



LONDON BOROUGH
OF BRENT COUNCIL
A review of the needs within
Brent's voluntary and
community sector
organisations

HR Consulting
December 2018

Table of Contents

Content

1	Introduction	4
2	Executive Summary	4
3	Background	4
4	Context and Current Position	4
5	Consultation	5
6	Community and Voluntary Sector: Challenges and Aspirations	6
7	VCO Service Mapping Area	7
8	The Way Forward: 'Building a Better Brent' Partnership Framework	9
9	Good Practice Comparisons	10
10	Funding	11
11	Quality Assurance Model	12
12	Voluntary and Community Sector Development	13
13	Communication and Consultation Feedback	14
14	Equalities	15
15	Future VCS Infrastructure Support and Assistance	16
16	Recommendations	16
	Bibliography	17

Abbreviations

BPET – LB Brent Council Voluntary Sector Partnership and Engagement Team

LBBr – London Borough of Brent Council

VCOs – Voluntary and Community Organisations

- Tier 1 VCOs – organisations commissioned by BPET
- Tier 2 VCOs – in receipt of larger grant funds from the BPET
- Tier 3 VCOs – in receipt of smaller grant funds from the BPET

VSIO – Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Organisation

VSIF – Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund

VCOs Activities:

- AIG – Advice, Information and Guidance
- ALS – Arts, Leisure and Sport
- CYP – Children and Young People
- ETV – Employment, Training and Volunteering

1. Introduction

The London Borough of Brent Council has taken the decision to review the needs of the voluntary and community sector organisations that offer local services to Brent's communities. Phase 1 focused on identifying the needs of the sector and Phase 2 focussed on consulting with sector organisations about the recommendations from phase 1. The consultation explored the following: a quality assurance model, realigning the grant allocation, prioritising the partnership between the sector and the Council and developing a set of partnership principles. The consultation also explored the needs of the sector to feed into future infrastructure support provided by Brent Council. The current model detailed herein is within the current budget not proposed budget.

2. Executive Summary

This report sets out the findings from phases 1 & 2 of the review of Brent's voluntary & community sector needs. Reference is made to the Council's Borough Plan- Building a Better Brent 2019-2023, voluntary and community sector research, and good practice from other London local authorities. Additionally, this report sets out proposals of a new model for working with and supporting the voluntary and community sector as informed by the review of needs 2018.

3. Background

Brent's voluntary & community sector offers a comprehensive range of services and activities that both contribute significantly to the wellbeing of Brent's residents, and complement local statutory services. The council acknowledges the pivotal role played by the voluntary & community sector and recognises the significant challenges currently confronting these organisations.

A review of voluntary & community sector needs was conducted to guide the council's approach in utilising its resources to strengthen VCOs capacity and resilience. This report sets out the findings from phases 1 & 2 of the review.

4. Context and current position

Achieving our vision will require innovation, continued and deeper partnership, and careful planning based on sound evidence. It requires us to shift from focusing on single services addressing specific issues, to a more joined-up approach based around localities. We must continue to explore and innovate, using our resources in the most effective way and securing the services that people need. This means working closely with partners, ensuring the best use is made of all our means. We will build resilient communities through our community hub model – a prime example of how we want to address the needs of our residents earlier. We will do this in a joined-up way, grounded in the neighbourhoods where people live. We will support local voluntary sector organisations and obtain best value from grant funding provided to them.

A different approach is needed to meet growing demand for council services whilst managing pressure on budgets. Increasing employment opportunities for local residents and raising income to support core services such as youth services, advice, older persons and disability are also vital.

To achieve these changes, the Council has taken a transformational approach that is set out within the 'Build a Better Brent' strategy. The transformation of community-led

services is currently being put into effect through varying work streams, including Outcome Based Review (OBR) outcomes; development and expansion of community hubs; 'Forward Together', stronger communities and community engagement. To help achieve its aims, the council will use its spending power to help support local communities, setting out clear expectations and with more of a focus on volunteering and community support.

Brent Council's Partnership and Engagement Team (BPET) currently provides infrastructure support and assistance and coordinates the current CVS Brent infrastructure service to the sector. Additionally, it administers various funding streams accessible to the voluntary & community sector. These currently fund: voluntary & community sector infrastructure support and capacity building; core and project costs associated with key services and activities that meet specific council strategic objectives; borough-wide legal and welfare benefits advice services; health-based projects; and smaller scale community activities. Grant awards are administered in line with the criteria set against each funding stream and Brent's constitution.

Brent's voluntary & community sector has a vibrant and wide-ranging local offer that both complements and alleviates pressure upon the Council's services. Brent's residents and the Council can and do benefit greatly from the uniqueness and strength of this offer that seamlessly aligns itself with the Council's strategic priorities as set out within the Borough Plan 2019-23 'Building a Better Brent'. The voluntary & community sector is keen to engage with the Council to deliver local services and activities effectively. The VCO service offer, its aspirations and challenges are set out below.

5. Consultation

The review's consultation process included input from approximately 372 organisations and individuals, residents' associations, community and voluntary sector organisations and charities. It was delivered in two phases, with the consultation methodology comprising of: surveys, telephone interviews and community-based workshops. Details are set out in tables 1 & 2 below.

Consultation Methodology

Table 1: Phase 1 - Review of Needs Consultation: June – November 2017

Components	Date(s)	Outcomes
Surveys - Tier 1	July - October	15 surveys returned
1-1 telephone interviews – Tier 1	July – October	15 interviews completed
Survey – Tier 2 & 3	July - October	30 surveys returned
Face to face interviews Tier 2 & 3	June - July	5 interviews completed
Total Surveys:	45	Overall
Total Interviews: 20	Total: 65	

Table 2: Phase 2 - Wider VCO consultation: June – October 2018

Components	Date(s)	Outcomes

Surveys	July - October	172 respondents
Workshops x 3x Wembley 1x Willesden 1x Kilburn	June - August	83 attendees
2x Brent Community Advice Network	September	52 attendees
Total: 372		

6. Voluntary and Community Sector: Challenges and aspirations

The voluntary & community sector offer provides significant benefits to local communities whilst complementing the Council's strategic priorities. The VCOs:

- Encourage civic duty (harnessing volunteers equivalent to £20ph), tackle inequality and promote community cohesion;
- Alleviate demand upon all public services by addressing residents' issues at the point of contact and obtaining additional resources to do so;
- Are independent and can therefore respond swiftly and rapidly to changing environments cutting through bureaucratic process;
- Can draw upon external resources that are otherwise unavailable to private and statutory organisations, and in some cases are grant givers;
- Enhance Best Value and attract resources through their non-profit status;
- Deliver ethical services built upon trust in communities and beneficiaries (particularly where residents face complexities in accessing services);
- Contributing towards improvements in community wellbeing (economic, social, physical, and mental);
- Provide in-depth local knowledge, strong community links, reach, and expertise that enables VCOs to better understand challenges at micro and macro level;
- Are well positioned to adapt quickly to change and develop innovative, tailored and preventative responses;
- Work ethically with passion, drive, commitment and a sense of social justice; underpinning voluntary sector values that contribute towards equality, inclusiveness and the sector's longevity;
- Fill gaps where cuts to statutory services have impacted (e.g. foodbanks, outreach, community events, etc.);
- Can become Brent's official CSR offer and can work with the Council to facilitate its own staff team's involvement in community volunteering.

Challenges

The current challenges faced by the voluntary & community sector mean that without more resilience and sustainability, there is a real threat to, and potentially a loss of vital services and activities in local communities. The main challenges identified within Phase 1 of the review were:

- A lack of long-term funding (directly impacting upon resource leverage, longer-term planning and organisation development);

- Rapidly growing demands for services delivered in many cases without full cost recovery (approximately 20% rise in demand in 2017/18);
- Impact of austerity and continuous change to central and local government policy (welfare reform, universal credit and significant cuts to non-statutory services such as youth provision);
- A lack of strong collaboration and partnership working with the council and between the VCOs themselves (requesting a need for a partnership framework);
- Difficulty in obtaining an overview of duplicate services (plus the impact of GDPR on data-sharing protocols). (*Note: Duplication was more complex to ascertain where wraparound services were provided*);
- Stronger voluntary & community sector leadership, strategic direction and vision within Brent
- VCOs needed to better demonstrate their value and be able to show how they provide not only best value but also wider social and community value. Discussion about how VCOs knew that they offered better value.
- Focused and more specialist organisational and development capacity building and support (pro-bono, mentoring, back office services);

Aspirations

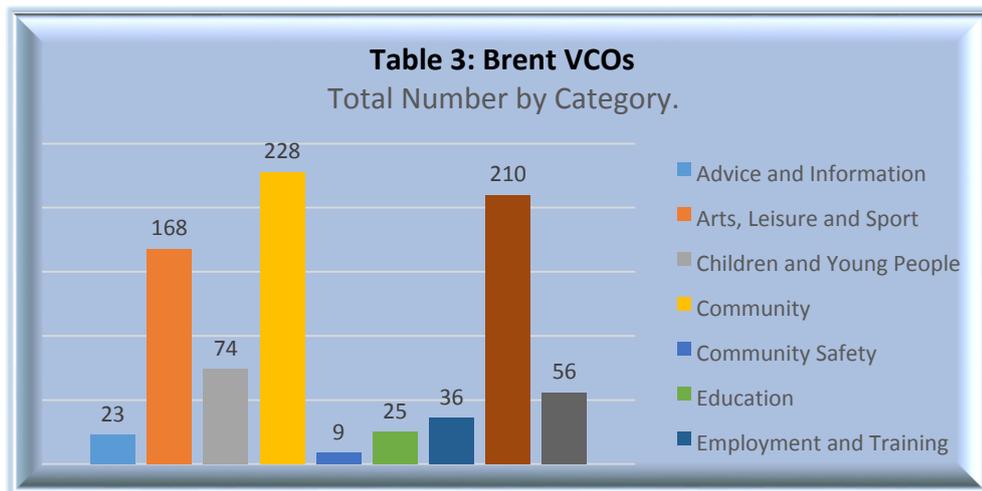
The VCOs were keen to work more productively and in a joint capacity with Council teams and departments. The review found that VCOs welcomed:

- Better communication with the Council – including visits from Council officers and councillors to the VCOs.
- It was noted that although there are communication tensions that exist between the VCOs and the Council, the VCOs welcomed the more recent changes made by some areas within the Council. (*The council's BPET, employment and Drug and Alcohol teams were flagged as examples of listening and good practice in joint working*).
- Partnerships and collaboration with the Council's wider departments;
- The BPET's support in publicising the VCOs knowledge and capacity amongst Council departments to encourage more integrated working;
- Working with the Council to better utilise the VCOs non-profit status to lever in wider charitable funds;
- The receipt of Council funds. Many VCOs rely upon these funds as external funders view council funds as a marker of a VCO's quality and capacity. Furthermore, grants are a reliable and consistent resource that attracts wider revenues.
- A partnership framework based upon trust, transparency and commonality which VCOs deemed as crucial particularly where resources are limited. The framework would assist the VCOs in better collaboration and communication and alleviating difficulties sometimes experienced in partnerships that are 'cobbled together';
- Maintaining a strong and independent sector voice;
- Support available from the infrastructure organisations.
- Clarity as to which organisations should play a lead role in the following capacity building areas:
 - Leadership / Governance and Innovation
 - Bespoke and focused capacity building
 - Thematic / issues-based policy and research
 - Advance specialist advice (e.g. HR, legal, finance, etc.)
 - Voluntary & community sector policy and strategy
 - Networking and promotion
 - Enabling 21st century working (shared assets, satellite services and hot desking)
 - Monitoring / evaluation guidance
 - Resource development

7 VCO Service Area Mapping

To gain a better understanding a mapping exercise explored the Council' voluntary & community sector databased that holds details for 829 VCOs. These were separated into 9 service headers as set out in table 3 below.

Using the descriptors of services and activities within the database, the VCOs were further arranged under 6 headers linked directly to the Council's strategic priorities. The headers are: poverty, employment/training/volunteering, young people/children, older people, vulnerability and emerging communities. The exploration identified 294 VCOs whose activities directly met these categories.



Poverty Relief – 26 VCOs provide foodbanks, community kitchens, food growing, welfare benefits advice, fuel poverty solutions, fair trade, community development and grant giving.

Employment/Training/Volunteering – 53 VCOs offer support for business start-ups/enterprise, tailored employment support, work with ex-offenders, employment support for homeless residents, employability courses and volunteering for young refugees, employment legal advice, employability for disabled people, tutoring, radio and media training, mentoring and flexible volunteering.

Young People/Children – 82 VCOs provide activities ranging from youth clubs, to scouts/guides/brownies/cadets, sport, performing arts, leisure, youth centres, health advice, business and enterprise, community safety, information, advice and guidance, training and employability support.

Older People – 40 VCOs offer services and activities that include homecare, social and luncheon clubs, music, benefits advice and guidance, services for refugees and migrants, empowerment, services for disabled older people, leaning and education, and employment support.

Vulnerability – 67 VCOs offer services in areas of vulnerability (although this figure is likely to higher due to the nature of voluntary & community sector services). Services and activities include homelessness support, welfare benefits advice, mental health services, disability services, carers support, substance misuse, children and parenting support, counselling, rehabilitation and victim support.

Emerging Communities – 26 VCOs work with emerging communities however the majority identified were primarily Somali communities with 4 serving Portuguese, and Romanian communities.

Recommendation - Work with the Brent Multi-Faith Forum to further explore the 210 faith-based organisations noted within the database to ascertain the local support and activities they offer to residents. Very few of these organisations are in receipt of funds from the Council (174 are churches). Wider research undertaken within Phase 1 suggested that their social activities mirror those of the voluntary & community sector. The Council could consider how it might work with these organisations in future.

8. The Way forward: 'Building a Better Brent' Partnership Framework

Overview

The partnership framework is a bespoke model created specifically for Brent. It addresses the aspirations, needs and challenges expressed by the voluntary & community sector by drawing upon industry research and good practice.

The new model needs to combine various components to create an agreed framework between the Council and voluntary & community sector predicated upon a set of defined principles. The framework will encompass a 'golden thread' link to the Council's current and future strategic aspirations as set out with 'Building a Better Brent'.

The components are:

- **A framework document** defined by the seven principles that incorporates longer term funding, a new Compact agreement, data sharing protocols, and transition arrangements into commissioning for some VCOs (as guided by quality assurance);
- Supplemented by a **Funding model** whereby the Council enables the VCS to access funding via grants, crowdfunding and contracts;
- **Quality Assurance** of the framework members guided by a Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 quality standard
- Local and flexible outcomes for voluntary & community sector infrastructure support as guided by the views of the VCOs.

The Phase 2 wider consultation asked VCOs for comments in relation to this new approach. The feedback and survey findings re set out in the sections below.

9. A Partnership Framework

The review recommends creating a new partnership framework that incorporates and enables stronger joint working based upon the principles set out in diagram 1 below. The principles were consulted on with the voluntary & community sector to define and work up each one.

- Quality services
- Trust and honesty
- Fairness
- Shared goals and values
- Openness
- Strong and equal voice
- Joint working

Diagram 1: Partnership Principles



Partnership Principles Consultation Feedback

Feedback from the wider consultation showed that the VCOs were in favour of the principles but with the following caveats:

- Harder and defined definitions/meanings are required for each principle
- Cannot be rhetoric: other such approaches have not been delivered before
- Transparency and guarantees need to accompany a partnership approach
- Joint working should be collaborative and resonate through the whole of the Council not just one or two departments. The Council recognises that VCOs already provide quality services and therefore should be the baseline from which to build a partnership;
- Trust and honesty need to be evident from the outset – this requires further building between the Council and the voluntary & community sector;
- The voluntary & community sector should be a critical friend to the Council and both sides should be open to praise and constructive criticism;
- Fairness should be reflected within the challenges related to resources (i.e. grants distribution & full cost recovery, capacity building, support, partnerships, and a strong voice);
- Shared goals and values require clear statements of meaning and need to be demonstrated in practice;
- Openness should focus on true and honest communication without threat to funding, encourage creative thinking and being heard and listened to;
- Equality of voice and in decision making is vital within the partnership alongside the Council being open to fair challenge whilst maintaining the voluntary & community sector's independence;
- A discussion is necessary around use of community spaces, responsibilities for them and shared facilities;

Good Practice Comparisons

The review also explored good practice approaches amongst London councils and best practice recommended by Compact Voice and National Association for Voluntary and Community Action National Council for Voluntary Organisations. The approach below also complements practice that was evident within the Council's previous and /or current approach to grant giving.

- **A compact agreement:** based upon the principles above and setting out those for funding, data sharing, and solving disagreements;
- **Explicit links between overarching priorities and grant funds** – this is already evident in the Council's current grants process
- **Providing capacity building to up-skill the sector** – this is evident in grant funding allocated for infrastructure support (VSIF)
- **In-kind support** – use of free space, shared IT, access to meeting rooms, etc. – this is evident in community spaces provide with peppercorn/low rents for some VCOs..
- **Enabling robust communication** – this approach is evident from the work of this review, as part of the Community Hubs approach, and through Brent Connects.

Table 4 below outlines other local authority partnership models. The review recommends further exploration of the approaches in Tower Hamlets, Ealing, Camden and Islington councils to ascertain whether the best elements of these models can be utilised suitably to help create the new VCS model.

Table 4: Local Authority Comparatives

London Borough	Inner/ Outer London	Demographic (similar to Brent - project population over 300-350,000)/ Diversity (<10% tolerance)	Best Practice Voluntary Sector Framework			
			Compact	Voluntary Sector Strategy	Funding Strategy or equivalent	Fund VSIO
Brent	Outer	332,100 population / 54% diversity	Original compact 2003. Not renewed.	No	Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund. (£1.3 million annually). 2016-2018	Yes
Newham	Outer	Yes population (342,900) / Yes diversity (54%)	Yes. Created in 2006 and renewed in 2012	No	No	No
Tower Hamlets	Inner	Yes population (304,000) / No diversity (39%)	Yes. Now its VC strategy	Yes (2016-19)	Yes, within its VSC Strategy	Yes
Ealing	Outer	Yes population (351,600) / Yes diversity (47%)	Yes. Created in 2010 and undergoing renewal	Some detail within other documents but currently under consultation	Community Grants budget commissioning 2015 – 2019 being replaced with new commissioning £2.24m annually (2019-23)	Yes
Camden	Inner	No population (252,100) / Yes diversity (42%)	Yes.	Yes, linked to VCS Investment Programme and renewed in 2016	Camden Council VCS Investment Programme 2017 – 2024 (£5.1 million annually)	Yes
Islington	Inner	No population (231,500) / No diversity (37%)	Yes.	Yes	VCS Partnership Grants Programme 2016 – 2020, (£2.7 million annually.)	Yes
Hillingdon	Outer	Yes population (301,000) / No diversity (32%)	Yes. Created in 2010	No	Corporate voluntary sector Grant programme, (£1.7 million 2017/2018)	No

11. Funding Model

The Council administers various grants that fund the voluntary & community sector initiatives comprising: The Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund, Edward Harvist, Love Where You Live and the Brent Advice Fund). A number of services are contracted to voluntary sector organisations including: Information, advice and guidance, Social Isolation in Brent Initiative (SIBI), the Accident Prevention Handyperson service for the elderly and the Single Housing Pathway provision to support single young people.

The Council provides the following support and assistance to the VCS to access funding:

- Bespoke funding training and workshops to provide the knowledge and practical skills across a range of organisations attract longer term funding from external funders
- Open4Communities, a free online grant-finder, free to all Brent residents and organisations
- Build relationships with London-wide and national organisations supporting the VCS to provide good practice information, build networks and access to key funders to both small and large organisations
 - Funder fairs – to provide grant information and meet funders
 - SpaceHive – a free crowdfunding online tool, (match-funding available)
 - Borough of Culture grant funding with support and assistance for applicants
 - Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to support local capital and community projects

12. Quality Assurance Model

The review identified a need for a more equitable and accessible process that enables the VCOs to grow their capacity, access grant funds within and beyond Brent Council, and meet growing demands on their services. The new model will allow any Brent VCO to join the partnership framework by meeting criteria that indicates its capacity to deliver activities, manage public funds (where awarded), partner with other VCOs and identify the level of capacity building it might require.

The new (draft) Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 standards will achieve the following outcomes:

- Provides a consistent criterion that gives an indication of the capacity of VCOs who join the partnership framework;
- Determines how and/or what support a VCO may need to meet the standard;
- Identifies where capacity building may be required enabling more targeted and focused infrastructure support;
- Provides equity in grant allocations enabling wider access for smaller organisations
- Determines whether some VCOs are able to access and deliver wider council contracts;
- Reduces administration costs associated with obtaining the standard as it builds upon governance and structures that many VCOs would already have in place
- Builds upon information that VCOs should already have available as part of their governance and delivery structures – reducing administrative requirements associated with joining the partnership framework.
- Provides a good indication of the quality of service provided by the VCOs and ability to manage resources; and work in partnerships;
- Reduces the need for annual grant application submissions from VCOs who deliver their expected outcomes.

Quality Assurance Model Consultation Feedback

The wider consultation feedback supported the quality standard as a good way to help build a partnership approach, but with the following caveats:

- Should not be used as a barrier to VCOs joining the partnership framework;
- Should not be used to bar VCOs from applying for grants;
- More detail is needed for VCOs to understand the standard beforehand
- Was another standard necessary - several VCOs have already obtained recognised quality marks (e.g. phase 1 of the review found 12 VCOs used 15 quality marks).
- How will the accreditation system work? for example who makes the decisions, will it be independent? As this is especially relevant for smaller orgs
- Quality assurance that will be recognised and agreed by all Brent Council departments and Health partners.

The new quality standard supports stronger partnerships and targets capacity building rather than creating barriers for VCOs: Implementing the new standard as part of the model is aimed at achieving the following:

- Serves as a search facility for all VCOs and the council to quickly locate other potential delivery partners that are already quality checked to a specific standard. *(This was an aspiration of the VCOs to help give some certainties when identifying new voluntary & community sector partners, and when creating and testing new partnerships);*
- Enables VCOs to identify and obtain appropriate support/capacity building required to move between the standards;
- Allows those that meet the standard to publicly state that they are member organisations on the council's partnership framework. *(This provides certainty to other funders who consider VCOs that partner with larger public bodies as an indication of quality assurance. It further addresses the VCOs need to use grants as a lever for additional resources).*
- Enables the council to ascertain the capacity of VCOs and use this to formulate ways of widening access to local services; and
- Subject to the Mayor's approval, can recommended to the Mayor's choices for the Mayor's charity.

The quality standard will therefore contribute towards creating stronger partnerships; degrees of certainty to VCOs that meet the standard; ascertaining and identifying VCOs capacity and development needs; creating fairer and wider access to grant funds; opening new opportunities for the Council to explore wider services in different localities; and benefitting from public recognition as a named VCOs on the partnership framework.

Overtime, the 'Model of Excellence' components should result in strong and measured evidence of Best Value and social impacts, quality services, equitable resourcing and more trust and openness through shared goals and values. The impact overtime should ultimately result in a more robust and sustainable voluntary & community sector.

13. Voluntary & Community Sector Development

The review findings identified a need for more robust infrastructure development in areas of voluntary & community sector leadership, organisational development and strategic vision. These development areas were requested of both the voluntary & community sector infrastructure organisation and the BPET. More clarity was required as to where responsibility should sit for the different development aspects. The areas identified are listed below and are (for the purpose of this report) grouped under three headings, namely; Strategy and Vision; Organisational Development; and Resource Development.

Strategy and Vision

- A strong and strategic independent sector voice with capacity as the representative of the voluntary & community sector, that communicates effectively with and for the sector, and sets its strategic vision and direction;
- Leadership development providing space for VCO leaders to meet, discuss topics of interest, engage in strategic planning and give mutual support. This would strengthen the voluntary & community sector voice, build upon joint working, and enable better engagement in wider policy and thematic debate;
- Coordination of voluntary & community sector communication enabling all VCOs to address and debate sectoral issues and challenges, network, critique and influence agendas, and to celebrate and publicise success; and
- Championing the voluntary & community sector both within and beyond Brent borough.

Organisational Development

- Develop a tiered and specialist approach to capacity building; tailored to size of individual organisations and focused on: specific needs; the breadth and depth of VCOs services; and the level of support required;
- Accessible and regular pro-bono and expertise support in specialist areas;
- Development of a policy / research library including templates, case studies and useable guides to grow and enhance VCO development;
- A single point of contact for all information pertaining to the voluntary & community sector;
- Accessible drop-in surgeries;
- Facilitating access to, and use of community spaces to accommodate 21st century working practices;

Resource Development

- Support to compete for council tenders and contracts;
- Advice, guidance and feedback on small to complex funding applications;
- Regular dissemination of resource information in appropriate and accessible formats;
- Partnerships database – revamped and widened to accommodate a better voluntary & community sector search facility;
- Set up of wider strategic networks for all VCOs to engage in.

Overall, addressing these infrastructure areas noted above accompanied by the new model should effectively strengthen Brent's VCOs.

14. Communication & Consultation Feedback

The question asked was, '*When communicating with VCOs, what does the Council do well and what can be improved?*' The responses were:

The Council's website is good (e.g. Browse Aloud) but needed to be kept up to date. The VCOs stated that communication was plentiful (e.g. website, Brent Magazine, and some consultation), and that some teams communicated really well (3 of which were named as the Drug and Alcohol commissioning team, the BPET and the employment teams). Some VCOs stated that they enjoyed attending the review workshops and more of these should happen regularly and particularly with the small organisations.

The VCOs felt improvements could be made through regular and focused mailshots with headlines that grab attention and information outlining details of events and opportunities. These could be short with links to other websites so that it supports targeting information.

A single point of contact for VCOs was requested (potentially named officers). This would hold an updated VCO database (that would also be a partnership search engine), and information about officers / councillors who work with, are involved with, and/or are interested in working with the VCOs. More visits from staff and councillors to local VCOs was a consistent message.

Ensuring that information and the history of current work with the council is not lost when officers move on. It was felt that by not keeping histories when starting new dialogues affected decision, wasted council and VCO time and added unnecessary tensions when previous agreements are changed.

The VCOs request a less bureaucratic, small grants process and quicker announcement of grant decisions.

Listening to the VCOs was a very clear message. Many felt that this would help with decision about services, use of spaces, consultations, funding, etc. but would also help remove some of the tension that could create a lack of trust or 'them and us' situation.

VCO Future Consultation Feedback

A second question asked, *'Going forward, what should the Council consider when it is consulting with VCOs?'* Responses were:

Feedback from consultation and genuinely using participants' views and input was welcomed so as not to be perceived as a tick box exercise. The VCOs welcomed regular and ongoing dialogue and again requested that officers and councillors take time to meet VCOs in the communities where they work.

The VCOs (particularly those run by volunteers) requested that council officers understand their resource limitations when asking for monitoring, arranging meetings/events (not all during office hours) or requiring responses.

The VCOs wanted to ensure that consultation was inclusive (capturing the silent voice). Listening and drawing upon their knowledge about communities was considered important in terms of how best to achieve wider consultation involvement.

15. Equalities

A further question asked, *'What should the new approach (model) take into account to ensure that it is inclusive for all VCOs?'* The main responses were:

The equality principle must mean openness and inclusiveness. This required different and more creative communication methods to ensure better inclusivity (e.g. deaf community, older people, mental health, young people, non-English speakers, etc.).

Aligning objectives was raised by the VCOs who felt that in many cases they are the residents' first point of contact. VCOs felt that they and the council are trying to achieve the same goal - which is good services for Brent's residents.

Better use of, more accessibility to council venues that smaller VCOs without funds can use for free to run community activities was requested. This would enable more access without cost barriers to residents.

16. Future VCS Infrastructure Support and assistance

A future infrastructure support and assistance programme will be based on the needs of the sector identified in the review and will include;

- To work closely in partnership with the Council and the Partnership and Engagement team to deliver infrastructure support and assistance
- To build a good and knowledgeable relationship with the sector, developing networks and partnerships with and for the sector
- To deliver services both centrally and in localities
- Provide a service tailored to the requirements of the different levels / Tiers of VCS organisations
- To design and deliver training tailored to the needs of the sector
- To support and advise organisations to income generate individually and in partnership/consortia focusing on external funding
- To support the delivery of the quality assurance model, build capacity, business planning and good governance
- To coordinate and deliver regular 'good practice' and strategic forums

17. Recommendations

This report sets out a recommended approach to strengthening Brent's voluntary & community sector delivering a bespoke model that aims to build sustainability and resilience into Brent's VCOs and develop a stronger and more robust working partnership between the sector and the council.

The recommendations are to conduct a detailed options appraisal to identify the most appropriate and viable framework that provides the best model for delivering the review outcomes including:

- a partnership framework based on shared principles set out in Section 8
- a structure that supports the needs of Tier 1, 2 and 3 organisations (Level 1, and 3 quality standard)
- a model, to provide infrastructure support and assistance to include; capacity building, training, developing business and fundraising plans, accessing external funding, volunteering requirements, developing partnerships and networks for Brent's voluntary and community sector based on the requirements identified in the review

Bibliography

BBC (2015) London-centric <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-248d9ac7-9784-4769-936a8d3b435857a8> (22/09/17)

Charity Commission (2016) 'How will the new Charities Act affect your charity?' (20/05/2016)
<https://charitycommission.blog.gov.uk/2016/05/20/how-will-the-new-charities-act-affect-your-charity/>
(27/09/17)

Charities Evaluation Service (2010) 'You're your money make a difference: good practice in monitoring and evaluation for funders.'
<file:///C:/Users/Family%20PC%20Account/Downloads/doesyourmoneymakeadifference-745-753.pdf>
(26/09/17)

Child Poverty Action Group (2017) 'The Impact of Poverty' <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/impact-poverty>
(21/10/17)

Civil Society (July 2017) Rob Wilson speech (July 2016)
<https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/ministerannounces-date-for-local-charities-day-at-charity-finance-summit.html> (20/08/17)

Compact Voice (2012) 'Local Authorities and the Voluntary and Community Sector: Investigating funding and engagement.'
http://www.compactvoice.org.uk/sites/default/files/foi_2012_local_authorities_report_final.pdf
(01/09/17)

DCLG (2011) 'Best Practice Guidance'
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5945/1976926.pdf
(25/08/17)

Faith Based Regeneration Network (2016) Faith in Social Action: Where Next?
<http://fbrn.org.uk/events/faithsocial-action-where-next-updates-and-documents> (20/12/17)

Gov.UK (2017) Find and Compare Schools in England <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=phase®ion=304&geographic=la&phase=secondary>
(20/01/18)

Gov. UK (2017) GCSE and equivalent results 2016-17 (provisional) (12/10/17)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-results-2016-to-2017-provisional>
(20/01/18)

Information Commission Office (2017) 'Overview of the General Data Protection Regulation'
<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/> (27/09/17)

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2015) 'Supporting Ethnic Minority Young People from Education into Work'
<file:///C:/Users/Family%20PC%20Account/Downloads/ethnic-minority-into-work.pdf> (21/10/17)

Lloyds Bank (2016) Rob Wilson Speech (December 216)
<https://www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/news/news/2016/12/13/statement-from-paul-streets-re-robwilson/> (20/08/17)

London Borough of Brent Council Business Hub (<https://www.brent.gov.uk/business/brent-businesshub/starting-a-business/finance-and-funding>). (13/08/17)

London Borough of Brent Council Intelligence Unit (2015) JSNA - Educational Attainment
<https://intelligence.brent.gov.uk/BrentDocuments/JSNA%202015%20-%20Educational%20Attainment.pdf>.
(13/09/17)

London Borough of Brent Council Intelligence Unit (2015) JSNA - Older People
<https://intelligence.brent.gov.uk/BrentDocuments/JSNA%202015%20-%20Older%20people.pdf> (13/09/17)

London Borough of Brent (2015) JSNA – Migrants and Refugees
<https://intelligence.brent.gov.uk/BrentDocuments/JSNA%202015%20-%20Migrants%20and%20Refugees.pdf> London Borough of Brent Council Local Safeguarding Children's Board (2017) Priorities (2017-18) http://brentlscb.org.uk/article.php?id=658&menu=0&sub_menu=4
(28/10/17)

London Borough of Brent Council (nd) Suppliers Guide.

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/2920796/Supplier%20Guide%20Procurement%20at%20Brent%20Council%20v5.pdf> (28/10/7)

London Borough of Brent Council (2007) Voluntary Sector Funding; A report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group <https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/2025504/VSF%20Task%20Group%20Report.pdf> (11/09/17)

National Council Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) (2017) 'The Road Ahead' (20/02/17) <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2017/02/20/the-road-ahead-what-will-2017-mean-for-charities/> (22/07/18)

NAVAC/NCVO (2011) 'Local Grants for a Strong Local Voluntary Sector' https://www.navca.org.uk/assets/000/000/103/Local_grants_original.pdf?1451998172 (04/07/17)

NCVO (2012) 'Quality Assurance in the Voluntary and Community Sector: Scoping Study.' http://www.opm.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/er_quality_standards.pdf (22/08/17)

New Policy Institute (2015) 'Poverty among young people in the UK' <http://www.npi.org.uk/publications/children-and-young-adults/739/> (21/10/17)

London Borough Brent (2014) 'Safer Brent Partnership Community Safety Strategy' (2014-17) <https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16402978/safer-brent-strategy-2014-17-v4.pdf> (28/10/17)

Salamon, L and Anheier, H. (1998) 'Social Origins of Civil Society: Explaining the Nonprofit Sector CrossNationally' in *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations*. Vol.9 (3), 213-247.

Trust for London (2016) 'London's Poverty Profile: 2016' <http://www.londonspovertyprofile.org.uk/keyfacts/overview-of-london-boroughs/>.(24/08/17)