

Enquiries to: Andrew Wilson
Direct Dial: 9th February 2009

Ms Ruth Hutton,
Third Sector Division,
Public Sector Reform Directorate,
The Scottish Government,
Victoria Quay,
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Dear Ruth,

The New Third Sector Interfaces

Thank you for your recent letter, following your letter of 21st October 2008, in which you outlined the main components of the infrastructure you plan with the Third Sector. In general terms the Falkirk Community Planning Partnership welcomes the direction you plan to take and the faith you place in local relationships between the sector and Community Planning Partnerships. We note your plans for more direct funding arrangements in the coming years and would like to offer to contribute to any pilot work at an early stage.

We believe the steps we have taken to enhance relations and partnership working between the Third Sector and the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), led by Falkirk Council, complement many of the changes you propose. Based on this we therefore propose that CVS Falkirk and District (CVS) will act as our local interface between the CPP and the Third Sector. This response therefore will outline the work we have undertaken locally, particularly with CVS, to improve our own arrangements.

We both understand and celebrate the significant contribution the Third Sector makes towards achieving our vision and priorities. This can be evidenced in a number of ways but in particular with the local levels of support we provide and in celebrating the contribution the sector makes toward the attainment of our local outcomes and priorities, particularly within our Single Outcome Agreement. This included showcasing the sector's contribution at our recent Community Planning Conference.

Underpinning our progressive relationships with the sector is the considerable amount of work we have undertaken particularly with CVS to improve governance and accountability. This has led to improved monitoring and reporting to both the CPP and Elected Members. We believe improvements in this area provide a strong platform for mutually beneficial professional working relationships built on respect and trust.

Our approach has led to improved outcomes for CVS with additional responsibilities being allocated to them by the CPP. CVS also sit as a key partner at the highest level within the CPP.

In the Falkirk Council area we have some established and some new organisations with a focus on the social economy. Support for these organisations has included CVS and some have been successful in obtaining Future Builders funding. We have an informal group of organisations within our Falkirk Social Economy Partnership which is designed to support current and future development of our approach in this area. Unfortunately we have been unsuccessful in recent bids to secure external financial support for the partnership. We therefore support your proposals that this should be encompassed within our local interface.

Although we have made considerable progress we do not plan to stand still. CVS as well as having lead responsibility with the Council's Community Services in developing a Voluntary Sector Compact, also plan to develop a local Volunteering Strategy for application across the CPP.

I hope this brief account of our approach demonstrates the considerable progress we have made in improving partnership working with the Third Sector and giving increasing prominence to this. We also look forward to working with you in further developing this agenda into the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Wilson', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Wilson
Community Planning Manager

Our Ref: CDB0209AW
Your Ref: