

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE
CABINET COMMITTEE**

Date: Wednesday 20th March 2018

1. **REPORT TITLE** Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Pledge
- Submitted by:** Partnerships Locality Officer, Robin Wiles
- Portfolio:** Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder - Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships
- Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

Purpose of the Report

To seek approval for the Borough Council to sign up to the Staffordshire Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Pledge for Local Authorities ("The Pledge").

Recommendations (to be in bold)

- a) **That the Borough Council adopt & sign up to the Pledge.**
- b) **That the Borough Council seeks to promote & implement the Pledge.**

Reasons

- a) The Pledge is intended to be a public commitment to work in collaboration with the local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector.
- b) The Pledge is consistent with existing collaborative work between the Borough Council and the local VCSE sector.
- c) Committing to the Pledge is a potential good news story for the Borough Council.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Pledge has been reviewed & endorsed by Team Staffordshire (<https://www.supportstaffordshire.org.uk/working-together/team-staffordshire>). Team Staffordshire is a voluntary sector led partnership, who co-operate to increase investment into Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent; and also to influence public policy for the benefit of local communities. The Borough Council, alongside South Staffordshire District Council, has one of the two places on the Team Staffordshire Steering Group, representing the Districts Councils in Staffordshire.
- 1.2 All Borough/District Councils in Staffordshire are being invited to adopt & sign up to the Pledge, by Support Staffordshire, who co-ordinate Team Staffordshire activity.
- 1.3 The Pledge replaces the former Staffordshire Compact, which the Borough Council had previously signed up to, but the Pledge is considerably more succinct.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 The Pledge is primarily a statement of intent, but one that can be used as a useful yardstick against which to measure the Borough Council's collaboration with the local VCSE sector.
- 2.2 Guidance notes for the Pledge state that "Where appropriate, the main Pledges can be reviewed periodically against the day to day practice of the authority, working between Support Staffordshire and a nominated authority officer." There may be some value in arranging a schedule for regular reviews at a frequency to be agreed.
- 2.3 The commitments within the Pledge are consistent with Borough Council strategy and practice.
- 2.4 The Pledge focuses on the Borough Council's commitments towards the local VCSE sector, without specific commitments in the other direction as was the case with the Compact although these are implicit.

3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 The Borough Council agree to adopt and sign up to the Pledge with a schedule of reviews at a frequency to be agreed built in. This is the preferred option.
- 3.2 The Borough Council does not adopt and sign up to the Pledge. This is not recommended.

4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 The Borough Council agree to adopt and sign up to the Pledge.
- 4.2 The Borough Council promote, in collaboration with Support Staffordshire and Team Staffordshire partners, the adoption and signing of the Pledge. Case Studies can be used to illustrate the commitment, for example the partnership arrangement between the two parties for a VCSE hub at the Guildhall.
- 4.3 A schedule of 6-monthly reviews to established with reports, as appropriate, to the Health, Wellbeing & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 Adopting and signing up to the Pledge will, by proving a public commitment to collaboration with the local VCSE sector create a positive image of the Borough Council.
- 5.2 The Pledge is consistent with Borough Council strategies and practice.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 The proposal will have a positive impact on all of the priorities, in particular:-
 - Transforming our Council to achieve excellence – adopting and signing up to the Pledge provides a framework for enhancing our collaboration with the local VCSE sector.
 - Local Services that Work for Local People – by supporting the local VCSE sector we will help to provide services in partnership that are responsive to local residents.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 The Pledge is a voluntary agreement and therefore has no legal implications in itself.
- 7.2 The clause referring to commissioning and procurement is consistent with the Borough Council's legal requirements thereof.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 The proposal is consistent with the Council's equality duties.
- 8.2 No adverse impact has been identified from the proposal.
- 8.3 It is reasonable to expect the proposal to encourage equity and opportunities for all by supporting collaboration with local VCSE organisation including those that work to that very end.
- 8.4 Given the diversity of services provided by the local VCSE sector the proposal does not seek to target any particular groups of people.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 There are no financial implications associated with the proposal.
- 9.2 The proposal is consistent with existing staff resources and therefore there are no human resource implications.
- 9.3 The Business Improvement Manager advises that the clause regarding commissioning and procurement contained within the Pledge presents no compliance issues for the Borough Council.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 No major risks have been identified from the proposal.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

- 11.1 There are no sustainability or climate change implications of the proposal.

12. **Key Decision Information**

- 12.1 The report is not regarded as a key decision.
- 12.2 The item is not included in the Cabinet's Forward Plan.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

- 13.1 There are no previous resolutions on the Pledge.

14. **List of Appendices**

- 14.1 VCSE Pledge for Local Authorities.

15. **Background Papers**

- 15.1 Not applicable.

