

TITLE OF REPORT: **Provision of an Infrastructure Support Service for the Voluntary and Community Sector in Gateshead**

REPORT OF: **Paul Dowling, Strategic Director Communities and Environment**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for:
 - A further extension to the current Agreement between the Council and Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS) to provide support, development, networking and representation to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Gateshead up to March 31st 2018
 - To provide an update on a collaborative procurement exercise with Newcastle City Council to secure an infrastructure support service for the VCS

Background

2. Cabinet agreed in January 2016 to implement a review of how the Council commissions an infrastructure organisation in Gateshead to support the Voluntary and Community Sector (Minute C138 refers).
3. The Council entered into an agreement with Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS), following Cabinet approval in April 2016 (minute 227 refers), to deliver an interim service whilst the Council considered options for service provision from 1st April 2017, shaped in part by several survey exercises carried out with community groups and organisations in August and September 2016.
4. Council officers entered into discussions with colleagues at Newcastle City Council, exploring the merits of a jointly procured VCS infrastructure service, or services, which would be available to community groups and organisations across the two local authority areas. The key drivers for considering this partnership approach were:
 - the shared ambitions and objectives that the two Councils have for a strong, vibrant and sustainable VCS that continues to contribute to the health and wellbeing of local residents and communities
 - a recognition that many organisations provide services and activities in both Newcastle and Gateshead
 - builds on the existing cross-Tyne working relationship, and
 - provides the potential for a more efficient use of financial resources
5. At its meeting on 13th December 2016, Cabinet agreed to:
 - the implementation of the extension clause in the current Agreement between the Council and Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service to provide support, development, networking and representation to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Gateshead up to September 2017

- the is Council leading a joint procurement exercise with Newcastle City Council as partners to secure an infrastructure support service for the VCS across both authorities, with the ambition of implementing the new arrangement from September 2017 subject to further Cabinet approval and budget considerations
6. The Agreement with NCVS was further extended until 31st December 2017 following Cabinet approval in May 2017 (minute C15 refers), whilst Newcastle City Council carried out some consultation activity to inform its commissioning model. Alongside this, the City Council extended the contract with its current provider until March 31st 2018.

Proposal

7. Both Councils remain committed to a collaborative procurement exercise with Gateshead acting as Lead Authority. In order to re-align the procurement timeline, it is now necessary to further extend the Council's Agreement with Newcastle CVS. The extension clause within the current Agreement with Newcastle CVS affords an extension until March 31st 2018.
8. Should the contract require a further, short extension, beyond the 31st March 2018, as recommended in this report, to complete the appointment process and allow for a smooth transition to the new contract, it is proposed that Cabinet delegate powers to the Strategic Director, Communities and Environment to extend the contract for a further period of no longer than 3 months, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Volunteering .

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that Cabinet:-
- Agrees to further extend the Council's current Agreement with Newcastle CVS until 31st March 2018 (in accordance with the Agreement's extension clause).
 - Delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Director, Communities and Environment to extend the contract beyond the proposed extension, for a period not exceeding 3 months, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Volunteering, should the procurement process require this.

For the following reason(s):

- To facilitate the implementation of the collaborative procurement exercise with Newcastle City Council with a view to implementing a new service from 1st April 2018, subject to further Cabinet approval and budget considerations
- To help build capacity and sustainability in voluntary and community organisations in Gateshead

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Policy Context

1. The recommendations in this report are consistent with the Council's vision and medium term objectives as set out in Vision 2030 and the Council Plan as follows:
2. Council Plan
Live Love Gateshead – a sense of pride and ownership by all
 - A confident and more aspirational population acting as Gateshead's strongest advocates
 - Gateshead people who care about their local area and share responsibility for making and keeping our environment the best it can be
 - A community who take pride in Gateshead the place and enjoy and engage in world class culture and heritage that contributes to a sense of belonging and wellbeing
 - Increasing Community, Individual and Council Resilience
 - Supporting people to help themselves, whilst making sure that we work with our partners and residents to help and protect those most in need.
 - Supporting economic growth will enable the Council to be more financially sustainable, allowing us to redirect resources to those most in need, in addition to the beneficial effects of people having sufficient money to prosper.
3. Vision 2030
 - Active and Healthy Gateshead
Gateshead to have one of the healthiest communities in the country with the building blocks in place to support and encourage people to take up opportunities to improve their health and lifestyle.

Background

4. The Gateshead Compact with the VCS
Providing an over-arching framework to the Review is the Gateshead Compact with the voluntary and community sector. The Compact, covering 2014-2017, is an agreement between the Council and the VCS to work together to agreed standards and shared objectives. It formalises a set of shared priorities which recognise the value and role of the VCS and includes a series of actions to deliver the priorities. The current Compact priorities are:
 - Strong, sustainable voluntary and community sector
 - Long term planning and transparency in commissioning
 - Valuing and enabling volunteering
 - Gateshead Communities Together

Consultation

5. The Cabinet Members for Communities and Volunteering have been consulted.

Alternative Options

6. The Council could decide not to support the provision of services to voluntary and community organisations. This would prevent the Council meeting its priorities in Vision 2030 and the Council Plan.

Implications of Recommended option

7. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** - The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that support for the provision of a CVS function of £160,000 is included in the Council's revenue budget for 2017/18.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – Nil
- c) **Property Implications** – Nil

8. Risk Management Implication – Nil

9. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – The services provided under the Agreement with Newcastle CVS helps support the voluntary and community sector to deliver services to vulnerable groups and communities of interest across Gateshead.

10. Crime and Disorder Implications – Nil

11. Health Implications – Nil

12. Sustainability Implications - Nil

13. Human Rights Implications – Nil

14. **Area and Ward Implications** - All wards – the report recommendations impact upon communities and the VCS across the Borough.

15. Background Information – Nil