group of people legally responsible for the control and management of a charity, which includes members of a charitable associations management committee and directors of charitable companies. Certain specific statutory responsibilities arise from being a trustee.

The VCS covers a wide range of interest areas including health and social care, faith, ethnic and community, welfare, self help, toddler, housing, leisure, sports, culture and environmental groups.

## **Appendix B**

Specialist Services will be required for:

- Children and Young People covering Early Years, Extended Service, Youth Service
- Leicestershire County and Rutland Primary Care Trust - Care Programmes/ Chapters of the PCT operating plan
- Older people
- Vulnerable People including people with learning disabilities
- Black and Minority Ethnic and new communities
- Community Transport