

Executive member feedback for Executive meeting Feb 2018

Devolution

- Consultancy event on Devolution in Alnwick. Attended by about 70 people, mainly individuals. Cllr Jackson, in his introduction, mentioned the importance of the VCSE in the bid that had gone to Government for devolution to be taken forward. We were asked to comment on four themed areas. The main area of interest for VCSE would probably be Employability and skills. Little time to ask questions put on a card “The VCSE has been identified as an essential partner in the bid for devolution. What role do you see the VCSE delivering, either as a partner on the Board or delivering services? No response to question.
- A “divorce” needs to take place from North East Combined Authority (NECA) before we can progress with a North of Tyne Deal. A mayor will be elected, but an interim mayor will be in place probably from summer 2019. To pay for a mayor and associated team, the local authorities can put a precept on Council taxes, but we were told that this would not happen and that the LA’s would take it from their existing budgets. However, a further event on 7th February, we were told the opposite.
- A further meeting on 7th February discussed how we could promote inclusive growth and the ambitions we had for the North of Tyne. There will be £20m a year for the NoT authority, and we need to look at how this can be used cleverly as a significant investment to drive economic growth. As well as this investment, the government are open to receive further business plans for consideration, for additional or further investment. North of Tyne have included housing and transport as some of the rural challenges faced.
- The withdrawal from NECA to the North of Tyne Authority needs presenting to government to show how it would also benefit the rest of the region (including those LA’s not part of the devolution deal) The Secretary of State will see if it passes statutory tests before it is laid before parliament. Agree an interim mayor then an elected mayor.
- The Inclusive growth element of the deal looks at a “cradle to grave” approach of better working and engaging with the VCSE to take this forward. They want to ensure representation from the VCSE on the Board and develop themed geographical networks for people to contribute.

Welfare

- The full roll out of Universal Credit has been put back until November 2018. This is when there will probably be a significant impact on the VCSE to provide support services for people living in Northumberland. This could be something that the Executive Committee may wish to discuss to identify what support is/could be available.

Equalities

- June 2nd 2018 First Northumberland Gay Pride event at Alnwick Rugby Club. Aim to spread message of Gay Pride out of Newcastle and into the northern heart of Northumberland.

Health and Well-Being

- A common thread through a lot of the papers at the Board was the impact of inequality on health and wellbeing in terms of the resultant lifestyle, take up of screening, types of illness and speed of both presentation and referral, which led to variation in outcome. A clear example is shown in the achievements of different GP practices in the presentation on Cancer. We know Inequality is increasing in the UK and is clearly beyond the remit of this board, but there are strategies in place for the areas discussed, Special Educational Needs and Disability, and Cancer Strategy. I pointed out the opportunities from the VCS in this work, to impact on lifestyle and expectations, as the tendency is to look for technological solutions.
- The changes in the “footprint” of the STP,(Sustainability and Transformation Plan) to one for the whole of the north was raised at the last meeting. There has been a great deal of change, and none of it has come to the board for discussion. A presentation on the changes to the STP/ACO (Accountable Care Organisation) and the proposed ACS (Accountable Care System), which seems to be a way of getting around the legal challenge to the ACO, and for which NCC have applied so that it can take forward work it had listed under the ACO. There was however no appreciation as to why we in the VCS should be interested or wish to be involved with the decision about an increased footprint of the STP. It appears it was proposed by the CCG`s in the region, in order to more economically deal with regional provision for such as cancer care, etc., and seems to be a fait accompli awaiting sign off from NHS England. It was presented as a regional issue with the expectation it did not involve the VCS, and we would be brought in at the appropriate time. I do not know if VONNE at the regional level have been involved in this, but it appears to be only the statutory organisations. This means opportunities are lost to engage both the sector and the public at an early enough stage to impact on the decision making process in a significant way.
- Following on from our reflections at the last Exec. we may wish to look at how we can work with others and co-ordinate our input to this board and its 4 sub committees, which are JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment), Communications and Engagement, Transformation, Ageing Well Partnership, in order to increase our impact.

West Northumberland

- Raised awareness in area meeting of my new role and also of the Consultation from NCC on support services. Also offered to meet up with colleagues to discuss area issues. Also sent out invitation by email to let me know key concerns
- West completely under resourced in terms of services for people in rural communities including child and adult care, transport, primary schools struggling, secondary schools in chaos and parents under massive stress calling upon mental health services
- Food banks overwhelmed by increases in numbers of people needing their support

- New concerns over “Funeral Poverty!” with increases in cremations NCC are having to pay for
- Organisations are having to find funds to provide services formerly provided by the public sector.