

Summarised Minutes of the Emergency Board Meeting held on 5th January 2011
to discuss the Consortium

Present: Gillie Newton, Ken Crawford, John Stedman, Margaret Coles, Jean Daley, Margaret Woolcott, Cliff Bell, Yvonne Wardrop. SL taking the minutes.

Consortium

There was a prolonged discussion about the consortium and how membership of this would affect the Senior Council?

MC asked whether the organization would be absorbed by Fusion and all board members felt we must guard against this happening. All felt that if Fusion was the lead agency then it should divorce from Living Options to avoid a conflict of interest. GN reported back that Diana Crump had said that their constitution would not permit them taking us over.

KC asked whether the consortium was there purely to distribute the funding from Devon County Council and GN and JS responded that this was not the case but we would be hopefully looking to cut back office expenditure, and offer and receive services from other members of the group.

JS raised, and there was some discussion about, whether there was a conflict of interest involved in the Board of Fusion as there were mainly employed personnel on the Board. SCfD Board felt that the Fusion Board should be user not employee led. JS wondered if Fusion was the best option as the lead agency and was there any alternative.

CB said, after speaking to councillors, that unless we joined we would get no funding at all so we needed to set in writing our terms and what we do and send a letter to all the councillors, local, district and county, before the Scrutiny Committee Budget meeting on the 24th January.

MC raised that she felt that the draft explanation of the Fusion gateway papers had been drawn up within local authority guidelines by paid employees.

GN maintained that in the consortium SCfD is unique and had by far the largest membership which was to our advantage.

YW suggested that we should write to John Coxon for advice and suggestions on how to get the government to put pressure on county councils to provide money for organizations like us or otherwise to provide central govt funding to enable us to continue as we were very much in line with the Big Society. This was agreed.

MW raised that such a major decision should have had a greater lead in than just three week. JS raised the fact that in fact this had been under discussion for a great deal longer than 2 months and that the organization was left out of all the discussions about the joint engagement strategy until it was a fait accompli that Fusion would be the 'gateway' organization to Involvement with Devon County Council, but despite this he felt we should go in with a positive approach, prepared to work together and treat it as a two year period in which we, the organization, could get alternative funding on stream.

Clarification is needed on "What do they mean about working together"?

JS suggested that we go in asking for fairness in representation.

GN and JS will argue our case.

GN asked if the Board was in favour of joining? YW asked if we could go ahead for a two month trial period but the board felt we would have to join for the two-year duration.

GN suggested we use AR's conclusion as a starting point:

- 1) The Board will need to consider whether it is appropriate for direct funding from DCC to be replaced with a Framework Agreement. My opinion is that there is a realistic alternative that would not result in a lesser financial settlement. The Board all agreed with this statement.
- 2) The Board need to consider who should be the lead agency – is this debatable?
- 3) The Board will need to get to know the potential partners (see below).
- 4) In preparation for discussion with potential partners, the Board need to develop a survival budget.

MW suggested and others contributed to:

- 1) We need to maintain our identity and complete independence of SCfD within the consortium including budgets and spending. It is also vital that the SCfD database is kept intact.
- 2) We need to insist on only getting 17% less money (the proposed reduction in contract funding from DCC), not the 50% which has been suggested.
- 3) We want a fair representation with no conflict of interest i.e. paid staff must be divorced from the Fusion Board.
- 4) We need more information on all the other organizations, staffing levels, strong and weak points, where they get funding from etc.

The Board asked if the meeting on Friday was a closed session and whether we could send observers. The board agreed that SL would email PG, copied to GV with this request, and inform CB if she receives no response by Thursday am.

KC raised that Eric Pickles has already said that DCC will only be subject to a 1.9% cut in reality so why is the projected cut to the voluntary sector 17%

Funding Group – CB raised this and asked if SL had received any response from anyone to the letter asking members to put themselves forward for this group. She confirmed she had not.

KC reported that J Corben has drafted an outline of a proposal for funding – core funding is extremely difficult to raise, all is for new projects – e.g. social isolation, keeping fit.

SY-Ross has said she would be willing to assist and will come to the next meeting.

Teignmouth are working intergenerationally – young people going into care homes to get older people's stories for a book. Utilising memory café spaces for other activities. Going into schools. It was agreed that the Funding group should continue.

GN suggested that all Board members put forward suggestions for new members to join the Board and this should be a priority.

Charitable status should go to Funding group – JS is waiting for input from a number of people for the strategic plan – KC, AC, MW.

Job descriptions – KC, CB

Motions for the AGM – GN will speak to Tony Simpson, and KC will finalise the Ron Robert's motions which must be put forward as he was told at the EGM he could.