

 <b>Brent</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p style="text-align: center;">17 October 2012</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement</b></p>
For Action	Wards Affected: All
<b>CVS Brent Progress Report</b>	

## 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 In March 2012 members of the Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the development of a Council for Voluntary Service in Brent. CVS Brent was being developed by the sector and members asked for representatives to return to the committee with progress on delivering their business plans.
- 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 present progress made by the organisation based upon the update report at Appendix 1.

## 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 progress of CVS Brent as the umbrella representative organisation for the voluntary and community sector in Brent set out in Appendix 1.

## 3.0 Context

- 3.1 The report to the Partnership and Place Committee in March 2012 set out the development of a new Council for Voluntary Service: CVS Brent and Brent Council Executive's agreement to fund an infrastructure stream as part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund. The total infrastructure 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. This includes significant elements of the work of CVS Brent and projects to respond to identified gaps in support for the voluntary sector.

- 3.2 CVS Brent was commissioned by Brent Council as an independent organisation to work with the voluntary sector, with work beginning in April 2012. In the first six months CVS Brent has secured staff to deliver key services, nearly finalised their governance arrangements for the medium term and supported a large number of organisations in planning their financial strategies and developing bids for funding.
- 3.3 'CVS Brent' now fulfils a critical role in the council's engagement with the voluntary sector and is working with the council to improve dialogue between the sectors. 'CVS Brent' is working to enhance the resilience of the voluntary sector so that better medium term financial planning and bid making support inward investment in the borough to benefit residents through locally delivered projects. Alongside this, CVS Brent is using 'transforming local infrastructure' funding to develop the access and interaction with the full range of CVS services through the use of technology.
- 3.4 The work of CVS adheres to NAVCA's national framework for the role of a CVS, which is 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

#### **4.0 Detailed Considerations**

- 4.1 Members are asked to refer to CVS Brent's Progress Report attached at Appendix 1. A representative from CVS Brent will attend the meeting to present progress 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. CVS Brent represents the range of organisations in the borough and the diverse range of communities these organisations serve.

## 7.0 Background Documents

- CVS Brent Business Plan
- CVS Brent Strategic Plan
- Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund Report to Executive January 2012  
<http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MId=1570&Ver=4>
- DCLG Localism Act
- Draft Voluntary Sector Strategy background research and feedback from sector
- Minutes of Voluntary Sector Liaison Forums

## 8. Appendices

Appendix 1: CVS Brent Progress Report

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## Appendix 1

### A Progress Report from CVS Brent, September 2012

#### 1. Summary

CVS Brent has made significant progress as the umbrella organisation representing Brent's Voluntary Community and Not for Profit Sector since it was first established in August 2011. This Progress report sets out the key successes so far against the strategic objectives set out in the organisations Strategic Plan presented to members of the Partnership and Place Committee in March 2012.

#### 2. A Council for Voluntary Service

- 2.1 The founders of CVS Brent have committed to the development of an organisation that is trusted by its members and partners and whose sole purpose is the support and promotion of voluntary action in Brent. CVS Brent has been developed on a lean business model, with an expectation of a small workforce focussed on dedicated to enhancing the voluntary, community and not for profit sector in Brent.
- 2.2 The Board acknowledge the intrinsic value of face-to-face interaction and this model is being used where it adds value, but CVS Brent is working towards a service delivery model that provides direct services only where a gap has been proved and where signposting to existing services or an on-line approach will not meet the demand.
- 2.3 Having set up the organisation in the last year and ensured service delivery from April 2012, CVS Brent will be refreshing its board of Trustees. Those interested in becoming members of the Board CVS Brent will be able to apply to be considered through the recruitment process which is based on a skills and aptitude assessment.
- 2.4 Presently through the funding secured from Brent Council, Transforming Local Infrastructures and Well London, CVS Brent employs a Chief Executive, a Development Manager and a Well London Coordinator.

#### 3. Progress against CVS Brent's Strategic Objectives

- 3.1 **Strategic Objective 1:** *To create an independent, inclusive, trusted and sustainable organisation that will enable Brent voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors to further develop a thriving civil society.*
- 3.11 Outcome sought: CVS Brent has the resources (financial, human and other) to achieve its objectives, provides high quality services, valued by its customers, has effective financial, administrative and monitoring systems in place and has an active and satisfied membership
- 3.12 Progress is good. CVS Brent set up an organisation and in the first six months of secured funding, is putting in place the structures to create the independent body sought by the voluntary, community and not for profit sector. Membership is available to the whole sector, and approximately 200 organisations have registered so far.

- 3.2 **Strategic Objective 2:** *To improve the capacity of local civil society to deliver efficient, effective services and respond to needs and opportunities.*
- 3.21 Outcome sought: Local civil society organisations: Have increased skills, knowledge & qualifications, are better informed about good practice & developments affecting their work, have improved access to funding & resources, have greater understanding of emerging opportunities for public service delivery and have increased knowledge and skills in relationship to the leadership of their organisations
- 3.22 Progress is good. CVS Brent is offering support, advice, information and guidance. Each week sees at least four interventions with organisations to support fundraising planning and provide support in general organisational development. CVS Brent is working with external funders such as John Lyon's Charity, Big Lottery Fund, City Bridge Trust, Trust for London, Jack Petchey Foundation, Wembley National Stadium Trust, Lloyds TSB and London Community Foundation on securing funding for organisations in the borough delivering services for Brent residents. This involves understanding an overview of the areas for improvement on bids received from the borough and raising awareness of funding streams within the sector. Recent events led by CVS Brent include Meet the Funder (Big Lottery, City Bridge Trust, London Community Foundation, Introduction to Wembley National Stadium Trust) and Working well in Consortia. Upcoming events include John Lyon's Den (John Lyon's Charity) on November 12, 2012 (in partnership with Brent Play Association), Enterprising the Sector (in partnership with the local Business sector) and Awards for All sessions (to begin in November 2012). CVS Brent is also working to secure a CVS Brent Hub, a resource for the benefit of the sector.
- 3.3 **Strategic Objective 3:** *To advance communication and partnership working within local civil society and with local and regional statutory and private sector partners.*
- 3.31 Outcomes sought: Improved intra-sector communications among local civil society organisations, increased opportunities for partnership working among local civil society organisations, improved communications between local civil society and the public and private sectors, improved partnership working between local civil society and the public and private sectors and increased number of inter-sector partnerships and collaborations
- 3.32 Progress is good. A joint output is the development of sessions for both local government and the voluntary sector outlining the key things you need to know about each. This is aimed at overcoming common misunderstandings encountered in partnership working. CVS Brent is now circulating regular newsletters to the sector and is working with the council to get regular updates from Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement on relevant upcoming events and review and consultation on policy. CVS Brent is now seeking to feedback issues important to the sector for inclusion at the Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum.
- 3.4 **Strategic Objective 4:** *To increase the influence of Brent civil society in local and regional strategy, policy and decision making.*
- 3.41 Outcomes sought: Local civil society organisations are better informed and prepared to lead and respond to changes in policy, more civil society organisations are involved in public sector strategy, policy and decision making partnership and networks and the public sector have a greater understanding of the role and impact of civil society.
- 3.42 Progress is good. The first 6 months have been used to establish linkages with existing structure, partnerships and groups. CVS Brent is now advising the council on engagement of organisations in the development of policy. CVS Brent have begun work on a Voluntary Sector Strategy and updated Compact in partnership with the council and have also facilitated a number of events with voluntary organisations looking at planned changes in council service provision. Recent sessions include Health and Wellbeing (focus on mental health) and

consultation in partnership with Brent Council (Reviewing Young People's services in the borough).

### **Cross cutting themes**

3.51 Outcomes sought include:

- Increased use of IT as a route to infrastructure support services
- More socially excluded groups take an active and influential role in the community,
- Increased number of faith communities involved in work of CVS Brent and other partnerships
- Increased involvement of local communities in civil society activity
- Increased empowerment of communities

3.52 Progress is good. CVS Brent was successful in securing Transforming Local Infrastructure Funding to develop a virtual CVS with provision of a number of services directly to voluntary sector organisations through the use of IT. A full-time Development Manager recruited has been and in post since August 2012 to develop this. The IT provider has been secured and a new website will be launched in October 2012. The virtual CVS is expected to be fully launched in September 2013.

3.53 CVS Brent is working with groups of all sizes whether they are seeking to start up or develop further; supporting fundraising planning, advising on governance arrangements and highlighting key issues to include in dialogue with the council and other public and private partner organisations in the borough. The other activities set out in this report all contribute to enabling the empowerment of communities. The drive to increase the registered members of CVS Brent will also increase the range of different communities able to engage in civil society activity alongside other groups in the borough.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

CVS Brent was developed by the sector, for the sector and has made good progress as an umbrella organisation for the borough so far. We look forward to building on this start in the coming months.