

## Impact Assessment of the withdrawal of infrastructure support for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Central Bedfordshire.

This document sets out the impact of CVS not being funded to provide services in Central Bedfordshire from April 2019 onwards. It outlines the main services currently being provided, what level of service is likely to be in place from April 2019, and details the impact and financial implications on both the VCSE sector and the local authority.

Over the next three years, CVS estimates that the impact will result in the local VCSE sector will seeing their income reduce by well over £700,000, the local authority will incur over £180,000 of additional costs, and the reduced contribution of volunteers is costed at over £450,000. Demand for council services will also increase.

For Central Bedfordshire Council to deliver their current five year vision and meet their obligations, the authority needs to collaborate, encourage and support the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. The sector plays a critical role in providing services that support all of the priorities in the five year vision:

<b>Enhancing Central Bedfordshire</b>	The diverse range of community activities and opportunities on offer, organised by local VCSE organisations for local residents to enjoy and become part of their own community, is a key characteristic of making Central Bedfordshire a place people want to live.
<b>Great Resident Services</b>	Volunteers play a key role in delivering many services for local people, with numerous VCSE organisations involved in maintaining and improving the physical appearance of the local environment in the town and villages that make up Central Bedfordshire.
<b>Improving Education and Skills</b>	VCSE organisations deliver numerous key services for both children and older people, including employment support schemes, support for young people and a range of other services that improve education and skills. Volunteering with VCSE organisations offers a route to developing work-based skills and experience.
<b>Protecting the Vulnerable; Improving Wellbeing</b>	VCSE organisations are a major provider of services across Central Bedfordshire, offering a range of early intervention and preventative services for both children, families and older people. Volunteering for some people can reduce their own social isolation and offers a sense of fulfilment and giving back to the community.
<b>Creating Stronger Communities</b>	Local VCSE organisations are often the embodiment of local people getting involved, making a difference by tackling issues and providers services that the local community want. Communities are more able to do things for themselves.
<b>A More Efficient and Responsive Council</b>	<p>The VCSE is a key local partner, speaking up for people in society that often struggle to have their voice heard, which can help the council co-ordinate great solutions for local residents.</p> <p>The VCSE is also a very cost-effective partner, making best use of funds and resources, often drawing other funds and sources of support into the local area.</p>

## The role of CVS

Community Voluntary Service (CVS) is a voluntary and community sector support organisation, offering a range of services, enabling local organisations and communities to make a difference.

- We provide advice, information, training and facilities, supporting organisations in the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.
- We promote volunteering and match volunteers with local opportunities.
- We encourage organisations in the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to work together, and in partnership with the public and private sector, connecting and sharing knowledge and expertise.

CVS currently receives approximately £23,000 per annum from Central Bedfordshire Council to deliver 'infrastructure services', to support the local VCSE sector. Funding is also received from Bedford Borough Council and Luton Borough Council to deliver similar services in those localities.

From April 2019, due to a cessation in funding from Central Bedfordshire Council, CVS will be unable to deliver services to local VCSE organisations in Central Bedfordshire, which will have a detrimental impact on both the local authority and local VCSE organisations. The following impact assessment sets this out in detail:

Service	What will this look like	Impact on the VCSE and Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC)
Funding advice	<p>No capacity to support VCSE to identify funding sources AND develop high quality applications.</p> <p><b>Financial Impact:</b> A risk of £600,000 over three years of external funding (Lottery, trusts and foundations, etc) not being secured by Central Bedfordshire based organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer successful applications, resulting in a reduction of income for the local VCSE sector, fewer preventative and early intervention type services being delivered by the VCSE.</li> <li>• CBC will see a rise in enquiries for funding which CBC staff will have to resource and manage, as they cannot be passed to CVS. Up to 50 organisations are supported each year.</li> <li>• CBC has stated that they 'will work with CVS to explore new ways of working and support voluntary and community organisations to access alternative sources of funding. This has not yet occurred and does not indicate what the impact is if no alternative sources of funds are secured.</li> <li>• Councillors/elected members will be unable to refer organisations seeking support.</li> </ul>
Commissioning and procurement support	<p>No capacity to support smaller VCSE to prepare for tenders, develop bids, and develop partnership/consortium bids.</p> <p>No independent organisation able to work with both commissioners and providers to ensure the process is fair, meets the expectation set out in the Social Value Act, and that smaller VCSE organisations are supported accordingly.</p> <p>No capacity to support CBC to engage with the sector to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VCSE organisations will struggle to compete with larger/private sector organisations with full-time bid writers. Greater risk of closure.</li> <li>• Fewer VCSE organisations will create the conditions for 'Marketplace Failure' and CBC will have limited potential suppliers to keep costs competitive.</li> <li>• Greater risk that a tender process will descend into a costly legal challenges, negative press coverage and local disputes with the local community.</li> <li>• CBC will need to allocate additional resources to meet their statutory duties under the Social Value Act, which places a requirement on commissioners to consider the economic, environmental and social benefits of their approaches to procurement.</li> </ul>

	<p>enable effective consultation and coproduction</p> <p><b>Financial Impact:</b> Up to £145,000 of funding over three years not secured by Central Bedfordshire based VCSE organisations.</p> <p>Over £20,000 per year in additional CBC staff time and legal fees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barriers to smaller organisations and groups from engaging with the public service commissioning process.</li> </ul>
Safeguarding support	<p>No capacity to support VCSE to develop appropriate safeguarding policies and arrangements.</p> <p>No capacity to offer workshops for staff and volunteers.</p> <p><b>Financial Impact:</b> Up to £30,000 over three years in additional CBC staff time required to engage and support local VCSE organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fewer VCSE organisations will be aware of local adult and children safeguarding arrangements. Greater risk of appropriate safeguarding alerts not being made.</li> <li>CBC staff will need to increase the level of outreach they provide in order to fulfil their duty (Children’s Act 2004) to ‘promote cooperation’ relevant organisations ‘that are engaged in activities in relation to children in the authority’s area.’</li> </ul>
Governance and Practical Issues	<p>No capacity to support new organisations to become formally established.</p> <p>No capacity to offer support on a range of issues, including: Charity Law, Data Protection/ GDPR, Employing Staff, Policies and Procedures, Financial Management, etc.</p> <p>No capacity to support the safe closure of organisations.</p> <p>Smaller voluntary organisations may be unaware of their own support needs and therefore unable to seek support.</p> <p><b>Financial Impact:</b> Increased demand on council services, especially in adult and children’s services, increasing year-on-year as VCSE organisations struggle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More difficult for local communities to respond to new and changing needs. No local support to advise on correct legal structures for the services that they wish to provide.</li> <li>VCSE organisations will have no one-to-one support on a range of organisational issues, all critical for the safe running of an organisation.</li> <li>Loss of oversight of capabilities and needs of local groups to promote high quality services driven by good governance and strategic change management.</li> <li>Greater risk of unplanned closures, resulting in unpaid debts, service users without support, sudden unemployment, and negative press coverage.</li> <li>CBC officers will receive enquiries relating to setting up organisations to meet new local needs.</li> <li>Inability to meet onerous organisational management requirements, may encourage some local groups to stay 'under the radar'.</li> <li>Inability to meet the needs of smaller voluntary organisations and groups which is often for face-to-face support, often out of hours – in particular to suit volunteers.</li> <li>Greater inequality experienced by groups formed from BME, LGBT, people with mental health problems, etc through absence of</li> </ul>

		<p>culturally appropriate support, and difficulty in communicating their needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced ability to demonstrate impact and provide evidence of what the VCSE sector does and why that is needed and consequent difficulties with accessing funding and engaging in commissioning processes.</li> <li>• VCSE organisations will find it harder to recruit, train, support and manage volunteers if they do not have good practice systems and processes in place.</li> </ul>
Volunteering	<p>No capacity to promote volunteering in Central Bedfordshire through events, social media and other awareness campaigns.</p> <p>No capacity to support local organisations to promote their opportunities.</p> <p><b>Financial Impact:</b> ONS estimates an average of £1,500 for every volunteer. Just 100 fewer volunteers every year will reduce the sectors capacity by £450,000 over three years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer opportunities for Central Bedfordshire residents to volunteer in Central Bedfordshire. Most opportunities on the Volunteer Connect system will be in neighbouring local authority areas.</li> <li>• Reduced capacity of communities in Central Bedfordshire to do things for themselves.</li> </ul>
Ongoing communication and networking and engagement	<p>Email update may still be available to Central Bedfordshire VCSE organisations.</p> <p>(Subject to the organisation continuing to be funded in other localities.)</p> <p><b>Financial Impact:</b> Up to £45,000 over three years in additional CBC staff time required to engage and support local VCSE organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VCSE organisations could still access the CVS website and Email update, but there would be no Central Bedfordshire specific information as staff will not be able to engage with local organisations and agencies.</li> <li>• Barriers to sharing resources, such as meeting rooms or intangible resources such as skills.</li> <li>• Reduced skills, knowledge and capacity to seize new opportunities, take on new challenges and adjust to changing circumstances.</li> <li>• Loss of a key tool for the VCSE to keep up-to-date with developments in relevant areas.</li> </ul>
Collaborative/partnership working, and consultation.	<p>No capacity to provide the council with a trusted, independent and impartial view from the perspective of the VCSE sector.</p> <p>No capacity to engage in any meetings/partnerships or consultation activities in Central Bedfordshire on behalf of the local VCSE sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Bedfordshire Council will find it harder to engage and consult with the local VCSE sector when they are required to do so. Additional staff time will be required in order to undertake any engagement or consultation.</li> <li>• There will be no local up-to-date directory of VCSE organisations for Central Bedfordshire Council to use to identify which agencies are delivering services. The cost of creating a similar directory would in excess of £30,000.</li> <li>• There will not be a locally trusted VCSE infrastructure organisation through which the local authority can 'link' to the sector, resulting</li> </ul>

	<p>No capacity to maintain an oversight of the VCSE sector, the changes, challenges and needs, which help inform the local authority.</p> <p>No capacity to support early intervention projects within the local VCSE, which will reduce demand on council services.</p> <p><b>Financial Impact:</b> <i>Up to £45,000 over three years in additional CBC staff time required to engage and support local VCSE organisations.</i></p>	<p>in Central Bedfordshire Council finding it harder to engage and work in partnership with the sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missed opportunities to maximise value as no capacity to encourage and support organisations to work together.</li> <li>• Not funding infrastructure support will damage the relationship between CBC and local VCSE organisations, who will interpret it as a measure of how important the council views the work and role of VCSE organisations.</li> </ul>
Digital	<p>Limited access to skills development and resources to VCSE to adapt to changes.</p> <p>No support to make the most of opportunities from digital.</p> <p>Exclusion of some organisations, and individuals from participation and access to advice/support.</p> <p><b>Financial Impact:</b> <i>Increased demand on council services, especially in adult and children's services, increasing year-on-year as VCSE organisations struggle.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges to VCSE organisations which do not have the skills or resources to engage or adapt the way they work.</li> <li>• VCSE organisations hampered by barriers to accessing technology and connectivity and a serious risk that digitally excluded VCSE organisations (and individuals) will be further excluded.</li> <li>• Individuals supported by VCSE organisations disproportionately affected by the move by public services to provide services primarily online.</li> </ul>

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