

10.06.2024

Dear Amanda,

Bassetlaw Place Partnership continues to work to deliver the objectives of the Place Plan through a well-established cross sector approach that has enabled us to respond highly effectively to recent challenges such as Covid and the Cost of Living Crisis. However I am writing to you as Chair of the Place Partnership to set out our concerns about what we consider are specific threats to the viability of the Voluntary Community Sector and in turn our collective ability to deliver on the objectives of the Place Plan.

In particular I would ask that urgent attention is given to the invaluable role the sector plays in delivering ICB objectives prior to decisions being made about ongoing financial support in order that the ICB is able to make fully informed decisions regarding the full impact of any future options for disinvestment in the sector.

In particular I would wish to flag a number of key risks and ask that these are acknowledged at system level:

- A risk of no VCSE funding or investment through the ICB for 25/26
- The ongoing impact of the extractive position created by reducing VCSE funding by 50% for 24/25 (as 40% of VCSE organisations have utilised reserves to make up the shortfall)
- The loss of the many millions in value/SROI currently achieved through the approx £500K funding which remains allocated to the VCSE in 24/25 could create a ripple effect and far bigger indirect cost than the millions currently saved through this investment.
- The escalating risk of loss of talent as contract end dates move closer at a time when workforce is a massive issue across the system
- A move to commission Nottingham-based or national VCSE and other providers to cover the whole county including Bassetlaw – we are aware of several recent examples of this which have lead to defunding of local groups

The result of the cumulative negative impact on the health and wellbeing of local citizens through loss of local services and prevention work is of course difficult to quantify. However, the rational and recognition of the SROI created nationally and at place has informed key policy drivers and system development over the past two years.

We are also concerned that the sector is being asked to further evidence the impact of its work, when the added value of the sector has been robustly evidenced many times in recent years. We would add that as this degree of evaluation is not funded through any contract and no support is provided at system level for SROI measurement, the costs of doing so inevitably directs resource away from the front line.

David Armiger
Chief Executive and Chair Bassetlaw PBP