

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	17 December 2009
Subject:	Council's Third Sector Strategy – Final Draft for Consultation
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Brendon Hills Corporate Director, Community and Environment Services
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Jean Lammiman Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Final Draft Harrow Council Third Sector Strategy

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Summary

This report asks the Cabinet to approve the attached Third Sector Strategy as a final draft for consultation. The strategy sets out how the Council proposes to engage with and support the Third Sector in Harrow.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to authorise officers to consult on the attached Harrow Council Third Sector Strategy, 'Working Better Together'.

Reason: (For recommendation)

It is good practice and in line with the Third Sector Compact, for the Council to consult widely on a draft before finalising the Third Sector Strategy.

Section 2 – Report

Fit with Vision and Priorities

1. The strategy seeks to strengthen the Council's engagement with the Third Sector (voluntary and community sector). Excellent Councils are recognised by good engagement with their Third Sectors. The existence of a vibrant Third Sector also helps to make Harrow cosmopolitan (minority groups are supported), competent (diversity is seen as an asset) and cohesive (people get on well with each other). The Third Sector provides significant support to vulnerable people and helps to build strong communities, thus driving two of the Council's priorities.
The consultation for which permission is sought, is also in line with the Council's CREATE values.

Background

2. The development of a Third Sector Strategy is one of the recommendations emerging from the Overview and Scrutiny committee's report 'Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector'. This report made 22 recommendations, 21 of which were accepted by Cabinet in March 2009. The recommendation asked the Council "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."

The Third Sector Strategy has been developed with input from representatives from the voluntary sector and has been co-sponsored by the Chief Executive of HAVS (Harrow Association of Voluntary Service). The strategy sets out how the Council will over the next three years transform the public sector's relationship with the Third Sector so that local people get the best possible services that make a real difference to their lives.

Options Considered

3. Preparing a strategy to expand upon the Compact is good practice. In this case it was recommended by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 9th December 2008. It is essential to consult on the Strategy to gain acceptance from the Third Sector and to bring views expressed back to Cabinet.

Consideration and Implications

4. This Strategy implements strong recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - It has been prepared following research and in conjunction with the Third Sector
 - It focuses on the Council's sphere of action, though the Council may wish later to recommend it to the HSP
 - The action plan is corporate

- At this stage consent is sought to consult with key stakeholders:
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Council Departments
 - Health
 - Police
 - Voluntary and Community Sector
 - HSP
 - Grants Advisory Panel
- Consultation costs will be contained with existing budgets
- Following consultation the Strategy will be amended and brought back to Cabinet for approval
- Implementation costs, if approved, are mainly in staff time. The work programme of the Community Development Service will be adjusted and cross-council support will be needed to deliver the strategy.

Financial implications

5. Most of the items in the action plan are to be resourced through realignment of existing resources. Items that are listed as 'to be costed' will be resourced either through realignment of existing resources with agreement or through external fundraising. There are no implications on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Performance Issues

6. The consultation itself should impact favourably on:
NI 7 Environment for a thriving third sector.

Implementation should also impact on:

NI 1 percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area and NI 6 Participation in regular volunteering.

Regular monitoring of progress against the action plan will be undertaken by the NI7 working group and an annual review will be undertaken, which will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Environmental Impact

7. Does the proposal comply with all relevant environmental legislation? Yes
8. Is there a specific requirement for a formal Environmental Impact Assessment or a decision based on Best Practicable Environmental Option (this will apply to aspects of planning, construction, waste management etc)? No

Risk Management Implications

9. There are 4 project-specific risks:
 1. There is a strong reputational risk if Cabinet decides that the Council should not have a Third Sector Strategy at all, contrary to the view of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 2. There is a strong reputational risk if the Cabinet decides not to consult.
 - This report is designed to mitigate these two risks.

3. There is a further reputational risk attached to implementation
 - This risk is mitigated by the Action Plan and monitoring proposals.
4. There is a risk that key indicators will not respond to the Strategy
 - This risk will be mitigated by monitoring the effect on NI7 particularly closely through the NI7 task group.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Narinderpal Heer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 11 November 2009		
Name: George Curran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 9 November 2009		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Anu Singh	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Divisional Director Partnership, Development and Performance
Date: 9 November 2009		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: John Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
Date: 9 November 2009		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Heather Kerswell, Interim Divisional Director Community and Culture,
Tel: 020 8736 6530

Background Papers: Final Draft Third Sector Strategy