

## **The New Third Sector Interfaces – Report on Behalf of Glasgow Voluntary Sector Interface Group**

The Scottish Government has requested a simple report on progress from each local authority area around progress towards the shift to a new ‘Third Sector Interface’. This report sets out, very briefly, the thinking around this as agreed by the newly established **Glasgow Voluntary Sector Interface Group**.

This group comprises representatives from the following;

- The Volunteer Centre (Glasgow)
- Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector
- Glasgow Social Economy Partnership, and
- Glasgow Community Planning Ltd.

This group will report in to its respective member organisations as well as to the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership as it progresses its work around developing the new Third Sector Interface.

### **Considering the Development of a New Interface**

Whilst we appreciate that there is a desire by the Scottish Government to progress speedily with the development of a new Voluntary Sector Interface which would fulfil the Government’s requirements to roll together a number of funding streams which currently support LSEPs, CVSs and VCs through one Interface, this interface is required to undertake a range of important other functions, and these are not so speedily dovetailed together.

We do not believe that a hasty approach would do sufficient justice our local third sector, which is significant in scale and diverse in its nature.

Rather we believe that a more comprehensive exercise will be required in Glasgow to ensure that whatever we agree does add value, impact, or be impacted upon by other key partners in the city.

The Functions of the new interface, as outlined in the letter from the Public Sector Reform Directorate, dated 2 February 2009 are currently carried out by a wide range of organisations in Glasgow, to varying degrees. GCVS and the Volunteer Centre work closely together, and play a strong co-ordinating and leadership role supporting the mainstream voluntary and community sector, their volunteers and boards. Local Regeneration Agencies provide specific support to the development of social enterprises, as do the Council, GCVS and CEiS and other public and third sector support agencies.

In agreeing the interface we want to take account of the strategic environment in which we operate and this will require comprehensive discussion, assessment and agreement on the way forward. We firmly believe that getting the model right is paramount and given

the complexity of the third sector in the city we do not envisage having the basic model of the interface in place by the end of March 2009.

### **The Voluntary Sector Compact**

The local Community Planning Partnership has recently signed up to a voluntary sector Compact for Glasgow. We are now set to move forward over the coming months to operationalise the Compact, finalising the action plan which will support the Compact's key commitments and building the infrastructure to deliver the Compact in close alignment with the SOA. We have begun discussion on the potential development of a Third Sector Strategy for Glasgow which could position the Social Economy Strategy and the Strategic Volunteering Framework within the framework of the Compact. Although these ideas are at a very early stage, we recognise the good practice embedded in the Edinburgh Compact and are keen to consider how Edinburgh's approach in joining up "third sector strategies" could inform the implementation of Glasgow's Compact. Whilst the Compact structures and processes will undoubtedly significantly support and strengthen, the development of new interface arrangements over the coming months, they will inevitably take time to bed down

### **The Glasgow Social Economy Partnership (GSEP)**

The GSEP has been active over the last two years in Glasgow bringing together key partners and organising development activity for the third sector, including the establishment and servicing of a Social Economy Support Service Providers Forum. We need therefore to consider what the implications of a new interface will be on the GSEP. The GSEP has an associated staff post and this resource has provided a key role in developing support networks and work plans for the sector generally. We regard the continuation of Glasgow Social Economy Partnership as central to the development of the Glasgow's Economic Strategy, and recognise its key role in the articulation of a clear Social Enterprise Strategy for Glasgow, aligned to SOA outcomes.

### **Glasgow Strategic Volunteering Framework**

The city has a new volunteering framework which has been adopted by the Community Planning Partnership. This provides key focus for the city, aligning strategies to support the growth, the quality and scope of volunteering activity alongside the major planned legacy investment in the period up to and beyond the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, we view the requirement for a new third sector interface as an opportunity to work towards an agreed approach which adds value to the joint efforts of Glasgow's third sector and will provide additional up-dates as we move forward.

The Glasgow Voluntary Sector Interface Group will report in to its respective member organisations as well as to the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership as it progresses its work around developing the new Third Sector Interface.

In Glasgow the development of the Third Sector Interface will take some time and we would welcome a discussion with the Scottish Government on likely timescale and on interim arrangements.