

**BUSINESS SUPPORT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 APRIL 2018
VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR**

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Summary

This report provides the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the research carried out in respect of other Councils, particularly Unitary Authorities, relationships with the Voluntary and Community Sector.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is relevant to a number of Council policies and supports the Council to achieve its strategic priorities that underpin its work in the delivery of services to the people of Medway.

2. Background

2.1 At the Health and Wellbeing Board on 27 June 2017 a suggestion was made that, given the increasing reliance on the voluntary sector to provide services, the viability of this should be investigated. The possibility of this being discussed at the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been mentioned although no conclusion had been reached as to the most appropriate committee.

2.2 It was agreed at the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 26 October 2017 that research to establish how other Unitary Councils manage their relationship with the voluntary sector would take place.

2.3 VCS organisations are used by various departments in the Council and it is recognised that our method in commissioning them is not always a strategic and holistic approach, i.e. one organisation may be commissioned separately by two directorates.

- 2.4 It is vital that our relationship with the VCS continues to ensure Medway residents are supported by them at an early stage. This preventative approach delays or stops the need for residents to receive statutory services, which in turn reduces expenditure. An example of this is the 3 Conversations Model being rolled out in Adult Social Care.
- 2.5 Many Local Authorities have a Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy and/or Compact. This is not the position in Medway.
- 2.6 Partnership Commissioning is currently reviewing a number of grants and contracts with the VCS to ensure that we have a Commissioning Strategy in place that is more holistic and sets funding on a more transparent and longer term footing.

3. Research Undertaken

- 3.1 A number of Councils' (including Unitary Authorities) Voluntary and Community Sector Strategies and Compacts were reviewed to establish their approach in this area.
- 3.2 Appendix 1 provides an overview of the research.

4. Future Working with the VCS in Medway

- 4.1 Medway has been working in partnership with DERiC (Developing and Empowering Resources in Communities), a national Community Interest Company (CiC), for a number of years, leading to the creation of two Medway-based CiCs, WALT and wHoo Cares. Both deliver DERiC's innovative and creative model of support for vulnerable people and their carers. This is achieved by both creating and using existing links in communities; thereby mobilising social capital in communities, strengthening neighbourhoods and building resilient communities.
- 4.2 The benefit of the way WALT and wHoo Cares operate is that they tailor their support to the individual i.e. some people need ad hoc support whilst others require more frequent contact. They build and maintain relationships with individuals and the community. This often results in continuous engagement, with normally hard to reach individuals. There is the potential of rolling out this approach wider across Medway.
- 4.3 It is envisaged that this approach will result in reduced demand on social care and health base budgets by utilising social capital that will reduce latent demand on traditional services as well as increase uptake of existing and new services.
- 4.4 Officers are also looking to how the Council can support the development of voluntary and community services in the future to support Adult Social Care. It is proposed to commission an innovative and exciting model that will allow the sector to improve its capacity, whilst supporting emerging new transformations of Health and Social Care and most importantly improve outcomes for residents in Medway.

- 4.5 There will be a focus on prevention and early intervention to stop people escalating to statutory Council and health services. The aim is to develop VCS capacity to support a number of important interdependencies including the 3 conversations model, the Medway Local Care Model, the Social Prescribing agenda and Care Navigation. The new service will be in place by January 2019. Officers will ensure engagement of the VCS service users and stakeholders in developing the model. It is proposed that the service will be delivered in partnership with a range of local VCS organisations and that smaller ones are supported better to access funding to deliver services to our most vulnerable residents.
- 4.6 In the next couple of months, officers will also commission Voluntary Community Sector organisations to support a pilot to redirect existing funding for statutory services into the community. This will include befriending, mentoring, welfare calls, preventing social isolation and a range of other domestic activities.

5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1 Although there is a need for the Council to work more strategically with the VCS, there needs to be a shift from grant funding to a more outcomes based approach. There is significant work taking place with the future VCS tender to place funding on a more secure footing. Additionally, significant work with DERiC is testing a new way of working with the VCS. It is proposed that these developments are allowed to be implemented before further work is undertaken on whether a VCS strategy or compact is required. It is proposed that Business Support O&S Committee receive a report at a later date to review the outcomes of the pilot and the longer term commissioning strategy.
- 5.2 At Business Support O&S Committee on 30 November 2017 it was agreed that the capacity of the voluntary sector (VCS) in Medway would be assessed through the next six monthly review of the Corporate Risk Register. Discussions at the Strategic Risk Management Group and CMT concluded that there is positive work underway to engage with the VCS, including through the implementation of the Three Conversations Model in social care, the forthcoming O&S Review of Social Isolation and the upcoming tender for VCS by Partnership Commissioning; as such this was not considered to be a significant corporate issue for inclusion in the Corporate Risk Register.

6. Risk management

- 6.1 This report is for information only, however there is a risk that failing to engage more strategically with the VCS to develop their capacity to support community resilience could result in a fragmented sector that is unable to respond to meet Medway's needs.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Fragmented VCS that does not have capacity or resilience to meet the needs of Medway's population.	Failure to build capacity and fragmented commissioning.	Review the outcome of the VCS tender and whether this is an approach to be developed across the Council.	C2

7. Financial implications

7.1 There are no financial implications to Medway Council directly arising from this report. However, any future commissioning would need to be done within existing budget allocations

8. Legal implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of this report..

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) notes the contents of this report, and;
- ii) agrees that a report should be presented to the Committee at a later date following the implementation of the pilot outlined in paragraph 4.6.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Arrangements in Other Local Authorities