

TITLE OF REPORT: Provision of Support, Development, Networking and Representation to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Gateshead 2016/2017

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Health & Wellbeing Board on a new Agreement with Newcastle Council for Voluntary Services (NCVS) to provide support, development, networking and representation to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Gateshead for 2016/2017.

Background

2. Following a Review of Funding to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) by the Council, Cabinet approved Policy Advisory Group's advice on 19th January 2016 (Minute C138 refers), which stated:

"Implement a review of how the Council commissions an infrastructure organisation in Gateshead to support the Voluntary and Community Sector (the Council for Voluntary Service - CVS). The Council currently commissions GVOG to provide the infrastructure organisation in Gateshead to support the Voluntary and Community Sector and this contract is due to expire on 31 March 2016".

The provision of support, development, networking and representation to Gateshead's VCS 2016/17

3. A thriving and vibrant voluntary and community sector is a vital characteristic that helps ensure the Borough's residents enjoy a higher quality of life with opportunities to improve their own health and wellbeing, together with their fellow residents and the communities they live in. To achieve this, the Borough's VCS needs to:
 - be effectively represented
 - be engaged in influencing and delivering services
 - be engaging in key decision-making processes
 - be championing excellence, continuous improvement and innovation, and
 - move towards greater self-sustainability where possible
4. At its meeting on 19th April 2016, Cabinet gave approval for an Agreement to be entered into between the Council and Newcastle CVS for the provision of services to the voluntary and community sector for 2016/2017. The Agreement includes an option to extend by up to a further 12 months, subject to the Council's budgetary position and further Cabinet approval. Cabinet also agreed that the Council shall commence discussions with partners and the VCS regarding the provision of a Council for Voluntary Services in Gateshead from 2017.

5. Informed by the 4 NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action) Performance Standards of Development, Support, Collaboration and Influence, the Council identified the key functions that it wished to see provided under the terms of the Agreement with NCVS. They are:

- Networking and Representation of the VCS
- Support and Development of the VCS, to include
 - Intelligence
 - Resources
- Engagement, marketing and communication

6. The key aspects of these functions are as follows:

Networking and Representation of the VCS

NCVS will be providing a lead representative and influencing role for the Borough's VCS, by engaging with key strategic partnerships and boards as required, and with Gateshead based organisations / service providers, and provide widespread feedback to the sector as an outcome of this role.

Support and Development of the VCS

NCVS will be proactively working on a prioritised basis with micro (up to £10,000 annual income) and small (annual income between £10,000 and £100,000) community organisations based in Gateshead.

They will provide advice and guidance to community organisations to help develop their capacity and skills, provide funding advice to help increase income, and organise training and workshop activity. NCVS will also support the development of those organisations with annual income over £100,000 as and when appropriate.

NCVS will also gather and share information on the health and viability of the VCS in Gateshead, and work with the Council and its partners to review the Gateshead Communities Together Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Engagement, marketing and communication

NCVS have started to develop a dedicated online presence on their website (www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk/gateshead) for Gateshead's VCS, providing information on the advice and support available.

NCVS are also now administering the OurGateshead website on behalf of the Council.

7. Joint Partnership Board

This will be set up to provide advice and guidance regarding the delivery of the Agreement, with membership including representatives from NCVS and the Cabinet portfolio holders for Communities and Volunteering.

8. Current position

NCVS are finalizing their recruitment process for the appointment of two part time workers, who will be providing dedicated support to Gateshead organisations. An office base will also be established very shortly in Gateshead Town Centre, which together with planned outreach activity across the Borough will ensure the availability of personal support within the Borough will be available for the duration of the Agreement, and help with the joint working opportunities with key

Council services, such as the Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering team.

Recommendations

9. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:
 - note the contents of this report, and
 - Consider how the Board can contribute to the wider review of support to the Borough's VCS.

Contact: David Andrew, Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering ext. 3824