

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR – INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT AGREEMENT

To: Communities and Partnership Committee

Meeting Date: 2 July 2020

From: Adrian Chapman: Service Director - Communities and Partnerships

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: N/A Key decision: No

Outcome: To consider an update on the re-commissioning and procurement of voluntary and community sector infrastructure support services across Cambridgeshire.

This service will be key to delivering the aspirations of ‘Think Communities’.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:

Note the requirement for and endorse an extension to the current grant agreement with Support Cambridgeshire, to allow for adherence to procurement regulations, as described in section 2.3 and 2.4 of the report.

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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). On 24 November 2019 Committee endorsed an extension to the current grant agreement with Support Cambridgeshire, the current provider of this service within Cambridgeshire, up to 31 March 2021 to allow for adherence to procurement regulations.
- 1.3 Procurement activities with stakeholders and providers undertaken prior to March 2020 have provided further intelligence and insight and have contributed to the development of intended outcomes and the service specification for this service. More recently, the response of the voluntary and community sector and the infrastructure support organisations during the pandemic will help shape our thinking for future commissioning of this service and will 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.
- 1.4 The newly-commissioned service will be a key enabler in our delivery of the Think Communities approach.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 Committee have previously approved a joint commission which will allow funding from the council, PCC and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to be combined into one tender process. The intention stated in November 2019 was to have three contracts or 'lots' which share a common specification but be specific to geographical areas for delivery, or for the third lot, specific to CCG requirements:
 1. One lot for provision of services across Peterborough, Fenland and Huntingdonshire
 2. The second lot for provision of services across Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire
 3. The third lot to be across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with CCG specifying their requirements
- 2.2 As a result of the global pandemic, we have seen an unprecedented response from our residents who wish to volunteer their support and increased engagement with the voluntary and community sector. We have also experienced households who have had to turn to Government and the council for support to get food, medicines and other support needs met during this time.
- 2.3 The coronavirus emergency meant that the council deployed resources into urgent and extraordinary ways to minimise the risks and support our residents and communities. As a result procurement processes and the tender process for infrastructure support services was paused whilst our COVID-19 response, business continuity arrangements and now recovery planning were all put in place.

2.4 The tender process now needs to restart but with an extension to the timeline as we are unable to complete the procurement regulation timescales and award a contract on the 1st April 2021. We are therefore requesting a 6 month extension to the current contract. This means Committee are asked to approve an additional 6 month exemptions waiver and extension to the Support Cambridgeshire contract. The new contract will therefore start on 1st October 2021. The total value of this exemption waiver (which includes the previous exemption agreed by committee last November for £73,560 and this one, £63,000) is £136,560.

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 above sets out details of significant implications above.
- 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 Councils and CCG.

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 peoples' mental health
 - Substance Misuse
 - Unhealthy lifestyles

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Gus de Silva
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer?	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?	No
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 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/