

# Minutes

## Northumberland VCS Consortium

10.00am, Friday 26 September 2008

Age Concern, The Roundhouse, Lintonville Parkway, Ashington.

### Present:-

Rodney James	Chair of Consortium
Christine Bone	GONE
Sandi Downing	Carers Northumberland
Moira Macfarlane	Northumberland CABx
John Maude	North Country Leisure
Charles Tremear	Volunteering Northumberland
Cath Carnaby	WHAC
Sheila McGuckin	Wansbeck CVS
Thom Bradley	CVABV
Peter Robinson	Church of England
Julia Lyford	N'land Community Development Network (NCDN)
Fay Cooper	Infrastructure Support Programme Manager, NSP
Linda Fakir	Northumberland County Council
Susi Goncu	Northumberland County Council

### In Attendance:-

Tracy Peacock	NSP (minutes)
Jane Cater	VONNE
Andrew Samuel (Sam)	VONNE (left the meeting after item 4)
George Courtice	Sector Development Officer
Lynda Watson	Compact and Contracts Officer

### Apologies:-

Liz Prudhoe	Adapt (North East)
Sarah Kidd	Northumberland County Council
Maria Stella	N'land Multinational & Minority Ethnic Group (NMMEG)
Vanessa Proudlock	Fed. of N'land Development Trusts (FONDT)
David Francis	Community Action Northumberland
Janice Gerard	Learning & Skills Council
Jill Robson	Jobcentre Plus
Clair Elliott	Northumberland County Council
Jason Gaskell	Northumberland Wildlife Trust
Melanie Eve	National Trust

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### 1. Welcome, present and apologies

Those present were welcomed by the Chair. Apologies were noted as above.

### Action

## 2. Minutes of last meeting & matters arising 06.06.08

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

Item 4: Evaluation report – summary not yet complete.

Item 9: Approval Panels deliberations & funding allocation - nothing has changed regarding allocation and reconsideration.

Item 10: Compact Consultation Code – The paper is now a live document.

## 3. Confirm Deputy Chair and membership of Steering Group and Approval Panel

The following members were endorsed:-

- Moira Macfarlane – Deputy Chair
- Vanessa Proudlock – Steering Group
- Charles Tremeer (in place of Anne Lyall) – Steering Group
- Simon Davidson – Approval Panel
- Julia Lyford (to replace Margaret Bland who stood down) – Compact Reference Group

All to note

## 4. Links to regional ICT projects Andrew Samuel (Sam) of VONNE

Sam, the ICT Champion from VONNE attended the Consortium to discuss two IT projects:

- Capacitybuilders – ‘map and gap’
- Improving Reach

### **Capacitybuilders ‘map and gap’**

Capacity Builders have provided funding for Region-wide ICT ‘map and gap’ activity. This funding has been awarded via the lead body NAVCA. The main idea is to use ICT champions to ‘map and gap’, activity by working with each Consortium to assess interest and ICT needs.

Sam attended the Consortium to discuss how each sub region could be awarded a percentage of this funding to conduct their own ‘map and gap’ activity via the Consortium. Funding will be provided over the course of 3 years. Background information has been sent to GC (this needs to be circulated to members). The most efficient way of working would be for the consortium to identify an individual or an organisation to undertake this piece of work. National funding for this activity is £300,000 (for 3 years) this amounts to £1,800 per quarter (per year) for each sub-region. This funding is available immediately. GC noted that Northumberland currently supports an IT project through NCDN and that it would be best placed to undertake this work.

GC

GC confirmed that one route would be to invite an expression of interest for this work which would then be appraised and approved by the Consortium’s Approval Panel. He would liaise with Sam and NCDN.

GC

### **Improving Reach**

VONNE has secured three years funding from Capacitybuilders Improving Reach programme to undertake an ICT project which will target hard to reach groups. The hard to reach groups are:

- Refugees and Immigrants
- Faith and
- Isolated Rural
- BME

The Improving Reach application was intentionally flexible and the first year of funding will be used to commission £20k research and assist in defining the delivery activity for the further two years; the following 2 years will be delivery of defined projects amounting to £40k per year in total.

JL asked if there was a steering group for this work as there is a lot of overlap with activity which is being undertaken at a sub-regional level. Sam confirmed that no steering group was yet established. GC agreed to work with Sam to ensure that there was Northumberland involvement in the Improving Reach work.

GC

### **5. Partnership working – way forward**

At the recent Steering Group meeting Julia Lyford raised concerns regarding BASIS 2. It was felt that the applications were not sufficient in this area and there was a need for improvement with partnership working.

George Courtice proposed that members meet for a half day workshop to look at good examples and better ways to move partnership working forward. This was agreed. It was suggested that an outside person be invited to facilitate this workshop. It was also felt that it would be beneficial to have a representative from VONNE at the workshop. The invite will go to consortium members, although it was agreed that other people could be invited. Members of the group are invited to suggest names and forward details to George Courtice of whom they think may like to attend.

All to note

### **6. WorkPlan (2008 – 11)**

Consortium Development Grants, WorkPlan 2008-11 was tabled. The completed Workplan must be returned by 30 September 2008. There is a need to prioritise outcomes. A set of priority outcomes has been defined to embed improvement and sustainability of third sector support at local and regional level. It was suggested that outcomes A2 and A3 should be prioritised. Outcome A4 should be taken into account.

All to note

As yet no additional funding has been secured for the remaining two years 2009-2011, although the SDO was confident that necessary additional resources for those years could be raised.

The consortium is responsible for milestones and evidence will be

required for all 6 of the expectations listed.

An annual report will be required on finance. A six monthly report will be required on activities.

Members accepted and endorsed the WorkPlan.

## 7. **Area Partnership: consultation response to NSP**

“Proposed Area Partnerships Draft Terms of Reference” was tabled for information. This is a draft paper and items can be amended.

It was agreed that the word “Partnership” should only be used in relation to Area Partnerships and should not be used to describe what are now known as “Community Forums”.

George Courtice to bring comments together as the consortium and then forward them on.

## 8. **Report backs**

### i) **Project Monitoring Summaries – Fay Cooper, NSP**

Fay Cooper tabled a report outlining the progress of VCS Infrastructure Programme in Northumberland for the period April 2008 to June 2008. A financial report is due 6 October and will be presented at the next consortium meeting.

All allocations must be spent by 31 March 2009. If projects have difficulty in spending their allocation they must report back to Fay Cooper to enable the money to be re-allocated.

The programme still has a small balance available of approx £5,600. There have been some delays with project activities, although there are no items of concern.

### ii) **Joint Implementation Team – David Francis**

George Courtice reported on behalf of David Francis and confirmed that on 3 September NCC agreed the basic structure of three Area Partnerships and 27 Community Forums.

The VCS Community development cluster group has not met for several months as the new council had yet to endorse the above proposals. As this has now been received and the group will convene shortly. Concerns were raised that some cluster groups which were members of the JIT don't appear to be meeting on a regular basis and/or the VCS are not being invited to some meetings.

### iii) **Sector Board representatives**

#### **NSP Culture Sector Board**

John Maude tabled a summary report from the NSP Culture Sector Board.

GC

All to note

A bid has been put forward for funding under the "Personal Best" programme to the Learning & Skills Council. Confirmation is expected in a couple of weeks if they were successful with the bid.

George Courtice to write to Northumberland Wildlife Trust to clarify its position on the environment & energy sector board.

GC

### **Northumbria Healthcare Trust**

Cath Carnaby tabled a report from Northumbria Healthcare Trust. Northumberland Mental Health promotion group are working to engage the Health and Art group. Jan Bostock is the lead contact for this project.

### **LAA**

The performance reward grant for Northumberland of the outgoing LAA (2006-09) is predicted to be in the region of £5.5 million paid in two tranches. It is expected that this will be a major source of VCS support, both for infrastructure and delivery, during the period 2009-11. George Courtice plans to meet with Janice Rose (NSP) and Clair Elliott (NCC) to discuss how we can best commission the allocation of the money. It was suggested that it would be sensible to continue the existing process and allocate infrastructure money according to the priorities of our Business Plan.

George Courtice wrote to Janice Rose (NSP) to discover more about the future for NSP. A reply was received explaining that a Task and Finish group chaired by Bob Langley was looking at the options available and would report in due course to the NSP Executive.

#### **iv) Approval Panel**

A summary of allocations and current available funding was tabled.

#### **v) Northumberland VCS Learning Consortium**

JL reported that the Gateway to Learning Strategy ensures every 16 year old has an offer of learning for the next 2 years. Students will receive a diploma through their school which involves working with employers. This will be community based learning. Clarification is awaited as to whether students will be eligible to receive EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) who undertake learning via the VCS.

#### **vi) NSP Executive**

Sheila McGuckin reported that the Exec met in July where an excellent presentation on Poverty, Financial Exclusion and Health in Northumberland was given by Janet Bostock.

A report was presented at the NSP Exec on "No one written off:

reforming welfare to reward responsibility” (Green Paper consultation). Full details can be found at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/noonewrittenoff/>

**9. Regional Links - Jane Carter, Senior Policy Officer, VONNE**

Jane Cater gave an update on the activity undertaken by Regional Infrastructure Consortium (RIC). An evaluation of RIC has recently been undertaken and it found that people didn't understand what the RIC does or what if funds. Therefore JC has been tasked to attend each sub-regional consortium to communicate RIC activity. JC tabled information on RIC membership and role. RIC is made up of Regional Infrastructure groups only.

**All to note**

The Regional Infrastructure Development Group (RIDG) provides a more local focus and includes representation from each sub-region. George Courtice, Fay Cooper and David Francis are the representatives from Northumberland. The RIC also feeds into the RIDG. This allows developments in Northumberland to be widely disseminated and acknowledged at a strategic level.

The META plan encompasses all 5 consortia business plans and has gone to Capacitybuilders for review. Hard copies were available.

JC provided an update on other RIC activity. Regional ChangeUp Projects have continued to develop. All information is available on the VONNE website. To improve communications each consortium will have a page of its own. [www.vonne.org.uk/rine](http://www.vonne.org.uk/rine).

**10. Dates & Locations of meetings in 2009 to be agreed. *Next meeting to be held at 10.00am, The Round House, Ashington, Thursday 18 December 2008.***

It was proposed that the meetings for 2009 be held on the following dates:

- 26 March 2009
- 26 June 2009
- 24 September 2009
- 18 December 2009

Please note the above dates alternate between Thursdays and Fridays.

It was agreed that the meetings be held in alternative locations such as Alnwick, Ashington and Hexham.