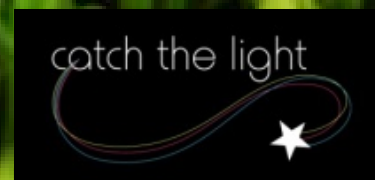# The Grassroots

Piece in the Jigsaw

A discussion paper on how changing perceptions of and support for the Third Sector and Volunteering will transform and empower Renfrewshire's communities

One door...
to a thriving, connected & sustainable Third Sector

RENFREWSHIRE CVS

catch the light

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Efficient Government Programme states that by 2011 the Scottish Government seeks to achieve £1.6bn savings which must deliver the same or improved services using less cash. The 'Conservative-Liberal Democrat' coalition in Westminster is based on agreement that reducing the structural deficit and achieving economic recovery is the most urgent issue facing Britain. Their emergency budget is speeding up the process by bringing forward ways to recover 80% of UK debt through spending cuts and 20% from raising taxes (The Independent 22/6/2010[1]). Predictions are that Scotland's economic recovery will be more painful due partly to its higher dependency on the public sector, with reports that the NHS alone will shed 4,000 posts (The Guardian 6/6/2010[2]). As this report was being finalised the Scottish Government released an Independent Budget Review (July 2010[3]) which explores options and makes recommendations for efficiencies to be met within a reduced budget allocation from Westminster. It refers to 'mainstreaming' roles for the Private and Third Sectors and radically redesigning public service delivery. In parallel with the economic drivers there is a new focus on community empowerment. The Scottish Government released its Community Empowerment Action Plan in 2009 and the Westminster coalition has just launched 'The Big Society'. With rising international concern over climate change, Scotland's Climate Change (2009[4]) Act makes community engagement a 'significant feature' of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning to a low carbon economy. Thus the drive to achieve economic, social and environmental benefits during hard economic times is driving governments and public service providers to further explore whether there is untapped potential within the Third Sector and Volunteering.

Historically the Third Sector is renowned and inherently trusted by the public to provide services to communities in need, build community capacity and foster various forms of community engagement as part of its ethos. Hence a key question is what actually needs to change so that the public and third sector can combine efforts and resources to make services more efficient, effective and sustainable as well as being better connected to communities. This report considers recent trends and their implications for Renfrewshire. It examines evidence of strengths within Renfrewshire, how to build on them and identifies potential gaps. It highlights examples of practice which might act as models to introduce, expand or roll out to meet the challenges ahead.

The society we live in is changing and service provision needs to alter to be more responsive, relevant and resilient to the changes ahead. The Third Sector and Volunteering has a significant role to play in economic growth and recovery but there is no quick fix, the Third Sector should not be viewed as the cheap option, nor should volunteers be used to replace real jobs. Yet the Third Sector has a unique capacity to connect with, transform and empower communities from the grassroots to achieve substantial long-term advantages. We need to reflect on the current context and investigate how much more can be achieved. The future focus should be on creating the right conditions where the sector's previously untapped potential is supported to add value and make a long-term impact on the social, economic, cultural and environmental development of Renfrewshire.

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[1] The Independent 'Emergency Budget 2010 at a glance' [Web:
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/emergency-budget-2010-at-a-glance-2007350.html]
[2] The Guardian 6/6/2010 'Scotland will be harder hit by public sector cuts' [Web:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/jun/06/scotland-last-uk-recovery]
[3] Scottish Government (29th July 2010) 'Independent Budget Review [Web:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/IndependentBudgetReview/Resources/final-report]
[4] Scottish Government (2009) 'Scotland's Climate Change (2009) Act [Web:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/climatechangeact]
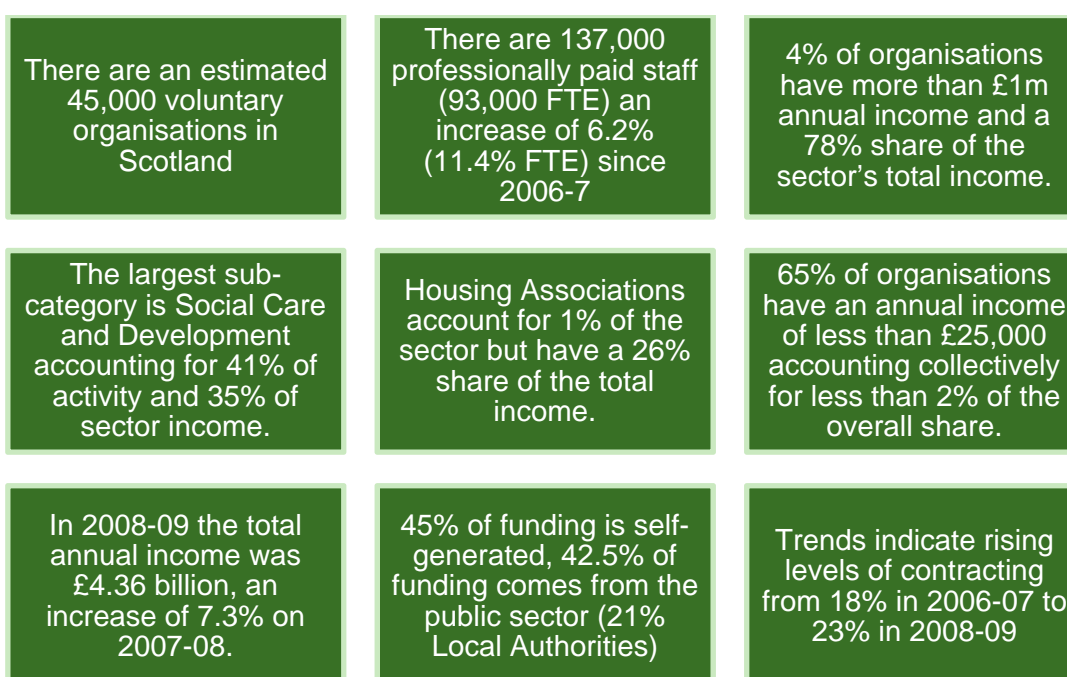
BACKGROUND

This section highlights key facts about the Third Sector and Volunteering and their contribution to civil society. It presents facts on Renfrewshire's sector. It also considers the public sector's growing interest and changing relationships with the Third Sector.

THE ROLE OF THE THIRD SECTOR NATIONALLY

The SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations) Scottish Voluntary Sector Statistics (2010[5]) highlights the Third Sectors' many shapes, sizes, roles and functions from small-scale community self-help groups to large-scale social enterprises. They offer a wide range of products and services locally, nationally and internationally.

Figure 1: Key Facts about the Third Sector in Scotland

There are an estimated 45,000 voluntary organisations in Scotland	There are 137,000 professionally paid staff (93,000 FTE) an increase of 6.2% (11.4% FTE) since 2006-7	4% of organisations have more than £1m annual income and a 78% share of the sector's total income.
The largest sub-category is Social Care and Development accounting for 41% of activity and 35% of sector income.	Housing Associations account for 1% of the sector but have a 26% share of the total income.	65% of organisations have an annual income of less than £25,000 accounting collectively for less than 2% of the overall share.
In 2008-09 the total annual income was £4.36 billion, an increase of 7.3% on 2007-08.	45% of funding is self-generated, 42.5% of funding comes from the public sector (21% Local Authorities)	Trends indicate rising levels of contracting from 18% in 2006-07 to 23% in 2008-09

Overall indications are of a growing, diverse and active sector. However levels of investment are disproportionate with the majority of income concentrated among a small minority of large-scale enterprising organisations, equipped to take full advantage of the rise in contracting while the vast majority of organisations survive on extremely low levels of income.

The UK wide report on social enterprises (Social Enterprise Coalition 2009[6]) argues that social enterprises form an increasingly important part of the economic and social landscape, which is distinct from the wider community and voluntary sector and performs better than equivalent parts of the business sector. Across the UK 56% of social enterprises have increased their turnover from the previous year compared to 28% of Small to Medium Enterprises SME's. Two-thirds are making a profit with an average turnover of £2.1 million and a median turnover of £175,000. More than two-thirds earn more than 50% of their income through trading and non-trading income falls to just 8% for

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[5] SCVO (2010) SCVO Scottish Voluntary Sector Statistics 2010 [Web: http://www.scvo.org.uk/scvocms/images/SCVO_Scottish_Voluntary_Sector_Statistics_2010.pdf]
[6] Social Enterprise Coalition (2009) 'State Social Enterprise 2009' [Web: http://www.scottishsocialenterprise.org.uk/policy/93]

those with more than £1m income. The only information presented separately for Scotland in the report is the breakdown of geographic areas. For the 82 organisations surveyed in Scotland 50% operate at a local authority level, 24% at a national and 2% at an international level. 77% of Scottish respondents claim to trade/operate in rural areas. The argument made by advocates of social enterprises is that this part of the Third Sector offers a model that is well equipped to meet modern social, economic and environmental demands.

A national review of literature describes the evidence of the Third Sector's contribution to social and economic life in Scotland as 'overwhelming'. The report identifies the sector's cross-cutting impact on the Scottish Government's five strategic objectives as one of its 'great strengths' (Dacombe and Bach 2009[7]). This can partly be explained by increasing levels of partnership working between the Public and Third Sectors. However there is a need to carefully consider the basis of relationships, particularly at a local level. Leach and Wilson (1998; cited in Greenwood et al 2002[8]) define three types of relationship between the sector and local authorities:

1. **Instrumentalists** –voluntary groups seen as external agencies with the instrumental potential for providing better value services
2. **Participative democratic ethos** - voluntary groups seen as essential to a participative ethos with potential to provide services as secondary
3. **Traditional** – voluntary groups supported through tradition and precedent

A joint statement signed by the Scottish Government, CoSLA, SOLACE (Scotland) and SCVO (2009[9]) acknowledges one of the barriers to success is that relationships between sectors in Scotland vary according to personality. The statement conveys the desired characteristics for a successful relationship, which fit with the instrumentalist/participative definitions as follows:

- A successful relationship between the Scottish Government, Local Government and the third sector will be built upon mutual respect and a joint understanding of the roles played and challenges faced by each partner in delivering better outcomes for the public. It will be a supportive and sustainable relationship which reinforces and celebrates our interdependence.

- Local authorities and the Scottish Government will value the third sector as an integral part of shaping and delivering better services for Scotland's people and will be flexible in their approach to partnership and funding so as to recognise their role in the sustainability of the sector alongside the delivery of public service.

- The third sector will organise itself so as to effectively participate in mutually acceptable decision making structures, in a transparent and accessible way. The third sector will be committed to working with Local Government to deliver efficiencies, promote Best Value, and achieve improved outcomes for local communities.

This gives both the Public and Third Sectors shared responsibility for working together to achieve common goals; becoming more relevant, responsive and resilient to modern challenges.

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[7] Dacombe, R & Bach, S 'The Evidence Base for Third Sector Policy in Scotland' October 2009; Scottish Government [Web: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/10/16155044/0]
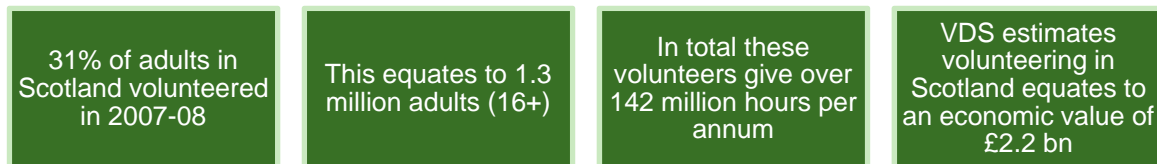[8] Greenwood J, Pyper R & Wilson D 'New Public Administration in Britain' 2002 Third Edition, Routledge, London
[9] The Scottish Government, CoSLA, SOLACE (Scotland) and SCVO 'Joint Statement on the Relationship at Local level between Government and the Third Sector' 2009 [Web: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1036/0087048.pdf]

THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERING NATIONALLY

Volunteering is not an exclusive part of the Third Sector domain. Volunteering also occurs in the public and private sector and commonly includes providing informal support to individuals as well as more formally organised support to organisations. Statistics highlighted by VDS' (Volunteer Development Scotland) (2010) are based on the Scottish Household Survey (2008[10]). Results are highlighted below:

Figure 2: Key Facts about Volunteering in Scotland

31% of adults in Scotland volunteered in 2007-08	This equates to 1.3 million adults (16+)	In total these volunteers give over 142 million hours per annum	VDS estimates volunteering in Scotland equates to an economic value of £2.2 bn

For those who volunteer the most common activities are those linked with children's activities in schools (22%) and other youth and children's organisations (22%), especially among adults aged 16-44. Volunteering for religious organisations is also high and becomes a more common volunteering activity as age increases.

The most frequent types of unpaid activity are: generally helping out (37%); raising money (33%); helping to organise or run events or activities (30%) and doing whatever is required (23%). Committees of unpaid volunteers are a defining feature of the Third Sector and is an activity undertaken by 20% of volunteers in Scotland.

The Scottish Household Survey (2008) nevertheless confirms that there is an under-representation of disadvantaged groups such as the permanently sick or disabled, the unemployed or those living in areas of deprivation with only 17-19% of those categories providing unpaid help to organisations or individuals compared to 33% for the rest of Scotland.

The types of organisations supported and activities provided by volunteers in deprived areas is different from the national picture with, for example only 9% input to sport compared to 16% in the rest of Scotland and 19% in deprived areas helping to organise or run events or activities compared to 31% for the rest of Scotland. Conversely some volunteering activities are marginally higher in deprived areas such as generally helping out (40% compared to 36% for the rest of Scotland) and providing direct services (9% compared to 6% for the rest of Scotland).

Based on an investigation of volunteering (Blake Stevenson 2008[11]), recommendations to improve its effectiveness include: using a differentiated and targeted marketing strategy to raise awareness of the benefits among different excluded target groups; clarifying commitments; and simplifying disclosure requirements to help reduce barriers to participation. Many who have ceased to volunteer say nothing would persuade them to re-engage while some would if they were able to fit volunteering around other commitments. Non-volunteers are more likely to be attracted to participate if someone known to them asks.

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[10] Extract from the Scottish Household Survey (2008) [Web: http://www.vds.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Volunteering%20Extract%20-%20Scottish%20Household%20Survey.pdf]
[11] Blake Stevenson (2008) 'Scottish Household Survey Analytical Topic Report: Volunteering'; Scottish Government [Web: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/01/18110338/0]

RENFREWSHIRE'S THIRD SECTOR & VOLUNTEERING FACTS & FIGURES

There is very little research on Renfrewshire's Third Sector or Volunteering. OSCR (2005[12]) reported that Renfrewshire has 299 charities 69% of which work within the Local Authority area. This ranks Renfrewshire 27th out of 32 local authorities for the number of charities registered per 10,000 of the population. However the ranking improves to 15th place in relation to charity income. RCVS, the infrastructure support organisations for the local Third Sector is conducting regular mapping exercises to address the gap in local data. They also maintain a database of local organisations. From the information available it is estimated the number of Third Sector organisations has risen by over 60% since 2003 from 418 to 700. The Scottish Household Survey (2008) states that 21% of adults in Renfrewshire volunteered in 2005/6. Local estimates are that 13,000 volunteers are active in Renfrewshire. More detailed analysis of the sector is available from the most recent mapping exercise (RCVS 2008) (n=107):

Figure 3: Key Facts about the Third Sector & Volunteering in Renfrewshire

59% of organisations responding employ staff	**75.5% of respondents engage volunteers (in addition to their governing body)**	**For those engaging volunteers the median number of volunteers in 14.5**
The main focus of work is in local communities	**Childcare, counselling & support services, disability and education are common activities provided along with volunteering opportunities**	**The most common beneficiary groups are older people, volunteers and young people, closely followed by disabled people and residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods**
Half provide services Renfrewshire wide	**88% of organisations employing staff are registered charities and 57% are companies limited by guarantee**	**35% or organisations not employing staff are registered charities and only two are companies limited by guarantee**
The income levels range from the minimum £192 to a maximum of £14.5M.	**Local authority grants are the main source of income for all organisations**	**Social economy organisations have much higher levels of self-generated or trading income and donations**

From one perspective rising numbers indicate a measure of success however like national trends this also causes a disproportionate dispersal of limited resources across a larger number. Mapping exercise respondents willing to disclose financial information (n=44) reflect the national picture of polarised high and low income organisations. Six organisations with the highest income levels account for 90% of the total income. 43% of respondents survive on less than £20,000 per annum.

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[12] OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) (2005) 'Scottish Charities 2005' [Web: http://www.oscr.org.uk/publicationitem.aspx?id=5360236d-9b84-4e47-9495-56f74dea647c]

Although the mapping exercise was carried out at the end of 2008 there were already signs of the impact of the recession with 24.5% of respondents (n=53) stating their income had reduced in the previous year while 52% said it had increased. Nevertheless organisations continue to take an interest in growing their capacity and resources with 15 organisations declaring an interest in becoming part of a creating a centralised Third Sector Hub facility.

Almost half (43%) of the organisations employing staff are not companies limited by guarantee which exposes them to risks which can easily be mitigated if they were. There are also a number of organisations that could benefit from becoming registered charities and/or Community Interest Companies. There is an apparent gap in meeting the needs of ethnic minorities & equalities work within Renfrewshire with few organisations providing evidence of specifically targeting these needs.
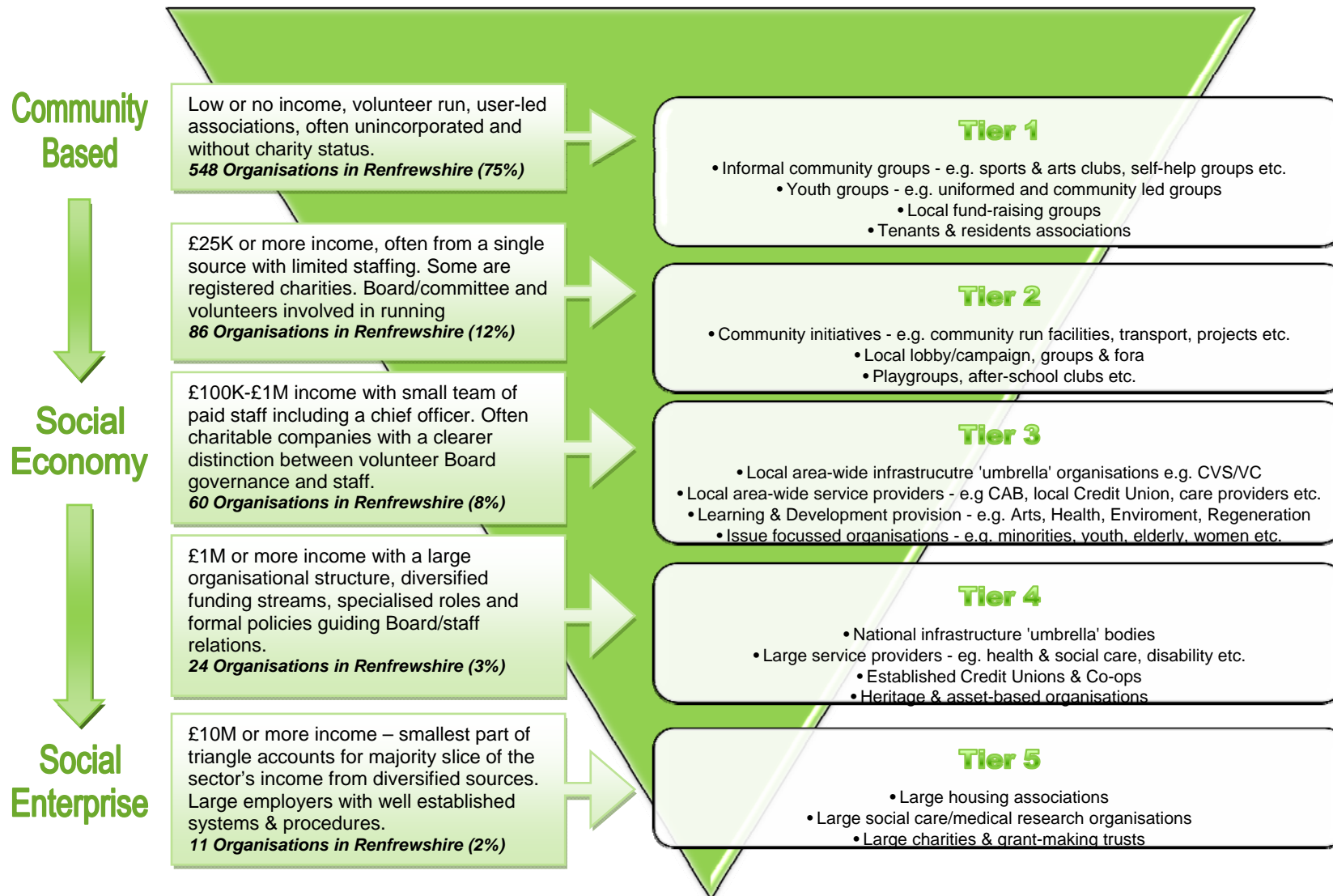
Information from the Third Sector Database was used to illustrate the spread of organisations estimated to be active in Renfrewshire. This diagram is referred to as the Five Tiers Triangle and estimates 75% of the local sector to be in Tier 1 while only 2% is in Tier 5 [see figure 5]. This is entirely consistent with national trends. Renfrewshire is therefore likely to face similar issues to those raised in literature and policy.

One significant difference for the sector in Renfrewshire is that public sector cuts are likely to hit harder and deeper given the higher dependency among all organisations on public investment of some form. Renfrewshire also contains a number of deprived communities suffering from the effects of poverty and worklessness.

If the predicted job-losses from the recession take hold; volunteering will provide opportunities to support people to stay economically active through developing existing or new skills, gaining experience and getting direct contact with employers. The organisations within the Third Sector will not only provide the bulk of volunteering opportunities within Renfrewshire, but also create significant opportunities for building community capacity; transferring and managing community assets and devising 'recession-busting' survival techniques for delivering products, services and activities with a social purpose. The voluntary activity established within Renfrewshire evidences the unique, diverse and specialised capacities inexistence. It is therefore well placed to support public agencies to tackle priorities such as deprivation, unemployment and addictions.

Whilst the majority of organisations are small with low levels of financial investments other assets are rich: volunteering contribution, knowledge of the issues faced by communities in need and the active involvement of service users and beneficiaries in designing and delivering their work. Thus the potential to marry this with the new requirements of public service delivery is worthy of further exploration.

Figure 4: The Five Tiers of the Third Sector in Renfrewshire

Community Based

Low or no income, volunteer run, user-led associations, often unincorporated and without charity status.
548 Organisations in Renfrewshire (75%)

Tier 1
- Informal community groups - e.g. sports & arts clubs, self-help groups etc.
- Youth groups - e.g. uniformed and community led groups
- Local fund-raising groups
- Tenants & residents associations

£25K or more income, often from a single source with limited staffing. Some are registered charities. Board/committee and volunteers involved in running
86 Organisations in Renfrewshire (12%)

Tier 2
- Community initiatives - e.g. community run facilities, transport, projects etc.
- Local lobby/campaign, groups & fora
- Playgroups, after-school clubs etc.

Social Economy

£100K-£1M income with small team of paid staff including a chief officer. Often charitable companies with a clearer distinction between volunteer Board governance and staff.
60 Organisations in Renfrewshire (8%)

Tier 3
- Local area-wide infrastrucutre 'umbrella' organisations e.g. CVS/VC
- Local area-wide service providers - e.g CAB, local Credit Union, care providers etc.
- Learning & Development provision - e.g. Arts, Health, Enviroment, Regeneration
- Issue focussed organisations - e.g. minorities, youth, elderly, women etc.

£1M or more income with a large organisational structure, diversified funding streams, specialised roles and formal policies guiding Board/staff relations.
24 Organisations in Renfrewshire (3%)

Tier 4
- National infrastructure 'umbrella' bodies
- Large service providers - eg. health & social care, disability etc.
- Established Credit Unions & Co-ops
- Heritage & asset-based organisations

Social Enterprise

£10M or more income – smallest part of triangle accounts for majority slice of the sector's income from diversified sources. Large employers with well established systems & procedures.
11 Organisations in Renfrewshire (2%)

Tier 5
- Large housing associations
- Large social care/medical research organisations
- Large charities & grant-making trusts

DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

The Conservative – Liberal Democrat coalition in Westminster has launched its 'driving ambition' for 'building the Big Society' by putting more power and opportunities into people's hands (Cabinet Office 2010[13]). The main themes which make up the Big Society idea are summarised below:

1. **Give communities more powers** – reforming planning, giving powers to save facilities due to close and training for community organizers.
2. **Encourage people to take an active role in their communities** – volunteering and involvement in social action, charitable giving/philanthropy and introducing a national citizen service for 16 year olds.
3. **Transfer power from central to local government** – devolved power and financial autonomy, a power of competence and returning decisions on housing and planning to Councils.
4. **Support co-ops, mutuals, charities and social enterprises** – creation and expansion of mutuals, co-ops, charities and social enterprises and support greater involvement in running public services, right to public sector employees to take-over services they deliver, and establish a Big Society bank from dormant bank accounts.
5. **Publish government data** – a new 'right to data' and publishing crime data statistics.

Although devolution means that many of the proposals will not directly affect Scotland, it demonstrates how the Third Sector and Volunteering are at the forefront of political thinking. Regardless of which political party is in power, all have proposals to strengthen different forms of voluntary action. 'Localism' is a feature of both Scottish and UK Governments due to concerns over falling voter turnout and pressures on public finances. There is a consensus across political parties that there should be greater citizen involvement in decision-making. Hence increasing participation is a theme which cuts across the main drivers of change. Pathways through Participation[14] in England explain the issues which are shaping the participation agenda which apply equally to the Scottish context:

Figure 5: Drivers shaping participation

Crisis of democracy and new governance spaces	Civil society: thriving or threatened?	Citizen action: individual agency and collective organising
• Formal public participation in decline • Spaces to re-engage citizens in decision-making - the localism and empowerment agendas • Citizens co-producing public services - the personalisation agenda	• Development of legal, statutory, financial framework for the Third Sector • Fears of co-option and over-stretch as the sector is increasingly involved in partnerships and service provision • Emergence of new forms of participation - on-line	• Associational life is active: people are not apathetic • Rising individualism: changing expectations of participation • Different/multiple identities - people associating with a range of communities of place and interest • New technologies can be harnessed for citizen mobilisation and activism • Spontaneous, unstructured and informal ways of organising

[Source: adapted from Pathways through Participation, ibid]

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[13] Cabinet Office (2010) 'Building the Big Society' [Web: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/407789/building-big-society.pdf]

[14] Pathways through Participation (2010) 'Briefing Paper no. 2 – What are the drivers of participation?' [Web: http://pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Briefing-paper-2-What-are-the-drivers-of-participation.pdf]
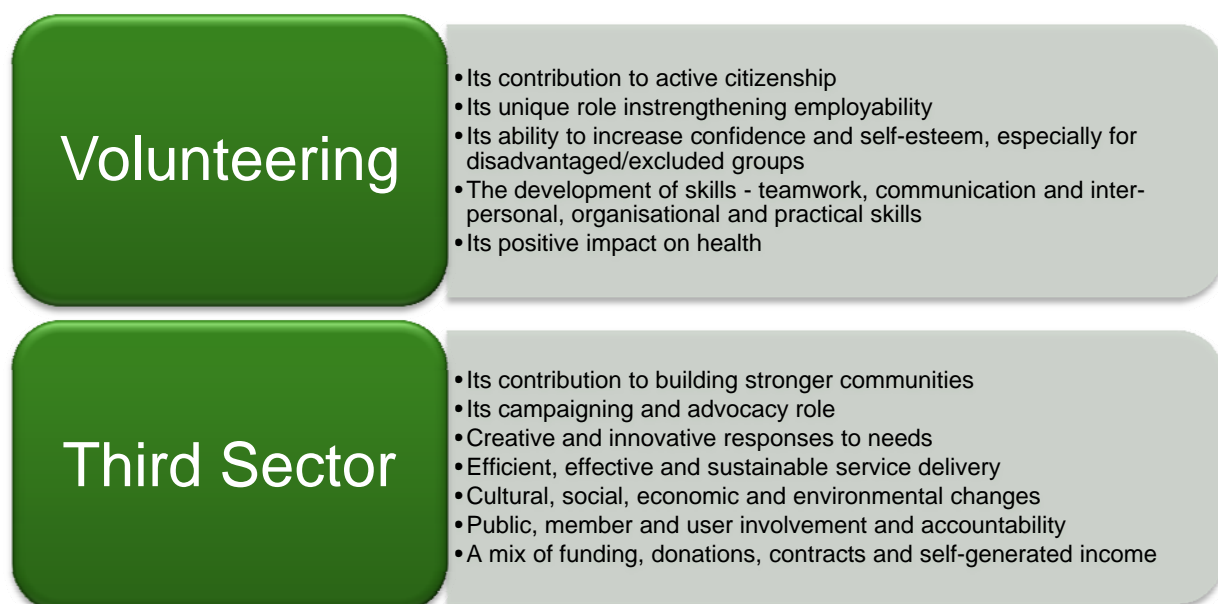
Essentially as formal state-organised forms of participation and service delivery decline; individuals, organisations and communities rely increasingly on alternatives such as informal social networks, Third Sector services and new technologies to meet their individual and collective needs or interests. Inequality nevertheless prevails across the UK with a growing gap between affluent and deprived communities. Inequality of opportunities is causing tensions between different socio-economic groups, ethnic groups, age groups and other minorities. Tackling society's inequalities is not easy. Evans (1997) notes that despite all the new initiatives *"…Those who are disadvantaged under-participate and successful participation by elites remains the norm."* (cited in Greenwood et al 2002, pp.131). The Third Sector reflects inequalities with polarised high and low-income organisations and an under-representation of marginalised populations within volunteering. There is nevertheless an opportunity to explore ways of supporting the Third Sector and developing Volunteering initiatives to fill the gaps, increase mobility and improve participation. The challenge is to reduce or remove the barriers which disadvantage low-income Third Sector organisations and prevent participation of under-represented populations and marginalised communities.

Paradoxically the whole efficiency drive could undermine any ideals for increasing and enhancing the role of the Third Sector and Volunteering. It is predicted that the Third Sector will experience a 'funding cliff edge' in March 2011 when many existing national and local government contractual and funding arrangements come to an end. The Third Sector is seen as a soft target for unpopular budget cuts and is already being hit by public agency announcements. Contracts that provide a route to sustainability are getting larger which prevents many organisations from tendering. There is also increasing competition for the diminishing funds available from all regular sources. Critics highlight that some policy plans will reinforce social inequalities, through for example replacing paid with unpaid labour. Implications from this phase of 'economic austerity' make it unlikely that additional funds will become available to make volunteering opportunities more accessible to those currently under-represented.

BACKGROUND CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion the Third Sector and Volunteering is widespread and actively makes a significant contribution across Scotland. Yet there are distinct problems with a lack of equality of investment and opportunity. The benefits offered by the Third Sector and Volunteering are summarised below [see figure 6]:

Figure 6: Third Sector and Volunteering: A summary of the benefits

Volunteering

- Its contribution to active citizenship
- Its unique role instrengthening employability
- Its ability to increase confidence and self-esteem, especially for disadvantaged/excluded groups
- The development of skills - teamwork, communication and inter-personal, organisational and practical skills
- Its positive impact on health

Third Sector

- Its contribution to building stronger communities
- Its campaigning and advocacy role
- Creative and innovative responses to needs
- Efficient, effective and sustainable service delivery
- Cultural, social, economic and environmental changes
- Public, member and user involvement and accountability
- A mix of funding, donations, contracts and self-generated income

A key question is how to maximise these benefits for the common good within the current political, economic and social climate. While the wider environment drives the sector into the spotlight we need also to take cognisance of the dangers. The main pitfalls to avoid are only benefiting the most prosperous organisations and individuals; inadvertently adding bureaucratic burdens; limiting mobility and progression routes and reinforcing the barriers to participation and development.

The particular trends noted for discussion and the opportunities they present are summarized as key points below:

Trends

- An increasing emphasis from UK/National/Local Government in directly engaging with citizen participation through volunteering, citizen education and consultation.
- A reduction in the direct provision of services by public agencies in exchange for co-production, partnerships or commissioning of services from the Third Sector and beyond.
- A growing but polarised Third Sector with a disproportionate gap and limited mobility between high and low income organisations and increasing competition for diminishing resources.
- A steady pattern of volunteering with generally lower levels of participation among more excluded groups and areas of deprivation.
- Clear benefits, although efforts can be undermined by economic downturn and cuts.

Opportunities

- Build on the capacity within the Third Sector/Volunteering to empower and engage communities in research/consultation, decision-making and delivering services.
- Devise policies and reduce burdens to create a fairer playing field for high and low income organisations and include a wider range of under-represented communities.
- Focus on reducing inequalities.
- Create conditions to build resistance to the negative impact from the economic climate.

The proceeding section highlights relevant aspects of national and local policies that present such opportunities for future strengthening of the role for the Third Sector and Volunteering.

THE CONTEXT

Building on the background and drivers for change; national and local contexts provide further evidence of the emphasis currently placed on the sector. At the end of 2008/beginning of 2009 three seminars were organised by ESRC, SCVO and the Scottish Government to explore the implications the changing environment has on the Third Sector and its role (ESRC/SCVO 2009[15]). Insights and implications from the seminars encapsulate the issues being grappled with by Public and Third sector leaders across the country. These include the following:

- There is a gap between public sector partners' stated willingness to engage with voluntary participants and the practical conditions which limit the extent of their influence.
- There is a need for more clarity of purpose for third sector organisations – with a better understanding of the limitations of market-based solutions, governance and capacity to identify and promote tangible and intangible benefits.
- An expanded role for voluntary organisations in delivering public services demands more awareness of the diversity of the sector and relationships with clients/service users and their information.
- Challenges in rural areas may be exacerbated by the economic downturn – responding to greater demands over wider areas, with diminishing funding.
- Wider involvement in social innovation needs to be appropriate – there is increasing competition and declining innovative activity (possibly due to the impact of changes in policy) but there are also opportunities to be embraced through collaborating in relation to changes in consumer, societal and technological arenas.

This section illustrates examples of how the research findings described above manifest in national and local policy.

AT A NATIONAL POLICY LEVEL

The following national policies clearly illustrate the step-change towards creating an environment for the Third Sector and Volunteering initiatives to start-up, develop and thrive so that products and services are more efficient, effective and sustainable; and where relevant, can be co-produced in collaboration with public agencies.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Currently the Scottish Government sees community empowerment as a key plank in delivering a more successful nation. The Community Empowerment Action Plan[16] (2009) highlights one of the characteristics of empowered communities as: **"the existence of locally owned, community led organisations which often act as 'anchors' for the process of empowerment."**

Despite current economic challenges there is an expectation that partners need to invest further in support for capacity building in order to create the right environment for community empowerment to flourish. In acknowledgement of the culture change needed, the Action Plan asks Community Planning Partnerships to undertake two things in relation to community empowerment:

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[15] ESRC & SCVO (2009) 'ESRC Seminar Series: Mapping the public policy landscape – The third sector discussions around key public policy issues' [Web: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/ESRC_PP_Third_sector_tcm6-34453.pdf]
[16] The Scottish Government/COSLA (2009) 'The Community Empowerment Action Plan' [Web: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/264771/0079288.pdf]

1. **Promote and support joined up approaches to community capacity building as both the foundation of a sustainable approach to community empowerment and engagement, and a means to help communities work on their own issues.**
2. **Embedding community empowerment throughout processes for Community Planning.**

Where this might differ from the past is that community capacity building is no longer seen as a specialism for community based organisations, community activists or qualified community workers. Nor is it limited to particular 'community' departments or sections of public agencies. It is to become an embedded part of a new service providing culture – how we think, plan, act and what we value about our people and places. More radically it is about considering how we give more power and control to communities to determine their own destinies.

ENTERPRISING THIRD SECTOR

The key aim of the Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan (2008-11)[17] is to create the right environment in which an enterprising third sector can thrive. Principally national investment is intended to open up new markets to the sector particularly in the public sector. This is to be achieved by providing support for both social entrepreneurs and organisations developing in an enterprising way. Public-social-partnerships are one of the models highlighted but there is a desire to build on partnerships in relation to designing and delivering services. The emphasis is not just on services and activities provided by the sector but the general way organisations are led and run to balance income generation and sustainability. To set the right environment the Government wants to achieve three things:

- Firstly, to operate professionally, identifying markets or opportunities - for many organisations this will involve developing products and then competing for, and winning, contracts.
- Secondly, to demonstrate the unique contribution that the third sector provides.
- Thirdly, to develop better third sector organisations contributing to increased sustainable economic growth and a more successful country.

Thus opportunities exist to take advantage of new investment available through the action plan and develop the social economy in a way that will maximise impact at a local level. This might include investing appropriately in those organisations that act as natural 'anchors' for building community capacity. Using existing intelligence and commissioning research to identify opportunities is also beneficial. It may include considering actions which are so far under-developed such as looking at volunteering as a first step-towards social entrepreneurialism.

THE SCOTTISH COMPACT

The need to agree the parameters of relationships between public bodies and the Third Sector has been part of an established dialogue in Scotland. One measure of relatively healthy relationships is 'The Scottish Compact' first drafted in 1998 and revised in 2004[18]. It is an agreement between national public agencies and the sector. It is based on 'a mutual understanding of the distinctive values and roles of the Executive [now Scottish Government] and the voluntary sector. Its aim is to develop robust relationships for the public good. It sets out high level principles and commitments in five areas: recognition; representation; partnerships; resources and implementation. Wider events discussed earlier have made the shared values of a democratic society; active citizenship; pluralism; human rights, equality of opportunity; quality services; cross-sectoral working and sustainable

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[17] Scottish Government (2008) Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan 2008-11 [Web: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/19085003/2]
[18] Scottish Government & SCVO (1998, revised 2004) 'The Scottish Compact' [Web: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/02/18723/31451]

development even more pertinent to both sectors. Some local versions have emerged to spell out commitments that foster stronger partnerships as part of local community planning.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

Given the disparity of income levels within the Third Sector and the fact that so many organisations have such a small share of the income; funding is a high priority for Third Sector organisations. Although Scotland's economy is reputed to rely heavily on the public sector less than half of the Third Sector's income comes from the public sector [see page 4]. Yet levels of public investment are considerable. In 2004 Audit Scotland found that Scottish councils provided £220 million to 14,000 organisations - including companies, trusts and voluntary organisations - to deliver a wide range of council-related services such as support for people with disabilities and the management of leisure centres. Nevertheless the 2005 report 'Following the Public Pound'[19] concedes that there are ways of improving how local authorities fund external bodies, including:

- **Put in place a register of their funding to external organisations**
- **Develop a corporate policy on free or subsidised use of council properties, vehicles and facilities by the organisations they fund, as part of their overall approach to asset management**
- **Take a risk-based approach to dealing with the organisations they fund, and focus their resources for scrutiny accordingly**
- **Explore opportunities for joint working with other councils.**

At a local level measures are required to improve coordination, transparency and accessibility to funding and resources.

LOCALISM AND SUPPORT FOR THE THIRD SECTOR AND VOLUNTEERING

Since 2008 the Scottish Government's Third Sector Team has been working as part of the 'localism' agenda to improve the alignment of the Third Sector with Community Planning Partnerships (CPP's) and their Single Outcome Agreements (SOA's). A key decision within the localism agenda is to end existing funding to Councils of Voluntary Services (CVS'), Volunteer Centres (VC's) and Local Social Economy Partnerships (LSEP's) in exchange for funding new 'single interfaces' from April 2011. Each local authority area has to provide evidence that the local Community Planning Partnership recognises this new body as a conduit to and from the local third sector. Locally this forces providers of local support services to consider their options and prepare for more strategic and streamlined ways of providing support services.

PERFORMANCE AND STANDARDS

A feature of the increasing focus on the Third Sector and Volunteering is the resulting explosion of quality and performance frameworks, tools and standards used to improve work carried out by organisations and volunteers. Some are statutory, for example charities are more closely regulated since OSCR the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator was established under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Reports from OSCR show that many of the smaller low-income charities struggle to meet many of the compliance requirements (OSCR 2008[20])

Other standards have emerged to promote good practice in participation:

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[19] Audit Scotland (2005) 'Following the Public Pound: A follow up report' [Web: http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2005/nr_051215_public_pound_km.pdf]

[20] OSCR (2008) 'Small charity accounts: a comparative study' [Web: http://www.oscr.org.uk/publicationitem.aspx?id=edcf081c-3149-4db7-aeda-cacce1232431]

National Community Engagement Standards – Community engagement is defined as developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences. The standards are designed to promote good practice, particularly in relation to fulfilling the requirements associated with community planning. http://www.scdc.org.uk/national-standards-community-engagement/what-is-community-engagement/

Principles and Standards of Citizen Leadership - Citizen Leadership is an activity that happens when citizens have power and influence and responsibility to make decisions; have some control over their own services; and when citizens take action for the benefit of other citizens. The standards in Scotland were designed to promote these types of activities, particularly in relation to health and social care services.
http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/media/CLT/ResourceUploads/9280/CitizenLeadershipPrinciples&StandardsPaper_small.pdf

National Care Standards - The National Care Standards are there to help make sure people get the right quality of care. They explain how to raise concerns or complaints when there is a problem with care services used. Consequently Third Sector organisations providing care services must register and comply with regulations set by the Care Commission.
http://www.infoscotland.com/nationalcarestandards/CCC_FirstPage.jsp

In addition, there are occupational standards specific to those working or volunteering in the Third Sector. Here are some examples:

- Trustee and Management Committee members in the Voluntary and Community Sector http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/national_occupational_standards/trusteenos/
- Management of Volunteers http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/national_occupational_standards/management_of_volunteers_standards/
- Business Support and Social Enterprise Support Standards http://www.sfedi.co.uk/standards-setting-body/standards/business-support-standard
- Fundraising Standards http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/national_occupational_standards/fnos/
- Campaigning Standards http://www.skills-thirdsector.org.uk/national_occupational_standards/campaigning_standards/

In parallel to these many business sector frameworks and tools are being used and adapted by the sector. Recently the CVS network worked with Quality Scotland to create a tailored version of EFQM (European Framework for Quality Management)

[See for example: http://www.scvo.org.uk/sva/Projects/QualityMatters.aspx .]

The sector has its own bespoke frameworks and tools. SCVO has a quality framework tailored for the Third Sector called 'The Big Picture. 'PQASSO' is the equivalent in England but is also used by some organisations in Scotland. There is also an Investing in Volunteers (IiV) award managed by Volunteer Development Scotland. There is also a growing interest in social accounting and auditing and in particular measuring social return on investment.

[For information of quality tools and frameworks see:
http://www.scvo.org.uk/SCVO/Information/ViewInformation.aspx?al=t&page=&all=&from=DSR&Info=148&TCID=44&PageName=Organisational%20Development For information on Social Return on Investment (SROI) see: http://www.neweconomics.org/search/apachesolr_search/sroi For information on social auditing and accounts see: http://www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk/]

Overall the sector recognises the need to conform and adhere to standards as part of proving its value and worth. The danger is that better resourced organisations are more likely to be able to keep up with and prioritise the growing array of tools and frameworks on offer. Similarly public sector commissioners need to find ways of supporting their local sector to comply with statutory requirements and quality standards in a way that is proportionate without discriminating on the basis of type, size or resources of organisations. Holistic models like social auditing that measure the economic, social and environmental impact using systems like Social Return on Investment are becoming more widespread in use and fit well with the aims of current policy.

SCOTLAND'S CLIMATE CHANGE (2009) ACT

Although not directly targeted at Scotland's Third Sector, the Climate Change Act is seen by many as a chance for the sector to demonstrate more innovative approaches to responding to environmental concerns. There is a requirement for a 'Public Engagement Strategy' that will inform individuals in Scotland about the targets and encourage their contribution. The targets include ambitions to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 80 per cent by 2050. Provisions relating to adapting to the impact of climate change, land use and energy efficiencies are already areas where a number of community initiatives are emerging [see link below for examples[21]]. Opportunities are not limited to reducing, re-using or recycling but extend to growing a 'green economy' where community ownership of products and services can generate an income to be reinvested in social causes.

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS AND SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS

The "Single Outcome Agreement" is an agreement between central and local governments as a result of the "Concordat" (2007) where the SOA connects local and national priorities and measures progress against a range of indicators. Community Planning Partnerships in each area are responsible for setting out a strategy for joint working between all public agencies, the Third Sector and communities to deliver the strategic objectives of a wealthier; fairer; smarter; healthier; safer and stronger and greener Scotland. At a local level there are usually a number of sub-partnerships with thematic and cross-cutting responsibilities to achieve related local targets. Although the national review of research found that the Third Sector and Volunteering contributes to all national priorities; the Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan makes explicit which national outcomes the Third Sector is expected to contribute to most:

> **Outcome 2:** we realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
> **Outcome 3:** we are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
> **Outcome 4:** our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
> **Outcome 7:** we have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
> **Outcome 8:** we have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
> **Outcome 9:** we live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger
> **Outcome 11:** we have strong resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
> **Outcome 15:** our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

Based on previous discussions in this report the current key priorities for the Third Sector are **Outcomes 2, 7, 11 and 15**. Volunteering on the other hand has current priorities relating to

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[21] Community Energy Scotland – Case Studies http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk/case-studies.asp?view=all

Outcomes 3, 4, 7 and 11. Implications are that we should expect to see mechanisms for participation in relevant community planning structures and evidence of active involvement of the Third Sector and Volunteering in contributing to planning and delivery of related actions and targets.

AT A LOCAL POLICY LEVEL

In Renfrewshire the Council Plan 2008-2012 focuses on *'the need to work creatively and efficiently to meet community aspirations and provide valued, personalised services'*. In doing so there is a commitment to *'support local people to participate in their own communities and wider society, and ensuring local areas are safe and pleasant to live in'*. There is a will to turn more of the rhetoric into reality by placing service users and communities deeper into the heart of shaping policy and taking on greater roles and responsibilities in its delivery.

A number of reviews highlight where approaches to connecting and supporting the Third Sector can be further enhanced.

RENFREWSHIRE'S SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

Renfrewshire Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) describes the different methods already used in Renfrewshire to engage with local communities:

- Innovative business hub 'incubation'
- An award winning Reaching Older Adults in Renfrewshire (ROAR) –Public Social Partnership pilot (one of 10 in Scotland) between RCVS /Social Work and other Third Sector providers is underway.
- There is a Community Council Liaison Officer.
- A scheme of decentralisation saw the establishment of five Local Area Committees with budgetary responsibilities.
- The Community Health Partnership established a Public Partnership Forum to inform and seek the views of residents.
- Support is provided to local Tenants & Residents Associations with 36 registered in the area.
- There is a Community Learning & Development Partnership preparing to produce more localised partnerships.
- There is also importance placed on joint working between sectors to strengthen routes to employment for those experiencing barriers.

Renfrewshire's Single Outcome agreement (SOA) 2008 to 2011 (June 2008[22]) acknowledges that the working relationship with the sector has improved in recent years and continues to evolve. The creation of the local compact was agreed in 2006 and is viewed as a particular strength by local stakeholders. RCVS and the Volunteer Centre Renfrewshire (VCR) both participate in the local Community Planning Partnership structures to represent the interests of the local sector and volunteering. They were therefore involved in shaping the content of the existing SOA. The most explicit reference to roles of the Third Sector and Volunteering is in Outcome 11.

The actions community planning partners are committed to, include:
- Delivery of Renfrewshire Community Learning and Development Strategy
- Voluntary sector and other partners continue to contribute to community capacity building.

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[22] Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership (June 2008) 'Renfrewshire Single Outcome Agreement 208-2011' [Web: http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/ilwwcm/publishing.nsf/Content/Navigation-ce-CommunityPlanHomePage]

- Development and implementation of an External Funding Strategy.
- Development Role of Local Area Committees in future monitoring and review of impact of public sector within communities.
- Regular Neighbourhood Forums involving tenant representatives, elected members and neighbourhood office staff to determine expenditure on small-scale local improvement works.
- Carry out annual ward inspections with local tenants' and residents' association members, elected members and officers to identify areas of concern. The results from the ward inspections are used to develop estate action plans for each ward.
- Development of Estate Management Agreements (EMAs). EMAs involve council tenants and other residents agreeing local service standards and monitoring their delivery. There are currently 6 EMAs in place and it is intended to develop a further 4 during 2008.
- Review Anti-Stigma training across sectors and partner agencies in line with the National 'See Me' Programme and the Mental Health Act.
- Optimise how frontline health services provide interventions to people with disabilities and long term illness.
- Development of a voluntary sector strategy.
- Continued work with Renfrewshire Council for Voluntary Services (RCVS) in their role as key representatives for the voluntary sector in Renfrewshire.
- Continued commitment from the partners of the Joint Voluntary Sector Working Group, which has developed the Renfrewshire Compact. The Compact details commitments to volunteering around recognition, funding, consultation, volunteering, and equal opportunities.
- Implementation of five Local Area Committees to consult and engage with local communities.
- PPRC to develop a programme of training and support events involving accredited training through partner agencies.
- Provide information sessions to groups and individuals to enable them to access funding, including promotion of the Renfrewshire Funding toolkit.
- Assist communities to develop community events by delivering training and support.

The actions build appropriately on existing structures and strengths. They also deal with inequalities, suggesting there is an inherent understanding that capacity building and improving equalities are key local priorities.

LOCAL AREA COMMITTEES

One example of empowering communities, cited in the SOA, was the establishment of five Local Area Committees (LACs) which act as a focus for community consultation and allocate a wide range of grants and funds. The LACs are designed to give local people the chance to hear from the Council and Community Planning Partners (such as Strathclyde Police, the NHS and the Fire and Rescue Service), to make sure they are achieving the highest possible standards of service. Importantly, the LACs have also been given substantial budgets to fund local initiatives and support local projects which reflect the priorities and needs of local people. This presents a useful illustration of how communities can be empowered by determining how best to allocate resources at a local level.

The arrangements do however pose interesting implications for the Third Sector. Research conducted for the Home Office in England suggests that relying solely on community representatives in partnerships may not represent the full diversity of 'the community'. As already discussed in this report there are particular challenges around engaging hard to reach groups. The report states "public meetings and community forums were generally found to be insufficient as an approach to community involvement since it could be hard to build consensus as either the community's views were often

suppressed or difficulties were found in coping with the volume or diversity of views." (Larsen 2004[23]). Hence the other involvement channels listed in the SOA need to be developed further, while new avenues are explored. Studies show the following practices can be particularly effective:

- **Using skilled and experienced facilitators, including those experienced in working with particular groups**
- **Making time for consultation as part of the lead in time**
- **Choosing consultation methods to suit the circumstances, and**
- **Working with and through existing groups** (ibid)

As the 'existing groups' within Renfrewshire, opportunities exist for Third Sector organisations to contribute by taking advantage of their skills and experience. Many Third Sector organisations provide services and give a voice to some of the most excluded groups such as those discriminated by age; gender; faith; ability; income; sexual orientation or other factors. Organisations focusing on issues or minority groups have strong relationships with people affected by these issues as well as highly specialised skills for removing barriers to involvement of communities that are often disengaged. Hence working with the appropriate organisations can offer new perspectives and bring new capacities to local service delivery. The new single interface – the infrastructure organisations established to support the Third Sector and Volunteering at a local level will provide a conduit to tapping into such potential, as the next paragraph explains.

DEVELOPING RENFREWSHIRE'S 'SINGLE INTERFACE' AS PART OF THE LOCALISM AGENDA

Within Renfrewshire a number of consultations have taken place to consider the best way of bringing together local providers of support services to meet the Scottish Government's requirements. Earlier work focussed on RIERSEP (Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire Social Economy Partnership), RCVS (Renfrewshire Council for Voluntary Services) and VCR (Volunteer Centre Renfrewshire) the two local organisations with a remit and funding from the Scottish Government to provide Third Sector/Volunteering support services. Through this work an agreement was reached between RCVS/VCR to merge, based on this being the favoured option among local organisations. Renfrewshire Council asked the parties to consider extending this to a three-way agreement that includes 'PPRC' the local regeneration company. Further work was carried out to investigate this option and indications are that a new single organisation will be formed to undertake the four main areas of work:

- **"Support to voluntary organisations operating in the area, both local and those national organisations that deliver services at the local level** (currently carried out by local RCVS)
- **Support to and promotion of volunteering** (currently carried out by VCR)
- **Support and development of social enterprise** (currently coordinated by RIERSEP with much of the service delivery provided by RCVS')
- **Connection between the CPP and the third sector"** (currently outlined in the 'compact agreement' between the third sector and CPP partners)

During a consultation on the development of a Single Interface, organisations were asked to identify what they saw as the main challenges they face in relation to working with volunteers and for their overall organisational development. The results are as follows (n=80) [see figure 4]:

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[23] Larsen, C. S. (2004) 'Facilitating community involvement: practical guidance for practitioners and policy makers' Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate [Web: http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/dpr27.pdf]

Challenges Working with Volunteers	Challenges facing organisations
• **Identifying appropriate funding for volunteering** • **Recruiting volunteers** • **Access to appropriate training for volunteers** • **Lack of resources to support volunteers with additional support needs** • **Marketing and promoting volunteering opportunities**	• **Identifying and applying for appropriate funding** • **Building effective partnerships** • **Marketing and promotion** • **Improving the quality of activities and services** • **Maintaining current income levels**

Feedback indicates that organisations believe that just standing still, maintaining the levels of income and providing the levels of services and activities they have at the moment is going to become increasingly difficult. This will have a knock-on effect on volunteering and is likely to reduce the amount of support that can be provided to individuals with additional support needs.

Despite natural tendencies for each of the identified local support providers to protect their existing structures and assets, there are great opportunities that these developments can take advantage of. During a Stakeholders' Event which took place as a follow-up to the consultation, workshops were held to get feedback on the principles for forming a single interface. Participants suggest that the single interface should be:

- **Independent from the public sector;**
- **Transparent in how it operates;**
- **Based on mutual respect and honesty (throughout the process of its formation);**
- **Committed to providing the best quality and best value services – an example of best practice;**
- **Representing the views and aspirations of local communities;**
- **Promoting partnership working; and**
- **Be empowering, inspiring, optimistic and enterprising.**

Participants believe once formed, the single interface should prioritise the following:

- **Management and development of volunteer programmes;**
- **Supporting volunteers with additional support needs;**
- **Celebrating and promoting the benefits of volunteering;**
- **Creating and designing appropriate volunteering roles;**
- **Funding and fundraising;**
- **Meeting legal requirements – including charitable accountability;**
- **Financial planning and management;**
- **Learning to become more enterprising;**
- **Engaging with decision-making and Community Planning – representing sector interests;**
- **Business/strategic and action planning;**
- **Growing assets, accommodation and resources;**
- **Providing administration, photocopying and payroll services;**
- **Tendering for public sector contracts, and**
- **Assessing needs, mapping and research.**

In terms of how services are delivered feedback suggests that people want better access to the services via:

- **A central 'prominent' building accessible to all – with good access for public transport;**
- **Website, newsletters, e-bulletins and social networking – interactive on-line services;**
- **Person-centred face-to-face contact;**
- **Making use of existing outreach/satellite resources in different locations (and mobile facilities);**
- **Sharing premises with other providers, and**
- **Having a good telephone service and using texting services.**

Overall there is broad based support for change. There is a clear opportunity for the new Single Interface to act as an 'anchor organisation' that the Community Empowerment Action Plan declares as vital to supporting wider community empowerment. There is a need to bring third sector and volunteering support services up to date in Renfrewshire by streamlining them, making them more accessible, efficient and effective and tailoring them to meet the diverse needs of the sector. Equally important however is independence, transparency and trust in how the single interface operates.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A recent economic development inquiry in Renfrewshire Council resulted in some specific findings and recommendations for working with the social economy segment of the local Third Sector:

- **Better liaison between business support agencies, wider council role in business related activities such as procurement, better marketing of (our) activities, lack of understanding of the role of the social economy sector, overkill on auditing and assessment of social economy organisations.**
- **A need for Council wide or a "whole Council" approach to Economic Regeneration *(the third sector movement*)**
- **To understand where the third sector can fit and/or add value to other headings: transport, tourism, Town Centre development etc.**

The previous emphasis on auditing and assessment appears to get in the way of fully understanding and maximising the capacity of the local Third Sector.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

In-keeping with national policy Renfrewshire's External Funding Scrutiny Board came to the following conclusions for improving the way it distributes funds:

- **Developing the Council's approach to external funding and grant support as a component of a community wide outcome led investment strategy.**
- **Setting the Council's arrangements for external funding and grant funding in the context of a community wide network of investment partners.**
- **Integration of the Council's external funding and grant distribution functions with a corporate projects and funding service.**
- **Simplification of Council grant funding arrangements to improve access and to be consistent with the purposes of open, *competitive, short term funding.***
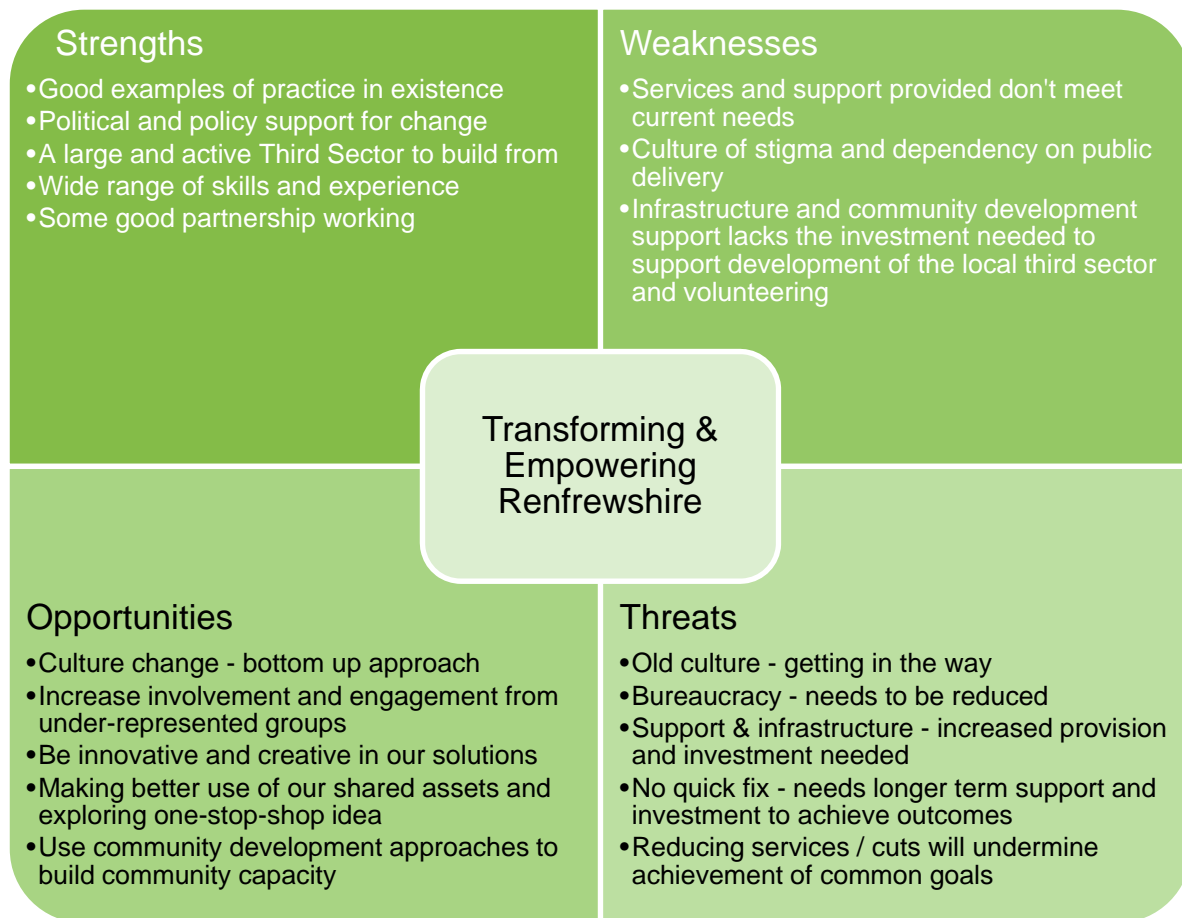
Consistent with the economic development enquiry there is a sense that there needs to be better coordination across departments and agencies as well as efforts to reduce some of the bureaucracies to make arrangements more open and accessible.

TRANSFORMING AND EMPOWERING RENFREWSHIRE

In March 2010 RCVS and Renfrewshire Council organised a seminar on Transforming and Empowering Renfrewshire. Its aim was to raise awareness of the potential and challenges for changes affecting the Third Sector and Volunteering. It looked specifically at Transforming Social Work Services and empowering communities through local people leading.

It is widely recognised within the Third Sector that there are many examples of good practice within Renfrewshire and some of these are listed in the seminar report. The cross-cutting themes that emerged are presented as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats [see figure 8]:

Figure 8: Cross-cutting themes emerging from the Transforming and Empowering Renfrewshire Seminar

Strengths
- Good examples of practice in existence
- Political and policy support for change
- A large and active Third Sector to build from
- Wide range of skills and experience
- Some good partnership working

Weaknesses
- Services and support provided don't meet current needs
- Culture of stigma and dependency on public delivery
- Infrastructure and community development support lacks the investment needed to support development of the local third sector and volunteering

Transforming & Empowering Renfrewshire

Opportunities
- Culture change - bottom up approach
- Increase involvement and engagement from under-represented groups
- Be innovative and creative in our solutions
- Making better use of our shared assets and exploring one-stop-shop idea
- Use community development approaches to build community capacity

Threats
- Old culture - getting in the way
- Bureaucracy - needs to be reduced
- Support & infrastructure - increased provision and investment needed
- No quick fix - needs longer term support and investment to achieve outcomes
- Reducing services / cuts will undermine achievement of common goals

The findings confirm that services need to be developed differently in future. For long-term outcomes to be achieved genuine user involvement needs to be supported and invested from the public sector. We need also to build the capacity of our communities to engage at different levels from research and needs assessment through to active involvement in service delivery. The future approach is creating a supportive environment for empowerment, allowing local people and local organisations to lead the way.

CONTEXT CONCLUSIONS

The policy and local context concurs with trends and issues highlighted nationally, that despite a very active Third Sector and high levels of Volunteering there are distinct barriers to overcome. The public sector within Renfrewshire recognises there are gaps in knowledge about the sector's capacity to participate at different levels. It also acknowledges that previous approaches are not as open or accessible as they need to be. Examples such as Local Area Committees show what is possible but these need to be developed and complimented with other methods to engage more fully with the Third Sector on a number of levels and promote further development of Volunteering.

At a local level it appears that many more organisations within all tiers of the sector have some reliance on public sector funding and support than the national picture. However income levels locally reflect the national disparity between high and low-level incomes. Nevertheless the Third Sector and Volunteering have a wider range of assets to offer. The sector is very reliant on volunteers, although there are indications that a lack of access to appropriate funding or training limits capacity to support individuals with additional support needs.

The summary points from this section are listed below:

Nationally

- Community empowerment is seen as the new ethos and culture – giving national and local governments an enabling role in creating the right conditions.
- Community Planning Partnerships are responsible for embedding a local culture of community empowerment.
- The Social Enterprise Action Plan places a particular emphasis on extending this type of third sector model by providing an environment where social enterprise can thrive.
- The Scottish Compact sets out the principles for public and third sector joint working. The shared values of a democratic society; active citizenship; pluralism; human rights, equality of opportunity; quality services; cross-sectoral working and sustainable development have become even more pertinent in the current climate.
- The way external funding is provided is a high priority to the Third Sector and can be better organised with opportunities to share learning and practice across local authority boundaries.
- Providers of local support services to the Third Sector and Volunteering (the infrastructure) are preparing for more strategic, streamlined and connected ways of providing support through the creation of 'single interfaces'.
- There are more stringent and wider ranging forms of regulation and standards expected of and by the Third/Volunteering Sector, which is causing difficulties for smaller low-income organisations.
- Key priorities for the Third Sector are within single outcome agreements are national **Outcomes 2, 7, 11 and 15**. Volunteering because of its focus on individuals is more likely to have priorities relating to **Outcomes 3, 4, 7 and 11**.

Locally

- The Renfrewshire Council Plan demonstrates a will to turn more of the rhetoric into reality by placing service users and communities deeper into the heart of shaping policy and taking on greater roles and responsibilities in its delivery.
- In Renfrewshire's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) there are already a number of methods in use and commitments from partners to engage the wider Third Sector, which require further development while new channels are explored which tap into more of the Third Sector's competencies, particularly in relation to involving under-represented communities.
- There is a clear opportunity for the new Single Interface to act as an 'anchor organisation' supporting wider community empowerment. Third Sector/Volunteering support services will be brought up to date by streamlining them, making them more accessible, efficient and effective and tailoring them to meet the diverse needs of the sector. Equally important however is independence, transparency and trust in how the single interface operates.
- For local economic development to flourish there is a need to better understand the 'Third Sector movement' and the widest extent of its capacity to contribute to all economic delivery channels.
- At a recent event held on Transforming and Empowering Renfrewshire discussions between the Public and Third Sectors highlight a shared understanding of the need to change relationships to improve service delivery. This requires proper investment in supporting capacity building for individuals, organisations and communities to engage at all possible levels: from research and needs assessment through to active involvement in service delivery. The key is empowering local people, local organisations and local communities to lead the way.

ACTIONS: WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

The above review of national and local research, policy and consultation presents a vast array of changes. The will and desire to create a new culture of joint working between sectors brings new opportunities to explore. The current economic climate will however restrict what can realistically be achieved. Ultimately combining the efforts and resources of all sectors to achieve common goals is the way forward. The community empowerment action plan (2009) contains a list of actions which provide a useful start point for creating the right conditions for working together to achieve common goals. They include:

- **Assessing community [Third Sector & Volunteering] strengths and responding to priority gaps in community infrastructure;**
- **Ensuring access to the basic operating requirements of community [and voluntary] organisations, such as accessible places to meet and childcare;**
- **Mapping community capacity building support, in terms of its reach to the communities that need it most, as well as its capacity to support community groups through various stages of development from formation to managing assets if they choose to;**
- **Ensuring accessibility of community capacity building support, for example through appropriate information, and referral arrangements across partners for groups seeking support.**
- **Continuing to build upon current work to support community engagement;**
- **Self-evaluating current processes for Community Planning in terms of their impact on community empowerment;**
- **As part of developing new initiatives and processes, think about the part that communities themselves [including the Third Sector and Volunteering] can play in delivering outcomes;**
- **Providing leadership to Community Planning partners in making their individual processes empowering for communities.**

There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that the social enterprise segment of the Third Sector offers alternative ways to achieve a social, economic and environmental impact. Supporting local implementation of the national Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan will enable greater mobility within the Third Sector, by making more of the smaller-scale organisations ready to adopt an enterprising model. Indirectly it will create more innovative volunteering opportunities such as social entrepreneurs; diversified fundraising and product design, development and sales. The Social Enterprise Action Plan recommends the following objectives:

1. Opening markets to an enterprising third sector

- The public sector market: working with purchasers to recognise the benefits of contracting with an enterprising third sector including their contribution to delivering national outcomes
- The public sector market: working with the third sector to make organisations better able to compete for and win contracts
- Developing social-to-social business
- Encouraging collaboration with the private sector

2. Investing more intelligently

- Direct investment in an enterprising third sector
- Measuring social return

- Collaboration between funders and development of new funds
- Finance training for the third sector

3. Promoting social entrepreneurship

- Providing funding to support social entrepreneurs
- Promoting social entrepreneurship in schools and colleges

4. Investing in skills, learning and leadership across the third sector

- Funding for skills
- Developing the learning infrastructure
- Improving governance

5. Providing support for business growth

- Creating an effective supply of business development support
- Mentoring for an enterprising third sector

6. Raising the profile of enterprise in the third sector

- Supporting third sector infrastructure
- Awards
- International exchange and learning

7. Developing the evidence base

- Demonstrating the value of the third sector
- Increasing our knowledge of the third sector in Scotland

One example in Renfrewshire which leads the way in achieving these recommendations is ROAR (Reaching Older Adults in Renfrewshire), the Public Social Partnership.

ROAR CASE-STUDY

ROAR is one example in Renfrewshire which reflects many of the desirable characteristics of effective joint working as well as a model of good practice for making the third sector more enterprising, promoting volunteering to excluded populations and building community capacity. Renfrewshire provides services to 11,500 people who need a degree of care and support to lead safe, independent and healthy lives. A range of agencies such as Social Work and other Council services, service users and carers; the NHS, housing providers, the police and care providers from the private and voluntary sector and others provide such assistance in partnership.

ROAR is established as a Public-Social-Partnership between the Public and Third Sectors working together to create a better future for older adults in Renfrewshire. Representation of the Third Sector movement within community planning structures and capacity building of the scope of the Third Sector is recognised as a key development issue. The objective is to develop thriving and connected communities that are involved and participate in devolved democracy. This ranges from neighbourly support and social interaction through to more formalised voluntary work or direct involvement with voluntary and community groups.

ROAR has already been recognised as a model of innovative practice. The project recently won silver at the CoSLA Excellence Awards in the 'health improvement category' and is up for a raft of other awards. It works to combat the following issues:

- Contrary to the general decline in Renfrewshire's population, a significant increase in the number of 65-80 year olds and the over 80s age group is projected to rise by 17% and 16% respectively by 2031.
- Over 1,000 older people and adults are in long term care, 2,300 adults receive Care at Home services and 2,000 people receive day care.
- A number of people require support and protection due to their vulnerability for a range of reasons such as age, disability or addiction issues.
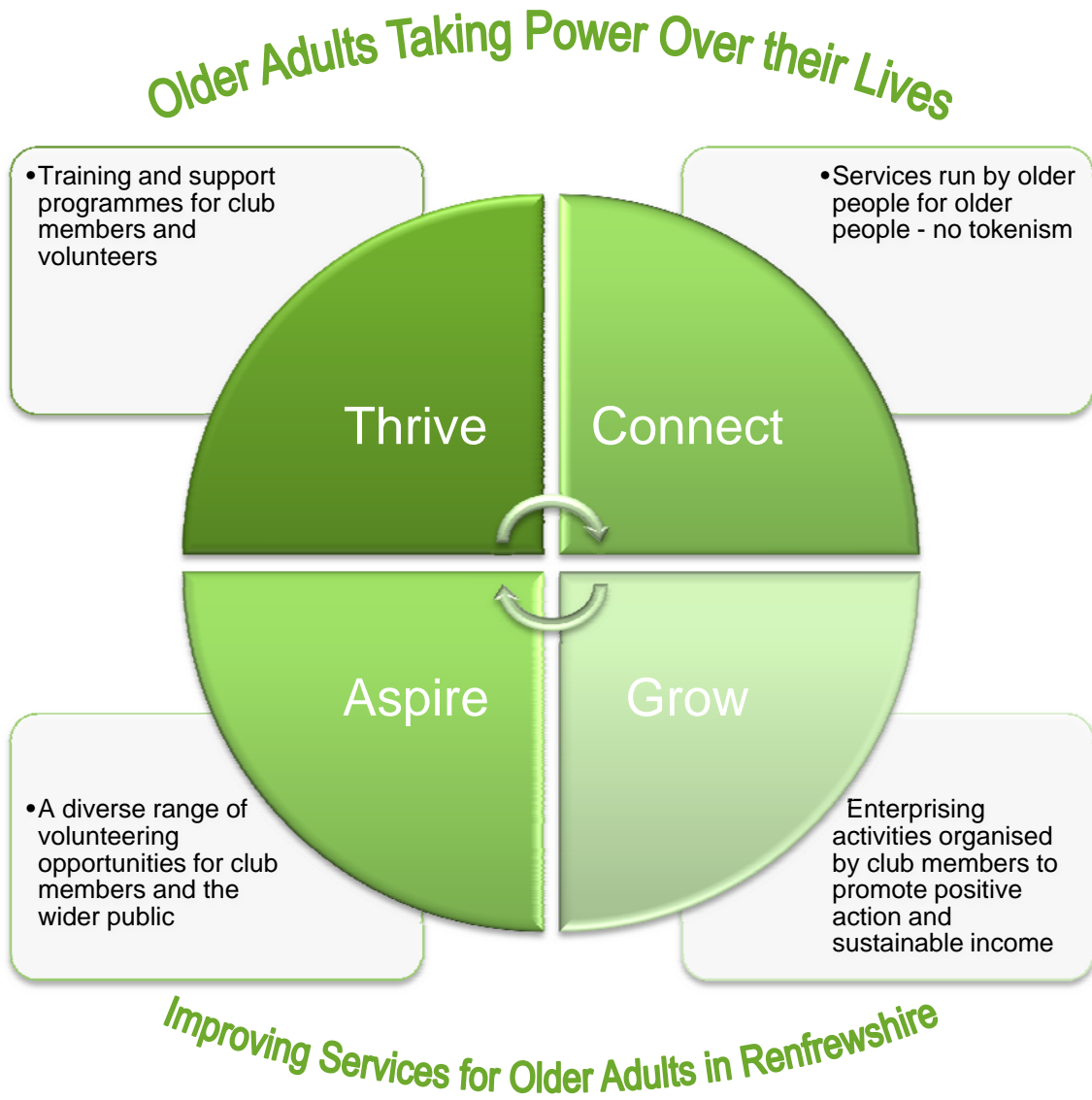
The ROAR Model below depicts how ROAR aims to engage the Third Sector, Volunteering and wider communities in addressing these issues [see figure 9]. Thus there is real innovative practice in existence in Renfrewshire which acts as a platform for wider developments. Through ROAR the Public and Third Sectors can work together and test out innovative ideas. More critically ROAR has to demonstrate that it can survive within a climate of diminishing resources and competing demands. Paradoxically the prospect of extending and rolling out the approach to wider contexts is likely to depend on resources and priorities more than evidence of need or logic. Nevertheless the key to success lies in working together at every stage, sharing the responsibility to determine the best way forward.

The Transforming and Empowering Renfrewshire Seminar delivered clear proposals for future actions which succinctly summarises much of the national guidance from a Renfrewshire perspective. In many respects this echoes what ROAR is trying to achieve and begins to outline a 'futures plan' for Renfrewshire.

Actions: What we can do about it

- **Build capacity from the grassroots and strengthen what exists and works well – e.g. ROAR**
- **Coordinate and take full advantage of the information and communication tools/outlets available to promote the right messages and engage more people in taking action**
- **Increase inclusion, engagement and networking with existing groups, organisations and faith organisations and those groups that are under-represented**
- **Have a clear plan and framework with realistic expectations for what the Public and Third Sectors can achieve, starting with what already exists and strengthen support services/resources and access to them**
- **Invest in and increase the role of volunteering and volunteering initiatives**
- **Reduce the red-tape and provide adequate levels of support to meet requirements**
- **Strengthen partnerships – create the right culture of trust, openness and transparency**

Older Adults Taking Power Over their Lives

- Training and support programmes for club members and volunteers

- Services run by older people for older people - no tokenism

Thrive

Connect

Aspire

Grow

- A diverse range of volunteering opportunities for club members and the wider public

Enterprising activities organised by club members to promote positive action and sustainable income

Improving Services for Older Adults in Renfrewshire

The report presents a holistic picture of the role and impact of the Third Sector and Volunteering both nationally and locally within Renfrewshire. Issues of a polarised sector based on investment inequalities and increasing competition are consistent across Scotland. The overwhelming dependency on public sector investment will make the effects of cut-backs deeper and more painful at a local level. Whilst there is a steady pattern of volunteering, marginalised communities remain under-represented.

Public sector partners acknowledge their approach in the past has created too many bureaucratic burdens and been disproportionate to the capacity and diversity of the sector which is not yet fully understood. Drivers for change shine a spotlight on maximising the future potential of the Third Sector and Volunteering as part of delivering a partnership approach to local service delivery. Tapping into more of the Third Sector/Volunteering potential requires:

1. **Creating the right conditions for building capacity and growth;**
2. **taking advantage of the drivers for change;**
3. **reducing burdens;**
4. **leveling the playing field;**
5. **tackling inequalities - reducing or removing the barriers which cause disadvantage;**
6. **building a stronger infrastructure via the single interface as an anchor organisation;**
7. **building on existing good practice**
8. **assessing what works and why; and**
9. **pursuing wider opportunities for engagement and volunteering - from research and needs assessment through to service delivery and quality audits.**

Nevertheless this is not a panacea for curing all ills brought by the economic downturn. The Third Sector and Volunteering adds long-term sustainable value, providing the conditions are right. Like life in general the discussion and evidence presented raises more questions than it provides answers. Nevertheless identifying the questions we need to answer can help drive us closer to our mission, for example:

- What is the capacity of the local third sector?
- What are the patterns of local volunteering – who does and doesn't volunteer and why?
- Do social enterprises provide a real alternative – a social, economic and environmental purpose supported by a mixed/balanced economy of investment?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of increasing the Third Sector/Volunteering role and involvement?
- What is the likely impact of the changing economic climate, in particular the reduction in public investment?
- What can be done to safeguard highly efficient and effective services?
- What can be done to increase mobility between different tiers of the third sector – building capacity and increasing enterprising opportunities/models?
- Can the higher income organisations help build capacity within the wider third sector?
- Where are the natural 'anchor' organisations within Renfrewshire and what can be done to enhance their ability to empower communities?
- What are the local priorities for the Third Sector and Volunteering in Renfrewshire?
- How do we take advantage of the wider potential of the Third Sector and Volunteering to transform and empower our communities?

Seeking answers to these questions will shape future developments. Critical to success is that the journey travelled should be part of a joint process with shared roles and responsibilities between the Public and Third Sectors. This is the path to more responsive, resilient and relevant future services.