

**Conference Edition December 2010**

## Future Focus: Wider Partnership Conference 2010

Partners from the NYSP Wider Partnership convened for another successful annual conference at the Pavilions of Harrogate on 8th November 2010. The event hosted over 200 partners from the public, business, voluntary and community sectors and provided an opportunity for people to network, join workshops, share ideas and listen to several speakers on issues ranging from the Spending Review headlines to the Big Society. So what's next? Pages 2 and 3 provide a round-up of the key points arising from the workshop sessions and how some of these might be taken forward.



### Tackling new challenges

We were delighted to be able to welcome a range of excellent speakers to the conference, including Emma Maier (pictured), editor of the Local Government Chronicle. Emma gave an interesting, journalistic perspective on the changes and challenges stemming from the 'huge change management programme' facing partners since the coalition government has come into power, including implementing concepts such as the Big Society. The latter was also picked up by our closing speaker, Isobel Mills of Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber, who emphasised the need for North Yorkshire

to showcase its good practice examples around Big Society-type projects, such as social enterprises, community services and participatory budgeting. John Moore, Corporate Director of Finance and Central Services at the County Council also helped to set the scene by outlining the key figures from the Spending Review and the impact these will have on partners across the county. Copies of both John's and Isobel's presentations can be downloaded from the NYSP website at [www.nysp.org.uk/widerpartnership](http://www.nysp.org.uk/widerpartnership) – see 'Conference News'.

# Workshops round-up

**Delegates were given the opportunity to participate in two workshop sessions. The first asked delegates to reflect on the challenges and opportunities of the Spending Review for partners and how we might tackle these. The second session sought ideas about what the critical priorities for North Yorkshire might be going forward.**

We have highlighted here some of the key issues arising in each of the six workshop groups. However, some salient points came out of each group which were:

- The Spending Review could hamper long-term planning as people will focus on short-term funding priorities.
- Is the NYSP fitted for the challenges ahead? We need to review the partnership landscape and ensure we are adaptable to it.
- We need to focus on protecting the most vulnerable members of our communities.
- There is concern that people will move into silos or retract into their own organisations because of cuts.
- There will be a need to challenge some public perceptions about services and then harness this to help shape services locally.

The full notes from each workshop session can be downloaded from [www.nysp.org.uk/html/nysp/wider-partnership/conference-news/](http://www.nysp.org.uk/html/nysp/wider-partnership/conference-news/)

## Group 1

- Challenges: what do we focus on and what do we stop doing?
- Opportunities: the voluntary sector may go for larger tenders.
- Solution: who is best placed to provide a service? Identify what we are going to pursue and which organisation is going to lead.
- We must exploit technology and learn to communicate in different ways.
- Partners can share more services to cut costs, for example on waste collection.
- The NYSP vision is generically deliverable but can we say it drives anything? We need to find a level and ask the NYSP: can you all sign up to it? Clearer outcomes needed.



## Group 2

- Protecting vulnerable people is a key priority.
- Freedoms around reporting and inspection burden present opportunities especially when taken on board collectively.
- Opportunity to harness discontent within communities about change and service withdrawals to transform it to energise community ownership initiatives.
- The response to the messages around Big Society, community ownership and responsibility needs to be constructive. This agenda is here to stay.
- Establishing structures that require less in terms of input, e.g. attendance and commitment but invest in ways of finding solutions.

## Group 3

- Is the NYSP the right structure for this journey? Localism is driven by local people and innovative solutions are required. Form must follow function.
- NYSP must undertake a 'threat' assessment within the county – who is the most vulnerable?
- Need to get the right people with the right skills to participate in moving forward on the Big Society.
- Priorities for the NYSP moving forward should be around:
  - Economic development
  - Vulnerable people
  - Stronger communities/social development (local inclusion)

## Group 4

- The NYSP needs to become more outcome-focussed.
- There are opportunities for better identifying and understanding local needs; working with partners to better target and redirect resources.
- There are particular challenges around the size and rurality of North Yorkshire – public transport cuts will impact on rural communities, for example.
- Three key areas for the NYSP to focus on now are:
  - Protecting and supporting the most vulnerable people
  - The economy (including employment)
  - Relationships (and maintaining communication mechanisms)

## Group 5

- There is a good history of partnership-working in the county and a resilience which we must harness.
- There may not be the capacity in the voluntary and community sector to develop and help build community involvement at present.
- We need to use evidence-based practice and learning from elsewhere to make decisions on investments and cuts.
- We can use voluntary sector knowledge to retain and train volunteers.
- We need to have more emphasis on prevention and preventative work.

## Group 6

- The impact of cuts will apply differently and disproportionately to individual organisations and communities. How is this to be balanced?
- The VCS does not have the infrastructure to take on everything and the changes do not mean a wholesale shift from the public to the voluntary sector.
- Organisations that have traditionally had some control will need to give some of this away.
- There are opportunities to encourage more volunteering and also to use and share public sector buildings with the VCS.
- NYSP needs to review what it is trying to deliver; there is a lack of knowledge about what the NYSP is 'on the ground'.

## Next steps...

The NYSP Executive will be reviewing initial thoughts and ideas around what might be the critical priorities for North Yorkshire at their meeting on 3rd February 2011. There will also be an ongoing need to discuss how the NYSP might evolve to meet the challenges of the current climate. Ideas and issues raised at the conference will be pooled into both of these discussions. Progress updates will be reported to NYSP partners via future newsletters and other means as appropriate.



We are always keen to receive feedback to help us improve these events and would be grateful to hear from you. An evaluation form for the conference is available to download from the NYSP website at [www.nysp.org.uk/html/nysp/wider-partnership/conference-news/](http://www.nysp.org.uk/html/nysp/wider-partnership/conference-news/) and includes details of where to return it to. Alternatively, please email any comments to [nysp@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:nysp@northyorks.gov.uk)

# Setting a new direction for North Yorkshire

Discussions are currently underway among the NYSP's six Thematic Partnerships to consider what might be the critical priorities for North Yorkshire over the next few years, with a view to potentially developing a revised Sustainable Community Strategy in 2011. The NYSP Executive has agreed that a plan is needed which sets out how the NYSP will achieve positive outcomes for people but that, in the current climate, such a plan needs to be tightly focussed on three or four key issues which require partnership intervention to be tackled effectively. The Thematic Partnerships have therefore been tasked with giving this some initial consideration and will report back to the NYSP Executive in February 2011. Feedback received from delegates during the NYSP conference workshop sessions will also feed into this process.

## North Yorkshire Financial Inclusion Strategy

**In the current economic climate, the ability for people to manage their finances wisely and to have access to financial services and support services has never been more important.**

In March 2010 a Financial Inclusion conference was held in Harrogate, hosted by the North Yorkshire Advice Services Partnership (NYASP) and the DWP Financial Inclusion Taskforce. Representatives from across the statutory, voluntary, community, faith and business sectors shared information about current services and discussed future needs relating to financial inclusion across North Yorkshire. The rationale for holding the conference was to develop a Financial Inclusion Strategy to build a stronger referral network and to increase funding opportunities for this type of work in the future.

Following the conference a Strategy Steering Group was formed by the NYASP to assist in the development of this document. In North Yorkshire support services are currently available across North Yorkshire but there is clearly more that could be done by bringing partners together at a local level to build a stronger referral network. This is in order to move away from financial inclusion activity being crisis led, as it is now, to balancing crisis led work with early intervention.

The Financial Inclusion Strategy builds on the principles of the national approach and best practice focusing on:

- increasing access to banking, saving and affordable credit
- access to advice
- improving financial capability

In addition, the strategy incorporates measures to:

- help people maximise their income
- prevent people falling into debt
- encourage more collaboration and partnership working
- mainstream financial inclusion

The NYASP has developed the strategy with broad-based thematic priorities but recognises that each district will wish to develop its own action plans in relation to these themes. Bringing partners together at a local level will be essential to ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken. This will either be through the LSPs or through another already established group in the district.

The consultation period for the draft strategy ends on **Monday 31st January 2011**. For further information or a copy of the draft strategy, contact Joanne Foster, DWP Strategic Financial Inclusion Champion. [joanne.foster@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:joanne.foster@sanctuary-housing.co.uk) /tel: 01482 383107

If you have any queries or feedback on this newsletter, or would like to receive it in a different format, please contact Diane Parsons at [diane.parsons@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:diane.parsons@northyorks.gov.uk) or call 01609 532750.

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