

Appendix 1

Update on actions to address recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Review

No.	Recommendation	Person responsible	Progress update	Indication of achievement
1	To have a Council-financed funding support officer within the voluntary and community sector to support groups in a variety of ways e.g. grant applications, adapting to any changes in the grants process, developing funding strategies, meeting monitoring requirements, procurement processes, community assets. To work closely with the Council's external funding officer.	Corporate Director of Finance and Corporate Director for Community and Environment	Achieved. Cabinet agreed 50% match funding with HAVS to support a Funding Officer for the Voluntary Sector. Anna Disney was appointed to this post and commenced her employment in September 2009. The Council's funding officer was involved in the recruitment of this new officer and will be sharing line management responsibilities with HAVS.	Green
2	To have a relationship manager at the Council to act as the main channel of liaison with groups in the voluntary and community sector.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment and Assistant Chief Executive	The Divisional Director for Community and Cultural services will be the Council's relationship manager and will be the main channel of liaison with groups in the voluntary and community sector.	Green
3	To develop a third sector strategy for Harrow that seeks to help define the local relationship with the VCS and invests in VCS development in line with partnership priorities. The third sector strategy should also seek to address the recognised gaps in the models developed and proposed by the scrutiny review - Community Trust model (for example gaps in commissioning and premises) and further work on the model of commissioning in the Strategic Relationships model.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	A final draft Third Sector Strategy will be presented to Cabinet in December. The strategy is co-sponsored by Brendon Hills, Corporate Director for Community and Environment and Julia Smith, Chief Executive of HAVS. A project working group made up of both voluntary and statutory sector representatives has supported the development of the strategy. Following cabinet approval in December there will be a consultation period to engage a wide range of stakeholders.	Green
4	To ask VCS representatives on the HSP to feed back more systematically to sector colleagues through regular emails or as updates in existing newsletters.	Assistant Chief Executive	Regular updates are provided and published through the sectors newsletter.	Green
5	To recognise the real opportunity to develop volunteering in Harrow where supply of volunteers outstrips demand – investing more resource to build the capacity of Harrow Volunteers Centre to provide infrastructure and support to small voluntary groups in recruiting and training volunteers and co-ordinating skills for day to day management of groups.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	Community Development services have revised the existing service level agreement with HAVS to agree new targets for the Volunteers Centre. These new targets focus current resources on providing more infrastructure support to groups to assist them with the recruitment, training and management of volunteers.	Green
6	To advertise the Volunteers Centre on the Harrow Council website.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	Information about the Volunteers Centre is available through the Council website through the A-Z of services.	Green
8	To develop robust governance arrangements for the Compact, to include refreshing the document every two years, promoting the Compact and its way of working, formalising conflict resolution (providing a framework for stage 1 complaints). To be the responsibility of a new Compact Board of representatives to feed up to the HSP, and therefore not reliant on individuals.	Assistant Chief Executive	A proposal has been developed to review the governance arrangements for the Compact this includes a proposal to develop a new compact board and peer review arrangements.	Green
9	To produce a reader-friendly summary of the new compact document and distribute this to councillors, officers and colleagues in the voluntary and community sector.	Assistant Chief Executive	The compact is currently being refreshed, once this is completed a reader-friendly summary will be made available.	Amber
10	To roll out training on the Compact and what it means to partnership working. To be included in members' training, management/officer training and training within the VCS and other partner organisations within the HSP, to raise awareness and understanding. (Please note that part (a) of the recommendation was agreed by Cabinet through the interim report).	Assistant Chief Executive	Some training for members of the Grants Panel has been undertaken and further discussions have taken place to ensure wider roll-out.	Amber
11	To rationalise the grant-giving process – to clearly define processes, appeals mechanisms and adherence to these in order to improve consistency and transparency.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	A grants consultation exercise was conducted during May 2009 with the voluntary and community sector. VCS organisations were consulted on the current grant eligibility criteria, size of grants, funding priorities and process of application. The findings from the consultation were presented to the Grants Advisory panel at their meeting on the 5th June. The Grants Advisory panel made their recommendations to the Portfolio and these were approved by the executive in July 2009.	Green

12	To move towards three-year funding commitments through grants so as to encourage stability and more scope for planning ahead within the sector.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	Further discussion to take place between Brendon Hills and Myfanwy Barrett, Corporate Director Finance.	Amber
13	To consider a longer-term approach (5-10 year funding) for SLAs awarded to VCS infrastructure organisations.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	Further discussion to take place between Brendon Hills and Myfanwy Barrett, Corporate Director Finance.	Amber
14	To agree that the 2009-10 grants round should be conducted in full compliance with the existing criteria and process and in a transparent way.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	The 2009-10 grants round concluded in March 2009. A number of compact challenges were received as a result of the process and decision-making of the grants advisory panel. The process for 2010-11 has now commenced with a number of improvements agreed by the Grants Advisory Panel.	Amber
15	For the Grants Advisory Panel to engage with the VCS to consider the criteria for the 2010/11 grants round and take account of the concerns raised through this scrutiny review about the current system. To bring these proposals to a scrutiny challenge panel in preparation for the 2010/11 grants application process	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	A grants consultation exercise was conducted during May 2009 with the voluntary and community sector. These proposals were brought to a scrutiny challenge panel in June 2009.	Green
16	To ensure that all procurement exercises and available premises are advertised in a regular email/newsletter and that the VCS are on that distribution list. To also raise awareness with the VCS that the Council's Web pages for procurement include much help and advice on accessing procurement routes.	Corporate Director of Finance and Corporate Director for Community and Environment	A new procurement strategy is in development which supports the principle of local procurement. Procurement have negotiated with Corporate suppliers for VCS to access these contracts and benefit from these deals. The first contract accessed by VCS through HAD is the Council's Stationery contract to be followed by paper, mobile, IT and Utilities. "Shop Local" initiative was launched to facilitate low value purchases directly from local and third sector market.	Green
17	To optimise the VCS access to procurement exercises through a fair assessment of the procurement requirements necessary for each tendering exercise.	Corporate Director of Finance.	All tenders are advertised on the Council's website offering fair access to VCS. Additionally, procurement have reviewed its tendering procedures and simplified the Pre Qualification Questionnaire and Tender documents to enable sole traders, partnership and third sector bid for public contracts.	Green
18	To ask the HSP partners to compile a register of their community premises/rooms and develop a protocol for their use by the VCS. To encourage a fairer and more transparent system of community lettings.	Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Community and Environment	A strategic review of key sites occupied by public sector partners is being undertaken by the Place shaping directorate, this will include identification of opportunities for third sector usage.	Amber
19	To ask the relevant council directorate(s) (concerned with lettings especially of schools) to assess the current issues around community lettings (of schools and council buildings such as the Teachers' Centre and community centres) and offer possible solutions to these. To articulate this assessment and present possible solutions to a scrutiny committee and concurrently feed into scrutiny's review of extended schools.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	Community Development and Children's Services have met to assess current issues around community lettings. A paper was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee meeting on the 28th July and at a follow up meeting on the 12th October 2009. An action plan to address these issues has been developed and will be presented to the Grants Advisory Panel in November.	Green
20	To task the HSP with creating an environment where creative people can thrive and make best use of community assets. To seek people with a passion for developing social entrepreneurship and social capital.	Assistant Chief Executive	Proposals to be developed.	Red
21	To establish a Community Trust for the council's grants administration processes and carry out further work on how this can best be achieved - the feasibility of a community trust model for grant-giving in Harrow should be fully explored, scoped and costed, using the scrutiny proposal as a basis. To include developing a better understanding of realistic timescales with regard to implementation and the ability to serve future needs of the borough, for example with regard to the Comprehensive Area Assessment.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	As part of the work undertaken to develop the Third Sector Strategy evidence was collected on experiences in other local authority areas where the grants function had been outsourced to a Community Trust. The Third Sector Strategy action plan includes an action to undertake a feasibility study on this issue so that the cost and risk implications are fully understood.	Amber
22	To conduct a feasibility of the Strategic Relationships Model for commissioning, using the scrutiny proposal as a basis. To include developing a better understanding of realistic timescales with regard to implementation, cultural/organisational shifts required, costs and the ability to serve future needs of the borough.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	The Third Sector Strategy includes a number of actions related to improving VCS access to commissioning including the establishment of a third sector commissioning network, a third sector checklist for commissioners, and the development of training to improve VCS skills and capacity to bid for commissioning opportunities.	Amber