



**Small Charity Week**

**Transitioning and Transforming**

**Policy Debate Event**

**Worcestershire County Council**

**18<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

## Event Purpose

The event drew together local Small Charities delivering local services to debate and explore the relationship between the Local Authority and small charities delivering public services locally.

The new commissioning environment requires Local Authorities to robustly access 'value for money' services for their communities. This requires Local Authority Commissioners to be ever more creative and resourceful in respect of what they commission and who they commission from as relationships move further along the scale to transactional relationships rather than transformational.

The event provided an opportunity to discuss how small charities are responding to the complex needs of Local Authorities whilst maintaining their focus on delivering the very best of services to their beneficiaries.

The main objectives of the event were to:

1. Network, form relationships and share best practice
2. Inform
3. Understand local needs and wants
4. Encourage local buy-in and ownership of the changing funding and delivery environment
7. Achieve, together, more sustainable results for local citizens
8. Establish more open communication channels, gain trust and break down barriers



## Delegates

A total of 64 delegates attended the event and included voluntary and community organisations, elected members and council officers.



## Event Approach

A networking session ran from 4 - 4:45pm and provided an opportunity to meet and make new contacts. This was followed by a debate and discussion session in the Council Chamber. The Leader of the Council – Adrian Hardman provided the welcome and outlined the context for the event.

A number of questions had been provided by the Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI) who deliver the Small Charities Week initiative and are based around the research currently being compiled with Small Charities and published by the Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI). Three were selected for use at this event.

Table discussions took place on the following questions; key points made are tabled for each question:

### Question 1

Payment by results' is a type of contract under which payment to the service provider (for example a charity) is made wholly or in part based on the results that are achieved rather than delivery of the service.

**How do you believe contracts commissioned on a 'payment by results' basis impact on the quality of services provided by charities to their beneficiaries?**

### Key Points

- Cash flow and risk causes pressure to succeed
- Can cause cherry picking in order to obtain better results
- Larger contracts could incorporate break points
- PbR better suited to commodities than care
- Easier to implement if clear outcomes are measureable

### Question 2

The way that the Government describes the charity sector has changed over time. Definitions have changed from, among others, the 'Third Sector' to the 'Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise' (VCSE) sector.

**Do you think the charity sector possesses unique characteristics compared to say Community Interest Companies and Social Enterprises who are not registered or regulated by the Charity Commission?**

**To what extent do you think it is important for small charities to have a unique identity in contrast to other not-for-profit organisations?**

### Key Points

- Can have a unique selling point with local knowledge, individual response, non statutory, independent
- Is there any need to differentiate?
- Commercial drivers could cause uniqueness to disappear
- Not against charities being enterprising to gain support from funding streams
- Different VCS business models are needed to fit different organisations
- CIC's bring loss of charity benefits e.g. rate relief and funding streams

### Question 3

The voluntary sector is currently operating in the broader context of economic austerity. This means that there have been reductions in funding for public services at both the local and national level.

**How are small local charities responding to reduced funding and what measures, if any, are they taking to diversify their income?**

### Key Points

- Use of external funding streams e.g. European, Big Lottery, Charitable Trusts, Police, Councillor Divisional Funds
- Developing commercial services to meet demand for direct payments
- Use of Changing Futures Fund to provide mentoring, organisational development, choice of support needs
- Trying to find collaborative partners, skill swaps, sharing training
- Mergers and acquisitions
- Marketing – sell ourselves

### SMALL CHARITIES EVENT EVALUATIONS

Question	6 😊	5	4	3	2	1 ☹️	Total Responses
<b>Enjoyment and Interest</b>	13 (23%)	23 (41%)	15 (27%)	4 (7%)		1 (2%)	56
<b>Likelihood of making a difference to you</b>		13 (23%)	19 (34%)	11 (20%)	9 (16%)	4 (7%)	56
<b>Usefulness of meeting other charities</b>	23 (41%)	22 (39%)	7 (12%)	2 (4%)	2 (4%)		56
<b>Usefulness of meeting officers/councillors</b>	8 (15%)	17 (33%)	12 (23%)	8 (15%)	4 (8%)	3 (6%)	52
<b>Usefulness of discussion sessions</b>	12 (22%)	18 (33%)	16 (30%)	5 (9%)	3 (6%)		54
<b>Quality of overall organisational/administration</b>	16 (29%)	25 (45%)	9 (16%)	6 (10%)			56
<b>Suitability of accommodation</b>	17 (31%)	25 (45%)	8 (14%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	55

#### What aspects of the event did you particularly like/dislike

The reminder of the 'depressive' nature of the cut backs and what that holds!  
 Meeting People from other organisations and swapping information  
 Discussion groups informative  
 Questions not very relevant  
 Liked listening to other ideas of adapting to changes  
 Name badges would have been good  
 Difficult environment for people with hearing impairment  
 Lots of consensus on topics  
 No councillor at our table - needed one at each table  
 Not knowing the reasoning for questions  
 Good to have councillor on table to they can heard what it's like on the front line  
 Feedback needed to be more tightly controlled  
 Disability parking information needed in advance  
 Greater clarity re. questions needed  
 Would have been nice to take away delegate list  
 Earlier in the day would be better  
 Q2 not well thought out  
 Only of benefit if something changes as a result  
 Too much time taken on drinks before  
 Short quick responses, well organised and fast paced  
 Summary of discussion points not always relevant to previous discussion in group  
 Question/discussion not entirely relevant  
 Questions didn't make most of the opportunity  
 Wrong questions  
 Enjoyed group I was in

	Yes	No
Do you think that you were given an opportunity to have your say?	53	1
Would you like more events like this to take place?	49	1

**Any other comments you would like to make**

Event worthwhile but difficult to keep up with conversations  
Encouraged by recognition of some learning from council  
Good to have councillors present and hope it will make a difference, particularly re. PBR!  
A number of these events but always end up having same conversations with no change  
Questions needed to be clearer  
Like to see feedback make a difference and know what going to happen moving forward  
Adrian's learnt from what he had heard about the differences between small and large charities  
No sense of ideas being held back  
Good to know others experiencing same issues  
These events useful for networking  
Hope council circulate a synopsis of responses  
Glad I came  
Maybe if parameters had been articulated at start there may have been a different outcome  
CFF helped us move on