

3rd December 2018

TITLE OF REPORT: Review on Helping to Increase Support /Capacity of the Voluntary Sector: Evidence Gathering Session No. 1

REPORT OF: Anthony Alder, Acting Strategic Director Communities and Environment

Summary

This evidence session will provide a summary of the overall support provided to Gateshead's Voluntary and Community Sector. The session will feature an initial presentation based upon the content of this report followed by a contribution from the Comfrey Project, who will outline how they have developed as a charity with the Council's support since coming to Gateshead several years ago.

1. Introduction

1.1 At its meeting in October 2018, Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the scope for a review to help develop the understanding of the type of support required by Gateshead's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), where it is needed the most and why, and in the light of this, where the Council's role, support and resources may best be focussed to maximise impact. The aims of the Review were agreed as:

- establish the extent and nature of the types of support the Council currently provides to the VCS across a spectrum of service areas
- how this activity is resourced and coordinated
- assess the effectiveness of this Council support in helping the VCS address the needs of Gateshead residents.

1.2 Definition of "grassroot" organisations in Gateshead

According to the Charity Commission website, there are currently 876 registered charities that are either based in Gateshead or name Gateshead within their charitable objects (therefore including regional and national organisations). There are also an estimated 750-1,000 smaller groups, many of them constituted, without funds or staff providing a range of valuable activities within their communities. The term "grassroot" organisation is often used to describe a particular type of voluntary organisation; for the purposes of this Review, this will be considered as referring to those organisations that are Gateshead based or delivering activities and services into Gateshead, with under £250,000 annual income – a description aligned with the eligibility criteria for the main Council funding scheme supporting Gateshead's VCS, the Thrive Fund.

2. Council Support for the Voluntary and Community Sector

2.1 The Council has long recognised that the presence of a strong and self-sustaining voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the Borough is an enduring key factor in

the ability of local communities to thrive and grow, enabling them to better cope with the decline of public sector resources. Although the overall level of resources the Council provides directly and indirectly to the VCS has diminished since 2010, it continues to provide a wide range of support, a summary of which is set out below.

2.2 Financial support - grants

The Council supports the VCS sector through a number of financial approaches, ranging from grants, to contracts and commissioning frameworks. A number of these are set out below by way of illustration rather than audit, the breadth and character of the funds.

Gateshead Thrive Fund

The priorities of the Gateshead (Capacity Building) Fund (renamed the Gateshead Thrive Fund for 2018/19) are to support:

- projects within the most vulnerable neighbourhoods in Gateshead and/or the most vulnerable residents
- projects which address poverty
- projects building social capital and increasing active participation by residents within Gateshead
- volunteering

The Fund – which is administered on behalf of the Council by the Community Foundation for Tyne & Wear and Northumberland - distributed £321,696 to 39 organisations in 2017/18. In the previous financial year, 62 organisations were supported with a share of £360,000.

Gateshead Innovation and Development Fund

During 2018/19 and 2019/20 this Fund aims to support organisations looking to introduce innovation through new ways of working, collaboration, scaling up impactful services and thereby addressing the Council's Thrive agenda. The Fund has received a number of applications requesting a proportion of the approximately £450,000 available, and a shortlisting exercise is currently being carried out by a multi-agency panel ahead of presentations to the Panel early in 2019.

Local Community Fund

In 2017/18, the Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team supported ward councillors to allocate just over **£46,000** to 71 individual community organisations and activities across the Borough.

2.3 Financial support – commissioning, contract frameworks and NNDR rate relief

The largest proportion of Council financial support to voluntary and community organisations comes through the contracts and commissioning frameworks the Council secures through Care, Wellbeing and Learning, and Public Health.

Supporting People (Adults)

Set out in the table below are the service activities for adults, some of which is non-statutory, for advocacy, carers, and day care that are currently provided in 2018/2019 by VCS organisations. It should be noted that this is in effect a snapshot given the different contract and grant frameworks involved, and that the same organisation may appear more than once in different service activities.

Service activity	Number of VCS providers involved	Total value of contracts and grants
Advocacy	3	£77,037
Carers (dementia support, short break, befriending, Carers of drug and alcohol misusers)	4	£613,405
Low Level Equipment	1	£7,500
Non-Statutory Floating Support	4	£260,083
Learning Disabilities Floating Support (Statutory)	2	£32,173
Non --Statutory Advice and Support	6	£473,628
Mental Health Day Provision	1	£30,330
Older People Day Provision	5	£348,300
Non-statutory Supported Housing	9	£1,223,443
	35	£3,065,900

Supported Living: Adults with Learning Disabilities

There are 27 service providers on the Council's framework for the provision support for people with a learning disability and/or autism spectrum condition within their own home and in the community. Out of the 27 providers 9 are registered as charities. Set out below are the respective contract values associated with each of the 8 charities currently providing services.

Service Provider	Service			Total Value
	Residential	Independent Supported Living	Single tenancy support	
VCS providers (8)	1,709,344	1,269,788	3,790,696	6,769,828
Private providers (19)	0	5,441,626	1,162,177	6,603,803
Overall total	1,709,344	6,711,414	4,952,873	13,373,361
% of budget proportion: VCS	100%	19%	77%	
% of budget proportion: private providers	0%	81%	23%	

In addition to commissioned activity, residents in receipt of Direct Payments from the Council may also elect to buy services themselves from charities.

Children and Young People Under 18 - Services for complex care needs at home or carers relief

Set out below are the commissioned services provided by VCS organisations for young people under 18.

Service provided	No. of VCS organisations	Contract / Framework value 2018/19
Independent Visitor Service	1	£15,000
Independent Case Advocacy	1	£15,000
Intensive Family Intervention Service	1	£350,000
Crisis Intervention Support Service	1	£175,000
Young Carers Assessment Service	1	£30,000
Jewish Children with Disabilities Out of school club	1	£7,724
Independent Foster Care advice and mediation service	1	£5,950
Adoption Support Service	1	£28,180
Short Breaks Framework:		
- <i>Community Outreach</i>	2	Hourly rate agreed and call offs made via the NEPO portal.
- <i>Home Care & Support</i>	2	
- Parenting and Crisis Support	1	
Parenting and Crisis Support	1	£30,000
Independent Regulation 44 inspections	1	£4,800
LD framework - Outreach	10	£55,770
LD framework - Home Care and Support	9	£27,885
short breaks (life limiting / shortening conditions)	1	£342 per night
Tier 2 Family Help: Befriending for families / overnight support	1	£60,000
Total (not including short breaks framework)		£805,309

Public Health

For 2018/2019, 12 VCS organisations were either contracted or provided with grant payments from the Public Health budgets to deliver services relating to drug and alcohol, obesity, and mental health, totalling **£144,820**. The *Make Every Contact Count* (MECC) programme supported 19 community organisations with a total of **£235,251**

National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) Relief

Charities are entitled to 80% relief on non-domestic property, which is wholly or mainly occupied for the purposes of the charity. The Council also has the discretion to remit all or part of the remaining 20% of a charity's bill. The profile of this support changes in-year, but as of November 2018, the table below illustrates the extent of the support.

Type of relief	Number of cases	Amount of relief (£)
Mandatory (80%)	217	4,500,000
Mandatory with discretionary (80% & 20%)	63	74,000
Rural Settlement Relief (village shop, post office etc.)	5	6,500
Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC)	15	87,000
		4,667,500

3. Volunteering

The Council provides a promotion, coordination and brokerage role for volunteers and volunteering in Gateshead.

- Around 50 Council services and Council-led projects promote an estimated 2,000 active volunteer roles and volunteers
- 170 external partners promote an estimate of 4,770 active volunteer roles and volunteers
- There are 66 organisations promoting group volunteer roles, with an average of 660 active volunteer roles and volunteers
- There are 40 “Friends of” groups that have 600 active volunteer roles and volunteers

4. Information, Advice and Guidance

Several Council services provide advice and guidance that helps raise the level of participation of residents with / within community-based activities, improving the health and wellbeing of residents and the viability of community organisations. A few examples are set out below.

GO Gateshead Sport and Leisure

Responsible for development of Sport and Physical Activity in Gateshead. The role of the team includes working closely with around 100 voluntary sports clubs (adults and juniors) across the borough, offering advice and support, including signposting with the outcome to build clubs’ capacity and sustainability.

Culture

Provides support to around 50 cultural organisations within Gateshead and regional organisations providing activity into the Borough, and during 2018 has provided event advice to around 100 organisations delivering a wide range of public events, from community festivals to fun runs and family fun days.

Economic Development and Housing Growth

Provides support to Gateshead-based social enterprises, which includes Community Interest Companies, including setting up, business planning, sources of finance, finding business accommodation, legal structures and governing models.

Environment, Housing & Planning

Provides environmental projects advice and guidance to Gateshead residents and volunteers helping to look after Gateshead’s ecology, countryside and open spaces.

Neighbourhood Management & Volunteering

Provides the Council's principal development support and capacity building function to community organisations in Gateshead. As well as overseeing the administration of the Thrive Fund, Local Community Fund and the Development & Innovation Fund, it also provides advice and support to community organisations on how to set up, register as a charity, governance and management procedures, and identifying funding opportunities (which has been enhanced with the Council's recent procurement of a *Grantfinder* licence). The Team also manages the contract the Council has with Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS), who have been commissioned to complement Council support with VCS networking, learning and training opportunities, specialist advice, advocacy and representation of the sector, and the management and development of the Council's OurGateshead website.

5. **Presentation: The Comfrey Project**

Dr Jo Price, Chair of Trustees at the Comfrey Project, will provide Committee with an insight into the work of her charity in Gateshead, and how working together with the Council is making a difference to the lives of refugees and asylum seekers and links to Gateshead's communities. Further information is to be found in Appendix 1.

6. **Recommendation**

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- Comment on the contents of the report and the presentation by the Comfrey Project

Contact: Anthony Alder ext. 3880

The Comfrey Project

The Comfrey Project is a charity which works with refugees and people seeking asylum at their Windmill Hills centre in Bensham, and at two allotment sites. Their aim is to improve their conditions of life and general wellbeing, while building skills, resilience, confidence, self-esteem and purpose.





The Council has worked with the Charity, helping it to relocate from Newcastle and grow its relationship with Gateshead residents, aided by funding from the Thrive Fund and Local Community Fund. It is exploring ways to improve the wellbeing of residents in the neighbourhood as part of the emerging Best of Bensham Partnership.

