

7th Meeting of Board of Voluntary Action Scotland –7th and 8th January 2010, Perth.

This briefing from the Board seeks to highlight some of the main items under discussion. It is not a formal minute.

Present: Sandy Milne (Vice Convenor), Alasdair Nicholson, Kenny Murphy, Helen Macneil, Helen Rorrison, Gilbert Grieve, Niall Smith, Harriet Eadie, Gaynor Jones

Apologies: Harry Whiteside (Convenor), Jessie MacNeil, Don Hunter Grant, Eliot Stark

In attendance: Corinna Donnelly, CVS Falkirk and District (Minute Taker)

SVA PROGRAMME

K.M. reported on progress and current issues with the Managing Intelligence and Common Platform strands and in particular the issue around Intellectual Property rights. It would appear that the rights would lie with S.C.V.O. and the Lottery though we would prefer a position whereby VAS, or some other natural body, could also have an ownership on behalf of its members/our network. With SVA taking a 'futures' approach (interface emphasis rather than just CVS) then VBay is something which needs to be carefully considered in terms how we can ensure we have a system which meets the needs of interfaces.

An initial proposal document had been prepared by G.G. and E.S. to seek development support for VAS through the SVA programme and this would now be discussed with SVA staff. Agreed that we should seek discussion with Big Lottery about potential role for VAS in further shaping SVA programme. A briefing / discussion paper will be prepared by H.M. and G.G. in preparation for that meeting.

Although some information had been provided by S.C.V.O. on spend incurred on the SVA programme, it was not in the detail that we might have wished. We will pursue this further with S.C.V.O. before raising it with the Big Lottery.

WIDER NATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Meetings had recently been held with Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition (SSEC), Local People Leading and Senscot to raise the profile of VAS, clarify roles and explore how we might work more effectively together. These had been positive and agreed that VAS should take membership of LPL and encourage our members to do so. Still within the area of social enterprise a joint facilitated meeting had been arranged by VAS between SSEC, SCVO, VAS, Senscot, VDS and Social Firms Scotland to share understanding of each other's roles and areas of common interest. The key aspect is the consideration of how social enterprises can be supported at interface level across Scotland. Again this was seen as a productive meeting which should be followed up with more detailed discussions.

MEETING WITH JOHN SWINNEY MSP

H.E. reported on the meeting held with John Swinney MSP prior to Christmas. This was felt to be a constructive meeting in developing our relationships with Scottish Government, explaining our aspirations for VAS and local interfaces, and the information that we could



uniquely bring to policy forums. We believe that we have prepared the ground to allow us to go back with some specific “asks” in terms of representation and activity, but will not do so until we have delivered and delivered well on the work currently contracted by Scottish Government. We received a firm commitment that our monies will remain ring-fenced and there were no plans to consolidate it with local authority monies through the Concordat.

WIDER PARTNERSHIP MODEL OF VAS

K.M. led a discussion on (1) how a wider partnership model for VAS could be developed as we sought to embrace membership of VC’s and in due course LSEPs and SENs, and (2) the progression of the research to identify future support needs of Interfaces, CVS’s and VC’s.

A proposed timescaled programme of activity to identify support needs for Interfaces, CVS’s and VC’s was agreed. The key elements would involve an electronic survey and 3 Focus Groups, possibly being in Inverness, Glasgow and Edinburgh to consider the results of the survey and refine the findings. We would seek a budget to assist members with transport costs where needed. It is expected that we will finish this piece of work and to report to Government by end of March.

Critical to the acceptance of a wider membership model for VAS would be equality of voice between members and that everyone’s interests were heard and represented.

Consideration was given to Electoral College models of membership and voting – with some debate as to the range of factors which should influence the number, geography and make up of such Colleges. This is of such importance that we agreed further work be undertaken in identifying the relative strengths / weaknesses of the proposed models before making a recommendation on proposed changes to our M & A’s to our membership. We recognised the urgency in progressing this matter for February – given that we have clearly stated to VC’s that we would welcome them as members and an early involvement would be to the benefit of all.

MEETING WITH S.C.V.O.

P.W. had previously advised of the willingness of SCVO to seek the involvement of VAS in a review of the Thrive and Connect Business Plan, both in terms of CVS performance and SCVO delivery. We agreed to be involved in this piece of work over the coming months. Whilst the review would undoubtedly influence future support needs, we felt that possible future work with SCVO on this specific matter should await the completion of the work currently commissioned by Scottish Government. SCVO will circulate results of the support needs questionnaire gathered by SCVO to VAS.

A positive discussion on how VAS might use some of the skill / resource / staff capacity with the CVS Network Team was held. From the VAS perspective there would be issues of direction and control of work undertaken on our behalf by SCVO staff, but it was agreed that there was real merit in exploring in some detail the opportunities – including the possibility of a secondment. Agreed that VAS would prepare an outline job description and P.W. would discuss this with his team.

It was noted that the Advisory Groups within the SVA programme (with whom VAS Directors have a considerable amount of involvement) appeared to operate with different degrees of effectiveness and that there was a need to seek greater connection with the PMG to ensure better involvement of VC’s. P.W. agreed that the briefs for Advisory groups should be “refreshed” and that we will circulate through a briefing along with details of contact person. H.E. would also raise this at a future PMG meeting.



Just prior to Christmas we had been approached by Scottish Government to circulate a questionnaire to CVS's regarding sector involvement with CPP's and current funding issues. Essentially it would seek to highlight inconsistencies (if any) of practice across Scotland by CPP's. VAS had agreed to be involved in this questionnaire, though not in its design. This was subsequently undertaken by SCVO. The final analysis and report would include comment from VAS and would be jointly signed off by SCVO and VAS. This report will go directly to John Swinney.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Board are acutely aware of the need to improve and standardise on their communication with members and external bodies – and even ourselves. Although there are limitations on our resource and the time that can be given by Directors we know that we can, and will, improve our practice. A draft Communication Strategy was tabled by H.R. and this provided sound principles on which we will build our practice. This paper will now be developed into a series of action points, with clear guidance and direction on our future communication strategy. With Directors attending a range of different meetings on behalf of VAS we need an agreed "script" for our key objectives, an agreed format for reporting back from meetings and agreement on handling of press and other enquiries.

A further draft will be tabled for the February meeting by the Communications Sub group.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

The meeting concluded with reports from the Regional Meetings, approval of new memberships to VAS and agreement that we should ask the PMG to consider including a VAS Update item as a standing agenda item at their meetings. The offer of VAS Directors to attend PMG meetings, CVS and VC board meetings and speak to colleagues in our networks about the work of VAS still stands and we would welcome any opportunity to do so.

END.

