

TITLE	Strategic Review of Voluntary Sector Services (Place Commissioning)
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 September 2017
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Josie Wragg – Interim Director, Environment Graham Ebers – Director, Corporate Services
LEAD MEMBER	Julian McGhee-Sumner – Executive Member for Adults' Services, Health, Wellbeing and Housing

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The review will provide

- the opportunity for longer term arrangements for the voluntary and community sector, supporting sustainability and market development within the sector;
- a clear and defined offer from the voluntary and community sector that delivers against a range of priorities and outcomes which have been jointly developed by the Council and the sector;
- clarity, through the partnership arrangement, on how the Council and the voluntary and community sector will work together as strategic partners in the delivery of key outcomes for Wokingham's residents.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to:

- 1) Note that the Place Commissioning Service is engaged in the Strategic Review of Voluntary and Community Sector services, alongside the People Commissioning Service, as reported to this Committee on 19 June 2017;
- 2) Note that the Review includes the following elements:
 - The development of a co-produced Partnership Agreement between Wokingham Borough Council and local voluntary and community sector providers including the key priorities and outcomes required for service delivery;
 - A strategic review of voluntary and community sector funded services including the further development of commissioned services with established outcomes for Wokingham's residents;
 - The continued direction of travel from the award of grants to voluntary sector providers to the award of contracts.
- 3) Comment on the proposals in the report.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

To outline to the Committee the approach being taken to the Strategic Review of Voluntary and Community Sector providers by the Place Commissioning service, which will mirror the approach being taken by People Commissioning, as reported to the meeting of this Committee on 19th June 2017.

The aim of the review is to secure the value the sector brings to residents as well as offering sustainable support to individual organisations within the sector.

The review will deliver:

- Measurable outcomes for each commissioned or grant funded voluntary sector service;
- The establishment of a clear relationship between the Council's continued grant funding of a voluntary sector service and the achievement of measurable outcomes;
- Transitional support arrangements for any current service which is recommended for decommissioning or where grant funding will not be renewed;
- The increased use of contracts rather than grants for voluntary sector services;
- The development of investment priorities to help shape future commissioning of voluntary sector services;
- A programme of outcome focussed reviews of current investments in the voluntary sector.

Background

At the meeting of this Committee on, 19th June 2017, the Assistant Director of People Commissioning presented a report outlining work that was underway to review voluntary and community sector services to ascertain which services were being provided; how these were being delivered and the means by which they would be evaluated in future i.e. through clear outcomes for service users. This would, in the main mean moving from short term grant funding to longer term contracts, providing more security for providers. The review would also improve the service to residents by attaching Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to the services being provided whilst assisting the sector with their medium to long term planning. This followed a report to Executive in January 2017.

The Committee requested that the Assistant Director, Place Commissioning provide an update to this meeting on how the review could be extended to Place-based Commissioning.

Analysis of Issues

The scale of Place-based voluntary and community sector commissioning is considerably smaller than that in People Commissioning, with only 3 organisations currently receiving annual grant-based funding totalling £45,600.

The three organisations are:

- Wokingham Job Support Club;
- Woodley Town Council (for Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative);
- Earley Town Council (for the Earley Help Shop).

However, the approach being taken is intended to mirror that which is underway for People based commissioning to ensure that there is consistency across the Council. In summary reviews will be undertaken in two main phases, with Phase 1 from September - October 2017, and Phase 2 from November 2017 to January 2018. Initial meetings are underway with providers to make them aware of the process and timetable for review.

Each review will follow the following process:

Meeting 1

This will be the core part of the service review and cover the following areas:

- Service description and aims;
- Governance arrangements;
- Monitoring arrangements;
- Outcomes identified, monitored and delivered;
- Customer, carer and stakeholder feedback;
- Potential opportunities for strategic alignments/partnerships with other providers;
- Alignment to the Council's priorities and outcomes.

Commissioning Analysis

Officers will consider the review material and propose recommendations for the service under consideration.

Meeting 2

The outcome of the review will be communicated to the provider via the second meeting.

The impact on the provider, customers and stakeholders will be carefully considered and, where changes are proposed, officers will recommend a transitional arrangement pertinent to the particular nature of the service. Recommendations will be focussed on the appropriate service future for the next 2-3 year period, with transitional steps where appropriate, e.g. transitional contract for year 1, market procurement in year 2.

Each individual service review will lead to recommendations covering a wide spectrum of options including:

- No change – continue with existing arrangements;
- Reduce/increase the scope of the service;
- Identification of performance issues that need to be resolved via an improvement plan;
- Move from grant funded arrangements to contracted arrangements;
- Increased or reduced grant funding;
- Expose the service to external competition;
- Decommission the service;

The potential outcomes of the review will be discussed with providers, and a draft review timetable will be available setting out proposed timescales.

The impact on providers, customers and stakeholders will be carefully considered, and the approach will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the service being commissioned.

Decision-making and Oversight

There are currently no grants/potential contracts which are over the EU threshold (£589,000). A meeting of the Executive on 30 March 2017 agreed to delegate authority to the relevant Director and Lead Member to approve outcomes from individual reviews. The Leader of the Council, as voluntary sector champion, will be provided with regular briefings on the progress of the strategic review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

In reviewing these services account will be taken of any potential impact on other council services, and key internal stakeholders will be consulted as part of any individual review.

List of Background Papers

Strategic Review of Voluntary Sector Services – Executive on 30 March 2017

Contact Sarah Hollamby	Service Strategy and Commissioning - Place
Telephone No 0118 974 6817	Email sarah.hollamby@wokingham.gov.uk
Date 7 August 2017	Version No. 1