

Executive – 6 November 2008

MONITORING OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS: SOUTH HAMS COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES, including the SOUTH HAMS VOLUNTEER CENTRE, and SOUTH HAMS CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Report of Head of Community Regeneration

Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 2000, Part 1.

Financial Implications: The existing Service Level Agreement financial support (to include provision for inflation increases) of:

- South Hams Community and Voluntary Services £33,297 (of which, £9,304 comes back to the Council as rent and service charge for The Cottage);
- South Hams Volunteer Centre £7,600; and
- South Hams Citizens Advice Bureau £40,179 (of which, £14,436 comes back to the Council as rent and services charge for The Cottage).

Purpose

1. To review the operation in 2007/08 of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between South Hams Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) and its core funders, South Hams District Council (SHDC), Devon County Council (DCC) and Devon Primary Care Trust (PCT), including the operation of the Volunteer Centre. Under the terms of the SLA (and agreed in minute E.175/01), to seek approval to roll forward the current 3-year SLA for a further year – i.e. to cover the year commencing 1 April 2011.
2. To review the operation in 2007/08 of the SLA between South Hams Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and its core funders, SHDC and DCC. To seek approval for SLA funding for the CAB to cover the year commencing 1 April 2009.

Contribution to Council Priorities

3. Members' support for CVS funding was as a result of their recognition of the role this organisation plays in representing the hundreds of voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and groups in the South Hams, and as one of the Council's key strategic partners supporting the development and delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy. In doing so, the CVS makes a direct contribution to the Council's overall aim 'to improve the well-being of the people of the South Hams'. It provides advice, training and other support to a wide range of VCS groups, which support priorities CP1 to 6 and positively helps the Council to fulfil the 6 Council commitments and 3 cross-cutting themes which underpin these priorities.

4. Members' support for the CAB recognises the valuable role this organisation plays in providing a range of quality advice and support services to individuals, who are often vulnerable and/or isolated. Again, this service makes a direct contribution to the Council's overall aim and supports priorities CP1 (affordable homes), CP2 (good jobs) and CP5 (an accessible council) whilst positively helping the Council to fulfil the 6 Council commitments and 3 cross-cutting themes which underpin these priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive RESOLVES to

- a) **note this progress report on the operation of the SLA with the CVS, including the delivery of the Volunteer Centre;**
- b) **approve the rolling forward by one year of the SLA funding for the CVS to cover the year commencing 1 April 2011;**
- c) **note this progress report on the operation of the SLA with the CAB;**
- d) **approve SLA funding for the CAB to cover the year commencing 1 April 2009.**

Background to the SLA with South Hams Community and Voluntary Services

5. Following a detailed examination by Scrutiny in 2002, the Council agreed to a 3-year partnership funded SLA to provide a greater continuity of core funding to the CVS (SC. 25/01, E. 55/01 and SC. 32/05 refer). This reflected the value Members placed on the role of the CVS and its contribution to Council objectives. Since this time, the operation of the SLA has been reviewed annually, reported to Executive, and Members have approved the rolling forward of the agreement by a further year each time.
6. A new SLA was prepared following 2006's review process with partners, with revised monitoring requirements introduced to ensure that the contribution the CVS makes to the corporate priorities of the funding partners can be evidenced (E.49/06 refers).
7. Commitment to continue this tripartite agreement has been pledged by Devon PCT, however some uncertainty still exists around the level of future funding they will provide. The PCT is currently negotiating with all Devon CVS's to equalise funding across the districts. In the past South Hams CVS has received a generous funding package from the PCT. This is likely to be somewhat reduced in the future.
8. The CVS has produced an annual monitoring report for the year 2007-2008 in accordance with the requirements of the new SLA. A summary is attached at Appendix A and this was discussed at a meeting with representatives of the funders on 30 September 2008. The monitoring report includes the statistics required by the SLA and provides an overview of the work of the CVS over the past year. At the meeting of SLA funders it was agreed that the CVS has made good progress in delivering the outputs and outcomes, and it was agreed in principle that the SLA funding should continue for a further year, subject to the approval of the Executive.

South Hams Volunteer Centre

9. Members will be aware that the CVS secured funding from this Council and DCC in April 2006 to host a new Volunteer Centre project. A part-time co-ordinator was recruited in May 2006. The role of this post is to look at new and innovative methods of recruiting and retaining volunteers, taking into account local needs and trends, as well as supporting organisations that involve volunteers in their activities. The monitoring requirements of the Volunteer Centre are provided at Section E of Appendix A.

Background to the SLA with South Hams Citizens Advice Bureau

10. The CAB completed the delivery of a 3-year SLA which covered the period April 2005 to March 2008 (E.49/06 refers). The SLA was revisited in August 2007, when it was agreed that the delivery of services and monitoring requirements were still appropriate, and met the corporate priorities of the funding partners. Funding was therefore 'rolled on' for a further 1 year (E.56/07 refers).
11. The intention had been to draft a new SLA for 2008-2011 to include a rolling funding commitment (E.49/06 refers) in line with good practice, to ensure that the funding partners are compliant with the Compact for Devon. In light of the uncertainty surrounding the Local Government Review in Devon and how this will impact on VCS funding packages, it is proposed, as an interim measure, to approve SLA funding (based on the expired SLA) for the CAB to cover the year commencing 1 April 2009.
12. The CAB has produced an annual monitoring report for year 2007/08 in accordance with the requirements of the SLA. A summary is attached at Appendix B. The monitoring report includes the statistics required by the SLA and provides an overview of the work of the CAB over the past year.

Risk Assessment

The following are the significant risks and opportunities identified:

Opportunity	Issues / Obstacles	Benefits
To approve the rolling forward by one year of the SLA funding for the CVS.	Not approving the rolling forward of the SLA funding for the CVS will result in an uncertain future for the organisation. They will lose continuity and the ability to properly plan ahead. Losing the CVS would leave a significant gap in service provision and no organisation for VCS groups to turn to for help and advice. Much additional pressure would be placed upon the Council to fill the void.	The rolling forward by one year of the SLA funding for the CVS will ensure service continuity. The services the CVS provides to the VCS in the South Hams are of significant value for money to the Council.

<p>To approve SLA funding for the CAB (based on the expired SLA) to cover the year commencing 1 April 2009.</p>	<p>Not approving SLA funding for the CAB for the year commencing 1 April 2009 will result in an uncertain future for the organisation. It will lose continuity and the ability to properly plan ahead. Losing the CAB would leave a significant gap in service provision and no organisation for individuals in need of impartial advice and support to turn to for help. Much additional pressure would be placed upon the Council to fill the void.</p>	<p>Approving SLA funding for the CAB for the year commencing 1 April 2009 will ensure service continuity.</p> <p>The services the CAB provides to the VCS in the South Hams are of significant value for money to the Council.</p>
<p>To promote equalities through SLAs with the CVS and the CAB.</p>		<p>The services provided by CVS and the CAB promote equal opportunities and help prevent discrimination in our communities.</p>
<p>To promote sustainability in the South Hams through SLAs with the CVS and the CAB.</p>		<p>The SLAs support the promotion of sustainability through their emphasis on supporting the VSC and promoting community-led actions and local decision-making.</p>

Conclusion

13. The security and funding provided by the SLA with the CVS helps ensure that the organisation can develop and make a sustained contribution to voluntary and community sector groups and community life in the South Hams.
14. The security and funding provided by the SLA with the CAB helps ensure that the organisation can develop and make a sustained contribution to the lives of some of the most vulnerable and/or isolated individuals in the South Hams.

Amanda Harvey
Acting Community Development Officer

Executive
6 November 2008

Lee Bray
Head of Community Regeneration

Background Documents:

South Hams CVS Service Level Agreement 2006 (rolling)

South Hams CVS Service Level Agreement Monitoring Report 2007–2008

South Hams CVS Annual Review 2007–2008

Draft South Hams CAB Service Level Agreement 2009–2010

South Hams CAB Service Level Agreement Monitoring Report 2007–2008

South Hams CAB Annual Review 2007-2008

Appendix A

Summary of South Hams CVS (CVS) SLA Monitoring Report 2007 – 2008

For the period April 2007 – March 2008 the CVS has reported on outcomes, in particular relating to all 3 funders' priorities, as well as on a limited number of key outputs.

A) Development

Outcome: The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) partners are informed about community and VCS needs and services, and are influenced by that knowledge. New services are developed within the VCS to meet identified needs.

Examples of issues being raised with funders or the LSP which influence policy, strategic plans and / or service delivery:

- Achieved through working directly with various partners, through the partnership approach of Devon Association of CVS (DACVS) and working within the Devon Consortium.
- The CVS has led a key project enabling and encouraging VCS representation within the Local Area Agreement and supporting the voice and involvement of the sector.
- The CVS has worked with LSP partners to raise awareness of the Compact.
- The CVS has developed successful working relationships with a wide range of LSP partners enabling an enhanced dialogue and understanding of the sector, and working to enable effective consultation mechanisms.
- Partners have been able to approach us for specialised local knowledge of the sector to shape their services.
- The CVS is a key player in the outcomes of the Sustainable Community Strategy providing the linking bridge with partners and the VCS, as well as taking an active role in working groups and activities (i.e. Sherford, Volunteering, Environment South Hams, Migrant Workers Initiative, and other partnerships such as the South Devon and Dartmoor Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), Community Planning database).
- Worked with the district co-ordinator of DCC Early Years & Childrens Services, providing support with governance issues in various settings.
- Involvement with the South West Forum sub-sectoral research.
- Involvement in South Devon College Enterprise day, working alongside students developing community projects.
- Worked with Peter Fletcher Associates to help draw up a governance structure for Senior Council for Devon.
- Helped establish the South Devon Coast Local Action Group in order to secure bid to SWRDA.

Value of external investment in the area of benefit which has been secured directly by the CVS / VC or as a result of advice and support provided to other VCS organisations:

- During 2007-2008, the CVS helped local voluntary and community groups to access in the region of £300,000 of funding, and supported 70 groups with their funding needs.
- Our work with local community groups to help them develop their fundraising skills has been particularly important. By helping community groups to understand what makes a good application, and by giving them the confidence to write their own applications, we aim to help them to become financially secure in the future.

- We also provide subscribers to our e-bulletin services with an in-depth monthly round up of latest information for funding relevant to local organisations. Local organisations have found this additional service very helpful in keeping up to date with changes in funders and trust news.
- We continue our work with groups to attain a sustainable funding mix rather than being reliant on grant funding.

Number of signatories to the Compact for Devon in the area of benefit:

- The CVS has signed on behalf of its core members and for the local VCS after consultation with users of our services. In addition, several groups have also signed up to the Compact in their own right.

B) Support

Outcome: The local VCS is better informed about best practice and is well supported by the CVS through its core range of services

Number and circulation of newsletters and / or e-bulletins produced:

- 6 issues of Voluntary Vine were published during the year. They were distributed to over 550 recipients, including local and voluntary groups, parish councils, libraries, and community colleges
- 6 issues of Funding Extra were published and distributed along with Voluntary Vine.
- Funding bulletins were sent to interested member groups once a month during the year. 52 Snippets and 45 Training email bulletins were sent to interested member groups during the year.
- A new series of information sheets were updated and expanded and added to the website in downloadable form. The series is designed as a complete guide to the basics for small and new groups.
- The CVS website has continued to be updated and offers an RSS news feed of regular updates from the CVS.
- Our acclaimed information services are now part of a service to all Devon CVS who pay a subscription for receiving e-bulletins and information sheets to pass on to their members.

Office Services:

- Local groups continued to make good use of our range of equipment to use and hire (including the badge maker, digital projector and screen, laptop, display boards and photocopier).
- The CVS resource library containing specialist publications was used by local groups 16 times over the course of the year.
- The meeting room was used 28 times by a variety of different local groups.

Number of organisations attending VCS forums or liaison events and number of such meetings held:

- 5 meetings of the Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF) were held around the South Hams during the year 2007-2008 with 37 organisations represented.

Annual survey of service users:

- Our annual survey of users and partners was done electronically this year. The survey showed that the CVS is continuing to deliver relevant and well received services to support the local VCS. Over the last few years, we have also been able to map the involvement of the VCS in partnership working with others. This has grown immensely in the last three years with a larger number of groups than previously working in partnership with others.

Record of plaudits and complaints:

- As a result of success with funding or opportunities, we often receive thanks and plaudits from many local organisations.
- We have also been commended for our work in partnership with others, and taking part in regional and national events.

Case examples of effective support given to local organisations to enhance capacity and sustainability:

- Please refer to The Gordon Carling Foundation case study on page 12 of the full CVS SLA Monitoring Report 2007–2008.

C) Representation and Liaison

Outcome: LSP partners routinely consult with the VCS and involve the sector in service development

Examples of consultation activity facilitated:

- The CVS has enabled consultation mainly through our forum co-ordination and made available notifications of a wide range of local, sub-regional and national consultations through our communication networks and via direct mailing to relevant local organisations on specific issues.

Examples of consultation / involvement activity with hard to reach groups:

- The CVS is leading on a key Devon wide project aiming to make the local voice heard and involved up to a county level.
- The CVS has worked in partnership with other county infrastructure organisations to enable consultations to take place.

Evidence of the CVS advocacy with statutory partners on behalf of the VCS generally or of individual organisations:

- The CVS has worked with a particular organisation regarding contract funding and arrangements that potentially would have been a breach of the Compact if we had not intervened and enabled dialogue.
- The CVS has worked with another local organisation to enable them to have an understanding of data protection issues in relation to a contract with a statutory partner.
- When issues arise over potential changes in services or provision, the CVS has taken the concerns from local organisations and communities and liaised with partners to communicate their concerns on their behalf.

D) Strategic Partnership Work

Outcome: Both the CVS and local VCS organisations are routinely involved in partnership working and LSP activity

Examples of VCS involvement in strategic and partnership activity:

- The CVS has played an active role in the evolution of the LSP and its working groups and initiatives, and in informing and involving local organisations of its progress. The CVS and local organisations have participated in the LSP's Community Partnership Forum.
- The CVS is represented, and represents our local VCS, on a wide range of local and sub-regional partnerships including the LSP, CDRP and Compact for Devon. It is also becoming increasingly active as a representative on other thematic partnerships.
- The CVS through its VSF has enabled the nomination and election of VCS representatives to the LSP and Devon Children's Trust Locality Forum Groups.

- As our survey indicated, a wider proportion of local organisations are involved in partnership working than previously and we have worked hard on encouraging and enabling local organisations to become involved: 68% of respondents work in partnership with other VCS organisations; 59% of respondents work in partnership with either SHDC or DCC; 36% of respondents work in partnership with an educational body; 4.5% of respondents work in partnership with the PCT.

Evidence of CVS influence on community planning priorities and activity:

- The CVS enables the VCS to take part in community planning and delivery of services through information sharing, facilitation and brokering of relationships between key people in the statutory sector and local organisations. We also use our highly developed information networks and our comprehensive database of local organisations to target specific groups or localities.
- Examples include Pops, Complex Care Teams, SW Patient and Public Engagement Pilot activity, LINKs, district wide activities and local town initiatives, and county activity and health consultations. Partners routinely consult and work with us to be able to link to appropriate communities of interest for their needs.

E) Volunteer Centre Activity

Outcome: The role and function of the VC is well known locally; organisational practice in using volunteers is improved

In May 2006, a part time Volunteer Co-ordinator was recruited to deliver the Volunteer Centre for the South Hams. The service continues to be highly successful. We are still aiming to increase the funding to enable this essential 'wrap around' service to grow further by increasing the hours of the Co-ordinator. This will enable more outreach services for volunteering activity with targeted projects such as youth volunteering and creating a market town presence across the South Hams.

In the last year, the Volunteer Centre has also been involved in the Local Public Service Agreement activity for volunteering as part of the 'Count Me In' project. This aims to count the amazing number of hours volunteers are doing across Devon.

The Volunteer Centre is accredited by Volunteering England:

- The service has achieved Volunteering England quality accreditation for all six core functions: brokerage, marketing, good practice, developing opportunities, policy response, strategic development. It is awarded on detailed evidence of activity and independent feedback from client organisations and volunteers. Success at the first attempt owes much to the productive integration of the centre with the CVS. Full accreditation was achieved in June 2008.

Evidence of promotion of volunteering e.g. through newsletters, talks, participation in events:

- Please refer to pages 18 and 19 of the full CVS Service Level Agreement Monitoring Report 2007–2008.

CVS Annual Monitoring Key Statistics	07/08	06/07	05/06
A. DEVELOPMENT			
Number of newly establishing voluntary groups	38	85	67
Total number of voluntary groups	551	572	487
Number of successful applications (known to CVS)	70	64	82
Value of successful applications (known to CVS)	£300,000+	£286,405	£739,134
B. SUPPORT			
Number of Voluntary Vines published	6	6	6
Total distribution list	550+	550+	550
Number of Voluntary Sector Forums held	5	6	6
Number of organisations represented	40	42	41
Number of electronic funding bulletins sent	18	18	18
Number of times the CVS meeting room used	28	86	86
E. VOLUNTEER CENTRE ACTIVITY			
Number of volunteers supported	178	67	17
Number of 'client' organisations supported	149	105	-

Appendix B

Summary of CAB SLA Report 2007 – 2008

Opening hours and locations from which the service is provided:

Monday – Thursday = 10:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:00

Friday = specialist appointments only

Outreach Services (not part of the SLA):

Ivybridge Town Hall = Monday 10:00-12:00

Kingsbridge, Quay House = Wednesday 10:00-13:00

Dartmouth Medical Practice = Wednesday 13:00-16:00

Number of paid staff. Hours worked (per week). Type of paid staff:

Core Service (SLA funded):

- Manager - 37 hours
- Advice Session Supervisor - 32 hours (2 people job share)
- Casework Supervisor - 12 hours
- Administrator - 9 hours

Other Services (non-SLA funded):

Legal Service Franchise:

- Casework Supervisor - 37 hours
- Caseworker - 37 hours
- Administrator - 37 hours (2 people job share)

Project Workers:

- Income Maximisation Project: Caseworker - 15 hours (ended 2007)
- Tax Credit Take-Up: Caseworker - 7.5 hours (ended 2007)
- Rural Access Project: Caseworker - 22.5 hours (ended March 2008)
- Migrant Worker Advice Service: Caseworker - 8 hours
- Debt Worker: Caseworker - 16 hours
- Citizens Advice Bureau Tutor - 6 hours

Number of volunteers. Type of volunteer staff:

48 volunteers:

- 32 advisers
- 4 trainee advisors (working through the Citizens Advice Certificate programme)
- 1 support worker
- 2 administrators
- 1 social policy co-ordinator
- 8 trustees

Training sessions undertaken by staff:

Training attended included:

- Helping clients resolve employment problems
- Overview of benefit system
- Paying for care

- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit
- Advising on possession proceedings
- How property is dealt with Individual Voluntary Arrangements and mortgage arrears
- Mental health and good practice
- Introduction to debt
- Housing Foundation
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Domestic violence and housing

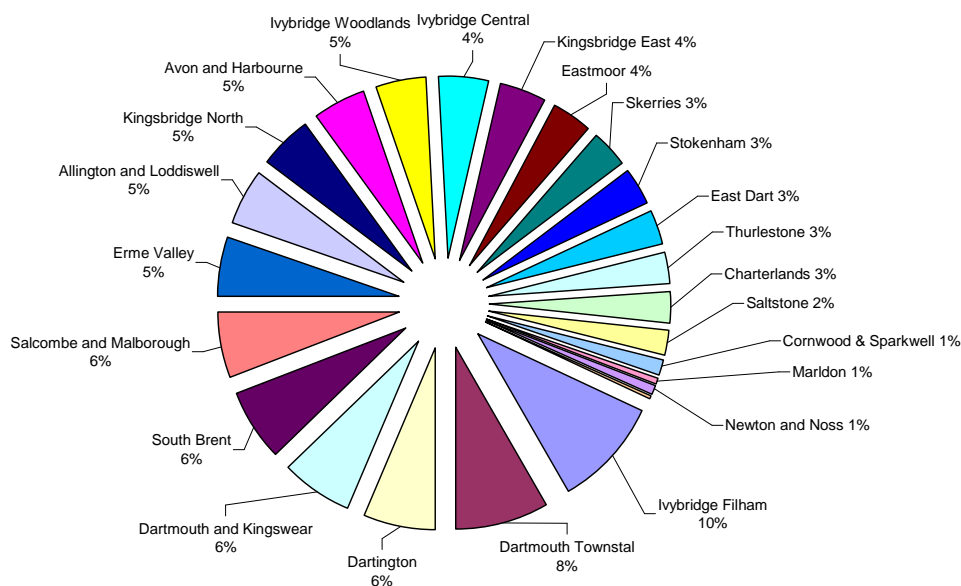
Citizens Advice put on various courses throughout the year at different venues which advisers can attend. We also have in house sessions either at the workers meetings or as specific sessions. All advisers must attend some training through the year.

Analysis of amount of debt work (e.g. by type):

Credit, store and charge card debts	18%
Unsecured personal loan debts	14%
Bank and building society overdrafts	10%
Council Tax, Community Charge arrears	7%
Water supply and sewerage debts	7%
Other	6%
Bankruptcy	5%
Catalogue and mail order debts	5%
Fuel debts	4%
Telephone debts	4%
Overpayments of Working and Child Tax Credits	4%
Mortgage and secured loan arrears	3%

Please refer to Section K of the CAB Service Level Agreement Report 2007–2008 for the full breakdown.

Information about where clients reside (limited to ward):



Any other information of value that the bureau can readily supply:

As part of our operation, South Hams Citizens Advice Bureau undertakes social policy work, identifying social problems that are causing hardship and supplying evidence to try to effect change.

During the year we produced social policy evidence in the following categories (Please refer to Section M of the full CAB Service Level Agreement Report 2007–2008 for the full breakdown):

Benefit	30%
Debt	16%
Finance	13%
Utilities	11%
Housing	9%

We are still producing evidence reports on the poor administration of Tax Credits and clients facing paying back large overpayments. We are also seeing the devastating effect of the instant stopping of benefit; with families relying on this source of income, debts can very quickly start to accrue and it takes some time to re-establish benefit with new claims and to stabilise debt.

We have recorded many incidents of irresponsible lending, with banks lending money to clients who did not have the means to repay the finance they had been given.

We have evidence of the effect of GPs charging for supporting evidence for disability benefits.

Most of our evidence on utilities is on trying to contact companies over the telephone. Clients generally come to us after having failed to contact them directly.

Our development for 2008-2009 is to improve our access to clients and we will continue to search for further funding for outreach and home visiting, as we see this as vitally important given the geography of the South Hams.

CAB Annual Monitoring Key Statistics	07/08	06/07	05/06
Number of client contacts	10,289	8,442	7,745
Total number of issues handled	10,286	13,927	13,941
Information about where clients reside (by issue):	See pie chart		
Dartmouth		1,222	1,017
Kingsbridge		1,835	1,543
Ivybridge		1,590	1,313
Totnes		3,795	3,938
Outlying areas		-	6,129
Number of issues categorised by subject:			
Benefits	3,623	4,209	4,245
Consumer	253	244	263
Debt	2,794	5,511	5,009
Education	47	29	34
Employment	1,057	1,060	977
Finance (other than debt)	134	140	170
Health	174	164	211
Housing	818	684	681
Immigration	33	30	54
Legal Issues	402	403	379
Relationship and family matters	430	440	439
Tax	104	88	83
Travel	49	20	30
Utilities	161	106	95
Signposting	40	657	974
Other	167	142	298
Amount of benefit generated for clients	Approx £1,000,000	£1,251,933	£917,023
Analysis of amount of debt work	Over £7,000,000	£11,779,137	£ 8,179,985
Percentage of people using the bureau by telephone	43.8%	45%	45%
Percentage of people using the bureau by email (no email advice service)	Less than 1%	Less than 1%	Less than 1%
Number of formal complaints about the bureau	1 (ongoing)	4 (3 resolved, 1 ongoing)	3 (all resolved)