



Strategy for Building Strong Communities

2015 – 2018

Foreword - Reverend Roger Sutton

Chair of the Strong Communities Partnership and Joint-Chair of the Trafford Partnership Executive

Trafford's third sector is vital to the life of Trafford; they connect communities, support individuals, deliver services and bring people together. The sector is innovative, dynamic and resourceful. It does not just fill the gaps in between public services; it's more often the first port of call for people, where they go for friendship, support and to give something to their local area. Which is why it's so diverse; what does the phrase third sector really mean? Voluntary and community groups of every shape and size, and now joined by an emerging social enterprise sector. They have seen huge changes over the last three years, positives and negatives. I have seen the financial challenges prompt a re-focus within the sector, a fresh look at what is being delivered and achieved, what is needed and what our aspirations are. Quality and sustainability are essential not just for survival, but to thrive. Relationships have been challenged, and have changed, but I see those that have emerged are stronger than ever, with more collaboration, within and across sectors, and greater recognition and valuing of voluntary and community groups.

What makes our voluntary and community groups so special are people. An army of volunteers, staff, friends, neighbours working tirelessly to build their local community and help the most vulnerable, at risk and in need. In 2014 the Trafford Partnership recognised just a small number of these people through its 40 Faces of Trafford awards. Having been nominated by local residents, hearing the stories of what people do to support people and neighbourhoods, was truly inspiring. We hope our *Be Bold ...Be the Difference* campaign has inspired many more people to take positive action in their community

And we have never needed them more. Public sector austerity, economic, demographic and social pressures are unprecedented. Voluntary and community groups are best placed to deal with these challenges, and best placed to respond, in the right place at the right time. But they cannot do this alone, and nor should they simply be given money to respond. We need a new spirit and culture of working together across sectors and communities, an assert based approach where we all have a contribution to make, and resources and skills are invested collaboratively, equally and transparently. Our *Locality Working* programme seeks to drive this way of working, bringing businesses, public services, residents and voluntary and community groups together to make positive change happen. The challenges we face present fresh opportunities if we are brave enough to change how we work, break down our silos and sector barriers, build beneficial relationships and create a new society.

That is why we have produced this strategy, so its not one just for the 'third sector', it's a vision for us all to achieve our common goals. To do that, we must invest in ourselves, as we need everyone to respond to this strategy. I am delighted that Trafford Council are continuing to invest in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector infrastructure contract, which has delivered so much over many years, raising the profile of the sector by supporting hundreds of groups and organisations to do new activities, deliver services and support volunteers.

Finally, thank you for taking the time to read this strategy and for your continuing support in our vision for building strong communities. This is our Trafford, let's make it together.

Rev. Roger Sutton

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1. About this strategy

This purpose of this strategy is to emphasise and strengthen the role the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, residents and communities have in delivering the Trafford Community Strategy.

In addition, it brings together the key themes underpinning a number of national and local agendas into a coordinated vision for effective partnership working. This will be achieved through mutually beneficial relationships between organisations, across sectors and with residents and communities, which will drive innovation, collaboration and meaningful co-production.

2. Context

The Trafford Partnership brings together organisations from across the public, private, voluntary, faith and community sectors and local residents. Members of the Trafford Partnership work together to achieve a common vision:

‘Trafford is a place where our residents achieve their aspirations and our communities are thriving’

By 2021:

- Trafford’s residents will have equal opportunity to be healthy, safe and prosperous, with fair access to housing, education, jobs in a flourishing, clean, green and sustainable local community.
- Trafford’s communities will take positive action to improve their local area and support those living amongst them in vulnerable situations, in partnership with services and businesses
- Trafford’s businesses will have the skills, investment environment and infrastructure to achieve their ambitions and be successful.
- Trafford will be a place people enjoy, with excellent cultural, sporting and heritage attractions and vibrant town, shopping and entertainment centres.

Within the Trafford Partnership there are seven thematic partnerships, each delivering one of the seven key objectives through their partnership strategies. For example, the Safer Trafford Partnership delivers *Safety and Reassurance* through its Crime Strategy.

Whilst all these strategies contribute to strong communities and the VCSE sector has a role in delivering each of these strategies, there is a broader recognition of what makes a strong community, beyond a specific service or theme. All people who live and work in the community can contribute, in particular the VCSE sector and residents. This strategy wants to promote the whole view of what builds strong communities, and the roles different organisations, sectors and residents can play in achieving this.

Role of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector

The changing financial, social and demographic environment places increasing emphasis on collaboration with and delivery by the VCSE sector to achieve the strategic goals of the Trafford Partnership. We must continue to recognise the importance of this sector, and work with its members to ensure there is sufficient capacity and sustainability within it.

In preparing this strategy, the Trafford Partnership carried out two surveys with public and private sector partner organisations (see Appendix A) and VCSE providers. The surveys highlighted the vital role the sector plays in delivering commissioned, grant-funded and voluntary services, often to people in the most vulnerable situations. The sector is seen as innovative, dynamic, flexible and responsive, making it a key partner in delivering effective and efficient services.

The surveys also identified the important role the sector plays in enabling engagement with the people of Trafford, often acting as broker between public services and communities. Through its proximity to local people, the sector can build more trusting, open and strong relationships.

All partners valued the VCSE sector highly, and see it as essential in their ability to achieve their strategic priorities. In order to support the VCSE, further development of strong and productive relationships of mutual benefit between all sectors and with communities was identified as a key goal by both surveys.

Relationships were regarded as strong between the VCSE and public sectors but the need to strengthen partnership working and to provide more clarity on organisational aims and priorities was identified in both surveys. However, relationships between the VCSE and private sector were not perceived to be as strong, with the majority of the private sector having a neutral or very poor relationship, reinforcing the need for this to remain as an area of focus for the new strategy.

Both partners and VCSE sector organisations agreed that opportunities were emerging through changing public services, with more VCSE service delivery taking place across a wide range of services and activities, through greater engagement with communities and the private sector, as well as via Greater Manchester Devolution.

As expected, funding (local and national) was highlighted as a key challenge in both surveys, alongside administrative demands by the public sector on the VCSE in relation to existing resources which are seen as 'bureaucracy' and the increasing reliance on volunteers over paid staff. Listening to local people and involving them in decisions and delivery was highlighted by public sector partners as well as providers. Concern that contracts will be taken up by large organisations, without the local knowledge or expertise, was expressed in the provider survey.

Overall, partners and providers identified the need to work more collaboratively, building better relationships and making better use of assets, funding and resources, better understanding of expertise and mapping of services, alongside increasing volunteering, developing social enterprise and improving communication. There was an overall desire from public sector partners to work with the VCSE sector to develop and deliver more single approaches and joined up working. Finally, leadership, and commitment from leaders, was identified, as was the recognition of the need to respond to the changing world.

Role of Communities

There is a joint role for public services, the private sector and the VCSE, alongside individual residents and other local stakeholders, in building strong communities. When we refer to community, we see this as everyone who lives and works in that place, regardless of 'sector'.

Strong communities are ones where individuals and families have opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing, achieve their aspirations through education and employment, feel safe, can enjoy their environment and can play an active part in their local community.

Local people are often best placed to support each other and take positive action to improve their area. Individual residents can take action that has a huge impact on their family, friends and neighbours, from volunteering with a local group, improving their own health and wellbeing, or just by being neighbourly.

We have a strong network of VCSE groups working with all ages, in all areas, on a wide range of issues. They offer the activity, advice, information and support that help individuals and families stay strong, recover from crisis, and thrive. Communities, in the broadest sense, provide the first response to challenges, often long before statutory agencies are asked for or are required to help.

This requires a change in the relationship between state and resident. In recognising that community resilience delivers strategic outcomes, the public sector's role is to encourage and enable residents and communities to take action, in addition to delivering core services. It makes people safer, healthier and wealthier and as such reduces demand on public services enabling them to focus on those most in need.

The private sector also benefits from a strong community, in terms of access to an educated, skilled and healthy workforce, a safe and attractive environment surrounding its premises and a stronger consumer base, and as such has a role in supporting local community action. We see this through our Town Centre Partnerships, and the increasing use of Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Value, employee volunteering and business engagement.

Again, mutually beneficial relationships across organisations and sectors and with communities will be vital to success. Strong communities cannot be achieved by working alone, which is why the Trafford Partnership has developed its Locality Working programme.

3. Aims and outcomes of the strategy

Aims:

- **Improve sustainability and increase growth in the VCSE sector**, developing fit for purpose, sustainable organisations able to deliver high quality services with diversified income streams and less reliance on grants, with a more commercial focus and which are flexible and adaptable to change.
- **Strengthen the ability of the VCSE sector** to deliver services and connect communities through engaging residents, leading community action, supporting people in the most vulnerable situations and brokering relationships between statutory bodies and communities.
- **Encourage mutually beneficial relationships** across sectors and communities that use smarter ways of working and collaboration to achieve what we cannot alone.
- **Provide clarity about the role of sectors in building strong communities.**
- **Align key themes underpinning current strategic thinking**, including Devolution for Greater Manchester, Public Service Reform, Social Value, early help and prevention and shaping demand.

Outcomes:

- All organisations, businesses, voluntary, community and social enterprise groups and individual residents see themselves as having a valued role in maximising community assets, taking positive action within communities and providing solutions to local challenges, creating and maintaining strong communities.
- Trafford has a thriving voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, with a significant role in achieving strategic priorities by delivering services and connecting communities.
- There are strong relationships between people across sectors and communities, based on equality, trust and effective collaboration, not defined by sector or service, which ensure we are working together in partnership for the benefit of Trafford and all its residents.

4. What we have achieved to date

The Trafford Partnership developed a Third Sector Strategy for 2011-2014. The purpose of the Strategy was to create a significant shift in the relationship between the statutory, private and third sectors, to one that was based on clear priorities and achievement of improved outcomes for the residents of Trafford, as outlined in the Community Strategy.

The Third Sector Strategy 2011-2014 defined the key influences both internal and external to the sector, and its relationship with public and private sectors, and set out 6 key themes for the Trafford third sector journey for the following three years. The Strategy was then used to help shape the three year infrastructure support contract, which following competitive tendering, was awarded to Pulse Regeneration, who working with Trafford Housing Trust formed the Thrive Trafford brand.

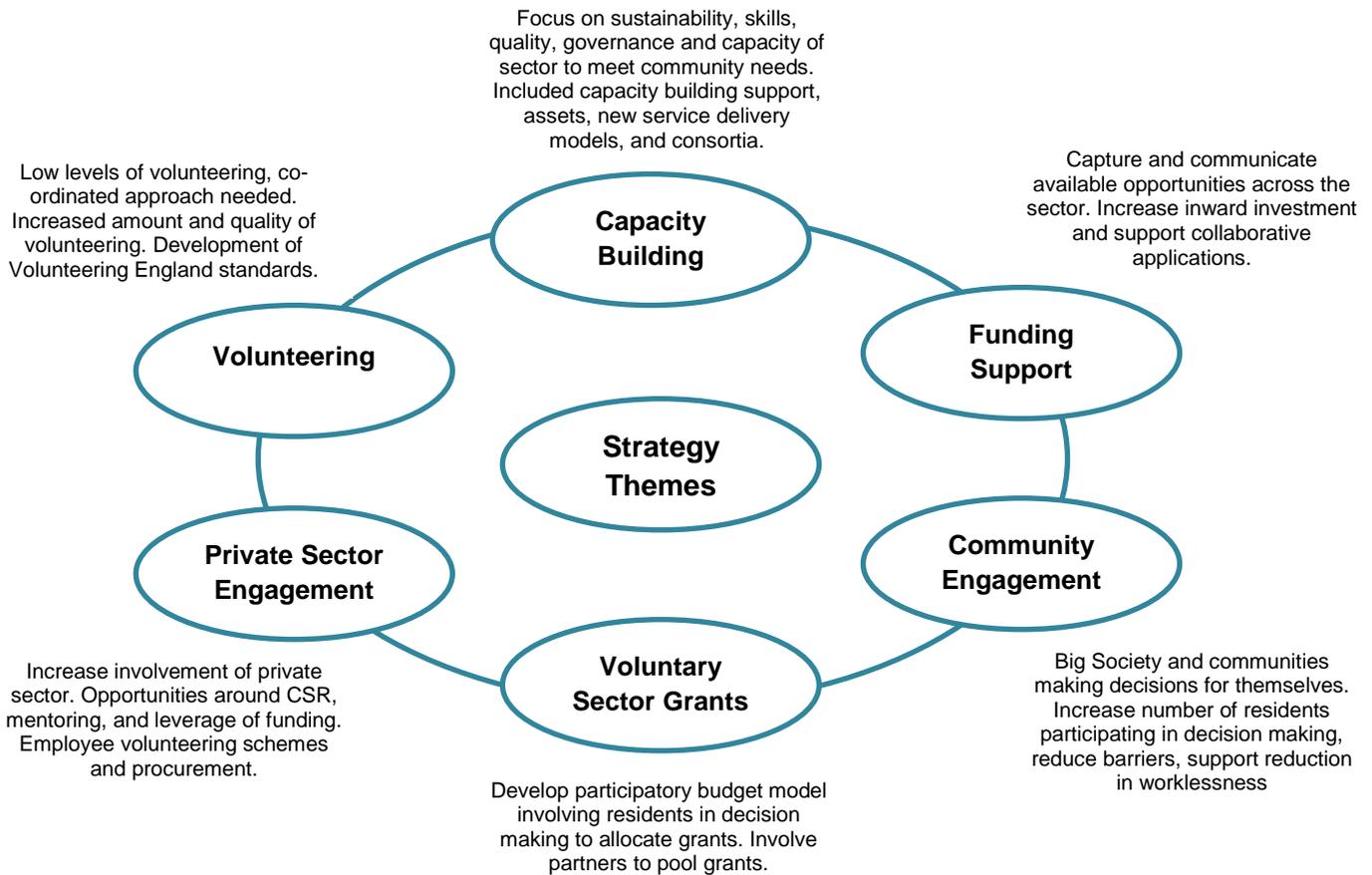
The Third Sector Strategy 2011-2014 Vision was:

“The Trafford Partnership believes a thriving and sustainable Third Sector is the key to our future ability to service communities well and design the Third Sector into the ‘Life of Trafford’.

We want to enable voluntary, community and faith organisations to play a key role in the Borough’s future as an independent and innovative force, delivering services and identifying original solutions to the design of future services.”

The six key themes of the strategy have shifted their focus over the past three years.

How it looked in 2011



Over the last three years, the capacity building has become more targeted, with an increasing number of groups wanting to develop their services and prove quality to funders and commissioners. The Trafford Quality Mark is becoming increasingly popular with organisations that have recognised its value. It has helped organisations to take a structured approach to their development, and in securing buy-in from both the staff and management committees within organisations. In addition, other frontline support workers from across Trafford are using the small groups' healthcheck with groups. It is very useful for groups that want to be in a better position to develop from and apply for funding.

An increasing number of groups are looking at the transfer of assets from Trafford Council, for example social enterprises looking to create health and wellbeing centres, through to bowling clubs looking to maintain their own greens and pavilions in order to attract additional members. Thrive has been supporting the process, helping groups with business planning and funding. Links with funders such as the Big Lottery have improved, with a pipeline of large bids being developed. This has helped to increase the levels of success with bids, with some large Reaching Communities bids being granted to Trafford based organisations that will help to fund the next three years of running costs. The strategic inward investment network has been re-grouped to undertake mapping of the investment coming into Trafford and where this can be targeted in future to help to meet locality and borough wide priorities.

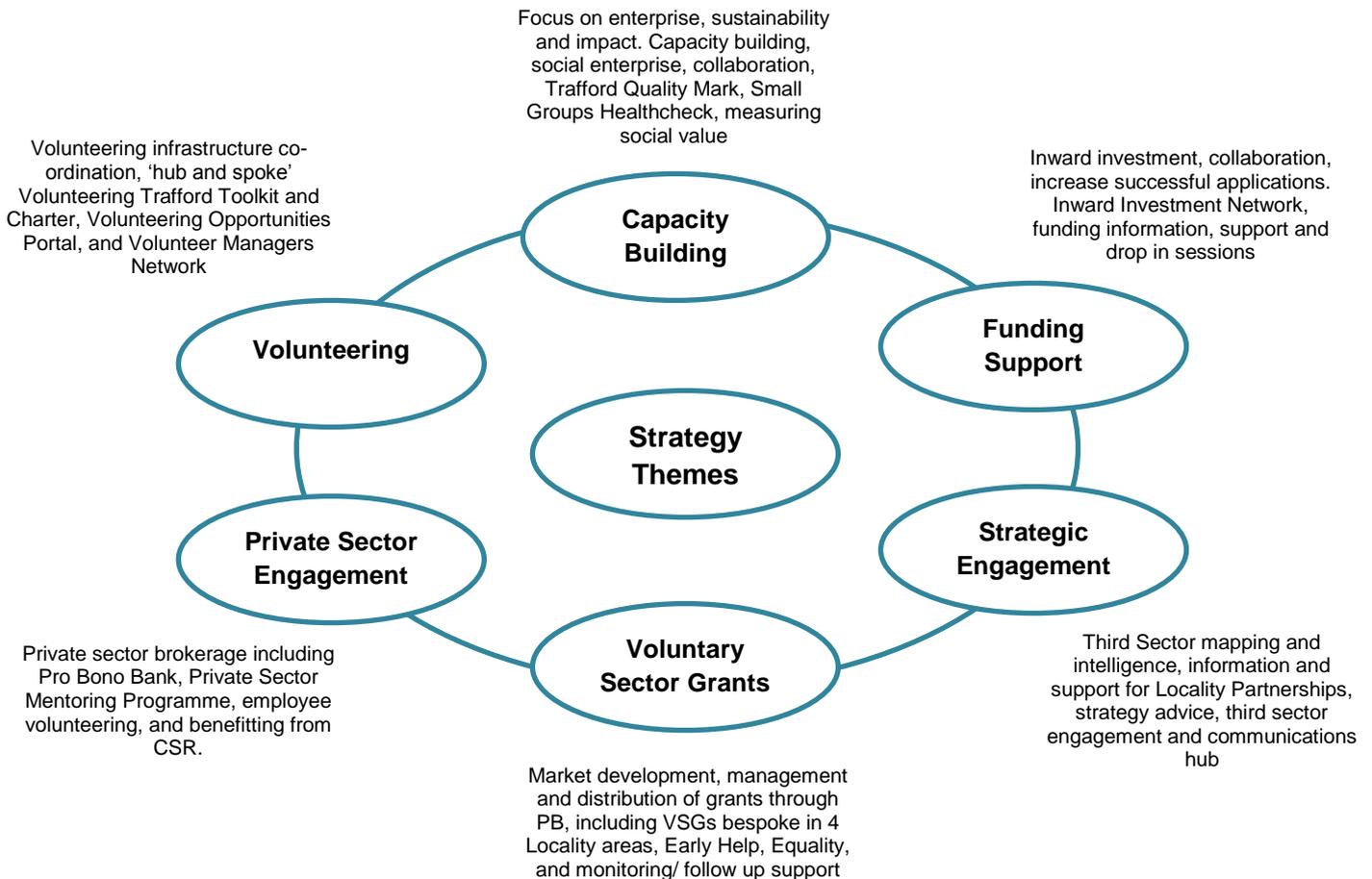
Thrive is part of locality working across Trafford, helping the Partnerships to set priorities and provide feedback from the third sector about opportunities and challenges at a local level. The Youth Trust is an emerging priority and Thrive will be facilitating the development of Young People's and Providers Forums that will be the link to the groups in the area working with children and young people.

The Voluntary Sector Grants scheme has developed and improved year on year since 2012. Over 1450 people voted at the four events held during summer 2015 and 28 of the 45 groups that were successful had not received funding before. Each year has seen increased numbers of residents voting and a significant percentage of new groups receiving funding, which were two key objectives of this element of the contract. The voting events are now a highlight of the locality calendar.

Business engagement has developed during the year, with 79 new businesses now engaged through the Pro Bono bank, team challenges or the business weeks of action.

The Thrive Trafford on-line hub is now acting as the main source of information on the VCSE sector. This includes volunteering, with over 75 different volunteering opportunities now being advertised on the site. The Volunteer Manager's Network has become a place where organisations meet to discuss issues affecting volunteers and network with their peers. The hub is being further developed to being able to offer brokerage, as well as promotion and is becoming a well-used tool for organisations in Trafford.

How it looks now



We have seen considerable progress in our vision for a thriving and sustainable third sector, with a clear recognition that the sector cannot be seen in isolation, and that a more holistic view of the relationships between public, private, VCSE and residents is the next logical step for progressing our vision for Trafford.

Having said that, we recognise there remain some very clear development and support needs and opportunities for the VCSE sector. Our understanding of the sector has been enhanced through the experience of the past three year's delivery by Thrive, their continuous conversations and relationships with providers and partners. The Quality Mark, Small Groups Healthcheck, asset transfer, capacity building, funding support, Social Value and business engagement, and volunteering infrastructure are as pertinent now as ever, and the direction of travel must be to build on successful provision to continue to deliver a thriving and sustainable VCSE sector. These essential elements of VCSE infrastructure support have been retained within the themes of this strategy set out in section 8.

5. The rationale for change

Nationally, rising demand, changing demographics and reduced funding means that councils and public services have to change the way they work. Projections from the Local Government Association report a total funding shortfall of £14.4 billion by 2019/2020 from 2012/2013 figures. This figure is a combination of increasing costs, (£7.4 billion) and budgets cuts (£7 billion).

Public services face unprecedented challenges. Between 2011/2012 and 2016/2017, there will be a reduction of 18% in funding for elderly social care, and 23% reduction for other social care. This reduction is in the context of an increase in demand due to rising life expectancy and the impact of social inequalities. Solely in relation to health and social care key challenges include:

- in 2010, one million people were aged over 65 years and required daily assistance to manage a disability, by 2030 this will increase to 1.9 million
- in 2010, 15.4 million people had at least one long-term health condition, by 2025; this will increase to 18 million.
- by 2022, there will be 40% more people over 65 years requiring care, and 32% more people living with a moderate or severe disability, compared to 2010 rates .

Many of England's local authorities have responded to this challenge by reducing or removing services, driving greater efficiencies and improving the productivity through new operating models. In the long term these strategies, designed to realise immediate and substantial savings, are not an answer to the long term demands of a changing society.

However, there are national, regional and local policies and best practice which could help to address these issues. This strategy seeks to recognise and bring these together because they directly impact the VCSE sector and require changing relationships between sectors, and between the citizen and the state.

Greater Manchester devolution – growth and reform

In November 2014 the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leaders of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority signed an historic agreement, devolving new powers and responsibilities to Greater Manchester, across employment and skills, economic growth, transport and health and social care, with more expected to come.

Trafford plays an important role in Greater Manchester. Our economy is the strongest in the North West; a higher proportion of our population is educated to degree level or above; our education and children's services are the best in the country and we are well connected with good transport infrastructure which will only improve with Metrolink through Trafford Park and to the Trafford Centre.

Devolution presents huge opportunities for Trafford to have a lead role across the region. Trafford has the ability to showcase the great work that happens here, putting us in a strong position to shape new structures and programmes of work. This means positive outcomes for our residents and businesses.

Just as the Trafford Partnership is reviewing its structures and priorities to ensure it is ready to take every opportunity presented by devolution, so must the public, private and VCSE sectors. We must use the strengths and assets we have in Trafford to secure the best possible outcomes for our residents and businesses locally and across the city-region. We must ensure we have connections into Greater Manchester, which will enable clear benefits to flow from the city-region through to our localities, communities and residents.

Public Service Reform

In July 2011 Government published the Open Public Services White Paper setting out its public service reform programme, through increasing choice, opening services up to a wider range of providers, devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level and improving transparency and accountability of public services. The models by which public services have been delivered for the last 50 years are no longer affordable. In large part this is due to reductions in public spending, but also the significant increase in demand for services and increased public expectation about the quality of services.

Councils and public sector partners are at the forefront of meeting these challenges and are driving transformational change and redesign of services, developing new partnerships and ways of integrating delivery to provide services that are fundamentally better – in terms of results, value for money and efficiency. Commissioning is increasingly a central part of the approach to redesigning services because it offers a means of joining up resources to focus on improving outcomes for citizens in the most efficient and effective way both now and into the future.

The Greater Manchester Strategy 2013-20 'Better Together' sets the overarching strategic framework for Public Service Reform in Greater Manchester. It sets out a collaborative and ambitious programme with two linked aims:

- to re-design public services to build the independence and self-reliance of GM's residents; and,
- to collaboratively invest in public service interventions to help all GM partners sustainably reduce demand for their services.

These reforms are expressly designed to encourage families, individuals and communities to lead more productive and fulfilling lives.

In addition, the development of an integrated health and wellbeing plan for Trafford, focussing on innovative transformation and integration of the health and social care systems, in order to redirect resources from expensive acute services to prevention, relies as much on a culture of behaviour change amongst residents, communities and service providers as does on structural reform.

With such broad outcomes, as commissioning changes and services are delivered differently, so Public Service Reform (PSR) becomes simply 'service reform', affecting all sectors and communities. Our Locality Working programme will make this manageable, enabling improved mapping of services, greater understanding of local needs and assets and fostering more productive relationships between statutory agencies, VCSE sector, businesses and residents.

Although PSR offers new opportunities it is also a period of significant challenge for the VCSE sector, squeezed between reduced funding and increased demand. We must make sure that organisations in Trafford have the capacity and skills to attract investment, whilst being flexible and responsive to ensure sustainability in a dynamic environment.

Social Value

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 came into force on 31st January 2013. It is now a legal obligation for local authorities and other public bodies to consider the social good that could come from the procurement of services. The aim of the Act is to ensure that, as part of commissioning and procurement processes, councils give consideration to the wider impact of service delivery. It allows authorities, for example, to choose a supplier who not only provides the most economically advantageous service, but one which goes beyond the basic contract terms and secures wider benefits for the community. Whilst the Act does not define what is meant by 'social value', the GM Combined Authority has defined it as:

A process whereby organisations meet their needs for good, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.

Statutory requirements of the Act only apply to public service contracts above EU thresholds, however in order to incorporate the good practice associated with Social Value into mainstream commissioning and procurement practice, it is the intention of Trafford Council, as part of the Combined Authority, to embed the Great Manchester Social Value Framework within all commissioning and procurement activity wherever proportionate and practicable.

Social Value forms a key element in the delivery of Public Sector Reform, with the objectives being to:

- promote employment and economic sustainability – tackle unemployment and facilitate the development of skills
- raise the living standards of local residents – working towards living wage, maximise employee access to entitlements such as childcare and encourage suppliers to source labour from within Greater Manchester
- promote participation and citizen engagement - encourage resident participation and promote active citizenship
- build the capacity and sustainability of the voluntary and community sector – practical support for local voluntary and community groups
- promote equity and fairness – target effort towards those in the greatest need or facing the greatest disadvantage and tackle deprivation across the borough
- promote environmental sustainability – reduce wastage, limit energy consumption and procure materials from sustainable sources

These clearly are the building blocks of strong communities, and as such Social Value should be maximised to support this strategic vision, ensuring social value contributions are targeted where most impact can be gained.

Furthermore, Social Value presents considerable opportunities for the VCSE sector, as it provides a way for smaller, local groups to compete for contracts by highlighting their wider contribution to communities. There is still work to do with the sector in supporting them to evidence their contribution to social value, as it can be very resource intensive completing Cost Benefit Analysis and other similar tools. There is also work to be done to clarify how social value from procurement with the private sector can be used to deliver against Trafford's strategic and locality priorities. Maximising social value and support for the VCSE sector in this area have therefore been retained as priorities for this strategy.

Early Help and Prevention

The early help and prevention agenda involves nearly all service providers, as at its heart is the recognition that it is better for people, and resources, to identify and deal with problems early rather than to respond when difficulties have become acute and demand action by more expensive services.

Trafford's Early Help Strategy sets out a clear goal, to enable the children and young people of Trafford to be safe, aspire and achieve their full potential, regardless of the circumstances in which they are born. Early help means providing help for children and families as soon as problems start to emerge or where possible identification of potential problems even before they arise.

Early help is most effective when delivered in partnership with statutory and voluntary partners, with communities and with families and young people. Council, police, health, housing providers, Job Centre Plus and Work Programme providers have been working together for several years on the national Troubled Families Programme, known in Trafford as Stronger Families. The programme has encouraged new ways of partnership working to engage some of the most difficult, and therefore most expensive families in the borough 'taking a whole family holistic approach'.

We are increasingly recognising that the front-line of service delivery is often not the public sector, but in communities themselves. People seek advice and information, support and help from within their own community; their friends, neighbours, family, and an extensive network of VCSE organisations, both large and small. As this local action supports public services to achieve strategic objectives, prevents the need for more costly services and delivers more sustainable outcomes for individuals and families, it is worthy of investment. This strategy seeks to acknowledge and resource community resilience and consequently the importance of early help and prevention.

Shaping Demand

Finally, to reduce demand on services we must make substantial cultural changes, placing residents, communities and the VCSE sector at the heart of improving community resilience. A variety of techniques for understanding and managing demand are now emerging across a range of public services, including:

- Customer insight, using tools such as user panels, customer journey mapping, analysis of data sets, risk stratification, to build a clearer picture of how and why people engage with public services.

- Changing the relationship between citizen and state, encouraging greater community cohesion and resilience, and changing public expectations
- Investing in prevention and early intervention, for example social prescribing, an approach that links patients in primary care with non- medical sources of support within the community. The social prescribing model will offer another option for GPs, and enable them to take a more holistic approach to improving the health and well-being of their patients and will complement the services that people already receive from the NHS.
- Focusing on value and outcomes, with less emphasis on cost and output as performance metrics, as a way of reducing waste and eliminating excess provision
- Using behavioural science to inform interventions, understanding and targeting behavioural drivers, segmenting user groups, using behaviour change techniques.
- Designing and integrating services around the user by involving users in the design and delivery of services, improving integration of delivery, co-production, increasing self-management, peer-to-peer and community support.

6. Locality Working in Trafford

Trafford Council and Trafford Partnership are responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above in many ways, for example through large-scale collaboration, integration and service re-design across health and social care, working more closely with the private sector in joint ventures, and involving residents and users in the delivery of personal and community services, such as personal budgets, asset transfer and volunteering.

Another way Trafford is responding is through *Locality Working*, a programme of activity that is envisaged will enable local, practical and tangible delivery of Public Service Reform, Early Help and Prevention and Shaping Demand, maximise the impact of Social Value for the communities of Trafford, and ensure that Greater Manchester devolution is connected to, can be influenced by and delivers benefits for Trafford's residents and communities.

Locality working is a way to work collaboratively and innovatively to make best use of the assets we have in our local area. This means bringing together everyone, from individual residents, businesses, community and faith groups, councillors, community leaders and public sector bodies, to work in partnership, share resources and enable new ideas to develop, making full use of the physical and human assets, financial resources and community spirit that thrives within our localities. This builds strong communities.

Locality Working:

- Sees residents, communities, businesses and organisations as equal partners
- Brings people together to achieve things we cannot do alone
- Shares power with local people, and adds value to their local activity
- Aligns strategic priorities with local communities to deliver joint action
- Provides the tools and support to local people to take action
- Shares information, skills and resources and collaborate with partners and people
- Is creative, dynamic, supportive and challenging in order to achieve our shared ambitions.

Benefits of Locality Working are:

- Increasing active citizenship
- Increasing community ownership of issues and challenges and developing innovative solutions
- Reducing demand for services
- Improving transparency and accountability to local people
- Providing local communities with the opportunity to influence change and commissioning decisions

Locality planning is one of our tools for locality working, as a framework which facilitates public service reform and collaboration, reduces demand through conversation with residents, and increases community action to build resilience. Locality Plans will align strategic priorities with the needs and assets of local communities, influencing how local services are delivered, where resources are used and what residents can do to solve local issues and support their community.

The development of the plans will include mapping and evaluation of current services, leading to the development of new, improved and innovative services, more coproduction and collaboration, and better use of resources.

To lead Locality Working, Trafford has established Locality Partnerships, made up of Councillors, partners including the police, health services and council, and Community Ambassadors. There are four Locality Partnerships that comprise of the following areas:

- Old Trafford & Stretford - Gorse Hill, Longford, Stretford and Clifford
- Sale - Bucklow St Martins (Sale) - Ashton upon Mersey, Brooklands, Priory, Sale Moor and St Marys
- South Trafford - Altrincham, Bowdon, Broadheath, Hale Barns, Hale Central, Timperley and Village
- Urmston & Partington - Bucklow St Martins (Partington), Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston

Their purpose is to:

- Increase resident and community involvement in local democracy and decision making, increasing service responsiveness and accountability
- Increase involvement in local priority setting by enabling improved engagement with residents and communities
- Increase volunteering, increasing social cohesion, community capacity and resilience

They will do this by:

- Enabling the community to contribute to the solution to key challenges, ensuring improvements are more sustainable and more effective, whilst influencing public sector services to redeploy resources more effectively
- Brokering engagement between strategic partner organisations and local residents and communities, utilising more effective methods of engagement
- Governance, engagement and communication of Locality Plans

Locality working is Trafford's approach to a methodology known as Asset Based Community Development. This focuses on maximising the strengths and assets in an area, not on the negatives and needs. So we focus on "what's strong, not what's wrong". How we engage people in this and the language we use also has to change. We must shift from a 'you said, we did' approach, with the 'customer' as a passive recipient of services, to exploring the 3 important questions:

‘what are communities best placed to do for themselves’, (resilience)
‘what can only public services do’ (statutory/critical services for the most in need)
‘what support can communities and services do better together?’ (co-production)

At the heart of ABCD is the belief that everyone is an asset and has something to offer their community. As part of the locality working programme in June 2015 we launched *Be Bold ... Be the Difference*, a borough-wide campaign to encourage more residents and businesses to get involved in their local community. We want residents to know that they can make a difference to the lives of their friends and neighbours and themselves, by being more active, volunteering, joining local groups or simply by being more neighbourly.

Furthermore, there are organisations across Trafford who can help and motivate residents to Be Bold by signposting to local groups, connecting them to the right people and supporting with funding. We have begun a programme of training to front-line staff across partner organisations in Trafford on how to be a Community Builder, enabling, supporting and connecting residents and communities.

7. Implications for this strategy

Public sector organisations, local businesses, the VCSE sector and residents all have a role to play in responding to the challenges and opportunities set out above, and enabling effective implementation of Locality Working.

Working alone, individually or within a single sector, will not deliver the outcomes we need. New and strengthened relationships across sectors and with residents, which foster a culture of working together, equally and innovatively are required. As such, relationship building, creating the space and conditions for collaboration and sharing resources are key elements of this strategy.

Building skills, capacity and quality within the VCSE is essential and requires investment to ensure the sector can access commissioning and deliver quality services. We need a sector which is robust, more enterprising, more willing to change and can adapt in response to dramatic changes that are taking place in the external environment. The VCSE sector needs support to be able to adapt to the changing landscape of funding, embracing new methods to secure investment and growth. Similarly, for communities to innovate, for example through social enterprise or asset transfer, there must be investment in their skills and capacity. Strong leadership is crucial to developing a stronger VCSE and Strong Communities, and we need to develop ‘excellent’ leaders within the VCSE and in communities, as well as develop ‘excellent’ organisations.

The public sector must embrace innovation and change in how services are delivered, opening themselves up to collaboration with other sectors, retaining a focus on quality as much as cost, and recognising the impact of local solutions. Public Service Reform, and the long-term benefits of devolution, will only be sustainable if they engage communities in change and services share power with them

Local businesses and residents are recognising their changing role and contribution to their surroundings, and this needs to be enabled at every opportunity by the public sector. Social Value offers a process and structure to businesses and the public sector to work together, but there are many other ways local businesses can contribute to their local area and workforce, and these need to be maximised in a way that engages business and connects them to others.

Finally, residents and communities are our greatest untapped asset. Communities that are involved in decision-making about their area and the services within it, that are well networked and supportive and where neighbours look out for each other, all have a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing. Our challenge is to create the conditions for community assets to thrive, to remove any barriers and for our services to work alongside communities in ways that are empowering, engaging and meaningful.

8. Building Strong Communities themes

To achieve our vision of strong communities, through a thriving and sustainable VCSE sector, improved partnership working across sectors, and empowered and active residents, we have identified six key themes.

Theme 1

Building mutually beneficial relationships across sectors and with communities by creating equal partnerships by sharing skills, assets and resources, providing strong local leadership, creating spaces to come together, utilising evidence and celebrating success

Outcomes

- Improved understanding of local needs and assets, opportunities and challenges, and ways to address them.
- Reduced barriers to engagement and participation by residents, businesses and organisations
- Robust projects that bring together a range of organisations and people from across sectors and communities and deliver long term outcomes for Trafford
- Information and resources are shared across the Trafford Partnership
- The Trafford Partnership has strong leadership, with a clear vision, inclusive culture and inspiring messages

Theme 2

Brokering innovative and smarter ways of working such as asset based community development, social enterprise and service integration & collaboration between organisations at all levels (including through specific work streams such as the Youth Trust)

Outcomes

- Innovative and creative responses to opportunities and challenges are embraced and encouraged
- Services are delivered that focus on improving outcomes for individuals and communities, not organisational structures
- Residents, communities businesses and organisations are seen as equal partners
- Strategic priorities and aligned with local communities to deliver joint action
- Local people have the tools and support to take action
- Improved awareness and valuing of community ownership and resilience
- Increased involvement of the private sector in supporting local communities and the VCSE sector and in delivering against Trafford's strategic and locality priorities.

Theme 3

Innovative income generation and investment to ensure financial sustainability in a mixed model and enterprise culture, encompassing social value, Community Infrastructure Levy, commissioning, national and regional opportunities

Outcomes

- Increased inward investment in to the Borough from external sources
- Increased number of collaborative applications for funding
- Public sector procurement maximises social value opportunities, values social return on investment, and assesses the impact of social value on strategic and local priorities as well as on outcomes for communities
- A VCSE sector that is responsive to outsourcing of public services, personalisation, co-production, integration and has an enterprise culture
- Increased partnership, co-ordination and consortia working within the VCSE sector to maximise value, efficiency, resources and skills
- Reduction in the number of organisations that face financial difficulty which puts residents and communities at risk
- Increased third sector growth in terms of mutuals, cooperatives and social enterprises
- The VCSE are able to evidence Social Return on Investment (SROI)

Theme 4

Building quality and capacity within the VCSE sector and communities to enable sustainable growth and achievement of positive outcomes.

Outcomes

- Increased sustainability, skills, quality, governance and capacity within the VCSE sector to meet community needs
- A VCSE sector which can demonstrate its impact on residents and communities in Trafford and is valued by other sectors and stakeholders

Theme 5

Developing our physical assets through financial investment, community involvement and asset transfer.

Outcomes

- Increased numbers of community groups managing community assets

Theme 6

Developing our people assets, by increasing resident action and taking a strategic approach to volunteering, providing a platform for opportunities, brokerage, data collection and impact monitoring.

Outcomes

- Increased numbers of residents participating in local decision making and co-production of services and evidence of their involvement making a clear impact
- Improved rates of customer satisfaction with public and third sector services
- A co-ordinated volunteering support service which meets the needs of volunteers, organisations and businesses across the Borough.
- Increased amount and quality of volunteering and social capital within our communities.
- Establishment of employee volunteering schemes across public and private sector organisations
- Improved range of positive activities and vocational opportunities which support personal & vocational development

8. Delivering the strategy

Delivery of this strategy is the responsibility of a wider cross section of organisations across Trafford from all the sectors. It will be much broader than the previous Third Sector Strategy which was more concentrated within a single infrastructure contract.

The cultural shift required to deliver services differently, build and change relationships and enable and empower residents and communities has to come from within organisations themselves, leading and empowering staff to think and work differently. The Trafford Partnership Executive, in endorsing this strategy, and the programmes contained within it, are committing to supporting delivery.

There are a number of key projects that will drive delivery of the themes, and elements within themes. For example, the locality planning process will support delivery of Theme 1. The establishment of the Youth Trust will contribute to Theme 2. The development of Community Builders will support Theme 6. All partner organisations are involved in these themes, and as such will be contributing to their delivery.

However, there will still be a role for a VCSE support organisation, to lead delivery of specific themes. These include social enterprise, volunteering, asset transfer and capacity building. The details and scale of this contract will be detailed through a procurement process.

Finally, there will be opportunities for specific commissions to deliver discreet projects connected to the strategy themes. For example, the commissioning of support to roll-out ABCD, Community Builder and Community Connector training and support.

9. Governance

Governance of the strategy will primarily sit within the Strong Communities Partnership Board of Trafford Partnership.

Annual Delivery Plans will be produced, with milestones, outputs and outcomes tracked by the Partnerships and Communities Team at Trafford Council.

Practical delivery of collaborative projects within communities will be overseen by the Locality Partnerships, and successes and challenges reported to the Strong Communities Partnership Board.

As such, partner organisations will need to build the strategy into their own delivery plans and monitor achievement accordingly. All partners are responsible for positively supporting delivery, and will be held accountable where necessary by the Strong Communities Partnership Board and Trafford Partnership Executive.