



Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement

Wards Affected: All

A Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) in Brent

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 In December 2010 members of the Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the development of a voluntary sector strategy in Brent. At the time a new Council for Voluntary Services was being developed by the sector and members asked for representatives of the new CVS to return to the committee once their business plans were developed.
- 1.2 This covering report sets out the context for infrastructure support for Brent's voluntary sector, the role of a CVS and the background to the development of 'CVS Brent' to fulfil this role for Brent. A representative from 'CVS Brent' will attend the committee to set out their approach to members based upon the business plan and strategic and operational plans attached at appendices 1 and 2.

2.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the following:

- 2.1 The role of a CVS and its importance in the present policy context to represent and support the development of the voluntary sector to the benefit of Brent residents.
- 2.2 The business plan and strategic and operational plan underpinning the work of CVS Brent as the umbrella representative organisation for the voluntary and community sector in Brent set out in appendices 1 and 2.

3.0 Context

- 3.1 When Brent's former CVS, BrAVA, ceased to operate in the borough, the council provided practical support to respond to requests to develop a new Council for Voluntary Service: CVS Brent. In January Executive agreed to fund an infrastructure stream as part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund. The funding stream includes commissioning work from a constituted CVS, supporting the development of a voluntary sector resource centre and responding to identified gaps in infrastructure support. The total stream is £159,249 each year for three years between April 2012 and March 2015 to commission projects which enhance infrastructure support for the voluntary sector.
- 3.2 The Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund was developed following consultation in November 2011, which identified strong support for a CVS, with organisations keen to outline some of the support they would

like to be developed. Factors identified as important included: mentoring between more experienced and less experienced organisations; more joint working; additional training or identifying supply chain opportunities; better alignment of service provision between the voluntary and public sectors and information about different sources of funding available for the voluntary sector.

- 3.3 NAVCA provides a national framework for the role of a CVS made up of five key areas:
- **Support and Services:** to help local civil society work effectively, signposting and offering capacity building support, information and advice
 - **Representation:** to ensure the views of local civil society are represented in an equitable and appropriate way
 - **Liaison:** to act as a focal point for Brent's civil society to network; develop partnerships, share learning and agree common ground
 - **Development Work:** to identify gaps and opportunities in services and provision and help civil society grow to fill them
 - **Strategic Partnership:** to work in partnership with local, regional and national government and the full range of public and statutory agencies on strategy, planning, commissioning and delivery

- 3.4 A CVS has a critical role in the council's engagement with the voluntary sector and will enable the council to respond to the need for improved communication between the sectors highlighted by Brent voluntary sector organisations. A CVS is one way to support voluntary sector organisations and investment in infrastructure is aimed at enhancing the voluntary sector's ability to be more resilient and bring funding into the borough to benefit residents through locally delivered projects.

4.0 Detailed Considerations

- 4.1 Members are asked to refer to CVS Brent's Business Plan and Strategic and Operational Plan are attached at appendices 1 and 2. A representative from CVS Brent will attend the meeting to give an overview of their approach and planned next steps.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None arising directly from this report

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report. The Voluntary Sector Initiative fund proposals were subject to an equality needs assessment which can be found with the Voluntary sector Initiative Fund Report at the link set out in the background papers section below.

7.0 Background Documents

- Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund Report to Executive January 2012
 - Consultation Responses (Summary at Appendix 5 and in main body of report)
 - Brent Council Main Programme Grant Consultation Document (Appendix 6)
- <http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MId=1570&Ver=4>
- London Councils Grant Funding Report to Executive January 2012
- <http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MId=1570&Ver=4>
- London Councils Funding Report to Full Council, July 2011
- DCLG Localism Act
- DCLG Proposals to introduce Community Right to Challenge
- DCLG Proposals to introduce a Community Right to Buy – Assets of Community Value

- Draft Voluntary Sector Strategy background research and feedback from sector
- Minutes of Voluntary Sector Liaison Forums

8. Appendices

- Appendix 1: Business Plan for CVS Brent
- Appendix 2: Strategic and Operational Plan 2011 - 2013

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