

CABINET

THURSDAY 7th APRIL 2022

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR, TOWN CENTRE, EVENING ECONOMY & COMMUNITY SAFETY

ADOPTION OF STAFFORDSHIRE VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (VCSE) PLEDGE

Exempt Information

N/A

Purpose

To seek approval for the Borough Council to adopt and sign the Staffordshire Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Pledge for Local Authorities

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- Consider and adopt the VCSE Pledge.
- Promote and implement the VCSE Pledge
- Delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Voluntary Sector, Town Centre, Evening Economy & Community Safety to review the pledge annually in conjunction with the Assistant Director Partnerships

Executive Summary

The Covid pandemic has highlighted the excellent work and community collaboration that can be achieved when the Council and our other statutory partners work closely with the voluntary sector. Our key anchor organisations came together and supported vulnerable people and communities, obtained key funding and continue to work to ensure that that work continues.

To endorse the Council support to our voluntary and community groups moving forward, the signing of the Staffordshire Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Pledge is intended to be a public commitment of the Council's ongoing work in collaboration with the local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector and focuses on the Borough Council's commitments towards our local sector organisations.

The Pledge is consistent with existing excellent partnership work between the Borough Council and the local VCSE sector and is a good news story to promote and enhance that commitment. It is primarily a statement of intent, but one that can be used to measure the Borough Council's collaboration with the local VSE sector. A copy of the signed pledge will be displayed on our web page.

Guidance notes for the Pledge state that “Where appropriate, the main Pledges can be reviewed periodically against the day to day practice of the authority, working between Support Staffordshire and a nominated authority officer.”

Living In Tamworth - the commitments within are consistent with the Borough Council Corporate priority and have a positive on neighbourhood and place shaping.

Proposal

The Council agree to adopt and sign up to the Pledge and promote, in collaboration with Support Staffordshire and Team Staffordshire partners, the adoption and signing of the Pledge.

The Tamworth Wellbeing Partnership will be the link with the VCSE sector in Tamworth and will review action plans, commitment and outcomes of our work with the VCSE sector. Ongoing work will determine the ongoing strategy and partnership approaches.

An annual review to be established with the Portfolio Holder for Voluntary Sector, Town Centre, Evening Economy & Community Safety in conjunction with the Assistant Director Partnerships.

Reasons for Preferred Solution

Adopting and signing up to the Pledge will, by proving a public commitment to our work with the local VCSE sector create a positive image of the Borough Council.

The Pledge is consistent with Borough Council strategies and practice.

Options Considered

The Council does not adopt and sign up to the Pledge.	Existing work continues without a formal framework and commitment
The Borough Council agree to adopt and sign up to the Pledge	The Pledge provides a statement of intent and agreement with a schedule of reviews on an annual basis

Resource Implications

There are no financial implications associated with the proposal.

The proposal is consistent with existing staff resources and therefore there are no human resource implications.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

Commitments are legally binding and can be challenged	The Pledge is a voluntary agreement and therefore has no legal implications in itself.
Expectation of ongoing funding by the Council	There is no commitment ongoing or funding amounts as a result of the signing of the pledge

Social value is not included in the tendering and grant proposals	The clause referring to commissioning and procurement is consistent with the Borough Council's legal requirements and presents no compliance issues for the Borough Council.
Reputational risks of non-compliance with the Pledge	The Council is committed to the work of the VCSE sector and existing frameworks and partnerships will provide support

Equalities Implications

The proposal is consistent with the Council's equality duties.

No adverse impact has been identified from the proposal.

It is reasonable to expect the proposal to encourage equity and opportunities for all by supporting collaboration with local VCSE organisation including those that work to that very end.

Given the diversity of services provided by the local VCSE sector the proposal does not seek to target any particular groups of people.

Sustainability Implications

The pledge and actions will be reviewed annually

Background Information

The Pledge was introduced to recognise the VCSE sectors role as local service providers, as a source of local intelligence, as a form of democratic involvement and as an important part of the local economy.

It has been reviewed and is endorsed by Team Staffordshire, a local cooperation between VCSE umbrella bodies and elected representatives.

<https://www.supportstaffordshire.org.uk/working-together/team-staffordshire>).

Team Staffordshire is a voluntary sector led partnership, who co-operate to increase investment into Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent; and also to influence public policy for the benefit of local communities.

Newcastle Borough Council and South Staffordshire District Council, represent the District Councils in Staffordshire on the Team Staffordshire Steering Group

All Borough/District Councils in Staffordshire are being invited to adopt & sign up to the Pledge, by Support Staffordshire, who co-ordinate Team Staffordshire activity.

The Pledge replaces the former Staffordshire Compact, which the Borough Council was party to.

Report Author

Jo Sands, Assistant Director Partnerships

List of Background Papers

Not applicable.

Appendices

VCSE Pledge – Tamworth Borough Council and Team Staffordshire