

Supporting Swale's Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2010 – 2015



Contents

	Page
Foreword	3
Outcomes from consultation on the draft Strategy	4
Executive Summary	7
1. Introduction	10
Why is the Sector important to Swale?	10
What is the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)?	10
The VCS in Swale	11
2. The Strategy	13
The Shared Vision	13
Achieving our Vision	13
3. Investing in a thriving and strong VCS – Our Approach	15
Priorities	15
4. Delivering the Strategy	16
5. The Shared Pledge	17
6. Action Plan	18

Foreword

I have pleasure in sharing with you Swale Borough Councils Strategy to support the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). Comments made through the consultation process on the draft – ‘Investing in Swales Third Sector’ – have been taken on board and incorporated. These changes are summarised on page 4.

Your continued endorsement and commitment is highly valued. By signing up to this document as our shared agreement to support Swale’s Voluntary and Community Sector we can together continue to be effective and engage partners, helping to develop stronger and inspired communities.

Councillor John Morris
Executive Portfolio Holder, Safer and Stronger Communities

As Director of the only local support and development organisation (Swale CVS & VC) in the borough of Swale, I fully endorse the ethos and commitment of Swale Borough Council (SBC) in the development and most importantly the implementation of a jointly owned VCS strategy.

The new coalition government has set both the VCS and the public sector tasks and challenges that will test our abilities of partnership and collaborative working therefore the development of this strategy could not be more timely.

We have and will continue to work towards a thriving, robust and effective VCS delivering better outcomes for and with the local people of Swale and whilst maintaining our independence we will work together to deliver and transform public services.

Chris White
Chief Executive
Swale Council for the Voluntary Services

Outcomes of the consultation on the draft Strategy

You Said	We Did
1. What do we mean by Third Sector?	This term was used by the outgoing government and has now been replaced by the Coalition with 'Big Society' with a Minister for Civil Society. We have decided to avoid jargon and use the term Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) from now on.
2. The strategy should not be called the Third Sector Strategy	Agreed hence the change in name to a Strategy to support the Voluntary and Community Sector.
3. Strategy needs to be jointly owned by SBC and the Sector	Agreed and feedback from consultation and workshops with VCS representatives has led to a shared Pledge and willingness to jointly own the strategy. However there is more work to do over the life of the strategy to develop an action plan that is jointly owned and more appropriate (see comment no.19 below)
4. The vision should be shared not 'our'	Agreed and has been amended.
5. Greater acknowledgement of the sector needs to be set out in the strategy	This has been reflected in the Pledge and as an action in the action plan.
6. This appears a 'top – down' strategy and needs to be more encompassing – less SBC leadership but more willing to respond and support actions and initiatives coming from the community	<p>Agreed. Whilst the actions are SBC 'heavy' as it stands over the life of the strategy this will even out (see comment no.19 below).</p> <p>As this is the first strategy for SBC it will be implication have an emphasis on what SBC will action. By having a document that is demonstrating that SBC is delivering initially, then it is hoped that this the VCS that confidence and trust in SBC that it is committed and as such then that the VCS can sign up to an action plan that is more evenly shared.</p>
7. SBC needs to develop a separate strategy for working with Parish Councils	<p>SBC relationship with Parish Councils could be explored as part of its commitment to the localism/ Big Society Agenda and SBCs/ KCCs work around 3 tier working.</p> <p>A separate strategy could be considered but this may be too onerous given limited resources and it would need to be tested further with other Parishes to gauge support. Perhaps a more flexible and responsive approach could be to support Parish Council requests through their meeting agendas to improve relationships and communications.</p>
8. The strategy needs to clarify the role of each	The VCS has developed a revised joint agreement which is now in the strategy. The role of each member is covered

member of the 'Third Sector family' before a joint agreement is published	through this revised pledge.
9. The Pledge should be a shared pledge not two lists	The Pledge has been amended to reflect this and a new one developed.
10. Where do sections 4, 5 and 6 of the action plan appear in the priorities? Are these SBC priorities? Are there 3 priorities or 6?	When the audit was undertaken and the top priorities of each sector were determined, 3 key priorities emerged and remain. Priorities 4 - 6 in the Action Plan have been included as they are key actions for SBC linked to the corporate plan. It has been recognised that at least to start with this will more a strategy that has actions with SBC emphasis (see comment no.6) and as such have been included.
11. SBC should not list the priority actions as this assumes they have identified areas of need	Priority actions have been included as areas of need from the VCS have been identified via the audit.
12. SBC should publish the resources it has and outcomes it wants so that the Sector can then bid for the resources they need to deliver	This is an idea and one to explore over the course of this first year of the strategy. Given the reduction in funding that is likely following the spending review October 2010, this will be something that will need to be considered for 2011/12. SBC will work with partners, the VCS and Parish Councils to explore this more fully in 2010.
13. The priority capacity building to be changed to 'shared development and learning' as both public and VCS can learn from each other	Agree that both public sector and VCS can learn from each other and there is an action in the action plan to reflect. SBC are also keen to support the VCS through training and development. However given central government focus in their Big Society agenda, SBC are keen to keep the title as Capacity Building as it believes that this then incorporates wider issues other than learning and development.
14. The achievements list is unrealistic and should be more specific and contain less jargon. 15. It should also be about mutual benefit not separate lists and the outcomes should be for communities not agencies	Agree and the list has been amended to reflect comments.
16. Young Peoples involvement in volunteering and community service need to be encouraged	Agree and now reflected in the strategy and action plan.

17. Tourism sector needs to be recognised	Strategy now makes reference.
18. Need to be clearer on our aims for commissioning	This will be picked up when SBC commissioning approach is developed in 2010.
19. The action plan appears almost entirely to contain actions that SBC will take and work needs to be done to identify skills and resources available from Parish Councils and VCS partners to devise an action plan appropriate to this Strategy	<p>It is true at the moment that the action plan is SBC focused as SBC has drawn it up and it is an SBC strategy but with a shared vision and joint approach starting now and developing over time.</p> <p>As this is the first strategy for SBC it will be implication have an emphasis on what SBC will action. By having a document that is demonstrating that SBC is delivering initially, then it is hoped that this the VCS that confidence and trust in SBC that it is committed and as such then that the VCS can sign up to an action plan that is more evenly shared.</p>
20. How will this be monitored?	This has been addressed in delivering the strategy section.

Executive Summary

Swale's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) has a vital role to play in making Swale a vibrant and prosperous place to live - improving people's quality of life and experience. However, for the sector to fulfil its potential, be relevant to the next generation of Swale residents and be an effective local partner, it needs to be supported and sustained - be given the opportunity to develop and flourish.

What do we mean by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)?

We include non-governmental organisations such as voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals.

The outgoing Government defined it as the 'Third Sector' and the new coalition calls it the 'Big Society'. This strategy will not attempt to badge the sector with these terms as feedback from consultation suggested that these terms mean nothing to our local community or those that work in the sector.

Big Society

The new coalition Government has announced its ambition to create a 'Big Society' – to shift the relationship between citizens and the state and put more power and opportunity in people's hands. As part of these plans the coalition sees charities, co-operatives, social enterprises and voluntary organisations - as the vanguard of this change, involving citizens, and helping them to take responsibility and control for their lives. It has committed to supporting such organisations and making it easier for them to play a central role in influencing and resolving local issues.

These organisations often include a relatively small paid workforce complemented by a huge contribution by volunteers at all levels. It is a sector that is best described as active, passionate and committed, and as such is a huge asset to a place and of significant value making an important contribution to the country's gross domestic product.

A changing landscape

There has also been a shift in terms of how local government must respond to the financial situation at a national level. With the introduction of many government plans to reduce the budget deficit, local government is entering into challenging and unprecedented times which call for radical reform. New and innovative ways of working will be introduced. There will be less funding available from and within the public sector at a local level. The opportunities on offer to us through place based budgeting need to be seized and maximised by the public and voluntary sectors alike. This strategy will take account of this through its approach to support and choices on investment in a realistic and sustainable way.

This also will change the way in which local government and the council works in the future, what it resources directly (an example will be reviewing its direct appointment of members and officers to outside bodies) and what services and functions are more

appropriate to enable and facilitate. This will determine which services are delivered and by whom.

The shared Vision

For the VCS in Swale to continue to be an effective and engaged partner helping to develop stronger and inspired communities - communities who are influential, demanding, independent, involved and active, with motivated and confident citizens, a more vibrant democracy and greater civic participation and where inequalities and tensions are removed and inclusion and cohesion promoted.

And so Swale Borough Council (SBC) has developed a VCS Strategy that is jointly owned by the council and the VCS - to build on and enhance the existing positive relationship we have together. A strategy that clarifies our approach and relationship to investing and supporting the VCS.

The strategy sets out:

- a framework for our effective, on-going engagement with the sector at all levels;
- clear priorities and outcomes;
- SBC's approach to support and enable the VCS;
- how SBC resources will be invested and allocated;
- how action will be coordinated whilst recognising the independence of the VCS;
- ways in which SBC can support the VCS to contribute to Swales Sustainable Community Strategy - our shared plan setting out our ambitions¹ for the borough; and
- how it will build on and develop the Compact² to embed transparent standards and principles of understanding between SBC and VSC.

The Strategy has been developed in partnership with Swale CVS by asking partners, Swale Community Empowerment Network (SCEN)³, voluntary & community organisations, councillors, parish councils and SBC staff their views on where SBC should invest its resources and action to help create an environment for the VCS to thrive; realising there has to be priorities given resources are finite.

We will focus on the following priorities of;

- Funding and resourcing;
- Volunteering (and civic involvement);

¹ SCS priorities are ambitions for learning, prosperity, inclusion & safety, health, environment, culture, homes and communities

² Kent Partners Compact 2009 developed by Kent Partnership. The **compact principles** are - openness, honesty, accountability, integrity, respect, trust, confidence, objectivity, understanding, transparency, common purpose, leadership, effective communications and listening.

³The SCEN is a network of voluntary and community groups and organisations based in Swale who are interested in making a difference in their community. It is a sub group of the Local Strategic Partnership

- Voice and Influence;
- Capacity building (focusing on shared development and learning);
- Governance; and
- Service Delivery & Commissioning.

What we will do and how we will do it is set out in the **Action Plan** in Section Six. We must ensure that the action plan is realistic and sustainable given the finite resource the council has at its disposal and the national financial challenges we are all facing. We recognise we can not nor should not deliver actions on our own. There are some actions that other organisations are better placed to do and so should be taking the responsibility for. There are others that the VCS is already doing but with support could be done more effectively. There is recognition from all sectors that we have a duty to cooperate and join up our approach and delivery to make best use of resources.

The Action Plan will evolve over time as will the role and relationship of the Council, other public sector bodies and the VCS, which in turn will determine the approach taken. It has also been developed so that it is flexible enough to respond to the new 'Big Society' agenda and forthcoming Localism Bill.

1. Introduction

Why is the Sector important to Swale Borough Council?

Swale's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) has a vital role to play in making Swale a vibrant and prosperous place to live - improving people's quality of life and experience. However, for the sector to fulfil its potential and be an effective local partner it needs to be supported and sustained - being given the opportunity to develop and flourish. Swale Borough Council (SBC) is serious about ensuring the success of the Sector, and is committed to playing its part in achieving this by investing in the development of a strong, thriving and empowered Community and Voluntary Sector that is best placed to represent communities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises.

We want to work together to match resources to deliver community aspirations and secure positive outcomes for the residents of Swale. We appreciate the ability of the VCS to engage with local people and shape places.

We recognise the role the VCS can play in designing and delivering public services to sustain communities and contribute to society – getting people more involved and in control, taking responsibility. We want to increase the potential, capability and opportunities for this to happen and evolve and mature over time.

What do we mean by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)?

We include non-governmental organisations such as voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals.

The outgoing Government defined it as the 'Third Sector' and the new coalition calls it the 'Big Society'. This strategy will not attempt to badge the sector with these terms as feedback from consultation suggested that these terms mean nothing to our local community or those that work in the sector.

Big Society

The new coalition Government has announced its ambition to create a 'Big Society' – to shift the relationship between citizens and the state and put more power and opportunity in people's hands. As part of these plans the coalition sees charities, co-operatives, social enterprises and voluntary organisations - as the vanguard of this change, involving citizens, and helping them to take responsibility and control for their lives. It has committed to supporting such organisations and making it easier for them to play a central role in influencing and resolving local issues.

These organisations often include a relatively small paid workforce complemented by a huge contribution by volunteers at all levels. It is a sector that is best described as active, passionate and committed, and as such is a huge asset to a place and of significant value making an important contribution to the country's gross domestic product.

The Sector in Kent and Swale

Kent has the largest number of registered charities working within its boundaries than any other county in the UK (approx 6,000 in 2009). Kent also has a wealth of robust Infrastructure organisations and multi agency cross-sectoral partnerships that support a thriving VCS. These Include:

- 19 Volunteer Centres;
- five Councils for Voluntary Service;
- Kent CAN: Community Alliance of Networks;
- Action for Communities in Rural Kent: Rural Community Council;
- Kent and Medway Infrastructure Partnership (KMIP);
- Kent Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium (KVIC);
- Kent Partners Compact Implementation Group; and
- North West Kent Racial Equality Council.

Swale has over 700 organisations offering a variety of services, supporting people and the communities they live in. As an example, Swale Citizens Advice Bureau deals with 7,000 client enquiries covering 20,000 different issues each year. These organisations range from very small groups run entirely by volunteers, to large organisations with a number of paid staff, and also include local branches of national organisations. Organisations cover a wide range of service areas and sectors from social care, information and advice services to tourism and leisure activities. An example of a sector which is strong and vibrant is the sporting community with 275 sports clubs and an estimated 6,000 volunteers providing regular sporting activity for 24,500 of our local population⁴.

Through these organisations Swale has thousands of volunteers working to make Swale a better place – a fairer society with opportunities for local people. These people are from all walks of life, young and old but have strength, energy and compassion. They are a significant asset to our borough.

Swale Borough Council (SBC) commissioned Swale Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) to undertake an audit of the VCS in Swale in March 2010 using available data and evidence. This was to add to research previously undertaken by CVS in 2005. A questionnaire was sent out widely and followed up with email, telephone and face to face interviews to get a total number of responses of 104. Additionally three workshops were held with VCS representatives, Councillors and Swale Borough Council officers. The data was then analysed to give a picture of the Swale VCS and its needs, aspirations and support structures. Full details on the results are contained in the audit report which is available on request, but as a summary:

- Demographics: the ratio of female to male respondents was 68 % and 32% respectively, reflecting the make up of both staff and volunteers in the Third Sector nationally. In an Office of the Third Sector survey it was found the ratio for Third

⁴ Sport England Active People Survey (3)

Sector workers was 66% women to 34% men. Of those interviewed 29% fell in the 45-59 category, 24% in the 65+, 12% in the 20-44 category, and just 2% were aged 16 -19. Only 11% of respondents did not answer the diversity question, whilst 18% did not monitor diversity;

- the total annual wage bill of respondents totalled £6,568,749;
- the Gross Annual turnover of respondents amounted to £75,587,678. 38% had a turnover of up to £10k, 23% up to £50k, with 7% more than £1m;
- of the respondents 9% receive funding from Swale Borough Council, 22% from donations, 20% from KCC, 10% from health sector. In total, 18% was earned income;
- 46% of respondents have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with a variety of funders (including SBC, KCC, PCT, Amicus Horizon, and Connexions) delivering a variety of services for the public sector including youth projects, arts and media, diversionary activities , mediation, carers services;
- 31% of respondents had a quality standard including IIP, OFSTED, NAVCA, Volunteering England, Kent Quality Mark;
- in terms of client groups the respondents served this ranged from young people and older people the highest (35%), families (27%), volunteers (25%), mental health (23%), information services (23%) to heritage and animals (5%), demonstrating a wide and eclectic range of services;
- 46% of respondents were registered charities, 40% community/ voluntary groups, 5% registered company, and 2% charitable trusts;
- of those organisations interviewed 46% do not employ any full time members of staff whilst 38% employ between one and five full time members of staff. At the other end of the scale, 4% of organisations interviewed employ 40+ full time members of staff. In comparison with the 2005 survey, where 22% of groups employed some full time members of staff, this has risen considerably to 54%. Organisations therefore appear to be employing more full time members of staff than previously, giving a strong indication that the sector is growing;
- Volunteering: the total number of volunteers in respondent organisation was 2,120, with average volunteer hours per week of 4,664 per organisation. The annual volunteer equivalent wages bill would amount to approximately £1.5 million based on the current minimum wage (£5.80 per hour). The range of positions include administration (26%), committee members (20%), play workers (15%), drivers (12%) project workers (10%), and maintenance (10%). 40% of organisations stated that it was easy to recruit volunteers, but 16% stated it was difficult. 74% felt that turnover of volunteers was low;
- Governance: 55% of respondents felt that their management committee needed support, including training, expenses, IT training, mentoring and guidance, with 64% not having had any governance training. There appeared to be no issue in recruiting members to the committees;

- Training: 53% of training is provided in-house, with 46% having an allocated budget for training. When groups were asked about other training they spoke of wanting to access training locally, and many use the CVS for training. In 2008/09 262 learners accessed courses, and in 2009/10 this has increased to 360 learners. Lack of funding and time constraints are the key barriers to accessing training;
- Support Services: 61% respondents are a member of CVS, and 44% member of the Swale Community Empowerment Network (SCEN). Funding information, bid writing, volunteering and newsletters are seen to be the key support required from the CVS;
- 85% of organisations that responded stated that they were content with the support in accessing accommodation/ office space;
- Influencing Local Decisions: 35% of respondents are satisfied with how they can influence decisions with regards to public sector bodies, 36% are neither satisfied or dissatisfied, and 29% dissatisfied; and
- Looking to the future: An optimistic response from organisations showed a 25 year expectancy of the lifespan of their organisations. 29% feel that the total value of grant funding will increase.

Town and Parishes Councils

There are 33 Parish Councils and two Town Councils in Swale who also play a pivotal role in the community life of the borough. Whilst they are not considered formally to be part of the Sector, as they are public authorities in themselves, it is important to recognise the role parish councils have to enable their communities.

As such they can be encouraged to reach their potential by working closely with the Sector and being involved in the 'localism' agenda delivering services and activities for the benefit of communities, so making Swale a better place to live and one that people are proud of. SBC therefore believes that town and parish councils can play their part, and we want to work in partnership with them to deliver the Vision of this strategy.

2. The Strategy

The shared Vision

For the VCS in Swale to continue to be an effective and engaged partner helping to develop stronger and inspired communities - communities who are influential, demanding, independent, involved and active, with motivated and confident citizens, a more vibrant democracy and greater civic participation and where inequalities and tensions are removed and inclusion and cohesion promoted.

Achieving this Vision

We need to develop an aspirational VCS Strategy to build on and enhance the existing positive relationship we have with the VCS in order to achieve our Vision.

The strategy sets out:

- a framework for our effective, on-going engagement with the sector at all levels;
- clear priorities and outcomes;
- SBC's approach to support and enable the VCS;
- how SBC resources will be invested and allocated;
- how action will be coordinated whilst recognising the independence of the VCS;
- the role each partner plays with regard to supporting VCS
- ways in which SBC can support the VCS to contribute to Swales Sustainable Community Strategy - our shared plan setting out our ambitions⁵ for the borough; and
- how we will build on and develop the Compact⁶ to embed transparent standards and principles of understanding between SBC and VCS.

The strategy needs to ensure that there is a shift in our approach to investment and support of the VCS, and as a result better support sector to design and deliver public services. There is a need for a joined up approach to the multiple challenges all sectors face over the coming years. That is the only way to strengthen and raise aspirations of local people and communities.

What will be achieved?

We anticipate that delivery of the strategy will achieve the following outcomes:

- Improvements to public services;
- Services that are more responsive and relevant;
- Services that are value for money;
- Services that cutting edge compared to other places;
- Services that we have made easy to access by a wider range of people;
- People's skills, learning and confidence improved through getting involved in activities;
- People have more influence and impact on how public services are run;
- People have better knowledge and information; and
- More trust between public sector agencies and the VCS and local people.

⁵ SCS priorities are ambitions for learning, prosperity, inclusion & safety, health, environment, culture, homes and communities

⁶ Kent Partners Compact 2009 developed by Kent Partnership. The **compact principles** are - openness, honesty, accountability, integrity, respect, trust, confidence, objectivity, understanding, transparency, common purpose, leadership, effective communications and listening.

3. Investing in a thriving and strong Voluntary and Community Sector – Our Approach

The strategy has been developed with the support of a broad range of partners across the sectors. It has also taken account of key Government drivers and research at a national level as well as regional and local strategic drivers.

Most importantly, it has been developed in partnership with Swale CVS and the Swale Community Empowerment Network (SCEN)⁷ - by asking partners, voluntary and community organisations, councillors and SBC staff their views. We have asked representatives of the VCS and SBC where SBC should invest its resources and take action to help create an environment for the VCS to thrive, recognising that as resources are finite there have to be priorities. Their responses were set out in the consultation document and tested to determine the following priorities:

We will focus on the following priorities of;

- Funding and resourcing;
- Volunteering (civic involvement);
- Voice and Influence;
- Capacity building (focusing on shared development and learning);
- Governance; and
- Service Delivery & Commissioning.

What we will do and how we will do it is set out in the **Action Plan** in Section Six.

A changing landscape

There has also been a shift in terms of how local government must respond to the financial situation at a national level. With the introduction of many government plans to reduce the budget deficit, local government is entering into challenging and unprecedented times which call for radical reform. New and innovative ways of working will be introduced. There will be less funding available from and within the public sector at a local level. The opportunities on offer to us through place based budgeting need to be seized and maximised by the public and voluntary sectors alike. This strategy will take account of this through its approach to support and choices on investment in a realistic and sustainable way.

This also will change the way in which local government and the council works in the future, what it resources directly (an example will be reviewing its direct appointment of members and officers to outside bodies) and what services and functions are more

⁷The SCEN is a network of voluntary and community groups and organisations based in Swale who are interested in making a difference in their community. It is a sub group of the Local Strategic Partnership

appropriate to enable and facilitate. This will determine which services are delivered and by whom.

To this end, we must ensure that the action plan is realistic and sustainable given the finite resource the council has at its disposal and the national financial challenges we are all facing. We recognise we can not nor should not deliver actions on are own. There are some actions that other organisations are better placed to do and so should be taking the responsibility for. There are others that the VCS is already doing but with support could be done more effectively. There is recognition from all sectors that we have a duty to cooperate and join up our approach and delivery to make best use of resources.

The Action Plan will evolve over time as will the role and relationship of the Council, other public sector bodies and the VCS, which in turn will determine the approach taken. It has also been developed so that it is flexible enough to respond to the new 'Big Society' agenda and forthcoming Localism Bill.

4. Delivering the Strategy

Delivery will be ensured by internal SBC governance and with the Executive Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities leading and championing the agenda. But as the strategy has a shared vision and is jointly owned by the council and the VCS, the VCS has a role to play in supporting the strategy is achieved, through the Community Empowerment Network.

Success will be measured in the following ways:

- through performance indicators such as the previous national indicators: NI 1 people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area, NI 2 People who feel they belong to their neighbourhood, NI 3 civic participation in the local area, NI 4 % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their local authority, NI 5 Overall Satisfaction with the area, NI 6 Participation in regular volunteering.
- results of national surveys and how Swale benchmarks against other places; and
- compliance with the Kent Partners Compact.

We will know if we have been successful if we achieve these outcomes and as such realise our Vision. To keep track and to measure our achievements we will need to monitor the action set out in Section Six. This will be done through the Swale Community Empowerment Network and reports on achievements publicised annually.

To demonstrate commitment to delivering the strategy we jointly agree to a shared pledge that reflects our distinct contributions to and responsibilities for delivery so that it is a two way approach. This is set out below:

5. The Shared Pledge

The Shared Pledge: SBC and the VCS jointly agree to;

- Lead by example offering strong community leadership and contributing effectively with and for local communities;
- Jointly work in partnerships and foster a collaborative approach to service delivery;
- Be open, approachable, visible and cooperative;
- Improved joint involvement in consultation and engagement around the delivery and design of services;
- Share and disseminate information, good and best practice and be open to trying new ideas;
- Be clear and transparent as to how we work with each other;
- Working together to develop shared learning and development enabling community based solutions encouraging the participation of local people;
- Ensure equity and fairness when working with the diverse and changing population of Swale;
- Improve our reach to diverse communities, acknowledging differences within communities;
- Respect each other's sector and acknowledge their differences; and
- Contribute jointly to the regeneration agenda, supporting local communities well being through changing circumstances.

6. Action Plan

1. Funding & Resourcing

Action How		Who When		Resource
Move to three year funding commitments (subject to annual review and government grant allocation as part of the CSR 2010)	All SBC's grants and contracts with VCS to state this in them by 2011/12 financial year	All SBC staff that issue SLAs with TSOs Legal Services to sign off	April 2011	SBC staff time Legal resource
Payments are made in a timely manner and decisions on funding made avoiding delays and giving sufficient notice	Timetable established and adhered to TSOs to submit data requested as part of SLAs in a timely manner to ensure payment can be made	All SBC staff that issue SLAs with TSOs Finance to lead budget setting process	April 2011	SBC staff time TSOs staff time
SLAs will be reviewed so that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are clear as to whether SBC are to issue a contract or a grant; - A set of generic contract standing orders are developed - they are made more robust but less onerous; - they are supported by a business plan; - they are reviewed in consultation 	Develop a corporate template and approach Implement use Business Plan support to be provided as necessary (see capacity building section)	Legal Services All SBC staff	September 2010 By April 2011	Staff Time Legal costs required

<p>with TSOs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - roles and relationship between SBC and TSOs are clarified; - they comply with Compact principles; and - They are monitored quarterly (or in proportion to the size of the grant) and managed in partnership. 				
<p>Grants will be reviewed so they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are based on outcomes and priorities; - have transparent criteria and principles; - involve TSOs in developing criteria and assessing grant; - support and guidance provided in how to bid/ apply; - are widely publicised and easy to find; - have an accessible application process and simple application form; - measure impact and outcomes; - are monitored quarterly; and - decision making processes are transparent, robust and communicated in a timely manner 	<p>ECS to review its grant processes</p> <p>ECS to publicise widely and as accessible as possible grant application process</p>	<p>Community Empowerment Officer</p> <p>ECS staff</p>	<p>October 2010</p> <p>July 2010</p>	<p>Community Arts Grant Budget £9k</p> <p>Community Cohesion Budget £40k</p> <p>Safer/ Stronger Budgets</p> <p>LEF Grant Budget</p>

Explore the pooling of all SBC community grants into one pot	Review of grant budgets and processes	Community Empowerment Officer	April 2011	Staff time
Explore the pooling of LSP partner grants to the VCS into one pot across the LSP	Review of grant budgets and processes	Safer & Stronger Manager (Safer & Stronger Theme Group to lead this review)	2015 Staff	time
Review of LEF funding to further enhance and develop commitment to participatory budgeting	Review report developed and proposal discussed at LEFs and agreed by SMT and Exec	ECS to lead in partnership with KCC	October 2010	Staff Time LEF budget
Issue guidance on how to access business rate relief/ concessions/ VAT exception etc	Statement to be disseminated from Business Rates	Business Rates Section	September 2010	Staff Time
SBC to review and publish the resources it has and outcomes it wants so that the Sector can then bid for the resources they need to deliver (link to commissioning actions)	Through service planning process	All sections	Dec 2010	Staff Time

2. Volunteering and Civic Involvement

Action	How	Who	When	Resource
Recognise the value and contribution of the VCS and evidence impact through an improved evidence base	use MOSAIC, data from the CVS, CAB, Impact Studies, Social Return on Investment case studies	ESC staff, Policy & Performance Team CVS CAB	By October 2010	Staff Time CVS staff time
Develop and encourage more	Work in partnership with Swale	Citizen	By April	Staff time

younger volunteers	CVS Improve links on SBC website Increase young people volunteering and community service	Engagement officer CVS Director Schools/ Colleges KCC	2011	
Continue to deliver services that involve volunteers in that delivery	Working with partners eg CVS, Groundwork, Prison Service, Probation Service to run SBC activities Community involvement in green infrastructure Sports Development schemes and support to sports clubs Arts projects Heritage/ Museum projects Tourism projects Use local performance data to monitor improvement	ESC staff	By April 2011	Staff Time Volunteer time
Seek to explore more effective ways to recruit volunteers when SBC activities/ projects need resourcing	Through CVS database, Kent eVents	All staff	By April 2011	Staff time
Work to encourage businesses/ organisations to develop Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes	Work to encourage businesses/ organisations to develop Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes Look at developing SBC CSR scheme for staff	ESC Project Officer HR team	April 2012 April 2012	Staff time TBC

3. Voice, Representation and Influence

Action How		Who	When	Resource
Improve SBC approach to civic participation and involvement	Introduce activities to build confidence, reduce apathy and enhance skills – The Duty to Involve Project	Head of Corporate Strategy & Communications Citizen Engagement Officer	By 2012	Staff time
	Deliver Connecting Communities project in Sheerness East and West	Equalities & Cohesion Officer	September 2010	£19k Connecting Communities budget
Set and deliver on SBC commitments under the 'Duty to Involve'	Publicise our commitment to involvement in: - contract development; - housing services; and - planning services.	Head of Corporate Strategy & Communications Head of Commissioning & Customer Service	By October 2010	Staff time
	Get the VCS involved in SBC service planning and strategy development	Head of Housing Head of Planning	April 2011	
Support and invest in the SCEN	Through SBC SLA with CVS	Community Empowerment Officer Director of CVS	April 2010	£13,400k budget
Support and resource the LSP theme	Provide administration to the	SBC Officers Quarterly		Staff time

groups where the Sector is involved	groups			SBC revenue budget
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4. Capacity Building

Action How		Who When		Resource
Develop shared development and learning for SBC/ VCS/ CVS by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mentoring opportunities; - work shadowing; and - shared induction/ training programmes 	ECS/ HR to develop proposals, process and opportunities	ECS Project Officer/ HR training officer/ CVS	By April 2012	Staff time
Develop a package of support which is relevant, tailored and accessible to build capacity and capability for the VCS Work in partnership with the VCS to commission projects on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business Planning; - Finance; - Performance Management & Data quality; - Project Management; - Risk management; - HR & staffing/ workforce development; - H&S; 	Develop a business case and project proposal that would then be procured in parts or as a whole package Procure and run project	Head of ECS Community Empowerment Officer	September 2010 By April 2011	SBC Performance Fund Staff time

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICT; - Events management; and - Commissioning/ tendering. 				
<p>SBC guidance and toolkits advertised and accessible to TSOs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events Management toolkit; - Risk Plans; - Procurement; - Business Plans; and - Licensing. 	<p>On SBC website</p> <p>Article in Inside Swale</p>	<p>ESC Project Officer in liaison with other SBC service areas</p>	<p>By April 2011</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
<p>Ensure SBC staff and VCS staff are trained and confident in performance management so they can assist VCSs to monitor performance</p>	<p>Corporate training being provided – look to offer a section for ECS staff that work in the community and are requesting data from VCSs</p>	<p>Policy & Performance Manager</p>	<p>June 2010</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
<p>Invest/ consolidate community development resource to work on the ground to build capacity</p>	<p>Review resource holistically through the Stronger Communities Group/ Community Empowerment Plan</p> <p>SBC ESC reorganisation</p>	<p>Head of ECS</p>	<p>By April 2011</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Community Cohesion Budget (SBC)</p> <p>HCA budget (SBC)</p> <p>PCT resource</p> <p>Amicus Horizon resource</p> <p>CVS resource</p>

5. Governance

Action How		Who When		Resource
<p>Develop a policy on SBC Councillor representation on VCS committees, Trusts and Outside Bodies so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the process for nomination is clear, open and transparent; - the bodies on the approved duties list is reviewed/ updated - send communication to ask VCS if they want a representative; - the 47 councillors are distributed equitably and evenly across bodies (review tally); - no conflict of interest exists for nominees; - councillors are clear what their role is and the expectations of them from TSOs and from SBC; - support and training is given to carry out role effectively; and - there is a commitment to being proactive. 	<p>SBC to develop policy and make proposals through Full Council</p> <p>See Approved Duties List for 2009/10 as to current member allocation/ representation</p> <p>Work through CVS to access wider groups</p>	<p>Democratic Services/ ECS</p>	<p>Dec 2010</p>	<p>Staff time</p>
<p>Develop a policy on SBC staff representation on VCS committees</p>	<p>Policy to be developed and approved</p>	<p>ECS Project Officer</p>	<p>By April 2011</p>	<p>Staff time</p>

<p>so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there is no conflict of interest; - any representation clearly links to work programme and JD; - their role and expectations are clear both from SBC and VCSs point of view; - support and training is given to carry out role effectively; and - there is an commitment to being proactive. 				
<p>Support Councillors and Members to be effective Community Leaders by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - setting out how they can get involved; - providing information on projects/ activities that can be championed and promoted in localities; and - training on how to work with and for communities (empowerment training). 	<p>Implement the Members Training Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer Profiling - Localism <p>Loot at feasibility of extending to town and parish councillors</p>	Democratic Services	<p>Sept 10 Oct 10</p> <p>By April 2012</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Democratic Services budget</p> <p>Possible income from training to Town and Parish Councillors</p>
<p>Encourage VCSs to value to monitor equalities and diversity in their sector and contribute to the agenda to improve reach and relevance</p>	<p>Deliver the SCEN diversity monitoring project and publicise findings to help support VCSs</p>	Diversity House	September 2010	Project Funding
<p>Run regular 'Have your say' campaigns/ consultations</p>	<p>See how to utilise existing mechanism for this such as Citizens Panel, LEFs, PACTS, LINKS, Amicus residents</p>	Policy & Performance Manager	By April 2011	Staff time

	panels, Rural Forum, Friends Groups Feedback results			
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6. Service Delivery and Commissioning

Action How		Who When		Resource
Identify which SBC services may be appropriate for shared service/ co-production with the VCS and how that would work in practice	Review and business case developed Which VCSs are best placed to deliver core services and which services does SBC want to outsource? Recognise the need to invest in new/ existing organisations as appropriate to ensure they have resources to enable them to deliver when setting up Trusts/ CICs to deliver SBC service etc Culture/ tourism review	Heads of Service as part of service planning and budget setting process Policy Overview Committee/ Head of ECS	By April 2011 By April 2011	Staff time and existing budget realignment
Invest and encourage Asset Transfer/ Management schemes in line with SBC policy	SBC Asset Transfer Policy SBC Asset Group Distribute and communicate the SBC policy for assets transfer	Community Empowerment Officer	Ongoing April 2010	Staff time
Lettings/ Leases will be issued in an	SBC Lettings Policy	Property Services	April 2010	Staff time

equitable and transparent way that ensures sustainability and viability.	<p>Balance the need to secure income with subsidy to support VCS</p> <p>Support and monitor VCS that have leases with shared responsibility for upkeep of buildings to ensure condition of buildings remain fit for purpose</p> <p>Distribute and communicate the SBC policy for lettings</p>		August 10	Buildings maintenance budget £300k
Fees and charges issued in a equitable and transparent way	<p>SBC Hall Hire Policy</p> <p>Fees & Charges Policy</p> <p>Distribute and communicate the SBC policy for hall hire</p>	<p>Finance Department</p> <p>Customer Contact Centre</p>	Oct 2010	Staff time
SBC to be clear on its aims for commissioning, which services and how organisations can be included	To be made explicit in the new framework below	Head of Commissioning and Customer Services	April 2011	Staff time
<p>SBC to develop a fair and transparent framework to commissioning the VCS that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - will be developed in partnership with VCS; - will be communicated widely; - is based on need; - reflects SBC priorities; - is outcome focused; - ensures service quality; - markets and advertises 	<p>Procurement statement on SBC website</p> <p>Commissioning framework for VCS developed</p> <p>SBC to appoint a Member Commissioning Champion</p>	<p>Head of Commissioning and Customer Services</p> <p>Legal Services</p>	<p>April 2010</p> <p>April 2011</p> <p>May 2012</p>	Staff Time

<p>commissioning opportunities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- provides reasonable timescales for bidding;- ensures that tender documents/ service specifications are clear and simple;- ensures that recruitment processes and criteria are clear, equitable and transparent; and- reflects a principle of proportionate monitoring.				
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