



Report to

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

16th April, 2014

Report of

Councillor J Clifford

Title

Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – Voluntary Action Coventry

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the work of Voluntary Action Coventry (VAC) over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council continues to appoint a representative to the VAC Board.

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

- 3.1 VAC is a local infrastructure organisation that supports the voluntary and community sector in the city. Founded in 1957, it is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Membership of Voluntary Action Coventry is open to all voluntary and community groups in the City and membership of VAC is free.
- 3.2 VAC's mission statement is 'VAC is an advocate for voluntary and community groups, helping to develop effective and diverse communities in the City. Through the provision of support, training and information, we promote good practice and encourage social inclusion. We promote, facilitate and develop volunteering in Coventry and recognise the contribution of individuals and volunteers to communities.'
- 3.3 The strategic aims of VAC are:
- Engaging and enabling voluntary and community sector involvement in strategic decision making
 - Meeting the support needs of voluntary and community organisations in Coventry
 - Championing and demonstrating the contribution of volunteering to civil society
 - Enabling the voluntary and community sector to develop new approaches to service delivery
 - Providing relevant information to local voluntary and community organisations and other stakeholders
 - Maintaining a strong and sustainable organisation
- 3.4 VAC's core values are:
- To tackle inequality, discrimination and social exclusion.
 - To support diversity and promote cohesion within the City's communities.
 - To be a vibrant, dynamic, learning organisation that values the contribution of all its staff and members.

- To promote the real value and positive impact of volunteering.
- To be an independent, credible, high profile listening organisation that provides leadership and advocacy for the Voluntary and Community sector in the city

3.5 VAC like many other agencies has experienced a drop in income as a result of a number of national funding sources drying up. Grant funding from the Council to VAC has also reduced over the last 2 years.

3.6 In April 2013 the Council put in place a Grant Aid Agreement with VAC. This sets out the performance management framework and the key objectives upon which VAC is expected to deliver in return for grant funding, see below:

1. Encouraging independence and Self-Sufficiency

- a. Preparing and supporting the third sector to responds to the increasing cuts in public services.
- b. Managing market development including development of current and new mechanisms e.g. Here to Help (H2H)

2. Being fair and support for the most vulnerable

- a. Early intervention and support to small third sector organisations providing services to vulnerable communities.
- b. Encourage organisations to work together to merge or assist with closing down where appropriate.

3. Personal responsibility, pride and releasing the potential of residents

- a. To work strategically with other partners to develop a cohesive approach to volunteer engagement.
- b. To promote volunteering in Coventry, providing information on individual and team based voluntary opportunities and matching volunteers to suitable roles.
- c. Working with other voluntary agencies and partners to up skill volunteers to meet local needs.

3.7 VAC reports on its performance on a quarterly basis, this is discussed at the quarterly Management Board meeting which is also attended by the elected members and a Council officer representative. In addition VAC meets quarterly with Council officers to discuss progress in relation to the agreed objectives. During the last 12 months some of the key activities have included.

- Supporting individual groups with their governance and fund raising.
- Providing training and support on group development, start up and closure
- Running the Volunteer Centre and delivering a range of outreach events to promote volunteering and match volunteers with volunteering opportunities in the City
- Bringing local voluntary organisations together to explore new ways of working through the development of the Here2Help consortia arrangements.
- Go live of Coventry Healthwatch managed through the Here2Help consortium.
- Involving a range of partners in the delivery of the cook and eat well programme.

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

4.1 The new Council Plan approved in January 2014 sets out the Council's vision and objectives for the next ten years. With increasing public sector cuts, the third sector has an important role in helping to deliver the priorities for the City. By attending the VAC Board meeting elected members can hear at first hand the support provided by VAC to the sector and any issues that the sector may face.

4.2 VAC Board includes representatives of local voluntary and community organisations elected by their membership. By attending the VAC Board meetings, City Council representatives benefit from discussion with third sector organisations on the VAC business plan and activities. It also provides an opportunity to network with third sector providers.

5 What Financial Contribution Does the Council Make to this Organisation

5.1 Voluntary Action Coventry was granted £190,250 in 2011/12 and this was reduced to £171,225 in 2012/13 and £150,000 in 2013/14 and for 2014/15.

6 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

6.1 Coventry City Council's representatives on Voluntary Action Coventry are Councillors Clifford and Sawdon. The representatives are invited to attend VAC's quarterly Management Board meetings and attend as observers rather than voting members of the board. During the period January 2013 to January 2014 inclusive Councillor Clifford attended two Management Board meetings and Councillor Sawdon attended three.

6.2 There is no remuneration associated with this appointment.

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper
Schedule of City Council Appointments to outside Bodies

Location: CH59