

Better Together VCS Forum Notes – 18 June 2024

Agenda Item	Key Issues	Actions/Links
Welcome & introductions	<p>Kate Burrows welcomed everyone to the meeting at the DCA offices in Willington. 15 people attended and introductions were made.</p> <p>BTF Forum members are politely asked to confirm their attendance through the County Durham Partnership email so that numbers can be confirmed. Although the acceptance of the invitation will keep the date in diaries, it may not reflect whether people are attending, or otherwise.</p>	<p>All to Note</p> <p>Countydurhampartnership@durham.gov.uk</p>
NE Devolution Impact	<p>James Cook, DCC Planning Policy Manager attended the Forum to present an update on the recent NE Devolution and the creation of the new North-East mayoral combined authority, NEMCA. In his presentation, James highlighted the aims of the new mayor, Kim McGuinness, outlining the portfolios for the new authority and the key ambitions.</p> <p>In response to questions, it was confirmed that the new mayoral office will be established in a Cabinet structure and an amended presentation including the details of the budget for the new authority is available on the DCA website.</p>	<p>Presentations</p>
Devolution from the Voluntary Sector Perspective	<p>Kate’s presentation complemented the one given by James and focused on the impact for the VCSE and proposals on how it will feed into NEMCA. Considerable scoping and steering work led by VONNE has already taken place both prior to and since the creation of the new authority, some of which has been based on the Manchester model learning and practice.</p> <p>An assembly has been created (detailed in the presentation slides) which will be chaired by the new CEO of VONNE, Martin Brookes who will also be the VCSE lead in the Mayors Cabinet. A proposal has been put forward to the Cabinet for a lead at officer level (Robin Fry) but this has not yet been agreed. Kate advised that she has been nominated as the Vice-Chair of the Assembly.</p> <p>There is also a proposal for a VCSE representative for each of the key ambitions of NEMCA, the detail of which is still being determined. It was noted that the VCSE needs to look across these themes at the gaps covering specific areas such as social care.</p>	<p>BTF members to consider any questions they have about the new arrangements – to be fed back to Kate.</p>

	<p>A point was raised the VCSE organisations in Durham and their counterpart organisations across the rest of the combined authority region will need to start to reach out and network with each other, to maximise effectiveness of service delivery and budget.</p>	
<p>Social Value/ Social Impact</p>	<p>Jo Laverick has been commissioned by Durham Community Action to carryout a study looking at what Social Value looks to the voluntary sector. The aim is to develop a measuring tool which is less labour intensive, easier to use, and more focused and is able to develop measures that the VCSE can use to demonstrate value, in order to complete for tendering.</p> <p>Kate and Jo gave a presentation which can be found here.</p> <p>Jo will be looking at best practice both nationally and regionally and is keen to link to VCSE organisations that already use a social value tool or are interested in having a discussion on their views on social value and monitoring. An email will be sent out to invite forums to link with Jo for further discussions.</p> <p>A report will be presented to Forum members at the October Policy Forum with a final report presented in January 2025.</p>	
<p>Safeguarding Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Right Care Right Person operational model has now gone live across the Durham Police area. It is aimed at ensuring an individual receives the most appropriate support from the organisation best placed to help them. Durham Police have developed an information tool for agencies to collect the information that they will use e.g. does the individual pose a threat, are they at risk of harm, etc. which they will share with agencies to enable them to collect the relevant information. Further information on the policy will be sent by DCA in a newsletter. • Abby has asked partners to share real examples of referrals and cases involving the policy which will help to inform the process and shape the programme. • A paper has been written outlining the safeguarding reporting process in terms of reporting and response. This will be shared with colleagues once it has been presented to the Safeguarding Board for approval. 	<p>All to note</p>
<p>Partnership Updates</p>	<p>This item was deferred.</p>	
<p>Information Sharing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age UK County Durham – A digital outreach worker for the digital inclusion service focusing on the 50-69 demographic. • Oases – A Food Durham Co-ordinator post is being advertised to deliver the Food Durham Initiative. • CAB – services are still locally available following restructure. www.citizensadvicecd.org.uk/ 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCP – user numbers of foodbanks is stabilising numbers in Durham however, the potential impact on end of Household Support Fund in September is unknown. The CDP debt advice service is now operating. • Durham Floating Support Service – In the largest merger of the charity sector ever, the Richmond Fellowship and Humankind merged 1st June. The launch of new structure/organisation is planned for 1st October. • CDCF – New grants available. A small grant for affiliated organisations to apply on behalf of an individual (up to £300) for organisations in County Durham and an Organisational Sustainability Grants for up to £10,000 for new ops for charities. Poverty Hurts has also reopened up with to £3,000 for individuals in poverty. • CTD - refugee numbers (and the asylum seeker population) numbers growing across the County as a result of being moved from other authority areas. Organisations requiring assistance can contact Joanne directly Joanne.Thorns@durham.anglican.org. • Durham MW Alliance – mapping the availability of support services with the aim of developing a networking plan/Single Point of Access • Healthwatch – a number of surveys are underway including: Maternity Services focusing on miscarriage; Pharmacy First; Mental Health Services; Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention and also Patient Transport. There is also an inclusion survey looking at the barriers being faced by farming communities around mental and physical health. Youth Health Serviceswatch has been set up with a dedicated youth worker visiting school PSE sessions from September. • PCP - the CMHT programme is at the planning stage identifying activities linked to Mental Health, which can be delivered which support local people through localised service delivery. 	
Date of Next Meeting	The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday, 13th August 1.30 p.m. Venue to be confirmed.	