

Insight

The One East Midlands Magazine

Winter 2010

Issue 6

INSIDE:
Big Society
Partnership Working
Planning & Asset Transfer

Welcome

Localisation and empowerment; both are key principles of the Big Society vision for the future. But achieving this vision will rely heavily on the strengths of relationships between third sector organisations, the local public sector and increasingly the business sector too.

But during a time of deep public spending cuts do those relationships actually exist and are they robust enough to deliver the Big Society vision?

This edition of Insight examines different aspects of the VCS relationship with our local public sector partners. We have focused specifically on those areas where good relationships have led to excellent local outcomes (such as commissioning and contracting) and where new structures and landscape put pressure on current relationships, as with the developing Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

In a climate of reducing budgets, working together to protect support for those most vulnerable in our society is essential. But are the VCS and the public sector really walking along the same path? Lets try to find out!

Rachel Quinn,
Chief Executive



Members respond

In September we wrote to all our members and networks to find out how you are faring in the current climate of cuts and policy change. 'Responding to the Big Society' asked you to tell us about the things that really matter and the impact this is having on your beneficiaries and your work. We wanted to know if your organisation is surviving and how we can help you thrive.

Having received your responses, we were then able to use the evidence to create a booklet 'Our Big Society: voluntary work and community action in the East Midlands'. The booklet was launched on 25 November during the visit from Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society. Visit the website to view and download the booklet:
www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/big society

The booklet is a valuable tool that demonstrates the positive impact that voluntary work and community action has in this region. It also makes the case that for the Big Society idea to work, Government must ensure that all policy and programmes reflect Big Society principles.

To find out more about the booklet, read the article on page 10.

Hannah Luck,
Communications Manager

In this issue

Insight

Winter 2010

Issue 6

- 1 Welcome
- 3 Policy Update
The Big Society
- 4 Support Services
- 5 Perspectives on
Partnership working
- 7 Community Led Planning
- 8 Planning Aid
- 9 Good Practice on Asset Transfer
- 10 Our Big Society
- 11 Spotlight on a Member
Business in the Community/Pro-Help
- 12 Spotlight on a Trustee
Ilyas Mohammed Aziz
- 13 Reportback
KIS event/Listen Value Invest

4



6



8



10



11/12



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Policy Update:

The Big Society - implications for the Voluntary and Community Sector

The Coalition Government has introduced its proposal for reforming the way public services are delivered to individuals and communities. Building the Big Society is the government's social and economic policy for devolving power from central government to the local public sector and communities. This proposal also has the intention to reduce the role of the state in front line service delivery and increase the participation of voluntary and community sector organisations in delivering public services. The Coalition Government has expressed its commitment to give local people the power to take control of their community through building the Big Society.

The VCS has a long and successful history of working with disadvantaged individuals and communities; employing methods that promote participation and empower communities. For example, the Big Society emphasises community participation in local activities through volunteering. The VCS has established structures and means for recruiting and supporting volunteers in their roles in the form of CVS, volunteer bureaux and brokerage organisations. These structures will be useful in delivering the Big Society.

Building the Big Society is being introduced at a time of austerity measures being adopted by the government with the aim of dealing with the recession and reducing the budget deficit. The VCS is already struggling with funding issues following spending cuts that have been passed on from local government and other public sector bodies. Reduction and removal of funding to the sector is being done at a time when alternative means of funding through the Big Society and other new government programmes are yet to be established. There is also a risk of loss of VCS skills and structures that will be needed in building the Big Society. Most contracts and grant agreements between the VCS and the public sector are due for renewal in March 2011 and there is a risk that most VCS agreements and funding will not be

prioritised by the public sector due to limited resources. The cuts to spending have already affected and will continue to affect the capacity of the VCS sector.

As more power is transferred to communities there will be an even greater need for the sector to be involved in the design and delivery of public services and stimulating social action. In order for this to happen it is imperative that the sector is not weakened during this transitional period that is fraught with difficulties.

You can read more about the Big Society by visiting One East Midlands website:
www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/big society

For more information on the policy issue outlined here please contact Henry Muchiyani,
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Support Services

Role, Quality and Impact of Third Sector Support Services and how this relates to the public sector

Kevan Liles Chief Executive
Voluntary Action Leicestershire

Here in Leicestershire, my organisation (Voluntary Action Leicestershire, VAL) has experience of working with a range of local authorities including the unitary City Council, and the two-tier County Council with Districts. These authorities are also of different political persuasions and some have shifted in political control in recent years. In addition there are the differences between authorities in their attitude to the third sector and volunteering. If you expect this article to 'dish any dirt' then please stop reading now. What I hope to do is to explore some of the methods we have used in different circumstances to develop relationships and positive outcomes for local third sector groups.

The first and critical tip is to understand thoroughly who you are dealing with, where the real power lies, and who in the authority makes things happen. This may not be immediately obvious and if you are not careful a lot of time and energy can be wasted building relationships with the 'wrong' people. In our local authorities some have key officers who have significant influence, whilst others are very much led by the politicians. This will also help you to understand the decision-making processes of your particular local authority.

Of fundamental importance is to be able to describe to public authorities the benefits of third sector support services. Politicians and officers are focused on protecting the frontline, and it is very easy for support services to be demoted to the 'back office'. The truth is that one of the reasons third sector service delivery is so much more cost effective is that most third sector groups have absolutely no back office – instead they depend on support services to cope. We should also remember that having no back office is usually not a choice – but forced upon the third sector because funders refuse to pay for anything except the frontline. The benefits of good third sector support services are that they provide excellent 'back office' and enable consistency of frontline delivery by third sector groups.

So how could the benefits of good support services be described?

Local third sector groups operate effectively:

Those groups delivering public services do it efficiently and effectively, and third sector groups operate within communities to develop social capital.

New third sector groups are able to emerge and develop to meet new needs: Communities are dynamic structures and can flex to deal with new challenges and needs. People who wish to form new third sector groups or initiatives get good support.

Local third sector groups have access to the resources they need: Third sector groups need a range of resources, most obviously finance but also volunteers and information/advice.

Local Community 'voices' are articulated and heard by public authorities: I would class third sector groups as the 'organised public' – an excellent and informed consultation group.

Public Authorities are able to better understand their communities and community needs: It is not sufficient for voices to be heard, to be a real benefit for public authorities both community voices, and the 'organised public' must make sense in the public sector current context and priorities.

It is clear from the above that support services need to be persuasive, supportive and work in partnership with their local third sector as well as with local public authorities. There is a symbiotic relationship between the support services and the local third sector groups. The local third sector has to accrue benefits from the activities of the support service, and the support service will never be considered effective if the local third sector doesn't show improvements, ability to cope with change, and impact in its dealings with the public authorities. A good third sector support service will constantly look both ways – to the public authorities as its funders (and true customers), and to the local third sector as its service users and partners in developing a more effective third sector.

So in the current financial squeeze can local third sector groups and public authorities do without third sector support services? Unsurprisingly my answer is NO but for several reasons:

- The local third sector will rapidly head into decline without effective third sector support services. There may be some who can get access to information and resources, but the third sector as a whole will not get consistent and appropriate support.
- Local public authorities will struggle to make sense of community 'voices' without the coherence provided by third sector support services.
- The drain on costs on frontline groups that have to buy support will far outweigh the savings sought from cutting support services.
- If the Government and local public authorities want to turn the Big Society rhetoric into reality at the grass roots then third sector support services are critical to this ambition.

Third sector support services cannot be complacent however, and need to deliver clear and consistent benefits to frontline third sector groups and local public authorities alike.

Perspectives on working tog

Derbyshire CAN

Derbyshire CAN
Contracts Advice Network ✓

Derbyshire Contracts Advice Network (DCAN) is a partnership project, which aims to increase the financial resources of third sector organisations (TSOs) and infrastructure groups by helping them win contracts and to increase skills and knowledge in the third sector about procurement.

The project is led by Links (the Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire Council for Voluntary Service & Action) in partnership with North Derbyshire Voluntary Action, Derbyshire Rural Community Council, South Derbyshire CVS, Southern Derbyshire Voluntary Sector Mental Health Forum, Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire. The project is funded by the Big Lottery BASIS programme and runs from autumn 2007 until summer 2012.

DCAN combines four complimentary elements:

- Training and information – a programme of focused events to increase knowledge and technical competence of the contracting process;
- One-to-one support – targeted development work with 40 frontline organisations for a full year; focusing on groups working with ‘hard-to reach’ communities;
- Mentoring – short term support for infrastructure providers enabling them to better support their members needs;
- Brokering relationships – between commissioner and local TSOs and

more recently between successful ‘out-of-county’ service providers with local TSOs able to support them in better delivery.

DCAN was developed to support TSOs who were unable to access public sector contract opportunities in Derbyshire. In 2007/8 it directly supported 41 organisations of which 10 went on to win resources through the contracting process. The brokerage role has provided greatest value by working with commissioners to simplify and improve accessibility in the tender process and paperwork and in mediating tensions about contract delivery. The brokerage service has been highly valued by both public sector commissioners and TSOs.

There are three key factors that have ensured success of the project:

1. Knowledge of the barriers faced by local TSOs in bidding for public sector contracts
2. Developing and maintaining robust and trusted relationships with local public sector commissioners
3. Drawing on the strong relationships held by Links and other project partners with local TSOs and infrastructure organisations.

In the last two years of the project the focus has shifted slightly to accommodate changes in the third sector commissioning landscape. Efficiency drives in public sector procurement has driven up the size and value of some local contracts;

ruling out TSOs from applying. Although opposed to this trend, DCAN believes that sub-contracting with TSOs can still have positive impacts for communities. A new strand of work linking contract holders from outside the Derbyshire area with TSOs that can support contract delivery is now available. Any organisations looking to work in Derbyshire but without current third sector contacts should contact DCAN to identify potential local partners.

For more information about the work of DCAN, to receive support or advice around public sector contract readiness or to find out about local delivery partners visit www.linkscvs.org.uk, email linkscvs@btconnect.com or telephone 01246 274844

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Big Lottery Fund

These are really challenging and worrying times for many people and projects. In this climate I hope it is reassuring that good cause funding from the Lottery is still there and projects continue to be funded across the region. In October we made over £1.3million awards through Reaching Communities and Awards for All programmes alone.

BIG is an outcomes funder meaning that our funding is related to what a project seeks to achieve rather than what type of organisation it is. This means that, whilst most of our funding is delivered through the voluntary and community sector (91% last year), we also make grants to other types of organisation, including social enterprises, individuals (where there is clear public benefit such as veterans) and cross sector partnerships that benefit individuals and communities.

Findings from research of our programmes shows that cross-sector partnerships can lead to more sustained outcomes, with greater community buy-in. We have seen how partnerships between local authorities and the VCS can deliver positive changes for the communities we support. The Local Authority can use its networks, resources and statutory powers to manage wider governance issues, leaving the VCS organisation to focus on the business end of delivering for neighbourhoods and individuals on the ground. The challenge is ensuring respect and equality in partnerships.

Flexibility is also important in areas where community groups may be small - notably sparsely populated rural areas. Even where voluntary and community groups want to play a more active role, they may lack the critical mass to win funding to build their capacity. Parish councils are often responsible for village halls, for example, and many have received BIG grants to refurbish them; and schools often act as 'community hubs', providing facilities and centres for wider community activity.

During the summer, Government has been consulting on an additional policy direction for BIG that focuses us more strongly on support for the VCS. We welcome the government's reassurance that we will continue to have the flexibility to work with partners and fund what works in a very challenging funding environment.

We do work closely with other funders – both across the region such as EM Funding Forum and nationally through our 'Intelligent Funding Forum', where we share good practice, intelligence on new funding models and identify opportunities for collaborative working.

We're also keen to develop partnerships in sectors where our networks are less strong – such as with the private sector, where we think BIG has a role to play in linking businesses with the huge range of exciting local projects that we support through our funding.

For example, regionally we have encouraged numerous funded projects to tap into Business Champions and Business in the Community to get specific skills at no cost with very positive results.

Personally, I feel partnership working and a clear strategic fit is now more important than ever. But I also recognise that working for the common good can be a real challenge in a competitive environment. At the end of the day the priority for all of us must be supporting those most in need. That's often the reason we come together and long may that continue.

Mick McGrath,
Head of East Midlands
Big Lottery Fund



Community Led Planning (CLP)

CLP is a step-by-step process that enables every citizen to participate in, and contribute to improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their local area. Already undertaken by approximately 4,000 communities across England, it represents an unparalleled opportunity for people to take responsibility for making things happen locally, rather than waiting on others to do it for them.

This unique approach to community empowerment has been developed and refined in rural areas since the late 1970s, largely as a response to the gradual withdrawal of public sector services and the increasing need for communities to look after their own affairs.

Over the years, Community Led Plans have taken on different names including Village Appraisals, Parish Plans, Market Town Action Plans and, more recently, Neighbourhood Plans. These have developed their own particular characteristics, tending to be used in different geographical contexts.

One of the defining characteristics of all Community Led Plans is that they are not imposed from above, but instead initiated and led by local volunteers who steer their community through a nine step process, which involves liaising with the local authority and its partners. Although many identified needs can be met by the community on its own, others need the cooperation of local authorities and service providers. Local authorities and service providers can benefit from engaging with Community Led Planning groups throughout the process. Working with local facilitators, they can help to ensure that communities are provided with the confidence to produce high quality plans that are well

researched, inclusive and deliver a range of actions that add value to local service delivery. CLP also results in a wealth of evidence about local distinctiveness and needs that local authorities and other service providers can use. Gathered by volunteers from within the community, this information can help to inform and rationalise the targeting of interventions and the planning of new development.

It is important that local authorities and service providers work with local facilitators employed by members of Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) in the East Midlands when supporting CLP. Local facilitators are well positioned to guide community groups through the process of producing plans, engaging with volunteers as appropriate to make sure that they are equipped with the very best techniques for catalysing local activity and securing the support of other key stakeholders along the way.

In Leicestershire, a protocol has been developed between the local authorities and Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council showing how they will work together in support of communities developing plans for their area, detailing how they will respond to completed plans and the help that is available to implement actions where needed.

In Nottinghamshire some of the local facilitators employed by Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire share desks in the local authority offices. These local facilitators provide a link between the needs and expectations of communities producing plans and officers within the local authority and other service providers who can provide specialist advice and support.

As a result communities producing plans in the county have been able to develop actions that have influenced the delivery of services locally, including:

- The development of affordable housing on exception sites where surveys of need were undertaken;
- Changes to the provision of bus services based on a better understanding of when and where people need to travel;
- Improvements to sports and play facilities where communities made suggestions and discussed this with officers from the local authority;
- The introduction of speed calming measures, developed in collaboration with Nottinghamshire Police.

Rushcliffe Borough Council has employed a Rural Officer through a Service Level Agreement with Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire for some years. The officer is employed by RCAN but works out of the council offices for a large proportion of her time. The benefit to the local authority is that they receive the advantage of RCAN's knowledge and expertise as well as the member of staff. This arrangement also does as much as possible to ensure that the community led plans are not developed in a vacuum.

Contributors:

Phillip Vincent, ACRE

Katherine Marriott, Rushcliffe Borough Council

Carola Jones, Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire



Planning Aid



David Cameron, writing in The Sun newspaper in October 2010, set out the Government's new approach to involving people in the future of their areas:

"We're giving local people more power over what happens in their neighbourhood - so communities can come together to keep pubs open, stop post offices from closing, run parks and take control over the look and feel of new developments in their area."

This new approach, known as 'localism', places people centre stage in the shaping the future of their areas. This approach is nothing new to Planning Aid.

Planning Aid England is part of the Royal Town Planning Institute and provides free, independent and professional planning advice to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay professional fees. The service provides Community Planning support as well as a Planning Advice Line. There is an office based in the East Midlands staffed by qualified planners, supported by over 100 locally based volunteers who are professional planners who give their time to the communities and individuals that Planning Aid England supports. Our Community Planning service is directed towards groups who have

historically experienced difficulty in engaging with the planning system, this includes, for instance, disability groups, children and young people, black and minority ethnic communities, those who find it difficult to get involved because of language or literacy difficulties, and small tenants or residents associations.

Our support can help these communities and individuals to be in a better position to positively influence the future of the local areas in which they live and work by understanding some of the key planning issues, knowing how and when to make their views known, and how to positively shape their own neighborhoods. Our Community Planners and volunteers are therefore dedicated to providing activities aimed at helping groups and individuals to get involved in the planning or regeneration of a specific site or area, to prepare their own plans for their area and to access information and training on the planning system.

East Midlands Planning Aid has worked with many different communities this year, and is currently developing links with the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association for whom we are providing training on the planning system and developing focus groups to help

members understand planning proposals, how they can submit their views, and how they can influence development in their local neighbourhoods. A key outcome of the work will be to create a guidance note for planners on how to involve people who are blind or partially sighted in the development of plans and policies.

We are also currently targeting the most deprived areas of Derby, Lincoln, Northampton and Nottingham helping communities to identify a vision for their area, all of which is very much in keeping with the localism agenda.

Planning Aid England also operates a Planning Advice Line. This is supported in the East Midlands by a professional planner and our network of volunteers within the region. It offers advice to people who ring with a simple planning query, whilst for the more complex planning matters a volunteer will be allocated to provide more support. Whilst all callers will receive some help, only those who meet our eligibility criteria will receive further help from a volunteer.

Penny Strutton,
Regional Manager,
Planning Aid East Midlands



Good Practice on Asset Transfer

Partnership working is absolutely essential to a successful community asset transfer, having supported numerous Asset Transfers across the Midlands and the country it is the ones where the local authority hands over the keys and walk away that fail.

Freehold or most often long term lease transfer of council assets into community or third sector ownership covers a whole range of statutory owned assets such as open spaces, car parks, piers and most commonly community centres. These assets are all in a variety of physical condition, suitability and value, and each recipient third sector organisation has a range of different governance arrangements, legal status, experience and ability to generate income to ensure the asset remains open to all. A 'one size fits all approach' just isn't possible and a solid partnership between the local authority and the third sector organisation is the foundation upon which unravelling all these complexities and ensuring a successful and sustainable transfer sits.

In Stoke-on-Trent the Neighbourhood Area Implementation Team (AIT) from the city council had regular contact with the Sneyd Green tenants and residents association (TRA) supporting their work with advice, guidance and pointers on fundraising. The TRA provided barbeques, activities and bouncy castles supporting the work of the area teams at fun days and the like in other areas of the city so that when the opportunity arose for the TRA to take ownership of their local community centre, trust and a good working relationship was already established. The building needed some work to be fit for

purpose so the AIT provided liaison and advocacy for the group in negotiations with other council officers in the policy, property and legal departments and provided capacity building support to ensure that the group can effectively manage the asset in a long term sustainable way. This is a multi disciplinary area where internal partnerships have been developed. The City Council's learning and understanding of the community asset process has supported it in becoming better at asset transfer and developing a practical approach and strategy.

Based on our work across the country supporting authorities and groups in asset transfer pointers for best practice and success include:

For authorities to:

- Work in partnership both internally and externally
- Get alongside the group, understand their abilities, needs and vision for the asset
- Be transparent about why you want to transfer the asset
- Be prepared to invest in the process with both time and resources
- Don't copy what others have done as each context is different but also don't re-invent the wheel, there are lots of resources and case studies on the asset transfer unit website www.atu.org.uk

For local groups:

- Really think about why you want an asset or building and if it is going to benefit or hamper your core work. Running an asset is costly and time consuming and you will need to generate significant income just to keep it afloat.
- Get a good strong board in place who have a range of skills and

enough time to commit to the local community and seeing a transfer project through

- Review all your policies and procedures and ensure your legal compliance, you can use our free online tool to ensure your credibility www.visiblecommunities.org.uk/index.php?page=10
- Get an independent conditions survey of the building, this usually isn't too costly but you can approach Pro-Help for a pro bono surveyor
- Put together a strong business plan, it doesn't need to be pages and pages long but needs to include the points above and show that you have;
 - a) a clear vision for delivering to the community based upon evidence of need through a community consultation or similar
 - b) a good estimate of running costs including any short to medium term maintenance costs
 - c) an ability to generate enough income to fund a) and b). This will include likely demand and competitor analysis

Asset transfer doesn't work for everyone, so explore the options in partnership to find a win-win solution.

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Karen Kelly – Stoke-on-Trent City Council, VCS Policy & Strategy

Community Matters free publication "Asset Transfer Partnership Routemap" has lots more information please go to our website to get your copy
www.communitymatters.org.uk

Our Big Society



One East Midlands has published a series of 10 papers, which consider the role that voluntary and community sector organisations play in delivering the Big Society and its principles.

Entitled 'Our Big Society: voluntary work and community action in the East Midlands', the individual papers examine the additionally brought to the Big Society by the VCS from both a local and national perspective; covering a wide range of themes:

- **Children, young people and families**
- **Commissioning**
- **Environment**
- **Faith**
- **Funding advice services**
- **Health and social care**
- **Race and ethnicity**
- **Rural communities**
- **Volunteering**

The papers followed the One EM members' survey 'Responding to the Big Society', which asked questions on a range of topics including service delivery, support, volunteers, the local public sector, funding and resources, equality and timescales.

From the numerous detailed survey responses received, One EM was provided with many case studies showing how the Big Society is already working within the region. Ten of these case studies were selected to illustrate the Big Society in action, including Friends of Green Wood Community Forum, Self Help Nottingham and New Parks Community Boxing Gym.

As part of their aim to inform and support government thinking on the future of social activity and social policy and how to embed it into all areas of policy development, a complete set of the papers were presented to MP Nick

Hurd, Minister, Minister for Civil Society, during his visit to Leicester on 25 November.

The aim of the Minister's visit, organised by Voluntary Action Leicestershire and hosted by One EM, was to gain ideas from local communities on building the Big Society and talk to residents about some of the most challenging questions facing the VCS today.

During the day, the Minister visited voluntary and social enterprise organisations that deliver services in the heart of the communities they serve, including Mutual Pathfinders Inclusion Healthcare Scheme, the Contact Project, Stride and the Tenants & Elders Project on St. Mathews Estate, and the TREES group.

The minister also addressed up to 150 people from community groups and organisations in Leicestershire at the launch of the VCS Assembly, a new initiative being developed by the sector with the support of VAL. This allowed him to gain valuable feedback from the very people who would help deliver the Big Society.

Our Big Society can be downloaded from www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/big-society.

SPOTLIGHT

Member: Business in the Community

Interview with **Lezli Hall, ProHelp Coordinator East Midlands Region**

1. Briefly describe your organisation (i.e. type of organisation, area you work in):

Business in the Community (BITC) is a national charity that believes in the importance of giving back to society. One of the ways we do this is by engaging local, national and global companies to address key social issues in relation to education, employability and economic renewal. ProHelp is a national network of over 1000 professional firms each of which provides free professional advice and strategic support to VCS organisations in their local area.

2. Who are your members?

Nationally, BITC has over 800 member companies and ProHelp approximately 1000 members. East Midlands ProHelp members include Freeth Cartwright LLP, Innes England, Simon Foote Architects, Duncan & Toplis, Lincolnshire Co-operative, Smithers Purslow, Browne Jacobson and Tollers.

3. What are the organisation's aims?

BITC aims to mobilise business for good, inspiring businesses to increase the quality and extent of their contribution to social and economic regeneration by making corporate responsibility an essential part of business excellence. We provide a framework to support and challenge business to improve its performance and benefit society through our four areas of expertise – community, environment, workplace and marketplace. ProHelp aims to offer swift, unbiased advice from professional firms to stimulate community based social and economic regeneration in local areas. The guiding principle is that members approach the work in the same way as they would any other fee-paying customer, but for no charge.

4. What work are you involved in at a regional level?

In the region, BITC engages businesses to support the community through various programmes and initiatives to help people get back into work, mentor and coach community organisations, raise the aspirations of young people and provide teams of volunteers for one off community projects. Over the past year, East Midlands ProHelp (presently part funded by ERDF) has collectively provided £326,000 of support to over 200 new community projects.

5. What benefits of membership to One EM do you see?

It is important that we engage with and promote our services to East Midlands VCS organisations at every opportunity to ensure they are aware of the free support available to them through our programmes and initiatives. To that end, it is crucial that we work in partnership with both stakeholders across the sector and private businesses to achieve this. Membership of One East Midlands enables us to reach all sectors.

6. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

If you are a business that is interested in finding out more about how BITC can help you engage the local community, or if you are a community or 'not for profit' group based in the East Midlands and wish to access ProHelp or find out about our other services contact our East Midlands Regional office on 0115 9247400.

Thanks for being our Spotlight Member

SPOTLIGHT

Trustee: Ilyas Mohammed Aziz

1. How did you get involved in One East Midlands?

I have lived and worked all my adult life in the inner city of Nottingham and have a reasonably good understanding of sector issues and challenges. I got involved with One EM to have an opportunity to make an effective contribution to our communities.

I joined the One EM Board in 2009 at a time when the future of organisations and agencies operating within regional infrastructure was under scrutiny. I accept the current period as a real challenge but equally it presents new opportunities for the organisation to become a much louder voice for the voluntary/community sector.

2. What role do you have within the Board?

Although I have no portfolio role, as a board member I am given ample opportunity to contribute. I like to think that I add some value to the discussions because of my extensive experience of working within community and voluntary sector settings where I have managed complex projects in challenging situations, and ensuring delivery of outputs, outcomes and achieving milestones to timescale and available resources.

Currently I am employed as a manager of the Pakistan Community Centre in the inner-city area of Nottingham.

3. What skills do you bring to this role?

I have extensive experience of working within community and voluntary sector settings. I have been and am still actively involved with vulnerable members of the community and with this experience have developed extensive links with statutory and voluntary sector services and resources. I have worked with people from deprived communities in addition to the indigenous community, I have also worked with people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

I am familiar with the issues and the challenges faced by the voluntary sector.

I hold a Diploma in Social Work. I have also undertaken extensive training in the field of sales and marketing, effective communication and project management.

4. What do you see are the benefits of One EM and how can it support the VCS in the region?

We may be divided by geographical boundaries, political and religious beliefs etc, but regional coordination and planning is crucial for the success of undertakings that are often too complex for any one agency/organisation to address. One EM is able to pool ideas, and coordinate action to achieve economic and social economies of scale.

5. How would you like to see One EM grow / change in the future?

I hold the view that One EM has occupied itself and should continue to occupy itself with supporting the process of communication, consultation and advocacy that leads to direct impact on local regeneration. Well coordinated policies and united partnerships will enable the voluntary/community sector to achieve their identified social and economic outcomes whilst maintaining a close eye on issues of regional and local inequalities.

We should continue to value sharing information, resources and ideas in order to achieve a common goal. The voluntary sector needs to be flexible, accommodating and supportive of one another. In this respect One EM must further demonstrate a sense of direction, motivation and offer assessed needs support to others to achieve their potential.

Thanks for being our Spotlight Trustee

Report b

Listen: Value: Invest

As part of One East Midlands' ongoing commitment to support the voluntary and community sector in the region, we are backing the Listen: Value: Invest campaign, launched at the Houses of Parliament in March by Voluntary Sector North West (VSNW).

The campaign asks MPs and other decision makers to listen, value and invest in the sector, at a time when it has never been more vital to do so, not just for people and communities, but for the wider economy as well.

The campaign is based on real examples, which demonstrate how the sector supports individuals, transforms communities and delivers economic benefits. This powerful combination of personal stories linked to economic benefits aims to show decision makers that the sector delivers real value and reinforces its role as a deliverer of services, a campaigner and a shaper of services.

Supporting the campaign and demonstrating the value of local and regional infrastructure, One East Midlands case study videos, featuring Northampton Volunteer Centre, Zimwomen, South Derbyshire CVS and Ticknall Lunch Club, can be seen at www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/casestudies

Rachel Quinn, One East Midlands Chief Executive, says: *"One East Midlands and other networks across the country are getting behind Listen: Value: Invest because it helps us demonstrate the positive and vital contributions made by the sector to all aspects of society. We want decision makers to hear the stories, value the contribution and invest in the sector as a better way of building the future."*

Whilst devised in the North West, organisations across the country are urged to get involved in the campaign, becoming stronger and unified in one voice and making a real difference. By contributing stories and adopting the campaign slogan and branding, the campaign can continue to develop into a strong, grass roots movement, showing decision makers that the sector is proactive and clear in our message.

Amongst those organisations in the region supporting the campaign is Community Action Derby. In a recent report on the £237 million value of the sector to the Derby economy, Matthew Allbones, their Deputy Chief Executive, says: *"It is widely recognised that the current financial situation is impacting on everyone, both public and voluntary sector, but the message from the VCS comes through loud and clear, Listen, Value and Invest."*

For more information on the Listen: Value: Invest campaign visit www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk/listenvalueinvest or the national campaign website at www.listenvalueinvest.org.uk.



back



Knowledge: Impact: Success:

Following the 2010 general election, with the country still in recession, the Knowledge Impact and Success (KIS) event, attended by 55 delegates, took place in June during the immediate aftermath of the coalition government's emergency budget announcements.

The overall aim of the event, developed by One East Midlands, in conjunction with Capacitybuilders, Big Lottery Fund and SEEM, was to bring together infrastructure organisations from across the region to look at how their current funding could lead the way for a more sustainable future.

Chaired by Mick McGrath, the Big Lottery Fund Head of Region for the East Midlands, the event focused on three key areas:

- Identifying, sharing and capturing knowledge developed through funding programmes.
- Using this knowledge to demonstrate the value, benefits and impact of infrastructure in the region.
- Sharing and celebrating success.

The keynote speech, delivered by Stephen Dunmore, Chair of the Capacitybuilders Board, analysed challenges facing the sector, the government's vision for the Big Society and the difference Capacitybuilders funding had made within the region.

The roundtable discussions that followed focused on the positive impact Capacitybuilders and the Big Lottery Fund have made to front line groups and the challenges and opportunities on the horizon.

Speed-dating, of the networking variety, allowed delegates the opportunity to meet representatives from regional and national projects, grant officers and national support services, ranging from the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group to NCVO and the Charities Evaluation

Service. A question and answer session was then dominated by finance, requests for assurance on the Capacitybuilders evaluation process and future challenges. This led to Stephen Dunmore outlining the three key challenges of commissioning, articulating value and maintaining independence, facing the sector today.

Overall, the event showed that Capacitybuilders and the Big Lottery Fund had grown and developed, although uncertainty remains as a result of the new political environment and proposed funding cuts.

The sector can offer assistance at this time, through playing a wider role in the commissioning of public sectors by:

- Delivering and co-delivering direct and support services.
- Providing intelligence informing the provision of better and more targeted services
- Working with communities to support demand changes for service provision as the market transforms
- Working with commissioners to provide increased understanding of sector commissioning and how processes can be improved.

Although it may require closer collaboration and possible mergers, it was agreed that in the future as a sector we must focus on efficiency and quality, with positive outcomes to beneficiaries remaining at the centre of decision making.

The conference report was sent to all delegates and is available on-line at: www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk.

For further information on Capacitybuilders visit www.capacitybuilders.org.uk and for the Big Lottery Fund visit www.biglotteryfund.org.uk.

Please note that following the publication in October of the government's proposed changes to Quangos, Capacitybuilders will no longer exist as a non departmental parliamentary body. The alternative delivery of their work is currently under review. The Big Lottery Fund will be retained on the grounds of impartiality, although its policy responsibility will be moved to the Cabinet Office.

One East Midlands is a registered charity, working with the voluntary and community sector.

One East Midlands brings together organisations that support voluntary and community groups across the region to influence and shape policy, improve services and provide a single point of contact for all stakeholders at a regional and national level.

One East Midlands is accountable to its members: voluntary and community organisations, frontline groups, public and private sector agencies. Through its membership, the sector is able to influence One East Midlands' work and ensure that the organisation does what it sets out to do.

For more information on our membership scheme visit the website: www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk

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