

Community and Equality Impact Assessment

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic equalities and diversity screening process to both new policy development or changes to services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have significant positive, negative or adverse impacts on the different groups in our community.

This process has been developed, together with **full guidance** to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010.
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Services (Social Value) 2012 Act

About the service or policy development

Name of service or policy	Voluntary, community and social enterprise Strategy 2019-2022
Lead Officer	Geraud de Ville
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Why is this service or policy development/review needed?

Our approach to considering equalities

This EIA considers the overarching equalities considerations for the implementation of the VCSE (Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise) strategy and associated commissioning in the Cabinet report. In order to fully understand the equality impact of the VCSE strategy, it is necessary to understand our community, their needs, our current VCSE context and how this will change in future, as well as the consequences of not changing. The EIA considers these aspects in the following few sections. It will also be necessary to closely monitor the delivery of the VCSE strategy to ensure that the sector and residents are supported within this context.

This strategy is both a commitment by the Council to work in greater collaboration with the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE); and an invitation to people within our communities to help us, and all other local partners to make Barking and Dagenham the best borough it can be.

This strategy will support the Council's aims to:

- change our relationship with our residents,
- strengthen partnerships, participation and a place-based approach and
- harness culture and increase opportunity

The overall equality impact on residents as a result of this strategy has been determined as low. Evidence has shown that there is support for more partnership working and better outcomes for residents by creating more opportunities with the VCSE. Also the opportunity for more collaboration, the local giving model and capacity building will all increase the potential for a stronger VCSE that can reflect specific equalities strands.

Background and current context

The Council has been on a journey over the last few years, one that has seen us transform the way we deliver services. At the heart of this transformation is our community and the establishment of a new relationship founded upon building resilience and enabling residents to fulfil their potential by providing them with opportunities to prosper.

Our aim is to harness the collective financial and nonfinancial resources of the public, private and voluntary sectors together with the hope, determination and aspiration of individuals, families and communities to live better lives, in a better place.

The 2016 Independent Growth Commission and the 2017 Borough Manifesto helped set a vision to ensure that these opportunities benefit everyone. To achieve this, the report of the

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B&D Growth Commission highlights the necessity and importance of developing the VCSE sector and a more participative culture characterised by greater levels of volunteering both across, and in different parts of, the borough. A key question indeed is how we connect the new opportunities brought by East London's economic growth with VCSE's to help ensure that no one is left behind.

The VCSE strategy acknowledges that we now need to work even more collaboratively to drive real change. From a service-delivery model aimed at 'meeting needs', our role is now to support residents to be more independent, providing them with the tools they need to do more for themselves and each other to achieve their full potential. This is something we must do in partnership, with greater participation of VCSE and individuals.

The VCSE strategy and associated actions are essential in supporting residents and ensuring that no one is left behind as the borough moves forward and we seek together to deliver the outcomes of the Borough Manifesto.

The strategy is built on three clear goals, these are:

Goal 1: Increasing participation: We want participation to become part of every day life. This means practical participation, e.g. people getting together in neighbourhoods; civic participation, e.g. through volunteering in schools, the charitable sector and social enterprise; as well as participation in the design and production of services and putting individuals and organisations at the heart of shaping the very services they rely on or help to deliver.

Goal 2: Enabling and embedding relationships based on trust: Critically, it also means supporting a more collaborative approach respecting all partners' contributions as equal and coming together to achieve more. We want to improve the way we can work across all organisations. This means drawing on data and expertise to make it easier for people to collaborate, as well as creating a climate of trust between stakeholders. This also means staying focused on outcomes and learning from failures, as well as being honest with each other.

Goal 3: Building the sector's capacity: Our approach is two-fold: reimagining how we can best partner with and support the VCSE across a range of initiatives, and reshaping approaches to commissioning and giving locally. Practically, this goal looks at how we can increase the resources available for the sector, facilitate the sharing of time, skills and intelligence, and the sharing of building and spaces.

Within the goals a number of elements are recommended that seek to support the VCSE to work with our residents. These include:

- Support for the VCSE through the social infrastructure tender.
- Co-producing The Local Giving model
- Increasing organisations that apply for crowdfunding
- Grow VCSE ecosystem through increased community ownership of small green plots
- Committing to publishing the list of buildings (or spaces in a shared building) available at any given time.

Why is this service or policy development/review needed?

- Increasing availability of space for VCSE organisations through leveraging resources from corporate partners
- Continue the development of the practical participation support platform in the borough through Every One Every Day
- Work with the Barking and Dagenham Delivery Partnership and other partners to increase their support and work with VCSE organisations

Importantly, the Local Giving Model will be accessible to the VCS at no cost to them, opening up the platform to raise funds and make improvements in the local community which are important to residents.

The Council has conducted research and interviews to build a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the sector locally and beyond. This has helped to inform the development of the strategy, and included:

- an overview of the general trends in the VCSE sector nationally, as well as a comparative analysis of what is taking place in other boroughs, including other local giving models and approaches;
- research on groups' current approaches to fundraising, including with regard to crowdfunding and the local lottery;
- overview and analysis of Council's VCSE spend in 2017-18.

In addition, BDCVS were commissioned to conduct a research project into the role of VCSEs in achieving the Borough Manifesto outcomes, that runs parallel to this work (see Appendix 2 for summary or findings).

The key observations/recommendations of this research include:

- The number of charities saying they are operating in B&D and those actually based (and therefore more likely to be providing services to residents and investing locally) in the borough needs to be understood through further research. This distinction has not been made historically, and an understanding is needed to build a more accurate picture of the sector.
- Not for profits in B&D seem to be smaller than their peers nationally and in London.
- Given the largest provision (after faith activities) is advice, information and advocacy there is opportunity for greater shared working with Community Solutions.
- Voluntary sector provision has not kept up to date with the demographic churn locally, with a low number of equalities-oriented organisations. BDCVS has filled this gap and may need to look at the reintroduction of an equalities forum for the sector.
- There are 593 CIOs, registered charities, industrial provident societies and CICs; and other unincorporated organisations in the borough. This brings the total number of not for profit sector organisations at a minimum of 620. The largest sector is faith-based organisations, with an income of approximately £7.8 million. Non-faith-based charities represented an income of approximately £12.4 million.

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Using a methodology that focuses on charities' area of benefit (AOB), the Centre for London calculations show that Barking and Dagenham have a much lower level of active charities compared to many other London Boroughs, and by comparison, central London boroughs have between three and four times more charities per head of population that have at least some form of local activity.

The Barking & Dagenham VCSE sector also has a greater proportion of small charities, with an income of under £100,000. 76% of charities based in the borough have an income of less than £100,000 and would be considered as micro and small scaled enterprises.

There are also lower levels of volunteering reported in Barking and Dagenham than in the rest of England. In 2017, the LBBB Resident's Survey identified that just one in five (23%) residents had volunteered in the last 12 months, compared to the national average of 42%, although the London average is lower too. However, we know that residents do a significant amount of informal voluntary work, such as religious activity and unpaid care for others.

Within this context the VCSE sector in the borough is delivering a range of services to and with residents. These range from essential support for people with social care needs, through to information and signposting support across faith communities and the wider sector, to activities promoting healthy lifestyles, engaging with our communities through the arts and heritage, and local community groups such as tenants and residents' associations and uniformed organisations. All of these groups and activity make up the variety of the sector locally.

1. Community impact (this can be used to assess impact on staff although a cumulative impact should be considered).

What impacts will this service or policy development have on communities?

Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National & local data sets
- Complaints

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- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and Community Organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with ‘protected characteristics’. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

This strategy outlines the Council’s ambition and commitment to strengthen the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE), and to build on some of the great ideas that emanate from the community to meet our ambitions as a borough. It aims to build capacity, increase civic participation, and facilitate collaboration with the sector, as equal partners. VCSE organisations have a unique position, and contribution to make to help address structural inequalities, e.g. through their frontline activities and commitment toward people with protected characteristics.

Many people are still reliant on the help of service delivery organisations to make ends meet. A number of VCSE organisations provide vital support to our residents, many of which present one or more protected characteristics (e.g. DABD, Harmony House). Some VCSE organisations serve specific groups within the community, such as women’s groups (e.g. Excel Women’s Centre, Ashiana Network), others organise activities for specific ethnic groups (e.g. Barking and Dagenham Somali Women Association), people living with/or helping others with disabilities (Carers of Barking and Dagenham), or bridging across age groups (e.g. Company Drinks).

Other organisations offer services, which address problems that disproportionately affect certain groups. Organisations like Lifeline and Faith Action propose Creative English classes to help recipients (often women) build their confidence. The universal support service provided by the Citizen’s Advice Bureau help people get advice & information on housing and homelessness, employment, consumer, family, benefits, money, legal and much more.

A lot of these organisations help address local structural inequalities. They also play an important role in our ambition to move from a paternalistic, service-delivery model aimed at ‘meeting needs’, to a model designed to support individuals, families and communities to grow their own capabilities. Our aim is to harness the collective financial and nonfinancial resources of the public, private and voluntary sectors together with the hope, determination and aspiration of individuals, families and communities to live better lives, in a better place.

Potential impacts	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	X			Strengthening local VCSE organisations	We have made the effort to include local communities in the production of the strategy, through ongoing

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Age	X			will positively impact local communities, providing them with the support and means to meet their needs and achieve their ambitions	engagement with the sector by the Participation and Engagement team, a four-weeks online consultation on the draft document and three open workshops for the sector. In addition, BDCVS has been commissioned to conduct a research project into the state of the sector and its role in achieving the ambitions for the borough as part of this process. This information provided is being considered as part of the consultation.
Disability	X				
Gender reassignment	X				
Marriage and civil partnership		X			
Pregnancy and maternity		X			
Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)	X				
Religion or belief	X			A majority of the 90 charities that are exclusively active locally (46%) provide faith-based services.	<p>Whilst faith organisations provide an invaluable contribution to our community, some of the traditions associated with faith may come to challenge certain practices or characteristics, e.g. on sexual orientation. To mitigate these impacts, a faith policy will be introduced in the spring of 2019.</p> <p>We have consulted with faith organisations as part of the consultation on the draft strategy and ensured that their ideas and recommendations are reflected in the strategy.</p>
Gender		X			The VCSE strategy capacity building and local giving model will increase the opportunity for more gender focussed organisation to develop in the borough
Sexual orientation		X			The VCSE strategy capacity building and local giving model will increase the opportunity for more sexual orientation focussed organisations to develop in the borough

COMMUNITY AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Any community issues identified for this location?		X			
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2. Consultation.

Provide details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the service or policy development e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups?

The Participation and Engagement Team, within the wider Policy and Participation team have been working on a number of strategic initiatives in the last two years, alongside colleagues in the council and the VCS sector locally. One of the key responsibilities of the team is to manage relationships with the sector and to act as a bridge between VCSE locally and the Council, as well as funders. The team consists of 6 staff, three established posts, one funded through the HRA on resident engagement, one funded by the Home Office (Community Engagement Coordinator-OCE) and one funded by MHCLG (Connected Communities Officer-Controlling Migration Fund). Alongside this, in the wider policy and participation team an Equalities community development post has been recruited for one year initially.

The commitment of the council through resourcing the Participation and Engagement Team to build relationship with the sector has contributed to shaping this strategy:

- The community response to London Bridge and subsequent engagement with the **faith sector**;
- Strategic relationships with local VCS organisations, commissioning the infrastructure support and supporting the engagement of the Council where required;
- A number of interventions which constitute components of an **emerging local giving model**, such as: the launch of a local crowdfunding platform with associated small grants fund (Apr 2017); the establishment of the first local lottery in London (Oct 2017); the recruitment of a citizen panel to manage the allocation of the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) spend (December 2018);
- A wide range of engagement activities across the community including Big Conversation events and focus groups to inform our cohesion approach; Human Library, the first community cohesion hackathon, belief in Barking and Dagenham, etc.;

The ideas and plan laid out in this strategy are the product of ongoing engagement through focus groups, 1-1 conversations, discussions with other places on best practices on VCSE, and feedback from a range of stakeholders and VCSE actors locally. The direction proposed in this document was also discussed with key commissioning directors and services within and outside the Council, including Inclusive Growth, Social Care, My Place, Procurement and Community Solutions.

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In addition, this strategy builds on a number of other pieces of research and consultation, including:

- In-depth qualitative work commissioned to the BDCVS with local voluntary and community groups on the future of the sector;
- A series of events (conferences, workshops and focus groups) and programmes, e.g. Connected Communities, organised in 2017-2018 as part of the council's efforts to better understand social cohesion issues and opportunities in the borough;
- A four-weeks public online consultation;
- Three public workshop sessions organised on 13 and 17 December in Dagenham Library, the Salvation Army (Barking) and BDCVS on 3 January.

3. Monitoring and Review

How will you review community and equality impact once the service or policy has been implemented?
*These actions should be developed using the information gathered in **Section 1 and 2** and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.*

Action	By when?	By who?
Review of the Community and Equality Impact Assessment	November 2019	Strategy Lead
Strategy impact evaluation (including on equalities)	Quarterly	Participation and Engagement Team
Final evaluation (including on equalities)	November 2022	Participation and Engagement Team

4. Next steps

It is important the information gathered is used to inform any Council reports that are presented to Cabinet or appropriate committees. This will allow Members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the wider community.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template for sign off by the Strategy Team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact

The strategy will outline the Council's commitment to work with VCSE organisations to improve residents' outcomes by 2022, by focusing on three main goals:

Goal 1: Building the sector's capacity

Goal 2: Increasing civic participation

Goal 3: Enabling and embedding relationships based on trust:

These goals will work towards achieving our vision for a strong VCSE. Practically, our vision for a strong VCSE means there are many ways in which individuals' ideas, projects and concerns can develop, flourish and be addressed. It also means a dense network of organisations shaping and delivering essential services and support, helping people grow in life and seize opportunities, bridging residents' capabilities and needs with donors, challenging the status quo, and being part of the fabric of the place.

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Divisional Director who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role (e.g. project sponsor, head of service)	Date
Tom Hook	Director, Policy and Participation	30 January 2019