VOICE

10 September 2019
The Beam, Sunderland
SUMMARY OF THE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

As the VCSE sector in Sunderland, we want to:

1. ***Come together to build on what already exists -*** *A great deal of information was shared on the positive things already happening in Sunderland to enable the sector to network, collaborate, seek funding, share information and have a voice. The sector has a strong desire to come together more and build upon these positive things to create a truly vibrant sector with relevant support in place for today's needs and in the future.*

2. ***Develop diverse and sustainable income streams -*** *Consistent with other surveys and research, accessing funding remains a primary concern for VCSE organisations. Organisations wish to be able to engage with local and national funders and access advice on funding applications and income generation strategies. Many acknowledged the need to broaden income streams beyond funding and need for sup port around earned income, contracts and enterprise.*

3. ***Engage and play our part in supporting the wider sector -*** *There was a strong willingness from organisations to engage and play their part in support for the sector. It was acknowledged that organisations large and small (and everything in between) have specific skills, expertise and networks to share as well as specific support requirements.*

4. ***Support cross-sector collaboration -*** *Supporting collaboration both within the sector and beyond the sector with public services and the private sector was a key theme and an acknowledgement that collaboration and partnerships take time and effort to develop, they start with building relationships and trust and that partnerships based on equal value for partners is key to their success.*

5. ***Find a solution to sector support that is sector led but with council buy-in -*** *The solution to support for the VCSE sector should be led by the sector both in terms of determining the types of support and resource required but also in the governance of the delivery body. It was also agreed that a positive, strong and evolving relationship with Sunderland Council and their area arrangements and strategic structures is also key to the success of future VCSE support in Sunderland.*

6. ***Build upon local area arrangements with a city-wide approach -*** *There were many contributions on the importance and strengths of the existing locality/ area-based structures and networks, which should be used as a foundation on which to build, but also noting their limitations and challenges. Many contributions called for the need for strategic and thematic city-wide structures and networks.*

7. ***Encourage and support volunteering -*** *Volunteers provide a valuable resource to many VCSE organisations and there is a clear need to provide support and share good practice on supporting and managing volunteers as well as a matching service to help organisations attract new volunteers.*

8. ***Share information with and about the sector -*** *The need for practical and strategic support around information sharing and visibility of organisations within and beyond the sector was clearly outlined, along with the potential of digital solutions to support some of this work.*

9. ***Encourage sector leaders to share and support others -*** *Many contributions noted the potential for peer sharing and learning between organisations within the VCSE sector within Sunderland, noting the difference in scale and capacity between smaller and larger organisations. Many wanted to be able to unlock sector leadership to benefit other organisations through skills sharing and mentoring etc. and that solutions/ forums and support requirements will differ for organisations of different scales and maturity.*

10. ***Amplify the voice of the sector through meaningful representation -*** *The sector should be actively represented at key strategic forums within the city to enable the sector to have a voice in strategic planning and decision making as well as enabling a feedback information loop to the sector about emerging policy, strategy and practice.*

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