



DELIVERING IMPACT: The role of Dorset's VCSE Sector



**December 2019
CONFERENCE – KEY POINTS**

Delivering Impact **2019 Conference - Key Findings Report**



The aim of the conference was to explore the ways the VCSE sector can more collaboratively deliver and demonstrate the sector's impact on the lives of people, and our communities in Dorset. The day started with presentations on Health & Wellbeing, Environment & Climate, and Community Economic Development. Delegates then discussed future developments in these areas for Dorset's VCSE sector. The Conference closed with a Panel Q&A of Infrastructure leaders who provide local VCSE support services in Dorset.

The Conference Agenda

Agenda Activities
Welcome (Conference) - Alan Clevett, Dorset Community Action—Chair of Trustee Board
<i>Introductory overview on current Health challenges/opportunities.</i>
VCSE Speaker 1 – Health & Well Being
Paula Bennetts , Dorset Community Action
<i>Introductory overview on CLS programme</i>
VCSE Speaker 2 – Environment & Climate Communities Living Sustainably film.
Introduction— Alex Picot
<i>Introductory overview on current CED challenges/opportunities.</i>
VCSE Speaker 3 – Community led Economic Development
Jason West , WeyForward, Chris Wilson , Weymouth Area Development Trust
BREAK
WORKSHOP SESSION
Table top conversations With questions on each theme
Plenary Q&A Issues we currently face, how best measure/communicate impact? Panel: Cllr P Batstone (DC), Sue Fleet (VCD), Alan Clevett (DCA), Dave Thompson (DYA), Natalie Sherring (DREC), Caroline Buxton (CAID).
Summary Concluding Address—Alan Clevett

1. WORKSHOP SESSION – Table top conversations

Question 1

How do we make services to deliver Health & Wellbeing as effective and joined-up as possible in Dorset?

a) What are the challenges to “joined-up” working?

- Lack of transport
- Too many statutory initiatives (altogether better, social prescribers etc..)
- Lack of understanding of what the Voluntary Sector is (e.g. just volunteering)
- Emphasis on “New” project funding rather than maintaining current provision
- Difficulties with building relationships (with statutory partners) and having meaningful consultation

- Compliance with confidentiality and data protection guidelines
- Lack of sustainable funding
- Lack of skills measuring impact
- Cuts of 10% on the VCSE sector
- Lack of local co-ordination of services – meaning lack of collaborative working
- Competition as too many organisations helping the “same” people
- Place Based support is not in place – personalised approach needed
- Too often money available is only accessible by large charities (often national), time and support needed within procurement to form collaboratives to meet local needs.

b) What are the opportunities?

- A one-stop shop is needed for people to get “basic” information about where to go to get help (e.g. starter furniture providers)
- Support needs of pre-schoolers with additional needs
- Transport for fun activities not just medical appointments
- Support for people to get to their nearest bus stop
- Using community assets as community hubs to get people together locally
- Need for men’s clubs – as they find joining current groups difficult
- Jan 2020 - DC online consultation of VCSE sector – key opportunity to make a difference
- April 2021 – DC Grant changes – opportunity to have a say in how grants are offered
- Link environmental opportunities and H&W to maximise impact of both
- A sector-wide strategic approach to utilising local funding opportunities
- Early intervention approach needed
- Social Value Act – needs greater emphasis in procurement practices

c) What work would you like to promote/receive support with?

- Support needed to bring people / link services together around local initiatives / opportunities
- Dorset Quality Mark (all groups highlighted this as a positive step to professional recognition of excellence within the sector)
- Help to empower volunteers

- Co-ordinated strategic approach needed (Transition Group?) to support VCSE sector access statutory funding
- Network events – to support collaboration
- Create a knowledge base owned by the sector
- Central support to promote services, both to communities and statutory commissioners



Question 2

How do we make services to deliver the Environmental & Climate agenda as effective and joined-up as possible in Dorset?

a) What are the challenges to “joined-up” working?

- Enforcement of building regulations and lack of consultation
- Inertia, lack of statutory will
- Lack of training and unbiased information
- Conflict of statutory priorities / mixed messages / no consistency e.g.; Waste Partnership / Lack of clear strategy
- Political agenda mismatch / need to depoliticise climate agenda
- Difficulty scaling up projects
- Difficulty of providing “quick wins”
- Lack of support from professionals for volunteers
- Needs to be part of everything we do, not an add-on
- No co-ordinated transport strategy

- Not currently tapping into young people's energy and drive for change

b) What are the opportunities?

- List needed of local ecological projects that could be replicated / sharing best practice initiatives
- Sponsor a tree project
- Village Halls – as shared desk space hubs (esp.; for Council/CCG staff) to reduce commuting
- Buy local – this should be first option (always!)
- Sector to act as role model for others / create volunteer champions / each Town and Parish Council should have an environmental champion
- School-based support – for parents and students (inc. secondary schools)
- Litter free Dorset scheme
- Training offer – to change behaviour/culture for organisations
- Local person (DC based) – to lead on all environmental strategy & projects
- Network of commercial businesses and VCSE sector to champion green issues (through Chamber of Commerce and BID) – Promote and support corporate responsibility

c) What work would you like to promote/receive support with?

- Support to share simple messages from DC Leader to community to affect change
- Best practice advice
- Advice around finance, setting up groups, legislation for local community groups
- Help recruiting local champions (and for T&PC)
- Lobbying from the sector for change, de-politicisation, creation of local lead at Dorset Council
- Village Hall's need green initiative support



Question 3

How do we make services to deliver Community-led Economic Development as effective and joined-up as possible in Dorset?

a) What are the challenges to “joined-up” working?

- Lack of sharing of information – often work is in silos
- Need for community facilitation to develop action plans
- Ignorance of CED – reluctance of statutory bodies to engage, emphasis on short-termism
- Multi-stream local economy
- Affordability of property / lack of space for enterprises / need for shared space, advice facilities, networking hubs
- Community apathy
- Lack of trust in small local providers
- Rate relief for social enterprises, CICs
- Use of out of area health service providers
- Not in Industrial Strategy with LEPs
- Need for a 21st Century economic model
- Ignorance of Social Value Act

- Cuts to youth service provision – impact on young workers/careers advice
- Reliance on seasonal employment

b) What are the opportunities?

- Tourism, doesn't have to be seasonal – more promotion all year round
- Need for more nursery provision / healthcare workers locally
- Affordable housing / affordable shopfront – high street regeneration support for start-up enterprises
- Income gap / zero hours workers / job insecurity – low income worker support needed
- Apprenticeship – offered by enterprises
- T&PC precept funding to support local economic development initiatives
- Campaigning together for enterprise development
- Buy local first – Dorset-wide scheme to instil trust in local providers
- Community wealth building scheme

c) What work would you like to promote/receive support with?

- Information hub to share what is working and what is not working
- Support smaller organisations to demonstrate their social value
- Promote Living Wage
- Development of initiatives to help the “just about managing” and local start-up support
- Lobbying to encourage funding to support low income workers, not just unemployed people
- Share legacy of CLS
- Support to be procurement ready – collaboration and start-ups
- Increase in small procurement opportunities
- Support for effective community facilitated events
- Support consultation opportunities – to change current concept of economic growth
- Local promotion of local enterprise provision

2. PANEL Q&A



Our Panel: **Alan Clevett** (DCA), **Dave Thompson** (DYA), **Sue Fleet** (VCD), **Cllr Pauline Batstone** (DC), **Natalie Sherring** (DREC), **Caroline Buxton** (CAID).

Discussion themes coming out of the Q&A Panel session included:

- Promoting your good work and the benefits in a range of ways to different audiences:
 1. Identify what outcomes you wish to achieve;
 2. Record and monitor what you do;
 3. Measure progress;
 4. Do case studies;
 5. Evaluate what you do;
 6. Work out the saving to the public purse (where appropriate);
 7. Identify what funds you lever into Dorset.
- Developing connections between trustees of local VCSE organisations;
- A common quality assurance process for Dorset's VCSE sector. We would need to consider the implications of introducing a Dorset QM. External QM's, e.g. the new UK Youth QM could be more rigorous than a local one, so we would need to consider a system which allowed people using an external system to align easily the requirements of a Dorset QM;
- Role of, and communications with the Local enterprise Partnership (LEP) and our LEP representative;

3. NEXT STEPS

1. The DCA board of trustees will meet in the New Year to discuss the contents of this report and how we best respond to the issues it highlights.
2. DCA to continue to provide a communication channel between the VCSE sector and the New Council to support engagement.
3. Conference delegates to participate in current consultation on Dorset Council's new corporate plan, and upcoming Dorset Council VCSE funding consultation in early New Year.



Thank you again for taking the time to be with us, and for helping us to raise the profile of the VCSE sector in Dorset. For further information please contact:

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