

**HORSHAM AREA COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY
SERVICES**

Three Year Business Plan 2011-2014

Value for Money Programme 2011

August 2011.

This is a public document, available free on request.

Three Year Business Plan 2011-2014

Introduction

"The Horsham Area Council for Voluntary Service exists to improve the quality and range of community services by supporting local voluntary action within the Horsham Area and by facilitating links between the voluntary and statutory agencies and the business community".

The vision for HACVS will be a summary of key themes, however in all that follows the objective to support members and the wider voluntary community by:

- a continuous improvement of the quality of service,
- a broadening of the range of services
- extending where existing and new services are delivered
- providing additional resources for current services
- continuing to raise awareness of diversity and equality
- promoting partnerships and closer working relationships
- representing members and the wider voluntary community as a whole to key decision makers and funding sources.

Quality standards

During 2010/2011, HACVS applied for and achieved PQASSO quality standard level 1 and during 2011 HACVS expects to support the re accreditation for Volunteering England. To obtain these quality standards is very resource intensive and whilst accreditation with NAVCA remains an objective this plan recognizes the very limited resources we have available at present and that, over the term of this plan, further quality objectives may remain a goal but unachievable.

Structure of the Plan

The following sets down a forward plan, which can be used both as an internal planning and discussion guide but also as a basis for promoting and marketing the activities of HACVS.

The plan is intended to run for three years reviewed and updated annually. The report targets funders, members and the wider voluntary community and is in two parts;

- * 3 year Development plan
- * 1 year Value for Money Programme, which sets down the objectives, actions and targets for the year ahead.

The plan is also to provide focus for the Board when considering a range of decisions that will need to be made

Background for the Plan

Infrastructure Support (Community Organisation development)

This plan is set against the background of significant government spending cuts which have impacted on the primary funders for the HACVS. It is difficult to prepare

any plan for growth when such uncertainty about funding remains. Restrictions in funding are likely to remain until at least the end of this plan. This relates not just to CsVS but all voluntary organisations. However we can plan to use the resources available to best advantage!

HACVS as with others in the 3rd sector infrastructure industry have traditionally relied on statutory funding for a significant portion of income. This is not being complacent, this reflects the fact that wider funding sources do not perceive infrastructure as a high priority, preferring to fund those directly supporting those in need. This is perfectly understandable, there is greater sense of altruism in that approach and funders can see where their money is helping those in need.

HACVS have made other funding bids in the last 12 months and will continue to do so, but these are likely to be on a project related basis, thus core funding from established sources remains very key to our survival.

Statutory funders have been able to see that the community infrastructure organisations 'capacity builders' (CsVS) need to be helped, and former governments have recognised 3rd sector infrastructure as a special case for funding, given that alternatives are very limited. The present government have now ended the 'Change Up' initiative and at the time of writing this plan, have released information of a £30m, fund to assist infrastructure organisations (Transforming Local Infrastructure Fund – TLIF).

The government has been pressing its 'Big Society' agenda, ostensibly transferring activities, previously the preserve of the statutory sector, to voluntary organisations, Community Interest Companies and Charities, however, as yet, funding does not appear to have followed, HACVS will continue to press for funding to flow to the 3rd sector in our area!

HACVS will continue to promote the sector in whatever way necessary, working with statutory and other funders (recognising funding limitations from all sources) to make the best use of grants available, continuing to working in particular with local authorities to access funding opportunities in partnership.

The funding situation for HACVS is not positive as we have lost over £13,000 p.a. from the demise of the NHS PCT funding, £14,000 p.a. in work time from the EESI project (ended Dec 2010) and a 10% reduction in their grant from Horsham District Council notified for 2011. As a result HACVS start the financial year 2011 with a reduction in income of 32% from 2010. This is an enormous reduction and will have substantial implications for our organisation and how we do business, indeed our ability to undertake some of the services currently provided now and into the future.

Our core activity remains funded, if somewhat reduced and HACVS will continue to deliver services required by our members and will continue in our view to 'punch above its weight' for the foreseeable future.

Volunteering

Completed in January 2009, the Horsham Volunteer Bureau merged with HACVS and the resulting organisation has benefited from economies of scale and a range of synergies. With further job losses expected in the general economy, together with statutory bodies seeking to use more volunteers in staff roles the work of the Volunteer Centre will continue to grow throughout the planning period.

However when the new merged organisation was set up the full management costs of the Volunteer Centre business was not known. These have been greater than expected, not covered in the current grant and therefore the work the Centre undertakes and the way in which it provides services will need to change to make cost savings and better use of resources. Investment from reserves has been made (with lottery funding) to support the volunteer centre with updated IT systems and hardware, we now need to optimize usage and consider the future focus and direction of the service.

Assumptions

This plan has to make assumptions and it is responsible and pragmatic to assume that funding from statutory sources (District and County) will be decreased in real terms over the funding period and therefore this plan centres on how the HACVS will cope with those reductions whilst endeavoring to optimize the service to members. Clearly any new initiatives and/or additional resource requirements will need to be generated from new funding sources, which are themselves reducing in scope, value and number and we do not underestimate the challenge faced in obtaining new funds!

HACVS is aware that grant money may be available, particularly within the Health and Wellbeing agenda, for example the Prevention and Wellbeing Implementation Project (PWIP), but this remains difficult to access currently, due the status of the government NHS reform and local authority restructuring. For this plan, we have assumed that no further funding, to replace the £10,000 NHS grant is available from statutory sources as matters are so uncertain, HACVS will react positively to support any new proposals.

The need for some form of a county wide formalized structure for CsVS is seen by HACVS as both highly desirable and ultimately a necessity. The Planning Action Group of WSC CsVS is currently looking into such options as are the Chief Officers group. Finalizing proposals is seen as urgent to ensure that CsVS remain pro-active in relation to their own future so that they can continue to provide 'independent' and local support for the 3rd sector in to the future. The 'Transforming Local Infrastructure Fund' may well be the catalyst for this to happen!

With regard to the current CsVS structures we believe that 'no change' is not a realistic option because:

- there are variable levels of facilities and funding across CsVS, leading to different levels of support (and therefore service) across the County
- duplication particularly in management, governance, employment, finance admin and ICT wastes money and resources
- no group contracts/purchasing to reduce costs
- vulnerable to declining funding levels
- limits to new funding opportunities as individual CsVS do not have the necessary 'scale' for some potential funding applications
- considerable benefits of CsVS speaking with one voice

To meet the above we believe that a county wide CVS structure is essential (as a minimum back room functions!) for the future, indeed the current governments 'infrastructure programme' of 'funding for change' promotes such a move and gives a huge opportunity to make this a reality.

As a result of the view in HACVS that a county wide structure is necessary we have decided that some developments at HACVS should be put on temporary hold (subject to the outcome of the TLIF bid), for example a very necessary complete redevelopment of our website, as it is viewed that this is much more sensibly and cost effectively implemented on a county wide basis.

What our members think:

From a survey of HACVS members undertaken in the spring of 2011, certain key service elements were identified as being of the highest priority:

- * Information and Communications to members
- * Training and mentoring of members in governance, funding and financial controls
- * Increased need for the recruitment of volunteers and associated support for mentoring, training, retention and good practice

Key Themes of the Plan

To focus on our primary business objective, capitalizing on our strengths whilst remaining adaptable and flexible, our aim is to maximise the effectiveness of the voluntary sector within the Horsham District.

This includes supporting members to achieve economies of scale and sustainability through efficient and effective use of resources, funding and volunteers;

- a) To work in partnership with all stakeholders to deliver services which are relevant, meet the needs of the community appropriately, are seamless with those of partners and represent best value for money.
- b) To build capacity through the identification, and acquisition, of additional financial and other resources and the use of technology
- c) To maximise the availability and quality of volunteers for the sector
- d) To ensure that any organisation utilizing volunteers has the means and capacity to maximize use of and ensure full and fair treatment of this valuable resource by sharing and influencing good management practice.
- e) To continuously develop relationships with members, the wider voluntary community, to support them and help them prosper thus providing services to the community.
- f) To continuously check with members, the services we provide, so that these can be 'tuned' to the changing needs of the voluntary sector.
- g) To support the foregoing, by researching and participating in regional, sub-regional and local planning and projects.

To meet these objective HACVS needs;

- a) To ensure that the charity has detailed plans in place, which set out how it

expects to develop its support to the organisations which it serves (please see - Challenges and Opportunities for the 3 years of the plan below).

To show that those plans are implemented consistently and equitably across the area which HACVS serves, and that the implementation is built on a set of core standards, which are monitored and reviewed.

- b) To ensure that all staff and volunteers are fully supported by the Trustee Board in terms of their conditions of service, procedural guidance, training and appraisal, as appropriate.
- c) To support the Trustee Board in their roles as service leaders and managers. To safeguard members of the Trustee Board, in relation to their current and future financial liability. To ensure that members of the Trustee Board are fully involved in planning and decision making, to the extent of their availability, through full board and subcommittee activity. To support individual members of the Trustee Board to achieve their full potential in contributing to HACVS business objectives.
- d) To maintain current quality standards/accreditations and when time/resources permit, achieve further quality standards.
- e) To develop further all means of communications to members and the wider community including development of our website and use of social media.

Challenges and Opportunities for the 3 years of the plan

Top Challenges

Challenge 1

Supporting and developing member's services

For HACVS to deliver consistently high quality services, in so far as practicable at the same level as 2010, given that operational funding for the front line has been reduced by 32%.

HACVS will maintain the drive for cost savings in the voluntary sector, as this is seen as key to survival at the same time endeavouring to support the objectives of the 'Big Society' initiative. HACVS, as well as all voluntary organisations, will be focussed on this contradictory message of reduced funding and increasing expectations of delivery.

HACVS will take the lead promoting greater economies of scale and strengthen the voluntary community as a whole at the same time making statutory funders very aware that there can be little expansion without basic funding.

At the same time we still need to recognise that we need to plan, wherever possible, to extend the service range where funding permits; for example to have significantly improved the availability (access to) of services within the rural parts of the District.

Priority will be given to the encouragement and support for emerging groups which are seen as key to the future development of 'Big Society' objectives.

The identification of a workable strategy for specific 'hard to reach' groups, has not been forgotten, but will be very difficult to achieve, in the course of this plan, because of resource constraints.

Opportunity;

We will be restructuring the work undertaken by our staff to provide a more flexible approach to the needs of members. We will continue to ask (directly and through surveys) our members about priorities/themes and focus on those identified.

We will make promoting the avoidance of duplication and the optimisation of resources core to our delivery by supporting members to do this through training, mentoring and the promotion and encouragement of collaborative and partnership working methods, alliances and mergers.

Actions:

*To challenge any calls on the HACVS service and those of our members, which are deemed as duplicating effort and not an effective use of resources.

*To keep under review any possible funding opportunities from whatever source including those presented by government initiatives (please see Page 10).

*To increase the number and hours of volunteers working within the core CVS.

*Develop organisational mentoring, increase training/networking and special promotional events to support joint working/new processes and techniques.

*To improve existing communications to/from members and with the wider community by restructuring the HACVS website to improve access and the information available. Also, with the assistance of suitable volunteers, set up and promote the charity through 'Face book' and if relevant other social networking internet sites.

*Liaise with other CsVS to consider what aspects of backroom functions and what shared service delivery can be developed, prior to any county wide structure.

*Continue to champion a County based CVS structure, as a minimum to provide backroom and specialist service functions.

Challenge 2

Health and Wellbeing

This sector of the both statutory and voluntary community is expected to grow significantly over the period of the plan, not least within the Prevention and Wellbeing Implementation Project. The Health and Wellbeing agenda has increased in importance to statutory authorities as this now encompasses all aspects of public health delivery as well as aspects of special local NHS health programmes.

Opportunity

The challenge here is to assist the 3rd sector by support and information to influence them in preparing/making bids, provide a conduit for information and how to focus on the delivery of the required services. If current discussion at fora is representative,

some of the delivery of Health and Wellbeing (PWIP) agenda is expected to be commissioned and therefore funding for provision of services will be available to local voluntary organisations who wish to bid, which may include HACVS.

HACVS have already played a key role, through specialist staff, developing in this area and intend to continue with the investment, however at the time of compiling this report this 'investment' is being funded from reserves, clearly this is time limited. HACVS as with any other provider will need proper funding to deliver support with this activity in the future.

Actions

- *maintain and where appropriate improve information provision and interpretation
- * seek preferred bidder status wherever possible for new local initiatives particularly PWIP development
- *ensure HACVS is seen as a significant partner in and for the promotion and delivery of services under the health and well being banner.
- *maintain presence on all local partnerships (subject to Challenge 1 and resource limitations)
- *develop all staff within HACVS to take some part in supporting this activity

Challenge 3

Volunteering

Access to new volunteers for opportunities available is critical to the success of the 3rd sector. The changing needs of the 3rd sector and the change to how they access volunteers impacts on what the volunteer centre needs to focus. It is not intended to reduce our recruitment role, but concentrate on volunteer retention, development and volunteering opportunities.

This follows surveys and other contact with members such that voluntary organisations are recognising the need to be better prepared to use/develop and treat volunteers in a proper manner. This is to maximise existing volunteers and increase retention rates. Further challenges include involving considerably more 16-25 year olds in volunteering, thus improving the message (about volunteering) to all potential volunteers.

Based on the current processing of applicants it is expected that well over 90% of all volunteer recruitment will be processed by telephone/email, the Do-It and HACVS /VC websites by the end of 2012. Whilst information/matching through information technology will be improved further, (including the use of Face book) and limited website improvements, the existing management of face to face interviews for potential volunteers is not seen as a cost effective use of resources.

Currently the majority face to face interviews occur at the Octagon on a 'drop in' basis or by pre arranged appointment. This requires the Volunteer Coordinator to be 'on duty' at the building in a way that is no longer seen a cost effective use of the resource available including, for that matter, the building itself.

Personal interviews are an essential part of the delivery of our volunteering services, therefore will continue to be available, by appointment, at both Lavinia House and the Octagon, in particular to meet requirements of 'special needs' and disabled applicants. Volunteer recruitment will be promoted through our existing methods plus expansion of 'special events' supporting volunteering throughout the district. The latter will also improve the availability of volunteer support services in the District but outside the Horsham 'town centre'.

Opportunity

As part of the service we must ensure that those organisations seeking volunteers are in a fit state to receive them. To fail to recognise the importance of this aspect is not only counter productive to all concerned but damaging to the overall volunteering programme.

Actions

*The 'drop in' opening hours of the Octagon will be reduced and resources released from this will be made available as follows:

*Develop additional 'help' packages for members

*Undertake more mentoring/training, special events for organisations on the best practices for volunteers.

*Seek more alternative methods of recruitment of volunteers through special recruitment events throughout the District.

*Seek new methods of 'getting to' 16-25 year olds to encourage them into volunteering.

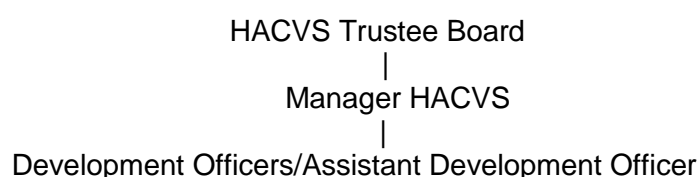
*Seek new types of volunteering opportunity, particularly short term projects to encourage people into volunteering.

*seek further funding to support a programme of help and support to those with special needs in volunteer placement.

Future HACVS internal structure to meet the needs of the Plan:

The Organisation and Staff

Based on the examination of HACVS workload/funding and the need to meet the expectations and requirements of the voluntary sector in Horsham, HACVS needs to be re structured as follows:



| Volunteers

In order to increase flexibility of staff to meet the challenges, under the banner 'Make Every Contact Count', the current stratified structure will be changed such that ALL staff can work flexibly across functions to deliver services to our members. However each member of staff will maintain one specialist role as follows: Volunteering development, Health and Wellbeing development, Membership development. All HACVS operations and administration will be centred at Lavinia House with most staff working from home or outreach.

Organisation and Use of the Buildings

Lavinia House

The aim remains, as before, to provide a centre of excellence for the voluntary services of Horsham District to use as a base for serviced office accommodation, office services, technical advice and support and to serve as a base for HACVS to develop services and resources to members and support volunteering in Horsham.

The Octagon is a small 'office' facility and will be used as an 'overspill' admin centre for HACVS outreach staff. However it will no longer be used as a 'regular drop in centre', solely for volunteering but for the wider use for HACVS service delivery. It is intended to recruit further volunteers to use the Octagon as an information centre for all the services supported by HACVS, also as an enquiry point not just for potential volunteers but any service provided by the CVS. When operating fully to meet the needs of HACVS, consideration can then be given to allow members to use the facilities in a similar way subject to not disrupting use by HACVS.

The Spire has recently undergone an external 'facelift'. Following awaited internal refurbishment and a new lease, the space will be developed for the wider use of the voluntary community. Currently a new lease is being negotiated and following finalisation the interior will be upgraded and will used for meetings/events and be promoted to members as such.

Alternative Funding/Resource Scenarios

The Social Enterprise challenge:

As part of such considerations the issue of trading on a more sustained basis will need to be considered. The Board will therefore need to understand the implications of setting up a trading company. Within the existing Articles of Association the charity can make charges for membership and membership related services (but not those covered by our funding agreements without authorisation) but is excluded from outright commodity sales 'trading'. HACVS have yet to identify market potential but will continue to consider alternative business models as opportunities present themselves.

HACVS Volunteer/Recruitment and Development:

HACVS have already recruited a team of volunteers, but will need to develop the team further to support the range of HACVS business activities. Excellent results from recruiting and developing our own volunteers has shown the way forward, this will be continued and expanded further and our experiences promoted to fellow organisations. Our work with those with special needs, which had been previously put on hold, is being restarted as further funding from WSCC has been secured for one year.

Sponsorships/Business support:

HACVS have not, to date, promoted support for the charity through sponsorship or non financial support from local business. During the current year this matter will be addressed, initially through personal contacts by Trustees. However we have recognised the need for a new Trustee/Volunteer to undertake and extend this role and advertising for this role will be undertaken.

Grant opportunities

HACVS will continue, as in 2010/2011 to identify and make application for grants from various Trusts and Statutory funds, in particular the charity will press for replacement funding for that lost in 2010 from the NHS from statutory funders.

Value for Money Plan April 2011- March 2012

The attached contains the work/development areas and targets for 2011/12 and is based on the value for money document agreed with Horsham District Council.

Value for Money Plan April 2011 – March 2012