

Report of the Assistant Director Partnerships to the meeting of the Corporate Improvement Committee to be held on 12 November 2008

Subject:

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Third Sector Review

Summary statement:

This report details the work, findings and draft recommendations from a review of the Third Sector for the Committee to Consider and comment upon.

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2006-2007
Improving Rural Services
Empowering Communities



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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BRADFORD
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report details the work, findings and draft recommendations from a review of the Third sector for the Committee to consider and comment upon.
- 1.2 A more detailed report with draft recommendations and implications is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2007, as part of its response to the 2006 Local Government white paper, the Council undertook a fundamental review of its Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) arrangements. In conducting that review, it was clearly recognised that the Third Sector made a significant contribution to partnership arrangements. However, it was beyond the scope and resources to address the specifics of this important contribution during that review to assess effectiveness and identify any areas for improvement. The LSP Review therefore recommended, as part of its final report in October 2007, that it be the subject of a further review.
- 2.2 Initial focus for the resources available was to implement the key finding of the LSP review and, therefore, the third sector review only commenced in April 2008. This was opportune as the Government, keen to support the sector, brought out another white paper called 'Unlocking our Communities' that further demonstrated the desire to gain active citizen involvement in their local communities. The white paper featured four areas:
 - Improving deprived areas through regeneration and promoting work and enterprise.
 - Encouraging active citizenship and reviving civic society as well as local democracy
 - Improving local public services by involving local users and consumers
 - Strengthening local accountability
- 2.3 Clearly, a thriving Third Sector can support all of these areas and it is critical for any Local Authority in its 'Community Leadership' role to ensure that it does what ever it can to strengthen the sector's involvement and contribution.
- 2.4 In the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, the Government also changed a number of funding regimes, such as Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. This followed hot on the heels of the end of certain European funding regimes and clearly reduced the available support for the Third Sector. It became more evident that given the complex demands upon the sector, it was necessary to ensure the resources available were being used in the most productive way for the District as a whole and that, where possible, the review should look to find ways in which effort could be prioritised, efficiencies made and any areas of duplication removed.
- 2.5 The Council's Corporate Self Assessment in January 2007 also identified the need to make the following improvements in relation to working with the Community and Voluntary Sector:
 - Improving communication with the sector through better mapping of information channels.

- Maximising funding arrangements through better publicity, support structures, better monitoring and review procedures.
- Smarter use of non financial resources by the sector – property, ICT, volunteering, skills, etc.
- Putting in place a more structured approach to assessing organisational capacity and performance.
- Putting in place an effective disputes procedure
- Developing smart mechanisms to assess the value of the local compact

3. Report Issues

- 3.1 The Government has a clear objective to improve the relationship between the public sector and the wider ‘third’/non-profit sector, which includes voluntary and community organisations. It believes this relationship should improve the responsiveness of public services and redress obvious inefficiencies in the way public sector funding reaches the sector. As around 70% of interaction between the public sector and the Third Sector takes place at local level (Charity Commission, 2007 ‘Stand and Deliver: the Future for Charities providing Public Services), attention has increasingly turned to the role of local government in delivering the Third Sector agenda. Hence the timeliness of this review.
- 3.2 Evidence of a thriving Third Sector and one that contributes to supporting better outcomes for localities, supported by a clear commissioning framework, will form part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment of council performance.
- 3.3 The review highlights actions required to facilitate a thriving third sector in Bradford within the parameters of the existing and potential resources available.

4. Options

- 4.1 Members are asked to comment upon the review report.

5. Contribution to corporate priorities

- 5.1 A strong Third Sector will have a major contribution to make to the delivery of all Council and District priorities.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Members are asked to consider the findings and comment upon the draft recommendations from the Third Sector Review contained in the report at Appendix 1.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Third Sector Review Report, Appendix 1.

8. Background documents

- Review of the Community Development Service – September 2005
- Minutes of Council, Executive and Corporate Improvement Committee, September 2004-November 2005

- Corporate Improvement Committee Report and Minutes, 11 March, 2008
- Corporate Assessment Report, June 2008.

9. Not for publication documents

Not applicable.