

**TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 18 March 2024  
**Report for:** Information  
**Report of:** Executive Member for Communities and Safety

**Report Title**

**Update on delivery of the Trafford VCFSE Strategy 2022-27**

**Summary**

The Trafford VCFSE Strategy 2022-27 was published as a 5-year strategy to strengthen and create a foundation for a sustainable Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise sector in Trafford. This report summarises the highlights for the VCFSE sector since the publication of the strategy.

**Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended that Executive:

1. Notes the content and progress to date.
2. Agrees for the strategy to be reflected upon to determine next steps and agree the actions required to achieve the deliverables of the strategy.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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*Implications:*

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	<i>The VCSFE Strategy will help to deliver on the Council's corporate priorities: reducing health inequalities, supporting people out of poverty, and addressing the climate crisis.</i>
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	<i>The VCSFE Strategy is in line with GM and national strategies and frameworks</i>
Financial	<i>There are no direct financial implications arising from this report</i>
Legal Implications:	<i>Any legal implications will be outlined within the report</i>
Equality/Diversity Implications	<i>The VCSFE strategy supports the equality duty on the Council</i>
Sustainability Implications	<i>The VCSFE Strategy supports sustainability</i>
Carbon Reduction	<i>The VCSFE Strategy outlines how the VCFSE sector can support carbon reduction</i>
Resource Implications e.g., Staffing/ICT /Assets	<i>No direct impact on the Council staffing nor asset budgets</i>
Risk Management Implications	<i>Challenges and mitigations are identified in the report</i>
Health & Wellbeing Implications	<i>Health and wellbeing will be improved through the implementation of this VCSFE Strategy through improved access to services and opportunities</i>
Health and Safety Implications	<i>No direct impact</i>

**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Trafford VCFSE Strategy 2022-27 is a 5-year strategy jointly developed by partners to strengthen and create a foundation for a sustainable Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise sector in Trafford.
- 1.2 The strategy was approved and published in July 2022 following engagement with the VCFSE sector and relevant boards and partnerships. Oversight of the strategy originally sat with the Living Well in my Community Strategic Coordination Group.
- 1.3 Previous to this current strategy, the Trafford Partnership had published a Strategy for Building Strong Communities in 2015 which focused on the role of the VCFSE sector.
- 1.4 The four lead organisations involved in the development of the current strategy were Trafford Community Collective, L&Q (previously Trafford Housing Trust), Pulse Regeneration (Thrive Trafford) and Trafford Council. Public services and VCFSE organisations contributed to the content and development of the strategy through several workshops.
- 1.5 Oversight of the Trafford VCFSE Strategy sits with the Policy Team at Trafford Council, working in partnership with Trafford Community Collective, L&Q and Thrive Trafford, who are collectively responsible for the deliverables alongside the Council.
- 1.6 The strategy aligns with the GM VCFSE Accord published in October 2021.

1.7 This is the first time that progress of the Trafford VCFSE Strategy has been reported to the Executive since the publication of the strategy in July 2022.

## 2.0 Strategy Overview

2.1 The strategy recognises the strength and value of the VCFSE sector in our borough. The importance of the sector has become more evident in recent years where VCFSE organisations have shown great leadership in responding to the Covid pandemic and supporting communities. The VCFSE sector in Trafford contributes an estimated £139 million to the economy.

2.2 In Trafford, it is estimated there are over 1,622 voluntary and community organisations and 71% of these are micro-organisations working directly with local communities. There are an estimated 34,062 volunteers supporting our VCFSE sector.

2.3 The Trafford VCFSE Strategy highlights 5 strategic aims:

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

2.4 This report summarises the highlights for the VCFSE sector since the publication of the strategy and the next steps for the VCFSE Strategy.

## 3.0 Trafford Community Hubs

Initially established in response to the Covid pandemic, the Trafford Community Hubs are providing valuable support for residents in their communities. A total of 9,330 Trafford residents were directly supported by the Community Hubs in 2023 and 2,301 residents received emergency support.

During the pandemic, funding was available to support the operational costs of the Community Hubs and to develop an enhanced volunteering service including the employment of Volunteer Coordinators within the Hubs. The Inclusive Neighbourhood Grants scheme has since been re-directed to fund the core services of the Community Hubs.

In 2023, the Trafford Community Collective (with the application led by Stretford Public Hall) secured £340,000 from the National Lottery Communities Fund to enable the continued employment of these Volunteer Coordinators in each of the six Community Hubs. The Volunteer Coordinators recruit and support volunteers across the VCFSE sector in their area, providing a more community based, coordinated approach to volunteering. This funding runs until August 2026.

One key deliverable of the strategy is for the VCFSE sector in Trafford to grow and become more resilient and sustainable. A working group has been established with the Community Hub leads and the Exec Member for Communities and Safety, to start these discussions and a range of partners are attending as required. This is a key piece of work for 2024.

#### **4.0 Coordinated Volunteering Support**

In 2023, an average of 327 active volunteers each month assisted the Community Hubs in engaging with communities; many of these volunteers have received support from the Hubs themselves in the past.

Alongside recruitment of Volunteer Coordinators at the Community Hubs during the pandemic, Trafford Council recruited a Volunteer Coordinator to manage the recruitment and training of volunteers for the Council as well as working alongside the VCFSE sector.

Thrive Trafford are part of the volunteering coordination infrastructure in the borough alongside the Community Hubs and Trafford Council. Thrive's annual target is to support 100 people in to volunteering opportunities and facilitate quarterly Volunteer Managers Network meetings which are well attended.

In summary, several organisations in Trafford provide resource in the coordination and recruitment of volunteers:

- Trafford Council: Volunteer Coordinator (full time)
- Thrive Trafford: Volunteer Coordinator (part-time) as part of the VCFSE infrastructure contract
- Trafford Community Collective: Volunteer Coordinator/Project Delivery Officer (one day per week)
- Trafford Community Hubs: Volunteer Coordinators (part-time) within each of the six Community Hubs funded by the National Lottery

The Council's Inclusive Economy and Communities Team are also working with the Council's Volunteer Coordinator and the Community Hubs to develop a volunteer programme providing support and training for people who wish to volunteer as a route to employment.

The Council's Strategic Partnerships and Policy Team and Inclusive Economy and Communities Team are working together to deliver the Trafford Community Awards Scheme in Autumn 2024; an event is planned to acknowledge the contribution of volunteers and VCFSE organisations in Trafford. The Awards will be hosted by Trafford College.

#### **5.0 Trafford Community Collective**

Trafford Council and NHS GM (Trafford) have contributed £225,000 to the development and sustainability of the Trafford Community Collective since 2020/21.

The Collective is a membership-based organisation representing the VCFSE sector in the borough. The most recent funding allocated to TCC will support the work of the lead partners, administration costs, marketing and to continue the post of Chief Officer/Strategic Lead at the Collective. This core funding has enabled the Collective to generate inward investment into Trafford, enabling the

organisation to expand its current deliverables and enable growth and aid sustainability.

Representatives of the Collective sit on several boards as a strategic partner to ensure representation of the VCFSE Sector and has been instrumental in the development of the new Integrated Care System for Greater Manchester, with representation on the Trafford Locality Board and Trafford Provider Collaborative Board.

In collaboration with Public Health and Trafford Local Care Organisation the Collective have led on the neighbourhood planning workstream; a key area of this work has been the development and delivery of neighbourhood workshops to support the development of integrated community-based services.

Workshops have been led by the Collective in all four neighbourhoods across Trafford which has led to the development of regular Neighbourhood Network meetings. The Collective have been integral to the development of the four Neighbourhood Plans, which identify priorities to be addressed over the life course of the Trafford Locality Plan.

The Collective operate three reference groups: the Children's Service Reference Group, Mental Health Reference Group and Diverse Communities Group. These reference groups have drawn in funding and enabled positive work to take place across the borough including the creation of a Children's Mental Health Link Worker.

## **6.0 Thrive Trafford: VCFSE Infrastructure Service**

Trafford Council continues to fund Thrive Trafford; our borough's VCFSE infrastructure service. The contract value is £110,000 per annum (October 2022 – September 2025), currently delivered by Pulse Regeneration Ltd and branded as Thrive Trafford.

Thrive Trafford provides opportunities for the sector to collaborate, signposts to funding and training resources, and supports residents looking for volunteering opportunities. Thrive also represents Trafford's VCFSE sector at a Greater Manchester level; attending several networks to collaborate with other boroughs and access wider opportunities.

Thrive Trafford provide quarterly reports detailing the outcomes of the infrastructure service. In 2023 Q2, the service supported 28 organisations with capacity building, supported 10 funding applications, delivered a VCFSE Strategic Forum attended by over 100 people, supported 30 people to find volunteering opportunities and published 205 social media posts raising awareness of opportunities for VCFSE organisations and volunteers.

Thrive Trafford represent our borough at a Greater Manchester level, opening new collaboration and funding opportunities for our VCFSE sector. Our borough is represented by Thrive Trafford at the GM VCFSE Leadership Group and GM LIO (Local Infrastructure Organisation) Group, working alongside the VCFSE infrastructure organisations from the other nine GM authorities.

Examples of accessing opportunities through the GM VCFSE ecosystem include:

- Discussions on the Live Well Joint Investment Fund; a new funding opportunity to enable VCFSE organisations to grow stronger healthier communities. Conversations with GM Integrated Care Partnership, Thrive Trafford, Trafford Community Collective, GM NHS Trafford and Trafford Council have taken place to co-produce how this project will be delivered.
- Involvement in GM Workforce Development and the creation of a central online GM hub and a shared HR support service for VCFSE organisations.
- GM Violence Reduction Alliance: support with the establishment of this GM funded programme and monthly partnership meetings between Trafford Council's Violence Reduction Officer, GM VRU lead, Trafford Community Collective and the new Trafford based Violence Reduction Alliance Facilitator (VRAF).
- GM Childhood Obesity Campaign: Thrive was commissioned to deliver focus group sessions and launch 'The Real Picture' survey.

Thrive Trafford and Trafford Community Collective work collaboratively to ensure VCFSE organisations know how and where to access the right support. VCFSE organisations are signposted between the two organisations depending on the need and support required; with Thrive Trafford providing infrastructure support and the Trafford Community Collective providing an opportunity for organisations to be part of a wider network and collaborate.

Thrive Trafford organise three VCFSE Strategic Forums per annum, bringing VCFSE organisations together with cross sector partners to codesign strategies, policies, and services. The Forums are regularly attended by over 60 VCFSE organisations and this was a key engagement forum in the development of the Trafford VCFSE Strategy.

Trafford Council representatives from the Strategic Partnerships and Policy Team attend the bi-monthly GM Local Authorities VCFSE Lead Officers meetings to collaborate with other local authorities on VCFSE strategy and infrastructure support.

## 7.0 **Commissioning Opportunities**

Trafford Council continues to commission a range of VCFSE organisations; recognising that they are often best placed to engage with and support communities.

Council teams commissioning programmes of work proactively identify where projects could be better delivered by VCFSE organisations in the borough. A recent example is the current tender for a new smoking cessation service; £140,000 is available for the service and applications are specifically open to VCFSE organisations with the knowledge that they are best placed to support residents within their own communities.

## 8.0 **Social Value / Climate Change**

Trafford Council has recently recruited a Social Value Coordinator in the Inclusive Economy and Communities Team. This Coordinator oversees Trafford's Social Value Charter and leads on the Trafford Social Value Action Plan, working in partnership with the business sector, public services and the VCFSE sector. The Social Value Steering Group brings together cross-sector partners working strategically around social value including the VCFSE sector.

The Social Value Coordinator is working with a range of VCFSE organisations and networks to look at leveraging in business skills and investment through social value. Work has also been undertaken with STAR Procurement and Trafford's Neighbourhood Leads to map out key social value TOMs (themes, outcomes, and measures) in line with key priorities for each Locality area to maximise social impact.

The VCFSE infrastructure contract with Thrive Trafford also includes a limited social value remit; proactively matching businesses offering support with VCFSE organisations who can benefit.

Thrive Trafford and Trafford Community Collective attend the Trafford Social Value Steering Group and the Trafford Community Climate Action Steering Group, enabling the VCFSE sector in Trafford to have a key role in contributing towards net zero/climate change targets.

The Trafford Community Climate Action Steering Group conducted community consultation in 2023 on climate change and an additional survey aimed at VCFSE organisations will be disseminated in March.

The Collective engaged the Trafford Local Care Organisation to include Climate Change in Neighbourhood Delivery Plans. Groundwork will be attending bi-monthly Neighbourhood meetings to engage groups and the VCFSE sector attendees. Trafford Council's Climate Change and Sustainability Service endeavour to work with Trafford Community Climate Action Steering Group towards securing funding for Trafford's Community Hubs to run workshops for VCFSE organisations.

## 9.0 **Summary**

The role of Trafford's VCFSE sector in strategic meetings and decision making has transformed since the Covid pandemic, following recognition and appreciation of the sector's significant contribution to our borough. The VCFSE sector is represented on a range of partnerships, groups and boards in Trafford and our borough is well represented within the GM ecosystem leading to improved access to opportunities.

Challenges to ensure the sustainability of the VCFSE sector in Trafford have been recognised and implementations in place to mitigate potential impacts:

- Continued coordination of the volunteering offer in Trafford and ensuring a clear pathway for residents wishing to volunteer; partners are working collaboratively.
- The sustainability of the core services offered by the Trafford Community Hubs; a working group attended by a range of partners has been established.

## 10.0 **Conclusion**

Support for the VCFSE sector and the sector itself has evolved in recent years with substantial activity at Greater Manchester level. Progress has been made in representation of the sector in Trafford and new challenges have arisen; it would be beneficial for the strategy to be reflected upon via a workshop to determine next steps (i.e., continuation of the strategy until 2027 or a refresh of

the strategy) and agree the actions required to achieve the deliverables of the strategy.

Governance of the Trafford VCFSE Strategy will be reviewed. Oversight of the strategy can remain with the Strategic Partnerships and Policy Team at Trafford Council; however, the Living Well in my Community Strategic Coordination Group has now disbanded and a new board or partnership to govern the delivery of the strategy must be agreed.

#### **11.0 Recommendations:**

11.1 It is recommended that Executive:

1. Notes the content and progress to date.
2. Agrees for the strategy to be reflected upon to determine next steps and agree the actions required to achieve the deliverables of the strategy.

#### **12.0 Reasons for Recommendations:**

12.1 It is recommended that the Executive approve the VCFSE highlight report and share progress on the performance of the Council's VCFSE strategy.

**Key Decision:** No

**If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given?** N/A

**Finance Officer Clearance:** GB

**Legal Officer Clearance:** DS

**DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE:** Sara Saleh

To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.

