

**Better Together**

**Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy**  
**for**  
**County Durham**

**2013-2016**



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## Introduction

Better Together is an aspirational strategy for partnership working between the public sector and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in County Durham. The purpose of the strategy is to influence policy and illustrate the diverse role and impact of the VCS.

The VCS and public sector work together every day in different ways across the County in order to improve quality of life for local people. This involves many people and organisations working in local communities often in unseen or uncelebrated ways.

VCS organisations have unique capabilities to energise local communities and build social capital especially in the most vulnerable communities. They provide opportunities for voluntary action and in doing so make use of knowledge, skills, interests, beliefs and values of individuals and groups. As employers and deliverers of specific services the VCS are also significant contributors to the local economy.

The VCS and public sector partners, under the umbrella of the County Durham Partnership (CDP), have jointly developed the Better Together strategy which will continue to support the building of a resilient and sustainable VCS in a rapidly changing economic and political environment.

The County Durham Partnership brings together key organisations from the public, private and voluntary and community sector all aiming to make life 'Altogether better' for people in County Durham.

The Better Together VCS strategy is an associated document of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) which is the overarching plan for County Durham and acts as a guide and framework for all other strategies developed for the area.

Better Together is also underpinned by the County Durham Compact which outlines the principles for the working relationship between the public sector and VCS. The strategy remains faithful to the commitments made in the Compact and seeks to build on these.

This strategy is being driven by the desire to have significant impact on locally identified needs and priorities. It has been developed within the national policy context which includes Big Society, the Localism Act 2011, the Best Value Guidance and the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. However it remains flexible enough to adapt to and take into account the changing policy landscape at both national and local level. This includes the development of Clinical Commissioning Groups and the inception of the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner, both of which will have an interest in working with the VCS. This flexibility is particularly important as all sectors are facing challenging budget pressures and have to make significant savings as well as responding to the implications of welfare reform.

The welfare reform agenda is hugely complex and likely to have significant impact on individuals, families, the local economy and services provided by all partners. It will be all the more important to be joined up in our response to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in our community. The VCS has a significant role to play in partnership with the public sector. This strategy seeks to provide the vision and direction to demonstrate that we are 'Better Together'.

Responsibility for the implementation of the strategy rests with the County Durham Partnership and its associated working groups.

The strategy will be in place from 2013 - 2016 and will be reviewed in 2015.

## **The Strategy**

### **Vision**

'As partners together we want County Durham to be a place where a diverse voluntary and community sector thrives, where everyone works together to realise the aspirations of individuals and communities to improve quality of life.'

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the strategy is:

- To influence future policy and identify opportunities for partnership working.
- To illustrate the diverse role of the VCS.
- To illustrate the social and economic impact of the VCS in County Durham.

### **Aims:**

- To build confidence and resilience in individuals and communities to enable improved quality of life.
- To nurture a flourishing and growing VCS to contribute to vibrant communities.
- To maintain strong and effective partnership working in order to achieve sustainable outcomes.

### **Objectives:**

1. To increase the sustainability of the Voluntary and Community Sector by building capacity to meet identified needs and be flexible enough to meet future needs.
2. To improve communication within the VCS and between sectors.
3. To increase the number, diversity and quality of volunteer opportunities and recognise the impact and value of volunteering in local communities.

4. To develop the capacity and resilience of individuals to manage and shape change in their lives and their communities.
5. To strengthen the influence and effectiveness of the VCS in strategic and local decision making.

## **Developing an Action Plan**

A joint Action Plan has been developed which sets out initial outcome focussed actions and expected outputs and activities to achieve these. Lead partnership groupings have been identified to build on the actions and develop specific targets to achieve the desired outcomes which will lead to fulfilling the objectives of the strategy.

Progress and performance will be monitored quarterly and an annual report made to the County Durham Partnership and its associated working groups.

## **Defining the Voluntary and Community Sector**

The use of the term voluntary and community sector (VCS) in this strategy refers to groups and organisations that are:

- Independent and constitutionally self-governing, usually with an unpaid voluntary management committee, sometimes accessing or receiving public sector funding for their day to day operations.
- Value-driven - they exist for the good of the community, to promote social, environmental or cultural objectives in order to benefit society as a whole, or particular groups within it.
- Not for financial gain, re-investing any surpluses in order to meet their objectives.

VCS organisations are also sometimes known as ‘the third sector’ or ‘civil society organisations’ and can vary enormously in size, from small local groups run exclusively by volunteers, who may also be members or service users, to large national charities that are household names such as Age UK and Barnardo’s.

VCS organisations operate in diverse and wide-ranging fields including many that work in health and social care, community leisure and recreation activities, environmental work, arts, sport, education, campaigning and advocacy and many are faith based organisations. They may be registered with the Charity Commission, and may include trusts and foundations, social enterprises, community interest companies, mutuals and co-operatives.

## The VCS in County Durham

According to the Charity Commission in May 2013 there were 1491 registered charities operating in County Durham. This number does not capture the many organisations whose income does not exceed £5,000 per annum and are therefore not required to register with the Commission.

Broadly speaking the VCS groups currently operating in County Durham can be categorised in the following ways:

- **Specialist support organisations:** Organisations, operating regionally and county-wide to provide services, with specialist areas of expertise e.g. older people, advice, environment, enterprise, disability, children and young people etc.

**Durham Action on Single Housing (DASH)** is a specialist support organisation. It is an independent charity that provides accommodation with support to people who are homeless or about to become homeless. As an organisation dedicated to helping people escape the plight of homelessness DASH has developed and worked very effectively in partnership with social care, the police service and housing associations. In an innovative move DASH is now also working very closely with other charitable organisations including: Moving On, Single Homeless Action in Derwentside (SHAID) and the Waddington Street Centre as part of Collaborate Durham to strengthen and share resources in a joint partnership effort to tackle the growing problem of homelessness.

- **Infrastructure:** Infrastructure organisations provide generic support to front-line groups, including governance and financial advice, support in identifying and applying for funding opportunities and help and training for volunteers.

**Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS)** provide expertise, information and support and develop the skills local people need to run successful organisations and groups. They are an example of an infrastructure organisation. They spread good practice; support joint working and help groups to find funding and make effective use of resources. CVSs promote equality and diversity by fostering a wider understanding of the needs of disadvantaged and under-represented groups, making sure that policy makers understand the needs of local communities. They provide a forum for the local VCS and help public bodies engage effectively with them. They also encourage more people to volunteer, promote volunteering opportunities and support people who want to get involved in voluntary and community action.

**Tarka Limited** has been operating in County Durham for over 15 years. It is a Community Interest Company and infrastructure organisation that offers all groups, but particularly those that specialise in childcare, back office support, advice, help and training. It can provide examples of good practice for policies and procedures and services such as back office functions including payroll, accounting and book keeping.

- **Front line:** Localised organisations and community groups, providing services which support individuals within local communities. These organisations may be referred to as “below the radar” groups.

**Painting for Pleasure** is a community group based in Trimdon Grange whose members came together in 2005 with an aim to bring Art into the community. They provide a friendly relaxed atmosphere for anyone wishing to learn to draw or paint and offer mutual support and encouragement that promotes a therapeutic approach to art. The group has a tutor who teaches a variety of techniques but allows members to work at their own pace allowing them to experiment with different mediums and express their individuality. The emphasis is on Painting for Pleasure.

As partners together we recognise the added value and significant difference to partnership working which VCS organisations bring. This includes the contribution of volunteers, not least providing significant expertise as trustees and members of management committees. VCS organisations have the ability to provide services and support that are not available from statutory organisations. They also have financial freedoms to secure funding and resources that are not available to the public sector and which may add significant value to an initial grant or contract.

There is already considerable entrepreneurship shown by many within the VCS through the identification of needs that are not met or not fully met by existing public and private services, and the development of innovative ways to meet those needs. Those within the VCS invest their personal and social capital – their skills, their hard work, their knowledge of networks within communities – to develop projects and services to individuals, groups and communities.

In this way the VCS adds social value, by improving well-being and quality of life in communities and developing skills and resilience in individuals. They also add economic value as an employer and investor in local communities.

Many VCS organisations in the County source a significant amount of their income from a mix of:

- grant funding
- external (national/regional) contracts
- consortia bidding for service delivery from the public sector
- service level agreements on specialist areas of delivery from various service groupings in the Council and departments within the NHS and Police
- earned income

The mix and proportions of funding sources is changing and levels of funding are reducing in all sectors. It is therefore all the more important to try and create a climate for entrepreneurship to grow and for more co-ordinated and collaborative approaches to develop.

Those VCS organisations that previously attracted larger contracts with public sector agencies are now working on options for increased collaboration on procurement exercises with the private sector, and for developing new models to meet emerging policy priorities. It is recognised that collaboration and working together in consortia can become more challenging and time consuming as resources reduce and there are fewer opportunities to tender for contracts.

In the County there are some locally administered small grant funding schemes providing a valuable source of funding for front line organisations and community groups and there is a recognised need to preserve grant funding where possible as well as funding through commissioned services and specific contracts. The importance of maintaining a wide range of ways to fund or resource the VCS will help ensure its sustainability. In some cases loan finance may be appropriate for some larger organisations and in kind support such as the use of premises or the offer of particular skills and expertise also has a significant impact for some organisations.

As well as providing services, the sector brings added value in the shape of knowledge and expertise, voice and influence, engagement and outreach, offering a different and valuable perspective on the needs of local communities.

Historically engagement with public sector partners has been undertaken in a variety of ways in County Durham including an informal consortium known as One Voice Network which sought to provide a 'voice' for the sector. Now different and innovative ways in which the VCS and its partners can engage with each other and



external agencies are being explored and developed in order to respond appropriately to the changing structures and cultures of all organisations.

This engagement is particularly important in helping to understand and respond to the factors that influence the health and wellbeing of local communities. The VCS has a pivotal role to play in identifying these factors and informing and influencing strategies and policies such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS).

Evidence suggests that shared priorities and effective partnership working across the statutory sector and with the VCS combined with efforts to engage with local people are crucial to tackling health inequalities. This in addition to the human and social capital that individuals and VCS organisations invest in their communities and the added value they create is a real contribution to the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities in County Durham.

This strategy will build on these foundations so that County Durham becomes a place where a diverse voluntary and community sector thrives, where everyone works together to realise the aspirations of individuals and communities to improve quality of life for all.

## **Achieving the Objectives**

To achieve the objectives of this strategy all partners will work together to develop the aspirations into specific, measureable, achievable and realistic actions set within stated timescales.

### **Objective 1**

**To increase the sustainability of the Voluntary and Community Sector by building capacity to meet identified needs and be flexible enough to meet future needs.**

Working in specific groups or partnerships as well as in day to day activities we will take steps to achieve this objective by continuing to develop an understanding about the current structure and make-up of the whole sector in County Durham.

We will continue to develop the most appropriate model for infrastructure support in order to ensure that front line VCS groups and organisations receive the support and development that they need and are enabled to meet their declared aims and objectives.

We will develop a long term partnership funding and investment plan for both infrastructure support and frontline groups. This will include recognising the importance of maintaining a range of ways to fund and resource the VCS, including grants, contracts, loan finance and in kind support from partners.

We will develop a clear understanding of the Localism Act and other government policies and their implications for all partners in order to ensure that the sector continues to be sustainable and that delivery of support is forward looking and has the ability to adapt to changing political and economic circumstances.

We will ensure that relevant advice, support and development opportunities are available to all parts of the sector in order for organisations to build their capacity to deliver on their objectives.

We will increase the transparency and clarity of the commissioning and procurement processes in the public sector in order for VCS organisations to collaborate to win public contracts through consortia bids.

We will support VCS organisations, for example through the use of business mentors and coaches, to be better prepared to bid for contracts with the public sector and to understand how to demonstrate their impact and the social value they offer.

We will encourage and support VCS organisations to become more socially enterprising in the way they deliver their services by generating income for themselves as well as leveraging in additional resources.

We will utilise training and education opportunities across all sectors as well as sharing the knowledge and expertise that exists, both with officers and with volunteers, in order to increase understanding and develop capacity to meet future needs. This sharing of knowledge, skills and experience will be vital as organisations evolve and people move on.

We will seek to ensure that VCS organisations receive relevant and up to date information and that their training needs are continuously monitored and addressed. Carrying out regular health checks, for example as part of a peer mentoring programme, will see knowledge and expertise shared across the sector.

We will build the capacity of public sector partners to better understand and support the VCS through promotion and development of the Compact.

**NAVCA** (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action) is the national voice of local support and development organisations in England. It is a charity that champions and strengthens voluntary and community action by supporting their members in their work with over 160,000 local charities and community groups. NAVCA believes that voluntary and community action is vital for vibrant and caring communities. It provides their members with networking opportunities, specialist advice, support, policy information and training. It is a vital bridge between local groups and national government. NAVCA takes the lead on the issues that matter most to local infrastructure organisations. It influences national and local

government policy to strengthen local voluntary and community action.

## Objective 2

### To improve communication within the VCS and between sectors.

To achieve this objective we will develop a communications plan to ensure that key messages are communicated effectively and regularly within the VCS and between sectors. Good communications are essential to building relationships and the communications plan will act as a guide to maintaining and supporting these.

The Communications Plan will be developed to:

- Communicate the work of the VCS across the County to all interested parties.
- Ensure all parties involved are clear on the key messages.
- Manage the volume of communication in a timely and efficient manner.
- Identify and use appropriate media for communication.
- Ensure that appropriate information is ready to be distributed when required.
- Ensure that all interested parties are aware of this strategy and what their role is in its delivery.
- Facilitate consultation with all interested parties by clearly communicating start and end dates, objectives, the consultation management process and how the information will be used to influence decisions.
- Ensure that Compact commitments are communicated to all interested parties and their use promoted as a standard of good practice.

The communications plan will build on the positive partnerships which exist and which are already underpinned by the principles and undertakings outlined in the County Durham Compact.

**The Church of England Diocese of Durham** contains over 200 Parishes with more than 300 Churches and a World Heritage Site Cathedral, approximately 1.5 million people live within its boundaries. The Diocese has a dedicated Communication Adviser who acts to support, advise, coordinate, drive and influence the plan for all stakeholder communication across the Diocese and into the wider community. In addition the Diocese has a Communications and IT group whose focus is to support and encourage the various channels through which information flows and also the ways in which church communities are engaged. One vehicle of communication is the website and there is also an email network forum for those with diocesan and parish responsibility and for those with interest in receiving news from the Diocese. Additionally the Diocese is working to implement a dedicated newsroom facility using the latest web and rich media technologies to provide a conduit for communication with all stakeholder inside and outside the Diocese. The facility will provide for both electronic and printed communication delivery as well as a vehicle to promote events and activities across the Diocese in the promotion of

mission and ministry.

**Durham Voice:** The Cornforth Partnership was commissioned in 2011 with the aim of strengthening partnership working between the County Durham Children's & Families Trust and the local VCS Community of Interest groups by supporting the development and coordination of the Consortia Framework and developing an effective communication network. The project has established 'Durham Voice' which through a central contact point produces a weekly electronic update of a wide range of information including funding news, training information, activities, events and consultation. The project has built up an extensive countywide contact list and circulates information to a wide range of contacts including VCS and public sector networks.

We will work to develop a relevant communication network for all parts of the sector.

### **Objective 3**

**To increase the number, diversity and quality of volunteer opportunities and recognise the impact and value of volunteering in local communities.**

To achieve this objective we will continue to value volunteering and celebrate the contributions made by volunteers in local communities. The VCS provides a vast range of opportunities for individuals to be able to offer support to others in a variety of ways whilst broadening their own knowledge and developing their skills base.

We will actively promote the value of volunteering as a means for building individual confidence and assisting people into employment.

We will encourage and support the VCS to showcase and celebrate the work of volunteers and to highlight the contribution that voluntary activity has in local and wider communities.

We will work with organisations across all sectors to help them to identify and remove barriers that may prevent people from volunteering.

We will encourage and support public and private sector organisations to hold Volunteer Fairs to showcase the volunteer opportunities available within the County. We will also encourage them to support their own employees to volunteer both as a means to develop their own skills base as well by offering specialist knowledge and skills which will benefit VCS organisations and local people.

We will encourage learning and the sharing of good practice from partner organisations such as the University. We will also encourage VCS organisations to share their expertise with both public and private sector organisations.

**County Durham Youth Offending Service** is a partnership between Durham County Council, the police, NHS, and the National Probation Service. Volunteers are an essential part of delivering this service. They work alongside professional workers to help to reduce crime and make a difference to young people's lives who are aged 10 to 17 years. Volunteer roles include being a member of a Community Referral Order Panel which allows young people to speak for themselves, and take responsibility for their actions, through a restorative approach. Being a Mentor or Appropriate Adult, providing support and a positive role model, or involvement in constructive leisure activities which provide young people with ways to fill their time in a positive manner.

We will raise the profile of National Volunteer's Week to promote volunteering as a positive experience, as a way of supporting local communities as well as learning new skills and gaining new experiences and contacts.

We will strive to ensure that our Volunteer Centres continue to develop the support and guidance that they are able to offer individuals and front line groups and to share good practice in volunteer recruitment, training and support.

**Volunteer Centres** are local infrastructure organisations that provide support to potential volunteers, existing volunteers and organisations that involve volunteers. They have 6 core functions: **Brokerage**; their primary function is to match both individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate opportunities in the local community. They offer potential volunteers advice and on-going support, matching their motivation to volunteer with relevant opportunities. **Marketing volunteering**; they stimulate local interest in volunteering and community activity, promoting and marketing volunteering through local, regional and national events and campaigns. **Good practice development**; they promote good practice in working with volunteers to all volunteer involving organisations. They deliver training for volunteers and volunteer managers. **Develop volunteering opportunities**; they work in close partnership with statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies as well as community groups and faith groups to develop local volunteering opportunities. Volunteer Centres will target specific groups which face barriers to volunteering. **Policy response and campaigning**; they identify proposals or legislation that may impact on volunteering. They lead and/or participate in campaigns on issues that affect volunteers or volunteering. **Strategic development of volunteering**; as the local experts on volunteering Volunteer Centres inform strategic thinking and planning at a regional and national level. They are also responsible for posting the majority of content to the national volunteering website

We recognise that many organisations already support individuals very well in their voluntary activity and that some volunteers may need added support and guidance to increase their confidence to enable them to become volunteers. This support may need to continue for the first weeks or months of their involvement. We will therefore encourage the use of ‘buddying’ or mentoring to promote good practice and volunteering opportunities.

We will encourage and support further development of the number and range of volunteering opportunities available within organisations as well as encouraging people to volunteer.

We will nurture and develop the networks that exist and broaden these out to ensure that opportunities are varied enough to meet the skills and interests of the volunteers. We will encourage the County Durham Partnership and its five Thematic Partnerships to utilise the networks of the different organisations involved.

In order to promote good practice in volunteering and highlight individual volunteering experiences, we will use case studies to celebrate voluntary activity and additionally publicise the opportunity to build and enhance personal skills and improve employability.

**Jack Drum Arts** is a social enterprise based in Crook, but working county-wide that seeks to engage individuals and communities in creative explorations using a wide range of performing arts and media. The organisation works with people of all ages and abilities to inspire and enable new audiences to consider how creativity might work for them – whether as a viable career option or as an enriching leisure and/or learning activity. The organisation provides opportunities for volunteers to work alongside professional practitioners, often as a first step into further education, employment or simply as a means of widening social networks.

#### **Objective 4**

##### **To develop the capacity and resilience of individuals to manage and shape change in their lives and their communities.**

In order to achieve this objective we will encourage all partners to adopt an asset based approach to community development. Asset based community development aims to develop and build on people’s strengths or assets i.e. their skills, talents and capacity, rather than concentrating on their needs.

Asset based community development draws out the strengths and successes in a community’s shared history as a starting point for change. An asset based approach

values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in individuals, families and communities.

Strong communities are made up of strong individuals and community activists who can play a vital role in enabling those communities to become enterprising and sustainable. Changes in national Government policy such as the Localism Act and the Open Public Services White Paper have given communities the opportunity to gain greater control of their local services and facilities. This offers a mechanism to shape change within their neighbourhoods and offers further opportunities to get involved.

**Healthworks** in Easington Colliery is a healthy living resource centre, managed by County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust. It provides easy access to a wide range of more than 45 health and community support services and activities for all ages and is open to anyone who lives or works in County Durham and Darlington. The centre acts as a community focal point where service providers and community groups can come together to address issues that affect the quality of life in the local community. Healthworks has over 60 volunteers who support the centre with administration, managing the refreshment bar and food co-op, and in the delivery of services and activities.

We will raise awareness about how to get involved in local networks, by highlighting what networks and partnerships already exist and by signposting individuals to groups and organisations that offer support, education, information and training. We will develop training resources and workshops to support individual volunteers, community activists and those in specialist roles such as trustees.

We will develop training resources and workshops to promote leadership within the VCS and to enhance the skills of paid staff as well as volunteers.

We will build on the successes of local participatory approaches to budgeting and decision making to promote active participation and empowerment (and the prevention of disempowerment) in order to encourage sustainable community driven development.

**The Activity Den** is a community building and project for children and young people in Stanley. The Den came about when a group of local people saw the imminent closure of a much-loved community building. In 2007 the Activity Den became a registered charity and company limited by guarantee and the volunteers through persistent endeavour managed to raise £100,000 for essential capital works to save the building. In July 2009 the trustees signed a lease on the building with Durham County Council allowing the continuing provision of a hugely popular and very successful venue for community activities for young people. The aim of The Den is to give children, young people, their parents, carers and volunteers the

opportunity to take a fuller and bigger role in life by engaging in wide-ranging activities and offering them the opportunity to make positive life choices.

## **Objective 5**

### **To strengthen the influence and effectiveness of the VCS in strategic and local decision making.**

To achieve this objective we will develop mechanisms to strengthen the voice and influence of the VCS to enable it to continue to grow and be resilient to the changing national and local landscape. It is also important to respect and uphold the independence of the VCS.

We will continue to support the existing networks where these are effective, as well as looking at new ways to create opportunities for a diverse range of voices to be heard and have an influence. This might be through local infrastructure organisations, specialist support organisations or through relationships with regional or national agencies.

**East Durham Neighbourhood Watch Association** has been established for 4 years and acts as a voice at local and regional level for the several hundred Neighbourhood Watch schemes that exist in the East of the county. It is managed by volunteers and promotes Crime Prevention and Community Safety initiatives. Durham Constabulary provides in kind support in the form of meeting rooms, printing facilities and participation in campaigns. The association raises funds through social events and funding bids to support activities such as the recent installation of door chains and window locks in 100 vulnerable properties in Shotton Colliery, which was carried out in conjunction with the Police and a local, private sector security company.

To enable the voice of the sector to influence strategic decision making at the earliest stages, and also to have involvement and influence at appropriate networks, we will ensure that the VCS has strong and effective links to all parts of the County Durham Partnership, including the Thematic Partnerships and AAPs. This will help to ensure local decisions are linked to specific activities and localities, meet local need and are made in response to local people.

We will seek to clarify the role that VCS representatives will play to ensure that everyone involved is able to fulfil their roles and are informed and supported accordingly. We will develop clear lines of communication and where appropriate terms of reference so that any VCS representative is committed to the effective two-way flow of information.



We will endeavour to ensure that those individuals who take on a role are from the most appropriate organisation within the VCS and at the relevant level of decision making. We will seek to empower individuals with expertise in specific areas of delivery to participate in any pieces of work that are relevant to that expertise and knowledge.

We recognise that the VCS plays a vital role in helping to deliver the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy. To ensure this involvement is optimised we will encourage all partners to enable and support VCS representatives to be part of the solution.

We recognise the important role that the VCS has in the commissioning cycle and we will continue to offer opportunities for the VCS to help in assessing needs, designing and reviewing services and influencing specifications that best meet the needs of local people.

**The Hive** at Ushaw Moor was opened in May 2012. It is a flexible place for people to meet and enjoy wide-ranging activities and also provides a point of access for a variety of services. It was developed as a community initiative by the Ushaw Moor Action Group who, in 2009, came together as a group of local people determined to address local issues. The Action Group worked in partnership with the Police, Durham City CVS, Mid Durham AAP, Groundwork North East, and local schools to identify problem areas and devise strategies and action plans to tackle them. Investments have been made as a consequence of the work undertaken and the Action Group is now providing the community with an effective local voice.

## **Next Steps**

The Action Plan which has been developed to implement this strategy is a working document reflecting the objectives outlined. It will also remain flexible enough to adapt to changing political and economic circumstances.

All partners, including those from within the VCS, will continue to be involved in developing and implementing the Action Plan. We will ensure that the most appropriate organisations have an opportunity to contribute to the identification of further actions and their delivery.

## **Glossary**

### **Best Value Guidance**

Statutory guidance, published in September 2011, which sets out some reasonable expectations of the way Councils should work with voluntary and community groups and small businesses when facing difficult funding decisions.

### **Big Society**

The Big Society is a policy initiative which involves three key aims: an emphasis on decentralisation (*'Community empowerment'*) with more power devolved to local councils and neighbourhoods; public services reform (*'opening up public services'*) enabling charities, social enterprises, co-operatives, but also private companies, to compete to deliver public services; and thirdly programmes to encourage people to play more of an active role in communities (*'social action'*).

### **Capacity Building**

Capacity Building generally refers to a process to increase the skills and resources of individuals, organisations and communities.

### **Commissioning**

Commissioning is the process through which needs are identified and assessed, and appropriate solutions designed to meet those needs. It is linked to procurement – the distinction being that commissioning involves deciding *what* should be purchased, whilst procurement is the process which determines *how* it will be purchased.

### **Community Interest Company**

A Community Interest Company (CIC) is a type of social enterprise company for those who want to use their profits and assets for the public good rather than being driven by the need to maximise profits for shareholders and owners. An organisation cannot be both a charity and a CIC but a charity may operate a CIC as a trading subsidiary.

### **Cooperatives**

Co-operatives are businesses that are fully or majority owned by their members – who may be employees, consumers, others in the community or a mix of these. Co-operatives work on one member, one vote – rather than one share, one vote – and sign up to an agreed set of values and principles.

### **Joints Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)**

The JSNA provides the evidence which tells commissioners what the health and social care needs of the communities are.

### **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)**

The JHWS is a legal requirement to ensure that NHS and social care agencies work together and agree the services that should be prioritised for County Durham. It has been developed with local stakeholders including service users, patients and carers, the voluntary and community sector, National Health Service (NHS) and Local Authority partners.

The document sets out where we would like County Durham to be heading in terms of health and wellbeing. It outlines a four year vision for improving health and addressing health inequalities in the County.

### **Localism Act 2011**

The Localism Act contains a wide range of measures to devolve more powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities greater control over local decisions like housing and planning.

### **Mutuals**

Mutuals are organisations that are owned by, and run for the benefit of, their current and future members. In the UK, the mutual sector is highly diverse and includes organisations ranging from housing associations to employee owned businesses.

### **Procurement**

Procurement is the process through which an organisation establishes contracts for goods, works and services. Procurement is part of the commissioning cycle, starting with an identified need and seeking to put in place a contract, or contracts, which effectively meet that need. This involves research, planning and market engagement, the conducting of procurement exercises such as tenders, the formal award of contracts, and the management and monitoring of contracts once in place. It is connected to, but separate from, “purchasing” - which is the process of ordering and paying for goods and services.

### **Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012**

The Act places a duty on public bodies to consider, prior to undertaking a procurement exercise, how that exercise, in terms of what is being procured, might improve ‘the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area’.

### **Social Capital**

A term used to describe those resources (trust, reciprocity, and the sharing of values), which allow a community to function more effectively.

## Social Enterprise

Social Enterprises are businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.

## Trusts and Foundations

The terms 'trust' and 'foundation' are often used interchangeably. All charitable foundations are trusts – that is, they are managed by trustees who may or may not be supported by paid staff. A foundation is a trust whose income derives from an endowment of land or invested capital. Not all foundations make grants; some use their income to finance charitable activity of their own. Not all grant-making charities have an endowment.

## Useful Links

**For the role structure and membership of the County Durham Partnership together with its associated documents visit:**

[www.countydurhampartnership.co.uk](http://www.countydurhampartnership.co.uk)

Here you will find:

[The Sustainable Community Strategy for County Durham](#)

[County Durham Compact](#)

[The County Durham Partnership Framework](#) - the booklet provides details about the structure and activities of the CDP, thematic partnerships and sub-groups.




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