

# Report to the Active and Cohesive Scrutiny Committee

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## Public Sector Commissioning in Partnership (PSCiP)



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### Introduction

To present to the Committee an update on the progress of the PSCiP programme.

### Background

PSCiP was aimed at recognising the potential of significant savings for all countywide partners involved in commissioning from the voluntary/third sector across Staffordshire. In collaborating with the County Council and the then Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) as part of the PSCiP programme, NULBC have been the only district to enjoy the benefits of such work, with a number of similar authorities monitoring outcomes as the work develops and contracts are let.

As part of the work, NULBC retained responsibility to determine the service it wants and was involved in shaping the service specifications/outlines to make sure they meet local needs.

NULBC officers were an integral part of the PSCiP commissioning/tender process, and continue to have a voice as part of the ongoing monitoring process following mobilisation of the new contracts ensuring any issues linked to performance with the successful service provider are reviewed and appropriately responded to.

Officers at NULBC continue to contribute, support and maintain a profile as part of the work of PSCiP, albeit the focus for Newcastle has been linked to two specific service areas: Infrastructure Support & Volunteering Service and Debt, Benefits and Consumer Advice.

In terms of infrastructure support and volunteering, Voluntary Action Stoke-on-Trent (VAST) was awarded the contract to become the Borough's local development and support organisation in May 2013. Under this contract VAST offers capacity building support, funding advice, volunteering service and strategic support. The cost of delivery for Newcastle is £12,000 per annum for an initial period of two years with an option to extend.

A contract for Debt, Benefit, Information and Advice Service was awarded to Staffordshire South West Citizens Advice Bureau in March 2014 at a total budget of £675,815. The funded provision of £131,386 per annum from Newcastle Borough Council ensures delivery and access of a service to local residents as in previous years for an initial period of two years with an option to extend.

Members of this Scrutiny Committees have received presentations by both providers prior to the commencement of each contract.

### **Progress update for the commissioned services:**

As indicated above NULBC's focus as part of the ongoing engagement process has been linked to two specific service areas:

- **Infrastructure Support and Volunteering Service**
- **Debt, Benefits and Consumer Information and Advice Services**

#### *Infrastructure Support and Volunteering Service*

During the first 12 months of the contract, VAST delivered 232 support sessions with local groups, hosted 3 dedicated Newcastle voluntary sector forums, organised a very well attended funding fair, held a volunteering event for volunteers week and several student volunteering events at Newcastle college.

The contract included an agreement for VAST to work and support the Newcastle Partnership and attend its meetings (Partnership Delivery Group, LAP Chairs etc.). A funding toolkit has been produced with opportunities for training planned to be delivered in the current year on various associated themes.

The project has undergone reviews with the county monitoring group (including the involvement of an officer from Newcastle). Added to this, there have been meetings held at the Civic offices with officers of VAST to look at ongoing support and delivery in the borough.

VAST produce quarterly reports for the agreed PSCiP contract but will be producing an annual position statement in 2014-15 detailing the delivery for Newcastle Borough.

VAST attended various groups in order to continue to be the voice for the sector and to inform the sector. For example, VAST have engaged with the Building Resilient Families and Communities Programme particularly around the identification and recruitment of voluntary sector organisations to the Programme's Accreditation Scheme.

Some of the groups attended by VAST include:

- Staffordshire Strategic Partnership
- LEP Funding Sub-group
- FIP Steering Group
- Volunteering Staffordshire Steering Group
- BRF Steering Group
- Early Intervention Steering Group
- Safe and Strong Communities Strategy Group
- Newcastle Partnership Delivery Group
- Achieving Excellence in Early Years Strategy Group

- Responsible Authorities Group
- Police and Mental Health Strategic Change Group
- Children's Service Provider Forum
- Prevent Strategic Board
- BRFC Leadership Group
- Staffordshire Carers Partnership Group
- Compact Steering Group

In addition to the above, a number of strategic events have been held since May 2013 including:-

- A Newcastle event titled "Business as Usual" which was well attended and gave funding advice available to local community groups and organisations.
- In conjunction with the Public Health team events were held in the north, west and east of the county and attracted 96 delegates and aimed to inform and promote opportunities in the Public Health District Commissioning Prospectuses for the Year 2014 / 2015
- The Vast Annual Conference was attended by over 250 delegates and focused on funding and sustainability.

94% of respondents who accessed VAST's support or services say that their confidence has grown because of the support provided and 96% say they are now more able to represent themselves because of the support provided.

On closure of the former Newcastle Community for Voluntary Services (NCVS) office a number of staff were offered and took up posts within VAST. Some staff members from the former Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Consortium of Infrastructure Organisations (SCIO) have also joined VAST following the award of the infrastructure support contract.

VAST have also opened an office adjacent to the Civic Offices in Merrial Street to support the delivery of services to infrastructure organisations.

#### *Debt, Benefits and Consumer Information and Advice Services*

The successful provider - Staffordshire South West Citizens Advice Bureau - commenced delivery of the contract on the 3 March 2014 at a total budget of £675,815. For this Borough, the funded provision of £131,386 per annum from Newcastle Borough Council ensures delivery and access of a service to local residents as in previous years, remaining a collaborative approach from both CAB and Age UK.

Officers from the County and Borough Councils have worked closely with the successful provider as part of the action planning process to address areas of clarification/concern from January-March 2014 to provide reassurances of the ability to deliver the service.

The service contains several elements:

- Telephone contact centre -operating on three sites in the county, one of them being in Newcastle (Wells Street), from the Staffordshire North and Stoke Bureau

- Face to face delivery will be funded to all 8 district bureaux, including the Wells Street bureau - this will mean a total of 150 of the most vulnerable service users are provided with generalist and special casework by referral from the contact centre annually
- Provision of a generalist advice service delivery within Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough, providing a minimum of 45 hours per week (including 20 hours of advice for older people delivered by Age UK) that includes outreach sessions at Kidsgrove and Madeley, and an additional telephone advice service of 16 hours per week

Due to the recent commencement of the contract, a detailed update is not possible and at this time there are no issues to be reported. Local contact with the service is maintained by a NULBC officer. Members can be reassured that a monitoring review meeting is scheduled for September and also an earlier meeting to discuss progress is to be held shortly.

## **Issues**

As reported in February the funding from Public Health to deliver 'Advice in Healthcare Settings' will cease for the Staffordshire North and Stoke Bureau, as it will in the Staffordshire Moorlands area. NULBC will consider the impact of the changes on demand for the advice service at the next review meeting with CAB.

The service provider will continue to respond to requests from residents of the borough linked to 'Debt, Benefits and Consumer' information advice and it is anticipated that, faced with current economic conditions, demand for the service will remain high. The new telephone service, which is intended to deliver advice on a triage basis, will be able to deal with many enquiries at first point of contact. NULBC propose to continue local monitoring of demand and review the contract delivery with the successful service provider.

The County Council has made changes to the contract management of commissioned projects with the responsibility moving to the Commissioning Delivery Hub. The review meeting in May 2014 for the Infrastructure Service was undertaken by officers from the Hub, and members can be reassured that the meetings are challenging and of a high standard to monitor ongoing service delivery of the commissioned providers and Newcastle officers continue to be involved.

A decision to extend the Infrastructure Support and Volunteering Service beyond May 2015 will need to be considered later in the year.

A summary of progress to update members can be provided in autumn 2014, unless requested earlier.

## **Questions to be Addressed**

- Is the information provided in this report sufficient for Members?

- Do Members wish to receive any further information and, if so, what information is required?
- Do Members have views on extending (or otherwise) the existing Infrastructure and Volunteering Service contract beyond May 2015?

### **Outcomes**

- To receive and understand an update on the work being done as part of the PSCiP Programme
- To highlight any issues with the existing arrangements in the two areas covered by PSCiP which include NULBC
- To be in a position to request further information

### **Invited Partners/Stakeholders/Residents**

Citizens Advice Bureau

VAST

Staffordshire County Council

### **Constraints**

- Provision of information on contracts recently let

### **Conclusions**

This note outlines the progress of the PSCiP Programme, specifically the work on the Infrastructure Support and Debt Benefits Advice contracts.

The note highlights where information is not available and also provides Members with information on future developments.

### **Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)**

Cllr Mike Stubbs – Communication, Policy and Partnerships