

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR – INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT AGREEMENT

To: Communities and Partnership Committee

Meeting Date: 3 September 2020

From: Adrian Chapman: Service Director of Communities and Partnerships

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: 2020/007 *Key decision: Yes*

Outcome: The planned re-commissioning and procurement of voluntary and community sector Infrastructure support services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This service will be key to delivering the aspirations of the ‘Think Communities’ unified approach.

Recommendation: The Communities and Partnership Committee is asked to:

- a) Agree the commencement of the tender process for Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Services across Cambridgeshire.
- b) Agree to receive a further report in May 2021 following the procurement process but prior to the contract being awarded.

Officer contact:	Member contact:
Name: Elaine Matthews / Helen Andrews	Name: Cllr Steve Criswell
Post: Think Communities Manager /Commissioner	Post: Chairman
Email: Elaine.Matthews@cambridgeshire.gov.uk / Helen.Andrews@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email: Steve.Criswell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 706385 / 0223 72857	Tel: 01223 706385 /01487 740745

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The investment the council makes to support voluntary and community infrastructure support services to frontline voluntary and community organisations sends a strong signal to the voluntary and community sector about their value and contribution to our communities, as well as informing, influencing and inspiring future practice and policy.
- 1.2 In October 2019, Communities and Partnership Committee approved the proposed approach to tender for voluntary and community sector infrastructure support services jointly with Peterborough City Council (PCC). In July 2020 Committee endorsed an extension to the current grant agreement with Support Cambridgeshire, the current provider of this service within Cambridgeshire, up to 30 September 2021 to allow officers to restart the tender process following a pause whilst focus was necessarily diverted to the COVID-19 response, business continuing and recovery planning and for adherence to procurement regulations.
- 1.3 The newly-commissioned service will be a key enabler in our delivery of the Think Communities unified approach. It will work closely alongside the organisations representing parish and town councils (specifically Cambridgeshire Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CaPALC), and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), and will support the enhanced role we are developing with these organisations to ensure the vital role that local councils play in supporting, developing and enabling our communities is maximised.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 Voluntary and Community Infrastructure Support Services are currently delivered to frontline Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCO) in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough through separate grant agreements and by different organisations. This investment in infrastructure support services sends a strong signal to the voluntary and community sector about their value and contribution to our communities as well as informing, influencing and inspiring future practice and policy.
- 2.2 Joint commissioning of this service in keeping with the Think Communities unified approach will allow funding from Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Peterborough City Council (CCC) to be combined into one tender process with two 'lots'. These contracts will share a common specification but be specific to geographical areas for delivery. Previous reports suggested the geographical split could be across the north and the south of the county. As a result of the feedback from potential suppliers during soft market testing as well as from VCOs, the lots will now be considered as:
 - Lot One for the provision of services across Cambridgeshire (£128k contract value)
 - Lot one for the provision of services across Peterborough (£40k contract value)
- 2.3 Papers to Committee in October 2019 and July 2020 also suggested the possibility of a third lot, focused on supporting the work of the Clinical Commissioning Group to the value of £18,000 pa. That shared approach has now been picked up appropriately outside of this contract and as part of Early Intervention and Prevention Framework procurement.

- 2.4 Significant engagement with stakeholders, current and potential providers and Council service leads undertaken prior to March 2020, plus consideration of the Public Service Board Grand Challenges (giving people a good start; ensuring that people have good work; creating a place where people want to live; and ensuring that people are healthy throughout their lives), have all contributed to the development of intended outcomes and the service specification for this service.
- 2.5 In particular the response of the voluntary and community sector and the infrastructure support organisations during the pandemic has further shaped our collective thinking for future commissioning of this service so that it continues to significantly contribute to the recovery phase, building further resilience within our communities and therefore cost avoidance in the future by supporting residents who do not have local support networks in place to meet their basic needs, and supporting the economic recovery with VCS support to give people opportunities to get them work-ready or to give them opportunities for better work. The learning from the response to the pandemic has also shown the compelling and impactful difference our local parish and town councils play in supporting their communities and coordinating positive action, and we will be continuing the development of a broader and more significant role for this first tier of local government through our direct relationships with them as well as with the bodies representing them as described in section 1.3.
- 2.6 The procurement will take an outcomes-based commissioning approach and the draft specification focuses on four broad outcomes. The VCS have provided a strong steer on the value of those and the type of support they will need from the provider(s) in order to deliver those outcomes. They will provide the council, the provider(s) and those who are supported through this commissioned service with the flexibility and ability to prioritise delivery to maximise impact, including for example, on the Think Communities areas of focus. In broad terms, the draft outcomes are as follows:

Outcome 1: To have sustainable, well run voluntary and community sector organisations

- Ensuring good governance, strong financial management, business planning, strategic planning and project management
- Having robust safeguarding policy and practices
- Having well managed community assets including community and village halls
- Having good volunteer management with effective policies and practice which enable good levels of recruitment and retention.
- Being representative of the diversity in the local population

Outcome 2: To have effective collaborative partnership and networks which work together across sectors using strength and asset based approaches, fostering a unified approach to shared priorities

- Sharing knowledge and practice through peer learning
- Working with other organisations in a place-based way
- Connecting local people, networks and services
- Coming together on specific topics at conferences or networking events, working together on joint funding applications
- Working together across the VCS to agree and provide suitable representation for the sector with funding and public sector partners and share the priorities of the Commissioners with the VCS

Outcome 3: To have new and established groups and projects which support both local community and Commissioners' priorities

- Supporting the creation, development and continuation of Community Groups that will meet the priorities of Commissioners and their local delivery area
- Developing a shared understanding of health, social care and other local principles and priorities
- Enabling activities which give people opportunities to get them work-ready or to give them opportunities for better work
- Making sure activities are diverse, inclusive and accessible to all
- Encouraging people to take social action and learn from each other, to feel able to develop innovative approaches which meet local needs
- Helping people to live independently and prevent reliance on statutory services

Outcome 4: To have strong vibrant communities with good community spirit

- Building capacity and resilience so people can help themselves and each other
- Fostering and harnessing community energy and spirit, supporting spontaneous local action to participate in a safe and effective way
- Learning from the local lived experience during Covid19, providing a legacy to local action by supporting the creation and development of place based community led actions
- Helping people feel safe and healthy

In all cases, the successful bidder will need to clearly demonstrate the ways in which they will engage with parish and town councils, Cambridgeshire ACRE, CaPALC and the local branch of the SLCC.

- 2.7 The detailed specification will further inform the potential providers of the Think Communities unified approach priority areas, in particular areas where a sustainable and well run VCS organisation with strong enabling support in place can make an impact with our residents and in the community, including for example as part of COVID-19 outbreak control, local support for carers, buddying for older people, increasing awareness of available technology to maintain independent living, creating volunteer opportunities for young people not in education, employment or training, supporting residents in food and fuel poverty, and helping us to better understand both the unique needs of our communities but also the potential for local delivery of key services through place-based commissioning.
- 2.8 The total annual investment in this services is expected to be in the region of £168,000 with £128,000 per annum from CCC and £40,000 per annum from PCC.
- 2.9 If approved, the tender documents will be live from 5 January 2021 to 5 February 2021. Between February 2021 and the end of April 2021, there will be a period of evaluation, including interviews with prospective contractors, before a recommendation for final approval to award being made by the end of April. It is proposed that a further report is then provided to Committee at its May 2021 meeting.
- 2.10 The duration of this contract will be for five years (3+2), therefore the Cambridgeshire County Council's total contribution to the contract is £640,000. This is in excess of £500,000 and is therefore a key decision. We are asking the Committee to delegate authority to the Service Director for Commissioning, in consultation with the Chairman of

the Communities and Partnership Committee, to award funding when the award of contract is made.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

- The VCS supports people to have a good quality of life in a range of ways. There is evidence that community participation supports the adoption of a healthy lifestyle and builds engagement in health and wellbeing improving initiatives.
- VCS infrastructure support in building VCS capacity and to support communities that are safe, and good places to live, is a cornerstone of our early help and preventative strategies for vulnerable people.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

- The VCS employs a significant number of people and contributes positively to the local economy.
- This affords opportunities for individuals and communities to develop skills through participating in their community which will help them within the workplace and build resilience to undertake initiatives that improve and enable independence, health and well-being.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

- The support of the VCS makes a real difference to the lives of children and families, providing opportunities for the whole population to succeed and to enable improved outcomes.

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

- A positive impact as people will be enabled to access services more locally as well as reducing demand on services which currently have a higher carbon footprint.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in Section 2.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

- The report sets out details of significant implications.
- Procurement services are involved throughout this process to ensure compliance.
- UK law insists that a contract this size goes to open market when the existing contract expires.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

- Legal services are involved in drawing up the contract terms and conditions, Memorandum of Understanding and Delegated Partnership Agreements between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils.

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**

- Engagement and consultation activities have taken place with a variety of stakeholders across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough including the VCS. The VCS have had a key role in deciding on the support required through the VCS Infrastructure support contract.

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
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Emma Jones
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Jeandre Hunter
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Christine Birchall
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes or No Name of Officer: Val Thomas

Source Documents	Location
State of the Sector Survey 2019	https://www.supportcambridgeshire.org.uk/state-of-the-sector-survey-2019/
Best Start in Life	https://camweb.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/our-organisation/where-we-work-how-we-work-who-we-work-with/best-start-in-life/strategy-aims-to-give-children-the-best-start-in-life/
Adults: accessing community support	https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/adults/organising-care-and-support/types-of-support/community-support/
Think Communities	https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities-localism/community-resilience