

## **Chief Executives' Group – North Yorkshire and York**

**14 November 2012**

### **Provision of voluntary sector support services**

#### **1 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To consult members on the implications of a proposed reorganisation of voluntary sector support and development services.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1 Voluntary sector support and development organisations provide a range of services to voluntary and community sector organisations, including:

- Funding advice and business planning
- Volunteer recruitment and management
- Financial management and book-keeping
- Governance support – for Trustees and committees
- Employment advice and HR services
- Training and events
- Policies and best practice
- Collaborative working
- Networking with other organisations
- Consultations and influencing local decision making
- Community engagement and community development

- 2.2 There are currently 13 organisations providing core voluntary sector support and development services in North Yorkshire, all of which are independent charities: 8 Councils for Voluntary Service (7 of which incorporate a Volunteer Centre service); North Yorkshire and York Forum; one independent Volunteer Centre; the three Community Care Associations:

- North Yorkshire and York Forum
- Craven CVS
- Craven Volunteer Centre
- Harrogate CVS
- Ripon CVS
- Richmondshire CVS
- Northallerton & District VSA
- Ryedale VA
- Seachange Community Trust
- Selby AVS
- Easingwold CCA
- Thirsk CCA
- Stokesley CCA

- 2.3 Currently local CVSs and Volunteer Centres are deeply embedded in their local Districts, having developed organically in response to local needs. They are membership organisations (the members generally being local voluntary sector

organisations) and are run by Trustee Boards drawn from the membership and other representatives of the local community. They work closely with officers within public sector organisations in their locality, and are involved in local planning and partnerships. Most receive some financial support from their District Council, for core work or specific projects. Some also provide direct services to the community (e.g. counselling, community transport) alongside voluntary sector support services.

- 2.4 North Yorkshire and York Forum was set up (as 'North Yorkshire Forum for Voluntary Organisations') by the CVSs in 1986 to provide a County-level voice and co-ordination for the sector. The Forum also provides some specialist services across the County e.g. Employment/HR services and safeguarding support.
- 2.5 Collectively, the total cost of providing support and development services is around £1.5million and Volunteer Centre Services cost around £200,000 (2011/12 figures). Income derives from NYCC and NHS NYY under a joint funding agreement; charges for some services; District Council grants; and grant funding from a range of other sources including Big Lottery and charitable trusts.
- 2.6 A number of funding streams are due to end over the next 2 years, which together with reductions in public funding mean that the current pattern of services is unlikely to be sustainable in the long term.

### **3 Reconfiguration of voluntary sector support services**

- 3.1 A number of options are under consideration for reorganising support and development services. The objectives of this reorganisation are:
  - To maintain local delivery of generalist support services where this is the best mode of ensuring local access
  - To centralise (at cross-District, County or sub-regional level) those specialist and back-office functions where efficiencies can be achieved without significant detriment to local services
  - To increase consistency of provision across the County, and overall effectiveness of the support services provided by the partners
  - To increase future sustainability of support services by reducing costs and increasing self-generated income.
- 3.2 There are a number of structural options under consideration, but broadly they fall into two possible approaches:
  - Organisation of CVS provision around 3 or 4 'hubs' based on cross-District provision (Ryedale/Scarborough, Hambleton/Richmondshire, Harrogate/Craven, and potentially York/Selby). Specialist staff would be located in each hub, serving 2+ Districts with the potential for some specialisms to be provided across the whole County from a specific hub. Generalist development workers would be available more locally. Relationships with local partners would be managed from each cross-District hub. The hubs would be created from existing CVS/VC organisations, by formal mergers or partnership agreements.

The hubs would operate collaboratively in relation to County/sub-regional level activity, which would either be allocated amongst the hubs, or delivered by a central organisation on behalf of the collective.

- Creation of a single organisation to provide CVS and VC services across the County, with staff located according to service delivery needs. In practice this would involve similar delivery arrangements to the 'hubs' model, but with more integrated governance and management arrangements. Structurally this could be created either through a merger of all the separate organisations, or through creation of a 'group structure'. The latter could maintain some local control over service delivery at a District level, and may overcome what may be perceived as a distancing of CVS organisations from specific District-level engagement.

- 3.3 Decision making on the way forward is complex as it involves agreement of the individual Trustee boards of all the affected organisations. We are working towards agreement in principle on the preferred model by early 2013, with implementation progressing during 2013.

We are aware from reorganisations implemented by statutory partners that reconfiguration of services can have unintended consequences, particularly in relation to partnership working where previous effective relationships can be disrupted. We are keen to ensure that our decision-making in regard to future provision of voluntary sector support services takes account of the views of key partners.

#### **4 Recommendations**

- 4.1 Members are asked to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of the options under consideration, compared to the existing provision.

Kate Tayler  
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