

## Chief Executive's Department 'Funding for Agencies' Budget – Consultation Results

### Background

The County Council's 'Funding for Agencies' budget currently supports eleven contracts, SLAs and grant funding arrangements with seven different VCS organisations. These organisations are:

- Voluntary Action Leicestershire (3 contracts) [VAL]
- Rural Community Council (3 contracts) [RCC]
- The Race Equality Centre (on behalf of a consortium) [TREC] \*
- Citizens Advice Leicestershire [CAB]
- Citizens Advice Charnwood [CAB]
- POWhER [POWhER]
- Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils [LRALC]

\*contract ended April 2014

In summer 2013, the 'Leicestershire's Future' budget consultation identified 'Funding for Agencies' as one of the top three budget lines to "reduce a great deal" or "reduce to some extent" i.e. it was felt that 'Funding for Agencies' was a lower priority area where savings could be made.

A savings target of £590,000, or almost 50% of the total £1.2 million budget, was therefore agreed by the County Council at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014, to be delivered by the 2015-16 financial year. The consultation clearly showed that protecting services for vulnerable people was a priority for residents, stakeholders and Council staff and the remaining budget will therefore be prioritised to enable us to best support those who are vulnerable.

The 'Funding for Agencies' Consultation questionnaire therefore sought views on the following proposals:

- A. That there should be no reduction in funding for Advice and Advocacy Services through Citizens Advice Leicestershire and Charnwood, and Support for Town and Parish Councils through the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils. That there will be minimal change to the Healthwatch Leicestershire contract despite a proposed reduction of £80,000 over two years (due to an underspend in the current year which will be re-allocated), and that the Think Leicestershire contract should end, as planned, in March 2015
- B. That the amount of funding available for the County Infrastructure Organisation, Voluntary Action Leicestershire, who deliver the Support for VCS Organisations contract, should be reduced from £595,880 to £300,000 in 2015/16.

- C. That the Council should commission two new services from January 2015. The first of these will support capacity building of communities of place/geography (the new Community Capacity Building Service) and the second will support the representation of communities of interest (the new Equalities Challenge Group).

The table below shows the level of funding against each area in 2013/14, the proposed funding for 2014-15 and 2015-16 included in the consultation proposals, and the saving to be delivered against each budget line. The table also includes the original proposed allocation of funding for two new proposed services – Community Capacity Building Service and Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group.

£80,000 of the budget (H, I and part of E) is used to support internal LCC activity and cuts of 72% are proposed in relation to these elements of the budget.

	Cabinet Report Reference	Current Provider	2013-14 (current)	2014-15	2015-16	Saving £
Advice and Advocacy Service	D.	CAB	192,000	192,000	192,000	0
Support for Town/Parish Councils	G.	LRALC	20,000	20,000	20,000	0
Healthwatch & Health Advocacy	F.	POhWER/VAL	192,511	41,000	0	192,511
Think Leicestershire	E.	VAL/LCC	70,000	30,000	0	70,000
Support for VCS organisations	A.	VAL	595,880	595,880	300,000	295,880
Rural Advice/Representation	B.	RCC	55,000	27,500	0	55,000
Race, Faith and LGBT representation	C.	TREC	35,000	0	0	35,000
<b>NEW Community Capacity Building Service</b>		Tender	0	25,000	50,000	-50,000
<b>NEW Equalities Challenge Group</b>		Tender	0	30,000	30,000	-30,000
Leicestershire Together	H.	LCC	20,000	15,000	10,000	10,000
Equalities - Workers Groups and Budget	I.	LCC	20,000	16,000	12,500	7,500
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,200,391</b>	<b>992,380</b>	<b>614,500</b>	<b>585,891</b>

## Consultation Results

Please note that the proposals outlined in this paper are the original proposals on which the Council consulted.

A total of 138 responses were received to the consultation but it is important to note that not all 138 respondents completed all questions in the survey. The total number of responses to each individual question is therefore included for information.

## General Comments

A number of respondents emphasised the need to ensure that all recipients of future funding ensure delivery against agreed priority outcomes and use the funding efficiently. It was suggested that greater alignment of contracts is required. Three respondents felt that a fairer way to reduce the funding would be to cut all funded projects proportionally.

Others questioned the logic of making the savings proposed whilst expecting more from communities and the voluntary sector:

*“it makes no sense to say that the authority wants the voluntary sector to take over services and innovate to deliver change, whilst cutting support to these same organisations”*

There were comments throughout the responses to the different questions in the consultation about the need for the Council to reduce management costs and member expenses and ensure that its own operations are as efficient as possible.

There were a number of comments about prioritising the remaining funding to support organisations providing front line, outreach and direct delivery:

*“if resources are scarce, which they obviously are hence this consultation, funding should be allocated to those organisations doing front line delivery”*

*“more emphasis should be placed on funding outreach staff to engage with vulnerable, hard to reach groups”*

One respondent suggested that contract procurement and monitoring costs should be reduced and the money saved used for direct service provision.

There were a significant number of comments about the rural-urban split and a sense that some people felt that rural areas would be disadvantaged by the proposals – *“rural communities stand to be marginalised under the new funding regimes”*. Others emphasised the need to recognise the differences between rural and urban vulnerability; *“ring fence financial support to help rural communities within each budget regime”*

There was also a plea to *“advise organisations as quickly as possible to give time for them to adjust”*.

**1. Do you have any comments about our intention to retain funding for the two Citizens Advice Bureaux, the Association of Local Councils and POhWER (Health Advocacy) at the current level?**

**Total responses = 97**

The proposal is to retain £192,000 per annum for Citizens Advice Leicestershire and Citizens Advice Charnwood
---

The proposal is to retain £20,000 per annum for the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils
--

The proposal is to retain £82,000 of funding for POhWER for health advocacy services
--

35 respondents agreed with the proposal to retain funding for all four organisations, 6 respondents disagreed and 3 respondents stated that this question was not relevant/applicable to them.

Citizens Advice Bureaux – Leicestershire and Charnwood

35 further respondents, i.e. in addition to the 35 respondents who supported the proposals overall giving a total 72% of respondents to this question, supported the retention of funding for the two Citizens Advice Bureaux. Reasons given for this include the essential role of the CABs in the current economic climate, their role in supporting vulnerable people, particularly in response to recent welfare changes, and the need for CABs to reinforce statutory services which are in danger of being overwhelmed, particularly as national and local government shrink and direct people with problems to CABs. CABs were felt to minimise costs through the use of volunteers and to gather a wealth of information about the most vulnerable in our communities. Many felt that the service offered by the CAB is urgently needed, and several respondents that the funding should be increased if possible. *"I do not know of any other organisations which can supply the range of advice and support for members of the community who cannot afford professional fees"*

*"Citizens Advice Bureaux provide as frontline a service to vulnerable people as you can find...they provide highly valuable services to vulnerable people who are not always able to help themselves or identify other avenues for support!"*

*"It is more important than ever that people have access to unbiased information, guidance and advice. LCC recognition of this is very welcome"*

Less positive comments about the CAB contract include opening hours being reduced and staff made redundant across the County despite no cuts being proposed and the impact of the recent CAB reorganisation and resulting loss of experienced staff and volunteers.

*"They have encouraged their most experienced people to accept redundancy. They now appear to be losing their most experienced volunteers"*

*"All County Bureaux have had their opening times reduced whilst maintaining the hours for the City Bureau. I do not believe that there has been a thorough examination of the possibilities in terms of restructuring"*

Several respondents referred to the challenge of delivering CAB services in rural areas and the related danger of depending on people being able to get to CAB offices.

Several respondents expressed concern that Leicestershire County Council only provides funding for two CAB in the County. In fact these two CABs cover all seven District/Borough areas in Leicestershire, as Leicestershire CAB covers Blaby, Harborough, Hinckley & Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire and Oadby & Wigston.

#### Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC)

19 further respondents, i.e. in addition to the 35 respondents who supported the proposals overall (giving a total of 56% of respondents to this question), supported the retention of funding for the LRALC and several urged that this funding should continue beyond the two years set out in the consultation document. People value the website, e-newsletters, training, guidance/advice and support provided by the LRALC, and point out that both Parish

Councils and the Association exist and run due to volunteers and that the LRALC is accountable to all Member Councils. It was felt important that the LRALC works with LCC to ensure that the contract prioritises information, advice and training to support the changing LCC strategy and it was suggested that there should be close alignment between the LRALC, VAL and new Community Capacity Building contracts.

*“The LRALC provides vital information, advice and support to enable Parish Councils (and Parish Councillor volunteers) to function effectively, to develop and to ultimately benefit the local community...it is a vital organisation to provide support, information, advice and practical measures to avoid a worsening of people’s lives”*

*“Without the support of the LRALC, it would be almost impossible for part time Clerks and Parish Councillors to ensure that they are working within the legal framework and to access funding and support that will allow their communities to develop”.*

*“the PC strongly urges LCC to plan to continue funding the LRALC beyond 2015/16 in view of the vital service it provides to Town and Parish Councils”.*

6 respondents (6%) suggested reducing the level of funding provided to the LRALC, for a range of reasons. These include that it should be funded by Parish Councils themselves through the precept, could be provided by NALC or the District Councils or be part of the proposed new Capacity Building contract. Others questioned the extent to which the LRALC and Parish Councils support vulnerable people and the level of funding received in relation to the small number of staff. There was also a challenge about the level of self-interest and individual motivation of the LRALC committee members and the breadth of their interest/agenda. 3 respondents had never heard of the LRALC.

*“It would be interesting to know how much they are prepared to help themselves by increasing the fees of their members who have the facility of raising their precept”*

### POhWER

6 respondents supported a reduction in funding for POhWER, the reasons stated for this included that the CAB could fulfil this role, that the NHS should fund and manage this health advocacy role, potential duplication with Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) that are linked to every GP surgery and the fact that the organisation delivering the contract is not local enough. 9 respondents had never heard of POhWER.

## **2. Do you have any comments about the minimal/planned changes to the Healthwatch Leicestershire (VAL) and Think Leicestershire (VAL) projects? Total responses = 99**

The proposal is to remove all additional LCC funding (currently up to £192,000 per annum) for Healthwatch. This means that the costs of both the POhWER and Healthwatch contracts will be met by the national government grant of £275,000 by 2015/16

Think Leicestershire is a three year project initially funded by the County Council at £70,000 per annum; this has been reduced to £30,000 for 2014/15 as the LCC staffing element had already been removed. It is proposed that all funding should cease at the end of March 2015.

18 respondents agreed with the proposal as set out above. Comments included that these projects/services are less essential. 3 respondents opposed the reductions. 9 respondents said that they had not heard of either organisation and 28 people did not comment in this section.

#### Think Leicestershire

11 respondents specifically supported the cessation of funding for Think Leicestershire in March 2015. Reasons given for this include no/limited evidence of impact/outcomes, lack of direction, and a feeling that it should be in the commercial/private sector with the opportunities that this would bring for raising funding. Others felt that the project lacks direction, is not accessible to the average person and is pitched at the wrong level. There was consensus that Think Leicestershire is less important than some of the other contracts covered in this consultation.

*“Think Leicestershire does not seem to have made any impact in the area where I live”*

*“Funding needs to be more with organisations that work at grass-roots levels – the does not the thinkers”*

#### Healthwatch Leicestershire

13 respondents supported the reduction in funding for Healthwatch Leicestershire. Several questioned why LCC funds Healthwatch (the proposal is that LCC will not contribute any funding in addition to the national government grant); again there were suggestions that the function should sit with CABs or the PPGs and that there are other avenues for challenge of the NHS. Others questioned the impact and effectiveness of the current Directors and Board and suggested that the number of meetings and level of bureaucracy should be reduced. Three respondents suggested that few have heard of or engage with Healthwatch due to its lack of visibility.

3 respondents positively supported its continuation at a time when people are likely to have less/reducing access to health services. The website was seen as an important source of information. It was also recognised by some that there is a statutory obligation to have a Healthwatch service.

#### County Infrastructure Organisation (CIO)

The proposal set out in the consultation is to reduce the amount of funding available for the County Infrastructure Organisation (Voluntary Action Leicestershire) for the Support for VCS Organisations contract. This will be reduced from £595,880 to £300,000 by 2015/16. We

recognise that this cut will have a significant impact on the level and type of support available to voluntary sector and community groups in the County.

At the moment the contract supports three specific areas of activity:

Policy and Voice - influencing and enabling the local voluntary sector voice

This includes producing policy information/briefings, helping the sector to influence policy decisions, supporting the sector to collaborate (work together), influencing commissioning processes, demonstrating the social value of the sector and gathering/providing accurate information about the sector in order to influence decisions

Group Support - capacity building the local voluntary sector

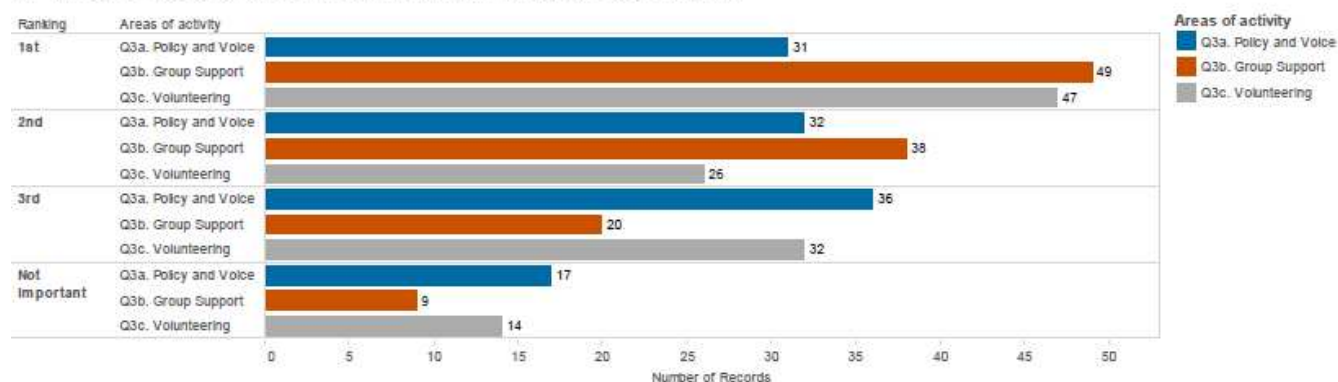
This includes supporting new groups to evolve to meet gaps in service provision, funding advice and support, support for groups who want to tender for public sector contracts, help to run groups effectively and general group support services (e.g. training, workshops and consultancy)

Volunteering - promoting, developing and supporting volunteering

This includes supporting the development of new volunteering opportunities, enabling people to take up volunteering opportunities and ensuring people are happy with their volunteering placement

### 3. Please rank each of these in order of importance to your organisation

Q3 - Please rank each of these in order of importance to your organisation:



Sum of Number of Records for each Areas of activity broken down by Ranking. Color shows details about Areas of activity.

Group Support, closely followed by Volunteering, was the area of Infrastructure Support activity of greatest importance to respondents. 75% of respondents had Group Support as their first or second choice, 61% had Volunteering and 54% had Policy and Voice. The responses to this question will help to inform the remodelling of the County Infrastructure Organisation contract.

### 4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the specific areas of support listed below will be of use / value to your organisation in the future

Question 4 asked respondents to assess a list of 27 different areas of support that could be provided by an infrastructure organisation in terms of the extent to which they would be of use/value to their organisation in the future. The top ten support areas, ranked by the percentage of respondents who strongly agree or agree that they will be of use/value to their organisation, are:

<b>Infrastructure Support Area</b>	<b>% Strongly Agree</b>	<b>% Strongly Agree/Agree</b>
Information about funding opportunities	41%	<b>83%</b>
Developing funding applications	38%	<b>71%</b>
Training around specific development areas	28%	<b>66%</b>
Influencing policy decisions – locally and nationally	23%	<b>65%</b>
Financial management and sustainability	28%	<b>63%</b>
Knowledge and information about the Leicestershire VCS	23%	<b>62%</b>
Support a collective and effective VCS voice	26%	<b>62%</b>
Help setting up/running a group or organisation	22%	<b>60%</b>
Developing and marketing volunteering opportunities	22%	<b>59%</b>
Recruiting volunteers	23%	<b>55%</b>

#### **5. Which five of these are most important to your organisation?**

When asked to identify which of these areas of infrastructure support were most important to their organisation, the top five are as follows:

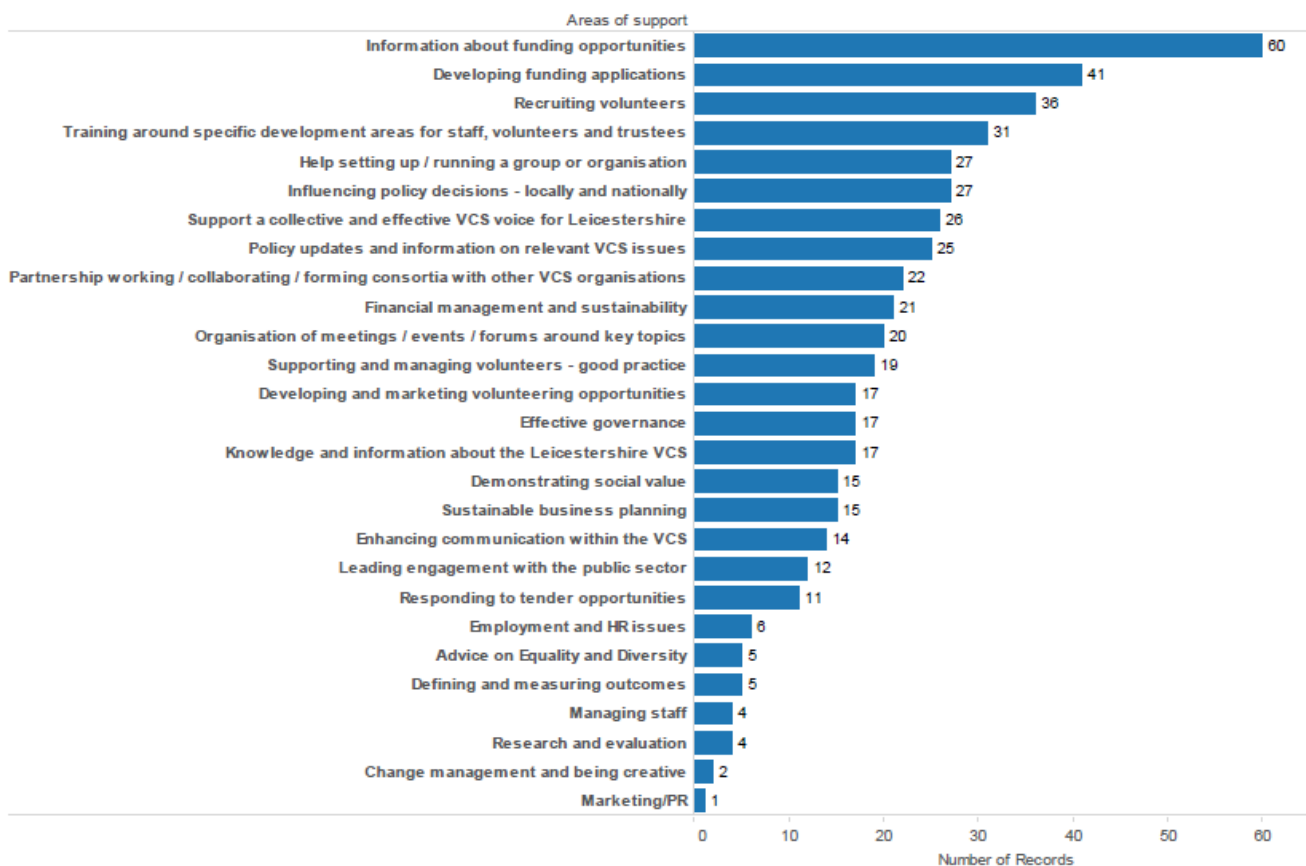
- 1) Information about funding opportunities - 57%
- 2) Developing funding applications - 39%
- 3) Recruiting volunteers - 34%
- 4) Training around specific development areas - 29%
- 5) = Influencing policy decisions – locally and nationally - 25%
- 5) = Help setting up/running a group or organisation - 25%

Again, this information will support any remodelling of the current CIO contract and inform the retendering of the contract for 2016/17 onwards.

The table below shows all options ranked by number of respondents identifying each option in their top five:



Q5 - Which five of these are most important to your organisation? Please tick up to 5 options.



Sum of Number of Records for each Areas of support.

**6. What specific impact is the proposed reduction to ‘Support for VCS Organisations’ through the County Infrastructure Organisation likely to have on your organisation/group?  
Total Responses = 106**

When asked about the specific impact that the proposed reduction in funding of £296,0000 (from a budget of almost £600,000 currently) would have on the respondents’ organisation or group, there was a real diversity of opinion.

In addition to the wide range of specific impacts identified in the table below, general comments opposing the reduction in funding included that the VAL service is an essential/invaluable resource that should be protected and retained (7 people) and, if possible, extended or increased i.e. that the proposed reduction in funding should not be applied to this contract. Others commented on the impact on outreach work of previous cuts and the likelihood that these proposed reductions will further reduce the potential for an effective and sustainable VCS. One respondent felt that VAL provides an essential ‘macro-vision’ for the sector whilst others identified specific benefits including VAL’s role in tackling worklessness through on-going work with Job Centre Plus, and support for the Police and Crime Commissioners’ grant making process in 2013/14. It was also suggested that further reductions were likely to lead to more costs for the public sector in the long run.

*“Voluntary action is the heart of communities but it needs infrastructure support”*

*“Cutbacks and austerity mean an increased focus on and reliance upon volunteers – which will require good volunteer information, advice, management, support, advocacy, representation etc. – all of which VAL can help with”*

*“I represent a community youth group which has had very little support from anyone with the exception of VAL. Funds spent on VAL, in our view, are leveraged by them to help a large number of small VCS organisations and we deplore any reduction in the support given to them”*

**Specific examples of direct impacts (in order of number of times referenced) were:**

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Won't get the advice/support we need to provide our service	16
Difficulty recruiting, training and managing volunteers	14
Less funding advice/support and reduced chance of success	13
Training	6
Lack of a VCS voice/network/fragmentation of sector	5
May have to pay for support/advice	4
Lack of support with tenders	4
Less support for collaboration	4
Massive impact in many areas	2
Lack of information about policy changes	2
Less support for smaller, local groups	2

Additional examples of impact from individual respondents included potential isolation for smaller groups, reduced ability to help the people who need it, lack of support with finance and business planning, lack of innovation, lower numbers of volunteers and the loss of the newsletter and networking events.

Others warn of the danger that the funding reduction is likely to have on the delivery model: *“we expect that the first reaction to reduced funding would be for VAL to further cut outreach provision in order to sustain the central, city-based organisation and staffing”*

Several respondents commented positively about the professionalism and abilities of VAL staff.

7 respondents stated that the proposed 50% reduction would have ‘limited’, ‘not much’, ‘very little’ or ‘minimal’ impact on their organisation or group

24 respondents stated that the proposed 50% reduction would have ‘no impact’ on their organisation. Reasons given for this include the following (all suggested by between two and five respondents):

- Need a smaller central hub with more frontline services
- Too remote - need more local voluntary initiatives and interventions – get out there
- A lot of resources going to one organisation
- Danger of City bias/County resources being used in the City
- VAL don't operate in rural areas
- No evidence that VAL reach anyone who lacks confidence or capability
- We are a large organisation – VAL don't support us
- Cut to VAL will protect other, more valuable services
- Taking over the sector – TESCO approach
- Never heard of VAL

*“VAL seems to be taking over the voluntary sector in Leicestershire...one large organisation is swallowing up all the funding while allowing smaller, but equally valid and valuable VCS organisations to face financial ruin”*

*“Funding has already ceased to be available to sustain the work of local VCS organisations. The CIO has become largely irrelevant in the life of the VCS in our District”*

*“The County Council needs to be bold and look seriously at what they are expecting the CIO to do and then trim the funding accordingly as at present it is far too lavish with the end result that front line delivery elsewhere is adversely affected”*

## **7. Are there any steps that the Council could take to minimise this impact and, if so, what?**

**Total Responses = 93**

A wide range of responses were received to this question, some key points are summarised below:

### General

- Help groups to focus on core business
- Provide rent free offices in unoccupied City and County Council buildings
- Waste less on other things - still too much bureaucracy and levels of management
- Represent to central government that many of the cost cutting measures will result in a vast increase of incurred and unavoidable costs
- Review overlap between LCC and commissioned VCS services and commission together
- Place a value on people and services - think about cutting the budgets a different way
- Adopt a sub-regional approach with the City and Rutland - this would lead to economies of scale and avoid a postcode lottery of support across LLR
- Ensure that reporting/paperwork is kept to a minimum so that money can be spent on providing a service and not unnecessary administration
- Commission on outputs - wider than just the VCS agenda
- Provide more/stronger Council support

### Funding

- Provide more funding to Parish Councils to enable them to provide the services to groups in their own areas
- Put some resources back into local VCS organisations
- Complete reallocation of funding across those VCS organisations who are delivering on the ground with outreach staff
- Look at other areas of expenditure before reducing funding for VCS organisations
- Seek to negotiate developer contributions to provide a realistic funding pot
- Stop all LCC funding - allow local communities to manage/finance their own schemes

### Voluntary Sector

- Ensure that voluntary sector organisations are able to access the (confidential, free) support they require in order to be able to compete effectively in tenders
- Encourage the diversity of VCS organisations rather than the amalgamation of groups, weakening identities and diluting the issues
- Prioritise any remaining funding to group support - locality based arrangements?
- Support new projects and provide less support to ongoing and established projects/groups
- Some larger organisations could provide supportive links to smaller organisations

### Volunteering

- Maintain volunteer drop in sessions e.g. at local libraries
- Promote volunteering and encourage organisations to involve volunteers better as this will help their sustainability
- Listen to local volunteers
- Time banking so value is added from other sources in return for services offered

### Rural Communities

- Leicestershire is predominately a rural county with many isolated parishes
- The RCC funding should not be cut they are required to support many organisations in the rural area
- You are suggesting creating new funding for community capacity building. This is a central feature of what the RCC do - why are you taking all their funds away and creating something new?

Please see the section on page XX summarising the comments on the funding currently provided to the Rural Community Council through the Rural Advice Service and Rural Representation contracts.

**8. Will the proposed reduction in budget to the County Infrastructure Organisation present challenges for specific service users (please identify who and what the specific challenges will be)?**

**Total Responses = 85**

15 respondents said that there would be no challenges for specific service users.

Specific groups of service users identified by 3 or more respondents as likely to be impacted by the proposed reduction in budget for the County Infrastructure Organisation (and the number of people referencing) were:

<b>Service Users</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Rural communities/rural isolated	13
Volunteers (more expected of them)	9
Smaller organisations/user-led groups	8
Most vulnerable/disadvantaged	8
Voluntary organisations	7
Service users	4
Money should be given to front line organisations	3
Vulnerable elderly	3

12 respondents did not know what the challenges might be, “particularly until VAL allocates its reduced budget”.

The impacts may also be felt by less affluent areas, village halls and Parish Councils. One pragmatic response was that “we will have to accept we may need to wait longer for help”.

*“this will present challenges to all groups affected in that they will endeavour to provide the same/an improved service with less money”*

**9. Have you/your organisation ever accessed support from the current County Infrastructure Organisation, Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL)?**

72 organisations (61%) of respondents to this question had accessed support from Voluntary Action Leicestershire. 46 respondents (39%) had not accessed support.

**10. If YES, what difference did this support make to your organisation?**

<b>Difference Made</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>
Helped to secure funding	18
Training and advice	11
Support to recruit and place volunteers	11
Support for collaboration	6

Strengthened organisational capability	6
Helped achieve our objectives	4
Policy support	4
Helped with promotion/awareness raising	4
Advice, encouragement and support	4
E Bulletin	4
Helped us with support/activities for vulnerable people	3
Forums/Conferences	2

8 respondents made a general comment that the support received had been invaluable but 7 respondents said that it had been of no help and 5 that it had been of minimal help. 3 respondents commented about the poor quality of the group support service whilst providing positive comments about other areas of support.

**11. What would the impact have been on your organisation if this support was not available?**

**Total Responses = 65**

The two main impacts - identified by 18 and 17 respondents respectively - were that the project would not have happened or would have taken longer, and a reduction in/closure of the service or organisation itself. 9 respondents identified failure to gain funding and 5 difficulty in recruiting volunteers. 5 respondents felt that the organisation would be less capable and effective and the same number that their organisation would have become isolated or out of touch. 3 respondents stated that they would not be able to offer as many services/activities. Other impacts include greater reliance on public services, lack of access to key information, contacts and organisations and the need to find/fund alternative support.

*“Risk of some VCSOs which could deliver excellent services to achieve the Police and Crime Plan outcomes not being funded, due to submitting poor quality applications”*

*“I may have given up without this support, and without ongoing support it will impede development, and may ultimately lead to the failure of the business, as creating a viable social enterprise is extremely challenging”*

*“We would still have continued to undertake our work, but not worked so closely with the public sector to help to meet your priorities”*

8 respondents stated that the support not being available would have had no impact and 5 that it would have had little impact.

It proposed to commission two new services from October 2014. The first of these will support capacity building of communities of place/geography (the new Community Capacity Building Service) and the second will support the representation of communities of interest (the new Equalities Challenge Group).

The new Community Capacity Building Service will support the Council in delivering its service devolution (communities delivering services, either on their own or in partnership with the Council) and demand management (supporting vulnerable people) priorities. This new service will cover the whole of Leicestershire (i.e. both rural and urban areas). The £50,000 allocated from the Chief Executives Department budget will be supplemented by £25,000 a year of Public Health funding. The total new contract value will therefore be £150,000 or £75,000 per year for two years.

New external support will be commissioned for the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG). Associated capacity building and training will ensure that members of the group are able to participate effectively and communicate information between public agencies and the communities they represent. We intend to seek independent support for the LECG as we believe that this will enable the group to play a vital scrutiny and challenge role in terms of the Council's proposed policy and service changes.

The communities of interest currently included in the LECG are as follows:

- Age – Older and Younger
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Carers (including young carers)
- Disability – Learning, Physical and Sensory
- Drug and/or Alcohol Users
- Gender Re-assignment (Transgender)
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Offenders and Ex-offenders
- People with poor Mental Health
- Race

**12a. What sort of capacity building support do you think community groups and voluntary sector organisations in Leicestershire most need if they are to support vulnerable people in order to reduce the demand on public services?**

**Total Responses - 88**

<b>Capacity Building Support to Support Vulnerable People</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Practical help/advice	9
Budgets/finance	7
Help identifying vulnerable people and their needs	7
Fundraising	7
Outreach work	6
Access to advice/leadership support	6

Training	6
Group Support	5
RCC Good Neighbours	5
Volunteering Marketing	4
Capacity Building	4

Other options, identified by one or two respondents each, are befriending/mentoring, support for community centres, support for self-help, support to set up peer groups (2), links to public sector agencies (2), examples of best practice (2), setting up procedures e.g. safeguarding and information sharing and sustained one to one support e.g. not just guidance and information and then 'left to get on with it'.

A number of people highlighted the importance of capacity building support for a wide range of vulnerable people:

*"An elderly person living in a village without a car is as vulnerable as an immigrant who arrives in the country with no job, few connections and cannot speak the language"*

There was also a plea to consider the role of vulnerable people within their communities:

*"Vulnerable people can be active participants in service delivery – if community capacity building is underpinned by individual and collective capacity building"*

However, there was also a reminder about the need to support everyone in the County:

*"Happy that vulnerable people are given priority but what about all the other good people of Leicestershire that need support in a situation of ever declining services such as transport and libraries"*

Again, there was a real sense from respondents about the important of outreach work *"this should be done by front line organisations with staff working in communities, not sitting in offices far removed from the need"*.

12 respondents said that they did not know.

**12b) What sort of capacity building support do you think community groups and voluntary sector organisations in Leicestershire most need if they are to get more involved in service delivery?**

**Total Responses = 88**

<b>Capacity Building Support to Support Service Delivery</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Funding/Grants	13
Professional support/advice e.g. legal, HR, finance, business models	12
Volunteering	9



Bid writing support	4
Community development/capacity building	3
Training	3
Infrastructure that makes it cost effective to bid for services	2
Clear and agreed targets	2

Other options, identified by one respondent each, are toolkits, marketing, information on service needs and gaps, help to get younger people involved, help to set up systems, enabling pilots and demonstration projects, relaxation of regulations/red tape and support for collaboration e.g. a cluster of PCs.

Some respondents to this question identified potential challenges *“with the best will in the world, maintaining a service with (mainly) volunteers is daunting”* and *“I can’t see many VCS agencies being able to do this well and sustainably enough”* and a plea to *“really care about VCS groups and listen to their experiences, allow them to influence...not just use them to fulfil the County Council agenda and responsibilities”*.

8 respondents to this question answered ‘Don’t Know’ or ‘Not Sure’.

**13. Are there any other priority communities or groups that the contract should target?**

**Total Responses = 73**

26 respondents said that they could not identify additional communities or groups. Specific groups, ranked in order of the number of times identified, are as follows:

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Rural communities/isolated/poor	11
Youth	9
Older	8
Disabled	5
Isolated/Lonely	5
Mental Health	5
Poverty	3
Ordinary people/communities	3
Everyone	3
Carers	3
Dementia	2
Families	2
Single Parents	2
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	2

Of these, rural communities, youth, older, disabled, mental health, carers and deaf/hard of hearing are already included in the membership of the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group.

Other priority groups, identified by single individuals, are as follows: brain injury, looked after children, armed service leavers, victims of domestic abuse, workless, young disabled, full time workers who pay their taxes, people with linguistic difficulties, health improvement groups e.g. chronic conditions, priority neighbourhoods, forced marriages, drug and alcohol users. A further comment which is worth considering is “need a more holistic vision, people move in and out of priority groups”

**14. Do you have any comments about the role/remit of the group?**

**Total Responses = 62**

7 respondents said that they support the proposal as set out in the consultation. 19 did not have any comments about the role and remit of the group and 9 did not know.

6 respondents felt that the remit of the group was too wide, that it would be a challenge for one provider to support the range of groups identified and that the funding is spread too far. 3 suggested that priority groups should be identified within the list and 2 that the contract should focus on enabling and capacity building *“the outcomes will not be achieved by organisations that do not put the resource into face to face work with local people...capacity building is not done by organisations and services but by people themselves”*. Two respondents suggested that the group was ‘just about political correctness’.

Other comments included the need to assess outcomes and impact, keep overheads to a minimum, ensure that representatives genuinely represent their community and that the group should focus on challenging policy and strategy *“I think assessing and challenging policy-makers to ensure that policies don’t discriminate is an important role and perhaps the main focus”*. There was a specific plea to think about rural and urban differences and how they might impact and to ensure that the needs of rural communities are not overlooked (3 people).

**15. Any other comments about the two new proposed contracts?**

**Total Response = 60**

9 respondents welcomed the two new contracts, whilst 7 respondents said that they did not know or needed more information before they could offer a view.

4 respondents felt that there should be more funding for the Capacity Building contract and 2 respondents that this contract must be divided fairly between rural and urban communities. 3 respondents felt that the Capacity Building contract could be part of the CIO contract.

General comments included the need to ensure both contracts are effective, with good links to existing services, and overheads and operating costs that are as low as possible. The need to ensure continuity of delivery between existing and new contracts was also highlighted.

2 respondents felt that the contracts were 'unnecessary' – *“invest in actual real services and not more phony talking shops which ultimately achieve little or nothing”* and 3 respondents felt that the new contracts should not be introduced to the detriment of existing services/organisations (VAL and the RCC were specifically mentioned). 20 respondents did not have any additional comments.

### **Rural Community Council**

A significant number of organisations specifically mentioned the support that they receive or have received from the Rural Community Council (Leicestershire and Rutland). Some of the key points made within these responses are summarised below.

It is worth noting that the two main contracts delivered by the Rural Community Council were due to end on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2014 and that these contracts have both been extended to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 (a nine month extension) in order to ensure that there is no gap in service. The proposal is to tender the two new services outlined on PXX to start in January 2015. The proposal does not therefore 'cut' funding to the Rural Community Council, rather it sets out the Councils thinking about the new service, prior to the tender documents being made available to the market.

The areas of support that the RCC had provided to respondents include; community engagement (including village appraisals, parish plans and village design statements), neighbourhood plans, affordable housing, good neighbour schemes, community action on climate change, Leicestershire and Rutland Playing Fields Association, wind farm opposition.

The value of the support that communities access through the Rural Advisory Service – project ideas, planning projects, methodology, sourcing and securing funding, signposting, training and links to relevant networks – was specifically highlighted by a number of respondents.

A sample of the comments about the Rural Community Council is as follows:

*“the rural voice will not be heard if funding is not retained for the RCC...they currently provide an important service in understanding and supporting the specific needs of rural communities”*

*“we would have found it difficult to complete a number of projects without their help”*

*“the work that the RCC does with communities has allowed us to bring forward affordable housing delivery for local people...they have helped to build the foundations for community engagement on housing issues”*

*“the RCC has a proven track record of successful community engagement”*

*“the RCC seems to deliver a great deal with little funding from LCC...they perform where others do not”*

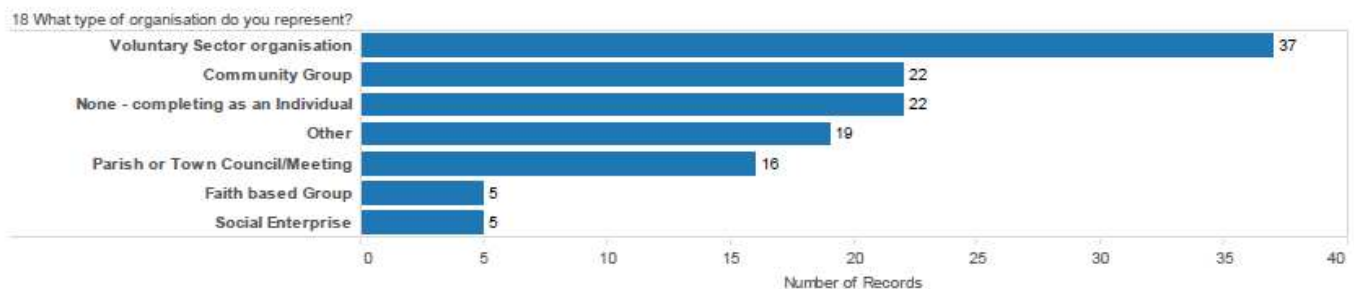
A number of respondents emphasised the need to retain the focus on rural communities *“as vulnerable groups can be even more disadvantaged in a rural setting where there is less infrastructure to support them”*, with the elderly and young families being identified as specifically vulnerable. The need to consider both remote rural communities and those close to the urban areas of Leicester City and the county’s market towns was also highlighted.

Several respondents commented on the potential impact on the RCC if they do not secure the community capacity building tender *“it could finish the whole organisation”*, *“do not ignore the expertise already in post”*, *“this will impact on the viability and scope of work that the RCC can do in the future”* and *“cutting funding to the RCC will impact hugely on the support available for community development and subsequently the availability and access to low level voluntary support in the community”*.

## Who Responded?

### 18. What type of organisation do you represent?

#### Q18 - What type of organisation do you represent?



Type of Organisation	Number (%)
Voluntary Sector organisation	37 (29%)
Community Group	22 (17%)
None – Individual	22 (17%)
Other	19 (15%)
Town or Parish Council	16 (13%)
Faith based group	5 (4%)
Social enterprise	5 (4%)

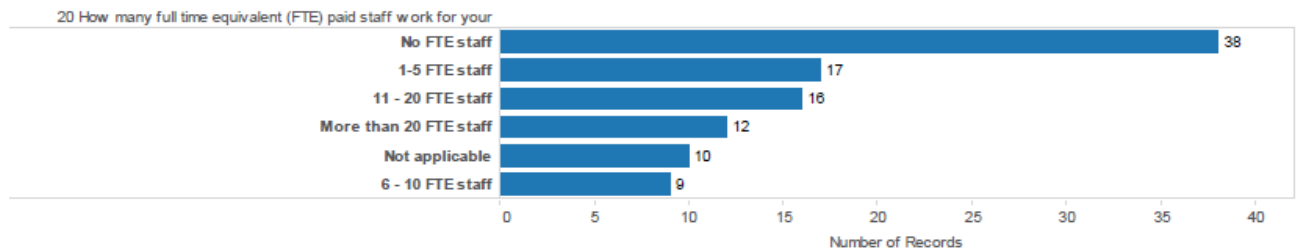
### 19. Do you have any connections (e.g. you are a staff member, trustee or member organisation) with any of the organisations affected by this consultation?

Yes 8 (36%)  
No 14 (64%)

5 respondents had connections with one of the Citizens Advice Bureau, 2 with the Association of Local Councils and 1 the Rural Community Council. A large number of respondents chose not to answer this question.

## 20. How many FTE paid staff work for your organisation?

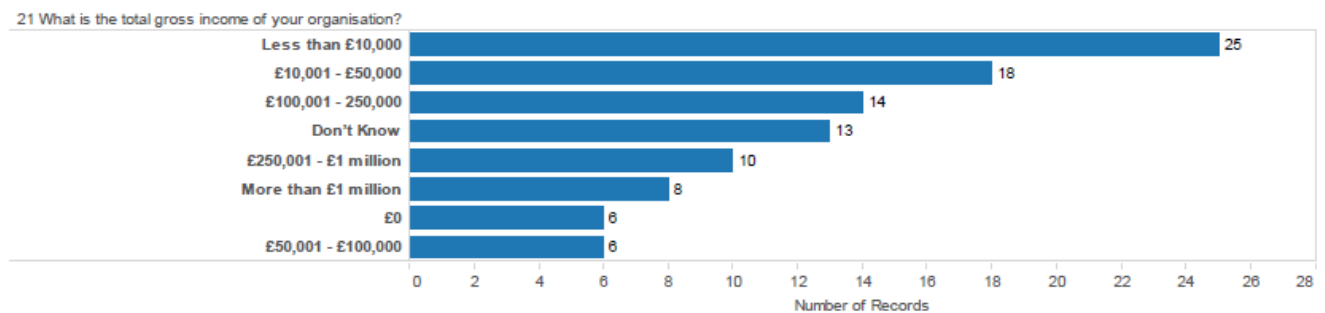
### Q20 - How many full time equivalent (FTE) paid staff work for your organisation?



Number of Staff	Number	Percentage
No FTE Staff	38	37%
1-5 FTE Staff	17	17%
6-10 FTE Staff	9	9%
11-20 FTE Staff	16	16%
More than 20 FTE Staff	12	12%
Not Applicable	10	10%

## 21. What is the total gross income of your organisation?

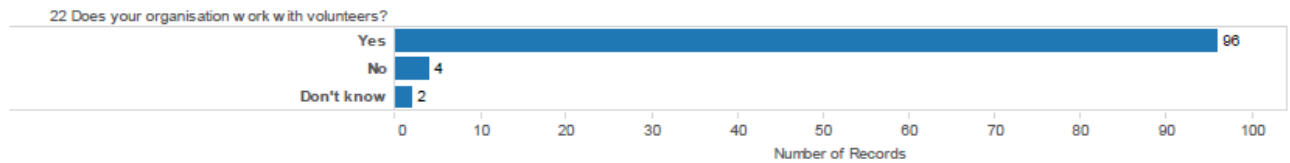
### Q21 - What is the total gross income of your organisation?



Income	Number	Percentage
Less than £10,000	25	25%
£10,001 - £50,000	18	19%
£50,001 - £100,000	6	6%
£100,001 - £250,000	14	14%
£250,001 - £1 million	10	10%
More than £1 million	8	8%

## 22. Does your organisation work with volunteers?

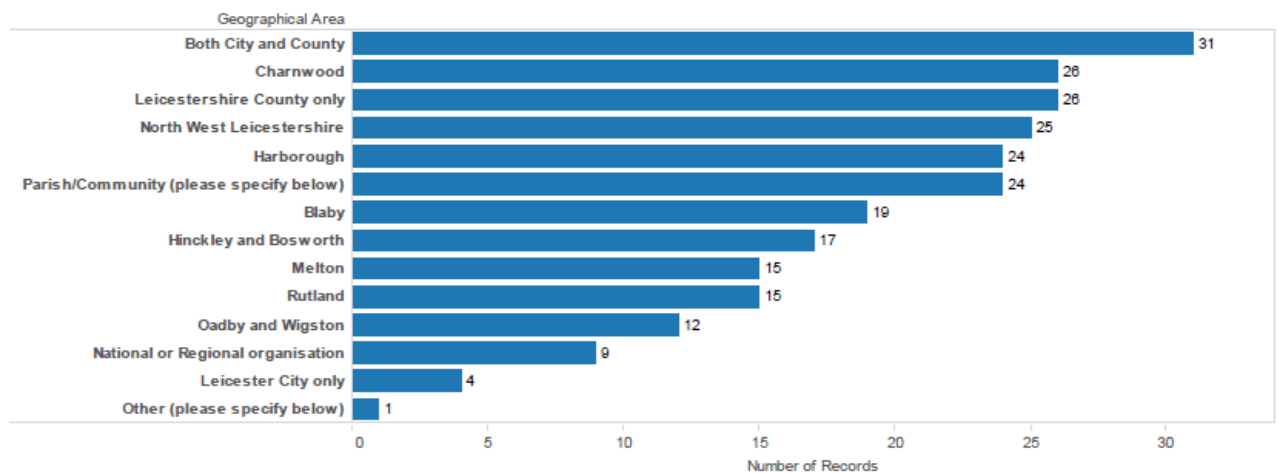
### Q22 - Does your organisation work with volunteers?



96 respondents or 94% of those answering this question said that their organisation works with volunteers. 4 or 4% said their organisation does not work with volunteers and a further 2 (2%) did not know.

## 23. What geographical area does your organisation cover?

### Q23 - What geographical area does your organisation cover/what is your area of benefit?

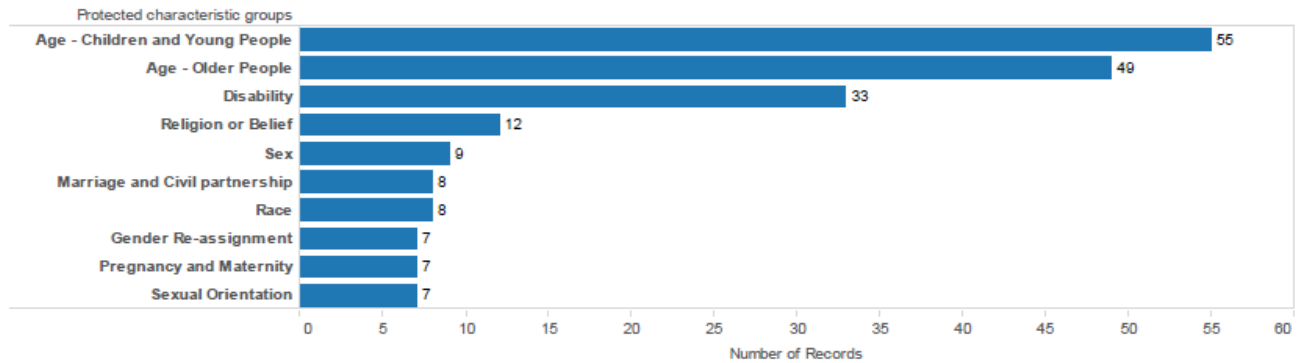


The top five responses to this question were:

Both City and County	31	(31%)
Leicestershire only	26	(26%)
Charnwood	26	(26%)
Parish/Community	25	(25%)
North West Leicestershire	25	(25%)

## 24. Does your organisation target its work to any of the following protected characteristic groups?

Q24 Does your organisation target its work to any of the following protected characteristic groups? Please tick all that apply



76% of respondents stated that their organisation targets its work to 'Children and Young People', 68% to 'Older People' and 45% to Disability. The next three protected characteristic groups targeted are 'Religion or Belief' (16%), 'Sex' (12%) and 'Marriage or civil partnership' (11%).

This page is intentionally left blank