

**REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE AND
FINANCE SCRUTINY
SUB-COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	6 April 2011
Subject:	Update on actions arising from the scrutiny review 'Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector'
Responsible Officer:	Brendon Hills, Corporate Director Community and Environment
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Chris Mote, Policy Lead – Safer and Stronger Communities Councillor Nana Asante, Performance Lead – Safer and Stronger Communities
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: Update on actions to address recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny review 'Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector'

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report presents an update on actions taken to address the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny committee report 'Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector' (December 2008).

Recommendations:

The sub-committee is requested to:

1. Comment on the positive and ongoing progress being made against the recommendations of the 'Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector' review.
2. Recommend that this work stream is now incorporated in to the Third Sector Strategy working group action plan.

Section 2 – Report

2.1 Introductory paragraph

2.1.1 The delivery of actions taken to address the recommendations made by the review 'Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector' support the Council's vision 'Working together our Harrow our community' as they seek to strengthen the role of the voluntary sector in Harrow. The actions also help address the corporate priorities including in particular 'United and Involved communities – A Council that listens and leads'.

2.2 Background

2.2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny committee undertook a review called 'Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector' during 2008. The final report made 22 recommendations, 21 of which were accepted by Cabinet in March 2009. This report provides an update on progress against these 21 recommendations.

2.3 Current situation

2.3.1 The table attached at Appendix 1 provides an update on actions that have been taken to address the recommendations of the review.

2.3.2 Significant progress has been made against all recommendations. In some areas the action has been completed and in other areas good progress has been made.

2.3.3 The responsibility for delivery of the recommendations cuts across a number of Council Directorates. The positive progress against all recommendations demonstrates that these have been actively pursued by the relevant service areas. The delivery of many actions has been undertaken through close partnership working and engagement of the voluntary sector in Harrow. Some of the recommendations have been incorporated in to the Third Sector Strategy and a cross-Council officer group (Third Sector Strategy working group) is continuing to meet to develop and monitor these.

2.3.4 The investigation and subsequent closure of HAVS will have a significant impact on the voluntary sector in Harrow. The Council is working with voluntary sector representatives to ensure that appropriate infrastructure support is maintained to support the sector in delivering services for Harrow residents.

2.4 Implications of the Recommendation

2.5 Equalities impact

The delivery of a strengthened voluntary sector will have a positive impact on equalities. A healthy and vibrant voluntary sector is a good

indication of a strong community where people from all backgrounds have access to the support they need to thrive.

2.6 Legal comments

The Council is able to support the voluntary sector in a number of ways including through the provision of grant funding. The Council in its dealings with the voluntary sector is obliged to pay due regard to its duties in relation to the Voluntary Sector Compact and equalities legislation.

2.7 Financial Implications

The scrutiny review made some recommendations regarding consideration of longer-term funding arrangements for the voluntary sector. In the current financial climate with uncertainty surrounding future Government settlements the Council is not able to respond positively these recommendations. These considerations will however, be kept under regular review.

2.8 Performance Issues

2.8.1 The delivery of actions to address the recommendations of the Scrutiny review 'Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector' supports the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities including 'United and Involved Communities – A Council that listens and leads'. The scrutiny review considered a range of evidence, including feedback from voluntary sector representatives before making its recommendations. By delivering the actions to address these recommendations the Council is able to demonstrate that the Council is listening and taking action to address local views.

2.9 Environmental Impact

2.9.1 The actions taken to increase local procurement opportunities thereby supporting the voluntary sector as a provider of services will have a positive environmental impact. The development of a local supplier increases the potential to create local employment opportunities.

2.10 Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

The Directorate risk register identifies the risk that the third sector may not have the skills and capabilities required to become more involved in the delivery of local public services. The delivery of the Third Sector strategy is one of the ways the Council is seeking to mitigate against this risk.

Separate risk register in place? No

2.11 Corporate Priorities

- 2.11. This report incorporates the following corporate priority:
United and involved communities – A Council that listens and leads

The delivery of actions arising from the scrutiny review ‘Delivering a strengthened voluntary sector’ supports the Council in delivering this priority.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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

Background Papers:

Appendix 1: Update on actions to address recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny committee