



## Report of the Director of Leeds Voice

### Inner West Area Committee

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2008

### Subject: Update on Voluntary Community and Faith Sector in West Leeds

<p><b>Electoral Wards Affected:</b>  <b>Armley</b>  <b>Bramley and Stanningley</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted  (referred to in report)</p>	<p><b>Specific Implications For:</b></p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community Cohesion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Function <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

## Executive Summary

This report contains a picture of the diversity and quality services provided by the west Leeds voluntary, community and faith sector in Leeds. The work they do and the impact it has. All of the attached appendix has been written in their own words and is not intended as an absolute record.

## West Leeds Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

### Purpose Of This Report

The purpose of this report is for the west Leeds VCF sector to bring the voice of their service provision to the debate and ultimately play their part in shaping better services and yet continuing to provide remarkable, valuable, creative and indispensable services.

### 1.0 Background Information

West Leeds has an extensive VCF sector. The sector brings a distinctive approach to service delivery, based on its specialist knowledge, experience and skills. This distinctive approach means the sector has an important role in the wider reform of service delivery. This report will highlight the achievements of some of the groups in West Leeds.

### 2.0 Main Issues

It is really important the people who are working close to the ground in the affected areas and who understand the causes and the potential solutions for the complex problems and needs are fully engaged and influencing decisions as well as the people who live in those communities themselves.

There are some misconception and misinformation about the competency and professionalism of the VCF sector. A lot of the services provided is done in an imaginative, creative and flexible way in order to be more open and accessible to the community.

The VCF sector employs thousands of paid professional staff, sessional workers and volunteers who provide high quality service with ongoing support and self-development. Once activities and programmes are up and running staff, management committee members and volunteers continue to run the activities and strategic direction of the organization to a high standard.

### **3.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance**

It should be pointed out that providing high quality, specialist and innovative service is not always cheap. The ethos of the VCF sector as always been 'not for profit', however the ending of a number of funding streams and changes from grant funding to commissioning, procurement and income generation has resulted in the sector feeling vulnerable and at risk, this will start to impact on the sectors operations.

### **4.0 Legal and Resource Implications**

As above.

### **5.0 Conclusion**

The coming year will most likely be difficult as the sector tackles the problems arising from lack of secure long term funding. However this situation presents an opportunity to stand back and review possibilities and even think out side the box all the time keeping at the front of our thinking the needs of our communities.

### **6.0 Recommendations**

Time and understanding is an important factor in achieving the robust governance and performance management procedures you have come to expect, allow good appropriate timetabled time for reports, applications and returns as capacity in some grassroots groups can be an issue

Revenue funding and full cost recovery is seen as valuable for the sector.

It is acknowledged that strength lies in the VCF sectors ability to reach local and marginalised communities with their innovative, proactive and person centred approach to a diverse service delivery and project activity.

A research report by Leeds Voice called the Ripple Effect:

The Economic Contribution of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector in Leeds, a summary is attached but the full report can be accessed by visiting [www.leedsvoice.org.uk](http://www.leedsvoice.org.uk)

This report has attached appendix;

1. ARCT
2. APPLE
3. Armley Juniors
4. BARCA
5. BEA
6. Christ Church Upper Armley
7. DOSTI
8. Healthy Living Network – Leeds
9. I Love West Leeds
10. Interplay
11. Research Summary
12. SKIPPKO