SQUEEZING EVERY DROP

Maximising Third Sector and Volunteering Support Services

A Consultation with Stakeholders in Renfrewshire

Interim Report

This interim report is prepared by Catch the Light on behalf of RIERSEP, Feb 2009

catch the light

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Introduction

The interim-report of **'Squeezing Every Drop: maximising Third Sector and Volunteering support services'** discusses the process and findings thus far from a consultation with stakeholders involved in providing or supporting infrastructure services within Renfrewshire. The consultation was prompted from a number of overlapping sources. RCVS held a stakeholders event in November 2008 for their own purposes which indicated a need to explore potential linkages between organisations within the Renfrewshire area and between CVS and Volunteer Centres in each of the RIERSEP (Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire Social Economy Partnership) areas. This coincided with funding being allocated to RIERSEP from the Scottish Government to explore development opportunities. At the same time the Scottish Government issued a communication to CVS, VC's and CPPs (Community Planning Partnerships) across Scotland which set out their expectations to fund a 'single interface' for Third Sector infrastructure in each local authority area by 2011instead of the current separate arrangements via national parent bodies. Catch the Light, the consultants who facilitated RCVS's stakeholder event were deemed to have suitable experience of working with infrastructure bodies to be commissioned by RIERSEP to carry out a stakeholder consultation across the three areas.

It is therefore intended that the final report will include exploration of the inter-relationships in each of the RIERSEP areas. Due to the early participation and response from stakeholders in the Renfrewshire area, it is the focus of the interim report. The findings will nevertheless be useful to the ongoing work in Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire. With work ongoing the final results may alter. The interim-report therefore provides early indications of different perspectives on how a local 'single interface' for Third Sector infrastructure support services should develop. Primarily it identifies which of the existing organisations or services are affected and where there appears to be a useful level of consensus for moving forward. Analysis of information is used to highlight early recommendations for the future direction of travel and any additional consultation or investigation required so that informed decisions can be made.

The report begins by setting some of the national context before outlining what is currently known about the extent of infrastructure support services within Renfrewshire. Viewpoints from service providers and key stakeholders are also taken into account. The findings are based on document research, a survey and a follow-up consultation using semi-structured interviews although the full interview analysis will be included in the final report.

The report uses terminology which is common to voluntary and volunteering sectors which could be alien to a wider audience. In Scotland most people use the term **'Voluntary Sector'** to describe all national or local voluntary, charity, community and social enterprise organisations which are governed by unpaid volunteers. However the term **'Third Sector'** is also used to describe the same sector in a way which emphasises its distinction from the Private Sector or Public Sector. Therefore both terms are interchangeable. Due to the fact that much of this report responds to communication from the Scottish Government, the term 'Third Sector' has been used as much as possible to maintain consistency. There is a fuller discussion of the term 'Third Sector Infrastructure' within the report which in this case refers to those organisations that provide support to improve voluntary activity and volunteering development.

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Background Context

The Third Sector's distinctiveness from the Public Sector and Private Sector is attributable to its organisations pursuing social, cultural and environmental purposes; being independent from the state; being governed by unpaid volunteers; using paid staff and volunteers to deliver their objectives, and receiving donations from the public (Scottish Executive 2005). Scotland has 45,000 nonprofit organisations, employing 129,000 (83,500 FTE) professional paid staff which is 5% of Scotland's workforce (SCVO, 2007). The sector consists of 18,000 regulated charities and mutuals which focus predominantly on social care whilst the wider unregulated sub-set features arts, sports and many other social, health and environmental categories of organisations (ibid).

The manifesto of Scotland's relatively new SNP Administration reinforces a commitment ***"to extend the involvement of the voluntary sector as co-producers of public services and drivers of community development"*** (SNP 2007, p.45). Recent trends in local government indicate that public agencies are reducing their role as direct service providers and taking on more arms-length strategic responsibilities where they enable others to provide the services needed to acceptable standards. Against this background many voluntary organisations and volunteers have an increasing role in delivering services in partnership or on behalf of public agencies which adds to their more traditional role of filling service gaps. This is causing rapid changes in the size, shape and nature of voluntary activity in Scotland which in turn is changing the types of support required from Third Sector infrastructure support providers.

Burt and Taylor (2002) suggest that the diversity which makes the voluntary sector an asset to Scotland creates significant infrastructural challenges. Since its beginnings in the late 19th Century a 'cluttered and muddled' landscape with over 200 support service providers known as 'infrastructure organisations' has evolved. They continue to emerge in response to identified needs and in more recent years in response to specific Government funding initiatives. The purpose of infrastructure organisations is to support their 'constituent-organisations', to provide services as efficiently and effectively as possible. Therefore they tend not to be involved in direct frontline delivery of the services commonly associated with voluntary organisations and volunteers. Their role is usually in the background; facilitating, steering and supporting organisations to achieve their mission. Typical activities include assisting organisations to:

- **Choose the right legal structure**
- **Seek charitable status and company recognition**
- **Apply for funding**
- **Find suitable accommodation**
- **Develop enterprising activities**
- **Write strategic and business plans**
- **Develop policy**
- **Employ staff**
- **Recruit and develop volunteers**
- **Participate in decision-making processes**

Infrastructure organisations are currently organised within national networks as in figure one [see Fig. 1]. The Citizens Advice Bureaux are slightly different in that they have their

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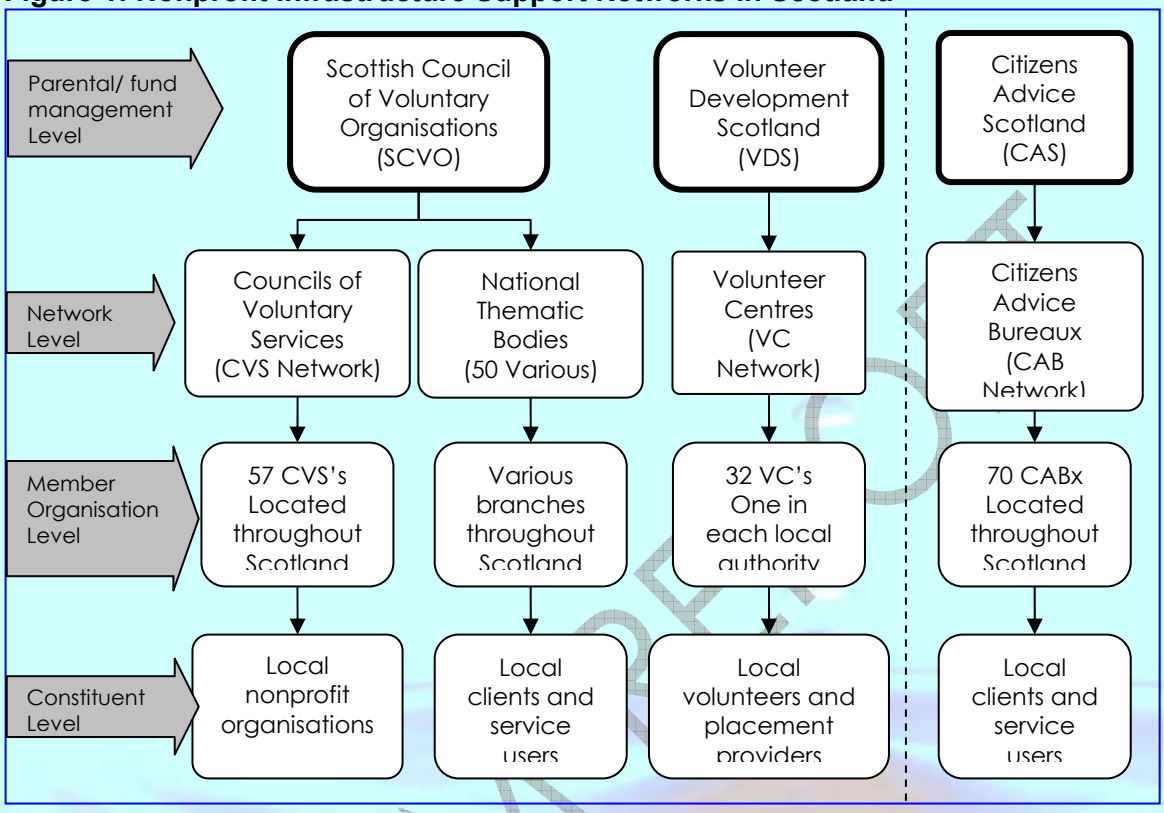
own parental and network level infrastructure support services at a national level, however locally they do not provide support services to other voluntary organisations.

Figure 1: Nonprofit Infrastructure Support Networks in Scotland



In-keeping with policy, for the three-year period 2008-2011 the Scottish Government allocated £30 million pounds investment to Third Sector infrastructure development. £11.85m was awarded to SCVO as a support package for the 57 local organisations which belong to the CVS network. VDS received £11.5m to support its 32 local Volunteer Centres. £3.7m was allocated to a national grant provider called the 'Voluntary Action Fund' to encourage volunteering. A further £4m was allocated to help the Third Sector become more enterprising and deliver more public services as follows:

- £750,000 for Local Social Economy Partnerships,
- £294,000 for Social Enterprise Networks,
- £940,000 for the Social Enterprise Academy,
- £521,000 for social entrepreneur support through First Port,
- £258,000 for the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations,
- £100,000 for action research on older people for older people led by the University of the Highlands and Islands,
- £225,000 for the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition,
- £351,000 for Evaluation Support Scotland,
- £240,000 for Development Trusts Association,
- £30,000 for International Network of Street Papers and
- £250,000 for social enterprise support in the Highlands and Islands.

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This list of mainly national infrastructure services is representative of the most recent evolutionary era in Third Sector development. Newer infrastructure support services tend to specialise on minority issues, or concentrate on the expanding social enterprise segment of the sector. Social enterprises generate income either through trading and reinvesting profits in social causes, or by delivering service contracts on behalf of government agencies. The growth of social enterprises and enterprising activity has become more popular as the sector tries to reduce its reliance on grant income from government, trusts, lottery funds or donations. In response, new infrastructure support services have emerged to provide more specialised support hence the growing list of bodies now funded by the Scottish Government.

In addition the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) made a one-off investment of £20 million for improving nonprofit infrastructure. The largest investment of £8.4 million went to SCVO for the 'Supporting Voluntary Action' programme which is a series of initiatives currently underway to improve the CVS network's own infrastructure (Big Lottery Fund 2007). The BLF fund derives from a premise that existing infrastructure support service providers need support themselves to respond to the rapidly changing needs of the Third Sector.

It is easy to accept there is confusion and misunderstanding applied to Third Sector infrastructure support services when considering the overlaps between networks and infrastructure service providers. For example although CVS and Volunteer Centres are funded via separate national parent bodies with separate support networks there are areas in Scotland where they both belong to the same organisation (E.g. East Renfrewshire). In most areas where they are separate organisations there are often long-standing arrangements in place for aspects of joint working and collaboration. Local Social Economy Partnerships bring together organisations engaged in social enterprise activity; however the local CVS is often a key player in this partnership, as is the case with RIERSEP (Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire Social Economy Partnership).

Locally the complexities of infrastructure support services are compounded by an additional layer of services provided by public agencies where rapid changes are also evident. Historically Community Development/Community Education teams worked from local centres, flats or shop-fronts to provide community-based capacity-building services such as youth work, adult education and community development. Whilst community services remain in each area their staffing numbers have reduced and in some authorities this aspect of service provision has been transferred to charitable companies operating at 'arms-length' from the local authorities which fund them. Years of targeted investment from national government towards areas experiencing multiple-deprivation has also led to a range of 'regeneration agencies' arising, many of which have formed as charitable companies. Their focus is on addressing deprivation and exclusion through physical regeneration, employability, safety, learning and health agendas. Nevertheless methods also incorporate regenerating communities by funding and supporting new voluntary initiatives or developing volunteering.

Although the above is not an exhaustive list of all relevant services overall there is clearly a wider range of infrastructure support services available from a wider range of voluntary, public and private providers. For those not entrenched in the system it would take a long time to fully appreciate the rationale of why services exist in the way they do. What is apparent is that organisations seeking support can find themselves lost in a maze of provision. This is backed up by recent reports stating that organisations claim

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they lack knowledge on what support services are available and how to access them (Rocket Science 2007).

In response the Government has made clear it expects a sea change in how it wants to fund Third Sector infrastructure support in future. Communication in November 2008 from the Scottish Government's Third Sector Team sets out some pointers which are paraphrased as follows:

- ***"We wish to work with local partners to ensure that in addition to the support the infrastructure provides to local and national third sector bodies working in each area, there is a strong interface between the third sector and the CPP - to enable the SOA to be informed by the knowledge and experience of the third sector; and for the third sector to have a real opportunity to show how it could deliver SOA outcomes.***
- ***The model currently under discussion is that we would provide a single pot for each CPP area.***
- ***It may be that some areas decide to go for a coordination arrangement for existing bodies; others might seek to replace existing organisations with new forms, perhaps single bodies."***

From the Government's perspective their funding will only be for organisations within 'agreed local arrangements' as this statement reveals, ***"While we expect to provide funding towards whatever form is eventually chosen, organisations which choose to remain outside the new arrangements will no longer be funded."***

The most recent communication expands by confirming the minimum requirements:

"Our funding will require that the interfaces meet a minimum set of functions, likely to be:

- ***Support to voluntary organisations operating in the area, both local and those national organisations that deliver services at the local level***
- ***Support to and promotion of volunteering***
- ***Support and development of social enterprise***
- ***Connection between the CPP and the third sector"***

The Government's Third Sector Team is also steering local stakeholders towards early transition, as this timetable from the most recent communication infers:

> **"End March 2009**: set out, as far as possible, the basic model of the interface to be set up in your area. Clearly, in many areas little detail can be given as discussions will have some way to go but stakeholders would find it helpful to have some idea of how you hope to progress the work. This may be the report referred to above although you may not yet be at a stage where the CPP has been involved.
>
> **March 2010**: put in place the new arrangements to operate, at the very least, in pilot form for the year 2010-11.

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April 2011: new funding arrangements come into operation. In advance of the next Spending Review, we have no information whatsoever on the likely level of that funding."

Furthermore there is an option to request the total funding for the CVS and VC as soon as arrangements are in place providing the following criterion is met:

> ***"The main criterion for awarding direct funding would be evidence that the CPP recognised the interface as the primary conduit to and from the third sector. This could be an exchange of letters, a memorandum of agreement or similar to establish an equally-balanced agreement between partners."***

In short, change is inevitable and the implications for Third Sector infrastructure providers are significant. The onus is placed on Community Planning Partnerships and infrastructure providers to work together to determine a 'local arrangement' that will best suit the needs of the Third Sector now and in the foreseeable future. This report outlines the early work carried out in the Renfrewshire area to determine an appropriate path.

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Defining Third Sector Infrastructure and Volunteering Support Services

There is no clear universal definition for Third Sector infrastructure and volunteering support services. To help understand the main functions this report separates support for voluntary organisations from volunteer development. Currently within Scotland the CVS network delivers support services to voluntary organisations which relate to two strategic themes of thrive and connect:

- **Thrive** – Direct capacity building support to community and voluntary organisations
- **Connect** – A catalyst for effective engagement between the community and voluntary sector and the local decision making and planning structures[1]

These themes are very broad and don't fully explain the functions which a CVS carries out to fulfil the thrive and connect strategy. Therefore we have borrowed the standards used by NAVCA[2] (2008) to explain the functions in more detail. The five standards are:

1. **The organisation pro-actively identifies needs in the local community and facilitates improvement in service provision to meet those needs**
2. **The organisation assists local voluntary and community organisations to function more effectively and deliver quality services to their users, members or constituents**
3. **The organisation facilitates effective communication or networking and collaboration amongst local voluntary and community groups**
4. **The organisation enables the diverse views of the local voluntary and community sector to be represented to external bodies, developing and facilitating structures which promote effective working relationships and two-way communication**
5. **The organisation enhances the voluntary and community sector's role as an integral part of local planning and policy-making**

Numbers one to three are relevant to the 'thrive' capacity-building theme, whereas four and five relate to the 'connect' theme of engaging in decision-making. Third Sector support services therefore entail working with organisations at any stage of their journey to develop and improve their services, and to make sure the voice of the Third Sector is part of shaping and influencing relevant policy. Volunteer Centres have a different focus which according to Volunteer Development Scotland is as follows:

6. **Dismantle the barriers to volunteering and close the opportunity gap**
7. **Improve the volunteer experience**
8. **Increase the number of people involved in volunteering**
9. **Broaden the range of people in volunteering**
10. **Encourage young people to volunteer**
11. **Get volunteering better recognised at policy level**

[1] CVS Scotland Business Plan 2008 – 2011

[2] NAVCA is the National Association of Voluntary and Community Associations in England and is the equivalent of the CVS Network in Scotland. The five standards were designed for infrastructure support organisations in England and there is currently no equivalent in Scotland.

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Volunteering support services focus primarily on individuals, recruiting them, matching and preparing them for volunteering opportunities, as well as ensuring there is a sufficient range of good quality and well managed volunteering opportunities available. Although the majority of Volunteer Centre work is with voluntary organisations they also support public and private organisations to develop their volunteering strategies.

Given previous discussion on the wide range of infrastructure providers in existence a key question of this consultation is, to what extent are these functions currently provided and which organisations are providing them. Uncovering answers to these questions within Renfrewshire will identify which organisations need to be included in a 'local arrangement for a single interface'. This will provide a basis for determining the most suitable arrangements for a single interface in future. Methods were therefore adopted to give all major stakeholders an opportunity to contribute their views on the extent of current infrastructure provision, the most beneficial types of joint working for Renfrewshire and the criteria for making it a success.

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Methods of Consultation

Following a stakeholders event organised by RCVS in November 2008 it became clear that the Government directive highlighted previously has wide ranging implications for infrastructure providers. Via RIERSEP a wider stakeholder consultation across the three areas was agreed as a first-step to gathering views and information on the potential options for a 'local arrangement' in each area as well as exploring opportunities for linkages between areas. It is imperative to make clear that the consultation methods at this interim stage are incomplete. This report focuses on the methods used in Renfrewshire as the majority of participants so far work within this area. Findings from East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde will be presented in the final report. The table below outlines the methods used so far.

Method	Purpose	Renfrewshire Participants
Document research	Reviewing the services, roles, purpose and policy of key providers affected by the development of a single interface (Business Plans, Strategies, Accounts and Research Reports)	RCVS PPRC VCR-No Response
Stakeholder Survey	A consultation with stakeholders to identify the main areas worthy of further exploration and to help determine the most feasible, acceptable and suitable options.	2 CVS 2 VCR 1 PPRC 10 Local Authority
Follow-up survey	Clarifying the extent of provision on each of the core functions from the perspective of key providers in Renfrewshire	CVS VCR PPRC RC-CLAD RC-Economic Development RC-SWD RC-Chief Executives CHP-No Response
Stakeholder Interviews	A more in-depth consultation on: • The distinctive features of services provided • What the linkages should be in each area and between areas • The most beneficial type of alliance and how to overcome the barriers to achieving it • The best structure for the short, medium and long term • Identifying who should be involved in decision-making and what criteria decisions should be based on • The essential criteria for ensuring a successful infrastructure	Gordon Martin SWD Alan Mair SWD Carolyn McIllroy SWD Alan Morris Economic Development Fiona Mackay CHP Janis McDonald, CO RCVS Andrew Noble Chief Execs Caroline Murphy, CO & Raye Wylie, Chair VCR Joe Ferrie PPRC

This interim report focuses mainly on analysis of findings from the survey. Analysis of the more in-depth interviews will be used in the final report.

Interim Findings for Renfrewshire

The Current Context in Renfrewshire

Reflecting on the historical roots of Third Sector infrastructure services in Renfrewshire it becomes apparent that the current push from Government towards a single interface has already been part of the Renfrewshire experience. When Scotland gained a devolved government in 1997 SCVO received funding from the Scottish Executive to set up a CVS in each of the gap areas – local authority areas without a Third Sector support interface. Renfrewshire was one of the areas identified. As part of this work a survey in 1998 showed that voluntary/community organisations wanted and needed a range of capacity building support for staff and volunteers. This led to the formation of RCVS as a charitable company in 2000.

Since the early 1990's Paisley already had an established Volunteer Centre (VC) which received high levels of social work funding. The Community & Family Care Policy Board withdrew this funding with effect from the 31st March 2004, on the basis of the projects failure to reach their Service Level Agreement targets. The VC Board at that time assisted Renfrewshire Council with an investigation which found the organisation's position to be unsustainable. Following the investigation in June 2004 a report was presented to elected members on the Community & Family Care Board where it was agreed that the national funding from the Scottish Executive's Voluntary Issues Unit would continue to be invested in Renfrewshire by diverting the grant to Renfrewshire Council of Voluntary service (RCVS) to:

- Develop a database of volunteers and volunteering opportunities; and
- Provide a public access point for volunteering

RCVS therefore became responsible for supporting volunteering whilst assisting with the re-establishing the VC. It acted as an incubator throughout its re-start-up phase by providing office space and support. In parallel with these events VDS as the national fund managers funded a consultant to explore the best way for re-establishing the Volunteer Centre. Although the report suggested that the VC would benefit from continuing to operate alongside RCVS, VDS took a lead in re-forming the VC as a separate charity. It received official recognition in December 2005 when it moved away from RCVS into its own office premises.

Given the recent history the Government's new demands for a single interface could open up issues which are familiar to many in the Renfrewshire area which may still be considered unresolved. These sensitivities need to be understood as part of the background which can influence the change process which lies ahead.

Renfrewshire is however making positive progress on involving the Third Sector in community planning which is one of the requirements of developing a single interface. At a national level the new Concordat agreement was signed between CoSLA and the Scottish Government requiring local authorities to deliver on national priorities through a local Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). The Renfrewshire SOA was signed in August 2008 after a significant period of consultation which included a specific consultation with the local Third Sector which included input from the CVS and VC. However the extent of

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Third Sector engagement in delivering SOA outcomes varies across each of the CPP sub-structures and it is generally accepted by stakeholders that there is still a significant amount to be achieved. Nevertheless there is evidence of work underway to gradually address these issues. These infrastructure services will therefore be examined in more detail.

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Third Sector Infrastructure Services in Renfrewshire

Despite some of the complexities, infrastructure support services in the Renfrewshire area exhibit many of the qualities which the Government wants other areas to aspire to, albeit from within a group of separate organisations. There are two main organisations directly affected by the Scottish Government directive for a single interface, they are:

- **Renfrewshire Council of Voluntary Services – RCVS**
- **Volunteer Centre Renfrewshire – VCR**

Within Renfrewshire there is also a regeneration agency and local development company **Paisley Partnership and Regeneration Company – PPRC** with some aspects of its services that relate to supporting voluntary and community organisations and volunteering. To understand the extent of involvement each organisation has, it is helpful to look at each of their strategic roles and examine the extent of provision in relation to core infrastructure support functions.

Figure 2: The strategic role and initiatives of key providers

	RCVS[3]	VCR[4]	PPRC[5]
Strategic purpose/ objectives	Thrive – direct capacity building support to community and voluntary organisations Connect – A catalyst for effective engagement between the community and voluntary sector and the local decision-making and planning structures The voluntary sector is supported to grow and develop and form a strong and robust foundation Voluntary sector organisations have a voice, are heard and are active partners in changing communities for the better The CVS responds to change, delivers quality services to meet local need and manages its services effectively	Gathering up to date information about local volunteer opportunities Putting people in touch with organisations where they can volunteer Providing information and advice to those who work with volunteers Promoting and publicising the values of volunteering	To support CPP structures that relate to regeneration, community development and employment To develop the project portfolio and coordinate partner activity in line with the SOA To support the CPP in monitoring the performance and expenditure of FSF To provide support to partners and communities on sources of external funding To provide marketing support to CPP projects and communities To provide support and development assistance to local community groups to enable them to build capacity and deliver services at a local level To assist individuals to assess and sustain employment To support the monitoring and overarching aims of Renfrewshire's Workforce Plus programmes.

[3] All RCVS info is taken from the RCVS Business Plan, their most recent Accounts and Annual Report.
[4] VCR has not yet provided the requested documents therefore information is taken from their response to surveys and what is published on their website.
[5] PPRC info is based on info provided from their Service Level Agreement (SLA). They do not have a Business Plan or Annual Report.

	RCVS[3]	VCR[4]	PPRC[5]
Main initiatives	Network development and working in partnership with CPP partners to represent sector interests within the CPP/SOA Building the capacity of third sector organisations through one to one and group support sessions on funding, governance and management and supporting the establishment of new organisations Mapping of the voluntary sector and Database management Providing an information service including a Website, E-bulletin, policy updates, guides etc. Corporate services – payroll, direct payments, and printing ROAR-supporting a consortium of providers to deliver a befriending programme for older people Work with partners to promote volunteering, social responsibility and community action	Part of a national volunteering database www.volunteerscotland.org.uk Student Volunteering Renfrewshire – to promote volunteering opportunities to local students MV – award scheme to encourage young people to volunteer VARIETY (Volunteering Activity in Renfrewshire Involving Exciting Training for Youth) Libraries across Renfrewshire have information points on volunteering	To assist the CPP to develop, monitor and review the implementation of Fairer Scotland Funds Community Action Team (CAT)- • promotes community involvement within the community planning process, • provides community capacity building by assisting community groups to help set up or enhance current projects, • organises training and consultation events, • helps with funding applications Equal Access to Employment – assists individuals with acquiring and sustaining employment
Main income	Scottish Government & Renfrewshire Council	Scottish Government	Fairer Scotland Fund , ESEP & NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

This figure illustrates that RCVS in its entirety is set up to provide infrastructure support services to voluntary organisations in Renfrewshire. Similarly VCR - the Volunteer Centre is dedicated to supporting volunteer development across Renfrewshire. For PPRC it appears that it is mainly the work of the Community Action Team that correlates more explicitly with infrastructure support services as defined previously. These organisations were therefore asked to indicate the extent of their involvement in relation to the core infrastructure support functions defined on page 9. The results are as follows:

Figure 3: Involvement in capacity building support

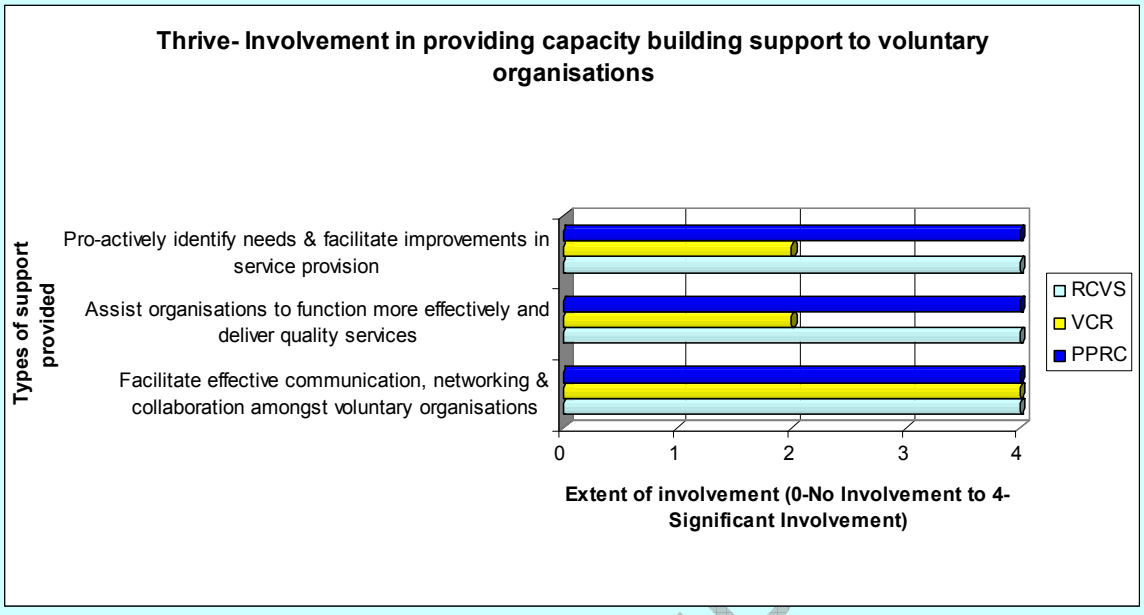


Figure three illustrates that both RCVS and PPRC consider their organisations to be significantly involved in providing capacity-building support to voluntary organisations. Based on the information in figure two it appears that this will apply to all of the RCVS activities. For PPRC it can be assumed that it is the CAT team's services being referred to as having significant involvement. VCR also has some involvement in these functions however their involvement is likely to focus on volunteering as part of the wider capacity building needs of organisations. As part of the ongoing consultation these points require further clarification from PPRC and VCR on whether these assumptions are accurate.

Figure 4: Being a catalyst for effective engagement in decision-making

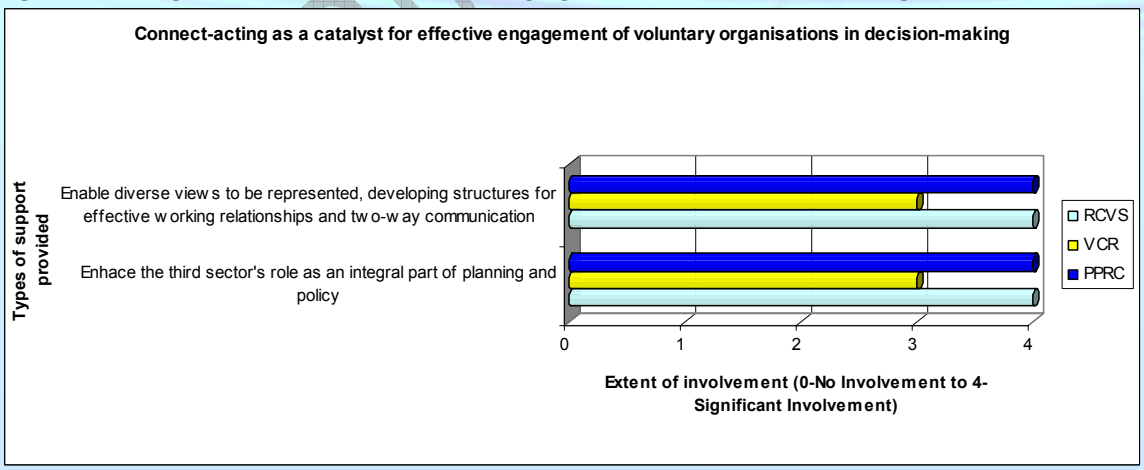
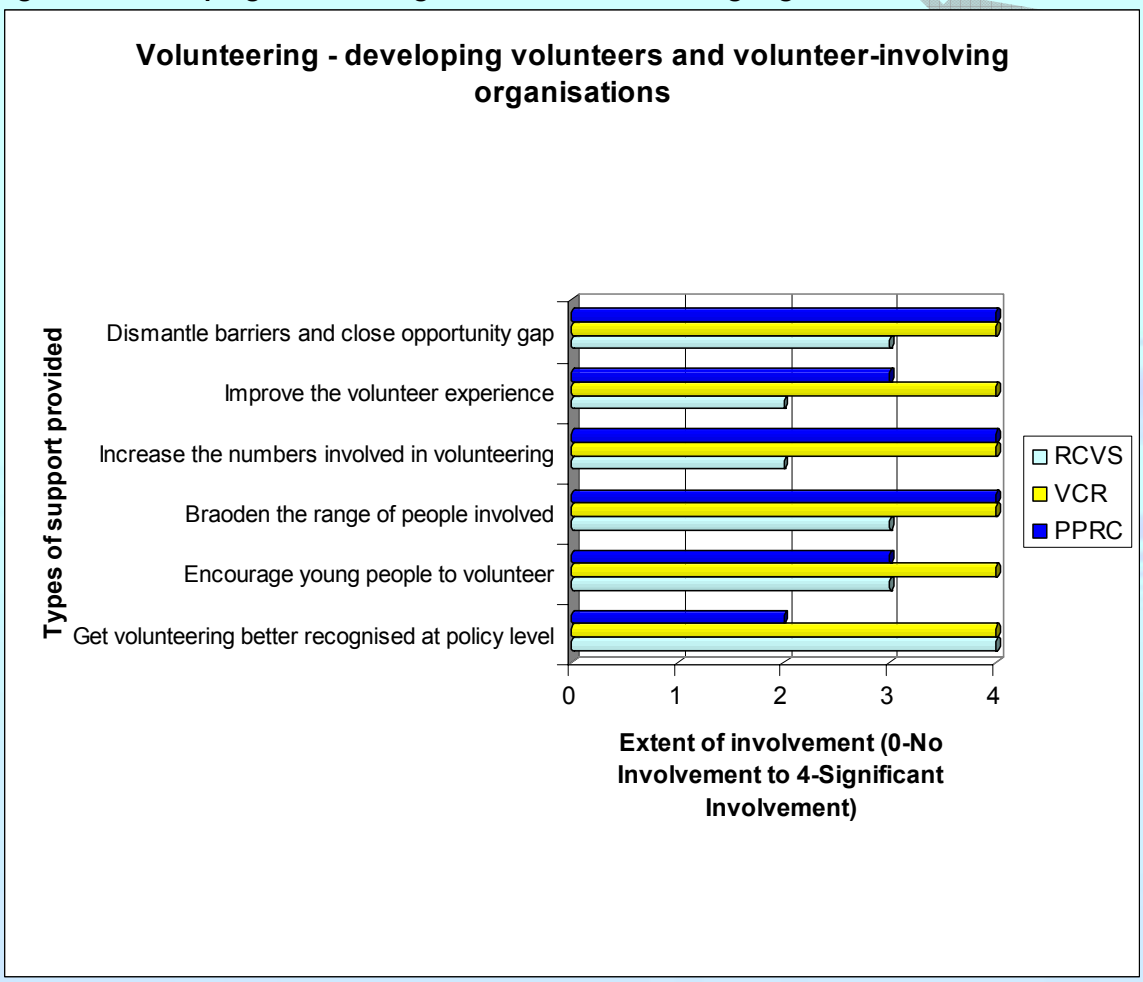


Figure four also highlights that RCVS and PPRC believe they have significant involvement in acting as a catalyst for effective engagement of voluntary organisations in decision-making. VCR also sees their organisation as having regular involvement in this aspect. For RCVS it is clear in figure 2 how this forms one of their key strategic roles as part of the 'connect' theme. RCVS is therefore given a role within CPP structures to represent the wider interests of the third sector in Renfrewshire. Engagement with the

sector is achieved by supporting thematic networks and having regular briefings with organisations listed on their database. The difference between RCVS and PPRC appears to relate to the fact that RCVS focuses on issues affecting the sector as a whole or affecting different sections or networks within the sector. PPRC's work is more concerned with issues affecting local areas within Renfrewshire. The role of PPRC therefore has a different emphasis as it is organised on a more localised area basis through supporting community representatives from constituted groups on the recently established Local Area Committees, a system implemented by Renfrewshire Council and endorsed by elected members. With the VCR it is understood that they represent volunteering interests on some of the community planning structures. The extent of engagement with voluntary organisations or volunteers in representing their interests is less clear within the limited information made available.

Figure 5: Developing volunteering and volunteer-involving organisations



As expected the VCR has much more significant levels of involvement in volunteering development as reflected in their core strategic purpose and initiatives. PPRC state they also have significant involvement particularly in relation to dismantling barriers, increasing the numbers and broadening the range of people involved in volunteering. Unlike the VCR PPRC do not have any obvious systems for recruiting and matching volunteers with opportunities or supporting volunteer management. They do however manage Renfrewshire's 'Community Voices' fund a government initiative to support

community engagement in decision-making. This translates locally into running a series of training courses to community representatives participating in Local Area Committees, who are acting on a voluntary basis. Barriers to participation are addressed by providing crèche and additional support as required. For young people PPRC support them into volunteering such as providing youth work/leader courses and football coaching. RCVS considers its role as being more significant in relation to getting volunteering better recognised at policy level. It is assumed that this is done as part of representing the wider interests of the Third Sector as part of RCVS' role within community planning structures. Figure 2 implies therefore that RCVS' role focuses on supporting partners and local voluntary organisations to promote volunteer development rather than having any direct involvement.

Generally RCVS, VCR and parts of PPRC each have services, resources and personnel with levels of appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to contribute to a new 'local arrangement' for Third Sector infrastructure and volunteering support services. With the existing government funding restricted to the CVS and VC there is a need for a decision to be reached locally on whether any of PPRC's functions or resources should continue to be considered in the next stage of moving toward a single interface.

Within the Local Authority the main sections providing elements of infrastructure support services also include Community Learning and Development, Social Work – Locality Planning, Economic Development and Chief Executives. It has also been mentioned to the consultants that Housing and Property Services and Corporate Services provide some community capacity building services. They each have different roles and purposes to perform which increasingly focus on the strategic role of local government. Therefore it may be the case that these functions will form strong relationships with the new single interface arrangement and be seen as the main sources of support to the single interface at a local level.

Officers from each of these organisations/functions come together via the Joint Voluntary Sector Working Group (JVSWG). A key achievement of this group was the creation of the Renfrewshire Compact. Launched in 2007 it sets out the principles of how the public and Third Sectors will work together in Renfrewshire. It aims to encourage better and more effective partnerships with a mutual appreciation of each others roles and responsibilities. This group could therefore play an important role within supporting the Community Planning Partnership to set up an appropriate decision-making process and criteria for determining the most suitable single-interface for Renfrewshire.

Thus the critical issue facing infrastructure providers in Renfrewshire is how to meet the challenge of creating a strong single interface between the Third Sector and the CPP by March 2011 or sooner. Given Renfrewshire's historical context it is important to ensure that any change is seen as moving forward rather than taking a step backward. Therefore it is essential that consultation processes are as open and transparent as possible with clear criteria for decision-making. There is also a need for an early steer from the CPP on whether to limit further development to RCVS and VCR or if there are legitimate grounds to include relevant parts of PPRC, namely the CAT.

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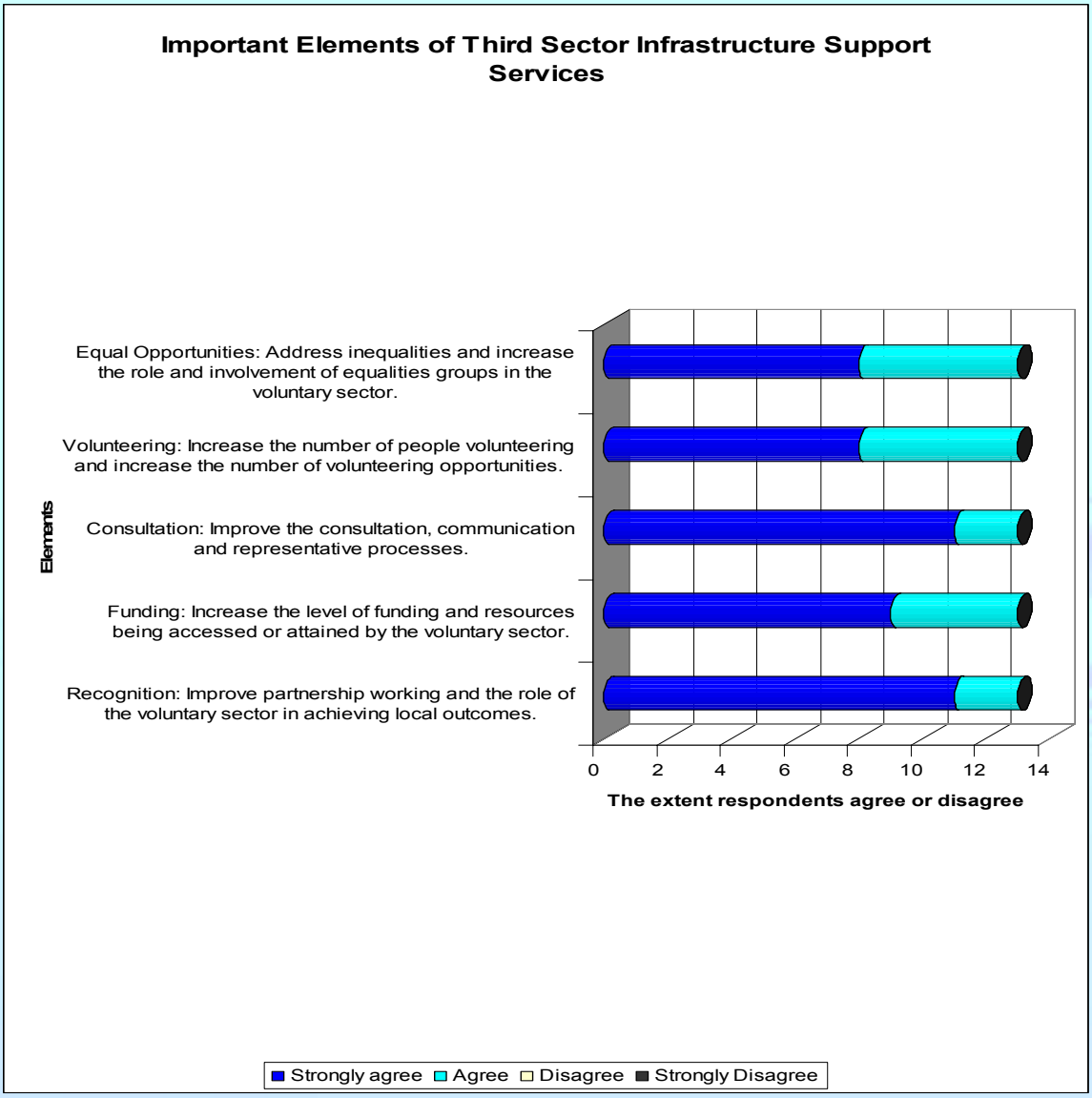
Survey Findings

From the survey findings so far there are clear areas of consensus emerging. This is especially true in relation to determining the most important elements of infrastructure support services. The priorities already agreed to in Renfrewshire's 'Compact' are shared priorities for all stakeholders as this chart demonstrates [chart 1].

Figure 6: Important elements of Third Sector infrastructure



Most stakeholders strongly agree with the priorities set out in the Compact. None of the stakeholders disagree. When asked what else were important factors the following suggestions were made:

> ***"Independence from Public Sector yet recognition by it of its key roles in supporting the sector to achieve SOA / CPP outcomes."***

"Fully integrated umbrella voluntary sector body which attains a high profile and recognition as being the independent voice of the voluntary sector in Renfrewshire."

"The infrastructure of the local Third Sector needs to be able to articulate clearly and accurately the views of the sector. As such it needs to work closely with the organisations which it seeks to represent."

"Gain recognition for the work that is already undertaken and promote this at local and national Government level."

This indicates that among stakeholders there is a good understanding of Third Sector priorities and the role which Third Sector infrastructure support services perform. The comments offer clues as to acceptable criteria for making decisions on the most suitable options, for example:

- **Independence from the public sector**
- **Fully integrated services**
- **Able to represent and articulate the needs of the sector**
- **Ability to raise the provide of the sector**

A key question for moving forward is ***which types of alliances or joint working will be most beneficial in Renfrewshire.*** Stakeholders were asked to consider a range of options and identify which ones offered the most benefits in the current circumstances [see chart 2].

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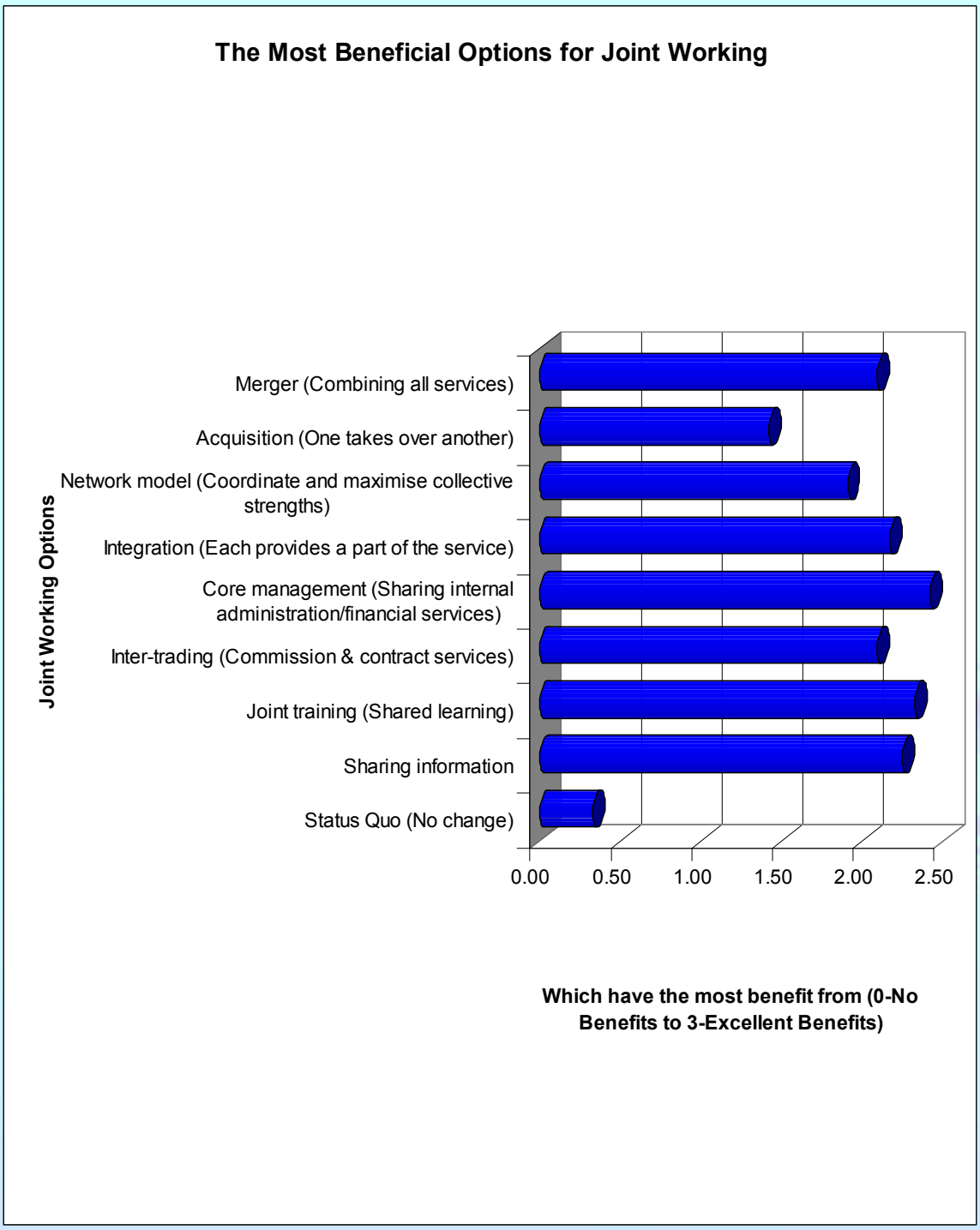
Figure 7: The most beneficial types of joint working



None of the respondents rated the **status quo** as having good or excellent benefits; consequently it can be assumed that change is supported within Renfrewshire. Although some respondents recognised the benefits of **acquisition** others were strongly opposed due to concerns over the damage this might cause to the organisation/s taken over. The strongest consensus emerged in relation to **combining core management functions**

which was perceived by all respondents as having excellent or good benefits. This is where efficiencies are gained from having common financial and administration services. Therefore it appears to be the option with the most support. **Joint training and sharing information** was rated by most respondents as having excellent benefits. These are types of joint working which are relatively easy to achieve however on their own they may not be sufficient for achieving the levels of coordination required for a single interface. **Integration**, where different organisations provide different aspects of an end to end service was also indicated as having excellent or good benefits to offer. Similarly a **merger** and **inter-trading** were highlighted as having strong potential. Generally the wide range of options rated as having excellent or good benefits indicates that many stakeholders are willing to consider a number of options. The additional comments infer that there is recognition of the benefits for more radical change within the Renfrewshire context, as these examples demonstrate:

> ***"What is required due to funding and a policy pressure is a radical change. The most radical being either acquisition or merger. Merger is better as a new identity can be developed. Acquisition is not as good as the likely dominant culture of the acquirer may not be the best to deliver and become the infrastructure supporter."***
>
> ***"I feel that for a new era in voluntary sector development in Renfrewshire, a complete merger would be the most effective way to gear-up to prepare for a position providing the strategic planning potential necessary prior to 2011."***
>
> ***"I believe that there is a duplication of effort & that several organisations can provide a range of services but the DEPTH of service can often be surface as a consequence of not being able to pay going rate for quality job. By pooling resources and reorganising provision range could be kept & depth considerably improved."***
>
> ***"Any change will create some level of resistance - but efficiencies will hopefully outweigh these if handled sensitively."***

Overall there is a climate and support for radical change which does bring relevant infrastructure services together in a coherent fashion. Thus the key components of a successful single interface in Renfrewshire are characterized by:

- **Radical change – possibly some form of merger**
- **A need for a new identity for the single-interface**
- **More efficient use of resources**
- **Avoid duplication and provide more in-depth support services**

The motivation for change is primarily driven by the belief that existing services could be improved if resources were more efficiently coordinated as part of a combined effort. This will prove helpful when the change process begins as the process is more likely to succeed if the change process is driven internally rather than purely as a response to an external drive from Government.

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The internal motivations were reinforced by stakeholders when they identified the key benefits and barriers to joint working [see table 1].

Table 1: The benefits and barriers of forging links between Third Sector infrastructure providers

Key Benefits	Key Barriers
• Ability to connect to the sector and its constituent parts • Better understanding of what the sector does and what it achieves • Improved support to the sector to deliver CPP/SOA outcomes. • Sharing information • Working relationship based on trust and respect. • Broader spectrum of skills and experience • Maximising collective strengths • Better understanding of the bigger volunteering picture • Improved recognition • Better use of resources • Joined up services for the sector • Less duplication/ competition • Innovative service delivery • Cost savings • Increased funding and resources	• Time & space to explore future options • Need to be located in Paisley town centre and provide a hub for all Third Sector activity • Protectionism – from individuals and organisations - inflexibility • Potential loss of resources • Fear of the unknown • Limited (existing) infrastructure and capacity – need to develop broader spectrum of expertise • Existing fragmentation of services • Difficulties sourcing appropriate levels and sources of funding – currently under-resourced • Council's ability to see the benefits of closer working with the Third Sector • Loss of identity • Separate Boards and Governance structures – each organisation has its own legal entity and separate procedures for changes

Whilst the benefits outweigh the barriers, overcoming them between now and 2011 will be critical to the success of whatever 'local arrangement' is arrived at in Renfrewshire. This early work is by no means conclusive. Nevertheless it is building up a clearer picture of the current context, the potential barriers to change which need to be addressed and the forces which will promote the realisation of short, medium and long term solutions.

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Next Steps

One issue being explored as part of the interview process is who should be involved in decision-making and what should the decision-making criteria be based on. The feedback on this is still being processed and analysed. However there is one criterion which is likely to dominate – **is the solution right for the Third Sector and volunteers in Renfrewshire?** The consultants hold the belief that this next phase should pose that question as part of a wider consultation with Third Sector organisations and volunteers. In the interim it is important that this consultation phase with stakeholders is concluded. There is also the need to do further work which involves reaching necessary agreements with decision-makers (politicians, CPP representatives and infrastructure providers). Therefore to help with the next phase of consultation it is recommended that the focus is on defining:

A – An ideal Third Sector and volunteering support service
B – Its minimum requirements

It should be possible to garner some of this information from the most recent mapping exercise conducted by RCVS and the volunteering database managed by the VCR. It is only right that processes are open and transparent for everyone affected by the imminent changes. Rather than presenting a completely blank sheet it is possible to define different models of infrastructure support services. Here are four different models which could be presented as a basic framework for stakeholders to add flesh and bones to – E.g. resources and specific working arrangements. They are:

Model 1: A Function Model – organised around different specialist functions
Model 2: A Thematic Model – organised around different themes and issues
Model 3: A Differentiated Model – organised around headings which describe the different segments/tiers of the Third Sector
Model 4: A Cluster/Integrated Model – organised around coordinating the work of the existing organisations in a more strategically integrated and coherent fashion

To explain the differences between models a diagram is created for each. There is a set of assumptions common to each model as follows:

Joint Board: The two Boards from the CVS and VC would work together until the inaugural meeting of the 'new arrangement' (anticipated in April 2011) at which point all existing members would stand down and a new Board would be elected.

Chief Officer: A Chief Officer would be appointed on secondment to take charge until the new structure is formed with the power to formally appoint staff. This secondment would be open to existing officers or the CPP may appoint someone from outwith the existing organisations to manage the transition phase.

Internal Support: There will be a need for a level of internal financial and administrative support to take care of the day to day operational processes. There appears to be recognition that these could be streamlined more efficiently as part of a single-interface.

External Support: There is at a minimum level a need for legal support and an accountant/auditor. There is also potential to contract in other support services such as

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HR, Health & Safety, web management and IT servicing among others. This is one area where there is scope to explore whether these contracts could be shared across the RIERSEP areas to further reduce costs. Such an arrangement is however not essential to making this feasible within Renfrewshire.

Monitoring & Evaluation: The monitoring and evaluation of Fairer Scotland Funds is currently carried out by PPRC on behalf of the CPP. There is therefore some logic that their natural role lies in designing and implementing appropriate procedures for the new single-interface arrangement. There might however be tensions if PPRC have a significant delivery role which would affect their ability to remain independent enough to monitor and evaluate their own services. It would be more feasible if it is only the relevant part of their existing services which are incorporated into the new single-interface. However no assumptions are being made at this stage as this requires further investigation and consultation.

Centralised Hub/One-stop-shop: Location is being raised by many stakeholders as an important issue. Several contributors have mentioned that the current location RCVS is inaccessible and that the visible profile of the VCR is low. PPRC are also conscious that their location in one neighbourhood makes it difficult to promote their services to other Renfrewshire communities. An apparent belief held by stakeholders is that that to raise awareness of current services there needs to be a town-centre location within Paisley which is easy for the public, voluntary organisations, volunteers and stakeholders to recognise as where they go to get assistance with all voluntary and volunteering matters. This will raise the credibility and profile of the services on offer. Regardless of the preferred model this can be achieved either as a shared location or where the services are combined under one roof. Although the focus here is on infrastructure services none of the models would prevent a hub/one-stop-shop from becoming a base for other voluntary services to operate from. This is a model adopted in other areas in Scotland and can provide a valuable source of regular income to the infrastructure organisation.

With these assumptions clarified the suggested models are set out for further consultation as follows:

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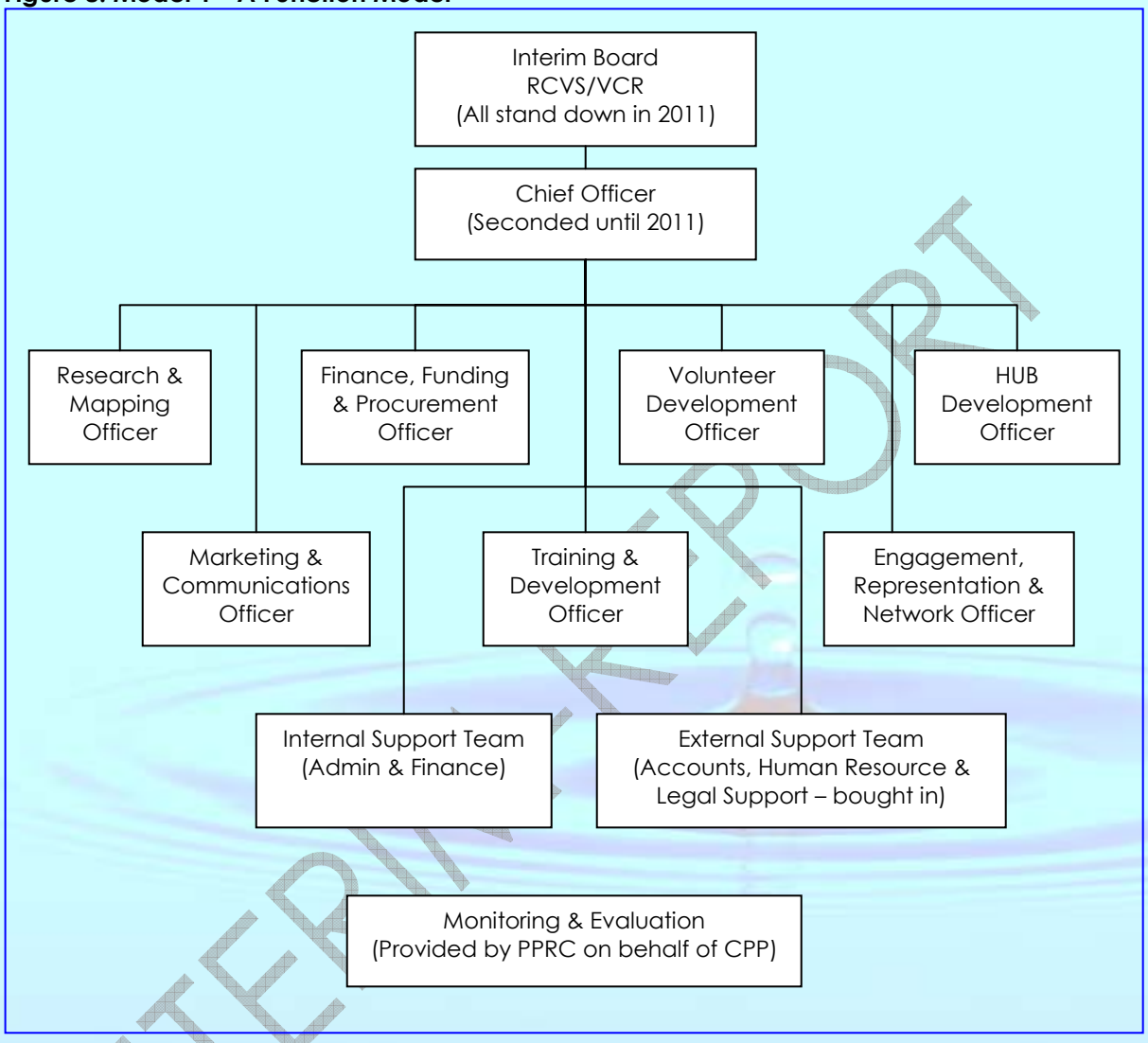
Model 1 – Function Model

Figure 8: Model 1 - A Function Model



The functional model makes support and expertise available to the Third Sector in response to different aspects of how they organise and manage themselves. The work would be organised in response to audits and needs analysis carried out for different organisations. For example if an organisation was experiencing financial issues the appropriate officer would audit their systems and work with them to explore solutions. At the same time the Training and Development Officer could organise appropriate training for staff and volunteers. Creating new volunteering opportunities might help them deliver parts of their service more efficiently, and so on.

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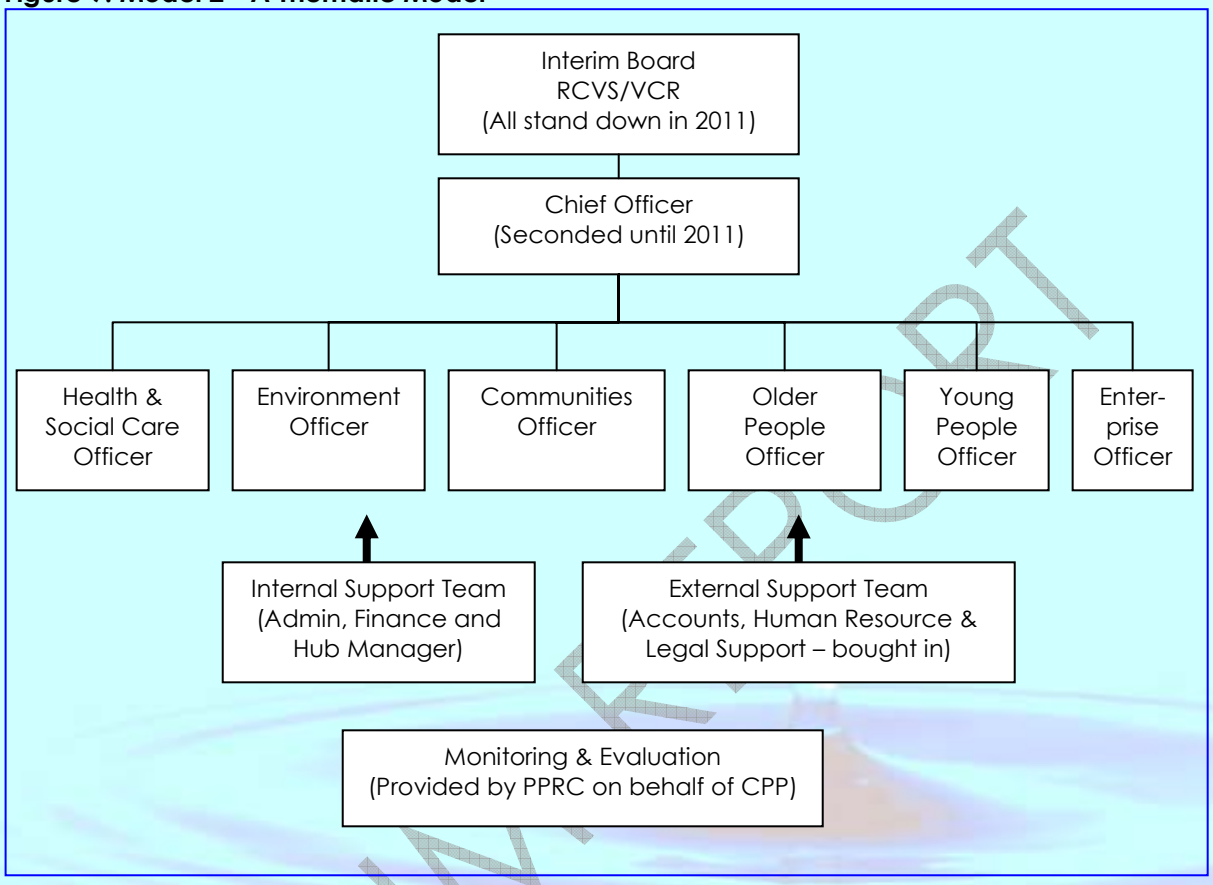
Model 2 – Thematic Model

Figure 9: Model 2 - A Thematic Model



The thematic model concentrates on the issues which are a priority in local communities rather than the functions of the organisations. Therefore the expertise focuses on being able to offer skills and experience to help communities and organisations tackle relevant issues. The approach is likely therefore to be less concerned with how organisations and individuals function and is instead more concerned with bringing the right people and resources together to make a difference. In this model volunteering is connected to each theme, for example it would be an option to help young people get work experience. On the other hand volunteering options would be developed which help keep older people active or help provide health and social care services.

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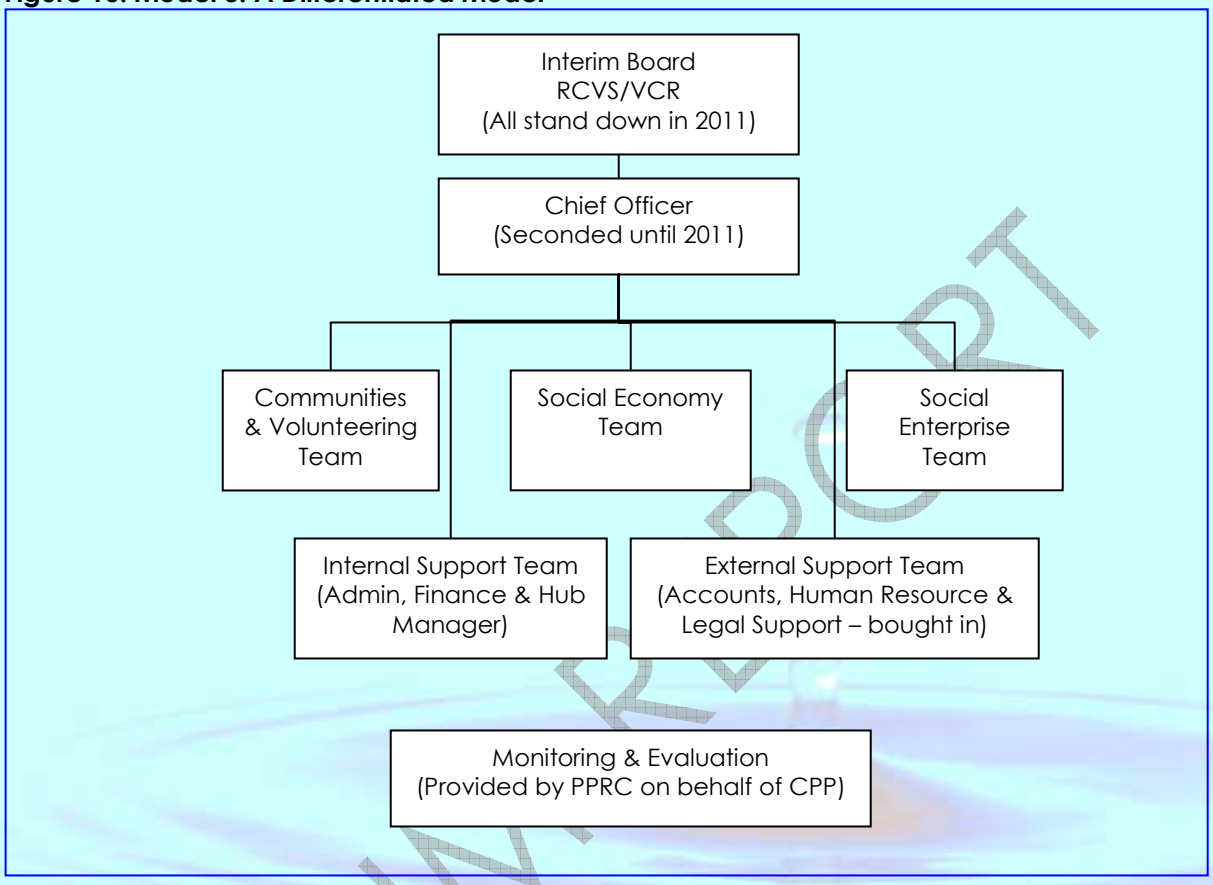
Model 3 – Differentiated Model

Figure 10: Model 3: A Differentiated Model



The differentiated model is designed to acknowledge the different needs of different types of Third Sector organisations. Therefore small teams would be organised to provide the appropriate levels of intervention for each segment or tier of the Third Sector. This means that small community based organisations run by volunteers would get support tailored to meet their needs. Social economy organisations employing staff and bidding for public sector contracts need to develop different capacities, therefore the support they receive would focus on helping them succeed in that environment. Social enterprises will need to adapt their services to be able to generate income in a recession therefore support services would be tailored to support those enterprises to survive in challenging times. Volunteering within this model would be organised to meet the needs of different organisations in each segment or tier of the sector.

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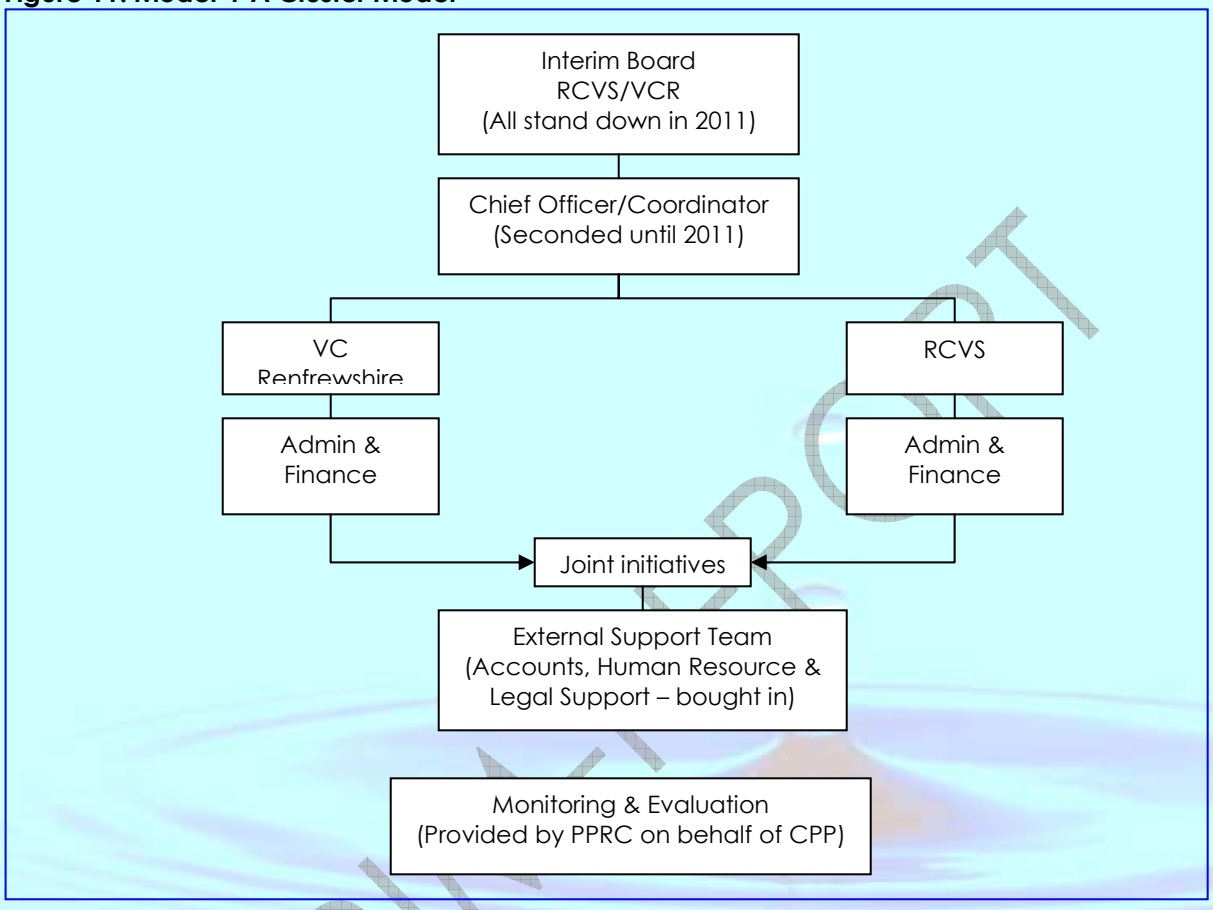
Model 4 – Cluster/Integrated Model

Figure 11: Model 4-A Cluster Model



The cluster model is the one which is the closest to existing arrangements. The Boards would work collaboratively and a Chief Officer or Coordinator would be appointed to coordinate activities between organisations but each would retain its separate functions and identities. The model shows that separate administration and finance arrangements would remain however efforts would be made to ensure that responsibilities were shared out to avoid duplication of effort. For example only one team would handle payroll.

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Conclusion

In light of the findings and discussion so far it can be concluded that follow-up action is now required to meet the requirements and timetable set out by the Scottish Government:

Next Phase-Renfrewshire

With Renfrewshire so far on in the consultation process the following action is recommended:

1. **Make a summary of the interim-report available for the CVS/VC/PPRC to consult their member organisations/volunteers on the proposed models/options. Gather, process and analyse feedback.**

2. **Organise a stakeholders' event to get an updated input from the Scottish Government, report back on the consultation process and to involve stakeholders in shaping the proposed models, to agree a preferred model for Renfrewshire.**

3. **Use the RCVS mapping exercise and an up to date VCR volunteering database report to identify needs, issues and trends presented by organisations and volunteers along with any data/audits on organisational/volunteering support provided by PPRC.**

4. **Audit existing levels of income and expenditure in each organisation and clarify which aspects are relevant to be transferred or incorporated in any new arrangement and outline how the preferred model can be resourced from secured income to meet the needs identified by mapping/database analysis.**

5. **Support each of the organisations affected to carry out an internal impact assessment of how the preferred model will affect them and any issues which need to be addressed before they can support the transition process to proceed.**

6. **From the CPP and political representatives get clarification on what the local decision-making process will be along with the criteria decisions will be based on and a timetable for action. Also seek responses and feedback on the preferred model and indicative resources required from the consultation process.**

Next Phase-Inverclyde

Inverclyde has not yet engaged with the process to any real extent. Therefore to make up time the following is proposed:

- **Through RIERSEP get Inverclyde representatives to agree a lead person for organising the consultation and acting as a conduit for communication during the consultation process.**

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- **Share the work done in Renfrewshire and offer an opportunity to hold a stakeholder consultation in Inverclyde using the same tools and models to determine an appropriate local arrangement.**

- **As with Renfrewshire tailor a report for Inverclyde Infrastructure Providers to share with their members/volunteers and gather feedback.**

- **Carry out steps 4-6 as in Renfrewshire.**

Next Phase-East Renfrewshire

East Renfrewshire finds itself in a different context where it already has a fully integrated CVS and VC. Unlike Renfrewshire or Inverclyde there is not any other separate organisation like a regeneration agency which carries out infrastructure support services other than some of the community, equalities and economic development services provided by the Council or via Community Planning structures. Therefore there are unlikely to be any structural changes to consider in this area. A stakeholders' event/focus group was conducted within Renfrewshire and the main areas raised for follow-up action are as follows:

- **Provide a tailored report for East Renfrewshire to share between stakeholders and members and get feedback.**

- **Get agreement to map the services provided to voluntary organisations by the Council and Voluntary Action**

- **Ask the CPP to discuss and agree ways that the third sector can become more fully involved in decision making processes and in co-delivering on the SOA**

- **The CPP should identify research on the potential for local joint planning and delivery strategies between statutory and third sector providers that would help redress the power imbalance and help build confidence and trust**

Feedback is required from East Renfrewshire on whether any external input is required to progress these points.

Next Phase-General

Not forgetting the wide range of national bodies affected by the move towards local single-interfaces the following is proposed:

- **Survey national/regional providers and networks which currently receive Scottish Government funding on how they see their role fitting with local arrangements, what resources they expect to be able to contribute and what links/relationships they want with the local area. Also ask the Scottish Government to clarify their expectations in this respect.**

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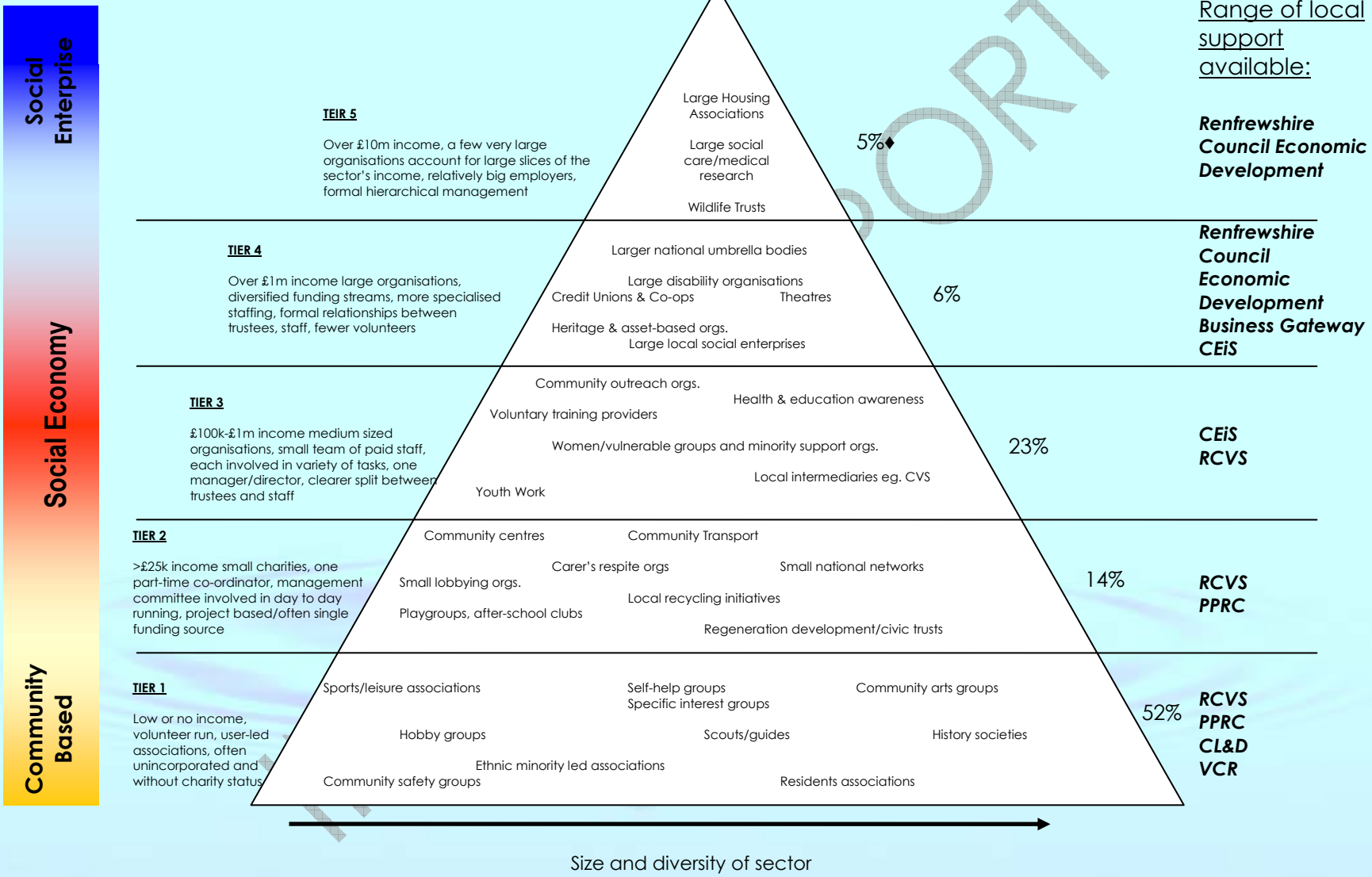
Appendix: Voluntary Sector Support Infrastructure in Renfrewshire



Types of activity and support required for each tier of the sector

TIER 1
Start-up support
Setting up a committee
Agreeing a Constitution
General governance
Funding/toolkit support
Ad-hoc training eg. Committee Skills
Quality standards
Networking/information sharing

TIER 2
Funding Governance
Company registration
Charitable status/compliance
Quality standards
Social enterprise/project development Operational planning
Social economy network/information sharing
Payroll/general financial management
Fast tracking

TIER 3
Social enterprise development & growth
Strategic planning
Governance OSCR/compliance
Project development
Social economy network/information sharing
Payroll
Financial management
Specialist training & development Employment law/HR services
Quality standards
Monitoring & evaluation
Loan finance
Asset development
Mentoring training & skills

TIER 4
Strategic planning
Loan finance
Asset development
Employment law/HR services
Quality standards
Health & safety
Leadership training & skills

TIER 5
Strategic planning Loan finance
Asset development
Employment law/HR services
Quality standards
Health & safety

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