

<b>Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee</b>		
Title	Developing the capacity of the community and voluntary sector: evidence session 1	
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager	4
Class	Part 1 (open)	19 October 2016

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 15 September 2016, the Committee agreed the scoping paper for a short review of the support offered for organisations in the community and voluntary sector. At this meeting the Committee will review the document “The Way Ahead” attached at appendix 1 and hear evidence from a range of witnesses.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- consider the content of this report including the report “The Way Ahead” attached at Appendix A.
  - take evidence from expert witnesses.

## **3. Introduction**

- 3.1 Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee acknowledges the contribution of the community and voluntary sector to public life and discussions at committee have demonstrated councillors and officers recognition of the importance of the sector in the delivery of public services.
- 3.2 Significant and sustained reductions in funding from government, alongside the continual demand to provide public services, present a significant challenge to the Council. As part of the organisational approach to make savings, the Council is shifting from its position of always being principal provider of services to a commissioner, facilitator and collaborator in shared arrangements. It is in this context that the Committee has decided to carry out a short review of capacity of Lewisham’s community and voluntary sector and invited witnesses to address the committee.

## **4. London Funders Report - The Way Ahead**

- 4.1 London Funders is an organisation that represents a network of fund giving organisations in the community and voluntary sector. Its recent report: ‘the way ahead: civil society at the heart of London’ is an overview of their work with Greater London Volunteering and the London Voluntary Service Council. The report sets out a vision for civil society in London and it establishes principles to help develop this vision.

4.2 The report emphasizes the importance of carrying out needs assessments in collaboration with communities using relevant data and it highlights the need for stakeholders in the sector to provide each other with support and challenge. The report sets the context for the future funding of the community and voluntary activity in London and it begins to describe the future role of local authorities as equal partners with the sector. The report is attached at Appendix 1 and the committee are asked to consider this.

## **5. Evidence Session**

5.1 At the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September, the Committee agreed to hear evidence from: Lewisham's Head of Community and Cultural Development and from representatives from local volunteer organisations.

5.2 Evidence will be heard from a number of individuals and groups. The following are confirmed at the time of publication of the agenda:

- James Lee, Head of Community and Cultural Development
- Andrew O'Brien, Head of Policy and Engagement, Charity Finance Group
- Phillip Granger, Rushey Green Time Bank
- Roz Hardie, Lewisham Disability Coalition

## **6. Further implications**

6.1 At this stage there are no specific financial, legal, environmental or equalities implications to consider. However, each will be addressed as part of the review.

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