



Trafford VCFSE Strategy 2022-2027

A strategy for strengthening the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector in Trafford and creating a foundation for a sustainable sector

Foreword

Trafford has a strong, committed and resourceful Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector built over many years. The sector connects communities, supports individuals and families, delivers services, and provides opportunities for volunteering, training and skills development.

The VCFSE sector supports communities and helps them to thrive, often supporting the most vulnerable in our society.

A thriving and successful VCFSE Sector is fundamental to the economic, physical and mental well-being of Trafford residents. This has never been clearer since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic when the sector mobilised and developed an effective community response to the impact this has had on individuals, families and communities in Trafford.

While the success of this response is well documented it is important to recognise the impact of the response in keeping people safe, ensuring the provision and supply of emergency food, medication and other essential items while maintaining social contact with people.

We have learned many lessons from this response and have incorporated them into the development of the strategy. We understand the need for co-production, the need to be flexible and responsive, to focus on outcomes for Trafford residents. We have learned the importance of the need to be inclusive and to communicate and engage with individuals, families and communities in ways that reflect their economic, social, environmental and cultural circumstances and backgrounds.

The ambition and vision of this strategy is for a resilient VCFSE sector that is a strategic partner in enabling better outcomes for all in Trafford, as outlined in Trafford's Corporate Plan and the Trafford Together Locality Plan. Through our combined commitment, enthusiasm, partnership working and co-production we will deliver a strategy that realises this vision by investing in VCFSE sector organisations in ways that create strong and prosperous communities in all areas of Trafford.

Chris Hart - Director, Thrive Trafford

George Devlin - Strategic Lead, Trafford Community Collective

Cllr Andrew Western - Leader, Trafford Council

Zoe Taylor – Communities Manager, Trafford Housing Trust

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The Vision

Trafford's VCFSE Strategy Vision

That Trafford has a strong and diverse Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector which plays a key role in strengthening communities and delivering shared priorities

The importance of the Trafford's VCFSE sector in supporting communities has become more evident in recent years where the sector has shown great leadership, stepping up quickly to respond to the needs of vulnerable residents in the Borough, by working collaboratively, and with public services and the private sector. This strategy champions a thriving and sustainable VCFSE sector in Trafford; a sector which has a strong and influential voice and is valued as a strategic partner.

VCFSE sector organisations are well placed to provide prevention and early intervention, alongside statutory services, enabling individuals and families to live well and prosper in their communities. The VCFSE sector, with its incredible expertise, huge volunteer and carer workforce and ability to connect with communities, is fundamental. Supporting local areas to further develop strong and sustainable partnerships between the VCFSE sector and partners such as the council will be key to keeping people connected and healthy.

A thriving and sustainable VCFSE sector will enable us to achieve the outcomes of **Trafford's Corporate Plan** (appendix 1) and the **Trafford Together Locality Plan**. Our shared vision for Trafford is ***"Trafford – where all our residents, communities and businesses prosper"***

This Trafford VCFSE Strategy is a 5-year strategy to align with the **Greater Manchester Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector Accord** (GM VCSE Accord: appendix 2) and builds on the **Strategy for Building Strong Communities**, published by the Trafford Partnership in 2018.

The strategy has been developed through the Living Well in my Community Strategic Group; membership of this group include public services and VCFSE organisations. A small Task and Finish Group has led on the consultation, involvement and engagement with partners and stakeholders through a range of workshops, and feedback has been incorporated into the strategy.

Who has been involved in developing this VCFSE Strategy?

Four leading organisations committed to strengthening the VCFSE sector in Trafford have led on the development of this strategy: Thrive Trafford, Trafford Community Collective, Trafford Council and Trafford Housing Trust.

Public services and VCFSE organisations across the borough have contributed to the content and development of this strategy through workshops to gain commitment from all organisations working with or on behalf of the VCFSE sector in Trafford. This has ensured that at the heart of the VCFSE strategy is the voice of the community to ensure that delivery meets need.



We need to bring together 'green groups' from across Trafford to form a borough wide partnership and work collaboratively on green issues/ensure a stronger voice.

This needs to be seen as a genuine collective piece of work involving all levels of the sector – from heads of organisations to front line volunteers and staff

It is vital for VCFSE organisations that they have a clear place they can go for help and support

We need to use less jargonistic language in the strategy to strip back barriers and clarify the message

We need to be specific on which inequalities we are looking to address by strengthening the sector – and how the sector can collaborate and have a clear impact

Sharing knowledge across the sector is valuable for networking, sharing best practice and innovation. The value of face to face events is missing at the moment

Call for equity and fairness in commissioning tenders so it's the best placed person/organisation who delivers the service 'we' need, not just known organisations

A successful VCFSE sector in Trafford

In Trafford, it is estimated there are over **1,622 voluntary and community organisations** and 71% of these are micro-organisations* working with local communities to help connect socially isolated people, transform green spaces and deliver community services to our residents who need additional support.



Our VCFSE sector in Trafford is varied; from **Friends of Park Groups** maintaining our greenspaces, volunteer led **community groups** offering activities to reduce social isolation, **faith organisations** helping to address food insecurity to larger organisations providing **health and wellbeing services**.

Never has the importance of the VCFSE sector in Trafford been more evident than now, where the sector demonstrates great leadership, stepping up quickly to respond to the needs of residents in the borough by working collaboratively and successfully with the council, Trafford Housing Trust, Trafford Integrated Care Partnership and other partners to do so, and developing new and important relationships for the future.

A range of community capacity building support is offered to the VCFSE sector in Trafford, through Trafford Housing Trust's Communities Team. Alongside this, **Thrive Trafford** offer local VCFSE infrastructure support services. **Trafford Council** and **Trafford Housing Trust** also offer financial support through grant schemes and commissioning opportunities. In 2021, the **Trafford Community Collective** was created as a membership organisation to promote, support and connect the VCFSE sector in Trafford.

The VCFSE sector also continues to make a significant contribution to the development of the **Greater Manchester Integrated Care System** in Trafford. The new system recognises the strength and role the sector can play in communicating, engaging with and involving individuals, families and communities in the development and delivery of health and social care services.

There is also a strong recognition of the importance of partnership working with the VCFSE sector to create early intervention and prevention services that enable individuals, families and communities to look after themselves and each other. The development of these person centred, holistic, community-based services will go some way to bridging the gap between increased demand and reduced resources within the health and social care system, and will ensure residents can access support in their own communities.

As a trusted partner, the VCFSE sector in Trafford is also represented on the **Trafford Locality Board and Trafford Provider Collaborative Board**, and in the development of the **neighbourhood model** for future service delivery.

*micro-organisations are VCFSE organisations with an annual income under £10,000



The Hope Centre, Partington

The Hideaway Discovery Centre was established in 2019 to provide an open access educational play facility for local families in Partington.

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic the Hideaway closed its doors as a play centre and stepped up to become one of the Trafford Community Response Hubs acting as a one-stop shop to enable local people to be able to access food and wellbeing support.

All of this support was provided by a small staff team and a large bank of local volunteers. The team recognised a need in Partington for there to be a permanent resource for the community so established the Hope Centre in an old shop on Wood Lane.

The Hope Centre provides a permanent Community Grocery, 'buy what you need fridge', uniform swap, local digital information board and Brew Bar offering information, advice and guidance through signposting.

The space is also available for agencies to make appointments and meet with residents locally.



Friends of John Leigh Park

Trafford has a number of friends groups across the borough helping to maintain and improve our green spaces.

The Friends of John Leigh Park was established in 2002 and volunteers are proactive in securing funding grants to deliver projects which benefit local residents using the park.

Over the years, the Friends Group have transformed the park with the installation of new picnic benches, creation of a wildflower garden, maintenance of the aviary and planting of new trees.

Thanks to the work of dedicated volunteers, Green Flags were awarded to 11 parks in Trafford in 2021/22.

Aims and outcomes of Trafford's VCFSE Strategy

These aims and outcomes focus on building the resilience and strength of the sector

Our aims:

- For the VCFSE sector in Trafford to grow and become **more resilient and sustainable**
- To embed the VCFSE sector in Trafford as a **strategic and influential partner**
- To support the VCFSE sector in Trafford to offer meaningful **volunteering opportunities** and pathways to **employment**
- Learn from best practice within the VCFSE sector on **effective community engagement**
- To enable local businesses, the VCFSE sector and public sector partners to **work in collaboration and deliver social value**

Outcomes:

- Trafford has a **thriving and resilient VCFSE sector** delivering services, connecting communities and supporting individuals and families
- The VCFSE sector is recognised as a **critical part of our local economy**, providing employment and volunteering opportunities
- The VCFSE sector is working collectively to **leverage financial investment** into the borough
- An **enhanced VCFSE infrastructure service** is created to support the VCFSE sector
- Trafford's **investment in the VCFSE sector** is achieving maximum impact in supporting the needs within its communities
- The VCFSE sector enable public services to better **engage with our communities**

Delivering the Strategy

Aim 1

For the VCFSE sector in Trafford to grow and become more resilient and sustainable

We want Trafford's VCSFE sector to be able to deliver high quality services. To do that, we know that it is crucial for the infrastructure to exist to support the sector. This means ensuring the sector has opportunities to work together and collaborate, to access funding and financial resources, and to access the training and support needed to develop capacity.

What will we do?

- We will aspire to secure greater investment into Trafford's VCFSE infrastructure support service
- Partners providing VCFSE support will work collaboratively to ensure this support service achieves growth and sustainability of VCFSE organisations
- Develop systems and processes that provide easy access to advice, information and support for organisations
- Trafford's VCFSE sector will be represented at a Greater Manchester level to enable peer learning
- Ensure existing financial resources are accessible to all VCFSE organisations and maximise these existing financial resources for greatest impact on communities
- Encourage new social enterprise start-ups by better promoting the business support available to achieve this

What will success look like?

- Increased capacity to support the sector and meet demand for support
- VCFSE organisations know where and how to access the right support that meets the sector's needs
- There is one clear pathway for support and partners are working together
- Trafford's VCFSE sector is an active partner in the GM VCFSE ecosystem
- The VCFSE sector knows what funding is available and has the confidence, skills and capacity to secure funding
- An increase in new social enterprise start-ups in Trafford

Aim 2

To embed the VCFSE sector in Trafford as a strategic and influential partner

We want Trafford's VCFSE sector to have a strong and influential voice in the development of local strategies and policies, and in the design of local services, recognising the value of co-production. The VCFSE sector in Trafford has played a key role in the development of the Integrated Care System at a local level, and will continue to do so.

What will we do?

- Ensure effective representation of the VCFSE sector on relevant decision-making partnerships, groups and boards
- Ensure commissioning processes are accessible to VCFSE organisations
- Ensure the VCFSE sector is an equal partner in the co-production of local services
- Better understand and appreciate the value of the sector and impact on communities

What will success look like?

- Greater voice and influence of the VCFSE sector in the development of strategies, policies and services
- Increase opportunities for VCFSE organisations to secure commissions
- Development and delivery of well-designed services that meet local need
- Effectively demonstrating the VCFSE sector's contribution and identifying gaps in provision

Aim 3

To support the VCFSE sector in Trafford to offer meaningful volunteering opportunities and pathways to employment

We recognise the important role of Trafford's VCFSE sector in providing volunteering opportunities and pathways to employment for local residents, through volunteering, training opportunities and placements. We want to support the capacity of the VCFSE sector to offer opportunities which are accessible to all Trafford residents.

What will we do?

- Create an enhanced volunteering coordination offer in Trafford, aligned with the VCFSE infrastructure service
- Support the VCFSE sector to recruit more apprentices and offer more traineeships
- Promote volunteering within the VCFSE sector as a pathway to employment, an opportunity for 'workforce development', and for greater mental and physical wellbeing, and social inclusion for the volunteer
- Raise the profile of volunteers in Trafford to celebrate their impact
- Develop a clear pathway for volunteers to access the correct advice, information and support
- Support organisations follow best practice for recruiting, developing and supporting volunteers
- Support the VCFSE sector to lead the way in good employment conditions

What will success look like?

- Increased volunteer recruitment, development and support
- Increase in qualifications and employability for residents
- Increased number of volunteers in Trafford, including those from underrepresented groups; improved mental health and wellbeing of the community
- Increased volunteer retention and recruitment, and continued commitment
- Increased volunteer engagement, retention and progression
- Greater volunteering in Trafford where volunteers feel supported and encouraged
- Employees in the VCFSE sector are well supported by their employers

Aim 4

The VCFSE sector supports residents to live well in their communities and often supports the most vulnerable in our society

We can deliver better community services by learning from best practice within Trafford's VCFSE sector.

What will we do?

- Work with VCFSE organisations to understand and learn from the lived experience of communities and residents
- Collaboration within the sector to secure larger and longer term funding opportunities
- Facilitate the sharing of expertise across the VCFSE sector in Trafford
- Stronger partnership working between VCFSE organisations and statutory partners
- Enable more VCFSE organisations to work with health organisations to deliver social prescribing for the benefit of residents

What will success look like?

- Strategies and policies are shaped by and responding to the voices of the communities
- Funding is available to deliver projects that benefit communities
- A well informed, stronger network of VCFSE organisations which maximises resources
- Joint membership on strategic boards on which the VCFSE plays an integral role
- Increased social prescribing and improved partnerships between VCFSE sector and health organisations

Aim 5

The VCFSE sector delivers and is able to benefit from social value commitments

Social Value includes economic, social, and environmental benefits and the Trafford VCFSE Strategy reflects the aims and outcomes within Trafford's Social Value Charter.

What will we do?

- VCFSE organisations will work collaboratively, and with businesses and the public sector, to leverage national and regional funding for delivering programmes addressing inequalities
- Facilitate greater coordination and collaboration to maximise social value; broker partnership working between the business sector, public services and the VCFSE sector
- Enable the VCFSE sector in Trafford to have a key role in contributing towards net zero/climate change targets and collaborating to support environmental projects

What will success look like?

- Increased funding is leveraged into the borough to deliver projects that benefit communities and reduce inequality
- Social value is maximised across all sectors via well informed stronger networks with mutually beneficial relationships
- Trafford's VCFSE sector is engaged in tackling climate change

Final Words

We need a strong and diverse VCFSE sector in Trafford to help strengthen our communities, tackle inequalities and improve the overall quality of life for Trafford residents.

Without a sustainable VCFSE sector which is well-funded, supported and considered as an important and influential partner, we will not achieve our partnership objectives; this strategy creates the opportunity for all partners to contribute to achieving our vision.

This is why, although the delivery of this strategy will be led by the four key delivery organisations (Thrive Trafford, Trafford Community Collective, Trafford Council and Trafford Housing Trust), public services partners and VCFSE organisations across the borough have contributed to its development to ensure their commitment to strengthening our VCFSE sector.

The delivery and evaluation of this strategy will be overseen by the Living Well in my Community Strategic Design Group involving the four delivery organisations and an action plan will be developed including commitments from partners who will contribute to the delivery of the actions over the next five years.

Appendix 1: Trafford's Corporate Plan

Trafford's [Corporate Plan](#) describes Trafford Council's strategic vision, outcomes and priorities for the borough. It includes an overview of what the council will do and how the council will work with residents, communities, businesses and other partners to deliver change to Trafford.

To achieve the commitments outlined in the Corporate Plan, Trafford Council will focus on the three outcomes outlined below. We have incorporated these three commitments into the Trafford VCFSE Strategy.

Reducing health inequalities

Working with people, communities and partners, particularly in deprived areas, to improve the physical and mental health of all our residents.

Supporting people out of poverty

Tackling the root causes to prevent people from falling into poverty, and raising people out of it.

Addressing our climate change crisis

Reducing our carbon footprint and tackling the impact of climate change.

Appendix 2: Greater Manchester VCSE Accord

This strategy compliments the Greater Manchester Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector Accord (GM VCSE Accord), a collaboration agreement between the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Greater Manchester Integrated Care System and the Greater Manchester VCSE Leadership Group.

This agreement focuses on:

- Creating a **shared understanding of the contribution that VCSE organisations make** towards tackling inequality in society, creating a more inclusive economy and addressing the climate crisis.
- **Building effective partnerships and relationships** between the statutory sector with VCSE organisations across different geographies
- Developing a **5-year iterative programme of enabling work** driven at a GM-wide footprint, which aims to maximise the ability of VCSE organisations to achieve better outcomes

The vision for the GM VCSE Accord

‘A thriving VCSE sector in Greater Manchester that works collaboratively and productively with the GM Integrated Care System, the GM Combined Authority, its constituent local authority members and statutory partners’.

The GM VCSE Accord sets out **eight commitments** which are reflected in the aims and objectives of our Trafford VCFSE Strategy.

Commitment 1: We will work together to achieve a permanent reduction in inequalities and inequity within Greater Manchester, addressing the social, environmental and economic determinants of health and wellbeing.

Commitment 2: We will embed the VCSE sector as a key delivery partner of services for communities in Greater Manchester.

Commitment 3: We will build a financially resilient VCSE sector that is resourced to address our biggest challenges of ending poverty and inequality in Greater Manchester.

Commitment 4: We will grow the role of the VCSE sector as an integral part of a resilient and inclusive economy where social enterprises, co-operatives, community businesses, charities and microsocial business thrive.

Commitment 5: We will build on our existing strengths to build the best VCSE ecosystem in England.

Commitment 6: We will put into place meaningful mechanisms to make co-design of local services the norm, including expanding channels for service design to be informed by 'lived experience'.

Commitment 7: We will fulfil the potential for building productive relationships between the VCSE, public and private sectors to address inequity and build back fairer.

Commitment 8: We will put in place a comprehensive workforce programme to support organisational and workforce development for VCSE employers based on and facilitating a more integrated public facing workforce.