

Subject:	VCSE Assembly Chair's report
Presented by:	Emma Ratzer, N&W VCSE Assembly Chair
Prepared by:	Emma Ratzer, N&W VCSE Assembly Chair Rachel Hunt, Head of Integration and Partnership, N&WCCG
Submitted to:	Interim ICS Partnership Board- Thursday 5 August 2021
Summary:	Update report from the Norfolk and Waveney VCSE Assembly Chair
Recommendation:	<p>The ICS Partnership Board is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the plans for the next phase of the VCSE Assembly Development

Main body of report

Key work plan priorities for the Chair over the next 12month, remain focused on how the Assembly will support the ICS as it matures for the benefit of the Norfolk and Waveney system. The overall vision for the Assembly is to foster strategic imagination built upon the core values of Ambition, Connection and Integrity.

There are three 'ambition' statements:

Balance of Representation - no partner should be defined by size of turnover, numbers of staff employed or by our own organisational objectives. We are all different and diverse and that is where our strength lies. We need to build relationships amongst us, trust each other and present a united front. Ultimately we all want to transform services and support for our beneficiaries. The Assembly is for everyone.

Model Better Behaviours – we should seek to improve the perception of our sector. This is not an opportunity to share our personal angst at public sector partners. We need to build relationships across the Norfolk and Waveney landscape whether you are a commissioner, funder, provider or volunteer. The Assembly needs to be a nurturing space where we harvest ideas and give everyone involved an opportunity to show their passion.

Genuine Voice and Influence – the Assembly should be a place where real transformation can take place and where, most importantly, we in the VCSE can actually see that change. The Assembly has the potential to influence real change for our communities and organisations should be supported to involve communities in co-design and their genuine voice and influence needs to be seen, it needs honestly capturing and openly communicating.

The significance of the Assembly's purpose and stance continues to be the focus of communication and engagement across the dedicated VCSE community throughout Norfolk and Waveney. Already the Chair has been involved in conversations around developing new partnerships that will positively connect and maintain unity in the strong voice of the VCSE community. Joining up existing communication networks to share learning is also a focus and plans to link the existing NSFT Sharing and Learning Events are already underway. Discussions are also taking place with NCC colleagues involved in re-commissioning the Working Together Partnership. Ensuring a clear distinction in role and purpose of the Partnership and the Assembly, will help inform how assets such as the VCSE Sector

Leadership Group and VCSE Assembly connect and are congruent in their responsibilities. The additionality the Assembly brings to the ICS will further progress how our strategic partnering with the ICS is developed. Connectivity between the Partnership and the Assembly will further support our 'three' ambitions, and be supported through some key work areas, as described below:-

1.0 Evolution of the current Assembly Steering Group

The existing Assembly Steering Group has delivered a framework Assembly model, which clarifies the purpose and role of an Assembly. The next step in its development is the membership of the group and its operational focus, driven by evolution, not revolution. Membership will draw strength from existing VCSE infrastructure and key statutory partners, to include wider membership of VCSE system leaders, alongside health and social care providers. Broader membership provides direction and support for the next 12-18 months of the Assembly's development, acting as a catalyst for some prominent pieces of activity that underpin the role and importance of the Assembly into our ICS.

In order to maximise funding made available to the Steering Group, the approach adopted by the Group moving forward must be to utilise these resources to initiate and commission key pieces of high profile work necessary to progress the Assembly model. The Group will adopt a transparent and open approach to promoting opportunity and the delivery of identified key actions of the work plan. By achieving this it will attract new VCSE partner involvement within the Group and lead aspects of work that further drive the Assembly forward.

The Steering Group will build on the outputs of the significant sector wide engagement and consultation work completed over the last 24 months, which was also captured as part of the 'Shared Ambitions Initiative' document produced by CAN in April '21. The Chair is committed to identifying a few key priority areas, linked to the 5 key Assembly priorities (Equal Partnering; Sustainable resourcing; Digital Integration; Data sharing; Consistent Evaluation). Once identified these key pieces of work to be progressed over the short term, demonstrating tangible change and impact for ICS partners and show the value the Assembly brings to N&W.

2.0 Rejuvenation of the VCSE Assembly communication and engagement strategy

The Steering Group has identified a need to improve its communication and engagement approach with the sector. Messaging and information should not just be limited to 'announcements' and high profile stories. It should also have a focus on regular content, demonstrating the Assembly carries meaning and a presence within our wider system. This highlights the Assembly ability to effectively connect with both grass roots and larger VCSE organisations around topics that add value and demonstrate the benefits and importance of the Assembly.

Regular sector broadcasts will include VCSE engagement as the role of 'system' and 'place' as the ICS becomes clearer; connecting with VCSE and statutory organisations to consider how we anticipate the Assembly 'model' will evolve to support a more meaningful ICS relationship. The following tasks will underpin the approach to improving the Assembly's visibility and mechanisms to connect more widely.

2.1 Establish a website development group - Recognising we need a website refresh and progress the existing online presence to be more interactive and able to act as a mechanism to encourage wider engagement. The website content should reflect forthcoming work plans and priorities for the next phase of the Assembly's development and will be regularly updated to support this. Website site navigation has already been streamlined to enhance the experience of understanding of our purpose.

2.2 Maximise use of funding available to deliver key pieces of work, and promote opportunities for sector partners to lead aspects of work - The VCSE Assembly website will be used to promote opportunities for VCSE organisations to be involved in the work programme and lead key pieces of funded activity. It will be vital to have comprehensive

communications to support this engagement with the sector and raise the profile of the approach and intention of the Assembly to fund organisations to participate in this way.

Stripping back messaging to stakeholders including the ICS and widening engagement with clear easy to understand communications allows the Assembly to provide touch points at all levels. The Assembly's purpose and effectiveness is evaluated best by actions and results and we are already gaining traction and making significant connections which will result in new work streams, work plans and increased activity. A good example of how the Assembly can be used to everyone's advantage is a new piece of work around 'Access to Justice'. The Chair is working with Norfolk Community Law Service who are promoting a new report, Law for Health published by UCL, and the Assembly will be coordinating and facilitating a webinar for all VCSE and statutory partners to hear about specialist legal advice services in a hope to influence legal solutions being the starting point for care and not a last resort, or a signposting activity.

Governance	
Meetings that this report has been, or is going to be, discussed at:	N&W VCSE Assembly Steering Group 12 th August.

