



Promoting and Supporting Voluntary Sector
Involvement in Regeneration

Annual Report

2008

Foreword

I am very pleased to present the Annual Report for 2008. As this is the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Regen Forum, I went back to see what we said in our first Annual review:

In December 1998, George Kelly of Newcastle City Council spoke to the Steering Group about the City Council's plans for a city wide regeneration strategy. As a result the Forum meeting in April 1999 was dedicated to this issue. Following further development of the Local Authority's plans, the Chair of the Regen Forum and the Development Officers were invited to begin a process of involving the sector.

There was no Local Strategic Partnership back in 1998. Decision making in the city around regeneration issues did not involve the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). It was the task of the Regen Forum to put that right and it is important to recognise the willingness of the City Council at the time to listen and respond.

Ten years on there have been huge changes, and a constant stream of government policy initiatives affecting how local government is conducted and how stakeholders can play their part. One of the main strengths of the Regen Forum is its ability to respond and adapt to these changes so that the VCS can be as fully engaged as possible, however different the environment might have become.

One thing is pretty certain: the next ten years will be just as full of change, and the Regen Forum needs to be here to ensure that the sector's voice remains strong and continues to be heard.

2008 has been a momentous year. First of all a fire in MEA House forced us into temporary accommodation for 7 months. One of the things that the whole of NCVS took great pride in during this period was the way in which its services were maintained, including Regen Forum activity, during a difficult time.

Secondly there was a review this year of the role of the VCS in the Newcastle Partnership. Whilst our host organisation, NCVS, is recognised as the primary agency for infrastructure support, our funding has also been reduced. This means that the officer team will be reduced from three to just two, and this will present some difficult challenges in the next few years.

It only remains for me to say thank you: to the steering group, for its steadfast commitment to the forum: to our representatives, for their dedication in bringing their expertise and knowledge to task of giving the VCS a strong voice. To the staff team, for all their hard work and in particular to Sue Kenney, who is leaving us at the end of the year to return to University and pursue a new career: and to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, for supporting us in this work for many years.

Sue Pearson
Chair

Newcastle Regeneration Forum

Background

Newcastle Regeneration Forum is a voluntary and community sector network of local organisations and groups working in, or interested in, urban regeneration issues. Developed and serviced by NCVS' Regeneration Project, the Regen Forum was established in the autumn of 1998.

The Regen Forum's aims are:

- to ensure the influence and involvement of the voluntary sector in regeneration at a strategic and policy-making level
- to provide a voice for the diversity of voluntary sector interests in regeneration
- To raise awareness and participation of voluntary organisations and community groups in regeneration

Membership

Full, voting Membership of the Regen Forum is open to **any voluntary and community sector organisation working or based in Newcastle upon Tyne, who is also a member of NCVS.**

We also welcome voluntary and community groups not based in Newcastle these groups being eligible for associate membership. We make the distinction between full and association members for voting purposes when holding the annual Regen Forum Steering Group election, in which only Full members receive a vote.

In addition to Full and Associate members we also maintain a membership list for non voluntary and community sector organisations, which includes the local authority and other public sector agencies, colleges and

universities, private enterprises and others.

Regen Forum full members now total 211 groups, encompassing a wide range of perspectives, including small local voluntary and community groups, residents associations and large voluntary organisations. When we widen this out to the entire membership of NCVS, this should increase to 400 plus.

Associate member organisations and other non voluntary sector members total 138 however over 490 individuals across the voluntary, community, public and private sectors regularly receive information from the Regen Forum.

2007 – '08 Regen Forum membership is at the back of this report.

As a voluntary sector body which strives to be inclusive, the Regen Forum is particularly keen that 'seldom heard' groups e.g. Black & Minority Ethnic organisations should be able to participate in, and benefit from, its activities.

Any groups who wish to join NCVS and the Regen Forum, or know of others who might wish to do so, should contact NCVS' Regen Team, Martin Gollan, Sue Kenney or Roger Mould, or at the following address:

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Newcastle upon Tyne
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Regen Forum Steering Group

The Regen Forum's main decision making body is the Steering Group whose 12 members are democratically elected by full member organisations. The steering group has an elected chair and can co-opt up to 3 additional members to ensure it reflects the full range of voluntary and community sector (VCS) perspectives within the Regen Forum.

Election 2008

There were four vacancies on the Steering Group in 2008 for which three nominations were received from the Regen Forum membership. The following will join the Steering Group:

Janet Hunter	Northern Learning Trust
Helen Grayshan	East End Alliance
Chris Knights	St Margaret's Church and Parish Centre

In order to fill the remaining vacancy, the Steering Group have agreed to put out a call for new nominations, which will happen in January 2009.

Current Membership

Current members of the Steering Group are

Ruth Abrahams	Disability North
Maurice Condie	Byker Bridge Housing Association
Jill Boak	Depaul Trust
Jacqui Sirs	Barnardos
Geoff Miller	Diocese of Newcastle
Umme Imam	Angelou Centre
Sead Masic	North of England Refugee Service

In a reciprocal arrangement with community sector infrastructure partners a member of the Infranet sits on the Regen Steering Group whilst Roger Mould attends the Community Empowerment Network Steering Group on behalf of the Regen Forum.

Thanks to former Steering Group members

The steering group is grateful for the contribution of the following members who have now left:

Sue Pearson	Age Concern
Stephen Linney	Business in the Community
Peter Stafford	Norcare
Beryl Brown	Sport & Activities Forum – Blakelaw & North Fenham

Regen Forum Activity 2007 – 08

Newcastle Partnership

The Newcastle Partnership is the city's Local Strategic Partnership and brings the public sector, voluntary and community sectors and private sector together to plan and deliver better outcomes for people who live and work in Newcastle.

In 2007 the Partnership reviewed its structure, reducing its number of thematic groups from nine down to five and creating a new executive arrangement of Strategic Board, Delivery Board and Innovation Group.

The Newcastle Partnership is responsible for producing Newcastle's Sustainable Community Strategy, an overarching 10 year strategy for the city. Through the Delivery Board the Partnership monitors progress on delivering SCS priorities, as contained in the Local Area Agreement, a three year delivery plan for the SCS.

The Regen Forum provides and supports voluntary and community sector (VCS) representation to all parts of the Newcastle Partnership using a mixture of election and selection processes (a list of Regen Forum Representatives is given on page 10). This however gives only a partial picture of the extent of sector involvement in the Partnership which has many more Regen forum members sitting on sub groups and working groups and providing a voice from the sector.

Reference groups

One of the ways in which we are providing support to Regen Forum representatives and enabling the wider sector to engage with the Newcastle Partnership Delivery Partnerships is through Reference Groups. Currently there are three established groups and one, for Safe Newcastle, has just been formed.

Each Reference Group is supported by a Regen Forum Policy Officer who maintains a membership list and work with representatives and public sector officers to identify issues and activities of relevance to the VCS.

The Reference Groups are

- Children and Young People
- Wellbeing and Health
- Employability
- Safe Newcastle

LSP VCS review

Toward the back end of 2007 and well into 2008, the outgoing LSP Director, Doug Taylor, put together a working group to review how best to work with the VCS. We were part of this group. This was done partly because we knew the level of funding

that was currently available for city wide and area based VCS infrastructure work was about to go down by a significant amount. The review was a brave attempt to look at what was really needed, then funding might follow.

After reporting to the LSP Strategic Board in February 2008, funding has since been allocated and the landscape looks very different. Two city wide organisations – NCVS and Newcastle Healthy Cities (NHC) – have been funded, but with a 20% cut in previous funding levels and thus will lose staff. The Regen Forum will continue to exist: we will introduce better levels of training and support to our representatives and will widen our electoral college out to the entire NCVS membership instead of just the Forum. This way we should get a wider spread of voluntary and community groups standing for election to the LSP boards.

Instead of elected Community Voices, supported by Newcastle Community Empowerment Network, NHC has been funded to set up and support what has been called (though yet to be formally named) a 'Standing Assembly' or Citizen's Panel, to allow for a more local and individual voice to be heard at the LSP. The area based consortia of East End Alliance and West End Community Development Consortium will no longer be funded by this route. Although both organisations hope to survive, there is no way they be able to support the work of the LSP to the same degree, if at all.

Given the current central government agenda of local community empowerment and engagement, partly through placing a statutory duty on public partners 'to involve' people in the delivery and development of services, we wonder how that can be done with this level of swingeing funding cuts to the very organisations that work on the ground with the communities and neighbourhoods that the LSP so badly wants to empower or engage with.

Certainly we acknowledge the city council are under pressure to make a huge level of cuts all round; but if this is truly a partnership, we also can't help wondering where is the support of the other statutory partners. Whether there will be contributions from the wider partnership remains to be seen.

Health Improvement

During the last year, Regen policy officers supported our reps through taking part in two Well Being and Health partnership working groups: the Alcohol Reduction Strategy project board, and the Mental and Emotional Well being strategy working group. The work of the latter is ongoing and the first draft of the Action Plan will be submitted to the Partnership board in December '08.

For the Alcohol Reduction strategy, we worked in partnership with Ollie Batchelor from Tyneside Cyrenians and Rob Bailey, Byker Bridge Housing Association (in their role as Safe Newcastle reps), as well as statutory partners such as the PCT public health team and the Regeneration Directorate. Regen organised questionnaires; ran focus groups with communities of interest; badgered lots of people for comment; attended many, many meetings and commented on many drafts of Newcastle's first ever Alcohol Reduction Strategy. We also facilitated both voluntary and statutory involvement in a recent regional – and lively - Socialist Health Alliance seminar on

the topic. The Alcohol Reduction Action Plan and Strategy can be found at <http://www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk/forums/regen/regenforum.htm>. Scroll down the page until you come to the Strategy.

LGBT Centre

Some time ago, Newcastle City Council hosted a consultation event with the LGBT communities - The Gay Say Day - to determine whether services were meeting our needs and how they might be improved. Overwhelmingly, the establishment of an LGBT Centre was the number one priority with 97% of people who took part.

A steering group was established in the spring of 2007 to investigate whether the provision of LGBT services would be improved with the addition of a dedicated LGBT centre. Regen has facilitated this group in partnership with the Council's Community Development Unit. Our first priority was to find out more about what the wider LGBT community wanted from a community centre. There was overwhelming support for an informal social space that would provide a range of alternative social activities to the current offer, which is limited to gay bars, where entertainment is alcohol orientated and often targeted at young gay men at the exclusion of much of the diverse LGBT community. This is reflected in the 95% of respondents who said the centre 'should' or 'definitely should' include a café (21% and 74% respectively).

Regen has been able to tie in the work on an ongoing basis to a broader spectrum of regeneration issues such as community cohesion, partly through giving a presentation to the council's Equalities Committee; but also connecting the work to the differing strands of the Health Improvement Strategy.

ABG/WNF/Commissioning

How local government receives funding from central government has undergone major change. Many funding streams that once went directly to council directorates, such as Children's Services, with specific conditions attached are now to be found within a single pot called the Area Based Grant, which councils have been told they can use flexibly to meet local priorities. Newcastle's ABG amounts to £103.9m over the period 2008 – 11 and within this is £28.1m of Working Neighbourhood Fund.

Regen Policy Officers have been part of officer working groups set up to aid planning the transition to ABG whilst Regen Forum representatives on the Newcastle Partnership have sought to influence how ABG is used in the city. The Regen Forum is represented on the newly established AGB Sub Group, an advisory group for the allocation of ABG resources.

2008 has seen a rise in the use of contracting to allocate funds, for example Children's Fund and WNF. Again, through Regen Forum representatives, Reference Groups and working directly with public sector officers, we have tried to ensure that procurement methods do not disadvantage voluntary and community sector organisations.

Employability/New Futures

The employability agenda has become the main theme for economic regeneration across the UK, and is particularly important in the North East where levels of economic inactivity are the highest in the country.

In Newcastle a company called Newcastle Futures has been formed, funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund initially and now by the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. An officer of the Regen Forum sits on the board of directors and is also a vice chair. The purpose of the company is to act as the overarching body co-ordinating all employability activity in the city, as well as employing over 20 case managers who work directly in local areas in partnership with delivery organisations, many of whom are Regen Forum members.

Regen Forum Events

Organising and hosting events for Regen Forum members on regeneration, Newcastle Partnership or public policy matters is an essential part of our method for informing and engaging the voluntary sector in Newcastle.

Speakers at recent events have included Gillian Hewitson, Newcastle Futures; Patrick Chapman, GONE; Douglas Taylor, Newcastle Partnership; and Mark Waters, Participatory Budget Unit. Topics covered have included excluded communities and the employability agenda, Newcastle Science City; the Safer Neighbourhoods programme, and Participatory Budgeting, the Third Sector Review.

Whilst some events have been solely Regen Forum events others have been jointly organised with partners such as the Newcastle Community Empowerment Network but all have provided an opportunity for Forum members to engage directly with the policy and decision makers in Newcastle and the region.

Infranet

Since 2006 the Regen Forum has been part of the Infranet. Funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund the Infranet brought together the Regen Forum with the Newcastle Community Empowerment Network, West End Community Development Consortium and East End Alliance. We were later joined by the Outer West Area Forum and Network North.

Through the Infranet the six organisations have worked to ensure that the full range of voluntary and community sector interests in Newcastle are heard and represented by the Newcastle Partnership

Regen Forum Representatives to the Newcastle Partnership

LSP Group	Regen Forum Reps	Date of Election/Selection
Strategic Board (1)	Janet Hunter Maurice Condie Geoff Miller	June 07 June 07 June 07
Delivery Board	Sue Pearson Maurice Condie	June 07 June 07
Innovation Group	Ruth Abrahams Jacqui Sirs	June 07 June 07
Safe Newcastle	Rob Bailey Ollie Batchelor	February 06 January 07
Housing & Environment (2)	Peter Stafford	June 06
Economy, Work, Skills & Learning (3)	<i>Janet Hunter</i>	November 07
Wellbeing & Health Executive	Barbara Douglas Ann McNulty	February 08 February 08
Wellbeing and Health – Health Improvement Board	Ruth Abrahams Chris Drinkwater	February 08 February 08
Children and Young People Strategic Partnership	Aileen Gilbert Heidi Douglas	August 08 September 06 (elected from Voluntary Sector Youth Forum)

Regen Forum Full Members

Organisation

4Children
93rd Newcastle Scout Group
ACHIMO Family Club
Action for Children
Action for Children Childrens Rights Service
Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse
Age Concern Newcastle upon Tyne
Angelou Centre
AnyBodyCan Ltd
Army Cadet Force Assoc.
Ashfield Parents Centre
Azure Charitable Enterprises
Ban Waste
Barnardos
Barnardos
Becoming Visible Communication
BECON
Benwell Christian Churches
Benwell & District Credit Union Ltd
Benwell Young Peoples Development Group
Better Days
Body Positive North East Ltd
Boys Brigade 7th Newcastle Company
Bridleways & Riders Action Group
British Red Cross
Bruvvers Theatre Company
BTCV
Business in the Community
Byker Bridge Housing Assoc. Ltd
Byker Sands Family Centre
Carers Centre Newcastle
Caring Hands
Changemakers
CHAT Shop
Children North East
Childrens Society
Childrens Society
Chillingham Road Arts Steering Group
Churches Regional Commission in the North East

City Church
Community Action on Health
Community Foundation
Community Furniture Service

Community Loan Fund for the North East
Cornerstone
Cowgate Methodist Church
Cragside Out of School Club
Crimestoppers
Crisis UK
Cyclists Touring Club Tyneside
D2 Youth Zone
Dementia Care Partnership
Denton Young Peoples Project
Depaul Trust
Depaul Trust
Diocese of Newcastle
Disability North
East Area Asylum Seekers Support Group
East End Community Buildings Network
East End Community Development Alliance
East End Health
Edward Lloyd Trust
Elders Council of Newcastle
Employment Opportunities
Epilepsy Action
ESFVON
Fairbridge
Family Health & Community Project
Federation for the Advancement of Community & Education
Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens
Fenham Assoc. of Residents
Fenham & Wingrove Children & Young Peoples Forum
First Step
Fostering Under Newcastle
Fourth Action
Friends of Orchard Mews Carers Support Group
Friends of Waverley Park
Girlguiding Newcastle upon Tyne
Grainger Park Boys Club
Guide Dogs
Health First Tyne & Wear CIC

Helix Arts Ltd
Henshaws Society for Blind People
Home Group Ltd
IPPR North
Istree Samaj
JET - Jobs Education & Training
John Boste Youth Centre
Keyfund Federation
Kids Café Network
Kiran
League of Friends of Prudhoe Hospital

Lifestyle
Listening Post
Marriage Care
Mental Health Matters
Millfield House Foundation
Monkchester Nursery Family Centre
Multiple Sclerosis Society
NAPI
National Assoc. for Colitis & Crohns Disease
National Energy Action
National Trust
NECA
Newburn Community Assoc.
Newcastle Citizens Advice Bureau
Newcastle City Centre Chaplaincy
Newcastle Deaflink
Newcastle Disability Forum
Newcastle Healthy City Ltd
Newcastle Healthy City Ltd
Newcastle Lesbian Line
Newcastle NewNet
Newcastle PROPS
Newcastle Society for Blind People
Newcastle Toy & Leisure Library
Newcastle Womens Football Club
NIWE Eating Distress Service
Norcare Ltd
North Benwell Black Residents Support Group
North Benwell Neighbourhood Management Initiative
North Benwell Youth Project
Northbourne Street Youth Initiative
North of England Civic Trust
North of England Refugee Service Ltd
Northern Architecture
Northern Learning Trust
North Moor Parents Get 2gether
Northumberland County Scout Council
Open Clasp Theatre Company
Open Door North East
Ouseburn Trust
Outpost Housing Project
Pakistan Cultural Society
Pakistan Muslim Assoc.
Palestinian Community Assoc.
Pendower Good Neighbour Project
Percy Hedley Foundation
Persepolis Youth Club
Ponteland United Reformed Church
Praxis Service
Princes Trust

Project North East
Quality Independent Care
Rathbone Training
Refugee Council
Reviving the Heart of the West End
Richmond Fellowship
Rights Project
Riverside Community Health Project
Rookie Sports
Roshni Asian Womens Assoc.
Rothley Trust
Sahara
St Anthony of Padua Community Assoc.
St James United Reformed Church
St Johns Early Years Pre-School Unit
St Martins Centre Partnership
St Margarets Church & Parish Centre
St Vincent de Paul Society England & Wales
Salvation Army Residential Centre
Scotswood Area Strategy Ltd
Scotswood Natural Community Garden
Search Project
SEDU
Shelter North East Housing Aid Centre
Sight Service
Sino-Anglo Cultural Exchange Assoc.
Sports for Youth CIC
Spurgeons
Stepney Bank Stables Ltd
Streetwise
Stroke Assoc.
Swingbridge Video
TALK
Them Wifies Ltd
The Youth Club
Throckley Leazes Tenants & Residents Group
Time Exchange Ltd
Together We Can Manage Partnership
Tomorrows People
Turning Point
Tyneside Cyrenians Ltd
Tyneside Cyrenians Ltd
Tyneside Foyer
Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre
Tyne & Wear Anti-Fascist Assoc.
Tyne & Wear Play Assoc.
Understanding Epilepsy
Victim Support Newcastle
Walker Communities Credit Union Ltd
Walkerville Community Assoc.

Walker YMCA Detached Youth Project
West Denton Community Assoc.
West End Befrienders
West End Health Resource Centre
West End Housing Co-operative
West End Productions
West End Refugee Service
West End Women & Girls Centre
Westerhope Village Residents Assoc.
Westgate Baptist Church
Winteraction
Wise Group
Women Away
Womens Sports Foundation
Workers Educational Association
YMCA Newcastle
Young Offroaders
Youth for Christ North East
Youth Inclusion Programme



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Presented to the
Annual General Meeting
24th November 2008

Published by
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Supported by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
(currently extended by the Working Neighbourhoods Fund)