



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Subject Heading:

Voluntary Sector Strategy Action Plan –
End of Year 1 Review

CMT Lead:

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Officer)

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Policy context:

This report supports the corporate
objective that our residents will be proud
to live in Havering.

SUMMARY

The report is the end of Year 1 review of the Voluntary Sector Strategy and action plan. It was agreed by Cabinet in June 2015 that the strategy and action plan would be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on an annual basis. The report sets out the main achievements to date and those actions where further work is still needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

1. Note progress made to date in delivering the Voluntary Sector Strategy and action plan, and
2. Endorse the refreshed Voluntary Sector Strategy and action plan for 2016/17

REPORT DETAIL

1. Background

In June 2015, the Cabinet approved the Council's Voluntary Sector Strategy 2015-18 and an Action Plan for the first year of the strategy. It was agreed that the Strategy would be refreshed annually and that an annual report would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board setting out the progress made in delivering the action plan.

This report highlights key achievements from 2015-16. A full summary of completed actions is attached at **Appendix 1**. Any actions not completed during Year 1 of the Strategy have been carried over into the 2016/17 action plan.

2. Key Achievements in delivering the Voluntary Sector Strategy and Action Plan 2015/16

2.1. Voluntary and Community Sector Review

The MTFS savings agreed by the Cabinet in September 2014 included a proposal to reduce the Council's spend within the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) by £1.1 million, to be achieved from 1st April 2016 ongoing.

In 2015, the Council conducted a full review of all funding provided to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Havering. At the Cabinet meeting in January 2016, "in principle" decisions were taken regarding the first £866,001 savings towards the £1.1m target, with authority being delegated to the then Deputy Chief Executives to sign off the final decisions.

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) agreed that, in order to meet the residual £233,999 savings, each Head of Service should be allocated an individual target, proportional to the overall level of spend in the voluntary and community sector that their service area currently accounts for.

Putting both the decisions in January and these residual targets together, the targets to be achieved by each service area are as follows:

	2016/17	2017/18	TOTAL
Adult Social Care	£500,000	-	£500,000
Children's Services	£182,750	£93,600	£276,350
Learning & Achievement	£36,120	£120,998	£157,118
Policy & Performance	£98,188	£60,840	£159,028
Culture & Leisure	£1,165	£2,340	£3,505

Economic Development	£4,000	0	£4,000
TOTAL	£822,223	£277,778	£1,100,001

Confidence in achieving these targets was assessed at the last Voluntary Sector Review Steering Group. At present, it is anticipated that the full level of savings will be delivered.

2.2. Joint working arrangements between the Council and the sector

The revised Havering Compact was launched on 18th November 2015. The Compact identifies that improved support and capacity building is required for small/medium sized organisations to enable them to participate in collaborative work and in tender/funding opportunities more effectively. This has been progressed through the provision of procurement training and networking opportunities, and monthly VCS Adults Commissioning Provider Forum meetings. There were four Voluntary and Community Sector Co-Production forums (or innovation forums). This included Disability/Condition Specific, Carers, Social Isolation and Peer Support, Respite and Day Opportunities. Over 100 attendees attended the four forums from 30+ organisations. Further training will be delivered in 2016-17.

The Havering Compact Steering Group has also been established to continue to work with partners across Havering to address future training needs and develop partnership working.

A Havering Compact e-bulletin has been introduced to regularly email information updates to the Voluntary and Community Sector, promoting external funding opportunities, training and support services. Over 800 groups now receive these emailed newsletters

A Havering Compact agreement and Terms of Reference have been developed. Discussions are now underway to improve awareness of Council procurement opportunities

The establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) (a consortium with a robust governance structure) is being explored with participation from a number of agencies. An initial Special Purpose Vehicle workshop took place on 5 July 2016. Nine organisations attended this event with a further three expressing an interest but unable to attend. The feedback from this workshop has been mostly positive from both the local authority and the voluntary and community sector. The next steps regarding this proposed initiative is final sign off from the Tapestry Board Meeting (Tapestry are leading on this) on 22nd August to establish a subsidiary to run the SPV. Organisations that are keen to take it forward will be then met informally to scope a model that is applicable for Havering.

The Council has recently agreed a new Procurement Strategy, invested in an electronic tendering system (capitalEsourcing) and offered training to the VCS

to better understand what the Council is looking for and the basics of tendering for Council contracts. There were three procurement workshops in all and 26 people attended from eleven organisations.

Adult Social Care is planning on offering another two tendering workshops aimed specifically at the VCS, in conjunction with Strategic Procurement, because of the forthcoming tendering of several contracts delivering services across the Carers and preventative agendas.

Adult Social Care is working with the VCS to co-produce service specifications for these services prior to tendering.

2.3. Improving communications and access to information

The Community Development Team's role descriptions have been refreshed and renewed as part of the restructure of the Policy and Performance service moving the emphasis from 'engagement' to 'development'.

The Community Safety and Development service has provided improved access to information for the voluntary and community sector via a number of dedicated electronic newsletters. A dedicated email address, vcs@haverling.gov.uk, has been established and widely publicised and a dedicated phone line is currently being established to the Community Development Team. A Voluntary and Community Sector web section has been created for the LBH website following consultation in September with various VCS organisations/groups. The new web section can be viewed at <https://www.haverling.gov.uk/Pages/Category/Voluntary-Sector.aspx>

Adult Social Care, Children's Social Services and Children & Disabilities Services have all been trying to work more proactively with the VCS (following the review of all VCS contracts), in addition to the work of the Community Development Team, hosting a number of regular targeted provider forums to maintain improved communication. Anecdotal feedback is suggesting the sector appreciates the improved two way communications, and many commissioned and new organisations are signed up to, and regularly using, the Care Network portal developed by Adult Social Care.

2.4. Commissioning Processes and Market Positioning

At the time of writing, a Joint Commissioning Unit to join up commissioning functions across Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Public Health is due to be launched in July 2016.

To ensure a consistent approach to commissioning across the Council and to enable opportunities for innovation and co-production within the VCS, a joint set of commissioning principles has been developed. These principles have been reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and their relevance has

been acknowledged. Further work will be undertaken to develop cross cutting commissioning strategies. This will be integrated with the developing Joint Commissioning Unit in 2016/17.

A revised Procurement Strategy was presented to Cabinet in March 2016 and the document agreed.

A Market Position Statement was formally launched at the end September 2015 by Adult Social Care and a number of market shaping workshops have been delivered to the VCS. These groups now have an improved awareness of local demands and gaps in current service provision, and are therefore better able to respond to fill these gaps. These meetings were well attended with 20 to 30 representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Adult Social Care Commissioning is also engaging with the ACO discussions and proposals for a VCS able to respond to the needs of residents across Havering, Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge, with two ACO VCS workshops having taken place to date.

Work has also started to develop a consistent, appropriate and outcome focussed approach to monitoring VCS grants and contracts.

2.5 Re-commission voluntary sector infrastructure support

Following the decision of HAVCO to wind up its activities, this action was reviewed in consultation with the Corporate Management Team and it was decided not to re-commission external infrastructure support services. Instead, additional staff resources were built into the internal Community Development Team as part of the Policy and Performance restructure, and this additional capacity has been used in particular to support the development of the new Volunteer Centre, Compact Steering Group, and to develop an annual 'Health Check' process for the local voluntary and community groups. Training for the voluntary and community sector was also developed and the following training was delivered:

- Crowd Funding workshops were delivered in June 2015 - 19 attended from 15 organisations.
- Business Continuity Workshops in July 2015 – 10 people attended from 7 organisations
- 3 x Procurement Workshops delivered between February and April 2016 attended (26 attendees – See above)

As stated above, the service launched a revised Voluntary and Community Sector web section on the Council's website in September 2015 offering governance, fundraising and training information and guidance.

2.6 Havering Volunteer Centre

Following the closure of the HAVCO volunteer centre in September 2015, a decision was made to establish Havering Volunteer Centre. A non-key executive decision was signed by the then Deputy Chief Executive to grant fund the new organisation for three years at the value of £168,816 (the same level of funding that had already been committed to the HAVCO volunteer centre). The Community Development Team has worked closely with the manager and trustees of the newly formed organisation. The Havering Volunteer Centre (HVC) is situated at Community Reach House, 32-34 The High Street, Romford. Although the organisation has been working with local volunteers since January 2016, the official launch took place in June 2016.

External funding of over £5900 has been secured from Awards for All for IT & office tools/stationary etc. HVC has also secured additional money through rental/hiring of office space. Once the organisation has been formally established for one year they will be able to seek additional external funding.

3. Refresh of the Voluntary Sector Strategy and Action Plan 2016/17

As agreed by the Cabinet in June 2015, the Voluntary Sector Strategy and action plan have undergone an annual review and refresh to reflect the progress made to date and to capture emerging priorities. The refreshed Strategy and action plan for 2016/17 are attached at **Appendix 2**.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

The MTFS savings agreed by the Cabinet in September 2014 included a proposal to reduce the Council's spend within the voluntary and community sector (VCS) by £1.1 million, to be achieved from 1 April 2016 on-going. Failure of services to achieve these savings would impact on the Council's financial strategy, however colleagues have confirmed that they remain on target to deliver these savings.

Three year grant funding of £56,272 per year was signed off as a non – key executive decision in November 2015 for the Havering Volunteer Centre. Funding is provided from the Policy and Performance service core budget within existing resources.

The Community Development service will support the Havering Volunteer Centre to bid for external grant funding, with the aim of making the organisation more sustainable and less reliant on Council Grant funding

Legal implications and risks:

There is no statutory duty to fund a volunteer centre in Havering. However the council has the power to do so. Otherwise there are no apparent legal implications in noting the content of the report.”

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no HR implications arising directly from this report

Equalities implications and risks:

A full equalities impact assessment was conducted when the three year strategy was developed.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Voluntary Sector Strategy, Action Plan and EIA 2015-18