

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

**7 October 2015**

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Voluntary Sector Strategy Action Plan Progress Report
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<b>Policy context:</b>	<p>The Corporate Plan 2015/16 provides that the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and encourage residents to play an active part in their communities through volunteering</li><li>• Seek to maximise funding for Havering through lobbying and attracting other external funds</li><li>• Encourage community responsibility by organising and assisting with community clean up campaigns</li></ul>

### **The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives**

Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for	[X]
People will be safe, in their homes and in the community	[X]
Residents will be proud to live in Havering	[X]

## **SUMMARY**

This report outlines progress which has been made in respect of the Voluntary Sector Strategy Action Plan since it was approved by the Cabinet in June 2015

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) Members are asked to review the report and note its content.
- 2) Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board are asked to determine when they wish to receive a further report on progress against the Voluntary Sector Strategy action plan.

## **REPORT DETAIL**

### Background

On 9 October 2014, the Council published a draft Voluntary Sector Strategy for consultation. An independent consultant was appointed to lead the consultation process which comprised workshops, focus groups, one to one meetings and an opportunity to submit comments directly either to the Council's consultant or to the Council itself. Over 116 people attended the workshops from a wide range of groups and the feedback was quite diverse in nature, reflecting the different levels of experience, needs and views in the sector. Despite this diversity, however, there were a number of ideas for action that were supported by a wide range of groups. Organisations saw the potential for real improvements in relationships between the Council and the sector and, to that end, wished to see a small number of realistic, clear and achievable actions on the part of the Council to achieve this.

Following the review, the Council, taking into account the feedback received, revised the strategy and developed an action plan to address a number of the issues raised by the voluntary and community sector.

The detailed report attached at Appendix 1 sets out some of the progress which has been made on the Voluntary Sector Strategy Action Plan, which includes actions to:

- Increase volunteering;
- Improve communication and access to information;

- Improve joint working arrangements between the Council and the voluntary and community sector;
- Develop alternative sources of funding for the voluntary and community sector;
- Promote the voluntary and community sector;
- Put in place procedures for community rights granted under the Localism Act, and
- Open up learning and development opportunities to the voluntary and community sector.

Progress against the action plan is monitored on a monthly basis by a cross-departmental Voluntary Sector Review Steering Group.

### Highlights

- On Monday 8 June, the Council hosted a Crowdfunding Workshop, showing voluntary organisations in the borough a new way of raising money. Crowdfunding involves funding a project or venture by raising contributions from a large number of people, via the internet. For many organisations it offers a new way to finance their activities, while giving ordinary people a new way to donate to good causes. Those organisations attending learned how to run a successful fundraising campaign including how to deliver a successful pitch, how to communicate this and build a network of supporters. 19 people attended the event and 5 people received a 1-1 session with the facilitator.
- Voluntary sector organisations have been engaged in discussions and preparations for the introduction of the Care Act. Engagement has been achieved through attendance at Care Act provider forums; attendance at a workshop for bidders that were interested in the advice and information tender (which will establish 3 Community Hubs) and through engagement in the development of the Market Position Statement which is aimed at existing and potential providers of Adult Social Care and Support and sets out to:
  - sustain and improve dialogue with providers, people who use services, carers and others, and
  - stimulate a diverse, active market where innovation and energy is encouraged and rewarded

Family Mosaic secured the advice and information contract and currently operates from Holgate House, Romford whilst establishing three community hubs across the borough.

- The Council has hosted two Business Continuity Workshops for the voluntary sector which will help organisations that attended to understand the risks they face, identify a strategy to support those risks and to develop an action plan to ensure the future smooth running of their operation. Eight delegates attended from seven VCS organisations.
- The Havering Compact has been refreshed in partnership with the voluntary and community sector and will be sent out for wider consultation at the end of September. The Compact for Havering is a written commitment to positive partnership working between the public bodies and the Voluntary and Community Sector in Havering.
- A VCS web section has been developed and was tested by a VCS Focus Group on Friday 25 September to ensure that it meets the needs of the sector, captures all of the feedback from the consultation and is user friendly.

Positive feedback was received from the Focus Group and it was agreed the VCS web section will capture the following topics:

Welcome page  
 Community Engagement Team  
 Governance  
 Grants & Support  
 Volunteering  
 Training  
 Community Directory of Groups  
 Community Activities by Ward  
 Links to external agencies and LBH portals

The web section will go live on 1 October 2015.

- A Volunteering Strategy has been developed for the Borough in partnership with HAVCO and will be sent out for consultation at the end of September.
- Over 40 volunteers have been engaged in Community Clean-Ups around the Borough and a calendar of clean-ups has been developed which is attached at Appendix 2.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISK

### **Financial implications and risks:**

The Council's approved financial strategy includes a savings target of £1.1 million in voluntary sector grants and commissioned services. The achievement of this and other savings targets are of major importance in managing the long term financial stability of the organisation.

The voluntary sector is a valuable community resource and it is recognised that the Council may better manage service costs pressures through the effective application of its voluntary sector strategy.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

There are no apparent legal implications in noting the content of the Report.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

There are no specific Human Resource implications.

### **Equalities implications and risks:**

The strategy has been subject to an EIA. The action plan flows from this strategy so an additional EIA has not been undertaken

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Voluntary Sector Strategy and Action Plan report presented to Cabinet on 17 June 2015

The Voluntary Sector Strategy and Action Plan are available on the Community Engagement page on the Havering Council website at:

<http://www.havering.gov.uk/Pages/ServiceChild/Voluntary-Sector-Strategy.aspx>

The Corporate Plan 2015/16 is available on the Council Democracy and Elections page on the Havering Council website at:

<http://www.havering.gov.uk/Pages/Catergory/Council-and-Democracy.aspx>

