

Stronger Together Workshop

11th March 2025

12 noon to 4pm

The Beehive, Grays

SESSION1: Stronger Together Partnership Board Terms Of Reference

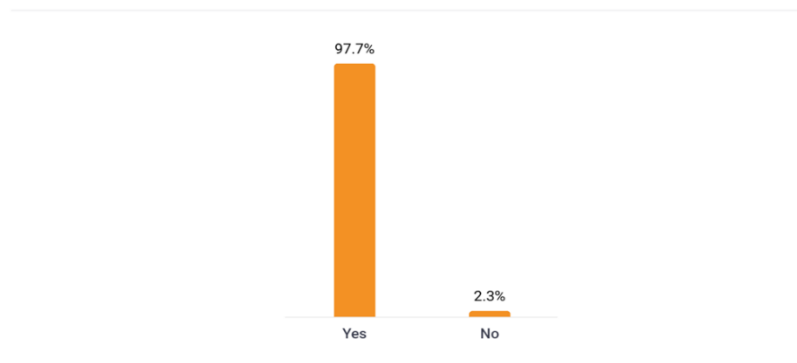
Clear recommendation to develop the Stronger Together Partnership Board into a more representative group. Terms of Reference approved.

Action: Create clear board membership role description and application process.

Action: Invite sector leads who expressed an interest in being a Board member to next meeting.

SESSION 2: Charter Poll Results

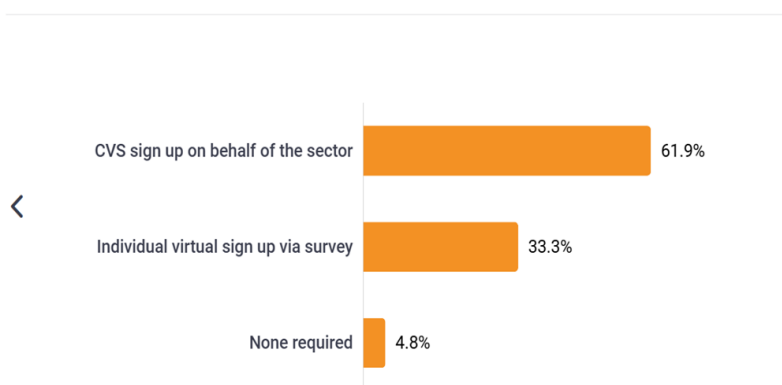
Are you happy to approve the revised Stronger Together Resilience Charter in preparation for formal governance?



46 total participants | 44 votes

1

What is the VCFSE sign off process?



46 total participants | 42 votes

Action: To add some text to the start of the ST Resilience Charter explaining the purpose of the document.

Action: To take ST Resilience Charter through formal council and NHS governance.

SESSION 3: Devolution Presentation

Patrick McDermott provided an update on devolution. Council submitting plan by the end of March. Greater clarity will emerge according to the national timelines in September.

Actions: To create regular opportunities for ongoing dialogue to shape devolution in Thurrock.

SESSION 4: Stronger Together Workplan – Small Group Feedback

1. Financial Sustainability and Resource Allocation Notes

- Discussion on s106 funding and the potential benefit to the VCFSE sector. Long legacy of lack of transparency regarding s106 monies. Some examples of other areas which have unlocked this funding for the benefit of the sector.
- Overarching need for a sector funding strategy that incorporates all funding streams – namely, statutory partners, s106, grants, fundraising, philanthropy and business.
- Create some short-term wins and longer-term strategic objectives

2. Strong Leadership and Community Engagement

- Coaching, Mentoring and Supervision - Discussion about the need for spaces for VCFSE leaders to share skills / experiences and peer support – this was seen as more valuable than formal training.
- Discussion about Trustee development – one person shared that their organisation is newly set up (in the last 12 months) and they had recruited Trustees however they did not seem to fully understand their role in the strategic management of the organisation,
- An example of a good networking event was a speed dating style event or ‘Managed Network’ meetings where senior leaders met to share updates.

3. Collaborative Partnerships and Networks:

- Confirmed support for proposed networks:
 - o Faith is very important for diversity
 - o Children and Young People are essential to investing in our future.
 - o Environmental sustainability is important for all our futures.
- **Action: Diversity, Inclusion and Equality was seen as an essential network. We acknowledged this could be a very broad area and may need some prioritising. Public Health were considered essential players.**
- **Action: A mapping of all strategic forums across Thurrock including partnership boards and operational/working groups so the sector can have a real voice**

4. Capacity Building and Training Facilitators notes

- Recommendation: Launch a Thurrock wide volunteering campaign.

- Felt it would help to raise the profile of volunteering and promote the benefits.
- Target young people as misconceptions there is a payment from it.
- Need to have buy in from partners to make it a priority in terms of a wider campaign.
- Having a catchy hash tag that partners can agree and share themselves.
- Partners need to recognise the importance in responding to referrals for prospective volunteers.
- Quick wins to support the campaign: increased promotion borough wide, case studies, stories and benefits, bigger social media presence, videos etc.
- Community boards inside council buildings, for example council town hall.

5. Supportive Policy Environment

General points:

- Data and intelligence is absolutely essential and granting access to the information the VCFSE and stat sector hold should be the first priority (noting obvious restrictions on the level of access to information).
- Conversation concerning the Procurement Act 23, stat sector needs to simplify processes, opportunities for the VCSE and SMEs – legislated rather than a nice to have and should be prioritised.
- The sector has an important role to play in ‘influencing’ rather than simply ‘supporting’ devolution working through the STPB.
- Important not to lose the sectors’ ‘hyper localness’ through devolution – the sector have a good grasp on specific areas of focus.
- Must maintain the strength of local voices.
- Training and education for the sector on how to interpret data would be a bonus – strength in having data analysts both in VCFSE and across stat sector. Where are the contact points where expertise already exists (mentioned Strategy and Performance Team)?
- The council must ensure adequate engagement with the VCFSE as the council goes through change and vice-versa.

SESSION 4: FEEDBACK WORKPLAN PRIORITY:

Summary Actions:

1. Financial Sustainability and Resource Allocation - **Develop a Funding strategy** outlining - funding streams including:
 - S106
 - Statutory Partners
 - Businesses
 - Social Value
 - Grants
 - Fundraising

2. Strong Leadership and Community Development - Focus programme expanding and marketing the **coaching, mentoring and peer support**. Ensure diverse voices are heard throughout.
3. Collaborative Partnership and Networks – Create new networks including New **Diversity, Equality and Inclusion** network. Raise **profile** of community programmes – successful positive stories
4. Capacity building and Training – Develop a high-profile Thurrock wide **volunteering campaign**
5. Supportive Policy Environment – focus on **Data and community voice**, Data sharing policy. Impact on everything.

FINAL SESSION: PLINTH DEMONSTRATIONS

Demonstration on plinth.

Action: seek volunteers to trial onboarding onto plinth and provide feedback to support developing the Thurrock plinth.