

SCRUTINY REVIEW UPDATE

Title of scrutiny review:	Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group
Chair of scrutiny review:	Councillor Glen Saffery
Final report published:	22 October 2020
Forwarded to Cabinet:	January 2022
Date of review:	January 2022

Recommendation:	W3RT should take steps to improve understanding of its activities in the local community. (GREEN)
W3RT response:	<p>What has already happened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W3RT's CEO continues to lead the Hertfordshire Community Leadership Forum, which has been instrumental in shaping how the local Voluntary and Community Sector can feed into and influence the new Integrated Care Systems. • New role of Head of Community Development is settling in well after starting in June 2021 and to date has interacted with over 300 representatives of local groups and organisations and has held in depth conversations with over 50 local groups so far to learn about their work, understand their needs and share support W3RT can offer. • New post appointed: Communications, Policy and Research Officer, who is reviewing internal and external communications including social media. • New website published with enhanced functionality to support local groups using Nation Builder https://www.w3rt.org/ • W3RT CVS hosted a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Engagement event in September 2021 following a research report we commissioned in 2020 with Brick by Brick Communities and Herts Equality Council to better understand how we can better engage and support these communities. The event was organised in collaboration with relevant local and County-wide partners and was well attended with 47 attendees on the day (70% representing Watford-based groups and communities) and we are working on a detailed action plan. We continue to facilitate introductions for local groups within the BAME community and attend the Herts BAME Network as well as the WBC Community Forum hosted by the Deputy Mayor, where many of these communities are represented. A detailed feedback and evaluation report was shared with the Council Communities team and the Deputy Mayor in October and is available on request for others who wish to review it. • W3RT CVS has grant managed and distributed over £200k for Watford based groups so far through our Community Funds and the Community Development team have proactively highlighted this funding to local groups at every given opportunity • W3RT CVS is in the process of launching two new digital platforms to support local groups with volunteer recruitment and fundraising and feedback from charities so far has been positive

	<p>Still to do/future next 12 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Community Development continues mapping out which groups we have connections with and any gaps in our networks so far, specifically relating to supporting those within protected characteristics groups • W3RT CVS has commissioned a research report into our engagement with local LGBTQ+ groups with Impactful Governance to better understand the needs of this diverse local community • Ongoing grant management • Our CVS Lead, continues attending a high volume of meetings and engagement opportunities with community groups each week to network, understand local needs and make W3RT CVS more visible to the local charity sector. • W3RT CVS continues to support or host local networks to ensure good communications / liaison. <p>Any constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote working due to the pandemic has potentially caused us to be less visible and many of our charity groups are still working online or nervous to attend in person events. We offer meetings and events both in person and online to cater for the widest audience • We don't currently have the technical set up to allow for fully hybrid events, so are offering a range of online or in person events and sharing information afterwards so all groups can get information.
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Recommendation:	There is a need for W3RT to build more and better partnership working across the local community. (GREEN)
W3RT response:	<p>What has already happened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above, W3RT's CEO continues to lead the Hertfordshire Community Leadership Forum, which has been instrumental in shaping how the local Voluntary and Community Sector can feed into and influence the new Integrated Care Systems replacing CCGs. W3RT is playing a full role supporting the development of the new Voluntary Sector Alliance to link into the ICS. • Our BAME Engagement event hosted on 30 September was delivered in collaboration and partnership with WBC, TRDC, HCC and CDA Herts • W3RT CVS is working collaboratively with influential local groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, One Vision, Watford Interfaith Association and Watford Palace Theatre with regular meetings established with the Head of Community Development and CVS Lead • W3RT CVS promoted and attended the business funding event on 17 November organised by the WBC Economic Development team as an opportunity to strengthen connections across the town and raise awareness of funds

- New Head of Community Development, has established contact with the Principal of West Herts College to discuss opportunities for events relating to employability and citizenship in 2022. These will be delivered in partnership with groups across the town.
- W3RT's Head of Community Development inputted into discussions around Terms of Reference for the WBC Watford Volunteer Group, which is due to move to twice a year in 2022 in response to new phase of Covid-recovery
- Our Community Funds Coordinator, was on the planning committee for the Watford Celebration event with WIFA held on August bank holiday
- Neighbours Together produces the regular What's On Guide in partnership with hundreds of local groups, many of which also work in partnership with our Getting Together programme.
- We have worked closely with HCC Sensory Team to facilitate discussions between the NHS and Watford Deaf Club relating to access to health care services (details shared with WBC in October), which has led to the re-starting of the 'Let Me See You, Let Me Hear You' (LMSYLMHY) engagement group for disability charities locally.
- We provide HR, ICT, outcomes and other logistical support to social prescribing staff working at eight local partner organisations.

Still to do/future next 12 months

- We work closely with WGH on hospital discharge, successfully piloted a "waiting well" pilot which has been extended, are working to support re: winter pressures and hope to extend discussions re collaboration on community transport and volunteering.
- W3RT CVS have commissioned a research report into our engagement with local LGBTQ+ groups with Impactful Governance to better understand the needs of this diverse local community. We will be working in partnership with other local groups (Herts Pride, Proud Hornets, Youth Connections, Young Pride Herts) to promote further engagement work
- Promotion and distribution of printed What's on Guide Jan-Mar 2022 to encourage over 55s to stay socially connected and active during winter

Any constraints – none to record

Recommendation:	W3RT and the wider local voluntary sector would benefit from a dedicated fundraiser at Watford and Three Rivers Trust. (AMBER)
W3RT response:	<p>What has already happened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks to funding through the Community Funds (ARG and HPB) WBC and TRDC have agreed some provision for us grant managing these funds. This has allowed us to increase the weekly contracted hours of one member of our team who is a fundraising specialist from half a day per week to 18 hours per week to end of the financial year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This additional staff time with a fundraising professional is allowing us to provide the Big Quiz in December, a Night at the Races event in summer 2022, with all funds raised going into the W3RT Community Funds pot for local groups to apply to in the 2022-23 financial year. • W3RT's CVS Lead, continues to support local groups with sustainable funding through the Herts Funding Database <p>Still to do/future next 12 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will launch our Funding Network early in 2022 including online resources and training and networking events to upskill local charitable groups in this complex area, bringing in external speakers who specialise in different aspects of fundraising as guest speakers. • The aim remains that any local group or individual will be able to access W3RT systems to underpin eligible and legal fundraising appeals and activities. • Come the end of the financial year, we will take time to review our longer-term requirements in fundraising and feedback to the Council on our plans to ensure sustainability <p>Any constraints</p> <p>Budget for sustained staff resource.</p>
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Recommendation:	The Community Fund should be established as a lasting pillar of support for Watford's voluntary sector. (AMBER)
W3RT response:	<p>What has already happened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have established a new landing page on our website for the W3RT Managed Community Funds, which cover all local funding opportunities across Watford and Three Rivers area. This captures all the funds available in one place with eligibility criteria and application process clearly outlined <p>Still to do/future next 12 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Community Funds Coordinator, is planning a number of fundraising events for unrestricted funds to make available in the 2022-23 financial year for groups to apply to. • Community Funds Coordinator, CEO, and Head of Community Development will be developing a sustainable plan for fundraising and fund generation from April 2022 onwards. <p>Any constraints – N/A</p>

Recommendation:	W3RT needs to clarify its long-term strategy for recruiting and sustaining local volunteering activities. (AMBER)
W3RT response:	<p>What has already happened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recently launched our new volunteering platform, Golden Volunteer, at our Annual Conference on 25.11.21, which will act as a central hub for all volunteering activity across Watford and Three Rivers area. Over 250 volunteers are already registered on the platform. <p>Still to do/future next 12 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onboarding campaign from groups to list their roles ready for our volunteering drive in January and February 2022 to tie in with new year's resolutions and start of term for local college and sixth form students. We will launch our Volunteering Network in January 2022. This will include content on Golden Volunteer, online forums around volunteering best practice supported by quarterly peer networking and training opportunities for local groups who involve and manage volunteers. Some areas of focus for the Volunteer Hub will be: recruitment, retention, recognition, safeguarding, data management and GDPR, Equality, diversity and inclusion, problem solving and succession planning. Many older volunteers have stepped away from their roles due to the pandemic, so our partnership with West Herts College is the first step in bringing new, younger volunteers into the sector to encourage life-long volunteering. <p>Any constraints – N/A</p>

Recommendation:	W3RT should ensure that connections with local partners and statutory bodies are maintained in order to maximise the number of volunteers locally. (AMBER)
W3RT response:	<p>What has already happened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connections with educational establishments will support us in this endeavour W3RT CVS is holding regular meetings with a number of key community partners (outlined above) to ensure we are all working in collaboration on volunteer-engaging projects. Head of Community Development and Community Engagement Officer have worked closely with HCC and the local NHS Trust to improve accessibility and visibility of local disability charities, including Watford Deaf Club, Hearing Advisory Service and Disability Watford. <p>Still to do/future next 12 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will look to establish our Volunteer Network as a hub for local volunteering best practice (alongside the WBC strategic group), and invite key representatives from volunteer-involving organisations to co-ordinate and collaborate initiatives.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are working on a stakeholder engagement plan to understand which staff member is engaging with which groups <p>Any constraints – N/A</p>
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Recommendation:	W3RT and the business community should strengthen their links. (AMBER)
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W3RT response:	<p>What has already happened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> W3RT CVS has established new, monthly meetings with the Chamber of Commerce to share key updates, projects and areas of collaboration. Staff attended an event on 17 November organised by the Economic Development team at WBC to network with business leaders and raise awareness of our work and funds available. We have seen increase in interest levels for businesses listing in our What’s on Guide with bookings generating around £1k per guide to help with printing costs. Community Funds Coordinator regularly attends Chamber of Commerce events on our behalf to share key messages with the business community We have started attracting donations from local businesses this financial year towards the W3RT Community Funds activities for 2022-23 We have appointed a new Trustee from Atria to join our board of trustees <p>Still to do/future next 12 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have explored the possibility of a unit in Atria, but the current 6 week maximum stay in one location is prohibitive for us so we are exploring alternative options to engage and increase our presence in the town centre. <p>Any constraints – N/A work ongoing</p>
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Recommendation:	W3RT and WBC should maintain a strong and collaborative working relationship. (GREEN)
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W3RT response:	<p>What has already happened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff across W3RT are holding regular update meetings with WBC staff and elected Councillors. We are sharing our CVS e-newsletter with many contacts at WBC and staff are invited to our events as well. We have established regular communications with the WBC communications team, and are working collaboratively to promote relevant initiatives within the local community, e.g. anti-begging campaign, Community Funds, What’s On Guide, Covid-related messaging
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- Our trustee board has appointed trustees to join the regular liaison meetings with WBC

Still to do/future next 12 months

- Ongoing meetings with WBC
- Feedback from WBC if there are any additional meetings they feel ought to be happening

Any constraints – N/A, staff time