

Subject:	Development of a Corporate Policy and Commissioning Prospectus for Community and Third Sector Development 2014 - 2017		
Date of Meeting:	11th July 2013		
Report of:	Assistant Chief Executive		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Emma McDermott	Tel: 29-1577
	Email:	Emma.mcdermott@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The council regards the Third Sector (charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations) as a key partner in the delivery of its vision for stronger, more resilient communities as set out in its Corporate Plan 2013-2015. As well as direct service provision the sector helps provide an independent voice for communities and under represented groups. It plays a key role in involving communities in designing and delivering public and community services that meet locally identified need.
- 1.2 The purpose of the policy will be to provide a corporate framework for future commissioning and relationships with the Third Sector, neighbourhoods and our diverse communities across the city. It will provide a coherent and clear view of the role and importance the council places on community development, community engagement and third sector development, how the three are interlinked and the council's corporate role in supporting these. It will specifically strive to better integrate our neighbourhood engagement and development agenda with our work on equalities and community cohesion.
- 1.3 A commissioning prospectus will be produced along side the policy which will bring together the current commissioning and funding arrangements for community development and neighbourhood governance, our engagement work with different communities of interest and identity and our strategic support to third sector organisations. The commissioning process will be through the local authority's 'Prospectus Model' and will seek where appropriate to include investments and funding from other public sector organisations. Initial, indicative dialogue with third sector providers about this approach and timing has been positive.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That committee:

- 2.1 Approves the development of a Corporate Policy and Commissioning Prospectus for Community and Third Sector Development 2014 – 2017.
- 2.2 Notes the approach and timescale for developing the policy and prospectus including final agreement of the approach at December Policy and Resources Committee.
- 2.3 Instructs officers to bring a report for decision on neighbourhood governance to Policy and Resources Committee in December 2013 to align this work to the development of the policy and commissioning prospectus.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Brighton & Hove has a strong and diverse third sector (charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations of all shapes and sizes) that contributes enormously to the work of the council and the outcomes of the city at every level. There are approximately 1600 third sector organisations in the city, plus numerous more informal neighbourhood groups, clubs and networks. The city as a result has one of the highest levels of community strength in the country. Examples of this work and its value include:

- The community and voluntary plays a key role in delivering numerous essential services across the city ranging from neighbourhood action groups, to the provision of adult social care services, the provision of advice and financial inclusion services to countless other projects and initiatives including food banks and community based art, sport and youth programmes.
- With the public sector, the third sector also plays a vital role in informing and leading service delivery innovation to better meet demand and build resilience of both individuals and communities. The sector's focus on prevention and involvement reduces down stream costs throughout public service provision and delivers additional returns on this investment – social, economic and environmental. Many organisations are already exploring more flexible working models and structures to facilitate service delivery. These activities therefore directly support our work around the delivery of excellent services, value for money and modernisation.
- Third sector activity improves both community strength and relationships within and between communities; social capital and cohesion are therefore strong within the city. This has numerous benefits for Brighton and Hove including low levels of community tension, high levels of tolerance and understanding and improved levels community trust, positive action and support, including volunteering.
- The third sector is also a significant employer in the city, employing about 8,000 people and contributing approximately £95 million to the economy. There are an estimated 19,000 volunteer positions in Brighton & Hove, giving 57,600 hours per week which translates as an annual salary bill worth approximately £24 million.
- As an independent sector the third sector holds a critical responsibility for facilitating and communicating the needs and concerns of specific groups of

people and communities, especially those under represented or facing severe disadvantage or marginalisation.

- 3.2 With the reductions in public spending the role of the third sector in delivery, driving service innovation, supporting voluntary community effort, ensuring the voices of the vulnerable are heard and accessing external funding sources has never been more important. Resources to support the third sector have however seen reductions both nationally and locally and the current public spending climate, recession and welfare reforms all mean that individuals and communities, particularly those facing the most disadvantage are under additional pressures. This is translating into increased service user demand, both in terms of numbers and complexity of issues, on community and voluntary groups/organisations.
- 3.3 The development of a more structured corporate policy framework setting out the approach of the council in supporting third sector activity is therefore essential reflecting:
- The significance of the third sector's role in the work of the council and wider success of the city
 - The changes in the resources available to support the sector
 - The increasing and changing demands being placed upon the sector from residents
- 3.4 Currently, the only corporate policy on community development, engagement or third sector support is the council's community development strategy. The council lacks an overarching policy that draws together and better co-ordinates the multitude of strands across the council that are seeking to engage and build capacity in our communities – providing a high level framework.
- 3.5 The proposal is to develop a policy that sets out the council's corporate approach and commitment to community engagement including representation, community development, infrastructure support to the third sector and its associated investment approaches. The policy will include a summary of evidence of need, the council's strategic objectives in supporting the third sector, community engagement and community development, measures of success and investment approaches.
- 3.6 As part of this, the policy will set the framework for the commissioning prospectus that will be developed simultaneously. The prospectus will set the commissioning outcomes for our investment in community development, community engagement, including representation, and infrastructure support over a three year period subject to annual budget decisions. It will also be used to set the framework for the work of the communities and equality team and the future review of the three year strategic grant programme.
- 3.7 The development of the policy provides a key opportunity to link the corporate investment in community and voluntary organisations that engage with equalities groups with the council's equalities impact assessment approach. Where possible the policy will seek to maximise the impact of funding from a range of sources and start to reduce duplication. It also provides an opportunity to begin to co-ordinate better with, and where appropriate reduce the range of

engagement outcomes held across the council. This will be an evolving piece of work and in the first instance focus on improving co-ordination of outcomes and investment with public health, children and young people's services, adult social care and the clinical commissioning group.

3.8 Lead by a core group of infrastructure organisations the third sector has undertaken an assessment of its support needs and will imminently launch, in September/October a new principal infrastructure organisation for the city. This organisation will directly provide improved support services and will be the gateway to other infrastructure organisations in the city. It will play a key co-ordination role providing groups and organisations with a clear, easy to access and navigate pathway into support across the city and possibly wider, as well as helping developing services to meet gaps.

3.9 The new policy proposed in this report will seek to clarify and compliment these infrastructure changes. It will clarify the offer from the council both in terms of direct infrastructure support from teams such as the communities and equality team as well as the council's commitment to and investment, subject to budget, in third sector provision of high quality infrastructure support. This support is important as it enables groups and organisations to bid and deliver high quality public services, deliver independent services and facilitate voice and representation.

3.10 Critically a key consequence of the policy and prospectus will be encouraging greater collaboration between third sector organisations for all the outcomes (community engagement and development and infrastructure support) maximising their impact and thus the impact of city council investment.

3.11 Important to the development of the policy and implementation of the commission will be a decision on the future of neighbourhood governance. The two neighbourhood governance pilots started in September 2012 and are due to report in September 2013. To meet the civic timetable this means that the evaluation process would have to start in July at the very latest and would unhelpfully fall over the summer break which is a difficult time to gather community feedback. It also significantly reduces the length of time the pilots have to trial new ways of working. Therefore it is proposed that the pilots run until September, with evaluation to follow and a report in December.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 The policy and commissioning prospectus will be developed in collaboration with communities via community representatives, the third sector, council colleagues and officers from partner public sector organisations through a range of means.

4.2 Overview of intended timeframe and process

Activity	Date
Policy & Resources Committee	11 th July 2013
Third and Public Sector steering group	Meeting regular intervals throughout the process

Range of stakeholder events: Third sector – providers and non-providers, public sector partners, elected members, community representatives	July – August 2013
First draft of policy and prospectus	Early September 2013
Range of stakeholder events	September-October 2013
Policy & Resources Committee approval of policy and prospectus and decision on neighbourhood councils	5 th December 2013
Prospectus released	December 2013
First stage bids	Early February 2014
Second stage bids	End of March 2014
Funding decision	Mid April 2014
Detailed negotiations (specification, work plan, monitoring and evaluation)	May – June 2014
Commissions start	1 st July 2014

A separate but linked process will be used to evaluate and produce a report on neighbourhood governance pilots for consideration by committee in December. This will take place during September and October and feed into the final policy and prospectus.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Costs associated with the development of the policy and the prospectus will be met from within the existing 2013/14 communities and equality team budget. The budget required for the prospectus will be, as a minimum £0.560m, being the amalgamation of the current commissioning strands held within the communities and equality team and will be subject to budget decision making in February 2014.

Finance Officer Consulted: Michael Bentley

Date: 13/06/2013

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The prospectus model of commissioning is now a well established mechanism to embed the social value generated by the community and voluntary sector into commissioning processes. 'Funding Agreements' are awarded following a bidding process that is designed to ensure that smaller organisations are not discouraged from taking part and which includes in the evaluation process the dimension of social capital. The council's procurement team will be involved in designing the detailed timetable, grant award processes and relevant

documentation. These will need to be taken into account in developing the final proposals for Policy and Resources Committee in December 2013.

Lawyer Consulted:

Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 11/06/13

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 An equality impact assessment will be planned into the process for producing the policy and the commissioning prospectus.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The strategic objectives of the policy and the outcomes of the prospectus will contribute to the One Planet Living Principles of Culture and Community, and Equity and Local Economy as defined in the Brighton & Hove Sustainability Action Plan. Moreover, it is a widely held view in the public sector locally that good public services and investment in sustainable communities is enhanced by communities that have an active voice in shaping service delivery. The third sector has a key role to play in developing our communities.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 During the process a discussion with the Partnership Community Safety Team and Sussex Police will explore how the objectives of the policy and outcomes of the commission can contribute to helping achieve those of the Safe in the City Strategy.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 As noted earlier in the report the development of a single corporate policy on community engagement, development and third sector support provides a good starting point for better co-ordination of outcomes and investment across the council and a more transparent message for communities and voluntary organisations.

A key risk for the project will be the need to build in flexibility for new investment opportunities to be incorporated in the commissioning process over the lifetime of the prospectus.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 During the process a discussion with colleagues in Public Health will explore how the objectives of the policy and outcomes of the commission can contribute to helping achieve public health outcomes.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The project has potentially significant corporate improvement implications as it starts to streamline and improve co-ordinate of investment across the council.

As the policy and commission seeks to facilitate greater joint working between community engagement and development in neighbourhoods and work with communities of interest and identity there are city wide implications and

opportunities. It will also have implications of providers of infrastructure support that work citywide.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Do nothing and continue to commission activity through individual commissions and process with and outside the communities and equality team. This would prevent any synergy being achieved, not only within those individual commissions but also across the council.
- 6.2 Reallocate the commissioning for community development, engagement and infrastructure held in the communities and equality team to service areas already pursuing similar but serviced based outcomes. This would prevent the synergy and joining up of outcomes and investment across the council.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Committee is recommended to approve the development of the policy and prospectus at an early stage to ensure corporate support for the project prior to engagement with communities and the third sector to avoid reputational damage, unnecessary work and to feed in councillors' views early in the process.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. BHCC Community Development Strategy

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

