

The Wiltshire Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Consortium

Working together to provide high quality infrastructure services and support to create a vibrant, effective, inclusive and sustainable voluntary, community and 3rd sector in Swindon and Wiltshire.

The strategic aims of the Consortium are to:

- provide an effective 'voice' and representation for the Voluntary and Community Sector in Wiltshire
- provide high quality and responsive support services and information to the Voluntary and Community Sector in Wiltshire
- build a strong Consortium with a distinct identity and direction that is supported by its members and their stakeholders in Wiltshire.

The consortium aims to achieve these objectives by

- Establishing and maintaining an accurate picture of capability and capacity within the VCS in Wiltshire to inform the development of action plans and highlight priorities to address gaps
- Maintaining, monitoring and updating these plans to ensure the provision of appropriate infrastructure services to frontline organisations
- Being inclusive and taking account of equality and diversity issues
- Effectively monitoring and evaluating performance and projects
- Engaging in local and regional planning processes
- Working towards a fully representative structure
- Establishing a seat on the Wiltshire Co-ordinating Group in the Wiltshire Family of Partnerships

The Consortium is the means by which the Third Sector in Wiltshire can express its ambitions, influence, issues and concerns. It will therefore be guided by the wider Third Sector through the Wiltshire Third Sector Assembly and supported by an elected Management Board. It is part of a structure that includes:

- The Consortium itself
- The Management Board
- Communities of Interest
- Project leads
- Wiltshire Third Sector Assembly

Who it's made up of:

The Consortium is open to any organisation or network providing they are delivering services to frontline organisations within the Third Sector in Wiltshire.

Organisations wishing to join the Consortium must be able to confirm that they deliver one or more of the following:-

- Management of an active membership of community and voluntary organisations
- Provision of networking opportunities to frontline organisations
- Practical Support which includes training and capacity building to frontline organisations
- Opportunities to enable the voice of the sector to be heard
- Provision of representation either on behalf of other organisations within the sector or management of processes to enable frontline organisations to represent others in the sector
- Ensuring equality of opportunity for contributions to be made to and participation in, the wider debate on the needs of the sector especially in the area of rurality, diversity and equality

All members of the Consortium will be expected to contribute and actively participate to meeting the objectives of the consortium.

What it does:

The consortium agrees the strategy and business plans as determined by the Management Board, and based on the needs of the sector and other external factors.

The Consortium will support, as a matter of principle, Communities of Interest (COIs) and agreed leads of those agreed COIs will automatically be participants in this group.

The Consortium will meet twice a year as a minimum. At other times, where appropriate, decisions and input will be requested electronically.

Any member of the Consortium will be eligible to lead projects but are expected to declare an interest in these and other matters where appropriate.

The Management Board

What it does:

The Management Board (MB) is accountable to the Consortium and is responsible for determining the strategy and business plans and managing their implementation and monitoring through agreed work plans.

The MB does not have the authority to amend either the strategic direction of the agreed plans nor the objectives of the consortium without consultation with and agreement from the Consortium.

The MB will manage the process of electing consortium representatives requested from either the public or voluntary sector and for ensuring that representatives observe agreed protocols

Who it's made up of:

Members of the MB will be elected from the Consortium members every two years.

The initial formation of the MB will be formed from representatives of infrastructure interests – for example:-

- One each of general infrastructure providers (e.g. Community First, 1 CVS to represent the 4)
- Older people
- Diversity*
- 0-19s
- Volunteering
- Skills and Learning
- Funding Advice
- Environment
- Independent Chair (through an agreed election process)
- The Accountable Body
- Public Agencies (via the Wiltshire Assembly) in an observer capacity

* The Diversity representative should not be drawn from an older persons' or Children and young peoples' organisation.

How it is organised:

The MB will meet regularly and at least 6 times per year.

All members of the MB will be cognisant of potential and actual conflicts of interest over consortium project delivery and will declare these and act in line with the agreed procedures for these situations.

The MB will invite relevant individuals or organisations to either their own meetings or to consortium meetings where appropriate to ensure that it has access to a range of essential skills including social enterprises and ICT.

Communities of Interest (COI)

These are supported by The Consortium and the Management Board and are open to any frontline voluntary and community organisation who has registered an interest in being involved in shaping the debate about the sector.

An organisation will state the level of which they would like to be involved and, through the COI leads will be contacted and communicated with as appropriate.

Communities of Interest will feed back into the Management Board and the Consortium.

Voluntary and Community Sector (Third Sector) Assembly

The VCS Assembly is open to any voluntary and community organisation who wishes to contribute to the debate on how our sector can be developed. The Consortium acknowledges that there are many different ways of contributing to this debate and will seek to provide avenues to achieve this by developing Communities of Interest and by using members of The Consortium to canvas views and opinions from their memberships/contacts.

The Forum/Assembly will be convened at least annually (state of the Sector in Wiltshire debate) and will enable The Consortium to inform frontline organisations of their activities and also gather input into future plans.

On a more regular basis input will be gathered and information disseminated electronically or as appropriate.

