

Third Sector Steering Group
Interim Progress Report for CPP Management Meeting 3 September 2008

D Price/G Heritage 27/8/08

In a presentation made by Cllr Dick Walsh on 21 May 2008, a clear challenge was put to the 3rd sector in Argyll and Bute to address the following areas of potential improvement:

- More active 3rd sector, supporting community activity, including stronger and more active social enterprises
- Better quality management systems in support of 3rd sector organisations
- Equitable access to intermediary advice and support across the county
- A clear, strong, unified voice.

‘Competence, Capacity, Confidence’

At the Volunteer of the Year Award Ceremony on June 6th, the Third Sector Steering Group (TSSG) as formed, comprising the three CVSs, Volunteer Centre, ABSEN, and 6 representatives of other agencies and organisations in the sector.

Since then, the TSSG has met every two weeks with a view to delivering a proposal in the form of a paper, addressing the above 4 themes.

Progress to date:

- Website and discussion forum launched, accessed via www.argyllcommunities.org.
- LEADER bid submitted to match existing funds to allow the TSSG to continue to function till the end of the financial year.
- Engagement of the Scottish Government 3rd Sector team’s regional representative, Ross Lindsay, to help support the process.
- Communication and consultation with members of the sector to inform and validate proposals.
- A great deal of lively and constructive debate with the TSSG aimed at achieving alignment, particularly between the intermediary organisations.
- An outline first draft of the final proposal paper has now started, which will map out how the sector will deliver the proposals aimed at addressing the 4 themes. This paper will recognise that by end of September, only an outline plan of action will be achievable, with further implementation planning detail following towards the end of the financial year. Actual implementation and delivery of outcomes will continue over the next two years.
- The following actions are included, at draft stage only, within the proposed report:

Outputs

- Third sector organisations implement strategies which will improve support and service delivery across the sector to voluntary, community and enterprise organisations
- Voluntary sector organisations adopt and work to achieving a quality standard recognised and valued by stakeholders and funders.
- Geographical barriers to access are addressed enabling equity in all areas of Argyll and Bute.
- Voluntary sector organisations work in partnerships, are co-supportive and strive to improve knowledge and expertise adopting best practice models across areas of performance
- Voluntary sector organisations demonstrate better governance, management and service delivery through quality standards.
- The sector seeks to implement a protocol or compact for working relationships with public bodies.
- Through inclusive consultation and engagement the intermediary organisations within the sector ensure that different interests and views are represented and that there is a flow of information and feedback between public bodies and voluntary and social enterprise organisations.

One important conclusion which the TSSG has reached is that whilst a clear, strong, unified voice is a worthy objective, a 'single' voice is neither feasible nor desirable.

In the meantime, Argyll CVS and Argyll and Bute Volunteer Centre, have set themselves a target of October 1, 2008, to commence a co-joined working agreement.

Here is an update on the status of this proposed agreement:

1. The co-joining agreement will preserve the corporate identities of the two companies.
2. The two companies will each have their own board of trustees, but these boards will share the same members
3. It is proposed that the two companies will share a management structure, led by Glenn Heritage, currently manager of the VC.
4. This management structure, reconciliation of payments for services, and other operational details, are still subject to ongoing consultation with staff and finalisation.
5. VDS and SCVO have been kept informed and are supportive.
- 6 . The main objectives of the agreement are to maximise the effectiveness of our shared human and financial resources, to improve county-wide access to intermediary advice services, and improve and extend the availability, scope and quality of information and advice..

This co-joined arrangement aligns well with the objectives of the TSSG, of Argyll and Bute SOA and National Indicators and will serve as a valuable pilot for more extensive co-operation and joint working across the sector and the county. The new Argyll & Bute VC and Argyll CVS will seek to develop further and stronger partnership links with the other intermediary groups.

Attached is copy of the first draft taken from a proposed joint business plan for ACVS and VC which sets a clear path for strong and active sector support. (*n.b. first produced for TSSG, but not universally adopted*)