Summary of the responses to the consultation on the proposed VCSE strategy

QUESTION 1

Which term best describes for you those that are in the pursuit of social change?

- Most respondent (67%) prefer the use of VCSE or VCS to talk about the sector, as opposed to civil society (19%)

QUESTION 2

What do you think are the three main needs of the VCSE sector locally to achieve the ambitions laid out in the Borough Manifesto?

- **Build relationships** to enable collaboration and (equal) partnership working. This needs time and structured planned engagement, networking and communication, e.g. through events
- **Capacity building**: Education, advice and guidance for small CICs and charities
- **Support**: access to funding and spaces
- **Recognition:** Sector needs to feel and be valued

QUESTION 3

What do you think are the three main strengths of the VCSE locally?

- **People:** Volunteers, workers with energy and passion
- **Access and trust** from the community
- **Local knowledge**: insights into residents' lives and experience in delivering in the area
- **Physical assets**: Buildings and equipment

"*I love volunteering, I can't understand why more people don't do it*"
"*The resources (people, ideas, money, social capital, fun and other things that can't be measured but make life better) they bring*."

Question 4

What infrastructure is needed to best support the VCSE locally?

Facilitating the collaboration across the sector with partners	25.46%
Supporting the sector to attract more funding to the borough	21.66%
Building support for small groups	16.17%
Supporting a measurable increase in participation and volunteering	14.06%
Developing mechanisms to support contributions from business	11.39%
Representing and convening the sector	11.25%

Other suggestions:
Action: Carry out a mapping exercise to categorise and group organisations which have similar objectives together across sectors (public, private and third)

Question 5

Outline three practical ideas that could increase collaboration and trust among VCSE organisations, the Council, and partners?

Top suggestions:

- **Engagement**: There is a need for organisations to be able to demonstrate what they do (e.g. through a volunteer fair)
- **Fairness**: Organisations want to be treated equally. Suggestions to increase transparency on B&D funding opportunities with information about who gets what, who does what, and what is in the pipeline.
- **Platform**: Collaboration could be facilitated though platform / collaborative space where organisations would be matched together and find collaborators. Or supporting a local, inclusive, peer-led network for the sector to facilitate sharing/learning and collaboration
- **Communication**: A better way to communicate with local government. Clear lines of communication with contacts of named key individuals. But also, to communicate successes in working together. This could be a social media page for all.
- **Trust**: Surfacing and eroding assumptions about the VCSE and rebuilding a shared understanding of the value and contribution of VCSE as a way to create solid partnerships. Request for more council departments to be engaged with cooperating with VCSEs and valuing VCSEs as assets

Question 6

How should commissioning evolve to deliver better outcomes for residents?

Services should be co-produced with local VCSE organisations	31.64%
Commissioners should favour outcome-based evaluation frameworks	21.90%
Local VCSE organisations should be favoured in commissioning	19.69%
The Council should introduce an ambitious social value policy	16.81%
Other	9.96%

Other suggestions:
Involve VCSE organisations before the commissions are put out to tender so that the shaping of the
commissions can be more of a conversation based around need than responding to an "after the fact" idea

QUESTION 7

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed vision for the VCSE sector?
- 79% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with the proposed vision. No respondent disagrees

QUESTION 8

Comments on goal 1: Building capacity
- "I think much has been accomplished over the last few years, but I feel much has sat within the Council rather than been initiated/developed by the sector. I believe this is because we have been weak in leadership and the focus has been on 'campaigning against' rather than developing the very initiatives outlined above (…)

The VCSE offers a nimble and responsive environment - but needs to change to have a positive, solution focused mindset."
- "I disagree. Collaboration is good and sometimes a requirement for big ideas with big funding and infrastructure. But it isn't the priority you desire. Capacity and success emerge when people feel enabled. Collaboration can act as a brake."
- "I also think it would be beneficial for LBBD to have a direct relationship with smaller community groups, rather than devolving this relationship to/ bigger organisations like Creative Barking and Dagenham, ComSol, Studio 3 Arts, Every One Every Day."
- "The Council needs to offer a balance of funding opportunities; this portfolio places an unsustainable emphasis on small grants and 'direct democracy' approaches, favouring projects that are appealing to the public. These opportunities do not lend themselves to more significant interventions, working in the less popular areas of deprivation on issues that are as 'publicisable' as other projects. Additionally, these funding streams do not require as much accountability in delivery, ensuring that the work delivered is robust and meaningful. NCIL resident panels is an exciting idea, but those residents should be trained and working within a framework to ensure money is spent wisely and evenly. The actions for this goal need dates of completion, and more detailed targets to be held to account."

QUESTION 9

Comments on goal 2: Increasing participation
- "We need to always keep in mind that civic participation is a sliding scale and that paramount to the success of a participation model is a strong referral and signposting network and a sector with a strong understanding of the opportunities available in the borough and beyond."
- "We don't think participation is fully understood locally, as it might mean to many people 'doing something for nothing' in order people to participate on something, they must first feel belong, valued and care about the cause, so they can take something away. one way to increase participation is volunteering, again some people think it's something unemployed and retired people do, so this mindset needs to be changed and people in work and in positions must volunteer in the community to engage, connect and offer their support within the neighbourhoods to promote shared values."
- "Participatory City and EOED are great here... keep an eye on the decision making of residents vs decision making in the organisation..."
- "This is great, I see it as connecting people just for the sake
- of it and it's the right thing to do as it helps build social capital. I think that participation might not be enough, it also requires democracy (are our public and private institutions democratic?)"

QUESTION 10

Comments on goal 3: Enabling relationships based on trust
- "Good projects and orgs should be recognised and celebrated but shouldn't be given priority or special treatment. Projects should be funded according to the achieved outcomes. Strong relationships and networks are important, but transparency and fairness are paramount."
- "Totally agree again - however, I do think it would be good to also talk about learning from practice. It's important to create a culture of trust where it's ok to get things wrong as long as we learn from them. We don't want to be so evidence

based that we never try anything new and risk giving people the chance to try something."

- "We can and should be embedding participatory decision-making and commissioning more as part of this goal."
- "It would be very good if we had better collaboration with the Council. I spend a lot of my time emailing and writing to various departments and it takes an age to get information back. It would be excellent if we had a short cut."
- "We share collaboration across sectors is important, however we feel honesty is key to this, organisations (the council and others) must share information and be honest about the need, outputs and aimed outcomes in equal footing. also, we find often organisations are valued according to their turnover and not their expertise and knowledge about an issue. the council and partners must review old ways of partnering and collaborating with the VCSE."
- "Actions for this goal require greater detail. "Compact is adopted" - by whom? How many VCS organisations, and when by?"