

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet  
Council

**DATE:** 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011  
27<sup>th</sup> January 2011

**SUBJECT:** Big Idea 5 – Transforming Sefton – Voluntary, Community,  
and Faith Sector Review – Stage 1

**WARDS AFFECTED:** All

**REPORT OF:** Samantha Tunney, Assistant Chief Executive  
0151 934 2174 / 2721

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Sue Holden, Head of Corporate Improvement, x4722  
Roger Robinson, Research & Information Manager – Adult  
Social Care, x3429  
Ian Willman, Area Performance Coordinator, x2015

**EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL:** No

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

To consider the initial outcomes of the review of the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector in Sefton

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

To enable Cabinet to make recommendations to Council regarding the proposed options within the report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Cabinet is requested to:**

1. Note the initial outcomes of Stage 1 of the review of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector in Sefton.
2. Note the funding allocations excluded from this review as detailed at Appendix A.
3. Note the impact of the reduction in specific Coalition Government grants on the sector – over which the Council could not assert any influence.
4. Note the developments in relation to progressing the Big Ideas transformation programme on becoming a Commissioning Council.

5. Approve the honouring of 90 day contractual commitments for all Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations or groups that lose 100% funding, prioritise £10,661 from the 2011/12 budget and make appropriate recommendations to Council.
6. Agree the reduced allocations of funding for organisations as detailed in Appendix D1 and mandate Officers to formally write to the organisations advising them that the funding has ceased and make appropriate recommendations to Council.
7. Agree the proposed reductions in funding for organisations as detailed in Appendix D2 and mandate Officers to formally write to the organisations advising them that the funding has been proportionately reduced and / or ceased and that this will be further reviewed in 2011/12 and make appropriate recommendations to Council.
8. Mandate Officers to formally write to the organisations in Appendix B1, 2, and 3 advising them that this funding has ceased and / or will cease (LEGI March 2012) and the Council will not have the resources to continue with these schemes once the specific funding comes to a natural end and make appropriate recommendations to Council.
9. Approve £15,705 (core) to be retained and agree the provision of £56,258 for the activity detailed in Appendix C to continue for one year only.
10. Approve the establishment of a set of reviews as detailed at Appendix E and to agree to prioritise £1,855,353 in 2011/12 pending the outcomes of the reviews and make appropriate recommendations to Council.
11. Approve the establishment of a consolidated grant fund of £50,000 for 2011/2012 and mandate Officers and Members of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Overseeing Group to establish criteria and a process for allocation of such funds to eligible organisations and that this fund be the responsibility of a designated Cabinet Member (as yet to be determined) and make appropriate recommendations to Council.
12. Request further reports to be brought on the outcomes of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Reviews proposed with any further recommendations.

**Council is requested to:**

1. Note the initial outcomes of Stage 1 of the review of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector in Sefton.
2. Note the funding allocations excluded from this review as detailed at Appendix A.

3. Subject to the consideration of Cabinet on 27 January 2011, note the impact of the reduction in specific Coalition Government grants on the sector – over which the Council could not assert any influence
4. Subject to the consideration of Cabinet on 27 January 2011, note the developments in relation to progressing the Big Ideas transformation programme on becoming a Commissioning Council
5. Subject to the consideration of Cabinet on 27 January 2011, approve the honouring of 90 day contractual commitments for all Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations or groups that lose 100% funding, and prioritise £10,661 from the 2011/12 budget.
6. Subject to the consideration of Cabinet on 27 January 2011, agree the reduced allocations of funding for organisations as detailed in Appendix D1 and mandate Officers to formally write to the organisations advising them that the funding has ceased.
7. Subject to the consideration of Cabinet on 27 January 2011, agree the proposed reductions in funding for organisations as detailed in Appendix D2 and mandate Officers to formally write to the organisations advising them that the funding has been proportionately reduced and / or ceased and that this will be further reviewed in 2011/12.
8. Subject to the consideration of Cabinet on 27 January 2011, mandate Officers to formally write to the organisations in Appendix B1, 2, and 3 advising them that this funding has ceased and / or will cease (LEGI March 2012 and the Council will not have the resources to continue with these schemes once the specific funding comes to a natural end.
9. Approve £15,705 (core) to be retained and agree the provision of £56,258 for the activity detailed in Appendix C to continue for one year only.
10. Approve the establishment of a set of reviews as detailed at Appendix E and to agree to prioritise £1,855,353 in 2011/12 pending the outcomes of the reviews.
11. Subject to the consideration of Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011, approve the establishment of a consolidated grant fund of £50,000 for 2011/2012 and mandate Officers and Members of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Overseeing Group to establish criteria and a process for allocation of such funds to eligible organisations and that this fund be the responsibility of a designated Cabinet Member (as yet to be determined)
12. Request further reports to be brought on the outcomes of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Reviews proposed with any further recommendations.

**KEY DECISION:**

No. This report is not a key decision in itself but forms part of the process for setting the Council's budget.

**FORWARD PLAN:**

Yes. Setting the Council's budget is included on the forward plan.

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

Immediately after Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

Not to agree the issues identified will increase budgetary pressures on the Council.

**IMPLICATIONS:**Budget/Policy Framework:

The proposals within this report impact on the budget and policy framework and therefore need to be determined by Council, as they form part of next and future years budgets.

Financial:-

The options and actions proposed in this report will support the Council's budget setting process for 2011/12.

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2006/ 2007 £</b>	<b>2007/ 2008 £</b>	<b>2008/ 2009 £</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resource				

Does the External Funding have an expiry date?	
Y/N	
How will the service be funded post expiry?	

Legal: Formal budgetary decisions must be made at full Council.

Risk Assessment: Early decision making in relation to budget issues will help to mitigate the impact of the consequential changes by giving sufficient time to undertake the required formal consultation / notification processes.

Asset Management: There are no direct implications contained in the report. However there may be indirect implications which will be assessed as implementation progresses

#### **CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS**

The Interim Head of Corporate Finance & Information Services has been consulted and his comments have been incorporated into this report.

#### **FD620 /2011**

Consultation and engagement with the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector has been under taken including:

- Open letters to the sector from Margaret Carney (October 2010, 16th November 2010, 12th January 2010)
- Dialog Event (10th December 2010)
- Forum meetings (6th November, 9th November, 10th November, 11th November, 16th November, 18th November, 23rd November, 30th November, 2nd December, 4th December, 7th December, 8th December, 14th December, 21st December)

**CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:**

<b><u>Corporate Objective</u></b>		<b><u>Positive Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Neutral Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Negative Impact</u></b>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Creating Safe Communities		√	
3	Jobs and Prosperity			√
4	Improving Health and Well-Being		√	
5	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People		√	

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

<sup>1</sup> Modernising Commissioning: Increasing the role of Charities, Social Enterprises, Mutuels and Co-operatives in Public Service Delivery, December 2010

<sup>2</sup> Localism Bill, December 2010

<sup>3</sup> National Transition Funding guidance

## 1. Background

Members will be aware from previous reports to Cabinet that the Council had forecast a budget gap of £58m over the next three years. The Council now faces a much bigger financial challenge than originally forecast. The Government Grant Settlement of the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010 revealed the need for an extra £6 million of savings in the next financial year. The Council must now find a total of £44 million in 2011/12 compared to the £38 million it had originally been planning for.

The settlement means Sefton Council has suffered a 25% decrease in Government support over the next two years and will have to find a savings total of £64 million by 2014. This equates to a stark 27% of the Council's controllable budget as opposed to the nationally announced 6.74% reduction in spending power. With the Council being a relatively low-spending and high-performing authority, opportunities to make savings through efficiency are minimal. The increased level of savings means that the Council faces an even starker picture than previously indicated.

In addition to such financial constraint the change in Government policy direction, as set out in the Localism Bill, places a responsibility on Local Authorities, their partners and communities to make decisions on what they consider to be local priorities. This means that funding will no longer be received as 'ring fenced' grants but will be replaced by fewer, larger grants, where the local authority is given the freedom and flexibility to use this income as they deem appropriate.

This significant change from prescriptive ring fenced grant funding to a single grant with freedom and flexibility, may result in different views being developed amongst the wider stakeholder groups, including the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector. This is compounded by different government departments issuing different interpretations of what remains ring-fenced and what goes into the overall settlement for local authorities. For example in previous years Children, Schools and Families had numerous ring-fenced grants where funding was required to be spent in specific areas. In 2011/12 these multiple ring-fenced grants will be replaced by a single Early Intervention Grant which will not be ring-fenced and over which the Local Authority will have the freedom and flexibility of expenditure. This single Early Intervention Grant funding stream has nationally suffered a reduction of some £270 million from the previous multiple ring-fenced funding.

At its meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 30<sup>th</sup> September, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 25<sup>th</sup> November and the 16<sup>th</sup> December Cabinet and Council identified savings and agreed a prioritisation process be undertaken. A workshop was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2010 with Members to discuss the priorities of the Council, as defined as:-

- Critical
- Frontline
- Regulatory

These were reported to Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010 and ratified at full Council on the same day. The Cabinet and Council will, on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011, be asked to prioritise all other services of the Council and consider proposals around reducing further or stopping altogether some services that the Council currently delivers. (See report elsewhere on the agenda).

As a result of these processes and the identification of critical services a number of funding allocations have been excluded from this review. These are detailed at Appendix A and account for £4,676,379. These have been identified as being critical by Children Schools and Families and Adult Social Care Services as agreed at Cabinet and Council on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010. As such they will be assessed in the light of the priorities for these service areas moving forward. Normal contractual discussions will be taking place with these organisations as part of the commissioning cycle.

## **2. Transformation – Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Project Group**

As part of the Council's '*Transformation Programme*' a project group of Officers and Elected Members was established to undertake a review into how the Council supports, commissions, and procures services through the Voluntary, Community, and Faith Sector. This review project is one of the six 'Big Ideas' transformational projects which members are already aware of. The Member Overseeing Group has worked to assess the impact of the Coalition Government's reductions on Local Authority funding and its subsequent implications for the Voluntary, Community, and Faith Sector within Sefton.

The specific objectives of the review were agreed as:

- To map the total resources, across all services, which are currently made available by the Council to community, voluntary and faith sector organisations;
- To assess the contribution the sector makes to the achievement of Borough outcomes and identify any gaps or duplication;
- To consider the potential effect on the Voluntary, Community, and Faith sector of a reduction in grants provided directly by the Government through various grant streams and to consider how this will impact upon outcomes within the borough;
- To identify additional opportunities where the sector can provide a more cost effective value for money solution to existing public or private sector providers;
- To move towards a commissioning approach, ensuring that need is identified and appropriate outcomes, performance measures and standards are in place;



- To work with members of the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector to develop an open and transparent model of commissioning. One that is proportionate and appropriate for the circumstances and recognises that in some cases the allocation of small grants should not require a major commissioning infrastructure;
- To facilitate engagement with providers within the Voluntary, Community, and Faith sector in order to develop the local markets where appropriate, which will be best placed to deliver commissioned services in the future.
- To examine whether services currently provided by the Council would be best delivered through the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector.

Since the establishment of the review project, the national policy context has changed dramatically with localism, decentralisation and public sector reform placing the voluntary, community and faith sector at the heart of the Coalition Government new agenda. The Coalition Government have in recent weeks published the Consultation paper on Public Sector Reform, the Green Paper: Modernising Commissioning - Increasing the role of charities, social enterprises, mutual's and co-operatives in public service delivery and the Localism Bill 2010. It is crucial that the Member Overseeing Group for the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector consider this new and dynamically changing policy context in bringing forward any recommendations on how the sector should be commissioned in the future. This new policy direction overlaps the work of the voluntary, community and faith sector Project Group and the Big Ideas Project Group on Commissioning and Procurement. It is important, if the appropriate processes are to be put in place to meet the new policy agenda that the work of these two groups is brought together.

The next stage of this project will explore how this new policy agenda will impact on the Commissioning of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations, and the opportunities this may provide for the commissioning of the sector. However, it should be recognised that there will need to be some development within the Voluntary, Community and Faith based organisations in terms of collaborating together to meet the new and emerging commissioning opportunities. In addition, there is a need for VCF organisations to explore the sharing of services such as back office functions, and the sector is being encouraged to explore new arrangements to achieve efficiencies. Local Authority delivered services are similarly exploring opportunities for shared services as a means of making efficiencies and reducing costs.

It is proposed that the Member Overseeing Group for the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector oversees the specific developments in relation to the 'commissioning framework' for the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector and that this be reported to the Member Overseeing Group for the Commissioning and Procurement Project. Given the aforementioned change in Policy context, it is proposed that the Procurement and Commissioning Project should be subsumed within a broader Project charged with developing the Framework for a Commissioning Council. The current Commissioning and Procurement Project

Objectives would then continue to be progressed as a subset of the overall Commissioning Council Project. Revised objectives will be developed for a revised Commissioning Council Project and the Voluntary, Community and Faith Commissioning Framework will be developed and fed into this wider project, at the appropriate stage.

### **3. Openness and Transparency**

It was recognised at the outset that the review would only successfully achieve all its objectives if the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector were engaged and could influence the work of the group. Angela White, as Chief Executive of Sefton Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) - the principal infrastructure organisation in the Borough - was asked to act in an advisory capacity to the Project.

The project group has communicated the progress of the review with the wider sector and the Council's position in relation to the implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review published in October 2010. To ensure continued openness and transparency in conducting the review:

- The Member Overseeing Group has met regularly to review the work of the Officer Group.
- The Member Overseeing Group has had the opportunity to meet directly with some organisations that receive significant levels of funding from the Council and sought to familiarise themselves with the geography of some VCF facilities.
- The Chief Executive has written two personal letters to the sector to keep them apprised of the implications of the Spending Review on the Council.
- The Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive have attended a number of forums and network meetings culminating in a specific event for the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector that receives direct funding from the Council in December hosted by Sefton Council for Voluntary Services.

### **4. National Transition Fund**

In recognition of the reductions in public expenditure the Coalition Government put in place a national Transition Fund of £100 million to which organisations in the Voluntary, Community, and Faith Sector may bid. This fund is for one year only and is being administered nationally by an arm of the BIG Lottery and the closing date for bids is the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2011. To be eligible to make a bid, groups will need to have been in receipt of a minimum of £30,000 from taxpayer funded sources, 60% of their income needs to be from taxpayers funded sources, and it has to have been for the delivery of frontline services in their last financial year. The fund will only cover up to 50% of the reduction in taxpayer funded income. Grants are available between £12,500 and £500,000. All taxpayer funded income is defined as the combined income from all the public sector, local as well as national funding streams. Big Lottery has confirmed that consortia bids will not be

accepted. Officers have worked with Sefton CVS to ensure that any local group which would qualify for the fund can make a submission by the deadlines. Sefton CVS have written to 49 groups that receive £30,000 or above from the Council offering assistance in assessing their eligibility to make a bid. At the time of writing only 8 local groups met all the criteria and will be submitting a bid for transition funding.

## **5. Initial outcomes from the first stage of the review**

Early work of the review has focussed on the identification of critical resource issues facing the Council for 2011/12 in respect of the Voluntary, Community, and Faith Sector. This mapping has been completed and is discussed further below.

A future report will be presented on the longer term development of a more robust, open, and transparent commissioning framework for the sector in concert with the Commissioning and Procurement Member Overseeing Group as detailed at point 3 of this report. This will help address a number of structural issues which have been identified in the way the Council currently works with the sector including:

- The Council uses a range of different commissioning, procurement and grant giving processes with the sector which results in some organisations having multiple funding streams going into them. This has resulted in duplication of bureaucracy within, and across departments of the Council, in managing the performance of the different contracts and Service Level Agreements. The sector claims that internal services of the Council have not been subject, in the main, to the same rigorous performance management that is in place for some voluntary organisations. It has also resulted in the creation of burdensome processes and inefficiencies within the sector itself.
- The varied approaches to commissioning and contracting with the sector has led to some instability in the sector, with some organisations having three year service level agreements, some with one year agreements, and others being commissioned / contracted on an ad hoc or spot purchase basis.
- Until now the Council overall has not been able to fully understand the value of what it spends in the sector, what services it buys from the sector to meet what outcomes, what value for money is achieved and what the wider social value is that the sector provides to the local communities of Sefton. Work is underway with the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership to develop a local approach to understanding and measuring effectively social value which will feed into the work on commissioning.
- The new Localism Bill, the expected Public Sector Reform White Paper due in the New Year and the Green Paper on commissioning from the sector place great emphasis on the Council's responsibility to investigate the possible improvements in efficiency and effectiveness to be made from commissioning via the Voluntary, Community, and Faith Sector.

## **6. Impact of Spending Review and Government Decisions**

The Coalition Government has already impact assessed and made decisions to cease a range of funding streams as part of the Emergency Budget in June 2010 and Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010. The funding ceased as part of the spending review includes:

- Working Neighbourhoods Fund
- Future Jobs Fund
- Local Authority Child Poverty Innovation Pilot Programme
- European Social Fund (ends December 2013)

These have been reported to previous meetings of Cabinet and full Council. Cabinet is asked to mandate Officers to formally write to the organisations detailed at Appendix B1 and B3 advising them that this funding has ceased or will come to an end shortly and the Council will not have the resources to continue with these schemes once the specific funding comes to natural end. (See Recommendation 8).

Additionally Local Enterprise Growth Initiative Funding (LEGI) nationally ceases in March 2011. However, Liverpool City Council - as the accountable body - has decided to spread its last year of funding over two years, so the programme's effective end date is March 2012. Funding for the 2010-2012 period was commissioned in April 2010. Organisations in receipt of LEGI funding schemes are detailed at Appendix B2. Note that some LEGI funding ceases naturally for schemes in March 2011 and some in March 2012 which is noted in Appendix B2.

Cabinet is asked to mandate officers to formally write to the organisations at Appendix B2 advising them that the funding for the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative will cease and the Council will not have the resources to continue with these schemes once the specific funding comes to natural end (see Recommendation 8).

## **7. Services deemed "Critical"**

Officers and Members of the Overseeing Group have deemed some activity to be maintained based on the prioritisation that Members have agreed at Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010 and full Council 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010. The resources referred to in Appendix C have been prioritised. Cabinet is asked to approve £15,705 (core) to be retained and agree the provision of £56,258 for the activity detailed in Appendix C to continue for one year only. See Recommendation 9.

## **8. Proposed Reductions in funding.**

The Project Group and the Member Overseeing Group determined where potential reductions in funding could be made through a priority rating process, equality impact assessment process and with the overall agreement of the Members of the

Overseeing Group, Appendix D1 details proposed reductions of £67,896 through cessation of some activities.

*It should be noted by Cabinet that Councillor Maher declared a prejudicial interest in the proposal relating to B15-4 Augustine Park – Taskman and Northfield Group and took no part in the decision making for this organisation.*

Cabinet is asked to agree the proposed reductions and mandate Officers to formally write to the organisations at Appendix D1 advising them that the funding has ceased. See Recommendation 6.

In addition the initial phase of the Youth and Community schemes review (Appendix D2) has identified proposed reductions of £245,655. A further review of services will be undertaken in 2011/12 as detailed in Appendix E.

Cabinet is asked to agree the proposed reductions and mandate Officers to formally write to the organisations at Appendix D2 advising them that the funding has been reduced and/or ceased and is subject to further review in 2011/12. See Recommendation 7.

## **9. Contractual Commitments**

The review group found that there has been a varied approach to putting in place and reviewing contracting and service level agreements. It is important that the Council moves towards regularising this situation in the future and to ensure that the Council honours contractual commitments.

Therefore, at this critical time of transition for the sector, Cabinet is asked to approve the honouring of 90 day contractual commitments for all Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisational or groups that lose 100% funding. See Recommendation 5.

Committing to these contractual arrangements will result in an additional budget requirement for 2011/12 as 90 days from January 27<sup>th</sup> would require support to be provided in the first month of 2011/12 financial year. This requirement is anticipated to be £5,242 for schemes in Appendix D1 and £5,419 for schemes reduced in Appendix D2. Cabinet are asked to prioritise £10,661 for the 2011/12 budget to be used for this purpose. See Recommendation 5.

## **10. Proposed Reviews**

The Project Group and Member Overseeing Group found that £4,402,073 was previously spent with a range of organisations and groups across Sefton to deliver a wide range of services across our local communities as detailed at Appendix E. Of this £2,546,720 has been reduced due to the impact of the comprehensive spending review, loss of national grant funding and the reductions outlined in this report. The Member Overseeing Group was of the view that to ensure that decisions are made based on a full understanding of the impact of reductions in funding on the sector a series of reviews need to be undertaken and that £1,855,353 is prioritised for the following reviews:

The following reviews are proposed to Cabinet:

- Sefton Council for Voluntary Services – Lead Officer Samantha Tunney
- Sefton Citizens Advice Bureau – Lead Officer Samantha Tunney
- Youth and Community Services and Facilities – Lead Officer Peter Morgan

Terms of reference for these reviews will be agreed by the Member Overseeing Group for the review of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector. The reviews will seek to identify what other public funding is being made available to the organisations within the reviews, an example would be NHS Sefton funding, to enable Cabinet and Council to determine appropriate levels of funding for future years.

Due to the range of services provided under these three review areas, and the complexities and inter-dependencies involved across both the sector and with council services, these reviews will flow into the next financial year. Therefore the Member Overseeing Group requests Cabinet to agree to prioritise this resource and agree the provision of the £1,855,353 for 2011/12 pending the outcome of the reviews. See Recommendation 10.

## **11. Single Grant Fund**

There have been a number of different grant pots across the Council, including grants to voluntary organisations (corporate), community grants (WNF), cultural grants (leisure), sports grants (leisure), to name but some. Some of these have been partially or wholly removed as part of the transformation programme and the loss of central government funding. Through the review the Member Overseeing Group identified the need for continued support for small community groups through small grant funds. It is proposed to Cabinet by the Member Overseeing Group that a single consolidated grant fund pot of £50,000 be prioritised. It is proposed that this will act as a transition fund for 2011/12 to meet potential gaps in funding as the Council further reduces its budgets and the outcomes of the above reviews are known. For 2012/13, and future years, it is proposed that a formal set of transparent criteria, based on the Council's future priorities, are developed underpinned by an open and transparent process for making applications to the fund be developed through the Member Overseeing Group and these will be brought back to Cabinet for agreement. See Recommendation 11.

## **12. Conclusion**

The VCF Review is invaluable, in that it ensures that the Council has a clear overview of resources going into the Sector. The relationship with VCF organisations and the vibrancy of the sector will enable the Council to continue to commission services to meet the needs of its communities. The review has, however, signalled the need for further development in terms of the approach to commissioning in order to improve sustainability and to reduce the bureaucracy which is currently evident. As the Council develops its overall Commissioning

Framework, it will be well placed, through the work of this review, to meet the emerging national and local policy context in which it operates.

There are, and will in the future be, significant resources being spent locally with VCF organisations. The findings of the first phase of this review evidence the current significant resource being spent on commissioned services and support to the sector through grants. In total, as part of the prioritisation of 'other services', Cabinet and Council are asked to prioritise £1,987,977 (see various recommendations above). This is over and above the already prioritised funding for 'critical' services.

This is only the first stage of the work of the VCF Overseeing Group, and further work will continue in developing a proportionate VCF Commissioning Framework, the major reviews identified within this report and in paving the way forward for the Council to take an holistic approach to commissioning services from, and supporting organisations which contribute to outcomes for communities within Sefton.