

CABINET	DATE 24 July 2024	ITEM NO 13
TITLE Community Resource Strategy	WARD (S) All	
CHIEF OFFICER Director of Communities, Environment and Central	CABINET MEMBER Equality, Culture and Community	
DECISION CLASSIFICATION Key	IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING? Yes	

1. **Decision required**

This report makes the following recommendations to the decision-maker:

- 1.1 Agree the proposed Community Resource Strategy and associated Needs Analysis at Appendix A.

2. **Links to Our Greenwich missions**

2.1 This report relates to the Council's agreed missions as follows:

- People's health supports them in living their best life
- People will not experience discrimination
- Those in financial need can access the right support, advice and opportunities to improve their situation
- Children and young people can reach their full potential
- Everyone in Greenwich is safer, and feels safer
- Neighbourhoods are vibrant, safe and attractive with community services that meet the needs of local residents
- The voluntary, community and socially motivated sectors in Greenwich are strengthened and able to provide more support to the most in need
- Our Council is better at listening to communities, and communities feel they are heard
- We develop networks with communities, key partners and businesses to meet need and address challenges together
- We design our services around the needs of our residents

- Our Council is an adaptive organisation, enabling it to navigate the increasing number of challenges it faces while remaining financially sustainable
- Our Council works in the most efficient and effective ways possible

2.2 The Voluntary and Community Sector forms a key part of civic society in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, and plays a vital role in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the Borough. The Community Resource Strategy helps to support and improve the Council's relationship with community organisations, helping to ensure that we work together more effectively and collaboratively.

3. **Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

3.1 The Community Resource Strategy seeks to provide an overarching strategy for the Council's use and relationship with community assets and community organisations, as well as mapping and identifying areas and types of need, ensuring that the future planning and delivery of services better aligns with the needs of residents in our local communities.

3.2 The Strategy comprises two components: the Strategy itself, and the Needs Analysis, which seeks to provide an improved understanding of the levels of need within Greenwich, helping to ensure that future grant funding and resource support better reflects the needs of communities, rather than officers' perceptions of those needs.

3.3 The Community Resource Strategy will supersede the previous Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy, with the new title seeking to better reflect both the resource element of the Strategy and that the new Strategy includes community organisations that may not consider themselves to be part of the Voluntary and Community Sector, such as faith groups and some other community organisations.

4. **Introduction and Background**

4.1 The Community Resource Strategy builds on the previous VCS Strategy, which ran to 2022, and learns from the outcomes of the Voluntary and Community Sector commissioning for 2023-27.

4.2 A particular challenge that the Council has had in respect of the Voluntary and Community Sector has been understanding need, with the allocation of VCS funding and other resources often being quite top down and based on

officers' perception of what communities need, rather than a more data-driven, participatory process to ensure that communities' needs are adequately reflected in what the Council fund.

- 4.3 This approach has led to funding tending to be allocated to organisations that have previously received funding, and who are able to navigate the grant funding process, while smaller organisations, which are disproportionately led by people from marginalised communities, have struggled to navigate the processes to access Council funding.
- 4.4 The approach taken to the allocation of physical resources, such as buildings, has historically lacked clarity as to the criteria for providing access, while challenges in assessing the impact of work undertaken by groups has limited officers' ability to create more objective approaches.
- 4.5 The Community Resource Strategy seeks to address these issues by providing a Needs Analysis, helping the Council understand the specific needs of communities in the Borough.
- 4.6 In respect of funding, the Strategy proposes significant changes to both how the VCS grant funding is commissioned and to the Council's relationship with community organisations, helping to ensure fairer and more equitable access to funding, while supporting an approach based on co-design and more participatory grantmaking.
- 4.7 The approach taken to community buildings has been developed with colleagues in Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills, and has been designed to both provide clarity and transparency in respect of the Council's approach to these facilities, as well as to support work such as the Strategic Asset Review.
- 4.8 Historically, the Council has been seen adopting a paternalistic approach to the sector, with high levels of centralisation and focus on activities funded directly by the Council, rather than delivered independently of Council funding, as well as adopting hierarchical approach, which has created a sense of competition, rather than collaboration, particularly in respect of funding. With this strategy, the Council is seeking to change this relationship to one of collaboration, working directly with community organisations and residents to ensure that we empower and strengthen communities.

5. **Available Options**

- 5.1 Agree the Community Resource Strategy – this option would adopt the Strategy. Officers would work to implement the strategy with community organisations.
- 5.2 Not agree the Community Resource Strategy – not adopt the strategy.

6. **Preferred Option**

- 6.1 Agree the Community Resource Strategy.

7. **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Community Resource Strategy seeks to fundamentally change the Council's relationship with community organisations, facilitating a collaborative, forward-looking and equitable partnership between the voluntary and community sector and the Council. Agreeing the strategy enables the Council to move forward with these changes, building a more positive partnership that benefits the most vulnerable residents in the Borough.

8. **Consultation Results**

- 8.1 Due to an oversight by officers, a formal decision to commence consultation was not sought prior to the commencement of work on the strategy. However, the Cabinet Member was briefed by officers and the consultants prior to the development of the Strategy. In addition extensive engagement has in any event taken place with residents, community organisations and others as part of the development of the strategy. This has included:

- 54 VCS/community organisations, of which 40% were led by people from marginalised communities, contributed by interviews, workshops, emails and other engagement.
- 75 Council staff and councillors.
- 19 external experts and other local authorities were interviewed.
- 100 residents were engaged via workshops and street engagement.

8.2 Engagement took place throughout the development of the strategy, ensuring that officers, groups and residents had the opportunity to participate at all stages of the strategy’s development.

9. Next Steps: Communication and Implementation of the Decision

9.1 If approved by the Decision Maker., the proposed Strategy will be circulated to community organisations together with lighter touch information setting out the key highlights of the Strategy. Sessions will also be held to ensure that relevant Council officers are engaged on the implementation of the Strategy and its content.

9.2 An action plan will be developed, turning the actions set out in the Strategy into a deliverable plan with timescales, allowing officers to be held to account for delivering the Strategy.

10. Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Legal including Human Rights Act</p>	<p>The Council has power to adopt a Community Resource Strategy under section 1 Localism Act 2011 which gives the Council a general power of competence which can be exercised anywhere and, in any way, provided that any action is in accordance with any applicable restrictions.</p> <p>Whilst there is no statutory duty requiring local authorities to engage with the voluntary sector and or with the community, legislation such as the Local Government Act 1999 and the Localism Act 2011 has introduced measures aimed at empowering and involving the communities served by local authorities. The Community Resource Strategy helps to support and improve the Council’s relationship with community organisations, helping to ensure that we work together more effectively and collaboratively.</p>	<p><i>Azuka Onuorah Interim Director of Legal Services 20th May 2024</i></p>

	<p>There is no statutory duty for the Council to consult on the proposed Strategy however this report identifies how the Council has taken account of the views of the voluntary sector and other stakeholders in formulating the Community Resources Strategy</p> <p>The adoption of the Community Resources Strategy is an executive function reserved to the Council's Cabinet under Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, to agree new policies and strategies which would result in a key decision being taken following consultation.</p>	
<p>Finance and other resources</p>	<p>This report makes the following recommendations to the decision-maker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the Community Resource Strategy and associated Needs Analysis. <p>There are no direct financial implications arising from the adoption of this Strategy. Any future decisions taken as a result would be subject to separate reporting.</p>	<p><i>Joanne Stark</i> <i>Head of Accounting & Business Change</i> 7.3.24</p>
<p>Equalities</p>	<p>Decision-makers are reminded of the requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper could directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and</p>	<p>David White, Head of Information, Safety and Community, 27 February 2024</p>

	<p>does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are immediately below. Further information is also available in the equality impact assessment attached at Appendix B.</p> <p>A key aim of the development of the Community Resource Strategy and Needs Analysis has been to better inform how the Council works together with communities and community organisations, particularly those from marginalised communities or backgrounds, which in many cases have experienced barriers accessing Council funding and support.</p> <p>This supports the Council’s Equality Objectives by improving how we deliver services to better meet the needs of residents with protected characteristics and remove silos, allowing us to more effectively support vulnerable residents.</p>	
Climate change	This report does not make any direct contribution to the Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan agreed by Cabinet on 18 November 2020.	David White, Head of Information, Safety and Community, 27 February 2024

11. **Report Appendices**

11.1 The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Community Resource Strategy and Needs Analysis
- Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment

12. **Background Papers**

None

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