Voluntary & Community Sector Infrastructure Services Review

Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference

1.0 Context

1.1 The relationship between the voluntary and the public sectors is changing - and at considerable speed. Recent years have witnessed complex public funding challenges, changing geographies in terms of partnership structures, new models of governance and delivery in the health/social care arena and widespread changes in the priorities and delivery mechanisms for regeneration and economic development.

1.2 The VCS provides a range of vital services, works with those most at risk of social exclusion and enables individuals to contribute to public life and the development of their communities – it also attracts funding not available to public agencies. This can provide significant opportunities for co-design, community engagement, capacity building and policy development and planning, but this relationship is complex and may also contain tensions about roles, relationships and in some cases, perceived conflicts of interest. The voluntary sector currently operates in a complex and challenging environment which will have implications for work-load, sustainability, future development and the management of risk.

1.3 The VCS in East Sussex, like the business community is also a micro-sector consisting of large numbers of very small organisations with limited internal infrastructure to meet the demands of compliance with a range of legal technical and contractual issues. As a consequence local organisations rely on the existence and activity of the main infrastructure organisations for support on a range of operational and strategic issues.

1.5 Nationally, the significance of VCS infrastructure has been the subject of some discussion and the recent publication of the Independent Commission on the Future of Local Infrastructure: Making Change for Good (NAVCA website February 2016) provides useful context and connection into a wider national debate.   .

1.6 In East Sussex the County Council, Boroughs and Districts and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) contribute annually towards the delivery of infrastructure services for the wider VCS. The main aim of VCS infrastructure services are to enable community groups and voluntary organisations to build greater resilience, self-sustaining capacity and capabilities to deliver activities and services that benefit their service users and communities. They are also commissioned to provide strategic representation, liaison and partnership working across sectors.

1.7 A number of challenges have been identified recently by the VCS in respect of the level of engagement experienced with key transformational agendas. These include a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities (both in the public and voluntary sector), and expectations regarding participation through existing commissioned provision. As such, a task and finish group has been convened with representation from both the public and voluntary sectors to work through identified issues and co-design proposed resolutions.

2.0 Purpose of the Group

2.1 The purpose of the task and finish group is to:
- Define the roles, responsibilities and categories of voluntary and community sector provision (i.e. advocacy, infrastructure services, frontline services, etc.), and how the statutory sector does and could engage with these different activities
- Develop a shared understanding of what is currently provided through commissioned VCS infrastructure services, and the expectations of both sectors about the level of communication, engagement and participation this provides
- Identify the key strengths and challenges in current provision,
- Understand future demand, what this could mean for VCS delivery and support locally – identifying scope for further development as required

- Design a proposed future commissioning and funding model of VCS infrastructure services to ensure the sector is able to engage with and respond to developing commissioning intentions, service developments and pathway design at both a strategic and locality level – this may include consideration of other related services that are currently commissioned through infrastructure organisations, e.g. Voluntary Centre East Sussex (VCES), SpeakUp, etc.

3.0   Scope
3.1   The scope of the review will incorporate commissioned VCS infrastructure services across the following public sector organisations:
- East Sussex County Council (ESCC)
- Hastings & Rother (H&R) and Eastbourne, Hailsham & Seaford (EHS) CCGs
- High Weald, Lewes & Havens (HWLH) CCG
- Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC)
- Hastings Borough Council (HBC)
- Lewes District Council (LDC)
- Rother District Council (RDC)
- Wealden District Council (WDC)

4.0   Authority
4.1   The task and finish group is responsible for co-designing recommendations to be brought back to the VCS Liaison meeting for discussion.

5.0   Membership
5.1   Membership of the group will be:
- Martin Hayles, Assistant Director – Strategy & Commissioning, ASC&H, ESCC (Chair)
- Bianca Byrne, Acting Head of Policy & Strategic Development, ASC&H, ESCC
- Anita Counsell, Head of Specialist Health Improvement, Public Health, ESCC
- Paul Rideout, Third Sector Policy Manager, Governance Services, ESCC
- Martin Fisher, Chief Executive, Rother Voluntary Action
- Steve Manwaring, Chief Executive, Hastings Voluntary Action
- Adam Chugg, Chief Executive, 3VA
- Peter Lister, Integrated Commissioning Manager – Localities, ASC&H, ESCC
- Colin Edgely, Operations Manager - Targeted Youth Support, Children's Services, ESCC
- Julia Cutty, Service Development Manager – Third Sector Commissioning, ASC&H
- Fiona Streeter, Deputy Director of Organisational Development and Corporate Affairs, EHS & HR CCGs
- Sue Pumphrey, Head of Corporate Services, HWLH CCG
- Jo Harper, Head of Business Strategy & Performance, Lewes District Council
- Pranesh Datta, Neighbourhood Manager, Hastings Borough Council

6.0   Accountability and Reporting Arrangements
6.1   The minutes of the meetings will be formally recorded, and the outputs of the task and finish group will be reported to the VCS Liaison Group and ESBT & C4Y Programme Boards.

7.0   Administration
7.1   ESCC ASC&H will be responsible for and co-ordinate meetings and associated support.

8.0   Frequency
8.1   The task and finish group will meet on a monthly basis from April to June 2016.