

One door...



to a thriving, connected & sustainable Third Sector

Transforming and Empowering Renfrewshire Seminar Report March 2010



Contents

About the Seminar	3
Welcome: Councillor Eileen McCartin	3
Transforming Social Work.....	3
Workshops	3
Empowering - Communities.....	3
Workshops	3
Background	4
Transforming Social Work.....	5
Information	6
Engagement/co-planning of services.....	7
Community development/ development of supports/ services	8
Volunteering	9
Contribution of non-social care services/social inclusion.....	10
Empowering Communities.....	11
Key Themes	13
Delegate List.....	14

About the Seminar

The Transforming and Empowering Renfrewshire Seminar took place on the 23rd March at the Wynd Centre in Paisley. It was organised in partnership between RCVS and the Social Work Department of Renfrewshire Council for a number of reasons:

- *To raise awareness of the current opportunities and challenges facing the public sector and local communities*
- *To bring the public sector, third sector and communities together to start a dialogue on shaping the delivery of future services*
- *To explore different ways the Third Sector and Communities can be supported to fulfil common goals*
- *To begin to identify how we can build on existing and create new opportunities for community empowerment*

The seminar was well attended with 60 delegates from a wide range of Public Agencies and Third Sector organisations. The seminar was chaired by Susan McLean and the programme was as follows:

Welcome: Councillor Eileen McCartin

Cllr McCartin has been a Councillor for 22 years is Depute Leader of Renfrewshire Council and is presently the convener of the Community and Family Care Policy Board, which encompasses Social Work, Leisure and the Arts.

Transforming Social Work

Speakers - Murdoch Carberry, Strategic Change and Development Manager, Renfrewshire Council Social Work Team supported by Sheila Gillies from the Senior Management Team. "Transforming Social Work" is all about how Social Work shapes its services in the future. A key feature of this transformation will be how we work with partners to achieve more personalised services which meet the needs of vulnerable people. This event aims to inform and start the dialogue with community and voluntary organisations in Renfrewshire about how we build individual, family and community capacity to meet changing expectations and demands, particularly at a time of financial challenges.

Workshops

Workshop discussions on the implications for the Third Sector in Renfrewshire led by Renfrewshire Social Work Staff.

Empowering - Communities

Speaker - Tom Black, Development Officer with Community Development Trusts Association Scotland (CDTAS), the national organisation for encouraging, supporting and representing Community Development Trusts within Scotland. Tom spoke on the topic of "Community Empowerment and Local People Leading".

Workshops

A facilitated workshop discussion to consider key issues of community empowerment in Renfrewshire.

Background

The Scottish Government and COSLA have agreed a definition of ‘community empowerment’:

“Community empowerment is a process where people work together to make change happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them.” (Scottish Government & COSLA 2009)

This signals a changing tide over how we want services to be delivered in future. A shift in the balance of power, mainly away from the public sector towards individuals and communities is consequently placing the role of the Third/Volunteering Sectors under the spotlight. This is due mainly to their track record in being closely connected to their communities and engaging them in the running of activities and services.

Of course it’s inconceivable that just being part of the Third Sector makes organisations automatically proficient at transforming and empowering communities. Like all sectors there are good, average and a few bad examples of practice. However adhering to the basic ‘voluntary action’ ethos of how Third Sector organisations should run; gives them a natural propensity to get empowerment right in ways which are often more innovative and cost-effective when compared to the public and private sector. As well as the general drive to reduce costs and debts, there is a growing sense of a public demand to do things differently whether running governments or running local services. The Third and Public Sectors in Renfrewshire need to work together to embrace the challenges in a positive way by making more of the best that all sectors can offer, particularly in relation to supporting communities experiencing some form of disadvantage or inequality.

We therefore present this seminar report to give some examples and feedback from dialogue between the Third and Public Sectors about how we might take this forward in Renfrewshire.

Transforming Social Work

Key messages from the presentations were:

Across all services

- Improving the experience for individuals using services
- Increasing efficiency and effectiveness
- Delivering financial savings
- Protecting frontline services
- Enabling partnership working & shared services

Changes for social work

- Ageing population
- Increasing demand from younger people with particular needs and children of parents with drug dependencies
- Bring services up to date with what people need - remove boundaries
- Greater value and respect for the role and skills of social workers

New '21st Century approach

- Engage people as active participants - not 'doing for'
- Build capacity of individuals, families and communities as well as voluntary effort and social networks
- Forge partnerships across sectors
- Focus on preventing problems - early intervention & maintain independence
- Importance of Third Sector and Volunteering contribution

Overall the aim is for a ***“shared purpose, acknowledging (and welcoming) interdependence, with a common focus on improved outcomes for communities in Renfrewshire.”*** and this will be achieved through a combination of:

- Networking
- Collaboration
- Partnership
- Innovation and
- Imagination...

The specific objectives in Renfrewshire are to:

- identify opportunities for partnership with service users, carers and community
- increase 'reach' of statutory service through development of minimum intervention community initiatives
- increase innovative and flexible responses

- maximise choice and diversity
- attract external/partnership funding
- build sustainable partnerships
- 'test' innovative models of support
- develop untapped/unconnected activity
- improve and increase volunteering opportunities

The workshops were organised in relation to five key themes with feedback to the questions summarised below:

Information

Question: What information do you need from statutory services to enable you/ your organisations to contribute?

Responses:

- Need all information at the beginning of a process – trust and openness is key
- Need for information on what social work does
- Need to know what is realistically possible
- People need to hear about the outcome of their involvement/contribution
- Need for honest engagement – not just to tick a box
- Get more 'good news' stories about social work into the media

Question: How can we improve information and its accessibility?

Responses:

- **Use plain English**
- **Face to face opportunities** – more community workers on the ground to interact with people
- **Better co-operation** - between departments and community planning partners
- **Use places where people go** - pubs, supermarkets, churches, sport venues
- **Make use of groups/organisations in existence** – their formal and informal communication channels
- **Have one stop shop in local areas** – learn from good example locally and in other areas
- **Use informal networks** – family, friends, neighbours
- **Use existing media** – e.g. Renfrewshire magazine, local press, radio etc.
- **Use databases** - held by different organisations to target relevant people
- **Use technology** – e.g. facebook, twitter, e-newsletters, websites etc.

Engagement/co-planning of services

Question: How can we move from consultation and engagement to co-planning/ co-production of services?

Responses:

- **Timing** – people need to be involved right at the beginning.
- **Trust** - on both sides.
- **Culture** - needs to change e.g. last say shouldn't always be with statutory services
- **Barriers** – need broken down e.g. stigma of Social Work and people not caring about who delivers services
- **Build on what works** – build on and promote the benefits of what already works
- **Involve** – those who use and benefit from services – their views count most

Question: What arrangements/ structures/ support do you require to get involved in co-planning or co-production of services?

Responses:

- **Campaign** - Improve communication and promotion of the ways services, service-users, families, volunteers and wider communities build new stronger connections.
- **User-led service design** - stop trying to “fit” people with service – bottom up not top down.
- **A crystal clear framework** - what is realistically possible? There won't be real equality between authority and community but we can discuss what is realistic.
- **Build on existing community/voluntary action** - Make more use of groups/organisations in existence (including those not commissioned by SW)
- **Work with churches and faith-based organisations** – they have an important role to play, providing services, social networks and promoting community involvement etc. but are often overlooked.
- **Strengthen volunteering** – work with existing volunteers and create new opportunities.
- **Develop forms of peer and intergenerational support** - e.g. for hard to reach groups, young people and older people.
- **Review and improve internal processes** – quicker action, reviewing assessments, more power to the front-line.
- **Local formal/informal networks** - social work, housing and other community-based organisations (e.g. seniors groups and social groups) can get more people involved at very beginning of process.

Community development/ development of supports/ services

Question: What gaps can you identify which could be met through community development?

Responses:

- Takeover and management of redundant Council property;
- Community Transport;
- Volunteer drivers schemes;
- Public service information for those in need;
- Investing in and developing work around cultural change; and
- Need for much work within the issue of mental health, specifically our older adult population.

Question: How can we work together to meet gaps?

Responses:

- **Improve co-operation** - between Health/Social Work and Housing
- **Develop Local Area Committees** - making them less bureaucratic, more representative, more consensual, and more strategic.
- **Bottom-up service design** - Further work on promoting a community enterprise culture, empowerment and engagement in relation to design and delivery of public services.
- **Reduce barriers** - hall letting policy, people routinely excluded through age limits, targeted funding, data zone etc.
- **Invest in building community capacity and community development** - preferably through a specific remit within the local voluntary sector.
- **Strengthen partnerships** - Grow and develop a mature relationship between the Public Sector and Third Sector by developing the right values, trust and balances of power.

Volunteering

Question: What skills and experience do volunteers need to have?

Responses:

- Communication/Interpersonal Skills
- Training
- Listening

Question: Can you identify opportunities to increase volunteering locally?

Responses:

- **Sponsorship** - of programmes/initiatives
- **More inclusion for young people** - sports, schools, service user groups etc.
- **More inclusion for older people** – promoting active healthy lifestyles and social interaction through volunteering
- **Networking** – with existing organisations.
- **Employer supported volunteering** – e.g. through Council and CPP partners.
- **Investing in volunteers** – awards to promote good practice.
- **Buddying & mentoring** – develop these types of programmes for different target groups.

Question: How can we work together to improve Volunteering?

Responses:

- **Locally accessible face to face volunteering support services** – need much greater access to volunteering support and opportunities using all types of outlets and media
- **Appropriate matching** - Ensure matching role is appropriate for volunteer & service user.
- **Invest** - in co-ordination of volunteering programmes.
- **Secondment opportunities** – e.g. from public agencies to support/coordinate/take part in volunteering.
- **Sharing resources** - training programmes/opportunities, accreditation and marketing.
- **Local people leading** – give power to local people and organisations to drive initiatives.
- **Regulatory support** - provide training and easy to use standard procedures on health & safety/risk assessments/disclosures/direct payments etc.

Question: What are barriers to volunteering?

- Bureaucracy - disclosure costs, Public liability/ Insurance Support needed
- Self Esteem
- When commitment is inflexible
- Lack of common sense approach in relation to disclosures, benefit checks and DWP links.
- Lack of resources and funding to meet costs of supporting volunteering
- Territorial boundaries.

Contribution of non-social care services/social inclusion

Question: What non-social work/care activities do you think could contribute to improving outcomes for service users? How do we make better links/increase involvement/ create opportunities?

Responses:

- Caring Atmosphere
- Social Interaction
- Supporting positive community activities
- Promote Volunteering to compliment paid services.
- Wider family buy in/support networks
- Audit of activities – what already exists?
- Identification of what next?
- Creating natural support systems – not service dependencies
- Networking
- Promote active and healthy lifestyles
- Support people to be good neighbours and citizens
- Share and promote personal stories and testimonies
- Accessible transport – community, public and private forms

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 part of the core support and investment from the public sector. We need also to build the capacity of our communities to engage at different levels. The future approach is a balance of creating the supportive environment for empowerment as the examples below illustrate:

Examples of Community Engagement & Empowerment

- Involvement in research, service mapping and needs assessment
- Involvement in surveys and consultations
- Peer support and mentoring
- Focus groups and think-tanks
- Auditing and reviewing service standards
- Enhancing service delivery with volunteer involvement
- Family/carer/user support networks
- Local training and employment access schemes for front-line jobs
- User involvement in governance of services
- Community involvement in allocation of funds/commissioning of services
- Training/capacity building of existing organisations
- Breaking services down into components for smaller-scale groups and organisations to deliver

Examples of Supporting Community Engagement & Empowerment

- User-led involvement in the governance as a service tendering requirement
- Making funds available for development of small user/community led initiatives to test out new ideas
- Investing in organisations that build third sector/volunteering capacity in proportion to expenditure on service delivery
- Commissioning of locally led mapping/research/auditing
- Awareness raising and training in social entrepreneurship and developing social enterprise
- Awareness raising and training in the statutory requirements and standards that services are required to meet
- Supporting existing examples of good practice to be able to meet procurement requirements

Empowering Communities

Tom Black talked about the national Community Empowerment Action Plan and the role Community Development Trusts play in ensuring local people lead on local services and issues. The key themes were:

Policy Context

- Land Reform Act (2003) and the right to community buy-out
- Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan (2008)
- Community Empowerment Action Plan (2009)
- Urban and Town Centre regeneration
- Rural development policy (EU driven)
- Climate Change Act/Implementation Plan
- Reductions in public sector spending

What are Community Development Trusts?

- Independent and under community control
- Aiming to improve the quality of life in its community
- Involved in a variety of enterprise activities e.g. promoting asset transfer
- Committed to partnership working

The benefits

- The above gives credibility, consensus, sustainability and added value
- Community Development Trusts in Scotland become part of a wider network of shared learning and benefits
- It establishes a presence and collective voice for the community sector, stimulates debate and new thinking and develops opportunities for collaboration between networks

The workshops discussed opportunities for community empowerment and the barriers/constraints. These are summarised below:

Opportunities for Community Empowerment

- Build value and trust
- Organise to attract funding
- Networking - bring groups/orgs together doing similar work and possible form a CDT
- New Single Interface - can support development of 'anchor' organisations
- Good examples already in existence
- Political support and some parts of public agencies
- Good assets available for transfer
- Harness achievement of existing groups/orgs
- Devolve more power
- Develop information and communication channels
- Make better use of existing public buildings and schools - for community use
- Use assets to generate income

Barriers/Threats to Community Empowerment

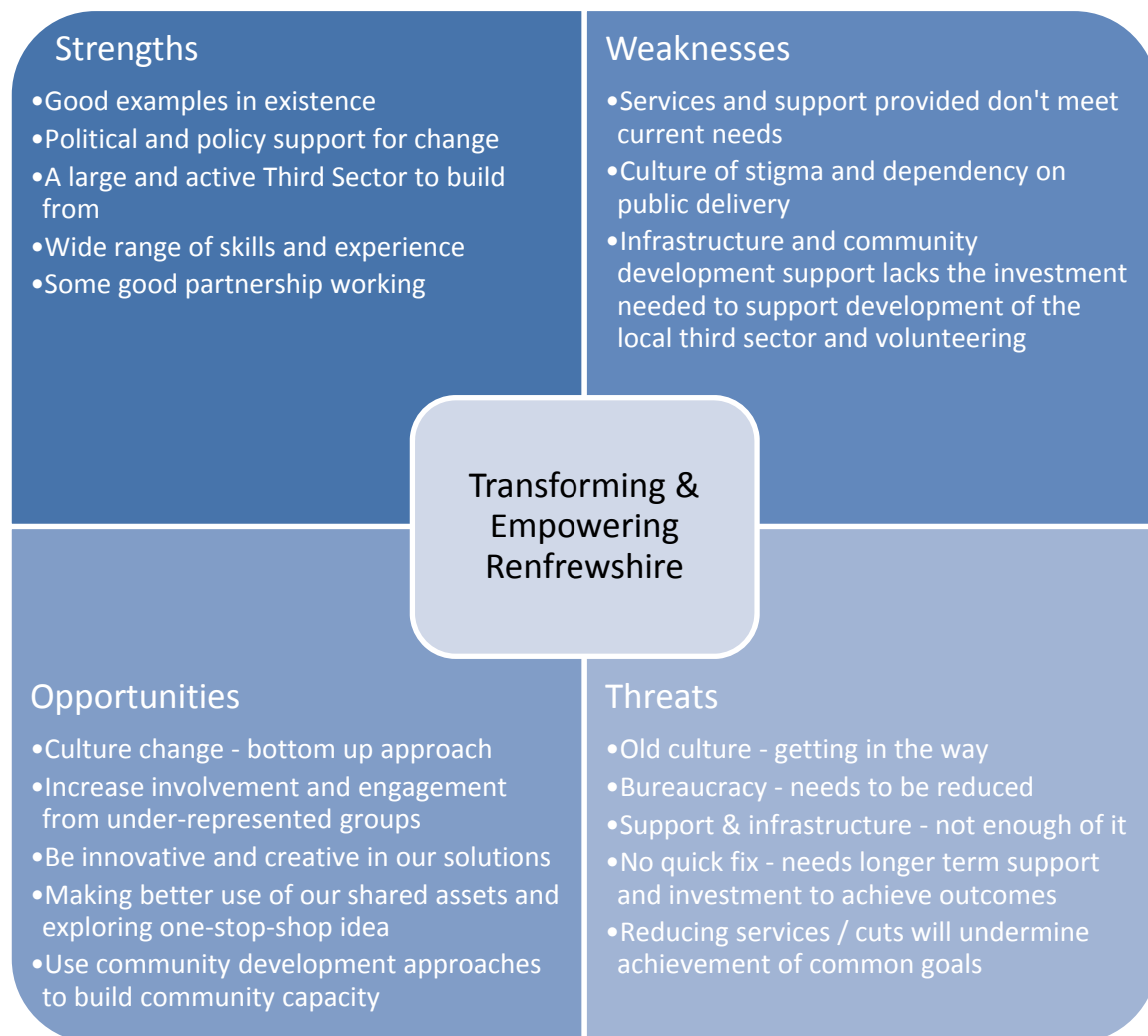
- Lack of value and trust
- Lack of funding, resources, experience and skills within groups/orgs
- Lack of will power/energy
- Lack of local identity
- Culture where 'public agencies provided everything'
- Too many expectations - setting communities up to fail
- Assumption - people want responsibility - but they might not
- Short-term funding
- Lack of real community voice
- Difficult to get people to take on responsibilities and volunteer
- Need to invest in long-term maintenance of assets
- Day to day problems left unsolved undermine trust e.g. antisocial behaviour, crime etc.
- Community Councils and other forums not representative of wider population

Examples of existing good practice in Renfrewshire

- Agefest is an example of good communication with the council and Voluntary organisations working together for the benefit of the community.
- Linstone H.A: Tenants associations, owner's forum, adult education forum, elderly forum.
- Kibble has developed a range of social enterprises
- ROAR - Public Partnership Forum
- Brookfield village hall
- The Wynd Centre
- Cornerstone, Bishopton
- The Tannahill Centre
- Kipco, Kilbarchan
- Sunshine Gallery
- Growth in Social Enterprise
- Paisley Development Trust
- SMA' Shot Cottage
- Johnstone Museum
- Fairshare Trust – Linwood community Panel
- Thrushcraigs
- Linwood Active Play park
- Local Area Committees – with correct remit, membership and leadership
- West end Festival
- Kilbarchan, Howwood Play parks
- Langbank Play park
- Skate Park – Renfrew
- Ferguslie Sports Centre
- Statue to Willie Gallagher.
- Two rivers festival/ Voices in Paisley
- Renfrewshire Growing Grounds Forum
- Spateston Tenants & Residents Assoc play park

Key Themes

There are cross-cutting themes emerging from the seminar presentations and workshops. These are set out as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats below:



There are clear messages about what we can do about it:

- **Build capacity from the grassroots and strengthen what exists and works well**
- **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**

Delegate List

Diane Goodman

Renfrewshire Carers Centre

Carolyn McIlroy

Renfrewshire Council

Johnstone Area Team

Adele Fraser

Linstone Housing Association

Alan Teasdale

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue

David Bruce

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue

Kenneth McMaster

Renfrewshire Community

Safety Panel

Jamie Irvine

Linstone Housing Association

Katie Ball

Renfrewshire Carers Centre

Ian Johnstone

Linstone Housing Association

Jane Johnstone

Linstone Housing Association

Jo Smith

A1 Training Services

Bill Duncan

Linstone Housing Association

Alex Imrie

Renfrew Public Partnership

Forum

Margaret Diamond

Paisley West & Central CC

John Wilby

Paisley West & Central CC

James Carmichael

Linstone Housing Association

Janis Byrne

RAMH

Ian Wilson

Linstone Housing Association

David Weir

Unity Enterprise

Meghan McEwan

Capability Scotland

Barbara Hastings

Unity Enterprise

Janis McDonald

RCVS

Sheila Gillies

Renfrewshire Council

Tom Black

Development Trusts

Association Scotland

Susan McLean

RCVS

Alison Greig

RCVS

Anne Keir

Paul Hannah

RCVS

Karen McDonald

Hear Here

Linda Campbell

Enable

Dorothy Ross

Greensyde Carers

John Ross

Greensyde Carers

Bill Wilson MSP

SNP MSP West of Scotland

Sandra Stewart

RCHI

Cllr Eileen McCartin

Renfrewshire Council

Anne McLean

Linstone Housing Association

Roisin Robertson

Renfrewshire Council

Nan McBride

Renfrewshire Early Years

Forum

Stephen Darroch

Renfrewshire Citizens's Advice

Bureau

James McAusland

Renfrewshire Sports Network

Irene Carswell

Health Improvement Team,

Renfrewshire CHP

Helen Moir

Jogging Buddies

Susan McDonald

Jogging Buddies

Liz Robertson

Loretto Care

Joseph Theodore

Hawkhead & Lochfield CC

Elaine Harris

Kibble Education & Care

Centre

Denis Docherty

Reid Kerr College

Mary Whyte

WRVS

Rae Brady

Community Rep

Carole Anderson

Linwood Health Centre

Gary Byars

Sunshine Gallery

Alan McNiven

PPRC

Alan Morris

Renfrewshire Council

Bill David

Howwood Community Council

Margaret Higgins

Project Officer, Energy Agency

Angela Dobbins

Paisley Methodist Church

Hugh Cameron

Erskine Community Council

Tommy McMaster

Acumen

David Henderson

Paisley Partnership Forum

Joe McGhee

RCVS Honorary Member