



Northumberland County Council

CABINET

11 October 2022

Working together with Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise

Report of: Maureen Taylor Interim Executive Director Communities and Business Development

Cabinet Member: Cllr Wendy Pattison Adults and Northumberland Communities Together

Report Author: Emma Richardson Senior Manager Specialist Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to seek approval to expand the current Northumberland Communities Together (NCT) and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Infrastructure contract to include management of additional funding transferred to NCC from NHS Northumberland CCG, now the Integrated Care Board (ICB), under a section 256 agreement, to support the Thriving Together work between Northumberland Communities Together and the VCSE.
- 1.2 The current VCSE Infrastructure Contract commenced on 1st September 2021 and will continue until 31st August 2023 with a contract value of £0.1m per year.
- 1.3 The aim of the commission is to maintain the continued development of a vibrant, independent, sustainable sector, that will work in partnership with Northumberland County Council (NCC) and other partners to ensure the best outcomes of individuals and communities of place, interest and identity in Northumberland.
- 1.4 The extension of the existing arrangements would allow a contract variation of the NCC/VCSE Infrastructure support contract of an additional £0.03m payable, prior to the contract expiry on 31 August 2023, to enable VCSE to identify and recommend grant payments to community groups in the County from a fund transferred to NCC by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) (formerly Northumberland CCG).

1.5 The ICB have provided one off funding transfer under section 256 agreement of £0.25m. Under the terms of the contract variation proposed, the funding transferred to NCC would remain with NCC but the variation of the contract with VCSE, will enable VCSE to identify and make recommendations for grant payments to eligible / appropriate organisations.

1.6 The money transferred from ICB in the sum of £0.25m is to test new activities and interventions through a population health management lens across the County and fits the Reducing Inequalities ambitions of the NCC and partners.

2. Recommendations

2.1.1 To approve a contract variation (of the existing contract which commenced on 1st September 2021 due to end 30th September 2023) to the value of £0.03m to the current Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) / Northumberland County Council contract.

3. Link to Corporate Plan

3.1 This report is relevant to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan:

- We want you to feel safe, healthy, and cared for
- We want you to love where you live
- We want you to achieve and realise your potential

4. Key issues

Background

4.1 Population health management brings health concerns into focus using data and expertise and uses this knowledge to address ways that resources can be allocated to improve the health of the population.

4.2 Funding has been allocated to the VCSE sector in Northumberland from the NHS to support local VCSE organisations and groups to work with the Council and other partners, such as schools and General Practices, to test new activities and interventions in their local community that improve health and life chances in Northumberland. This funding is currently a one-off funding transfer amount of £0.25m.

4.3 The contract variation does not place a requirement upon VCSE to distribute all funding prior to the end of the Term. There is no set timeframe for the funding to be spent as NCC cannot predict the demand for applications for this funding however, it is anticipated that in light of current challenges around population

health, for example in relation to the cost-of-living crisis, warm homes, low wages, transport, and food insecurity, and the increase in cross sector collaboration and innovation, to suggest applications will be forthcoming and appropriate.

- 4.4 To further support communities to be sustainable and empowered, this Population Health Management funding will be made available to communities, using the Thriving Together / VCSE contract model as an extension to the arrangement between Northumberland Communities Together and Citizens Advice Northumberland.
- 4.5 Together as above with NCT involved in criteria setting and decision making. It is important to note that the £0.25m fund itself will remain with the Council within NCT budget, the review, and recommendations to approve applications against the Population Health Management fund will be managed under the Thriving Together/VCSE contract.
- 4.6 This approach ensures that innovation and development in the VCSE and communities can be supported through those who are expert in that delivery, but also assure appropriate sound governance of public monies
- 4.7 The contract variation of £0.03m has been brought about by circumstances which:
 - 4.7.1 Were unforeseen because of unexpected transfer of funding responsibility from the CCG/NHS. In 2021 CCG had agreed to deliver a fund open to VCSE groups and organisations in Northumberland to test new interventions to improve health at a local level. This was intended to be commissioned by CCG, however, was not in place ahead of the termination of the CCG and inception of the new Integrated Care Board (ICB) in July 2022.
 - 4.7.2 As the ICB has a wider geographical footprint and organisational structure compared to the CCG, when the changeover was approaching, there was concern that the funding would no longer be focussed on Northumberland and discussions commenced in March 2022 (some 7 months after the commencement of the VCSE contract) for the transfer of funds to NCC.
 - 4.7.3 This happened relatively swiftly, and the funding was transferred via a Section 256 agreement to NCC in March 2022. At the time the contract was entered into, this was not foreseen or foreseeable.
 - 4.7.4 Do not alter the overall nature of the contract in providing support for the VCSE sector in Northumberland; and

4.7.5 Do not exceed 50% of the total initial contract value placed with the provider, and as a result, the proposed variation remains compliant with Regulation 72(1)(c) Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Implications

Implications	Comments
Policy	Opportunity to include health to policies and adhere to Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Corporate Plan. VCS Liaison Group “Working in and with VCSE in Northumberland”
Finance and value for money	Represents good value for money and is more cost effective in execution of processes involved. The fund is £0.25m provided by ICB (previously Northumberland CCG) of which £0.030m is to be added to the VCSE contract
Legal	The variation and the proposal adheres to the conditions as set out in Regulation 72(1)(c) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to Full Council.
Procurement	Compliant with procurement process.
Human Resources	Input from Public Health and Northumberland Communities Together staff – within existing roles.
Property	N/A
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Designed to address wider inequalities including wider determinants of health inequalities. Approach designed to give best value from VCSE funding available to address all inequalities.
Risk Assessment	N/A
Crime and Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	Visible marketing of the opportunity for VCSE groups and organisation to apply. Reporting and storytelling follow up.
Carbon reduction	Hyper local activity to be funded, and applications will be assessed through a sustainability lens.

Health and Wellbeing	The funding is to improve the health and wellbeing of residents of Northumberland
Wards	All

Background papers

Report sign-off

	Name
Deputy Monitoring Officer / Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Maureen Taylor
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Pattison

Author and Contact Details

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