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| Committee: Overview and Scrutiny | Date: 2 nd October 2012 | Classification: Unrestricted | Report No. | Agenda Item No. |
| Report of: Aman Dalvi, Corporate Director Development and Renewal | | Title: Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy: Consultation Document | | |
| Originating Officers: Nasim Ahmed and Ali Ahmed Third Sector Team, Development and Renewal | | Wards: All | | |

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report is to inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the current work to refresh the Tower Hamlets Third Sector Strategy, which ran from 2009-2011. The new document takes into account the change in language at a national level – and adopts the preferred local term – the Voluntary and Community Sector. It is also proposed that this be adopted as a Partnership Strategy. The draft strategy is currently out for consultation.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and comment on the draft strategy and the consultation questions:
- Do you agree with the aim and strategic objectives of the strategy?
 - To what extent do you think the steps identified will meet the challenges faced by the voluntary and community sector?
 - What other steps do you think can be taken to deliver these strategic objectives?

3. **COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 3.1 This report asks Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the draft refresh of the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy for the period 2012-2015. The draft is currently being consulted on with organisations which comprise the sector and the Tower Hamlets Partnership.
- 3.2 Future funding of the Voluntary and Community sector as part of this strategy will have to be considered as part of the Council's Medium term Financial Plan (MTFP) against a background of expected further reductions to the Council's funding and the need for savings from 2014-15 onwards as part of the next financial settlement with government.

- 3.3 There are no financial implications arising from this report. However In the event that the Council agrees further action in response to this report then officers will be obliged to seek the appropriate financial approval before further financial commitments are made.

4. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)

- 4.1 The Tower Hamlets Community Plan sets out the vision and priorities for the borough which have been set by the Council and its partners. From the Council's perspective, the Community Plan includes its sustainable community strategy for the purposes of section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Community Plan makes clear that individuals and organisations from the third sector are delivery partners in relation to a number of key objectives. This is particularly the case in respect of achieving A Prosperous Community, in respect of which the third sector strategy is recognised as part of the delivery framework that informs partnership working.
- 4.2 Having regard to the Community Plan, it seems that further developing the VCS strategy may be supportable as being necessary to deliver a variety of Council functions. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits the Council to do things (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) calculated to facilitate, or conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions. The Council also has power under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to specified restrictions and limitations imposed by other statutes. It may be considered that development of a strategy to support the VCS is something an individual may do and thus also something that the Council may do.
- 4.3 When working to develop the VCS strategy the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. Some form of equality analysis will be required and officers will have to decide how extensive this should be.

5. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The voluntary and community sector strategy play an integral role in reducing inequality, building community cohesion and promoting community leadership, the three principles of One Tower Hamlets. A new voluntary and community sector strategy should be clear about the ways in which it will support those principles.

6. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

6.1 There are no specific SAGE implications arising from the recommendations in the cover report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific risk management implications arising from the recommendations in the cover report.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific Crime and Disorder Reduction implications arising from the recommendations in the cover report.

9. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

9.1 There are no specific efficiency implications arising from the recommendations in the cover report.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector
Strategy: Consultation Document

Brief description of "background papers"

Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.

None

n/a