

Regeneration News

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Welcome to the June 2009 edition of Regeneration News! This edition is packed with a range of features which we hope you'll find both interesting and informative.

First up is a bit of information about the Sheffield First Partnership structure and in particular how you can utilise your VCF reps. on the Sheffield First Partnership Board and Thematic Partnership Boards. Then we've got an interview with John Mothersole, Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council – including his views on, and messages to, the VCF sector.

Our centre pages focus on both up and coming employment programmes and whether [or not] they create opportunities for our sector... well worth a read if your organisation is thinking of exploring procurement opportunities!

Next up is a look at where we are with Community Assemblies and what 'OFFER' can offer in terms of helping people engage with, and influence their Community Assembly.

Network News on page 7 gives the opportunity to hear about recent events and developments around VCF networks and OFFER's role in these. Last but not least, our news bites section has a few tasty snippets of information around new opportunities and support for our sector.

Finally, if you have any comments about Regen News - then please do get in touch! We're always happy to receive feedback, be that good, or not so good!

T: 0114 253 6730 or
Email suef@offer.org.uk

The Sheffield Third Sector Review deadline is fast approaching! So if you're a VCF organisation in Sheffield and are planning to feed into the review please do so as a matter of urgency. If you're a VCF organisation in Sheffield and have not yet heard about the review please contact OFFER

T: 0114 253 6730 Email: info@offer.org.uk

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Developing the voice of the VCF sector for Sheffield.

Supporting Groups and Forums & Network to be effective partners.

Networking by helping them get involved in decision making.

Sheffield First Partnership News



The Sheffield First Partnership has been restructured to ensure it continues to best meet the needs of the City.

A round of recruitment has taken place with the appointment of new Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCF) representatives.

To find out what's happening across the Sheffield First Partnership, and who the VCF reps are:

Why not check out the Sheffield First Partnership section of OFFER's website, www.offer.org.uk

Representatives' News & Forthcoming SF Meetings

June 2009

- 2nd Health and Well-being P'ship.
- 4th Safer and Sustainable Communities P'ship.
- 10th Sheffield First P'ship.
- 18th Strong Economy Board P'ship.

July 2009

- 8th Sheffield First P'ship.
- 9th Children and Young People 0-19+ P'ship.
- 22nd Environment P'ship.

August 2009

- 6th Safer and Sustainable Communities P'ship.
- 13th Strong Economy Board P'ship.

How to utilise VCF representatives

The role of the VCF representatives is to represent the views of, and contribute the expertise of our sector; so if your organisation has a view/s, here's how to take it forward:

If you know which Thematic Board your view fits with, either contact the relevant VCF reps directly or get in touch with that Board's Liaison Officer – a full contact list can be found at www.offer.org.uk/content.php. Alternatively give OFFER as ring on 0114 253 6730.

And / or why not come along to OFFER/VAS network meetings? Both OFFER and VAS help facilitate various networks... again either check out the events page of OFFER's website or ring OFFER on 0114 253 6730 to find out more.

Want to know what gets discussed and what VCF reps have influenced?

Then why not sign up to OFFER's monthly Sheffield First e-bulletin to get a quick overview - to subscribe, send an email with 'SF e-bulletin' in the title bar to suef@offer.org.uk

Check out the 'Sheffield First Partnership' section of OFFER's website www.offer.org.uk

For more information on any of the above, or if you want to see our sector's reps in action, join their discussions before the Board meetings and then observe the main meeting; contact Sue Faxon at OFFER on 0114 253 6730 or email suef@offer.org.uk.

OFFER, and the whole VCF sector through OFFER, would like to thank all those who serve on Sheffield First Partnership boards and raise issues on behalf of us all.

What Principles guide our VCF sector reps decision making

The Triple Bottom Line Tool - this tool agreed by VCF representatives in April, provides a simple reference to guide VCF Reps influence and thinking in Board decision making processes. It can be downloaded from:

www.offer.org.uk/content.php

A catch up with John Mothersole

OFFER recently caught up with John Mothersole, Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council to check out his view of the City Council's relationship with the VCF sector.

Q. What does the Council see as the priorities for Sheffield, and what contribution do you think the VCF sector can make to achieving these?

A. Whilst we'll continue to build on the good work around the physical agenda, our next phase of work will place an emphasis on the 'people agenda'; i.e. building skills, tackling worklessness, and addressing quality of life issues. The VCF sector's role contribution is invaluable here given its depth of Community knowledge, and understanding of what needs to be done locally.

Q. What are your thoughts on the Third Sector review and what would you like to see emerge from it?

A. Two things; firstly, to understand the sector's strategic strengths, and secondly to determine what's needed to sustain those strengths so we can work together to co-produce and implement strategies that will take the City forward.

Q. The City Council is clear it wants to take the lead on the economic agenda; why is this?

A. Let me make clear, there is no monopoly on wisdom – whilst the City Council is taking the leadership role on this agenda – decisions are certainly 'not a 'done deal'. The thinking behind them is influenced by public, private and VCF sector representatives and reflects the views of local Communities.

Q. In terms of funding – the Sector is facing an uncertain time following the demise of e.g. Objective One funding; have you any messages for the Sector?

A. The key message is that funding investments must follow the priorities for the City and be justified against these priorities.

Q. There are concerns that following the restructure of the Sheffield First Partnership and some Boards being discontinued, that some issues e.g. financial inclusion may be lost – what's your view?

A. The role of the Sheffield First Partnership is to manage the whole picture – with smaller numbers of Boards managing the component parts. Lately we seem to have got into the habit of performance managing the component parts and not investing sufficient time into the whole picture. I appreciate the view that getting rid of some specialist boards may result in some issues being lost, but as long as the SFP Board recognises the issue is vitally important, it will continue to include it in this whole picture approach.

Q. Any advice on how best the VCF sector can apply influence?

A. Two ways: Participate in existing structures and be more demanding – I both adopt and promote amongst Council officer colleagues, an 'open door' policy with email and tel. contact details out in the public domain for people to get in touch. If a group or consortium feels their voice is not being heard we are happy to listen, learn and understand the issue/s.



Q. From your perspective – what do you think the VCF sector think of the City Council?

A. They probably think:

- OK we're hearing a different tone / message so let's go with it and see what's delivered.
- That the funding world has changed and we'd like clarity on what the City Council will support.
- The structures are confusing and we'd like the City Council to provide clarity
- We wonder how the Council's new ideas will take off?

Q. Finally any top-tips for the VCF sector?

A. Yes – talk to us! Get to really understand what we're about and show us how you can contribute towards us collectively achieving our objectives.

Up and Coming Employment Programmes -

The hunt for new opportunities in these challenging times, coupled with strong links to their local Communities, and a proven track record of supporting some of the most marginalised and disadvantaged means a number of VCF organisations will be looking to secure employment programme contracts. This feature aims to inform the sector of the current funding and organisational landscape around this agenda, along with future initiatives on the horizon, and support VCF organisations in determining whether [or not] this area of work is right for them.

The Policy Framework - where's Government coming from on the economic and skills front?

The Policy Themes driving the economic agenda focus on:

- Getting economically inactive people into work
- Improving skills and having more people qualified at level 2 and 3.
- Encouraging entrepreneurship (people setting up in business)
- (and increasingly) Supporting people through the recession

Where does the money come from to support this work?

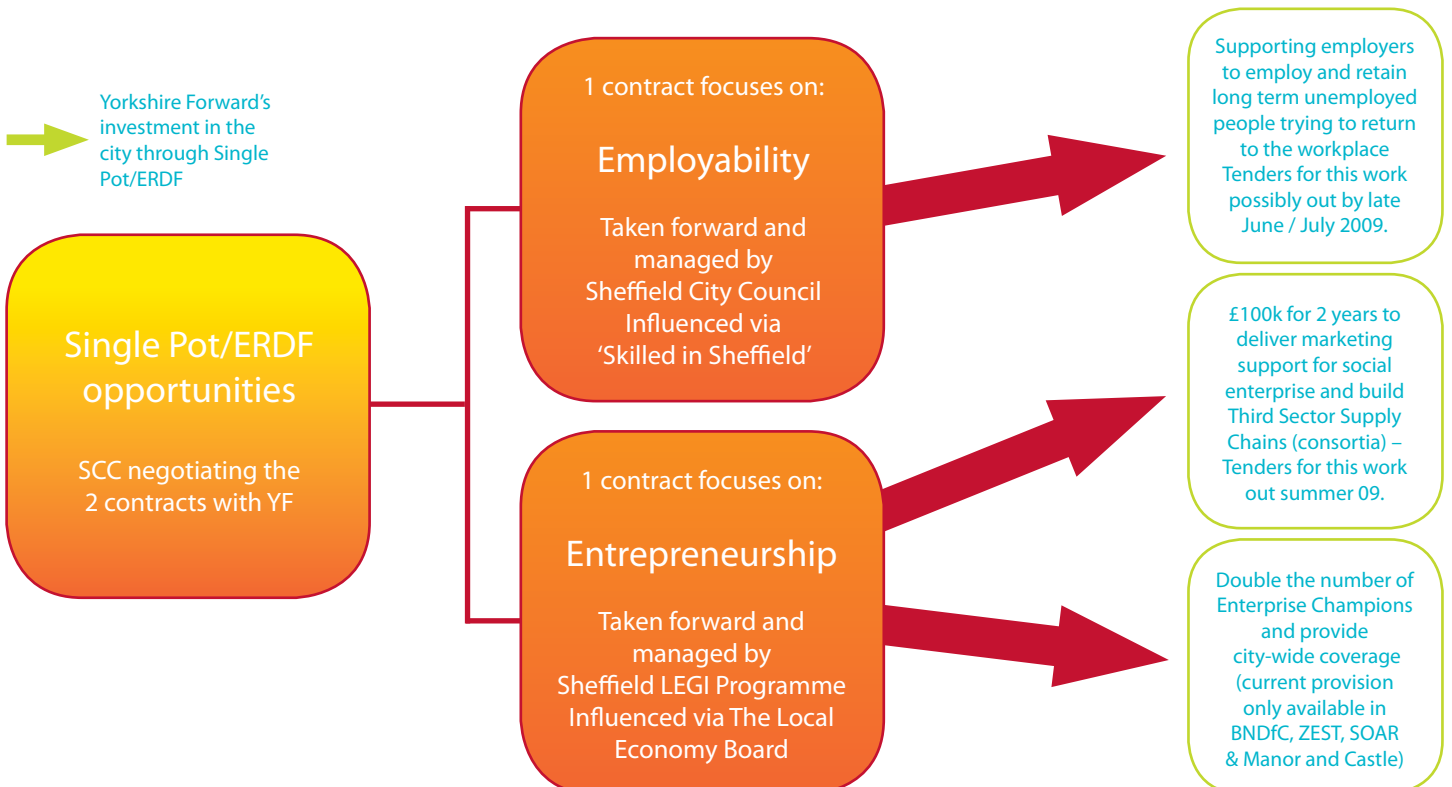
Money to support this work comes from:

- The European Social Fund [ESF] through the Learning and Skills Council [LCS] / Department of Work and Pensions [DWP] which is supporting the 'Progress Together Programme aimed at the economically inactive.

- Yorkshire Forward's investment in the City through predominantly Single Pot funding [money from Central Government] and a smaller element of European Regional Development funding [ERDF]. Sheffield City Council is now in the process of negotiating the 2 contracts with Yorkshire Forward. The diagram (below) provides detail about project activity and strategic fit.

Other pots of money to support the economic and skills agenda include:

- DAF (Deprived Area Funds)
- NLDC (Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities)
- A new 'Future Jobs Fund' Initiative – likely to support mainly 18-24 year olds nearing a year's unemployment through 6 month's employment with Sheffield City Council or a VCF sector organisation.
- WNF (Working Neighbourhoods Fund)



Do they create opportunities for the VCF sector?

What's next on the horizon?

- New Programme areas for the DWP and others as a result of the recession?
- The 'Flexible New Deal' - future provision for the longer term unemployed although Government is still trying to work out how it wants to deliver this

So will these new programmes create opportunities for the VCF Sector?

Whilst the above programmes may well provide opportunities for the VCF Sector - experience tells us that previous New Deal contracts, and other big employment related contracts have generally been secured by big private sector companies, who have [sometimes] in turn sub-contracted bits of this work to smaller organisations.

A bit about the 'PROSPER' Consortium

This is a consortium of 5 VCF sector organisations, who will try to capitalise on their combined assets to secure larger contracts. This could create sub-contractual opportunities for smaller VCF sector organisations if the funding allows. The 5 organisations are ZEST, Manor and Castle Development Trust, SOAR [Southy and Owlerton Area Regeneration] BNDfC [Burngreave New Deal for Communities], and STEP [Stocksbridge Training and Enterprise Partnership].

However, experience tells us that where VCF organisations have taken on contracts and especially sub-contracts - it is not without its problems!

Key points for VCF organisations to think about:

- Can we deliver what's been asked for instance supporting employers.
- Is there enough money it?
- Are the rules around payments so restrictive that only an organisation with large cash reserves to bankroll the scheme could go for it? - Will even PROPSEER have enough reserves to do this? Will this affect their ability to sub-contract?
- Are payments only released on results? If so, can we achieve the targets fast enough to survive?
- We may need to use the bigger players in our sector to access opportunities on behalf of the rest.

The Bottom Line - Approach With Caution!

Anything else I should think about?

Yes - If you're a VCF organisation that's interested in this area of work why not get involved in 'SCEN' - the Sheffield Community Economic Network.

This aim of this network, supported by OFFER is 'to maximise the ability of Sheffield's VCF sector to unlock the potential of communities to contribute to the economic transformation of the city.'

Key objectives developed by and for the network include:

- Being a forum for open debate and sharing of good practice
- Influencing the economic agenda at neighbourhood level
- Developing an awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities
- Secure investment for the VCF sector

If you are interested in becoming a member of SCEN simply contact T: 0114 253670 E: suef@offer.org.uk

Procurement Support Programme for Sheffield based organisations

If you want to be procurement-ready, a new programme dealing with the major aspects of how to do business with the public sector, will help you on your way.

A range of workshops and seminars will give you everything you need to develop your organisation, and become procurement-ready. Thanks to funding through BiG: Make It Your Business, these individual sessions - worth £250 each - will be available free of charge (deposit required) to Sheffield based organisations.

For further information, and details of how to book your place, visit www.thebigwebsite.org.uk/procurementsupport

Community Assemblies – What's OFFER's role around this agenda?

With the new Community Assemblies model currently being rolled out, Regen News readers might be wondering about OFFER's role around this agenda? Basically, OFFER is providing a supporting role to enable Communities to actively engage with Community Assemblies, and be in a position to influence what happens in their local area.

OFFER - Supporting Community Engagement

Sheffield City Council has made clear that a central aim of introducing the Community Assembly model was better Community engagement. The City Council recognised that they shouldn't be doing all of this themselves – they were clear they wanted engagement and empowerment activity that's independent of statutory organisations. The City Council tasked OFFER to deliver a programme of work on the basis of OFFER's; city-wide remit, existing networks, and proven track record.

So what does OFFER's support programme look like?

OFFER's support programme will be delivered through two joint programmes – 'Listening Matters' and 'How Your Area Works' which will be run in each of the 7 Community Assembly areas.

The 'Listening Matters' programme, developed by a company called Re-generate Trust, first came to the attention of people in Sheffield's VCF

Sector via them attending an Urban Forum Conference. A few people from some Community Forums visited Wigan, where the programme had been delivered, to explore it further. They then shared their positive experiences with a broader audience of Community Forum reps at an event in February '09.

We'd like to make clear however that OFFER's approach and ethos is to **NEVER KNOWINGLY DUPLICATE WHAT ALREADY EXISTS** – we're about helping more new people get involved at a time when overall resources are fewer.

OFFER is now in the process of talking to Community Forums / Organisations and CA Teams in the 7 Assembly Areas to discuss the programme and how it will best work in their individual areas. The first 'Listening Matters' programme is likely to commence in June. Do please get in touch if you want to find out more, or have specific questions – either ring OFFER on 0114 2536730 or email info@offer.org.uk.

What else?

OFFER will continue to support the VCF sector to influence the Community Assemblies. Positive results from the OFFER supported VCF Community Assembly Reference Group includes:

- VCF representation having been written into the guidance for Partner Panels
- The sector reinforcing to the Council that community engagement can't happen across a whole Community Assembly Area and so this is now being developed at Ward level
- Consider the need for Community Assemblies staff to support the Third sector to establish local infrastructure/partnerships where currently none exists.

There are likely to be ideas that need influencing and issues that needs sorting in the future and OFFER is continuing to support the VCF sector to do this.

The aim of 'Listening Matters' is to engage local people.

As a result of the VCF interest described above, OFFER has teamed up with Re-generate Trust to work alongside local Communities to give them the tools to engage with Community Assemblies on their terms.

The Listening Matters approach uses active listening skills to focus on key questions which help determine;

- What people love about their Neighbourhood
- What concerns them about it
- What their vision for their Neighbourhood is

It does not impose solutions, but supports the development of Community activists to develop and take forward local solutions to locally defined issues.

The aim of 'How Your Area Works' is to equip local people with the skills needed to influence plans and decisions that affect their lives.

The programme builds on the success of the 'How Your City Works' Programme and aims to help equip people with the skills and knowledge:

- To understand how the system works
- To make the system work for you
- To understand where power and influence lays, and when and how to use this

Each course will be tailored to local needs and delivered in associations with partners, including Community Assembly teams, and local public, private, and third sector organisations.

Network News



Sheffield BME Network Inaugural AGM

The Sheffield BME Network held its first ever AGM (Annual General Meeting) at the Mercure St Paul's Hotel on Thursday 26th March 2009. As well as the formal AGM business,

to establish a fully functional independent network structure. After two years of hard work shaping the organisation, it was a memorable day for the Black & Minority Ethnic (BME)

The aim of the Sheffield BME Network is to have an inclusive, effective and accountable BME Network for the Voluntary, Community & Faith sector across the city. Their vision is to have a thriving and healthy BME VCF sector in Sheffield for the 21st Century. The network will robustly scrutinise decision making, lobby, and champion the interests and aspirations of its members. For further information, please contact:



there were speakers, information stalls, a buffet lunch and opportunities for networking.

The Interim Network was originally set up by a group of dedicated BME volunteers who came together

members of the Voluntary, Community & Faith (VCF) sector in Sheffield. The development of the Sheffield BME Network has been supported by OFFER (Open Forum for Economic Regeneration), Sheffield City Council and VAS (Voluntary Action Sheffield).

The Secretary, Sheffield BME Network, Tel: 0114 223 2100, E: amohammed@ycasheffield.co.uk

Creating a Disability Network for Sheffield

An event held on 18 May helped move Sheffield one step closer to developing a disability network for the City. The event, jointly supported by Inclusive Living Sheffield and OFFER and attended by a broad cross section of individuals and agencies, provided the opportunity to look at three different disability network 'models'

from around the country to decide on the best one for Sheffield.

Participants worked in groups to consider the individual merits of each of the models and came up with a 'pick and mix' approach of selecting the best bits from each. A smaller steering group will now work on

pulling this together, along with a draft constitution to bring back to a main group event planned for 1 October 2009.

For more information contact **Jacquie Stubbs**, Tel: 0114 253 6750 E: Jacquie.stubbs@inclusivesheffield.org.uk

A quick update on OFFER's Faith Work



OFFER's Faith work is entering year two of a three year project funded by Capacity Builders, ChangeUp Improving Reach, working at city-wide and neighbourhood levels.



One of the aims is to increase the influence and representation of faith communities on decision-making bodies, and over the last year new VCF reps from faith communities have been recruited to Sheffield First Partnership Boards. We have begun work with Community Forums in the seven Community Assembly Areas to work

with faith communities on specific projects. Having reflected on the possibilities and benefits of working together, a 'Women of Faith' project has been started with groups from five faith communities in Shiregreen and Burngreave led by Shiregreen United Reformed Church, exploring their faith and work together.

The NIACE training for Faith leaders, workers and volunteers has been run successfully for a second year, with 77 people applying for 20 places. National recognition of the role Sheffield has played in developing this course was given by Christ Taylor of NIACE at the Sheffield Faiths Forum Annual Meeting, attended by 89 members of faith communities in the city in March.

OFFER has also worked with the Sheffield Faiths Forum and the BME Network to put on two conferences on Preventing Violent Extremism [PVE]. Malcolm Cumberbatch and Mike Fitter, the Chairs of the BME Network and Sheffield Faiths Forum, agreed to take forward consultations within the sector on the development of a Reference Group. A full report on the two PVE conferences can be found on the OFFER website at:

www.offer.org.uk/resources/documents/PVE%20Events%20Report%20Generated%20May%202009.pdf

For information / to get involved contact **Dave Sutton-Jones**, Tel: 0114 253 6730 Email: davesj@offer.org.uk

News Bites



Social enterprise? feeling the effects of the Credit Crunch?

Facing challenges and difficult decisions as a result of the credit crunch?

See opportunities for growth but lack the necessary finance to move forward?

We have funding available to support social businesses in either position. Working across Yorkshire and the Humber,

Key Fund Yorkshire offers a mix of flexible grant/loan packages for social entrepreneurs, voluntary and community organisations and existing social enterprises.

To find out more please contact the Key Fund on 0845 140 1400, email info@keyfundyorks.org.uk or visit our website www.keyfundyorks.org.uk

Community Grants Programme to help unemployed adults into work or training

A £1.4 million program to help small community organisations in South Yorkshire move unemployed adults closer towards a job or training has now opened to applications.

Community Grants makes awards of up to £12,000 for activities targeted at 4 priority groups; people with disabilities and health conditions, lone parents, people aged 50 and over and people from ethnic minorities.

Eligible activities could include basic skills training; taster work experience (including voluntary placements); training advice and guidance; job search assistance; confidence building/personal development; and debt counselling.

The scheme is financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and Learning and Skills Council (LSC). £1.4 million will be

distributed in our region between now and September 2010.

Downloadable application forms and guidance notes are available at www.hlc-vol.org/commgrants. There are monthly deadlines for applications and you should receive a decision on your application within 4 weeks.

A formal launch event will be held at The Circle on Friday 10th July from 10am with lunch, at which groups will be able to chat to the Community Grants team about potential applications. To register your interest in this event call 01482 327438 or email communitygrants@hlc-vol.org.

For more information contact Niall O'Reilly, Tel: 0114 278 1316 Email: oreillyn@hlc-vol.org

The long awaited 'Communitybuilders' fund

'Communitybuilders' was originally mooted in the Government's 'Communities in Control: real people, real power' White Paper.

It's aimed at supporting Community Anchor organisations to acquire/develop Community buildings as a basis for income generation.

The application process is likely to begin in the summer. More details available from:

www.communities.gov.uk/communities/thirdsector/communitybuilders

Regeneration News is published regularly and circulated to organisations in the VCF sector in Sheffield.

If your organisation does not receive RN, please email, or phone us to be placed on the mailing list.

E: suef@offer.org.uk T: 0114 2536730

If your organisation is not a member of OFFER, you can ask to for a membership form which is also available on our website:

www.offer.org.uk

New VCF Low Carbon Network

Sheffield's City Strategy sets out an ambition to be a attractive, sustainable, low-carbon city – but how can the VCF sector contribute to that? On 7th April a new Low Carbon Network was launched by OFFER to help VCF organisations make a difference. The event at Sorby House showed how our sector can help reduce Sheffield's carbon emissions and play a part in the fight against climate change.

The links to achieving community health, wellbeing and prosperity were presented by speakers from NHS Sheffield, Heeley Development Trust, South Yorkshire Energy Network and Sheffield Faiths Forum. If your organisation would like to join the Low Carbon Network please contact Sue at OFFER. T: 0114 2536730 E: suef@offer.org.uk

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