

TITLE	Procurement of Adult Social Care Voluntary Sector Services
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 30 September 2021
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Adult Social Care and Health - Matt Pope
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services - Charles Margetts

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

The Executive is asked to approve the procurement business case for the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector (VCFS) Adult Prevention Services. The total annual value of £2.1 million¹ is spread across approximately 22 organisations and 30 grants and contracts, with individual contracts of up to £300k pa. The key benefits to residents in the Borough will be better quality, more joined-up voluntary sector prevention services, aimed at preventing, reducing and delaying the need for formal care and support among the adult population across a range of mental health, physical health and social support needs, with an increased focus on value for money, quality and sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive:

- 1) approve the procurement business case as attached to the report;
- 2) delegate permission to the Director of Adult Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services to approve the contract and grant the award.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Adult Social Care and Voluntary and Community Sector strategies outline the importance of prevention services to prevent, reduce and delay people needing to access statutory care services.

This procurement will deliver on the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020-2025, specifically the priority to commission services in line with our strategic priorities that deliver quality and value for money. This supports the demand management of adult social care and injects increased funding to the sector.

There is a strong VCFS market across Wokingham able to support vulnerable adults as evidenced in the exceptional community response to the Covid 19 pandemic. The Council currently funds 22 VCFS organisations, providing 30 contracted adult prevention services which underpin the sector. These organisations also raise their own funding

¹ £2.1m per annum from 2022. Current budget per annum is £1.8m.

and are able to utilise assets to benefit thousands of vulnerable residents. This procurement will ensure security of funding for up to five years for VCS organisations working in the borough.

This report covers the ASC prevention services last reviewed in 2017, with contracts ending in March 2022. Building on the VCS's achievement and the needs identified through the VCS Strategy we plan to increase overall investment in preventative services by £500k in 2022/23 and a further £100k in 2023/24. £280k of this is being invested in the VCS through this procurement.

This report and appended business case recommend that a grant and contract award process commences in October 2021 to complete in January 2022. This allows time for mobilisation of services in time for new agreements to start on 1st April 2022. The total budget is £2.1m p.a. which will be allocated across a wide range of health and well-being needs as a set of grants and contracts open to competitive award. The process will be as simple as possible and proportionate to the size of the grants, while allowing for the sector to be creative in how outcomes are met. VCS organisations with experience in the borough will be invited to bid either alone or in partnership to meet outcomes for residents in line with the Adult Social care and Voluntary and Community Strategies.

The grants and contracts will be awarded for three years with options to extend for a further two years. This will bring stability to the market and support the sustainability of many VCS organisations operating in the borough, which is a key priority of the VCS Strategy.

BACKGROUND

Our ambition is for Wokingham Borough to be one of the best boroughs for adults and carers in need of support to live, where they feel safe, included and a key part of our community. Our Corporate Plan commits to safeguard the most vulnerable residents and ensure everyone has an equal chance of benefitting from the opportunities that living and working in Wokingham has to offer. The Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020-25 sets out the Council's strategic vision for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) that will help promote health and well-being and enable people with care needs to live independently and reduce the need for long term care.

The VCS is a fundamental part of Wokingham Borough. It is a key partner in delivering services and support for our residents, made up of a diverse range of socially driven, not-for-profit, voluntary, community and faith groups that have a unique role in supporting the borough at a neighbourhood or community level. The diversity of organisations in the borough ranges from small grassroots groups to well established larger ones that together provide a wealth of services. The VCS is well placed to assist in dealing with the challenges faced by the Council through their extensive experience, expertise and local networks.

The VCS Strategy focuses on the following priorities:

1. Prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support
2. Work in partnership and build the capacity of the VCS
3. Commission services in line with our strategic priorities that deliver quality and value for money

This report outlines the implementation of the third priority:

- Ensuring future opportunities are clearly linked to identified community need, aligned to Council Priorities and services
- Developing a new bidding framework for future allocation of funding to achieve ASC outcomes
- Providing clarity on how provision is contributing to outcomes
- Working closely with and recognise the experience and expertise of the VCS
- Improve governance and scrutiny of funding by developing arrangements for grant decision making and scrutiny that are open and transparent
- Supporting innovation, allowing for flexibility and enabling risks to be taken

Funded services currently include information and advice services for vulnerable people and their carers, practical support (handyperson services, home from hospital, carer sitting services and housing related support). Social and emotional support (dementia café, mental health prevention, drop-in and befriending services to reduce isolation and loneliness) and infrastructure support to build capacity in the sector and develop volunteers.

This procurement takes into account the objectives of WBC's new Procurement Strategy, in particular:

1. To ensure procurement practices achieve true competition, best value for money and that customer and client needs are met, and

2. To encourage the effective planning, monitoring and review of current and future procurement activities, including identifying opportunities for collaboration with private and public sector bodies as well as the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sectors.

BUSINESS CASE

The Business Case is provided as a standalone appendix supporting this paper.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Current budget is £1.8m (this will increase to £2.1m with planned additional investment from April 2022)	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£2.1m Any inflation added to the framework will be agreed annually as part of the Medium Term Financial Planning process	Yes there is sufficient funding in the MTFP which includes the additional investment	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£2.1m Any inflation added to the framework will be agreed annually as part of the Medium Term Financial Planning process	Yes as above	Revenue

Other Financial Information

The grants and contracts will be issued for three years with the option to extend for up to a further two years. The current VCS budget is part funded through the Public Health Grant and the Better Care Fund. All grants and contracts will have clauses within the terms and conditions that allow reduction or termination if WBC ceases to receive the external funding during the duration of the agreement.

<p>Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation</p> <p>This procurement is part of the implementation of the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy which was produced after extensive consultation with the local voluntary and community organisations.</p> <p>A gap analysis was undertaken in May/June 2021 to understand what areas of prevention were not being sufficiently addressed. This updated the VCS Strategy Needs Analysis, incorporating learning from the Covid 19 pandemic.</p> <p>The following stakeholders contributed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wokingham Voluntary and Community Steering Group including Involve, Citizen’s Advice, CLASP, Community Navigators, Wokingham Volunteer Centre, The Link Visiting Scheme, Age UK, Promise Inclusion Network, Oxfordshire MIND, Tu Vida • Healthwatch • Carers Steering Group • Learning Disability Partnership Board • Wokingham Integrated Partnership Board and Group, including Berkshire West CCG. • Public Health, Adult Social Care teams, BAME colleagues’ network
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<p>Public Sector Equality Duty</p> <p>Please see appended Equalities Impact Assessment. This project will have a net positive effect on groups protected under the Equalities Act.</p>

<p>Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i></p> <p>These services are not directly linked to climate emergency. However, the bids will be evaluated for social and environmental value. Bidders will be asked how their services and organisation are contributing to reducing carbon footprint.</p>

<p>List of Background Papers</p> <p>Procurement business case Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020-25 Equalities Impact Assessment</p>

<p>Contact Pamela Iyer</p>	<p>Service Adult Social Care</p>
<p>Telephone</p>	<p>Email pamela.iyer@wokingham.gov.uk</p>

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