



Your Ref:

Our Ref: VS/1 - EJM/MB001

2 April 2009

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Dear Geoff

I am writing in response to your letter of 2 February 2009 seeking information on the position of Dumfries and Galloway. Please find enclosed a position statement as at 1 April 2009 for posting on the website.

On behalf of colleagues across the different organisations that will be affected by the changes, could I thank you for your continuing support and guidance to us as we find our way through this process. It is much appreciated.

As you will see from the statement, we anticipate taking up the offer of further support from the Scottish Government and once the Planning Group and the Task Groups have had an opportunity to consider the detailed programme I would envisage a specific request coming your way. You will also see that we intend to have a further meeting of the wider 'D&G Interface cluster' in June and I will advise you of the date as soon as possible in the hope that you would be able to join us.

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth J Manson
Corporate and Community Planning Manager

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CURRENT POSITION IN DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY AS AT 1 APRIL 2009

1. There were two meetings of the 'cluster' for Dumfries and Galloway comprising the four Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS), Volunteer Action, the D&G Federation of CVSs, the Local Social Economy Partnership and the Corporate and Community Planning Manager in November 2008 and January 2009 to consider the future arrangements for the Third Sector interface in Dumfries and Galloway. The status quo was not seen as the optimum arrangement and there was unanimous agreement that from March 2010 there should be a new set of arrangements.
2. An Options Paper was drafted by a small Working Group. Boards were then invited to consider the various Options and indicate their support for their initial preference. At a meeting on 25 March 2009, it was agreed to work up two of the Options - an enhanced partnership model and a new regional structure.
3. It was agreed that work should be undertaken on the different aspects of the change process by setting up small Task Groups to look at the key issues. Three groups were initially identified:
 - (1) the development of the Business Plan for the interface to deliver on the Scottish Government requirements for:
 - support to voluntary organisations operating in the area, both local and those national organisations that deliver services at local level;
 - support to promote volunteering;
 - support and development of social enterprise; and
 - interface between the Community Planning Partnership and the Third Sector.
 - (2) the identification of resources - financial, information, accommodation and staffing and the implications for pensions, TUPE etc.
 - (3) the management and decision-making structure of the interface with the CPP, recognising that either model would require elements of both local delivery/links with Council Area Management and Local Third Sector Forums, and also a regional strategic dimension.
4. It was agreed that as much of the work as possible should be taken forward by the local organisations represented in the D&G Interface 'cluster' and it was likely that there would be a requirement for professional expertise in all areas.
5. It was noted that resources could be sought from the Scottish Government and/or the Community Planning budget and that an allocation of £8k identified by the Federation of CVSs for work on one of the Options could perhaps be applied to the general work programme across both Options. Travel expenses could be claimed from the Community Planning budget if an organisation could not accommodate this within its own resources.
6. Each of these workstreams will look at best practice and examples of activity in other parts of Scotland (the exact area would depend on the subject matter).

7. The timescale for this work should see the Task Groups set up in May, providing an initial report to the 'cluster' grouping before the summer break; undertaking consultation following the National Standards of Community Engagement; and reaching a conclusion in their work by September 2009. This would allow for a report to the Community Planning Joint Board in September and also for decisions to be taken by local funders as part of their annual budget round in the late autumn. This would also allow for suitable lead in time before the shadow structure was put in place from March 2010.
8. The original Options Group is coming together on 20 April as a Planning Group to map out in more detail the timescale and key dates of meetings; the stakeholder consultation proposal (recognising that the identification of stakeholders in itself is an important issue as it includes not just voluntary and public sector partners but members of the community and private businesses too); and the remits and leadership of the Task Groups.
9. The importance of using recognised frameworks to assess the options was agreed and in particular the need to undertake a SWOT analysis and a risk assessment. It's been recognised that at the conclusion of this phase of the work, there may be an advantage of independent analysis and also a Change Manager once the decisions had been made about the Business Plan, operational arrangements and structures.
10. Finally the principles of openness, transparency, respect and fairness were identified as important and which must be adhered to by all participants in the process, recognising that there are challenging and sensitive discussions ahead.

Other related activity

1. A Compact between the public and voluntary sector was agreed in spring 2008 and a series of awareness sessions has taken place in Feb/March 2009. The Compact identifies a number of principles to improve the relationship and working arrangements between the sectors. An Implementation Group is working up the details for training and supporting Compact Champions as well as handling Record Forms.
2. A Task Group on Funding of the Voluntary Sector has been established with representatives from the Council, NHS and Voluntary Sector to improve the arrangements for funding from the public sector bodies, both in terms of process and sustainability.
3. Third Sector Forums have been established, one on a regional basis and four on an area basis, co-terminus with the Council's Area Management structure, the NHS Local Health Partnerships and the community planning Local Rural Partnerships. Communications and liaison arrangements are being developed and improved as the bodies become better established.
4. The Local Social Economy Partnership has commissioned research into its arrangements and the findings are now being disseminated.
5. A training programme for community planning partners is being made available to all local partners with the costs of the voluntary sector participants to be met by the Community Planning budget. The training course is about collaborative working and the team of participants will address a relevant local issue during the four days/eight weeks of the course in autumn 2009.