



Leicestershire
County Council



SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 9 DECEMBER 2009

**PETITION: SHEPshed VOLUNTEER CENTRE - REQUEST FOR THE
CONTINUED £10,000 FUNDING FROM LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Commission with information regarding a petition containing 532 signatures submitted by Mrs. C. M. Radford CC on behalf of Shepshed Town Council and in her capacity as local member for the Shepshed electoral division which reads:

'We the undersigned ask that Voluntary Action Leicester and Voluntary Action Charnwood secure more funding to return the Volunteer Centre to its previous opening hours. Also, that the lease on the current premises is renewed in 2010.'

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Cabinet agreed its approach to proposals from the Voluntary and Community Sector for changes to infrastructure support in November 2007 as follows:

That the Voluntary and Community Sector Consortium (VCS) be advised that the County Council:

- (i) welcomes the draft Strategy and the definition it brings to the role and purpose of VCS Infrastructure Support;
- (ii) wishes to agree with other funders a distribution of funding that supports a hybrid model which involves both a single Infrastructure Support organisation and existing VCS organisations acting as service delivery partners, community anchor organisations and representatives of the sector.

Background

3. A high quality and effective VCS is very important in Leicestershire. It helps to create community cohesion, provide general support to the most vulnerable in society and can deliver services on behalf of funding agencies.

4. The County Council therefore provides funding for 'infrastructure support' which is a range of services provided by the sector to itself to help it carry out the above roles. These services include specialist advice on HR, IT and other matters, help with funding for VCS groups, recruitment of and support to volunteers and work with funding agencies to develop policy and assist with procurement.
5. A funding consortium made up of the County Council (nearly £1m) District Councils (about £200k in all), NHS LCR (about £200k) and others (about £100k) provides funding of nearly £1m for infrastructure support which is currently delivered through Voluntary Action Leicestershire. The remaining £0.5m of this funding is provided to support local representation through 7 District based Community Hubs and 3 independent Volunteer centres (Syston, Castle Donington and Lutterworth).
6. In addition to their local representation role, the Community Hubs and Volunteer Centres provide a range of services, often referred to as 'direct services' under separate contractual arrangements with specific County Council services, mainly Adult Social Care and Transport. For 2008/09, only the Community Hubs and Volunteer Centres received some additional funding. This was because they had been using their infrastructure funding to cross subsidise direct services. The funding was to ensure these direct services could be provided once the infrastructure funding was transferred to Voluntary Action LeicesterShire. These services are currently under review and there are likely to be changes to the services required and new procurement processes that will affect the Community Hubs and Volunteer Centres during 2010/11.
7. The Shepshed Volunteer Centre decided to become part of Voluntary Action Charnwood in 2007 and since then its funding has come through Voluntary Action Charnwood. Its local representation funding is therefore included in the £70k provided to Voluntary Action Charnwood.

Shepshed Volunteer Centre (SVC)

8. The Shepshed Volunteer Centre runs a number of services that are not funded as direct services by public agencies including a befriending scheme and a gardening scheme. These are therefore services ran entirely on a voluntary basis. It receives no funding from the County Council for direct services.
9. As part of its performance framework, Voluntary Action LeicesterShire has a target to increase the funding available to the VCS generally. It has already met with the Shepshed Volunteer Centre and agreed to assist it to access additional funding.
10. As Shepshed Volunteer Centre is part of Voluntary Action Charnwood it is essential that discussions are held to consider how the organisation distributes its funding and the role that Shepshed plays in terms of local representation in particular.

Background Papers

Petition containing 532 signatures is held on the Chief Executive's Department petition file.

Circulation under the Local Alert Issues Procedure

Mrs. C. M. Radford CC

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Commission:

- (a) Considers the information in this report; and
- (b) Notes that Voluntary Action LeicesterShire has already agreed to assist Shepshed Volunteer Centre to provide additional funding.

Officer to Contact:

Andy Robinson, Assistant Chief Executive
Tel: 0116 305 7017
Email: andy.robinson@leics.gov.uk

Equal Opportunities Implications

None.

Environmental Impact

None.