



London Borough
of Hounslow

Community Partnerships Unit

Thriving Communities & VCSE Sector Strategy **2015-2019**



Foreword

The London Borough of Hounslow's *Thriving Communities and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector Strategy 2015-2019* is a key document outlining how the local authority will work in partnership to support active resident and VCSE involvement in meeting local needs.

Community organisations, charities and neighbourhood social action all contribute towards building social capital, civic engagement and community cohesion; providing valuable services to improve the quality of life for many of our communities.

Although 2015-2019 will be an extremely difficult period for the local authority; with the onset of unprecedented levels of cuts forcing us to review the way we provide services and support residents; we are still firmly committed to developing a sustainable and independent VCSE sector who we can work in partnership with to support the communities we serve.

Having removed £60m from our budget since 2010, the Council now faces a similar level of savings over the next four years. These significant financial constraints, coupled with an increasing demand for services, require the Council to refocus efforts to help those who most need our support. With this level of challenge it is more important than ever that we remain firmly committed to working effectively in partnership with residents, communities and the VCSE sector to develop a strong, safe and thriving Hounslow.

This strategy draws upon recent research we have commissioned, other academic literature, policy reviews and various needs analyses. It provides an outline of the three key outcomes that will focus our attention and efforts during the next four years. It complements other policies and strategies within the Council and connects with the community goals of external agencies such as the Metropolitan Police and Hounslow Clinical Commissioning Group (Hounslow CCG). It has also received valuable feedback from the local VCSE sector and draws on regional and national best practice.

The Council is transforming the way we plan and deliver services and as such, we are asking our partners and the communities in Hounslow to work with us to make sure we make the most of our financial and other resources.

This will mean communities doing more and having greater influence over services including being able to design them, new opportunities to have a say and get involved in local activities.

We continue to assert that given the funding constraints forced upon Councils it is vital to work effectively in partnership with residents, communities and the VCSE sector to develop a thriving Hounslow with opportunities for all.

I commend this strategy and look forward to reporting its success and achievements, benefiting all residents, in the near future.



Councillor Sue Sampson
Member for Communities and Economic Development

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Executive Summary

The London Borough of Hounslow's Thriving Communities and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector Strategy 2015-2019 is a key document outlining how the local authority will work in partnership to support active resident and VCSE involvement in meeting local needs.

Community organisations, charities and neighbourhood social action all contribute towards building social capital, civic engagement and community cohesion; providing valuable services to improve the quality of life for many of our communities.

This means the Council, with other agencies, the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, local businesses and communities will work in an integrated way pooling our efforts and resources to help secure new funds and opportunities.

Having removed £60m from our budget since 2010, the Council now faces a similar level of savings over the next four years. If the funding cuts mean the Council will need to focus primarily on those with most need, many other residents will look to the VCSE sector for support. Residents needs and priorities are changing and as a Council we need to be clear about the approach we adopt ensuring we are responsive to current challenges – not only changing how we provide services but also the support we will need to give to the VCSE sector and residents in adapting to change.

The strategy is outcomes-based and all work is connected to one of the following:

Outcome 1 – Empowered residents actively shaping their local area and enhancing civic pride

Outcome 2 – Enabling independence and resilience by building the skills, resources and capacity of residents, neighbourhoods and communities

Outcome 3 – A vibrant, self-sustaining and ambitious Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector in Hounslow

The proposed actions that the Council will undertake are presented under each outcome (*please see pages 15–27*).

How it is structured

There are three sections to the strategy. Starting with an outline of the purpose, this strategy sets the context of how we will aim to foster active, healthy communities, where people get on well together and are supported by a responsive VCSE sector that demonstrates how it helps people in the borough to help themselves.

Executive Summary

It outlines the communities that live in Hounslow and the sector that operates locally supporting thousands of our residents. Data that has informed our decisions and future direction is included and the rationale for our focus is explained.

Section 1 concludes with a review of how this strategy complements other Council policies and strategies and connects with the community goals of partner agencies such as the Metropolitan Police, NHS providers and Hounslow Clinical Commissioning Group. It has also received contribution from the local VCSE sector and deepens our working relationship centred on collaboratively meeting the challenges and demands on services. The principles that guide our approach to delivering the strategy are explained. These include: sustainability; valuing our partnerships and engaged and resilient communities.

Section 2 details the three priority outcome areas for working with residents, communities and the VCSE sector. These connect the work of the Council and key partners and are explained in terms of why the outcome is important and what is it designed to achieve; how the Council is already working on this outcome; what the Council is committed to do over the next four years to achieve this outcome; and the role of communities, the VCSE sector and Councillors and Community Leaders and what life will be like in Hounslow when the outcomes are achieved. Actions for each outcome cover more than 12 different teams and departments within the Council exemplifying the commitment to the new way of working and achieving the three outcomes.

Section 3 focuses on the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and its progress over the next four years. We have taken an outcomes-based approach to how the Council, communities, VCSE sector and other agency partners will work to enrich residents' lives and recognise our collective strengths. This means we will monitor the longer-term benefits and impact of services for residents and communities by reviewing progress on each outcome; analysing and comparing result between main areas of work for VCSE organisations.

Section 1: Introduction and context

We aim to foster active, healthy communities, where people get on well together and are supported by a responsive VCSE sector that demonstrates how it helps people in the borough to help themselves.

The purpose of the strategy is to set out a framework of joined up work across the Council and partners that tackles the things that matter the most to local life as good neighbours, resilient residents and supportive communities. It connects work across the Council and key partners, aiming to build on and maintain Hounslow's existing high levels of social cohesion. It also focuses on helping our most vulnerable residents live independently through building support systems that help meet their individual needs.

With reduced financial resources, it's important we reshape our approach to collaborative working to consistently spend our time on what we say we care about. The Council can't make the necessary changes to services or our local areas on our own. We need to continue to foster and grow the close relationship between our services and those provided by other organisations.

The VCSE sector works with thousands of residents including many vulnerable and 'hard to reach' residents. The sector can provide essential 'community intelligence' to assist in planning cost effective services that are well targeted to meet local residents' needs.

This means we (i.e. public sector bodies, the VCSE sector and communities) have to work, plan and commission services together wherever possible. Thinking in an integrated way means we'll stop duplicating ideas, services and ways of collecting information. Instead we'll be ready to pool our efforts and resources to help secure new funds and opportunities.

The Council has identified three priority outcome areas for working with residents, communities and the VCSE sector:

Outcome 1 – Empowered residents actively shaping their local area and enhancing civic pride

Outcome 2 – Enabling independence and resilience by building the skills, resources and capacity of residents, neighbourhoods and communities

Outcome 3 – A vibrant, self-sustaining and ambitious Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector in Hounslow

Working together to achieve these three outcomes will assist the Council in adjusting how we connect communities and the VCSE sector with resources that they can use to develop themselves. It will also help us shape how we will fund and commission the VCSE sector to provide services.

1. Hounslow communities and the VCSE sector

The role of local governments and the wider public sector, such as the police and the NHS, continues to undergo significant change. The welfare state and the amount of money available in benefits have reduced while schools and doctors now have more control over how to spend the money that they get from the Government. Communities, charities and businesses are being asked to deliver public services. This radical reform is happening at the same time as an increased drive for vulnerable people to get support from their community rather than Council services.

With reduced financial resources, it's important we reshape our approach to collaborative working to consistently spend our time on what we care about. Thinking in an integrated way means we'll stop duplicating ideas, services and ways of collecting information. Instead we'll be ready to pool our efforts and resources to help secure new funds and opportunities.

To address these changes we reviewed the Council's relationship with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) sector. This strategy focuses on promoting a sustainable VCSE sector and ways for residents to start and continue local activities that make a difference.

The outcome based strategy aims to connect work across the Council and with key partners. It aims to build on and maintain Hounslow's existing high levels of social cohesion

and help our most vulnerable residents live independently through building support systems that help meet their individual needs.

VCSE organisations play a key role as partners in delivering services that are either not provided elsewhere or complement Council services. Many of these also prevent the need for costly high-level interventions by providing support and advice early on in people's lives.

The Council recognises this contribution in working with local people to make a difference to their community and lead change. Developing relationships with a range of partners is essential to delivering this strategy. These partnerships will help to foster trusting communities interested in playing active roles in local decision-making and volunteering.

Hounslow is a diverse borough, full of character, entrepreneurial spirit, and with huge potential. Over the next 20 years, Hounslow Together, the local strategic partnership, aims to work with the community to develop the borough to be distinctive, vibrant and thriving, with a happy, high-achieving community at its heart.

By 2015 the London Borough of Hounslow will be home to a resident population of 273,300 people (project population Greater London Authority) and is the fifth fastest growing population in the country (Census period 2001-2011).

Table 1: London Borough of Hounslow key statistics

Statistic	Value
Projected population, 2015	273,300
Breakdown of projected population by ethnic group, 2015	White: 132,100 (48.4% of total residents), Black: 24,700 (9%), Asian: 102,700 (37.6%), Other: 13,800 (5%)
Projected overall number and percentage of residents of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, 2015	141,100 (51.6% of total residents)
Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimant count, February 2015	3,300 (1.9% of residents aged 16-64)
Median annual earnings of residents, 2014	£25,715

Sources: GLA central trend-based population projections, 2013 round; GLA central trend-based household projections, 2013 round; GLA central trend-based ethnic group projections, 2013 round; ONS JSA claimant count (ONS/Nomis); ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings resident analysis – provisional

Hounslow is one of London's largest boroughs, covering 56 km² and stretching from the border of Heathrow Airport in the west to Chiswick in the east. The Borough has four town centres at Hounslow, Chiswick, Brentford and Feltham.

Locally, the most deprived wards are Hanworth and Cranford which are classified (in the Index of Multiple Deprivation, IMD) as in the most deprived 30% of areas in England. The least deprived wards are Hounslow South, the three Chiswick wards, Osterley and Spring Grove and Hounslow Central. It is worth noting, however, that the IMD measure can mask pockets of deprivation within wards and there is a diversity of income and lifestyle in every area.

Locality approach

Increasingly the Council is taking a locality based approach to the work we undertake with

communities and residents. Hounslow is divided into five localities and, while we have some data on services and needs in each area we are working to improve our understanding of the features of each geographical area. Some locality based initiatives are partnership projects operating in specific areas of social or economic disadvantage where joint efforts can really make a difference to residents.

In 2015 we launched four Stronger Neighbourhood projects in the most deprived areas of the borough. Funded by the Council these are coordinated by VCSE networks and will become an important part of the community infrastructure that allows the Council (and other partners) to meet their priorities through more effective engagement and involvement with residents and smaller community groups.



The economic climate and reduction of finances and services will impact on the most vulnerable which rely on the VCSE sector – for instance large families, carers, disabled people, children, council tenants or any household in receipt of any form of benefit is likely to be affected to a greater or lesser extent. This means cumulative and unintended impacts will fall on:

- The estimated total number of households affected across the borough is 22,000 (out of a total of 95,000) corresponding to the approximate number of housing benefit claimants – many of these seeking VCSE support
- Residents across the borough – in particular residents in three of our five locality areas (West, Brentford and Isleworth, and Heston and Cranford) who we know have been most affected by the various changes in legislation. This also correlates with the areas of Hounslow that are, on aggregate, the three most deprived. This underlines the issue that broadly, all deprived areas across the borough are suffering from the cumulative effects of reforms and reductions in Council and partner finances and services.
- Issues related to housing. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, all forum areas in Hounslow are (on aggregate) in the top 1% most deprived for barriers to housing.

While the council provides both direct and commissioned services for people who face financial and social exclusion including the risk of homelessness, these services currently help over 15,000 in the borough every year. These are people who have suffered disadvantage that has impacted on their day-to-day life (for instance they have experienced job loss or are long-term unemployed, lone parents, are ill or disabled) and will seek VCSE organisations to support them in one way or other. It is these groups who may be particularly disadvantaged, because of the combined effects and the changing nature of support available, as funding reduces and new legislation takes further effect such as the £12 billion cut in the welfare budget announced post-election 2015.

Community cohesion and engagement

Hounslow has long enjoyed good relations with its residents. Much can be learned from Hounslow's

experience to date in terms of cohesion practices and grassroots community engagement. This enables us to understand the triggers that may improve residents' behaviour towards each other. We have a proven track record in supporting diverse and resilient communities, having gained Beacon status for our cohesion work in Hounslow.

Cohesion can be understood as the extent to which residents of Hounslow bond around common interests and goals, mutual knowledge, a sense of collective identity and belonging, shared understanding and trust. Cohesion is positively related to the number, variety and/or intensity of shared interests and interactions that provide a basis for solidarity, mobilisation and joint action.

By contrast, lack of mutual understanding and ignorance of one another can serve to undermine cohesion. This can be easily exploited by those who seek to create divisions and confrontation. It is critical to understand what divisions might exist both within and between particular given possible lack of awareness of cultural sensitivities and norms.

Hounslow is one of 13 local authorities classified as a super diverse cluster (by the 2011 Census) with the following characteristics:

- An urban area with a history of migration and very high rates of migration for all categories of migrants from different nationalities
- Higher than average numbers of young people and below average numbers of older people
- Almost half of the borough's population (48.5%) belong to a Black Asian Minority Ethnic group. There are over 16,000 households in Hounslow where no people in the household have English as a main language (17% of total). This is ranked 9th in the UK.
- Our borough communities vary widely in needs (e.g. Chiswick is much more affluent than Bedfont) and our services need to be responsive and often quite tailored in their approach to reach diverse communities.

International migration into the Borough is thought to account for around 3.4% of the population in 2011, compared with 2.5% in London and 1.1% in

England. Hounslow's migrant population includes refugees from countries such as Somalia, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, who have some different needs to those of settled communities (though we appreciate there is a significant common ground among many service needs). In recent years, there has been significant inward migration from other parts of the European Union, such as Poland.

Our data and services tell us that there is a strong ethic of hospitality and mutual respect in our communities. Part of this comes from the way the Council and our partners communicate and support our commitment to equality. This sits alongside the need to deliver visible social justice, to prioritise

transparency and fairness, and build trust in the institutions that arbitrate between groups.

The Hounslow Residents Survey, last carried out in autumn 2014 and due to be conducted every two years, is used by the Council to monitor residents' views on both the local authority and the borough more generally. As a number of the survey questions have been asked of residents before (either in Hounslow and at a London or national level), we can compare Hounslow's performance against both its past performance and the rest of the UK.

Among the 35 questions included in the survey three questions are related to community cohesion and engagement:

Table 2: Hounslow Residents Survey 2014 – responses to questions on community cohesion and engagement. Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Hounslow Resident Survey Question 2014	Resident responses
Question 1 What extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together? By getting on well together, we mean treating each other with respect.	Definitely agree or tend to agree: 83% Neither agree nor disagree: 8% Tend to disagree or definitely disagree: 6% Don't know: 2%
Question 2 To what extent would you agree or disagree that people in this local area pull together to improve the local area?	Definitely agree or tend to agree: 59% Neither agree nor disagree: 19% Tend to disagree or definitely disagree: 18% Don't know: 5%
Question 3 Over the last year on average how many hours a month have you given unpaid help to any group(s), club(s) or organisation(s)? <i>(Please only include work that is unpaid and not for your family)</i>	0-5 hours: 18% 5-10 hours: 4% 10-20 hours: 2% More than 20 hours: 3% None: 72%

Source: Hounslow Residents Survey 2014 Research Report, BMG Research

The results indicate:

- ✓ Hounslow's communities are more cohesive than the London average (75% of London residents agree with Question 1 compared to 83% of Hounslow residents)
- ✓ A large majority of respondents felt that people from different backgrounds in their local area tend to get on well together and
- ✓ A somewhat smaller majority also felt that people where they live are likely to come together to improve the local area.

The survey findings show that only 27% of Hounslow respondents had volunteered over the previous 12 months (lower than the national and London averages and an area for improvement). This strategy aims to change this by increasing the number and type of real and meaningful volunteer opportunities that match residents' needs. For instance, volunteering could be a way into a new career or the start of getting back into work after raising children, or the motivation could be linked to making friends and feeling connected to local areas.

2. Hounslow's diverse VCSE sector

In Hounslow we have over 600 VCSE organisations (with around 250 of these being very active and employing staff) involving thousands of local volunteers. They provide a diverse range of services across all sectors including the arts, youth services, education and lifelong learning, environment, sport, homelessness, health and wellbeing, and social care. Our VCSE organisations work across all ages, communities, faiths and with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, providing services that are often bespoke and flexible matching individual or communities' needs. What they have in common is the ability to improve the lives of those who live, work, visit or volunteer in Hounslow. Despite the challenging financial times the council remains committed in supporting vulnerable members of the community through these services.

Medium-sized and larger VCSE organisations contribute to the economic vibrancy and wellbeing of Hounslow by providing training, jobs, services and volunteering opportunities. Small and micro organisations (mainly volunteer-run with a low income) are also vital contributors to our communities. We acknowledge the drive and commitment of these organisations and how they continue to offer invaluable support to our local residents.

The Council carries out an annual survey of the VCSE organisations who work locally. Findings from last year indicate that over 80% of VCSE organisations surveyed said there was increased demand for their services. To cope, organisations were increasing their use of volunteers to deliver their services (by 61%) and using their financial reserves to cover the running costs of organisations (71%). Half of the organisations surveyed stated their funding

had reduced during the past year. The recession has increased demand for services and reduced funding available and VCSE groups need support in responding to these challenges.

Most of the organisations surveyed work across all geographical areas in Hounslow (48%). In much the same way, they work with more than one key beneficiary or target group (such as older people, people with mental health needs or Black Asian Minority Ethnic Refugee (BAMER) communities). The VCSE sector has a key role in promoting community cohesion, among BAMER communities, across age ranges, across faith communities and through good neighbour and shared activities on estates and in neighbourhood. Just over 40% of organisations also work in other West London areas which potentially can help in growing organisations' skills and enables Hounslow residents to access other services across West London.

We will work with West London VCS Network, which covers 8 boroughs, including Hounslow, to encourage cross borough VCSE partnership work and cross-borough VCSE consortia for major external funding bids.

Summary of a number of key challenges:

- Continued effect of funding cuts and financial constraints
- Residents facing increased cost of living and reductions in welfare
- Availability of funding through Council grants, contracts and external funds, social investment and fundraising
- Effects of population growth and demand on services
- Increase in households (currently 10%) who are fuel poor affecting all aspects of their lives
- Impact of Government policy and legislation
- Ways forward for greater collaboration and VCSE consortiums to provide joint services or to be viable as commissioned providers
- Need to ensure diversity and inclusion at all levels in organisations from staff, patrons to service users and board members
- Development of high level IT skills and digital literacy within the sector and by service users to support independence and

3. Strategic Context

This strategy complements other policies and strategies within the Council and connects with the community goals of partner agencies such as the Metropolitan Police, NHS providers and Hounslow CCG. It has also received significant contribution from the local VCSE sector and deepens our working relationship centred on collaboratively meeting the challenges and demands on services.

Aims

The Council and our partners share a vision of stronger local communities, in which resilient and sustainable VCSE organisations play a leading role, both independently and working with the public sector.

We will review and refresh the Hounslow Compact between the Council and the VCSE sector by Summer 2016. Many of its principles will of course remain significant such as promoting mutual respect and understanding between the public, private, VCSE sectors to enable them to work better together to develop local services to meet the social, economic, health and environmental needs of its local communities, and to tackle inequalities.

Strategies and plans

Hounslow Together Board is a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) of public, private and voluntary sector organisations, which comes together to focus on local issues in a strategic and co-ordinated way. The Future Borough Strategy developed by the Hounslow Together in 2011 has a strategic long-term vision 2030, the strategy and action plan for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing for the local area. It is an overarching plan for the Borough.

The Corporate Plan 2015-19 summarises the Council's overarching priorities and performance targets under our established seven themes:

- Keeping you safe
- Brighter futures for our children
- Good quality homes and jobs
- A cleaner, greener Borough
- Active, healthy communities
- Help and support when you need it
- An ambitious Council, delivering quality services and value for money.

The Corporate Plan makes clear how we are going to deliver our substantial contribution to the Future Borough Strategy. Three main areas under the Council's ambition to foster active, healthy communities link to this strategy and they are:

1. Ensure people in our community get on well together, supported by a strong voluntary sector
2. Increase the VCSE sector's ability to improve the lives of local people within the borough
3. Promote citizenship, build trust and help prevent extremism.

The Thriving Communities Funding Plan reflects the priorities of all the borough's services. It was widely consulted on and it adds value to the work of the whole Council and external agencies. The Funding Plan seeks to provide the infrastructure through which an engaged, capable and responsive VCSE sector can function and deliver the building blocks that allow for thriving communities to exist. This infrastructure requires a more rigorous outcomes-based approach.

Principles

The principles guiding our approach are:

Sustainability

This principle covers in its broadest sense:

- Financial sustainability on various funding streams and revenue-raising activities, capacity to bring in match funding and more effectively use Council resources. Commissioning should also achieve value for money by considering the social value of VCSE service providers – the balance between economy (cost), efficiency (degree of output) and effectiveness (outcomes and results).
- Partnerships between VCSEs and other external funders, providers and agencies that are easy to form and worth continuing
- Environmental sustainability that supports communities and the VCSE sector to develop effective environmental policies, deliver projects and activities around climate change and environmental issues (such as reducing waste, recycling, sustainable purchasing, transport and sharing venues)
- Social sustainability. The Council is a London living wage employer and expects all contracts and

service providers to support this rate. The Council recognises the benefits to the individual, businesses and our society through paying sufficient wages.

In tighter financial times the VCSE sector can take action itself to improve sustainability. The Community Partnership Unit, Hounslow Voluntary Sector Support System (HVSSS) and Hounslow Community Network (HCN) will work together on a VCSE Efficiency Review advising and supporting groups on options to reduce costs by shared administration and finance support, IT, equipment and premises and accessing national discount schemes available to charities.

Valuing our Partnerships

As council budgets reduce further, partnerships will play an even greater role in sustaining and increasing gains in the wellbeing and resilience of our communities and the VCSE sector. The Council is already actively working with partners such as Hounslow CCG to develop a more integrated health and social care system and the Met Police to jointly develop a range of community safety and cohesion related activities. We also take a more formal role in bringing together the Hounslow Community Military Partnership Board and other multi-agency partnerships.

Hounslow Community Network provides a collective local VCSE voice and brings together VCSE groups across the borough. HCN will be a key partner in delivering aims and outcomes under the Thriving Communities Strategy

It is also recognised that any future prevention programme, such as for addressing issues related to diabetes or TB, will require active participation from the VCSE sector working alongside public health colleagues in the Council. Faith, community and voluntary groups have access to the local communities which are often worst-affected.

A key component of our partnership working is to ensure that the people of Hounslow have suitable information, advice and advocacy to access the most appropriate services. We also ensure that professionals are able to signpost people to preventative services, including many delivered by VCSE groups, rather than more costly provision of treatment services later on. Equally important is that residents participate and feel valued in consultation and engagement processes that matter to them. Local businesses can make important contributions

to delivering the Strategy. Working with HCN and local Chambers of Commerce we will encourage local businesses to support community projects through donation of surplus equipment, pro bono professional advice, business volunteering in the community and free use of business premises for community events. In addition, HCN will organise 'Meet The Developers' events for major developers to network with VCSE representatives in different areas of the borough. The Council, partner agencies and VCSE sector partnerships will, through greater evaluation of impact:

- Focus on delivering proven interventions that target the greatest areas of need
- Build preventative support and networks within local communities
- Demonstrate combined ways to improve residents' quality of life
- Work to build and retain trust and credibility with all Hounslow residents, communities and VCSE sector organisations and partner/stakeholders
- Use collective approaches to tackle the most complex issues in joined up ways.

Engaged and resilient communities

Residents that participate and are engaged in local activities have a greater sense of belonging and stronger relationships and connections with each other, VCSE organisations and the Council can positively adapt to change and uncertainty.

The Council supports approaches that understand and harness the assets in our neighbourhoods and communities. We will assist alternative networks of support for residents and organisations such as town centre associations, to lead, access and develop. These networks will enhance individual and community relations and opportunities by working directly to:

- ✓ Increase a sense of belonging and interactions between residents from different communities that are already very positive
- ✓ Help marginal and vulnerable communities adversely affected by socio-economic inequalities or disadvantage
- ✓ Develop a strong sense of ownership of decision-making; between all participants
- ✓ Foster less dependent relationships and greater equality in responsibility and purpose particularly on long-term thinking on entrenched or complex challenges.

Section 2: Outcomes

Outcome 1 – Empowered residents actively shaping their local area and enhancing civic pride

What we mean and why it is important

We will continue to listen to communities about what is most important to them and work with them to understand what opportunities and risks there would be in doing things differently. A key goal of Outcome 1 is that our communities will develop the confidence, capacity, and motivation to participate in or lead local activities or services they see as necessary and valuable.

Life pressures often seriously hamper peoples' ability to join in or take the lead in community activities. Many people will be busy with work, looking after their families, or feel disengaged with their local community.

Some areas of Hounslow are more deprived than others. To take away some of the worries about the cost of feeding the family, some local households are relying on food banks. Others notice the difference that accessing free school meals can have on their budgets. Local data tells us that many residents are finding it difficult to live on their household income. The local authority has an important role to play in creating, encouraging and sustaining cohesion among all communities in Hounslow. VCSE groups also have a key role in signposting residents to available support and in advocating for more vulnerable residents, such as those faced with benefit sanctions or needing legal advice or representation.

We want residents to feel more empowered to help solve the issues they face, and have the opportunity, wherever possible, to be involved in decisions about the services they receive. By understanding the diversity of social action needed in Hounslow we can better co-design

and influence ways to reduce the barriers to participation and leadership.

We aim to increase the proportion of people volunteering and we will be monitoring this consistently. Volunteering opportunities need to be suitable for people with different skills, interests and time commitments. This strategy continues to encourage the provision of volunteer roles that spread across the whole of Hounslow and that are appropriate for the diverse demographics of local residents.

Civic pride also encompasses community cohesion and feeling included and listened to in decisions that affect the residents of Hounslow. We will focus on community cohesion policies that reach the majority of residents' not just specific groups (such as ethnic minorities or white working class families). We take the view that tackling inequalities remains a key component of community cohesion. Where any community or group is clearly disadvantaged it is far less likely to have an effective stake in society. For instance, we know from Public Health data at the local and national level, that health and community cohesion are interconnected. Health tends to decline (and can lead to preventable deaths) in communities where levels of interaction are low and where people feel insecure.

Closely linked to the concept of cohesion in Hounslow, is the concept of community resilience. Community resilience is embedded in our work with our communities enabling them to withstand, respond to and recover from a wide range of harmful and adverse local, regional and international events, either natural or caused by an individual or group.

When cohesion is low and some residents feel disempowered from collective shared values

and potentially become at risk of being violently radicalised, our Prevent Duties becomes critical to assisting and supporting our communities or residents in becoming resilient to radicalisation.

The Council's vision is that everyone, who lives, works, is being educated or visiting Hounslow forms part of the wider Hounslow community, is respected and valued, and has the opportunity to contribute to the life of our many communities. The Council is committed to open government, encouraging local people to get involved and have their say on the decisions that affect them, their families and communities.

What we are doing now

Community development and social action

programmes start with what communities already have available to make things better rather than seeing areas or people as needy. As an ambitious council we believe that thriving communities require local capacity to be unlocked and to be able to seize opportunities rather than just on getting by.

We have established a new team of Community Engagement Officers to deliver a redesigned service on Hounslow estates with more emphasis on tangible outcomes and partnership working to support resident-led activities that increase local resilience. This team has begun partnership programmes with public health, heritage and leisure that will develop resident involvement in local parks and libraries, strengthening the role of residents in ongoing delivery of activities in these places. With £1 million of Arts Council funding,

Watermans, a key local VCSE organisation focused on the arts, will lead the Creative People and Places programme. This is supported by 6 partners including the Council, and will deliver high quality arts projects in 4 community hubs. Communities across the borough will have equal access to inspirational and excellent arts provision. This will redress the current imbalance in engagement in the arts between communities in the east and west of our borough.

Leading on Cohesion and engagement

programmes for established and new residents from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, visitors, investors and those coming to the borough for work, leisure or studies. We fund evidence-led research, community self-determination and social action that often include volunteering opportunities.

In our Prevent work we offer VCSE sector and residents opportunities to Identify and participate in programmes relevant to youth radicalisation leading to violence, recruitment issues, extremist prevention, etc. We aim to involve youth and communities in protecting Hounslow from violent extremists' narrative and activities.

Following a large scale consultation process, the Council is currently developing the role of Councillors and Area Forums to ensure greater involvement of local people in decision making and ensure their voices are heard on issues that affect them – an important part of strengthening these processes will be partnership working with local groups.

We currently commission services that support this outcome:

Supporting Volunteering

This service raises the profile of volunteering in the borough, supports residents to volunteer, and supports VCSE organisations to provide good quality, supported volunteering opportunities.

Groundwork London is delivering the service and takes a strategic lead for volunteering in the borough and will work to promote a culture of 'giving' across all of Hounslow's communities.

Arts and Civic Pride

The provision of world class centre based and outreach and community arts provision that increases levels of engagement, builds civic pride and celebrates and reflects cultural diversity in the borough. Feltham Arts provides the community development and Watermans is Hounslow's world class arts centre.

Risks and challenges to cohesion and engagement are addressed through our **Prevent work**. This covers partnerships with schools, faith groups, Police and government agencies through training, specialist education courses, multi-agency approach and interventions and sharing best practice. Prevent activities are aimed at stopping vulnerable adults and young people from becoming involved with violent extremists, whether in the UK or overseas.

Funding and commissioning VCSE sector organisations and local residents (through Area Forum grants) working on this outcome. For us this includes mobilising communities through supporting existing small volunteer led groups and forums that bring together different interests. The Council also coordinates an annual VCSE sector data to better understand how the sector (including roles for volunteers) is faring.

VCSE charity trustees and management committee members are also volunteers. Hounslow Voluntary Sector Support Service will run an annual 'Come on Board' event to share best practice between trustees and encourage more local people to become charity trustees, particularly more young

trustees and from Hounslow Black Minority Ethnic and Refugee and newly arrived communities

What we will do – the role of the Council

Over the next four years the Council will support this priority by delivering some cross-Council priorities such as:

- Developing ambitious proposals for transforming the Council's interaction with the community, bringing together existing initiatives to develop a new relationship with customers/residents
- Reduce bureaucratic barriers to social action, with devolved power to residents where appropriate
- Promoting and embedding volunteering with a 100% target of all funded and commissioned VCSE organisations providing some new volunteering opportunities each year being reached
- Establishing a Volunteering Charter that involves all partners. The target is that all partners and 80% of the VCSE sector will sign up to the Charter by 2019.

We will work together to deliver some priorities with different departments such as:

Council Department	Actions
Community Partnerships Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Deliver an improved community engagement role focused on estate based projects and development of new resources and processes to facilitate understanding of estates and support engagement programmes ■ Keep working with the Resident Associations' Forum, other resident and tenant groups such as tenants group and Friends of Park groups ■ Build on our armed forces community covenant workstream supporting army families to feel part of Hounslow's communities, including securing funds to enable integration of army families especially when partners are on deployment ■ Work with the Hounslow Friends of Faith to further enhance our profile and reputation with faith groups in the borough ■ Deliver the Stronger Neighbourhood projects within their target areas – providing appropriate support, capacity building and partnership working opportunities to the four lead providers ■ Ensure the Prevent duty is incorporated into existing safeguarding policies and procedure, ensuring it becomes part of the day to day work of the authority ■ Further develop neighbourhood networks, that support projects we've funded over the last few years such as Cultivate London, Timebank, Streetbank (outdoor play and 'taking over streets'), community allotments and food growing and our commissioned Volunteer service

Council Department	Actions
Community Partnerships Unit (cont)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to provide events based on literature, cultural, heritage, arts and communities and support other providers in their delivery of large scale events such as the Hounslow Older Person Festival, Feltham Arts Festival and Our Parks Presents Outdoor Film screening ■ Create a local map and resource of community and social asset 'anchors' (linking people, VCSE organisations, Council buildings, green spaces and events) in partnership with HVSSS
Community and Adult Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Co-design with VCSE organisations and residents a range of high quality learning opportunities that will contribute to their personal, social, educational and economic well-being ■ Consult with current service users, VCSE groups and local residents to find out exactly what their needs, interests and aspirations are ■ Offer family Learning that links to local social action ■ Develop and extend the role of Community Learning Champions in partnership with HVSSS ■ Use local areas and infrastructure to its maximum to engage neighbourhood based learning
Regeneration, Spatial Planning & Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Explore the potential value of developing an innovation hub that shapes local areas and links into creative economy (experimentation with digital technologies by arts and cultural organisations, developing local creative clusters) ■ Support appropriate community infrastructure through the collection of Community Infrastructure Levy imposing on new developments in conjunction with communities and VCSE sector providers who use the facilities ■ Consult with VCSE groups via HCN and other forums on future priorities for Section 106 funding ■ Engage VCSE organisations through the process as well as for consultation on the Great West Corridor Plan and West of the Borough Plan ■ Explore the prospect to set up or expand towns teams which are collectives of local businesses, retails and interested residents to improve the town centres.
Skills and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Listen to communities and VCSE sector ideas on creating a better mix of new jobs in their localities ■ Support communities to access new initiatives like the Careers Coach and assist the VCSE sector to commit to moving people into work, and giving them opportunities to progress in work through localised projects and volunteering ■ Provide information on apprenticeships to get the VCSE sector thinking about innovative ways to take on more apprentices each year
Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Signpost volunteering opportunities and other key VCSE support services on LBH website and celebrate, through communications and events, community and neighbourhood successes ■ Use insights from resident led programmes to inform customer service approach and work with HVSSS to develop community advocates that can tackle demand of Council services
Intelligence Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Produce local data and future modelling across the 5 localities with other agencies and VCSE sector partners on local capabilities and supports
Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Working with the Youth Offending Service, learn from VCSE organisations working with young offenders (such as Outside Chance) and find opportunities to partner with them on future projects aimed at reducing the rate of reoffending ■ The Neighbourhood Community Safety Coordinators work with residents as well agencies (primarily the Police) to respond to disorder hotspots with coordinated multi-agency action plans

Council Department	Actions
Community Safety <i>(cont)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support local communities and Champions to ensure Hounslow is a safe place to work, live and visit and the figures for feeling safe in the evening continue to increase. This can be supported by the Neighbourhood Community Safety Coordinators as well as local Police. ■ Agencies will be involved in various community events with the VCSE sector to assist in delivering aspects of the 'Safer Summer' campaigns
Leisure and Culture, Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Currently 29% of adults are not physically active enough. Increase the physical activity levels of adults in the borough to meet the recommended daily guidelines in order to improve their health. ■ Work with communities and VCSE sector to better utilise libraries, community open spaces, play areas, riverfronts and community allotments and support the Council's health-promoting activities ■ Support a range of local activities and events that celebrate our strengths and diverse communities ■ Achieve green flag award status for all or our 16 key parks by 2018 with the assistance of Friends of Parks groups and active local volunteers ■ Encourage resident use of arts and cultural programmes where they can learn new skills and start social enterprises ■ Support local events such as Hounslow Older Person Festival, Feltham Arts Festival and Our Parks Presents Outdoor Film screening
Children and young people services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with communities and young people awarded funding to start new projects in local areas particularly those based on developing local connections and feeling emotionally secure ■ Work with communities and the VCSE sector to monitor the difference we collectively make to the lives of children, adults and their carers ■ Promote what is available to young people locally on the Family Service Directory online and support VCSE organisations to update online information
Adults Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with partners to provide communities with information and advice to help them lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives ■ Support older people to be active in community life (get out and about and join in activities)
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recommission wellbeing services recognising the role of VCSE sector in delivering services to key priority groups ■ Support local involvement in initiatives such as Dementia Friendly Communities and Keep Safe Places ■ Work alongside VCSE groups who reach communities and neighbourhoods that may not access statutory services ■ Continue with a programme of universal activities and services (open to everyone) that promote healthy environments and lifestyles ■ We will continue to: promote access to good quality information, support safer neighbourhoods and projects that help, promote healthy and active lifestyles (e.g. physical activity, health walks), encourage lifestyle changes (e.g. stop smoking, healthy weight, improve mental wellbeing) ■ Engage with the VCSE sector in programmes including 'Health Walks' to increase residents' use of outdoor space for exercise/ health reasons.

Council Department	Actions
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Preventing homelessness – joining up with VCSE sector and key partners to prevent homelessness and help residents retain their own home ■ Reduce rough sleepers in Hounslow – this has increased in the past 3 years from 24 to 106 – this is an increase of 78% (83 people) of whom all were new to living on the streets ■ Re-establish our partnership working with Private Sector Landlords, RPs and other key stakeholders – to reduce evictions, renew tenancy, maximise on nomination agreements to help us meet our supply need and provide a home to those who need it the most
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with local residents representing activities and residents views at the Hounslow Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership ■ Raise awareness and encourage community action on biodiversity ■ Encourage residents to take part in grimebusting activities and continue their positive view and actions on recycling ■ Support a range of local VCSE sector organisations and communities working on nature and conservation projects making a real difference to local areas such as at the River Crane.

This outcome will only be achieved if we all work together to shape our local areas and keep our civic pride and community cohesion strong. This includes our local communities, VCSE sector, Councillors, partners and Council staff. Below is how we see the key roles of each group and the benefits of participating.

The role of others

Role of communities

Residents will be interested in being involved in various activities that make a positive and lasting difference to their communities. Communities will understand what opportunities there are locally and in their neighbourhood to participate in volunteering and community lead social action. Residents will then feel there are no barriers to taking action and starting new projects when they identify a need.

People will come together to use and animate green spaces, river areas and parks with activities that many can join in. There is a range of informal help from friends, family and communities for people who need support and community activities and events to help people stay well, happy and feel part of a supportive community.

Communities will know what local VCSE organisations work in their area and how to access services. Residents will share their knowledge and local intelligence to assist the Council to pool resources, make more informed decisions and set up feedback opportunities.

Role of the VCSE sector

The sector will have a key role in enabling the voice of the community (especially groups that feel excluded from mainstream services or existing opportunities) to be heard. This role includes encouraging and supporting local service users and citizens to get involved in decision-making and the co-design of services. The sector will be a key contributor to cohesion and equalities, by building social capital and strong community networks. Organisations will be able to provide evidence of the positive impact of their services on our local communities to be funded or commissioned by

the Council. VCSE organisations will be strong and effective facilitators, coordinators and enablers of social action.

VCSE groups be expert at working together in partnerships and consortia. Hounslow Voluntary Sector Support Service will deliver a new local 'VCS Consortia Building Programme' and will particularly look to develop new VCSE consortia around older people/help at home groups, groups with physical and learning disabilities and information and advice groups.

VCSE groups will have developed new skills to adapt to changing circumstances through the

support provided by Council commissioned services such as HVSSS.

Role of Councillors as Community Leaders

Councillors will focus on ways to empower local communities and residents with a sense of civic pride for their place through more conversations with communities. They will encourage and support community social action by understanding residents' views and aspirations in being involving in local issues.

Councillors will act as community leaders, particularly at the neighbourhood level, in facilitating resident participation in all aspects of decision-making and the shaping of services.

Outcome Two: Enabling independence and resilience by building the skills, resources and capacity of residents, neighbourhoods and communities

What we mean and why it is important

The Council is focused on enabling people to live more independent and healthier lives by signposting them to a range of social support systems and helping them see the benefits of greater choice and control in their life.

Community resilience has an important part to play in protecting residents during the economic downturn and overcoming adversity. One way of looking at resilience is in helping communities to develop the skills that enable them to prepare ahead to respond and recover quickly from difficulties or unexpected changes. In other cases it is about coping with major problems and acute needs when they happen to people and their communities.

Together in partnerships we work to help to alleviate some immediate hardships being faced by our most vulnerable residents. We also plan ahead innovative ways to embed resilience in what we do, even when forced to make cuts to services and grant funding. We are committed in our corporate

plan to supporting resident-led activities that improve community resilience.

Our 2014 VCSE sector survey results indicate that many organisations felt an increased demand for their service by low-income families and individuals being affected by welfare reform, Universal Credit and the work programme. We expect this will increase over the next four years. Many residents and service users across the borough have told the Council they are struggling and vulnerable to numerous stresses they are not prepared for; some families for the first time are turning to food banks and charities for basic needs that they have always been able to provide themselves; others are stressed by living in precarious housing aware that they can't afford to pay the rent if it is increased.

There are clear 'referral pathways' – routes through which people can be linked into VCSE services – to help residents and communities strengthen their resilience and ability to self-help. The VCSE sector's skills and experience in working with excluded and marginalised communities is essential to the delivery of services for vulnerable people.

This applies particularly to some groups who may be unable or reluctant to engage with statutory partners. These services are key to enabling people to live independently, be active in their community, create a local support network and help navigate systems that people may need in new ways such as health and social care.

Using our locality approach we will, in partnership with the Met Police, Armed Forces, faith and VCSE organisations, local businesses and Further and Higher Education and schools, seek to transform negative images of places and groups of people to reduce stigma and ensure opportunities are open to all residents.

What we are doing now

- Commissioning advice, support, signposting and advocacy services. Signposting to community resources, so people are well informed and can help themselves
- Run a multi-agency approach to making sure that vulnerable people receive appropriate support

- Directly target bespoke and early intervention services to residents in the most deprived areas in the borough to help with education and training
- Help residents experiencing multiple, complex needs to turn their life around, often through intervention and prevention programmes delivered by the VCSE sector
- Identifying the risk factors to poor health as early as possible, to provide general low level support and care that will help people stay healthy and avoid problems escalating
- Funding significant research on vulnerable and isolated communities to inform new service delivery and local social action e.g. better understanding of residents' resilience levels and support from others in a social housing estate in Cranford.

New community programmes and resources are available via the national 'My Community Rights' programme run by Locality. We will work with HVSSS to ensure residents groups and neighbourhood groups are aware of and can access these national resources.

Example of current commissioned services:

Advice service

The provision of free, confidential and independent information, advice and representation to enable local people to exercise their rights and responsibilities in: welfare benefits, debt, housing, employment, discrimination and immigration. This support prevents long-term costs and better identifies those who are at risk of experiencing a crisis. Effective signposting and support means steps can be taken to help transform residents' lives and prevent future need or crises.

CAB Hounslow is providing these services to our residents.

Hate Crime Outreach and Support Service

The provision of a confidential, accessible support service for victims of Hate Crime in Hounslow. It also raises awareness of Hate Crime amongst residents, VCSE and statutory organisations.

West London Hate Crime Support Service is providing this commissioned service.

Community Transport and Shopmobility Service

This service has two elements:

1. Minibus hire service available to support the work of VCSE organisations, schools, statutory organisations and others in the borough. A MIDAS training programme to ensure that staff and volunteers receive the required training to drive their organisations' own or hired mini-buses.
2. An accessible Shopmobility service providing good quality scooters and electric wheelchairs for rent to residents of the borough and Shopmobility members from outside the borough.

Community Transport Hounslow is providing this commissioned service.

What we will do – role of the Council

Delivering some priorities within specific departments such as:

Council Department	Actions
Community Partnerships Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support community recovery programmes to promote independence ■ Work to support targeted priority groups e.g. the Better Homes, Better Health service offering support to Hounslow residents most at risk from the health effects of cold weather and often coordinated by VCSE organisations ■ We will also work with local residents to co-design new services to improve accessibility and equity of use ■ Deliver an improved community engagement role focused on estate based projects ■ Deliver the Stronger Neighbourhood projects within their target areas – providing appropriate support, capacity building and partnership working opportunities to the four lead providers ■ Ensure the Prevent duty is incorporated into existing safeguarding policies and procedure, ensuring it becomes part of the day to day work of the authority and continual programme to help prevent violent extremism ensuring we address the key aims of the Prevent Act / Strategy ■ Continue programme to help prevent violent extremism ensuring they meet Prevents aims of responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it; preventing people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; and working with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address
Community and Adult Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Focus funding and resources on targeted provision to meet the needs of those who are most vulnerable and furthest from learning or employment. ■ Extend the participation of learners who often have multiple and complex needs, who face barriers to learning and living in areas of greatest disadvantage ■ Develop effective and strong partnership that enables the Service to implement the key aims of this strategy, namely reaching disadvantaged vulnerable and 'hard to reach' groups in the community
Skills and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Deliver projects to tackle unemployment and underemployment in the west of the borough in particular and among specific ethnic groups and those with complex barriers to employment ■ Improve resident access to information and advice provided through the National Careers Service as well as awareness of local provision ■ Provide tailored and responsive support to those affected by welfare reform changes by working with partners to develop personalised packages of support, including supporting people in low-paid work to improve their skills
Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Publicise 'how to' style descriptions of basic Council processes that ease citizenship and settlement in the Borough such as how to make appointments, registering with a school (e.g. free school meals and nursery vouchers), registering with a local GP ■ Updated website pages connecting residents, communities and the VCSE sector to resilience related issues and resources ■ Raise awareness among frontline staff of the needs of migrant communities and develop training that explores how to make points of contact a more positive experience for migrant communities

Council Department	Actions
Intelligence Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Data on resilience levels at locality levels and people's connection with community assets and uptake of services ■ Use new research – from Joint Commissioning team, Children's and Adults' Services and the CCG and Public Health – on residents initial contact with Adult Social care and their overall journey through support to help shape more effective Public Health primary prevention work (e.g. publicity campaigns with residents as Champions or VCSE organisations promoting through outreach and community festivals) and to shape better targeted secondary preventative services
Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to communicate with residents, communities and the VCSE sector the Council's priorities of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and available local services such as the continuation of specialist services, schemes and initiatives on Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence; an integrated response to ongoing problems with Prostitution, trafficking for sexual exploitation and FGM. Encourage schools, residents, faith and local community deliver activities aimed at raising awareness on VAWG. This is currently carried out via a number of projects and initiatives by the Community Safety team and multi-agency strategy groups (the VAWG Strategy Group) including work delivered by contracted agencies ■ Continue to support victims of all types of hate crime and develop and embed a Keep Safe scheme to support victims of Disability related hate crime. This is currently carried out via a number of projects and initiatives by the Community Safety team and multi-agency strategy groups (the HCPF) including work delivered by contracted agencies. ■ Support Trading Standards work with VCSE residents and communities on the many excellent initiatives under way in Hounslow to educate householders, particularly the elderly, to change their ways of doing things e.g. how to deal with uninvited doorstep sellers and no cold calling zones
Leisure and Culture, Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Commission or fund or work with to secure resources: VCSE organisations able to deliver on the whole systems integrated care model that show they are flexible to meet the needs of individual users and build on community assets. Research highlights effective interventions to tackle loneliness are: community navigators, befriending, social interaction through community involvement and hobbies. Social group activities included group exercise, art, therapeutic writing and aspiring activities, with different studies showing a reduction in falls and improved physical health ■ Identify practical ways to improve community resilience and reduce demand for resource-intensive services ■ Focus on developing and supporting community activities through working in localities
Children and young people services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve the pathways through services so that young people do not become dependent and are able to step down to lower levels of support as soon as is appropriate e.g. services for young people transitioning to adulthood ■ VCSE sector to work with Children's Services to reconfigure young people's services to better meet the needs of young people leaving care who require higher need provision as part of transition into adult services ■ Champion VCSE sector offer in supplementing school education (e.g. through arts, music and sport programmes, volunteering and extra educational support) to improve achievement levels of local children ■ Work on collaborative projects with Public Health and the VCSE sector to reduce teenage pregnancy projects ■ Effective joint working to support the economic well-being of children, young people and families. To commission services based on the diverse needs of Hounslow's residents ■ Recognise the role communities and VCSE sector play in delivering on the multiagency plan that ensures children and young people at risk of abuse or neglect are protected ■ Consider ways communities and the VCSE sector can help the Council achieve emotional resilience targets in schools through using evidence based Targeted Mental Health in schools programmes

Council Department	Actions
Adults Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communities and VCSE sector to connect with adult social care providers with commissioning responsibilities helping older people, learning disability, physical disability (including sensory impairment), mental health and their carers who require or will require access to information, advice and advocacy services or low level non-health or social care based support to maximise their independence ■ Strengthening Hounslow's online resource directory, Careplace, as a signposting and brokerage tool by linking with other community facilities in the VCSE sector and Council community services ■ Support residents with social care needs who receive a personal budget to use it in the most effective way by tapping into quality VCSE and other providers services ■ Through our market facilitation function we will offer development advice and support to VCSE organisations to encourage and grow them to be self-sufficient ■ Engage with the local VCSE sector to support older people (and other vulnerable groups) to continue living as independently as possible in their local community, and to achieve and maintain their abilities in relation to physical, intellectual, emotional and social well-being. Services will be commissioned that promote independence and reduce social isolation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing information on and support to access services available to maintain older people living in their own home, e.g., information services, care navigators – Delivering a range of physical and social activities that promote both physical and mental health and wellbeing; – Providing a befriending service to older people living alone where this does not already exist
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Building on existing investments through section 256 agreements, we will continue to invest in preventative activities through the local VCSE sector. These will include low cost/no cost solutions, initiatives to combat social isolation and the development of contracts which encourage building working relationships with the VCSE to engage with the community and target work at the most vulnerable populations ■ Continue to commission an integrated community drug and alcohol treatment and recovery service for residents (currently delivered by the iHEAR Partnership) ■ Develop an alcohol strategic plan in partnership with Community Safety, which will outline the strategic actions needed by a range of partners including VCSE sector and communities to reduce the impact of alcohol misuse in Hounslow. A challenge for all partners is to manage the issues of domestic violence, mental ill-health and substance misuse which have been identified as common features of families where harm to women and children has occurred. Continue joint working on this to support these families and lead prevention / treatment programmes ■ Work with the CCG, Public Health England, NHS England and the VCSE sector to design and evaluate a pilot TB prevention programme ■ Participate in a new London digital Mental Wellbeing programme to help Hounslow residents to self-assess and manage their issues such as anxiety ■ Commission an integrated wellbeing service that is person centred, providing a range of universal and targeted interventions, engaging with local VCSE sector to promote local services, and activities that promote independence and community engagement ■ Delivery a small grants programme promoting mental wellbeing and physical activity and sharing learning and good practice across the VCSE and with other key partners

Council Department	Actions
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work jointly with VCSE to create opportunities to up skill those in need on money management and assist them in managing debt ■ Work with credit unions and other money support mechanisms to enable and support those at risk of having rent arrears ■ Joint partnership working with VCSE in widening support to households, families to gain mediation, resolve conflict, reduce domestic violence as a result of cumulative unintended impacts of reforms
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Joint working with Transport, Planning, Environmental Health and Licensing to improve the built environment, active spaces, and access to alcohol and healthier affordable food. Going forward we aim to achieve a point where all new commissioning considers the impact on the health and wellbeing of residents ■ Promote biodiversity conservation as a key indicator of wellbeing and sustainable development and ensure that best practice information is shared ■ With CPU and Public Health, promote mobility and the accessibility of community facilities, e.g. adequate transport services

This outcome will only be achieved if we all work together to shape our local areas and keep our civic pride and community cohesion strong. This includes our local communities, VCSE sector, Councillors, partners and Council staff. Below is how we see the key roles of each group and the benefits of participating.

The role of others

Role of communities

We need communities to help us to identify who needs help and support – so that we can assist and signpost them as early as possible to reduce the impact on their life and before they need lots of services or more expensive services. Communities will learn from each other and share examples of how things have worked in their community.

Communities will understand what might make individuals and families vulnerable at different points in their lives. There is a range of informal help and community activities and events that help people to stay well and happy. Neighbours, services users, carers and patients will be supported to be involved in shaping public and VCSE services.

Role of the VCSE sector

VCSE organisations will need to make sure that their services reach the areas and people that need them most. All partners will do all they can

to support everyone in Hounslow to feel more confident in helping themselves.

The VCSE sector will understand what is important to the Council and its partners. The Council and its partners will understand what is important to the VCSE sector. The VCSE sector will have opportunities to influence and shape commissioning priorities. VCSE organisations will be strategic partners, contributing to shaping local priorities. They will be enablers of community representation, by encouraging and supporting local service users – especially those that are vulnerable and marginalised – to be involved in setting the agenda and get involved in decision-making.

Role of Councillors as Community Leaders

Councillors will support residents to self-help and give information about the range of advice and assistance that communities, the VCSE sector and the Council provides to help residents feel more able and independent.

Outcome Three: A vibrant, self-sustaining and ambitious VCSE sector in Hounslow

What we mean and why it is important

The VCSE sector provides vital support networks within our communities – some of these directly through giving advice, care and/or support and others by connecting people to social activities that reduce isolation and help communities enjoy time together.

By delivering a range of early intervention and prevention programmes and services, more people can receive assistance early on. This results in many personal and financial benefits – for instance it helps people change their behaviour, when problems arise, to better help themselves and build their own skills, health or levels of resilience. It also keeps costs down as it is much more expensive to help a person when they are in the middle of a health or personal crisis rather than before it has started.

The Thriving Communities Funding Plan 2015-19 reshaped the way the Council funds VCSE sector services. We now have a coordinated and joined up approach to developing and supporting the sector. We are keen to support and develop a diverse market of VCSE sector suppliers of commissioned services that can effectively meet the needs of users over the long term. To achieve these outcomes we know that the Council and partners need to assist the VCSE sector to continue to develop and strengthen their strategic, financial and non-financial resources. At a time when Council resources are limited, we will need to be better at identifying more innovative ways of helping the sector.

To reduce duplication and the council paying twice for the same service or alternatively not paying providers for the value they create, we will pursue collaborative commissioning with health partners and across Directorates wherever possible.

Where possible providers will be encouraged to work more effectively in partnership. Where

services are closely related, Council departments will join up efforts to create more coordinated services and assign responsibility and budgets for taking projects forward. This could mean we pool grant funds for small organisations delivering across areas like health, disability, mobility, social isolation and homelessness. For example the Community Partnership's Unit and Community Safety jointly recommissioned a domestic violence support service until 2017.

What we are doing now

Supporting capacity building of the VCSE sector enabling organisations to contribute to partnerships and form networks that help drive the transformation needed to be more focused and innovative with less financial resources.

Commissioning and funding services and projects designed to help the sector grow and be self-sufficient. We promote greater supplier diversity in the provision of public services and seek opportunities for the Council to act as system leader rather than direct deliverer.

Leading on the **VCSE Partnership Forum** designed to discuss and develop all Council Directorate's joint working with the VCSE sector and HCCG.

Funds and continues to support (through access and resources) the **Hounslow Community Network** and its 260 plus members. In its first three years Hounslow Community Network (HCN) has grown to represent half of the known community groups in the borough and has become the focal point for VCSE organisations to engage with Hounslow's public sector organisations. It has a target to increase membership to 400 groups over the next three years. It serves as an active forum for debating local issues and community need. Local VCSE organisations are regularly engaged in policy development and the success of

HCN has directly led to new consortia forming in the borough.

The sector has access to various community buildings in the borough. Additionally, the Council invested in the CAN Mezzanine.

We continue to promote collaborative working in the shared VCSE sector hub space of the CAN Mezzanine in the Treaty Centre. It is specifically for VCSE organisations to run their offices, hold training sessions and

conferences and host meetings. Within a year of operation, CAN Mezzanine has met all its targets in encouraging VCSE organisations to take up leases, encouraging smaller and medium sized organisations to network more effectively and develop ideas that can help them grown and support residents more.

Ensuring we communicate the nature of the financial challenges and, where possible, find solutions with the VCSE sector including tapping into underused resources.

Example of current commissioned services:

VCS Support Service

This service is designed to build the capacity, sustainability and quality of services provided by the VCSE sector through, for example, better utilising existing resources; having clearer understandings of residents' needs and challenges and greater collaboration across the sector and with the council.

This commissioned service is provided by Ealing Community and Voluntary Service (lead provider) with Hillingdon Association of Voluntary service.

What we will do - role of the Council

Over the next four years the Council will support this outcome by delivering some cross-Council priorities. Importantly where funding is reduced we will actively plan ways to:

- **Help the sector bring in more external funding sources** range from lottery funding, trusts and foundations, European funding and funding from private sources. CPU, HVSSS and HCN continue to renew the Hounslow External Funding Action Plan. The latest plan covers 2015-2017
- **Assist the sector to create effective cross-sector partnerships** and consortia to secure EU and other large funders such as Big Lottery money. This is likely to require cross-borough local authority/VCSE bids
- **Combat reduced external funding** and greater competition for funds by commissioning services to provide training to the VCSE sector to submit well thought out and innovative bids
- **Share non-financial resources** such as office space, equipment, expert staff, time and ideas

about which programmes worked and could be scaled up and expanded to run in different locations or with more residents

- **Develop training** with funded or commissioned services such as HVSSS for staff, board members and committee chairs of the role of the VCSE and their representatives. This will also help all partners to better understand the real cost of things if the VCSE sector comes to the rescue when things are difficult.
- Encourage the sector to **tap into regional support** available free to VCSE organisations and monitor who is and its benefit to residents
- **Update the current Hounslow Voluntary Sector Compact** together with HCN and the sector more generally – this document outlines a code of practice for partnership working between public bodies and the VCSE sector. The new Compact will fully represent how we work together to improve the lives of residents.
- **Ensure Social Value** is considered in all Council commissioned contracts and funding.

Delivering some priorities within specific departments such as:

Council Department	Actions
Community Partnerships Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to develop relationships with external funders through various contacts such as biannual Hounslow Funders Fairs and delivering on the joint external funding plan with Hounslow Community Network (HCN) and Hounslow Voluntary Sector Support Service (HVSSS) ■ Monitor the effectiveness of the 9 VCSE core services commissioned in 2015 ■ Provide outcome based grant funding for all sized VCSE organisations ■ Train and support the VCSE sector to take a leading role in mainstreaming community cohesion and tackling Prevent issues ■ Conduct an annual VCSE Sector Survey ■ We will have a strong databank of evidence about what works, in what context and why covering our funded programmes and commissioned services ■ Create maps of all community and social asset anchors (linking people, VCSE organisations, Council buildings, green spaces and events) ■ Develop and help resource training programmes with HCN for VCSE and statutory sector staff on how to implement the recently refreshed Compact ■ New opportunities in social investment and crowd funding to secure returns and match funds to Council contributions ■ Further scoping work to identify what services can be delivered by or with the VCSE sector, and the practicalities of how to move forward – through the role out of Social Challenge or Innovation Days delivered jointly with VCSE organisations ■ Enhance the Prevent offer to support residents understanding of the drivers towards radicalisation and the pathways towards theatres of jihad. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure we adopt a risk based approach to the Prevent Duty. – Demonstrate effective partnership working across Hounslow and its neighboring boroughs – Provide bespoke training for front line staff including VCSE staff enabling them to understand ‘what is radicalisation’ and where to go for support. – Adopt a robust and effective monitoring and evaluation process for all Prevent projects working to evidence best practice and good governance. – Offer support and advice to elected members to ensure they are aware of signposting to support services to prevent residents from being drawn into terrorism.
Communications Intelligence Hub, Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide information that is helpful to VCSE organisations and partners e.g. Borough statistics and upcoming procurements, funding opportunities ■ Update LBH website for easy use by residents and the VCSE sector ■ Undertake community-led research and action research activities, including training and capacity building ■ Participate and lead the Council’s marketing contribution to the campaign to promote the VCSE sector in Hounslow (in conjunction with HCN and the CPU)
Community and Adult Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support local VCSE organisations as identified in the Community Learning Strategy to access funding opportunities to help address local priorities. ■ Further develop capacity building opportunities to support local VCSE organisations in the delivery of good quality provision, which meets Ofsted standards. ■ Through the Community Learning Strategy continue to build on existing partnership work with VCSE organisations and develop new partnerships to ensure that programs are accessible and delivered where the people in most need can easily access them.

Council Department	Actions
Community and Adult Learning <i>(cont)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Collaborative working between the Council and the VCSE sector to identify opportunities to provide informal settings for English language learning, preparation for employment, digital inclusion and integration
Regeneration, Spatial Planning & Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Accelerate efforts to promote and develop social enterprises through expanding the Social Enterprise Partnership. We are committed to the ongoing development of social enterprises to deliver health and social care services, new products and services, employment and training. The Council has ambitious plans for social enterprises to participate in a long-term way in regeneration activities and spaces in Brentford, Chiswick and central Hounslow. ■ Help the VCSE sector find opportunities to promote their strengths to local businesses e.g. working with HCN, the Chambers of Commerce and other businesses on the 'Meet the Developers' events ■ Encourage the VCSE sector to be proactive and innovative by sharing data quickly, running prototyping or piloting of new schemes and securing funding in partnership with the sector ■ Enable VCSE sector to make links with the business sector and actively work on one major project to enhance the VCSE sector's presence in a key regeneration areas
Skills & Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participate in the VCSE Partnership forum to assist, where possible, organisations to understand and ameliorate residents unemployment and underemployment issues ■ Work with relevant VCSE organisations, where appropriate, on employment, job readiness and skill development areas
Commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recognition of the social value within commissioning and funding processes—making this explicit in funding criteria and tender specifications ■ Consider options for an integrated commissioning framework ■ Create opportunities for commissioned services and funded organisations to meet and discuss their work
Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support and advice for VCSE (providers and non-providers) to be represented within strategic partnerships such as the Community Safety Partnership (CSP)
Public Health (Wellbeing and Leisure and Culture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with capacity builders to develop the Friends of Parks groups and secure Green Flag Awards for all parks in Hounslow ■ Longer-term initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of marginal or new communities through commissioned services Work with VCSE sector on volunteering opportunities and ways to involve residents in designing services ■ Undertake work to make VCSE sector aware of, opportunities to tender for large wellbeing contracts and smaller grants.
Children and young people services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop partnerships with schools to foster engagement and participation with VCSE sector ■ Support the VCSE sector to prioritise more early intervention and ■ Preventative activities to focus delivery that will reach and help disadvantaged young people ■ Directly support and/or fund services for a range of communities that lead to self-sufficiency, greater quality of life factors and/or independence.

Council Department	Actions
Adults Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue a focus on building alternative networks of support and partnerships (involving all Council Directorates) in combination with the VCSE sector to reduce reliance upon public services ■ VCSE sector offer is present on CarePlace ■ We're taking an overall whole systems approach at dementia and older residents. This will involve becoming a dementia-friendly community and redesigning existing VCSE services with the potential to develop new initiatives to reflect what the local community needs and aspires to.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Actively involve and work with the VCSE with a view to creating opportunities/ advice to households or those with a housing need and prevent homelessness ■ Re-establish working relationships with VCSE to jointly deliver a seamless housing service including: supporting those in priority housing need to gain, maintain, and remain in their own home ■ To actively promote and increase the role of the Tenants, leaseholders and Sheltered groups and insure they have a strong voice and influence the delivery of tenancy services delivered by the council
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Voluntary and community sector is supported and advised on their involvement in local consultations ■ Direct contact with VCSE sector on resource efficiency offers - involvement in a campaign a year ■ Co-develop a social action forum of VCSE groups working on green issues

This outcome will only be achieved if we all work together to shape our local areas and keep our civic pride and community cohesion strong. This includes our local communities, VCSE sector, Councillors, partners and Council staff. Below is how we see the key roles of each group and the benefits of participating.

The role of others

Role of communities

Communities will be involved in giving feedback) to the Council and to VCSE organisations about their service satisfaction and types of needs.

Communities have the right information about existing resources, services and groups and can see and benefit from the sector developing and growing. Residents will benefit from range of sustainable projects developed by the VCSE sector that meet their needs and support larger council targets.

Role of the VCSE sector

The VCSE sector will effectively give its voice to many issues to help improve Council policy and services.

This will happen in a coordinated way via HCN and in regular dialogue with between organisations and the Council. Organisations will participate in the capacity building support and training funded by the Council and delivered through HVSSS and where possible create ways where they can give back and share their skills (e.g. peer training on evaluation, tools on how to recruit more Black, Asian Minority Ethnic trustees to their boards.

Representation on key decision making groups and forums is taken up by trained VCSE sector representatives who have the legitimacy and support to fulfill these important roles

Additionally, HCN will support democratic annual election, support and training for VCSE

representation on local partnership boards and forums ensuring transparency and fair representation of local organisations.

Local and regional VCSE organisations will be tapped into in order to improve our local sector's understanding of membership benefits, effective innovations and funding opportunities. Mutual sharing of knowledge, practices and solutions is encouraged to demonstrate continuous improvement in third sector work. For instance HVSSS' new online 'Hounslow VCSE Learning Bank' will allow local groups to swap good ideas, share model policy documents and highlight local VCSE 'success stories'.

Evaluating organisations impact will be commonplace and organisations will feel supported to undertake new ways of assessing progress towards achieving the outcomes. Data sharing will be made easier by Council intelligence and through initiatives such as HVSSS developing an online 'Hounslow VCSE Stats Bank' with key statistics which local VCSE groups, particularly small groups, can use for bids to funders and for their organisations business plans.

Through HCN funded by the Council, an events calendar will better inform VCSE organisations and communities what is happening locally. More opportunities to publicise to local residents the benefits a thriving local VCSE sector brings to Hounslow will be utilised by organisations often coordinated by HCN, the Council and HCCG.

Role of Councillors as Community Leaders

Understand and meet with VCSE organisations who are operating locally to make the lives of residents happier and healthier. Learn how the sector is working across partnerships to bring in more money to the local area and offer more services of need. Attend and support communities and VCSE sector events that can improve community participation.

Councillors to operate as 'social entrepreneurs' bringing together residents and agencies in the area and across the VCSE, public and private sectors to tackle social, economic and environmental challenges.

Section 3: Making sure we deliver

This strategy has taken an outcomes-based approach to how the Council, communities, VCSE sector and other agency partners will work to enrich residents' lives and recognise our collective strengths. This means we will be able to monitor the longer-term benefits and impact of services for residents and communities by:

- Reviewing progress on each outcome
- Analysing and comparing results across all funded and commissioned VCSE organisations.

The Council requires all funded and commissioned services to measure and report on how it is delivering against the Thriving Communities outcomes. From these results, we can more easily assess which services are having an impact on people's lives at a local level; how residents are faring and where limited resources should be directed.

The implementation of the Thriving Communities and VCSE sector strategy will be monitored through a series of engagements and methods, including:

A cross-departmental and organisational steering group (VCSE Partnership Forum) consisting of key Council officers and the VCSE sector will be responsible for taking forward and monitoring compliance with the strategy	Six month progress updates to the Council's VCSE Partnership Forum and annual report to the Community Investment Advisory Panel and to the HCN Executive Board	Financial review of value for money, social impact and level of funding brought into the borough by the VCSE sector and collaboratively with the sector
Data from our Community Partnership Unit's annual VCSE survey and comparisons over past four years	Data from the Residents survey 2014 and improvements on targets about community cohesion and active participation in social life	Compare our progress against other local government indicators and national datasets
Increased external funding secured via joint Council/VCSE funding bids with six monthly progress reports to the VCSE Partnership Forum and the HCN Executive	More residents physically active and using outdoor spaces for improved mental wellbeing	At relevant meetings of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stronger United Communities Group - Community Sports and Physical Activity Network (CSPAN) - Health & Wellbeing Board
Target for Volunteering Charter achieved – all partners and 80% of the VCSE sector will sign up to the Charter by 2017	Measure and compare the volunteer profile with the demographic profile of Hounslow residents to review the diversity of uptake and type of opportunities people want	Review of Council staff and partners awareness of the outcomes in this strategy and work towards achieving them

Glossary

Capacity building is the work that develops skills and knowledge within VCSE organisations so they can increase their ability to deliver services. This includes:

- Leadership training
- Governance support
- Brokering partnerships with the VCSE sector or with businesses
- Specific campaign support or social media expertise
- Training for innovative funding sources such as crowd funding projects and social challenge prizes designed to develop imaginative, effective solutions to big social problems
- Helping to build the reputation and awareness of the VCSE sector and its diverse offer to residents.

Community empowerment is what happens through engagement and other activities. Power, influence and responsibility is devolved from existing centres of power into the hands of communities and individual citizens. They gain the power to take decisions about services and initiatives that affect their lives.

Demand management means trying to ensure that fewer people need services and that the right services are provided first time

External funding for the VCSE sector is defined as income that is additional to any statutory income provided by central government or local Council. These additional funding sources are received as a result of a competitive tendering process and can be used to develop existing activities, projects or service as well as allowing new ones to take place. External funders include Big Lottery Fund, BBC Children in Need, Santander Foundation.

Social action is about people coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities. It can include volunteering, giving money, community action or simple everyday neighbourly acts.

Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations include constituted groups, associations, registered charities, community interest companies, not-for-profit companies, mutuals, cooperatives, and social enterprises. The term VCSE sector applies to those organisations that are value driven and reinvest their surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives.

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