SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE		
Report Title	Update on Capacity in the Voluntary Sector report	
Ward	All	
Contributors	Head of Culture and Community Development	
Class	Part 1	Date: 15 December 2017

Reason for lateness

This report was dispatched late due to a major IT failure on the day of dispatch which necessitated the re-drafting of the report.

1. Purpose

1.1 This report provides an update to officer responses to Committee's report on Capacity in the Voluntary Sector.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee:

2.1 Notes the report and provides feedback to officers on progress to date.

3. Background

3.1 At their meeting of 14 April 2016, the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee, resolved to carry out a review into developing the capacity of the community and voluntary sector.

3.2 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. The scoping paper set out the background and key lines of enquiry for the review. The key areas proposed to be considered were:
To establish:
- The Council's principle means for providing support to the sector
- The budget available to carry out this work
- The process for assessing the support needs of community and voluntary sector organisations

To consider:
- What forms of support should be a priority for the sector?
- What form should support arrangements for the community and voluntary sector take?

3.3 The timeline for the review was as follows:

19 October 2016 – To agree the scope of the review.

19 October 2016 - Evidence-taking session to cover the analysis of the Council's role in and budget for supporting the voluntary sector and to consider evidence from voluntary organisations.

28 November 2016 – Draft Report to Committee coinciding with the report on the main grants programme for 2017/18

January 2017 – final report released

3.4   The report was submitted to Mayor and Cabinet on 21 June 2017 along with officers' initial responses and returned to the Committee in July 2017. This report provides a further update on progress against the original recommendations.

4.   Update to the responses to the recommendations in the report

4.1   The updated response to each of the report's 10 recommendations are set out below along with officers' initial response:

4.2   <u>Recommendation 1</u>

4.2.1   That the Council continues to work with voluntary organisations in Lewisham to help them adapt to changes in funding and reductions in grants from the Council. Support should be timely and tailored to the needs of organisations.

4.3   <u>Response</u>

4.3.1   Each Main Grant funded organisation has been allocated a lead officer from within the Culture and Community Development team who is responsible for both monitoring performance and providing ongoing support. This includes attending at least one trustee meeting and one in depth discussion with representatives of the organisation per year providing the means for officers to gain a detailed knowledge of the needs of the organisation. There are also themed leads within the team e.g. the arts, sport, information and advice who will have wider strategic knowledge across a number of organisations and will also undertake horizon scanning in order to keep up to date with issues and opportunities. A variety of types of support are offered, including 1:1 advice, information on resources that become available such as funding or training and opportunities to network with other organisations to facilitate greater partnership. We also now monitor the number of funding bids made by each organisation as part of our formal processes.

        Voluntary Action Lewisham (VAL) is also funded to provide support to the borough's voluntary sector. Following the review of services being provided by organisations receiving Main Grant funding as part of the budget cuts in 2016, officers have been working with VAL to redesign and modernise these services to make them more responsive to current needs – targets attached as appendix 1. The organisation is currently going through a restructuring process to implement these changes.

4.3.2   <u>December 2017 Update</u>

4.3.3   Officers continue to work with each Main Grant recipient to ensure that they are developing their service model and organisation to ensure that they are sustainable in the long term. This is through on-going dialogue regarding their outputs and outcomes and the use of the Rocket Science tool which promotes self-examination and reflection. Funding for all 60 organisations in receipt of Main Grants was confirmed for 2018/19 at Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 15 November 2017.

4.3.4 VAL continue to work with organisations, individually and collectively, to develop their service models and fundraising abilities to ensure that they are better placed to respond to the changing funding landscape.

4.3.5 VAL has a target to provide specific support to 100 groups and promote collaborations and partnerships between groups to solve local issues and enable them to realise the funding they need.

4.4 Recommendation 2

4.4.1 When the Council reviews the grant-making process, the Council should ensure it considers assessments of skills and opportunities available in an area and not just look at need. This could be considered as an assets model rather than a uniquely deficits model.

4.5 Response

4.5.1 Assessments of skills and opportunities is very much a part of the current grant making process and the assessment of individual applications. The Main Grants Guidance document puts forward a number of key principles that highlight this approach including:

- A recognition of the importance of maintaining an independent sector that can act as a critical friend to challenge public sector policy and delivery.
- A recognition of the key role that the sector plays in building civic participation, providing a voice for seldom heard residents and providing community intelligence.
- A recognition of the great diversity of the sector and the need to engage with small and emerging groups as well as large established organisations.
- A recognition of the sector's potential to take risks and innovate which does not sit easily within commissioning frameworks.
- A recognition that third sector organisations have been key delivery partners within Lewisham, including for a wide range of targeted short term initiatives. Grant aid provides a level of security for organisations ensuring that there is a strong sector able to address local need, attract additional resources and be ready to work in partnership with us.
- A recognition of the sector's ability to utilise resources that are not available to the statutory sector through external funding and volunteers. Every £1 of grant aid invested yields approximately £4 from other sources

    The Guidance document goes on to state:
- In establishing the priority themes for the grants programme we have considered the contribution the third sector can make to meeting the priority.
- In assessing applications to the grants programme we will be looking at an organisation's readiness to work with us as active partners and what they can bring to such a partnership

4.5.2 December 2017 Update

4.5.3 The Council continues to work with the VCS to taken an assets based approach to solving local issues. Neighbourhood Community Development Partnerships (NCDPs) have been established through Community Connections (Ague UK, Lewisham Disability Coalition, Voluntary Action Lewisham and Rushey Green Timebank) to promote local partnerships and asset based solutions to social issues. The four NCDPs (based on the Health and Social Care neighbourhood boundaries) each have £25,000 available to allocate via a participatory budgeting approach designed to seed-corn and promote local services.

4.5.5 Officers are working in partnership with colleagues in the VCS to ensure that this asset based approach is balanced with needs intelligence to ensure that under-served community and locations are still able to access the required, and equitable, level of funds and services.

4.6 Recommendation 3

4.6.1 LB Lewisham's commissioning models should reflect "The Social Value Act (2013)". Real consideration should be given to the benefits to the community of tenders by local voluntary and SME organisations during the valuation process as a means of countering contract-based culture.

4.7 Response

4.7.1 Officers welcome the proposal to consider the benefits of tenders by local voluntary and SME organisations and will work with the Corporate Procurement Board to explore opportunities in this area. Voluntary Action Lewisham will also be encouraged to identify and help address the capacity building needs of the sector in order to ensure that organisations have the necessary skills to participate in this kind of activity.

4.7.2 December 2017 Update

4.7.3 Officers continue to work the Corporate Procurement Board regarding the use of the powers outlined in the Social Value Act and how these fit alongside the requirement to deliver best value for the authority. The Council has a new Social Value Officer who is mapping the different procurement approaches across the Council in order to highlight areas when the Act could drive added value for the authority.

4.8 Recommendation 4

4.8.1 The Council should consider the possibility of supporting the development of a "brokerage" system between voluntary sector organisations and employers to support increased numbers of and more effective volunteering opportunities.

4.9 Response

4.9.1 Over the past year the Council has worked closely with voluntary and community sector to establish Lewisham Local to explore new approaches to volunteering. This initiative has begun to establish bespoke giving opportunities and advertise these to local businesses, groups and individuals. Giving opportunities have attracted some staff volunteering and business donations of items. A notable example was a local HR consultancy volunteering two consultants' time for a morning to work on CV skills and employment support at a local job club. Lewisham Local is continuing to operate in this area in order to broker links between the borough's largest employers and volunteering opportunities with organisations.

4.9.2 December 2017 Update

4.9.3 Lewisham Local, involving partners Voluntary Action Lewisham and Business in the Community, are developing an employee volunteering offer in the borough. Initial conversations have started with businesses and employers in the borough. These are centred around what kind of offer would most benefit local good causes as well as businesses and employers. As part of Giving Tuesday, 28 November 2017, Lewisham Local in partnership with The Albany, hosted an event: B*e a Community Minded Business in Lewisham.* This involved presentations of businesses currently contributing to communities in Lewisham and opportunities for businesses to volunteer and give: http://lewishamlocal.com/givingtuesday-2017-what-happened/

4.9.4   In addition to this activity VAL have a specific target to engage four new private sector organisations with the VCS in the borough both to provide volunteering opportunities and commit direct resources to the sector.

4.10   Recommendation 5

4.10.1 That the potential for setting up a liaison support network specifically for Chief Executives in the Community and Voluntary Sector in Lewisham be investigated.

4.11   Response

4.11.1 A support network for Chief Executives is likely to be welcomed by the local voluntary and community sector and yield benefits such as opportunities for skill and resource sharing. The proposal will be taken forward by VAL as part of its redesign of services.

4.11.2 December 2017 Update

4.11.3 VAL has a target to establish a range of forums to meet specific sector needs. However, the new NCDPs have provided a new opportunity for skill and resource sharing and these are being reviewed before any standing networks are established. However, officers will survey the sector in early 2018 to establish whether there are any specific one-off events (such as a Chief Executives' forum) that are required.

4.12   Recommendation 6

4.12.1 That the Council understands the importance of volunteering and the need for organisations to get support to develop their networks. Larger charities have access to substantial sets of data which enables them to target activities to local demographics. The Council should investigate the possibility of facilitating intelligence and data support to smaller organisations in the sector, for example through purchasing data systems such as MOSAIC and sharing data. In its consideration the Council should consider cost and maintaining and upholding the highest standards of data protection.

4.13   Response

4.13.1 Ad hoc support is provided on request to organisations around access to data, where resources allow. Data gathered by the Policy, Service Design and Analysis team has also been made available on a wider level in the past. However the value of providing this support in a more systematic way is noted and will be explored with Council colleagues and Voluntary Action Lewisham.

4.13.2 December 2017 Update

4.13.3 This work is on hold pending full training/understanding on/of the new General Data Protection Regulations.

4.14   Recommendation 7

4.14.1 The Committee welcomes the involvement of civic society and empowering people to be involved in their communities. The advocacy role voluntary groups deliver was welcomed but work carried out to meet social need was vital.

4.15   Response

4.15.1 The response of the Committee in welcoming the involvement of civic society and empowering people to be involved in their communities is noted and will be used to inform future recommendations around these issues.

4.15.2 December 2017 Update

4.15.3 This recommendation was key in the development of the new targets for VAL specially the specialist workshops which are designed to empower local people/activists to mobilise to address issues in their local community.

4.16   Recommendation 8

4.16.1 The Main Grants Programme should be sustained including providing the opportunity to fund core costs in some circumstances. The value of funding core costs should be recognised both when the Council funds organisations and when it is bidding for external funding itself.

4.17   Response

4.17.1 The support of the committee for provision of core funding in some circumstances is noted and will inform recommendations made to Mayor and Cabinet as part of the proposals for the next round of Main Grants due to begin in April 2019.

4.17.2 December 2017 Update

4.17.3 A report to Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 15 November 2017 confirmed the funding to the 60 Main Grant recipients for the 2018/19 financial year. As part of this report officers outlined a review of a small cohort of recipients who provide Youth Theatre services in order to gain further clarity on the nature of services provided, the number of service beneficiaries, the role of core funding and the extent to which Main Grant funding is used to bring in other resources. Ultimately this was intended to inform future grant making processes to ensure equitable and appropriate use of funds.

4.17.4 The review has been very useful in highlighting the need for greater comparisons to be drawn between organisations as part of any future grant making rounds and this will be built into future assessments. However, it is less clear-cut how to recognise organisations being able to make use of their infrastructure to deliver added value without moving into a situation where smaller applicants are always disadvantaged. Officers will use the learning from this exercise to improve the grant making process in future rounds to ensure that grant making is as equitable as possible.

4.18   Recommendation 9

4.18.1 The role of local assemblies should include community development and capacity building.

4.19   Response

4.19.1 Local assemblies are encouraged to take on a community development and capacity building function and there are many examples of where this has successfully been achieved. The success of this work is often dependant on the availability and willingness of local voluntary and community sector organisations to work alongside the assembly which has limited capacity. It is also important to note that priorities for individual assemblies are

set locally. Sharing the learning around these issues through networking events has been important and officers will ensure that these events continue to take place.

4.19.2 <u>December 2017 Update</u>

4.19.3 The Local Assembly Officers have worked closely with Community Connections on the development of the NCDPs which has been seen as having significant mutual benefit. In practice this means that information regarding community activities and needs has been shared been areas and across ward boundaries and a number of partnerships have been developed due to these interactions.

4.19.4 Officers have also learnt from the social media campaign developed for the Borough's bid to be the first London Borough of Culture and will share this with both Local Assemblies and NCDPs to improve their community reach.

4.20 <u>Recommendation 10</u>

4.20.1 Following the review, there was a concern to ensure infrastructure support organisations provide a greater voice for the voluntary sector.

4.21 <u>Response</u>

4.21.1 The concern of the committee is noted and officers will ensure that this is fed into the development of the new offer being developed as part of the redesign process that VAL is currently going through.

4.21.2 <u>December 2017 Update</u>

4.21.3 VAL has a number of specific actions in this area including:
- VAL presence at key consultation and coproduction events to help share intelligence and understanding
- Voluntary sector representation at strategic boards, meetings and events
- Local people (volunteers and representatives) recruited and trained to be the voice of their communities and to facilitate dialogue
- Briefing notes produced, based on local intelligence gathered (providing two-way information pathways between local communities and strategic decision makers)
- Intelligence and data on local communities gathered and shared with LBL and others to enable coproduction practice

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Any financial implications in respect of the above will be part of the existing budget resourcing.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

7. Crime and Disorder Implications

7.1 There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

8. Equalities Implications

8.1 There are no adverse equalities implications associated with this report.

9. Environmental Implications

9.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

Background papers

Report to Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on the Main Grants Programme 2018-19
http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s53532/Main%20Grants%20Programme%202018-19.pdf

Report of comments of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee on the Main Grants Programme 2017-19
http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s46647/03MandCResponseMainGrantsProgrammeSSCSC281116.pdf

Report to the Mayor and Cabinet Committee on the approach to Main Grants Programme savings
http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s44598/Main%20Grants%20Programme%202017-18.pdf

For further information on this report please contact James Lee, Head of Cultural and Community Development on 020 8314 9569.

Appendix 1 VAL/One Lewisham – full year targets for new ways of working

Scale and reach	Linked outputs to measure success
1,200 people signposted to volunteering	• Organisations supported to recruit volunteers and board members with specific skills • Local people signposted to online platforms and support agencies to enable them to volunteer • Trustees recruited and trained (with a focus on Chairs and Treasurers) to ensure effective governance of local organisations • Individuals supported to connect with others to address needs identified
1,000 people using new website and digital tools	• Website available with news, opportunities, policies, templates, funding opportunities and access to capacity building resources online
300 organisations connected to support	• Organisational diagnostic tests completed and signposting to support provided • Emerging groups supported to identify and access resources
100 organisations provided with tailored support (of which 15 are provided with bespoke longer-term in-depth support)	• Collaborations and partnerships between groups facilitated to solve local issues, with support provided to enable them to realise the funding they need • Narrative case studies on outcomes of intensive work with groups through in-depth support
50 community consultations/events engaged with	• One Lewisham presence at key consultation and coproduction events to help share intelligence and understanding • One Lewisham team engaging with neighbourhood based networking sessions • Voluntary sector representation at strategic boards, meetings and events
50 people with supported needs enabled to volunteer	• Individuals with specific needs supported into volunteering
24 specialist workshops reaching 200 people	• Engagement of new/diverse sector experts • Training sessions facilitated by sector experts • Workshops to upskill the sector and introduce them to funding possibilities
20 people recruited and trained to represent the sector	• Local people (volunteers and representatives) recruited and trained to be the voice of their communities and to facilitate dialogue • Voluntary sector representation at strategic boards, meetings and events
16 forums and networks facilitated	• Forum meetings facilitated (including Equalities Working Group) • Peer learning networks facilitated between civil society leaders to develop practice
12 in-depth policy briefings produced	• Reports, articles, toolkits and guidance notes produced based on horizon scanning and gathering of examples of excellence and innovative practice
5 snapshot surveys to capture data and intelligence	• Briefing notes produced, based on local intelligence gathered (providing two-way information pathways between local communities and strategic decision makers) • Intelligence and data on local communities gathered and shared with LBL and others to enable coproduction practice
4 new private sector organisations engaged with the sector	• Partnerships brokered with the private sector • Private sector input to the borough (time and/or money)