

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
AND SCRUTINY SUB-
COMMITTEES**

Date:	28 January 2010
Subject:	Draft Third Sector Strategy
Responsible Officer:	Heather Kerswell, Interim Divisional Director Community and Cultural Services
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Anthony Seymour, Safer and Stronger Communities Lead Member
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Draft Third Sector Strategy

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the background to the development of the Councils draft Third Sector Strategy. The report is presented to the committee as part of the consultation process being undertaken before the strategy is finalised by the Council.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny committee is asked to:

1. Consider and provide their comments on the draft Third Sector Strategy.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

The draft Third Sector Strategy seeks to strengthen the Council's engagement with the Third Sector. Excellent council's are recognised by good engagement with the Third Sector and the existence of a vibrant sector helps to make Harrow cosmopolitan, confident and cohesive. The draft Third Sector strategy contributes to two of the Council's corporate priorities:

(1) Improve support to vulnerable people and (2) build strong communities.

Background

The draft Third Sector Strategy has been developed in response to a number of local and national drivers including;

- (i) National policy developments that seek to put the Third Sector at the heart of public service delivery.
- (ii) Local policy developments including the Council's 'Better Deal for Residents' programme that aims to provide public services in a more efficient and co-ordinated way.
- (iii) The recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny committee review on 'Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector' of 9th December 2008. In particular the specific recommendation; "to develop a third sector strategy that helps define the local relationship with the VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) 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 strategy has been developed with input from representatives from the VCS through their involvement in a project working group. The strategy has been co-sponsored by Julia Smith, Chief Executive of HAVS (Harrow Association of Voluntary Service) and Brendon Hills, Corporate Director Community and Environment.

The Council's cabinet committee approved the draft for consultation at their meeting on the 17th December 2009. This report is presented as part of the consultation process before the strategy is finalised.

The committee is asked to consider the following:

- (i) Do you agree with the vision of the strategy?
- (ii) Will the objectives deliver the vision ie. To deepen partnerships, support the development of capacity of voluntary organisations and enable participation for third sector organisations in the design and delivery of services?
- (iii) Will the actions deliver the objectives?

Consideration and implications

The strategy focuses on the Council's sphere of action, though it may wish later to recommend it to partners in the Harrow Strategic Partnership. The action plan is corporate and requires cross-council support to deliver the actions which has been secured through the Council's Corporate Strategy Board.

The consultation phase is an opportunity for further third sector consultation. Following this the project working group and sponsors will consider comments received and make appropriate amendments before the strategy is presented to Cabinet in March 2010.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The proposed action plan contained within the strategy is to be resourced through realignment of existing resources. Items that are shown as 'to be costed' will be resourced through realignment of existing resources or with agreement, through external fundraising.

Performance Issues

1. The draft Third Sector Strategy contributes to the delivery of two of the council's corporate priorities (1) improve support for vulnerable people (2) build strong communities.
2. Delivery of the Third Sector strategy should impact most directly on performance of the following national indicator:

NI 7 – Environment for a thriving third sector. Performance against this indicator is measured through a biennial, national third sector survey. Our current performance indicates 10.4% of local organisations report satisfaction with the support they receive from local public sector organisations. The target for 2010 is 14.4%.

Delivery of the strategy also has the potential to impact on other indicators such as:

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

The development and delivery of the Third Sector Strategy should have a positive impact on the assessment of the Council by the Audit Commission as it demonstrates partnership working with the Third Sector to deliver positive outcomes for residents.

Regular monitoring of progress of the strategy will be undertaken by the NI7 working group (a group made up of council officers and voluntary sector representatives) and an annual review of the strategy will be undertaken.

Environmental Impact

Does the proposal comply with all relevant environmental legislation? **Yes**

The Third Sector Strategy aims to facilitate increased procurement of services through local third sector organisations thereby stimulating the local economy and potential development of fair trade opportunities and social enterprise.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? **Yes**
Separate risk register in place? **No**

There is a risk that the key indicators will not respond to the strategy. This is mitigated by the actions identified in the strategy any slippage in delivery should be identified through the monitoring proposals.

Corporate Priorities

The report addresses the following corporate priorities:

- Improve support for vulnerable people – many third sector organisations provide support to vulnerable people, strengthening the relationship and position of these organisations to deliver services will help contribute to this priority.
- Building strong communities – a strong and vibrant third sector is an essential component of a strong community, the strategy seeks to strengthen the role and sustainability of the third sector.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory officer clearance not required.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Kashmir Takhar, Interim Head of Community Development, 020 8420 9331

Background Papers: Draft Third Sector Strategy and Consultation Questionnaire

www.harrow.gov.uk/thirdsectorstrategy