

**REVIEW OF SUPPORT CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**To:** Communities and Partnership Committee

**Meeting Date:** 27 September 2018

**From:** Sarah Ferguson, Assistant Director, Housing, Communities and Youth

**Electoral division(s):** All

**Forward Plan ref:** Not applicable      **Key decision:** No

**Purpose:**

**To report on Support Cambridgeshire achievements so far, and priorities for the next 12 months to further strengthen the Voluntary and Community Sector.**

**To outline the potential approach for future agreements covering Cambridgeshire and Peterborough when the current contract comes to an end.**

**Recommendation:**

- a) To note key achievements as outlined in Support Cambridgeshire’s Annual Report (September 2017- August 2018).**
- b) To endorse the Council’s priorities for Support Cambridgeshire to further strengthen the Voluntary and Community Sector for the coming year.**
- c) To note the potential future joint approach between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to further improve outcomes and efficiencies.**

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## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** Cambridgeshire County Council recognise the vital role the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) plays in communities across Cambridgeshire, both in terms of supporting and helping to develop strong and well networked communities and in delivering services for and alongside the Council.
- 1.2** In 2016, Cambridgeshire County Council replaced nine annual grants to Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Infrastructure Support organisations with one combined agreement over 3 years with a total value of up to £371,722 plus 1 year extension. Providers were invited to tender against a new single service specification to build the capacity of voluntary organisations, community groups and local councils, and our relationship with the sector. This new arrangement was an opportunity to have a more strategic, long term approach which reduced duplication and was more efficient and effective for all parties.
- 1.3** The successful provider was Support Cambridgeshire, a partnership between Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations (lead), Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services and Cambridgeshire ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) who deliver on:
- Town and parish councils – To improve the lives of local communities through vibrant, dynamic and effective town and parish councils
  - Volunteering and social action – To promote alternative forms of volunteering and place-based social action initiatives
  - Voice and representation – To facilitate a better understanding of the voluntary and community sector and deliver trained, knowledgeable representation
  - Information and advice – To increase the capacity of the voluntary and community sector through training, information and advice
  - Community facilities – To increase the contribution of well managed and sustainable community owned facilities
- 1.4** This new arrangement started on 1 September 2016 and this paper outlines achievements from the second year of the agreement and sets out priorities for the third year which started on 1 Sept 2018.

## **2.0 MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1** Support Cambridgeshire's key achievements over the last year are set out in Support Cambridgeshire's Annual Report September 2017 to August 2018 (Appendix 1). Highlights particularly relevant to the Communities and Partnership Committee include:
- Over 400 people attended network events - a 60% increase on last year. Topics included volunteering, finding funding and bid writing, data protection and General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR)
  - Over 160 people trained in how to start a community group, demonstrating impact, GDPR, financial planning, health and safety, and recruiting and managing volunteers. This was an increase of 43% on year one. 64% of attendees reported an increase in skills and knowledge. As a result of the GDPR training, at least 5 organisations have reworked their policies and procedures to ensure compliance moving forward

- Nearly 13,000 views of the Support Cambridgeshire website - an increase of 85% on year one. Feedback suggests the site is easily navigable, full of topical information and regular news feeds on the state of the sector
- Over 8,000 visits to the self-service funding portal and 192 newly registered users, generating £22,000 for local groups. An additional £15,000 was raised by Quest for Funding volunteers in Oxmoor
- 24 village halls are working towards Hallmark Accreditation alongside 8 trained Community Building Mentors
- 25 people have been trained to represent the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), including representatives from Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum, and the VCS has been represented at 19 strategic partnership boards
- 165 people attended the 2017 countywide Town and Parish Council conference, with 85% of attendees rating the Conference overall as 'Good' or 'Excellent'. *"As a result of the workshop, I am hoping we will be able to run Parish Councillor Drop-in surgeries with an aspiration to include District & County Councillors in due course"*.

**2.2** The key delivery areas for the next 12 months have been informed by The State of The Sector Survey 2018 (Source Documents) and County Council priorities. In addition to the continuation of the current programme, a number of new areas of work have been identified:

- A new Commissioning Forum that brings together statutory commissioners with Voluntary and Community Organisations to help all parties develop an understanding of current priorities and how to tackle local challenges
- A new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Network to provide a strong voice for the sector and widen VCS representation at the table of our strategic decision-making boards. The Network, with a wider brief of Connect - Communicate - Collaborate, will discuss big issues and work together on solutions
- A Connecting Communities conference on how the sector can increase levels of formal and informal volunteering to reduce loneliness and social isolation
- Extension of placed-based social action including that which is linked to the Neighbourhood Cares places, aiming to prevent or delay demand for County Council services
- A wide range of training and network events to support community groups who wish to be self-sustaining, including through fundraising, donor giving and event management as a means of income generation. Other options might include crowdfunding and digital giving
- A Community Practitioner Forum to share best practice around topics such as community cafes, and maximise the use of resources such as Cambridgeshire Insights and the funding portal to help communities apply for funding
- Expansion of the countywide Town & Parish Council Conference to include the Combined Authority

**2.3** The current approach to VCS Infrastructure via Support Cambridgeshire has now been in place for two years and this work has taken time to develop and grow. 700 community organisations were surveyed for the Annual State of the Sector Survey 2018 (Source Document). The survey results positively illustrated a sector that is broadening their funding base, adapting to funding challenges and working together. It also shows the sector's increasing understanding of the County Council's strategic priorities (38% in 2017 to 52% in 2018) that will lead to more mature conversations

about how we can work together to deliver locally-led solutions to local challenges and mobilise the energies and strengths of our communities.

- 2.4** Officers are already exploring options for a shared Cambridgeshire and Peterborough grant agreement when the current agreement comes to an end in August 2020. A joint service specification would be agreed and tendered across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, in order to further improve outcomes and efficiencies.
- 2.5** Members are asked to support the development in principle of a revised and joint grant agreement for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. If approved, development of the agreement would commence from early 2019 with a view to tender in early 2020.

### **3.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

#### **3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

- The VCS employs a significant number of people and contributes positively to the local economy.
- Skills developed by individuals through participating in their community will help them within the workplace.

#### **3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

- The VCS supports people living healthy and independent lives in a range of ways. There is evidence that community participation supports the adoption of a healthy lifestyle and builds engagement in health-improving initiatives.

#### **3.3 Supporting and Protecting Vulnerable People**

- Support Cambridgeshire's work to build VCS capacity and support communities that are safe, and good places to live, is a cornerstone of our early help and preventative strategies for vulnerable people.

### **4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Resource Implications.**

- A continuation of increased community capacity and a more collaborative approach will help to establish how we best use our assets to achieve the most value for Cambridgeshire residents

#### **4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

#### **4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**

*[input awaited]*

#### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

- Evidence indicates that some services delivered by local people within local communities can be more successful than statutory services at reaching people who may need support.
- Building a strong VCS to help people help each other should therefore support more equal and diverse accessible provision locally
- Some of our services will become increasingly more localised, so that we can meet local and individual need within each specific community context

#### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

- The increasing awareness and take up of the support available to the VCS Infrastructure from Support Cambridgeshire is documented in 2.1.
- Wide reaching communications by Support Cambridgeshire, County Council and public sector partners will continue to publicise the Support Cambridgeshire offer including easy to access information and advice.

#### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

- The role of Members helps in contributing towards the success of a thriving local VCS. Members can connect local groups to this support.

#### 4.7 Public Health Implications

- A thriving VCS supports individuals and communities to take responsibility for their own physical and mental health. It can engage them in taking steps to adopt a healthy lifestyle and other health improving activities
- Building community resilience and VCS infrastructure will impact on many of the needs identified in different Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs), including the following:
  - Long term conditions
  - New communities
  - Homelessness and at risk of homelessness
  - Vulnerable children and adults
  - Carers
  - Older people's mental health
  - Substance Misuse
  - Unhealthy lifestyles

Implications	Officer Clearance
<b>Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?</b>	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

<b>Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by Finance?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Paul White
<b>Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?</b>	Yes or No Name of Legal Officer: <i>response awaited</i>
<b>Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
<b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Matthew Hall
<b>Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
<b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Val Thomas

## Source Documents

Support Cambridgeshire Annual Report:  
September 2017 - August 2018

## Location

[https://www.supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/new/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Annual-Report-doc\\_Companded-3.pdf](https://www.supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/new/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Annual-Report-doc_Companded-3.pdf)

Building Conference: Annual State of the  
Sector Survey 2018

<https://www.supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/new/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Building-Confidence-The-annual-state-of-the-sector-Survey-2018-FINAL.pdf>