
Strengthening the Third Sector

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report updates the CPP on the developments to strengthen the Third Sector in Argyll & Bute.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** Note the situation and monitor progress of the Third Sector Steering Group
- 2.2** Note work with Third Sector in tandem with this development – Fairer Argyll and Bute Plan, and “Harnessing the Potential of the Third Sector” Demonstration Project.
- 2.3** Consider inviting representatives from the Third Sector Steering Group to a future meeting to discuss their proposals.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1** Council Leader and Chair of the Community Planning Partnership, Dick Walsh invited staff and Board representatives from the umbrella organisations of the Third Sector to a meeting on 21 May 2008 to discuss opportunities for development. In attendance were the 3 Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS), Argyll & Bute Volunteer Centre (ABVC), and Argyll & Bute Social Enterprise Network (ABSEN), as well as Mull & Iona Community trust (MICT) as a sub-contractor to provide CVS services. Also presenting at the meeting were Scottish Government Third Sector Division and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). It was clear that national and local government bodies were all looking for the same outcomes.
- 3.2** The aim of the meeting was to strengthen the Third Sector and identify how it can best be involved in community planning processes, both locally and strategically. This was seen as the start of a process of identifying ways to improve the working together of Third Sector organisations in Argyll & Bute.

- 3.3** The objectives set are to develop:
- More active third sector, supporting more community activity
 - Better quality support for third sector organisations across the whole of Argyll and Bute
 - Equitable access to support for all communities in Argyll and Bute
 - A clear voice advocating the interests of the third sector in Argyll and Bute locally and nationally
 - Stronger and more active social enterprises winning contracts to provide services
- 3.4** The Third Sector was challenged to come up with a new plan to meet these objectives, with financial support from the Fairer Scotland Fund from 2009 – 2011, and thereafter, potentially, from the Council's block allocation.
- 3.5** Those present agreed to further consult with the sector on 6 June following the Volunteer Awards in Oban. Scottish Government, SCVO and the Council all gave presentations and assisted at workshops.
- 3.6** At this event, ideas were gathered in workshops facilitated by the Third Sector and partners, and a Third Sector Steering Group was established. This group had its first meeting on 17 June.
- 3.7** The timescale for developments are as follows:
- End of September – options presented by the third sector organisations to CPP
 - End of October – final draft of Fairer Argyll and Bute Plan agreed
 - November – agreement by Argyll and Bute Council and Argyll and Bute CPP
 - February 2009 – Council budget decision
 - April 2009 – chosen option enacted

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1** The Third Sector Steering Group has a major task to complete in a very short timescale, the outcome of which is crucial to the future of a thriving and equitable Third Sector across Argyll & Bute.

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