

Appendix F: Action Plan

In order to ensure this action plan is genuinely deliverable rather than merely aspirational, the following actions have all been agreed with the agencies named. Where there is a commitment to actions, these will be fully resourced, either through existing resources, or, where there is an additional cost indicated below, by specific resources being allocated or refocused. Successfully delivering this strategy demands a change in the way the council and VCS operate and to drive and deliver this new way of working will have resource implications however it is envisaged that this new approach will be more efficient and make savings in the long term, therefore resources can be allocated on an “invest to save” basis. Unless stated otherwise, it is expected that actions where the council takes the lead role will be delivered within existing council resources, though existing resources may be redirected in order to achieve this. Therefore, delivering the action plan will not involve the council allocating more resources than those already committed. Where voluntary sector partners take the lead, some actions are included in the plan, which require additional resources to be provided. Whilst at this stage it is not possible to establish the exact level of additional funding needed, the commitment is there to provide the resources necessary to enable these essential actions to be delivered, and the detailed implementation and awarding of any contracts will agree exactly what this will look like.

The core resources that this strategy requires in order to deliver against its key priorities are:-

- A Central Council VCS Team (A strategic team to support the development of the VCS and delivery of this strategy. This goes beyond the role of the existing Third Sector Team in dealing with grants.)
- Contracts to provide effective infrastructure support across the whole of the sector, acting as a point of contact and support. These could be through organisations such as THCVS or Volunteer Centre TH (in addition to any existing contract/grants)
- Contracts to get more out of business investment in the borough e.g. with brokerage organisations such as East London Business Alliance (ELBA) or Education Business Partnership (EBP)

The Third Sector Advisory Board (TSAB), (currently being reviewed) will be the overarching body responsible for the delivery of this strategy. It may develop subgroups to focus on delivering particular aspects of the strategy. Upon the strategy being finalised, the action plan will be developed into a working document for the lead, supporting and partner agencies below. This will include developing more detailed timetables and milestones, naming lead individuals, and refining of evaluation techniques, so that we can effectively measure what is being achieved for each action over time. This will include using hard data, customer feedback and survey results to evidence the progress made. It will be important that delivery of the action plan starts quickly, however the action plan will be a live document, reviewed and revised during the lifetime of the strategy to ensure it remains relevant and current.

Section A: Actions to clarify roles and responsibilities and improve co-ordination

Overarching actions are proposed in order to bring clearer roles and responsibilities and better co-ordination into place:

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	Resources	Outcomes	Completion
1. Agreeing roles and responsibilities and improving co-ordination	(a) Council, THCVS and VCS to agree a Compact setting out each other's roles and responsibilities and how they will be embedded into activity	Lead Third Sector Team Support Corporate Communications	THCVS VCS	Staff time Contract with THCVS VCS time	The Council, VCS and key partners have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and their work is co-ordinated effectively	Year 1
	(b) Create a task and finish group with representatives from the council, local VCS organisations and business representatives to better co-ordinate collaborative working	Lead Third Sector Team Support Corporate Strategy & Equality	THVCS ELBA	Staff time VCS time		Year 1
	(c) Realign and restructure relevant Council internal resources including staff to better support delivery of this strategy	Lead Corporate Director for Resources		Staff time		Year 1

Section B: Proposed actions to promote co-production and sustainability

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
1. Review strategies, policies, service specifications and action plans	(a) Review, develop and update key strategies, policies, service specifications, and action plans to reflect greater co-production with the VCS and implement best practice in this area.	Lead Third Sector Team alongside services Support Corporate Strategy	THCVS VCTH ELBA	Staff time VCS time	The Council has a well-defined strategic co-production approach	Year 1

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
		and Equality				
2. Develop Place-Based Community Leadership	(a) Ensure robust communication channels, which are already in place, can be developed further so that the Council and VCS can effectively work together. This includes a review of the role and purpose of the Third Sector Advisory Board.	Lead Third Sector Team Support Corporate Communications	THCVS	Staff time VCS time	The Council and VCS interact and engage effectively	Year 2
	(b) Have mature and transparent discussions about financial challenges and how we might jointly address them. Including high level meetings between political leaders and senior VCS reps at early stages of the budget and financial planning cycle and consideration of savings and cost reductions	Lead Third Sector Team Support Corporate Communications, Mayor's Office	THCVS	Staff time VCS time		Year 1
	(c) Ensure the right community development skills in the council and bring council staff together with partners, VCS organisations and service users to put collaborative community leadership into practice.	Lead Third Sector Team Support Localisation Team	THCVS	Staff time VCS time	There is strong community leadership in local areas of the borough	Year 2
	(d) Work closely with recognised local leaders to create effective community leadership, where partners	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS ELBA	Staff time VCS time	The Council and VCS interact and engage effectively	Year 1

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
	co-operate to achieve shared priorities. Increase opportunities for community leaders to get involved in council decision making.	Support Localisation Team and Corporate Strategy & Equality				
3. Move to collaborative commissioning	(a) Develop a transition plan for the implementation of a collaborative way of designing and delivering services (including an impact assessment of this approach on current grant arrangements). This should include details of the council, VCS, THCVS and other resources committed to the plan.	Lead Third Sector Team Corporate Strategy & Equality and Procurement Service directorates	THCVS	Staff time Additional THCVS resources may be needed	The borough's services work using a collaborative commissioning model	Year 2
	(b) Undertake a review of all council funding and commissioning of VCS organisations. To enable the development of a co-production framework which can be agreed with the VCS.	Lead Third Sector Team Support Procurement Service directorates	THCVS	Staff time VCS time		Year 2
	(c) Review council commissioning and grant funding arrangements, processes and procedures in order to co-produce effectively.	Lead Third Sector Team Support Procurement Service directorates	THCVS	Staff time VCS time		Year 2
	(d) Encourage VCS to bid for council contracts by developing a forward plan	Lead Third Sector	THCVS	Staff time		Year2

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
	for commissioning to help the sector plan ahead. Encourage the VCS to form partnerships where this increases capacity.	Team Support Procurement Service directorates		VCS time		
	(e) Pilot a co-production model of commissioning in each council department during 2016/17. Apply lessons from this approach to apply to a broader set of service areas in 17/18 and beyond.	Lead Service directorates Support Procurement Corporate Strategy and Equality				Year 3
4. Develop an evidence base together	(a) Identify the data and information needs of the sector and the council. Council and VCS to adopt an open-source approach to their data. The council to gather examples from other public bodies on the use and impact of publishing open-source data	Lead Third Sector Team Support Corporate Communications FOI Team and services	THCVS VCS	Staff time, software VCS time	The VCS access and use council data effectively to support their work	Year 1
5. Build VCS and community capacity	(a) Develop a comprehensive training programme to equip VCS organisations to participate effectively in the commissioning process. For example, to include workshops about specific tender opportunities. This is to be based on discussions of need with the VCS, with a particular focus on the needs of small organisations	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS	Staff time, Value of contract Additional THCVs resources may be needed	VCS organisations and their service users are equipped to participate in co-production	Year 2
	(b) Equip service users to participate		VCS	Staff time,		Year 2

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
	in co-production, particularly those from hard-to-reach communities.	Lead Third Sector Team Support Corporate Communications Services		VCS time LBTH funding for VCS		

Section C: Proposed actions to maximise the value from resources

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
1. Move to an outcome based and commissioned approach	(a) Review existing council spend with the VCS and identify the most appropriate funding approach towards grants/commissioning, to meet Community Plan outcomes. This will include an assessment of the social impact of existing council spending and the degree to which the management of that activity needs to change	Lead Third Sector Team Support Finance	VCS	Staff time VCS time	Council funding of the sector is more focused on outcome based commissioning	Year 2
	(b) Develop an outcomes based framework for commissioning based on Community Plan and Strategic Plan priorities	Lead Corporate Strategy & Equality Support Relevant services		Staff time	Council's commissioning and funding processes are appropriate to VCS activity	Year 3
	(c) The Council, VCS and THCVS collaborate to develop a Service	Lead Third Sector Team,	THCVS	Staff time	VCS activity is more aligned to	Year 3

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
	Delivery Agreement which ensures services explicitly deliver against Community Plan objectives and support closer working and mutual accountability.			VCS time LBTH contract with THCVS	Community Plan priorities	
	(d) Clear processes are identified for transitioning specific grant funding streams to commissioning and this is communicated to the VCS and made transparent more widely.	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS	Staff Time LBTH contract with THCVS	The VCS are able to plan for and participate in the transition to commissioning.	Year 1
2. Take a new approach to grant giving	(a) Develop a transparent, cross-party decision making process for grant allocations, based on well-defined criteria that support clear outcomes. Consider involving the VCS in this process	Lead Third Sector Team Support Procurement and Corporate Communications	VCS	Staff time VCS time	There is a robust grants process	Year 1
	(b) Develop a grant monitoring process which is robust at measuring and evaluating impact. This process will enable both “soft” and “hard” impacts to be measured. This requirement for impact will be proportionate to the level of funding and the risks involved	Lead Third Sector Team		Staff time		Year 1
	(c) Streamline remaining grants into a single process. Develop management arrangements and methods of measuring impact	Lead Third Sector Team Support		Staff time		Year 1

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
		Procurement Corporate Communications				
	(d) Develop processes to ensure forward planning for procurement and grants are considered together. The council will also ensure that the process enables new community needs to be taken into account in a timely manner	Lead Third Sector Team Support Procurement		Staff time		Year 1
3. Take a strategic approach to Council resourcing across the VCS	(a) Use existing needs assessments (Community Plan, borough needs analysis and Joint Strategic Needs Assessments) to understand community need and apply this to a review of the way the council currently funds the sector, to determine future funding priorities and models. Ensure that all council spend is linked back to need and aligned to council priorities	Lead Third Sector Team Support Corporate Strategy & Equality		Staff time	Buildings, other assets and resources are used effectively and demonstrate value for money	Year 1

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
	(b) Develop and consult on the criteria and methodology for measuring the community benefit provided by tenants of council buildings	Lead Third Sector Team Support Asset Management Team	THCVS VCS	Staff time VCS time		Year 1
	(c) Identify “soft resources” within the Council which could usefully be shared with the sector. These could include; sharing on-line safeguarding training, supporting DBS checks and sharing expertise in specialisms like insurance. Then develop an offer, publicise this and facilitate access through THCVS.	Lead Third Sector Team, Support Resources	THCVS	Staff time LBTH contract with THCVS Additional THCVS resources will be needed	The council effectively shares information and soft resources with the VCS that achieves value for money and improves consistency	Year 1
4. Promote transparency and accountability of the VCS	(a) Ensure full transparency of the VCS by promoting openness and accountability in areas such as; the declaration of interests, financial standing, working collaboratively etc	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS VCS	Staff time VCS time LBTH contract with THCVS	The VCS is open and accountable	Year 1
	(b) Ensure all council contracts and grants awarded to VCS organisations are regularly updated and are available to be scrutinised on the council’s website	Lead Third Sector Team Support Procurement	THCVS	Staff time VCS time		Year 1

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
5. Build the capacity of the VCS	(a) Co-design an approach to supporting the VCS and how this should be commissioned.	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS	Staff time LBTH contract with THCVS, although additional resources will be needed	There is support in place to support the VCS	Year 2
	(b) Jointly review and monitor THCVS support to ensure that it is effective in addressing the needs of the sector. In particular ensuring the needs of smaller organisations are clearly supported	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS	Staff time VCS time LBTH contract with THCVS		Year 1
	(c) Identify potential external funding sources to expand and diversify the resource base of local VCS organisations. Support VCS to devise external funding strategies. This information to be shared openly with the VCS	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS	Staff time VCS time LBTH contract with THCVS		Year 2
6. Encourage resource sharing within the sector	(a) Develop a comprehensive agreement that defines how disparate VCS groups will work together on common goals and reduce competition	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS VCS	Staff time VCS time LBTH contract with THCVS	The VCS effectively shares resources between organisations to ensure value for money and reduced costs	Year 2
	(b) Promote the benefits of partnerships and support the development of effective local consortia to bid for commissioned	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS	Staff time VCS time		Year 1

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	/Resources	Outcomes	Completion
	services			LBTH contract with THCVS, but would need additional funding for a Development Officer		
	(c) Encourage community facilities to be made available for VCS organisations and better use of existing VCS resources	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS	Staff time VCS time LBTH contract with THCVS		Year 1
	(d) Use council resources and commissioning to promote and reward joint working between VCS organisations. To ensure that VCS organisations recognise their duty of outreach to the whole community	Lead Third Sector Team Support Procurement Services	THCVS	Staff time VCS time LBTH contract with THCVS		Year 2
	(e) Develop a “buddying” programme for larger VCS organisations to support smaller ones	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS	Staff time VCS time LBTH contract with THCVS, but will need additional funding		Year 2

Section D: Proposed Actions to create a step change in volunteering

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	Resources	Outcomes	Completion
1. Audit and capacity building	(a) Undertake an audit of community need and capacity – led by VCS/volunteers to develop understanding of the potential and options for volunteering	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS EBP VCTH	Staff time VCS time THCVS can lead with additional resources	The options and potential for volunteering in the borough are clearly defined	Year 1
2. Council leading by example	(a) Develop a new policy that encourages council employees to volunteer and develop opportunities for volunteers to work at the council	Lead HR Support Corporate Communications Services	VCTH	Staff time VCS time VCTH can lead with additional resources	Council employees are encouraged to volunteer and there are opportunities for the community to volunteer with the council	Year 1
3. Developing and promoting new approaches	(a) Consider a 'Tower Hamlets Alumni' volunteering scheme that harnesses the skills and expertise of people who have a connection to the borough.	Lead HR		Staff time	New ways of volunteering harness additional volunteering potential	Year 2
	(b) Consider a borough-wide 'Time Banking' type model to enable residents to access	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS VCTH	Staff time VCS time		Year 2

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	Resources	Outcomes	Completion
	financial and non-financial support.			Not included in the LBTH contract with THCVS. Will need more resources		
	(c) Strengthen partnership working with the VCS. Establish clear streams of volunteering to match volunteering activity with the needs of the sector, the community and volunteers.	Lead Third Sector Team	THCVS VCTH	Staff time VCS time Will need additional THCVS resources		Year 2
	(d) Consider setting up annual awards and a VCS week to champion the work of volunteers and the VCS. These activities will be co-ordinated, where appropriate, with existing local and national initiatives	Lead Third Sector Team, Support Corporate Communications	EBP THCVS VCTH	Staff time VCS time Contract with THCVS VCTH can lead with additional funding	Residents are encouraged to participate in co-production and be active in the community	Year 2
4. Engaging with the business sector	(a) Work with brokerage organisations to broker relationships with the corporate sector and align corporate social responsibility activity	Lead Third Sector Team, Support Economic Development	EBP VCTH	Staff time VCS time VCTH can lead with additional resources	There is support for volunteering in the borough	Year 2

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	Resources	Outcomes	Completion
	with needs in the borough.	Service working with ELBA				
5. Co-ordination and brokerage	(a) Increase links with the Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets to support volunteering.	Lead Third Sector Team Support Volunteer Centre Economic Development Service working with ELBA	THCVS VCTH	Staff time VCS time VCTH can lead with additional resources		Year 1
6. Rewards and incentives	(a) Work with local people to develop incentives which could be used to encourage residents to get involved in voluntary activity.	Lead Third Sector Team Support Volunteer Centre Economic Development Service working with ELBA	THCVS VCTH	Staff time VCS time VCTH can lead and organise extra volunteers fayres/events for additional resources	Residents are encouraged to participate in co-production and be active in the community	Year 1

Section 6: Actions to bring together businesses and the sector

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	Resources	Outcomes	Completion
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Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	Resources	Outcomes	Completion
1. Improve the effectiveness of businesses' contribution to the borough	(a) Develop a toolkit to promote CSR in the borough and support mutually beneficial relationships between business leaders and VCS. This toolkit to include the development of a comprehensive needs assessment	Lead Economic Development(toolkit), Third Sector Team(needs assessment) Support , Corporate Communications, Corporate Strategy & Equality	THCVS ELBA EBP	Staff time VCS time LBTH contract with THCVS Printing and publicity	Business contributions to the borough are better matched to need	Year 2
	(b) Engage with businesses and the VCS, to: map existing activity against community need; establish where business support and investment complements VCS activity; establish the range and value of CSR activity in the borough. This mapping exercise will help avoid duplication and ensure a wide a range of groups benefit from	Lead Third Sector Team(community need) Economic Development(business spend and activity) , Support , Corporate Strategy & Equality LBTH contract with THCVS	EBP ELBA Businesses THCVS EECF	Staff time VCS time		Year 2

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	Resources	Outcomes	Completion
	available resources in future. This will include encouraging highly skilled ongoing volunteering, such as accountancy support, rather than just supplying one-off team building activities					
2. Encourage businesses to give back to the local area	(a) Develop a Business-VCS Pledge that encourages business to work more closely with the VCS and targets support and investment in places where it will have the greatest impact.	Lead Economic Development, Support Third Sector Team, Localisation Team	ELBA THCVS EBP EECF	Staff time VCS time Contract with THCVS Publicity and promotion	Businesses contribute more and more effectively to the local area	Year 2
	(b) Use community benefit clauses in all relevant council contracts in order to lever additional support for VCS organisations in the borough and the local community and economy.	Lead Procurement (development) Economic Development (implementation) Support, Services		Staff time		Year 2
	(c) Review policy on business rates	Lead Revenues Team	THCVS	Staff time		Year 2

Key Area	Action	Lead Officer	Partner Agency	Resources	Outcomes	Completion
	charged on council properties to establish if incentives can be introduced to support and develop the capacity of VCS organisations.	Support Third Sector Team, Economic Development		VCS time Contract with THCVS		
3. Understand the business environment better	(a) Establish pathways of exchange between the VCS and business sector to offer long term and meaningful support to the VCS.	Lead Third Sector Team (VCS partners) Economic Development (business partners)	THCVS EECF	Staff time VCS time Contract with THCVS	The borough is able to fully benefit from the contributions businesses want to make	Year 2
	(b) Create an online portal or business/VCS directory to facilitate a strategic partnership between businesses and the VCS	Lead Third Sector Team Support Economic Development	EBP ELBA THCVS EECF	Staff time VCS time Contract with THCVS Printing and promotion		Year 2