

Scrutiny Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Progress Update

| Number | Recommendation | Responsibility | Anticipated Completion Date/ Completion Date | Evidence of progress - April 09 | Assessment of progress (Categories 1-4) 07/04/09 |
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| 1 | That the Council undertake a feasibility study into encouraging employees to volunteer with accredited voluntary organisations, and the study's scope to include reference to allowing paid and unpaid time off, acknowledging and rewarding volunteers, pre-retirement information and use of volunteer champions | Human Resources & Feasibility Working Group | Apr-09 | The feasibility study was substantially completed in December 2008. This initiative requires further discussions with an external provider to support the volunteer process. If a decision is taken to progress the initiative the group will then work with HR to develop any associated policies. | 1 |
| 2 | That those organisations that receive core funding from SBC should provide a clear annual statement concerning the training and support they provide for their own volunteers, and that this should be written into funding agreements | Principal Community Development Officer | 31.10.08 | The core funded organisations that involve volunteers in their own organisation have provided a statement concerning their own volunteers. | 1 |

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| 3 | That an appropriate, willing core funded organisation be identified to have responsibility for provision of a 'volunteering bureau' | SRCGA | August 08 December 08 April 09 | Stockton Residents & Community Groups Association included funding for a volunteering bureau in a Lottery bid for Basis II funding. The bid was unfortunately unsuccessful. An alternative approach is being developed with a modest investment of kick start funding from the Community Development Team. The proposal will be discussed with the prime contractors who have secured funding to deliver activity using the Community Fund. This approach involves partnership working with the Professional Services Group who assisted in the delivery of an excellent training programme for Stockton's 3rd sector in the autumn of 2009 | 3 |
| 4 | That the Corporate Directors of DNS and CESC should take forward a response to the Audit Report on Youth and Community Centres, including reference to the status of Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre and that a report should be prepared for CMT and reported back through the scrutiny monitoring process within six months | Joint Working Group | Jan-09 | This work has been superseded by the EIT review concerning Properties and Facilities Management. The Properties and Facilities Management Review is a year one EIT review and will be a comprehensive review covering the management of community buildings and address the issues contained within the audit report referred to. | 3 |
| 5 | The provision of a freephone to access Council services (as exists in Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre) should be examined as to whether it could be replicated elsewhere; | Access to Services Team | | The opportunity exists to extend the freephone service to other community buildings as long as it is funded by the host venue itself. | 1 |

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| 6 | That the Council should continue to review and resolve governance issues including: | Team Leader- Democratic & Member Services | Apr-09 | All Councillors appointed to outside body organisations for 9/10 have been advised of contact details of each organisation they have been appointed; and have been informed or whether their role is as an executive of; or adviser to, the organisation concerned. Members have also been signposted to the existing guidance available to support them on outside bodies; and in particular to the Checklist to be considered by Councillors before commencing their role with the organisation, and FAQ's re this role. New guidance has also been prepared by the Council's Community Development Team (in consultation with the Council's Risk Management Section) regards insurance arrangements for voluntary sector organisations; and this has been sent out to all relevant outside body organisations with details of the Councillors appointed to them for this year; and a reminder of what information they should provide to members (checklist) upon commencing their duties. | 2 |
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| | | | | <p>Preparations are also being made by the Community Development Manager/Democratic Services to provide further training opportunities for members regarding their role on voluntary sector organisations. Regarding information about the activities of outside body organisations, information is now provided on the Council's website and Intranet of all outside & joint body organisations appointed to by the Council; which includes contact details for each and, where authorised, web links to the organisations themselves containing the latest information/minutes of their activity.</p> | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure that Members receive appropriate support to fulfil their roles on VCS bodies, including a review of guidance currently issued, and to consider how information regarding the activities of VCS organisations appointed to by this Council may be best brought to the attention of Members; | | | | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewing which organisations should be required to complete the Governance Self Assessment documentation, and making sure that it is understandable for those which are, especially those organisations which no longer have Member representation; | Community Development Team | ongoing | As part of their routine work the Community Development Officers support their individual organisations to undertake the Governance Self Assessment annually. | 1 |
| 7 | That the Council should continue to ensure the governance compliance of 3rd sector partners when procuring services from them and the maintenance of an up to date, central register of complaint organisations should be developed | Procurement Team and devolved procurement | ongoing | Standard Pre-Qualification Questionnaire and Business Questionnaire used during the tender process. Approved lists also using the same questionnaire. Contract register up to date. | 1 |
| 8 | That, building on what information the Council already holds, a mapping exercise should be carried out in order to ascertain the full extent of the Borough's voluntary and community sector, where the Council has a funding or contractual relationship | Procurement Team and devolved procurement | Apr-09 | Mapping of Contract Register complete and Agresso FMS updated to identify VCS 'suppliers'. Final report and validation check still to be run - expected to be complete in May. | 3 |

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| 9 | That all core funded organisations must have information readily available to the public giving details of trustees, the annual report and the accounts | Principal Community Officer | Oct-08 | All core funded organisations have been written to on this matter. Spot checks are being undertaken when Community Development officers visit core funded organisations to check if the information is to hand. | 1 |
| 10 | That there should be a memorandum of understanding between Council, SCRAGA and Catalyst regarding the sharing of data of VCS groups | Principal Community Officer | Dec-08 | A working relationship is in place and functioning to share contact information on VCS groups | 1 |
| 11 | That the following statement be included within the terms and conditions of future core funding and grant agreements: "This grant/ funding is issued for the stated specific purpose. A condition of accepting the grant is that your organisation agree to the Council having access to demonstrate that funding is used appropriately" | Principal Community Officer | Oct-08 | The statement is included within the revised Service Level Agreements updated by legal in the autumn of 2009. | 1 |
| 12 | That core funded organisations should consider the merits of attaining charity status, in view of the potential reduction of costs to the Council in relation to rate relief and themselves in reduction of energy costs | Commissioned training delivered by the Professional Services Group | September – December 2008 | The planned training and information sessions was delivered during the autumn of 2009 highlighting the considerations of different operating structures including charity status. The sessions were well attended. | 1 |

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| 13 | That the council examine the issues in relation to funding and relationships (outlined in page 29 - 30) as part of future work in relation to the core funded organisations | Principal Community Officer | ongoing | The approach to the review of the Voluntary Sector Support Fund was considered by Cabinet and Renaissance in March 2009. The review is underway with 410 questionnaires having been delivered to different interest groups throughout the Borough. The questionnaire is being backed up by specific workshop sessions to be delivered in May 2009 at venues in Billingham, Stockton and Thornaby. Promotional material highlighting awareness of the review is on the Council's website, the Catalyst website and appeared in the Evening Gazette on May 4th. | 2 |
| 14 | That the Council should continue to examine opportunities to provide procurement help and advice to the sector | The commissioned training package for the sector to address governance issues will include, during the finance session, the benefits of becoming a charity and a limited company. | 30 th September 2008 | Training provided and good practice extended to the recent commission of contractors for activity funded by the Communities Fund. | 1 |
| 15 | That, where appropriate, funding from the Council to the VCS should be in the form of 3 year contracts in order to provide stability for organisations | Procurement Team | ongoing | Officers responsible for contracting encouraged to agree 3 year minimum contracts (assuming funding available) with options to extend beyond the initial 3 year term. | 1 |

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| 16 | That the new Executive Director of Catalyst be requested to attend Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee within 6 months to provide information and clarity on the role and workings of Catalyst, including their role in allocating funding and procurement criteria, and progress in relation to building relationships with all the Borough's VCS and refreshing the Memorandum of and Articles of Association | Executive Director of Catalyst and Principal Community Officer | November 2008 - January 2009 | The Executive Director of Catalyst attended a specific session in November 2009 | 1 |
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