

# Royal Borough of Greenwich Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2017-2022





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## Foreword

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is enhanced by having a diverse voluntary and community sector (VCS) including faith groups and social enterprises. It can reach residents and communities and develop relationships of trust with them, helping to support some of our most vulnerable.

The sector plays an important role in mobilising community action and tackling the causes and effects of poverty, inequality and social and economic exclusion. A strong and vibrant VCS is therefore at the heart of a fairer Greenwich.

The VCS Strategy was developed with substantial input from local voluntary and community sector organisations as well as key partners: the Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade and NHS Greenwich. It was developed in recognition that the VCS will be an essential element in delivering future strategic plans for the Borough and the need to create an environment that enables organisations to work together in a supportive way.

In the future, closer working with the VCS and other partners will be central to co-producing new models of service delivery, funding and commissioning. Better engagement and collaboration with the community, VCS and local businesses will help the Royal Borough of Greenwich continue to grow.

At a time when central government is cutting funding for public services and reforming welfare benefits, the need for strong and independent voluntary and community organisations is greater than ever.

Volunteering and being an active member of local communities increases well-being and fosters a strong sense of civic pride.

Volunteering makes a significant contribution to society, not least in terms of its contribution to the local economy. Creating an environment where the social capital of volunteers is supported, recognised and celebrated is equally important to the delivery of this strategy.

The often unrecognised contribution of the faith sector in supporting communities, volunteering and delivering important services was highlighted through the engagement and development work leading to this strategy.

The growth of social enterprises in the Borough is notable. Businesses trading to tackle social problems, improve communities, people's life chances, or the environment must be celebrated and embraced through this strategy.

This strategy aims to create an environment in the Borough which allows the VCS to work independently and together with partners in the public and private sector to meet local priorities. It outlines the conditions required to maximise our collective resources optimally in an increasingly constrained financial context, to achieve the best possible outcomes for all.

The VCS Strategy provides The Greenwich Partnership with the conditions for key partners to work better together for positive lasting impact on improving local communities and the economy. Only through collaborative working can we continue to tackle poverty and inequality, mitigate the effects of budget reductions from national government, and provide skills, further education and jobs in the local community.

This is a five-year strategy in recognition that some of the change required to deliver our vision will take time. The strategy is supported by a three year action plan that will be reviewed annually.

Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald  
**Cabinet Member for Culture, Creative Industries  
and Community Well-Being**

# Context for Our Strategy

## Definitions

The term Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) applies to organisations that are not-for-profit, social value driven and that reinvest any financial profits into social, environmental or cultural objectives.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has a diverse VCS and this strategy encompasses the full range of organisations that exist in the Borough. It is recognised that many organisations that help make the Borough a vibrant place to live and work, receive no direct financial support from the Council.

### By voluntary and community organisations, we are referring to:

- Community associations
- Community groups
- Co-operatives and social enterprises
- Faith organisations
- Grant making trusts
- Green Spaces Friends Groups
- Housing associations
- Non-constituted groups of residents working together to make a difference in their local communities
- Registered charities
- School/parent groups
- Social enterprises
- Sports, environmental, arts and heritage organisations
- Tenants and residents' groups



# The VCS in Greenwich

The VCS is characterised by its diversity in both organisational profiles and activity - one of its key strengths. Organisations and groups vary in size, work in diverse fields and specialisms and support a wide range of local beneficiaries.

The diversity of the sector, and its responsiveness to changing need and demographic profile through mobilising community action, underpins its importance.

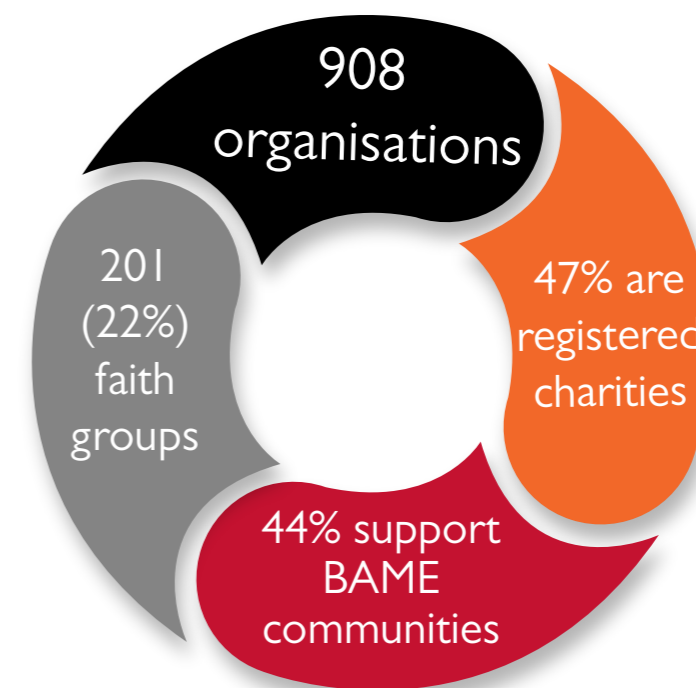
The most comprehensive profile of the local VCS is provided by Greenwich Action for Voluntary Service (GAVS). Their database provides current validated data on a diverse range of organisations that elect to be included on the system and share information.

GAVS recognise the sector is larger than these figures suggest but there is no requirement for many groups to register or share their information.

The financial profile of the local VCS demonstrates how small most groups are, with 70% having a turnover of less than £30,000.

- 31% have turnover of less than £5,000
- 40% have turnover between £5,000-£30,000

The importance of the VCS to the local economy is demonstrated by the statistics about its people. In the Royal Borough of Greenwich, **the VCS employs more than 6,106 people and there are more than 11,793 volunteers.**



The London for All sector profiling conducted by London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC) using Charity Commission Open Source Data in 2013, provides the best and most recent overview of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in The Royal Borough of Greenwich.

The data does however only include those organisations registered as a charity or having a corporate entity.

- 823 charitable organisations
- Income of £117.9m
- Proportion of social enterprises similar to other Boroughs
- 259 local charities
- 69 national charities
- 43 charities based outside the Borough that only work in the Borough
- 29 Community Interest Companies

Of those registered charities in the Borough with **an income over £500k, there are 2,562 Trustees and assets of £109.5m.**

As well as GAVS, the Borough also supports a local volunteer centre. Volunteer Centre Greenwich (VCG) helps people looking for voluntary roles to find the right opportunity in the Royal Borough of Greenwich and also provides training for volunteers. It is well recognised that volunteering has a positive impact on individuals, local services and the community as a whole.

## Volunteering in Greenwich

Volunteering rates are high across the Borough, with figures from GAVS showing over 11,700 volunteers giving up time regularly for causes they support. Volunteer Centre Greenwich collects data on those registering with the organisation.

Data<sup>1</sup> for 2016-17 showed:

- 498 organisations registered, promoting 1,111 opportunities.
- 68% of registrations were female and 32% were male.
- 28% of volunteers identified as employed or studying; 36% identified as unemployed; 6% as unable to work due to ill health and 1.5% as retired.
- 29% identified as White; 44% identified as Black; 6% identified as Asian and 15% identified as Mixed Race.
- 76% were aged between 17 and 49; 17% were aged 50-64; 2% aged 65 and over.
- 12% identified as having a disability.

More communication, collaboration and business engagement across the whole sector will go a long way to support the VCG to help more volunteers find more opportunities in more organisations in the Borough.

## Community Centres

The Royal Borough recognises that community centres are the lifeblood of our community, supporting some of the most vulnerable and deprived communities and tackling priorities for the Council in fostering community cohesion and well-being. The Royal Borough has supported community centres in Greenwich ever since they became independent of the Council. With 11 Council supported centres, incorporating a further 10 satellite halls, these community centres are run as charities or community associations by local people for local people.

These centres are part of the Federation of Greenwich Community Centres, established to promote the activities of, and to act as a voice for, community centres in Greenwich.

Across the Borough, community centres provide affordable venues for local residents to enjoy accessible, welcoming and diverse activities which help to build inclusive and strong communities. The range of opportunities available at the centres is constantly adapting in response to local needs and trends. The centres provide a place where individuals, families, groups or organisations can come together, and this social value brings direct and indirect benefits for the Borough as a whole.

Community centres offer a wide range of activities and services to and for the local communities they serve. The list below provides just a sample of the activities available.

- Affordable venues for community groups and individuals to meet
- Lunch clubs and dementia cafes
- Bingo and tea dances
- Healthy eating and cooking classes
- Sports, martial arts and fitness
- Art groups, craft groups, local history groups
- Amateur dramatic groups, singing and dance groups
- Youth clubs, breakfast and after-school clubs
- Stay and play, nurseries, child-minder groups
- Uniformed groups, incl. Scouts, Cubs and Beavers and St. John's Ambulance
- MP and Councillor surgeries, residents' associations, local party meetings
- Coach trips, family fun days, Christmas lunches, shows and pantomimes
- Venues for weddings, celebrations and children's parties.

The Royal Borough recognises the social value and social impact that the centres provide to local residents and the community as a whole and is committed to supporting them to become stronger and more sustainable in the future. The positive impact on health, well-being, reducing social isolation and building social resilience and cohesion are all means of assessing their social value.

## Faith Sector

For many residents, their faith centre is the heart of their community, creating social networks as well as providing emotional and practical support. The level of activity and impact of social action delivered by faith communities is often overlooked but is an important element in a healthy society.

Many projects and services delivered are not restricted to a single faith community but have a broader societal reach, based on need. The range of projects and community support delivered in Greenwich by faith groups is extensive, demonstrated by the sample below:

- Accommodation
- Befriending
- Debt advice and support
- Drop in centres
- Foodbank
- Healthcare
- Job clubs
- Mentoring
- Sports and fitness activities
- Street Pastors (community safety)
- Welfare and benefits advice
- Youth services.

<sup>1</sup> Volunteer Centre Greenwich 2016-17 statistical information

An audit of faith action in Greenwich by the Cinnamon Network in 2015<sup>2</sup> provides a valuable insight into the profile and value of activity. The audit had a response rate of 39% or 45 identified faith organisations. It demonstrates the challenge of engaging faith groups across all faiths but provides a valuable insight into local activity.

Across the 45 faith groups that participated in the audit, the 2014 statistics demonstrate the huge contribution made to the Borough's communities and economy.

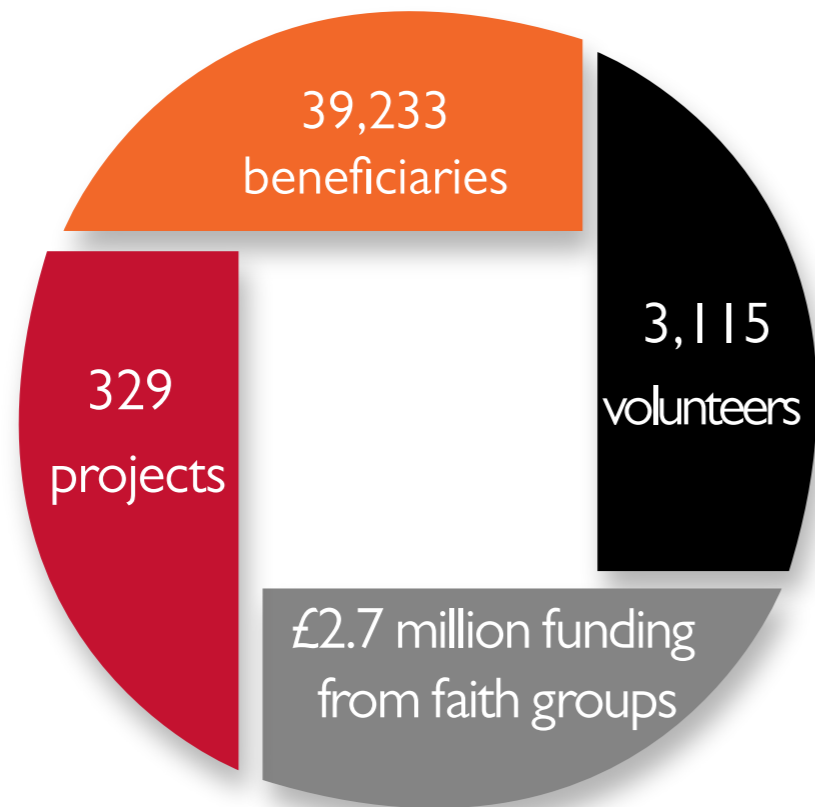
The statistics highlight at a time of cuts to public spending and changes to welfare and housing systems there are groups of committed and faith-driven individuals who are filling in the gaps. In 2014 this equated to 277,522 volunteer hours across the 45 faith groups.

<sup>2</sup> Cinnamon Faith Action Audit, May 2015 – Cinnamon Network

## Financial Climate

The financial climate for all public sector organisations has been and will continue to be harsh for the foreseeable future. Between 2010 and 2016 central government funding for the Royal Borough of Greenwich was cut by half. NHS Greenwich is experiencing unprecedented levels of demand and is working hard to meet local health needs within their budget.

Formulating this strategy was the starting point of creating a collaborative and mutually supportive environment to meet future challenges together. Creating understanding between partners of the requirements for mutual support aims to maximise the use of existing resources and lead to greater success in securing more investment for the Borough.



## VCS Funding Success

Seven London funders provided an overview of VCS applications, success rates and areas of strength and weakness. This information was used to help inform priorities and objectives.

The funders contributing information were:

- Awards for All
- BIG Lottery
- City Bridge Trust
- Heritage Lottery
- Lloyds Foundation
- London Councils
- Trust for London

Overall the feedback was very positive with a higher than average success rate with the BIG Lottery, Awards for All and the Heritage Lottery. Other funders reported that the Borough has a just below average success rate but nothing worthy of significant concern.

London Councils highlighted that VCS organisations in the Borough had not led on any European Social Fund bids for the last nine years but had participated in some led by organisations in other Boroughs.

Several funders commented on the inconsistent quality of applications, particularly in relation to demonstrating they met funding guidelines.

### Strategy Development

On 20 September 2016, The Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) launched the development process for a new multi-agency

VCS strategy that aims to shape a more collaborated approach to meeting the needs of local people, build community resilience and increase sustainability of valuable voluntary and community organisations and social action.

Following the launch event, a Steering Group comprising of representatives from the voluntary and community sector, RBG, Metropolitan Police, London Fire and Rescue Service and NHS Greenwich was convened to lead on developing the strategy.

An online survey for voluntary and community organisations ran for three months to identify issues and priorities.

This was supplemented by two further engagement events held in November and December 2016 to ensure that groups unable to attend the launch event could contribute to the conversation. By attendance at a range of VCS forums and a few specifically convened meetings, underrepresented sections of the VCS were engaged in the conversation.

In total over 150 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations have participated in developing this strategy. This is not the end of the engagement process as the strategy aims to create an environment for more dialogue, co-production and collaborative work in the future.

Seven of the main London funding trusts, foundations and agencies provided a profile of giving to the VCS in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. This information was invaluable in identifying success rates and organisational support requirements.

## Identified Issues

The engagement programme identified a series of challenges and issues for the strategy to address. Some were raised across every engagement method, others were only identified through one process. These were all discussed and explored by the Steering Group and not given weighting.

### Premises

Access to affordable, accessible and appropriate premises was an issue consistently raised. The challenges and constraints the VCS and public sector partners identified were:

**Lease arrangements**, particularly for those organisations in Council properties, were inconsistent and often a barrier to securing external funding to improve the sites so they were fit for purpose.

**Maintenance costs and arrangements** were often complex and led to the true community benefit potential of sites not being realised.

**Affordability** is a major issue for VCS organisations wanting to use premises owned in all sectors. To increase sustainability, rent and hire charges have been increased to levels many small groups can no longer afford. This is stifling social action at a time we need communities to do more.

**Suitability** of many buildings to meet the changing needs of VCS groups and social enterprises is a challenge. There is diverse range of space requirements for the modern sector including offices, hot desking, accelerator space, events space, service delivery space etc.

**Availability** of accommodation to meet demand is a consistent challenge. Many community buildings are at capacity.

### Funding

The engagement of VCS organisations identified that the majority of local groups had a positive outlook about their chances of securing funding from the Council and NHS in the next five years. With a harsher financial climate, all partners need to ensure they explore all funding avenues.

The local VCS is growing and 54% hope to expand services in the next 3 years. Several barriers to growth and enabling new start-ups were identified.<sup>3</sup>

**Bidding capacity** across all partner organisations is a current challenge. Staffing reductions across public and VCS organisations is leading to funding opportunities being missed or insufficient capacity or skill base to develop partnerships and submit quality bids.

**Lead agency capacity** within the VCS has been a barrier to the development of consortia and partnerships for large bids and tenders. In other Boroughs, the infrastructure organisations (such as GAVS) have had a size and financial scale to enable them to lead on consortia bids. Lack of organisational capacity in RBG is undermining the effective development of consortia.

**Collaborative work** between VCS organisations and public sector partners is good but rarely translates into joint bidding. Increased competition for reducing resources

is undermining collaboration, rather than maximising the use of available resources.

**New models of income generation** and fundraising are being considered by many VCS organisations. Growth in the number of social enterprises also demonstrates there are other routes to sustainability that compliment traditional approaches. Ensuring the sector's people have the right skills and knowledge to support strategic change and translating ideas into delivery is a challenge.

**Securing funding** is still a major issue for many organisations but particularly small, community led groups. They lack the capacity to bid and often lose confidence after bad experiences.

**Public sector funding** is greatly valued. The retention of grants as a method of supporting the VCS is treasured by the local sector. However, the tendering and procurement systems often preclude VCS organisations and limit the transition from grants to contract.

**Monitoring requirements** of grants were consistently identified as bureaucratic and labour intensive, taking resources away from delivering frontline services to residents in need.

**The disconnect between commissioned and grant aided activity** within The Royal Borough of Greenwich is a barrier to maximising the use of resources and linking funded activity to Council priorities.

**Sustainability of small groups** is vital to ensure effective community led solutions to local need. Many small groups are finding the funding, governance and partnership environment a real challenge to their viability.

**Demonstrating impact** and value of VCS activity is needed more than ever to secure public sector funding. Commissioners identified this as one area the local sector

needs to improve to ensure improved chances in securing funding in the future.

### Partnership Environment

Through engagement it is evident that there is a lot of partnership activity in the Borough and a long history of joint working. Several factors affecting collaboration and its potential benefit locally were identified.

**Organisational changes**, restructures and staff turnover are having an impact on the development of trusted relationships required for effective partnership.

**Small VCS groups** find it hard to engage at many levels, due to their capacity constraints and a lack of clear processes for engagement.

**Non-existent and/or inconsistent VCS engagement** by public sector organisations when developing local strategies, identifying need and developing commissioning frameworks is undermining co-production.

**Lack of awareness and recognition** of the VCS and its role in the community and the local economy prevents its true value to the Borough being maximised.

**Systems for partner identification** when wanting to develop joint projects, services or bids are complex. Systems that would broker more collative work were felt to be needed.

**Trust and transparency** were identified to be essential requirements for effective partnership. There was a belief that some VCS organisations had greater access and influence with elected members and officers than others.

<sup>3</sup> Ian Beever – Consultancy and Training. Greenwich VCS Strategy Development Survey Monkey responses received from over 90 VCS organisations in Greenwich (September – November 2016)

**Weak systems for engagement of faith organisations** in partnership and collaboration was an identified issue, along with a lack of recognition of faith based activity and how it fits into wider partnership activity, commissioning and funding frameworks. 71% of faith groups want a closer relationship with other organisations locally.

**VCS led consortia** need to be developed and not rely on public sector partners to initiate their development.

## Volunteering and Social Action

Creating an environment that encourages and supports volunteering and informs social action is essential for the health and well-being of communities. Many public sector agencies engage volunteers now, as well as VCS organisations of all sizes. The demands on volunteers' time, interest and skillset has never been greater.

As the public-sector contracts, communities will have to do more to support their families, friends and neighbours. Several current challenges were identified that all partners were experiencing.

**Too many volunteers** coming forward was an issue identified by several VCS and public sector organisations. There is not the capacity to support and manage the volume interested in volunteering in certain sectors; the lack of systems for referring those people onto other partners is missing.

**Recruiting volunteers** with the right skills and time was an issue for some organisations but not a consistent problem.

**Effective volunteer management** is required to ensure people are supported and not exploited. Having local capacity to support organisations from all sectors to adopt best practice was seen to be essential.

**Bureaucracy** can stifle social action and undermine community self-help and resilience. Activities that encourage, support and promote social action at neighbourhood level were felt to be missing in the Borough. Coordinated volunteering promotion is not happening currently, each organisation is doing their own thing. A more strategic and collaborative approach to promoting volunteering and social action was identified as an approach greatly needed.

Good governance is essential for an effective and sustainable VCS. Having effective and skilled trustees and committee members who are able to meet their obligations is essential for a robust VCS.

## Digital Inclusion

The increasing use of technology is wonderful and RBG aims to be at the forefront of its utilisation. Public sector organisations are using technology more for service and information delivery. Technology use in managing organisations and frontline delivery offers many opportunities and the VCS needs to maximise these too. Several factors reducing the true impact of technology are currently issues for partners.

**Digital exclusion** across parts of the Borough's communities is a barrier to service access.

**Increased demand** for support from VCS organisations in using technology to access services from the Council is a huge issue. Funding and capacity to meet this increased demand has not been put in place.

**Increasing technology** use to access services and information is a priority for the Council and NHS Greenwich but no clear strategy of how the VCS could support this agenda has been developed.

**Maximising the potential of technology** in managing VCS organisations offers many cost and quality benefits. Addressing the skill, awareness and resource constraints within the VCS is a barrier to technology maximisation.

## Equality and Inclusion

Developing a proactive culture of collaboration that maximises benefit for all is a central goal of this strategy. The VCS works with those who are often most excluded from society and experience inequality and disadvantage.

The Fairness Commission identified some of the issues in the Borough and has developed approaches to addressing inequality and exclusion.

**Improved VCS involvement** in initiatives tackling employability. The sector has a historic lack of capacity and engagement in supporting people into work and improving skill levels which has led to missed chances to bring money into the Borough.

**Better coordination** of anti-poverty work across all partner agencies is required to effectively link activity and maximise potential.

**Clarity of purpose** for strategic engagement of VCS organisations working with and supporting the voice of diverse communities needs to be refined.





## Our Strategy

The VCS is a key partner in delivering the Greenwich Partnership's vision and priorities. The VCS Strategy aims to change the way the Council and other partners work with the sector to support better outcomes for the Borough's communities.

By developing this strategy collaboratively it is a recognition that all organisations need to reflect and change the way they work together in response to a rapidly changing environment.

Ensuring we have a dynamic and responsive VCS, that is engaged and able to identify opportunities to improve the Royal Borough of Greenwich is crucial. Connection to public services to ensure residents access a range of

opportunities that improve life chances and tackle inequality is a fundamental principle to joint work.

Increasing inclusion of the Borough's diverse communities to build cohesion and ensure people have the skills, knowledge and resilience to cope with the challenges of today's society can only be achieved by working together.

### Vision

A sustainable voluntary and community sector working in an effective collaborative environment with the Council and partners to meet the changing needs of local people and the environment.

*Ensuring we have a dynamic and responsive VCS, that is engaged and able to identify opportunities to improve the Royal Borough of Greenwich is crucial.*



## Strategic Priorities 2017 - 2022

As a product of engagement with the VCS and key partners, the VCS Strategy Steering Group have been able to identify and agree a series of priority areas required to achieve our vision. It was important to focus on things that could be delivered and will improve collaborative working and the sector's ability to deliver real impact.

### Premises

The high cost of premises in London creates an expensive environment for the VCS to operate in. Smaller organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to meet costs and the sector is experiencing challenges in accessing affordable suitable accommodation to deliver services and activities. Rising costs and lack of availability is undermining the sustainability of many groups and valuable community activities.

At the same time, many publicly owned buildings need investment to ensure they are fit for purpose and are suitable for the changing profile of use.

Supporting the sector to cut costs, share resources and access suitable accommodation must be delivered together.

**Outcome: Maximising the Borough's physical assets to meet the needs of the VCS and our communities.**

#### Objective 1

To map and review properties in community use owned by partners and the VCS to develop a strategy for maximising their potential by March 2019.

#### Objective 2

To acquire and develop a new VCS Community Hub Building providing affordable space, shared services and a

central point for public service access by March 2019.

#### Objective 3

To work with community centres to develop and agree a model for sustainability by March 2020.

#### Objective 4

Public sector partners to identify and make available space for VCS and community use by March 2018.

### Funding

Access to appropriate funding with proportionate application and monitoring systems was identified as an important issue locally. It is important for the VCS to be able to deliver important services and activities not overwhelmed by bureaucracy and unnecessary systems.

Equally securing the best outcomes with public sector funding is crucial in today's financial climate - achieving best value must be a priority. Grants offer a valuable and flexible tool for funding VCS activity but the Council and other partners will need to improve systems and linkage to key outcomes.

Collaborative bidding will be an important element of future funding programmes to streamline application and monitoring processes. Collaborative bids will be desirable where appropriate.

The importance of grants to the VCS and the ability to lever additional resources into the Borough is agreed as a priority. Collaboration and mutual support to ensure that all funding opportunities are exploited is essential.

Procurement and commissioning processes that are accessible to the VCS need to be matched by an improvement in the sector's

ability to demonstrate the impact and value of its work.

As a golden thread running through this priority and several others, is the desire to develop a branded local giving scheme. With partners, the VCS and business; this will be a new venture, looking at a variety of methods to secure new funding for the VCS.

**Outcome: Creating a local funding environment that enables a collective response to changing need, demand and aspiration.**

#### *Objective 1*

To develop a new branded local giving scheme to harness the collaborative power of local people, business and community groups VCS by September 2018.

#### *Objective 2*

To provide dedicated multi-agency fundraising support; brokering partnerships, supporting quality applications and leveraging more funding into the Borough by June 2018.

#### *Objective 3*

To ensure GAVS has the capacity through merging with an appropriate organisation, to take lead partner responsibility in consortium bids for the VCS by September 2018.

#### *Objective 4*

To streamline and improve connectivity of Council grant programmes to other commissioned activity by March 2019, introducing proportionate monitoring at the same time.

#### *Objective 5*

To strengthen the value of community benefit linked to the Social Value Act in the procurement processes of the Council, CCG and other public bodies by April 2018.

#### *Objective 6*

To develop a programme of support and training to support VCS organisations develop new models of income generation and fundraising by March 2019.

### Collaborative Working

Delivering the VCS Strategy will require a concerted effort from all public-sector partners to consider VCS engagement, its value and potential in identifying need, designing services and commissioning activity. Equally the VCS should explore ways to work together to support effective solutions to challenges in the Borough.

There are many opportunities for collaboration but realising the full potential of joint working will be the test of success for this strategy. The engagement process identified that there is a real appetite and excitement for collaborative working, this needs to be harnessed and problems duly discussed and addressed.

Improving communication to build trust, increase transparency and facilitate more joint working was identified as a priority. Greenwich CCG has just started to engage with the VCS after several years of poor collaboration due to a range of internal issues. The Strategy Steering Group noted an improved culture and approach to collaboration with the VCS by Council officers but equally identified silos and poor communication as issues to be addressed.

Good examples of co-production methods were identified with Adults and Older People's Services in the Council. It was felt that this should be explored as a standard model across the whole Council.

Developing consistent engagement systems

for the VCS that ensure equitable access to elected members and officers in the Council was identified as a route to fairness. At present, it was felt those VCS representatives who shouted loudest or had routes to influence received favourable treatment.

**Outcome: A proactive culture of collaborative working to maximise benefit for all.**

#### *Objective 1*

To develop a consistent approach to co-production within the Council that recognises the VCS role in identifying need, supporting the development and delivery of creative solutions by June 2018.

#### *Objective 2*

To develop a new model for inter-faith group engagement improving participation and capacity in collaborative work by January 2018.

#### *Objective 3*

To develop a range of VCS led consortia in readiness for changes to funding systems and priorities in December 2018.

#### *Objective 4*

To launch an annual VCS Conference commencing in November 2017 as the focus for effective multi-agency dialogue with the sector.

#### *Objective 5*

To identify, agree and disseminate VCS named point of contact within the Council, CCG, Fire Service and Metropolitan Police by March 2018.

#### *Objective 6*

To use events and workshops linked to the Greenwich Partnership as a route to engage a broad range of partners in tackling local challenges and agreeing shared solutions.

#### *Objective 7*

To develop and agree engagement systems between the VCS and Greenwich CCG by December 2017.

### Technology and Digital Inclusion

Technology offers real benefits to the Borough, its communities and economy. The pace of change and increasing adoption of technology for service access offers benefits but equally poses challenges.

The Council and CCG are making huge advances in the use of technology but recognise the need to work with the VCS to support increased take-up of online provision. Lack of skills and limited access to computers or the internet, risks large numbers of residents being excluded from information or access to services.

VCS organisations need to increase usage of technology in organisational management, delivering services and demonstrating impact. This will potentially increase efficiency and cost effectiveness, extend reach and lead to improved completeness when bidding for funding.

Collaboration was identified as the most productive solution in supporting a strategic approach to the use of technology and reducing exclusion. The impact on residents of technology adoption in service delivery with the unintended consequence of increased demand for support by the VCS needs to be considered in strategic decision making.

**Outcome: Maximising the benefits of technology whilst ensuring digital inclusion.**

### **Objective 1**

To develop a multi-agency digital inclusion plan, starting with a joint event by December 2017.

### **Objective 2**

To provide voluntary and community organisations help to demonstrate impact using technology by September 2018.

### **Objective 3**

To develop a range of neighbourhood based digital inclusion projects by August 2018.

## **Volunteering**

Volunteering is at the heart of the VCS and a fundamental principle of governance. There are many organisations and groups in the Borough run entirely by volunteers. Maximising the social capital of volunteers by creating a supportive environment helps build good community relations, fosters self-help and resilience and can prevent residents requiring public service interventions.

Supporting volunteers is resource intensive. Ensuring good practice in volunteer management across the public and voluntary sectors is an identified requirement in the Borough.

Good governance to ensure the reputation, integrity, compliance and safeguarding of VCS organisations, school governors and other structures is fundamental to sustainability.

Engagement with a range of partners identified is a real mixture of experiences locally in the recruitment and support of volunteers. Some partners have too many volunteers, while others find it hard to recruit or find people with the right skills.

Increasing corporate volunteering could provide a real opportunity to improve the skill mix on boards and committees.

## **Outcome: Increasing volunteering, social action and community resilience**

### **Objective 1**

To convene a multi-agency communications group by November 2017 responsible for promoting volunteering and coordinating an annual programme of campaigns to increase community involvement.

### **Objective 2**

To use tools such as small grants and crowdfunding to stimulate community action within communities and neighbourhoods by June 2018.

### **Objective 3**

To introduce ways to recognise and celebrate volunteering and active citizenship by March 2019.

### **Objective 4**

To use the new local giving initiative to engage business in corporate volunteering by March 2019.

### **Objective 5**

To develop a solution that enables organisations with too many volunteers and those with a shortage to ensure volunteers are matched with opportunities.

## **Business Engagement**

Raising the profile of the voluntary sector within the business community and supporting organisations in their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies is currently missing in the Borough. Enabling collaboration between the private sector and VCS has been a challenge historically, especially as the profile of business locally is largely SMEs.

Working with businesses to build links for mutual benefit is an exciting opportunity but one that requires careful planning and management. There are a range of mutually

beneficial ways the VCS and business can work collaboratively by sharing time and skills, building partnerships, sharing expertise and fundraising together.

## **Outcome: Working with business to build links of mutual benefit.**

### **Objective 1**

To engage business in the development and delivery of the local giving initiative for the Borough by September 2018.

### **Objective 2**

To launch an online platform that enables businesses to identify opportunities to deliver their CSR objectives easily from a menu of options by March 2020.

### **Objective 3**

To establish new approaches for collaborative work between the VCS and business associations by March 2018.

## **Equality and Inclusion**

The VCS plays an important role in engaging and enabling the voice of marginalised and seldom heard communities. Supporting the strategic representation of the Borough's diverse communities is crucial to ensuring fairness, equality of opportunity and inclusion.

The Fairness Commission led by the Council is currently taking place and will identify a range of actions to address inequality and increase inclusion.

The engagement process for developing this strategy identified that the VCS has had a historic under capacity, compared to other Boroughs, in tackling unemployment and improving the employment opportunities of residents. Things have improved notably recently with the VCS participating more in initiatives to support employability. More needs to be done to maximise the potential

of the VCS role in tackling work related poverty and exclusion.

The audit into activities of faith groups in the Borough demonstrated how much work is being delivered to tackle poverty, disadvantage and unemployment but is not recognised or linked into other services.

## **Outcome: Improving outcomes and access to services for residents, ensuring opportunities are available for all.**

### **Objective 1**

To improve engagement and collaboration with VCS and faith organisations in programmes to address employability and skill development by March 2018.

### **Objective 2**

To support improved mapping and collaboration between agencies providing information and advice services in the Borough by September 2018.

### **Objective 3**

To ensure the engagement and role of the VCS in the delivery of recommendations of the Fairness Commission are considered and formulated by September 2017.

### **Objective 4**

To review and agree the role of funded VCS strategic partners in supporting voice and representation of diverse communities by March 2018.

## List of Organisations Participating in Strategy Development

### Organisations engaged through Strategy Development Launch Conference, 20/09/16

- Abbey Wood Community Group
- Advocacy for Older People in Greenwich
- Advocacy in Greenwich
- Age UK Bromley & Greenwich
- Avant Gardening
- Borough Commander - London Fire Brigade
- Charlton Athletic Community Trust
- Charlton Athletic Race Equality
- Greenwich Action for Voluntary Service
- Clockhouse Community Centre
- Commercial Director - Greenwich Theatre
- Crossroads Care South East London
- Development Officer - GAVS
- East Greenwich Charlton Deanery Synod member
- Eltham Arts
- Eltham Youth Project
- Emergency Exit Arts (EEA)
- Family Action
- First Step Trust (FST)
- Global Fusion Music & Arts
- Glyndon Community Group
- Greenwich & Bexley Credit Union (GBCU)
- Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre (GLYPT)
- Greenwich Association for Disabled People (GAD)
- Greenwich Carers Centre
- Greenwich Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Greenwich Coalition for Equality & Human Rights
- Greenwich Community Development Agency
- Greenwich Dance
- Greenwich Housing Rights

- Greenwich Inclusion Project
- Greenwich Islamic Centre
- Greenwich Mencap
- Greenwich Migrant Hub
- Greenwich Mind
- Greenwich Police
- HER Centre
- Meridian Money
- Metro Charity
- Middle Park Community Centre
- Mycenae House (Vanbrugh Community Association)
- New Charlton Community Association
- New Wine Church
- Plumstead Community Law Centre
- Shrewsbury House Community Association
- St Alfege's Church
- St Mary's Eltham Community Complex Association
- The Camden Society
- Volunteer Centre Greenwich (VCG)
- Volunteering Matters
- Welcare
- West Greenwich Community Centre
- Woolwich Common Community Centre (WCCC)

### Members of Strategy Development Steering Group (Nov 2016 – Feb 2017)

- Advocacy for Older People
- Charlton Athletic Race Equality (CARE)
- Federation of Greenwich Community Centres
- Greenwich Action for Voluntary Service
- Greenwich Advocacy for the Disabled
- Greenwich Housing Rights
- Greenwich Mind
- Greenwich Police
- Greenwich Inclusion Project (GRIP)
- Her Centre

- London Fire Brigade
- Metro Charity
- Somali Parents Network
- South Greenwich Forum
- Volunteer Centre Greenwich

### Organisations engaged through Strategy Development Workshop, 16/11/16

- Advocacy in Greenwich
- Big Red Bus Club
- Caribbean Social Forum
- Changing Lives Housing Trust
- Children Home Forever Ltd
- Forum at Greenwich
- Greenwich Coalition for Equality and Human Rights (GCEHR)
- Greenwich Islamic Centre (GIC)
- Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL)
- LPF Kiddies Club CIC
- Meridian Money Advice
- Metro Charity
- Mums-Aid
- Right Choice Independent Special School
- Samaritans
- Shrewsbury House
- Simbaha
- Thames Reach
- The Camden Society - Work Train
- Voice of Mauritius
- Volunteer Centre Greenwich
- Wide Horizons

### Organisations engaged through Strategy Development Workshop, 24/11/16

- Ajoda Community Alliance
- ARUBA
- Central Greenwich Children's Centres
- Community Empowerment and Support Initiatives (CESI)
- Clockhouse Community Centre
- Dementia Carers Group

- East African Diaspora Community Network (EDCN)
- Greenwich Chinese Women
- Greenwich Health Champions
- Greenwich Inclusion Project
- Greenwich Mencap
- Greenwich Pensioners Forum
- Iranian Youth and Development Association
- Listening Ears
- Pathway Sports
- Peabody
- South London Forum
- South London Special League

### Survey Monkey Survey – Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy Development Survey (September – November 2016)

Over 90 local organisations responded to the survey but respondents remain anonymous

### GAVS' Voluntary Sector Leaders' Forum, 24/11/16 - attended

### Organisations responding to Draft Strategy and Action Plan Consultation (May/June 2017)

- Addaction – Greenwich
- Federation of Greenwich Community Centres
- Glyndon Community Group
- Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG)
- Greenwich Pensioners Forum
- Greenwich Theatre
- Martin Jenkins – local resident
- National Autistic Society (NAS) – Greenwich Branch
- St. Mary's (Eltham) Community Complex Association



Communities & Environment  
3rd Floor, The Woolwich Centre,  
35 Wellington Street,  
London, SE18 6HQ  
[www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk)