

Impact Assessment



Assessment of: Proposed Civic Agreement between the Torbay, Plymouth and Devon Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Assembly and Devon County Council

Service: Communities Team

Head of Service: Simon Kitchen, Head of Communities

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service: Version 1.0 – 27/6/24

Assessment carried out by: Simon Kitchen

1. Description of project / service under review

The Council has worked alongside the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector throughout its history, and currently commissions Voluntary, Community and not for profit organisations, including charities, to deliver across its areas of responsibility including a wide range of care and support to vulnerable people, those nearing the end of their life, youth work and adoption, from library services and community transport.

The Torbay, Plymouth and Devon Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (TPD VCSE) Assembly, established in 2022, is a broad based inclusive and shared collaborative model where people, communities and organisations can contribute and engage in the way they want to. Everyone from across Torbay, Plymouth and Devon (TPD) from a VCSE who wants to be included will be included.

The Assembly provides network support necessary to create a fluid pool of people and organisations, with a broad range of skills, expertise, innovative solutions and lived experience that can fully engage in, inform, and influence strategic partnership discussions, co-design of services, policy development, co-commissioning and joint leadership and decision making. The Assembly provides a place where anyone can find out what is happening across local partnerships. (Please refer to Appendix 1 for further information about the Assembly's reach and governance arrangements)

The Assembly's network encompasses a wide range of different types of organisations (infrastructure, larger County-wide, small community groups, user-led organisations, Healthwatch etc) from across all the geographical areas of Devon (Torbay, Plymouth, North Devon, South Hams, East Devon, West

Devon and Mid Devon).

The Assembly works across all areas of need including health and social care, debt and poverty and all ages.

The Assembly is fully committed to equality and diversity, and aiming to ensure that the relevant VCSE organisations are involved at the earliest possible stage.

Proposal

Devon County Council and Torbay, Plymouth and Devon Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Assembly now wish to form a shared Civic Agreement to set out a commitment to work in partnership to better understand and collectively respond to some key challenges and opportunities for Devon in the years ahead.

The agreement recognises the fundamental role that both the VCSE and the Council, alongside key partners have in collaboration, co-design, and sharing resources to generate greater benefits and improved outcomes for Devon, its people and its communities.

The agreement will set out shared strategic priorities, principles and ways of working.

Critically, the agreement will be underpinned by an annual and mutually agreed plan of activity around specific areas of focus and priority, which will include key priorities for the Council.

Partnership arrangements will be established with designated lead representatives from each organisation to finalise and drive activity.

2. Proposal, aims and objectives, and reason for change or review

The agreement is a new proposal, though builds on relationships and arrangements across the VCSE sector and the Council. The agreement is designed to improve connections, relationships and understanding across colleagues and organisations. As a result it is hoped that specific opportunities may develop to improve outcomes for people in Devon; and to improve service delivery. However, this will be an indirect, rather than a direct outcome from this agreement.

3. Risk assessment, limitations and options explored (summary)

No other options were considered.

There are a number of Corporate strategic and operational risks which relate to the Council's interaction with the VCSE; or could be mitigated through intervention from the sector. This agreement and its delivery can support the response to key risks and opportunities for the Council.

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

The benefits and relationships developed as a result of the proposed Civic Agreement has the potential to impact any of Devon's residents and organisations, particularly in relation to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector. However, it is not anticipated that the Agreement in isolation will have and direct impact on residents in isolation.

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

The Assembly's network encompasses a wide range of different types of organisations (infrastructure, larger County-wide, small community groups, user-led organisations, Healthwatch etc) from across all the geographical areas of Devon (Torbay, Plymouth, North Devon, South Hams, East Devon, West Devon and Mid Devon).

The Assembly works across all areas of need including health and social care, debt and poverty and all ages.

The Assembly is fully committed to equality and diversity, and aiming to ensure that the relevant VCSE organisations are involved at the earliest possible stage.

The VCSE Assembly have a simple structure consisting of:

- 1 Executive Committee
- 2 VCSE network meetings
- 3 VCSE Assembly Themed Hub meetings.

An Independent chair (3.5 days per month) is accountable to the Assembly Executive Committee and ultimately to the wider VCSE Network.

In addition, the agreement will require relevant officers and members of the Council to engage and respond as appropriate.

6. Additional relevant research used to inform this assessment

Devon County Council reviews the current services internally using contract meetings, service performance quarterly reporting, outcome data and thematic discussions with the current providers. These activities enabled us to better understand how the services have been performing in meeting the

needs of Devon residents, meeting the targets set and developing the offer further. The findings from these discussions will be used to inform Civic Agreement and Work Plan and future thinking and have been a fundamental element in the strategic thinking behind this work.

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

No specific consultation has been commissioned.

The Agreement has been produced through co-production of the Assembly Chair, Executive Committee and officers from the Council.

Background information

8. Equality analysis

Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must consider how people will be affected by a service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (for work), sex, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are: informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations; proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision); fair, necessary, reasonable, and those affected have been adequately consulted.

| Characteristics | Potential or actual issues for this group. | <p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, ‘close gaps’). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the <u>DCC Equality Policy</u>?</p> |
|--|--|---|
| All residents (include generic equality provisions) | The agreement will align to the Equality Act and DCC’s Equality and Diversity Policies | All residents in Devon. The agreement will develop understanding, partnerships and relationships across organisations, including those reducing inequality. |
| Age | As above | All ages of people in Devon. The agreement will develop understanding, partnerships and relationships across organisations, including those reducing inequality. |
| Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people | As above | <p>Discussions in relation to the Civic Agreement, Work Plan and any services resulting from those discussions will be undertaken digitally, via telephone and in person. When in person the service will be required to be responsive to people’s individual needs as described above.</p> <p>There are no exclusions to access the Civic Agreement based on someone’s disability, including on the grounds of mental illness.</p> <p>The service is required to address barriers to accessing services which may include inability to pay for transport, childcare responsibilities, language, specific vulnerabilities and issues with reading/writing/digital literacy and are required to be flexible in their approaches to seek solutions to any other individual need that stops access. This will be assured through consideration relating to the timing and style of meetings and other communication alongside the engagement of those organisations that work with those citizens of Devon that identify within this category.</p> |

| Characteristics | Potential or actual issues for this group. | <p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, ‘close gaps’). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p> |
|--|--|---|
| Culture and ethnicity: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin/race, skin colour, religion and belief | As above | Individuals with protected characteristics will not be negatively affected by this agreement. This will be assured through consideration relating to the timing and style of meetings and other communication alongside the engagement of those organisations that work with those citizens of Devon that identify within this category. |
| Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women’s right to breastfeed) | As above | Individuals with protected characteristics will not be negatively affected. By this agreement. This will be assured through consideration relating to the timing and style of meetings and other communication alongside the engagement of those organisations that work with those citizens of Devon that identify within this category. |
| Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership | As above | Individuals with protected characteristics will not be negatively affected. By this agreement This will be assured through consideration relating to the timing and style of meetings and other communication alongside the full engagement of those organisations that work with those citizens of Devon that identify within this category. |
| Other relevant socio-economic factors such as family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, ‘digital exclusion’, access to transport options, rural/urban | As above | Individuals with protected characteristics will not be negatively affected. By this agreement. This will be assured through consideration relating to the timing and style of meetings and other communication alongside the full engagement of those organisations that work with those citizens of Devon that identify within this category. |

9. Human rights considerations:

We need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).

The agreement and its objectives will comply with the Human Rights Act 1998.

10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 11, otherwise complete the environmental analysis information below):

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| Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process | N/A |
| Planning Permission | N/A |
| Environmental Impact Assessment | N/A |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment | N/A |

| | Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these). | Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible). |
|---|--|--|
| Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost: | N/A | The VCSE Assembly has organisations that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with VCSE organisations whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects. |
| Conserve and enhance wildlife: | N/A | The VCSE Assembly has organisations that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with VCSE organisations whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects. |
| Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape: | N/A | . The VCSE Assembly has organisations that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with VCSE organisations whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects. |
| Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage: | N/A | The VCSE Assembly has organisations that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with VCSE organisations whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects. |
| Minimise greenhouse gas emissions: | N/A | The VCSE Assembly has organisations that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with VCSE organisations whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects. |

| | | |
|---|-----|--|
| Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise): | N/A | The VCSE Assembly has organisations that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with VCSE organisations whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects. |
| Contribute to reducing water consumption: | N/A | |
| Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level): | N/A | The VCSE Assembly has organisations that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with VCSE organisations whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects. |

11. Economic analysis

| | Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these). | Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible). |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Impact on knowledge and skills: | Nil | The agreement will develop relationships and understanding across organisations and partnerships. |
| Impact on employment levels: | N/A | |
| Impact on local business: | Nil | The agreement will develop relationships and understanding across organisations and partnerships which may lead to economic/commercial opportunities. |