



# **“Policy Foresight Event”**

**Identifying the policy priorities for the voluntary and  
community sector in Yorkshire & the Humber**

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006

## **Event Report**

## Identifying Policy Priorities

The aim of our first Policy Foresight event was to explore the policy context and decide together on key priority issues for the voluntary and community sector (VCS). At the Regional Forum we are now considering how we can respond to these priorities and we hope that your organisation will do the same.

The event included contributions from Isobel Mills of Government Office, Neil Cleeveley of NAVCA and Karl Wilding of NCVO. These three provided a foundation of expertise and insight about the policy context.

From this foundation, 66 delegates worked together to answer the question:

**What are the *priority* issues for the Yorkshire and Humber VCS we need to work on *collectively* and are best tackled *regionally*?**

Each participant started with their own list of priorities (a total of 171 ideas were written down). Working from these initial ideas, five broad priority areas were agreed:

1. Commissioning, procurement and the role of the VCS
2. Strengthening the VCS voice and promoting the sector
3. Excluded and Marginalised Groups and New Communities
4. Partnership and collaborative working
5. Local Area Agreements

### 1. **Commissioning and Procurement and the role of the VCS**

- Information sessions that are accessible particularly to small and medium sized VCS.
- Practical resources i.e. toolkits
- Above actions follow either a mapping exercise or relook at existing data.
- Research
- Get smarter at being involved in these processes (influence systems)
- Create the right environment for effective commissioning to happen (skills, systems, knowledge)
- Protection of smaller orgs.
- Needs of the most disadvantaged
- Relationships (within VCS and between VCS and Public sector)
- Collaboration: cost and impact of (on individual orgs)

### 2. **Strengthening the VCS voice and promoting the sector**

- Develop effective communication of different messages which meet the needs of different audiences that reflect the diversity of the sector and approaches the needs of the sector bottom up.
- Effective Voices
- Representative
- Evidence based
- Promoting / Marketing
- VCS contribute to policy and strategy
- Scrutiny role

### **3. Excluded and Marginalised Groups and New Communities**

- Needs assessment for new communities
- Service provision
- Excluded Groups (break this down BME / Refugees & Asylum Seekers)
- Voice
- Capacity Building

### **4 Partnership and Collaborative Working**

- Share Intelligence
- Targeted Communication
- Benchmarking
- Co-operation of themed networks in Region
- Explore new models of delivery partnerships (e.g. operational groups and orgs) so VCS orgs can retain values and focus on disadvantage but also compete effectively against national VCS and others.
- Supporting Sub – Regions
- Collaborative Working
- Learning and practice from SWIM
- Forge local partnerships
- Dialogue with e.g. strategic health authority

### **5 Local Area Agreement**

- Lobbying GOYH
- Advocating the low cost of early interventions
- Shared intelligence across the region
- Training for all, to engage
- VCS Contribution
- Explore and model marketing collaborations / partnerships / impact outcomes and skills and capacity of public agencies.

In addition to these 5 priority areas, participants at individual tables agreed additional issues and suggestions:

- Wholesale VCS rejection of the RES
- Purpose alternative RES
- Alternative funding delivery structure
- Reciprocity in the VCS (very local)
- Very local/ regional / national /leadership
- Communications and marketing strategy

There were also further priorities that individuals wanted to be remembered

- Demography, Impact on service delivery and collaboration and long term planning
- Bottom Up, Inclusive, Responding to communities needs – promotion of real needs
- Plain English / lack of Jargon e.g. policy updates to go to multi layers of organisation
- Market the value of our sector
- Research into demonstrating outputs and outcomes that tackle, Civil renewal, Cohesion etc.
- Supporting a Community Development approach
- Supporting communities and CD workers to get their voice heard at regional level
- Local Government White Paper