

18 September 2017

Community, Health and Housing Committee

Funding Strategy – Commissioning Prospectus

Report of: *Kim Anderson - Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager*

Wards Affected: *All Brentwood Borough Wards*

This report is: *Public report*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.** The Funding Strategy 2017-2020 was agreed by Members at the Community, Health and Housing Committee on the 19 June 2017. Within the Funding Strategy is the Commissioning Prospectus which sets out the services that the Council wishes to commission the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to provide. The current providers are Citizens Advice Brentwood for the provision of independent advice and guidance services; Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services for representing the VCS and promoting the value of volunteering; and Brentwood Community Transport for the provision of an accessible transport service.
- 1.2.** The existing Commissioning Prospectus has been reviewed and the updated draft document is before Members tonight for agreement before it is circulated to the Voluntary and Community Sector to bid for the provision of services.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members agree to the revised and updated Commissioning Prospectus as set out in Appendix B, and that the opportunities be advertised through the Council's procurement portal.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1.** The Council has moved away from direct grant funding organisations to a commissioning model to provide services which support the Council's priorities and provide the expected outcomes that the Council would like to see.

- 3.2.** To make the process open and transparent the Commissioning Prospectus was developed which meant that potentially any organization with the right competency and capacity could bid for services set out in the Prospectus.
- 3.3.** The Council's Funding Strategy 2017-2020 was agreed by members of the Community, Health and Housing Committee on the 19 June 2017. One of the areas for review within the Strategy was the Commissioning prospectus.
- 3.4.** The current Commissioning Prospectus covers three priority areas for the Council: Representing the Voluntary and Community Sector and promoting the value of volunteering; The provision of independent advice and guidance services; and the provision of an accessible transport service. Those VCS organisations that were successful to provide those services were Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services, Citizens Advice Brentwood and Brentwood Community Transport.
- 3.5.** It was recognized as part of the review that these organisations are not just solely funded by Brentwood Borough Council, so where possible the Council has worked with Essex County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group to align any monitoring and reporting templates so that the relevant organisations will just have the one reporting mechanism.
- 3.6.** The Council also asked the existing providers to provide information on their KPIs, the number of people that they are working with, identify any unmet needs and also identify any emerging trends that could impact their services. A summary of their feedback is attached in Appendix A.

4. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1.** There are differences between the 2015 Commissioning Prospectus and the 2018 Commissioning prospectus. Essex County Council and Essex Council for Voluntary Services (ECVS) have jointly developed a new scope for infrastructure support services in Essex based on a clear ask of the Council for Voluntary Services(CVSS) by Essex County Council (ECC) and partners which is more aligned to refreshed, clearly defined outcomes that support the overall intentions and its partners which include Brentwood Borough Council, which are set out in Appendix C. The scope of the document comprises four parts:

- 4.1.1.** A – the broadly defined outcomes required by the funders
 - 4.1.2.** B – The menu of VCS infrastructure support services to be provided by the CVSs to support the wider VCS to support the delivery of the broadly defined outcomes (excluding the provision of Volunteer Centre, which are provided under a separate funding agreement)
 - 4.1.3.** C – The basic building blocks of an effective CVS
 - 4.1.4.** D – Underlying principles for collaboration between members of ECVS, ECC and District Councils.
- 4.2.** It is proposed that these are included as part of the Commissioning Prospectus under Priority 1: Provision of a Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure support service.
- 4.3.** The provision of independent advice services is currently being provided by Citizens Advice Brentwood. There is also work undertaken jointly across Essex. Citizens Advice Brentwood have noted that there has been an increase in the requests for housing and benefits advice and with the full introduction of Universal Credit coming in November 2017 it is expected that there will be more issues around short-term debt problems as a result.
- 4.4.** The provision of an accessible transport service is currently being provided by Brentwood Community Transport (BCT). Brentwood Community Transport have traditionally been in receipt of funding from Essex County Council and the NHS. BCT have received a 14.4% cut in funding from ECC which does mean that they are now unable to fulfil the needs of the service. The demand for health transport has also grown but this can only be met with their registered route serving Brentwood Community Hospital. They have also seen a decline in the number of volunteers coming on board despite marketing and advertising opportunities.
- 4.5.** The draft prospectus has taken into consideration some of those issues and the priority and key outcomes that the council would like to see by the commissioning of those services.

4.6. It is proposed to commission services for two years with a review after year one and the amount of funding within the Commissioning Prospectus is only indicative at this point as it will be agreed as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

4.7. The Commissioning Prospectus will be part of an annual report to Members on the funding and support that the Council gives to the VCS.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 The Commissioning Prospectus will ensure that the funding that the Council allocates is targeted in the appropriate areas to support those most in need and supports the Council's priorities.

6. References to Council Priorities

6.1 The Funding Strategy sits across a number of corporate priorities to ensure that public money is targeted to support the most vulnerable in our community and that we have a strong and resilient Voluntary and Community Sector.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

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7.1 The table sets out the indicative funding amounts within the Commissioning Prospectus, and this will be confirmed as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

Commissioning Prospectus	Amount
Provision of independent advice and guidance services	£59,000*
Provision of accessible transport service	£26,600
VCS infrastructure support service	£10,000
TOTAL	£95,600

7.2 The funding of £95,600 is currently provided for in the Council's 2017/18 base budget. *£3,000 of the Commissioning Prospectus is funded from

the Housing Revenue Account. The remaining balance of the total is funded from the General Fund.

Legal Implications

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- 7.3 Any existing commitments the Council has entered into with regard to any voluntary or community organisation will need to be examined before any changes could be implemented.

8. Background documents

- 8.1 Funding Strategy 2017-2020

9. Appendices to this report

Appendix A – Summary from the existing VCS organisations providing services through the Commissioning Prospectus

Appendix B – Draft Commissioning Prospectus

Appendix C – VCS Infrastructure Support Services in Essex

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