
Third Sector Support from Local Infrastructure Organisations

SYNOPSIS

For Members to agree the joint commissioning of third sector support from a Local Infrastructure Organisation covering Corby and Kettering.

1. Background Details

Northamptonshire County Council currently has a number of contracts with Infrastructure Organisations for the provision of support to the Third Sector which should complete at the end of March 2010 but are being extended until 30th June 2010. Local Infrastructure Organisations play a supporting, co-ordinating, representation, policy making and development role for the voluntary and community sector.

There are currently four local infrastructure contracts covering the county where Kettering and Corby are covered as one local infrastructure area. The present Kettering/Corby contract valued at £92,038 per annum (£50,000 NCC £20,500 CBC and £21,538 KBC) is currently let to Groundwork North Northamptonshire who work in partnership with Corby Voluntary and Community Services (CVCS) and Kettering Volunteer Network to deliver across the two Boroughs. The present contract requires organisations to deliver the joint following outcomes:

- Volunteering Stretch Targets
- Support and development to frontline Third Sector organisations
- Support Third Sector organisations across to access funding to deliver key priorities
- Facilitate representative structures to enable Third Sector organisations to inform and contribute to County and Local Strategies
- Support the delivery of LAA Priorities

There are then separate outcomes for Corby that CVCS deliver to which are more targeted to the needs of the Corby community and voluntary sector. Presently these are:

- (a) provide assistance to the voluntary / community sector, giving advice and support
- (b) provide and facilitate voluntary sector forum meetings
- (c) recruit, train and place volunteers with voluntary / community organisations
- (d) provide training to voluntary groups and other organisations
- (e) provide volunteering opportunities and personal development
- (f) provide funding advice searches to the local community
- (g) provide assistance and support in applying for different funding streams.

A stronger third sector is an asset to any local area. The third sector can contribute in many ways, and the government has included it as a priority on the basis of the following:

- The importance of the third sector to strong, active and empowered local communities

- The value of the third sector to responsive and effective local government
- The value of local government to the third sector

The timescale for the tenders for a Local Infrastructure Organisation is extremely tight to have an organisation appointed for the 1st July.

Timetable LIO specification funding:

- 16 February - One Corby Policy Committee
- 17 February – Advert released
- 1 March 2010 – Specification advertised (Appendix 1)
- 1 March to 23 April application process
- 22 March – Bidders' Information Day
- 23 April, 12 noon – Application closing date
- 27 April – Evaluation Panel
- 28 April – Presentations to Evaluation Panel
- 1 July 2010 – Start of LIO service

2. Report

Northamptonshire County Council, at its Cabinet meeting held in November 2009, agreed to devolve budgets for local infrastructure provision to Districts and Borough Authorities. There is £50k per year for the Kettering/Corby contract if each local authority agrees to a three year funding agreement to ensure there is sustainability in the investment.

In the areas where local council funding is only agreed for 1 year, Northamptonshire County Council would contract with a Local Infrastructure provider for the NCC contribution and the local Council would need to make its own arrangements.

Presently Corby and Kettering are covered as one local infrastructure area and it is proposed that Corby Borough Council and Kettering Borough Council continue this arrangement and undertake a joint commissioning process for the Corby/Kettering contract, which would have generic core outcomes relating to the following specific National Indicators and joint outcomes:

- N12 People who feel they belong to their Neighbourhood
- N16 Regular volunteering opportunities
- N17 Environment for a thriving third sector
- Link with countywide LIO organisation
- A Third Sector representative to sit on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) board

It is envisaged that the NI's above will not reduce in importance after one year of funding and as the Third Sector is best place to deliver against NIs 6 & 7 it is felt that

commissioning the work to the third sector provides better value for money in terms of delivery and support to the Council in meeting its NI targets.

Within the contract there would then be separate, specific outcomes for Kettering Borough Council and Corby Borough Council, which will be funded by each Borough Council, the successful organisation would have to deliver against these outcomes.

The successful organisation will be expected to sign a service level agreement which would be used by each authority to monitor how they are performing.

The proposed funding available for the Local Infrastructure Organisation is as follows:

- Northamptonshire County Council - £50,000 per year for three years
- Kettering Borough Council - £21,500 per year for three years
- Corby Borough Council - £ 19,470 per year for three years

The funding allocated for the Corby contribution is from the existing One Corby Core Organisation budget. The amount of funding presently granted to CVCS to deliver Local Infrastructure support in Corby is £20,500 this has been reduced in line with the 5% reduction to One Corby Grants as suggested in the budget proposals for 2010/11.

The contract for the Local Infrastructure Organisation would be for three years; therefore Corby Borough Council would be financially committed to £19,470 per year for three years.

It is proposed that Northamptonshire County Council pay Kettering and Corby Council's £25,000 each at the beginning of the financial year and then each local authority pay's the successful organisation through its own grant schemes in two equal instalments through the financial year.

The reason for this is to ensure that the funding can be controlled by each local authority if the successful organisation is not delivering on the specific outcomes identified or they are in any financial difficulties.

It is also proposed that Officers from Kettering and Corby Borough Council work together to develop the specification for the contract and to undertake the commissioning for the contract. The contract would operate from 1st July 2010 and cease on 31st March 2013. A joint contract would enable the development of service provision for the Third Sector in partnership with the statutory sector and our communities.

Options to be considered:

Option 1 – NCC, Corby and Kettering - 3 year Contract - £208,410

Northamptonshire County Council, Corby Borough Council and Kettering Borough Council undertake a joint commissioning process for an organisation to deliver Local Infrastructure Services to support the Third Sector in Corby and Kettering.

The benefits of a joint NCC, Corby and Kettering contract are;

- Increased stability and vibrancy within the Third Sector.
- Supporting resilience in the Third Sector to enable development of service provision in partnership with the statutory sector and our communities.

- Supporting shared approaches and consistency of information and communications in relation to policy, funding and grant making.
- Development of opportunities to maximise social capital, enable community and social enterprise.
- Increasing the profile, standing and reputation of Northamptonshire in relation to the positive work with and by the Third Sector
- Creating greater synergy of working and funding cycles across funding partners to improve forward planning, reduce duplication and enable collaborative working, in the best interests of our communities and customers.
- A 3 year contract provides certainty of funding for the sector and can be used as core funding. By all three authorities pulling their funding this allows the organisations to lever in additional funding to develop the service.
- Services can be developed in partnership to reflect corporate priorities and link to other key strategies and priorities such as the LAA and Sustainable Community Strategy.
- A joint Corby / Kettering contract will strengthen the service offered to the community and voluntary sector by offering shared expertise and specialism between the Local Infrastructure Organisation and the statutory sector

Option 2 – NCC and Corby Contract 3 year contract - £208,410

Northamptonshire County Council and Corby Borough Council undertake a joint commissioning process for Local Infrastructure Services to support the Third Sector in Corby. As Option 1, but certain areas would be reduced.

- Increased stability and vibrancy within the Third Sector but to a lesser degree than option 1.
- Supporting shared approaches and consistency of information and communications in relation to policy, funding and grant making but to a lesser degree than Option 1.
- Creating greater synergy of working and funding cycles across funding partners to improve forward planning, reduce duplication and enable collaborative working, in the best interests of our communities and customers but to a lesser degree than in Option 1.
- A 3 year contract provides certainty of funding for the sector and can be used as core funding. By two authorities pulling their funding this allows the organisations to lever in additional funding to develop the service but as there is less partnership funding as in Option 1 the amount of funding awarded may be reduced.

Option 3 – NCC, Corby and Kettering 1 year Contract. (Separate funding)

This would be separate contracts, although there has to be joint arrangements for commissioning the work as only one delivery organisation is required.

- Northamptonshire County Council will not devolved the £25K to Corby Borough Council for local Infrastructure provision instead it would contract for a Local Infrastructure provider for the NCC contribution which would concentrate on the National Indicators and not a Corby agenda.
- The appointed organisation through NCC may not be suitable or willing to deliver Corby priorities.
- If the organisation appointed by NCC was suitable and willing to deliver Corby priorities there would be two sets of monitoring information required. One for

NCC and the other for Corby. This would be extra administration and may mean two sets of monitoring meetings for the organisation.

- If Corby was going to continued funding in 2011/12 the tender process would have to start 6 months into the 2010/11 contract which does not allow any sustainability for the organisation delivering in Corby.
- A new provider would not be able to develop robust enough relationships with the community and voluntary sector within a 12 month period to be able to deliver Corby priorities listed in the contract.

Option 4 - Corby Contract – 1 year contract £19,470

Corby could commission on its own for Local Infrastructure Services to the third sector to deliver against set Corby priorities.

There are some disadvantages in doing this:

- There is no sustainability for the Local Infrastructure organisation which goes against Government priority on strong, active empowered local communities.
- Less funding is going to support the Third Sector in Corby
- There may be a reduction in service delivery
- If Corby was going to continued funding in 2011/12 the tender process would have to start 6 months into the 2010/11 contract.
- A new provider would not be able to develop robust enough relationships with the community and voluntary sector within a 12 month period to be able to deliver Corby priorities listed in the contract.

Option 5 - No support to the third sector

This will result in organisations having limited or no support. Development opportunities within the 3rd sector would be considerably reduced. The Local Organisation infrastructure is not that robust at the moment and this will increase difficulties and problems across the borough.

3. Issues to be taken into account: -

Policy Priorities

Joint commissioning would meet Best Value practises as there are generic outcomes for both local authorities.

Financial

There is a financial commitment from Corby Borough Council of £19,470 for a 3 year contract with the successful organisation.

1. Funding awarded can be a set amount and not index linked. The £19,470 is currently allocated for within the 2010/11 budget.
2. Members need to be aware that if the £19,470 is committed the amount will be committed for 3 years and therefore will be ring-fenced and excluded from any future budget challenges and processes.

Legal

The Council is required to ensure it has a transparent process and policy in respect of determining the level of grant subsidy to any community group. Grant awards will be in accordance with the Council's powers and duties, which will be reported at the appropriate time. Legal support has been sought to develop the template to be used by Officers for SLAs for Core and Devolved organisation funding.

Performance Information

The grants process is set up to fund groups and organisations. These have to provide information to the Council to ensure the funding provided has been allocated and spent as proposed. Monitoring forms have to be completed for payments to be raised.

Best Value

The Council's allocation of grant support to organisations that benefit the community meets many of the principles of Best Value. Best value principles are covered within the partnership arrangements between the council and the community organisation in management of the contract.

Community Safety

Community Safety is not been a determining factor for the grant allocation

Equalities

All grants will be given on the basis that organisations have either adopted an equal opportunities policy/procedure or have an equality statement. All projects supported must not discriminate or refuse participation by any members of the community.

Sustainability

The grants scheme supports the sustainability of community groups and organisations within the Borough.

4. Conclusion

By joint commissioning the organisation who is awarded the contract can consolidate central core costs to ensure that more funding is given to direct delivery of services. This provides better value for money and a better service to the community.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:-

- i) Agree Option 1 (as detailed within the report).

Background Papers

Previous Overview and Scrutiny Panel and One Corby Policy Committee Minutes
Previous Grant Sub Committee Minutes

External Consultations

None

Wards

All

Officer to Contact

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