

**The Regional Strategic Cross-Sector Partnership Awayday
March 18th 2009**

Holiday Inn, Egerton Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XZ

Meeting notes

Attendees

Name	Organisation
Lucian Borcanescu	ICT Champion – South East
Siddo Deva	Project Manager, UNI network
Warren Feagins	Change Up Programme Coordinator, Slough CVS
Robert Hardy	Director of Improvement & Engagement, Kent County Council
Abigail Lee	Senior Policy Officer, RAISE
Stephanie Linham	Regional Coordinator South East, Community Matters
Carol McKinley	Chief Executive Officer, RAISE
Lesley Nicholas	Third Sector Policy & Development Manager, GOSE
Kat Pearce	Regional Manager, South East, Capacity Builders
Steve Polden	Director, Southampton Centre for Independent Living
Kate Poulton	SE Region ESF Manager, Jobcentre Plus, SE Regional Office
Ken Scott	Treasurer, Making Music South East
Jacinta Thorley	Regional Manager, South East Rural Community Council
Angela Warburton	Senior Manager for Corporate Cabinet, CSR & VCS Partnerships, SEEDA
Victoria Westhorp	Thriving Communities Team Lead, GOSE
Carole Claridge	C2 Management Consulting Ltd (facilitator).

The meeting objectives

1. Review progress against the RSCP business plan 08-09.
2. Identify the priorities for the RSCP in 09-10.
3. Continue to build relationships between members.

Review of 08-09 activity

We reviewed 08-09 activity by looking at the 11 projects in the RSCP business plan and, for each project, asking the questions:

- Did we do what we said we would do? If yes, what's the evidence? If no, why not?
- What difference did our efforts make to the well being of the Third Sector in the South East?

The responses to these questions are captured in the table on pages 4-7. Overall we concluded:

- We had done a lot in 08-09, particularly given the limited dedicated resources available to the partnership.
- There was a lot more that could be done in the coming year to build on this good start. In particular, we needed to do more to promote the work of the RSCP to potential members, to funders and to policy makers (and make use of ICT to do this).

Looking forward to 09-10

We did this in four steps. We considered:

1. The key opportunities and threats facing the sector in the coming year (summarised below).
2. The specific actions needed to progress the 11 projects in the business plan (these actions are captured in the table on pages 4-7).
3. The RSCP's top 5 priorities for next year (listed below).
4. Changes to the way we work to make the RSCP more effective (detailed on page 3).

The opportunities and threats

Opportunities	Threats
<p>Recession means increased demand for Third Sector services, an opportunity to raise the profile of the sector, how it contributes to the economy and how it could contribute more to LAA targets.</p> <p>Tighter budgets may drive more commissioners to contract with the Third Sector (but we don't want to be seen as a cheap option).</p> <p>Tighter budgets may drive greater collaboration in the Third Sector and across sectors.</p> <p>The 'VOICE' project, funded by Capacitybuilders, gives us more resources to influence the Sub-National Review (SNR).</p> <p>High unemployment and less job mobility may result in more people wanting to volunteer in their communities.</p>	<p>Recession means diminishing resources (from public funds and charitable giving) to do what we already do and respond to the opportunities recession brings.</p> <p>Local authority budgets are being hit hard – the Third Sector could be an easy target for cuts.</p> <p>SNR and a single regional strategy with an economic and spatial focus (not social) could lead to diminished voice for Third Sector (e.g. the loss of representation via the regional assembly).</p> <p>General election in 2010 – a change of government might result in Change Up/CB disappearing altogether.</p>

The top priorities for the RSCP in 09-10

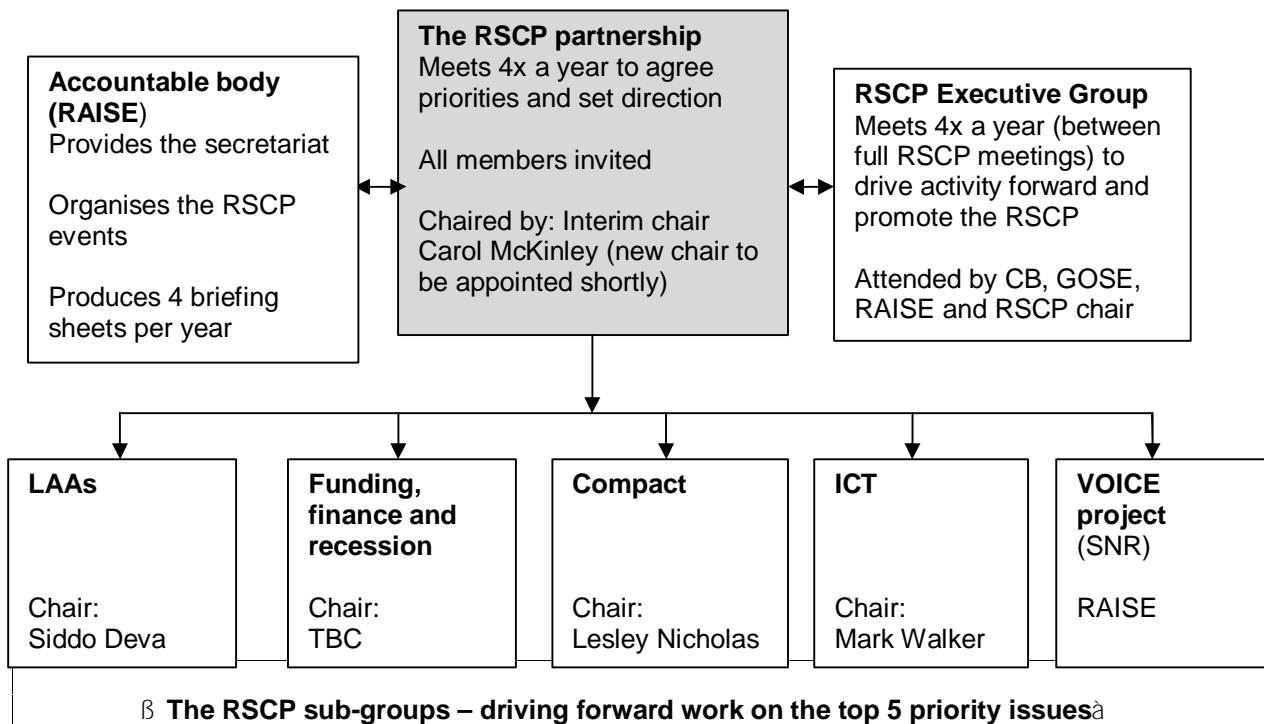
1. **Recession:** understanding the impact of the recession on the Third Sector – particularly on its funding and finance.
2. **Compacts:** keeping Regional Compacts on the agenda.
3. **LAA's:** promoting the Third Sector's engagement in Local Area Agreements (LAAs).
4. **VOICE:** giving the Third Sector a strong VOICE in the implementation of the Sub-National Review of Economic Development & Regeneration (SNR).
5. **Promotion:** promoting the RSCP and its achievements to strengthen its membership and increase its influence. Make use of ICT to do so – leading by example.

Changes to the way we work in 09-10

We identified that the partnership's way of working was generally effective. However, there were several areas that needed to be addressed. These were:

- The lack of capacity in the LAA sub-group to follow through on the LAA research funded by RAISE and Capacitybuilders (October 2008).
- Increasing the attendance from the local consortia and the local authorities.
- The perception that this might be a closed group, when in fact we welcome new members.
- The lack of a sub-group to tackle funding, finance and the impact of recession.

An overview of how the RSCP will work in 09-10 is illustrated below, followed by the actions needed to put this in place.



No	Actions to improve the way we work	Who
1	Do more to promote what we've achieved to members/potential members who aren't attending regularly (e.g. local authorities, local consortia) to persuade them of the value of attending; and improve the communication to those who can't make meetings so they stay connected. Maximise use of ICT to do this and consider developing a clear identity for RSCP.	Exec Group
2	Produce an RSCP membership pack for all members to include structure chart, member contact details, how the partnership works etc.	RAISE
3	Continue to run events and make sure they are branded RSCP. They are an important element of the RSCP's work.	Exec Group/RAISE
4	The LAA sub-group needs a new chair, terms of reference and new members. Siddo Deva to take the chair and drive this forward	Siddo Deva
5	The Compact sub-group is working well. Lesley Nicholas to continue to chair.	Lesley Nicholas
6	The ICT sub-group. Ask Mark Walker to review how it's working and decide if any improvements are needed.	Mark Walker
7	A new sub-group is needed to tackle funding, finance and the impact of recession on the Third Sector. The terms of reference will be clearer after the Funding & Finance workshop on the 19 March. People interested in contributing are Jacinta Thorley, Stuart Brown, Clare Marrett, Carol McKinley.	Exec Group

Activities in 08-09 and actions for 09-10

	What did we do and what difference did it make?	What do we need to do in the coming year?
TS, P, on ivity.	<p>We are getting recognised as adding value and seeing a change in the attitude and behaviours of national and regional bodies:</p> <p>Regional and national bodies are now bringing issues to the RSCP. Our research has been recognised by OTS. We organised a joint event with one of the Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs). We held LAA events and briefings. We've had positive interaction with regional bodies.</p> <p>But there is not much evidence of recognition from local authorities.</p>	<p>Do a lot more to promote the RSCP, its work and its achievements to potential members, policy makers and funders.</p> <p>Consider developing an identity and website for RSCP.</p>
r ny itions	<p>The research report was welcomed by OTS – but what happened as a result?</p> <p>We don't have evidence that it impacted on the local authorities.</p> <p>There is anecdotal evidence of more Third Sector involvement in LSPs. But more research is required.</p>	<p>Strengthen the sub-group. Appoint a new chair to drive it forward.</p>
b- on the on gence w it	<p>RAISE has presented to RSCP on the VOICE project.</p> <p>There is ongoing 'dialogue' regarding Third Sector engagement in regional structures but it's too early to say if we are making an impact.</p> <p>We're not sure if all the RSCP partners feel involved in this issue.</p>	<p>Demonstrate more clearly the link between the VOICE project and the RSCP. In effect it is the RSCP's 'VOICE project' sub-group for this issue.</p>

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	What did we do and what difference did it make?	What do we need to do in the coming year?
itor s links cal e with s e.g. se	<p>We've not done what we said we would do because RIO has lost its way. It is now a networking group.</p> <p>It did provide a financial contribution to the LAA research.</p>	<p>This project, as described in the business plan, is no longer relevant.</p> <p>Instead we should invite RIO members to the RSCP meetings.</p>
work ent o s the ap.	<p>A lot has been done but because the region is so large, it is sometimes hard to see the progress. We still have 2 regional ICT champions (but only part-time). They are beginning to work with funders as they need a proper budget. Their work included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing process and strategy development. Investigating ICT in Third Sector. Providing support to VCOs but it is more reactive than proactive (partly because some VCOs are only concerned about ICT when they have a crisis). Producing a report for UNI – use of ICT to improve communication and collaboration amongst BME groups. Supporting electronic communications at regional level – consortium coordinators. <p>More needs to be done to help VCOs understand how to think strategically about ICT.</p>	<p>Embed the ICT working group and strategies more strongly in the RSCP.</p> <p>Continue to develop and implement the ICT strategy.</p> <p>The RSCP to lead by example and adopt ICT to improve communications – website, blog.</p> <p>Train development workers to identify ICT needs at source. Develop a programme of organisational health checks.</p>
act ly E, A,	<p>We have achieved a lot:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation. The Compact action plan – the final version is agreed. By 6 April 4 agencies will have signed up. <p>There are issues still to be discussed at the April meeting and more promotion and engagement is needed.</p>	<p>Keep Compacts on the agenda.</p> <p>Run a training session for RSCP members – ask members to commit to doing one thing to promote Compacts.</p> <p>Encourage application of Compact principles to procurement, funding and commissioning activities.</p>

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	What did we do and what difference did it make?	What do we need to do in the coming year?
cial P, to on arning ffer ship	<p>We did support successful funding applications i.e.</p> <p>RAISE's bid to Capacitybuilders – this increased the sector's voice and its capacity to engage in the SNR.</p> <p>The South East Disability Information Network's bid to the BASIS fund for a Regional Disability Network (SEED-IN). This secured £0.5m for a five year project.</p>	<p>Keep intelligence (about policy and funding) up to date to inform forward planning. Do this through the Consortium Coordinators' workshop and events.</p>
the & by um.	<p>We did two activities in 08-09:</p> <p>A Funding & Finance event has been organised for the 19 March.</p> <p>The Funding & Finance research has been shared with government to influence the 'Real Help for Communities' response to the recession.</p> <p>It's too early to say what difference these activities have made to the sector. There's much more to do next year.</p>	<p>The Funding & Finance event will play a part in determining the direction next year. Ideas so far include:</p> <p>The scope of this project needs to be widened to address the impact of recession on funding. We need a sub-group on this – bringing together the different pieces of research on the impact of the recession and VCOs and service users; and developing an action plan.</p> <p>Influencing national as well as local policy and practice.</p> <p>Use the regional 'Real Help for Communities' Conference on 24 June.</p> <p>Promote good practice examples from Yorkshire & Humber, Tower Hamlets, and Sheffield.</p>

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	What did we do and what difference did it make?	What do we need to do in the coming year?
Partnership on issues in partners in	<p>We have worked closely with Capacitybuilders and we helped write its priorities for the region (as far as draft 3).</p> <p>We tested the RSCP business plan with Capacitybuilders.</p> <p>We tried to produce the meta plan but we found that Third Sector organisations' priorities kept changing each time we consulted with them.</p> <p>It is difficult to say what difference this has made but it did influence the CB business plan.</p>	<p>Use the priorities from the local consortia to test the business plan against. But keep it simple (learn from meta plan exercise and talk to Warren!)</p>
Shared of	<p>We haven't done enough on promoting the work of the group and its members. This is a key priority for next year.</p>	<p>Need to do a lot more on promoting the RSCP's activities so our value is understood and recognised by potential members and stakeholders.</p>
Business plan progress	<p>This was done today!</p>	<p>Review progress at the quarterly meetings and consider another awayday in 12 months.</p>