



Planning and Partnership at mvda

The first two years...

...reaching out to communities, raising the voice of the VCS and adding value to Middlesbrough life.

The Planning and Partnership Team at Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA) provides core support for Middlesbrough Community Network (MCN), the mechanism through which the voluntary and community sector engages across Middlesbrough Partnership structures.

The Team was established in June 2006 to enable a significant change in the way that MVDA supports MCN. Its aim was to shift the focus from how the voluntary and community sector organises to what it contributes to Partnership activity. The team provides dedicated administrative support for MCN, and four officers with lead responsibility for voluntary and community sector engagement under each of the following themes:

- Children and young people
- Economic development and enterprise
- Health and social care
- Safer and stronger communities.

MCN's representatives from across the local voluntary and community sector contribute a significant amount of unremunerated time, knowledge, skills and abilities to Middlesbrough Partnership activities, in addition to the delivery of critical services to the hardest to reach Middlesbrough communities.

Key achievements:

- Increased membership of and active engagement in MCN (with 27 representatives at July 2008).
- The emergence of a more confident voluntary and community sector.
- Increased public sector recognition of the value of the voluntary and community sector as a strategic partner.

Children and Young People

Since the national introduction of Every Child Matters, the expectations and requirements of people working with children, young people and families have changed. The local voluntary and community sector has responded well to this change, with increasing involvement in strategic planning and partnership working to improve outcomes for children and young people. The achievements of the last two years provide a firm foundation on which to build a range of responsive, integrated and preventative services.

Key achievements:

- A voluntary and community sector (MVDA) place on the Children's Trust Board, supported by Middlesbrough Community Network representatives' engagement across the Children's Trust Every Child Matters theme groups.
- MVDA's initiative to engage the voluntary and community sector in Middlesbrough's Joint Area Review of children's services is attracting considerable interest from other areas.
- MVDA's research into the children's workforce development needs (funded by the Children's Workforce Development Council) has enabled the development of local training and support, including:
 - Every Child Matters training
 - A locally designed training programme for people new to working with children and young people.



Economic Development and Enterprise

The voluntary and community sector's contribution to economic development is often overlooked, but locally recognition is growing of voluntary and community organisations' role as employers and small businesses, capable of attracting resources to the area and investing surpluses in local services. The Planning and Partnership Team supports a range of activity that contributes to Middlesbrough Partnership's objective of revitalising Middlesbrough. Many frontline services support the progression to employment of some of the most excluded groups of Middlesbrough people.

Key achievements:

- A mini conference for Middlesbrough's voluntary and community sector, *Culture, Cash and Community Impact*, explored developments in social enterprise, social benefit accounting and "selling services without selling out".
- Planning and Partnership support for the maximisation of Jobcentre Plus's Deprived Area Fund resulted in some excellent community-based projects to assist the progression to employment of those most distanced from the labour market.
- Co-ordinating the voluntary and community sector's contribution to preparations for the new Working Neighbourhoods Fund, including development of the delivery framework.

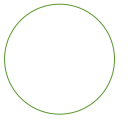


The focus of national policy is to ensure the needs of local people are known and understood by strategic planners and that they are met by patient and user-centred services. The local voluntary and community sector is helping to shape services to meet the needs of Middlesbrough people, building on a tradition of work with communities and individuals who do not readily access mainstream services. Local voluntary and community organisations and associated networks are now acknowledged as an integral part of Middlesbrough's health and social care planning and delivery framework. MVDA's Planning and Partnership Officer is supporting the first Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which will inform future health and social care commissioning in the Borough.

Key achievements:

- Establishing the place of the Supporting People Voluntary and Community Sector Providers Forum within the partnership framework to inform planning for appropriate housing-related support for vulnerable people.
- Supporting the Physical Disabilities Reference Group and shaping key components of Middlesbrough's Physical Disabilities Strategy 2008 – 2011.
- Leading on behalf of Middlesbrough Partnership the local response to proposals for changes to national and regional policy that will impact on local people.





MVDA's Planning and Partnership Team organised and led voluntary and community sector engagement in Middlesbrough's Local Area Agreement, producing the Statement of Community Involvement and developing the concept of Stronger Communities as a crosscutting theme. The newly established Stronger Communities Group has lead responsibility for progressing Local Area Agreement priorities in the area of social and community regeneration, including community cohesion, resident engagement, and voluntary and community sector development.

Key achievements:

- Providing a voluntary and community sector voice for marginalised communities through a seat on the Responsible Authorities Group of Safer Middlesbrough Partnership.
- The recognition and inclusion of homophobic and transphobic hate crime under the Safer Middlesbrough Partnership umbrella, including an initiative to encourage and support reporting.
- Development and leadership of a new Stronger Communities Partnership theme to complement the Safer Middlesbrough Partnership and other Action Groups.

middlesbrough community
NETWORK



Looking Ahead – Future Priorities

Building on the work of the first two years, MVDA's Planning and Partnership Team is poised, over the next three years, to support Middlesbrough Community Network in realising the full value that voluntary and community organisations can bring to improving the quality of life in Middlesbrough.

We will seek to:

- Maximise the opportunities presented by the inclusion of the **environment for a thriving third sector** as a priority in Middlesbrough's Local Area Agreement.
- Increase the impact of the **Working Neighbourhoods Fund** and other strategic initiatives by supporting the development and delivery of high quality and innovative services by local voluntary and community organisations.
- Improve the effective targeting of resources by harnessing the knowledge and experience of frontline voluntary and community organisations to inform local strategic needs assessments.

This work has been made possible with support from Middlesbrough Partnership, and Neighbourhood Renewal Funding through Middlesbrough Council.

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