

## **Wellingborough and District Community Consortium Meeting Notes**

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2011 at Swanspool Pavillion**

RH informed attendees that Nene Valley Community Action now have a new website which has a host of information along with a chance for groups to advertise their events. [www.nvca.org.uk](http://www.nvca.org.uk)

Debbie Moore (Community Development Officer) advised groups that NVCA were starting a mapping exercise of where groups are working. Groups were asked to put their names against any areas that they were working in. This will help NVCA to ensure that specific information is signposted to the relevant organisations.

### **Prevention & Demand Management Consultation Response**

It was advised that NCC have had to do a step back approach (1 – 2 years) and will not be starting in April 2012. Many organisations will have had a contract extension whilst NCC roll out a phased approach to bring the changes in. NCC will be facilitating a further consultation with organisation and bringing a more detailed document to the table. Attendees were advised that the latest version of what was recommended to Cabinet in early November is on the NCC website. RH advised that the document is available to read or download from the NVCA website.

In the meantime NCC will be talking to groups that perhaps cover similar services about ways to set up partnership working and to encourage groups to change the way that they are focussed. Talking about groups that are well established in an area – it appears that they often attract people from further afield that do not have the same services in their area which then manifests into a higher concentration of people requiring services.

### **Feedback from WBC funding consultation**

Cllr Barry Graves confirmed that the consultation was launched in July 2011.

13 written responses were received, from 11 different organisations and a personal response based on knowledge of the local sector.

For many years WBC have run a Voluntary and Community Sector programme and they will retain this but with a 25% cut. WBC has undergone some structural changes with the loss of 80 staff.

The aim of the grants is to support services from voluntary and community sector organisations that help to achieve the Councils objectives. It is anticipated that funding awards will be for a three year period from April 2012.

The scheme is based on the themes outlined below. The closing date for applications is 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

General advice on Debt Prevention and Debt Management,  
Employment Advice and Support,  
Dial a ride community transport services  
Support for communities living in priority intervention areas  
Voluntary Sector Infrastructure support,  
Equalities Advice and Support,  
Support and Aftercare for victims of crime,

New total budget of around £200,000.

- The Council would fund services, not organisations.
- Community Grant Funding would be reduced by 25% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.
- Employment advice and support was a new service that the Council was looking to fund.
- The Councils policy of funding organisations to meet rental charges that are subsequently returned to the Council as rental payments would need to be reviewed.

WBC already has a commitment to contribute to the Countywide interpersonal violence work. A decision was made that Heritage could only be funded if additional budgets are found and Young People is to be kept in-house to allow the Council to support the Youth Council and other projects such as Democracy Week directly.

The working party will meet in December to review applications, prior to recommendations being made to Resources Committee on the awarding of funding to organisations in early 2012.

BG confirmed that WBC would like to see the voluntary and community sector get involved in a number of projects such as the Castlefields regeneration along with the renovation of the bandstand. There are various activities planned for the Queens Jubilee next year along with Party in the Park. The Olympic torch will be stopping in Wellingborough and there is a possibility of some intergenerational work there. It would be helpful if NVCA could facilitate an open meeting on how/what WBC and the voluntary and community sector can pull together to support these projects. BG also confirmed that the Health and Wellbeing board were running strong in Wellingborough but that the future of the Local Strategic Partnership was in question and that the election of two new representatives for the voluntary and community sector should be held in abeyance and the current representatives should be allowed to continue until the direction of the partnership is made clear.

The floor was opened to questions on the two presentations:-

Question: John Weavill

The whole emphasis is on prevention at the moment but yet the County Council are still cutting funds in areas such as Physical Disability and Older People.

Answer: Tony Meadows

There is planned commissioning for the area but early discharge is key – the figures for re-admittance to hospital is enormous. There will be specific lines of contract for Alzheimers and a Dementia Strategy for Northants which will in turn attract further funding to come forward.

NCC has no capacity to run commissioning on all the contracts so a phased approach is the way forward. Drug and Alcohol funding is very high and a proportion is ringfenced – NCC will look to see engagement of some of this money.

It should be made clear that there are some services that will not carry on.

Tony Meadows would like to hear from organisations who have issues regarding commissioning – it would be good to hear from organisations working in these areas.

tmeadows@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Question: Jenny Dixon

The new funding arrangement from NCC looks to be coming down to ward level. With some areas of deprivation and some more well off will this be the role of the Borough Councillors to advise more.

Answer : Tony Meadows

The methodology needs analysis by using the super output areas to support the allocation of funding. There may be 2 – 3 levels of need in a ward. This will be looked at with local and district groups.

Question: Jonny Whitmore

Funding for young people will be kept in house – what happens to the Youth Advisory Panel.

Answer : BG

The funding will be heavily weighted towards children and young people.

Question: Northamptonshire Carers

Northamptonshire Carers already have a Carers Hub which works very well. It is both physical and virtual with a phone line which staff man. All people can refer into the model. There is a form of triage with a Carers Assessment and people can be referred to other services such as Age Concern for sitting service and Crossroads for respite care.

RH added that with the NCC model it needs to be clear services are available to all – even to people that could help themselves financially. An example of this would be an elderly lady with no family living in her own home showing signs of dementia.

Answer: TM

There is a recommendation to remove the tenure aspect of the support services and that this mean that it would be based on a individuals need not what finances they have. There will be a fairer charging structure and Community based Housing Organisations will broaden their horizons to outside of their tenants to help owner occupiers.

Question : Northamptonshire Carers

Many smaller organisations and areas do not know about the Carers Hub – would NCC be able to pull all this information together to get it out to individuals.

Answer: TM

There is a clear need for someone like a Village Agent in local areas who can signpost individuals to organisations and make information available. We all need to be more creative and see what we can really do.

**Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership** - driving the needs of business forward and how the voluntary sector can benefit from working with the business sector. An overview from NEP was given. Presentation attached.

NEP advised that many businesses do not know who to approach to offer help and have no idea what many groups may need. They are looking at a joint funding bid with Northamptonshire Community Foundation to put together a web based approach on the lines of a dating agency where groups can post what they need and business can offer services that they can provide. Some businesses see working with the voluntary sector to see how their staff cope when they don't have the back up of their business back office support etc.

They also find that their employees are more motivated once they have done some volunteering.

NEP confirmed that ProHelp is an organisation that provides professional staff free time to help but that this had not really taken off and they were struggling to get enough projects. NVCA will put the ProHelp link on their website and details to contact them are:-

### Community groups

#### Do you need some free professional support?

Find out how ProHelp works, the type of support we provide and whether we can help your organisation.

To apply for support please contact the ProHelp team on 0115 924 7404.

Other ways of making contact with businesses would be by reading the Third Sector Magazine which is available online. This link will also be added to NVCA's website.

NVCA confirmed that a good source of fundraising gifts was The Phoenix Resource Centre in Raunds – contact details 01933 626000. This will also be put on NVCA website and included in the NVCA weekly ebulletin. AT mentioned that a good source of gifts in kind/items wanted would be Freecycle and Freegle – see details below.

Freecycle details <http://uk.freecycle.org/>

Freegle details <http://ilovefreegle.org/>

### Local Voluntary Sector Representative Feedback

Anne Toms (Voluntary Sector Rep for Wellingborough and District)

AT confirmed that the Countywide Forum has been talked about for around 10 years, is now funded by the Big Lottery and run by LION (Local Infrastructure Organisations Northants) including NVCA and others.

The Steering Group has now been established after elections held in March 2010. There should be 2 reps from each district but in some districts they did not get the required 2 people as there was not anyone put forward for the posts.

They have now met twice and established two working groups Task and Finish Group for the Annual Conference 2012 and Task and Finish Group for Communication.

The next meeting is due to be held in December. A Countywide Forum Worker has now been appointed, Dawn Cummins and it is now felt that organisations will start seeing a proper form across the County.

Jenny Osborne asked if there would be networking events – AT confirmed that nothing had been decided yet around Locality Based events but it was likely that they would have a more electronic way of keeping in contact with the 7 geographic localities.

Edeltraud Freund asked how will groups feed into the Countywide Forum – AT confirmed that NVCA Community Consortium will be the mechanism to feed into the Countywide Forum.

Members of the meeting advised that they were not enamoured with NCC's idea of a "Dragons Den" approach and asked that this be fed up through the Countywide Forum. It was also confirmed that the Steering Group had already written to NCC with regard to an event that they put on in Kettering in October which had been very poorly put together with poor graphics on the Presentation – this was a good example of the sector working together and meant that it wasn't just one organisation putting their name to the complaint.

Catherine Noonan – NCC stated that emphasis is not on the "Dragons Den" part of the bid.

### **Jonny Whitmore – Wellingborough Partnership**

JW confirmed that a Local Strategic Partnership was no longer a statutory requirement and he was not sure what will happen to the Partnership in the coming months. He agreed that until things have been made clearer it made sense to keep the two representatives who were coming up for election to continue in post. Currently the Partnership has 4 key areas Your Neighbourhood, Your Health, Your Money and Your Safety (Community Safety Forum). JW is the Youth Advocate who passes the views and opinions of young people so that the Partnership engage with young people. At present all Districts are now reviewing what they should do with regard to the Local Strategic Partnerships. East Northants have already disbanded theirs and have no clear way of now engaging with the voluntary sector. WBC have confirmed that they do want to engage with the voluntary sector and are looking at a way forward.

Jenny Dixon endorsed the decision that the current reps continue on until things are made clearer.

### **Any Other Business**

Lynn Lavender (Chair) of Wellingborough Voluntary Sector Forum confirmed that the Steering Group had met recently and it was decided that they will not hold any more meetings. In their opinion the NVCA Community Consortium meetings meet the needs of the sector. It is already established that if NCC or WBC want to launch any consultations that this will be done through NVCA. One of the tasks of the forum was to appoint representatives to the Wellingborough Partnership but with the changes afoot this will not be necessary. It should be noted that the Wellingborough Voluntary Sector Forum had been established for many years and thanks should be given to all organisations and individuals for their involvement.

**Next meeting of the Wellingborough Community Consortium will be on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012**