



Hertfordshire Thriving Third Sector report



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¹ As part of the restructuring of the Hertfordshire Infrastructure Consortium (HIC) of Third Sector Organisations, the SETG will soon be replaced by a new sub-group of the newly launched body.

Introduction

The new Local Area Agreement (LAA2) includes a set of 198 indicators covering issues of national priority. Each LAA area is required to select up to 35 of the 198 indicators to be delivered with local partners. An improvement target is set for each indicator. One of the indicators on the national set is National Indicator 7 (NI7) which has been selected as one of Hertfordshire's 'up to 35'. NI7 is concerned with the contribution that the public sector and its statutory partners make to the environment in which the Third Sector can thrive and operate successfully.

A healthy Third Sector is an asset to the community in which it operates. It is therefore beneficial for public bodies to invest in the success of the sector.

The Third Sector, sometimes referred to as the Voluntary and Community sector (VCS) is defined by Government as organisations that:

- are non-governmental
- are 'value-driven' – that is, are primarily motivated by the desire to further social, environmental or cultural objectives rather than to make a profit *per se*, and
- principally reinvest surpluses to further their social, environmental or cultural objectives.

What is NI7?

Defined as the 'environment for a thriving Third Sector', National Indicator 7 (NI7) is one of the priority targets in Hertfordshire's LAA. It is important to note that even if NI7 had not been selected as a priority target, it would have still been assessed as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which is an assessment of the statutory sector's performance. NI7 is concerned with the contribution **that local government and its statutory partners make** to the environment in which Third Sector organisations can operate successfully.

Why was NI7 included on the national indicator set?

According to the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) guidance², NI7 has been included as a government priority in the National Indicator set in recognition of:

- **The importance of the Third Sector to strong, active and empowered local communities**, helping communities become more cohesive and inclusive as well as empowering individuals to have more say over issues that affect them.
- **The value of the Third Sector to responsive and effective local government.** The Third Sector can help statutory agencies to address a wide range of community concerns from strengthening community cohesion to increasing environmental sustainability, to tackling the many causes and consequences of social and economic disadvantage. The Third Sector often has deeper and wider reach into communities' hard-to reach areas.

² OTS 'Briefing for Local Strategic Partnerships. NI7: Environment for a Thriving Third Sector'.

- **The value of local government to the Third Sector.** Local statutory agencies can be influential in shaping the environment in which Third Sector organisations work. This could be through, for example, their approaches to partnership working, consultation, funding relationships, or the way in which they commission services. NI7 is designed to capture the overall contribution made by local statutory agencies to the environment in which Third Sector organisations operate.

How is it measured?

NI7 is measured by a new, perception-based survey of Third Sector organisations³. It is the statutory sector's support for, and engagement of, the Third Sector that will be assessed. The Office of the Third Sector (OTS) conducted the national baseline survey in the Autumn of 2008 and 49,000 Third Sector organisations participated in the survey.

The survey asked Third Sector organisations a series of questions about staff, funding, partnerships, support/ advice etc however, only one question contributed to the measurement of NI7:

“How do the local statutory bodies in your area influence your organisation's success?”

Nationally, 16.2% of surveyed Third Sector organisations said they believed that local statutory bodies make a contribution to their success. The baseline⁴ for Hertfordshire was 14%. Hertfordshire is now working towards a target of 17.9% to be achieved by the Autumn of 2010.

Whose performance will be measured?

That of all public sector agencies ie. Local Authorities, Police, County Council, Health Authorities etc. This means that the survey is concerned with the performance of the statutory sector from the Third Sector's point of view.

How and why was NI7 selected as a priority for Hertfordshire?

In 2008, during the design stage of LAA2, Hertfordshire Forward, the countywide Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), delegated the decision of 'the Third Sector indicator' to the Hertfordshire Infrastructure Consortium (HIC) of Third Sector organisations. The choice was between NI6 'Volunteering', and NI7 'Environment for a thriving Third Sector'. HIC selected NI7 for a number of reasons:

- NI7 has the potential to raise the profile of the Third Sector
- It can help clarify the contribution that the Third Sector makes to local priorities
- NI7 is the only national indicator that focuses on the health of the Third Sector
- To select Volunteering would reinforce the inaccurate perception that the Third Sector is about volunteering and nothing else

³ www.nstso.com

⁴ Appendix 4: Baseline results

- Volunteering was already a priority under LAA1 and the Valuing Volunteers campaign which was launched as part of LAA1 delivery, was and still is, active.

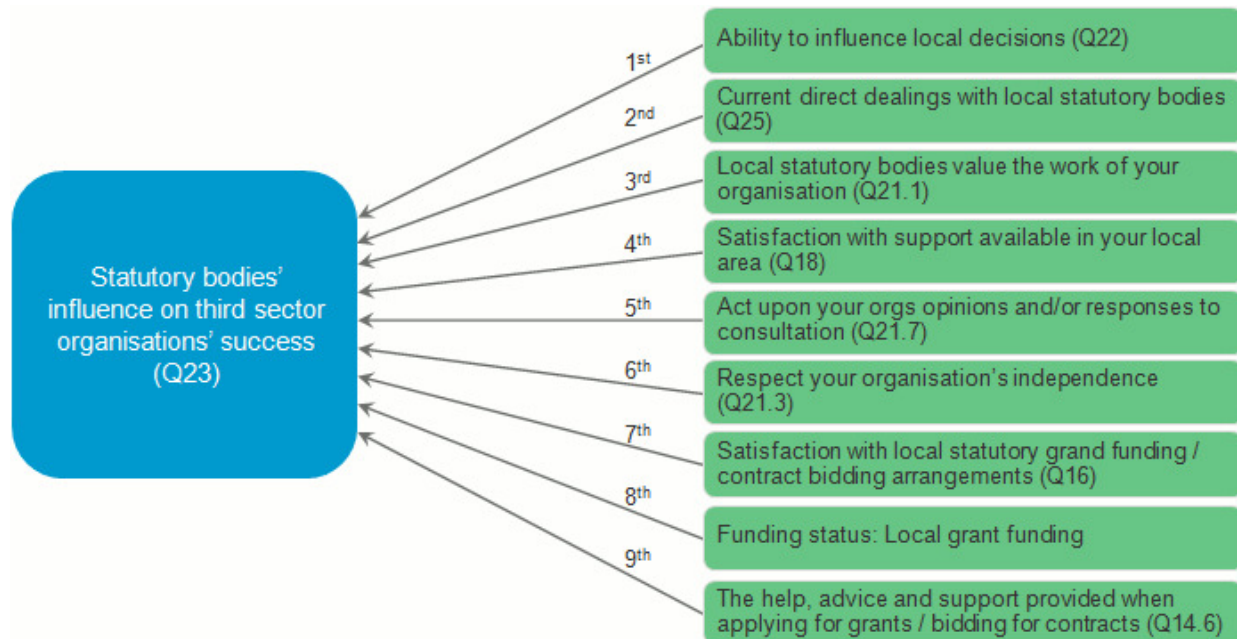
Why conduct a local survey when there is a national one?

The national survey asked the Third Sector how they thought their public sector partners were performing. This survey looks at the reverse, asking the public sector how they think they are performing with regard to supporting the Third Sector. This local survey also seeks to:

- Raise awareness of the indicator, its definition and its implications
- Help raise awareness of the good work that is already happening around the county
- Help public sector colleagues understand the different ways in which they can contribute to the success of NI7
- Celebrate and enable the sharing of good practice.

What drives NI7?

An analysis of the baseline survey by Ipsos Mori suggested that, based on the responses received, the following nine issues are the key drivers of NI7:



It appears from the survey results, that the ability to influence local decisions – encompassing Third Sector engagement by public bodies - is the key driver of NI7, more so than funding which is usually cited as being the main driver of Third Sector success. Further analysis shows that no matter how satisfied Third Sector organisations are with their funding, if they feel that they cannot influence local decisions, the perception of success diminishes significantly.

Methodology

This was a qualitative survey which sought to get a picture of Third Sector support activity in Hertfordshire. Surveyed organisations were asked a series of questions⁵ to help them recognise their Third Sector support activity as contributing to NI7. The survey also sought to gauge progress made with regard to NI7 in Hertfordshire.

In the case of the Local Authorities, responses relate to the Council as well as the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Respondents were:

- Broxbourne Borough Council
- Dacorum Borough Council
- East Herts District Council
- Hertsmere Borough Council
- North Herts District Council
- St Albans District Council
- Stevenage Borough Council
- Three Rivers District Council
- Watford Borough Council
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (part of Herts County Council)
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- East and North Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust
- Hertfordshire Probation Service
- Hertfordshire County Council

Responses have been collated and analysed⁶ in this report, including 'Areas for development', which represent suggestions of areas in which things could be done differently. Survey responses have also been used to produce organisational snapshots⁷.

Disclaimer

This report is based on responses given to the survey questionnaire. It is possible that some respondents will be engaged in more activity than is reflected here but have not reported it. Please also note that the information herein does not constitute expert advice but rather, a collation and analysis of Third Sector Support in Hertfordshire as well as examples from elsewhere in the country.

⁵ Appendix 5: Questionnaire

⁶ Analysis: Page 6

⁷ Organisational Snapshots: Page 10

Analysis

There is a lot of good work happening around the county and it is hoped that this will be shared via this report. Despite some gaps, Hertfordshire is performing well in the following areas:

- Provision of funding
- Involvement of the Third Sector on Local Strategic Partnerships
- Use of The Compact to inform practice
- Provision of Officer capacity to deal with Third Sector Partnership activity.

There are gaps around areas such as

- Future plans for VCS engagement and support in light of NI7 and the CAA
- Third Sector strategies, although some have used the Compact instead
- Ensuring that the role, importance and contribution of the Third Sector is understood by staff.

Support for the Third Sector ⁸

All except two of the respondents provide grants or other funding for the Third Sector with most reporting that they have Service Level Agreements in place. Only five respondents reported that they have multi-year funding in place.

Some Local Authorities provide core funding for Third Sector infrastructure organisations such as CVSs and Volunteer Centres. This enables them to reach a larger number of organisations through infrastructure membership and links into the communities. North Herts is the only Local Authority that has not indicated that they are funding either the CVS or the Volunteer Centre in their local area.

Watford, Probation and the Constabulary are the only organisations that are currently providing direct training to Third Sector organisations. Herts County Council (HCC) was the only respondent that reported experience of Social Enterprise development support in the past, as well as the hosting of events and conferences that deal with Third Sector issues.

Areas for development:

- Direct training for Third Sector organisations
- In-house/ staff volunteering schemes
- Social Enterprise support
- Hosting Third Sector related events and information sessions
- Support for infrastructure organisations. The National Association of Voluntary and Community Agencies (NAVCA) suggests that a CVS requires a minimum budget of £260,000 to provide a basic level of service over the 5 core areas of recommended support, including a Volunteer Centre.

⁸ Appendix 1: Table 1

Working in partnership with the Third Sector ⁹

Eight of the eleven Local Authorities reported that they have Third Sector organisations involved on their LSPs. Other partnership work is diverse in nature with only a few reporting that they involve the Third Sector on sub groups. Stevenage, Watford and Welwyn Hatfield have Neighbourhood/ Community networks in place. Dacorum and Welwyn Hatfield have been involved in Task and Finish work around Third Sector support and engagement. This is an activity that could prove to be useful in light of NI7 and associated delivery plans.

Dacorum, Welwyn Hatfield, the PCT and the County Council were the only respondents that reported that they have regular meetings with the Third Sector. This is an important and useful activity as it maintains engagement and contact which means that statutory bodies remain at the pulse of changes and developments in the Third Sector and are then able to provide relevant support.

Areas for development:

- Task and Finish activity
- Regular meetings with the Third Sector
- Neighbourhood/ Community networks.

Compact ¹⁰

All except two of the Local Authorities have a Compact. Three Rivers is currently developing a Compact while Welwyn Hatfield has plans to use their new Community Network in place of a Compact. Probation and the Constabulary have not indicated any plans for the development of a Compact or sign up to an existing one. Those with a Compact in place are using it to inform practice, including those whose Compact groups are no longer meeting regularly. North Herts is the only respondent to have reported regular meetings of the Compact group.

Some have mainstreamed Compact ways of working into their operations while others, such as Broxbourne, Hertsmere and Watford have indicated that they will be reviewing and / or refreshing their Compacts.

Dacorum and Watford have given the Third Sector the responsibility of co-ordinating and managing Compact work in their districts.

Areas for development:

- Encouraging sign-up to the Compact
- Raising awareness of the importance of Compact ways of working.

⁹ Appendix 1: Table 2

¹⁰ Appendix 1: Tables 3.1 and 3.2

Third Sector Strategy ¹¹

None of the respondents reported that they have a Third Sector Strategy although Watford, Welwyn Hatfield and the County Council have indicated that they have plans for the development of Third Sector strategies. North Herts and Three Rivers plan to use the Compact instead. A number of others are or will be, assessing the value of a strategy later this year and next year.

Six respondents indicated that they have no plans to develop a Third Sector Strategy.

Areas for development:

- The development of a Third Sector Strategy or alternatively,
- A statement of agreed practice for working with the Third Sector.

Measuring the effectiveness of support ¹²

All have reported that they have performance reporting arrangements in place. It appears, from the responses to this question, that respondents have good systems for measuring the effectiveness of the Third Sector in delivering on respondents' contracts. What is missing from the responses however, is information about systems that monitor the effectiveness of the support that respondents give to the Third Sector.

Areas for development:

- The development of mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of respondents' support for their local Third Sector. This could be assessed as part of the performance measurement process, by asking the Third Sector for their views on the effectiveness of the support they receive from respondents.

Future plans for Third Sector support ¹³

Plans for future Third Sector support are patchy with some reporting reviews of Commissioning procedures and the Compact. Others plan to maintain the current level of support in the short term. East Herts has indicated plans to increase Third Sector support, specifically, funding for the CVS.

¹¹ Appendix 1: Tables 4.1 and 4.2

¹² Appendix 1: Table 5

¹³ Appendix 1: Table 6.1

Broxbourne, Hertsmere, St Albans, Welwyn Hatfield and the Probation Service plan to align future Third Sector support with their local Community Plans/ Strategies. St Albans and the Probation Service are planning to conduct Third Sector capacity-building work.

Areas for development:

- Recognising Third Sector support as a priority in future activity
- Discussing engagement and support possibilities with the Third Sector

Future plans for Third Sector engagement ¹⁴

Plans for future Third Sector engagement are also patchy. The most common form of engagement is sub-groups and partnerships as well as liaison activity and consultation. Dacorum reports that they are due to discuss possibilities with the Third Sector after the review of their Task and Finish group's findings while Three Rivers, Probation, Herts County Council and Fire & Rescue plan to extend their support for volunteering. Broxbourne and the Constabulary reported that they have not made any plans for future Third Sector engagement.

Broxbourne is the only respondent that has concrete plans in place for the advancement of NI7. An NI7 presentation has been arranged for the LSP and this will form the basis for NI7 action planning.

Areas for development:

- Plans for future Third Sector engagement
- Engagement of the Third Sector as an equal partner.

Ensuring that the importance of the Third Sector is understood by staff ¹⁵

The most common method is the use of internal newsletters and communications as well as staff workshops although only 6 respondents reported that they are involved in these.

East Herts, Hertsmere and the County Council report that they intend to make use of Member links. Dacorum is the only respondent that is engaged in joint training sessions with the Third Sector and Three Rivers is the only respondent that plans to conduct an Audit of the Compact.

Broxbourne and St Albans reported that they have no plans in place for the development of mechanisms to ensure that the importance of the Third Sector is understood by staff within their organisations.

¹⁴ Appendix 1: Table 6.2

¹⁵ Appendix 1: Table 6.3

Areas for development:

- Communicating the importance of the Third Sector using internal communications and publications
- Joint training sessions with the Third Sector.

Specific priority relating to the Third Sector¹⁶

Only 6 of the respondents have made direct reference to the (support and/ or engagement of the) Third Sector within their Community Strategies/ Corporate Plans.

Some have made reference to community engagement, volunteering and other activity relating to the Third Sector but not to Third Sector organisations per se.

Area for development:

- Recognition of Third Sector support and engagement as a priority in Community Strategies and Corporate Plans.

Dedicated staff resource responsible for Third Sector partnership working¹⁷

All respondents have an Officer with responsibility for partnership working with the Third Sector.

Ten of the respondents have a Councillor, Executive Member or Senior Manager responsible for the same. Broxbourne, Hertsmere, Three Rivers, Fire and PCT do not.

Area for development:

- Councillors, Executive Members or Senior Managers with the responsibility for partnership working with the Third Sector.

¹⁶ Appendix 1: Table 7

¹⁷ Appendix 1: Table 8

Organisational Snapshots

Borough of Broxbourne Council and LSP

Third Sector support is in the form of funding - currently over £260,000 per annum - including grants to the Volunteer Bureau and three-year Service Level Agreements with two organisations. Officer support has also been provided for the development of a CVS business plan. Broxbourne engages the Third Sector as a partner on the LSP and other sub-groups. The Third Sector is also commissioned to undertake work e.g. Provision of a health shuttle service and the distribution of information packs to migrant workers. Performance is measured by way of reports and monitoring meetings.

Broxbourne has a Compact which is due to be refreshed in the near future. The value of a Third Sector strategy is due to be assessed at the same time. The LSP has arranged for a Third Sector presentation around NI7 to begin the discussion about future Third Sector support in light of NI7. Plans for future Third Sector engagement are yet to be made and there are currently no plans to ensure that the importance of the Third Sector is understood by staff.

Broxbourne has an Officer, but no Councillor or Executive Member with responsibility for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

The Third Sector is not mentioned directly in the Community Strategy.

Dacorum Borough Council and LSP

Dacorum supports the Third Sector through funding (over £800,000 per annum, including three year funding arrangements) as well as through subsidised premises rentals and National Non-Domestic Rate relief. Partnership working with the Third Sector takes a number of forms including a Task and Finish group made up of both statutory and Third Sector organisations. The Local Authority funds the local CVS and Volunteer Centre and provides a town centre information centre for use by the Third Sector. Third Sector partners have helped design Service Level agreements and each funded organisation is provided with a Liaison Officer from the Council's staff to facilitate communication. The Council meets with their Third Sector partners regularly.

Dacorum's Compact is managed by a group of Chairs and Chief Executives of Third Sector organisations (CHACE) and is used to inform practice. Although the district does not have a Third Sector strategy, there are plans to assess the value of one when the work of the Task and Finish group is complete.

With regard to future Third Sector support, Dacorum reports that there will be no reduction in the commitment to the Third Sector in the short term. Third Sector engagement will be strengthened via the Compact, CHACE and the Liaison Officer arrangements. Further engagement

arrangements will emerge from the work of the Task and Finish group. In terms of ensuring that the importance of the Third Sector is understood by staff, Dacorum is currently awaiting the results of the Task and Finish group recommendations which will likely include staff and Councillor training, the Dacorum Partnership and a reviewed Commissioning system.

Dacorum has both an Executive member and an Officer with responsibility for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

"Dacorum has a thriving and dynamic voluntary and community sector that the Partnership wants to maintain. Opportunities to develop this sector and new ways of working will be explored. We will support a vibrant voluntary and community sector".

East Herts District Council and LSP

East Herts provides grants to the local Third Sector including £15,000 core funding to the CVS. Partnership working with the Third Sector is mainly through the LSP and the Compact framework. The Compact group is no longer in operation however, while active, the group was instrumental in accessing Change Up and Capacity Building grants to develop the East Herts Vocal Project, now the CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts.

Although East Herts does not have a Third Sector Strategy, plans are in place to create one through the Community Strategy action plans. The plan for future Third Sector support is to increase CVS core funding for 2009/10. Future plans for Third Sector engagement include the development of a Third Sector strategy and with regard to ensuring that the importance of the Third Sector is understood by staff, East Herts plans to make use of Officer links and meetings with the Member who has the Community portfolio.

East Herts has both an Executive Member and an Officer with responsibility for leading on partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

"Ambition: Strengthen social cohesion and empower communities by working in partnership with the voluntary sector in the design and delivery of public services".

Hertsmere Borough Council and LSP

Hertsmere supports the Third Sector through: funding; Service Level agreements; officer advice and guidance; and subsidised rent. The Local Authority is working in partnership with the Third Sector through the LSP and its subgroups, as well as through other joint projects.

The Compact has been used to inform practice and is due to be reviewed later this year. Hertsmere does not have a Third Sector strategy however, the assessment of the value of a strategy will be subject to the Compact review.

With regard to plans for future Third Sector support, Hertsmere plans to tie the level of support more closely to the Community Engagement Strategy. Third Sector engagement will be by way of engaging the Third Sector as a gateway into the communities.

Hertsmere has an Officer but no Executive Member responsible for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

Third Sector support is not mentioned directly in the Community Strategy. There is a focus on the engagement of communities and not the Third Sector, as a sector. The Third Sector role is seen as being that of a gateway into the communities.

North Herts District Council and LSP

North Herts' support for the Third Sector is in the form of: Area Champions (Community Development Officers); Community buildings and resources; grants and funding; council tax relief; subsidised rent; loan of equipment; staff time; information and advice. Partnership working with the Third Sector is through council Liaison officers.

North Herts has a Compact which is used to inform practice. The Compact group meets regularly and is led by North Herts CVS. North Herts does not have a Third Sector strategy, choosing to use the Compact and the Community Strategy instead.

With regard to future Third Sector support and engagement, North Herts plans to continue the present level of support. Internal newsletters and communications will be used to ensure that the importance of the Third Sector is understood by staff.

North Herts has both a Councillor and an Officer responsible for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

" .. supporting active voluntary organisations and community groups by providing grant aid and other support through Compact so they can meet the needs of local people". NI7 is included in the support measure.

St. Albans District Council and LSP

Support for the Third Sector is in the form of funding and staff time. Partnership working is through the LSP and there is a Compact which is used to inform practice. There is no Third Sector Strategy neither are there plans to develop one.

With regard to future Third Sector support, St Albans plans to continue the current level of support as well as build the capacity of the sector to provide preventative support services. Third Sector engagement will be aligned with the Community Strategy which sets out key objectives.

St Albans has both an Executive Member and an Officer responsible for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

"Helping to build the capacity of the VCS to provide preventative and support services"

Stevenage Borough Council and LSP

Stevenage provides the local Third Sector with £465,000 worth of grant aid and £116,000 worth of rent subsidies. The Sector is also provided with: start up support; help registering charities; information, advice and guidance; access to training and networking opportunities; project management of community events; budgeting support; media coverage; facilitation of information-sharing and funding advice. Some of this support is delivered via the CVS. Partnership working with the Third Sector operates at three levels: Strategic Partnerships, Thematic partnerships of the LSP and Neighbourhood Partnerships through neighbourhood working arrangements.

Stevenage has a Compact which is used to inform practice. There is no Third Sector strategy however, there is the possibility that a strategy will be developed upon completion of the Grant Aid review.

Stevenage plans to continue the level of Third Sector support currently provided through the work of the Community Development team. The Grant Aid process is also being reviewed in order to make it more transparent and effective. Ways of further supporting the Third Sector are being explored and as part of that exercise, Stevenage plans to take advantage of the Take Part Pathfinder project which seeks to strengthen existing, and develop new working relationships with the Third Sector. LSP theme partnerships are in the process of being reviewed, including an assessment of the way in which the partnerships work with the Third Sector.

Staff newsletters and communications are used to ensure that the importance of the Third Sector is understood by staff.

Stevenage has both an Executive Member and an Officer with responsibility for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

The Community Strategy makes no direct reference to support for the Third Sector, the focus is on volunteering instead. However, the Community Plan will soon be refreshed to include support for the Third Sector.

Three Rivers District Council and LSP

Three Rivers supports the Third Sector through: grants; Non-Domestic Rate Relief, property rental subsidies and Service Level Agreements. The Compact is still in development and a working group has been formed to take this work forward. Three Rivers does not have a written Third Sector strategy but the Third Sector is engaged in a number of ways.

With regard to future Third Sector support, funding assistance, grant funding and Non-Domestic rate relief will be continued. Grant and Compact reviews will help determine ways in which the role and importance of the Third Sector can be embedded into the Council's procedures. Provisional plans include workshops and Compact Audits.

In addition to the development of a Compact, Three Rivers will be conducting a grant review process. It is hoped that the Compact working group will be able to use the results of both to develop new codes of practice and an implementation plan.

Three Rivers has an Officer, but no Executive Member, with responsibility for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

The Third Sector is not mentioned directly in the Community Strategy.

Watford Borough Council and LSP

Watford supports the Third Sector by way of: grants; Service Level Agreements; Funding Officers; core funding to the CVS; information, advice and guidance. Partnership working is through the LSP and its subgroups, projects and community networks including a Community Arts Network and a Community Sports Network. These networks feed into the LSP and are sometimes commissioned to meet LSP priorities. Watford has a Compact which is used to inform practice and is currently being refreshed and streamlined. There is no Third Sector Strategy, however the CVS is developing a Community Development Strategy while the council develops a Commissioning Framework. It is envisaged that both will cover some Third Sector strategy issues.

Watford will continue to fund the CVS to enable the latter to 'spearhead [their] frontline support to the sector'. The council will also continue to work on joint projects with the Sector and

consultations will be used for further engagement. To ensure that staff understand the importance of the Third Sector, communications with Third Sector partners will be shared at management meetings and cascaded to staff.

Watford has both an Executive Member and an Officer responsible for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

The Third Sector is not mentioned directly in the Community Strategy.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and LSP

Welwyn Hatfield Council supports the Third Sector through grants; subsidised premises; office equipment and access to training. A Service Level Agreement is also in place with the CVS and a new Grants Policy has recently been agreed and implemented. Partnership working with the Third Sector is through the Local Strategic Partnership and in future, will be done via the Community Network which is currently being developed by the CVS. The Council does not have a Compact, choosing to use the Community Network instead. There is no Third Sector Strategy but a brief for one is currently being developed as part of the Community Network's initial work programme for 2009/10

In terms of future Third Sector engagement, the Third Sector will continue to be engaged on the LSP as well as through consultations and the planned Community Network. There will be no cuts to Third Sector support in the short term. Task and Finish work has been commissioned through the LSP Board and the Community Strategy will be used to ensure that the importance of the Third Sector is understood by staff.

Welwyn Hatfield has a recently recruited an Officer responsible for Third Sector relationships. There is also an Executive Member responsible for Partnerships in general.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

The Third Sector is not mentioned directly in the Community Strategy.

Hertfordshire Constabulary

The Constabulary does not support Third Sector directly. However, there is an in-house Volunteering scheme. The Constabulary has not indicated that it is involved in any partnership working with the Third Sector and has reported that it does not have a Third Sector Strategy.

No plans have been made for future Third Sector support and engagement however, Force Induction days will be used to ensure that staff understand the importance of the Third Sector.

The Constabulary has both an Officer and a member of senior management responsible for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

The Third Sector is not mentioned directly in the Corporate Plan.

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Although the Fire and Rescue Service is a part of Hertfordshire County council, it operates with a certain element of independence. As such, the Service has been listed as a separate entity for the purposes of this report.

The Fire and Rescue Service supports the Third Sector through the provision of free meeting rooms, training and materials. Partnerships have been formed around the Home Fire Safety Checks and commissioned work. The Service also has a Volunteer scheme but no Third Sector strategy.

Future Third Sector support will be in the form of the continued use of premises and the provision of funding where possible and appropriate. The Fire Service is seeking to engage the Third Sector more and will be exploring opportunities for greater partnership working and consultation. Regular contact with the CVS is also planned.

There is has an Officer, but no member of Senior Management, with responsibility for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

The Third Sector is not mentioned directly in the Corporate Plan.

East and North Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust

Third Sector support is through grants and contracts while partnership working is done through regular meetings. The PCT has signed up to the Compact and is using it to inform practice. There is no Third Sector strategy however, the possibility of a strategy is due to be discussed.

To support the Third Sector in the future, the PCT plans to implement World Class Commissioning principles and ensure that they are incorporated into the way the organisation works. With regard to Third Sector engagement, the PCT will continue to meet with Third Sector

colleagues on a quarterly basis. Information about the Third Sector will be shared internally to ensure that staff understand the Sector's importance.

The PCT has an Officer, but no member of Senior Management, with overall responsibility for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:

The Third Sector is not mentioned directly in the Corporate Plan.

Hertfordshire Probation Service

Probation supports the Third Sector through grants, training, capacity-building work and free use of premises. Service Level Agreements are in place with a number of Third Sector organisations. Probation is also involved in a number of projects in partnership with the Third Sector. The Probation Service does not have a Third Sector Strategy, choosing to use their Commissioning Strategy instead. Future Third Sector support will be built into the Commissioning strategy.

VCS liaison activity will continue into the future and there will be no cuts to Third Sector support in the short term. The Business Development Panel and performance reports are used to monitor the work of partnerships.

To help staff understand the importance of the Third Sector, relevant aspects have been included in the key strategic priorities of the organisation. Probation has both a member of senior management and an Officer responsible for partnership working with the Third Sector.

Priority relating to Third Sector:

Third Sector engagement is included in key strategic priorities.

Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire County Council supports the Third Sector through: grants and funding; capacity building; provision of information, advice and guidance; and contracts. Third Sector representatives are also funded to attend partnership meetings such as the Hertfordshire Forward Core Group and the Partnership Development and Performance Group (former Interim Delivery Group) of Hertfordshire Forward.

Partnership working is through: the LSP; Compact; Conferences; and the establishment of the Hertfordshire Equality Council. HCC has also supported the development of a Social Enterprise network in the past. HCC works in partnership with the Third Sector through the Strategic

Partnerships Unit (SPU) which has, as part of its remit, the responsibility for co-ordinating the council's approaches to working with the Third Sector. The SPU manages the Strategic Leadership contract, which represents HCC's primary investment into the Third Sector and is currently held by the Hertfordshire CVS Group. HCC has recently been involved in the development of the Hertfordshire Volunteering strategy.

HCC has a Compact which is being used to inform practice. There is currently no Third Sector strategy however, the County Council is considering developing one in 2009/10

With regard to future Third Sector support and engagement, current relationships will be maintained. As a response to NI7, plans are currently developing for a review for 2009/10 that will look at refreshing relationships with the Third Sector. The review will, among other things, address the funding needs of Third Sector infrastructure bodies such as the CVSs and Volunteer Centres, revisit Compact principles and assess the role of the Third Sector and Volunteering in promoting Community Cohesion and addressing the impact of the recession.

With regard to ensuring that staff are aware of the importance of the Third Sector, HCC plans to conduct induction sessions for new Members and employees. Internal communications will also be used.

HCC has both an Executive Member and an Officer with responsibility for partnership working with the Third Sector.

LSP priority relating to Third Sector:
"Enable and support a vibrant voluntary and community sector and a range of diverse cultural activities which meet the needs of local people"

Recommendations

Several 'Areas for Development' have been identified in this report. Based on these and activity elsewhere in the country, recommendations for the minimum level of Third Sector support are outlined below.

Suggested minimum Third Sector support:

- Ensuring that the Third Sector is able to influence local decisions. For example through consultations, effective representation, and the resourcing of that representation, on LSPs, LSP sub-groups and other partnerships.
- Internal promotion of the role and importance of the Third Sector.
- An Officer responsible for Third Sector partnership and engagement.
- A Councillor/ Member or Senior Manager responsible for Third Sector partnership and engagement.
- Monitoring the quality and effectiveness of your organisation's support for the Third Sector.
- Specific mention in Community/ Corporate Plans and planning documents, of your organisation's plans for Third Sector support
- VCS strategy or alternatively, a statement of agreed practice in relating to, and supporting the sector.
- Third Sector information sessions as part of the induction programme for new staff.
- Direct funding for at least 1 infrastructure body within your area.
- Sector-friendly commissioning processes
- A healthy grants/ funding mix.
- Effective communication channels between your organisation and the Third Sector.
- Sign up to Compact.

Conclusion and Next Steps

This report represents an initial attempt to gauge Third Sector support activity in Hertfordshire. It is clear that there is some good work that is happening around the county and it is hoped that this work can be coordinated, supplemented and showcased to ensure the coordinated delivery of activity that contributes to NI7.

It should be noted that NI7 is not a 'Third Sector indicator', neither is it a 'public sector indicator'. As outlined in the introduction to this report, both sectors stand to benefit from the successful delivery of the indicator. Plans are currently being developed for a partnership approach to the delivery of this target and both sectors are encouraged to take ownership of actions within the action plan.

Next Steps

Officers who have contributed responses to this local survey will be asked to participate in an NI7 Statutory Officers' grouping to ensure a joined up approach to NI7 delivery in Hertfordshire. It is envisaged that this group will work closely with an existing grouping of Third Sector agencies.

The draft NI7 action plan will be finalised and partners encouraged to take ownership of actions within it. The action plan will include activity around the gaps that have been identified in this report.

The current draft includes existing activity as well as activity that is already underway including:

- This Thriving Third Sector survey
- Ensuring adequate and effective Third Sector representation on countywide partnerships
- LAA/ VCS blog: <http://myhertslaa.blogspot.com>
- LAA/ VCS website: www.myhertslaa.net
- NI7 presentations at LSPs
- Launch of the countywide Volunteering Strategy
- Third Sector information sessions at induction days for new public sector staff
- CSF Voluntary and Community Sector Engage action plan
- PCT Third Sector web page: <http://www.enherts-pct.nhs.uk/voluntarysector/>
- Ensuring that good quality funding advice and information is available:
www.hertsdirect.org/hern and www.funding4herts.org.uk.

Appendix 1: Survey responses

Question 1: What type of support do you give to your local voluntary sector?

Table 1

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
Grants and funding															
3 year funding arrangements															
Subsidised premises/ rent															
Information, Advice and Guidance															
Capacity Building															
Tax and rate relief															
Equipment															
Training															
Acting as sounding board and mentor															
Staff Volunteering scheme															
Service Level Agreements															
Funding for CVS															
Funding for Volunteer Centre															
Social Enterprise development															
Third Sector events															

Question 2: How are you working in partnership with the voluntary sector?

Table 2

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
LSP															
Commissioned work															
Task and Finish work															
Liaison arrangements															
Regular meetings with VCS															
VCS Representation on sub groups															
Neighbourhood/ Community Networks															

Question 3.1: Do you have a local Compact?

Table 3.1

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	East Herts	Hertsmere	North Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
Yes															
No															
Still being developed								2009							

Question 3.2: If you have a local Compact, how are you and partners delivering it?

Table 3.2

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
Due to be refreshed/ reviewed soon									2009						
Managed by VCS Chief Officers' Group															
Using it to inform practice															
Regular meetings of Compact group															
Compact Group no longer in operation															
Encouraging sign-up															

Question 4.1: Does your Organisation have a VCS Strategy?

Table 4.1

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
No															
Still being developed															

Question 4.2: If not, do you have plans to develop one? When?

Table 4.2

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
Yes		2009								2009/10					
No plans															
Will use Compact instead															
Assessing value/ awaiting decision	2009						2009								2010

Question 5: How do you measure and monitor the effectiveness of your support to your local Voluntary and Community Sector?

Table 5

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
Monitoring meetings															
Performance management system															
Periodic reports															
No system in place															

Question 6: Given that both the CAA and the LAA (via NI7) will be assessing the extent to which your organisation contributes to the success of your local VCS, what are your plans for:

Question 6.1: Third Sector support?

Table 6.1

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
Review of Compact															
Review of funding & Commissioning															
Considering VCS strategy															
Discuss possibilities with VCS															
No cuts to support in the short term															
Increased funding to CVS															
Align support to Community Strategies															
Capacity building															
No plans															

Question 6.2: Third Sector engagement?

Table 6.2

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
Continue Liaison activity															
Consultations															
Develop a strategy															
As a gateway to communities															
Due to be discussed															
Sub-groups & partnerships															
Encouraging/ extending volunteering															
No plans															

Question 6.3: Ensuring that the importance of the Third Sector is understood by those working within your organisation?

Table 6.3

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
Shared training events															
Staff workshops															
Due to be discussed															
Links to Elected members															
Compact Audit															
Internal newsletters/ communications															
No plans															

Question 7: Please use this space to share examples of VCS support that could be shared with other statutory colleagues e.g. training, office space, equipment, furniture etc? See Appendix 2.

Question 8: Other than support for volunteering, does your Local Strategic Partnership have a priority within its Community Strategy that relates directly to the role of the Third Sector?

Table 7

	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police
Yes												

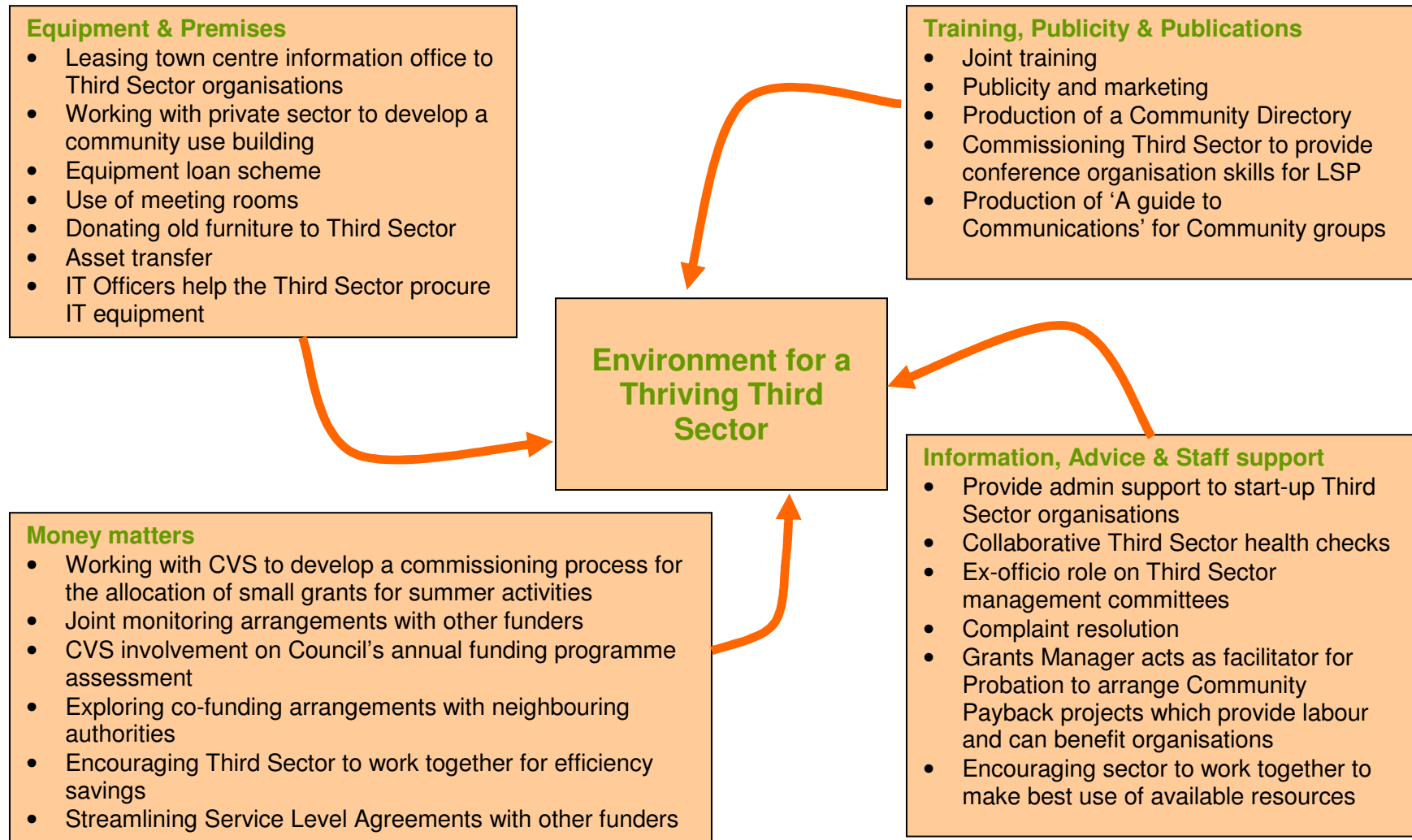
Questions 9 and 10: Officer and Executive Member/ Senior Manager/ Councillor with the responsibility for partnership working with the Third Sector

Table 8

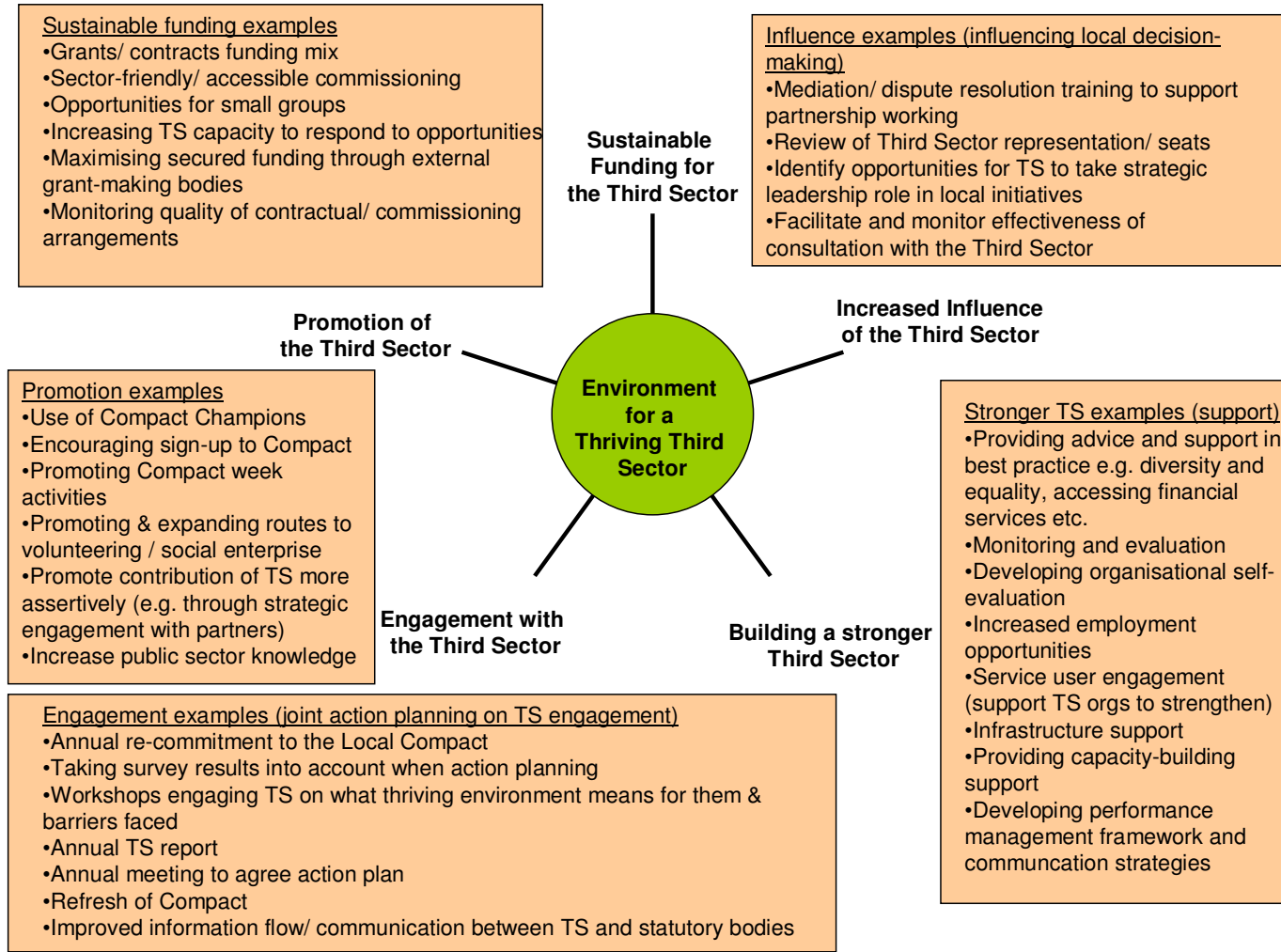
	Broxbourne	Dacorum	E Herts	Hertsmere	N Herts	St. Albans	Stevenage	3 Rivers	Watford	Welhat	Fire	Police	PCT	Probation	HCC
Councillor/Member/ Senior Manager															
Officer															

Appendix 2: Examples of Hertfordshire Third Sector support

Question 7 : Please share examples of Third Sector support in your area.

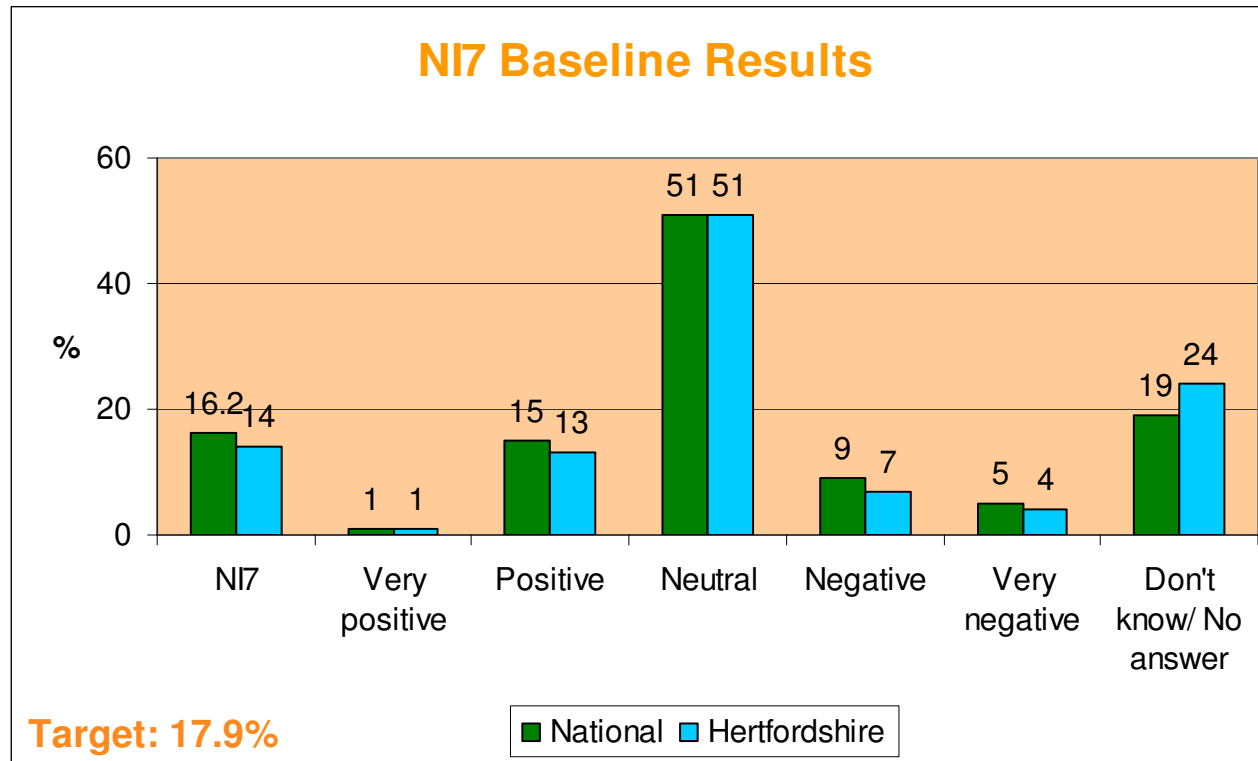


Appendix 3: Examples of VCS support from elsewhere in the country



Appendix 4: National NI7 Baseline results

Based on the question: How do the local statutory bodies in your area influence your organisation's success?



Appendix 5: Questionnaire

1. What type of support do you give to your local voluntary sector (including social enterprises)? █
2. How are you working in partnership with the VCS? █
3. If you have a local Compact, how are you and your partners implementing it? █
4. Does your organisation have a VCS Strategy? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If not, do you have plans to develop one? If so, please indicate when.
5. How do you measure/ monitor effectiveness of your support to the local VCS? █
6. Given that both the CAA and the LAA (via NI7), will be assessing the extent to which your organisation contributes to the success of your local VCS, what are your future plans for: 7.1. VCS support █ 7.2. VCS engagement █ 7.3. Ensuring that the importance of the VCS is understood by those working within your organisation? █
7. Please use this space to share examples of VCS support that could be shared with other statutory colleagues e.g. training, office space, equipment, furniture etc? █
8. Other than support for volunteering, does your Local Strategic Partnership have a priority within

its SCS that relates directly to the role of the VCS/ Third Sector? If so, please provide details.



9. Do you have a local Councillor or Executive Member responsible for leading on partnership-working with the VCS? If so, please supply name and contact details.



10. Please supply the name and contact details of the Officer with overall responsibility for working with the VCS.



Comments

Useful links

National NI7 survey: www.nstso.com

My Herts LAA website: www.myhertslaa.net

NI7 blog: <http://myhertslaa.blogspot.com>

Hertfordshire CVS Group: www.hertscvs.org.uk

Hertfordshire Infrastructure Consortium (HIC): www.herts-ic.co.uk

Hertfordshire Forward: www.hertslink.org.uk/hertfordshireforward

Hertfordshire Compact: <http://www.hertsdirect.org/yrccouncil/hcc/partnerwork/hertscpact/>

Office of the Third Sector: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector.aspx

The Compact: www.thecompact.org.uk

Herts External Resources Network: www.hertsdirect.org/hern

Funding for Herts: www.funding4herts.org.uk

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