



Borough of Oadby & Wigston

Community Services Directorate

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Dear Andy,

LEICESTERSHIRE VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT SERVICES DRAFT STRATEGIC AND DELIVERY PLAN 2008-2014

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above document. Please find attached Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's response to the seven questions.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council has and is working proactively with the Local Voluntary Action for Oadby and Wigston and has to date many successes in relation to delivering community services through partnership working.

We feel that as a result, our views are founded on firm knowledge of the successful engagement at local level that such a service can provide to improve the quality of life of local people, that the Voluntary Service understand and is responsive to the needs of the locality it sits within.

We strongly support locally based service delivery which maintains its own autonomy, management and strategic leadership infrastructure. We do however see the benefit in a central hub providing policy governance and a few other core governance practices e.g. Procurement, Human Resources and the development and co-ordination of a centralised web portal, but not as is suggested the range of centralised infrastructure services that are proposed. Therefore, as they stand, the current format of the document does not provide the model that we as a local stakeholder feel is most practical, but we would hope that by re-modeling the infrastructure services proposed through the Hub and Spoke proposal this can be overcome.



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We feel that it is vital that the model used provides each locality the flexibility to delivery local services at local level, that meet local need, by locally knowledgeable staff, managed by leaders within the locality, who have accountability for their own direction of travel and can set their own identity. The services should be supported by a sub-regional central infrastructure providing limited, core practices that provide a generic and consistent value to the independent locality services.

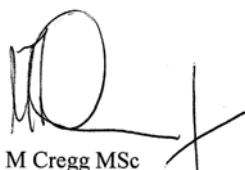
We believe that any other proposal would reduce the level of community ownership and could as a result invoke a reduction in local volunteering.

We welcome the overall mission, but disagree that a move to a more centralised direction would 'reach more groups more effectively'; we believe that the focus of community volunteering and service provided to the resident would be diluted. .

Once again we thank you for the opportunity to provide our opinion on the proposal and would like to provide our reassurance that we have only the quality of life of our community at heart and would wish to ensure that any voluntary service proposal is fit for this purpose.

We await your response to consultation and are willing to provide any support that you feel may be required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Cregg', with a stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

M Cregg MSc
Director of Community Services

Response to questions:-

1. Does anything need adding to the context or key policy drivers sections, and if so, what impact might this have on infrastructure services?

We feel that it is not clear in this section that the proposals are to remodel the infrastructure services only and what these entail, as opposed to operational delivery direct to the public. It should be made clear that infrastructure changes should be to **support** service delivery and not the other way around, Support should facilitate development at ground level where improvement should have real outcomes to the **individual** and not merely to the cost and delivery of the service. A seamless service can only be achieved if the individual accessing the service sees no seams. For all the proposals provided there appears to be a high risk of a 'passing on culture' developing. We believe that each locality should have the flexibility to deliver local services at local level that meet local need, by locally knowledgeable staff, managed by leaders within the locality.

We would make the point that leadership should be locally driven and the business direction of travel should be overseen by the locality. Therefore, we would not welcome any strategic leadership other than that of policy direction at a Sub-regional level for our residents

2. Are the vision, mission, outcomes and objectives the right ones? If not, what changes need to be made?

The mission is fine and we would support this as it reflects local citizenship and local ownership. However, in conflict to this, you state that a move to a more centralised direction would 'reach more groups more effectively'. We would strongly suggest that this is diluting effective delivery at local level and removing the focus of locality development to meet local need.

3. Are the sub-regional, district and sub-sectoral levels of delivery right? If not, what changes need to be made?

A Sub –regional infrastructure needs to enable development at ground level and appreciate locality needs. **Be a supporting and enabling body.** By removing the autonomy of the locality services to deliver what is needed, in the manner that meets local requirements, is not supporting in our opinion.

In addition the Hub and Spokes model is not reflective of previous consultation where we suggested a status quo moving to a centralised Hub, providing policy governance and services such as Human Resources, Procurement and Web Portal development and as you suggest training packages delivered locally. We believe this offers a consistent approach for policy and for core business development.

Your proposal is heavily weighted towards centralising the infrastructure and removing autonomy and local business identity. We do not see this as practical and would **welcome a remodelling as suggested.**

We **would not wish to support** one county wide infrastructure or a City / County Delivery, as these both remove local identify and the flexibility of the local organisation to steer their own ship in accordance with needs. The proposals are shown as controlling instead of supporting.

4. Which delivery model do you think is the best to deliver these services and why?

See above – re-modelled Hub and Spokes, but none as they are proposed within the document

5. How do you think your chosen delivery model could operate to ensure (a) clear leadership, strategic direction and accountability; (b) a comprehensive, flexible, consistent, quality service across Leicestershire; (c) ability to engage with the procurement and commissioning agenda at a sub-regional level?

As discussed a remodelled hub and spokes approach would allow local delivery of local services by local people with local leadership under local direction, supported by core policy services. This is about addressing what is important to the people and delivering what locality services know about best, this cannot be achieved by decision making being undertaken on a county wide basis, it will lose a local focus dilute real life changing outcomes. *(We recognise that this excludes the delivery of standardised services such as garden services and such like, which will remain untouched and still be delivered by outreach spokes.)*

It offers flexibility to manage own business, model service delivery, and reflect local provision against local needs. Branding and identity are key – local people deliver local volunteering because they have pride in their own area. Although supporting Leicestershire is part of the bigger picture – real people work within real neighbourhoods, supporting their small communities, this need to be embraced and utilised to bring on more volunteers. Centralisation is likely to remove this feel.

6. Can you suggest any improvements to your chosen delivery model?

Already stated – Policy driven hub, autonomy at local level.

7. Are there any particular priorities for areas of work or work with specific groups of people? If so, please identify why and how these could be delivered within budget.

Voluntary Action for Oadby and Wigston (VAOW) is a fundamental key partner sitting on the Local Strategic Partnership and have been since the onset of the process. VAOW have local knowledge about the needs of local people and are the key drivers for the Community section of the Oadby and Wigston Sustainable Community Plan which is feeding into the County wide Sustainable Community Plan and Local Area Agreement outcomes. It is only with their knowledge and local expertise that the development of the Community section has been possible. Only with their expertise and ownership of the Community theme will this part of the Community Plan be delivered. (The Sustainable Community Plan for the Borough is available on request.)

VAOW was also a key partner in the setting up and now in the delivery of the Neighbourhood Priority Action Steering Groups and is supporting the setting up of the Neighbourhood Action Teams. They provide not only operational service delivery that is key to meeting local people's needs within these identified areas, but also have the strategic knowledge of governance and policy which supports this local delivery. It would be without doubt a major set back and in fact, most probably an unfillable gap if this connection and involvement were not maintained and supported in the most practical and effective manner. We believe that our suggestion offers this practical solution.

