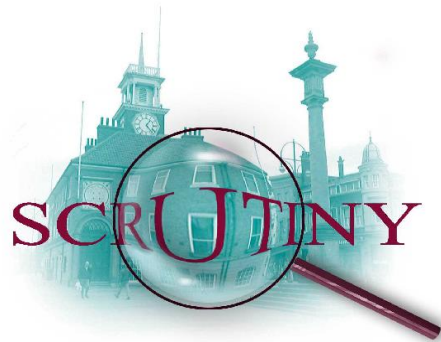# Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee

– Task and Finish Group

Review of the Voluntary and Community Sector

SCRUTINY

June 2008

Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 1LD

Contents

Task and Finish Group – Membership

Councillor Suzanne Fletcher (Chair)
Councillor Aidan Cockerill
Councillor Mick Eddy
Councillor Andrew Larkin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Group thank the following contributors to this review:

- Julie Allport, Head of Housing, SBC
- Stephen Shaw, Community Development Manager, SBC
- Judith Trainer, Scrutiny Team Leader, SBC
- David Bond, Director of Law and Democracy, SBC
- Norman Allinson, Senior Accountant, SBC
- Dawn Welsh, Neighbourhood Renewal Manager, SBC
- Ian Jones, Chief Internal Auditor, SBC
- Julie Harkin, Senior Finance Manager, SBC
- Simon Lee, Senior Policy and Projects Manager, SBC
- Craig Farnaby, Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre Manager, SBC
- Martin Skipsey, Procurement and Payments Manager, SBC
- Angela Lench, Principal Procurement Officer, SBC
- Councillor Beall, Council Representative on Catalyst Board
- Stephen Bray, Chair, Catalyst Board
- Kevin Pitt, Billingham Partnership
- Geoff Harrison, Chair, Billingham Partnership
- Lesley Makin, Corner House Youth Project
- Graeme Oram, Five Lamps Organisation
- Terry Murphy, Five Lamps Organisation
- Margaret Middleton, Hardwick Partnership
- Paul McGee, Consultant, and, Newtown-Norton-Clarences Community Resource Centres
- Kevin McAuley, Newtown-Norton-Clarences Community Resource Centres
- Ian Bartlett, Stockton District Advice and Information Service
- Sacha Bedding, Stockton International Family Centre
- Julie Derbyshire, Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association
- Noelle Darwen, UNITE
- Melanie Baker, UNITE
- Hugh McGouran, Chief Executive, Tees Valley Community Foundation

Contact Officer

Peter Mennear, Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 01642 528957
E-mail: peter.mennear@stockton.gov.uk

Foreword

We started our review of the Voluntary and Community Sector and its relationship with the Council at the end of January 2008 as a small "Task and Finish" Group with a limited timescale. However far more issues than we originally thought, arose during the review. This has meant that our small Group of four has not been able to look at all the issues we set out to look at, and have not been able to conclude some of those that we did, as mentioned at the end of the full report.

However, a lot of work has been done, and the Group held 9 meetings in 4 months, and interviewed 22 people, as well as considering written evidence provided.

Our work has uncovered a tremendous amount of dedication, hard work, and professionalism within the Voluntary and Community Sector. We hope that as a result of this review, relationships and trust between parts of the sector and with the Council will grow and flourish, with a greater understanding of each other's roles. There is no doubt that without the work of both the paid officers and many volunteers, the fabric of our community in this Borough would collapse. We owe them a huge thank you, and hope that as a result of this review they will be strengthened and encouraged.

I pay tribute to the work and dedication of the members of the Group who have worked hard on the review, and have spent many a weekend reading documents and preparing for meetings. I also want to thank the scrutiny officers, first of all Judith Trainer who had to leave part way through to begin her maternity leave, and Peter Mennear who so nobly carried on the work. Also to the Democratic Services Officers, Sarah Johnson, Michelle Jones and Tanya Harrison who all had a difficult task with so many meetings close together. Our link officer, Stephen Shaw, deserves a special mention to for working with us so constructively and finding information for us.

PHOTO

Councillor Suzanne Fletcher
Chair – Task and Finish Group
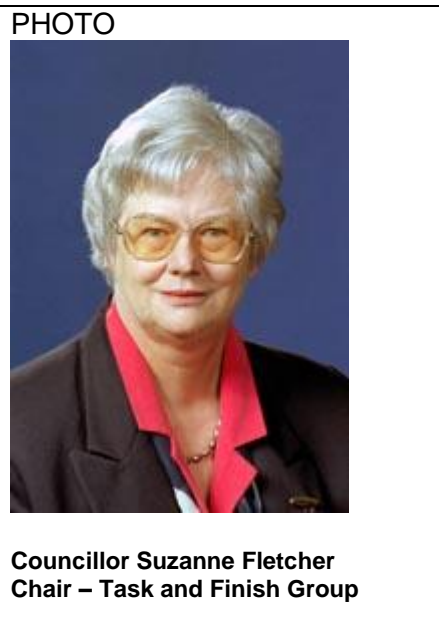
Original Brief

1. Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address? Strengthen the Council's approach to partnership working.
2. What are the main issues? Funding of Community and Voluntary Sector Relationship with the Council Advice, Training and Support from the Council and umbrella organisations Maintenance Issues for Council Owned Buildings Transfer of Community Assets Member Representation, indemnity and reporting mechanisms Governance Arrangements Performance Management, user satisfaction and accountability mechanisms of Core Funded Organisations Enhancing relationships with the wider community and voluntary sector
3. The Task and Finish Group's overall aim/ objectives in doing this work is: To ensure that there is adequate advice and support to the community and voluntary sector and that appropriate funding is allocated and aligned to Community Strategy priorities and targets.
4. The possible outputs/outcomes are: Appropriate funding levels aligned to Community Strategy priorities and targets   Improved advice and support to community sector   Improved performance management and accountability mechanisms   Clarity of the role of the Strategic Organisation (Catalyst) and the delivery organisation
5. What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic? Detailed consideration of issue and an understanding of the issues facing the community and voluntary sector and what improvements should be made.

1.0 Executive Summary

1.0 The Voluntary and Community Sector can be defined as organisations set up by individuals and groups whose primary objectives are social rather than economic. These organisations are independent, provide a form of service and may campaign on issues which are of concern to them. These groups are often funded by grants and donations, and are normally formally constituted. Voluntary organisations are sometimes larger and some operate across a wide area, with a staff of paid professionals to support their work. Community organisations are rooted within more specific locations and are largely made up of grass roots volunteers. The VCS is part of what is termed the 'Third Sector', as compared to the public and private sector.

1.1 Local authorities have long had close relations with the VCS and are the biggest single source of funding for the sector. But within national policy there is now an ever increasing emphasis towards engaging with the sector in order to jointly deliver services and further contribute towards local decision making, alongside recognition of the role the sector fulfil in contributing towards civil society and sustainable communities.

1.2 The Committee found that there are a wide range of VCS organisations operating in Stockton Borough. An indication of the size of the sector can be gained from the database of Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association (SRCGA). This register has approximately 430 affiliates, and it is recognised that there are other groups within the Borough who are not affiliated to SRCGA. The sector ranges from small activity groups based in local community centres to larger organisations such as the International Family Centre and Five Lamps which provide a variety of services. Stockton Council provides core funding to eleven organisations within the voluntary sector.

1.3 The Group have found that there is an important contribution made by the Borough's Voluntary and Community Sector in delivering high quality services and opportunities for local people. It is clear that much hard work goes on to provide these services and this should be recognised and valued. The Group have taken the opportunity to provide an overview of many of the issues affecting the local VCS and have made recommendations in order to secure further improvements and greater understanding where necessary.

1.4 The Group acknowledge and recognised the work done by the Community Development Team over the last 12 months. In the past there has had to be a concentration on 'fire-fighting' problems as they arose. This has changed and the Team have concentrated on providing a support infrastructure with the link officers providing support to their portfolio of community centres.

1.5 VCS groups are becoming increasingly involved within local public service provision and the need for the VCS to have due regard to good governance is as important as ever. The Group recognise that the risks and responsibilities of many VCS organisations are often as great as those involved in running a small business, and members and volunteers need training and support to fulfil their duties. At the same time, the Council, as the body responsible for co-ordinating the funding of several million pounds of public money into the sector, needs to be re-assured that the recipient organisations are robust.

1.6 The Group have considered the voluntary sector organisations which do not receive core funding in order to assess their support needs. The Group recognise the value and role of the entire sector including the need to continue to provide challenge using its position on the various Renaissance Boards. The Group are satisfied that all the core funded organisations contribute in some way to the aims of the Community Strategy. The group expects that its comments will be taken on board during future work, and in particular the forthcoming review of the Voluntary Sector Support Fund.

1.7 It is recognised that various challenges exist for the sector to cope with and the Group believe that the Council should continue to assist when appropriate, including the need to value volunteering and assistance with procurement, in conjunction with relevant partners. Within the Council, the Group have identified some outstanding issues which it believes require resolving, including the organisation of community centres, in order to secure best value for all.

1.8 Catalyst is the new organisation to replace Stockton Voluntary Development Agency (SVDA) and the need for a new body to provide a strategic voice for the sector has been acknowledged. However, the Group have identified a number of uncertainties in relation to the new body, Catalyst, and believe that by gaining clarity on these issues it will be for the benefit of all within the sector, including Catalyst.

1.9 The Group recommend:

Volunteering

1. **That the Council undertake a feasibility study into encouraging employees to volunteer with accredited voluntary organisations, and the study's scope to include reference to allowing paid and unpaid time off, acknowledging and rewarding volunteers, pre-retirement information and use of volunteer champions;**

2. **That those organisations that receive core funding from SBC should provide a clear annual statement concerning the training and support they provide for their own volunteers, and that this should be written into funding agreements;**

3. **That an appropriate, willing core funded organisation be identified to have responsibility for provision of a 'volunteering bureau';**

Community Centres

4. **That the Corporate Directors of DNS and CESC should take forward a response to the Audit Report on Youth and Community Centres, including reference to the status of Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre and that a report should be prepared for CMT and reported back through the scrutiny monitoring process within six months;**

5. **The provision of a freephone to access Council services (as exists in Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre) should be examined as to whether it could be replicated elsewhere;**

Governance

6. **That the Council should continue to review and resolve governance issues including:**
   - **to ensure that Members receive appropriate support to fulfil their roles on VCS bodies, including a review of guidance currently issued, and to consider how information regarding the activities of VCS organisations appointed to by this Council may be best brought to the attention of Members;**
   - **reviewing which organisations should be required to complete the Governance Self Assessment documentation, and making sure that it is understandable for those which are, especially those organisations which no longer have Member representation;**

7. **That the Council should continue to ensure the governance compliance of 3rd sector partners when procuring services from them, and the maintenance of an up to date, central register of compliant organisations should be developed;**

8. **That, building on what information the Council already holds, a mapping exercise should be carried out in order to ascertain the full extent of the Borough's voluntary and community sector, where the Council has a funding or contractual relationship;**

Core Funded Organisations

9. **That all core funded organisations must have information readily available to the public giving details of trustees, the annual report and the accounts;**

10. **That there should be a memorandum of understanding between Council, SCRGA and Catalyst regarding the sharing of data of VCS groups;**

11. **That the following statement be included within the terms and conditions of future core funding and grant agreements: 'This grant/ funding is issued for the stated specific purpose. A condition of accepting the grant is that your organisation agrees**

to the Council having access to your records in order to demonstrate that funding is used appropriately';

12.   That core funded organisations should consider the merits of attaining charity status, in view of the potential reduction of costs to the Council in relation to rate relief and themselves in reduction of energy costs;

13.   that the council examine the issues in relation to funding and relationships (outlined on page 29-30) as part of future work in relation to the core funded organisations;

Procurement

14.   That the Council should continue to examine opportunities to provide procurement help and advice to the sector;

15.   That, where appropriate, funding from the Council to the VCS should be in the form of 3-year contracts in order to provide stability for organisations;

Catalyst

16.   That the new Executive Director of Catalyst be requested to attend Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee within six months to provide information and clarity on the role and workings of Catalyst, including their role in allocating funding and procurement criteria, and progress in relation to building relations with all the Borough's VCS and refreshing the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

17.   That following evidence received during the review regarding the concerns of a number of organisations surrounding the former SVDA and the lack of confidence which ensued, the Group recommend that an investigation takes place.

2.0   Introduction

2.1   This report presents Cabinet with the findings of the Task and Finish Group made up of Members from Stockton Council's Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee. The Group have undertaken a review of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) within Stockton Borough. The topic was identified at a meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum in January 2007 and subsequently incorporated into the work programme by Executive Scrutiny Committee in May. The review was subsequently delegated to a Task and Finish Group by the Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee.

2.2   The Group have taken the opportunity to review several issues affecting the VCS within the Borough. The original brief for the review is set out on page 6, however as the review progressed it became clear that it would not be possible to carry out a detailed review of all the issues such as the transfer of community assets, within the timescale and capacity available. Therefore the Group prioritised in order to consider some topics in more depth than others, whilst still providing an overview of key issues facing the sector.

2.3   The review incorporated a site visit to Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre and one meeting of the Group was held at Wolviston Court Community Centre. An all-Members' Survey was carried out for the purposes of this review, in order to gain feedback on issues relating to Member representation. Members would like to thank all those who have contributed to the review, including the representatives of the Core Funded organisations who provided a wide range of information and whose co-operation is gratefully acknowledged.

3.0   Background

National

3.1   The Voluntary and Community Sector can be defined as organisations set up by individuals and groups whose primary objectives are social rather than economic. These organisations are independent, provide a form of service and may campaign on issues which are of concern to them. These groups are often funded by grants and donations, and are normally formally constituted. Voluntary organisations are sometimes larger and some operate across a wide area, with a staff of paid professionals to support their work. Community organisations are rooted within more specific locations and are largely made up of grass roots volunteers. The VCS is part of what is termed the 'Third Sector', as compared to the public and private sector.

3.2   VCS organisations, whatever the size or purpose, share the following common characteristics:

- They are independent and autonomous
- They exist for public or community benefit
- They are not for individual gain
- They are not allied to a political party
- They are governed by a constitution or set of rules
- They are overseen by unpaid board or committee members
- They are accountable to their members
- They include faith groups, social enterprises, credit unions etc.
- They may or may not be charities

3.3   Local authorities have long had close relations with the VCS and are the biggest single source of funding for the sector, as the IDeA states. But within national policy there is now an ever increasing emphasis towards engaging with the sector in order to jointly deliver services and further contribute towards local decision making, alongside recognition of the role the sector fulfil in contributing towards civil society and sustainable communities.

3.4   The Local Government White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities', published in October 2006, aimed to 'give local people more influence and power to improve their lives':

'The White Paper is a clear vote of confidence in councils and councillors as the leaders of their communities – it places local authorities and their communities at the heart of strengthened local decision-making and backs local authorities at the centre of local coalitions to strengthen communities, encourage opportunity and promote prosperity…

We want the best local partnership working between local authorities and the third sector to be the rule, not the exception, and for the sector to be placed on a level playing field with mainstream providers when it comes to local service provision.'

3.5   References to the Third Sector are distributed throughout all sections of the White Paper. The Paper sets out Government expectations in a number of relevant areas:

- Public agencies to continue to change how they work so they can offer individuals and communities the choice and quality of service that modern consumers expect and demand.
- Council's to rise to the challenge of working in partnership; to provide strong and visible leadership; and a sense of vision and civic pride for their local area;
- Residents and communities to be empowered to hold public services and the Council account and to be able to influence the services in their area;
- Local partners to work together to tackle difficult cross cutting issues like social exclusion and anti social behavior that hold back the sustainable economic development of the area.

3.6   The White Paper sets out the centrality of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The CVS are key partners within LSPs and it is therefore seen as important that relationships and practices are 'fit for purpose'. The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) states that Local Authorities must ensure that there is a 'golden thread' between priorities and the allocation of funds to the CVS.

3.7   A key element of the White Paper was the promotion of more 'responsive services and empowered communities'. This included the promise of increased opportunities for communities to manage and own local public buildings and land. In particular it highlighted the role asset management or ownership can play in giving communities the stability and confidence to develop and grow, as well as the means of securing external investment.

3.8   A review of the barriers and incentives affecting the transfer of public assets to community management and ownership was undertaken by Barry Quirk and '*Making Assets Work - The Quirk Review of Community Management & Ownership of Public Assets'* was published in May 2007*.

Local

3.9   There are a wide range of VCS organisations operating Stockton Borough. An indication of the size of the sector can be gained from the database of Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association (SRCGA). This register has approximately 430 affiliates, and it is recognised that there are other groups within the Borough who are not affiliated to SRCGA. The sector ranges from small activity groups based in local community centres to larger organisations such as the International Family Centre and Five Lamps which provide a variety of services.

3.10   Stockton Council provides core funding to eleven organisations within the voluntary sector. The funding is seen as essential to the operation of the organisations concerned and is intended to assist towards paying core running costs of the organisation as a whole, rather than delivering specific services. During 2007-08 this funding amounted to £545,420, of which

£120,000 was sourced from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The organisations are:

- Stockton Residents & Community Groups Association;
- Stockton District Advice & Information Service;
- Newtown and Norton Community Resource Centres;
- The Clarences Community Resource Centre ;
- The Five Lamps Organisation;
- UNITE;
- The Cornerhouse;
- Hardwick in Partnership;
- The Billingham Partnership;
- Catalyst;
- Stockton International Family Centre.

3.11 Within Stockton Council, primary responsibility for managing relationships with the VCS is held by the Community Development Team in Housing Services. The main functions of the team include:

- Support and monitoring of the 11 Core Funded organisations
- Support and landlord responsibilities for the community association tenants occupying the 23 community centres within Housing Services portfolio
- Management of Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre
- Main point of contact for the voluntary and community sector

3.12 A team of three Community Development Officers each act as link officers for 6 or 7 of the community associations within the portfolio of 23 premises (Appendix 1). The link officers act as the first point of contact with the Council and provide tailored help, support and guidance. The repairs and maintenance budget is £19,000 for all 23 Centres. A bid has been made to the Community Assets Fund in order to refurbish The Clarences Community Centre, Norton Grange Community Centre and 32 Dovecot Street (currently run by the Five Lamps Organisation).

4.0   Evidence/Findings

Relationship with Local Strategic Partnership

4.1   Stockton Renaissance is the Local Strategic Partnership for the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. The Partnership is made up of the main Renaissance Partnership Board which acts as the overarching body in order to lead on the social and economic regeneration of the Borough, an important element of which is the preparation of the Sustainable Community Strategy. Four Area Partnerships (Billingham/Central/Eastern/Western) and seven Thematic Partnerships (Children's Trust Board/Housing and Neighbourhood/Arts and Culture/Safer Stockton/Economic Regeneration and Transport/Health and Wellbeing/Environment) contribute to the same aims, adding their individual perspectives to debate.

4.2   The Neighbourhood Renewal Team lead on making sure that the VCS are engaged within the Renaissance family of partnerships and take an active role in priority setting and shaping service delivery, at the same time as enabling the sector to challenge policies and delivery.

4.3   The Group found that VCS representation on the Renaissance partnership is facilitated by the Community Empowerment Network (CEN). The Renaissance Board and Area Partnerships have dedicated voting spaces for the VCS. Currently there are 21 organisations represented through the CEN.

4.4   The CEN is managed by Stockton Residents (SRCGA) and funded through the LSP. It holds formal elections amongst its members in order to identify partnership nominees. A BME Network was set up in 2004 in order to increase BME Group participation within the LSP, however this has now been combined within the support arrangements for the CEN.

4.5   In addition, the CEN supports the work of its members by building capacity for their work on Renaissance including such things as training, pre-agenda meetings, one-to-one support and information packs. There are bi-monthly meetings for all members of the Network, and the main focus of these meetings is to enable feedback from the Renaissance representatives to the Network as a whole. Currently there are 370 members of Stockton's CEN.

4.6   There is a Compact between Stockton Renaissance and the Voluntary and Community Sector. This has been recently 'refreshed' and sets out the shared principles and joint commitments which have been signed up to in order to achieve acceptable standards of working.   A draft of the Compact was submitted to the CEN for comments before agreement by the LSP. It has been signed up to by the following organisations:

- Stockton Renaissance
- Cleveland Police
- Cleveland Fire Brigade
- North Tees PCT
- Learning and Skills Council
- Catalyst
- SRCGA
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

- Stockton Youth Assembly
- Tees Valley Rural Community Council
- Job Centre Plus

The Shared Principles and Undertakings made by both sides can be found at Appendix 2.

4.7 The Group found that the Sustainable Community Strategy has an ambition on Strong Community Involvement which includes:

'working in partnership with the community and voluntary sector to promote participation and volunteering in public life, in particular the democratic process … Also where appropriate we will encourage community groups to take ownership and responsibility for their own events and organisations, helping build community capacity throughout the Borough.'

4.8 The Council has a Communication, Consultation and Engagement strategy in place which specifically mentions the VCS. Under the 'Engagement' section it is stated that:

'We believe that the Stockton Renaissance family of partnerships, which includes the Area Partnership Boards and the Thematic Partnerships, is one of the most appropriate avenues for effective engagement. These community led partnerships are a mandated and representative forum, providing a channel of communication and engagement from the main LSP board through to and from local residents…

We are committed to working with local residents, umbrella voluntary and community sector organisations and key stakeholders to continue to review and develop effective engagement mechanisms…

We also engage with local residents at a neighbourhood and individual level through a variety of other mechanisms, including through user groups, resident associations/community partnerships, voluntary/community umbrella organisations and councillor ward surgeries which take place in the community…

We recognise that sometimes other organisations, particularly the voluntary sector, may be better placed to engage on our behalf. We therefore ensure that our advertising and procurement for engagement services is appropriate…'

4.9 Under the arrangements for the 2007 Corporate Assessment of the Council, members of the local VCS were included within a Stakeholder Survey. This covered 66 organisations including the police, PCT and local business. It is not possible to differentiate between the different type of respondents as the Audit Commission retain the details of individual responses. However, when asked if the Council 'makes effective use of partnerships', a majority of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'tended to agree.'

4.10 The Group found that the Council and LSP had ensured that representatives of the sector were included within the wider engagement picture and had secured representation on important representative bodies, but was mindful

of the need for these representatives to continue to make sure that their voices are heard.

4.11   The Neighbourhood Renewal Manager informed the Group that up to 47% of the latest round of the Neighbourhood Renewal (NRF) programme has been delivered through the VCS (2006-08). Following the replacement of the NRF by the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF), transitional, one-year WNF funding for several NRF projects has been agreed for 2008-09. This amounts to funding in the region of £1.8 million that will be allocated to the VCS to deliver these projects.

4.12   **2008-09 Transitional WNF Funding for NRF Projects**

Economic Regeneration and Transport		
The Five Lamps	Guidance and Learning	658,175
The Five Lamps	Business Support in the Community	168,650
Stockton International Family Centre	BME	70,500
Newtown Community Resource Centre	SOL	187,000
PANIC	Ground Level	49,500
A 4 E	Fit for Employment	52,000
TOTAL		1,185,825
Safer Communities		
Corner House Youth Project	PODs	46,125
Harbour	Domestic Violence	26,000
SWITCH	Switch	27,060
TOTAL		99,185
Children and Young People		
A Way Out	Twister Arts	61,500
Newtown Community Resource Centre	Say's Who	20,812
Corner House Youth Project	Wise, Wonderful and Well	31,634
SMASH	SMASH	10,250
Newtown / Norton Community Resource Centre	Norton Grange Youth Activities	22,550
The Five Lamps	Making Young People Matter	59,194
Brook	Boys and Young Mens Worker	60,000
TOTAL		265,940
Housing		
Stockton District Information and Advice	Specialist Advice Service	41,467
TOTAL		41,467
Other		
Core Funded Orgs	Voluntary and Community Sector Support Fund	123,000
Stockton Residents and	CEN and BME Works	128,125

Community Groups Association		
TOTAL		251,125

4.13 In addition to the money allocated through the Renaissance-led NRF/WNF, the Group found that the Council provides the sector with several million pounds in the form of core funding, other grants or as the result of commissioned services. A survey of Council service departments found the following examples:

- Community Protection co-ordinate £88,500 for services including domestic violence support, sexual abuse counselling and victim support;
- Adult Services co-ordinate c.£300,000 for services to aid independent living;
- Adult Services Drugs Action Team co-ordinate c.£1.2 million for services including family support and arrest referral;
- Children's Services co-ordinate funding worth over £1.6 million for services including play facilities, youth justice, youth unemployment, healthier lifestyles, teenage pregnancy and young carers support at the time of the review;
- Adult Services co-ordinate c.£1 million for registered charities in relation to Supporting People;
- Housing Services (Community Development) co-ordinate £430,869 for the eleven Core Funded organisations in 2008-09;
- Arts and Leisure co-ordinate c.£2.7 million for services including management of the Council's leisure centres (Tees Active), music facilities, riverside fringe festival, ARC arts centre, Billingham Folklore Festival and dance development.

4.14 The funding comes from a variety of sources including SBC, Big Lottery Fund, Home Office and the European Social Fund. It is not possible to give a definitive breakdown of the amount of public money directed through SBC to the VCS as a definitive corporate list does not yet exist. The individual sums involved range from a few hundred pounds to several hundred thousand, and the recipients range from small community based play groups to large, national charities which have a presence within the Borough and region. Comments in the Members Survey refer to the need to have a public document listing the Council's links with the VCS, and a better understanding of these links by Members as a whole. The Chief Internal Auditor also acknowledged the need to 'map' the voluntary sector within Stockton Borough.

4.15 It is clear that the VCS, nationally and locally, is being increasingly encouraged towards being providers of services. However it is also acknowledged that the great strength of the sector comes from its tradition of campaigning and advocacy. The IDeA also states that the challenge for the sector is to be able to continue to develop its campaigning role at the same time as representing user groups within decision making processes. The Group is keen to ensure that the ability of the sector to innovate and

challenge is not compromised by the need to concentrate on the delivery of services, and that this should be respected and encouraged.

Procurement

4.16   The Group was interested to make sure that the smaller organisations within the sector continue to have the chance to secure commissioned services. Smaller organisations may feel unable to become suppliers of services due to a lack of business skills, or inability to meet strict procurement deadlines.

4.17   The Group noted that 47% of NRF programmes have been provided by the VCS, and that Stockton is an active partner within the North East Centre of Excellence for Procurement (NECE) and their work on reducing barriers to procurement from the sector. At the strategic level, Stockton Council has in place measures to enhance the Council's ability to make use of the power to increase the 'well-being' of the area. This is outlined at Appendix 3, particularly relevant sections are highlighted. The Compact between Renaissance and the VCS has a specific reference under 'Undertakings by Stockton Renaissance':

   'To make contract opportunities available to the Voluntary and Community organisations and to apply proportional evaluation monitoring subject to organisations meeting agreed criteria and where applicable, the Stockton Borough Governance Code of Practice. Also to ensure all commissioning of services is in line with the Council's Procurement Principles.'

4.18   Opportunities to tender are mailed to those on the Council's governance database. Stockton is working in conjunction with Middlesborough BC in order to further level the playing field for those who then wish to make a tender. This includes examining the financial testing element of the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire which would normally make it difficult for VCS to pass due to their accounting and legal situation.

4.19   During the review Members considered a document from Community Ventures Ltd, 'Social Clauses Research Report' which had been compiled on behalf of the NECE. This identified uses of social clauses within public procurement contracts. Social Clauses are 'relevant, legitimate and value for money aspects' of contracts which 'fulfil a particular social aim'. They have the benefit of enabling Councils to achieve the aim of increasing economic and environmental well-being of their areas through the procurement process. Examples include incorporating training opportunities within construction contracts, and assessing what community safety or environmental benefits contractors will provide.

4.20   The mere fact that social clauses are taken account of during the process does not necessarily mean that VCS groups are best placed to take advantage and will win more contracts, as this would mean that third sector organisations were willing and/or able to take part in the procurement process whereas in reality many may not have the capacity or desire. However they can be used to promote the sector if it is an explicit part of LA policy to use them in this way, and it is possible to award marks for them during the assessment process.

4.21   As a Council, Stockton operates a devolved approach to procurement and operational officers are responsible for undertaking tendering processes. The Corporate Procurement Team provide advice and have been encouraging officers to consider the use of social clauses. There is to be a new, in-house training course to enhance officers' knowledge of the use of social clauses, and make the link between wider corporate goals and individual tenders. Examples of their use so far include 5 unemployed workers who worked on the North Shore project and have since gone on to gain full employment. The Group welcome this process and believe it should be strongly encouraged.

Community Development

4.22   The Group acknowledge and recognised the work done by the Community Development Team over the last 12 months. In the past there has had to be a concentration on 'fire-fighting' problems as they arose. This has changed and the Team have concentrated on providing a support infrastructure with the link officers providing support to their portfolio of community centres.

4.23   The Council provides a Community Accounts Assistant in order to provide financial support and advice, and audits a number of community centre and voluntary organisation accounts. It was reported that in the past, there had been a tendency for groups to access this resource only when crisis situations had arisen, other than for routine audit work.

4.24   It is recognised that the sector is diverse but has a series of common issues facing it. These include governance, human resources, legal matters and finance/business planning. Those involved in the VCS need support and guidance and that this is in terms of making sure people have the skills rather than simply the provision of more funding. The Council does not have the capacity to provide support directly to all organisations within the Borough. The Council currently aims to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is in place, monitoring the performance and links with the core funded organisations, and maintaining relationships with those groups who are tenants within its portfolio of community buildings. £40,000 has been allocated in the Medium Term Financial Plan for improvements to governance/support in the third sector.

4.25   The Group considered other methods in which the local VCS could benefit from assistance in terms of their ability to reduce costs. One method may be through the ability to access Council energy contract arrangements. SBC is a member of the North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO) and therefore benefits from the purchasing power of this. As many CVS organisations are designated 'Public Bodies' under the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 (such as community associations, old people's associations, village hall management committees and solely for the purposes of this Act) it could be possible for them to also become members of NEPO. However, there is a fee of £1000 per year and the amount of supply required for particular items would have to be above the minimum required. A further scenario, allowing for restrictions in individual situations, may be for the organisations to trade with the Council without having to join NEPO. Under the same Act, 'public bodies' have the power to trade with one another and so the Council could in theory buy from the electricity supplier and then re-sell to the VCS under a

separate contract. SBC would be liable to the electricity supplier and the VCS organisation would be liable to the Council for payment and there may be a re-charge for the administration involved.

4.26 This may not be suitable for all and it was noted that Tees Active do not follow a similar course and negotiate separate deals, however the Group feel that this option should be considered where appropriate.

4.27 Unlike the centres such as Wolviston Court which are run by their own management committees, the Community Development Team directly manage Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre. The Centre is unusual in that it is the only community centre under the responsibility of the Housing Service employing paid Council staff. As well as the manager, the centre employed seven other permanent members of Council staff. In addition, some seasonal staff are employed along with unpaid volunteers.

4.28 The centre was developed through Estates Action and City Challenge funding following riots in the late 1980s. The centre works with partners and agencies to deliver a wide range of activities. Partners included Sure Start, PCT, Stockton on Line, Central Stockton Day Services, St John's Community Partnership. Other facilities included: the Council's Preventions Unit, Drop in Youth Café, diversionary activities for young people, sports development/ health programme, private hiring of rooms for parties/ meetings.

4.29 Majority of funding came from the Council although some income was also generated by the centre. The centre receives support from the Council finance department in respect of financial monitoring.

4.30 Young people were actively involved from an early stage in decisions about the running of the Centre and the centre encouraged a lot of customer feedback and enjoyed excellent staff/customer relationships. This gave local people a feeling of ownership of the centre and it could be argued this had led to a reduction in anti social behaviour. The Group believe that these features could be considered as best practice for use elsewhere.

4.31 Staff at the centre signposted residents to other Council services and a free phone to Tristar was provided. The Group were keen that this could be extended elsewhere in other council and community buildings.

4.32 The Community Development Team manage the Community Centre Forum. This has been re-launched in October 2007 with the aim of bringing together community associations and the voluntary sector in order to receive policy updates and information on changing regulations. Also to provide networking opportunities and an exchange of ideas and informaton. The Chair of the Group attended a meeting of the Forum and noted that of the attendees, only three representatives were of a voluntary nature and many were paid professionals. The programme of meetings has only recently been established and concerns will be taken on board during future planning.

4.33 The Group heard evidence from the Chief Internal Auditor in relation to the organisation of the Council's Youth and Community Centres. The findings of an Audit report from February 2007 were outlined. Prior to Local Government Re-organisation in 1996, the previous Stockton Council had operated a number of Community Centres and providing the facilities which were passed to local community management committees to actually run. Activities for

adults, youths and children were then organised within the overall context of the Community Centre. This arrangement continues and these Centres are now under Housing Services remit as outlined above.

4.34 Cleveland County had also run a series of centres within Stockton, with local adult management teams running the centres, but the emphasis was on the provision of youth services. These centres then transferred to Stockton Council in 1996, and are now within Children, Education and Social Care's (CESC) remit. From a community point of view, the services delivered are very similar.

4.35 Of the 18 Youth and Community Centres associated with CESC, all have an allocated youth service worker. Four of the Centres occupy premises owned by the youth service, two are based in Adult Education establishments, five are school based and seven are in other voluntary organisation premises, only one of which is owned by the Council and managed by Development and Neighbourhood Services (DNS).

4.36 The Audit report stated that 'well structured performance targets are given to each Youth Centre worker for their work with children and youths. The system of performance monitoring is working and managed very well.'

4.37 The report states that the organisation and administration of all these buildings does not present a coherent picture. Setting aside those under Housing Services:

- those in the four Youth Service premises are charged a rent that covers repairs, maintenance and utility bills, and can keep any additional income from lettings;
- these tenants are on occasion, applying for grants from various sources to extend or improve the buildings;
- for CESC associated buildings based in schools, Youth Service pay the cost of hiring direct to the school;
- the Adult Education centres are no longer a cost to the Youth Service;
- the Youth and Community situated within a DNS premises does not get rent contribution but does have staffing assistance;
- The facilities based in private voluntary organisation premises get a £500 grant, with a letter of agreement specifying what this covers.

4.38 The recommendation of the Audit Report was that the administration of all Council-owned community centres should be combined under CESC's umbrella. The recommendation was accepted by Corporate Directors of Development and Neighbourhood Services and CESC, however remains unimplemented. It is the Group's view that the centres under CESC's remit can often operate under a rather paternalistic arrangement, with services provided as a matter of course. However, notwithstanding this viewpoint, it is clear that this issue has remained unresolved for a considerable amount of time and should be reviewed as a matter of priority. This review should also take into account the unique status of Ragworth Centre.

Governance

4.39   Good governance is crucial to engaging confidence in the sector's reputation and ability to deliver effective services to the communities in which they are based. It is also vital for the Council to be re-assured that when it provides public funding to the sector, they will be used transparently and for the purposes originally intended. In light of the significant levels of funding now being channelled into the sector, as demonstrated, this is as important as ever.

4.40   Previously there have been issues regarding the good governance of the sector, and some instances of the Council having to intervene in the operation of voluntary organisations. An example is the involvement of Internal Audit at The Forge and the Richard Hind Centre following problems at each. There are various risks involved in the management of community centres including financial stability and insurance for staff, visitors and those in charge of groups using the centres. The Corporate Manslaughter Act has now come into force and this also needs to be considered.

4.41   It is recognised that there is a high turnover of staff and people on voluntary management committees within the sector. This is not something the Council can directly control, however efforts can be made to ensure that corporate governance standards are in place for whoever may be in post at a particular time.

4.42   To achieve its aim of promoting good governance within the sector, the Council has devised a Governance Code of Practice, together with a Self Assessment questionnaire. This was prompted by publication of the 2004 CIPFA report, 'Good Governance Standards for Public Services'. This report included a list of questions that should be asked of those organisations in receipt of public funds. The Code of Practice is also based on the Nolan Principles emanating from the Committee for Standards in Public Life. These are:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

4.43   The Underlying Principles are outlined at Appendix 4. The Assessment contains sections devoted to: individual organisations and their make-up, financial regulations, staffing, policies and procedures, health and safety and insurance cover. The Code of Practice and Self Assessment was originally drawn up in conjunction with Internal Audit and Finance. An initial briefing took place with the sector in conjunction with SRCGA. Responsibility for the Code of Practice and its completion now rests with the Community Development Team, where the 'governance agenda' is also high on the priority list.

4.44   Members felt that there are issues remaining with the implementation of the Governance Self Assessment Questionnaire. It is intended that organisations

receiving public funding must complete the Assessment as a condition. The documents were distributed to over 600 VCS organisations within the Borough in 2006. However, at present, only 56 of these have responded to the Assessment. It is recognised that the larger organisations, with a paid staff, have had little difficulty in completing the questionnaire, but that the smaller, community based groups may struggle to complete it without adequate support. Comments in the Members' Survey allude to the need to 'de-professionalise' the language in circulated documents.

4.45 The Group regard the promotion of good governance as being important for all VCS organisations, whether directly in receipt of public funding or not. The Group believe that as the Code of Practice is the Council's principle method of encouraging good governance within the sector, it should be examined to make sure that the documentation is suitable for all. The governance database needs to be fully up to date in order to provide assurances regarding the use of public money.

4.46 The Core Funded Organisations have completed the Assessment. The Community Development Manager is assured through the monitoring regime and link officer system that the remaining tenants within their portfolio of centres are working towards having appropriate governance arrangements in place. All recipients of the Voluntary Sector Core Fund are required to sign up to Agreements which set out the obligations the organisation must follow, including their legal and financial requirements. They are also required to submit to the Community Development Team their Annual Reports, Business Plans and Audited Accounts. During the review, one Member of the Group had tried to gain access to these by presenting themselves to the reception of one of the organisations, following a complaint from a member of the public, but was told that these documents were not for public viewing. This may have been a training issue but the Group feel that it is important for these to be easily publicly accessible.

4.47 The Council has a tradition of appointing Members to Outside Bodies, many of which have been within the VCS. Following raised concerns regarding the potential liability of some elected members acting as members of an outside body organisation that they had been appointed to, a review took place in 2006. A report to Members Advisory Panel in June 2006 outlined the process which was being taken in order to assess and minimise the risks involved in appointing to outside bodies. As part of this process the Council surveyed those bodies with Member representation. The following is an extract from the report:

> 'In order to minimise the risks associated with being a member of an Outside Body, it is recommended that all Members appointed by the Council to serve on an Outside Body should receive training on their duties and responsibilities. It is also recommended that the Council should assess the risks involved, ascertain what, if any, insurance arrangements are in place for Members of the Outside Body and determine whether it is appropriate to make a nomination taking account of audit and other financial controls that may exist.

> … all outside body organisations were contacted in January and February this year requesting that they complete a questionnaire

detailing the extent of their insurance/indemnity cover for their members.'

4.48   Organisations were contacted in order to provide proof of the extent to which they provide the following insurance cover: public liability, employee liability, professional indemnity and material loss/damage.   Questions were also asked in order to assess the type of role Members would be expected to fulfil, ie. executive or advisory.   A number of VCS groups, including some community management associations, no longer have member representation since this process was begun. This could be due to one of the following reasons:

- Organisation is defunct
- Assurances have not been received that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place
- Decision taken by Council not to make appointments for any other reason
- Decision taken by organisation itself that Member representation is no longer needed

4.49   As this is one link to the Council which may not be available to these organisations, the Group believe this is another reason why the Governance self assessment documentation should be revised in order to make sure that it is capable of being completed by all groups, including those using Council owned premises.

4.50   Also during 2006, the Guidance for Elected Members appointed to Joint/Outside Bodies was produced by Democratic Services in conjunction with Legal Services and the Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager. This general guidance was provided in order to support elected members in the different types of role they may be expected to undertake as a member of an outside body, including: the conduct that they should exercise; their potential interests and liabilities arising from their outside body role and the necessary safeguards and information that they should be provided with by the organisation prior to acting on its behalf.

4.51   The purpose of the all-Members' Survey was to assess what support Members currently received in relation to their role on Outside Bodies. The return was small (ten replies referring to 16 VCS organisations) but the Group felt that it still highlighted a number of issues worthy of further consideration. Of those who had been appointed by Council, some had not received appropriate guidance as to their role on the Body and were not told of their responsibilities (in terms of trustee or director). One Member regarded the Guidance as being difficult to understand and did not relate to the problems encountered. There was a mixed response when asked what support had been received from either the Council, the Body, or any other organisation; some had received training, one Member had received nothing from the Body and had struggled to gain advice elsewhere.

4.52   Examples of additional information and guidance which could assist Members with their roles included: straightforward check lists of issues which community halls should be doing to comply with the law (eg. fire, health, child protection); more detailed guidance on such issues; clear information on the

roles and responsibilities of trustees. All Members knew what steps should be taken should they become aware of any concerns regarding the activities of the Bodies. Only one Member was clear on the need to report back on the activities of the Body.

4.53   Some of these issues could be dealt with by appropriate umbrella organisations, and the Group acknowledges the work in producing the Guidance document. However Members feel that issues relating to Member representation remain outstanding.   The Group feel that mechanisms for reporting back on activities on Outside Bodies could be further developed. The Group also have concerns regarding the lack of member representation on Council-owned Community Centres. The group regards it as a concern that Councillors who wish to fulfil their community role as members of community centres cannot do so due to their lack of insurance arrangements.

Core Funded Organisations

4.54   As part of the review, the Group met with representatives of the eleven core funded organisations. Through the Voluntary Sector Support Fund (VSSF), the Council provides funding to these particular groups due to the range of services they provide, and the risk that if they were not in receipt of core funding the services would be lost and the sector as a whole could be significantly weakened.   During 2006-7 and 2007-8, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has been used to 'top up' the VSSF money provided to each core funded organisation.   It has now been agreed that the Working Neighbourhoods Fund will fulfil this function for an interim year (2008-9).

4.55   The funding levels are set out at Appendix 5. Previously the core funding agreements (CFA) were 3-yearly.   However, the latest CFA has only been agreed for 2008-9, as the Council intends to undertake a comprehensive review of the VSSF during this year. It was noted that at present, a historical formula is used for the allocation of the funding based on criteria such as geography and number of buildings managed. The Community Development Team lead on the relationship with the 11 core funded organisations. Milestones for each have been agreed and there is now a system of six monthly monitoring. The system of monitoring these agreed milestones is written into the individual Service Level Agreements that have been agreed with each core funded organisation.   Members of the Group strongly support this process and believe that it should continue.

4.56   A standard set of questions were asked of each in order to assess the role of the organisations, what support was received, role in delivering the Community Strategy and relationship with the Council.

4.57   A summary of the organisations and their aims is below.

- Stockton Residents & Community Groups Association (SRCGA)

SRCGA or 'Stockton Residents' is the community sector's infrastructure body in Stockton-on-Tees. Originally set up to help a small number of community centres, it now has c.430 affiliated bodies. It provides a professional support service to promote and develop the effectiveness of the sector. Examples of

its work include: VCS reference library, training sessions, Community Development Workers/Health Works Network Newsletters and Directory, supporting development of new resident associations. SRCGA has recently supported the awareness raising events surrounding health Local Involvement Networks (LINks).

SRCGA manages the Community Empowerment Network on behalf of Stockton Renaissance. This programme directly ensures VCS involvement in the shaping of the Community Strategy and the work of Renaissance as a whole.

- Stockton District Advice & Information Service (SDAIS)

SDAIS provide the functions of a Citizens Advice Bureau for Stockton Borough, providing independent social welfare advice concentrating on debt, money, housing and immigration. This ranges from one-off advice to the specialist level (for welfare, benefits and debt) which can lead to appearances in court. Outreach work to prisons and BME community takes place, alongside social policy work.

The Service has a turnover of £1 million. £850,000 is provided from sources including the Lottery, Northern Rock and Legal Services Commission to fund specific services. The activities of SDAIS in some way relate to all five themes of the Community Strategy: Healthier Communities (eg promotion of self-advocacy to those with learning disabilities), Children and Young People (eg. increasing income and reducing debt has impact on families), Safer Communities (eg. 'Reducing offending through Advice' project), Liveability (eg. work with Tristar and Housing Options to reduce homelessness) and Economic Regeneration (eg. advice on back to work benefits and grants).

- Newtown-Norton Community Resource Centres, and the Clarences Community Resource Centre

These three separate Centres are now a federation and all aimed to promote the economic and cultural development, and community cohesion of their areas, by providing a base for several services. The centres are the only source of such services in their local communities.

As part of the core funding agreement for the Newtown Centre, 40% of room hire was available free of charge to local community groups. This Centre provided a base for North Tees PCT and Sure Start.

The federation as a whole employed 40 staff and had a turnover of £1 million.

- The Five Lamps Organisation

This is a community-led social and economic regeneration business, employing 47 staff and a turnover of £1.6 million (07-08). Most income is through contracts to deliver services on behalf bodies such as Learning and Skills Council, DWP, Business Link, and One North East. Over the last three years, Five Lamps has managed to attract £3 million worth of funding into the Borough.

Services provided include: People into work, Training for employment, businesses start-up, basic skill training, capacity building for the VCS, youth service, community health improvement, community centres delivering community services

- UNITE

UNITE is a community mediation service used to help neighbours and communities resolve disputes before they escalated. The core funding provides for a community mediation service within Stockton Borough. The services contribute towards improving health and community cohesion. Services are also provided to other agencies in the Borough on a case by case basis.

- The Corner House

The Corner House Youth Project is based in central Stockton and provides opportunities, space and services for young people on the fringes of society, perhaps due to their family circumstances or poverty, thereby contributing to the Every Child Matters agenda.

A range of services are provided in conjunction and on behalf of a variety of other agencies including: after schools clubs, BME youth forum, drugs awareness groups, and sports based- Positive Futures project.

- Hardwick in Partnership

This was set up in 1994 in order to improve lives in the Hardwick area, through increasing employability and raising aspirations. A number of courses are provided including counselling, searching for employment, youth projects and adult education. Partnership work takes place with Stockton Riverside College and SDAIS.

- The Billingham Partnership

The Billingham Partnership has the overall theme of 'Improve Billingham'. It acted as the Northern Area Partnership for Stockton Renaissance, and employed a part-time manager. Bede College acts as the Partnership's accountable body. There is an elected membership of 25 with members also serving on the thematic partnerships of Renaissance.

The Partnership allows for strong community involvement within the overall workings of Renaissance and has a developing relationship with the recently formed Billingham Town Council.

- Stockton International Family Centre

SIFC was formed in 1990 in order to raise awareness of BME issues within the Borough, thereby reducing social inequality and contributing towards employability. The Centre has had over 2000 beneficiaries from around 80 countries of origin. A range of services are provided in a culturally safe resource centre, including welfare rights and English language courses.

Efforts are made to provide services to the community as a whole, instead of creating 'shadow' services for only the BME community. The largest user group by ethnic type is 'white British'.

- SVDA/Catalyst

Catalyst is the new strategic body for the VCS in Stockton Borough. This is referred to in more detail at page 31.

4.58 The Group are satisfied that all the core funded organisations contribute in some way to the aims of the Community Strategy. However, it is recognised that there is a need to review the methodology for allocating funding. This is something which should be taken into account during the upcoming review of the VSSF. The Group noted the idea that core funding provides recipients with a 'credibility' which assists organisations in obtaining other funding.

4.59 During discussions, a number of issues were raised by representatives which the Group believe should be considered during future work in relation to the core funded organisations **(Recommendation 13 refers)**. These included:

- All organisations had good relationships with the Council as a whole, especially at the operational level. However, it was reported, specifically from the Corner House and UNITE, that it would be useful for organisations to have a link with the strategic levels in order to secure their place within the strategies, and that too often references to the VCS were implicit rather than explicit. UNITE reported that it would be useful for more sections in the Council to have a better awareness of the services available.

- The Billingham Partnership raised the issue of the need for SRCGA to have more support in order to deliver the Community Empowerment Network, as support had been reduced to three officers.

- Members noted that it would be desirable for contracts with the VCS to be 3-year wherever possible in order to aid business planning and continuity, and that a conscious effort should be made to achieve this. The IDeA state that too many contracts with the sector are short term which makes it difficult for the 'organisations to recruit, retain and develop staff, and to access capital'. This issue was also raised in the Members' Survey. However the variety of funding streams involved is recognised and the issue will need to be carefully examined.

- Similarly, although core funding is delivered in advance in two, six-monthly tranches, the SIFC noted that other council contracts are in arrears and this restricted flexibility. Paying all contracts in advance of need would transfer the risk but the VCS has delivered previously and feels confident will continue to do so. The problems presented by continual rises in funding below the rate of inflation were noted by SDAIS.

- Representatives of Newtown-Norton and Five Lamps reinforced the idea that the sector is being manoeuvred away from surviving on grants and the move towards contracts and provision of services. Previously the split was 95% grants-5% contracts and now it is 85%

contract and 15% grant. With organisations increasingly unable to rely on grants, the benefits of releasing the funding through asset transfer was outlined. The ability to secure loans against their own premises would help alleviate the issues of short term funding and contracts.

- In common with the sector as a whole, the need for support in terms of human resources advice was raised by SRCGA. Some smaller organisations such as the Billingham Partnership contracted out their HR provision to their accountable body.

- The Group note that the Billingham Partnership acts as the Renaissance Northern Area Partnership but is unique in terms of its funding compare to the three remaining Area Partnerships, which enables it to undertake the activities as described above. This apparent discrepancy should be taken into account during the review of the VSSF.

4.59 During the review, Members were made aware of the benefits to organisations registering as charities in relation to a reduction in business rates.

- If an organisation is non-profit making and does not have charitable status, they can apply for up to 100% discretionary rate relief but there is a cost to SBC as the Council must fund 25% of the amount of this relief.

- Registered charities are entitled to 80% mandatory relief if they are using the property for charitable purposes, and can apply to the Council for discretionary relief on the remaining 20% - where it is granted the Council funds 75% of the 20% discretionary.

4.60 The criteria for the granting of Discretionary Rate Relief were laid down by Council and include groups such as community resource centres and community associations. Charitable status can be awarded to a wide variety of organisations including these types. There is always a cost to Stockton Borough Council where discretionary rate relief is awarded. The Council has approximately 140 business rate accounts in receipt of discretionary relief.

4.61 Of the core funded organisations, Catalyst, the Newtown, Norton and Clarences Resource Centres, the Billingham Partnership, Stockton International Family Centre and SRCGA are all registered as companies rather than charities. In all cases it is the occupier not the owner (i.e. sometimes the Council) who is responsible for paying the rates, and therefore applying for relief.

4.62 There are considerable savings available to the Council should they register as charities, compared to the cost to SBC if they were receiving 100% discretionary relief as non-profit making organisations. These savings equate to 10% of the rates due as a whole. There are also savings on energy costs because of the lower rate of VAT for registered charities.

4.63   The group believe that the core funded organisations have a duty to reduce their costs wherever possible, and due to the significant savings available, should therefore be encouraged to attain charitable status.

Catalyst

4.64   The Group met with Stephen Bray, Chair of Catalyst Board, and Paul McGee, consultant, separately from the other core-funded organisations. A later meeting also took place with Councillor Beall who is the Council's Member representative on the Board and Julie Allport, SBC officer representative.

4.65   Catalyst is the new organisation to replace Stockton Voluntary Development Agency (SVDA). The need for a new organisation was explained. A review had taken place during 2006 of the functions of SVDA and SRCGA. Both were acting as support providers to the sector within the Borough. SVDA had been drawn into providing operational services, including bidding against other local VCS organisations, rather than providing the strategic overview and representative body which the sector required. At the same time as the review it was becoming apparent that the funding picture for the sector was becoming ever tighter and replaced by increased commissioning arrangements as mentioned elsewhere. 'Super-rich' charities such as the Bill Gates Foundation exist but will only provide money when they can see a coherent business plan in place.

4.66   The review had suggested the creation of a new body in order to fulfil these functions and provide this leadership in the Borough, in conjunction with the Council. The review had not been given the brief to amalgamate SVDA and SCRGA. The intention was for the new organisation not to become a deliverer of services but to act as a body which could draw down funding to the sector and act as the recognised 'voice' of the sector within the Borough. In addition, the Group heard that Catalyst would be able to provide much needed policy and research work on behalf of the local VCS. In the first instance, some organisations hold an automatic place on the Board eg. SRCGA and the former SVDA.

4.67   The current Board Members of Catalyst are as follows:

- Alex Bain, SRCGA Director
- Julie Derbyshire, SRCGA Chief Executive
- Julie Allport, SBC Head of Housing
- Cllr Jim Beall, SBC Council representative
- Tony Chapman, Teesside University
- Geoff Harrison, Billingham Partnership
- Cllr Colin Leckonby, ex-SVDA Director
- Graeme Oram, Five Lamps
- Roy Parker, SCRGA Director
- David Whiting, faith groups representative
- Tina Williams, PANIC, organisational sector

Membership is for 3 years and there is to be an appraisal process so that members are in place 'in their own right'.

4.68   The Group found that Catalyst will not be directly providing services. However, it will be responsible for making sure that services are provided by others and that opportunities exist within the Borough, for, as examples, a volunteering bureau, governance support, and training programmes. Catalyst is a key partner within the Compact discussed above. Its now intended that it will begin to influence policy and draft a strategy for the VCS.

4.69   In addition to Catalyst, a new Community Interest Company (CIC) is to be established. This is a partnership between Five Lamps, Newtown Community Resource Centre and Accent Regeneration and will be a 'delivery' agency as opposed to 'strategic'. The Partner's stated objectives for establishing the CIC are as follows:-

- To contribute, and add value, to the delivery of neighbourhood renewal and regeneration in Stockton.
- To provide a delivery channel to work in support of Catalyst within an evolving and new commissioning framework.
- To increase the capacity and effectiveness of the broader third sector in the borough through structured joint working, improved relationships, joint resource and asset management, joint support mechanisms, common priorities.
- To accelerate the development of local social enterprise; places and people working for themselves.

4.70   The lead partners intend that the CIC will provide greater efficiency, building third sector capability and efficiency through joint working and resource/service sharing. Potential plans include the creation a pool of vital services such as cleaners, legal services and HR, which the VCS could access.

4.71   Members of the Group expressed concern at the delay in setting up Catalyst. A series of milestones had been originally set out for Catalyst to achieve during 2007-08. These included the appointment of staff, training of Board members and establishment of policy working groups by September. In the event, Catalyst Board members were not formally appointed until December 2007.

4.72   It was explained that the delay was a result of the time taken to complete the winding up of SVDA and these milestones were agreed prior to the delay. It was necessary for the SVDA accounts to be properly audited and signed off before new Catalyst Members could sign up.

4.73   The 2007-08 core funding for these organisations was split into 2 tranches. The first £17,000 was provided to SVDA in order to assist the winding-up of this organisation and has been accounted for by independent auditors. The remaining £17,000 was provided to the new organisation Catalyst and has been used for setting-up costs, and also to pay SCRGA who had carried out some front of house services on its behalf.

4.74   The delay in appointing the Board led to a delay in the recruitment of staff, together with the need to be assured of the availability of funding for the necessary posts. It was only during the period of the Group's review when the job advert for a Chief Executive had been distributed. The lack of staff had a major impact on the capacity of the new Board. It has been necessary

for Board members to carry out basic 'housekeeping' in relation to Catalyst's premises and accounts. As a result of this activity, a number of utility contracts have been re-arranged to give best value. However, the Board has been undertaking various planning exercises to determine its role when it was fully operational, including taking best practice from the other Tees Valley voluntary development agencies.

4.75 Following an 'away day' the shadow Board of Catalyst (as was in October 2007), the new organisation's vision was set out as follows:

- **To be recognised as the strong voice of the broader third sector in Stockton;** such that non sector people and organisations naturally come to us, as the 'authority', for an opinion/view; such that sector people and organisations naturally look to us to speak out and represent, with measured and balanced voice, the collective views of our independent members/organisations.
- **To exert strategic influence;** informing and responding to the policies of the local authority and other key agencies/bodies (local, sub-regional, regional, national); securing commissions from those agencies/bodies that enhance/expand the work of members/organisations; identifying sector gaps and centres of expertise.
- **To provide a channel/gateway for agencies and organisations seeking to interact with, and within, the sector;** identifying who's who within the sector; signposting members to each other; signposting outside agencies/bodies to members,

4.76 The Group are concerned about and acknowledge the frustration displayed by members of the VCS and members of the Board, due to a lack of any tangible delivery over the past year. It was clear that some Board members shared this frustration.

4.77 The Group were informed that, as a new organisation without a paid executive officer, Catalyst has not had the capacity to properly explore areas such as the role it may take in the future in attracting and distributing funding streams. This will be a key area to debate and reassure once the executive officer is in place, so as to give certainty and assurances to the Sector. Other key areas which Catalyst acknowledge they need to progress are the establishment of a Council of Interest and an overall communication strategy.

4.78 The Group note the views of the Council representative in that it may be preferable for those VCS organisations which are providing services under contract to cease Member representation, and instead have the relationship monitored through contractual agreements. However, strategic bodies could be regarded as partner organisations on which it is acceptable to have stakeholder representation. It was the particular view of the Council representative that he believed that, currently, his role on the Board principally concerned: ensuring that allocated public funds are put to good use; promotion of good relationships; increasing communication within the sector.

4.79 The Group were told that Catalyst would be accountable to a Council of Interests of around 30 members. These members would be chosen by Catalyst as being "fit and proper" organisations. The Group believe that

Catalyst, and its Council of Interests, needs to be representative of the sector to be truly considered the voice of the Borough's VCS, therefore the Group believes that it should be made clear what the 'standard' is, and if this relates purely to good governance and 'fit and proper' organisations.

4.80   The Group believe it is necessary for the exact role of Catalyst to be clarified, in order to dispel concerns regarding the possible conflicts of interest which may ensue, and to provide clarity for the wider VCS community. Similarly, the Group believe the role of Catalyst in influencing policy within Stockton Council, and mechanisms for doing so, should be made clear. The Council's expectations of what Catalyst will be achieving will need to continue to be written into core funding agreements, as with all core funded organisations.

4.81   Members noted that there is currently no written agreement between Catalyst, SRCGA and the Council in relation to the sharing of data should this be necessary.

4.82   Catalyst have retained the Memorandum and Articles of the SVDA, subject to them being amended for the purposes of the new organisation. There are a number of inconsistencies with these. These include differing references to the numbers of directors required, no explanation as to what constitutes being a 'member', and the difference between a 'general' and 'individual' member.

4.83   The Group acknowledge that the Board made a 'judgement call' that the exact contents of the Mem. and Articles were not a priority at the time and it was recognised that they had originated from the SVDA, and that Council representatives, as well as the Group, had drawn attention to the inconsistencies. However, in order to set a good governance example, one of the stated aims of Catalyst, the Group believe the opportunity should be taken to refresh the Memorandum and Articles in order to better reflect the aims of the new organisation.

4.84   The Articles provide for the existing Board to choose most, if not all, new directors, and so on in perpetuity. It was said by one witness that other bodies in the sector have similar arrangements   The Group were told that the initial recruitment process had been open and transparent, including adverts in the local press and SRCGA had also produced a mail shot to advertise the opportunities, which was then followed by an interview process.

4.85   The representatives of the remaining core funded organisations provided mixed views on Catalyst. Some views were positive and described it as a 'wonderful' opportunity for the sector but that it needed to be better understood.   The benefits of an improved 'voice' within the region and influence on policy were mentioned, along with the prospect of ensuring funds were available which would help prevent local groups becoming franchises of national bodies. It was noted that it was important for Catalyst to succeed, since the Borough's VCS could not take another failure of an umbrella body.

4.86   Other core funded groups stated that, although they had heard of it, they were not sure of the exact role of Catalyst and what it would be doing. It was also noted that transparency would be important to avoid the commissioners of services receiving the contract for those same services.

4.87   The Group heard that, understandably, there was disillusionment amongst the VCS due to the time taken to form the new organisation. It was also noted that the initial launch event in January 2008 had not been a distinct event and had been joined on to the signing of the Compact. It is now crucial for Catalyst to embark upon a process of engaging with the local VCS in order to make the links within the sector, fully explain its position and build confidence.

Tees Valley Community Foundation

4.88   Members were advised of the work of the Foundation. The TVCF raised money from wealthy individuals and successful organisations, invested it and used the proceeds to provide grant funding for a range of community organisations. Currently £9 million was invested, approximately £350,000 was available for grants annually and currently approximately 29% of these grants are being channelled into Stockton Borough.

4.89   The Chief Executive of TVCF is also the Vice-Chair of Professional Services Group. This was set up in order to enable the VCS to access a range of services such as legal advice and accountancy. It was noted that the services of the PSG were being used to support organisations during the period between the dissolution of SVDA and Catalyst being fully operational. The Community Development Team has provided a signposting role in this regard.

Volunteering

4.90   The Group considered the 'Manifesto for Volunteering' which is the final report of the Commission on the Future of Volunteering. The Government's response was published during the course of the review and was also considered. The Manifesto sets out a vision for volunteering to become 'part of the DNA of our society – it becomes integral to the way we think of ourselves and live our lives, and we are inspired to contribute to contribute in this way.'

4.91   Volunteering England estimate that, in 2005, volunteers contributed the notional equivalent of £48.1 billion to the economy, and that this was the equivalent of c.2.1 million full-time workers. The Manifesto consultation revealed that in addition to covering gaps in services and provide extra help, 'volunteers:

- make services more personal and genuinely caring
- encourage innovation and fresh perspective
- promote equalities, including equal access to services
- enable a service to be user-led
- can be a means of precipitating change, through campaigning, lobbying and involvement in governance
- can enable a sense of ownership
- can focus on one task, whereas paid staff may have other duties
- can offer long-term support to an organisation
- are flexible and motivated, being aware of what needs to be done rather than what could be done
- build up people's skills base and can be a source of new staff for

       organisations

- are a source of local and other knowledge
- promote community cohesion and help to build strong communities'

4.92   The Government response is supportive of the overall vision of the Manifesto. There is an indicator on participation in volunteering within the new framework of 198 performance indicators for local government, and this will provide an added incentive to local authorities.

4.93   The Manifesto makes a series of recommendations in order to take forward their vision. These include methods of encouraging organisations to take forward volunteering by their own workforce, and the role of public bodies in using their corporate position to promote volunteering in the wider community.

4.94   As part of the review, Members received evidence submitted by the YMCA 'v' Youth Project. This youth volunteering scheme delivers opportunities for 16-25 year olds living within the Borough. Members receive a certificate and the opportunity to complete a Bronze Level Youth Achievement Award which is recognised nationally by employers and trainers. Since September 2006, the project had managed to recruit 600 young people in volunteering opportunities. Partners refer young people who have shown an interest, including Stockton Council. The Group agreed that it seemed an excellent project which other organisations could mirror.

4.95   A number of core funded organisations have volunteers supporting their work, including Five Lamps, SDAIS and Newtown-Norton-Clarences Centres. In addition, the Five Lamps organisation has a paid staff of 48, and allows these staff up to 50 hours paid time off a year in order to complete voluntary work. In addition to the support of volunteering within the Council itself, the Group believes that these organisations should provide statements on what activity they undertake to support their own volunteers. The Manifesto recommends that those who do have formal volunteers working on their behalf, should commit to training these, including where possible the opportunity to acquire formal qualifications.

4.96   The Group believe that the Council may consider following this lead and enabling its employees to participate in volunteering. This is also an explicit recommendation of the Manifesto; that organisations, including businesses, should extend the opportunities for employer-supported volunteering, subject to their size and operational requirements. This may be in relation to paid time leave to volunteer, or a more flexible scheme of work. The Government response includes reference to its intention to support the expansion of volunteering amongst civil servants. For the Council, there are similar precedents in terms of employees using their time to be, for example, Councillors in other districts, magistrates and members of the Reserve forces.

4.97   As part of the Council's corporate role to volunteering, the Group believe that it should increase awareness, possibly through a series of training, of the role and value of volunteering amongst its employees, and to acknowledge this role. This could also form a part of pre-retirement preparation for employees. The identification of a 'volunteering champion' within the Council, could help towards the aim of actively promoting voluntary activity within the Borough.

4.98   The Group consider the provision of a Volunteering Bureau within the Borough to be of prime importance, and that efforts should be made to secure its provision.   Responsibility for this 'volunteer matching' service had previously rested with the SVDA. Following a re-tendering process this had subsequently been awarded to the Butterwick Hospice. The Group found that currently this service is not being provided, partly due to the Hospice being unable to access the required data from the former SVDA. At the 2007 'Are you being served ... Well' event, held in order to gain the views of older people, it was noted that 'we need a single point of contact in the centre of Stockton to make it easier to access information about voluntary projects'.

4.99   The group were concerned that throughout the review they heard from members of the public what happened to SVDA in terms of costs and personnel was the subject of much rumour and discussion in the community. It was having an unsettling effect on the rest of the VCS. The Group felt that this issue needed to be addressed to clear the air.

5.0   Conclusion

5.1   The Group have found that there is an important contribution made by the Borough's Voluntary and Community Sector in delivering high quality services and opportunities for local people. It is clear that much hard work goes on to provide these services and this should be recognised and valued.

5.2   As VCS groups become increasingly involved within local public service provision the need for the VCS to have due regard to good governance is as important as ever. The Group recognise that the risks and responsibilities of many VCS organisations are often as great as those involved in running a small business. Members and volunteers cannot realistically be expected to cope with these without training and support. At the same time, the Council, as the body responsible for co-ordinating the funding of several million pounds of public money into the sector, needs to be re-assured that the recipient organisations are robust.

5.3   It is recognised that various challenges exist for the sector to cope with and the Group believe that the Council should continue to assist when appropriate, including the need to value volunteering and assistance with procurement, in conjunction with relevant partners. Within the Council, the Group have identified some outstanding issues which it believes require resolving, including the organisation of community centres, in order to secure best value for all.   This includes a mapping exercise of what VCS organisations the Council has arrangements with.

5.4   The Group have considered the voluntary sector organisations which do not receive core funding in order to assess their support needs.   The Group recognise the importance of all the sector, and its role, including the need to continue to provide challenge using its position on the various Renaissance Boards.

5.5   The Group are satisfied that all the core funded organisations contribute in some way to the aims of the Community Strategy. The group expects that its comments will be taken on board during future work, and in particular the review of the Voluntary Sector Support Fund.

5.6   The need for a new body to provide a strategic voice for the sector has been acknowledged. However, the Group have identified a number of uncertainties in relation to the new body, Catalyst, and believe that by gaining clarity on these issues it will be for the benefit of all within the sector, including Catalyst. To assist with aiding understanding within the Council, the Group have requested separately that a briefing note be produced which outlines the role of Catalyst and SRCGA for all Council Members.

5.7   Due to limitations on time and capacity, the group have not examined in detail asset transfer, accountability and user satisfaction of core funded organisations and best practice elsewhere. However, the group have taken the opportunity to provide an overview of many of the issues affecting the local VCS and have made recommendations in order to secure further improvements and greater understanding where necessary.

Appendix 1

Community Premises within the Housing Services Portfolio

Centre Name
Caretakers House, The
Challoner House
Clarence's Resource And Community Centre
Corner House
Elm Tree Community Centre
Five Lamps Community Resource Centre
Hardwick Community Centre
High Grange Community Centre
Low Grange Community Centre
Newtown Community Resource Centre
Norton Grange Community And Resource Centre
Old Billingham Community Centre
Parkfield Community Centre
Portrack Community Centre
Primrose Hill Community Centre
Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre
Salter's Lane Community Centre
South Thornaby Community Centre
Stockton International Family Centre
Wolviston Court Community Centre
Wolviston Village Community Centre
Wrensfield Community Centre
Yarm Community Centre

Appendix 2

Compact between Stockton Renaissance and the Voluntary and Community Sector

Shared Principles that underpin the Compact:

1. Voluntary and Community Action is an essential component of a democratic society;

2. An independent and diverse Voluntary and Community Sector is fundamental to the well being of society and opportunities for all;

3. Established mutual respect between all partners;

4. All parties recognise and value the independence of the Voluntary and Community and the role it plays i.e. consultees, services deliverers;

5. To respect the confidentiality of any information provided by each sector when given access to it;

6. Stockton Renaissance and the VCS have distinct but complementary roles but both have regard to delivering the Community Cohesion agenda;

7. Stockton Renaissance recognises that the VCS have different forms of accountability and are answerable to a different range of stakeholders. Common to both is the need for integrity, objectivity, accountability. Openness, honesty, equality and leadership;

8. Stockton Renaissance plays a role, amongst other things, as a funder of some Voluntary and Community organisations. Funding can be an important element of the relationship between Stockton Renaissance and the Voluntary and Community Sectors.

Undertakings by Stockton Renaissance

1. To recognise and support the independence of the Voluntary Sector and their lawful campaigning and challenging role irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist;

2. To pay particular regard to the concept of strategic funding, ensuring the capacity of Voluntary and Community organisations to respond to Government and Stockton Renaissance initiatives;

3. To make contract opportunities available to the Voluntary and Community organisations and to apply proportional evaluation and monitoring subject to organisations meeting agreed criteria and where applicable, the Stockton Borough Governance Code of Practice. Also to ensure all commissioning of services is in line with the Council's Procurement Principles;

4.   Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, on of the partners of Stockton Renaissance, co-ordinates the Stockton Borough Governance Code of Practice and is looking to review the procedure with the mandated umbrella organisations;

5.   Where a policy decision is likely to have a significant effect on the Third Sector, Catalyst must be involved at the earliest opportunity, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks, where possible for wider consultation. Explanations where appropriate to be provided where this minimum cannot be adhered to;

6.   To encourage full cost recovery principles in preparing project budgets and funding applications;

7.   Stockton Renaissance to look at longer term funding arrangements for the Voluntary and Community Sector and involve the Sector in any reviews of funding through their mandated umbrella organisations;

8.   To recognise the infrastructure of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the development at a national, regional, sub-regional and local level;

9.   To involve the Voluntary and Community Sector in the development of policy and to work with the sector to identify and address likely implications of such policies;

10.   To acknowledge and utilise the contribution of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the furtherance of Stockton Renaissance's strategic developments;

11.   To recognise and accept the voice of the Voluntary and Community Sector as the voice of their communities and interest;

12.   To promote effective working relationships, consistency of approach and good practice between National Government, Stockton Renaissance and the Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly where cross-organisation and departmental boundaries are concerned;

13.   To adhere to the principles of open government (which seeks to ensure that whenever possible discussions take place in public and reports, findings and decisions are made public).

Undertakings by the Voluntary and Community Sector

1.   To recognise the respective roles of the umbrella organisations particularly the Community Empowerment Network with regard to them obtaining representatives to Renaissance and its sub groups;

2.   To recognise and support the public sector bodies that sit on Stockton Renaissance in their statutory duties;

3.   To maintain high standards of governance with due regard to the Council's 'Governance – Code of Practice' for the VCS. Catalyst and Stockton

Residents and Community Groups Association (SRCGA) will take responsibility for promoting this amongst the sector;

4.   To respect and be accountable to the law, and in the case of charities observe the appropriate guidance from the Charities Commission, including that on political activities and campaigning;

5.   Catalyst and SRCGA will take responsibility for the dissemination of information thus enabling voluntary and community groups to participate in wider strategic funding opportunities;

6.   The Voluntary and Community Sectors recognise a responsibility to attract investment and shall endeavour wherever possible to become less reliant on core funding from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council;

7.   To ensure that stakeholders are kept informed and consulted, where appropriate, on development proposals and other matters involving Stockton Renaissance and those views are accurately communicated; Catalyst and SRCGA will ensure that such consultation is as wide as possible and where appropriate effective representation of the sector takes place;

8.   To develop and maintain a democratic structure that will enable representatives to participate in partnerships and subgroups where required;

9.   To promote effective working relationships with Stockton Renaissance and other agencies and ensure effective networking across the Voluntary and Community Sector;

10.   To involve users, wherever possible, in the development and management of activities and services;

11.   To put in to place and adhere to policies for promoting best practice and equality of opportunity in all matters related to volunteers and service provision.

Appendix 3

Extract from Procurement Strategy 2006 – 2008

Sustainability

The Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on English and Welsh local authorities to prepare a community strategy for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. The act gave authorities the power to do anything they consider is likely to achieve the promotion of the area's well-being, including the use of procurement to help deliver corporate objectives including the economic, social and environmental objectives set out in the community plan.

Procurement Principles

1. *Sustainability should be integrated within the mainstream of the procurement cycle; identify need, develop the business case, define the procurement approach, supplier selection, tender evaluation, award and implement contract, manage contract and closure/lessons learned.*

2. *In order to be able to assess the risks associated with products, services and works procured, the Council should understand something about their major environmental and social impacts and the effect on the local economy.*

3. ***Wherever possible, consideration shall be given to carrying out procurements in such a way as to maximise the benefit to the local economy.*** *This can include packaging of contracts, advertising of contract opportunities*, *targeted recruitment and training and community benefits*.

4. *Procurement shall be arranged in such a way that it encourages a diverse and competitive market, including procurement from SMEs, minority ethnic businesses, social enterprises and voluntary and community organisations.*

5. *Procurement from verified sustainable sources and **fair trade sources** where available should the purchaser's first choice unless a business case for selecting other products can be justified.*

6. *Procurement policy either solely or in partnership with other organisations should seek to support and promote local or regional markets for sustainable*

Appendix 4

Code of Practice – Underlying Principles

The Code of Practice comprises six core principles of good governance, each with its supporting principles. The supporting principles for each core principle are as follows:

1. Good governance means focusing on the organisation's purpose and outcomes for residents and users

- *Being clear about the organisation's purpose and its intended outcomes for residents and service users*
- *Ensuring that users receive a high quality service*
- *Ensuring that taxpayers receive value for money*

2. Good governance means performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles

- *Being clear about the functions of the management board and committee*
- *Being clear about the responsibilities of non-executives and the executive and ensuring those responsibilities are carried out*
- *Being clear about relationships between management board and committee members and the public*

3. Good governance means promoting values that underpin good governance and upholding these through behaviour

- *Putting organisational values of good governance into practice*
- *Individual management board and committee members behaving in ways that uphold and exemplify effective governance*

4. Good governance means taking informed, transparent decisions within a framework of controls

- *Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken*
- *Having and using* good quality information, advice and *support*
- *Having effective controls in place, including managing risk*

5. Good Governance means developing the capacity of the governance team to be effective

- *Ensuring that appointed and elected management boards and committees have the skills and experience they need to perform well*
- *Developing the capacity of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance*
- *Striking a balance, in the membership of the management board and committee, between continuity and renewal.*

6. Good Governance means engaging stakeholders and making accountability real

- *Understanding formal and informal accountability relationships*
- *Taking an active and planned approach to accountability to the public*
- *Taking an active and planned approach to responsibilities to staff*
- *Engaging effectively with stakeholders*

Appendix 5

Voluntary Sector Support Fund Allocations

ORGANISATION	Allocations 2007/8 £	Allocations 2008/9 without NRF £	Allocations 2008/9 with WNF £
Stockton Residents & Community Groups Association	35,734	28,229	36,270.01
Stockton International Family Centre	54,652	43,175	55,471.78
U.N.I.T.E	16,815	13,283	17,067.23
Stockton Borough Voluntary Development Agency	35,734	28,229	36,270.01
Newtown-Norton Community Resource Centres	50,500	39,895	51,257.50
Hardwick Community Partnership	30,479	23,773	30,936.19
Stockton District Information & Advice Service	150,423	118,834	152,679.35
The Corner House	35,734	28,229	36,270.01
The Clarences	19,969	15,775	20,268.54
The Five Lamps	74,622	58,951	75,741.33
The Billingham Partnership	30,300	23,937	30,754.50
Planned Reserve	10,458	8,559	10,882.87
TOTAL	**545,420**	**430,869**	**553,869**
Funded by:			
SBC (VSSF)	422,669		
SBC (CRSF)	2,751		
NRF/WNF	120,000	0	123,000
TOTAL	**545,420**	**430,869**	**553,869**