INTRODUCTION

Following an extensive review of capacity building services and the strategic and representational role of Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), along with consultation with a wide range of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) members, local stakeholders and statutory partners, SCVO has completed and launched a new 3 year Business and Strategic Plan (Business Plan) from April 2008. Building on existing good practice and valued services, this steers a clearer pathway towards better meeting present and developing organisational needs of VCS organisations and supporting both statutory partners and VCS members in constructive engagement in working together to serve Sandwell’s communities. The Business Plan outlines five priority areas through which delivery activities will be resourced and focused, namely:

(i) understanding the third sector
(ii) supporting the third sector
(iii) forging strong networks
(iv) facilitating public service delivery
(v) ensuring excellence and quality of service provision

This Agreement supports elements of priorities (ii), (iii) and (v).

TARGET GROUP

SCVO supports a wide spectrum of VCS bodies active within Sandwell, ranging from volunteer-led community groups to large organisations delivering public services to contract. SCVO currently has knowledge of 675 VCS bodies in Sandwell.

THE SERVICE

This Agreement’s Funding enables SCVO to carry out the following activities:

1  Capacity building services for VCS organisations
2  Supporting engagement and representation between the VCS and the statutory sector
3  Disseminating information to the VCS regarding local and national developments and providing a mechanism for policy consultation
1 Capacity building services for VCS organisations

This element of this Agreement links into SCVO’s Business Plan priority area (ii): ‘SCVO will strengthen the capacity of third sector groups working within Sandwell assisting them to function more effectively and deliver quality services to Sandwell’s communities.’

Work in this area will be directed towards achieving the following outcomes:-

- **More Voluntary Organisations and Community Groups in Sandwell will deliver services of recognised quality to their communities, based on known needs.** More VCS bodies will have governance arrangements in place which are fit for purpose and governing bodies who are confident and able to fulfil their strategic role. Organisations will be more sustainable because their staff and volunteers will have improved knowledge, information and skills in the operational areas of planning, management and fundraising.
- **VCS organisations in Sandwell will benefit from signposting to a more comprehensive range of complementary capacity building and representative services.**
- **SCVO’s VCS capacity building provision will be increasingly recognised as meeting the most critical and timely development needs of VCS bodies and supporting progress towards the priorities of relevant stakeholders and partners.**

SCVO’s capacity building services for VCS organisations in Sandwell will be to:

a) Develop a capacity building strategy  
b) Support regional infrastructure capacity building networks  
c) Undertake capacity building support work with individual Sandwell VCS organisations

a) **Develop a capacity building strategy**

SCVO will develop a rolling twelve-month capacity building strategy for the third sector in Sandwell, using SCVO intelligence; the collation of local priorities specifically included the Local Area Agreement and dedicated consultation with relevant stakeholders. Activities may include focus groups, web and paper-based consultation with VCS members, consultation and briefing with statutory partners, and dissemination of a strategy report.
Output | Target
---|---
Develop a rolling twelve-month capacity building strategy for the third sector in Sandwell | Initial strategy produced (by 31 May 2008) plus one revision (by 30 November 2008)

**Evidence:** To include: capacity building strategy published in newsletter and on SCVO website, plus evidence of consultation process.

### b) Support regional infrastructure capacity building networks

**SCVO** will support regional infrastructure networks (e.g. Change Up consortium) in identifying areas of partnership delivery and in increasing the amount of capacity building resources directed towards Sandwell’s VCS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support regional infrastructure networks</td>
<td>Report quarterly summarising regional infrastructure network activities relating to capacity building (including the amount of resources directed towards Sandwell’s VCS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence:** To include: calling notices and minutes of infrastructure meetings, plus report outlining network and Change Up activities.

### c) Undertake capacity building support work with individual Sandwell VCS organisations

**SCVO** will provide capacity building support for individual VCS organisations. This work is categorised as one-off support or in-depth support. One-off support includes signposting, short policy work, and attendance at an SCVO event. In-depth support has been divided into 7 areas that relate to:

- Planning
- Quality
- Funding
- Financial Management
- Networking
- Governance
- Healthcheck
A points system, see Appendix A, has been devised to replicate the amount of time, in general, that SCVO spends on each category and area of support.

SCVO will undertake capacity building support work to the value of 1,096 points pa, 2008/09.

Within this annual points total, 2008/09, SCVO will undertake targeted in-depth capacity building support work with up to 6 VCS organisations, identified by the PCT, from a list of organisations that have contracts with the PCT.

The Council and the PCT will identify similar targeted capacity building support work, in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undertake capacity building support for Sandwell VCS organisations</td>
<td>1,096 points pa, 2008/09, of capacity building support (see Appendix A for scoring tariff):- 110 points within quarter 1 219 points within quarter 2 383 points within quarter 3 384 points within quarter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of VCS organisations receiving capacity building support</td>
<td>85 different VCS organisations worked with pa, 2008/09 (cumulative figure):- 9 by the end of quarter 1 26 by the end of quarter 2 55 by the end of quarter 3 85 by the end of quarter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From within the annual total of 1,096 points of capacity building support, to carry out targeted in-depth capacity building support work with VCS organisations identified by the PCT</td>
<td>Up to 6 VCS organisations pa, identified by the PCT, receive in-depth capacity building support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of in-depth capacity building support cases opened</td>
<td>Report quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of in-depth capacity building support cases closed</td>
<td>Report quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount of external funding (in £s) secured by supported VCS organisations</td>
<td>Report quarterly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evidence: To include: reports from Client Tracking Database outlining completed cases and corresponding points score.

2 Supporting engagement and representation between the VCS and the statutory sector

This element of this Agreement links into SCVO’s Business Plan priority area (iii): ‘SCVO will create networking opportunities and support engagement and representation between the third and statutory sectors.’

Work in this area will be directed towards achieving the following outcomes:

- More VCS bodies and statutory partners in Sandwell will understand and benefit from the Sandwell Compact in its role supporting and shaping the relationship between the two.
- The views, experiences and aspirations of Sandwell’s VCS will be more effectively represented at strategic partnership level such that this contributes positively to local planning processes.
- Sandwell’s VCS and statutory partners will have increased confidence that VCS activity within partnership structures is effective, accountable and truly representative.

SCVO’s engagement and representation activities will be to:

a) Promote and support the implementation of the Sandwell Compact
b) Ensure that the third sector is represented effectively
c) Support groups within the third sector to understand and to lobby the Sandwell Partnership

a) Promote and support the implementation of the Sandwell Compact

SCVO will promote and support third sector and statutory sector organisations to implement the Sandwell Compact. Work on reviewing the Sandwell Compact commenced prior to the start of this Agreement and formed part of the required outputs within the previous Agreement. A revised draft Sandwell Compact has been completed and formal consultation, on the draft, commenced prior to the start of this Agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete the initial 12 weeks consultation on the draft Sandwell Compact</td>
<td>31 May 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell Compact adjustments completed following consultation</td>
<td>31 August 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote and support the implementation of the Sandwell Compact</td>
<td>Quarterly report summarising activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence:** To include: minutes of Compact Steering Group meetings, report outlining revision and consultation activity, activities supporting Compact compliance.

**b) Ensure that the third sector is represented effectively**

**SCVO** will ensure that the third sector is represented effectively at the Sandwell Partnership Board, the LSP (Local Strategic Partnership) Executive and in any groups (possibly a future “Performance Board”) established by the Sandwell Partnership to develop or review the Sandwell Plan, or Sandwell Local Area Agreement.

**SCVO** will contribute **200 hrs per annum** to support this area of work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend Sandwell Partnership Board meetings</td>
<td>Attendance at 2/4 Board meetings pa, 2008/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend the LSP (Local Strategic Partnership) Executive</td>
<td>Attendance at 8/9 executive meetings pa, 2008/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on <strong>SCVO</strong>’s Sandwell Partnership meeting activities, such as issued raised and actions agreed</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence:** To include: reports of attendance at Partnership meetings, including issues raised on behalf of the VCS and agreed actions.

c) **Support groups within the third sector to understand and to lobby the Sandwell Partnership**

**SCVO** will put in place capacity building activities to support groups within the third sector to understand and to lobby the Sandwell Partnership, its member organisations and any third sector representatives operating within Partnership structures.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organise briefing/training events for third sector organisations</td>
<td>One briefing/training event (by 30 September 2008); one briefing/training event (by 31 March 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on follow-up support provided to the VCS annually</td>
<td>By 30 April 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence:** To include: report evidencing training and briefing events around VCS engagement with Partnership structures.

3 Disseminating information to the VCS regarding local and national developments and providing a mechanism for policy consultation

This element of this Agreement links into SCVO’s Business Plan priority area (v): ‘SCVO will be seen as an excellent organisation, which makes a clear and valuable contribution to life in Sandwell.’ Services delivered in this area underpin the quality and effectiveness of service delivery in Business Plan priority areas (i) – (iv).

Work in this area will be directed towards achieving the following outcome:-

- Sandwell’s VCS will be better informed of local, regional and national news and developments that affect them and statutory partners will be supported in timely engagement with the VCS and their communities with regards to policy consultation and joint working.

SCVO’s disseminating information activity will be to:

a) Produce and distribute the ‘SCVO.INFO’ newsletter

SCVO will produce 6 issues of the ‘SCVO.INFO’ newsletter pa. This will be distributed through various media to Sandwell VCS members, and to statutory partners upon request. The newsletter will support the dissemination of information relevant to VCS members, including, but not limited to, local news and developments, policy consultations, community engagement, and resource and capacity building opportunities. Relevant articles from statutory partners and local infrastructure organisations will be welcomed within this.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produce and distribute the ‘SCVO.INFO’ newsletter</td>
<td>6 newsletter editions pa, 2008/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on the number of articles submitted/included annually</td>
<td>By 30 April 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry out an annual feedback survey</td>
<td>By 30 April 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence:** To include: evidence of newsletters produced, distribution report showing number of contacts to which it is disseminated, number of articles from statutory partners submitted and included, newsletter satisfaction survey (retrospectively, annually).

**EXPENDITURE**

This Agreement’s funding totals £116,677 pa, 2008/09.

**SCVO** has projected annual Agreement expenditure, 2008/09, in the following areas:

- Staffing - £83,597
- Organisational support and management - £23,070
- Direct project costs - £10,010

**SCVO** will report to the Council, in a format of the organisation’s choosing, actual expenditure each quarter and, for quarters 1, 2 and 3, profiled expenditure for the remainder of the financial year.

**VALUE FOR MONEY**

To determine good value for money, **SCVO** will endeavour to benchmark this Agreement’s services with similar VCS infrastructure providers. **SCVO** will investigate the appropriateness of benchmarking with VCS infrastructure organisations working within the other Black Country boroughs (Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton) and with the Council’s other Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) family group members (Coventry, Middlesborough, Stoke, Gateshead, Rotherham, Bolton, Oldham, Derby City, Kingston Upon Hull, Tameside and Knowsley).

**SCVO** will report the organisation’s value for money activity to the Council twice pa, this information will be shared with the PCT.
QUALITY STANDARDS

SCVO is currently recognised as meeting two national quality standards:-

1. Investors in People: this quality award, which sets a level of good practice for improving an organisation’s performance through its people, was first achieved by SCVO in early 2004. This recognition was re-affirmed following assessment against the standard 3 years later, in November 2006. SCVO will work towards maintaining this recognition through re-assessment in late 2009.

2. NAVCA Quality Award: this is a service-delivery standard for Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIO) run by the umbrella body the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA). The Quality Award assesses the quality of services offered by LIOs against performance standards set by NAVCA and includes a rigorous, external audit. SCVO achieved the Quality Mark in March 2008 and will work towards maintaining this recognition through re-assessment in early 2011.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

SCVO routinely seeks feedback from clients with regard to the effectiveness of the support offered.

All SCVO members – whether they have received a service during the last 12 months or not – are surveyed annually to seek feedback on their experience of SCVO’s services and communication, and to assess their levels of client satisfaction. This allows SCVO to identify areas for improvement, particularly in service planning, by feeding into processes such as the capacity building strategy.

Additionally to this, all capacity building cases are evaluated following completion of the work. This evaluation captures both a measure of the ‘difference made’ to the client through the support, plus any concrete outcomes such as funding secured or quality standard achieved. Stand-alone projects and activities such as training or briefing events are evaluated at the point of delivery.
OUTCOMES

As identified in “THE SERVICE” section, above, SCVO’s services, provided via this Agreement, should contribute to a number of outcomes. However, SCVO is required to report against progress on the following specific outcome:

The knowledge of governance arrangements within Sandwell’s VCS organisations improves.

SCVO will measure and report this outcome to the Council twice pa, in a format of the organisation’s choosing, this will be shared with the PCT. Outcome evidence will be gathered via questionnaires completed by Sandwell VCS organisations receiving capacity building support from SCVO. Questionnaires will be completed before and after SCVO’s capacity building support work intervention.
Agreed Points System for Quantifying SCVO Capacity Building Provision

The method outlines a points system whereby SCVO provides services over seven areas of in-depth support, as well as instances of one-off support, up to an agreed points total.

There are a number of distinct advantages for all parties in using this method:-

1. **Encouraging increased efficiency over our current monitoring method** where services are quantified by ‘instances of support’. This method views support on a ‘case’ basis where cases will be opened and then closed. It does not incentivise inefficiencies such as meetings when meetings are not necessary: rather, it encourages SCVO to seek the most efficient and effective route to the outcome for the client.

2. **Flexible enough to respond to VCS need rather than dictating need**. It is very difficult to anticipate the demand for different services over a given period: external factors such as funding opportunities, new initiatives and promotions, or funder requirements may increase demand for, for example, attainment of quality standards by VCS groups or new business plans. This method is not prescriptive and does not limit the amount of support for VCS groups in any particular area.

3. **Supports an outcome focus**. The method encourages a discipline of focusing on outcomes to enable closure for client cases. Unlike previous Service Level Agreement arrangements, specific cases would be routinely followed up to gather outcome information and this would be reported on to the funder.

4. **Provides wide coverage of all key areas of core provision**. The system enables SCVO to cover all the key areas of in-depth support. It also provides SCVO with a sound base on which to leverage in other funding to focus on complementary areas where there is new or growing need.

5. **Clarity about what the funder is buying and the relative demand for different support areas**. Funders receive monitoring information which provides a retrospective breakdown of the support given: this informs them in greater detail of the support they are funding and the relative demand for different areas at present by VCS groups.
The seven in-depth areas, as well as their relative cost and a description of what these definitions include, is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-depth support areas</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Management</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcheck</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-depth support areas</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>support with business planning process and project planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>information on QS and support towards standards and in-depth policy work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>identifying funders, creating plans, making applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Management</td>
<td>guidance on aspects of financial management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>providing information on local networks, VCS and stat agencies, local services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>information on legal structures, help with constitutions, man committee support, charity reg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcheck</td>
<td>A one-off review meeting with VCS client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-off support</td>
<td>Includes event attendance, one off information or support, short policy work, signposting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Illustrations

Below are two examples of what the profile of support could look like for one year of the this Agreement:

(i) Number of points of support agreed under the SLA: 1,627

- Planning: 11 cases (points score 11x8=88)
- Quality: 21 cases (points score 21x4=84)
- Funding: 112 cases (points score 112x6=672)
- Financial Management: 9 cases (points score 9x6=54)
- Networking: 16 cases (points score 16x4=64)
- Governance: 83 cases (points score 83x7=581)
- One-off support: 42 cases (points score 42x2=84)

- Quality: 14 cases (points score 14x4=56)
- Funding: 165 cases (points score 165x6=990)
- Financial Management: 9 cases (points score 9x6=54)
- Networking: 11 cases (points score 11x4=44)
- Governance: 87 cases (points score 87x7=609)
- One-off support: 37 cases (points score 37x2=74)

(ii) Number of points of support agreed under the SLA: 1,867

- Planning: 5 cases (points score 5x8=40)
FUNDING DETAILS

Funding to be provided:

£116,677 pa, 2008/09 (Made up of Council funding, totalling £75,877 and PCT funding totalling £40,800. The Council and the PCT are funding, proportionately, all aspects of the Service Specification.)

Duration of Funding:

1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011 (subject to satisfactory annual review)