

New service to support voluntary and community organisations in East Devon

This report provides details of the work undertaken to secure a new East Devon Voluntary Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) support service.

A new overarching service to provide support for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) groups and organisations in East Devon is being set up by Devon Communities Together using funding acquired by EDDC through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

East Devon has been without such support for the VCSE sector for several years and although we have tried previously to support the creation of a provision funding could not be secured to progress the project. In 2022 through an application for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund we were able to secure a grant of £60,000 per year for three years to progress this project.

Through a procurement process we were able to secure a contract with a provider (Devon Communities Together) to establish this service for the VCSE sector in East Devon. As part of the procurement process, we compiled a specification document setting out what service we expected and the conditions of the contract. Devon Communities Together submitted a delivery statement which was then assessed for compliance and suitability against the specification before the award was given.

Devon Communities Together are an independent charity, which has a long-established reputation for working closely with rural communities and the groups and organisations that support them. The new service will be designed in close collaboration with East Devon's VCSE sector to provide better connections across VCSE groups and organisations in the district. It will encourage joint approaches to tackling important local issues which it is anticipated will include topics such as health and social care, social isolation and loneliness, fund raising, community resilience, transport, inequalities and climate change. Local VCSE groups and organisations will decide what's important.

For more information the service specification and the Devon Communities Together delivery statement are attached.

East Devon District Council specification document for the procurement of a CVS function across the district.

1. Background

East Devon is currently in the unenviable position of not having an overarching support organisation for our voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. We are unique within Devon, as every other area has one and we suspect we are one of very few in the country without one.

This has been a significant issue since our last Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) withdrew its provision around 5 years ago. However, the issue has become particularly apparent more recently, whenever the VCSE sector needs to be coordinated as a part of a wider campaign or initiative. Two recent examples include the lack of coordinated support throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and more recently in the provision of wrap-around support for the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, coordinating support for refugees and host families. The current poverty reduction and mental health agenda could be better actioned and better serve our local communities if a new CVS were established and maintained. There is also the issue that VCSE groups are being relied on more and more to provide services people desperately need, such as to combat loneliness and social isolation, assisting those wishing to apply for Universal Credit, helping those dealing with debt, helping with personal care, etc. Without coordinated support, some of these essential VCSE groups could start to disappear.

A CVS can also help the VCSE sector to secure funding. There is funding available for a wide range of organisations and community projects. However, the issue is that many VCSE organisations are unaware of these funding opportunities, they are not 'grant ready', they apply for things they are ineligible for, or they fail to submit a strong enough application. For example, with our own Small Grants Fund, 27% of applications were not eligible for the funding, which is time and resources wasted by those VCSE groups that could have been spent on service provision. A CVS would help and support such organisations with their funding bids, increasing the likelihood of them submitting strong and successful applications.

The development of a new CVS will ensure that community and voluntary services can operate in a more coordinated manner, with more opportunities to unlock funding and provide other services to improve the quality of provision across East Devon.

2. Service required

To resolve the issues around the lack of coordination between community, voluntary and social enterprises (VCSEs) in East Devon we have allocated UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funds to establish a new Council for Voluntary Service (CVS). We have been awarded £60,000.00 a year for three years by the fund for this work with a total award of £180,000 for the three years.

The new CVS for East Devon needs to be an umbrella organisation for the whole of the East Devon voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. It needs to provide opportunities for support for the whole sector in areas such as governance, training and funding advice. It also needs to provide a co-ordinating service for the VCSE sector in

response to wider campaigns and initiatives that may benefit from a multi organisational response.

East Devon District Council (EDDC) expect to see the new CVS service provide the following strategic actions:

- To work in partnership with voluntary, community and social enterprise groups to target work where community support is needed.
- To periodically review community and individual needs to identify service requirements and target advice, support and service delivery to respond to identified needs.
- Strengthen and build capacity in the sector to compliment the services provided by statutory partners to enhance community resilience.
- Provide a CVS support group to assist in coordinating and supporting VCSE groups enabling them to thrive.
- Commissioning, enabling and encouraging VCSE groups where there is a perceived gap in service provision.
- Improving the quality of life by creating vibrant, inclusive, supportive and balanced communities.
- Fund raise, support fund raising and oversee activity in the VCSE sector and advise on improvements.
- Advise on safeguarding policy and procedures so VCSE groups can operate safely and effectively.
- Facilitate access to legal and governance advice for VCSE groups in East Devon.
- Collaborate and work in step with VCSE on projects that benefit East Devon communities.
- In partnership with VCSE groups produce a VCSE sector compact to steer the activities and set out high level outcomes.
- Operate a VCSE group training programme to meet the development needs of VCSE groups.
- Establish a directory of VCSE groups with contact details and the scope of service provision.
- Create a VCSE group website that is accessible and provides accurate data on VCSE groups operating in the district.
- Advocate for VCSE groups and enhance the reputation of the sector.
- Celebrate VCSE achievements and promote the social value of volunteering.
- Monitor VCSE activity and undertake periodic reviews and surveys.

Through our engagement with the VCSE sector, they outlined a number of core activities a CVS can provide to help improve their operation and resilience. East Devon District Council therefore expect to see the new CVS service provide the following operational actions:

- Help VCSEs to get set up
- Help VCSEs develop a business plan
- Help VCSEs apply for funding
- Help VCSEs to publicise their offer;
- Provide VCSEs with guidance and training
- Help VCSEs become more sustainable
- Help to share best practice between VCSEs

In addition to these much needed services, a CVS should help to increase the involvement of VCSE organisations in strategic developments, providing a 'voice', representation and advocacy within the community and essential intelligence for decision makers and planning bodies, resulting in better local services that meet the needs of our local communities.

The main contact for the provider within EDDC will be the project lead however there may be other officers with EDDC that might wish to work with provider to assist the VCSE sector.

The provider would need to show that they work with and support a range of charities. We would expect key personnel who will be delivering this contract to have a wide range of knowledge and skills in delivering successful CVS service and would have a wide range of experience in working within the VCSE sector.

3. Outputs/Outcomes

The aim is for the new CVS to support at least 150 VCSEs. Of those supported, we aim to see at least 9 VCSEs achieving funding for new or improved facilities and at least 90 individuals receiving training. Engagement numbers for the organisations supported should also increase. The longer term aim is to build-up the capacity of this new body to the degree where it can become self-sustaining without the need for future UKSPF funding in future rounds and meet those strategic actions listed above.

We recognise the need for the provider to be accepted and welcomed by the VCSE sector in East Devon and want to hear how this will be achieved in your methodology delivery statement.

The formal outputs and outcomes that are required to be delivered over the three year funding period and as part of the funding agreement with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, are as follows:

Table 1.

Output/Outcome	Minimum targets
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support (numerical value)	150
Number of facilities supported/created (numerical value)	9
Number of Tourism, Culture or heritage assets created or improved (numerical value)	9
Number of people attending training sessions (numerical value)	90
Number of new or improved community facilities as a result of support (numerical value)	9

4. Key Milestones

The funding agreement from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is that up to £60,000 will be provided each year for three years, this will fund work for the following years 2023, 2024 and 2025. It is expected that the provider will meet all of the outputs and outcomes listed above at section 3 by the end of March 2026 at the latest, in line with our UKSPF funding agreement.

Progress on these outcomes will be expected to be reported on at least a quarterly basis to the relevant EDDC officer.

Table 2.

Outcome	Target date 31/12/2023 (Performance linked to second payment in Jan 2024)	Target date 31/12/2024 (Performance linked to third payment in Jan 2025)	Target date 31st December 2025 (performance linked to meet UKSPF targets)
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support (numerical value)	50	50	50
Number of facilities supported/created (numerical value)	3	3	3
Number of Tourism, Culture or heritage assets created or improved (numerical value)	3	3	3
Number of people attending training sessions (numerical value)	30	30	30
Number of new or improved community facilities as a result of support (numerical value)	3	3	3

In terms of the wider outputs that we would also want to monitor the following on a quarterly basis.

Table 3.

Outcome	Quarterly targets
Number of organisations engaged with	15
Number of organisations helped to get set up	1
Number of organisations helped to develop a business plan	2
Number of organisations helped to apply for funding	6
Number of organisations helped to publicise their offer;	6

Number of organisations provided with guidance and training	15
Number of organisations worked with to become more sustainable	6
Number of schemes run to help to share best practice between organisations	1
Hours delivered providing CVS support	N/A

We expect the successful service provider to introduce a plan for the long term funding of the service drawing on resources from various sources to ensure that we have a self-sustaining project to continue the CVS work.

5. Reporting Requirements

The provider will be required to report on the progress of their work to the project lead at East Devon District Council on a regular basis at least quarterly. Also the provider will need to provide the information about the performance towards the outputs and outcomes to the relevant EDDC officer as required. EDDC will provide a monitoring report template for use by the provider.

The provider will collect all data required for the monitoring template and other data which may support the Services' evaluation, such as case studies and feedback throughout the Term of the contract.

8. GDPR

We would expect the provider to have a GDPR policy and procedures in place. The provider shall comply with their obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and shall take steps to ensure it is compliant with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation from 25 May 2018.

EDDC is a public authority for the purpose of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "FOI Act") and EDDC will, as a public authority, determine in its absolute discretion and be responsible for its response to any request for information made to it under the FOI Act, and shall not be liable to the provider or any other person for any loss suffered or costs incurred as a result of any bona fide disclosure of information under the FOI Act.

The provider will cooperate in all respects with the council to ensure compliance with the FOI Act. If the council is asked to provide information to any person as a result of the FOI Act, the council shall be entitled to request such information from the provider, and the provider shall respond to EDDC's request within 7 working days from such request. In the event that the provider receives a request for information under the FOI Act from a third party, it shall consult with EDDC before responding to such request.

In the event that the provider receives a request under the FOI Act for information it shall consult with EDDC before responding to the request.

11. Payment Details

The first payment of £60K will be made once the award has been made for the work to be undertaken through 2023. The subsequent payments will be released upon completion of each stage as described in table 2, and where, acting reasonably the Project Manager considers that each stage has been satisfactorily completed, payments will be released and a purchase order will be raised.

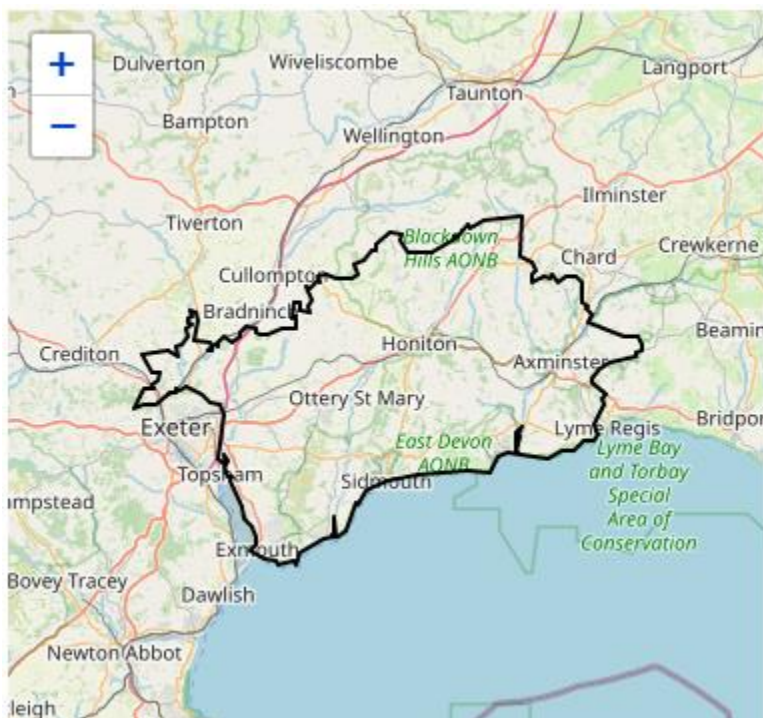
The provider should submit an invoice on headed paper detailing the work carried out and stating the EDDC purchase order number covering the £60,000.00 for that year's service.

The provider will then need to send the invoice to payments@eastdevon.gov.uk or East Devon District Council, Income & Payments, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton EX14 1EJ for payment. Any queries can be raised with the EDDC project lead.

As payment is upfront, if the provider does not meet the specified delivery targets, the authority reserves the right to call the provider to a meeting to agree a rebate for the work not delivered.

12. Where the service is to be delivered

The service provided will need to cover all of the charity and voluntary sector across the district of East Devon. The provider should ensure that any training and other meetings or events are held in East Devon or are accessible via online delivery.



13. When

The contract duration will be for 3 years. However, it is hoped that this is just the start of the journey for the CVS and that it can continue past this date to provide co-ordination and

support to the VCSE sector across East Devon. If after this time further funding is approved, a new procurement will need to be undertaken.

14. Contract Implementation

Upon contract award there will be a meeting between EDDC and the supplier to discuss contract implementation.



Devon Communities Together: Methodology Delivery Statement East Devon Voluntary Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) Support

As requested in the Methodology Delivery Statement supplied, information is provided in the following areas in support of our application to establish a new VCSE umbrella infrastructure service for East Devon district. It is noted that information provided in our response will form part of any ensuing Contract.

Question A: How will you deliver the required services to the CVSE sector in East Devon to meet the key deliverables on time.

1. Who we are

Devon Communities Together (DCT) is an independent charity (charity number 1074047) with over 60 years' experience of asset based community development (ABCD) infrastructure work. As the Community Council for Devon, we are part of the national ACRE network (Action for Communities in Rural England). Founded in 1961, we have accumulated a wealth of experience in helping communities resolve and progress the matters that are important to them. We have worked together with communities on a wide range of projects and services that support our vision to inspire and support rural communities in Devon to be dynamic and sustainable places for people to live and work. Our track record, experience and skills will support the creation of a new framework for a comprehensive and effective district wide VCSE infrastructure service informed and co-created by VCSE organisations in East Devon.

Devon Communities Together is constantly evolving, keeping pace with the ever changing social, cultural and economic needs of communities, yet our foundation is in those basic needs that never change. We have the flexibility to support our vision of dynamic communities shaping their own futures. Our mission is to inspire communities using our knowledge, networks, professionalism and enterprise.

Our Strategic Aims are to...

...champion diversity and inclusion, hear minority voices and respond to their needs.

...identify and work to reduce inequalities to ensure 'rural proofing of services, and to improve community health and wellbeing.

...work with communities to develop innovative ways to achieve community resilience and a positive impact for climate change and sustainability.

...develop community capacity building, through local facilities, spaces, services, people and their skills.

...support Devon's rural economy, local entrepreneurs and businesses to develop and thrive, and promote community wealth building.

...flourish as an agile, flexible, learning organisation, responding positively to the evolving needs of our communities, stakeholders, and staff.

Our values are:

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Resourcefulness
- Collaboration
- Inclusion

2. Our experience

Our experienced and specialist staff team is focused on inspiring, upskilling, training, supporting and advising groups and individuals to make changes and achieve positive outcomes for Devon's communities. Our approach to project and service delivery is rooted in helping communities to help themselves and is underpinned by principles of asset-based community development (ABCD). We work with a very broad range of people, including rural and coastal communities and those living in Devon's towns and villages, supporting them across a wide variety of activity including:

- Creating accessible, inclusive training and work opportunities for young people
- Tackling digital inequalities
- Investigating and addressing health inequalities
- Tackling rural loneliness and isolation
- Enabling affordable housing
- Reducing food poverty
- Improving people's health and wellbeing
- Helping communities and organisations reduce their carbon footprint
- Supporting communities to prepare for an emergency
- Influencing development through neighbourhood planning
- Helping communities mobilise their assets
- Community and parish planning
- Supporting village halls and other community buildings
- Helping sport and play facilities
- Providing a wide range of training opportunities
- Supporting social enterprise and community businesses

We routinely monitor our activity, publishing annual impact reports to illustrate the difference our work makes. Examples of projects – both current and successfully delivered within the last 18 months – where we have (or are) leading community infrastructure, capacity building, business planning and consultation and engagement activity include:

3. DCT Infrastructure Support Activities

The following illustrates the breadth of our infrastructure support activities over the past few years.

Category of Infrastructure Support Activity	Examples
Asset Based Community Development Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon Highlights Programme, Covid – 19 Community Support Programme, Brixham Town Hall Repurposing Community Development Project • Design Led Thinking Focus Groups & events • Recruitment , support for and retention of volunteers and community activists
Community Engagement/ Consultation/ Community Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation strategies / plans – design, data handling, analysis, report writing • Community consultation activity and event management • Community questionnaires / surveys development and management • Community led planning (Parish Plans/ community plans)- action planning, implementation and monitoring • Over the past year, we have delivered a number of community consultation exercises including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tavistock Neighbourhood Development Plan - Braunton Neighbourhood Development Plan - Ford Oaks Solar & Green Infrastructure Facility Community Consultation
Community Facilities/ Buildings Advice & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Hall Audit and Community Buildings Support – an extensive audit of the needs and aspirations of Village Halls across Devon with 215 of 400 audits completed in the period between September 2023 and March 2023. • We also deliver direct to Village Hall organisers a programme of information, advice and training including the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management Structures/ Governance procedures - Business Planning - Fundraising strategies/ information and advice - Service delivery Support - Feasibility Studies
Community Grants Administration	<p>DCT has a strong track record of successful administration of grant schemes. Over the past year, examples of the grant schemes that we have managed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the VCSE Assembly, we managed the large grants (£165,000) grants to grass roots VCSE groups and organisations from Devon Public Health Community Covid Outbreak Management Community Grant Fund • Wild About Devon Grant Fund Administration – designed as a simple way for community groups to access small amounts of funding to kickstart or advance their wild life project. 77 community wildlife groups applied to the Wild About Devon community grant scheme and 27 were awarded funding of up to £500 to undertake diverse wildlife projects • Devon County Council Growing your Community Grant Fund (£50,000) – a focus on Village Halls and community groups. • In partnership with Devon Voluntary Action, we collaborated in the administration of the NHS Cost of Living Community Grant Scheme

	<p>(£300,000). DCT was responsible for due diligence around large grants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon Community Resilience community emergency planning grant fund - Over 200,000 m2 of land has been restored or improved and 420 people were engaged, including 113 volunteers. Phase 2 was launched in March 2023, with 47 applications received already from across the county. Of these, 28 have been assessed with seven grants awarded to a value of £1,852.
Community and Social Enterprises/SME advice & support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provide a range of social enterprise and business support including business models/planning; governance and legal frameworks; financial planning; sustainability 'health checks' and sustainable funding strategies; digital capability & engagement with digital technology • Examples of projects that we are currently running include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Start Devon – a project providing business and social enterprise support to would-be social entrepreneurs, including - Enterprising Halls – a programme of training and advice designed to help community buildings and Village Halls see themselves as commercial organisations in need of robust and sustainable business and financial plans. incorporation and charity registration - Devon CRF Social Enterprise Support Programme – a programme of specialist advice and coaching for social entrepreneurs.
Community Capacity Building/Devon Community Learning Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon Community Learning Academy provides a wealth of group learning, peer networking, online courses, skills development and professional training opportunities for businesses, community groups, social enterprises, charities, local councils and individuals in Devon.
Emergency Planning/ Resilience Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Devon Community Resilience Forum supports communities to develop their community emergency plan; a document that guides community response in an emergency and helps communities to prepare. • Devon Resilience Innovation Project - DCT is responsible for the stakeholder engagement aspect of this project that focuses on co-creation of local flood protection schemes with a nature-based focus • Devon Community Resilience Forum - DCT manages the Devon Community Resilience Forum which is supported by funding from Defra, Devon County Council and the Environment Agency who we report to monthly on community resilience activities and stakeholder engagement including grants awarded
Environmental Sustainability Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCT is a member of Devon Net Zero Task Force and is actively working with partners to deliver the Devon Carbon Plan • We are delivering Devon Net Zero and Climate Change Community Peer Network, a pilot project funded by the University of Plymouth

	<p>designed to pilot approaches to visioning a sustainable future as a way to engage and involve communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change/sustainability action planning
Fundraising Strategies & Income Diversification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We offer support on a range of funding sources (including crowdfunding) and fundraising plan development, financial investment; sustainability information and advice, and Social Investment strategies
Housing Needs Surveys and Community Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCTs hosts and facilitates the Devon Community Housing Hub with its focus on community led housing and the identification of affordable housing opportunities across the county • Through this we deliver an annual programme of Housing Needs Surveys (delivered through Devon Community Housing Hub)
Neighbourhood Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We offer support to communities around consultation and engagement; building a robust evidence base and developing effective and robust policies • We run Devon Land Use Framework, a Devon-based project designed to support the national Land Use Framework through community engagement
Transfer of Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have supported communities in the Transfer of Services and Assets to community ownership (e.g. buildings / land / facilities) • Transfer of Services to community responsibility

Additionally, on behalf of Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, we are currently leading a VCSE Virtual Wards pilot (also known as Acute Hospital at Home) which is being trialled across Devon's Eastern Local Care Partnership. Working with other members of the VCSE (including Wellmoor CIC, British Red Cross, Westbank, Age UK, West Devon CVS, Living Options Devon, Ottery Help Scheme, TRIP CTA, Seachange Devon), we are supporting patients and carers in East Devon in their use of digital technologies in a home setting. Through this project, we have refreshed links with VCSE group and organisations in East Devon.

4. Our links with Devon's VCSE sector

We have strong strategic links including with county, district and parish councils; ICS, One Devon NHS and play an important role within Devon's VCSE sector including as a key member of the Leadership Group of Devon, Plymouth and Torbay VCSE Assembly, whose members are supporting our delivery of the Virtual Wards project described above.

The VCSE Assembly recognises that strategically and across the wide range of activities undertaken across our communities there are opportunities for better collaboration and engagement to effect positive system change delivering better outcomes for all. The Assembly is led by VCSE sector infrastructure services to manage arrangements for engagements of third sector organisations / community service specialists and people with lived experience, on the co-design / co-production / co-commissioning of improved service delivery solutions.

In East Devon, we have long-established contacts, strong networks and routinely work in partnership with the district's Town and Parish Councils and its 65 Village Halls. We have worked alongside and provided infrastructure support for the VCSE in E Devon for over 60 years and supported VCSE groups and organisations in the district across a broad range of projects during this time. During the last financial year,

we have actively worked with, supported, and collaborated over 100 VCSE organisations on a range of different activities. We are actively involved in the East Devon Local Care Partnership.

5. What we will deliver

To deliver the service detailed in the specification, drawing on our own experience, our established reputation, and our strong links within Devon's VCSE sector as well as best practice and available learning from elsewhere in the country, we will co-create with VCSE groups in East Devon a framework to create a new overarching VCSE service for the district. Our approach will be supported by a series of tried and tested methodologies (described in more detail below) to ensure successful outcomes.

We will:

- Connect geographic groups and structures to share, draw in and join up intelligence and insight, through an inclusive and collaborative community asset mapping approach
- Grow VCSE/ public sector collaboration to improve local community outcomes including – health & social care; wellbeing; economy; community wealth building; affordable housing, community resilience, digital inclusion; transport, inequalities & climate change
- Develop system change dialogue on creating culture shift and improved outcomes and social value to support a new way of working, influencing strategic, people centred and place-based policy and service development to enable positive change
- Allocate a dedicated staff resource – e.g. a project manager supported our team of community development officers - to lead on the delivery of the project;
- Work closely with East Devon VCSE groups and organisations to co-design a programme of work to deliver project outputs and outcomes. Key elements of the programme will include:
 - two early VCSE “Creative Conversation” events designed to establish the scope of the project with East Devon VCSE groups and organisations. Ideally these events would take place early in the project (June/July) avoiding the summer holidays and so that initial activity could commence in September.
 - The first event would provide the opportunity to introduce ourselves to local VCSE groups and organisations; describe the role we have been invited to undertake and the new VCSE infrastructure support service offer, review project outcomes as listed in the specification and invite feedback.
 - The second event, taking into account learning from the first event, would be designed to discuss and agree the approach needed to deliver those outputs and outcomes over the lifetime of the project identifying key themes, target areas and core activity.
 - DCT will then develop a detailed programme of work (by the end of August) which would include:
 - regular open meetings (at least bi-annually) for East Devon VCSE groups and organisations to ensure on-going opportunities for networking, input and collaboration with East Devon VCSE groups.
 - A VCSE support group will be established to assist in co-ordinating and supporting VCSE groups enabling them to thrive. Terms of Reference will be established to define and focus the work of this group, frequency of meetings and its relationship with other East Devon VCSE groups and organisations. (Quarterly meetings or as needed)
 - A programme of sector capacity building activities will be established, including targeted training, advice and support (including Place based & People Led & ABCD, charity & social enterprise governance, legal, policy, business planning, impact evaluation & digital marketing and fund-raising) designed to support existing and encourage the creation of new VCSE sector groups and organisations including support for the facilities that they may run (commence in September and run for the duration of the project)

- Support the co-production of an East Devon VCSE Partnership Agreement (building on the idea of a 'Compact') within the first year of the project to guide activity over the remainder of the project and act as a springboard and guide for a sustainable service beyond March 2026.
- Creation of a marketing and communication plan (by the end of September and reviewed every 6 months) which will include consideration of how best to establish and maintain effective VCSE sector communication channels and accessible online platform (to be created within the first 6 months and refreshed annually); use of social media posts (e.g. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook); engagement with local press and media designed to promote and inform the public about East Devon VCSE groups.
- Linked with marketing and communication plans, community asset mapping methods will be established (building on the idea of a directory which will ensure that people can easily access information about VCSE groups and organisations in East Devon and that those groups and the services they provide are widely promoted. It is anticipated that this work will link with existing countywide online VCSE information sources.

Through our established links across the county and within East Devon (e.g. local government, health providers, charities and other organisations), we will work to increase the involvement of VCSE organisations in East Devon in strategic developments, providing a 'voice', representation and advocacy within the community and essential intelligence for decision makers and planning bodies, resulting in better local services that meet the needs of our local communities.

6. Methodologies

Supporting the creation of the new VCSE framework for East Devon, we will apply a number of tried and tested principles and methodologies (approaches) to achieve the listed outcomes and outputs. The DCT staff team are experienced in innovative community engagement approaches using Asset Based Community Development and Design Led Thinking tools to develop solutions, in combination with formalised procedures such as community planning.

Throughout the project, we will work closely and collaboratively with local groups and organisations in East Devon, applying principles of Asset Based Community Development in order to assess and strengthen the resources, skills, experience, strengths and potential held in communities across the district. We will apply a Design Led Thinking approach – a systematic, intuitive, people-focused problem-solving approach to implementing change; use Theory of Change/Logic Models to help groups and organisations develop and implement successful projects and help them to understand how to monitor their impact and the social value generated by their activity.

In this way, we will upskill and provide workforce development for the sector as a whole across the district, building VCSE network capacity and - by increasing membership and strengthening the network - we will help grow the influence and 'voice' of groups and organisations at a local level enabling it to more effectively engage with and influence local policy development; decision making and planning.

7. Outputs and Outcomes

In developing the new service, we will, as specified, across the period of the project (as illustrated in the table below), identify and work with at least 150 VCSE organisations across East Devon. Of those supported, at least 9 VCSEs will achieve funding for new or improved facilities and at least 90 individuals will receive training. An important goal will also be to increase engagement numbers for the organisations supported. The longer-term aim is to build-up the capacity of this service to the degree where it can become self-sustaining without the need for future UKSPF funding in future rounds and meet those strategic actions listed above. Our approach to the outputs and outcomes detailed in the specification is illustrated in the table below.

Table 1

Outcomes (Change)	Outputs (Nos.)			Methodology (Approach)
	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support (numerical value: 50/year)	50	50	50	Drawing on the methodologies described above, the approaches we use with groups and organisations will be based on a combination of: Signposting, advice and specialist support (e.g. governance, funding, finances, bid-writing, business planning; sustainability) Advice about the creation of locally focused communication and marketing incusing e.g. creation of newsletters/ e-bulletins/ website resources/ social media messages Local themed networking and connecting events. Promotion of a culture of peer learning and mutual support.
Number of organisations engaged with (15/quarter)	60	60	60	
Number of organisations helped to get set up (1/quarter)	4	4	4	
Number of organisations helped to develop a business plan (2/quarter)	8	8	8	
Number of organisations helped to apply for funding (6/quarter)	24	24	24	
Number of organisations helped to publicise their offer (6/quarter)	24	24	24	
Number of organisations provided with guidance and training (15)	60	60	60	
Number of organisations worked with to become more sustainable (6/quarter)	24	24	24	
Number of schemes run to help to share best practice between organisations (1/quarter)	4	4	4	
Number of facilities supported/created (numerical value)	3	3	3	
Number of Tourism, Cultural or heritage assets created or improved (numerical value)	3	3	3	Applying a similar approach to that outlined above – identifying specialist advice and guidance where needed- we will work with groups responsible for Tourism, Cultural or heritage assets or

				thinking about taking on responsibility for such an asset to develop informed, realistic and sustainable plans.
Number of people attending training sessions (numerical value)	30	30	30	These outputs will be drawn from the activities described above.
Number of new or improved community facilities as a result of support (numerical value)	3	3	3	These outputs will be drawn from the activities described above.

8. Project Management

We will use our tried and tested project management systems, processes and tools to support design and delivery of the work programme. Our project management processes will directly support successful project design and implementation as well provide the basis for regular reporting to the commissioner supported by robust monitoring and evaluation.

9. Monitoring & Evaluation

We will design a Theory of Change Impact Evaluation Framework to ensure that key lessons are learnt and applied to plans for a sustainable service with measurable social value beyond March 2026.

DCT is the only Devon county-wide Asset Based Community Development charity, specialising in and with extensive experience of the provision of independent Theory of Change, Logic Model, Social Impact measurement and evaluation for community led and place-based groups and organisations.

We have a successful track record of providing high quality Theory of Change based independent programme evaluations, including for National Lottery and European funded projects for a broad range of partners including Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner; Petroc FE College; West Devon Youth Association; Public Health Tactical Management Group; Devon Recovery Co-ordination Group; Local Authorities.

DCT has the in-house expertise to work alongside the network of participating delivery partners to help them to better realise and articulate their current and potential impact as part of the programme. For example, articulating clear social and environmental outcomes that they want to measure on an ongoing basis and increasing the number of participants that they work with.

DCT's approach has a strong focus on supporting delivery partners to build up qualitative as well as quantitative data, we are experienced in supporting project partners to produce case-studies, short videos, photographic evidence to demonstrate the impact and the learning of local activities.

10. Sustainability/Future funding

Drawing on our own experience as a long-established charity, we will establish a plan for the long-term funding of the service which will draw on resources from various sources to ensure that the new service is self-sustaining and able to build on and develop its support for the VCSE in East Devon from April 2026.

Question B. A breakdown of how the fixed budget of £60,000 / per annum, and the resultant hours calculated against the framework rates, proportioned to deliver the required services.

11. Project Costs

The majority of project costs will support staff salaries (project management, community development and marketing), with a small amount ring-fenced for expenses including venue hire. The following is provided as an indication of how we will breakdown the budget over the period of the project. Key assumptions are listed below:

Cost centre	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Staff costs	£51,809	£62,543	£61,643	£175,994
Expenses (e.g. venue hire)	£750	£1300	£1075	£3125
Total	£52,559	£63,718	£62,718	£179,118.87

Notes and Assumptions:

- As per the specification, a total of £180,000 (£60,00 pa) is available to support project activity over 3 years (2023-26)
- The figures listed above assume a June 2023 start date up to the project end date of 31st March 2023
- Project duration: 34 months during which of activity in support of the project outputs and outcomes will be delivered
- As advised by DCC, costs listed above are outside the scope of VAT
- Staff hours: Project manager: 0.5 fte; Community Development Officer: 1 fte; Marketing support at 2 days/month
- DCT staff operate on the basis of a 36.25 hour week

Question C: What resources you will have in place to ensure that all services are delivered on time and in a compliant manner.

12. Resources

The following resources will be made available to support the project:

- i. Infrastructure – DCT, as a charity and employer, has in place the necessary infrastructure to:
 - Receive grant monies available to fund the project.
 - Employ the staff needed to design and deliver the project on standard pay and conditions.
 - Store information, data and other materials associated with the project safely and securely (e.g. using in-house CRM systems).
 - Deliver the project using our project management processes, systems and tools (supported by staff training).
 - Effectively communicate with stakeholders either face-to-face at our office or remotely through video communication (e.g. Teams, Zoom)
 - We bring connection with national, voluntary and community sector focused networks and organisations including the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA); the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO); Social Enterprise UK; Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and the Rural Services Network (RSN).
 - Our county-wide strategic connections are described above

- ii. Staff – we will allocate a dedicated asset-based community development staff resource from within our existing staff team to lead on the design and delivery of a programme of work to meet the outputs, outcomes and milestones detailed in the specification. Staff allocated to the development of the new service will have the necessary skills to successfully lead the project to completion and will be line-managed through the CEO and Deputy CEO.
- iii. Equipment - we will supply all staff allocated to the project with the necessary equipment to successfully carry out their role (e.g. laptop, phone, desk space and other relevant office equipment)
- iv. Accommodation – we operate a hybrid approach to work ensuring that staff have the flexibility to work in the best location – office, home, community venue - to meet the needs of their work. Staff working on this project will have access to our office which is located at Matford Business Park, Exeter. They will have the choice to work at home and we will also seek out opportunities for co- location with East Devon VCSE to encourage connection, collaboration and co-creation.

Question D: Provide details of the names, experience, skills and capabilities of the key individual(s) who will be working on the delivery of this contract.

13. Staff allocation

As described above, we will allocate a dedicated staff resource to the project.

- Project Management staff resource of 0.5 fte will be allocated to the oversight of the delivery and performance management of this programme.
- Project Officer staff resource of 1 fte will be allocated to the delivery of this programme
- Marketing & Administrative staff resource of 2 days/month will be allocated to supporting and promoting this programme.

Our project management staff team is made up of highly experienced and skilled staff, who provide direct line management and operational supervision to all project staff. Project managers review project outputs against targets monthly and conduct 6 weekly 121 support and supervision meetings with project staff. All staff are supported through annual appraisals, individual learning and development plans and specialist in house training.

Staff allocated to the creation of the new service will have the necessary project management, engagement, community development, organisational, budgetary, monitoring and evaluation skills to successfully lead the project to completion. All DCT delivery activities will be fully compliant with ISO 9001 and 14001 Quality Standards. The project team will be supported by DCT's executive team specifically our CEO and Deputy CEO

14. Key Project Delivery Staff

Should we be successful in securing the bid, we will allocate a single project lead which will have the support of the other staff listed above to support successful design, implementation and promotions of the project and its activity.

- Hannah Reynolds
The focus of the large part of Hannah's professional career has been in working with, or working for, rural organisations and social purpose businesses, as they negotiate the shifting tides of policy, diversification

opportunities and finding funding in difficult circumstances. As a consultant to the Plunkett Foundation, Hannah has provided support to rural community shops and other enterprises e.g. rural clubs, community centres and village halls. Hannah has extensive project management experience. The focus of the large part of Hannah's professional career has been in working with, or working for, rural organisations and social purpose businesses, as they negotiate the shifting tides of policy, diversification opportunities and finding funding in difficult circumstances.

- **Harry Bonnell**
Harry holds an MSc in 'Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability' from BTH University (Sweden) and has 8 years' experience of community engagement work in both London and Devon, facilitating a wide variety of multi-stakeholder and volunteer-based projects. In 2016/17 Harry studied for a masters in 'Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability' where he learnt and applied business and group facilitation techniques – specifically to help move towards a more sustainable world.
- **Rod Birtles**
Rod is an experienced community development and engagement specialist and project manager. He has many years' experience of working in development and management positions in a range of community and arts organisations, with responsibility for all aspects of financial, fundraising, governance and legal structures. Rod has specific experience in inclusivity and Theory of Change Impact Evaluation As senior community arts development officer at Kirklees Council Rod supported local arts groups and festivals in fundraising and business planning.
- **Sarah Newman**
Sarah is a marketing and communications professional with an MA in Mass Communication at Distinction level and 17 years' experience in marketing & communication roles, including marketing strategy development, digital marketing and graphic design. Since joining Devon Communities Together, in 2017, Sarah has managed the promotions/marketing/ communications strategies for the organisation's broad and diverse projects and services, including digital marketing and management of the website www.devoncommunities.org and social media platforms. Sarah also produces and distributes the Devon Communities Together online LOVE Devon e-bulletins; the annual hard copy LOVE Devon magazine and the quarterly and annual organisational Impact Reports as well as designing all project marketing collateral (leaflets/ posters/ surveys etc).
- **Victoria Grimberg**
Victoria is an educator, an excellent communicator and an experienced project manager with responsibility for managing a range of DCT projects with responsibility for delivery, monitoring, budget management, reporting and evaluation. Victoria was born in Falkenberg, Sweden and moved to Devon in 2014. During her University years she studied History at Wolverhampton University via the Erasmus+ programme. She has a MA in Education and is a qualified History teacher who changed career and became a Project Development and Delivery Coordinator who has since completed her PRINCE2 Foundation qualification in project management. Victoria has a wealth of experience in bid writing and project management, both on a national and international level.

Question E: Confirm that you have the available capacity to deliver the services to the CVSE sector in a timely manner. Please include a timetable setting out how the services will be delivered.

As described, we will allocate a staff resource (e.g., project manager with community development officer support) to lead on the collaborative design and delivery of the project. The following high-level timetable is provided as an illustration of our broad approach:

		2023			2024			2025			2026		
Key Milestones		Q1 (part) Apr-June	Q2 July-Sept	Q3 Oct-Dec	Q4 Jan-Mar	Q1 Apr-June	Q2 July-Sept	Q3 Oct-Dec	Q4 Jan-Mar	Q1 Apr-June	Q2 July-Sept	Q3 Oct-Dec	Q4 Jan-Mar
Staff resource identified	June 2023												
VCSE 'kick start' events (2)	June - July 2023												
Detailed work programme in place	31st August 2023												
Communications & Marketing Plan in place	31st August 2023												
Online information sources scoped	31st March 2024												
VCSE partnership agreement developed	June 2024												
VCSE Open meetings	Bi-annual												
VCSE Support Group meetings	Quarterly/as needed												
Training, advice and support programme	Monthly												

Other available information in support of delivery of services to the CVSE sector in East Devon.

- Devon Communities Together is currently based at Units 73 and 74 Basepoint Business Centre, Yeoford Way, Exeter EX2 8LB.
- More information about our projects and services can be found on our website (www.devoncommunities.org.uk)
- We are the Community Council of Devon (operating as Devon Communities Together) and a member of the national network of community councils, ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)
- We deliver a wide range of projects and services in support of our charitable purposes and strategic goals and can provide evidence of such activity on request.
- In support of our application, on request and as needed, we can provide:
 - our Memorandum and Articles of Association
 - copies of our audited accounts for the past 2 years
 - Employer's (Compulsory) Liability Insurance: £10 million
 - Public Liability Insurance: £5 million
 - Professional Indemnity Insurance: £2 million
 - Product Liability Insurance: £5 million
 - a range of relevant policies (e.g. GDPR; Equality and Diversity; Health and Safety; Safeguarding)