

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....19th May 2016

1. Title of Item/Report

VCSE Support Review

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that provided detail of the support to the VCSE. Stockton Borough Council had a long track record of supporting the VCSE and had a strong partnership and positive relationship with the sector, which was viewed as a model of good practice nationally, regionally and locally. The landscape in which both the VCSE sector and public sector operated continued to significantly change. Change that presents a variety of opportunities to support the sector on its journey of sustainability and help the Council in meeting the objectives set out in strategic plans.

As part of the Big Picture programme agreed by Council a review of support to the VCSE had been undertaken and delivered savings of £175k by 18/19. This would be delivered through a combination of revenue savings from an internal staffing review and, following additional investment in the sector for 2 years to address the review findings, a reduction in the overall grant funding to the sector. The funding invested in the sector (not including commissioned services) was £368,250 comprising grants to Catalyst and Stockton Resident's and Community Groups Association and a Market Development Fund.

The review identified strong support for the infrastructure model and acknowledged and evidenced the progress the sector as a whole had made on the journey to sustainability, particularly where organisations had recognised and embraced the need to do things differently. It identified a number of areas that could be improved or considered to ensure there was a more strategic and proactive approach to development and sustainability of the sector that would require some additional capacity in the short-term in support of achieving objectives within the Council Plan.

The Council remained committed to supporting the sector on its journey from dependency to self-sufficiency and the recommendations in this report reflect that commitment.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The core grant to Catalyst of £89,250 be retained for the period 16/17 through 17/18 and 18/19. This provides Catalyst with a 3 year financial planning window.
2. The contract not be renewed for community empowerment support following the contract end date of March 17.
3. Some additional capacity be provided to Catalyst for the next 2 years with some clear outcomes to address the identified capacity issues in relation to market stimulation and development, asset transfers, external funding and strategic leadership/business development of the sector. This capacity be secured through fixed-term secondments following the internal review of HR, Communications and Legal (which includes the Community Engagement Team).
4. Following the conclusion of the fixed-term secondments identified above, in support of sector sustainability, £95k of revenue savings from the community engagement element of that review be secured.
5. The Council continue to invest in support of sector sustainability through the Market Development Fund but reduce it by £40k (to £199k) in 18/19 following the additional investment to deliver the outcomes noted at (3) above.
6. The contract with Catalyst be reviewed and amended to take account of the key findings from this review with a clear and robust contract monitoring framework in place.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To secure savings to contribute to the 'Big Picture' Programme outlined to Cabinet in June 2015.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 – VCSE Support Review as he was a director at Catalyst and withdrew from the meeting and left the room.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 27th May 2016

Proper Officer  
23 May 2016