

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

No.	Recommendation	Person responsible	Update	Further action	Date
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	The Council provided 50% match funding for a Funding Officer role from September 2009 - March 2011. The officer was based at HAVS and provided support with identifying funding sources, assisting with funding applications, delivering training workshops etc. To replace this service the Council is working with VCS representatives to put in place interim support services for the voluntary sector that will include funding advice. Funding advice is also available from the Council's External Funding Manager which includes VCS access to an external funding network and external funding newsletter.	(1) Delivery of interim VCS support services (2) Following VCS consultation the development and delivery of long-term support services	(1) 30th June 2011 (2) December 2011
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	The Divisional Director for Community and Culture is the Council's relationship manager and is the main channel of liaison with groups in the voluntary and community sector.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
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	The Third Sector Strategy was developed and adopted by Cabinet in April 2010. A Third Sector Strategy cross-corporate working group has been established to monitor progress and wider impacts on the VCS. This group is supporting the development of a Third Sector Investment plan. The aim is to establish clear commissioning priorities and outcomes from this investment.	Development of Third Sector Investment plan presented to Cabinet	Jul-11
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	The notes of Harrow Chief Executives meetings are made available to the VCS representatives on the Council website within 5 days of each meeting. Briefing notes of HSP Board meetings are available to HSP representatives and are on the Council website within 5 days of each meeting. The VCS representatives provide feedback to sector colleagues through the Voluntary Sector Forum and email communication.	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
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	Arrangements are being put in place for the provision of interim support services for the VCS that will include support with volunteer recruitment. It is recognised that there is a real opportunity for VCS organisations to make more use of volunteers in Harrow and a lack of support available to small voluntary groups on how to make best use of volunteers. This will be taken in to account when a service specification for infrastructure support is devised.	Following VCS consultation the development and delivery of long-term support services	Dec-11
6	To advertise the Volunteers Centre on the Harrow Council website.	Corporate Director for Community and Environment	Provision of services to support volunteer recruitment will be provided as part of the interim arrangements being put in place. It is likely that this will also be an aspect of the specification that is developed for the provision of infrastructure support services.	(1) Delivery of interim VCS support services (2) Following VCS consultation the development and delivery of long-term support services	(1) 30th June 2011 (2) December 2011

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7	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. An outline structure has been agreed by the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum and detailed terms of reference are under development.	Development of terms of reference and agreement by Voluntary Sector Forum	Oct-11
8	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 refresh has been completed except for the funding code which has been drafted and is now the subject of consultation with the voluntary and community sector and service departments. When this is complete, a reader-friendly summary will be made available.	(1) Finalise and agree draft with VCS and internal stakeholders. (2) Develop reader friendly summary.	October 2011
9	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. Further training to focus on the new funding and procurement code when agreed will take place.	Training on new funding and procurement code to be rolled out to officers, VCS and other stakeholders.	November 2011 - January 2012
10	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	Since the Overview and Scrutiny report was published two consultations have been undertaken with the VCS to develop the grant-giving process in line with recommendations. The first consultation in 2009 resulted in a number of changes being implemented to the grants administration process. A second consultation was undertaken in January 2011 on further potential changes to the grants system that will inform the development of the 2012/13 funding round.	Development of Third Sector Investment Plan for 2012/13 onwards	Jul-11
11	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 of Finance and Corporate Director for Community and Environment	The recent consultation with the VCS indicated strong support for moving towards the commissioning of some services from the VCS. Proposals for the 2012/13 funding round are currently being developed in consultation with the VCS and other stakeholders. It is envisaged that this could lead to longer-term funding agreements, however this requires further development with Finance and Procurement departments.	Development of Third Sector Investment Plan for 2012/13 onwards	Jul-11
12	To consider a longer-term approach (5-10 year funding) for SLAs awarded to VCS infrastructure organisations.	Corporate Director of Finance and Corporate Director for Community and Environment	The development of a replacement service for the provision of infrastructure support will be undertaken in consultation with the VCS. This consultation will inform the development of a service specification which will be secured through a commissioning process. The development of a commissioning approach will consider the need for longer-term funding agreements.	(1) Delivery of interim VCS support services (2) Following VCS consultation the development and delivery of long-term support services	(1) October 2011 (2) December 2011
13	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	Cabinet agreed at their meeting in December 2008 that the 2009-10 grants round should be conducted in full compliance with the existing criteria. The 2009-10 grants round concluded in March 2009.	Training on new funding and procurement code to be rolled out to officers, VCS and other stakeholders.	November 2011 - January 2012
14	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 with the VCS during May 2009. Proposals for revisions to the criteria and application process were discussed with a scrutiny challenge panel and the Grants Advisory Panel in June 2009. This resulted in the introduction of revised criteria and amendments to the grants process. The same process was used for the administration of grants for 2011/12. Lessons learned from both years will inform the revised process for 2012/13.	Development of Third Sector Investment Plan for 2012/13 onwards	Jul-11

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15	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	Tenders and available premises are advertised on the Council's website. The Council has provided workshops to the VCS on commissioning helping to raise their awareness of the support available via the Council's web pages on procurement. A questionnaire has been sent to VCS organisations to assess their training and support needs to access procurement opportunities. A further workshop will be held with the VCS to ascertain their training and support needs and identify how this is best provided.	VCS stakeholder workshop to develop commissioning process and assess training and support needs.	Jun-11
16	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.	The Council's procurement strategy supports the principle of local procurement. The "Shop Local" initiative was launched to facilitate low value purchases directly from local and third sector markets. To assist VCS access to procurement exercises, procurement have reviewed tendering procedures and simplified the Pre Qualification Questionnaire and tender documents to enable sole traders, partnerships and third sector providers to bid for public contracts. Community and Environment are working with the Sustainable Procurement officer to assess VCS training needs to assist them in accessing procurement opportunities, following this a programme of support and training will be developed.	Assessment of third sector training needs and development of capacity building action plan.	Jul-11
17	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.	Corporate Director Place Shaping 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. A directory of venues available for hire is being developed to support users of community lettings.	(1) Cabinet report on development of Council property assets (2) Development of directory of venues for hire	(1) December 2011 (2) October 2011
18	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	An assessment of issues around community lettings was undertaken in 2009 and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Since this time a further consultation has been undertaken in January 2011 which sought views on how community lettings could be provided in the future. The consultation results indicated strong support (75%) for the proposal that organisations should be able to book directly with schools rather than the Council operating as an intermediary. The results of this consultation will inform proposals for the future delivery of this service as part of the Third Sector Investment plan.	Development of Third Sector Investment Plan including strategic approach to providing premises support to the VCS.	Jul-11
19	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 Corporate and Corporate Director for Community and Environment	The Harrow Strategic Partnership is considering a draft priority for tackling worklessness which would include creating opportunities for the development of social entrepreneurship. This is one of the funding priorities for allocation of LAA reward grant to support developments in this area. The Third Sector Investment plan will also take in to account training and capacity building needs for the VCS.	(1) Finalisation of HSP priorities and allocation of reward grant (2) Development of Third Sector Investment Plan for 2012/13 onwards	Jul-11
20	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	During the development phase of the Third Sector Strategy some preliminary work was undertaken in to the feasibility of moving to a Community Trust for the Council's grants administration process. The results of this concluded that the development of a Trust from scratch would be resource intensive and examples in other local authority areas, where grants had been outsourced showed that they had later been brought back in to Council control. The recent consultation undertaken in January 2011 sought the views of the VCS on which organisation could administer a small grants programme in the future, the responses were 62% in favour of this responsibility remaining with the Council compared to 18% opting for a Community Trust.	ACTION CLOSED	

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21	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	A revised funding process for 2012/13 is being developed which will include commissioning of services and a small grants programme. The proposals will be developed as part of the Third Sector Investment plan.	Development of Third Sector investment plan including timetable for the introduction of a commissioning process	Jul-11