

Creating The Environment For A Thriving Third Sector On The Isle of Wight

A Draft Strategy For Consultation

23rd June to the 12nd September 2008

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This consultation paper has been drafted by The Isle of Wight Compact Strategy Group, Comprised of representatives from:

- Isle of Wight Council.
- Isle of Wight Rural Community Council.
- Isle of Wight NHS Primary Care Trust.
- Voluntary Sector Cabinet

This document is available on request in a variety of formats and languages including large print and Braille.

1. Introduction.

This draft strategy sets out what might be needed to ensure a thriving voluntary and community sector (VCO) or third sector on the Island. This has been put together for public discussion by the Compact Strategy Group, a partnership of VCO and public sector representatives. **You are invited to send comments up to a closing date of the 12th of September 2008.**

The Eco Island Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the Island Strategic Partnership's vision for the Island:

"We want the Isle of Wight to become a world renowned Eco-Island, with a thriving economy, a real sense of pride and where residents and visitors enjoy healthy lives, feel safe and are treated with respect".

More information about Eco Island and the Island Strategic Partnership (ISP) can be found at www.eco-island.org.uk

Public sector partners on the Isle of Wight, supported by the broader ISP, recognise the need for a strategy that ensures Voluntary & Community Organisations (VCOs) can contribute as fully as possible to this vision.

A strategy agreed between the public sector and the Island's voluntary and community sector will partners to give a voice to diverse communities, release community creativity and potential, enable the active involvement of citizens in their community and deliver many public services.

The partners in this strategy agree on the need to improve partnership between the public sector and the voluntary and community sector in order that greater public service delivery by VCOs can be developed. Public services delivered by VCOs add quality and value and can achieve better results for residents in many cases.

To help this happen, the ISP has agreed that a three year improvement in the state and potential of the voluntary sector of the Island as part of the 2008 Local Area Agreement with the Government. This will result in ISP members working together with VCOs to create an environment for the thriving third sector on the Island.

The Government will assess the environment for VCOs in the autumn of 2008 and again in 2010. The ISP will set and agree with the government a target for improvement between 2008 and 2010. Progress will be assessed by the government, who will measure the extent of public service delivery, attitudes toward the public sector among VCOs and seek evidence that the sector is making a positive difference in achieving a strong and sustainable community.

This draft strategy makes a number of proposals that the partners hope will lead to a thriving third sector. Organisations and individuals are invited to respond to these proposals and give their views on the best strategy for the future. To find out how you can respond, please see Part 6 of this document.

2. The Purpose Of A Strategy

A Government review of the third sector (July 2007) set out the national direction towards the VCO sectors role in strengthening local communities. This has implications for the public sector, which should work with the VCO sector on:

- Enabling the community and campaigning, including diverse and effective consultation and engagement of the VCO sector in public life
- Strengthening communities, including community asset and enterprise development
- Transforming public services, drawing on the understanding and experience of the sector in designing, developing and delivering services and public value
- Encouraging social enterprise; businesses with social and environmental aims
- Supporting the environment for a healthy third sector, investing in third sector infrastructure through specialist funding streams.

The Government concludes that the VCO sector and Government have a mutual interest in building the capacity of voluntary and community based organisations. Public sector partners, through the Island Strategic Partnership, are committed to engaging and supporting the VCO sector through developing local capacity and involvement in the delivery of public services.

The purpose of this draft strategy is to respond to this national agenda and to prompt views and feedback on a number of proposals for change. The aim of a final strategy is more specifically to:

1. Enable the continued development of the rich mix of VCO activities and the contribution they make to the Island, for example culture, conservation and caring, which enable communities to be strong, cohesive and connected
2. Support effective and inclusive delivery of public services that support Eco Island and the priorities of public sector partners.
3. Help to transform public services through the knowledge, innovation and creativity of the Island's communities.
4. Improve public sector dialogue and engagement with often excluded or unheard communities through VCOs.

A strategy will provide a local context to a number of key national themes and most importantly identify the various changes that need to take place, and the various pieces of work that the public and VCO sectors needs to undertake to help create the environment for a thriving voluntary and community sector.

Development of this strategy is being driven by a combined public and voluntary sector group, the Compact Strategy Group, and every effort has been made to keep the document short and focused on actions and outcomes. The input of the IWRCC, based on their experience and recent sector consultations has been key in the preparation of this document.

A consideration of what is needed to create a thriving third sector is provided under four headings:

- Engagement
- Funding
- Volunteering
- Infrastructure

A wide range of possible commitments are then made with the intention that they address the needs of the public and VCO sectors. A final strategy will reflect the views and comments of the organisations and individuals who respond to the initiation to consult on these proposals.

3. The Needs Of A Thriving Voluntary And Community Sector

3.1 Engagement

Effective engagement is characterised by trust, mutual understanding and good communication. Effective engagement focuses on achieving specific goals and is not just about ticking the box; it's as inclusive as possible and leaves room for differences of opinion. It is regular, consistent and long term.

Such characteristics reflect the more specific needs of a thriving voluntary and community sector on the Island.

What are the engagement needs of a thriving voluntary and community sector?

1. VCOs should be treated as equals, listened to, respected for their skills, experience and commitment.
2. Greater awareness by the commissioners of public services, contracts managers, legal and procurement staff of the long term value, character and the concerns of VCOs.
3. Awareness by VCOs of the priorities, commissioning and contractual needs of public sector bodies, supported by a willingness to work collaboratively across the VCO sector to better meet commissioning needs.
4. Clear points of contact at different levels : through the Island Strategic Partnership, the Compact Strategy Group, through public sector leads for networks (see point 4), through identified commissioners, through identified contract managers.
5. VCO led Networks are to be encouraged and used as one mechanism through which partnership based approaches to public service policy development and involvement in commissioning and delivery can be improved.
6. A clear, trusted and timely methodology for raising and addressing VCO concerns through an effective Local Compact and a Compact Strategy Group that is seen to be used and trusted by all involved.
7. Need for a commitment from partners that they will make people and resources available and empowered to deliver the content of this strategy
8. Current varied approaches to community development and engagement should be brought together and developed into a clear Island Community Empowerment Plan that empowers not merely consults or engages.
9. VCOs should be encouraged and when relevant funded to help represent the views of communities and service users, especially those communities/service users less able to represent themselves.

10. Public sector commissioners and VCOs should work together constructively to improve service delivery, by using appropriate levels of performance monitoring and focussing on outcomes for service users and communities.

3.2. Funding

Public sector funding is often the dominant issue in discussions focusing on the needs of VCOs. The way the public sector commissions and procures services is pivotal. It must also be remembered that the sector generates huge amounts of money through bids to the lottery and charitable trusts, fund raising, through legacies and donations, and through direct sales.

What are the funding needs of a thriving voluntary and community sector?

1. Funding is more likely to be made available to VCOs when commissioners of public services and procurement managers have a greater understanding of the long term value, character and concerns of the sector, and when VCOs have an understanding of the commissioning priorities of the public sector..
2. Flexible and innovative approaches to procurement should not prevent VCOs from engaging because of the methodology used; timescale, requirements, size of contract for example.
3. A range of funding opportunities should be maintained. At a national level this relates to concerns over use of lottery funding and at the Island level this focuses on the provision of grant funding opportunities.
4. Longer term funding, paid in advance, helps the organisational stability that encourages quality services, innovation and development.
5. The real cost of delivering services must be acknowledged and reflected within the funding arrangements for VCOs.
6. Need for the full added value – or Island value - of the benefits of local service delivery by a local VCO to be taken into account in any funding or contract allocation process.
7. Potential for unintended consequences related to EU/National/Local competition requirements and processes should be minimised to avoid needless and significant negative long-term impact on local VCOs.
8. All public sector funding of VCOs must be accompanied by an appropriately detailed funding agreement identifying the nature of work, performance expectations and other terms and conditions.
9. Some VCOs should be helped to develop new approaches to direct revenue generation.

10. VCOs need support to become fit for purpose with regard to tendering for public services when this approach is adopted by public bodies.

11. Need for VCOs to be supported with timely information on funding opportunities and with related training on project development and bid writing.

3.3. Volunteering

Volunteering is what distinguishes the voluntary and community sector from other sectors. Volunteering is the bedrock of the sector. The majority of VCOs on the Island are 100% reliant on volunteers and whilst the evolution of the sector has seen the number of people employed within the sector grow and grow, it is still the volunteer trustees giving up their time, taking on the responsibility, that make it possible.

What are the volunteering needs of a thriving voluntary and community sector?

1. Need for support with recruitment.
2. Need for support and funding for training for volunteers.
3. Need for support with management.
4. Support with Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.
5. Future need for support and training around the new Independent Safeguarding Authority requirements.
6. Need for cross sector support to promote the benefits and value of volunteering and to overcome barriers. This includes promoting public and private sector staff volunteering schemes to increase the pool of volunteers.
7. A realistic and sympathetic approach should be adopted by public sector funders with regard to how volunteers can realistically be used in the delivery of services.
8. Need for reasonable volunteer expenses to be paid as part of the cost of any funded service that is provided by volunteers.
9. Need for reasonable expenses to be paid to volunteers (not paid staff) who attend public sector / Island Strategic Partnership 'sponsored' meetings.
10. A specific need for the recruitment of more trustees for VCOs.

3.4. Infrastructure

Infrastructure can mean a number of things but in this strategy we are referring to buildings, back office functions, workforce development and skills and technical/specialist support needs and information.

What are the Infrastructure needs of a thriving voluntary and community sector?

1. VCOs need support with a variety of specialist / technical skill areas – funding, H.R., legal, ICT, governance and more. Such support creates a more competent and resourceful voluntary sector.
2. Greater partnership working within sector (e.g. shared building/staff/purchasing) can make limited resources and capacity go further.
3. New voluntary sector hub(s) will help to make best use of resources and to help modernise facilities used by the sector.
4. Need to maximise availability, minimise cost and maximise uptake of training opportunities across the public and VCO sectors.
5. A need for support from public sector organisations and other sources of expertise with group start up and organisational development. This should include support with business skills and a social enterprise approach.
6. The VCO sector will also need support with the management of community buildings and a clear public sector approach to community asset management and possible asset transfer.
8. New approaches by public and private sector partners to increase in kind support to VCOs that will help build capacity, skills and mutual understanding.
9. The increased and improved use of ICT to provide and share information, market services, supported by very clear and jointly agreed information sharing protocols.
10. Partners must collaborate to maintain awareness, increase understanding and take actions to address changes in key legal or policy requirements.

4. Assessment Of The Situation In 2008

An assessment has been made of the current state of partnership between the public sector and the voluntary and community sector.

In considering the areas of engagement, funding, volunteering and infrastructure, it is clear that whilst there is of course an enormous level of joint working between the public sector and VCOs and some small steps are being taken to address current concerns, the overall situation indicates that some significant improvements need to be achieved.

4.1 Engagement Today

- The Voluntary Sector Cabinet has recently been re-launched and requested representation at the ISP and its constituent parts. This has formally been granted by the Health and Well Being Board and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the signs look positive that this can be achieved across the ISP structure.
- A Compact Strategy Group has also recently been re-launched and is driving the creation of this document.
- The network structure that provides membership to the Voluntary Sector Cabinet offers significant potential as a conduit for further and more detailed engagement with the sector and the IWRCC itself has over 80 VCO members.
- These networks are of varying character and some are potentially in need of more administrative support if their potential is to be reached and the RCC has recently secured further funding from a mixture of the IWC, Island Strategic Partnership and Capacitybuilders to support them.
- The effectiveness of contract management by the Isle of Wight Council has been variable and a number of examples of poor practice identified.
- The effectiveness and timeliness of public sector consultations is a source of concern.
- There is no centralised approach to data management in relation to VCOs, either within the Council itself or between sectors.

4.2 Funding Today

- The Isle of Wight Council currently funds over 175 partnerships with voluntary and community organisations through contracts, service level agreements and grants. Grant funding is a way of funding organisations to engage in activity that the council wishes to support rather than 'contracting' for a specified range of goods, works or services.
- [The Isle of Wight NHS Primary Care Trust also commissions a number of voluntary sector services.](#)
- There are over 800 registered charities on the Island and it is estimated that the total number of VCOs could be as high as 1,500.
- The IW Council spent almost £15m through VCOs during 2007/08 including over £4m million on grants.
- Not unsurprisingly, for those organisations delivering public services, public sector funding is key. However, it is estimated that the total value of the

sector on the Island (including Third Sector organisations) is over £70 million and probably higher when value is put on volunteer hours.

- The public sector on the Island faces changes in its resources in coming years and partners will face funding challenges.
- Funding guidance and processes exist but new approaches are needed to ensuring that Eco Island priorities and public sector commissioning goals are met.
- Public sector procurement arrangements are being revised but consistent communication with the VCS on the implications and new expectations is needed.
- The new public procurement environment offers considerable potential benefits to the VCS is viewed with concern due to the lack of clarity around new expectations and processes, perceptions of inconsistency, concerns around overly bureaucratic processes and other issues.
- Public sector expectations around information management, risk management, value for money etc have not yet been clearly and consistently communicated to the VCS.
- Many long standing funding arrangements have not been subject to effective performance management or alignment with the priorities of commissioners; causing difficulties on both sides when commissioners want to change things.
- A number of different approaches to funding have been in place across the public sector. Until recently, the Council and other commissioners have not held a central overview of spend through VCOs – information has been managed by service area, or through grant programmes.
- As well as Council and PCT investment, VCOs are able to access significant funding from other sources as highlighted earlier. With some exceptions, Island funders are not always used to maximising or leveraging these other streams for example through providing strategic links, match funding or in kind support, nor to work cooperatively with those funding and work streams to ensure added and best value.
- Most grants are made annually, creating planning and service delivery problems for VCOs, and an administrative burden for funders.
- In some cases, the short term nature of commissioning and funding approaches create a barrier to the development of VCOs and innovative approaches to service delivery, such as social enterprise development.
- There is an increasing desire for more sustainable funding levels and durations among commissioners, funders and VCOs.
- Various parts of the main funding organisations are funding VCO infrastructure activity to organisations working with specific client groups, for specific activities, leading to different funding streams to the same organisation.
- The IW PCT has joined the VCO strategy process in order to develop a joint approach to funding alongside other ISP partners.
- VCOs have observed that in some cases business relationships with public funders are overly focused on process.
- An understanding of the impact of funding or procurement processes on VCOs is most often missed by public funders.

4.3 Volunteering Today

- It is possible to identify at least four different types of volunteer activity: 'mutual aid or self-help; philanthropy or service to others; participation or civic engagement; and advocacy or campaigning.'
- The degree to which public services and VCOs actually use volunteers on the Island is not fully known.
- Increasing the citizen's active role in local communities is a key strategic consideration for the Island Strategic Partnership and a considerable element of Eco Island.
- The IW Rural Community Council (RCC) has collected information from 140 VCOs, (i.e. from a relatively small proportion of island VCOs) identifying 3235 volunteers and estimating the total number of hours volunteered as 664,437.
- This clearly illustrates the crucial role that VCOs and volunteers play in managing or moderating demand on local public services.
- The IW RCC has recently launched a new Volunteer Centre for the Island and intends to become accredited with Volunteering England in the next 18 months.
- The way in which people come to volunteering is changing and may need further change – a greater use of the internet for example and the IWRCC is providing an on-line service linked to the national volunteering database.
- Volunteering may be a part of the solution in delivering more responsive and locally tailored services but it should also be acknowledged that if service tenders become more and more prescriptive this may undermine this potential.
- The Isle of Wight Council is developing an Employee Volunteering Scheme that encourages employees to volunteer. Such schemes must be sustainable and well managed.
- There is a need to highlight and publicise the personal rewards and community benefit of volunteering and the IWRCC intends to hold an annual Island awards evening from 2009.
- The Council provides some funding to volunteer promotion and support through funding arrangements with the IWRCC although it should be acknowledged that this figure is approximately £23,000 and the average cost of delivering all the core volunteer centre functions (excluding client specific projects) within a unitary authority area has been identified as £92,000 in a recent study. (Northampton Volunteer Centre supported by Volunteering England and Capacitybuilders)
- VCOs need help from a volunteer centre to maximise and broker the best experience for volunteers and their end users. This support role is developing and promoting volunteering, brokerage of volunteering opportunities, enabling access, providing information, training, research and campaigning on volunteering

4.4 Infrastructure Today

- Public sector partners have a direct funding relationship with around 200 of the estimated 1500 VCOs across the Island. Infrastructure support can lead to a vibrant and more broadly based VCO sector.

- Locally empowered communities often just need infrastructure support rather than public sector funding or involvement.
- The majority of infrastructure funding agreements on the Island are through the IW RCC which provides the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) role.
- A recent VCS survey on infrastructure needs conducted by the IW RCC gained 19 responses and focused on the value to VCOs of 8 identified support services:
 - Representation of the sector – 88% responses identified as critical
 - General information, advice and signposting - 85% critical
 - Workforce development and training – 47.5% critical
 - Volunteering – 74% critical
 - Developing joint working opportunities – 14.5% critical
 - Information and communication technology – 33% critical
 - Bidding for funding and tendering for services – 63% critical
 - Business planning/development/social enterprise – 22% critical
- In addition to the funding provided to the IW RCC for the CVS role, the IW Council and public sector partners also fund infrastructure organisations working with specific client groups, for specific activity, or engagement, such as Age Concern or Citizens Advice Bureau etc.
- Funding from Capacitybuilders, a central government initiative, offers investment in infrastructure at both a national, regional and local level. The IW RCC is the accountable body for the local Capacitybuilders consortia, the Island Infrastructure Group and begun to develop infrastructure support at a collective level for Island VCOs.
- Many public funders in the UK offer a range of advice on VCO issues, funding and training expertise being the most notable. However, due to a legacy of withdrawal from this activity, this service offer is now less available to VCOs.
- Data collection and information management related to the sector is variable. VCOs keep their own database of members, and collect local information differently and are not consistently co-ordinated.
- The IW RCC has been addressing part of this issue in the last year through its Merlin Questionnaire and will continue to develop improved data regarding the character of the sector and its organisations.
- A Voluntary Sector Cabinet has been in existence for some years but has not been very active. The IW RCC is co-ordinating efforts to improve its representative role and link it to key strategic bodies such as the ISP.
- The Voluntary Sector Cabinet’s members are now nominated from a variety of networks and this model offers further potential for development.
- Accommodation is a significant issue for VCOs. Other than staff, often their biggest cost is premises. Owning an asset offers opportunities to raise money from different funding streams, both loan finance, and income generated by making the property “work” for the organisation. It also means reduced rental costs.
- On the downside, asset ownership also brings considerable risks and there have been some recent instances of local VCOs having considerable problems with meeting the cost of their building.
- Public sector organisations on the Island have estate assets that could be a different way of supporting VCOs.

5. Commitments

A large number of commitments by the partners in the strategy are set out below. These proposed commitments and any others that emerge during the consultation will be considered by the member organisations of the Compact Strategy group at the end of the consultation period. The commitments agreed on will be used to form the basis of a detailed plan for the strategy, with timescales and responsibilities.

5.1 Engagement - proposals

1. Delivery of this strategy will be driven through an effective Compact Strategy Group, meeting at least quarterly.
2. The Compact Strategy Group will provide an effective mediation role that will be well advertised to VCOs.
3. A new Compact Implementation Group of public sector and VCO representatives, meeting bi monthly, will ensure delivery of the actions, commitments and development activities contained within the strategy.
4. The Voluntary Sector Cabinet will be represented on the Island Strategic Partnership's Key Delivery Boards.
5. The partners will develop protocols that will ensure where appropriate the involvement of VCOs in identifying commissioning needs. This will involve ensuring that community voices are heard and innovative and creative commissioning solutions are considered.
6. Public sector partners will recognise and use the voluntary sector Networks that support the Voluntary Sector Cabinet as a key strategic partner, to be used on a regular basis to help inform policy development and VCO involvement in the commissioning process.
7. The voluntary and community sector commits to participating in these networks.
8. Public sector partners will ensure that all public sector contracts and grants have a clearly identified person with responsibility for their management.
9. Public and voluntary sector commissioners will be subject to guidance that helps them to manage funding arrangements in a positive and timely way and that will encourage them to seek constant improvements in service quality and outcomes for communities.
10. Partners will raise awareness of the presence, capacity and opportunities provided with a voluntary sector briefing in all staff inductions.

11. Partners will use the RCC newsletter is used to communicate key messages to the sector and will regularly review overall approaches to communication with the sector.
12. Communication protocols to help guide communication between public and private sector partners and VCOs.
13. All partners are committed to greater sharing of information where this sharing will benefit service users and communities, through a framework of legally compliant information sharing protocols.
14. Set up a work shadowing scheme between the public and voluntary sectors to increase mutual awareness.
15. All written/e-mailed communication to the public sector from a VCO will be responded to in a similar fashion within 14 days.
16. The existing Compact will be reviewed, updated and promoted in 2008 and bi-annually thereafter.
17. The public sector partners in the strategy commit to providing capacity to review and support improvements to partnerships to ensure they are effective and well governed.
18. Ensure that a 12 week consultation period is adhered to for public consultation processes.
19. Partners will develop a new Island Community Empowerment Strategy to ensure that public sector work on public consultation, user voice, community development, neighbourhood regeneration, parish council support, personal and community development learning, volunteering and other related elements are delivered within a shared framework and with reference to each other.
20. The Voluntary Sector Cabinet will develop the role of the VCO networks as a framework for initiating joint and collaborative responses by the sector to the commissioning needs of the public sector.
21. A number of guides will be produced to improve communication and joint working A priority for the CSG will be:
A guide to procurement for VCOs.
Others will include:
Training guide to shared training opportunities
Procurement and funding schedule of activities
Asset transfer and sharing of physical infrastructure
Performance management guide
Guide on information sharing protocols
Employee volunteering schemes
Equality, risk and diversity.

In addition, public sector guides, policies and procedures will include as relevant, commitments to supporting the role of the VCO sector in service delivery in ensuring strong and more engaged communities.

5.2 Funding - proposals

1. Commitment to a minimum of 3 year service level agreements and contracts whenever possible.
2. Commitment that when a 3 year contract is not possible a clear rationale is made public.
3. Implement longer term funding arrangements when a strong rationale can be made.
4. Make payment in advance of expenditure in the vast majority of instances and especially taking into account the size and capacity of the VCOs in question.
5. Public sector commissioners and contract managers will commit to being proportionate in performance monitoring requirements and will focus on outcomes when assessing value.
6. Public sector partners will create a small grant programmes to build VCO capacity in key areas or address a clearly identified short-term issue.
7. The public sector partners will recognise that it is legitimate for VCOs to include the relevant element of overhead costs in their estimates for providing a service, this may be described as 'full cost recovery'.
8. Public and voluntary sector organisations will work continuously to ensure the adoption of national best practice with regard to procurement and funding processes. Commissioners will take account of social clauses, community benefit and value to Island communities.
9. Use clear criteria and application processes that allow VCOs a minimum of 12 weeks to apply for funding; ensure that decision-making is transparent and that funding is clearly linked to Eco Island and commissioning priorities.
10. The partners from all sectors will ensure that those commissioning and contracting with VCOs have up to date knowledge of both national VCO issues and local providers.
11. Ensure that the Isle of Wight Council Procurement Board is informed about the use of social clauses, community benefit and other approaches that could benefit partnership working between commissioners and VCOs.

12. Use a variety of methods to advertise funding timetables and opportunities including the RCC newsletter and website.
13. Undertake benchmarking work to establish and make public the cost and unit price of service delivery by VCOs in other areas.
14. Use standard contracts and agreements whenever possible.
15. Commissioners will increase joint and joined up commissioning to ensure that cross cutting work is funded through one procurement exercise not in a piece-meal fashion.
16. Commissioners and the Voluntary Sector Cabinet will ensure that VCOs are enabled to act jointly in responding to commissioning needs.
17. From September 2008 the IWC and Primary Care Trust will work with VCOs to review existing grants and contracts. Some grant funded arrangements may change, with the service provided under a grant in future provided under contractual agreement. This review will be handled in a way that ensures that value is seen in the widest possible sense, and that the need to maintain and develop a diverse range of potential VCO partners is enhanced.
18. Future funding and procurement arrangements can be grouped around the following outcomes and parameters, so that it is clearer whether agreements are most likely suited to grants or a contractual agreement:
 - Specific service related outcomes – contractual agreements
 - Organisational, corporate and Island-wide objectives and outcomes, e.g. community cohesion, capacity building, safer and stronger communities – grants and partnership agreements
 - Pump priming and new project development – grants, partnership agreements and contractual agreements
 - Funds to lever other income, e.g. charitable, private sector, other statutory sector funding streams – grants and partnership agreements
 - Mixed length of agreements to ensure new opportunities every year – grants, partnership agreements and contractual agreements.
 In addition, a small grants programme open to VCOs and local communities.

5.3 Volunteering - proposals

1. The IWC will continue to financially support delivery of the Island Volunteer Centre service.
2. The IWRCC is committed to promoting and supporting inclusive volunteering through its Volunteer Centre service.
3. The IWC and the IWRCC are committed to the creation of an Employers Supported Volunteering Scheme and to the encouragement

of public and private organisations who can also develop such schemes. The IWC will launch a scheme in 2008.

4. The IWC will commit to supporting a future Volunteering Awards scheme and will co-sponsor the event.
5. Public sector partners will pay reasonable expenses for volunteers, including travel and subsistence, within public sector funding agreements of all types. The partners will also pay reasonable expenses to unpaid volunteers attending strategic meetings of the Island Strategic Partnership and other public meetings.
6. All partners will address volunteer training needs within their wider training and skills activities.
7. All volunteer involving organisations should have a volunteer policy. Partners will produce a template to help organisations draw up a policy if they don't already have one.
8. The IWRCC will lead the development of best practice in recruitment and retention of volunteers, producing guides for organisations who wish to use volunteers. Guides will highlight best practice, including designing opportunities, recruitment of volunteers, CRB checks, induction, health and safety, payment of expenses, supervision, involvement and recognition.

5.4 Infrastructure - proposals

1. The Commissioning partners are committed to the development of Voluntary Sector Hubs.
2. Public sector partners will investigate how future management of the public sector property portfolio can best benefit VCOs.
3. The public sector partners will develop a Community Asset Transfer Strategy, initially addressing Council owned properties.
4. The IWC is committed to funding the Council for Voluntary Service role, delivering support and advice on funding, governance and other issues, currently delivered by the IWRCC.
5. All partners are committed to ensuring increased availability of shared / joint training and more joint work to develop new training initiatives.
6. The public sector partners will continue to make available subsidised training places on training and skills development activities.

6. How To Respond To This Consultation Draft

The proposals in this draft strategy require support, comment and debate if they are to be adopted by the partner organisations signing up to the final strategy.

The partners are also keen to hear of other ideas and strategies for creating the right environment for a thriving third sector. To ensure that you have your say, we have arranged a number of ways for you to respond and contact us:

Use The Internet

A consultation website has been developed to make giving your views as easy as possible. To access the online consultation document and response form visit: <http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/iwrcc/strategyconsultation>

If you wish to read a Microsoft word version of the document in advance and then access the online consultation, it can be downloaded here

http://www.iwrcc.org.uk/36/view_article/180/Voluntary_Sector_Strategy_Draft.aspx

A pdf version of the document can be downloaded here:

www.eco-island.org.uk/our_place/themes_and_actions/voluntarysectorstrategy.aspx

Please note that the online response form needs to be completed in one go and cannot be saved. It will probably take about 20 minutes unless you have read the document in advance.

Use Email

A Microsoft word response form is available here

http://www.iwrcc.org.uk/36/view_article/179/email_and_paper_response_form.aspx

which you can complete and use to email your views or questions directly to the partners.

The Isle of Wight Rural Community Council: Nigel.parrish@iwrcc.org.uk

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The Island Strategic Partnership: info@eco-island.org.uk

In Writing or by Telephone

You may prefer to post your views or questions to us. You can write a letter or complete a form available to download at

http://www.iwrcc.org.uk/36/view_article/179/email_and_paper_response_form.aspx

Please send your response or questions to one of these addresses:

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