

Cabinet – 24 June 2009

Voluntary and community sector strategy

Portfolio:	Councillor Perry, Communities and Partnerships)
Service:	Walsall Partnership/Neighbourhood Services
Wards:	All
Key Decision:	No
Forward Plan:	No

1. Summary of Report

The attached document is a strategy for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) within Walsall. Increasingly, there is a need to further develop our work with the VCS to deliver better outcomes for Walsall people. This strategy identifies Walsall Voluntary Action (WVA) as the key link between the VCS and public agencies. It sets out what is expected of both the VCS and public sector commissioners. The overall aim of the strategy is to prepare and enable the sector for new arrangements where services will be commissioned and contracted. It also provides improved mechanisms for the VCS to be represented appropriately in decision-making fora.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet approve the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy (VCS), attached at appendix 1.

3. Background Information

3.1 Places Survey – Conditions for a Thriving Third Sector

3.2 Walsall COMPACT

3.3 Local Government White Paper (October 2006)

3.4 HM Treasury Third Sector Review (December 2006)

4. Resource Considerations

4.1 Financial:

4.1.1 The strategy recognises that the council needs to regularise its funding of the VCS as a separate work-stream.

4.1.2 The strategy should enhance the opportunities for Walsall VCS organisations to be commissioned to deliver services.

4.2 **Legal:**

4.2.1 There are no direct legal considerations. However, there is the likelihood of increased contracts between the council and the VCS as a result of the strategy.

4.3 **Staffing:**

4.3.1 The impact on staffing is one of changing requirements in how staff conduct business. There is no specific expected impact on staff numbers; however, there could be impact where services currently delivered by the Council are contracted to the VCS in the future.

5. **Citizen Impact**

The impact on citizens should be positive as the VCS has a reputation for delivering wide benefits sensitive to local and individual needs.

6. **Community Safety**

None.

7. **Environmental Impact**

None.

8. **Performance and Risk Management Issues**

8.1 **Risk:**

8.1.1 The Place Survey reveals that the council could improve the perception that VCS organisations have on how we support them to deliver services.

8.2 **Performance Management:**

8.2.1 The strategy puts an onus on WVA to deliver improvements on the representation, levels of contracts and communications between the VCS and public sector commissioners.

9. **Equality Implications**

The strategy should impact positively as VCS organisations are reputedly adept at reaching marginalised and otherwise disadvantaged groups.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 The strategy has been developed in partnership with a number of public sector organisations and WVA. A wide range of VCS chief executives and governing bodies have been consulted in the process of developing the strategy.
- 10.2 A meeting of the working group took place on 9 June 2009 and it was decided that a launch event would be held in mid-July 2009.

Background Papers: See section 3.0 above.

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Jamie Morris
Executive Director

15 June 2009



Councillor Garry Perry
Portfolio Holder

15 June 2009



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A Strategy for the Voluntary and Community Sector in Walsall

Creating the Environment for a Thriving Third Sector

1.0 Purpose

To scope out, in broad terms, the key strategic actions that public sector partners/commissioners believe need to be taken to enable a thriving third sector in Walsall. This is intended to open a dialogue with the voluntary and community sector (VCS), through Walsall Voluntary Action (WVA) and to enable a robust strategy and action plans to be agreed and put in place.

2.0 Context

2.1 There has been wide encouragement from several sources to engage the VCS in shaping and delivering services in local areas. The unique contribution of the VCS in being value-driven, efficient and able to reach vulnerable people in communities is recognised.

2.2 As NHS Walsall implements its approach to world-class commissioning, its key function will be to commission health services from a growing range of providers, including VCS providers. Many of the services and delivery organisations required will need to be developed or established.

2.3 As Walsall Council meets the challenges of its changing role in community leadership and of delivering more and better services whilst also actioning efficiencies, increased outsourcing is anticipated. Key developments in social care (People First) and in Children's Services (Child Protection) demand new approaches to the delivery of services. This should enable more flexible and locally responsive services to be delivered within tighter cost constraints. The VCS will become an increasingly important provider of commissioned services.

2.4 Walsall Partnership co-ordinates the work of all the key partners within Walsall. New emphasis is now being given to identifying how public resources are best used to deliver agreed outcomes. The VCS has an important role to play in this.

2.5 The new National Indicator Set (NIS), which measures the performance of the VCS, specifically includes an indicator entitled Environment for a Thriving Third Sector. This strategy is complementary to the more detailed Target Action Plan for this particular NIS indicator. This indicator is also included in

Walsall's Local Area Agreement, demonstrating the commitment of Walsall Partnership (including key organisations such as Walsall Council, West Midlands Police, NHS Walsall, West Midlands Fire Service, Walsall College) to the VCS. The importance of the VCS is understood and valued by public sector agencies.

3.0 The WVA will be the Over-arching Infrastructure Organisation for the Whole of the VCS in Walsall – Level 1 Commission

3.1 The WVA will be jointly commissioned by Walsall Council, NHS Walsall and other partners to provide support services and be accountable for development of the VCS as a whole in Walsall. These commissions would include:

- 3.1.1 Number of VCS organisations holding a quality standard
- 3.1.2 Number of Walsall people volunteering
- 3.1.3 Number of new VCS organisations
- 3.1.4 Number of commissions to VCS organisations
- 3.1.5 Increase in value of total commissions
- 3.1.6 Number of Walsall Partnership themes supported by VCS representation
- 3.1.7 Number of VCS organisations engaged in influencing commissioning
- 3.1.8 Number of VCS organisations supported to raise funding
- 3.1.9 Increase in VCS funds raised
- 3.1.10 Increase in VCS organisations reporting back the outcome of community engagement
- 3.1.11 Number of public sector staff trained in the working of the VCS

3.2 The WVA will provide a brokerage/support service for the range of commissioners across the Partnership and this would involve:

- 3.2.1 Building membership capacity to secure accreditation and registration to demonstrate the availability of provision
- 3.2.2 Market development through access to training for management, workforce planning and service provision
- 3.2.3 Communicating commissioning intentions with the membership of WVA
- 3.2.4 Percentage increase in number of organisations in voluntary sector in Walsall with quality accreditation
- 3.2.5 Percentage year-on-year increase in number of organisations in working sector registered and profiled with WVA
- 3.2.6 Implementation of a reactive and proactive communication plan
- 3.2.7 Committing resources and staff time to training statutory sector employees in voluntary sector working

4.0 What Public Sector Organisations will be Accountable for

4.1 Public sector organisations should make clear, as early as possible, their commissioning intentions. This should include:

- 4.1.1 New outcomes to be commissioned

- 4.1.2 New outputs to be commissioned
 - 4.1.3 Quality standards to be met by all providers and by when
 - 4.1.4 Existing VCS providers used/outputs/outcomes/cost
 - 4.1.5 Gaps where there are no current providers
 - 4.1.6 Intentions for local, ethnographic approaches to commissions
 - 4.1.7 Overall workforce plan and particularly the implications of outsourcing
 - 4.1.8 Being Compact-compliant, but recognising the competing demand of operating on a commercial basis
 - 4.1.9 Considering if and when core funding is appropriate and ensuring that such arrangements are transparent
 - 4.1.10 Resourcing the WVA properly to undertake its key infrastructure organisation role
 - 4.1.11 Developing its own capacity to commission services
- 4.2 In practice, it may be practicable that a framework for the above develops over a year or so with quarterly meetings between the public sector and WVA and its representatives. This has the advantage that urgent commissioning needs can be underway sooner, rather than wait for the whole infrastructure to be developed.
- 4.3 The public sector intends to use the WVA as a broker for communicating the above to the VCS.
- 5.0 The WVA will be accountable for the development of the VCS and its key functions, which will be as follows:**
- 5.1 Representation: To coordinate the representation of the sector. This implies that VCS representation will be delivered by a number of VCS organisations operating through the WVA. WVA will be the overall umbrella body for the VCS.
- 5.2 Development: To develop the VCS to enable it to grow, taking advantage of commissioning and funding opportunities.
- 5.3 Support: To provide support to the VCS. This may take various forms including governance, legal, financial, ICT, systems support and advice to improve the performance of the VCS.
- 6.0 Outcomes (and who will be accountable)**
- 6.1 Public sector partners identify and report potential commissions monthly (Walsall Council, NHS Walsall)
- 6.2 Public sector partners jointly commission (Walsall Council, NHS Walsall)
- 6.3 VCS organisations see commissioning as being a transparent process (Walsall Council, NHS Walsall, WVA)
- 6.4 VCS organisations influence commissioning (WVA)

- 6.5 Public sector organisations support the growth and development of VCS to be commissioned through the WVA (Walsall Council, NHS Walsall, WVA)
- 6.6 All VCS organisations commissioned are working towards or meet agreed quality standards (WVA)
- 6.7 The number and type of VCS organisations commissioned increases year on year (WVA)
- 6.8 The total value of commissions to the VCS increases year on year (Walsall Council, NHS Walsall, WVA)
- 6.9 An increase year on year in VCS accessing external funding (Walsall Council, NHS Walsall, WVA)
- 6.10 Commissioning of the VCS is reviewed jointly by sectors annually (Walsall Council, NHS Walsall)
- 6.11 An increase in volunteering (WVA)
- 6.12 More opportunities for the VCS to deliver services (Walsall Council, NHS Walsall)
- 6.13 The total amount of reported external grants received by the VCS is increased

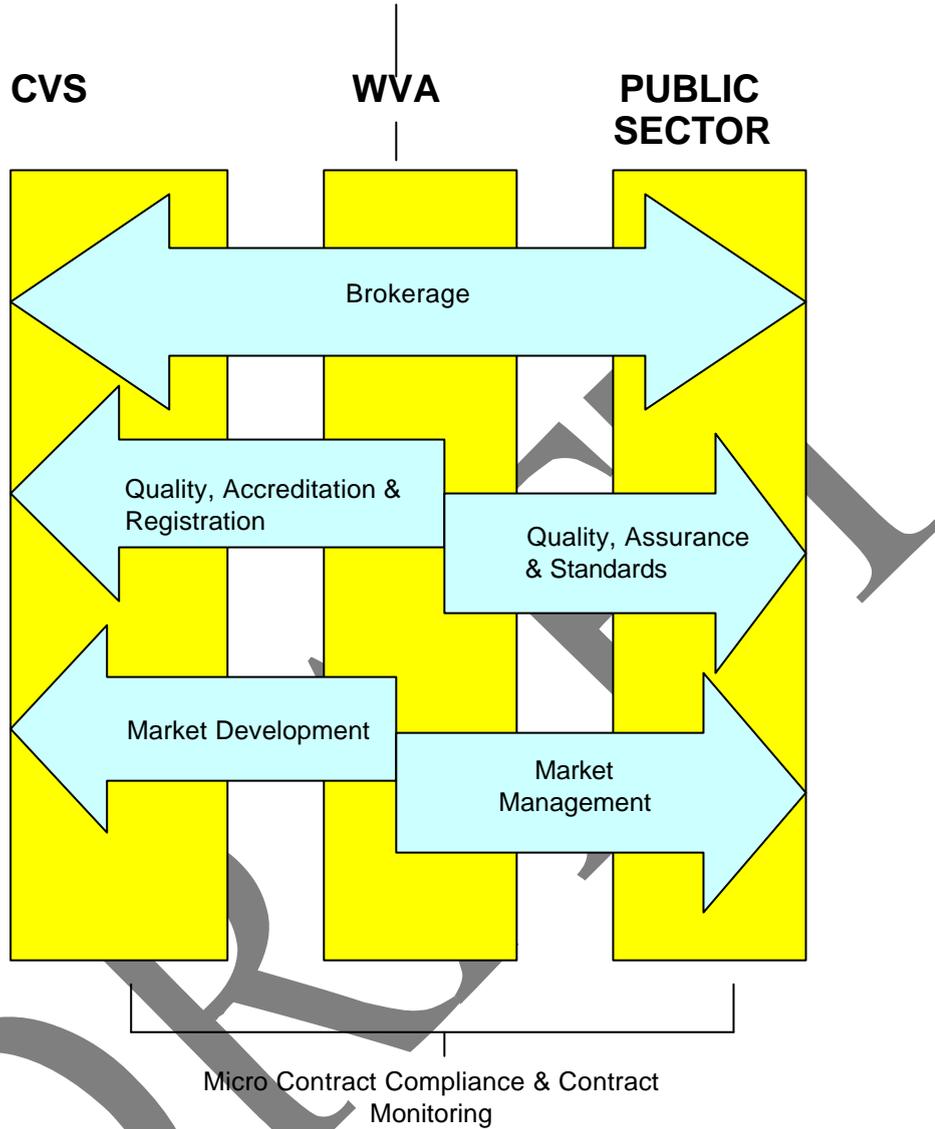
7.0 Governance

- 7.1 The Stronger Partnership within the overall Walsall Partnership structure will be the first point of governance for the delivery of this strategy. The Stronger Partnership will refer issues by exception to the Walsall Partnership Board.

8.0 A Model for Commissioning/Joint Commissioning

- 8.1 WVA to provide and be accountable for the development of the VCS as a whole in Walsall
- 8.2 WVA to provide a brokerage service for the range of commissioners across the Partnership:

Walsall Partnership People / Prosperity / Places
Strategic Contract Monitoring and Compliance



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