

# Overall summary of the voluntary and community sector responses to the procurement consultation

## **Please note:**

- Due to the nature of written responses from groups and organisations it has not been possible to anonymise them to protect confidentiality. This summary lists the common themes reported, and does not identify individual groups.
- The nature of the conference event means that it has not been possible to attribute comments to individual groups. Therefore, no statistical data to measure views is available from that event, although comments have been incorporated.

## **Participation figures**

1. A total of **44** separate groups and organisations took part in the consultation and/or conference events:
  - **24** groups provided individual written responses to the consultation
  - A further **20** groups attended the information sharing conference held in May
2. Warwick District Council's Community Partnership Team currently funds **15** separate groups and organisations to deliver community work – these contracts will cease on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 to be replaced by the successful applicants from the procurement process.
  - **10** of these groups took part in the consultation process and/or conference
3. The participation of 'currently funded' and 'not currently funded' groups in the consultation breaks down as follows:
  - **77.3%** of participants are not currently funded by Warwick District Council
  - **22.7%** of participants are currently funded by Warwick District Council

## **Grouping of services under the three headings**

**65%** of groups that responded in writing agreed with the groupings.

Conference attendees were able to share a broader range of responses through discussion, although the majority of comments were about identifying specifics under each of the three headings rather than questioning the make-up of the groupings.

These are the most common themes raised by participants:

- How the overlaps between the headings will be recognised and scored
- Greater clarity of what WDC wants delivered was requested
- There is anxiety about the targeted geographical areas and the risk of reduced support to communities not encompassed

A substantial list of additional services to be included under the headings was submitted, each generally being specific to the individual participant.

## **Participant views on services to be added**

**60%** of groups that responded in writing said we had missed services under the service headings. This broadly reflects the responses given during the conference events.

Of the 24 written responses to the consultation, **13** groups provided suggested additions. **10** of these responses listed additions aligned with the service being delivered by the particular group that was responding.

The following additions were put forward by more than 1 group:

- Make explicit reference to vulnerable people and access to services (broadest possible definition of 'vulnerable')
- Homelessness and prevention of homelessness
- Ensure that a clear list of 'communities of interest' is provided
- Make sure that allowance is made for the running costs of buildings
- Ring-fencing of funding for groups currently being funded

## **Suggestions on how to measure the benefit of services to communities**

The majority of responses suggested measures specific to a particular service area or delivering organisation

These are the most common themes raised by participants:

- Set SMART performance measures
- A mix of quality and quantity measures
- Number of people 'helped'
- Service user feedback
- Measuring new users/beneficiaries, not existing users/beneficiaries
- Case studies and narrative reporting, not stats

## **Suggestions on improving monitoring arrangements**

**65%** of groups that responded in writing said that quarterly monitoring forms were not the best way to monitor projects. This broadly reflects the views expressed by conference participants.

These are the most common themes suggested by participants:

- Organisation-specific reporting measures should be used (so each organisation would report in a different way based on their existing practice)
- Six-monthly rather than quarterly monitoring
- Face to face interviews between WDC and the provider
- Visits by WDC officers and Elected Members to groups and activities being run, to experience them first-hand
- Ensure the monitoring process is robust and meaningful
- Make the monitoring process proportionate to the amount of funding awarded
- Only monitor the part of the organisation being funded – not the whole organisation

## **Feedback to be incorporated into future procurement/commissioning of voluntary sector services**

These are the most common themes raised by participants:

- Statutory providers need to procure services together, under a single contract, to ensure groups have the best understanding of the funds available
- Opening the tendering process up to the European Union is unnecessary – local services should be commissioned in a way that limits non-local competition
- The process of application is too time-consuming for small groups, and doesn't provide enough incentive to participate
- Contracts need to be flexible enough to allow movement given the rapidly changing nature of funding to the sector
- Consultation periods must adhere to the 12-week recommendation in the Compact agreement
- The 'targeted geographical areas' heading needs to be revised to ensure that all communities in need can benefit, whether they be geographical communities or communities of interest
- The language used in the supporting documents needs to be simpler
- The consultation should be managed differently
- The partnership focus of the tender is of concern to some groups, who are not used to working in this way
- The process has been squeezed into too-short a timeframe
- Consulting with groups and members of the public has divided opinion, particularly where services are not of universal appeal (and thus perhaps less likely to be selected by members of the public)
- Concern at the weight that might be given to the public consultation response on the basis that the respondents might not be representative of the whole community
- Thought needs to be given to how existing services can be supported on an ongoing basis to provide stability
- Pre-setting of budgets for the three areas reduces groups' ability to submit brand new concepts for delivery