

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Communities and Cohesion
2.	Date:	Monday 24th February, 2014
3.	Title:	Supporting Rotherham’s Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector – Single Infrastructure Grant
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhood and Adult Services Directorate with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

5. Summary

The Voluntary Community and Faith sector (VCFS) play a vital role within Rotherham providing a range of services and support to individuals and communities throughout the Borough which complement, add value and where appropriate increasingly provide alternative provision to public services- often working with the most vulnerable and marginalised people and communities. The VCFS also provides an effective means and route to support the active engagement of service users, carers and the public enabling them to have a voice in the commissioning, planning and delivery of services.

The VCFS is a vital partner in enabling RMBC achieve its corporate priorities especially in the challenging economic environment Rotherham and RMBC continues to face. The Single Infrastructure Grant enables a co-ordinated and targeted approach to support the VCFS in the Borough to maximise opportunities, increase efficiencies and effectiveness .

6. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member,

- Continues the integrated Rotherham Infrastructure generalist support to the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector in Rotherham provided by the current Service Level agreement with Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR).
- This support enables the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) to deliver against the following revised outcomes:
 - Increasing individual and community engagement, resilience and self-help
 - Increasing high quality VCFS service delivery, innovation and effectiveness
 - Targeted support to some of our more deprived communities and responding to Welfare Reform Agenda
 - Increasing the resources to the Borough and maximising value for money

- That the VCFS infrastructure support and services are developed and delivered in line with the Rotherham VCFS Strategy and the Rotherham VCFS Annual Survey.
- That the SLA agreement is subject to a detailed delivery plan to be agreed with Zafar Saleem , Community Engagement Manager RMBC, with ongoing regular quarterly monitoring and reporting and six monthly progress reports to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Cohesion meetings.

7. Proposals and Details

The current VCFS Infrastructure support agreement was developed in 2011 as part of a 3 year agreement funded by NHS Rotherham and RMBC. The decision to bring together the work under a single agreement was forward thinking and has set the precedent for other LA's to follow a similar agreement.

VAR has acted as the accountable body for the current Service Level Agreement and has to date delivered the agreement with 5 other partners – VAR, Rotherham Ethnic Minorities Alliance (REMA), Together for Regeneration (TfR) South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau(SYFAB) and Rural Action Yorkshire (RAY). The original partners were all subject to a Partnership Agreement and their services have been independently assessed and evaluated as part of this agreement.

Since the proposal was first developed some of the organisations have undergone significant changes both in delivery and organisational structure notably TfR, RAY and SYFAB. In recent months both TfR and SYFAB have ceased to exist as separate organisations although some of SYFAB activity appears to been transferred to South Yorkshire Community Foundation (SYCF).

The agreement has been subject to regular quarterly monitoring and reporting and all partners have delivered against the agreed outcomes and outputs. Where partners have not been able to progress some activity because of changes in their organisational structure activity has been, where appropriate, incorporated within the delivery of the Rotherham based partners -VAR and REMA- so that no detrimental effect would be felt by the VCFS in the Borough. Progress reports have been brought to previous Delegated Powers meetings and a Impact report has been produced. The funding provided has enabled a number of key deliverables over the current 3 year agreement including

- Services and support to over 500 groups and organisations annually within the Borough
- Raised over £3 million for Rotherham groups and organisations
- Provided bespoke support over 300 people from migrant and emerging communities plus work with over 300 individuals/ families from the ROMA community including engaging members of the community as health champions
- Dealt with over 5700 volunteering enquiries and brokered over 3800 volunteering opportunities

- Enabled significant consortia and partnership approaches to new forms of service delivery and input into planning of services

As a result of these reports and ongoing discussions and consultations the proposal has been reviewed and refined to ensure that the outcomes it will deliver against meet RMBC's current and future priorities and the economic challenges that Rotherham and RMBC in particular will continue to face.

The proposal will enable continued support to the numerous and diverse VCFS groups in Rotherham and further develop the potential and capacity of these groups to contribute to the strategic aims set out in RMBC's revised Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy. The proposal also delivers against each of the priorities identified within the Health & Wellbeing strategy, Welfare Reform priorities, Deprived Neighbourhoods work etc. In particular it will enable the development of :

- Increased engagement of individuals and communities within the Borough, improved citizenship and community cohesion and increased individual community and economic resilience and self help.
- Further innovative partnerships of co-production and integrated delivery of services both between VCFS organisations and between VCFS organisations and other public sector/ RMBC providers.
- Offer some alternative and lower cost solutions to meeting the needs for efficiency and high quality service provision this includes developing community based options which increase individuals and communities ability to support their own needs and the provision of a range of preventative and early interventions which reduce the need for more costly interventions.
- Targeted work with some of our more deprived communities within the Borough who experience some of the worst challenges and outcomes and the unacceptable inequalities that are a consequence of this and consequently risk being left behind e.g. specific work with BME, Migrant and ROMA communities and targeted work as part of the Deprived Neighbourhoods and Welfare Reform agenda.
- Further opportunities to draw down additional resources to the Borough both in terms of increased individual involvement and engagement through volunteering and increased funding through external resources and funding opportunities and income generated through charged services and social enterprise opportunities. In particular targeted and dedicated 1:1 work is needed within Rotherham with specific individual communities and groups to help draw down additional funding and redress the imbalance that currently exists in Rotherham groups accessing Lottery funding and other external grants and funding bodies.

Whilst increased involvement with the VCFS offers a range of opportunities for service delivery and increased individual and community involvement the sector is comprised of very diverse independent organisations (estimated over 1200 in Rotherham and up to 50,000 volunteers). To harness the capacity and further

develop the opportunities available it needs co-ordinated support and leadership. Without this the risk is that efficiencies will not be maximised and opportunities lost.

The Voluntary ,Community and FaithSector are user led organisations that operate to strict governance requirements often set down in charitable law. Their aims and activity are determined by their users and members. VAR and REMA are Rotherham based membership based organisations whose purpose, values and aims are developed and implemented in accordance with their member's needs. Members are from across all spectrums of the VCFS, varying in size, geographic location and scope – e.g. providing services support to children, young people, disabled communities, rural communities, older people and BME communities. VAR's membership is now over 650 organisations and groups and is still increasing. REMA supports a richly diverse and ever-changing BME community with groups from over 35 ethnic backgrounds from a population that has doubled in the last decade.

We regularly consult and involve our members, the wider sector, public and partners through both formal mechanisms e.g. surveys, specific areas of research and a range of informal events, meetings and specific work with our main consortia of groups/ individuals associated with Children, Young People and Families, Adult Health & Social Care and BME Communities. We provide a regular weekly flow of information through our weekly bulleting which is sent to over 500 groups/ organisations/ individuals. VAR website receives over 6,000 visitors viewing on average 26,000 pages a month. Many of the VCFS organisations we support work with some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged parts of the Borough dealing with service users who are experiencing the highest needs and inequalities. We specifically target work within the most deprived neighbourhoods and provide an effective and trusted means of engaging with and delivering services to some of the hardest to reach and most vulnerable individuals, groups and communities within Rotherham.

This involvement of all of our stakeholders – within the VCFS and Public sector provide the basis for the development of our plans and delivery of our activity The proposal is supplemented by a detailed delivery plan with clearly defined targets and agreed areas of financial spend which are monitored on a quarterly basis.

8. Finance

The total RMBC financial allocation is £203,606 per annum. This funding is allocated between the different outcome headings and supports a number of staff posts and areas of activity. The funding is split between the delivery partners who are part of the original SLA agreement. There is an additional funding element set aside for small grants.

The funding from RMBC has enabled VAR and other delivery partners to draw down further investment both to support areas of delivery within the proposal and

additional activity. This investment has been from other partner agencies eg Rotherham CCG and also external funding bodies eg BIG Lottery Fund. It is anticipated that further investment will be able to be drawn down in the future supporting activity both as part of this proposal and further specific activity and funding within the sector thereby significantly increasing the resource available to the VCS and the Borough.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Without co-ordinated support and leadership to the sector there is a risk that the opportunities for the VCFS to continue to support and deliver much needed services will be lost, future opportunities will not be maximised, the VCFS will lose out on additional financial resources that may be available and further efficiencies will not be maximised.

Risks associated with failure to deliver against the detailed action plan by the delivery partners are mitigated through the regular reporting mechanisms that have already been established.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposal support supports the revised Council corporate priorities:

- Stimulating the local economy and helping local people into work
- Protecting our most vulnerable people and families, enabling them to maximise their independence
- Ensuring all areas of Rotherham are safe, clean and well maintained
- Helping people to improve their health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities within the Borough

The proposal also supports the Community Strategy priorities:

- Ensuring the best start in life for children and families
- Supporting those who are vulnerable in our community
- Supporting the growth of a sustainable and competitive local economy

The proposal supports the six priorities of the Health & WellBeing Strategy in particular

- Priority 1 – Prevention and Early Intervention
- Priority 2 – Expectations and aspirations
- Priority 3 – Dependence to Independence
- Priority 6 – Poverty

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Previous reports to Cabinet Member Communitise and Cohesion –on 24.06.13, 04.11.13. 02.12.13

Quartely monitoring reports since 2011

Annual Survey of Infrastructure Organisations conducted in December/ January 11,12,13/14

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