

Action Plan – Review of Voluntary and Community Sector

| Recommendation | Proposed Actions/Progress | Success Measures | Responsibility | Date |
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| <p>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;</p> | <p>A Feasibility Working Group consisting of representatives from Development and Neighbourhood Services, HR, Trade Unions and operational management will be established.</p> <p>At their first meeting (20th October 2008), they will draw up a terms of reference to look at national guidelines, best practice, suggest a criteria for what might be appropriate "accredited" voluntary organisations and consider the nomination of champions.</p> | <p>Produce a report for HRSG and CMT for consideration</p> <p>As part of the feasibility proposal, policies and procedures can be drawn up. If the initiative is accepted, a policy can be ratified and implemented without delay.</p> | <p>Human Resources & Feasibility Working Group</p> | <p>April 2009</p> <p>Timely Implementation to coincide with the potential launch of the Stockton Volunteers Bureau in April 2009 may be appropriate. Although creation of the bureau depends on lottery funding approval, this should not impact upon the implementation of a process to encourage employees to act as volunteers.</p> |

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| <p>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;</p> | <p>Secure volunteer support and training statements from core funded organisations</p> | <p>Statements received from core funded organisations</p> | <p>Principal Community Development Officer</p> | <p>31.10.08</p> |
| <p>3. That an appropriate, willing core funded organisation be identified to have responsibility for provision of a 'volunteering bureau';</p> | <p>Stockton Residents are bidding for resources to become Stockton's "Volunteer Bureau". Bids for Basis II funding submitted in August, if successful a Delivery Plan will need to be prepared by Christmas, in anticipation of project work commencing in April 2009.</p> | <p>SRCGA securing Basis II funding from Big Lottery. August and December bidding deadlines to achieve.</p> | <p>SRCGA</p> | <p>August 08 December 08 April 09</p> |

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| <p>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;</p> | <p>A joint working group consisting of representatives of CESC and D&NS are meeting to progress this issue. The third planned session will take place on 27th October 2008.</p> | <p>Report prepared</p> | <p>Joint Working Group</p> | <p>January 2009</p> |
| <p>5. The provision of a free phone to access Council services (as exists in Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre) should be examined as to whether it could be replicated elsewhere;</p> | <p>Need to confirm arrangements with the Access to Services Team</p> | <p>To be confirmed by the Access to Services Team</p> | <p>Access to Services Team</p> | |

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| <p>6. That the Council should continue to review and resolve governance issues including:</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; | <p>The content of the Guidance document prepared by Legal and Risk Insurance Section in 2007 will be reviewed with the relevant officers to ascertain whether it is still fit for purpose. At the same time, consideration will be given to the need for further member training in this regard.</p> <p>The new Personal Support Plan (PSP) process for elected members includes discussion of the support needs for elected members specifically serving on Outside Body organisations. This process should identify and future training/learning required; and can influence the content of this training programme. The Members Advisory Panel will receive regular updates of any training need arising from this process.</p> <p>The appointment process for elected members to outside bodies for 2009/10 will include reminders being issued to each</p> | <p>Refreshed Guidance documentation .</p> <p>Identification of individual member and corporate need for training and support requirements regarding Members roles on outside body organisations.</p> <p>Increased take up by outside body organisations to offering the required advice and support to</p> | <p>Team Leader-Democratic & Member Services</p> | <p>April 2009</p> |

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| | <p>outside body organisation of the advice and support needed for elected members serving on their organisations. The Checklist of information and support needed (as contained in the Guidance document) will be circulated to them at the time appointments are confirmed. At the same time, all Councillors appointed to outside body organisations will be provided with both the Guidance document and specifically alerted to the Checklist and FAQ's.</p> <p>To improve the availability of information regarding the activities of outside body organisations, the SBC website of democratic information will be enhanced with a section devoted to outside body organisations, with links to each organisation with web access. Those organisations without web access will be advised of the opportunities to access free community web information</p> | <p>elected members. Improved communication to elected members regards the basic Checklist of actions they should seek from outside body organisations upon appointment.</p> <p>Increased availability of access to information re activities of outside body organisations.</p> | | |

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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; | <p>facilities; which would assist them in their own promotion and development. For those organisations without web access, members will be offered the opportunity to use their own personal Cllr Web Page to promote the activities; and/or to deposit this information within the Members Information section of Intranet.</p> <p>See 7 Below</p> | <p>All services following proper procurement/commissioning processes</p> | <p>Procurement team and devolved procurement</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

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| <p>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 compliant organisations should be developed;</p> | <p>Some governance issues assessed during the normal tender process (e.g. insurance levels, financial standing, H&S etc). The level of detail assessment may be increased depending on the risk profile of the contract.</p> <p>The Corporate Procurement Unit holds a Contract Register that identifies all organisations the Council contracts with.</p> | <p>All services following proper procurement/ commissioning processes.</p> <p>All contracts referenced on the contract register.</p> | <p>Procurement Team and devolved procurement</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p>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;</p> | <p>The Contract Register holds details of organisations we have a contractual relationship with.</p> <p>Work has started to develop a bigger picture of all the relationships we have with the third sector.</p> | <p>A better picture of all our relationships with the third sector and the value of funding/ contracts</p> | <p>Procurement Team and devolved procurement</p> | <p>April 09</p> |

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| <p>9. That all core funded organisations must have information readily available to the public giving details of trustees, the annual report and the accounts;</p> | <p>Write to all core funded organisations to highlight this good practice and conduct spot checks</p> | <p>Information available on request at counter or during a spot check</p> | <p>Principal Community Officer</p> | <p>October 2008</p> |
| <p>10. That there should be a memorandum of understanding between Council, SCRGA and Catalyst regarding the sharing of data of VCS groups;</p> | <p>Data Sharing Protocol to be developed.</p> | <p>Protocol in place and operational</p> | <p>Principal Community Officer</p> | <p>December 2008</p> |
| <p>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 agrees to the Council having access to your records in order to demonstrate that funding is</p> | <p>Change of wording within core funding agreements.</p> | <p>Core-funding Agreements amended and re-issued</p> | <p>Principal Community Officer</p> | <p>October 2008</p> |

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| used appropriately’; | | | | |
| <p>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;</p> | <p>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.</p> | <p>Training delivered and issue raised with those attending</p> | <p>Commissioned training delivered by the Professional Services Group</p> | <p>September – December 2008</p> |
| <p>13. That the council examine the issues in relation to funding and relationships (outlined on page 29-30) as part of future work in relation to the core funded organisations;</p> | <p>These considerations are helping to shape the developing approach to the Voluntary & Community Sector Support Fund Review.</p> | <p>Stronger relationships with voluntary and community sector partners.</p> | <p>Principal Community Officer</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

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| <p>14. That the Council should continue to examine opportunities to provide procurement help and advice to the sector;</p> | <p>The commissioned training package for the sector to address governance issues will include, during the Enterprise session consideration of enterprising ways securing an income from the sale of a product or service to support the charitable aims of the organisation</p> | <p>Session delivered</p> | <p>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.</p> | <p>30th September 2008</p> |
| <p>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;</p> | <p>In most cases 3 year contracts are used as a minimum, however there are times, due to funding limitations that shorter terms are used.</p> | | <p>Procurement Team</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p>16. That the new Executive Director of Catalyst be requested to attend Corporate, Adult Services and Social</p> | <p>Catalyst are in the process of refreshing their Articles and Memorandum of Understanding and these are due to be</p> | <p>New and more robust Articles & Memorandum</p> | <p>Executive Director of Catalyst</p> | <p>November 2008</p> |

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| <p>Inclusion Select Committee within six 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 relations with all the Borough's VCS and refreshing the Memorandum and Articles of Association.</p> | <p>completed by November 2008</p> <p>Ongoing discussions with SBC regarding Voluntary Sector Support Fund et al and the role of Catalyst</p> <p>Catalyst are planning a event to launch their model of community sector engagement with the third sector in November 2008.</p> <p>A constituency membership will be formed and from that an election/selection process undertaken for the council of interest.</p> | <p>The formation of a clear plan as a result of these discussions</p> <p>The launch event</p> <p>The formation of membership and the Council of Interest</p> | <p>Executive Director of Catalyst and Principal Community Officer</p> <p>Executive Director of Catalyst</p> <p>Executive Director of Catalyst</p> | <p>December 2008</p> <p>November 2008</p> <p>December 2008 and January 2009.</p> |