

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

12 September 2017

Subject Heading:

Voluntary Sector Strategy Review and Refresh

SLT Lead:

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Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

Our new vision, 'Havering – making a Greater London', is about embracing the best of what Havering has to offer, and how we as a borough can play an active role in the success of the whole of London. Our vision is focused around the borough's communities, places, opportunities and connections.

Financial summary:

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report which is for information only. Whilst there may be financial implications of delivering the strategy the expectation is that it will be delivered from within existing budgetary provision. Where this is not possible any issues will be raised through the appropriate channels.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this a Strategic Decision?

No

When should this matter be reviewed?

The current Voluntary Sector Strategy expires in 2018. A new Strategy will be prepared prior to this date and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board will be consulted on its content.

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

Communities making Havering	[x]
Places making Havering	[x]
Opportunities making Havering	[]
Connections making Havering	[]

SUMMARY

This report brings Members up to date regarding progress in implementing the Voluntary Sector Strategy 2015 – 18.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the progress made to date and endorse the proposed updates to the Voluntary Sector Strategy 2015-18.

REPORT DETAIL

The main items to report this year in relation to the key themes of the Voluntary Sector Strategy 2015 to 2018 are set out below:

1. Strengthening joint working arrangements between the council and the sector

The Havering Compact goes from strength to strength and is now 18 months old following its relaunch in November 2015. The Compact operates through an independently chaired managing steering group (whose membership is reviewed annually through an election of members) and a quarterly Compact Forum where a wider range of voluntary and community sector organisations become involved.

In October 2016, a pilot “health check” was sent out by the Council to 45 voluntary and community sector organisations working in Havering, in order to ascertain how best the Council could help and support the sector. Based on the results of this survey, the following initiatives were introduced:

- A weekly funding update containing details of all the new grants available to organisations in the borough (found on the Grants and Support Section of the Havering website)
- The development of a Funders Fayre. The borough’s first Funding Fayre will take place on 25th September 2017 and all the main funders such as the

City Bridge Trust, Big Lottery, Trust for London, Lloyds Bank Foundation and Tudor Trust will be in attendance. The event will give local voluntary sector organisations the opportunity to obtain advice and guidance from funders and other support organisations (e.g. the Council's Community Development Team) as to what makes a successful application or tender and what types of projects and initiatives funders are currently looking to fund.

- Training opportunities have been offered to the sector in areas such as business continuity and procurement
- A community directory has been developed and went live in March, allowing all voluntary and community organisations who wish to the chance to have an online presence. This can be viewed at <https://familyserviceshub.havering.gov.uk/kb5/havering/directory/home.page>
- A dedicated Community Development Team phone line (contactable on 01708 432112) which is manned between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

As the Council has created links and built relationships with more voluntary and community groups operating in the borough, this year's health check has been extended to around 150 local voluntary and community sector organisations and results are being evaluated at the moment. The findings will inform the development of a new Voluntary Sector Strategy going forward from 2018.

Also this year, consultations and co-production work were undertaken between the Council's Joint Commissioning Unit (JCU) and VCS partners to inform the design of the Havering Carer, Inclusion & Peer Support services tender.

2. Improving communications and access to information

The Compact e-bulletin continues to promote external funding opportunities, training and support services and good news stories of joint working / funding bids to share across the sector. Subscriptions currently sit at 1,804 - an increase of 382 (27%) within a 12 month period. The Compact Steering Group is currently also considering setting up a Twitter account in order to enhance communications with its members.

The Active Living e-bulletin also continues to be circulated monthly and is aimed at the 50+ audience in Havering. The purpose of the bulletin is to promote activities, events and opportunities to combat social isolation, encourage physical and mental health and wellbeing, and increase volunteering amongst older residents. Information is sourced through internet research, as well as voluntary and community groups submitting details of their services. The readership figure stands at 5,968, an increase of 972 (19%) in the last year.

Between January and May 2017, the Voluntary and Community section of the Council's website received 4,772 visitors, 3,258 of whom were unique visitors. The most popular section of the VCS website is the volunteering section, with 1,800 visitors in 5 months. The second most popular page is the Grants and External Funding section, which saw a 72% increase compared with the previous 6 months, which is likely as a result of the new funding insight updates that are posted weekly.

3. Increasing volunteering

The Havering Volunteer Strategy 2016-2021 was agreed by the Cabinet in December. The Strategy sets out five target outcomes and five objectives, as shown below:

Havering Volunteer Strategy 2016-2021	
<i>"The volunteering vision for Havering is to ensure that our communities and volunteers are resilient and that they are supported by an effective and sustainable voluntary and community sector. We want volunteers in Havering to benefit from the enthusiasm and ambition that the voluntary and community sector in the borough represents."</i>	
Outcomes	Objectives
Havering is a place where the full range of economic, social, environmental and personal benefits that volunteering brings is recognised by residents, organisations and businesses.	Build a stronger, more resilient community that encourages greater participation in local community life.
Volunteering is encouraged so that, in time, volunteers will be reflective of the many and diverse communities in Havering.	Promote resilience, health and well-being to both individuals and organisations.
Volunteering is supported, rewarding and everyone feels that they can make a difference.	Increase volunteering through appropriate matching of volunteers and opportunities, considering individuals' and organisations' diverse needs.
Volunteering brings people together, makes a positive impact on social cohesion and makes a significant contribution to all aspects of life.	Support businesses in delivering corporate social responsibility programmes that include employee volunteering.
Havering is a place where volunteering is exciting, vibrant and diverse.	Create the right environment which ensures that volunteering schemes are mutually beneficial to both the volunteer and employing organisations.

Delivery of the associated action plan is monitored by the cross-departmental Voluntary Sector Steering Group.

The 2016 / 17 financial year was the first full year of operation for the Havering Volunteer Centre (HVC), having (with the support of the Council) become the first Volunteer centre to open in London for six years. New Trustees have been recruited throughout the year with a wealth of experience and skills to offer. The HVC exceeded all the performance targets set for it in its funding agreement with the Council and, during Quarter 1 of 2017/18, the HVC has already registered 198

new volunteers and 87 new volunteering opportunities, as well as signposting registered volunteers to 594 volunteer placements. At the end of October, the HVC was also one of four finalists in the Team London Awards in the Volunteer Centre Award category and received a Recognition Award for its exemplary contribution to volunteering.

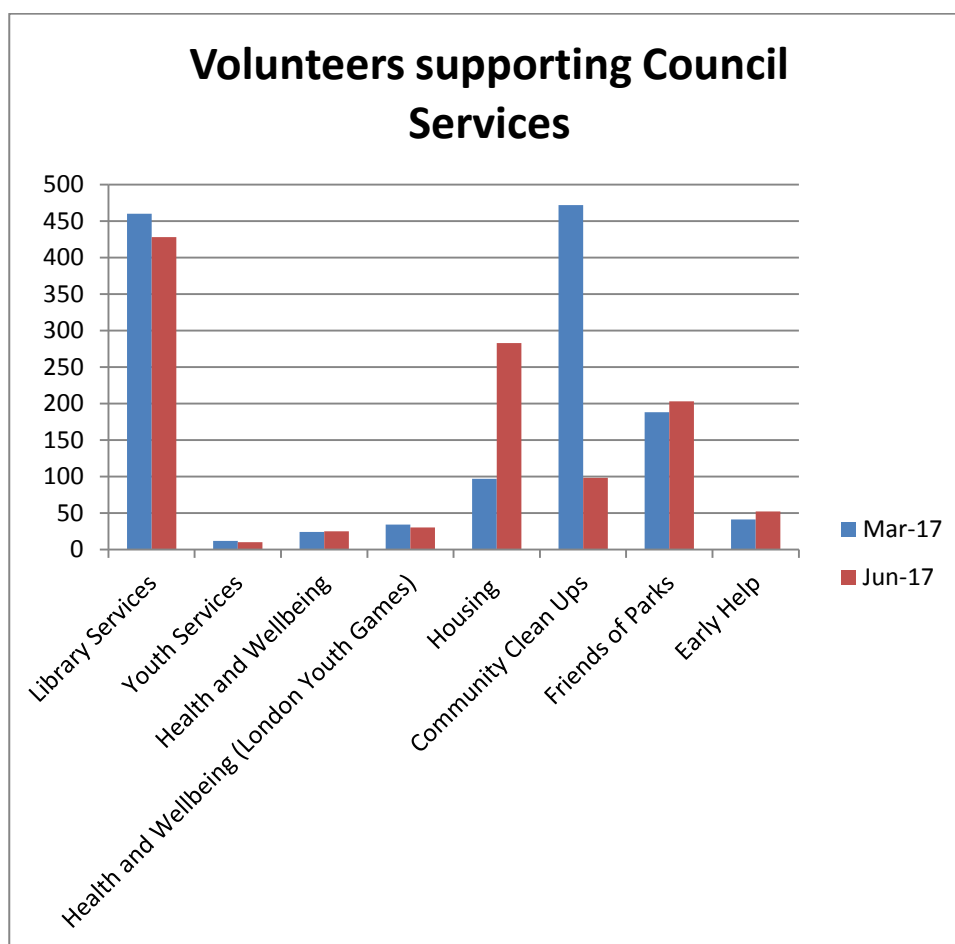
This year, following feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Board in response to last year's progress report, the HVC asked all organisations to record volunteer hours. Some were willing to do this whilst others preferred not to submit this information. Below is a summary of volunteer hours submitted to the HVC by various public, voluntary and community organisations across Havering.

Organisation	Volunteer Hours Per Year
HVC	10,400
CAB	10,608
FIRST STEP	1,300
QUEENS THEATRE	1,040
HAVERING MUSEUM	10,244
HAVEN HOUSE	1,872
HABBIT FACTORY	4,160
MIND	10,920
RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP	5,200
SFH	10,400
BEDROCK RADIO	6,968
HOME START	2,600
WOMEN'S AID	1,248
WELLGATE FARM	5,720
HASWA	1,560
HEALTHWATCH	1,040
WITNESS SERVICE	4,160
LBH LIBRARIES	9,360

LBH EARLY HELP	1,300
FAMILY MOSAIC	2,080
BEDFORDS WALLED GARDEN	5,200
MITCHELL HUTH	416
HAD	4,784
RICHARD HOUSE	11,440
TOTAL HOURS	124,020

The table and graph below show the number of people volunteering for Council services at the end of 2016/17 and at the end of Quarter 1 2017/18. As can be seen, there has been a particularly large increase in the number of volunteers supporting initiatives run by the Housing service. Meanwhile, the reduction in volunteers registered with the Libraries service was largely due to the completion of a data cleansing exercise to remove volunteers from the database who had not actively volunteered during the previous 12 months.

	Mar-17	Jun-17
Library Services	460	428
Youth Services	12	10
Health and Wellbeing	24	25
Health and Wellbeing (London Youth Games)	34	30
Housing	97	283
Community Clean Ups	472	98
Friends of Parks	188	203
Early Help	41	52



As can be seen above, 472 volunteers took part in Community Clean-Ups during 2016/17, exceeding the target by some 84%. 58 clean-ups took place at a range of locations and venues around the borough including:

- Painsbrook Park
- Wennington Village
- Raphaels Park
- Cottons Park
- Harrow Lodge Park and Garden for the Blind
- Grounds of Tesco (Roneo Corner)
- Ardleigh House Community Association
- Harwood Avenue
- Ingrebourne Valley and Hornchurch Country Park
- Bedfords Country Park
- Bedfords Walled Garden
- Hornchurch Country Park
- Havering Country Park
- New Windmill Hall Community Association
- Rainham Village and park area
- Elm Park town centre
- St. Andrew's Church

Interserve and Network Rail have supported some of these events through their Employee Supported Volunteering (ESV) schemes, and many of these areas are now subject to a regular clean-up organised by volunteers.

Over the past year, the Housing service has also organised community bulb planting at a number of locations including:

- Oldchurch Gardens, Romford
- Bevan Way and Hacton Lane
- Petra estate, Elm Park
- Various sheltered housing schemes
- Delta estate, Gidea Park
- Highfield estate, Collier Row
- Rainham

The Havering Volunteer Managers Forum continues to meet and has already supported 30 local volunteer managers during Quarter 1 of 2017/18.

In response to the 2016 Voluntary Sector Health Check, 47% of respondents indicated that they would like guidance in relation to managing volunteers. Work is therefore progressing with the Havering Volunteer Centre to develop a Volunteering Toolkit that can be used by public, private and voluntary sector organisations alike to help them recruit, retain and support volunteers. It is expected that this will be launched in Quarter 3 of 2017/18. Once published, a link will be available to the toolkit from the Council's website.

4. Commissioning processes and market positioning

During the last year, the Council's Voluntary Sector Steering Group has agreed a standard approach to grant monitoring to be used by all services grant aiding voluntary and community sector organisations with £5,000 or more. This is designed to improve the consistency and robustness of monitoring, whilst not being disproportionately onerous for voluntary sector organisations. Work is also underway to streamline the number of individual funding agreements that different Council departments have with various larger community sector organisations operating in the borough, with a view both to maximising the added value of the Council's investment and in order to rationalise the monitoring requirements for the organisations concerned.

Monitoring procedures in respect of the Council's largest funding agreements with the voluntary sector have been strengthened. Quarterly meetings now take place with all grant funded organisations and performance is evaluated against Key Performance Indicators and reported to both the Voluntary Sector Steering Group and the Lead Member. At the request of the Steering Group, these monitoring arrangements have recently been subject to independent review by Internal Audit. A draft report has been released and is currently subject to internal consultation until 6 September. A verbal update on the findings will be provided to the Board at the meeting, however the initial feedback has been positive.

5. Developing new models of service delivery

Whilst local organisations often come together in ad hoc consortiums it had been recognised that a more formal structure was required. With the support of the Council, Ensemble Community Solutions has now been established as a response

to the challenges of the changing funding landscape and the social care environment, in particular. This provides community based charities with an opportunity to come together in order to bid collaboratively for grants and tenders. This affords smaller, more localised charities and community groups the opportunity to compete within consortium arrangements with larger national or regional charities and agencies. The aim is to secure funding and investment on behalf of local charities helping to ensure that local services are delivered by local charities who have proven their commitment to local people rather than a national or regional organisation with no track record of delivering local services. The Advisory Group met for the first time in January and currently has 15 members.

6. Access to learning and development opportunities

Procurement training for voluntary and community sector organisations took place throughout last financial year. Market warming exercises were also held in the early part of the year to ensure that local voluntary and community sector organisations were as prepared as possible for the tendering process that was launched by Adult Social Care subsequently. In total, approximately 30 voluntary and community sector organisations were given advice by the Council's procurement and commissioning units. The training was evaluated by participants, for the most part, to be excellent.

Advice UK (the UK's largest support network for free, independent advice centres) also hosted one to one and group sessions at the Havering Volunteer Centre to provide funding and support advice. This was paid for by London Councils. Wise Age's Resourcing Older People's Employment Support (ROPES) project also ran workshops at the HVC in November. Volunteer Management and First Aid training have also been delivered from the Havering Volunteer Centre over the past several months.

The strategy and action plan have been updated for 2017/18 to reflect progress made to date; the Council's new corporate vision and Corporate Plan, and our plans and priorities for the future. The refreshed strategy and action plan are attached as **Appendix 1** and the Equality Impact Assessment as **Appendix 2**.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report which is for information only. Whilst there may be financial implications of delivering the strategy, the expectation is that they will be delivered from within existing budgetary provision. Where this is not possible any issues will be raised through the appropriate channels.

Sam Gable. Strategic Finance Business Partner.

Legal implications and risks:

There are no direct legal implications arising from the delivery of this strategy.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no direct human resource implications for the Council. The strategy is delivered within existing resources

Equalities implications and risks:

An equality impact assessment is in place for this strategy and is attached at **Appendix 2** for information.