

TITLE OF REPORT: **Performance Monitoring: Agreement with Newcastle CVS for the provision of support, development, networking and representation to the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead**

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

Summary

This report provides an overview of the performance of Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS) associated with the Agreement it entered into with the Council in June 2016 for the provision of support, development, networking and representation to the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead.

Introduction

1. Council agreed, in April 2016, to enter into an Agreement with NCVS for the provision of support, development, networking and representation to the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead. The Agreement covers the period until 31st March 2017 and was established as an interim arrangement following the demise of GVOC to ensure there was continued provision of support for the Borough's voluntary and community sector (VCS).
2. With an interim arrangement in place, the Council is now looking at options for the provision of support and representation for the VCS in Gateshead for 2017/18 and beyond, which involves discussions with Newcastle City Council and Newcastle Gateshead CCG with a view to a jointly commissioned approach. This was agreed as an approach to explore by Cabinet in December 2016, together with an extension to the Agreement with NCVS until September 2017 to enable a procurement process to take place, with Gateshead Council acting as lead partner.

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

3. A resilient and effective VCS is vital in ensuring Gateshead residents enjoy a high 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 ideally needs to:
 - be effectively represented
 - be in possession of key skills to provide activities in an effective manner
 - be engaged in influencing and delivering services where appropriate
 - be able to engage in key decision-making processes
 - be championing excellence, continuous improvement and innovation, and
 - move towards greater self-sustainability where possible

4. Shaped by NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action) Performance Standards the Agreement between NCVS and the Council addresses three core elements; these are set out below together with key activities provided through the Agreement by NCVS to deliver them.
- Networking and Representation of the VCS
 - provide 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
 - Support and Development of the VCS
 - work 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
 - provide advice and guidance to community organisations to help develop their capacity and skills
 - provide funding advice
 - organise training and workshop activity
 - support the development of organisations with annual income over £100,000 as and when appropriate
 - gather and share information on the health and viability of the VCS in Gateshead
 - Engagement, marketing and communication
 - establish a dedicated online presence on their website for Gateshead's VCS
 - administer the Council's OurGateshead website.
5. The report attached at Appendix 1 has been provided by NCVS and sets out the activities they have provided within Gateshead since entering into the Agreement with the Council. By way of historical reference, an example quarterly monitoring report provided by GVOC under the terms of their SLA with the Council is included in Appendix 2.

Recommendations

6. Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
- Comment on the attached report with reference to the performance and activities delivered by NCVS since the commencement of the Agreement with the Council.

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Appendix 1

AGREEMENT BETWEEN GATESHEAD COUNCIL AND NEWCASTLE CVS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

1) Introduction

This report gives a nine month update on performance and delivery for the period 20 April 2016 to 13 January 2017 against the outcomes of the agreement. It is monitored on a quantitative basis (performance measures) and a qualitative basis (impact reports), against the three key functions of this Agreement, namely:

- Networking and Representation of the VCS
- Support and Development of the VCS
- Engagement, Marketing and Communication

There are also the obligations under contract monitoring:

- Reports are produced each quarter (31 July, 31 October and 31 January)
- Regular meetings held with the Service Director
- Regular meetings held with responsible officer

The performance measures and targets are outlined in the table below, followed by some further detail regarding the 3 key functions, in paragraphs 3-5.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS 2016/17

Indicator	Baseline Position March 2016	March 2017 Target	Position at Q3 (20th April 2016 to 16th January 2017)
Number of community groups directly engaged	109	200	249 individual groups
Increase the number of community groups accessing support for the first time	No baseline	Baseline to be established	249 individual groups
Provide advice and guidance to organisations to enable them to submit funding applications for a combined total value of	£56,028	£500,000	£677,940

between £500,000 and £1 million			
Number of Gateshead VCS organisations provided with funding advice	29	50	57 individual groups
Increase the number of groups actively using Our Gateshead website	2030	2,250	No way of recording accurately how many groups use OurGateshead
Number of pages viewed of OurGateshead website per year	66,682 website visits	120,000 website visits	98,860 website visits
Maintain and update a database of community and voluntary organisations in Gateshead	184,486 page views	300,000 page views	254,150 page views
Provide performance management reports for the Partnership Board, to include feedback from service users, emerging intelligence and progress on meeting the performance framework targets	n/a	Ongoing management	Provided on 9 th November 2016
Produce a State of the Sector report for Gateshead	n/a	1 (by December 2016)	Initial information provided on 13 February 2017
Produce and present a performance management report to the Council's Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee			Will take place on 13 th February 2017
Increase number of consultation and community engagement events	0	10	14
Councillor feedback process		tbc	tbc
Service users feedback		tbc	tbc

2) Background

In Spring 2016, Newcastle CVS was invited by Gateshead Council to provide support, development, networking and representation to the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead. The contract started on 20 April 2016, and also included management of the provision of OurGateshead, the online resource used for community groups, events and activities, which includes support for health and wellbeing. At the same time GVOC, the previous provider, was being closed down and there was no transfer of resources from GVOC to Newcastle CVS. A single worker was transferred across under the TUPE process and the OurGateshead website, but this was not current.

As soon as the contract was agreed, premises were sought in Gateshead and staff dedicated to supporting groups in Gateshead were employed. At the same time, the CVS core team was enhanced and extended its support into Gateshead. This meant the offer to Gateshead organisations began in summer 2016. Close working with Gateshead Council officers eased the process and provided local knowledge. The Council's Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team arranged a series of 'show and tell' visits around different communities; these were very helpful. A series of 'Meet and Greet' events were established across the five areas to get the CVS Gateshead Team out into local communities.

3) Networking and Representation of the Sector

Although there are three separate functions, the reality is they are all inter-related. The community intelligence that comes from the support and development work, feeds directly into the representation of the sector, and enables CVS to tailor more appropriate services.

Throughout the summer, following a marketing campaign, CVS staff went and visited a range of Gateshead-based voluntary organisations. This enabled CVS to put together a more accurate picture of what was happening on the ground. During the visits, organisation leads spoke about what they did, the current issues facing the organisation, their current funding, and their relationships and how CVS could help them. A pattern soon emerged of a number of (medium-sized / larger) organisations, mainly providing social care and wellbeing support, not knowing what was happening in the local Council and NHS, and losing contacts.

A Voluntary Sector Leaders Group was established; this has now met three times. It provides information about the sector, encourages networking with each other, and provides access to key decision-makers e.g. Director of Public Health, Chair of the CCG.

A workshop on campaigning was organised at Gateshead Citizens Advice, funded through the Millfield House Trust, and this was run by a trainer from the Sheila McKechnie Foundation and a representative from Parliamentary Outreach.

Invitations have been sent out to Gateshead groups engaged in children and youth work, mental health, disability to come together about particular issues, policies,

Government consultations. This will increase and enhance not just the knowledge, but their positive relationships with each other, which could lead to partnership working in the future.

An example of this networking approach was the budget consultation meeting hosted by Newcastle CVS. Information on the Council Budget was circulated through a number of different media to voluntary organisations. The Neighbourhood Manager organised for key Gateshead Council officers to attend, the CVS Chief Executive chaired the meeting, Gateshead Council officers did presentations and answered questions, there was a lively discussion. There was a follow-up meeting, for the voluntary sector only. The comments from these meetings and from discussions with officers enabled the CVS Chief Executive to write a comprehensive response to the budget.

The representation of the sector, the provision of its voice and advocacy, comes mainly through representation at key meetings. The Health and Wellbeing Board has a Voluntary Sector Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group the day beforehand. An invitation is sent out to around fifteen key voluntary organisations to attend. The meeting is chaired by the CVS Chief Executive, who is the voluntary sector representative on the Board. The Gateshead Council Officer leading on Health Policy attends and briefs the group, taking it through the Health and Wellbeing Board agenda. This mechanism enables voluntary sector organisation leads to be very well-briefed on local health issues, to feed into the process and to inform the CVS Chief Executive to reflect the opinions at the Board meeting.

The Chief Executive is a member of the Gateshead Strategic Partnership Working Group. She has attended meetings, contributed to the review process and participated in the LGA Peer Review Process. CVS Policy Officers are on the Community Safety Partnership and the Children's Trust Board and regularly engage with voluntary organisations so their views on reflected on these boards.

This has been a year of change for Gateshead Council's partnership boards and groups, so CVS has tried to keep voluntary and community organisations up to date with what is happening. In a number of instances it is more relevant to have provider organisations directly involved as they have knowledge of the current issues.

There are regular meetings with senior Gateshead Council officers, quarterly meetings with the Leader of Council, meetings with Gateshead Cabinet Portfolio Holders and there was a display outside the September Gateshead Council meeting.

The Chief Officer is also a member of the Newcastle Gateshead CCG Joint Integrated Care Programme Board/ STP group in which she aims to reflect the views of the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead on health issues. She has tried to promote social prescribing, and the value and benefit of community organisations in improving health and wellbeing. She has been critical of the STP process – both the engagement and the lack of detail in the initial plan. There have been meetings with the Gateshead Care Partnership and with the Gateshead Healthcare Trust Chair and Chief Executive.

There are a number of key strategic discussions which focus on bringing external resources into Gateshead where there has been CVS involvement. The Well

Newcastle Gateshead project, which is awaiting final sign-off from Public Health England, involves Public Health, arts organisations and the Bluestone Consortium; once finally agreed it will bring in an additional £1m into Gateshead and Newcastle. The Blue Stone Consortium is a separate charity, operating Gateshead and Newcastle and is currently managing the Fulfilling Lives contract and will manage the Well Newcastle Gateshead work.

There have been other sources of external funding that CVS has applied for to bring additional resources into Gateshead. There is a strong likelihood of a small amount of money from the Home Office, but this is waiting for central approval.

The CVS Chief Executive meets with external funders such as staff from Big Lottery, Virgin Money Foundation, Community Foundation and others and highlights the good work that is going on in Gateshead.

There has been a study carried out on key issues affecting the voluntary and community sector in Gateshead and the early findings will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The full results will be incorporated into a document that will provide a comprehensive insight into the key issues facing voluntary and community organisations in Gateshead.

4) Support and Development of the Voluntary and Community Sector

The majority of the CVS resource is focussed on this part of the contract. This enables small and local organisations to thrive, develop and become more sustainable. The three support and development staff (Gateshead Support Team) are based in the Age UK Gateshead office. Each staff member relates to the specific five areas of Gateshead, as well as working to themes, based on their individual experience. They are backed up by the full CVS staff including Funding Advice, Governance Support, Policy, and Marketing and Communications.

This work itself involves:

- setting up local charities, community groups or social enterprises
- helping organisations identify the resources they need to develop
- supporting organisations with funding applications
- providing advice on appropriate funders
- advising on governance – how to run an organisation properly
- discussing policies and procedures and working with organisations so they understand and own these
- identifying and providing appropriate training
- connecting groups together, particularly in local areas

There has been a Gateshead Support and Training Programme, based on the needs identified through this work. Although each group is individual, there are common needs and themes that keep emerging. Local groups often have strong relationships, and in some cases dependence, on Gateshead Council support. As the Council Budget is decreased further, CVS are working with groups to make them more resilient than ever, as there is less support in the whole system.

In November a Funders Fair was organised for smaller organisations. This was done in partnership with the Funding Manager from Culture, Communities, Leisure and Volunteering and over fifty people from local, small organisations attended, as well as key funders.

The CVS Gateshead Support Team has used an outreach approach and visited organisations within their local communities, where possible. The approach has developed from the initial 'meet and greet' sessions to going to other organisations' and community events, to make best use of resources.

Clearly this work has been happening during a time of change, and a number of organisations were confused about the status of GVOC and the role of Newcastle CVS. At the same time there have been changes in Gateshead Council officers, external funding sources, and the general uncertainty around austerity, budgets, Brexit etc. Although very few organisations received funding from European sources, the EU debate just added to the feeling of uncertainty about the future. Where possible the CVS Support Team has offered assurance and certainty and direct support to organisations to help make them more sustainable.

The CVS Support Team has worked in partnership with Gateshead Council staff, recognising that scarce resources should not be duplicated, and there are some gaps that could be filled. The experience from the team is that some organisations, particularly the small, local community organisations rely a lot on Gateshead Council staff, and indeed Councillors, and have not managed to develop their own capacity. As Gateshead Council support is further withdrawn over the next few years, it cannot be assumed that all of the current organisations will be sustainable and active and able to operate truly independently. This position is reflected across many organisations in the North and in areas of need.

There are concerns that in areas where there are reductions in council and health services, there is an expectation from the Government that volunteers will 'step up' or step in to fill the gap previously occupied by paid, professional staff. Although Newcastle CVS does not have volunteering as part of the contract, it is clear that the role and purpose of volunteers is not to substitute for paid staff.

The following case study illustrates how the CVS team works with Gateshead Council staff, to make best use of the respective skills and experiences.

Case Study: Birtley Hub (Birtley Community Partnership)

The CVS Gateshead Support Team has had an ongoing relationship with the Partnership since June 2016. This began initially with meeting with the incoming Chair of the Management Committee, who is the spouse of a local Councillor, and the previous worker. This was initiated through one of the Council's Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team's introductory 'Show & Tell' meetings for the Gateshead South area.

The work has consisted of meeting at about monthly intervals to support the Hub's progress in becoming 'Fundraising ready'. A large part of this has been in setting milestones and marking progress towards unearthing /constructing /updating a suite of the basic documents that any external funder would see as the basic essentials. Namely:

- Clear documentation of the legal status / type of organisation
- A concise 'outcome focussed' business plan (2 sides of A4) summarising:
 - the local demographic / social need

- the core strengths, infrastructure, assets and viability of the project
 - five broad project areas to focus on in the next 2 to 3 years
- Establishing an updated library of core policies relevant and essential to securing funding and safely operating within the law and best practice
 - Updating web presence, and addressing any breaches and risk issues
 - Retrospectively documenting progress /reporting / budgeting of existing funded projects
 - Strengthening governance, including skilling up new Management Committee Members and helping identify potential candidates for some officer roles.
 - Helping identify and develop a number of useful tools in preparation for making future funding bids less onerous and more practically focussed – both to increase likely success and to ensure budgets are based on proper costings

In parallel, the Gateshead Council Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team has been helping identify potential tenants (start-ups) for under-used upstairs spaces. This will further increase the financial stability, cash-flow and the Hub's aim to achieve stability and enhanced viability of their core project.

The key thing to note in this relationship it has been a mentoring and motivational approach to help the Management Committee members to develop the skills and confidence to be able to produce the above outcomes themselves. This ensures they truly understand, own and feel confident about implementation. The CVS officer role has been in setting direction, ongoing guidance, and regular review.

In this way, there is a built-in legacy of increased skills and capacity in the organisation for the future. The next steps before March 2017 are to support the Hub in identifying a range of potential funding sources and put all of the above into practice by making some strong bids to implement the five project areas identified in their Business Plan.

5) Engagement, Marketing and Communication

A key strand to the work has been to underpin it with a strong marketing, communication and engagement approach. As soon as the contract was awarded, a communications plan was implemented. Letters and emails went out to local Councillors, key strategic partners, voluntary and community organisations across Gateshead, Council officers and key people elsewhere. Gateshead Council included information in their communications. Where possible and appropriate, local meetings were set up with key contacts.

Gateshead Council provided Newcastle CVS with a list of nearly 400 organisations, as no information was transferred from GVOC. There have been regularly attempts to increase and enhance the contacts of community and voluntary organisations in Gateshead.

Management of the Council's OurGateshead website was also transferred as part of the contract, and the worker formally at GVOC was transferred through the TUPE transfer process. The website had been allowed to deteriorate for some time, and

additional resource was made available from the Gateshead Public Health Department to improve and update the website so that it is now active, current and well-used, both by members of the public and staff.

A dedicated website was established, with Facebook and Twitter accounts focussing on Gateshead. Social media is actively updated.

The key e-newsletters, the fortnightly e-inform, and monthly On the Hoof, are edited to include Gateshead information and profile Gateshead activities and events. Inform, the CVS quarterly newsletter, includes Gateshead organisations and the information is appropriate for them. There is a dedicated Gateshead flier, business cards, banner stands. All the material makes it clear that CVS supports Gateshead organisations and activities.

Each Gateshead Councillor has received initial information and receives the quarterly newsletter and e-inform. Some councillors have signed up to On The Hoof. An information pack went out initially to every councillor, and a welcome pack has gone out to Gateshead councillors who have been elected since May.

There have been multiple communications aimed at voluntary and community organisations in Gateshead; letting them know about the services offered, contact details, and specific information e.g. safeguarding, ensuring Gateshead contacts and groups are highlighted in our general communications. There have been tailored communications on other resources – Ellison Services, the Bluestone Consortium, Specialist Services and others which could be of value to local organisations.

There have been regular meetings with Gateshead Council officers as appropriate, not just for monitoring purposes. The CVS team has met with the Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team. There is regular contact and discussions between members of all the teams.

Following the initial letters and emails, CVS staff met with Gateshead partners and established relationships to encourage engagement. As described earlier, there was series of visits to Gateshead-based organisations to make an introduction and as the basis for future engagement.

The NHS locally went through major changes at the beginning of April. The Chief Executive has met with the CCG Chair, Chief Officer, Clinical Director and is has monthly meetings with the Director of Delivery and Transformation. She has met with Healthwatch Gateshead, Gateshead Care Partnership and done a presentation to the Gateshead PUCPI meeting. She represents the voluntary sector in Gateshead on the Joint Integrated Care Programme Board. She has done a response on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP). The connection with the NHS is important as many groups focus on wellbeing and are funded through NHS contracts and / or Innovation Fund grants.

The last nine months have been busy, hectic, energising, challenging and rewarding. There is a vibrant voluntary and community sector in Gateshead. Newcastle CVS hopes it can continue to contribute to the activity in the future.

Sally Young
Chief Executive, Newcastle CVS

Example performance report from GVOC (May-July 2014)

Topic	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Current	SLA Performance Assessment	Explanation
Community Engagement and Empowerment	No. of consultations and community engagement	4	10	22	Green	Work on the Land of Oak and Iron has increased the consultations possible in this period.
Establishing new groups	No. of new community groups established	37	75	22	Green	On track
Groups sustained	No. of community groups sustained (where support has been provided and community groups have continued to operate/thrive)	300	270	4	Amber	This indicator is a long term reporting requirement. GVOC will carry out an annual sample study of groups supported
Our Gateshead	No. of groups on OurGateshead website	803	1200	924	Green	OurGateshead is performing well on this indicator
Support with funding	Funding secured for community and voluntary groups	875,865	1,000,000	8385	Red	This indicator will be assessed on an annual basis due to lead times for funding applications.
Total groups support	No. of community groups supported	99	300	348	Green	The performance on this indicator encompasses the many types of support provided.
Volunteering	No. of volunteers	1926	2300	448	Red	This area is underperforming due to limited resources in the team. Promotion activities are planned for the coming period.