

A Strategic Action Plan for the Third Sector in Derby

April 2010

Part One: Background and Context

In September 2009, the Development Group, which helps to guide the Third Sector Participation project, looked to find ways of increasing the level of engagement of community level groups throughout the City. A key element of the work was identified as the need to undertake a large scale piece of engagement work which would culminate in the creation of an Action Plan for the Third Sector in Derby. It was felt that this would be a positive way of engaging significant numbers of groups in seeking to establish an identified set of targets. A process was developed which would ensure that as many groups, organisations and individuals operating in and around the Third Sector¹ in Derby would have an opportunity to participate in the creation of the Action Plan.

The key steps in the process of developing the Action Plan were as follows:

- The Third Sector Voices meeting held in December 2009 was asked to debate the broad topics which might, be included in an Action Plan for the Third Sector in Derby
- A large scale consultation survey looking at the views of the Third Sector in Derby was undertaken. As a result of the feedback from the survey a number of areas were identified which warranted further exploration. The analysis of the responses received are available from: www.communityactionderby.org.uk
- The outcomes of this consultation were then used to help shape the agenda for an event held in March 2010 entitled 'Your Sector, Your Say'
- The 'Your Sector, Your Say' event included a series of detailed discussions with representatives from the Third and Public Sectors
- This Action Plan and the following Action Plan was drafted from the outcomes of the event and the survey

In order to support the development an independent consultant was engaged to provide a valuable external perspective on this work. As a result Peter Stone was asked to undertake the survey, to help shape and run the event and to draft the Action Plan.

This Action Plan describes the work which the Third Sector should seek to address over the coming years. The documents list the targets which the Sector has identified and then describes the actions which will need to be undertaken. Where appropriate they also cover when the work should be started and who should take ownership of each task.

This section, part one; has been specifically structured around five broad targets, which have been identified by the Sector. In part two; the actions have also been grouped around these five targets to emphasize the links between the context and the plan.

It is of interest to note that, whilst the ideas for this Action Plan were developed directly from the feedback received from the Sector, the actions it describes also chime well with a

¹ The third sector is a diverse, active and passionate sector. Organisations in the sector share common characteristics: non-governmental; value-driven and; principally reinvest any financial surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives. The term encompasses voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, cooperatives and mutuals both large and small. Source: Office of the Third Sector

number of the national targets called 'National Indicators' that have to be delivered at a local level.

The overall work towards achieving the targets described in the Action Plan will directly support National Indicator 7 "Environment for a Thriving Third Sector". In addition two further National Indicators are supported by the activities defined in the Plan – National Indicator 6 "Participation in Regular Volunteering" and National Indicator 4 "Percentage of People Who Feel They Can Influence Decisions in Their Locality". The achievement of the targets in the Action Plan will therefore result in a stronger and more sustainable Sector but also one that can contribute to these vital measures. Where actions are defined which do not directly contribute to a particular National Indicator these will, however, still support a wide range of activities of importance to both the Public and Third Sectors.

T1: The Sector will play a much more engaged role in the development and implementation of policy in the City

Survey Findings

There was a wealth of data which supported the need for the Sector to play a wider role in the policy agenda;

- *55% felt that decisions made by public bodies, such as Derby City Council, did not take into account the needs of their group/community*
- *97% felt they should take their organisation's view into account*
- *97% felt that they wanted to be able to influence policy in the City which affects their group or organisation*

The survey also clearly identified a range of emerging needs for the Sector; these are detailed in the full survey report but in particular identified:

- the recession and;
- the need to replace dwindling grant funding

These emerging needs have been incorporated into the Action Plan alongside the necessity to address new policy areas including the need to; increase Community Transport provision in the City; respond to the Personalisation of Care agenda and; ensure that the issue of the health and fitness of young people is addressed.

It is critical that the Sector ensures it is in a position to influence policy to the advantage of its beneficiaries. This work may include ensuring that the views of the Sector can be determined, or are known, when policy makers, funders and other organisations want to communicate with it. The goal has to be that when an input is needed it can be researched quickly and the resulting opinion seen to be representative of the views of the Sector as a whole.

There are at least two key emerging priorities on which the Sector needs to engage. As a matter of urgency it needs to address the absence of affordable accessible transport, such as would normally be provided by a Community Transport scheme, in the city. Secondly it needs to consider its response to the Personalisation of Care Services agenda. This is a critical issue for the Sector to address if it is to ensure that individuals affected by the agenda are to continue to receive the best care services possible. It also presents an opportunity for continued/additional income generation.

T2: Improved communication will ensure the Third Sector will be better informed about and more able to take advantage of opportunities for partnership working

Survey Findings

A number of pieces of data from the survey directly underpin the actions which are being suggested in this Action Plan:

- *Only 51% of respondents felt they were well informed about the opportunities to work with the public sector (including funding opportunities from the sector), in relation to their group*
- *74% felt that communications between policy makers and the sector did not work efficiently*
- *56% of respondents were not aware of the 3rd Sector Compact and what it does*

This data highlights the need to ensure that communication between the two Sectors is clear, accountable, transparent, trusted and streamlined. It is also vital that communication can travel quickly both from and to the sector. The key to this will be ensuring that there is a fast and responsive single point of contact able to coordinate this communication work. It is suggested that this role will best suit Community Action Derby within the context of the work it already undertakes.

This responsive single point of contact will be critical if the Sector is to ensure that it is aware of opportunities for partnership working and can take advantage of them. It will also be critical to better partnership working that the Public Sector adheres to the Derby Compact². There is clear evidence that officers in statutory bodies (and some in the Third Sector too) are unaware of the Compact and the requirement for both sectors to adhere to it. It will be important for the Sector to explore ways of ensuring that staff are aware of the Compact, that it is adhered to, and that breaches are challenged and rectified.

² The Derby Compact is a commitment to open, transparent and fair working practices by statutory and voluntary and community sector partners. Its aim is to improve relationships, communication, participation and services to create a better Derby. Source Derby City Council

T3: The Sector will be more able to respond to the changing funding environment and will therefore become more sustainable

Survey Findings

Data from the survey which underlined the need for the actions suggested in this Plan was as follows:

- *54% considered that their organisation was not – or would not be – involved in tendering for new and existing contracts*
- *65% felt that they were not adequately prepared to tender for services*
- *The majority of respondents were only certain of securing 60% or less of their income for the financial year 2010/11*

The funding environment for the Third Sector has never been as volatile as it is now, and this situation is likely to continue for the next few years. A number of factors mean that any organisation operating in the Sector needs to equip itself to deal with this rapidly changing climate. At the root of the problems being experienced is the recession and its associated knock-on effects. Local authorities, PCTs and other public bodies are all expected to make significant cost reductions – and this, in turn, can affect the Sector either through the removal or reduction of grant programmes or the possible expectation that services may have to be delivered with even greater value for money. The survey and the ‘Your Sector, Your Say’ event were very clear on the critical need to ensure that grants and other forms of support including secondment and in-kind giving continue to be made available from the City Council and others. In addition to the situation faced by local authorities, funders who rely on giving grants from interest earned on investments; also have lower levels of funds to disperse. Finally, the financial problems of the recession mean that more organisations are seeking funding from this diminishing pot – making the competition for funds stiffer than ever.

In the tendering field there is a clear need to ensure that the Third Sector develops its ability to bid for, and win, tendered services. This will require the Sector to improve its ability to understand the tender process and ensure that all necessary policies and procedures are in place in advance of contracts being let. More also needs to be done by the Public Sector to: produce long term guidance on purchasing intentions to allow a more proactive approach to tendering; ensure that purchasing departments work together to encourage joint commissioning; make the volume of required paperwork proportionate to the value of the contract and; ensure that tenders reach the likely tendering organisations in the Third Sector. It will also be important for the Sector to encourage its constituent members to consider diversification wherever possible – this may include traditional fundraising, the development of membership and supporter schemes and so on.

In addition the Sector needs to find ways of demonstrating its effectiveness. Being able to measure and demonstrate this has always been essential but will become even more critical as funds become ever tighter and as the Sector has to compete for contract opportunities. It will therefore need to find ways of providing accurate feedback on the return on investment (and even the Social Return On Investment³) which it provides.

The work to review the Joint Commissioning Framework⁴ is already in hand and it is critical that this work continues as a matter of urgency. The Third Sector has a vital role to play in the review in terms of ensuring that its voice is heard and that proper procedures are followed as part of that review. It will be key that the Sector ensures that the Framework – and indeed the Compact – are widely understood and are working properly.

T4: The Third Sector will seek to ensure that there is a more coordinated approach to the recruitment and development of volunteers throughout the City

Survey Findings

The survey provided some useful insights into the need for a coordinated approach to volunteering:

- *66% of respondents felt that they could accommodate somewhere between 0 to 10 additional volunteers*
- *Half of all respondents felt that they did not have enough volunteers to undertake all of their organisation's work*
- *The average number of volunteers per responding organisation was 27*

A key issue in the continued development of a strong and vibrant Third Sector in Derby – especially in these difficult financial times -will be the engagement of increasing numbers of volunteers in its work. There is a clear need for the Public, Private and Third Sectors to discuss all aspects of volunteering to ensure that the City offers a wide range of opportunities to benefit the volunteers and the organisations which they will support. In tandem with this comes the need to ensure high standards in volunteer management throughout the Sector.

The Sector must develop better ways of coordinating its recruitment policies with regard to volunteers. This work may include areas such as: using the Volunteer Centre more fully and; development of signposting to allow groups to ensure volunteers get to the 'right' organisation.

³ Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an analytic tool for measuring and accounting for a much broader concept of value. It incorporates social, environmental and economic costs and benefits into decision making, providing a fuller picture of how value is created or destroyed. Source: the New Economics Foundation

⁴ The Joint Commissioning Framework is guidance on processes adopted by Derby City Council and Derby City Primary Care Trust for ensuring effective Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) involvement in the planning, commissioning and delivery of Health and Social Care services

T5: The Sector will develop and promote even higher standards of staff management and training

Survey Findings

Data from the survey which supported the need for better staff development included

- *36% of responses indicated that their staff – and volunteers – required additional training*
- *The reason for inadequate levels of training was a lack of funds for two thirds of respondents*

If the Sector wishes to ensure it operates to professional standards and can respond competitively to the tough financial, and fundraising, environment it needs to ensure that staff are managed to high standards. Areas which will need to be addressed include the development of standard practices including job descriptions; supervision and appraisal; inductions and exit interviews and; training.

In addition it is essential that free training opportunities (such as attending sessions run by the Public Sector) and locating pots of funding which could be used to pay for training needs are promoted and used to develop staff. There is a need to determine training needs across the whole Sector so that a cost effective, Sector-wide approach to the issues of addressing how to access these courses, how to organise them if needed and how to pay for them can be made.

What happens next?

The Third Sector has come together, for the first time to describe the issues which it believes have to be addressed; these issues and priorities have been summarised in this Action Plan. To ensure that the work required is undertaken – and achieves the desired results – it will be necessary to divert resource towards these priorities and that the work is monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

The implementation of this Action Plan aims to ensure that the Third Sector can continue to play a leading role in the delivery of a vast range of products and services across the City for the coming years. There are a number of issues which need to be undertaken in order to ensure that the Action Plan is agreed and implemented:

Action Required	Deadline
Action Plan discussed at Development Group	20 April 2010
Action Plan finalised	30 April 2010
Implementation of Action Plan commences	4 May 2010
Development Group monitor Action Plan delivery	Quarterly from July 2010

Part Two:

A Strategic Action Plan for the Third Sector in Derby

The Development Group, consisting of ten voluntary and community sector members was the driving force behind the development of the Strategic Action Plan. Each step of the process has been guided by them to ensure the plan reflects the needs of the Sector.

Title	Target	By When
T1: Policy	The Sector will play a more engaged role in the development and implementation of policy throughout the City	Apr-Sept 2010
T2: Partnership	The Sector will be better informed about and more able to take advantage of opportunities for partnership working through improved communication	Apr-Sept 2010
T3: Funding	The Sector will be better able to respond to the changing funding environment and will therefore become more sustainable	Oct-Mar 2010
T4: Volunteering	The Sector will seek to ensure that there is a more coordinated approach to the recruitment and development of volunteers throughout the City	Apr-Sept 2010
T5: Management	The Sector will develop and promote even higher standards of staff management and training	Apr-Sept 2011

These targets, and the degree to which they have been achieved, will be monitored on an annual basis. They will then be revised, and added to, as necessary.

What you can do

This Action Plan hopes to address a number of issues and priorities but success will require concerted effort on the part of a range of people and organisations in the Third and Public Sectors. We have also included some suggestions about what you can do.

T1: The Sector will play a much more engaged role in the development and implementation of policy in the City

What	When	By Whom
Development Group to identify a process whereby the views of the Sector can be quickly and accurately determined	April – Sept 2010	Development Group
Implementation of the process whereby the views of the Sector can be quickly and accurately determined	Oct 2010 onwards	Community Action Derby
To establish the purpose and role of third sector representation	April – June 2010	Derby City Partnership
Development Group to establish a process to ensure representatives are accountable and effective	July – Sept 2010	Development Group
Implementation of the process to ensure representatives are accountable and effective	Oct 2010 onwards	Community Action Derby

What you can do

Access networks and training to increase your understanding of policy in the city and how it affects your group

Where issues have affected your group raise them with the appropriate public body or support organisation

Take the opportunities that are provided, such as consultations, to give your view

T2: The Sector will be better informed about, and more able to take advantage of, opportunities for partnership working through improved communication

What	When	By Whom
Focus Groups to be held with Third and Public Sector representatives to determine how communications can be improved. Bearing in mind the challenges posed by neighborhood area working and the need to rationalise the communications channels	Oct – Dec 2010	Community Action Derby
Implementation of improved communication	Oct 2010 onwards	Community Action Derby
Establish meetings with key individuals in the Public Sector to discuss issues such as the awareness of, and adherence to, the Compact / Joint Commissioning Framework	April – Sept 2010	Compact Forum

What you can do

Ensure your group accesses current and relevant information from credible sources

Identify training to develop your use of unfamiliar technology

Having tried different things; make sure you only use ones that are effective for you

T3: The Sector will be more able to respond to the changing funding environment and will therefore become more sustainable

Influencing Policy:

What	When	By Whom
Sector to play a role in the review of the Joint Commissioning Framework / Compact	July 2010	Compact Forum
Monitoring of the effectiveness of the Joint Commissioning Framework and the Compact	Nov 2010	Compact Forum

Supporting Contracting:

What	When	By Whom
To identify the full range of current support available for third sector groups relating to contracting	July - Sept 2010	Community Action Derby
To identify gaps in current support and potential ways of addressing them	Oct – Dec 2010	Development Group
Developing and maintaining co-ordinated support required by Third sector groups	Jan 2011 onwards	All Support Providers

Evidencing Effectiveness:

What	When	By Whom
Development Group to establish a process for the Sector to determine its effectiveness; whether by SROI or other means	Oct – Dec 2010	Development Group
Promotion to Third and Public Sectors of process for measurement of effectiveness	Jan 2011 onwards	Community Action Derby
Assessment of the scale of implementation across the Sector	March 2012	Development Group

What you can do

For activity from April 2011 only plan for that which you know precisely where the money is coming from

Ensure you know about the Joint Commissioning Framework and Derby Compact and use them in your relationships with the public sector

Consider if contracting will apply to your organisation

Consider how you measure the difference your organisation makes

T4: The Third Sector will seek to ensure that there is a more coordinated approach to the recruitment and development of volunteers throughout the City

What	When	By Whom
Discussions to be arranged between Third, Public and Private Sectors to discuss ways of coordinating the approach to volunteers across the City	April – Sept 2010	Volunteer Centre
Development of a strategy for the coordination of approach to volunteers	April – Sept 2010	Derby City Partnership
Sector-wide promotion of National Occupational Standards in Volunteer Management	Oct 2010 onwards	Volunteer Centre
Assessment of the scale of implementation across the Sector	Oct - Dec 2011	Volunteer Centre

What you can do

Take time to plan how you work with volunteers

Undertake appropriate training in managing volunteers

Implement National Occupational Standards in Volunteer Management

T5: The Sector will develop and promote even higher standards of staff management and training

What	When	By Whom
Review the range of training required by the Sector	April – June 2011	Community Action Derby
Review the range of training available	April – June 2011	Community Action Derby
Analyse gaps and develop training provision	July 2011 onwards	Training Providers
Develop and promote a strategic approach to management and training of staff. Taking account of standards across the Sector including reference to national workforce development strategies	July 2011 onwards	Development Group

What you can do

Review how you manage staff to ensure it is meeting the objectives of the organisation

Undertake appropriate training in staff management

Share resources and training opportunities with other organisations

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