

Appendix C - Bradford and District VCS Infrastructure Review – Themed Workshops Interim Report

Historically BMDC and Bradford CCGs have funded the support of the Voluntary and Community Sector through grants to infrastructure organisations. The overall purpose of the funding is to develop, maintain and encourage a thriving non-profit sector in Bradford. The non-profit sector plays a vital role in the success of the city and contributes vastly to the wellbeing of the workforce and residents in Bradford.

During the last eighteen months, Bradford and Districts infrastructure support organisations have worked with independent contractors to undertake a review in relation to the services and support delivered as part of Bradford Metropolitan District Council's and Bradford CCG's contracts. Initially in 2019 Project Rome worked with the sector and developed a report aimed at outlining the current provision and working up a set of recommendations for future commissions.

Thereafter, a co-production phase was entered bringing together stakeholders to look at the service needs and strategic development within infrastructure for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector. The workshops initiated conversations around designing whole system approaches, collaborating with the wider economy whilst embedding community voice. Only a third of the planned workshops were completed before the subsequent COVID lockdown. This interim document compiles the notes from the events.

Voice and Influence

'Voice and influence' constitutes two interconnected strands of work - representation of the VCSE sector and, the voice of communities and how that influences strategy across the district. In terms of sector voice, the current structure of the Assembly gives representation with a line of accountability and governance structure. A further 'Engaging People' commission connects with communities through the VCS to gather voices on specific subject.

The Voice and Influence Co-design workshop prioritised the following areas of development;

- A review of the Assembly forum topics and themes, consideration to be given to those cross-cutting themes, themes that currently work in isolation and how information is shared across the forums.
- Forums to move away from information sharing platforms to partnership forums between both the VCSE and public sector partners including CCG and Council officers.
- Further development of outreach. Consideration of how the mechanisms foster a relationship between the voice of the grassroots and service design and strategy.

- To revisit the governance of the Assembly Steering Group, look at whether the most appropriate VCS leaders are representing the sector through ASG and, the transparency of both that representation and decision making.
- Clarity to be outlined in terms of where Community Partnership representation and ASG representation work together and, to further acknowledge and understand the different types of representation; strategic / commissioning / design and delivery.
- To move towards a shared vision for the sector, which can be carried by the ASG leaders and Alliance governance structure.
- Staffing resource for Assembly forums to be more widely discussed. Allocating one dedicated part time worker for each topic forum was the preferred model.
- Assessment and clarity in voice and influence sub groups, particularly under the protected characteristics sub contracts. There is a need to give a more equitable reach to these communities of interest with an emphasis on paid representation.
- Need for a diversity of networks with shared visions. These networks don't necessarily need to be physically centralised.
- Engaging Communities activity works on an ABCD approach and existing network of assets for engagement work. This data should be shared strategically and district wide. Information to be more widely interrogated and have a conduit for feedbacking into communities. This work is likely to be given more direction with a district wide engagement plan.
- Voice and Influence insight to be fed into external funding opportunities giving strong community voices to the design of services.
- Development of Young People's leadership and representation.

VCSE Resourcing

The current voluntary and community sector resourcing provision across Bradford District is comprised of two elements of work. Bradford VCS Alliance operates as part of the integrated health and care system and provides contract management for health. This function was originally funded by Bradford CCGs however operates a sustainable model through the contracts it attracts and manages. Community Action Bradford and District provides a research and information service which benefits the sector with resourcing insight.

During the VCSE Resourcing co-design workshop, the following areas of development were prioritised;

- Income maximisation for VCSE organisations within the district and generating additional external funding into Bradford.
- Increasing capacity for the inclusion of resourcing services for social enterprise.

- Links to be developed between 'Give Bradford', CSR and the Infrastructure organisations developing resourcing activity.
- Development of a 'market place' to run alongside the Alliance activity. This market place to build a network of specialists/members.
- Aim to work within an 'honest brokerage' across the Alliance activity. Conflict of interest to be removed from brokerage to provide more transparency. Current provision has cross over of Alliance/Assembly/providers/Competitors. 'Honest Brokerage' is seen to be able to enhance the influencing of the strategic environment.
- Contract Management packages to be developed to assist with the 'honest brokerage' and outcome data sets.
- Transformation work to be developed around real time data platform – links to both income maximisation and brokerage.
- A concentration on a 'Left Shift' strategy, following the work carried out in Airedale.

Volunteering

Volunteering provision currently operates from two independent Volunteer Centres located in Bradford and Keighley. The functions of these centres comprise of the recruitment and brokerage of volunteers and volunteer placement, advice and support for employers on volunteer management and volunteer development in terms of promoting 'People Can' and representation at region.

The priority areas to come out of discussion during the co-design workshop can be summarised as follows;

- A wider assessment to be undertaken into the resource needed to run two independent volunteer centres and how that resource might best fit needs across the district.
- A move away from appointment-based drop ins and a more time effective model developed.
- Shifting towards a model of capacity building within organisation and culture change within those organisations towards the use of volunteers.
- The need for a renewed Volunteering Strategy across the district.
- Furthering the possibilities of the 'People Can' kitemark within organisations.
- To ensure that the training strand is linked with the capacity building training package.
- To work towards developing portable 'volunteer passports' to enable DBS and training transferrable.
- To maximise funding of volunteering agenda through joint funding of volunteer co-ordinators across organisations.
- Carry out focussed work supporting organisations around the Corporate Social responsibility agenda.

- Ensuring that volunteering is linked to other programmes across the district for example, the RICS programme which outlines support for volunteering
- Drive forward a programme for statutory organisations and organisations within the VCSE to release staff to volunteer.

Information and Insight

A small part of infrastructure commission is current spent within information and insight services. This piece of work delivers on making available information on funding, volunteering, events, jobs, relevant news and policy and guidance.

There was a brief discussion, which was proportionate to the work element and although this role was depicted as being vital, the main areas for further development were;

- The establishing of a self-serve information service through a single platform. This platform to be able to provide downloadable resources, policy packs, advice and information.
- A refresh of the DIVA database and updated information in relation to the VCS sector.

Capacity Building

Commissioned services are centred around the provision of training to include the development of skills, effective use of resources and community accountancy. There is a delivery of a generalist support to groups, in particular new and emerging groups and, a Voluntary and Organisation Support Office (VOSO) in each constituency. Some of the themes previously mentioned, such as Information and Insight and Resourcing cross over with the capacity work.

The discussion at the co-design workshops were centre around the following priority areas;

- Workforce development and capacity building of strong new and diverse cohort of system leaders.
- Skilling up the sector – market development to link in with VCSE Resourcing.
- Creation systems of learning around generous leadership.
- Self-serve single platform for organisations to self learn / develop – a move away from the appointment based VOSO model.
- Robust assessments for support – possibility of specialist support to organisations – move away from generalist offer.