

Enfield College

Sustainability Toolkit



EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund



Leading learning and skills

This Toolkit is one of a series produced for Third Sector organisations by the pan-London European Social Fund project 'The Capacity Building Toolbox' co-financed by the London LSCs. The series covers six topics.

- Consultation and Representation
- Events Management
- HR Policies and Procedures
- Developing and Running a Training Course
- Sustainability
- Work-Life Balance

Each Toolkit takes a practical, hands-on approach to the topic providing the user not only with information and guidance but also with a series of interactive activities key to the topic covered. The user will learn by doing.

Led by Enfield College, the Capacity Building Toolbox Project also produced management standards and training materials specific to the Third Sector. Further details of these can be found on Enfield College's website under the 'for employers'/'Capacity Building Toolbox' link or by email to toolbox@enfield.ac.uk.

Training materials for the three-day training courses - which cover topics different to the Toolkits - are available for use by Third Sector organisations. The slideshows in PDF format are freely available for download from the College website (see link above). Contact toolbox@enfield.ac.uk regarding use of the full material, including trainers' guides and handouts, in its original form or consultancy support developed by the Project.

Note that both the Toolkits and the training materials are covered by copyright. Permission to use or adapt any of the materials for commercial purposes must be given by Enfield College.

© Learning and Skills Council 2006

Enfield College

CONTENTS

Overview	1
Definitions	1
Context	2
Guiding principles of sustainable development	3
Internal systems	6
Setting up an organisation	6
Facilities	8
Finding premises	10
Access audit	11
Making your office more environmentally friendly	12
Policy areas	14
Internal systems	14
Participation and decision making	14
Services and activities	14
Financial controls	15
Information systems and administration	15
People - identifying and nurturing your most valuable resource	17
Management committee	17
Organisational policies and procedures	19
Recruitment and selection	19
Partnerships	20
Potential drawbacks and disadvantages	20
What makes a good partnership?	20
Example - North Lanarkshire: Code of Good Practice for Community Organisations	21
Partnerships - Positive or Negative?	26
Positive reasons for VCS involvement in partnerships with statutory sector bodies	27
Networking	30
Recognising the importance of networking	30

Be prepared to make the most of a networking 'moment'	31
Contracts of employment	32
Health and safety	33
Disciplinary and grievance procedures	34
Volunteers	38
Equal opportunities policy	38
Future planning	40
Value	40
Checklist headings	40
Practical tools	40
SWOT Analysis	41
Good practice checklist for voluntary organisations	44
Further information	50
PEST Analysis	51
Case study: future planning & multi agency engagement	55
Funding opportunities	59
Organisations/research/resources	61
Helpful websites	63
Answers to questions	64

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Capacity Building Toolbox 'Sustainability Toolkit'.

This Toolkit aims to make the concept and reality of sustainability in the Voluntary and Community Sector (the 'Third Sector') accessible instead of daunting.

The Third Sector is subject to rapidly changing policy on sustainability. There is greater government-led expectation for voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) to be innovative, inclusive and income generating to sustain their communities into the future.

To help you do this, you will find checklists, practical tips and guidance on key areas VCOs have to consider to sustain growth - from sustainable partnerships and resource development to staff recruitment, retention and skills development and, of course, funding. There are also useful resources and pointers covering research and funding bodies.

Rather than speed ahead and do what you believe is expected of your organisation or group, we hope this 'starter' Toolkit inspires new thinking and allows you to slow down and reflect positively about the best way forward for your organisation and local communities.

We also hope that this toolkit leaves you feeling confident and clearer about the sustainable legacy that you want to leave behind.

Good luck!

DEFINITIONS

Sustainability or 'sustainable development' has more than one definition, an indication of its complexity, relative newness and the dynamic political and social climate that underpins the concept.

Three useful definitions of sustainable development are listed below.

Most societies aspire to achieve economic development to secure rising standards of living, both for themselves and for future generations. They also seek to protect and enhance their environment, now and for their children. Reconciling these two aspirations is at the heart of sustainable development.

ECIFM, University of Reading

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This is a widely used and internationally accepted definition endorsed in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio, Brazil.

A dynamic process which enables all people to realise their potential and improve their quality of life in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth's life support systems.

Forum for the Future

CONTEXT

Sustainability is a major policy initiative strongly driven by the government in line with its aim to create social cohesion and communities that are enterprising and self sustaining. Largely referred to as 'sustainable development', sustainability in the Third Sector is focused on social justice, environment and wealth generation.

Sustainability in the Third Sector is focused on social justice, environment and wealth generation

Sustainable development is believed to facilitate the capacity to alleviate:

- Poverty
- A lack of community pride in your area
- Poor environmental quality and health
- High crime
- Unemployment levels
- Multiple inequalities.

To that end, the UK government's *Strategy for Sustainable Development: A better quality of life*, was published in May 1999. This defines sustainable development in line with four objectives:

- Social progress, which recognises the needs of everyone.
- Effective protection of the environment.
- Prudent use of natural resources.
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

In March 2005, the government launched a new sustainable develop strategy (*Securing the Future*) accompanied by a strategic framework. The new strategy claims to have taken account of all the lessons gathered since 1999, including the role and importance of the Third Sector. Local Strategic Partnerships, operating on a multi agency level, are seen as an important part of this process.

Since the 1980s, there has been a slow realisation that the current model of development, particularly the use of natural resources, is unsustainable. The importance of the Third Sector has been noted, such as the role of volunteering and community action, but a greater emphasis appears to be placed on local authorities as sustainability leaders.

Meanwhile the true extent and viability of the sector's role amid increasingly short-term funding options could be a serious barrier to its growth and full engagement in sustainable development.

Yet VCOs are, and have always been, well-placed to improve the lives of deprived communities and socially excluded groups experiencing a poor quality of life from poor local environmental quality to inadequate access to services including transport, healthcare and education.

The challenge ahead is illustrated by some startling global figures:

- Over a billion people live on less than a dollar a day
- More than 800 million are malnourished
- Over two and a half billion lack access to adequate sanitation.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The UK Government, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Administration have agreed upon a set of shared principles that provide the foundation for sustainable development policy in the UK.

The UK's four priority areas for immediate action

These are:

- Sustainable consumption and production
- Climate change and energy
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- Sustainable communities

According to the government, sustainable communities should be:

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities
- Well run with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership
- Environmentally sensitive with places for people to live that are considerate of the environment
- Well designed and built
- Well connected and supported by good transport services and communication
- Thriving with a flourishing and diverse local economy
- Well served with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all
- Fair for everyone including those in other communities, now and in the future.



QUIZ

Before you use the toolkit, see if you can answer the following questions. Write down your answers and keep them with you as you work through the toolkit.

Where you are unsure, read the advice and guidance provided on these topics. You will find the answer at the end of the toolkit.

- 1 What does sustainable development mean and what is its relevance to the Third Sector?
- 2 What does LEGI stand for and when was it launched?
- 3 In what years did the government launch its first and second Sustainable Development Strategies?
- 4 What are the four objectives of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy?
- 5 Which one is not a priority area for 'immediate action' in the UK on sustainable development?
 - (a) Sustainable Consumption and Production
 - (b) Educational Attainment
 - (c) Climate Change and Energy
 - (d) Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement
 - (e) Sustainable Communities
- 6 Your organisation changes its Chief Officer whose name is on your headed note paper. You still have at least a thousand printed sheets of paper left. What do you do with this?
 - (a) Stick a label over it with the new Chief Officers name
 - (b) Use it all as internal scrap paper
 - (c) Continue to use it until it runs out
- 7 Your organisation currently records all post in a post book when it arrives. Your staff are complaining that due to the volume of post, it is taking the administrator a long time to do and you are not receiving your post until the afternoon. To solve this problem you:
 - (a) Continue with the current system as it is not important to read post on the day it arrives
 - (b) Allow staff to open their own post and don't record it
 - (c) Allow staff to open their own post and develop a computerised filing system into which they input their post
- 8 You have outgrown your current premises and are looking to relocate. You are offered premises in a neighbouring area that are large but are not as accessible. Do you:
 - (a) Take them and deal with any issues after you have moved
 - (b) Carry out an accessibility audit to see if it is suitable for staff and users
 - (c) Keep looking for premises that best meet your needs

9 Your organisation wants to develop a website and you discuss it at a management committee meeting. One of your committee members has a relative who is learning about websites and can develop one for the organisation for a nominal fee. Do you:

- (a) Take them up on the offer as the cheaper the better
- (b) Recognise the conflict of interest and decline and seek outside quotes for the work
- (c) Decline the offer and discuss with staff and users what sort of website would be useful before you seek quotes

For every question you could not answer, you will find the answer in this toolbox.

INTERNAL SYSTEMS

SETTING UP AN ORGANISATION

Responsibility covered	Type	What you will need	Advantages	Disadvantages
Legal structures	Unincorporated association	Constitution	<p>Quick and cheap to set up</p> <p>No legal fees unless you choose to take legal advice on a constitution</p> <p>Private - as the organisation is not answerable to any outside body</p> <p>Democratic organisation</p> <p>Can be wound up easily at members' general meeting</p>	<p>Cannot acquire or own property in its own name, must be held by trustees</p> <p>Legal proceedings cannot be taken by the group in its name</p> <p>Committee members can be held personally responsible for debts and obligations in the group's name</p>
	Charitable trust	Trust deed or declaration of trust	<p>Can be set up quickly and cheaply. Need £5 for stamp duty (Inland Revenue)</p> <p>Ask Charity Commission to approve constitution</p> <p>Cheap to administer, if changes need to made to trust deed, these can be done quickly with approval of Charity Commission</p>	<p>Must register as a charity and have restrictions placed on it</p> <p>Non democratic organisation - no membership structure</p> <p>Trustees are the only ones with power to make decisions on behalf of the trust</p> <p>Can apply to Charity Commission to hold property, but individuals may still be personally liable</p>
	Company limited by guarantee	Memorandum and articles of association	<p>As an incorporated organisation, the company will have a separate legal identity distinct from its members</p>	<p>Regulated by Companies House and hence subject to more controls and bureaucracy</p> <p>Annual returns and accounts must be</p>

			<p>It can buy and sell property in its own name</p> <p>It can take or defend legal proceedings in its own name</p> <p>It can protect individual members of the management committee from personal liability except in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fraud ● Breach of trust ● When they continue to run the organisations when it is insolvent 	<p>submitted to the Registrar of Companies and these are public documents</p> <p>Companies have to notify Companies House when a director resigns or joins</p>
	Industrial and provident society	Rules	<p>This is an incorporated organisation (same rights as companies)</p> <p>Use a set of rules to register with the Registrar of Friendly Societies</p>	<p>If you do not use model rules, registration can be lengthy</p> <p>If model rules are used the fee is £120 - £900 and will take several months</p> <p>Annual returns and accounts must be submitted to the Registrar</p> <p>Registers of members and officers must be kept and are available for public inspection</p> <p>It is expensive to amend a constitution - up to £800</p> <p>An annual fee is also due to Registrar on submission of accounts each year</p> <p>Cannot register with Charity Commission - no number</p>

FACILITIES

Forms of tenure	Types and description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Buying property	Freehold Absolute ownership of the building and the land on which it stands	Long-term security and independence	Need a substantial capital sum Need to refer to the Charities Act 1993, s38 (seeking appropriate advice)
	Long leasehold Pay a capital sum to acquire a long lease, eg 99 years, together with minimal annual rent	Long-term security and independence	Need a substantial capital sum Leaseholders have some restrictions and obligations and have to pay a rent
Leasing and Renting premises	This involves paying market rent and always grants the tenant exclusive right to occupy a property; a lease imposes obligations on both landlord and tenant.	The Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, gives security to tenants in business premises. Landlords can serve notice only under the terms of the Act, and even if they do so, tenants can ask the court to grant a new tenancy. (If not opposed by the landlord on specified grounds, such as rent arrears, a new tenancy is likely to be granted.)	Where a lease is for more than seven years, the organisation may have to appoint holding trustees or a custodian trustee to hold the lease on behalf of the organisation (Should be a trust deed) There are exemptions to the Landlord and Tenant Act, eg leases granted for less than six months and leases where both parties with the agreement of the court have decided not to apply the Act There are more risks for unincorporated associations and trusts as individual trustees or members have to hold the lease in the organisation name The risk are less for incorporated organisations: by having a legal existence

			they have limited liability
Holding a license	<p>Unlike a lease which gives exclusive legal interest in a property, a license grants only personal permission to occupy the premises and is generally a temporary agreement; the Landlord and Tenant Act does not apply</p> <p>The licence sets out the obligations of both landlord and licensee in a simpler form than a lease</p>	<p>You can surrender it to a landlord and generally you have no obligation to repair, maintain or insure</p> <p>As licensees are not considered to be occupiers for the purpose of non-domestic rates, it can be a lot cheaper to have a license than a lease</p> <p>Landlords will try to include a portion of the rates in the rent; it is therefore best to check before signing</p>	<p>A licensee has little security</p> <p>A license can be for a fixed term or be indefinite but will have a fixed period of notice</p> <p>Once notice has been given and expired the licensee must leave</p> <p>If no notice period is in the agreement, the court will decide what is reasonable notice in the event of a dispute</p>

FINDING PREMISES

When looking for property you need to consider the following.

- Proximity to public transport and access on foot and bicycle
- Access for disabled people (including car parking) and those with children
- Local facilities for staff, for example basic lunchtime shopping, a bank, a supermarket
- The immediate locality and whether members would be happy attending activities in the premises and how people will feel if they have to work late and attend evening meetings
- Time restrictions on access
- The neighbours, particularly if the premises are in a residential area and you make noise or if they are noisy and you need to carry out services that need quiet
- Whether goods can be delivered. This is particularly important if you regularly need heavy goods delivered
- Any planning permission granted on a property
- Security and reception services.



Based on your experience can you think of any more?

ACCESS AUDIT

This will be required for the management committee, service users and visitors.

For an access audit that is fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act you should contact your local disability organisation and ask them to check your premises to see if they are compliant.

The list below has some of the things you will need to consider regarding your premises:

- Approach and car parking
- Routes and external level change, including ramps and steps
- Entrances including reception
- Corridors, internal doors, internal ramps
- Lifts stair lifts and internal level changes
- Toilets
- Fixtures and fittings
- Means of escape
- Providing information.



Based on your experience can you think of any more?

MAKING YOUR OFFICE MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

Depending on your activities you may consider developing your own environmental policy. To start the process you will need to consider the:

- Purpose of the policy
 - To help conserve resources
 - To help reduce pollution
- Content of the policy (not exclusive)
- Reducing, reusing and recycling waste, for example:

Yes	No
Reusable crockery and cutlery	Using disposables
Bottle milk deliveries	Disposable containers
Reusing file hangers, lever arch files	
Reusing single-sided paper for scrap, internal memos, drafts, file, fax and email copies	
Double-sided function on printers and photocopiers	
Join a waste paper recycle scheme	
Use stationery boxes to save recycled paper	
Recycling print cartridges	
Recycling other office waste such as water bottles, drink cans, plastic cups	
Reuse computer and other office equipment or purchase recycled equipment	
Find reusable paint scheme	

- Efficient use of energy and water, for example:

Yes	No
Switching off lights when rooms not in use	Do not compromise security
Switching off computers and other equipment when not in use for a period of time	
Replacing conventional light bulbs with low cost equivalent	
Position desks and work stations where they gain maximum benefit from natural light	
Make sure that thermostats and heating controls work	

Ensure lighting system controls work properly	
Purchase equipment with energy saving facilities	
Do not overfill kettles and keep fridges defrosted	
Conserve water - repair dripping taps etc	Do not compromise hygiene

- Environmental consideration when acquiring office supplies and other equipment, for example:

Yes	No
Buy recycled paper and other stationery	
Buy remanufactured or refilled toner and print cartridges	
Buy refurbished computer and office equipment	
Use surplus paint	
Find the local store that provides reusable material for voluntary groups	
Research organisations that provide a comprehensive list of recycled products	

- Minimising the environmental impact of transport use, for example:

Yes	No
Make sure the quality of local transport is reasonable when considering new premises	
Advertise for staff and volunteers locally	
Encourage public transport use by providing up-to-date information on public transport	
Encourage staff and volunteers to cycle by providing secure facilities for bike storage and expenses for bike use	
Recognise that car use may be essential and keep mileage rates under review	
Reduce the need to travel by permitting home working, make use of telephone for telephone conferencing	

POLICY AREAS

INTERNAL SYSTEMS

When thinking about what will sustain your organisation in the long term, you will need to be clear about what internal systems will be required.

An audit checklist/health check will provide you with an idea of what your organisation needs

PARTICIPATION AND DECISION MAKING

Area	What's involved
Decision making methods and procedures	Who decides what, when and how, and who is accountable to whom
Who else is authorised to make decisions	For example, if someone can be absent from work, if an elected member cannot be reached
Disagreements	What happens when decisions cannot be reached?
User involvement	How members or users are consulted or involved in decision making

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Area	What's involved
Working methods and procedures	Who does what, when and how; job boundaries; who is accountable to whom
Comments and complaints from users	How users' comments are encouraged, and how complaints are monitored and dealt with
Opening hours	When the organisation's services are available, whether the organisation can be closed and who decides to close it, what happens if a worker does not arrive for a shift
Standards	How much work is to be done and what standards it has to be done, how quantity and quality are monitored, what happens if work does not meet the required standard
Health and safety	Requirements for premises, staff volunteers, dealing with breaches of regulations or policy, special policies, eg precautions against infectious diseases
Confidentiality	Who has access to information about users or members, what happens in a case of breach of confidentiality
Access for people with disabilities	How the organisation's services, activities or facilities are to be made available to people with mobility, speech, hearing, sight or other disabilities

Access for speakers of other languages	Policy on translation and interpretation
Charging policy	On activities, goods, services or facilities
Equipment	Who can use it, safety, regulations, responsibility for maintenance and repair
Stock	Who can use it, procedures for keeping track of what is used, responsibility for replacement
Vehicles	Who can use them, responsibility for petrol and other costs, payment of expenses for use of workers' own cars, insurance responsibilities
Outside contacts	Who can negotiate or speak on behalf of the organisation, who can talk to the media

FINANCIAL CONTROLS

Area	What's involved
Financial decision making	Who makes the decisions
Budgets	How are they drawn up, budgetary controls, how variances are dealt with
Expenditure	Who can authorise expenditure
Cheques	Who can sign
Cash	Petty cash procedures, security of cash on the premises or in transit
Financial record keeping	Documentation required, who has access to financial records
Gifts and payments for services	Who keeps gifts or payments made to workers

INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND ADMINISTRATION

Area	What's involved
Managing post Paper should be handled once - receive it, deal with it or pass it on, dispose of it	Incoming post storage Letters - how they are dealt with Minutes - reading and filing Magazines/newsletters - skimmed or passed on to appropriate person Listing who gets what Rubbish - recycle
Managing messages	Pass on as quickly as possible

	<p>Define whose responsibility</p> <p>Answering incoming calls - message slips</p>
Managing information system	<p>Collection or creation: getting the information into the organisation, from outside or from within</p> <p>Storage: where and how the information will be kept in the short term and permanently</p> <p>Retrieval: getting access to information when it is needed</p> <p>Return: getting the information back to its proper place after it has been used</p>
Managing filing	<p>Alphabetical: using letters</p> <p>Categorised: finance, funding, fundraising, legal documents etc</p> <p>Numeric or alpha numeric: using letters and numbers</p> <p>Colour: different coloured folders</p> <p>Historical and current files: past and present work</p>
Computerised systems	<p>Manual systems needed to back up</p> <p>Develop procedures for regularly copying information</p> <p>Find out about data protection</p> <p>Budget for training</p> <p>Clear policies for health and safety for everyone using computers</p>

PEOPLE – IDENTIFYING AND NURTURING YOUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Management Committee is the group of people ultimately accountable for the activities of a VCO.

Together they take decisions about the purpose and direction of your organisation; ensure that money and property are properly used and managed, to meet the aims and objectives of the organisation; ensure that the organisation does everything within the law; abide by the organisation's governing document; and make sure that staff and volunteers are supported to best carry out the organisation's services.

There are five key responsibilities:

- Vision and Leadership
- Accountability and Legal Liability
- Monitoring and evaluating
- Financial Management
- Managing Staff and Volunteers
- Upholding policies

Identifying the strengths and the needs of your management committee: framework for an audit

- What skills are needed within your Management Committee - finance, employment, communications etc?
- What skills exist amongst your Management Committee members?
- Does your Management Committee need additional expertise to meet the needs of your organisation?
- Does your Management Committee reflect the diversity of the real world in terms of:
 - Age
 - Class
 - Religion
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Sexuality
 - Disability
- Is your management committee able to represent the interests of the organisations management, staff, service users and funders?
- Are there external experts or professionals who could be consulted with, eg an employment lawyer on staff-related matters?

- Should you establish an advisory committee to take on the role of considering issues relevant to the management committee's responsibilities and ensuring that the committee has appropriate information and advice?

Selection procedures

To ensure fair and consistent practice that is in line with your governing document, you must consider what procedures you will use in recruiting and selecting management committee members.

- 1 How will individuals apply for Committee membership?
- 2 Who will determine who is eligible to be put forward for Committee membership?
- 3 What criteria will they use to determine who is eligible?
- 4 What are your formal procedures for appointment to the Management Committee?

Your answers to all of these questions should be based on:

- Requirements outlined in your governing document
- Procedures or criteria agreed by your Management Committee.

For further details contact NICVA's Charity Advice Service on 028 9087 7777 or email cas@nicva.org

ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Essential to long-term sustainability is the development of updated, understood and detailed policies and procedures. These include:

- Equal Opportunities
- Recruitment and Selection
- Volunteering
- Public and employers liability
- Health and Safety
- Complaints
- Financial
- Grievance and disciplinary.

Below are some key aspects of the major policies and procedures required.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The key steps in the process of recruiting a new staff member are:

- Identifying a vacancy
- Preparing a timetable
- Agreeing and writing:
 - Job description
 - Selection criteria - outlining expertise, skills and knowledge
 - Person specification
- Compiling a pack for applicants including the above, organisations details, terms and conditions of post and equal opportunities monitoring form
- Plan and complete internal preparation. This includes:
 - Choosing interview panel of 3-5 people. Panel should be trained in undertaking interviews, clear about the process and have no conflicts of interest
 - Ensuring all in the organisation are clear about recording requests for application forms and sending out information
- Advertise the post using variety of means, not simply newspapers but local outlets, newsletters etc and review applications
- Shortlist - Agree a system for short-listing candidates for interview, such as a points system/tick boxes
- Interview
- Make decision/Offer job subject to references
- Offer feedback
- Prepare induction
- Set up a system to keep all paperwork from the process. It may be required in the event of a complaint.

PARTNERSHIPS

Increasingly VCOs are involved in working relationships with statutory sector bodies. These relationships are increasingly part of formalised structures, which aim to involve the Third Sector in the development and delivery of services and policies.

Long-term sustainability can be enhanced by involvement in initiatives such as:

- Local Strategic Partnership
- Neighbourhood Renewal fund
- Change Up
- Compacts
- Community Empowerment Networks
- SRB Regeneration.

Can you think of other partnerships in your area?

POTENTIAL DRAWBACKS AND DISADVANTAGES

For many, however, the experience is not entirely positive for the following reasons:

- The rules of partnership are set by the more powerful partners - statutory sector - and often create barriers to real participation
- Many VCOs are locally based, small, with few, if any, staff with unpaid management committees making it hard to participate fully
- A partnership with the statutory sector may compromise the aims and practice of Third Sector, and autonomy and flexibility would be compromised
- Local authority managers and their Third Sector counterparts may learn to speak the 'same language' but accountability to users may worsen
- Key decisions may be taken within informal networks to which most Third Sector organisations will not have access
- Partners may fail to recognise the complexities involved in representing the views of diverse Third Sector constituencies
- It may be difficult for many VCO representatives to understand unfamiliar systems and jargon used by local authorities.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PARTNERSHIP?

It does not have to be this way: 'Partnerships are formal long-term relationships founded on collaboration and the clear articulation of needs, capacities, responsibilities and expectations. Regular communication and evaluation and equal say in the design and implementation of projects are defining features.'

Guiding principles

- Partners agree on the mission, values, goals and measurable outcomes for the partnership.
- It should be characterised by mutual trust, respect integrity and commitment.
- It builds upon identified strengths and assets and addresses the need for improvement.
- Power and resources should be shared between partners.
- It should be clear and open, with regular and accessible communication between partners. Listening, and developing a common language and sharing meaning are priorities.
- Roles, responsibilities and procedures should be established with the input and agreement of all partners. Regular feedback is essential from all.
- All successes are shared and credit owned by all.
- It takes time to develop and evolve.

EXAMPLE – NORTH LANARKSHIRE: CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Introduction

This document contains material intended to form the basis for agreeing partnership working between the voluntary and statutory sectors.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the Voluntary Sector Strategy and the other Codes that have been developed. These are Codes of Good Practice for Funding and Volunteering. As the Voluntary Sector Strategy rolls out, Codes will be developed and these will be subject to further consultation before being adopted.

The focus in this document is firmly on smaller community-based organisations and is defined overleaf.

The Voluntary Sector Strategy recognises community groups as having particular importance to local communities. Therefore this Code is committed to continuing and developing new ways to support community groups to achieve their potential.

It aims to provide a framework for mutual trust and acceptance of respective roles and responsibilities of statutory sector and community groups and recognises the diversity and contribution of the community sector. This will help to enable the community sector to play an effective role in developing local communities.

- Statutory Sector undertakings
- Community Sector Undertakings
- Joint Undertakings
- The Community Sector
- The Community Sector's Value

Statutory sector undertakings

The statutory sector is committed to establishing and maintaining best practice in the way that it

supports community organisations. This sector undertakes to implement effective support for community organisations that will:

- Ensure that policies that affect community organisations recognise the importance of communities of interest or issue
- Ensure policies affecting these communities are proportionate, and new policies are given an appropriate impact assessment prior to finalisation
- Be sensitive to the community sector's needs and role, and the general thrust of this Code when setting policies and procedures, including a regulatory role
- Ensure equal opportunities for all communities
- Promote, encourage and facilitate directly the provision of the resources required for the development and maintenance of the community sector infrastructure
- Investigate the potential for the transfer of assets to community-based organisations to promote community enterprise and sustainable development at local level
- Recognise the need for practical learning, development and support for community groups and to the individuals within them
- Recognise, in both policy and practice, the independence of the community sector
- Ensure statutory sector employees working with communities are adequately trained and equipped to do so
- Be sensitive to the community sector's needs and their role in relation to the Community Planning Partnership.
- Ensure that the call on local communities in the new governance arrangements are realistic, and that the resource implications are known, understood, and provided for
- Recognise the valuable time, skills, expertise, knowledge and effort that community groups can bring to partnership working
- Recognise where the needs of service users and carers should be taken into consideration.

Community sector undertakings

The community sector undertakes to implement an effective framework that:

- Accepts that funding brings with it the necessity for proportionate monitoring and evaluation
- Operates on a basis of user participation and control wherever possible
- Tackles all forms of discrimination
- Complies with the basic requirements for community groups as direct representatives of a local community, whether of locality, issue or community interest
- Fulfils community expectations for accountability and to help facilitate the community ownership of partnership work
- Is clear and open to the extent to which community groups have a representative voice
- Seeks to broaden the range and increase the number of people included in community organisations or other local activities.

Joint undertakings

The statutory and community sectors are committed to sustaining best practice in their relationships. The statutory sector accepts that community groups place much store on mutual respect and being given recognition for all they do as independent groups, whether they are set up to complete a specific task or are more permanent.

The statutory sector recognises that community organisations are a key community resource for achieving positive change, often with a range of practical skills developed through carrying out activities, usually in flexible, innovative ways and with the simplest of structures.

One of the main reasons why the Voluntary Sector Strategy will work is that there are undertakings on both sides. It is jointly understood that however much individual community groups may be committed to undertakings on an individual basis, the community sector, by nature, does not have a durable and effective way of speaking with one voice or of holding its members to account.

In this spirit, both sectors undertake to:

- Adhere to the Voluntary Sector Strategy and the Codes of Good Practice as they apply to community groups
- Make suitable mention of this Code of Good Practice in all appropriate statutory sector documentation and community sector publications
- Develop a partnership approach to carry forward the strategies for communities, including promoting, sharing best practice and celebrating success
- Jointly explore and periodically review ways to ease working between the community and statutory sector.

The community sector

The community sector is generally the organised community. It operates closest of all to the grassroots. Not all of the contribution made by the community sector is readily apparent, especially at the less formalised and visible end of the spectrum. Yet the impact of community groups on local communities can be considerable both in what they do and, indeed, on how they do it.

Community groups can:

- Give a voice to communities
- Foster a balance between self-interest and citizenship
- Fill service gaps through mutual aid or self-help
- Provide support for hard-to-reach people and areas
- Identify local priorities and tailor service to meet those priorities
- Provide individuals with the necessary self esteem and confidence to be more involved.

The community sector in North Lanarkshire comprises hundreds of small organisations. They bring together members of local communities and work or campaign towards a specific issue or outcome.

Some provide services that may be complementary, but should not be regarded as a substitute. Community nurseries, community halls and tenant management organisations are examples of the kind of services run by community groups.

Others, such as support groups for families and individuals, offer a service designed to meet specific needs.

The community sector's value

Community groups provide many personal development opportunities such as building confidence, developing leadership skills or learning specific skills. The community sector has enormous diversity in relation to the capacity of groups.

The sector makes a substantial contribution to the social structure and regeneration and is one of the building blocks leading to improvements in neighbourhoods.

Community groups also make an economic contribution through people giving their own time, resources, skills and support in kind. This value can be increased and made more effective and sustainable by allocating additional resources to groups, especially where an area or community is under resourced.

The resource needs of community groups can include funding, capacity building, training, access to networks, information, consultation, as well as the need to engage with national and local public bodies and the voluntary sector. It is in the interests of the statutory sector to help sustain the conditions and relationships in which community groups can thrive. Indeed, the community sector is seen as a key partner in North Lanarkshire.

Community groups offer a unique source of information about the communities in which they work. Through them, the statutory sector can be in close touch with the communities they serve. However, care should be taken against thinking of the voluntary and community sectors as a few large umbrella voluntary organisations.

The Councils for Voluntary Service, for example, may be convenient entry points but, if used as shortcuts in place of engaging with community groups directly, the outcomes can be put at risk.

The strategic importance of the community sector needs to be given practical recognition. The statutory sector regards community groups as central to developing the 'Active Communities' agenda, as well as playing an important part in the development of local community forums.

This is one way in which community groups can assist in helping address what matters in North Lanarkshire and help to support what is best for the area.

Conclusion

The community sector has a vital role to play in North Lanarkshire. Community organisations, through their engagement of volunteers, the services provided and the support given to individuals and groups is immense and invaluable.

Therefore, this Code provides a framework to ensure relationships between the community and statutory sectors are different than before, are based on shared values and mutual respect which reflects the willingness to work together in developing healthy communities locally.



Read through this Code and identify *three* key areas of good practice.

PARTNERSHIPS - POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?



Choose a partnership your organisation is involved in and outline the following?

- 1 How does it benefit and further your organisations aims and objectives?
- 2 What are the drawbacks to involvement?

POSITIVE REASONS FOR VCS INVOLVEMENT IN PARTNERSHIPS WITH STATUTORY SECTOR BODIES

- To create a healthy and diverse local VCS, which can respond to new opportunities and demands.
- To build and operate effective working relationships between the Third Sector, the statutory services, business and other stakeholders and providers - nationally and locally.
- Represent the issues impacting on services users at a policy level, also raising their awareness of and access to relevant services.
- To make it easier for clients and users to access your services.
- Fill gaps in services provided by the statutory sector.
- To build the capacity of the Third Sector.
- To act as a conduit for the dissemination of funding opportunities.

MAPPING EXERCISE



Review a partnership your organisation is involved in and complete the table below.

Name of partnership	
What is your organisations role?	
Ho much time does it take up?	
How does it fit in with your organisations aims and objectives?	
What have been the successes?	
What have been the barriers?	

<p>What would you like to build on?</p>	
<p>What would you change?</p>	
<p>What steps do you need to be more effective?</p>	
<p>What steps will you take to do this?</p>	

NETWORKING

Networking is a key strategy which can lead to a greater understanding of how other organisations work and the value or otherwise of working in partnership with them.

'Networking is neither a marginal nor clandestine activity and should be explicitly recognised in annual monitoring and reporting; in training and support; in systems of individual, group and agency accountability; and in strategic planning, project design and funding applications.'

It does not have to be:

- Just for the well connected
- Cold calling
- Using people
- Pushy and begging
- Selling yourself
- Only for large organisations
- Scary and difficult
- False and manipulative.

It can:

- Increase awareness of your organisation's work, help gain new ideas, provide work and give access to funding
- Demonstrate an open 'can do' attitude
- Promote your organisation's brand
- Build sustainable and important relationships.

RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING

Networking Dos

- Have a clear goal
- Value difference
- Be open, supportive and accommodating
- Be persistent in following up leads and contacts
- Focus on learning names and roles
- Be helpful even if there is no immediate benefit to you
- Stay in touch regularly and systematically
- Always carry cards
- Become known as well connected and helpful
- Seek out new people at meetings and events
- Always be alive to opportunities.

Networking Don'ts

- Don't rush, be impatient or lose sight of your objective
- Don't have hidden agendas
- Don't fail to follow up on commitments made
- Don't contact people only when you need something
- Don't compromise quality of contact for quantity.

(Source - Networking Pocket book - Jon Warner)

BE PREPARED TO MAKE THE MOST OF A NETWORKING 'MOMENT'



Fill out the following to use in a three-minute presentation to colleague who take the role of a representative of another organisation.

The role of my organisation is ...	
My role within it is ...	
What value is my organisation to you and yours?	
What partnership opportunities are available to develop work with my organisation?	

CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT

A contract of employment is a crucial document for all organisations as it sets out the terms and conditions of the relationship with its employees. Legally all employees are entitled to a written statement of their terms of employment and pay within two months of starting work.

A contract cannot be changed once it has been agreed unless there is agreement between the two parties.

If an employer breaks the contract, an employee could claim for unfair dismissal, can claim for damages and possibly take a case to an Employment Tribunal. This can be distressing and costly for all concerned and can also fundamentally undermine the equal opportunities policy of an organisation.

The main two types of contract are:

- **Permanent**- a contract has no fixed end date unless subject to continued funding.
- **Fixed-term** - if funding is available for a specific project, a contract will run for as long as the funding is appropriate. It will include the expiry date when the job would end. If the contract is for more than two years, you can include a clause by which the employee waives the right to claim redundancy when the contract expires.

Within these two types of contracts there are many different ways of working including full-time, part-time, job-share and term-time hours.

Contents of the contract

A contract of employment must contain the following.

- Employee's job title
- The start date of the employment
- Where the employee will work
- Details of salary and other benefits
- The employee's hours of work
- Entitlement to sick pay
- Leave entitlement
- Pension arrangements, if any
- Details of organisations policies and procedures.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and safety rules and regulations form a fundamental part of how an organisation operates as an employer and delivers its services. Legally, organisations with over five employees must have a health and safety policy. However, good practice and insurance requirements mean that all organisations have a duty of care to staff, volunteers, committee members, service users and members of the public in order that they avoid personal injury.

The key steps in developing a policy are outlined below.

Undertaking a risk assessment

All organisations should undertake this process as good practice, whether or not you have paid staff. By carrying out a risk assessment you demonstrate that your organisation has considered all possible hazards and has methods of avoiding accidents.

In the light of this you must

- Identify potential hazards
- Decide who may be affected and in what way
- Make an assessment as to how these risks are covered by existing policies and procedures and, if not, what should be done. Look at good practice elsewhere to help you in this process
- Write a report of these findings
- Constantly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this assessment and make changes where necessary.

Registering premises

If an organisation has paid employees, it is legally required to register its premises and activities with the local authority's environmental health department. If activities include manufacture, repair or printing them they must be recorded at the local Health and Safety Executive.

First aid

Organisations should make arrangements according to their specific needs and activities. An assessment should be undertaken to establish exactly what is required. Organisations must have a member of staff who is trained in basic first aid and who is known to all in the organisation. As well as this 'Appointed Person', it may be necessary for your organisation to have a fully trained first aid 'officer' who must have completed a Health & Safety Executive approved course run by an organisation such as the St Johns Ambulance. This person's name must be prominently displayed in your premises.

The organisation must have a first aid box, which should include sterile plasters, bandages, wound dressings, a leaflet on basic first aid.

Fire certificate

A fire certificate must be displayed if your premises are open to the public and if the Fire Brigade do not deem the premises a low risk (in which case they will grant an exemption).

The owner or sole tenant of any premises is responsible for applying for a certificate, which must outline:

- Details of how the premises are used
- Fire escape routes and assembly points
- Fire fighting equipment required
- Fire drills and other fire precautions
- First Aid details.

All staff, volunteers and visitors should be made aware of the procedures, the location of the nearest fire exit and how the alarm will be raised. A visitor's book should be kept at the entrance in case of a roll call.

Do not block fire exits and keep them clearly marked.

Other issues

Other issues to be considered are:

- Hazardous substances
- Food hygiene
- Accidents and incidents records
- Assessment for staff on seating posture and purchase equipment accordingly.

DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Disciplinary procedure

Before drawing up a disciplinary procedure, an organisation should outline clear and understandable standards and set out codes of conduct which the procedure will be set against.

These standards assist in ensuring a consistency of management action and behaviour and improve the effectiveness of organisations.

Codes of conduct can cover the following:

- Gross misconduct
- Timekeeping
- Absence
- Leave
- Health and safety
- Standards of work
- Use of company facilities
- Tackling discrimination.

Clear disciplinary procedure help employers deal fairly with employees who fail to maintain standards. Through these most disciplinary problems can be solved by informal discussions or counselling.

However, if this approach fails to resolve the problem, the more formal approach will be adopted through a clear and accountable process.

A disciplinary procedure should:

- Outline for managers and supervisors how disciplinary matters should be handled
- Encourage employees to achieve and maintain standards of behaviour
- Provide a fair and consistent method of dealing with potential or real problems
- Not discriminate on grounds of race, sex or disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief
- Specify to whom it applies
- Explain the penalties
- Deal with matters quickly
- Give employees the rights to be accompanied and to put their side of the case
- Specify who has the authority to take disciplinary actions
- Ensure that action is not taken without careful investigation
- Provide a right to appeal.

Once the procedure has been written, organisations need to be sure that all employees are familiar with it and have access to a copy. Managers and supervisors must be trained in its operation.

Before taking disciplinary action using the procedure, organisation must be certain that:

- The matter cannot be resolved through informal processes and that it has been investigated fully
- The individual is told that s/he will be interviewed by the appropriate manager/supervisor and has the right to be represented or accompanied by another person.
- At the interview, the employee should know the details of the allegation and s/he must have the opportunity to put his or her side of the matter
- Any disciplinary measure is appropriate to the circumstances.

If a warning is given, it should tell the employee, the level of improvement required, the date by which it is to be achieved, what will happen if it is not and how to appeal.

Three step procedure

In October 2004 a 'three step' statutory discipline and dismissal and grievance procedure was introduced.

The procedure is not intended to replace exiting disciplinary procedures. Organisations should set up their own procedures by following the guidelines set out in the ACAS 'Code of Practice'.

It is not to be used in the early stage of disciplinary action for alleged 'minor' offences, only when an organisation is considering taking serious disciplinary action, such as dismissal, suspension without full pay, or demotion.

This would come into effect if an employee's conduct or work performance has failed to improve following a number of warnings, or if the employee has allegedly committed an act of gross misconduct.

Under these procedures the following steps are to be taken:

- The employer must give the employee a written statement outlining why it has decided to take disciplinary action.
- The employer must meet the employee, who may be accompanied by a colleague or union representative. The case must be stated, allowing the employee the opportunity to respond. Following the meeting, the employee must be given the decision with an explanation that s/he may appeal.
- The employee may appeal against the decision and again choose to be accompanied at the appeal meeting, which should ideally be heard by a different or more senior manager. The employee must be informed of the decision of the appeal. The employee must appeal to complete the statutory procedure.

In relation to summary dismissal due to gross misconduct, the new legislation involves two stages. First, the employee is written to with an outline of the reasons for dismissal and their right of appeal. The second will come into being if the employee wishes to appeal.

Government guidance shows that regulations do not apply where:

- Collective redundancies are involved, here there is a duty to consult representatives
- Strike action is taking place
- The business suddenly closes
- Factors beyond the control, such as long-term illness of either party, make it impossible to go through the procedure in the foreseeable future
- The employee cannot legally continue working, eg where a driver has lost his/her license
- A designated dismissal procedures agreement applies
- The employee claims interim relief before the procedure is completed
- Either party adopts violent or abusive behaviour
- Harassment (defined as violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment) or some other unacceptable behaviour is involved (As with discrimination, it is the perception of the recipient of the behaviour that counts.)
- Either party fails to attend the meeting. Where the meeting fails to take place due to either party being unable to attend, the employer, taking account of employee's right to be accompanied and any suggested dates, is required to rearrange the meeting, but only once.
- National security is an issue.

Grievance procedure

A grievance procedure enables individual employees to raise concerns with management about aspects of their employment either by themselves or with a representative. It is as important as dealing with discipline.

Managers and supervisors need to know how to deal with complaints clearly, sympathetically and promptly. The written procedure should facilitate this. It should recognise that most routine complaints and grievances are resolved informally in discussions with the employee's immediate manager.

The number of stages contained in the procedure will depend upon the size and nature of the organisation, and the management structure.

Most grievance procedures will outline:

- How and with whom to raise the issue
- Whom next to apply to if not satisfied
- Time limits to each stage
- The right to be represented.

The three-step statutory grievance does not replace existing procedures but outlines the key points they must contain.

The steps are that the employee:

- Sets out in writing his/her grievance with the employer.
- Arranges a meeting to discuss the grievance. The employee has the right to be accompanied. At the end of the meeting the employer informs the employee of the decision and the employee's right of appeal.
- Tells the employer if s/he wishes to appeal (and s/he must do so to complete the statutory procedure). If an appeal is requested, a further meeting is arranged, if possible with a more senior or different manager. The employee has the right to be accompanied. After the appeal meeting, the employee is told of the employer's decision.

Employment tribunals will reject claims from applicants if employees have not raised the grievance by sending a step one letter.

The guidance states that 'If the employee begins the procedure by sending a step one letter his or her complaint will be accepted by the tribunal, but if the three-step procedure has not been completed and the employee is successful in his or her claim, the compensation will usually be increased or decreased by between 10 and 50 % depending on whether it was the employer's or the employee's fault that the procedure was not completed.'

VOLUNTEERS

The involvement of volunteers in any organisation should be a positive experience for all concerned if thought and care goes into their involvement.

Before recruiting new volunteers, organisations need to plan the specific tasks they will be expected to perform and how they will be supported, supervised and managed. A policy must ensure clarity of the volunteer's role and clearly define entitlements and responsibilities.

Volunteers are to be valued within an organisation and any policy should outline the following:

- Tasks
- Policies, including equal opportunities, health and safety and expenses
- Location.

Volunteers should not have to incur costs and it is good practice to offer to pay all volunteers out of pocket expenses for costs incurred.

These could include:

- Travel
- Meals
- Postage and telephone costs if working from home
- Care of dependents
- Protective clothing or essential equipment
- Costs of petrol used in the course of volunteering.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

There is legal protection in this country against discrimination on the grounds of gender, race/ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief and age. The main legislation is:

- The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amended 2000)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975/1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Legislation also protects against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Many organisations develop harassment policies, which guard against direct discrimination of an individual by violating their dignity or creating an offensive environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating.

An equal opportunities policy should outline the values which underpin an organisation's commitment to equality and the recognition that the communities they serve are made up of people from different backgrounds and cultures.

The policy should aim to:

- Identify and eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote best practice in equality of opportunity
- Show that the organisation's commitment to equality is known and understood, and communicated by all involved with the organisation.

It applies to all aspects of its operations particularly:

- Providing services
- Recruitment and staff development
- Volunteers, contractors, consultants, suppliers
- Management
- Partnership working
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Training
- Complaints.

An equal opportunities policy is not simply a written document, it runs through the heart of an organisation and all involved in the organisation must implement and uphold it.

While good practice dictates that equal opportunities is essential for the organisation, there are also legal commitments that the organisations must meet in relation to service users and employees.

FUTURE PLANNING

VALUE

Before you can begin to forward plan you need to be clear about its value to your organisation and way of working, and how the process will complement and facilitate your sustainability objectives. An essential consideration is how you are going to market your services, philosophy and achievements to the community and stakeholders.

CHECKLIST HEADINGS

These include:

- Sustainability objectives (what legacy do you want to leave?)
- Gathering information (why, where from and how)
- Conducting research (identify unmet need and/or how to meet service demand, how public spaces are used)
- Possible solutions to meet the problems identified
- Consultation with relevant stakeholders and potential partners
- Understanding and meeting diversity
- Action planning (around policy and practice)
- Identifying possible funding options (locally, nationally and internationally)
- Appraisals in development
- Partnership working
- Campaigning and lobbying programme leaders and politicians
- Marketing your organisation, project or group
- Project ideas linked to the main sustainability headings tied in with local need, policy initiatives and new/future trends such as recycling, social enterprise, food initiatives, education projects or energy efficiency initiatives
- Joining relevant forums in statutory, private and voluntary sectors
- Providing advice and support
- Developing a business plan.

PRACTICAL TOOLS

As forward planning is an internal process, it is useful to do an audit of where you are in your thinking, organisational culture and development, and the nature of the environment in which you work and are located geographically.

A productive starting point is to produce SWOT and PEST analyses.

SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis is a tool for auditing an organisation and its environment. It is the first stage of planning and helps you to focus on key issues. SWOT stands for:

S trengths

W eaknesses

O pportunities

T hreats

Strengths and weaknesses are *internal* factors. Opportunities and threats are *external* factors.

Strengths

A strength could be:

- Your expertise and/or specialist marketing skills
- A new, innovative service
- Location of your organisation
- Quality processes and procedures
- Any other aspect of your organisation that adds value to your services.

Weaknesses

A weakness could be:

- Lack of marketing expertise
- Undifferentiated products or services (compared to your competitors)
- Location of your group or organisation
- Poor quality goods or services
- Damaged reputation.

Opportunities

An opportunity could be:

- A developing market such as the internet or home-working
- Joint ventures, strategic alliances or a merger
- Moving into new market or service areas that offer improved funding options
- A new international market
- A market or space vacated by an ineffective organisation.

Threats

A threat could be:

- A new organisation in your home market and location

- Limited funding with a nearby organisation
- Another organisation has a more innovative service or approach
- A competitor or similar organisation has stronger access to channels of distribution, funding and sponsorship
- Local/central government funding policy changes which impact on your service delivery capacity.

SWOT guide

- Use a SWOT as guide, not a prescription
- Be realistic and honest about the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation
- Any analysis should distinguish between where your organisation is today, and where it could be in the near future
- Be specific and avoid grey areas
- Always analyse your organisation and services in relation to your competition, ie better than or worse than your competition
- Keep your SWOT short and simple and avoid complexity and over analysis
- Remember that a SWOT is subjective and will be subject to change
- Any key issues identified will feed into your marketing objectives. You can use it in partnership with other auditing tools such as a PEST analysis (see next section).

SWOT analysis



Complete the following table for your own organisation.

<p>Strengths (internal)</p>	<p>Weaknesses (internal)</p>
<p>Opportunities (external)</p>	<p>Threats (external)</p>

GOOD PRACTICE CHECKLIST FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

This checklist is designed to assist organisations to thoroughly audit activity and establish areas of change and improvement in order to ensure sustainability.

It introduces the idea of a code of practice and provides a framework for debate among staff and board or committee members.

It is essential that a code is owned by the entire organisation and for this purpose it is important for stakeholders, including staff and volunteers, to have an opportunity to contribute to the process of devising the code in the first instance and reviewing it once it has been formally adopted. By this means the code will be both dynamic and integrated into the organisation and never become a document that just gathers dust.

The checklist is not intended merely to be ticked off. There is no 'pass mark'. Other questions will come to mind during the process and some will be more or less relevant to particular types of voluntary organisations. Every voluntary organisation - whatever its size, nature or purpose - will benefit from the process of considering every question on the checklist.

EFFECTIVENESS

- Does your organisation publish a clear statement of its values and objectives?
- How is this distributed and to whom?
- Is this reinterpreted as circumstances change?
- Do all activities remain consistent with these values and objectives?
- Is the statement of objectives developed into a plan that shows what your organisation intends to achieve over a specified period and how it intends to achieve it? (This may be a simple annual work plan in a small organisation or a fully-fledged operational plan in a larger one.)
- Is your organisation explicit about the needs that it intends to meet?
- If you are funded to provide key services, do you have mechanisms to ensure that you are targeting those who most need them in a way that is consistent with your resources?
- Does your organisation have effective mechanisms for consulting users on what they think of current services and about future services?
- Do you listen and respond accordingly?
- Does your organisation have a clear framework of internal regulations? (In small organisations, it may be sufficient if this clarifies who is entitled to incur expenditure and sign cheques.)
- Does your organisation have standing orders, financial regulations, policies and procedures covering all main areas of work to ensure that resources are raised and spent effectively and that activities are carried out so as to meet objectives?
- Does your organisation take particular care with tendering and expenditure authorisation?
- Does your organisation monitor and evaluate its performance and achievements on a regular basis so as to learn from successes and mistakes and become more effective? (For a small organisation this might take place through an annual review. For a larger one there are likely to be a range of mechanisms from performance monitoring to user surveys.)
- Does your organisation tackle poor performance whenever it arises?
- Does your organisation take advantage of the training and support that it can receive from intermediary bodies and other mutual support networks?

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Does your organisation publish a clear statement that describes the range of organisations and individuals to whom it is accountable and how it seeks to fulfil these responsibilities?
- How is this distributed and to whom?
- If you are a service-providing organisation, or in receipt of public funding, do you maintain

- constructive relationships with statutory enablers (often local authorities)?
- Does your organisation assess and take account of the impact of your work on local communities?
 - Does your organisation publish systematic arrangements for involving users? (This is particularly important for those providing services to vulnerable people or those who have little effective choice about where they can obtain the services they need.)
 - Is your organisation open about its work and does it publish information for its stakeholders and the public?
 - How is this distributed and to whom?
 - Does your organisation have a code of conduct for trustee board/committee members and staff, which includes such issues as conflicts of interest?

STANDARDS

- Is your organisation explicit about the standards to which it is working?
- Does your organisation consult users about the standards of service that they need and then plan services accordingly?
- Do you develop standards in a way which encourages ownership and commitment?
- Does your organisation seek regular feedback from users about its performance?
- Does your organisation have a systematic approach to quality?

USER INVOLVEMENT

- Does your organisation publish a clear statement of its values, policies and arrangements for involving users in the way that the organisation affects their lives?
- Does your board/committee have an effective mechanism for ensuring that it understands the impact of its decisions on users? (For caring service organisations, direct user representation is likely to be best.)
- Does your organisation publish the standards of service that it intends to provide so that users and other stakeholders can judge whether they are being met?
- How is this distributed and to whom?
- Does your organisation monitor service provision in order to ensure that users are being treated consistently and that no group is experiencing unfair exclusion?
- Does your organisation encourage and work with user-led organisations to plan and improve services?
- Does your organisation have a clear complaints procedure that is available to all your users that sets out the way in which complaints can be raised, investigated and resolved?

- Does your complaints procedure ensure, as far as possible, that the complaints are not dealt with by those against whom they are being made?
- Does the procedure contain an independent, external element for complaints which cannot be resolved by the internal process?

GOVERNANCE

- Does your organisation publish a clear statement of how the board is elected/appointed?
- How is this distributed and to whom?
- Does your organisation have a written statement of the key responsibilities of the board which includes:
 - sharing responsibility for the organisation's objectives and setting plans to achieve them
 - Approving the budget and accounts and ensuring the organisation remains solvent
 - Establishing the framework of delegation to staff (if any)
 - Monitoring the organisation's performance
 - Taking key decisions
 - Ensuring, with staff advice where appropriate, that the organisation's affairs are conducted lawfully and in accordance with accepted standards of best practice and probity?
- Do representatives of other groups or organisations on your board accept that their first responsibility is to the board and that they share responsibility for all its decisions?
- Does your organisation set out a clear statement of the personal role of each board member, with acceptance confirmed in writing, that includes:
 - Supporting the values and objectives of the organisation
 - Contributing to board decisions, drawing on personal skills and experience and sharing responsibility for all decisions reached
 - Working constructively with colleagues, staff and other volunteers
 - Attending board meetings having read the papers prepared for them
 - Respecting the confidentiality of information
 - Following the organisation's code of conduct and declaring any interests
 - Procedures for registering interests and handling conflicts of interests?
- Does your board organise its business on a systematic basis including:
 - A regular cycle of meetings at times chosen to secure maximum attendance
 - A clear agenda and relevant papers circulated well in advance
 - Separating items for decision from items for information
 - Recording decisions clearly in the minutes

- Having clear arrangements for urgent decisions that involve appropriate consultation with available board members?
- Does your organisation have a clear statement of the role of the chair that includes:
 - Ensuring the efficient conduct of board meetings and general meetings
 - Ensuring that board members have the opportunity to express their views before important decisions are taken
 - Establishing a constructive relationship with and supporting the senior staff member
 - Ensuring that the framework of delegation is working effectively and bringing problems to the board's attention
 - Ensuring that the board receives the advice it needs, including professional advice when appropriate
 - Representing the organisation when appropriate
 - In conjunction with other board members: appraising the senior staff member or team, determining senior staff pay, reviewing the composition of the board, ensuring that the senior staff member is replaced in a timely and orderly way?
- Does your board carry out a periodic review of its effectiveness and assess the strengths and weaknesses of its current composition?
- Is your board systematic in the way it recruits board members and achieves steady renewal, including:
 - Assessing the range of skills, experience and other characteristics that the board requires and seeking board members that meet this profile
 - Identifying board members who may have no connection with existing board members
 - Giving new members effective induction into their responsibilities
 - Providing continuing training and support?
- Does your organisation maintain a code of conduct for staff and committee members that ensures high standards of probity and makes clear how conflicts of interest are to be handled?
- Do committees of the board have clear terms of reference and clear accountability to the board?
- If your organisation has members, is there a clear statement of the membership policy and of the link between the membership and the board?

VOLUNTARY ACTION

- Does your organisation value both the specific and wider community benefits that voluntary action can bring?
- Does your organisation give volunteers a clear statement of the task(s)/role that it wants them to carry out? Are the expectations and obligations in both directions explicit as well as

the basis for claiming expenses?

- If your organisation relies on volunteers to provide key services to others, does it ensure that there is an adequate assessment and management framework to ensure that users get the service that they require while avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy?

EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

- Does your organisation develop, maintain and publish its policies for ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment?
- Does your organisation monitor its services so that it can identify and resolve any gender, race or other unfair discrimination?
- Does your organisation monitor its employment practices so that it can identify and resolve gender, race or other unfair discrimination? Are employment practices regularly reviewed and kept up to date?
- Does your organisation consult with relevant minority groups so as to ensure that its services are appropriate and that access to them is open?
- Does your organisation endeavour to reflect the composition of the communities that it seeks to serve in the staff it employs and its board?

STAFF MANAGEMENT

- Does your organisation comply with employment legislation, provide safe places of work and review its employment arrangements periodically to make sure that they comply with good practice?
- Does your organisation provide all staff with clear job descriptions, and appropriate induction, training, management, support and appraisal for them to carry out their roles?
- Does your organisation recruit staff openly, fairly and systematically? Is there a clear salary structure designed to attract and retain competent staff within the resources available to the organisation?
- Does your organisation periodically review its staff structure to ensure that it is still relevant to its circumstances and objectives?
- Does your board periodically review the effectiveness of its working relationship with staff? (External advice can help to resolve areas of difficulty.)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Towards Voluntary Sector Codes of Practice is published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and is available from York Publishing Services Ltd (price £9.95 plus £1.50 p&p, ISBN 1 85935 028 3).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contracts of employment

www.barnetvsc.org.uk/resources/factsheets/employment.html (Information on Employment Rights and Employment Act 2002)

www.ivac.org.uk/Downloads.htm (Various model policies including a model contract)

www.askncvo.org.uk (Information on terms, conditions and contracts)

Recruitment and selection

www.bvsc.org/content (Section on recruiting staff)

www.communitylinksbromley.org.uk (Info on recruitment and equal opportunities)

www.savo.org.uk/infosheets.htm (Various guidelines on being a good employer, recruiting staff, managing volunteers, equal opportunities)

www.askncvo.org.uk (HR Bank within the Human Resources and Employment section. this contains information on CRB checks, recruitment checklist, how to attract suitable candidates, interviews, selections and references)

www.nacvs.org.uk/resources/policies/recruitment.shtm

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk (Sections on finding the right recruit)

www.volresource.org.uk

www.valewisham.org.uk (Booklet *Before you Employ*)

www.volunteering.org.uk (Download free fact sheets on various aspects of volunteering, including insurance for volunteers and sample volunteer agreements.)

www.dwp.gov.uk - Department of Work and Pensions

www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk - Inland Revenue

www.tuc.org.uk - Trades Union Congress

www.hms0.gov.uk - Employment law on sexual orientation and religious belief

www.eoc.org.uk - Equal Opportunities Commission

www.cre.org - Commission for Racial Equality

www.drc.org.uk - Disability Rights Commission

PEST ANALYSIS

A PEST analysis considers an organisation's environment before beginning a marketing and forward planning process. This environmental analysis should be continuous and feed into all aspects of your planning.

PEST stands for:

P olitical factors

E conomic factors

S ocio-cultural factors

T echnological factors

The marketing environment in which the PEST is developed

An organisation's marketing environment comprises:

- The internal environment, such as staff (or internal customers/users), board members, office technology, wages and finance
- The micro-environment such as your external customers/stakeholders, partners, competitors
- The macro-environment such as Political (and Legal) Economic, Socio-cultural and Technological forces.

Together, these are known as PEST factors.

Political factors

The political arena has a huge influence on the regulation, scope to campaign, spending ability and service development of VCOs.

Consider:

- How stable is the political environment?
- Will government policy influence laws that impact on your organisation, finances and service development/delivery?
- What is the government's position on key issues/topics that are relevant to your organisation such as sustainable development?
- What is the government's policy on the economy?
- Does the government have a view on culture and religion?

Economic factors

You need to consider the state of the economy and economic factors in the short and long term. This is especially true when planning for sustainability and being aware of international influences.

Consider:

- Interest rates
- The level of inflation
- Employment levels
- Long-term prospects for the economy.

Any economic factors that impact on your target audience and local community positively (a move towards funding social enterprises) or negatively (unemployment disproportionately impacting on young African-Caribbean men).

Socio-cultural factors

The social and cultural influences on organisations vary from country to country, so it is important to be aware of dominant social and cultural trends. Some trends may still be hidden. It is important that these factors are acknowledged.

Consider:

- What is the dominant religion?
- Does language impact upon the distribution of services into different markets?
- How much time do service users have for leisure?
- What are the roles of men and women within society?
- Do we have an ageing population? Is the older generation wealthier?
- Does the population have a strong/weak opinion on green issues?

Technological factors

Technology is vital for competitive advantage, and is a major driver of globalisation.

Consider:

- Does technology allow for your services to be provided more cheaply and to a better standard of quality?
- Do the technologies offer users and VCOs more innovative products and services such as internet banking, motorised wheelchairs, and Braille mobile phones?
- How is distribution changed by new technologies such as the use of the Internet to promote your services and reach new audiences?
- Does technology offer voluntary and community organisations a new way to communicate with consumers, e.g. website banners, Customer Relationship Management (CRM).

Q&A WITH GORDON KEENAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN PARTNERSHIP GROUP (UPG)

The UPG is a community regeneration agency that pioneers sustainable development and encourages social enterprise in west London. Since it was established in 1997, the UPG has attracted over £10 million in investment to Hammersmith & Fulham. In March 2005, UPG won a Transport for London Technology Award with Hammersmith & Fulham council for an innovative cycle hire scheme.

www.urbanpartnershipgroup.co.uk

What is your definition of sustainability?

Sustainability is something that leaves a legacy in the form of assets for the community. Although the emphasis is on income generation and having the capacity to secure its own resources this hasn't been fully worked out for the Third Sector. I think that there is room for discussion about the definition of sustainability but is about culture change at all levels - statutory and voluntary.

How do voluntary and community groups have to adapt?

Sustainability requires you develop a business plan. Lot of groups operate in a vacuum. To be sustainable you have to create a longer-term plan in addition to your short-term business activities, to enable you to meet your sustainability goals and to help you establish what you are trying to achieve beyond the grants. You need to ask some key questions such as what is it about your group, activities or organisation that are required; where are they going to be located and why.

We have to recognise with the Third Sector that there is a tendency to set up new organisations. In Hammersmith the number of voluntary organisations in the last eight years has increased from 350 to over 750. That is not sustainable for the community or the local authority. It cannot fund 750 groups in the way that it funded 350. Many of the organisations are doing the same thing.

What are some of the main drivers for sustainability?

The drivers are coming from a number of places. The government is saying that we are making sustainable projects, but there is little idea of what that actually means in practice. If you ask any fund provider like the London Development Agency or a local authority's grant making office, they will probably tell you that sustainability means that you've got the capacity to raise your own finance in the future. That for me is not accurate.

In the longer term it might mean that we have to redefine things such as grants, which is a good thing. I think there needs to be service level agreements where you purchase the service and the organisation has a proper equal relationship with the purchaser.

What are the shortcomings on the current grant making system where sustainability is concerned?

Sustainability is something that you have to prove and it is very hard to prove. If you are providing a local community service you are always going to be dependent on those activities being purchased. With sustainability, this is turned around where you have to rethink what you do yet the manner in which you are funded hasn't, fundamentally, changed.

What advice would you give voluntary and community organisations?

Leave a legacy

You have to show that you will leave a legacy and improve the nature of the community. You have to produce a business plan that shows a five to seven year plan beyond your current activity. You have

to at least indicate how you are going to resource that. Where do you think your business could be? Where would the funding come from? It may not be a local authority or grant. You may go to other fund providers such as a Primary Care Trust. In your business plan you don't need to prove 100% that you are going to get that money. They can't insist that of you because all these things are tender processes. But you have to be able to show that you are geared up and ready for that eventuality.

Create new partnerships and join networks

You must try and broaden your membership. Show what business groups you are linked into. In Hammersmith we have the adult learning skills forum and that is part of a bigger group that reports to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). At the Adult Learning and Skills Forum, which the UPG chairs, the vice chair represents the adult education department. That is key because the adult education department then reports back to that forum which is for groups and organisations, which in turn reports back to the LSC. That shows that you are connecting with the right channels. It is also about marketing. Sustainability implies the ability to promote to others that you still exist. People are usually 'here' until the next grant. You have to find some way to market yourself and show what your networks are.

Creative thinking

Sustainability requires you to show that you are thinking outside your box, that you are connecting with other official channels. This increases your potential to bid in jointly with these groups to the bigger reporting bodies like the LSC. Doing joint bids or allowing your project or organisation to be part of other bids saves time and your resources and increases your chances of success.

What is the way forward?

VCOs have to think about resources for the future. For example, what resources do they need to retain for emergencies that may arise? There is a useful and new phrase - 'Full Cost Recovery' (FCR). The Big Lottery has recognised the principle of FCR. It enables you to declare not just your project costs, but also the cost of your manager having to prepare the application. Groups have to think properly about their costs. There is no point winning an application and being the cheapest if all you are becoming is a slave to the system.

Sustainability also involves people thinking about the links they need to make with peer and partner agencies doing similar things. It might ultimately require mergers. Childline has now merged with the NSPCC after many years as an independent charity. Childline recognised that the decision was for the greater good and they wanted to continue the service.

Perpetuity Funding needs to be on the agenda, particularly when funding does come to an end. When organisations and groups see any new funds in their areas they should argue from the beginning for the programme to leave some sort of perpetuity funding so that when funding like the Single Regeneration Budget comes to an end, money has been set aside, generating interest that can provide funding to groups annually.

My suggestion is to join with other groups and ask their programme managers what will be left behind when the programme is finished. If you place that seed in their mind at the beginning, there is a chance that at the end something tangible will be left behind. For example, if the NDC puts away 5% of its resources every year into a deposit account, at the end there will be some capital left for perpetuity.

You have to become more self-confident. That is what sustainability is about.

CASE STUDY: FUTURE PLANNING & MULTI AGENCY ENGAGEMENT

Westminster Homelessness Forum, part of Voluntary Action Westminster, is an example of forward planning through the strategic engagement of local agencies to help sustain homelessness organisations and groups to meet the needs of homeless people in Westminster.

Westminster Homelessness Forum is a forum for organisations that work with Homeless People in Westminster. The forum's overarching objective is to promote and facilitate the Third Sector's involvement in national and local agendas around the needs of the homeless community in the borough. Its structure is shown below and on the next page.

The forum meets bi-monthly. For more information about the forum or to become a member of the forum contact: *The Capacity Building Officer, Voluntary Action Westminster, 37 Chapel Street, NW1 5DP Tel 020 7535 0486 email: fgaffa@vawcvcs.org*

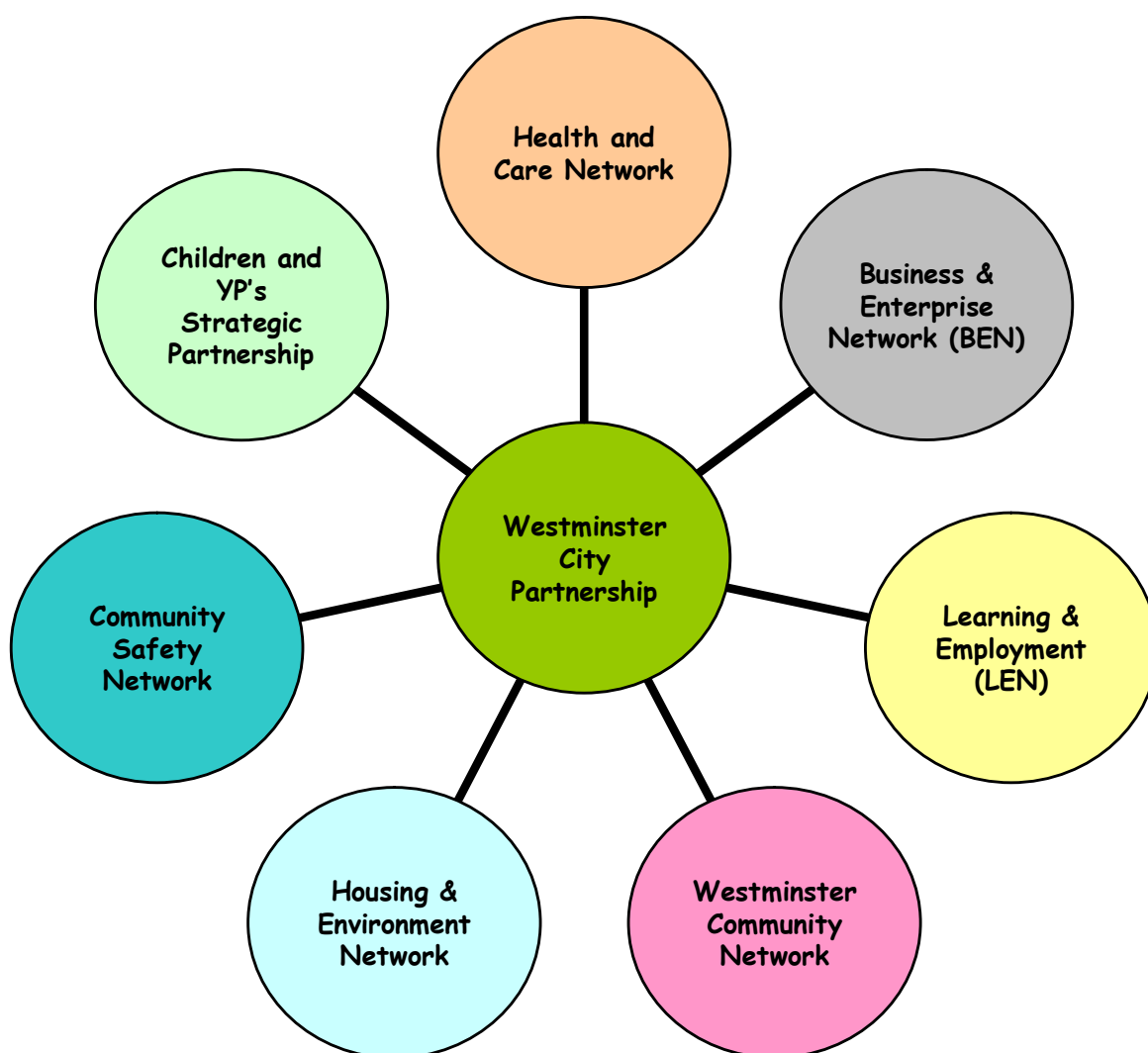
The Westminster City Partnership is the key strategic partnership in the City. It brings together representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to work to improve the quality of life for all who live, work and visit the City of Westminster.

The government has encouraged the setting up of Local Strategic Partnerships - like the Westminster City Partnership - to improve services in a more joined up way. The Partnership's responsibility includes the:



- Delivery/monitoring of the key actions and targets set out in the Westminster City Plan and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- Allocation and monitoring of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding.
- Westminster City Plan to improve the quality of life and well being of Westminster residents, visitors and businesses. Based on a long-term vision articulated by residents and other key stakeholders, the Westminster City Plan sets out some of the key actions and targets we will take in the short, medium and long term to improve your quality of life.

On the next page is its programme for a recent Forum event.



WESTMINSTER HOMELESSNESS FORUM**GET TOGETHER/VISIONING DAY @ ABBEY COMMUNITY CENTRE, SW1V****Tuesday 22 November 2005: 10.00am-3.30pm**

9.30am	Registration, Arrivals, Tea and Coffee
10.00am	Welcome and Introductions- Who is here and Why? <i>Joy Francis (Facilitator)</i> Setting the Scene, Housekeeping and Introductions <i>Chair of the Forum & Facilitator - Joy Francis</i>
10.15am	The Wider Perspective Westminster Community Network <i>How the forum fits in into Westminster's Local Strategic Partnership. Fiona Gaffa - Voluntary Action Westminster</i>
10.30am	A Local Perspective- Westminster Homelessness Strategy <i>Anna Waterman Community Health and Regeneration Manager- Westminster PCT & Co Chair of Homeless, Refugees Asylum seekers and Rough Sleepers Health Partnership Group</i>
10.45am	A Community Safety Perspective- City Guardians and Rough Sleepers in Westminster <i>Marielle Vestlund City Guardians Rough Sleepers</i>
11.15am	What services are available for the Homeless Community In Westminster? (Identifying unmet need for Homelessness Services in Westminster) <i>Group work & Feedback 10 mins - Facilitator (Joy Francis)</i>
11.30am	Tea and Coffee Break
11.45pm	How can the forum be more influential and representative of your needs as homelessness service providers? What are your-day-to-day challenges in your present roles? <i>(Group work & Feedback 10 minutes)</i>
12.30pm	Lunch, Networking and a Mini Mapping Exercise!!!! <i>Fiona Gaffa - Voluntary Action Westminster</i>
1.15pm	The pros and cons of consulting with clients

	<p>What the forum can effectively do to facilitate your work and address key issues</p> <p><i>(Group Work- Feedback (laminates) Joy Francis - Facilitator</i></p>
2.15pm	<p>Best Practice Examples: Thames Reach Broadway - User Involvement in Developing your services</p> <p><i>Joanne Fearn Research and information Manager</i></p>
2.45pm	<p>What Happens Next? Action Planning for Meetings in 2006.</p> <p><i>Suggested Themes</i></p> <p><i>Conference/Relaunch of the forum in 2006</i></p> <p><i>Fiona Gaffa- Voluntary Action Westminster</i></p>
3.30pm	<p>Evaluation and Close</p>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

www.access-funds.co.uk/

Comprehensive information on grants for the charitable and no-profit sector:

www.governmentfunding.org

Information on Government funding can be found at:

www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/documents/what/funding.pdf

A useful 29-page list of grant sources for UK sustainable development projects from the Sustainable Development Unit.

The Big Lottery

Head Office
Plough Place
London EC4A 1DE
Tel. 020 7211 1800

www.thebiglotteryfund.org.uk

Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

LSC Helpline: 0870 900 6800

info@lsc.gov.uk

www.lsc.gov.uk

Local Economic Growth Initiatives (LEGIs)

The Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) was launched in 2006. The programme is estimated to be worth £50 million in 2006-2007, rising to £150 million each year until 2008-2009. This will be subject to confirmation in the 2006 Spending Review. To be applied to some of the most deprived areas, the programme will provide devolved and flexible investment to support locally-developed strategies to stimulate economic activity through enterprise.

To find out more, download Southwark Council's briefing at:

www.southwark.gov.uk/Uploads/FILE_16259.doc

or download the government's most recent outline of the initiative at:

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/3A3/DF/next_steps_on_legi210705.pdf

London Development Agency (LDA) Opportunities Fund

Public Liaison Unit
London Development Agency
Devon House
58-60 St Katharine's Way
London E1W 1JX
Tel: 020 7954 4500

Text phone 020 7954 0010

www.lda.gov.uk

New Deal for Communities (NDC)

Grant approved (Round 2) London areas include:

Brent, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham,

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
6th Floor, 6/G9 Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Hotline number: 08450 82 83 83

neighbourhoodrenewal@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

www.neighbourhood.gov.uk

Peabody Trust

45 Westminster Bridge Road,
London SE1 7JB
Tel: 020 7021 4000

pr@peabody.org.uk

www.peabody.org.uk

ORGANISATIONS/RESEARCH/RESOURCES

Centre for Sustainable Design

University College for the Creative Arts,
Farnham Campus
Faculty of Design
Falkner Road
Farnham
Surrey GU9 7DS

Tel: 0252 89 2772

cfsd@surrart.ac.uk

Centre for Sustainable Investment

e.hunt@forumforthefuture.org.uk

020 7324 3654

The Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment (CSERGE)

Administrator: ERGE
School of Environmental Sciences
University of East Anglia
Norwich NR4 7TJ

01603-593738

d.turnbull@uea.ac.uk

Institute for Research on Environment and Sustainability

Devonshire Building
University of Newcastle upon Tyne
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 7RU

0191 246 4949

ires@ncl.ac.uk

Sustainable Development Research Network

SDRN Coordinating Office
Policy Studies Institute
50 Hanson Street
London
W1W 6UP

020 7911 7500

www.sd-research.org.uk

A New Agenda for UK Sustainable Development Research

Dr Malcolm Eames, Published by the Policy Studies Institute and the Centre for Sustainable Development 2002.

www.psi.org.uk

Sustainability of tall buildings research

This programme examined the options available for constructing sustainable tall buildings against a background of pressure for change. The programme looked at the effect of tall buildings on their local environment and analysed new developments in their design, construction and operation. For more information visit: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

Directory of Sustainability in Practice, Forum for the Future

A searchable database with current sustainability initiatives. For more information visit: www.forumdirectory.org.uk

Liveable City Handbook

A practical handbook for organisations wishing to improve the all round sustainability of their operations in a manner that links environmental concerns to social and economic progress.

The Liveable City is a major initiative of the Sustainable City Forum, a body of representatives from the City's residential and business community brought together by the Corporation in 1998. For more information, visit: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

The Sustainable City - Protecting the quality of life into the 21st century

This document is the local Agenda 21 action plan for the City and outlines how the Corporation and its partners are working towards a sustainable future.

For more information, visit: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

HELPFUL WEBSITES

The principles and approaches are covered in more detail in *Securing the Future* - the UK Government's sustainable development strategy and the UK Strategic Framework

www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm

www.the-environment-council.org.uk

www.forumforthefuture.org.uk

www.lsx.org.uk

The London Sustainability Exchange - provides organisations and networks of individuals with the motivation, knowledge, and connections they need to put sustainability into practice.

www.sustainability.co.uk

An independent think tank and strategy consultancy. Experts in corporate responsibility and sustainable development.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Question 1

Sustainability or 'sustainable development' has more than one definition. The most widely used definition is: *Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.* Sustainability is a major policy initiative strongly driven by the government in line with its aim to create social cohesion and communities that are enterprising and self sustaining. Largely referred to as 'sustainable development', sustainability in the VCS is focused on social justice, environment and wealth generation.

Question 2

LEGI stands for the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative. It was launched in 2006.

Question 3

The first government initiative Strategy for Sustainable Development: A better quality of life, was published in May 1999 and in March 2005, it launched a new sustainable develop strategy entitled *Securing the Future*.

Question 4

The four objectives are:

- Social progress, which recognises the needs of everyone.
- Effective protection of the environment.
- Prudent use of natural resources.
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Question 5

Educational Attainment isn't one of the four priority areas.

Question 6

- (a) Wastes more resources and is fiddly
- (b) Wastes good quality paper
- (c) Yes because you can always type over the name so it is deleted

Question 7 An efficient organisation responds to correspondence as soon as it arrives (see information on managing information systems).

- (a) If it isn't important for the organisation to know what information comes into it allow staff to deal with their own post.
- (b) Computerised systems allow for recording of information and take the onus off one member of staff to be responsible for other's post.

Question 8

(Refer to section on premises and accessibility)

- (a) You will find that not only will you have to deal with disgruntled staff and service users; you will also have to deal with costs through relocation expenses and/or recruitment of staff, loss of clients who can't access new premises.
- (b) An audit will give you a clearer idea of what will be appropriate for both staff and clients and enable you to find premises that meet these needs.
- (c) Carrying out an audit will define your needs and make your search easier.

Question 9

- (a) You always get what you pay for. You may run into difficulties when you need changes and it may not meet your needs.
- (b) Seeking outside quotes when you are unsure of what you want could be as disastrous as accepting the cheap option.
- (c) This option allows you to develop a website that will be useful to both staff and clients and for you to receive quotes and designs to develop what the organisation needs.