

Action Points/Notes

Shropshire VCS Assembly Board

Meeting with VCS Task Group members 9am – 11am

VCSA Board members only 11am – 1pm

11th February 2015

9.00am, Council Chamber, Shirehall

Attended

Board and VCS Task Group Members		
Jackie Jeffrey	Chair, VCS Assembly	JJ
Nicola McPherson	Health and Social Care Forum	NMcP
David Currant	Green Shropshire Xchange	DC
Jean Robinson	PAN Disability Forum	JR
Rachel Scriven	Green Shropshire Xchange (Observing as new second)	NS
Julia Baron	Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership	JB
Hilary Paddock	Housing Support Forum	HP
Chris Child	County Sports Partnership	CC
Linda Cox	Transport Forum	LC
Mark Hignett	Arts and Heritage Forum	MH
Cllr Tim Barker	Shropshire Council	TB
Rachel Wintle	Mental Health Forum	RW
Neil Evans	Shropshire Council	NE
Robert Smith	Information Advocacy Advice and Guidance	RS
Sarah Wilkins	Shropshire Council	SW
Sarah Thomas	Children's Summit	ST
George Candler	Shropshire Council	GC
Tina Wigfall	Shropshire CCG	TW
Julie Tustin	Shropshire Providers Consortium	JT
Bridget Mollekin	Older Peoples Assembly	BM
Mark Gibson	Partners for Social Enterprise	MG
Guest Speakers		
Simon Alford	University Centre Shrewsbury	SA
Kate Garner	Shropshire Council	KG
In Attendance		
Sarah Dodds	VCSA Coordinator	SD
Pauline James	VCSA Support Officer	PJ
Kate MacDonald	VCSA Support Officer	KM
Charlotte Green	Strategy, Research & Performance Support Officer	CG
Elaine Griffiths	VCSA Coordinator	EG

Apologies

Apologies received from Sonia Roberts, Angela Parton, Carola Fielden, Lilian Owens, Heather Osbourne, Sam Tilley, Paul Tulley, Caron Morton, Clive Wright, Bill Evans, Glyn Edwards, Cllr Lee Chapman.

Note

- Actions will be highlighted as a separate list to assist with progress monitoring.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jackie Jeffrey welcomed everyone to the meeting. JJ welcomed Rachel Scriven from Green Shropshire Xchange.

Members were asked to declare any interests by completing the Declaration of Interests form.

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Review of Grant Funding

Neil Evans joined the meeting to provide an update on grant funding. A copy of the presentation was shared in advance of the meeting.

NE explained the proposal to simplify the current Grant Guardian process and asked the Board for volunteers to join a small working group to review and establish the principles for grant funding as well as identifying when competition is or isn't appropriate.

Action 1 Jackie Jeffrey and Chris Child volunteered to join a small working group to review and establish the principles for Grant Funding.

3. University Centre Shrewsbury

Simon Alford from University Centre Shrewsbury joined the meeting to provide a verbal update on the collaborative venture between Shropshire Council and the University of Chester. Shropshire has been identified as an area with limited HE provision. The development of a University in Shropshire is hoping to enable more young people to access HE and for them to remain in the County once they have completed their studies.

The University want to be part of, and contribute towards, the local community by linking into business and existing networks.

Twelve programmes are planned to start in September 2015 with a further 5 starting in September 2016. Approximately 150 students will start in September 2015. An 85 place residential block/student accommodation will be developed in Mardol House in the town centre with teaching space available in both Rowleys House and the Guildhall.

Chester University actively encourages disadvantaged groups to access their courses and would expect that this would be the same for the Shropshire Centre.

Action 2 CG to include the contact details for University Centre Shrewsbury.

Action 3 DC to share the details of the Car Pool Scheme with Simon Alford.

The group gave their thanks to Simon for joining the meeting.

4. Assistive Technology Memorandum of Understanding

Pauline updated the group on the draft Assistive Technology MOU. The Board are being asked to sign up to the MOU.

Action 4 The Board agreed that the MOU needed additional detail outlining the expectation for the Board (The difference between VCSA support and organisational level sign up). PJ agreed to draft an email to circulate to Board members for comment.

Action 5 Board members agreed to circulate the MOU to their organisations and get in principle support.

5. DCLG Transformation Challenge Award – Community Hubs

Kate Garner joined the meeting to provide an update on Community Hub developments. Funding has been awarded from DCLG starting from April 2015 to support the creation of six Hubs which will in turn support the redesign of libraries and customer service points.

The expectation is that the current library structure of libraries in 22 towns will remain unchanged and the mobile library service is not within scope. The DCLG grant will support development of Community Hubs in the six libraries identified below with an aspiration to roll the programme out to the remaining 16 libraries in the future.

- Church Stretton
- Whitchurch
- Albrighton
- Shifnal
- Bishops Castle
- Gobowen

£520,000 has been awarded for 2015/16. This will be broken down into 3 key areas;

- a. £350,000 for structural changes to buildings to develop six new libraries,
- b. £120,000 for technology to enable moving existing services to new buildings,
- c. £50,000 to build capacity within sectors. The Council want to have a discussion with both VCSA and SALC to jointly agree how to achieve best value in the six new libraries/community hubs.

KG reassured the Board that whilst developing the community hubs continued opportunities for face to face discussions and availability of information will be a priority and services will compliment what is currently being delivered.

JJ reconfirmed that the original bid was counter signed by the VCSA Board with the expectation that members would be involved in the planning for hubs and implementation of the bid. KG confirmed that the six areas identified already have organisations in place to deliver the services. Community Enablement Officers are the first point of contact in relation to community asset transfer.

Action 6 KG agreed to continue to keep the VCSA Board up to date with progress in relation to Community Hubs.

Action 7 VCSA to work with ALC in responding to DCLG Transformation challenge.

6. Change Group Update

George Candler provided an update on payment mechanisms. A proposal has been put forward to James Walton, as the section 151 officer, to amend the financial rules as currently they do not allow the Council to make payments in advance on contracts. This can cause

difficulties for voluntary organisations, specifically in relation to cash flow. The proposal put forward will mean that if organisations meet the revised parameters detailed below then they will be able to access funding through a grant mechanism.

Parameters to Determine Eligibility

- The eligible organisation will be a member of the Shropshire Voluntary & Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) and will meet the following criteria:
 - It is a voluntary, community or social enterprise organisation operating in Shropshire
 - It is independent and has its own constituted board
 - It does not distribute profit from its activities to owners or members, but retains profit for use in serving the organisation's basic purpose
 - It relies on some voluntary activity, ie donations, public support or unpaid trustees. It is, however, entirely compatible for the organisation to have a mainly salaried workforce
 - It is not party political
- The eligible organisation will be signed up to the Shropshire Compact through membership of the Shropshire VCSA. Through being signed up to the Compact the organisation is committed to the following principles:
 - Support stronger and effective partnerships
 - Effective engagement through providing and responding to opportunities for involvement
 - Sharing information
 - Allocating Resources effectively through making best use of all the resources available to us and implementing the most appropriate funding mechanisms
 - Enabling Change
 - Delivering Outcomes and Social Value
 - Quality in Delivery
- Consideration has been given to whether a 2 or 3 stage payment model would be desirable for each individual contract.

NE noted that the Council want to be able to strike a balance between enabling VCS organisations to work effectively versus the risk to the Council of payments being made in advance. With this in mind the section 151 Officer has agreed to consider grants for VCS organisations on an individual basis outside of the Councils formal financial rules.

Concerns were raised about whether this could be seen as anti-competitive and limit the ability for small private sector organisations to win tenders. To ensure the process remains fair for all organisations the successful bidder will be identified through the tendering process, prior to negotiating payment mechanisms.

Once the process is formalised it will be shared with the Board and member organisations.

Action 8 GC to send a copy of the document outlining the proposed parameters for payments in advance to CG.

Action 9 NE to consider comments made by VCSA Board.

7. State of the Sector Survey

Jackie Jeffrey introduced the State of the Sector survey and asked for feedback from the group. The following actions were identified;

- Action 10** It was agreed to review one of the survey questions for future years to capture data from organisations who are not at risk but wish to make a comment.
- Action 11** KM to change the wording from 'claimed'.
- Action 12** Next time the survey is produced add a question to ask organisations no longer at risk how they managed to increase income.

7a. Shropshire Playbus

EG shared the statement from the Playbus confirming the closure of the service.

- Action 13** EG and JJ to write on behalf of the VCSA to express sadness at the news of closure and thank them for the contribution they have made in Shropshire.
- Action 14** KM to circulate the statement with regards to the Playbus closure in the newsletter.

Public Sector colleagues left the meeting at 10.30am.

8. Actions from the last meeting and Matters Arising

The group agreed the minutes from the last meeting. There were no matters arising.

- Action 15** CG to add Mark Gibson to the list of attendees to the minutes of the previous meeting.

9. Forum and Representative Reports

PJ asked the group to consider the reports received from Forums and the main issues to be addressed. Actions to address the issues were identified as follows;

- Action 16** County Sport Partnership
KM to include the Neighbourhood Life project within the Newsletter.
- Action 17** Safeguarding Adults Board
It was agreed that the VCSA would be represented on the Board. RS to identify the representative from the IAAG Forum.
- Action 18** Assistive Technology
This item had previously been covered under agenda item 3.
- Action 19** Resilient Communities
This item will be covered under agenda item 12.

The 0-25 Summit highlighted the need to have a formal link between the Children's Safeguarding Board and the Adult Safeguarding Board. This is being progressed through the Children's Trust.

10. Forum Representation for IAA and VAN

JJ asked the Board to consider the paper relating to Board representation and associated recommendations.

- IAAG Board Representative

Following the appointment of Rob Smith to the role of Chair of the IAAG Forum there are two VCSA Board representatives from Age UK. After discussion the Board unanimously decided;

Action 20 It was agreed to change the terms of reference for the Board to enable two individuals from the same organisation to act as Board members. (Proposed by LC, Seconded by JR) The draft wording for this will be developed by SD and PJ to be circulated at the next Board meeting for approval at the Annual Assembly.

- Visual Arts Network

The VAN are proposing a second representative who is both a Shrewsbury Town Councillor and Shropshire Councillor. After discussion the Board decided;

Action 21 The Board agreed Councillors would be exempt from representing a Forum of Interest due to potential significant conflicts of interest. (Proposed by MG, Seconded by ST, Abstention CC) The draft wording for this to be developed by PJ and circulated at the next Board meeting for approval at the Annual Assembly.

11. Chair and Vice Chair Updates

JJ updated the group on the recent H&WB Peer Review. Feedback from the review is that the contribution of the Voluntary sector is good and should be applauded. The H&WB Strategy is currently under review.

JJ passed thanks from the Board to ST for representing the VCSA at the recent Shropshire Council led design workshops. ST confirmed that the process was a useful way to look at individual sector and organisational roles and how they each contribute towards the bigger picture.

Key messages from the second workshop for the Board were as follows;

- The VCSA to clearly articulate what more they can contribute.
- There was limited discussion on statutory duties.
- The discussion highlighted the expectation that individuals need to do more for themselves and contribute more for their local community.

Action 22 It was suggested that the format of the recent design workshop could be used as an agenda item at the AGM. ST agreed to circulate the feedback from the meetings to the Board.

Action 23 It was agreed to convene a planning session for the VCSA in advance of the Annual Assembly. SD/PJ to organise.

12. Team Update

The Board was asked to consider the paper circulated.

13. Building Resilient Communities and the VCS

PJ provided an introduction to the session including a video. The Board separated into three groups to consider the questions posed. (See separate notes.)

14. AOB

Action 24 JJ will be stepping down as Chair of the Assembly in April and will be replaced by Rachel Wintle, currently Vice Chair. Board members are encouraged to consider applying for the Vice Chair vacancy.

15. Date of Future Meetings

- Wednesday 13th May 2015, Council Chamber, Shirehall
- Wednesday 20th May 2015 (Annual Assembly), The Greenhouse Stadium
- Tuesday 7th July 2015, Council Chamber, Shirehall
- Wednesday 7th October 2015, Council Chamber, Shirehall