

Cabinet – 05 September 2018

The Voluntary and Community Sector, a new way of working

Portfolio: Councillor Perry – Community, Leisure and Culture

Related portfolios: N/A

Service: Communities and Partnerships

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1 Summary

- 1.1 The work undertaken by volunteers and community groups is valued and welcomed by this authority. Section 3.1 of this report provides details of projects undertaken by volunteers such as the Pelsall reading rooms and the night shelter.
- 1.2 A thriving voluntary and community sector (VCS) brings many opportunities for supporting residents at less cost than traditional council services and plays an important role in achieving the council's corporate priorities.
- 1.3 The signing of a voluntary sector partnership agreement shows the VCS sector that Walsall Council and its partners have a commitment to an improved level of involvement and commitment to the sector.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet recognises the contribution and value of the work done by the voluntary and community sector.
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director for Resources and Transformation in consultation with the portfolio-holder to finalise and agree a voluntary sector partnership agreement between public sector organisations and the voluntary and community sector.

3 Report detail

- 3.1 The council is proud of the VCS within Walsall. The sector delivers services to the public, many of which would not exist without the support and drive of volunteers and charitable organisations within Walsall. There are many

examples of excellent work being undertaken aligned to the corporate plan including:

The Reading Rooms in Pelsall: Community takeover of the old Pelsall Library space which is now delivering services including a book exchange, space for community activities including children's groups, a community cafe, a job club. In addition a community gym and welfare rights support and advice will commence shortly.

Night Shelter: The commissioned operation of the night shelter working with over 100 volunteers to provide improved cold weather provision for rough sleepers and a pathway to other council and partner services.

Initiatives have been underpinned by the council's and partners' commitment to One Walsall, the voluntary sector infrastructure organisation which has a growing reputation for professionalism and support.

The VCS has much to offer, not least a unique position of reach into, and relationship of trust with, the communities from which many organisations have grown and remain a part.

3.2 The council is refreshing its relationship with the sector and has a number of initiatives in place to drive forward a change in thinking which will allow the sector to grow and mature further. The vision for the sector within Walsall is for it to be a strong, confident partner who works with public sector organisations across Walsall to improve the lives of residents, in particular the most vulnerable. The council is confident that this can be achieved and its future relationship should:

- Recognise and celebrate the value of the sector
- Recognise the role of One Walsall as the voluntary sector infrastructure organisation and voluntary sector lead organisation within Walsall
- Create a strong and effective partnership with the sector
- Encourage collaboration and, where appropriate, integration within the sector and with partners
- Enable the sharing of information with the sector appropriately and legally
- Allow us to work together with the sector on the allocation of scarce public sector resources
- Allow the sector to be involved and play an important role in change and shaping service provision
- Agree outcomes aligned to our corporate plan and the Walsall Plan and recognise and celebrate the social value added by the sector
- Help drive improved delivery through appropriate support

3.3 To enable the effective support of the sector, the council wishes to work with the sector on a range of initiatives including how we support the sector to use council- owned assets effectively and to support voluntary sector infrastructure through One Walsall. To express its commitment to the sector, the council wishes to agree a voluntary sector partnership agreement with the sector through the VCS infrastructure organisation, One Walsall. It is hoped and the council will encourage other public sector bodies within Walsall to support this initiative and become signatories to the voluntary sector partnership agreement.

- 3.4 A draft voluntary sector partnership agreement, co-designed with the VCS and which has already been shared with partners, is attached as appendix (a).

4 Council corporate plan priorities

- 4.1 A strong VCS will support the EPICC (Economic Growth, People, Internal Focus, Children, Communities) priorities identified in the corporate plan and will help local communities to become self-sufficient and independent. Working proactively with the VCS will:

- Support economic growth through the creation of new organisations, including social enterprises, and the identification of new income streams supporting the Walsall economy.
- Increase the independence of people and communities to create greater personal and community resilience reducing the need for council and partner services which will enable greater focus on those in most need.
- The Walsall VCS will support the internal focus drive for efficiency and effectiveness through more joint and integrated service delivery.
- Provide a particular focus on supporting children and young people, keeping them safe and raising their aspirations in a cohesive Walsall.
- Bringing Communities together on the ground and increasing resilience and a stronger sense of belonging and cohesion.

5 Risk management

- 5.1 Failure to provide appropriate support to the VCS will result in reduced services to Walsall residents.

6 Financial implications

- 6.1 Appropriate integration and transfer of services to the VCS should result in cost savings to the authority.

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 A voluntary sector partnership agreement is an informal statement of commitment, and is used where parties wish to create a relationship that is not legally binding.

8 Procurement implications/social value

- 8.1 There are no direct procurement implications associated with the establishment of a voluntary sector partnership agreement between public sector organisations and the voluntary and community sector

8.2 The council already recognises the role of the VCS in its procurement policies and activity, including greater focus on social value through the social value policy and social value charter in relation to the council's commissioning process.

9 Property implications

9.1 There are no property implications relating to this report.

10 Health and wellbeing implications

10.1 Creating a vibrant VCS is a foundation of the council's work with communities to ensure appropriate support for individuals' health and wellbeing.

11 Staffing implications

11.1 Not applicable

12 Reducing inequalities

12.1 The strengthening of arrangements and relationships between public sector bodies and the VCS is essential to the delivery of the priorities within the corporate and Walsall plans. The ability for Walsall to plan, design and deliver services in partnership with the VCS will allow for the design of services with more focus on community need and greater involvement of service users.

12.2 The contribution of the sector to the Walsall economy is growing with increased grant income and more opportunity for local VCS organisations.

13 Consultation

13.1 There is ongoing consultation with the VCS and partners.

Background papers

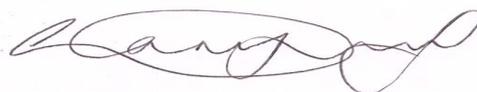
Author

Paul Gordon
Head of Business Change
☎ 653704
✉ paul.gordon@walsall.gov.uk



James Walsh
Executive Director

5 September 2018



Councillor Perry
Portfolio holder

5 September 2018

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Walsall has much value to offer, not least a unique position of reach into, and relationships of trust with, the communities from which organisations have grown and remain a part. To realise this value, and aid its continued growth, consistent ways of working should be adopted to support strong, collaborative leadership within the VCS, and between the VCS and public sector.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Voluntary Sector Partnership Agreement (VSPA) is to demonstrate the parties' commitment to a supportive, collaborative and transparent cross-sector partnership in pursuit of positive outcomes for the people of Walsall. In signing this document, each party undertakes to build on existing relationships and work within a set of agreed principles in pursuit of the outcomes set out below.

2 Parties to the Agreement

- 2.1 The VSPA is between public sector organisations which are members of Walsall's Strategic Partnership Group, and the VCS in Walsall. It has been signed by the Walsall VCS Reference Group on behalf of the VCS in Walsall. For more information on the parties see Appendix A.

3 Commencement Date and Term

- 3.1 The parties will work collaboratively for an initial period of three years commencing on (TBC – beginning of next calendar year?).
- 3.2 The lead organisations (see Appendix A) commit to undertake an annual review of the VSPA, to identify progress and the actions required to address any barriers to further development of the partnership.

4 Scope of the agreement and outcomes

- 4.1 The overarching aim is to establish and maintain a supportive, collaborative and effective cross-sector partnership, in pursuit of positive outcomes for the people of Walsall.
- 4.2 The specific outcomes to be achieved are set out below, and further detail on the actions and indicators for each can be found at Appendix B:
 - To improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for the people of Walsall
 - To maximise value from collective resources
 - To build successful partnerships which promote shared understanding and integrated service delivery
 - To effectively engage communities in designing services and influencing decisions
 - To develop and maintain transparent and equitable ways of working

5 Principles and Values

5.1 The parties commit to upholding the following in their approach to the development of the partnership and delivery of collaborative activity and services:

- *Mutual respect and trust* – Acknowledgement of the different skills, expertise, experience and reach of the parties, and willingness to work with and learn from others.
- *Recognising independence* – Acknowledgement that organisations are independent in their own right, with their own governance, aims and ambitions.
- *Understanding of constraints* – Acknowledgement of the practical and legal constraints placed on organisations by their structure, responsibilities and regulatory frameworks.
- *Transparency and openness* – Listening, sharing ideas and best practice, and willingness to address shared opportunities and challenges.
- *Asset-based approach* – Ensuring a focus on the strengths, gifts, passions, rather than the deficit with the parties and our communities.
- *Seek maximum value* – Involving partners, as appropriate, in processes that may impact on services and to engage with the wider sector regarding service priorities.

6 Commitments

6.1 The VCS will:

- Act as a critical friend to the public sector, providing constructive feedback on the partnership experience;
- Actively contribute to the co-design and review of services, and share information about the impact of services, to meet people's needs and align with commissioner priorities;
- Facilitate communications with the wider VCS and with members of Walsall's communities, particularly marginalised residents which public sector organisations find harder to reach;
- Communicate clearly and transparently any constraints to the public sector;
- Engage with appropriate support to develop capacity and take responsibility for seeking development opportunities.

6.2 The public sector will:

- Act as a critical friend to the VCS, providing constructive feedback on the partnership experience;
- Provide genuine opportunities for the co-design and review of services;
- Share information about the impact of services, and actively support or endorse the work of the VCS where appropriate;
- Clearly specify, in a timely manner, the needs, priorities and requirements for service delivery and the potential role of the VCS in achieving this;
- Communicate clearly and transparently any constraints to the VCS,

- particularly with regard to financial considerations;
- Facilitate communications and engagement with the wider public sector delivery network and with Walsall's communities, particularly those who would benefit from or wish to access the support of the VCS;
 - Actively engage the VCS in the co-design of services, and share information about the impact of their services, to meet people's needs and align with commissioner priorities.

Appendix A – The Parties

All signatories to be listed here.

Lead organisations to be identified to work on annual review – suggest One Walsall for VCS and Walsall Council and CCG for public sector.

Appendix B – Actions and Indicators

List of key actions and indicators to measure progress to be included once outcomes agreed – requires input of VCS Reference Group and SPG member leads.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Voluntary Sector Partnership Agreement		
Directorate	Resources and Transformation		
Service	Communities and Partnerships		
Responsible Officer	Paul Gordon		
Proposal planning start	1/2/2018	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	1/4/2019

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Show which category the proposal is and whether it is new or a revision.		
	Policy		
	Procedure		
	Guidance		
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	No	Revision
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	No	Revision
	Other - give details	Non-legally binding partnership agreement	
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?		
	To make a visible commitment to the Walsall Voluntary and Community Sector		
3	Who is the proposal likely to affect?		
	People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
	All		People involved in the Community or Community Activities either from membership of an organisation, participation in activities or volunteering
	Specific group/s	Y	
	Council employees		
	Other (identify)		
4	Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In recent years there have been many alterations to budget which have had a cumulative impact on the sector. This partnership agreement is designed to confirm the council and public sector partners' commitment to the sector. 		
5	Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).		
	Engagement and Consultation has been with One Walsall. Previous budget cumulative EQIA's		



Consultation Activity			
N/A			
Type of engagement/consultation		Date	
Who attended/participated?			
Protected characteristics of participants			
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
6	Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation		
N/A			
7	How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.		
	Characteristic	Affect	Reason
			Action needed Yes / No
	Age	Positive for all groups as they increase the opportunity for all groups to engage with the VCS and build opportunities for improved relationships with the sector	
	Disability		
	Gender reassignment		
	Marriage and civil partnership		
	Pregnancy and maternity		
	Race		
	Religion or belief		
	Sex		
	Sexual orientation		
	Other (give detail)		
	Further information		
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.		(Delete one) Yes
Yes this proposal links with the proposal to agree additional funding for a voluntary sector infrastructure organisation. Both will have a positive impact on the community and equality groups.			
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?		
	A	No major change required	

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome

Where the assessment indicates a potential negative impact (B, C or D in question 7), identify how you will reduce or mitigate this impact. The full impact of a proposal will only be known once it is introduced, so always set out arrangements for reviewing the actual impact of the proposals e.g. 6 month or 12 months after implementation.

Identify who the monitoring will be reported to and what it is part of e.g. service monitoring or project monitoring. Then ensure the outcome of each action is added, this is just as important as identifying the potential impact.

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail
	Use this section for updates following the commencement of your proposal.

Contact us

Consultation and Equalities
Change and Governance

Telephone 01922 655797

Textphone 01922 654000

Email equality@walsall.gov.uk

Inside Walsall: http://inside.walsall.gov.uk/equality_and_diversity-7.htm