

Minutes for the Regional Strategic Partnership meeting 10th December 2008

MWB Guildford, Guildford, Surrey

Present:

Jacinta Thorley (Chair)	(JT)	South East Rural Community Councils (SERCC)
Yvonne Arthurs	(YA)	South East Regional Public Health Group
Terry Bishop	(TB)	Regional Action and Involvement South East (RAISE)
Stuart Brown	(SB)	Make Music South East
Odette Cousin	(OC)	Regional Action and Involvement South East (RAISE)
Mike Daley	(MD)	South East Coast Strategic Health Authority
Siddo Deva	(SD)	UNI Project Manager
Warren Feagins	(WF)	Slough Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS)
Colin Griffiths	(CG)	Regional Action and Involvement South East (RAISE)
Robert Hardy	(RH)	Kent County Council
Andrew Jones	(AJ)	Surrey Community Action
Therese Lawlor	(TL)	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Stephenie Lineham	(SL)	Regional Coordinator South East for Community Matters
Louise McGrath	(LM)	Big Lottery Fund
Carol McKinley	(CM)	Regional Action and Involvement South East (RAISE)
Lesley Nicholas	(LN)	Government of the South East (GOSE)
Kat Pierce	(KP)	Capacitybuilders Regional Manager
Steve Polden	(SP)	Local Consortium Perspective (Southampton)
Angela Warburton	(AW)	South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)
Madeleine Watters	(MW)	Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

Apologies:

Dave Ahlquist	South East Area Social Enterprise Partnership (SE2)
Hazel Broad	Reading Voluntary Action
Mandy Clements	Jobcentre Plus
Chris Cowap	Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action (BFVA)
Karl Dyson	Isle of Wight Rural Community Council (IOW RCC)
Andrew Ferrier	East Hampshire District Council
Peter Johns	South East Ethnic Minority Partnership (SEEMP)
Fiona Mabbott	Portsmouth Council of Community Service (PCCS)
Tony Odonnell	Government of the South East (GOSE)
Barbara Poole	People's Voices
Paul Rideout	East Sussex County Council (ESCC)
Dev Sharma	UNI c/o North West Kent Racial Equality Council
Diana Wooldridge	Winchester Area Community Action (WACA)

1. Welcome Introduction and Apologies

Everyone in attendance briefly introduced themselves

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting (10th September 2008)

In response to the minutes in section 4 from the previous meeting ('Presentations on Third Sector and Health') MD noted that the National Health Service/South East Coast Strategic Health Authority has now put in place a programme of work on equality and diversity on the South Coast in response to a report which came out in the summer regarding Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups as it is an issue which is taken very seriously.

3. RSCP Chair

JT: One candidate was interviewed for the position; however they did not have enough experience of the sector and ChangeUp. As an interim measure it was suggested that an 'executive group' consisting of JT, representatives from GOSE, RAISE, Capacitybuilders and one other partner from the sector be formed.

KP: Suggested CM as interim chair of this group, acknowledging a potential conflict of interest with regards to future funding programmes.

This suggestion was approved by those present.

Action A: Creation of interim Executive RSCP group

4. Report Back on Progress with RSCP Business Plan

I) LAA Report and Next Actions

JT: The business plan needs to be reviewed. As this process requires some time the scheduled March meeting of the RSCP could become an away day. This will also serve as an opportunity to review the RSCP terms of reference.

Action B: That the Executive RSCP group discuss plans for an away day on March 18th

CM: The Local Area Agreement (LAA) report should be distributed shortly, it is currently at the printers with 500 copies set to be produced. It is a robust piece of research that highlights the disparity around regional engagement and levels of influence. Most areas have NI6 or NI7 with one area (Brighton and Hove) with both. RAISE is composing an executive summary sheet for all members which will also be available on the RAISE website. RAISE is now set to begin a new piece of research on NI4 and look at what engagement there has been on that and why areas chose it.

JT: The report should be sent to the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) and would demonstrate the cross sector partnership working in the South East.

LN: Mentioning the work and benefits of the RSCP to the OTS via GOSE is a useful tool and raises the group's profile and influence.

SD expressed interest in joining the LAA sub-group.

II) Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

KP: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) champion, Mark Walker held a meeting of people interested in working on the ICT strategy last month, whilst attendance numbers were not high, the attendees were very engaged. There is action and positive momentum on this project.

III) Regional Compact

LN: Everything is working well with meetings held quarterly. The draft regional Compact is currently out for consultation and the action plan is being updated by all involved. The hope is that it will be signed, by those who are ready by April 1st of next year.

IV) Modernisation Project / Sub-National Review (SNR)

JT: The response to the SNR Consultation has not yet been announced.

OC: RAISE has carried out the following work under the 'Voice' project:

- 1) Produced a briefing sheet on the 'Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power' White Paper.
- 2) Run 3 'Your Voice' events in September in Aylesford, Winchester and Oxford to discuss with members the barriers they face in getting the views of their organisations and communities across to decision makers.
- 3) Responded to the following consultations; Improving Local Accountability, Third Sector's Strategic Voice within CLG, Empowerment Fund Consultation, Secretary of State's proposed changes to the South East Plan, South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) business link consultation.
- 4) Continued to engage at the regional level, sit on the Regional Assembly and support our stakeholders on the Regional Assembly.
- 5) Produced a response to and co-ordinated Voluntary/Community Sector (VCS) representatives who gave evidence to the Assembly's select committee on SEEDA's approach to labour force and employment.
- 6) Submitted a joint response with Shelter to the next select committee on Sub-regional working.
- 7) Submitted a response to the Assembly's consultation on Gypsy and Traveller pitch allocation and started to forge links with these communities. This work will be on-going to ensure that this community gets its voice heard at the regional level, particularly at the Examination in Public which is due to take place next summer.

V) Co-ordination Grant and Funding & Finance work

JT: At a local level consortium funding and finance is the one thing that is high on everybody's agenda in terms of brokering better relationships between statutory agencies and the Third Sector, this is something that could be pursued in the next year. However, so far the RSCP has not actively pursued activity on this although it is part of the Business Plan. The regional co-ordination grant will be used to undertake regional events, one of which will be in March based upon the recommendations contained within the Funding and

Finance report. We will be inviting the Office of the Third Sector to request feedback on how they have been using the report. JT: A working group should be formed to move forward the recommendations in the first Funding and Finance report.

SB, MW and LM are willing to participate

WF: Recommended Fiona Windgrove.

Action C – set up a group to take forward the funding and finance work.

5. Review of Business Plan – Future Activity Discussion and Impact of the Economic Downturn

OC: at the regional level Jonathan Shaw MP and James Braithwaite (Chair of the SEEDA Board) are on the Regional Economic Delivery Council (REDC) which is chaired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sue Dovey also has place on this group as Chair of RAISE. RAISE has formed a focus group to feed into this and encourages any members of this group who may wish to do so to join.

Action D: If anyone wants to join RAISE's South East Economic Delivery Council focus group please contact RAISE.

There is an inevitable increase in services during a recession for most members. It is not yet clear how recession may affect the sector. During the previous recession 67% of charities saw a drop in donations. The banking collapse in Iceland has caused further problems. However since most 2009-10 grants to the Sector have been allocated they are secure, but there may be much greater challenges going into 2010 -11. If local authorities are under pressure, particularly from a council tax freeze it may well impact their discretionary spending

6. Financial Update from RAISE

CM: Budgets are all on target to be spent in delivering the work that has just been discussed.

7. Update from UNI

SD: UNI launched a website at the end of October and hope it is able to help its members to communicate and interact with a broader audience. (www.theuninetwork.org.uk)

UNI have also undertaken a skills audit exercise, auditing 30 BME organisations across the South East region – also audited some member organisations to assist the development of training strategies.

UNI have been mapping out the mechanisms available to organisations to influence policy at local and regional level and want to build an advocacy programme on the basis of it.

UNI has increased in size, with 21 members and further expansion planned.

UNI are hosting an away day on January 7th to look at governance and management of UNI and are working with RAISE on this.

8. Capacitybuilders Update

KP: Gave a verbal update on Capacitybuilders, her written report is attached to these minutes as an appendix.

9. Any other Business

CM: RAISE is working with the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) champion, Mark Walker to respond to the current consultation on digital inclusion

KP: It would be useful to discuss the development and roots of this group. The RSCP formed out of the Regional Consortium, as part of Changeup. The RSCP has now developed a more strategic influencing role. However this development has meant that the link with ChangeUp and the local consortium in the South East has been weakened. We should also review the relationship with local consortia. This could be part of the away day in March.

LM: 'Big Thinking': The Big Lottery Fund Consultation on future strategy and funding priorities for 2009-15 will be open until February 2009 and needs the RSCP's response before then.

RH: The Office of the Third Sector has sent a questionnaire to all Local Areas about the current extent of 3 year funding, the deadline for responses is the end of December. This will be followed by a Minister's statement in October 2009. Members of the RSCP raised concerns that they had with the quality and reach of the Questionnaire, many of which have already been fed back to OTS.

CM: RAISE is undertaking social audit with questionnaires going out to all members, the process is being undertaken by an external consultant and may be followed up by a phone call for more in depth consultations.

JT: The Regional Infrastructure Organisations (RIO) group has not met recently.

RIO is currently useful for the exchange of information; in the future there will be two informal RIO meetings a year which RAISE will bring forward. The economic downturn will be covered, if the group is needed again then it can be re-organised into something more formalised

RH: Is anyone in attendance a member of the RIEP group? One of the themes is LAA and community engagement and sustainable communities. A member of Progress Through Partnership a sub group of the RIEP had been attending, but they were presently undergoing staff changes which is why no-one had attended this meeting.

Action E: RH tasked with getting someone from the partnership to attend the next RSCP meeting.

10 The next meeting will be an 'away day' on March 18th: Venue to be confirmed.

Action	By Whom	Timeframe	Comments
Action A: Creation of an interim Executive RSCP group.	CM/JT	By Jan '09	
Action B: That the Executive RSCP group discuss plans for an away day on March 18 th .	CM/JT	In Jan '09	
Action C set up a group to take forward funding and finance work.	All in attendance	On-going	
Action D: If anyone wants to join RAISE's South East Economic Delivery Council focus group please contact RAISE.	SB/MW/LM		
Action E: RH tasked with getting someone from the partnership to attend the next RSCP meeting.	RH	By March 18th '09	