

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

**TO: CABINET
17 JULY 2008**

**FROM: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
8 JULY 2008**

MINUTE 350 Scrutiny Review – Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector – Interim Report

The Committee considered the report of the Project Sponsors - Corporate Director of Finance, Harrow Council, and the Chief Executive of Harrow Association of Voluntary Services - which set out the interim findings of the Scrutiny Review on Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector. The report set out the progress made and provided the Committee with an opportunity to contribute to the second phase of the Project.

The Chairman of the Review Group commended the manner in which the Review was conducted and stated that it was intended to report the outcome of Phase 1 of the Review to Cabinet on 17 July 2008 with a view to moving to Phase 2. It was noted that the purpose of reporting this matter to Cabinet, at this early stage, was to keep them informed of the progress made.

A Member stated that the Review had facilitated communication between the Council and the Voluntary Sector and he hoped that the conclusions of the Review would be equally effective. The Review was considered to be of value.

Another Member congratulated the scrutiny officer on the presentation of the report and commended the review where the voluntary sector was seen as an equal partner. He raised the issue of The Compact, a working agreement between the Council/Harrow Strategic Partnership and the Voluntary Sector, and how it 'fitted' in the review. He added that it was important to ensure that the grant giving process was transparent and fair. It was essential that the Council was seen as beyond reproach in this regard. The Member also referred to the Council's assets policy where some of the Council's assets could be put to good use by the voluntary groups. There was also a need for the Council and the voluntary sector to tap into external funding opportunities that were available.

The Chairman added that the Voluntary Sector was pleased with the progress made on the Review, and he was pleased to report that the Service Level Agreement issue had been resolved.

A Member referred to the consultation events held in the previous week and enquired whether there would be opportunities for the Voluntary Sector to consult further with its wider membership, such as trustees. The scrutiny officer advised that the Review Group would be meeting on 21 July 2008 to develop the scope for the second phase of the Review and it was envisaged that, subject to the agreement of the Group, further consultation would be planned to seek input on the development of future possible models.

RESOLVED: That (1) the interim findings of the scrutiny review, set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted together with the comments set out in the preamble above;

(2) it be agreed that the findings of the Review so far were a fair reflection of the current climate, and that the findings be used to inform the second phase of the Review and any consequent recommendations;

(3) the request from the Review Group that the final report be produced by Christmas 2008 be agreed;

(4) the changes to the membership of the Review Group, as set out at Appendix B to the report, be agreed;

(5) the scope for the second stage of the Review be considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 29 July 2008;

(6) the report be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Background Documents: Report and Draft Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 8 July 2008

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