Scope of VCS infrastructure support services in Essex: 2017/18 Brentwood CVS

Framework

ECC and ECVS have jointly developed a new scope for infrastructure support services in Essex based on **a clearer ask of CVSs by ECC (and partners) which is more aligned to refreshed, clearly defined outcomes that support the overall intentions of ECC and its partners** (e.g. District/Borough/City Councils and CCGs). ECC and the CVSs have previously agreed the need for a more 'funding for outcomes' approach.

Initially, this approach will bring together all ECC requirements for its CVS funding (Public Health and Social Care) and, in some areas, this will be extended to include piloting co-funding with District Councils (specifically Brentwood, Rochford and Basildon Councils to date). The approach set out in this document, therefore takes account of discussions with those Councils on a co-funding approach to help ensure District Council and ECC funding are aligned (where appropriate). In time, and if successful, the framework in this document could be extended to include co-funding with other CVS funders (e.g. CCGs, other Districts, Police and Crime Commissioner, other parts of ECC, etc.).

The overall framework, which is illustrated in the diagram at appendix A, acknowledges that there are two modes of funding the VCS to deliver broadly defined outcomes:

1. A more traditional, top-down model of direct service funding for projects that are known to be effective at achieving the desired outcomes in parts of Essex or other areas (e.g. Colchester BC funding of Shopmobility through their grant to Colchester CVS).
2. A community asset-based (Asset Based Community Development – ABCD) approach that seeks to build on existing good practice in each locality, spread good practice from other areas (being sensitive to each locality's context and asset base) and build capacity for local groups and organisations to respond and deliver activities that achieve the desired broadly defined outcomes, in line with ECC's overall challenges (i.e. focused and prioritised VCS infrastructure support services).

It is recognised that for population scale challenges, population scale interventions are needed and that, in the current funding climate, ECC would not be able to pursue a strategy based solely on direct service funding, even if that were desirable or appropriate. Instead, a community asset based approach is needed to achieve the extended reach, and coverage of, public health (and other) activities and messages that direct service funding cannot achieve. This approach offers the prospect of ECC (and other funders) getting much greater "bang for their buck" through the "contribution multiplier" that inevitably would result from effective support for communities to self-organise and respond to the challenge in their own ways, building on their own assets (human and physical) and taking on board good practice from elsewhere, when that is appropriate to their context. That is not to say that there will never be instances where it is appropriate for funders to adopt the first mode of funding, what is important is for there to be clarity in the framework and definitions used to ensure that all involved understand the approach being taken and the outcomes that are sought as a result.

The remainder of this document, focuses on the scope VCS infrastructure support services to be funded by ECC (and, in some areas, District Councils), i.e. the second funding mode, including KPIs to evidence links between CVS activities/outputs and the broadly defined outcomes sought by ECC.

The scope comprises four parts:

A. The broadly defined outcomes required by the funders.

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B. The menu of VCS infrastructure support services to be provided by CVSs to support the wider voluntary and community sector to support delivery of the broadly defined outcomes (excluding provision of volunteer centre/bureau service, which are provided under a separate funding agreement).
C. The basic building blocks of an effective CVS.
D. Underlying principles for collaboration between members of ECVS, ECC and District Councils.

Parts A and B operate as a matrix with part B broadly defining the support CVSs are funded to provide to the voluntary and community sector in their area and part A defining the emphasis each CVS should place on their proactive work to reach out to stimulate and support voluntary and community sector activity in their area to address the broadly defined outcomes. It is accepted that a significant proportion of CVS activity will be reactive and that help should be provided to any qualifying VCS group or organisations seeking support regardless of whether that is likely to contribute to the broadly defined outcomes.

Parts C and D set out the actions required for each CVS to build its own capacity, capability and effectiveness and the principles that underpin collaboration.

Scope
Part A: Broadly defined outcomes
ECC has identified the following broadly defined outcomes that represent its key priorities for the community asset-based funding of VCS infrastructure support services set out in this document:

Broadly defined outcome	KPIs
1. **Weight management** – CVSs should support building community resilience for weight management support including working with commissioned weight management providers.	The extent to which the support provided is targeted towards VCS groups/ organisations addressing one or more of the broadly defined outcomes in accordance with KPIs/targets b, c, d, k and r (see also segmentation data).
2. **Pre-birth to 19 years' health, well-being and family support** (PB19) – CVSs should work to support communities in building family and young people's resilience, including working with commissioned PB19 providers.	
3. **Healthy Lifestyles** – CVSs should support the voluntary sector including to increase referrals to the Essex Lifestyles Service for healthy lifestyle advice.	
4. **Winter preparedness** – CVSs should support the voluntary sector in proactive and preventative health and social care efforts to reduce winter pressures in the system, including areas such as awareness raising about cold weather measures and support, and flu vaccinations for priority groups in local communities	
5. **Good Lives** – CVSs should support the voluntary sector to increase understanding of Good Lives (i.e. the importance of the balance between helping people to help themselves and signposting individuals for timely support that may help them maintain their independence), including supporting the sector to be able to inform, empower and enable people to access tools to improve their physical and mental wellbeing and maintain their independence and to work as partners across the wider health and social care system.	
6. **Step-down/sign-posting from CCG commissioned services** – CVSs should work with the voluntary sector to identify appropriate local voluntary and community sector sources of support to ensure safe and effective discharge from formal health and social care protocols, and ensure appropriate facilitation and signposting between statutory sector services and voluntary sector organisations.	
7. **Emergency Planning** – CVSs should continue to support the Essex statutory sector, responding to emergency planning exercises and participating in major incident	

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planning to support identification and appropriate care for those most at risk.

While these ECC broadly defined outcomes are important in all areas of Essex, to the reflect the ABCD approach on which this scope is based, the relative priority and approach between them will vary from district to district depending on the extent of need and supply of relevant services (in any sector) in each district. CVSs should determine (and justify through reporting) how these outcomes are prioritised within their area of benefit.

Part B: VCS infrastructure support

The VCS infrastructure support offer, to be delivered by the members of ECVS, is structured around the 5 VCS infrastructure services defined by NACVA, developed to reflect the priorities and broadly defined outcomes of ECC and other partners. The table below provides the menu of services that will be tailored to reflect each local CVSs circumstances and level of funding and should be read in conjunction with the reporting framework described below. To simplify target setting and reporting, the agreed targets are based on the total infrastructure support activity the CVS expects to deliver in the year in question from all sources of funding. ECC and co-funding district councils recognise that where a CVS receives funding for infrastructure services from multiple sources there will be economies of scale and that should funding be withdrawn from any source the ensuing reduction in targets will most likely be by a proportion greater than that of the reduction in funding.

Activity	Objective	KPIs	Targets
Development			
1. Lead/manage and participate in a range of local networks, events and forums to a. gather intelligence, share good practice b. stimulate/facilitate innovation and local responses c. promote effective collaboration between VCS groups/ organisations and across sectors; and d. raise awareness of the broadly defined outcomes. e. ensure that the voice and perspective of the VCS is heard and understood with a wide range of stakeholders; and f. facilitate effective co-production of policy, strategy and delivery of services. Specific networks, events and forums will include i. 2 Community breakfasts	That each CVS has a good understanding of the VCS in their area in particular of: community needs, resources, capacity and opportunities for service development and to actively stimulate/ facilitate local VCS-led responses and promote innovation and adoption of good practice, where appropriate to the community assets, unmet needs and gaps in provision identified.	a) Number of networks and events supported. b) Raised awareness of the broadly defined outcomes amongst VCS organisations and groups. c) Evidence of good practice, community needs and barriers to effective delivery in the VCS in respect of services to address the broadly defined outcomes. d) Evidence of increased voluntary action, particularly in respect of the broadly defined outcomes, in response to unmet community needs, including to enable roll-out of good practice.	a) At least 20 networks and events supported each year. b) Feedback from VCS organisations/ groups shows increased awareness of the broadly defined outcomes. c) 6-monthly reports provided to funders including: a. At least 2 example a year of good practice. b. Evidence (including case studies) of community needs and barriers to effective delivery. d) Support provided to establish and/or enhance/grow at least 5 VCS activities each year (supported by case studies in each 6-monthly report).

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Activity	Objective	KPIs	Targets
and 1 Networking Lunch			
2. Consult widely with the local VCS to gather information on unmet community needs, good practice and barriers to delivery.			
3. Support the establishment of increased voluntary action, particularly in respect of the broadly defined outcomes, in response to unmet community needs, including to enable roll-out of good practice[1].			
Support			
4. Undertake organisational heath-checks of VCS groups/organisations to help determine their support needs.	To ensure that local VCS groups/organisations have access to information, training, guidance and other support to help them to be legally, safely, effectively and sustainably run and to access to appropriate funding and other resources.	e) Number of organisational health checks undertaken.	e) At least 22 (22% of membership) organisational health checks undertaken each year with action plans agreed.
5. Provide information to the local VCS through a range of effective publicity and communication channels including on:		f) Evidence of effective information provision to VCS organisations/ groups	f) At least 5 distinct communications channels in regular and frequent use to communicate information to VCS organisations/groups plus evidence of impact communications.
a. good practice			Newsletter bi monthly 265 electronic and 199 paper copies distributed.
b. community needs			Funding bulletin bi monthly 201 electronic copies distributed
c. funding opportunities			
d. funders' news/ information including promoting public sector initiatives			Information emails 142 distributed on as and when basis
e. changes in the law/regulatory requirements			Website 500 page views per month
			Facebook 69 Likes
6. Provide guidance to the VCS on a range of issues including: governance, resourcing/ sustainability, finance/ accounting, leadership, health and safety and accreditations.		g) Number of VCS organisations/ groups provided with guidance (supported by case studies or other evidence).	g) At least 40 VCS organisations/ groups provided with guidance (plus case studies or other evidence).
7. Provide support for VCS organisations/ groups to make applications for funding/run fundraising initiatives.		h) Number of funding applications/initiatives supported.	h) At least 20 applications/initiatives supported.
		i) Amount of funding obtained from applications supported.	i) N/A – outcome report only.
8. Enable VCS		j) Evidence of enabling VCS organisations/groups to access training and/or	

[1] The County Council and co-funding district councils do not, in general, intend to include in this scope details of the activities they wish to see supported/stimulated by CVSs to allow space for innovation and local variation. Instead there will be informal dialogue at a local level to ensure that there is a shared understanding of priorities for stimulation of new/enhanced VCS-led activities/projects to contribute to the broadly defined outcomes in this document.

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Activity	Objective	KPIs	Targets
Groups/organisations to access training and/or specialist support and/or services to aid effective, safe and legal operation. 9. Work in collaboration with Volunteer Essex to promote and support growth in volunteering		specialist support k) Evidence of collaboration with Volunteer Essex.	j) 6-monthly report to funders includes case studies and feedback to evidence that VCS organisations/groups have been helped to access training and/or specialist support k) 6-monthly report to funders includes case studies and feedback to evidence effective collaboration with Volunteer Essex.
Liaison			
See activities 1 and 5 above.	To facilitate and enable effective communication and collaboration between VCS groups/organisations and between commissioners and the VCS including identifying and sharing good practice.	See KPIs a) and f) above.	See targets a) and f) above.
Representation			
10. Maintain and develop membership/affiliation to CVSs across Essex. 11. Maintaining an Essex-wide VCS database. See also activity 1 above.	To provide a coherent, voice for the VCS both Essex-wide and within each locality through effective engagement with as wide a range of VSC groups/organisations and other stakeholders as possible.	l) Number of CVS members/ affiliates. m) Evidence of maintenance of Essex Connects (or an equivalent system).	l) At least 100 members/ affiliates. m) 6-monthly reports provided to commissioners include evidence of effective use of Essex Connects (or an equivalent system).
Strategic partnerships			
12. Active engagement and regular dialogue with commissioners, in particular on progress with broadly defined outcomes and to challenge assumptions and approaches based on local evidence and experience. See also activity 1 above.	To participate, and/or enable effective VCS representation, in as wide a range of strategic forums as possible to help ensure policy, funding and service development is sensitive to the needs of, and opportunities presented by, the VCS in Essex and the responses to local needs are flexible and timely.	n) Evidence engagement with commissioners. o) Evidence of local VCS response to emerging local issues. See also KPI a) above.	n) 6-monthly reports to include case studies to illustrate effective engagement with commissioners, including providing guidance on the feasibility of roll-out of good practice from other areas. o) 6-monthly reports to include case studies to illustrate local VCS responses in particular to evidence VCS contributions to addressing the broadly defined outcomes. A report every 3 years on the profile of local VCS (and community assets) from each district and locality (using an agreed county-wide data collection framework). See also KPI a) above.

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Part C: CVS effectiveness (building blocks)

ECC (and District Council commissioners) want to support and encourage CVSs in Essex are well governed, well run and as effective as possible in delivering the VCS infrastructure support services funded under this scope; they must lead by example. To that end and to underpin the VCS infrastructure support services set out in the next section, the commissioners expect CVSs to have in place a number of basic building blocks of effectiveness and to strive for continuous improvement in these. The table below sets out these building blocks and the KPIs and targets that apply to each.

Where a particular CVS is not performing well against these requirements they are expected to put in place an improvement plan to ensure improvement within a reasonable timeframe, agreed with the commissioner(s), which is likely to include elements of third party support (including peer support from within the ECVS network). The scope and form of support should be discussed and agreed at quarterly ECVS meetings with the commissioners.

Building block	KPIs	Targets
I. Each CVS has in place effective **performance management** against a clear outcomes framework that demonstrates **value for money** in delivery of VCS infrastructure support services	i. Achievement of performance management/quality assurance accreditation or adoption of an appropriate quality assurance/impact assessment tool. ii. Proportion of KPI targets being achieved across all parts of this document.	i. To be making progress towards accreditation/adoption of an appropriate tool by 31 March 2018 and achieved by 31 March 2019.[2] ii. At least 80% of targets being achieved or exceeded.
II. Each CVS has **trained and capable staff/volunteers** with relevant experience in place to deliver VCS infrastructure support services	iii. Proportion of staff/volunteers with appropriate qualifications and/or training records	iii. 100% of staff/volunteers to have received an annual review of training needs and to have an up to date training record (including achieving or be working towards a relevant qualification, where appropriate).
III. Each CVS has in place **effective governance** arrangements underpinned by ethical values.	iv. Assessment (including peer review) against a nationally recognised governance framework/organisational health check (e.g. Good Governance: A Code for the Voluntary and Community Sector). v. Proportion of Trustees and senior staff receiving training on governance.	iv. Assessment undertaken at least every 2 years, resulting in an improvement plan that is agreed and implemented (including peer support where appropriate).[3] v. 100% of Trustees and senior staff attend at least one governance training event each year.
IV. Each CVS has a medium-term plan for **sustainability**.	vi. Adoption of a 3+ year business plan/strategy to diversify funding and increase income including earned income.	vi. To be making progress towards accreditation/ adoption of the plan/strategy 30 September 2017, plan/ strategy adopted by 31 March 2018 and reviewed/ refreshed annually.
V. Effective **collaboration** between	vii. Evidence of collaborative frontline	vii. At least 2 examples per CVS a

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[2] This could be achieved individually or through groups of CVSs working together depending on the tools/accreditations on offer and each CVS's specific circumstances.
[3] **First assessment must be undertaken and improvement plan in place by end March 2018**

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Building block	KPIs	Targets
CVSs, including **efficient use of resources**.	activity between CVSs. viii. Evidence of effective and efficient use of resources between CVSs	year of successful frontline collaborative activities. viii. At least 1 example per year CVS of successful sharing of resources/ economies of scale realised through collaborative activity (whether within the ECVS network or with third parties, including public sector).
VI. CVS services are, and are perceived to be, **accessible** and well used.	ix. Customer satisfaction. = x. Number of VCS organisations/ groups supported by CVS services. xi. Estimated number of beneficiaries of VCS organisations/ groups accessing CVS services.	ix. At least 75% of VCS organisations/groups report that CVS services are easy to access and are satisfied with the support they received. x. At least 50 different organisations/groups access CVS services in a year. xi. N/A – output report only.
VII. Each CVS has in place a prioritised **annual work-plan** for VCS infrastructure support services.	xii. Performance against annual work-plan agreed with funders.[4]	xii. Annual work plan agreed with funders and targets being achieved

Part D: Underlying principles

To help ensure the successful and locally sensitive delivery of the VCS infrastructure support offer set out above, these services will be delivered in line with the following key principles of collaboration:

1. A firm commitment by ECVS, ECC and District Councils to values of **equality of opportunity**, **participation**, **co-operation** and **involvement** for all the citizens of Essex.
2. **Collaboration** between ECVS members, ECC and District Councils wherever possible, avoiding competition and minimising duplication.
3. Applying **subsidiarity** as much as possible; the role of ECVS and the commissioners is to enable VCS infrastructure service provision through ECVS members and other stakeholders
4. When appropriate, and with the agreement of ECVS members and relevant commissioners, individual CVSs may host projects for the benefit of the wider VCS in Essex.
5. **Equitable sharing of responsibility** for ECVS activities across ECVS members, including strategic representation roles.
6. Promoting, implementing, and upholding the principles of the local and Essex Compacts and supporting Codes.
7. **Open and honest communication** between commissioners and ECVS members and between ECVS members to ensure timely feedback and identification of community assets, good practice and emerging challenges.

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[4] For 2017/18 the agreement with funders of the scope and targets shall be sufficient to satisfy this requirement but a more comprehensive plan shall be required in future financial years

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Reporting framework

ECC recognise that, while it is relatively easy to define and measure outcomes when people in crisis need help, it is much more difficult for preventative services and that this challenge is compounded for infrastructure support services. Therefore, while the above provides the reporting framework of KPIs and targets for CVSs both on their own effectiveness and the VCS infrastructure support services they deliver, the emphasis in reporting will be on dialogue, engagement and shared learning rather than slavish achievement of numerical targets. Progress will be reported in writing at 6-monthly intervals to commissioners and, as well as reporting against the specific KPIs and targets, the report should include:

- A strategic overview from ECVS collectively plus individual reports from each CVS, including evidence of compliance with the underlying principles set out at Part D.
- Segmentation of data (where appropriate), e.g. according to the type and size of VCS organisations/ groups supported, the broadly defined outcomes their work contributes to (if any) their geographical distribution and the type of support provided to them.

A 6-monthly report format/template will be developed for use in reporting against this scope.

It is intended that ECC (and District Council co-commissioners, where applicable) will attend quarterly meetings of ECVS to discuss progress and feedback, including to review the development of the scope and priorities for future years (in particular there will be a formal review of this document at the third quarterly meeting to ensure that a revised scope is agreed in good time for the following financial year). Between quarterly meetings there should be regular and open dialogue and exchange of information between CVSs and with commissioners.

Given the developmental nature of this approach it is acknowledged that there will be a degree of imprecision (in particular in the KPIs and targets) and mutual learning. Therefore, it will be important to ensure that appropriate narrative reporting by CVSs is included to explain where there is variance form the expected progress towards any particular target to facilitate dialogue on the further development of the scope to reflect the realities of experience and practice. In addition, ECC and Brentwood District Council co-commissioners will agree a rolling programme of visits to individual CVS to enable sharing of learning and feedback as well as to review progress in delivery.

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Appendix A: funding framework for VCS infrastructure services.

Broadly defined outcomes

ECC directly commissioned services

Core infrastructure services

District Council or CCG directly commissioned services

CVS effectiveness (building blocks)

1 **Development** Identifying and filing gaps	**2** **Support** Raising standards	**3** **Liaison** Enabling communic-ation & collaboration	**4** **Represent-ation** Providing a voice	**5** **Strategic partnerships** Promoting strategic involvement

Principles of operation and collaboration

Reporting KPIs and targets