

APPENDIX B: Charter for Barnet with the Voluntary and Community Sector

Barnet's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is extremely diverse, encompassing charities, community groups, social enterprises and local residents. Barnet Council and the local VCS have the same end goal – strong communities and independence and wellbeing for residents – and we want to work together towards these shared aims. The VCS' close connection with communities is vital in this. These principles have been developed by the council and the VCS as a guide for how we want to work together.

We will encourage more participation from residents and community organisations in developing their own response to local issues and taking responsibility for their area

- The council, VCS Development Partner and the sector will explore opportunities to support the kick-starting of community-led initiatives through initiatives such as the Big Society Innovation Bank 'Micro Fund', in line with jointly agreed aspirations
- These initiatives will be designed to be sustainable where appropriate so that they are eventually able to operate as independently as possible

We will recognise our shared values and aspirations, while respecting the variety of different skills, expertise and knowledge that different organisations bring to the table

- The needs of service users, carers and communities, not the structure of organisations, will shape service design
- We will bring together our expertise to serve communities and we will be open to sharing our knowledge with other organisations where appropriate

We will support each other to continually develop the skills we need to improve our services and fuel the vibrancy of the sector

- The VCS Development Partner will be a key player in identifying and responding to the sector's needs, developing capacity in the VCS

We will recognise the diversity of the communities we serve and commit to supporting them equally, as outlined in the Equality Act

- Where possible, we will design services to be 'diverse by default' so every member of the community can access them
- We will seek to ensure that all communities' voices are heard

We will work together to make best use of our shared assets and resources – money; buildings and space; time and energy

- We will keep each other informed of funding opportunities
- We will explore and support collaboration between different organisations and groups when this would be beneficial
- We will support our large community of volunteers and make sure they feel valued, keeping them informed of opportunities and brokering roles where needed, so that residents continue to give their time generously to causes they care about

- We will use our space efficiently and be open to sharing our spaces for the benefit of the community

We will keep processes for providing goods and services for the council as simple and transparent as possible so that all organisations have a fair chance at competing

- We will aim to provide easy access to information on upcoming tendering opportunities
- We will aim to make tendering and monitoring requirements fair and proportionate
- We will aim to maintain these principles through sub-contracting arrangements
- We will aim to design contracts in ways that promote sustainable benefits to service users