

# VCS Infrastructure Re-Commission

Creating the Conditions for Communities to Thrive

Date: May 2023

# Motivation for Review

Current Investment is due for review on **1<sup>st</sup> April 2024**. Four key motivators for change had been identified. These motivators had been informed by Statutory partners, the Voluntary and Community Sector and incumbent providers delivering the service



## **Inconsistency in the Offer**

A variation in the offer county-wide leading to inequitable benefits across the voluntary sector



## **Lack of focus on Infrastructure**

There had been a shifting focus from the infrastructure organisations toward delivery and away from infrastructure



## **Competition with the Sector**

This change in focus was leading to competition for funding between infrastructure organisations and the organisations they support



## **Reassurance around Value for Money**

Lack of assurance that we were achieving value for money for our investment and maximizing opportunities for co-commissioning

# The need for change

- The Insight Phase of the review engaged **249** voluntary and community partners, **12** district/borough/city council partners and the **12** incumbent providers
- Insight identified the following **key ambitions** for the future commissioning model to deliver for the benefit of residents

	Ambition
1.	Essex wide offer focused on <b>core infrastructure</b> offering support <b>independent</b> from place based competition
2.	<b>Universal, quality assured</b> minimum offer
3.	<b>Facilitate attendance of the VCS</b> at strategic conversations and be <b>curious</b> about local landscape to accurately <b>represent</b> the voice of the VCS
4.	<b>Place based</b> insight to convene the right partners at the right time to address societal challenges.
5.	<b>Localities leads</b> tap into local insight to accurately represent local need.
6.	Specialist delivery partners aligned to the <b>building blocks</b> , bringing expertise to deliver the ask of commissioners in a <b>flexible</b> and <b>adaptable</b> way to meet community needs.
7.	Approach that enables resources to be flexibly deployed to areas/cohorts of <b>greater need</b>
7.	Potential for a <b>universal offer</b> with the ability to target support as needed.

- This insight enabled an options appraisal to be undertaken to design a new commissioning model to deliver the ambitions of the system

# Building Blocks of the future commissionion

The insight/ambitions from all three stakeholder groups was reviewed and used to finalise the commissioning requirements

## OVERARCHING AIM

Consistent **universal support offer** open to all with ability to **target** specialist support and/or representation to geographies, cohorts or specific challenges.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

A consistent **universal developmental/support offer** open to all with capacity for **bespoke support** as required to meet need. An offer that embraces **digital delivery** to maximise reach and scale, whilst retaining quality F2F interventions where applicable, and supporting Digital Inclusion ambitions in the VCS and wider community.

## SYSTEM WORKING

Act as an **advocate for the VCS** in the wider system, **facilitating the voice of the VCS**. Embrace and promote a **Local First Approach** utilising hubs of local insight to **convene local partners** to address societal challenges.

COMPLIANCE/BUSINESS ADVICE

COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORTED DELIVERY

SYSTEM VOLUNTEERING

RESOURCE & FUNDING ATTRACTION

NAVCA  
Pillars



Capacity Building



Volunteering

LOCAL ENABLEMENT & EMPOWERMENT

LOCAL INSIGHT

NAVCA  
Pillars



Leadership &  
Advocacy



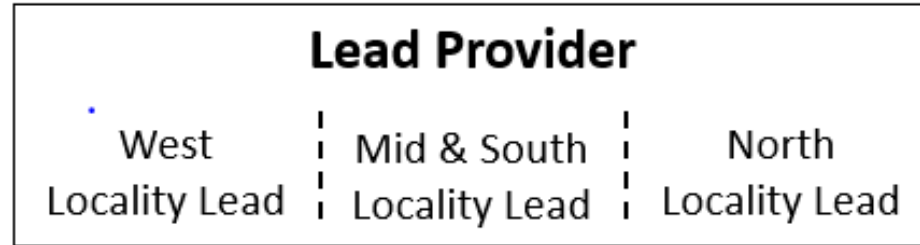
Partnership &  
Collaborations

The successful bidder will be expected to develop their **vision, mission & values** during the first developmental year

Full description of the finalised Building Blocks, Commissioning Values and Behaviours and Benefits in **Appendix 2**.

# The new commissioning model

- **LEAD PROVIDER MODEL** which best reflects the ambitions from the **Insight Phase**



## Lead Provider

- Accountable to commissioner and responsible for delivery of **ALL** aspects of specification
- Responsible for **Universal Core Infrastructure Offer** against a **minimum quality standard**
- Responsible for delivery of a Single Point of Access for the sector
- Provide **Locality Leads** to tap into local insight

## Lead Provider: Locality Lead

- Nominated locality lead aligned to one of the 3 ICS footprints and associated districts
- **Facilitating attendance** at strategic conversations, Recruiting, supporting and/or representing the VCS voice at strategic conversations
- Identify cohorts who would benefit from targeted/ bespoke support
- Asset map, with **ability to convene local delivery partners** around geographies, cohorts and specific challenges



## Speciality Delivery partners

- Work in collaboration with each other to deliver minimum standard universal & bespoke support to geographies and cohorts as needed
- **Flexibly deployed** to support targeted geographies/cohorts as required/identified by data and insight – to areas of **greater need**

# Situational analysis

A SWOT analysis on this transformation was conducted to help maximise benefits and minimise disruption

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveraging expert support for the VCS in Essex</li> <li>• Focus on core capacity and resilience building with quality assurance and a minimum standard offer, bolstered by economies of scale</li> <li>• Empowerment of VCS voice at strategic level via locality leads aligned to health and district footprints</li> <li>• Data-led approach targeting activity to geographies/cohorts of need using local insight and desk-top data</li> <li>• Single Access Point reducing inequalities for VCS and facilitating collaboration with system partners</li> <li>• Ability to target bespoke support to VCS with thematic or cohort focus</li> <li>• County wide data to better understand community need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential loss of flexibility in offer</li> <li>• May impact ability of some VCS to have their needs heard by the providers</li> <li>• A change in providers locally may be confusing for service users leading to a gap in service uptake</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic commissioning at place with district and health partners around shared ambitions – re-engagement May 2023.</li> <li>• Maximisation of the financial envelope across the system</li> <li>• Greater understanding of the role of VCS infrastructure and commitment to the benefits of a strong offer</li> <li>• Market engagement to co-produce methods of achieving insight-led outcomes</li> <li>• Local support bolstered by standardised, quality assured county wide offer that can be targeted as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruption to the transformation and confusion of the offer if incumbent providers aren't brought on the journey</li> <li>• Lack of trust if the lead is unknown within the Essex VCS</li> </ul>

The **insight-led** benefits and opportunities of a change in the commissioning approach is clear. However, as with any system change, to realise the ambitions, will cause disruption and may “ruffle some feathers” as we transition to a new way working. Ongoing engagement with system partners invested in this space is aimed to mitigate disruption, gain buy-in to the new approach and identify opportunities for collaborative commissioning

# Summary

- There is an evidenced need to change the way in which we invest in our voluntary and community sector
- We need consistency of offer with the ability to flex and adapt to direct investment to areas of greatest need
- This will cause disruption and, in all likelihood the role for incumbent providers will change, or even cease
- We want to work closely with system partners to identify opportunities for collaborative commissioning and working together to deliver the change needed
- These ongoing conversations are vital to help achieve the ambitions identified from system partners, the voluntary and community sector and incumbent providers

# Implications and Next Steps

- Transformational Change is necessary in the ECC commissioning approach for VCS Infrastructure to achieve the ambitions of the system, including Service Users, identified during **The Insight Phase**
- The insight is informing the transformational design which will have implications for incumbent providers, who will be supported through the change process
- It is our ambition that notification to the market of the details of this transformation will be given by the end of May 2023 via Public Information Notice (PIN) to fact find and test the intention with the market
- New commissioning approach will be implemented 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024



**We value opportunities for collaboration and further engagement amongst wider commissioners, to understand these implications and develop a cohesive way forward**



# Appendices

# Appendix 1 Key Ambitions identified from Stakeholder Insight

Stakeholder	Key ambition	Future Commissioning Model Requirements
VCS	A strong desire to move from competition to collaboration with infrastructure organisations	Investment in an Essex wide offer focused on <b>core infrastructure</b> support <b>independent</b> from competition between infrastructure and VCS organisations
VCS	The value of infrastructure organisations supporting delivery to 'get off the ground' without a conflict of interest	Specialisms within an independent Essex wide Infrastructure offer, based on the building blocks, that can be mobilised to <b>incubate</b> and <b>accelerate</b> new activity consistently across Essex
VCS	The need for an inclusive and equitable offer	Essex wide offer accountable and responsible for a <b>standardised support offer</b> at a <b>minimum quality standard</b>
VCS	A voice at a strategic level	<b>Place Based</b> provision that taps into local insight to <b>facilitate attendance</b> at strategic conversations and be <b>curious</b> about local landscape to accurately <b>represent</b> the voice of the VCS
CVS	Better collaborative working between Infrastructure Organisations	An Essex wide offer that removes geographical barriers between organisations, fostering system wide relationships
CVS	Having autonomy over delivery	Specialist delivery partners aligned to the <b>building blocks</b> , bringing expertise to deliver the ask of commissioners in a <b>flexible</b> and <b>adaptable</b> way to meet community needs.
CVS	Evidenced based approach aligned to need	Localities leads tap into local insight to accurately represent local need. A co-designed, evidence led dashboard that is flexible to community need [testing 2023/24]
ECC	Support for ECC ambitions e.g. Levelling Up, Everyone's Essex, wider determinants of health	<b>Place based</b> insight to convene the right partners at the right time to address societal challenges. Responsibility to complete an <b>annual health check</b> that identifies need, current capacity/assets and a gap analysis
Health	Fostering collaboration between the VCS and health partners to meet health challenges	<b>Place Based</b> provision that taps into local hubs of insight to <b>facilitate attendance</b> at strategic conversations and be <b>curious</b> about the local landscape to accurately <b>represent</b> the voice of the VCS. Ability to <b>incubate</b> and <b>accelerate</b> new activity consistently across Essex if no current provision
Health	Collaborative commissioning	<b>Place based</b> leads aligned to health footprint to more easily facilitate collaborative commissioning
District	Variation in the infrastructure offer	Essex wide offer accountable and responsible for a <b>universal offer</b> at a <b>minimum quality standard</b>
District	A coherent ask from the system	Potential for collaborative commissioning a <b>standardised support offer</b> with the ability to target support as needed.

# Appendix 2 Finalised commissioner requirements

## OVERARCHING AIM

A consistent universal support offer open to all with the ability to target specialist support and/or representation to geographies, cohorts and specific challenges.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

A consistent universal developmental/support offer open to all with capacity for bespoke support as required to meet need. An offer that embraces digital delivery to maximise reach and scale, whilst retaining quality F2F interventions where applicable, and supporting Digital Inclusion ambitions in the VCS and wider community.

### COMPLIANCE/BUSINESS ADVICE

Providing up to date, accessible and specialist compliance support to VCS of all sizes bespoke to their needs (e.g. insurance, governance procedures, safeguarding, compliance checks, policy/legal updates).

### COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT

Focus on continuous development based on a model of peer to peer coaching, skills sharing, affordable formal training and promoting opportunities to attract new talent.

### SUPPORTED DELIVERY

Provide Incubator and Accelerator support. Working alongside local partners to initiate and grow interventions where capacity is lacking with the ambition of 'handing off' into sustainable delivery

### SYSTEM VOLUNTEERING

Develop a whole system approach to volunteering connecting into the wider system, promoting corporate volunteering (social return on investment) to offer a variety of opportunities for people to volunteer in ways that work for them.

### RESOURCE & FUNDING ATTRACTION

A conduit for funding, attracting funding into the Sector from within and outside of Essex. Upskill the sector to secure funding and facilitate/encourage collaborative bidding. Leverage non-financial assets and lobby for communities to benefit from corporate social responsibility.

## SYSTEM WORKING

Act as an advocate for the VCS in the wider system, facilitating the voice of the VCS. Embrace and promote a Local First Approach utilising hubs of local insight to convene local partners to address societal challenges.

### LOCAL ENABLEMENT & EMPOWERMENT

Work in collaboration with the wider system at an Essex wide and Local, District, Alliance, ICS and County Level to advocate and enable the voice of the VCS. Actively recruit relevant VCS members to strategic boards, represent their interests utilising intense understanding of their priorities and develop connections between VCS and wider system partners where relevant. Be aware of the Strategic Priorities of commissioners and where they intersect with those of the VCS and wider community.

### LOCAL INSIGHT

Be connected into local hubs of insight and community connectors to be able to consult an up to date/fluid 'asset map', utilise these connections to support and encourage a Local First Approach convening local partners around geographies, cohorts or challenges that are a priority for the community and/or wider system. Conduct an annual district level 'health check' to map need against community capacity to support future planning, increasing resilience and asset development.

NAVCA  
Pillars



Capacity Building



Volunteering

Full description in [Appendix 1](#)

NAVCA  
Pillars



Leadership &  
Advocacy



Partnership &  
Collaborations

# Appendix 2 Finalised commissioner requirements

## VALUES & BEHAVIOURS

FACILITATING & CONVENING

INSPIRING & ADVOCATING

NEUTRAL & TRANSPARENT

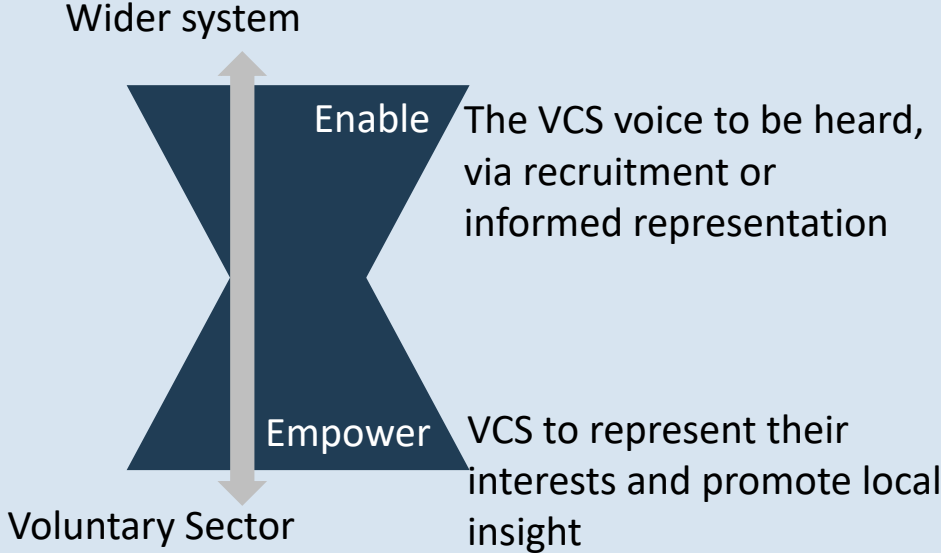
HUMBLE & CURIOUS

SUPPORTIVE & INCLUSIVE

COLLABORATIVE

\*The successful bidder will be expected to develop their **vision, mission & values** during the first developmental year

Act as an **advocate** for the VCS in the wider system, **facilitating the voice** of the VCS and **representing their interests**.



### SYSTEM WORKING

# Appendix 2 Benefits

## Benefits

<b>Outcomes &amp; Impact</b>	<p>A <b>revised dashboard</b> focusing on <i>outcomes</i> and <i>impact</i> including a <b>needs-led Health Check</b> to enable better <b>place based targeting</b>, focussed on the ambitions of LU, EE and the Determinants of Health.</p>
	<p>A lead provider will be <b>accountable</b> to provide a <b>universal minimum standard</b> of support which directly addresses criticism that the historic offer was unequal across the county.</p>
	<p>Delivery partners that are chosen based on the type of support given and not by geography will <b>leverage specialist, expert support</b> into the sector.</p>
	<p>The insight phase has shown discontent with the current offer and a motivation for change from all parts of the system, a new commissioning model <b>effectively signals this change</b>.</p>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<p><b>Increased resilience</b> and <b>sustainable asset development</b> via a return to <b>core VCS Infrastructure</b>. Creating vibrant and thriving communities who can achieve ambitions in place.</p>
	<p>Consolidating 12 contracts into one will reduce the time spent on contract management allowing the SC team to focus on <b>creating the conditions for communities to thrive</b>.</p>
<b>Collaboration &amp; System working</b>	<p>Removing boundaries between those delivering infrastructure support avoids divisive commissioning and <b>builds in collaboration</b>, including beyond Essex boundaries.</p>
	<p>A single point of access, via the lead provider, will make it more <b>accessible to new users</b> to be <b>triaged to the specialist support</b> that they require, whilst also making it easier for system partners to tap into the network.</p>
	<p>Engagement and system buy in will result in a <b>shared ask</b> of the infrastructure organisations allowing them to <b>focus on the core infrastructure offer</b></p>

## Appendix 2 Benefits

### Benefits

Priority setting	Closer alignment to geographical health footprints will better enable the <b>priorities of communities to be represented</b> in system-wide strategic conversations.
	Embedding of the <b>empowerment</b> and <b>enablement</b> role fosters <b>two-way, non-hierarchical priority setting</b> by communities and the wider system.
	Re-focus on <b>local insight</b> sitting with the VCS, businesses, residents and social prescribers in place.
Financial	Consolidating 12 contracts into one will provide <b>economies of scale</b> and ensure we can <b>maximise the outcomes of the financial envelope</b> .