

REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	14 March 2013
Subject:	Third Sector Strategy
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Paul Najsarek, Corporate Director of Community Health and Wellbeing
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Perry, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: Third Sector Strategy

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the background to the new Third Sector Strategy and identifies potential actions for Harrow Council.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to;

- (1) note the Strategy
- (2) endorse the delivery of the actions listed in paragraph 2.3.2 to support the delivery of the Strategy.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To demonstrate the Council's commitment and support for the strategy.

Section 2 – Report

2.1 Introductory paragraph

2.1.1 Harrow Council recognises the important role played by the Third Sector as a valued partner in delivering services to Harrow residents. The Third Sector delivers a range of services which support the delivery of the following corporate priorities:

- (1) Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe
- (2) United and involved communities
- (3) Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

2.1.2 The Third Sector strategy has been developed by the Third Sector for the Third Sector. It sets out how the Third Sector aims to respond to the difficult financial and social challenges facing the borough. This report sets out the background and context that has led to the development of the strategy and requests Cabinet to note the contents of the strategy.

2.1.3 The report also highlights examples of the positive partnership work that takes place between the Council and the Third Sector. The report further requests Cabinet approval to deliver a range of actions that builds on existing activity to demonstrate support for the strategy.

2.2 Options considered

2.2.1 The strategy sets out a new vision for the Third Sector and a three year action plan to deliver benefits for the Third Sector and Harrow residents (see Appendix 1: Third Sector Strategy). The Third Sector will be responsible for the implementation of the strategy and has requested Cabinet to note the strategy. The following options have been identified:

Option 1: Cabinet notes the strategy and commits Harrow Council to delivering a number of actions to support its delivery.

Advantages:

- This demonstrates pro-active support for the strategy which would be viewed favourably by the Third Sector.
- Delivery of these actions provides opportunities for partnership working
- Delivery of these actions will help strengthen and develop the relationship between the Council and the Third Sector

Disadvantages:

- Existing resources may need to be reallocated to support the delivery of these actions.

Option 2: Cabinet note the strategy but does not commit to delivering any actions to support the strategy

Advantages:

- The strategy is noted and no Council resources are required to deliver actions.

Disadvantages:

- The lack of delivery of practical actions would send a negative message to the sector.
- Future relationships with the sector could be affected.

2.2.2 Option One is recommended to Cabinet so that the Council can demonstrate its pro-active support to the strategy and its ongoing commitment to the Third Sector.

2.3 Background

2.3.1 The Third Sector Strategy sets a vision for the Third Sector to 'Optimise social capital in Harrow'. It recognises and builds on the positive developments that have taken place through the implementation of the Third Sector Strategy adopted by Cabinet in March 2010. Some examples are provided below against each theme of the strategy;

Theme 1: Deepening Partnerships:

- The Adult Services consultation on the provision of Adult Social Care services in 2011: Working closely with Third Sector organisations the consultation process was developed and jointly delivered thereby ensuring the views of a wide cross-section of residents were represented.
- Building on this model, Harrow Council is currently working with Third Sector organisations on developing a joint borough-wide response to the new Welfare Reform legislation. Through this partnership approach the aim is to ensure that appropriate support is in place to assist the most vulnerable residents affected by these changes.

Theme 2: Building Capacity:

- Harrow Council provides support for organisations in identifying sources of funding. This is provided by the External Funding Manager who manages both the External Funding Network and circulation of a regular External Funding Newsletter. The demand for both activities has increased significantly in recent years.
- Following the closure of Harrow Association of Voluntary Service (HAVS) the Council has funded an Interim CVS (Council for Voluntary Service). This has been provided in response to

the sector's need for ongoing support in areas such as volunteer recruitment, fundraising and capacity building advice.

(3) Theme 3: Enabling participation

- A number of training and support sessions have been delivered across Council Directorates to assist the Third Sector in engaging with commissioning and procurement opportunities. This has included market development activity with a number of organisations to help them understand the requirements of bidding for delivering the new Healthwatch service. In the event, a consortium of Third Sector organisations has been successful in winning the contract to deliver these services from April 2013.
- Directorates are working with Third Sector organisations to review the delivery of services including for example, Children's Services who are working with Third Sector organisations to review the provision and re-tendering of provision of short breaks for children with disabilities

2.3.2 The Third Sector Strategy has identified three new themes against which it deliver a three year action plan. The action plan will be implemented and monitored by the Third Sector. The action plan also however identifies the following areas for Council input:

Theme 1: Public Engagement

Strategy Action: Organise a joint media campaign between partners to raise awareness of the new Community Right to Challenge, Build, Bid and Buy and similar schemes as they become available.

Harrow Council has developed web-based information on the Community Right to Challenge, to assist residents in understanding the new legislation. This information is available on the Council website and sign-posts residents to additional sources of support and information.

Proposed Council action:

In response to the action identified in the strategy Harrow Council will explore further opportunities for raising awareness of Community Rights and similar initiatives.

Theme 2: Strengthening Support

Strategy Action: Engage with statutory partners to review their commissioning plans with a view to these including:

- *A means of identifying and responding to service gaps and emerging need*
- *A review of current procurement policy*
- *Requirement for SLA beneficiaries to provide plans for sharing expertise around sustainability across sector.*

Harrow Council undertakes a range of engagement work with the Third Sector which informs its commissioning plans. This includes for

example the Let's Talk campaign and recent summit on health and well-being priorities in the borough which helped inform the development of the joint Health and Well-Being strategy. The new Strategic Commissioning Division within the Council offers opportunities to share and understand data from a range of sources to support our understanding of the changing needs of Harrow's communities.

Proposed Council actions:

In response to the actions identified in the strategy and building on current engagement activity undertaken, it is proposed that;

- Further opportunities are identified for joint consultation and engagement to discuss commissioning plans and data sharing.
- A review of the implementation of the Council's Sustainable Procurement Policy is undertaken.
- Service Level Agreement (SLA) requirements are reviewed and consideration given to the inclusion of requirements to share information and expertise.

Strategy Action: Create skill development opportunities for the unemployed and volunteers, linking these to gaps in services'.

The Council works with Third Sector organisations to deliver projects that support the unemployed and volunteers including the Xcite and X-16 projects. The X-16 project targets 16-24 year olds not in employment, education and training. The second phase of the project will be expanded through joint working with Third Sector organisations and increase opportunities for skills development and volunteering.

Proposed Council action:

In response to the action identified in the strategy and building on current activity the Council will explore further options for developing joint, sector-specific initiatives to develop skills for the unemployed and volunteers.

Strategy Action: Sector wide consultation on options to create a more sustainable and effective Third Sector and later establish new joint working structures for infrastructure support.

The Council is currently supporting the Third Sector in undertaking consultation on its ongoing and future support needs. Through this engagement activity the Council is also assisting the Third Sector in developing a local delivery mechanism for the future provision of support services.

Proposed Council action:

The Council will continue to provide support to the Third Sector in undertaking consultation and developing a delivery model for providing infrastructure services.

2.4 Current situation

2.4.1 The Council adopted its first Third Sector strategy in 2010 following a recommendation made by the Overview and Scrutiny review, 'Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector' (2008).

2.4.2 The Third Sector Strategy set out a strategic approach for developing the Council's relationship with the Third Sector. It was developed in consultation with the Third Sector and identified actions across three themes:

- (i) Deepening partnerships
- (ii) Building capacity
- (iii) Enabling participation

2.4.3 This strategy delivered a number of positive improvements in the relationship between the Council and the Third Sector resulting in increased engagement and participation in a number of areas.

2.4.4 Building on the achievements of the Third Sector Strategy and in response to the increasingly difficult financial climate the Council adopted the Third Sector Investment Plan in October 2011. This set a strategic framework for the delivery of Council support to the sector including;

- (i) The delivery of an Outcomes Based and Small Grants funding programme.
- (ii) A strategic approach to responding to Third Sector accommodation needs.
- (iii) Alignment of the provision of other Council support such as discretionary rate relief to the principles of the Third Sector Investment Plan.

2.5 Why a change is needed

2.5.1 During 2012 the Third Sector felt that the refresh of the strategy should be led by the sector. A working group was established and the Corporate Director Community Health and Well-Being was invited to Co-Chair this working group.

2.5.2 The strategy has been developed by the Third Sector to address its own needs. It recognises the serious financial and social challenges facing the sector and seeks to address the sectors needs for building capacity and strengthening collaborative working.

2.6 Implications of the Recommendation

2.7 Legal Implications

2.7.1 In developing the Council's response to the strategy regard should be had to the public sector equality duty. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome.

The equalities impact will be revisited on each of the proposals as they are developed. Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. The statutory grounds of the public sector equality duty are found at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

It is important that when making decisions involving voluntary groups who serve persons with the relevant protected characteristics that a full equalities Impact is completed. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- *Age*
- *Disability*
- *Gender reassignment*
- *Pregnancy and maternity*
- *Race,*
- *Religion or belief*
- *Sex*
- *Sexual orientation*
- *Marriage and Civil partnership*

The Council's response to the strategy should also take account of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. This brings a statutory requirement for public authorities at the procurement stage of any service contract to have regard to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area. It aims to make the concept of 'social value' more relevant and important in the placement and provision of public services. Before undertaking any relevant procurement, the Act requires the Council to consider:

- How what is proposed to be procured may improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of its area
- How that benefit can be secured through the process of procurement and
- Whether the Council needs to undertake any community consultation

2.8 Financial Implications

2.8.1 The resources required to implement the actions identified in this report will be met from within existing resources. There are no other implications on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

2.9 Performance Issues

2.9.1 The delivery of actions to support the Third Sector strategy has the potential to support the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe.
- United and involved communities
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

The performance of the strategy's objectives will be undertaken by the Third Sector Forum.

2.10 Environmental Impact

2.10.1 The Third Sector comprises a large number of organisations delivering a diverse range of activities and services. Some of these organisations support the maintenance and improvement of biodiversity and contribute to preserving the quality of open spaces open to the public.

2.11 Risk Management Implications

2.11.1 The main risk associated with this decision is that the Council is unable to deliver the proposed actions due to the ongoing pressure on resources. This risk is mitigated in a number of ways; (1) some of these actions are currently underway and resources have already been identified (2) the proposed actions have been agreed corporately with a commitment to identify appropriate resources across a number of Council departments.

2.12 Equalities implications

2.12.1 The Third Sector Forum has completed an Equality Impact Assessment on the Third Sector Strategy. This impact assessment identifies the potential for a positive impact on all protected equality characteristics.

2.13 Corporate Priorities

2.13.1 The Third Sector Strategy has the potential to support the delivery of the following Council priorities:

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe.
- United and involved communities
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Roger Hampson

on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 18 February 2013

Name: Jessica Farmer

on behalf of the
Monitoring Officer

Date: 28 February 2013

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington

on behalf of the
Divisional Director
Strategic
Commissioning

Date: 28 February 2013

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: John Edwards

Divisional Director
(Environmental
Services)

Date: 18 February 2013

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Kashmir Takhar, Service Manager Community Sector Services,
020 8420 9331

Background Papers

(1) Cabinet report: Third Sector Strategy, March 2010

<http://www2.harrow.gov.uk/documents/g4535/Public%20reports%20pack,%20Thursday%2018-Mar-2010%2019.30,%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

(2) Cabinet report: Third Sector Investment Plan, October 2011

<http://www2.harrow.gov.uk/documents/g60641/Public%20reports%20pack,%20Tuesday%2018-Oct-2011%2019.30,%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]