

BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JULY 2019

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

Report from: Ian Sutherland, Director of People - Children and Adult Services

Author: Scott Elliott, Head of Health and Wellbeing Services

Summary

This report provides the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an update on the recent commissioning activity for the Voluntary and Community Sector, as requested at 12 April 2018 Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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, underpinning 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 was 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 At the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 April 2018, a report provided the Committee with an overview of the research carried out in respect of other Councils, particularly Unitary Authorities, relationships with the Voluntary and Community Sector. A future report was requested that updated on the planned commissioning and pilot activities that were underway.

3. Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning

- 3.1 Following an extensive commissioning exercise by Medway Councils Partnership Commissioning in 2018, January 2019 saw the launch of a new VCS 'Better Together' Consortium. This partnership represents the lead providers that were successfully awarded the contracts with the new VCS framework. This includes the following contracted lots;
 - Lot 1 - Infrastructure Support Services for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Organisations in Medway, awarded to Medway Voluntary Action
 - Lot 2 - Healthwatch Medway awarded to Healthwatch Kent
 - Lot 3 - Welfare, Debt and Advice Support Services including Local Welfare Provision awarded to Citizens Advice Medway
 - Lot 4 - Carers Information, Guidance and Support, Young Carers and Carers Support Payments, awarded to Carers First
 - Lot 5 - Visually Impaired Support and Information, awarded to Kent Association for the Blind
- 3.2 With the successful commissioning and mobilisation of the Wellbeing Navigators service in October 2018, Imago have also joined this leadership consortium. The consortium, as a single point of accountability, will report directly to a Medway Council Commissioning Monitoring Group made up of commissioners and other key stakeholders from Adult Social Care, Public Health and the CCG.
- 3.3 The aim is to bring together the VCS in a collaborative way that allows each organisation to remain independent of the other with no legal obligations. The expectation is that providers will work to a common set of values and goals and outcomes alongside specific KPIs set out in the specification for each Lot. Providers will ensure representation on the Leadership Team and will be expected to share and discuss opportunities, responsibilities, issues and risks to service outcomes.
- 3.4 The strategic aims and objectives of the VCS leadership team are
 - Create a cohesive workforce, including volunteers, who have the right skills, who are engaged and well informed, working in the right place and working towards an integrated and person centred approach
 - Work collaboratively with commissioners and communities to encourage VCS development in early intervention and preventative

services, social prescribing, self-care and self-management support to vulnerable people in Medway. Assist in directing resource and capacity in the right areas to provide the right service at the right time. This must entail strengthening provision in deprived and remote areas of Medway, areas with greater ethnic diversity and in areas where people are most susceptible to social isolation and loneliness as well as in areas where there are greater numbers of people living with long-term conditions.

- Develop an intelligence and outcomes led approach to planning, resource allocation and interventions to increase the impact and alignment to council priorities, ensuring that contract specifications set out clear KPIs which are carefully monitored
- Work collaboratively to develop an integrated client management system, containing a single version of people's needs, choices and assets so that, where possible, people only need to tell their story once and proactively and effectively addresses needs and mitigates risk to service provision
- Develop an interactive and digitally accessible map of community assets and directory of services for effective signposting across the system
- Encourage social enterprises and micro-providers to enter the local care and support market, thus strengthening the local economy while also creating more choice for people with care and support needs (in line with the Social Value Act 2012)
- Provide a strong emphasis on working with communities to solve local problems and to contribute their own assets and resources to promoting health and wellbeing, particularly for people with care and support needs
- Ensure equitable services across Medway, remove duplication and fill gaps in provision
- Address CCG and council priorities especially relating to health and social care
- Provide joined up models of working around the 3 Conversations approach, care navigation, social prescribing and any future commissioning of VCS services

4. Other VCS work underway

4.1 The Council's Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed in November 2017 that an in-depth review should be undertaken on 'The Impact of Social Isolation for the Council'. Recommendation 14 of this report requested that Cabinet:

- i) Expresses its support for the development of social prescribing in Medway and of an associated directory of services, subject to appropriate funding being secured and requests that this work is promoted across the Council to enable staff to signpost isolated individuals to appropriate support.
- ii) Emphasises the importance of ensuring that adequate provision is made for people who are unable or unwilling to access information via the internet e.g. if an online directory of services is developed.
- iii) Requests that consideration be given with regard to whether any in-kind, non-financial support could be provided to local voluntary

organisations where their activities or planned activities directly contribute to reducing social isolation or loneliness in Medway.

- 4.2 This report and other strategy drivers (such as the NHS Long Term Plan) emphasise the importance of social prescribing and the possible benefits this programme of work can have on residents and the healthcare system. There are also possible benefits to the voluntary community sector, with social prescribing providing a pathway and support for residents to access the local services/clubs/activities, often provided by the voluntary and community sector. This increased throughput has the potential to enhance the footfall of local providers, who could benefit from more residents/members/customers accessing their services.
- 4.3 Consideration will need to be given to some of these activities to ensure that the throughput does not outstrip demand and the volume of social prescriptions does not outstrip the capacity available. A Medway Social Prescribing 5 year plan has been drafted by Medway Council and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group and is currently being consulted with a range of key stakeholders, to ensure these risks are mitigated.

5. Advice and analysis

- 5.1 The committee are asked to continue their support to work strategically with the VCS. There is considerable activity already underway through partnership commissioning to support the VCS, predominantly through the newly established VCS Leadership Consortium. There are also a range of health and social care activities supporting and partnership working with the sector, such as the Social Prescribing Network. The committee have the potential to identify new opportunities to further enhance the sector, as a flourishing and vibrant voluntary and community sector, is essential for Medway residents.

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 and to develop their capacity to further 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 take future opportunities to enhance the capacity and resilience of the sector | Council officers, members and health partners continue to work strategically through commissioning and other processes | C2 |

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications to Medway Council directly arising from this report.

8. Legal implications

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

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the contents of this update report

Lead officer contact

Scott Elliott, Head of Health and Wellbeing Services

Scott.elliott@medway.gov.uk

01634 333012

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

None