

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Community, Arts and Sport Advisory Group
AUTHOR/S: Community Development Manager

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The role of the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement in relation to Community Development and the Voluntary Community Sector

1. **Purpose**

- (a) The aim of this paper is to advise the Community, Arts and Sport Advisory Group of the changes that are happening in the Voluntary Community Sector and the links to be made between the sector and the Cambridgeshire wide Local Area Agreement.
- (b) To raise awareness about some of the proposed initiatives to link voluntary and community organisations with their Local Strategic Partnerships.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	Initiatives arising from the Local Area Agreement priorities will have a positive impact on all corporate objectives.
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Background

3. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's) have been developed to bring together key statutory, private and voluntary community sector partners to ensure that local services are delivered in partnership.
4. Local Area Agreements (LAA) are agreements between local partnerships and the government about the delivery of intended outcomes attached to agreed funding packages. In two tier areas such as Cambridgeshire the LAA is being agreed at the county level but it has to take into account priorities identified by District local authorities and LSP's in their Community Strategies. Each of the District LSP's is being asked to sign off the Cambridgeshire wide LAA. In their turn district level LSP's have to reflect LAA outcomes in their own action plans.
5. The Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement for 2006-2009 has within it a Statement of Community Involvement. This states that work will centre on communities and the support needed at the organisational and individual level to develop community empowerment by joining up current initiatives relating to community planning and community development, community cohesion, parish plan and parish council development and compact and volunteering support services.
6. It also says that "the involvement of the voluntary and community sectors in the ongoing design and delivery of the LAA is essential. All LAA partners recognise and support the role of the voluntary sector in service delivery and user involvement."

Considerations

7. There is a recognition in the LAA document that there needs to be a further development of Voluntary Community Sector structures if the VCS is to take on its role of programme delivery, policy dissemination and strategic representation. To achieve this the following are proposed:
8. The establishment of a new overarching Cambridgeshire Voluntary Sector Forum led by Cambridgeshire ACRE made up of both voluntary sector and public sector partners which will set the strategic direction and be influenced by issues arising from local voluntary forums in each district. South Cambridgeshire already has such a forum.
9. The Cambridgeshire Voluntary Sector Forum will be responsible for the co-ordination of work programmes and funding streams to ensure cost-effective achievement of strategic outcomes and targets at a local level. (An example of this is the Rural Social Community Programme where ACRE have successfully achieved funding for Community Development workers to work with Parish Councils in each of the districts in Cambridgeshire. This is over-seen by the Cambridgeshire Rural Forum.)
10. Better arrangement for joining up the community sector work with the wider voluntary sector, local authorities and LSP's.
11. All of this points to an emerging increased importance of voluntary and community organisations in terms of the role they will be expected to play in local planning and service delivery structures.. The Cambridgeshire LAA – and the different LSPs – offer great opportunities and challenges for the Voluntary Community Sector to be recognised and to be involved in future discussions and decisions. Ensuring there are sufficient resources for this to happen will be one of the main challenges for all involved.

Options

12. Members of the Working Group are asked to consider the contents of this discussion regarding the role of the voluntary community sector in relation to Local Strategic Partnerships and the Local Area Agreement and to note the support that will be required to enable the VCS to fulfil its role as a partner in service development and delivery alongside statutory and private organisations working in South Cambridgeshire.

Financial Implications

13. No financial implications from this report

Legal Implications

14. No legal issues from this report

Staffing Implications

15. No additional staffing implications from this report

Risk Management Implications

16. None

Consultations

17. Following on from the Members Consultation event in December, further consultation will be considered by the Group as part of this process.

Conclusions/Summary

18. The Voluntary Community sector has an increasingly important role to play working alongside the South Cambridgeshire LSP to ensure delivery of intended outcomes attached to agreed funding packages through the LAA. This will be achieved by improving co-ordination between voluntary community organisations through a county wide voluntary sector forum.

Recommendations

19. That the Community, Arts and Sports development plan include reference to the increasingly important role that the voluntary community sector has to play in relation to partnership working through LSPs and delivery of Local Area Agreement outcomes

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Changeup Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – Draft report on organisational capacity building project.

Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement

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