



Voluntary Sector
Commissioning Framework
(2019 - 2023)

Community &
Environmental Services

Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework 2019 - 2023

The Commissioning Framework is the council's strategic approach that sets out the priorities for a range of leisure and community services, which are delivered by voluntary and third sector organisations on behalf of Watford Borough Council (WBC).

Watford Borough Council is committed to supporting a vibrant and engaged voluntary sector which can deliver high quality and value for money services that benefit those who live, work and visit Watford. The council is also keen to work in partnership with the voluntary sector as demonstrated in the Watford Compact (Appendix A).

What are voluntary or third sector organisations?

Third sector organisations' is a term used to describe the range of organisations that are neither public sector nor private sector. It includes voluntary and community organisations (both registered charities and other organisations such as associations, self-help groups and community groups), social enterprises, and mutuals.

Benefits that third sector organisations can give commissioners

The voluntary sector is a key contributor to making Watford a better place to live for its residents and is recognised as being best placed to deliver some services at a local level supporting excluded, vulnerable or new and emerging communities. The council can benefit considerably from working closely with third sector organisations, some of the common themes are:

- **Understanding the needs of service users and local communities** that the council needs to address
- **Closeness to the people** that the council wants to reach
- **Ability to deliver outcomes** that the council finds it hard to deliver on its own
- **Innovation** in developing solutions and
- **Performance** in delivering services

Why adopt a Commissioning Framework approach?

This is the fourth Commissioning Framework approved by WBC. The purpose of this Framework is to ensure that there is a transparent and a robust approach to how the council commissions the voluntary sector to deliver services that are considered a district council responsibility and address evidenced, current or emerging need(s) within the town.

The council has five priority areas of work. Our priorities are critical to the council achieving successful outcomes for its ambitions for the town. The specific priorities are intended to support the delivery of the council's corporate vision detailed in the Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020 in particular:

- Champion smart growth and economic prosperity
- Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities
- Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community

- Secure our own financial future

Future funding of the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework 2019 - 2023

The current economic climate means that all organisations, whether they are public, private or third sector, have to look at the way they do things and consider what will best ensure long term sustainability for those services and activities that are important to local people and the community.

What is clear is, given the current and future pressures, the council cannot be all things to all people or provide the answers to, or solve, all issues. By working together in a collaborative way, including the statutory, non-statutory and commercial sectors, new and different ways of working can be explored to ensure a healthy local voluntary sector continues to exist.

As a commissioning organisation it is important that the authority is able to measure the expected outcomes and evaluate trends in service delivery over the period of time of the new framework. Therefore, the framework and its commissioned organisations need to be flexible to adapt to future service demands.

However, financial support beyond Year 1 of the framework will be subject to the availability of funding during that period as set out in the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and annual budget setting process.

This Commissioning Framework, therefore, provides a strategic structure to take us forward and build a foundation for future resilience and financial sustainability.

What services and organisations does the council currently commission?

The council's current Framework (2016 - 2019) commissioned the delivery of the following priorities:

- Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector in the town
- Advice and support services
- Arts and cultural opportunities
- Enabling people with mobility problem to access the town centre
- Community centre provision across the borough
- Mayor's Small Grants Fund

What are the proposed commissioning priorities for 2019 - 2023 and how were they identified?

The development of the new Commissioning Framework has provided an opportunity for the council to review its current priorities and assess:

- what services it should continue to promote, support and fund
- whether the current priorities are still right for Watford in the context of being appropriate for a district council to grant aid within a limited budget and resources

The Elector Mayor, Portfolio Holders, council officers and elected members have considered a range of evidence relating to Watford including:

- Review of the existing service level agreements and key performance indicators of the commissioned organisations over the previous three years
- Demographic information including census and public health ward information, deprivation data and other information that paints a portrait of our current and future communities
- Aspirations of the council's economic growth programme and how the voluntary sector can contribute to achieving this
- Impacts and outcomes of the council's Community Asset Review (CAR Project) including which groups are using the council's leisure and community properties
- Discussions with voluntary and third sector organisations in the borough
- Findings from the previous and new Equality Impact Analysis on the Commissioning Framework

Commissioned organisations and priorities for 2019 - 2023

This assessment of the borough and its communities has identified that the following existing priorities and organisations are commissioned, with the addition of the Watford Pump House Theatre, for a new four year funding cycle. All of these organisations are considered to be important to WBC as they continue to align with the council's current and future aspirations.

The commissioning priorities are:

- **Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector**
It is proposed that Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) be commissioned to deliver this service given their extensive networks across the voluntary, statutory and business sectors.

The focus of service delivery will be to strengthen the voluntary sector in Watford and enable it to thrive, ensuring that it has the best possible opportunity of delivering high quality, effective and value for money services to residents and service users.
- **Advice and support services**
It is proposed that Watford Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) be commissioned to deliver a generic advice service provision. The CAB currently has a proven track record in the sector and has the capacity and capability to deliver a comprehensive advice service to the diverse and changing communities of Watford, working with the council to address and respond to any national agendas, legislative or policy changes that may impact on service users.

- **Mobility services**

It is proposed that Shopmobility Watford be commissioned to deliver a mobility service that allows those with mobility problems to access businesses and services in the town centre. Shopmobility Watford has the necessary experience and infrastructure in place to deliver this service.

- **Arts and culture**

The cultural offer for Watford is a key council ambition to build Watford’s reputation as a great place to live and to stimulate economic growth. It is proposed that Watford Palace Theatre and the Pump House Theatres be commissioned to deliver arts and culture services through a range of theatre activities/programmes. Watford Palace Theatre is a key contributor to delivering to the council’s cultural vision through their work on high quality theatre productions, projects and outreach programmes. The Pump House Theatre plays a key role in supporting and providing community and grassroots arts and cultural opportunities for local residents and Watford communities.

- **Community centre provision**

It is recommended that community centre provision remains a commissioning priority on the basis that all the currently commissioned community centres are located in areas of multiple-deprivation.

The community centres which form part of the new framework are:

Community Centre	Commissioned organisation
Holywell Community Centre	Watford & Three Rivers Trust (W3RT)
Orbital Community Centre	One YMCA
Meriden Community Centre	Watford Football Club Community Sports and Education Trust
West Watford Community Centre	West Watford Community Association

The centres should be commissioned to support the needs of their individual communities, fostering a sense of community spirit and cohesion. It is proposed that facilities provide a range of centre activities that address evidenced need in their ward in one or more the following areas:

- Public health focusing on mental health and wellbeing
- Youth and young people focused activities
- Activities for older adults
- Activities for people with disabilities

- **The Mayor's Small Grants Fund**

It is proposed that the council continues to administer the Mayor's Small Grants Fund to provide grants to a maximum of £2,000 for equipment and/or one off projects.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to establish whether there are any emerging needs that are not addressed through the commissioning priorities. If there are emerging needs identified during the period of the Framework that are not currently met, consideration will be given as to whether these are a District Council responsibility, align with the council's corporate objectives and whether council funding or grant aid is required in order to commission the service.

Oversight and governance arrangements

The quality of services commissioned by the council will be monitored by the Leisure and Community Services Team. A rolling programme of reports and presentations to Portfolio Holders and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be developed and agreed to ensure that the Elected Mayor, Portfolio Holders, elected members and leadership team are kept informed regarding the progress and performance of the new commissioning framework.

Performance against the Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Each of the commissioned organisations will have an SLA and bespoke service specification which details the KPIs required by the council. Understanding the social value and the positive outcomes of the commissioning framework's investment is important to the council. The authority has already started to capture the workforce and volunteering information. During the last framework additional research has been conducted to establish a baseline dataset on the following topics (1) reducing the Carbon Footprint and evaluation of the wider supply chain and the economic benefit (2) local firms/companies employed by the community centres to deliver services.

Appendix 1 - Watford Compact (2014)

Watford Compact – a cross sector partnership

This is a voluntary agreement between different organisations designed to strengthen local relationships and improve outcomes for the local community. Organisations signing up to this compact may come from the public, private or voluntary sectors – or from organisations that have a foot in two or more sectors.

Recognition, respect and partnership

All signatories to this document:

- agree to work in partnership to improve outcomes for stakeholders, customers and the local community;
- recognise and respect the roles of each sector;
- understand that a successful community must have effective, confident organisations in each sector.

The basics

Signatories agree to work within the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility defined by ISO 26000:

- Accountability
We are answerable to those affected by our decisions and activities, as well as to society in general for our overall impact.
- Transparency
We will disclose (in a clear, accurate manner and to a reasonable and sufficient degree) our policies, decisions, and activities, including known and likely impacts.
- Ethical behaviour
Our decisions and activities will reflect our commitment to honesty, equity, and integrity.
- Respect for stakeholders
We will take into account the rights and interests of all stakeholders including owners, members, customers, constituents, employees, neighbours, other individuals or groups may also have rights, claims, or specific interests that should be taken into account.
- Respect for the rule of law
We will ensure that all our employees, volunteers, agents and stakeholders understand our commitment to comply with applicable laws and regulations.
- Respect for international standards of behaviour
We will ensure that all our employees, volunteers, agents and stakeholders understand our commitment not to benefit from unethical behaviour, even where this behavior is legal.
- Respect for human rights
In all circumstances we will respect and foster rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and elsewhere in the International Bill of Human Rights.

Good governance

- We will publish an annual report on our work.
- We will demonstrate our commitment to good governance by working within or toward an appropriate quality assurance standard.
- We will monitor and evaluate our work and secure regular feedback from our stakeholders.
- We will join or recognise representational and trade bodies such as the Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce and W3RT CVS.
- We will be active within appropriate broader local partnerships such as sector forums dealing (for example, with culture, technology, or education).

Good practise

- Consultation and collaboration
We will consult customers, members, constituents, stakeholders wherever possible, contribute to the consultations of others, and work collaboratively where a common interest is identified.
- Environment
We recognise that natural resources are limited and the natural environment is precious, and will take action to reduce consumption, increase recycling, and protect the environment.
- Equalities
We will promote equality and remove discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, marital status, pregnancy or parenthood, race, religious belief or non-belief, sex, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment.
- Public health
We will promote good public health, including good mental health, to our employees and stakeholders.
- Employment
We will observe good practise in recruitment and employment, and will particularly look to provide opportunities for local people who are young or disadvantaged.
- Volunteering
Where appropriate we will provide opportunities for volunteers and encourage paid staff to volunteer in the local community.
- Charity
We will support local charity by contributing to fundraising or encouraging our staff to contribute.
- Watford
Within the law and competitive practise, we will try to recruit suppliers, contractors and employees from within the Watford community.

The public sector - lead signatory: Watford Borough Council

Public sector organisations derive their legitimacy from popular consent and democratic accountability and are responsible for policy development, regulation and the rule of law, and the delivery of statutory services. Public sector signatories agree to adhere to the national Compact.

The private sector - lead signatory: Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce

Private sector organisations are accountable to their private owners and through regulation and the rule of law; they underpin the economy by producing goods and services, generating trade, creating jobs and wealth, and paying taxes.

The voluntary sector - lead signatory: W3RT CVS

Voluntary sector organisations are accountable through their trustees and members and through regulation and the rule of law; they challenge injustice, preserve culture, highlight and address needs by providing goods and services, and provide a platform for marginalised and under-represented groups. Voluntary sector signatories agree to adhere to the national Compact.

Status

This is not a legally binding agreement and implies no legal commitment. We acknowledge the right of each signatory to determine its own policies and to act accordingly. If any organisation decides it cannot meet the standards set by this Compact, it can remove its name from the list of signatories.

Where a complaint is received that a signatory organisation is not meeting the standards set by this Compact, its name can be removed from the list of signatories by unanimous agreement of the three lead signatories (subject always to the right of the organisation to respond to the complaint received).