

One Voice Suffolk

**Suffolk's Voluntary & Community
Sector Infrastructure promoting**



One Voice Suffolk Infrastructure Consortium Notes of meeting held on 8th September 2008 at SAVO

Present:

Hazel Pidsley	Bury St Edmunds Volunteer Centre (Chair)
Martyn Burnside	Waveney Community Forum
Louise Fairbrother	Mid Suffolk Action in Partnership
Wil Gibson	Suffolk ACRE
Laura Hack	Suffolk Coastal Resource Network
Liz Louch	ICVS
Jonathan Moore	SAVO (Items 1 to 5 only)
Gill Robinson	Suffolk Volunteering Federation
Marian Sedwell	Babergh Communities Together
Bud Simpkin	Young Suffolk (Items 1 to 5 only)
Stephen Watt	Suffolk County Council

In Attendance:

Tom Bright	SAVO - Secretariat
Richard Catherall	Suffolk County Council (Item 1 only)
Richard Weller	Capacity Builders

Apologies:

Jane Basham	ISCRE
Don Tricker	SENS

Actions

- Tom Bright to circulate details of Open Space Technology to OVS members
- All OVS members to send Tom Bright any questions which they wanted asked during the visit to Bedfordshire
- All OVS members to send Tom Bright details of any projects they wanted considered for funding from the Consortium Development Grant 2008/11

1. Presentation by Richard Catherall

Richard Catherall presented a summary of the work he was undertaking in his new role with Suffolk County Council. Richard stated that whilst his role was primarily connected with the partnership between the VCS and Suffolk County Council (SCC) and the Suffolk Strategic Partnership (SSP), a large amount of his time over the previous three months had been around the Local Government Restructuring Consultation in Suffolk.

Richard stated that he was going to be working with Stephen Watt to build mutual relationships with strategic partners in the VCS but he was not going to be duplicating the work of the Funding Management Group. Richard stated that SCC wanted to engage with the VCS and he would act as a broker with SCC and the SSP with an aim of increasing the VCS's role in the SSP.

Richard stated that he wanted to raise the credibility of the VCS within SCC as he felt that in some areas the understanding of the VCS was limited and work with the VCS was not joined up on a corporate basis.

Richard stated that Andrea Hill was introducing a leadership programme 'Exceptional Suffolk' for over 300 SCC staff and that the training would include a compulsory VCS module and he hoped to involve both local and national VCS organisations in the delivery of this module. Richard stated that the aim was to provide a legacy for the successor authority(ies) to SCC.

Richard stated that he also had the responsibility for the governance of the SSP and wanted to improve the way in which it managed the LAA.

Jonathan Moore stated that he felt that the VCS's role in the governance of the SSP was not explicitly detailed in their documentation.

Richard stated that each LAA Delivery Partnership was responsible for deciding the role of the VCS in their governance but he felt that there would be an increased role for the VCS in the SSP in future. Richard stated that the SSP needed a performance management framework and the responsibility for this would be with the SSP's Chief Executives' Panel and therefore their role would be different to what it had been in the past. Richard stated that part of the performance management role would be to ensure that the Delivery Partnerships were including the VCS in an appropriate manner.

Gill Robinson expressed concerns that whilst there was strategic work with the VCS being undertaken at senior levels at SCC it could be difficult to get VCS concerns heard by less senior staff and this could result in delays such as the year it had taken to produce the service level agreement for the volunteer centres.

Wil Gibson stated that given his experience of LAA1 the power remained with those people who held the funding rather than those people who had the skills necessary to decide the most appropriate methods of service delivery. Wil stated that he hoped that the model adopted with LAA1 would not be replicated with LAA2.

Richard stated that he felt that the abolition of the Accountable Bodies Group was a positive step. This would reduce the level at which power was held because decision making was to be made by the Delivery Partnerships which were more accountable and more easily influenced by the VCS than the Accountable Bodies Group had been in the past.

Laura Hack stated that the establishment of the Delivery Partnerships had not been an easy process partly because the split of the LAA targets across the Delivery Partnerships had yet to be decided and SCC were leading on the Delivery Partnerships.

Richard stated that SCC was leading on the Delivery Partnerships as they were the Accountable Body for the Delivery Partnerships and so had a responsibility to ensure that their arrangements were appropriate.

It was felt that information on the Delivery Partnerships had not been publicised widely to the VCS and there was an urgent need to publicise the work of the Delivery Partnerships and how the wider VCS community could feed into them. Richard agreed that there was a need to publicise the work of the Delivery Partnerships both within the VCS and SCC. It was noted that the resources available within SCC for work with Delivery Partnerships were significantly greater than those available in the VCS and that within the VCS it was likely that there were going to be capacity issues over working with the Delivery Partnerships.

Bud Simpkin reported that the Children's Trust was working well and could be a model for other partnerships but he was unsure how successful it would be if the additional funding that was currently funding the work was not replaced and he felt that SCC was the only potential funder for the work.

Richard Weller stated that throughout the East Of England and more widely engagement and partnership work had grown hugely in recent years and he was not aware of any additional funding be made available for the additional work. Richard Catherall stated that he felt that it was a resource allocation issue for individual organisations to decide where they should be focussing their resources.

At this point Richard Catherall left the meeting

2. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 8th July 2008

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th July 2008 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Performance Management System

Gill Robinson reported on discussions with Richard Weller and Wil Gibson regarding the Performance Management System (PMS) developed by Suffolk ACRE. Gill outlined the history of the PMS and the resources contributed by both OVS and Suffolk ACRE funding. And stated that she had reached the conclusion that given the additional Suffolk ACRE investment into the project, OVS might only have a call on the intellectual property of the original work that the Consortium funded and that identifying this element of the total product may be nigh on impossible and until the product achieves sales to break even, an irrelevance.

Gill recommended that any intellectual property and licensing remained with Suffolk ACRE and that a profit share would not be sought, now or in the future. The Consortium agreed with this recommendation.

Gill noted Wil Gibson's affirmation that he is personally committed to the product and to promoting its take up among not-for-profit organisations so that there was a real legacy to the Capacitybuilders funding.

Wil Gibson stated that he hoped that a project group could meet every six months to review progress. Richard Weller stated that he hoped that if the PMS made a profit in the future it could be run as a social enterprise for the benefit of the VCS in Suffolk.

3.2. Membership

Tom Bright reported that SENS had provided Tom Bright with a copy of their constitution and so had informed them that they had become a member of OVS. Liz Louch stated that she believed that the recent SENS AGM had not been quorate. Stephen Watt stated that an EGM had been called to allow SENS to continue to operate in accordance with their constitution. Tom Bright stated that he would monitor the situation.

Tom Bright reported that he had received a copy of the constitutions or partnership agreements from most OVS members and would be chasing up those who had yet to provide them.

Tom Bright reported that HAVO had stated that they wished to remain a member of OVS in their own right. It was noted that a response from Lowestoft Volunteer Centre was still awaited.

3.3 OVS Member Reconfiguration

Hazel Pidsley reported that one of the roles she wanted to undertake as Chair of OVS was to move OVS forward and she and Jonathan Moore had held discussions regarding possible future developments.

Jonathan reported that he had held discussions with many, but not all, OVS members about possible future reconfiguration of the sector and he had produced an initial paper which was a summary of the issues which had been raised during the discussions. Jonathan stated that he felt that it was important to think about the future and as it was such an important issue there needed to be dedicated time and resources identified for these discussions.

Jonathan stated that his paper contained initial thoughts and he hoped that all OVS members would contribute to the development of the ideas in the future.

It was agreed that OVS members needed to be proactive in this area and an awayday on 23rd February 2009 should be held to start the process. It was agreed that Hazel Pidsley and Martyn Burnside would lead the arrangements for the awayday.

Martyn Burnside stated that he had two staff who could deliver an awayday using Open Space Technology and it was agreed that Tom Bright should circulate details of this method of facilitating an awayday to OVS members so they could decide if it was the method which should be used or if an alternative method of facilitation should be used.

3.4 Information Sheets

Laura Hack reported that she was still awaiting a number of updated Information Sheets for OVS members which were to be put on the new OVS website and would be chasing these up as the new OVS website was about to be launched.

3.5 Boundary Committee

It was noted that the fact finding visit by four OVS members to Bedfordshire was to take place on 17th September. It was agreed that if any OVS members had questions which they wanted to be asked they should send these to Tom Bright as soon as possible.

3.6 Research Project

Jonathan Moore reported that the funding round he had hoped to submit a research bid to had been cancelled and the next round was to be held in the summer of 2009.

4. Modernisation Programme Grants 2008/11

Gill Robinson reported that she had met with all the volunteer centres in Suffolk and the strands of work each was to undertake had been agreed and the work was about to start in earnest. Gill stated that she was completing the detailed Capacity Builders workplan which needed to be submitted by the end of September.

Tom Bright reported that he understood a number of meetings had been held regarding the development of the MECAN network and improved infrastructure support for BME organisations and further meetings were to be held by the end of September to finalise the workplan. Richard Weller offered his support if it was necessary with the development of this workplan.

5. Consortium Development Grant 2008/11

Tom Bright reported that he had met Richard Weller to discuss the Consortium Development Grant 2008/11 and presented report on the decisions which needed to be made by the Consortium over the allocation of the annual grant of £29,000.

It was agreed that as previously agreed £10,000 should be allocated to the Secretariat and that this funding should be used to undertake the work identified by Capacity Builders in Section 2 of the workplan.

It was agreed that the priorities from Section 1 of the workplan should be

- **A3** - Integration and links between consortia plans and broader local partnerships and strategies, including links with Local Area Agreements, and
- **A4** - Increased skills among support providers in commissioning and evaluating impact, which will be important as many local funders move to more competitive funding regimes

A discussion took place regarding potential projects which could be funded from this grant. It was agreed that any OVS member which had a project which they wanted considered for funding under either of these priorities should inform Tom Bright as soon as possible so that he could circulate the projects to Consortium members for prioritisation and approval.

At this point Jonathan Moore and Bud Simpkin left the meeting

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Compact

Laura Hack reported that she and Stephen Watt were attending a conference on the Compact and she asked if there were any particular issues which OVS members wanted raised. Wil Gibson stated that he felt that funding was needed to monitor compliance with the Compact. Laura Hack stated that she felt that this could be partly achieved by running public law training sessions as these had proved useful in the past.

7. Dates of Future Meetings

It was noted that the next OVS meeting would be held on:

- Monday 10th November 2008 commencing at 10.00am at a venue to be confirmed