

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 24 September 2020

Report author: Head of Leisure & Environmental Services

Title: Review of the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework Year 1 (2019-2020)

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides a summary of:

- Background information to the framework
- Financial information – (Appendix 1 - Budget profile)
- Performance against the Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) (Appendix 2)
- Workforce data (Appendix 3)

1.2 This report is to provide information to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the performance of the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework during Year 1 (2019-2020). The analysis of the data and performance against the SLA's and KPI's is positive, this last year the organisations have worked closer together following the implementation of the Framework Partnership Meetings, whereby all commissioned organisations get together twice a year and discuss any emerging issues. The next partnership meeting is scheduled for 22nd September 2020 and will be focused around Community Safety.

1.3 The council/Officers have received positive comments from residents regarding staff, the venues and the variety of what is on offer. Focus for the year ahead will be to engage more with local residents, businesses and have regular programme reviews. The services offered by our Community Centre and Voluntary organisations links with the councils vision, values and priorities, they provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, understanding their needs and catering for them with a varied programme of activities.

1.4 During the Covid 19 lockdown (end of March to August 2020) a number of the commissioned services were closed in-line with government guidelines e.g. community centres and theatres, however the CAB continued to deliver their services on line or over the phone to service users.

1.5 In line with the Public Procurement Notice the council has continued to financially support the different organisations as set out in the SLA. The authority has undertaken to meet its contractual obligations during the lockdown period and paid the commissioned organisation the funding identified in Appendix 1 of this report. This approach has ensured that the voluntary sector bodies which form part of the Framework remains sustainable in the short to medium term.

1.6 The negative impact on service delivery during the lockdown period will be reviewed as part of the regular partnership monitoring of the SLA and KPI's over the next 12 months and will feature in the Year 2 report next year.

2.0 Risks

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Third sector contractors do not deliver contract and service specification outlined in the SLA	The facility or services is not available for residents and customer to use	Regular contract monitoring by the council to review the contract and KPI'S requirement are being met by the third sector contractor	Treat	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6
Contractor/ commissioned organisation goes into administration	As above	As above Regular review of contractors accounts	Tolerate	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6
Contractor merges with another provider or is taken over by another company/ charity	Could have no impact on the service Or New company tries to alter the contract/SLA and KPI's which impacts on the programme or service	As above Option to terminate the SLA/contract early	Tolerate	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6

Death or injury to a customer/user or member of staff	Distress to injured parties Reputational risk to council and contractor in failings in health and safety compliance is identified	Regular partnership monitoring by the council to review the health and safety and contract requirements are being met and reviewed by the third sector contractor	Treat	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6
Reduced funding to the VSCF during the period due to budget pressures from the MTFS	The facility or services is not available for residents and customer to use Reputational risk to council	Regular review of WBC budget allocation for VSCF	Treat	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6
Second wave of Covid 19 and future local lockdowns	The facility or services is not available for residents and customer to use	Regular partnership monitoring by the council to review the health and safety and contract requirements are being met and reviewed by the third sector contractor	Tolerate	Unlikely (3) x High (3) = rating of 9

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 To review the report and supporting information and make any recommendations to the Cabinet

Further information:

Chris Fennell - Chris.fennell@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Alan Gough Group Head of Community & Environmental Services

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 The Framework is the council's mechanism that sets out the priorities for a range of leisure and community services which were delivered by voluntary sector organisations during 2019 - 2023 on behalf of WBC.

4.2 The services commissioned as detailed in Appendix 2 are:

- Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector – delivered by Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) aka Council for Voluntary Services (P:8-10)
- Mobility scooter and wheel chair services – delivered by Watford Shopmobility (P:6-7)
- Advice services – delivered by Watford Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) (P:3-4)
- Arts and culture services – delivered by Watford Palace Theatre (WPT) (P:5) Pump House (P:11)
- Small Grants Fund – administered by WBC

4.3 The authority also provides a management grant to support the following council owned community centres across the borough:

- Holywell Community Centre – managed by W3RT (P:12-13)
- Orbital Community Centre – managed by One YMCA (P:14)
- Meriden Community Centre – managed by Watford Football Club Sports and Education Trust (WFC Trust) (P:16)
- West Watford Community Association (WWCA) (P:15)

4.4 The council has a long standing and positive working relationship with the local voluntary and third sector organisations and it deploys a significant proportion of its budget to support a number of them in a variety of ways. The commissioning framework commenced 1 April 2019 and will end 31 March 2023.

4.5 The quality of services commissioned by the council are monitored on a regular basis. Should the services be considered below the quality expected or the need for the service reduce then the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the organisations commissioned can be reviewed or amended to enable the council to de-commission or reduce funding as appropriate.

4.6 As part of the oversight and governance arrangements a joint 'Risk Register' between the council and the different commissioned organisations has been developed and is monitored and reviewed on a 6 monthly basis. A rolling programme of reports and presentations to Portfolio Holders and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been agreed to ensure that elected members and Strategic Leadership Team are kept informed and updated regarding the progress and the performance of the VS Framework.

4.7 Appendix 2 details the individual organisations performance against the SLA and KPIs during the last year (2019-2020).

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 The funding for the commissioning framework was met through existing resources. The budget envelope for 2019/2020 was a stand still budget. Appendix 1 details the funding provided to the different organisations. The budget for future the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework is subject to the council's annual budget setting process and any requirements to make savings or provide growth will be dealt with as part of this process

5.2 **Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

5.2.1 The council has a wide variety of legal powers that are available for it to provide both financial and physical assistance to the voluntary sector to enable them to undertake their functions. The priorities identified within the Commissioning Framework are all covered by these powers.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken for the new VS Framework 2019-2023 to establish whether there are any emerging needs that are not addressed through the commissioning priorities. If there are emerging needs identified during the period of the Framework that are not currently met, consideration will be given as to whether these are a District Council responsibility, align with the council's corporate objectives and whether council funding or grant aid is required in order to commission the service.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 There are no changes to WBC staffing arrangements identified in this report

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 There are no changes identified in this report relating to WBC office/town hall accommodation.

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 There are no Community Safety/Crime and Disorder implications or issues identified in this report

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 There are no sustainability issues identified in this report

5.7.2 The VS Framework accords with the council's approach on sustainable procurement to consider the social, environmental and economic impacts of the Framework. Small firms, voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises are innovative and add value with an important role in the local economy and contribution to social cohesion and the wide well-being agenda.

5.7.3 Appendix 3 Workforce Data, identifies that 521 people are employed by the VS Framework organisations.

Appendices

1. Budget profile
2. Review of performance against SLA & KPIs: Yr. 1 - 2019 - 2020
3. Workforce data Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework 2019 - 2020

Background papers

- Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework: 2019 – 2023