

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Demonstration Project was established in June 2008 to harness the potential of the Third Sector to help achieve Council objectives. The Demonstration Project Board is chaired by Council Leader and membership comes from the following; Big Lottery Fund, Community Planning Partnership Chair, Social Economy Network, Third Sector Organisation, Enterprise Agency, NHS, Council Director of Community Services and Head of Planning and Performance.
- 1.2 The Demonstration Project Team was tasked with taking forward the work detailed in the COHI Report, March 2008, and the political direction of Government, which recognises the role that Councils play in enabling communities to achieve their potential.
- 1.3 To ensure Argyll and Bute Council is fit for this role, the Demonstration Project Team was tasked to look at current Council policies and procedures and identify barriers and opportunities.
- 1.4 At the same time the Argyll and Bute Social Economy Partnership (ABSEP) was agreeing a detailed plan to develop the Social Enterprise Sector.
- 1.5 Funding was sought from the Council, the Scottish Government and LEADER to put this plan into action.

2. OUTCOMES

The Demonstration Project was tasked with achieving the following outcomes which relate to the Carnegie Report;

- 2.1 Funding streams are appropriate and linked to strategic plans.
- 2.2 Improved community sustainability through the Third Sector's ability to acquire assets.
- 2.3 Procurement policies of Argyll and Bute Council and CPP Partners have a clear and strategic view of the Third Sector as a service deliverer.
- 2.4 Social enterprises are able to access appropriate training and information to help them develop.

The ABSEP, by working directly with the Third Sector will also be seeking to achieve these outcomes.

3. CONSULTATION AND RESEARCH

- 3.1 The Demonstration project has undertaken consultation and desktop research with a range of internal and external partners to look at the four main outcomes.

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- 3.2 The consultation included a questionnaire which appeared on two Third Sector intermediary organisation websites and was distributed with the Council's ALERT funding bulletin. In addition, each Team Leader contacted stakeholders individually; and the Third Sector Steering Group acted as a focus group, allowing discussion on issues and ideas for progress
- 3.3 The findings from this consultation and research have been used to form the recommendations and suggestions for the next steps for the Demonstration Project.
- 3.4 The ABSEP is promoting research and study visits to identify innovative delivery mechanisms for rural areas. It is also seeking to identify accurate measures of growth and business sustainability within the Third Sector.

4 FINDINGS

Many of the findings were applicable to all outcomes and these have been summarised below. On the whole, findings from the Demonstration Project research and consultation exercise confirmed people's perceptions of the main areas for improvement.

- 4.1 Examples of good practice in working with the Third Sector exist in some Council departments but awareness across the Council of the benefits of working with the third sector, and the underpinning knowledge such as community benefit, social capital etc. varies significantly.
- 4.2 The Council has undertaken work to help identify and measure social benefit in resource planning, and has a strategy for working with the Third Sector. It has developed the following;
 - (i) *Sustainability Toolkit*
 - (ii) *Outline Business Case Scoring System*
 - (iii) *Weightings for community aspects within the procurement process*
 - (iv) Volunteering framework
 - (v) Corporate Plan
 - (vi) Corporate Planning and Performance Framework
 - (vii) Consultation Toolkit
 - (viii) Draft Community Engagement Strategy

This work needs to be consolidated and developed into a coherent overarching framework for the Council's relationship with the Third Sector.

- 4.3 There is not a general awareness within the Third Sector of how they can contract services from the Council, apply for grant assistance or have an impact on service delivery. There is no framework for the flow of information between the Council and the Third Sector.
- 4.4 There are many ongoing related strands of work such as the Corporate Planning and Performance Framework, Single Outcome Agreement, Community Engagement Strategy, Fairer Argyll and Bute Plan and others that the Demonstration Project must continue to work with in finding ways forward. Much of this work involves Community Planning Partners and there should be a framework for this work based on shared principles

of transparency, accountability, communications, equity and respect between partners.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of these recommendations were applicable to all outcomes and these have been summarised and detailed below;

- 5.1 That there is a wider consultation, both internal and external, to fully inform the Project and make best use of existing resources.
- 5.2 That the Council adopts an intelligent client approach for all Third Sector work rather than a specific department. This will help the Council have a strategic view of the Third Sector and the Third Sector have a strategic view of the Council.
- 5.3 That the Council develop a comprehensive approach to working with the Third Sector which reflects the diversity of the Third Sector but within an overarching framework. This framework will enable appropriate signposting through the single point of contact, and would be useful in gathering intelligence on the Third Sector and its needs.
- 5.4 That a mechanism is established for ongoing communication between the Council and the Third Sector and a promotional strategy to highlight opportunities and contributions from both.
- 5.5 That the Council, with the Community Planning Partners, develops a Compact with the Third Sector which will lead to improved partnership working, and that this work should be part of the development of the Third Sector interface with CPP.
- 5.6 That work should be undertaken to identify options for service delivery where the Third Sector can bid for contracts.
- 5.7 That the Council considers the Public Social Partnership Project in Oban as a pilot for Third Sector service delivery.

6 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Responses from the consultation questionnaire and from informal meetings with stakeholders have shown an overwhelming desire for a further consultation based on the findings from this first phase. This second phase of consultation would involve more stakeholders and be over a longer period of time, essentially building relationships and an agreed way forward.
- 6.2 Phase 2 consultation or dialogue with our partners will take place over two-three months. Conversation with our partners will allow us to refine our proposals and implement these following the final report document to be produced for the COHI in Argyll and Bute.

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- 6.3 The ABSEP is now in a position to carry forward a programme of work which supports this process. The funding will support the Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network to undertake a range of activities to develop social enterprise within Argyll and Bute and Arran and the Cumbraes, this will complement the work of the Demonstration Project.
- 6.4 Carnegie UK Trust have committed to working with the Demonstration Project to help take forward the recommendations. This will help to keep the Demonstration Project abreast of national and international related work, as well as providing a platform for work in Argyll and Bute and ongoing developmental support.

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