



**+ READING VOLUNTARY ACTION**

Reading Voluntary and Community Sector

# Vision and Voice Conference 2010

## Event Outcomes

Protective services for  
excluded children from  
funding cuts

# Vision and Voice

## 22 March 2010

Royal Berkshire Conference Centre, Madejski Stadium, Reading

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The conference was for Reading's Voluntary and Community Sector to meet and discuss the issues that are important to us.

The conference provided the opportunity to use our influence, instigate positive change and work towards a new town-wide community strategy – the Vision for Reading 2030.

Delegates set their own agenda, discussed their key issues and generated Visions and priorities. Delegates were then asked to grade these by level of importance.

The following outcomes reflect this prioritisation, and record the Visions and the ideas as to how to achieve them.

# Visions for Reading

- 01 Building Neighbourhoods and Retaining Community Services
- 02 Valuing and Strengthening Family Life
- 03 Older People and Community Life
- 04 Breaking the Cycle of Poverty (*Group A*)
- 05 Breaking the Cycle of Poverty (*Group B*)
- 06 The Impact of Alcohol and Illegal Drugs on Crime
- 07 Developing the Uniqueness of Reading
- 08 Raising Young People's Aspirations
- 09 Expectations for Voluntary Services in an Environment of Decreased Funding
- 10 Attracting and Promoting New Small Business
- 11 Improve the Provision of Services for the Disabled
- 12 Developing Partnerships Between Statutory and Voluntary Sectors (inc. faith-based funding)(*Group A*)
- 13 Developing Partnerships Between Statutory and Voluntary Sectors (inc. faith-based funding)(*Group B*)
- 14 Improving the Health and Welfare of Older People
- 15 Building Respect and Co-operation Between Community Groups

Vision and Voice

A better Reading, for everyone

Keynote Speaker

Baroness Jill Pitkeathley

Caversham,

Chair of the Third Sector Awards

Body,

Deputy Speaker House of Commons

# 01

## Building Neighbourhoods and Retaining Community Services

### Vision

Reading is a place where people know their neighbour, are not afraid to help their neighbour and know where to go for help and support. Where people respect and use their community centres, which provide a hub for communication and where public/voluntary sector partnerships can develop creative ways of delivering services.

### Priorities

Supporting the development of Social Enterprise by pump priming and business mentoring (ref. Connect Reading).

Build Communications Network

+ Networking lunches in community areas

Respect

- + Encourage moral respect
- + Lead by example

## Vision

Reading is a place where family life is valued. Families are given friendship, support and practical help. They are encouraged to develop healthy role models for the development of their children into healthy and well balanced adults so future generations are safeguarded. Families have a network of support.

## Priorities

Affordable housing and financial incentives so that both parents don't have to go out to work.

Relationship education in schools so that teenagers are taught how to establish and maintain relationships.

Setting up local support networks for families so that help is easily available – involving and empowering the community.

## Vision

Reading is a place where older people deliver value into the community and feel good about it.

## Priorities

Where they can access services and support as required.

A place where barriers are broken down between generations and between neighbours.

Where people can share and teach each other skills, thus building relationships and a community free from fear.

Where acknowledgement and empowerment trumps fear.



## 04 Breaking the Cycle of Poverty *(Group A)*

### Vision

To raise aspirations and opportunities for individuals (and families) and promote a framework of values that help connectedness with the community.

### Priorities

Raising realistic aspirations for all individuals in the community.

Ensuring prompt multi-professional interventions so that short-term early investment saves long-term costs.

Learning and working together through the involvement of members of the community.



## Vision

Establishing a point where every individual has the belief that it doesn't have to be that way. Where every generation hopes and encourages belief that for our children there will be more optimism.

## Priorities

Poverty – not just income

Relative poverty/optimism/  
aspiration

Sense of worth and  
participating in a  
worthwhile life

Positive small steps and more  
dialogue with those in 'poverty'

Relationships (trust) and  
valuing the best elements

Prevention (starting young)

Capacity building (those  
already embedded)

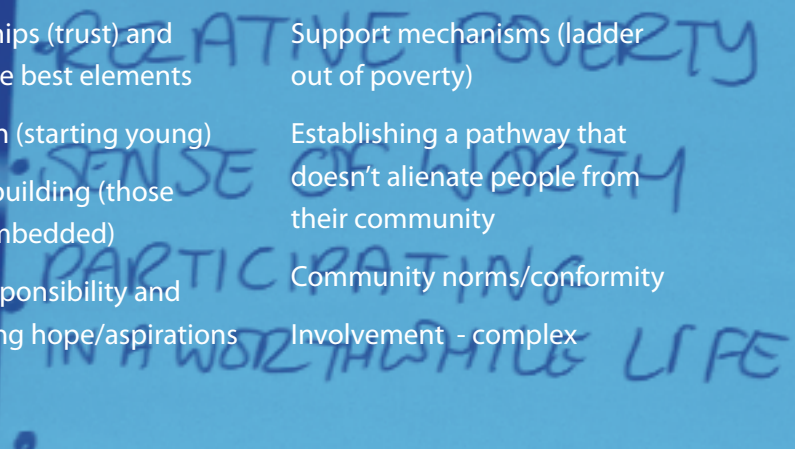
Taking responsibility and  
establishing hope/aspirations

Support mechanisms (ladder  
out of poverty)

Establishing a pathway that  
doesn't alienate people from  
their community

Community norms/conformity

Involvement - complex



## Vision

To walk safely down a street in Reading, which is free from the bad impact of drugs and alcohol, so that in twenty years time we have a family-orientated town centre 24/7 and a wider choice of cultural activities.

## Priorities

## Education

- + Family
- + Schools
- + Parenting classes
- + Educate children to educate parents

## Advertising and local media

- + Social stigmas
- + Advertising through NHS

## Prevention Tools

- + Police
- + Parents
- + Legislation
- + Point of sale of alcohol
- + Advertising moderation in drinking

## National Bodies

- + Interact with and feed into national initiatives

## Family Culture

- + Parents as role models
- + Schools and teachers
- + Sports – mentors and role models

## Vision

A cultural and community life which is: Proud of our past, Celebrating our present, Confident of our future, Diverse and inclusive, Reading is unique!

## Priorities

**Planning**

Value the diversity of buildings and of whatever age. Draw up a list of those that matter to Reading and protect them with appropriate planning guidance.

**Leisure**

Support local entertainments  
Create Reading Calendar of Events to include them all and circulate widely.  
Reading is a festival town.

**Commercial**

Identify better location for Market and encourage it to grow.  
Revive St James feast day with a fair.  
Be more specific about shop uses to encourage variety in a locality.



## Vision

Reading will be a community which will create and foster an environment for children and young people to be individuals, empowered to make choices and recognise their own abilities.

## Priorities

Remove/protect against media (stereotypes, "norm", "success")

Celebrate local achievements

Put in place:

- + Early recognition of potential issues
- + Provide local support and services to meet these
- + Recognise vocational qualities alongside academic achievements
- + Mentoring

RAISING YOUNG  
PEOPLES'  
ASPIRATIONS

## Vision

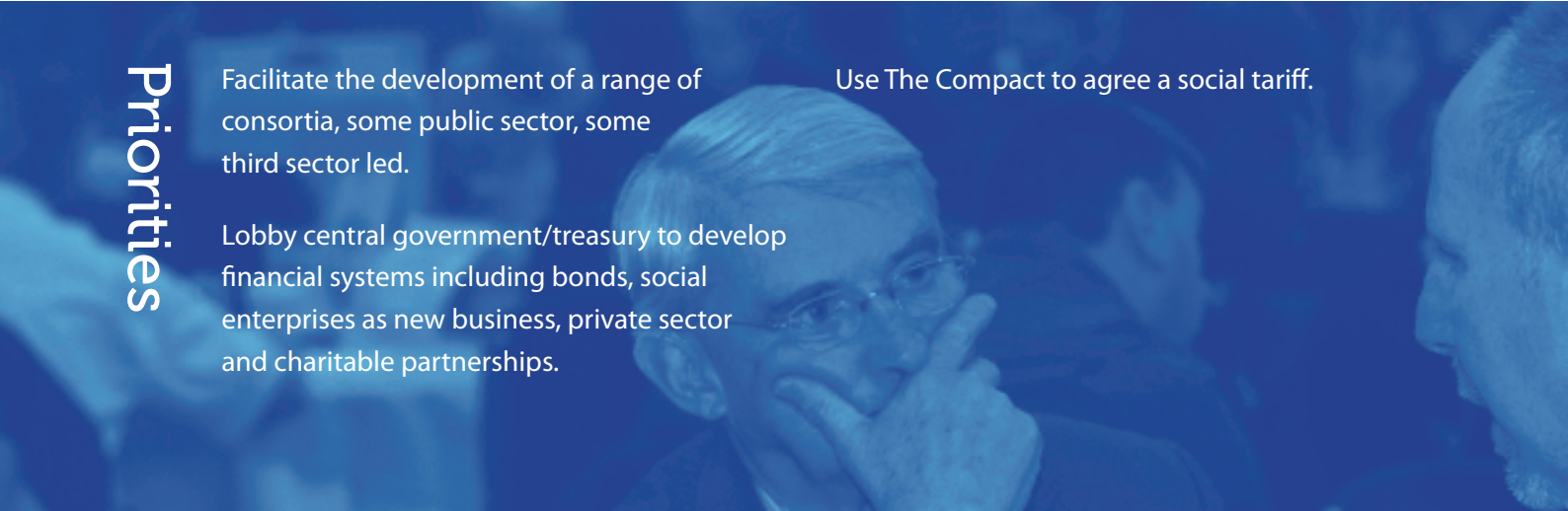
To increase partnership/consortia bids and develop new business models for funding streams to achieve better value. To value preventative work by agreeing a social tariff to demonstrate the 'real terms' of funding.

## Priorities

Facilitate the development of a range of consortia, some public sector, some third sector led.

Lobby central government/treasury to develop financial systems including bonds, social enterprises as new business, private sector and charitable partnerships.

Use The Compact to agree a social tariff.



## Vision

Reading is a place with a vibrant local economy in which small business play a significant part, where everyone feels supported to start/grow a business, breaking the dependency culture and encouraging aspiration, especially for young people and those who find it harder to access jobs in the modern workplace.

## Priorities

Develop a dynamic resource business hub or hubs around the town for use by small businesses – flexible, affordable, professional space, equipment services.

Develop a brokerage service:

- + To support SMEs access public and private contracts
- + Helping SMEs develop flexible partnership working

Convince local government to encourage entrepreneurship of SMEs to bring about local fiscal and economic engagement, drawing on a wide variety of skills at different levels.

3 small business

Reading is place with a vibrant, local  
culture of enterprise in which

## Vision

A vision for all disabled (physical, neurological, sensory, learning, mental health) people (adult, child and elderly) to be able to make the same life choices as anyone else, with the support they need to make it happen.

## Priorities

Legal + legislation = to enforce compliance with current/future laws:

- + Making laws and challenging current – with support (financial)
- + Enforcement
- + Politicians for the future LA

Fair Representation:

- + Councillors
- + Boards and Forums taken seriously/positively contribute to, e.g., planning; Disability Equality Scrutiny Board (e.g. West Berks have one)

Support, Education for carers and self supporting individuals:

- + Good quality services + opportunities – covering area needed (e.g. ex-boundry transport), time needed (e.g. into evenings, to socialise)
- + Continuity of trust of external carers i.e. non-family

Life Choices

- + Housing
- + Transport
- + Culture/Leisure
- + Education and employment

## Vision

Partnership between equals. All parties respect, trust and understand each other, in order to provide a professional service. Mutual exchange of respect of knowledge, expertise and diversity/capability. Continual 2-way review of working practice, service provision and transparency. A recognition of ownership/responsibility of, the voluntary sector as professional bodies. Encouragement: we do feel that this is beginning to happen, we should get there before 2030!

## Priorities

Equality of Partnerships

**Short Term**

Increased involvement throughout whole process: 2 way reviewing – monitoring – initial planning

**Medium Term**

Work exchange

**Long Term**

Increased professionalism across the voluntary sector

**Continual**

Both sectors increasing their 'sale-ability' to the other, resulting in a level playing field and VSOs being competitive option.

## Vision

Being valued as professionals and seen as equals. We as voluntary groups must be up to standard and must act professionally too. Trust is important and goes both ways. Respect. Bring back everything to the 'people we want to serve'.

## Priorities

Statutory sector funding to establish set boundaries for funding for Christian/Faith organisations.

For groups to be clear about their motivation and their ethos and also the understanding of needs of people.

For Reading to be a model for funding and faith based joint working.

Faith should sometimes be taken out of the equation in order to have a level playing field.

Can we have a fair hearing even if we 'get up people's noses'? regardless of what we can deliver.

## Vision

Reading is a place where older people have just and equal treatment through quality flexible housing, EMP and services including health, social care and transport to maintain and enhance their quality of life.

## Priorities

Flexibility and accessibility in:

- + Employment/retirement
- + Housing and Accommodation
- + Transport solutions (to avoid isolation)
- + Leisure, sport and cultural activities
- + Health and social care

Improved availability of information about all the above, e.g. home-accessible technology and media.

Addressing poverty at an individual level.

Raising and keeping older people's needs on the Reading Agenda.

## Vision

Reading is a place which is welcoming and where everyone can access information they need through central and local community points which are independent and voluntary and community led.

## Priorities

Providing focus training to interested volunteers in *Community Development Principles* to people connected with wider community.

Community Development *Activists* meeting up every 3 months informally to network and exchange ideas.

Regular publishing of profiles of the different groups working in Reading.



# Your Vision What Happens Next?

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Your vision will be incorporated into a refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy.

It is being developed by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), a body that links up statutory, voluntary and business organisations in Reading.

LSP issues include health, children, young and older people, safer neighbourhoods etc; issues that affect everyone in our town.

You can continue to have your voice heard by linking up with Stronger Together, who assist local groups with representation, influencing and training support.

Find out more at  
[www.strongertogether.org.uk](http://www.strongertogether.org.uk)



# stronger together

consider, plan, deliver

The **Stronger Together** programme brings together four forums: **The Forum, Sakoma** (BME Communities), **Reading Faith Forum**, and **Reading Children's and Voluntary Youth Services** (RCVYS), into a consortium with **Reading Voluntary Action** to ensure that the voice of the voluntary and community sector is able to influence strategic decision-making.

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Stronger Together is supported  
by Reading Voluntary Action

[www.rva.org.uk](http://www.rva.org.uk)



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