

TAUNTON DEANE COUNCIL for VOLUNTARY SERVICE

SPRING CONFERENCE - Thursday 19th May 2005

The Mayor, Cllr Richard Lees welcomed everybody. He gave a brief outline of his background and involvement with TDCVS and went on to explain that the CVS was the umbrella for all other voluntary organisation in the Taunton Deane area and what it does.

Vernon Samuel of the Government Office of the South West then spoke about the modernisation of voluntary sector services. He explained that he was on a two year secondment. The Government vision was for the voluntary sector to work together with the public sector to improve facilities, leading to better services and therefore better quality of life for those in need. We were all asked to work harder together to move thing forward – to prepare for the challenges of today and tomorrow – modernisation. Funding is a major issue.

Vernon Samuel continued in speaking of Change Up South West, a consortium of eleven partnerships from Gloucester to Cornwall of which CVS is a member. It is a leadership group to support organisations. Change Up South West is a ten year vision, with an annual budget of £212,000.

There were three themes to be addressed:

Modernising Infrastructure

- Promoting partnership collaboration
- Developing and strengthening life support services.
- Organisations to share services making them cost efficient.
- Benefits of working in partnership.

Improving Reach.

- Create network of how to distribute services.
- Access to services.
- Training and development of staff – paid and unpaid.
- Improving the quality of the voluntary sector.
- Access to volunteer management and support for volunteers – structure.

Information

- The voice of the voluntary sector through information.
- The sector be to sustainable – finance.

- Identifying what work is needed and how it is funded.
 1. Social Enterprise – revenue – selling some of their expertise to fund the activity they are involved in.
 2. Underpin the services. Visibility of activity / services.
 3. Credibility – makes a difference to what you do.
 4. Visibility – creditable visible results.
 5. How to fund the activity.
 6. Understanding the needs of the voluntary and public sector – joint vision.

There were several questions regarding Change Up not least that £212,000 sounded a lot of money but as it is covering a wide area, Taunton would probably benefit only with a tiny amount.

Mark Green TDBC.

Taunton – Modernisation Vision.

Taunton in the future is targeted for growth and there were three specific areas of the town affected. Within a month there would be a team in place to look at the different parts of the vision.

He expects organisations to put their views forward and have an input in the future vision.

There were many questions following Mark Green's presentation. Many questions concerned the lack of a centre for voluntary organisations and voluntary services.

Catherine Beedell – VISTA

Voluntary Sector Training Alliance, VISTA is under the umbrella of the Somerset Voluntary Sector Network, to work with the voluntary and community sector.

Provides free training – to qualify one must be part of the voluntary sector. A large range of specialist training and booklets were available.