

# **REPORT FOR: GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL**

---

**Date of Meeting:** 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013

**Subject:** **INFORMATION REPORT –  
Update on Third Sector  
Investment Plan 2012-15:  
Council support to Third Sector  
organisations**

**Responsible Officer:** Paul Najsarek, Corporate Director  
Community, Health and Well-Being

**Exempt:** No

**Enclosures:** Appendix 1: Third Sector Investment  
Plan  
Appendix 2: Community Resource  
Centre facilities hire rates  
Appendix 3: Third Sector Strategy

## **Section 1 – Summary**

This report provides an update on changes to the way in which Council support is provided to Third Sector organisations since the adoption of the Third Sector Investment Plan.

**FOR INFORMATION**

## Section 2 – Report

### 2.1.1 Background

In October 2011 Harrow Council approved the Third Sector Investment Plan 2012-15 (Appendix 1). It was developed following extensive consultation with the Third Sector and set out a strategic framework for the delivery of Council support to the Sector. The aim was to ensure the Council made the best use of its resources by aligning the allocation of these to the delivery of its corporate and statutory priorities. Since the adoption of this Plan there have been a number of changes to the way in which some of that support is delivered and this report provides an update on those changes:

2.1.2 The Third Sector is defined as follows: ‘Not for profit, independent, voluntary and community groups or organisations formed by local people, or those with a local interest, to improve the quality of lives for themselves and/or fellow citizens in Harrow. These include registered charities; voluntary organisations; community groups; faith groups involved in social action; community interest companies and social enterprises’.

2.1.3 The development of the Third Sector Investment Plan followed a review of the Main Grants programme and other Council support to the sector. The Plan was developed at a time when all Directorates were reviewing the support provided to the Third Sector to ensure that resources could be used in the most cost effective way to deliver services to Harrow residents. Both the Adults and Children and Families Directorates were reviewing their commissioning priorities and the demand for grant funding continued to far exceed the budget available.

2.1.4 The Third Sector Investment plan set out the following key principles:

- Resources will be allocated to organisations that operate on a not-for-profit basis only.
- Resources will be allocated where they are used for the benefit of people living, working or schooling in Harrow.
- Resources will be allocated where they help the Council deliver its priorities.
- The allocation of resources will be matched to the delivery of specified outcomes.
- Resources will be allocated where they achieve good value for money and deliver measurable added value.
- Resources will be allocated where they provide benefit to the protected equality groups under the Equalities Act 2010 and further the Council’s public sector duty on equalities.

The aim was that these principles would underpin the future delivery of Council support to the Third Sector through commissioning, grant funding and premises support.

### **2.2.1 Council grant funding and commissioning:**

In September 2012 Harrow Council agreed a new process for the distribution of Council grant funding. This new process introduced the Outcomes Based grants (OBG) and Small Grants programmes. The aim of the OBG programme was to provide large (up to £75,000 per annum), three year grants for the delivery of services that supported the Council's corporate priorities and approved core outcomes. The aim of the Small Grants programme was to provide small (up to £5,000), annual grants to smaller organisations (ie. those with an annual income of up to £50,000 per annum) to support the delivery of a range of projects and activities.

2.2.3 These changes reflected the feedback received from the sector and took in to account the other funding support provided by the Council. The budget available for grant funding is a discretionary fund and represents a relatively small proportion of the total funding provided to the sector by the Council as a whole. The changes took in to account the need for longer-term funding for some services as well as the Council's commitment to maintain a diverse and vibrant sector including smaller organisations. Improved cross-Directorate working has provided greater clarity on the amount of funding provided to the sector and streamlined some Council processes. For example, the introduction of joint monitoring means that some organisations complete a single set of monitoring forms and receive one monitoring visit that covers all Council-funded activity.

### **2.3.1 Accommodation support:**

The Third Sector Investment Plan identified that the current process for allocating accommodation support was ad hoc with some organisations benefiting as a result of historical arrangements. The results of the consultation with the sector indicated strong support for the following proposals:

- Organisations benefiting from Council accommodation should contribute to the cost of provision.
- 'Larger' organisations should support smaller ones with access to premises.
- There should be alternative provision to that currently provided at 'Community Premises' (ie. the ground floor offices located at 27 Northolt Road) possibly run by organisations themselves, such as a resource centre, or drop-in venue.
- Organisations should be able to book venues directly with schools rather than the Council operating as an intermediary.

Based on this feedback the Plan identified the need for 'Third Sector hubs' that offered opportunities for shared costs, community management and flexible use offering facilities such as;

- Office space
- 'Hot desking' space
- Shared meeting / training space
- Shared activity space
- Postage / internet / IT facilities

The following developments demonstrate how the delivery of Council support has changed since the adoption of the Third Sector Investment Plan:

- 2.3.2 *Carramea Community Resource Centre* (formerly known as Community Premises, ground floor offices, 27 Northolt Road). Community Premises was a Council operated voluntary and community sector office set up in 1996, initially intended as a start-up for new and small organisations. The premises offered free office accommodation, meeting space, postal address and mail receiving services, and centre management but was only benefitting 26 organisations, some of whom only used the postal services. Many of the organisations had been based there for over 10 years and some since the beginning with space vacated rarely to make way for other organisations. The Council was liable for all building and management costs. Each organisation had to pay for its own telephone and ICT costs.
- 2.3.3 In May 2013 Harrow Council concluded the transfer of the management of Community Premises from the Council to a voluntary organisation by the name of Carramea. Harrow Council agreed a 10 year lease with Carramea, who are responsible for managing these premises for the benefit of the local community.
- 2.3.4 Carramea is a consortium of mainly small, BMER (Black, minority ethnic and refugee) organisations many of which were previously based in the building. The organisation has been successful in securing funding from the Harrow Strategic Partnership, the Big Lottery Fund and the John Lyon Charity to develop the Centre. This has enabled refurbishment including a new reception area, new ICT installations and the re-modelling of the accommodation to provide more flexible space.
- 2.3.5 The Resource Centre offers organisations access to flexible, pay-as-you-go office space, as well as hourly hire of meeting and counselling rooms. Organisations pay an annual registration fee of £120 which entitles them to a reception and telephone message service, a postal address and mail handling service. Facilities such as individual work stations with computers, internet access and telephones can be booked on an hourly basis as can an ICT training suite. A list of hire rates for these facilities is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.3.6 Following the completion of internal refurbishments, the first phase of the Centre opened in August 2013. The Centre will be fully operational in November 2013. It is expected that over 100 organisations will be able to benefit from this facility and most of the organisations

previously based at Community Premises have signed up for the new facility in addition to organisations new to the centre. This facility can now serve as a pilot for future community management of other Council premises where appropriate or viable and officers are already exploring the potential to offer the nearby Community Hall for community management, after consultation with local residents.

2.3.7 *Community Lettings* is the Council scheme that offers a booking service for community organisations to book school facilities. The scheme offers organisations the opportunity to make bookings at a concessionary rate at some schools in the borough.

2.3.8 The number of bookings managed through this scheme has reduced significantly since 2010 when most of the high schools in the borough transferred to academy status. These schools now manage their own bookings and only six schools remain in the scheme. The table below demonstrates the reduction in the number of bookings administered:

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
<b>No. of bookings</b>	52	18	16	11

The bookings taken for the current academic year are as follows:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>School</b>
Harrow Folk Dance club Harrow Iranian Community Association Rachana	Belmont School
Pinner United FC	Cannon Lane Middle School
KPS Gujarati School The Furquan Academy	Kenmore Park First School
North Harrow Evening Towns Women's Guild Elmfield Church Navalar Tamil School	Longfield First School
9 <sup>th</sup> Kenton Scout Group	Priestmead School
Tamil Kalvi Koodam	Welldon Park Middle School

2.3.9 The feedback from the sector (paragraph 2.3.1) demonstrated support for the proposal that organisations should be able to book directly with schools. In addition the consultation with schools also demonstrated a willingness to administer bookings directly. Initial discussions with the six schools still in the scheme have indicated a positive inclination towards managing the bookings directly and the aim is to move all bookings to schools by August 2014.

2.3.10 *The Lodge, 64 Pinner Road*: Following the closure of Harrow Association of Voluntary Service (HAVS), the lease on The Lodge, 64 Pinner Road was released to the Council in February 2012. The Lodge is currently occupied by five voluntary organisations; Harrow Community Transport, Harrow Bereavement Care, Harrow Refugee Forum, HOPE and Voluntary Action Harrow. One ground floor office is

occupied by DMG Sounds. There are two vacant offices on the first floor and their availability has been advertised to voluntary organisations in the borough and are likely to be filled shortly. There is a meeting room on the ground floor which is available for hire. The charges are £8 per hour for organisations with an income of £10,000 or less per annum and £13 per hour for organisations with an income of £10,001 or more per annum.

2.3.11 Harrow Council has managed the building since February 2012. The building has suffered from a lack of attention to external building repairs in previous years. Harrow Council has set aside funding to address these repairs including replacing the fascias and guttering and resurfacing the car park during 2013-14. The Community Sector Support team also provide a booking facility for the meeting space; arrange regular user group meetings with tenants in the building and conduct regular health & safety audits and maintenance support. The Council has been approached by several organisations who may be interested in self management of the building.

2.3.12 *Directory of venues:* Voluntary organisations are constantly seeking affordable venues to deliver their activities. The results of the consultation also indicated support for the provision of a directory of venues for hire. Work has commenced on a directory of venues which will be available on the Harrow Council website shortly. The directory will include not only Council premises but other venues for hire around the borough as well.

#### **2.4.1 Infrastructure support services**

Following the closure of HAVS Harrow Council has continued to fund the provision of support services to local voluntary and community organisations. This support has included;

- capacity building advice
- fund raising support
- a volunteer recruitment and placement service
- training workshops
- IT support; database development
- Support to the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum.

The services have been provided by Ealing, Hillingdon and Hammersmith and Fulham CVS (Council for Voluntary Services).

2.4.2 The current Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the delivery of these services will cease in November 2013. A tender for the provision of services from December 2013 onwards opened in October. The aim is to identify a new provider that will be awarded a contract to provide services on a longer-term basis.

**2.5.1 Other Support:** In addition to the above Harrow Council provides support to the Third Sector in a number of ways, including;

2.5.2 Local Third Sector organisations supported by Harrow Council have undertaken a consultation to identify support needs within the sector. The consultation results indicated strong support for the delivery of

infrastructure services by a consortium of local organisations. In response to this a consortium has been formed by local organisations by the name of Harrow Community Action (HCA). HCA has been established as a Community Interest Company and is led by a board of 10 Directors elected by the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum. The aim of the organisation is to provide infrastructure support services, enable collaborative bidding and work towards creating a more sustainable and vibrant sector.

2.5.3 *Third Sector Strategy:* A new Third Sector Strategy was developed during 2012-13 (Appendix 3). The strategy was developed by the Third Sector with support from statutory agencies including Harrow Council. The strategy was considered by Cabinet in March 2013 and Cabinet endorsed the delivery of a number of actions by the Council to support the strategy including;

- Identifying opportunities for joint consultation and engagement to discuss commissioning plans and data sharing.
- Reviewing the implementation of the Council's Sustainable Procurement Policy.
- Reviewing SLAs to consider the inclusion of requirements to share information and expertise.
- Exploring options for developing joint, sector-specific initiatives to develop skills for the unemployed and volunteers.

Harrow Council staff participated in a Third Sector Strategy engagement event in July 2013 which provided opportunities to share information and gather feedback. Representatives from the Procurement team were on hand to offer help and guidance with the Council's procurement processes. The implementation of the strategy will be led and monitored by the Voluntary Sector Forum.

2.5.4 *External Funding advice and support:* Harrow Council has continued to offer external funding advice and support to Third Sector organisations. This includes:

- the regular distribution of an external funding newsletter with information about potential funding opportunities
- Facilitation of a regular external funding network meeting which provides an information exchange and networking opportunity for organisations
- External funding events that provide opportunities for engaging directly with funding bodies such as the John Lyon Charity, the Big Lottery, Sport England and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

2.5.5 *Volunteering initiatives:* Harrow Council undertakes a number of volunteering initiatives to support and promote volunteering amongst Harrow residents:

- Harrow's Heroes is the Council's annual celebration event recognising the contribution of volunteers in the borough
- Harrow Council's One-4-One scheme encourages volunteering amongst employees
- 'How to' guides have been developed to help residents understand the many different ways they can get involved with their local community.

2.5.6 *Compact Refresh*: The Harrow Compact is a statement of intent that sets out mutual expectations regarding the working relationship between Harrow's Third Sector and statutory agencies. The Compact is a voluntary agreement between agencies that aims to promote a positive and constructive relationship between the sectors. It can also be used to resolve complaints or conflicts when needed. The Compact was developed in consultation with the Third Sector and includes the main compact agreement as well as codes for volunteering, consultation and BME (Black, minority ethnic) organisations. The Compact was last refreshed in 2012 to ensure that it reflected the current environment. The Funding Code was more recently approved by the Harrow Strategic Partnership in September 2013.

## **Section 3 – Financial Implications**

3.1.1 All initiatives described within this report are managed within the current budget as follows:

- The development of the Carramea Community Resource Centre is being supported through an SLA with the payment of rent on a tapered basis for the first three years ie. full rent paid in year one; two-thirds of the rent paid in year two; one-third of the rent paid in year three. Thereafter the Centre will pay 100% of the annual rent due.
- The transfer of community lettings to schools will mean the transfer of income from lettings to schools with a corresponding reduction in costs for caretaker costs and reimbursements.
- The cost of repairs to be undertaken at The Lodge have been approved as part of the capital programme for 2013-14.
- The funding to support the delivery of infrastructure support services has been agreed as part of the grant recommendations made by Cabinet in February 2013.
- The cost of delivering actions to support the Third Sector Strategy will be met within current resources.
- A restructure of the Community Sector Services team has enabled the reallocation of staff resources to deliver support to the Third Sector as described above.

There are no other implications for the Medium Term Budget Strategy (MTBS).



## **Section 4 - Equalities implications**

4.1.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the proposed implementation of the Third Sector Investment Plan (October 2011). The results of this assessment identified there was the potential for both a negative and positive impact on some groups. As a result of the assessment the following actions were identified;

- To monitor the implementation of the proposals.
- To provide advice and guidance on alternative sources of funding.
- The phased implementation of proposals during 2012-13.

The delivery of Council support to the Sector has continued to be monitored. For example, grant applications are analysed by protected characteristics and grant recipients are asked to provide monitoring information about beneficiaries. This information is presented to the Grants Advisory Panel for their consideration. To mitigate the impact of these changes advice and guidance on alternative sources of funding and the continued provision of infrastructure support services has been provided to enable organisations to explore other avenues of support for their activities. The proposals contained within the Third Sector Investment plan have been implemented on a phased basis taking in to account the consultation feedback provided by the sector.

## **Section 5 – Corporate Priorities**

5.1.1 The changes to the way that some Council support is delivered to Third Sector organisations has been undertaken in line with the Council's Third Sector Investment Plan. Provision of support to local organisations' enables the continued delivery of a range of services which support the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe.
- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads.
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

## **Section 6 - Statutory Officer Clearance:**

Name: ...Anthony Lineker.....  on behalf of the  
Chief Financial Officer

Date: ...8<sup>th</sup> November 2013...

## **Section 7 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

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

### **Background Papers:**

(1) Cabinet report: Third Sector Investment Plan 2012-15, October 2011

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

(2) Cabinet report: Proposed letting of community resource centre – 27 Northolt Road, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2012

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/documents/g61071/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2013-Sep-2012%2019.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

(3) Cabinet report: Third Sector Strategy, March 2013

<http://www.harrow.gov.uk/www2/documents/g61077/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2014-Mar-2013%2019.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>