



Community Engagement Systems for Haringey Strategic Partnership

Haringey Community Link Agreement

Background

The current provider of community engagement systems in the Haringey Strategic Partnership (HSP) has been derecognised as of 22nd March 2007, following a performance review. This situation leaves the HSP with a vacuum in ensuring effective community engagement in the partnership and its themed boards. Therefore the London Borough of Haringey have commissioned a community development advisor to work with the Council, HSP and HAVCO to develop new proposals and model for engagement that can be introduced within the financial year 2007/8.

The first draft of the proposal for new community engagement systems in the HSP was published in May 2007. Following its publication and presentation to the HSP it has been subjected to a period of consultation and scrutiny by the voluntary and community sector in the borough.

The wider engagement, consultation and scrutiny process has taken three forms. Firstly, a Reference Group of existing voluntary and community sector representatives was established to feed into the revision of the proposal and take it to the wider sector for engagement.

Secondly, a questionnaire was developed and released with the proposal to Haringey's voluntary and community sector. In total over 800 organisations received the proposal and questionnaire and 36 were completed and returned in response to the invitation to comment, along with 35 evaluation forms with further comments made by those attending the stakeholder meetings on 12th July 2007.

Two stakeholder meetings were held on 12th July to engage those organisations who preferred to discuss and explore the proposal in person. Attendance at these meetings was good and engaged a wide range of organisations both voluntary and community from many different backgrounds.

Overall the results of the consultation and engagement process highlighted widespread support for new systems of engagement in the HSP as long as they lead to real influence and change. There were however some real issues outlined in the original proposal which some parts of the voluntary and community sector found

difficult to agree with. Despite the consultation process some of these issues have not been resolved and therefore this revised proposal has been amended to address areas of concern where this was possible without undermining the integrity of the model outlined in the first proposal. The key areas are: -

- Definition of constituted body allowed to be in membership of Haringey Community Link Forum (Page 9)
- Co-option to HSP and its sub-structures (Page 3)
- Revision of compulsory training and induction programme (Page 6)

The funding that was available through Government Office for London to establish and manage Community Empowerment Networks no longer exists. Therefore the priority for Haringey is to ensure we secure effective systems that offer the partnership effective engagement, accountability and real influence. Sustainability and appropriate resourcing were also critical factors important to the voluntary and community sector that came through very clearly from the consultation process.

This document outlines new engagement systems proposed by HAVCO following engagement led by the Reference Group with the wider voluntary and community sector and supported by the Council and the wider Partnership.

Interim Arrangements

The HSP still has approximately 11 representatives from the community sector and 14 from the voluntary sector remaining on its Main Board and Themed Partnership Boards. In some cases Themed Partnership Board Chairs have taken action to fill voids during this interim period.

Main HSP Board	Community Sector	- Youth Council (2)
Equality REJCC (1)	Voluntary Sector	- HAVCO (3), Peace Alliance (1), Race Joint Consultative Committee -
Well Being Board	Community Sector	- Federation of Residents Association (1)
	Voluntary Sector	- HAVCO (2)
Safer Communities Board	Community Sector	- Haringey Community and Police Consultative Group -
HCPCG (1)	Voluntary Sector	- Peace Alliance (1), HAVCO (1)
Children & Young Peoples Board	Community Sector	- Youth Council (2)
	Voluntary Sector	- HAVCO (2)
Better Places Board	Community Sector	- Federation of Residents Association (2) Friends of Parks (2) Mobility Forum (1)

Voluntary Sector - No representation

Enterprise Board

Community Sector - No representation
Voluntary Sector - Selby Trust (1) HAVCO (1)
Collage Arts (1)

Integrated Housing

Community Sector - Haringey Leaseholders'
Association (1) Voluntary Sector - SHADE (1) Hornsey
YMCA (1)
Afrikcare (1)

It is proposed that these places remain as an interim arrangement until new systems are adopted and fully operational. This would ensure consistency, stability and remove the requirement to develop systems of securing further representatives for a 6-9 month period which would be resource intensive. The new proposals will ensure consistency across the whole partnership structure and a higher level of accountability and support for *all* representatives.

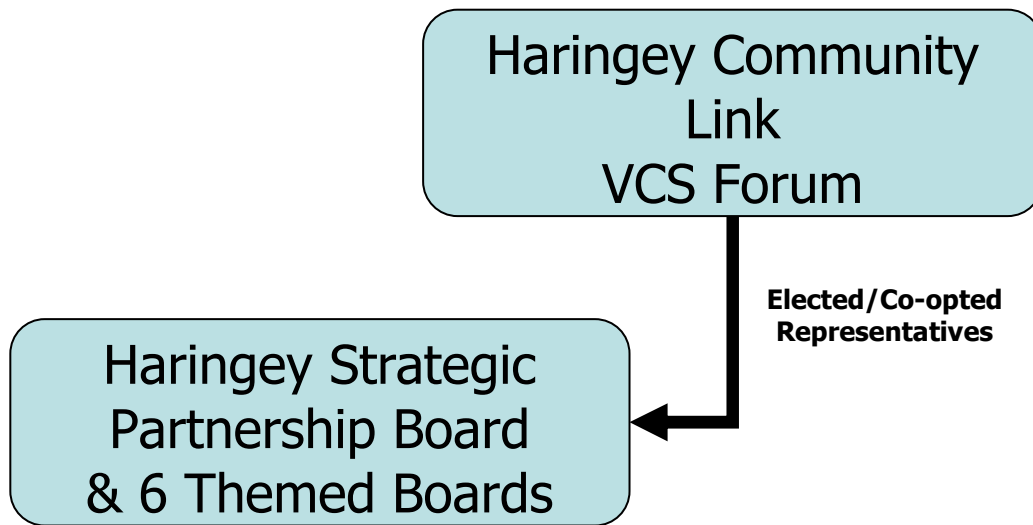
Proposed New Model for Community Engagement

It is proposed that all voluntary and community sector representatives on the Main HSP Board and its Themed Partnership Board structures are elected through a new forum called Haringey Community Link Forum. This would become the 'forum of forums' for the voluntary and community sector.

The introduction of the new system for securing voluntary and community sector representatives would replace *all* existing mechanisms (some of which vary by themed boards), ensuring consistency and accountability. This will mean that existing voluntary and community sector representatives will lose their current places at the end of the interim arrangement period. If they wish to retain their places they will have to stand for election.

The new systems will add value to the partnership and all sectors involved. It is a real opportunity to improve effective representation, as the voluntary and community sector want to build upon the Beacon Status achieved by the London Borough of Haringey for Area Assemblies. It could also offer real value for money if utilised for securing voluntary and community sector representation on other structures outside of the HSP, such as PCT partnership boards, LSC project/partnership boards etc. This is an approach being adopted in several other London boroughs.

Haringey Community Link Forum should have the power to co-opt strategic, voluntary and community organisations with specialist skills or knowledge to the partnership boards, in addition to the elected voluntary and community representatives. The Community Link Forum will monitor the performance of such organisations, who will be expected to work with the Community Link Forum representatives and help build up the Forum.



The development of Haringey Community Link, a voluntary and community sector forum will see benefits for the partnership, the voluntary and community sector and other agencies operating in Haringey. It will ensure a formal gateway is developed to communicate with a wide range of organisations on policy and service issues, through regular structured meetings.

The development of the forum will see community engagement in the partnership moving towards a generic model of representatives being elected or co-opted onto the HSP and Themed Boards. This will mean they are representatives of Haringey Community Link and not specialist areas of interest or geography (such as disability, faith etc). There is a firm belief that this will reinvigorate voluntary and community sector representation, especially on delivery partnerships. With the resources allocated by the HSP to support new engagement systems, this model is achievable.

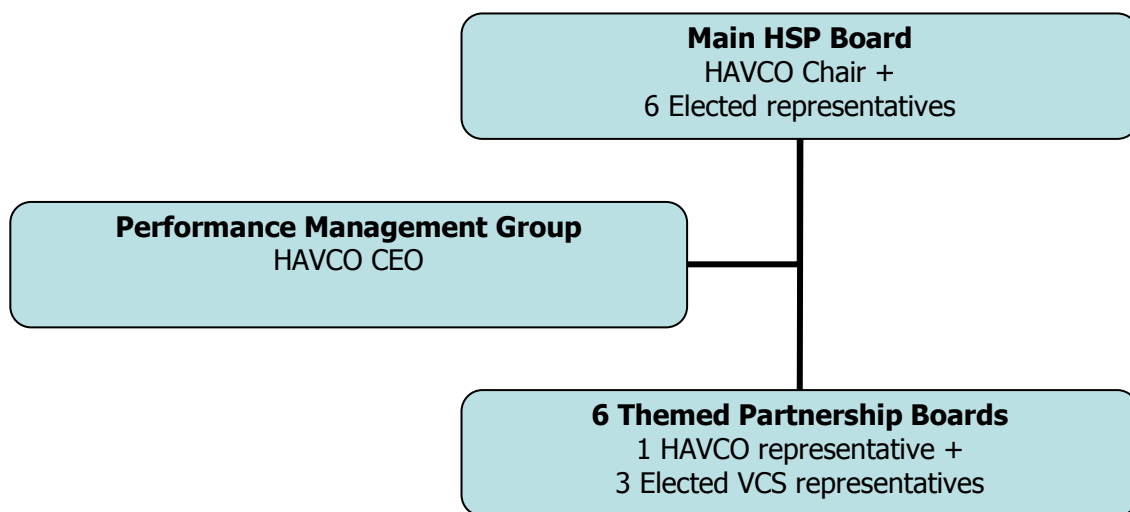
Building on experiences in other boroughs, despite not having specialist forums, people are only nominated to stand in areas of interest/specialism and therefore not having specialist structures does not affect the quality of representatives achieved or the knowledge they bring to the table. Importantly, it does, however, increase their accountability to the whole forum and wider community.

Where there are key policy areas the HSP is focusing on (such as Local Area Agreement, Children’s Trusts etc) ad hoc themed forums may be convened to ensure representatives and the wider forum are briefed and informed. A successful example of this was where HAVCO organised a themed forum linked to the Well-Being Partnership in August 2006. This was to address the Local Area Agreement development. Through this forum the VCS were able to directly influence thinking in developing LAA targets and priorities. This approach should also lead to a greater level of understanding for representatives of Haringey Community Link and increase quality of contribution within the partnership as a whole.

Number of Places for Community and Voluntary Sector Representatives

It is proposed to standardise the number of places available for election across the Main Partnership Board and its Themed Partnership Boards, as at present the quality of representatives varies leading to inequality in possible routes to influence.

HAVCO are also proposing to have non elected positions on the Main HSP Board for the Chair, and new place for the CEO of HAVCO on the Performance Management Group and one position on each of the Themed Partnership Boards. These places would be in recognition of the organisation representing the interests of the voluntary and community sector, in the same way the Chamber of Commerce or Small Business Federation secure places onto the partnership. This would mirror arrangements operating across London and nationally.



This new model would see 24 elected places for voluntary and community sector representatives on the Main HSP Board and Themed Partnership Boards and 8 standing places for the HAVCO representatives looking after the interests of the voluntary and community sector.

Support for Elected Representatives

To ensure a full range of quality representatives are achieved through the new systems; support, training and development are going to be integral in the Community Link Model.

There will be three stages of support and training for representatives in Community Link.

(i) Briefing

Once the nominations for positions on the HSP and its Themed Boards have been opened, briefing sessions will be held around the Borough to ensure that

everyone considering standing is fully aware of what will be involved and expectations upon them.

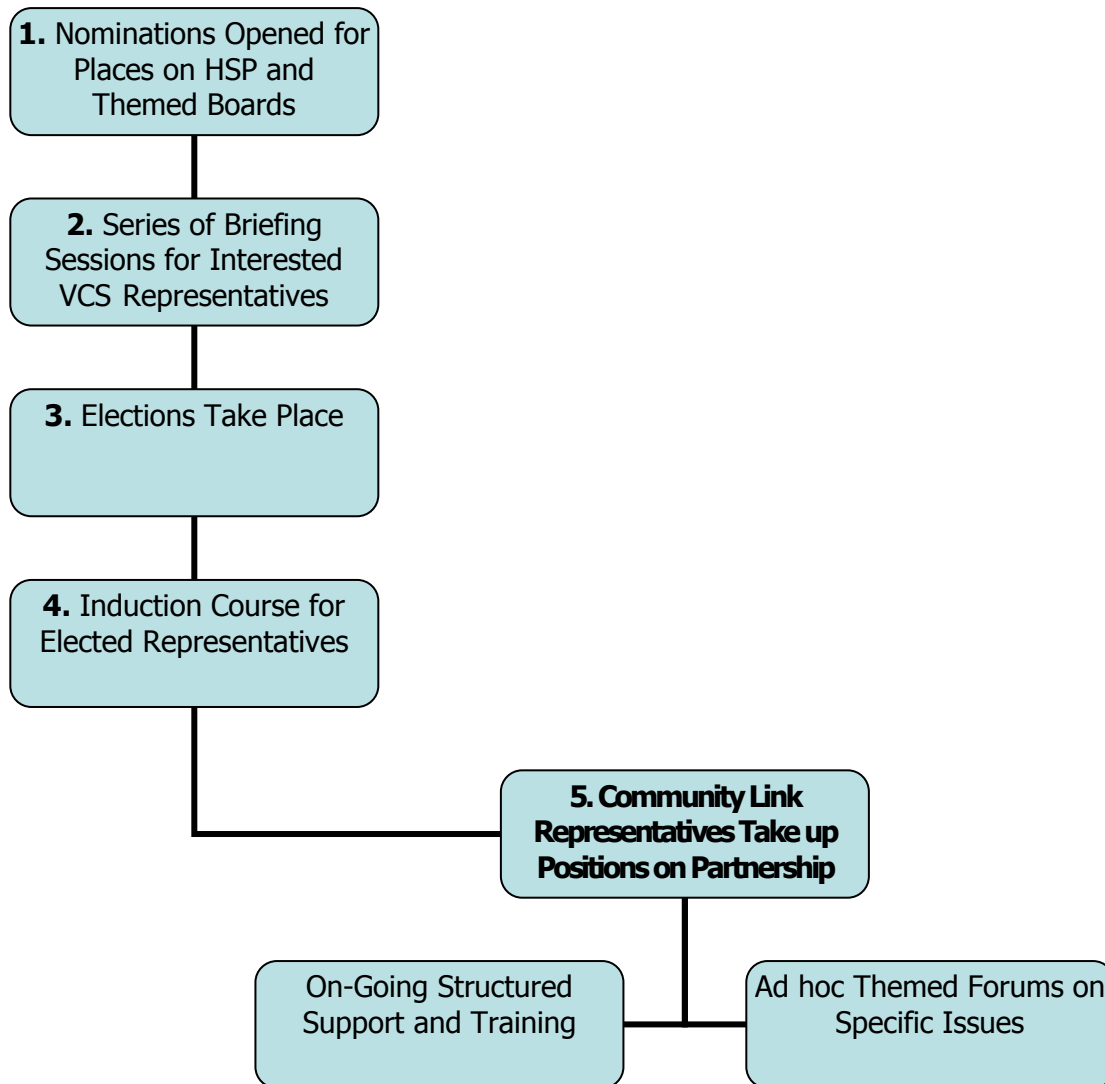
(ii) Induction

Once elected, all representatives will be required to attend a compulsory induction training course before taking up their positions. The aim is to ensure that representatives fully understand the role of the partnership, its legal structures etc and the policy environment in which it is operating. Following the consultation and engagement process it is proposed the induction training programme be 3 days but delivered on a modular basis to allow flexibility and also acknowledge prior learning and experience. The full course outline and modules will be developed as part of the next development phase of the Haringey Community Link Forum.

(iii) On-Going Training and Support

The post holder coordinating Haringey Community Link Forum will provide on-going briefings and policy support to the elected representatives. This will vary in its delivery, depending on the needs of the elected representatives on each partnership structure. It could include pre-meetings, written briefings, email forums, notice boards to exchange views and opinions etc. The role of officer employed to support the representatives will be to ensure they are given customised support to ensure the most effective contribution to the partnership.

Support Process Flow Chart



Web Portal and ICT Support

HAVCO through support of ChangeUp (lead partnership for the delivery of the Haringey Local Infrastructure Development Plan) have developed a web-portal for the voluntary and community sector in Haringey. This also has linkage to sub-regional activities across North London. The web-portal has been branded Community Link.

The aim is to further develop the website to link closely to the work of the community engagement function and bring added value to the forum. The website will offer the elected representatives and the wider VCS the following benefits: -

- Policy briefings
- All minutes and agendas for the HSP and Themed Boards
- A notice board where elected representatives can exchange views and experiences and ask for advice (not open to public)
- Consultation opportunities with the wider sector
- Email bulletins of information arising from the partnership and key priorities for influence

- Notice of meetings and themed forums

As funding has been secured for this through the Home Office, this would offer real added value to the development of new systems within the HSP and support the e-government agenda.

It is recognised that some representatives may, for reasons e.g. of disability, require added support / training to fully access ICT opportunities. The need to effectively resource the web portal to ensure it can meet expectations of functionality is also essential.

Implementation Timetable

There is a commitment to ensure the new proposed systems are explained to existing HSP community and voluntary sector representatives, the wider voluntary and community sector and those of other statutory partners before a final decision on a new model of community engagement is agreed in July 2007.

The timetable for information dissemination through formal structured events and written feedback is as follows: -

Existing community representatives	April/May 2007
Wider voluntary and community sector	May/June/July 2007
Statutory Partners	July 2007
HSP Approval of Proposal	July 19 th 2007
Development Phase Begins	July 20 th 2007
Community Links Membership Launch	January 2008
Elections	February - March 2008
Representatives Take Positions	April 2008

Proposed Community Link Forum Terms of Reference

Community Link Mission

To increase the level, accessibility and quality of services meeting local need and community cohesion through greater engagement and influence.

Community Link Objectives:

- (i) To support community representatives on strategic partnerships
- (ii) To work with stakeholders to identify how the voluntary and community sector can contribute towards delivery of targets within the LAA and Community Strategy
- (iii) To collate views of the voluntary and community sector on strategic issues, ensuring they are fed into the debate through the HSP and other fora
- (iv) To engage frontline organisations so they have enough information and the systems to influence policy
- (v) To support community needs assessment by members of Community Link in order to influence policy
- (vi) To propose solutions where things could be better
- (vii) To support better partnership and collaborative working
- (viii) To support statutory agencies and the partnership in clarifying the role and expectations of the voluntary and community sector in Haringey
- (ix) To support the voluntary and community sector to understand the balance between campaigning role and service delivery
- (x) To build trust, understanding and clarity between elected Councillors and representatives to see how they can co-exist to build a better society

Role of HAVCO in Relation to Haringey Community Link Forum

- a) HAVCO's role is to represent the interests of the voluntary and community sector and to empower and support Community Link to speak for communities
- b) HAVCO would be the lead and accountable body for the service, and therein have ultimate power to revoke the membership of Community Link Members who breach the terms of reference and / or the agreed code of conduct

Community Link Membership

- Membership of Community Link is separate to HAVCO's membership
- Membership is free
- Only constituted voluntary and community organisations in Haringey or organisations based outside of the borough that have a substantial percentage of Haringey residents using their services can be members. In relation to this forum constituted encompasses the following organisations: -
 - Voluntary and community organisations governed by a committee of volunteers with terms of reference and/or
 - Those with governing documents falling into one of the following headings; Constitution, Memorandum and Articles of Association, Trust Deed, Set of Rules (Industrial and Provident Societies), terms of reference (for community forums etc).

- Members are expected to adhere to the Community Link Forum's code of conduct.

Summary

The environment for all agencies is changing dramatically and there are increasing pressures to meet the needs of local communities through closer partnership and collaborative working. The Community Link proposal aims to ensure that Haringey has the best systems for effective representation of the voluntary and community sector. Therefore, it will be responsive and listen to its members and be subject to regular review.