



Routes to Partnership

Record and Analysis of Consultation Contributions

Introduction

The Routes to Partnership proposal document was released for consultation in September 2008. The document outlined preparatory work undertaken to establish a model for voluntary, community and faith sector engagement in the Surrey Strategic Partnership.




The three month consultation period saw the proposal document distributed through the NAVCA, Surrey Community Action and Surrey County Council websites. It was also promoted through the Councils of Voluntary Service across the County.

There were also five consultation events held over the three month period in: -

-  Camberley
-  Guildford
-  Leatherhead
-  Redhill
-  Runnymede

A presentation was made at the Surrey Strategic Partnership Conference on 24th November where NAVCA also had a stand to promote the consultation and invite comments and questionnaire returns.

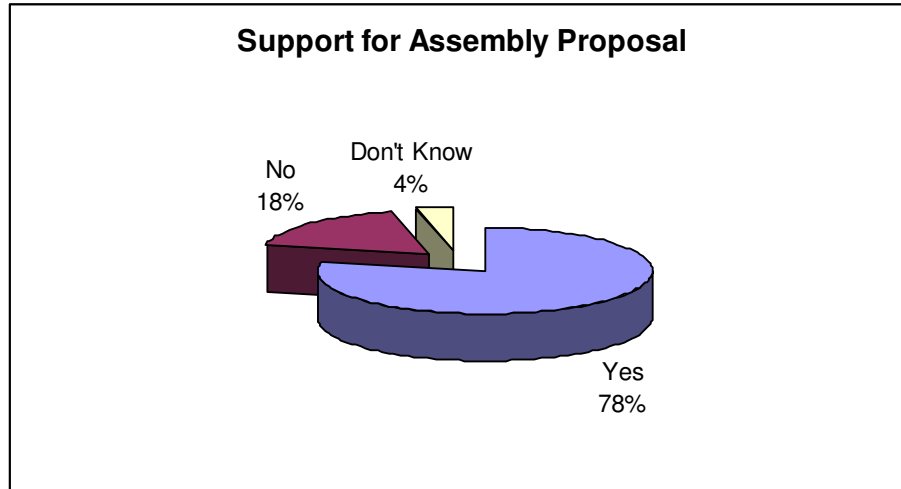
Various meetings were also held with representatives of statutory agencies to encourage their contribution to the consultation and gauge their support for the ideas outlined in the consultation document.

-  In total 35 questionnaire returns were received by the end of the consultation period.
-  41 people attended the five consultation events held around the County.
-  Over 100 people attended the SSP conference.

This document outlines the results from the consultation process. A separate final proposal document with costings will summarise the final concept to go before the SSP for decision making.

Assembly Proposal

1. Do you support the proposal to develop a voluntary, community and faith sector assembly for Surrey?



- Allow opportunity for postal voting if they wish
- Assembly is a great idea
- Attendance may be skewed in order to influence votes
- Capacity of individuals needs to be considered, so a few people do not sit everywhere
- Essential for expenses to be covered
- Hustings at the assembly could be good
- It has got to be independent
- Maximum should be 3 years for representatives
- May get same people chosen by assembly
- Mix of postal and meeting votes is an option
- Postal ballots may get some people involved
- Question whether the electoral college system for the assembly could only include those present
- Some specific groups may not get a chance
- The generic representative model is good
- The networking opportunities from the assembly meeting will be great
- There is a split in who should host the assembly and the worker
- There should be a 2 year election cycle
- There should be a maximum number of people from any organisation allowed to hold a place in the SSP representing the VCFS
- This is a great opportunity for engagement
- Trust needs to be built and cannot be achieved overnight
- We need to forget the history and all work together
- We need to present a positive image and cohesive approach to the statutory sector
- Would hope that umbrella bodies could work together for the interests of the VCFS

2. What elements of the new proposal do you think are positive and could lead to effective engagement and representation within the Surrey Strategic Partnership?

a. Increased representation on theme boards

Yes 81.5%

No 8%

Don't Know 11%

b. Representation on the delivery management group

Yes 81.5%

No 11%

Don't Know 7.5%

c. Formal process to nominate representatives to SSP

Yes 85%

No 11%

Don't Know 4%

Comments:

In Support

- Further representation from the voluntary sector has to be a good thing
- Important to have a mix of representation – any person should not be on other groups as to do this properly i.e. communicate with wider communities will be a big job
- A transparent process for representation would be a big step forward
- To ensure widest possible representation of VCFS, I believe any one organisation should only sit on one of the theme boards
- Surrey VCFS bring a vast amount of experience, knowledge and service provision to the SSP. It is diverse in the range of activities serviced; the clients, users and carers it works with/for and its networks enable it to engage with grass roots issues, all of which touch LAA indicators. As Surrey cannot agree that one borough/district can represent them, it seems unreasonable to argue that only 3 people can represent 5000+ organisations or communities.

The argument by the membership of the SSP Delivery Management Group relating to financial clout, ignores the fact that although £16m is received locally from statutory sector agencies who might say they can direct service delivery, the VCFS also draw in at least as much again. Sadly, no-one has done the survey but the VCFS ability to access additional funds, public donations, and gifts in kind, must bring in at least double that.

Lastly a formal route to nomination ensures the process is transparent, those who want to get involved either in the selection or as a representative has a clear mandate from the sector and puts them on a par with the elected members i.e. councillors

- Start from what is already in place (e.g. SCA, CVS etc). be careful of the faith sector – aim for representation rather than token presence
- On the Leadership Group, it was agreed to review governance after eighteen months or so. Whilst increased numbers are not welcome, it would be timely to consider changes and the argument made about the complexity and size of the VCFS sector, and the scale of dissemination is a powerful one. Surrey County Council is sympathetic to the case made, but the SSP would need to take a view on additional representatives.

Representation proposals for the thematic partnership are on the whole fine, however representation on the Children & Young People's thematic partnership needs to align with the arrangements being made for a modernised Children's Trust.

There has not been a VCFS representative on the original, deliberately small DMG as it is the 'meeting of chairs' of the thematic partnerships. There is therefore a question mark on the particular role of a VCFS representative. There is something to be said about giving the sector a place at DMG, however this would need to be on the understanding that there would need to be a single VCFS sector representative, nominated by the Assembly who would sign up the VCFS to delivering on specific LAA objectives.

- The PCT support the proposal to develop a VCFS assembly to ensure appropriate representation across the whole sector. The PCT welcomes the opportunity to have formal mechanisms to identify representative organisations which will help VCFS engagement within the PCT's own strategic commissioning plans as well as the SSP. In relation to the assembly representatives the two gap areas the PCT would like to highlight are Carers and Children's VCFS of all ages not just youth organisations.
- As long as the representatives are supported and respected as equal partners.
- User and carer led organisations need to be included separately in the title of the assembly and have a separate route to membership of the assembly.

Reject Proposal or Request Amendments

- User led organisations and carers are not a voluntary or community group. It should read voluntary user lead organisations, community and faith sector, as per the Surrey Compact
- Elections for representatives should take place in boroughs and districts organised by CVSs to find representatives of voluntary organisations
- Proposal of assembly not supported, locally created or supported groups would feel marginalised. The strength of the VCFS is that they are diverse. Endless attempts to structure them into public sector type representational models will not work. In the end it will damage the volunteering ethos to the detriment of needy Surrey. These needs are well

catered for in local strategic partnerships and that is where their input/representation should be focused.

- Just another layer of bureaucracy keeping civil servants in jobs and costing tax payers money they cannot afford.
- It seems expensive, unnecessary and jobs for the boys.
- We welcome the objective of allocating specific representation from various partnerships and forums on the Thematic Partnerships. However, the process of selection, and hence the actual representation, appears to be deeply flawed. There would seem to be insufficient commonality of purpose to enable a representative from one forum to adequately represent the interests of all of the other forums. (Although three representatives are proposed for each of the thematic partnerships, this still requires one delegate to represent the interests of at least three of the partnerships and forums).

It is difficult to see how the proposed assembly (forum of forums) could operate in practice. By definition, it is a collection of disparate organisations and interests, which overlap only at specific points. The proposed model seems to be guided more by structure than purpose, and it is not clear what business the assembly is intended to transact, or what flows of information and/or actions are envisaged for it. In other words what is meant by 'engagement' in the context of the assembly?

Up to 25 VCFS representatives are proposed in this model. Perhaps a more effective and equitable approach might be to invite each of the partnerships and forums (eight at present) to nominate three representatives each to the three thematic partnerships that they consider most relevant to their interests. While this may result in some Thematic Partnerships being more 'popular' than others, it does ensure that the various partnerships and forums are represented on those that they consider the most important.

- We would need to know how the nomination process is to work, however, before giving wholehearted support, as we believe that front line support groups (as opposed to infrastructure groups) must be represented predominantly, and Carers' Support Projects should figure in the proposal.
- Capacity for places may be the issue.
- Resourcing and back-filling could address capacity issues
- More engagement may encourage more organisations to want to involved
- Support the increase in places
- Patients Council has worked locally

3. What do you think would be key indicators of success of any new community engagement systems in the Surrey Strategic Partnership?

a. Participation of representatives at all levels of SSP

Yes 77%

No 8%

Don't Know 15%

b. Influence of representatives at SSP

Yes 77%

No 8%

Don't Know 15%

c. A vibrant and diverse voluntary, community and faith sector assembly bringing together opinion, skill and views

Yes 84%

No 8%

Don't Know 8%

Comments

In Support

- We agree with the above indicators, but these are essentially output indicators, and we need to examine a more **outcome** based set of indicators i.e. those which ensure the development and effectiveness of the VCF sector.
- Another key indicator is evidence of successful links between Surrey wide and Borough/District level
- Vibrant and diverse could take some time!
- The PCT believe key indicators of success should include: -
 - o The whole VCFS having the opportunity to be represented across all strategic programmes not just SSP and the new structure should facilitate this
 - o Ability to influence and contribute to decision making processes where appropriate
 - o VCFS have the relevant support/training to undertake their roles
 - o Appropriate feedback mechanisms are in place from assembly representatives to the sector
- Surrey CC believes the VCFS representatives would need to demonstrate that they would gain support from the sector. There needs to be a strong perception of delivery and of value added.
- The support role is important
- As said before, the sector is vast and no area is not touched by their input, therefore they should be involved as SCC. True partnership should allow the representatives to be in a position to influence at the same level as other members.
- The object must be to establish a wider legitimacy of the representatives from the VCFS and improve circulation flows.
- Plus a changed perception of the VCFS by statutory agencies (voluntary ad volunteer are often confused at present)
- Plus more VCFS lead priorities in LAAs

- An LSP cannot represent the best interest of the community without their representation.
- What's important is the right people are around the table
- Facilitation of effective communication will be important
- It is right as long as democratic
- Representatives HAVE to communicate

Reject or Request Amendments

- Again, to ensure inclusivity, organisations which are user led and represent citizens need to be separately identified
- Concern that there is no mention of the Surrey Compact being part of the SSP/LAA etc. There is growing evidence of local compacts working with and feeding into the SSP/LAA/LSP having beneficial results to the partnership work.
- For costly over bearing officialdom
- Not worth doing if it only a talking shop without any power.
- Only effective if correct people from VCFS have correct skills.
- Plus user led organisations.

4. Do you feel that the quantity of representatives proposed within the new system is appropriate and achievable?

Yes 52%

No 18%

Don't Know 30%

Comments:

- Difficult to see where generic advice agencies such as CAB fit in
- It is not so much the quantity of representatives that matters but the availability of such representatives (for example carers are bound to the home for a large part of the day) and thought needs to be given to communication systems that do not wholly depend on physical presence at meetings, in order to get involvement of a qualitative nature
- It will be interesting to see if it is achievable and where representation is drawn – again needs to be linked to local level
- One link which maybe under represented could be residents groups who would not necessarily sit under CVS'; however it may be a group CVS' should concentrate more on although Boroughs and Districts may argue they support/engage with them directly.
- Quality is the main factor here
- Stop now before we sink under an increasing sea of overheads.
- Surrey Rural Partnership is currently undertaking a task to identify where its members are also representatives within the current LAA structure. We aim to equip these 'Rural Champions' with the background and support necessary to ensure that they can maintain oversight of the objectives, strategies and programmes proposed by the Strategic Partnership. While rural interests should be represented on all of the Thematic Partnerships, the spatial differences outlined above make direct representation particularly relevant on

Safer and Stronger, Economic Development & Housing, Infrastructure and Environment Thematic Partnerships.

- The PCT welcomes the views of the VCFS on its capacity to fulfil the recommendation outlined.
- The SSP leadership group remains dominated by public sector organisations – there should be more VCFS – suggest 5 generic representatives
- Yes!

5. Do you agree with the idea of having a compulsory induction programme for all representatives of the proposed VCFS Assembly?

Yes 78%

No 15%

Don't Know 7%

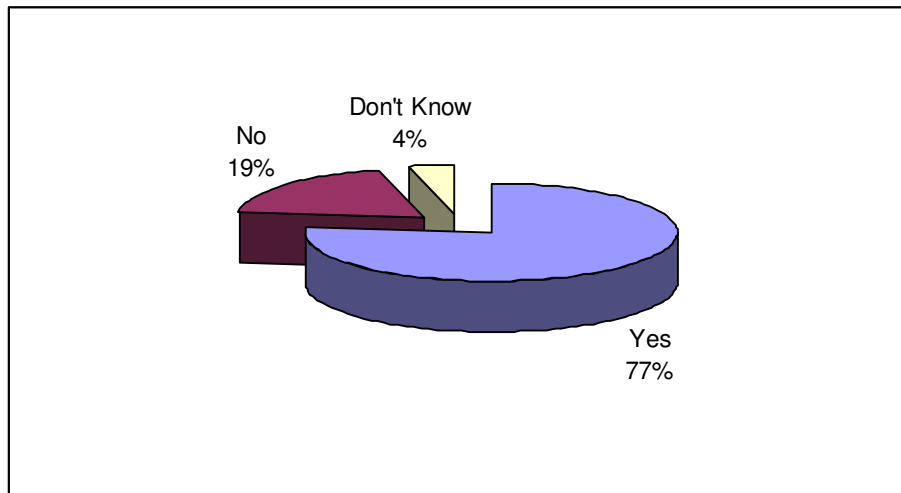
Comments:

- 1 day with updating sessions
- Agree
- And everyone else who sits as a representative from other groups. It could be misconstrued. SCC has commissioned this work and could be seen to be saying we don't think you are as skilled as the other player which we all know is not true.
- Back-filling is essential
- But make sure it is a day worth spending on it!
- Compulsory training would be helpful, coupled with a commitment from the Chair of the relevant group to ensure the representative is brought up to speed rather than expecting them understand the last minutes.
- Don't have one.
- Essential – but is this just for the VCFS representatives or everyone on the partnership?
- Essential!
- If there is funding for this then it is supported
- Indeed I think that there are occasions when additional briefing sessions would be useful – for example for all the C&YP Board and Area Representatives.
- Induction needs to cover how to network and speak for the wider community
- Induction should also include statutory agencies and have their input
- It is important for establishing communities of reference and for networking
- It will also hopefully engender commitment
- Not entirely necessary where reps have significant relevant experience
- Not relevant until structure and purpose of assembly is clarified
- Statutory representatives on the SSP might also benefit from spending time work shadowing some of the VCFS organisations.
- The induction is particularly important, so that representatives fully understand they are representing the wider VCFS and not only the views of their individual group.
- The PCT supports the idea of a compulsory induction programme for representatives, as good practice suggests representatives should be provided with training and support in

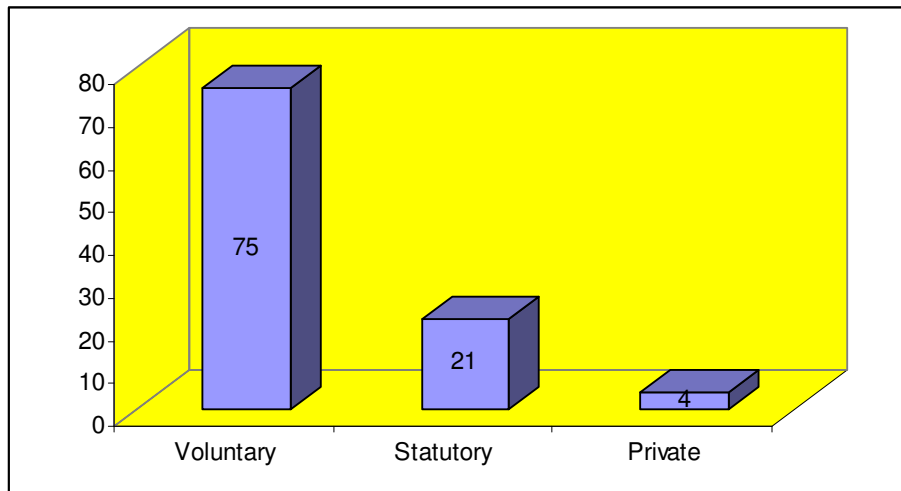
fulfilling their role. The role description is an essential element to be developed prior to the programme commencement and should involve partnership consultation.

- The Surrey Compact has to be part of the induction to make sure everyone has the same level of knowledge.
- There should be a systematic assessment of people
- This is vital
- Use the RAISE Toolkit
- Would seem sensible. Could this be extended to include local arrangements?

6. Do you agree with the proposal to have a dedicated officer to support representatives, facilitate the gathering of views from other organisations and communities and ensure effective feedback?



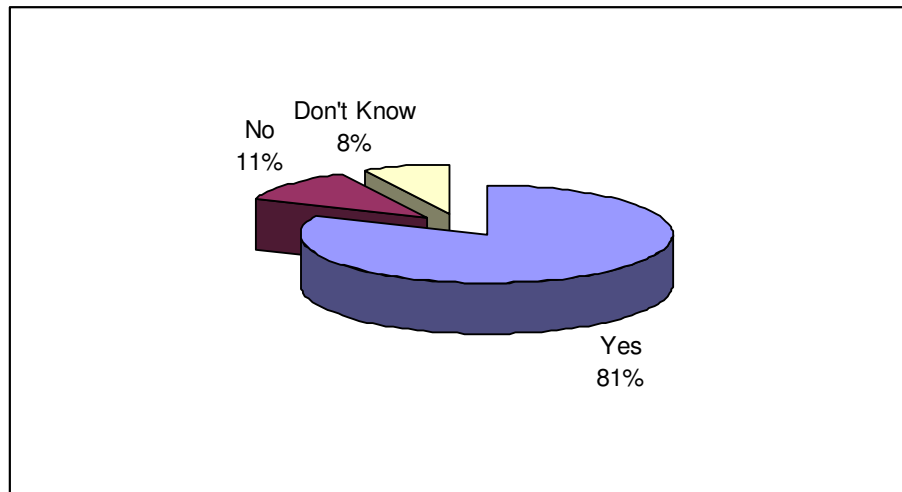
7. Which sector is best placed to host this officer and coordinate the secretariat of the assembly?



Suggestions: -

- An umbrella body e.g. CVS/SCA
- Concerned that if it hosted in VCFS it could be seen as empire building
- Could be hosted by SCA with a memorandum of understanding
- CVS
- CVS Network to determine
- Employed and lined managed by Surrey County Council and based with SCA
- I do not believe it matters whichever is acceptable to the majority
- I VERY STRONGLY think the secretariat should be in the VCFS and indeed from experience of the 4 area boards, one person will not be enough
- It would be helpful to have some dedicated resource to support the implementation of the proposals and on-going support. Feedback mechanisms need to be agreed within the sector and should not be seen as the role of one officer. This process can be facilitated. The PCT would suggest that it is for the VCFS to identify the most appropriate sector to co-ordinate this activity.
- Leverage of being within SCC could offer benefits and prevent marginalisation
- Maybe split cost between all partners
- Need to get the balance between SCA and local CVS needs to be recognised
- Obviously SCA would like to offer (subject to negotiations over expenditure/resources) to host the support service. Discussion may be needed on whether one full time post would be sufficient. However, if this was not fully acceptable another proposal might be that Surrey Infrastructure Consortium hosts the post.
- Private sector to keep check on overheads
- Probably SCA or Surrey CVS organisation
- SCA
- SCA
- Should be part of the SSP secretariat support
- Should be within SCC because its part of the SSP and would be in a ring fenced budget
- Shouldn't automatically be SCA, the CVS Network could also host
- Surrey Community Action
- Surrey CVS/VC Network at a salary that reflects other VCS salaries and not the over inflated one enjoyed by Surrey County Council employees.
- The officer and secretariat should definitely be hosted in the VCFS, rather than the Surrey County Council. Because it has a county remit, SCA would be the ideal hosting for hosting the officer.
- This could be a statutory sector post if the person was just given the remit of support and facilitation of the representation.
- This is a resource issue, but if the resources were available then I see no reason why it shouldn't be voluntary sector – CAB?
- User led organisation i.e. Surrey Coalition or Action for Carers
- We need the officer to have the full confidence of the assembly and ideally the person should be a volunteer, with a self experienced background in one of the dominant sectors in the VCFS (e.g. social care or health) but engaged on a self employed basis.

8. Do agree with the proposal to cover all expenses such a travel, childcare and care for those representatives whose organisations are not already funded to fulfil these duties by Surrey County Council?

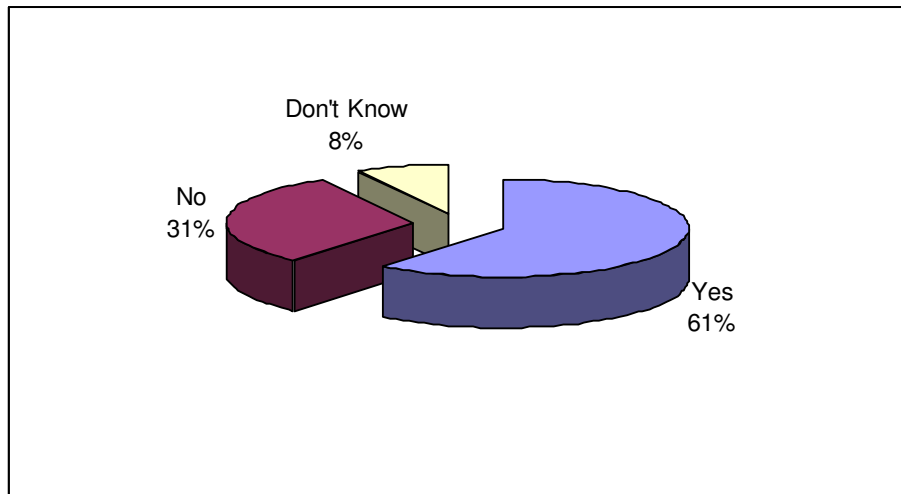


Comments:

- Backfilling payments should also be considered – time is the most precious resource we have in the VCFS. Also some of the forums (e.g. PACS) need support to continue their work and act as representatives.
- But where is the funding coming from and if this means cuts in frontline VCS then I might reconsider my answer.
- How does this compare with what currently occurs from other organisations?
- However I would not want this to be an obstacle to the scheme
- I think this will be difficult to achieve.
- i.e. the right person rather than the right income bracket
- It is essential that all costs are covered including time in training and familiarisation sessions. It may also be helpful to meet other representatives from time to time.
- Its daylight robbery!
- Not relevant until structure and purpose of assembly are clarified
- Surrey County Council recognises there is some cost to this engagement and is able to provide some funding to support this.
- This is essential
- Up to a limit – it cannot be a bottomless pit and certainly not for organisations that are funded by SCC and part of their remit is to represent their larger population.

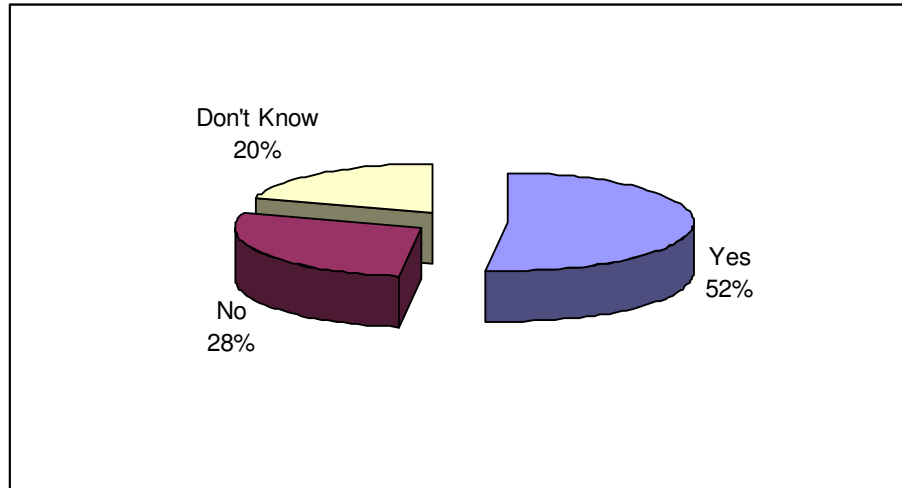
Equalities & Diversity Reference Group

9. Do you support the proposal to have an equalities and diversity reference group as a resource for representatives?



- 50/50 on whether this will work or not
- Access is important
- Add a user representative as well as carer
- Do not list people by impairment
- Good leadership will be essential
- If this goes ahead would need to have a lifespan until representatives are more inclusive
- Keep focused on social model of disability
- Leadership is essential and full knowledge
- Maybe split between areas of the County
- Need to be mindful that the members are not the same as the GOSE and Elmbridge Group
- Needs to reflect changes in demography
- Possible organisational membership rather than individual may work
- Representatives could be OK if this reference group is right
- Safeguards would be important
- This proposal could lead to an 'us and them' attitude
- This proposal formalises the role of some of the special interest groups
- Use established routes to build this group not the assembly
- Would be good to have

10. Do you feel the 12 identified places proposed on the reference group cover the diversity of Surrey's communities and issues?



Comments:

- Although in principle this is good idea and the council were able to see the benefits of this reference group, Surrey County Council has had to move ahead quickly as part of its work on the Equality Standard. As a result the council's former external equality reference group has been re-established. There is scope that by the time the new arrangements for the SSP are in place, the council's re-established group will be able to offer advice when needed.
- Concerns on how reference group would be effective and how it could be pulled together in the long term
- Excellent idea.
- I am concerned the Compact gets overlooked. I know that there are champions on these groups but in the heat of the moment the Compact gets overlooked. They have other areas to represent as well as the Compact and are not always able to make interventions to ensure the Compact at relevant moments. I feel sure had this happened, the Compact would now be underpinning the LSP/LAA.
- I feel that the E&D reference group would be just one group to many
- It would be impossible. I would be surprised if we ever had more than a third of the VCS in Surrey agreeing to the same thing at anyone time! But we all have to make some compromises.
- Its hardly understandable
- Its probably as good as it can be but you can't cover the full diversity
- No user led organisations
- Not enough information available to me as yet.
- Really needs to be accurately assessed.
- The PCT support this proposal, it is important for the representatives to have the equality and diversity training

- Yes – but only if the representative organisation on each board has a way of communicating and networking with the organisations they are seeking to represent.
- Yes but identify 3 places for disabled people (do not define them by their impairments)

General Comments & Contributions

11. General Comments:

- Since its inception, The Surrey Rural Partnership has been actively engaged with the evolving LAA to ensure that its objectives and processes recognise the issues and challenges of Surrey's rural constituency. Our objective is to ensure that there is equitability in the focus, programmes and resources that the LAA applies to rural Surrey (i.e. that they are rural proofed). We have been very encouraged by the recognition and support that has been forthcoming from the Strategic Partnership through this initiative.

Although the current consultation focuses on the engagement process, the Strategic Partnership also recognises the role of the Rural Partnership as a potential delivery partner to meet the LAA's objectives. The Rural Partnership now hosts several initiatives such as Surrey Rural Town's Programme; the Rural Housing Group; the Rural Access to Services Programme (RASP); and, SEEDA's Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Leader Programme. Cumulatively, this places annual funding of some £700,000 under the aegis of the Rural Partnership, much of which addresses the same Performance Indicators as the LAA.

- I resent Government and civil servants trying to dominate and control any voluntary services part from laying down guidelines and giving political backing.
- I would like to think that CABx Network could be included and as Chair of the Surrey group, I would like to know more and attend one of the events.
- There is no mention of the Age Concern Network of 27 organisations in the County.
- Collaborative partnership to high professional standards should be Surrey's boast.
- Surrey CVYS has had representatives on the Surrey Leadership Group (Chairs by Nick Skellet) in the person of its Chairman, David Hypher, and I have been the voluntary sector representative on the Children and Young People's Commissioning Partnership. Surrey CVYS also has reps on the C&YP area boards. I try to feedback to our members – this process will be eased by putting our papers on our website to be launched before Christmas.
- Such as assembly might be mildly useful, but not sufficient to justify the salary and other costs. The 'engagement part of the voluntary sector budget should be reduced, and the funds released and used to support voluntary groups. This alternative has not been made clear to respondents.
- Much needed in Surrey, where so much of the VCFS involvement is channelled through a single organisation which purports to represent the sector but speaks on our behalf without any system of seeking views.
- With regard to disability and equality, I believe Surrey is beginning to understand disability issues but women's issues are not being considered.

- The proposals are a retrograde step with SCC not to include user led organisations within the original proposals. Please note user led organisations are NOT; repeat NOT community groups as accepted by CC social model of disability.
- Having worked as an LSP Manager, I know first hand the confusion surrounding LSPs and that they actually do. I suggest that a clear and simple (as possible) explanation about the financial implications – and the importance of the VCS at all levels being represented be circulated as widely as possible.
- Need to link to the local CVS's
- Need to link in at a local level with the Borough and Districts
- Surrey County Council welcomes the proposals to improve VCFS engagement with the Surrey Strategic Partnership.

However, there has been some concern raised by Adults Services and Action for Carers that the current proposals as set out in the diagrams do not seem to give service users and carers a direct voice and an opportunity to influence the SSP. Surrey County Council's expectation is that Carers and service users should be shown as groups in their own right, who will feed into the proposed engagement structure.

Overall, notwithstanding the arrangements for service users and carers, agreeing the proposals will be a major encouragement to the sector to get together and agree more coherent positions. Clearly, there is unlikely to be one view, given its complexity, but there are real benefits to the sector being more collective and coherent. Potentially, having to represent the views of the sector at the SSP meetings will greatly encourage this. The proposals provide an opportunity to the VCFS to increase its voice and for the sector to be seen as having legitimate representatives.

The proposals may cause the representatives from the Leadership Group, and perhaps the nominated representatives from the Assembly, to meet outside of the proposed annual assembly. Surrey County Council would like a group of say 5 to 7 representatives from the Assembly to form the VCFS side of the 'Strategic Group' that was set up during last year's VCFS Strategy consultation process. Whilst that group continues to meet, it recognises that it has no legitimacy, and its members are looking forward to the new arrangements being in place.

- NO NO NO. Save the money, we will need it! Don't waste it on extra overheads.
- We are very keen to ensure that Carers in Surrey (100,000) are represented at every level of the proposed processes, and would even propose that Carers should be given their own 'box' on page 16 assembly diagram – top line beneath the VCFS Assembly – and NOT through either LINK or PACS; additionally young carers should be represented at the appropriate levels i.e. the Children and Young People Thematic Partnership representation within the 3 nominees and as an appropriate in the assembly diagram.
- Funding through the LAA bring competitiveness within the VCFS

Gaps in Mapping

- Ex-offenders need to be considered and how they are mapped into the engagement process
- Housing and homelessness is missing and needs to be profiled in the engagement systems

- Need to consider those with a hearing impairment
- Not sure where care homes would fit into this equation
- PACS has now renamed as Surrey Health and Social Care Network
- The Youth Groups Forum is run by Connexions
- There is a gap in smaller sports groups that the Culture Forum will miss
- User and carer led organisations need to be mentioned
- V-Involve – formally Millennium Volunteers has now set up a forum
- Young carers are also a part of the community that need to be considered when engaging with children and young people

Influencing Local Partnerships Unit
ilp@navca.org.uk
www.navca.org.uk/infobank

NAVCA
The Tower
2 Furnival Square
Sheffield S1 4QL

Tel 0114 278 6636
Fax 0114 278 7004
Textphone 0114 278 7025
navca@navca.org.uk
www.navca.org.uk

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