

Changing the Dynamics

Changing the Dynamics: Contents

28.06.13

1. Introduction	p.3
2. Co-Production	p.4
3. Methodology	p.8
4. Findings	p.10
5. Evidence: Case Studies	p.15
6. Conclusion	p.22
Appendix 1: Collation of individual interviews	p.25
Appendix II: Collation of evaluation questionnaire	p.32

Working together, colleges, training providers, voluntary organisations and community groups can make an enormous contribution to restoring this country

John Hayes, Minister for Skills, FE and Lifelong Learning

1. Introduction

Background and Aims

Changing the Dynamics was delivered between November 2012 and June 2013 by the West Midlands Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (WMCETT) in conjunction with Clever Elephant, a well-established Midlands-based consultancy company. The aim was to explore how professional relationships between FE colleges and Third Sector infrastructure organisations could be improved, both to secure better services to learners, and to support colleges both with community accountability and responding appropriately to community need. The project sought to identify useful and/or new models of engagement, partnership, leadership and co-production. These would be captured in case studies, and the case studies once written up, could inform developing practice in line with *New Challenges, New Chances* (BIS Dec 2011).

First some definitions: What is the Third Sector?

This term describes organisations that are not-for-profit and non-governmental, in contrast to the private and public sectors. The terms voluntary sector, community sector, civil society, and charities are also sometimes used. Third sector organisations provide services across the whole of society including education, environmental services, housing, religion, politics and health and social care. Those delivering such services are often called front line organisations

What is Third Sector Infrastructure? “It’s support by another name”

“Infrastructure describes the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support and develop, co-ordinate, represent and promote front line organisations, thus enabling them to deliver their missions more effectively”
(ChangeUp 2004: 15)

What is Co-Production? “Everyone is a resource”

Co-production is the joint product of citizens and government undertaking activities together. It’s an old idea that is coming back in to focus as austerity bites. It regards people not merely as repositories of need or recipients of services, but as the very resource that can turn services around. This takes a cultural shift as it also moves the balance of power around between professionals and individuals. It requires everyone to commit to working together.

The research was designed to deliver four outcomes. These were: increased understanding, locally appropriate initiatives, new and groundbreaking cross sector relationships, and case studies of emerging models of co-production and collaboration. The action research

approach process was iterative and reflected key governmental policy strands including *New Challenges*, *New Chances* and the *Localism Act* (2011).

2. Co-Production and *Changing the Dynamics*

Rationale: Content and Methodology

Changing the Dynamics focused on relationships between the FE sector and the Third Sector infrastructure. Identifying the issue and designing the activity were both underpinned by co production processes. It was the third in a series of WMCETT cross sector projects funded by LSIS:

- ✓ *Change Exchange* 2011
- ✓ *Changing Landscapes* 2012
- ✓ *Changing the Dynamics* 2013

The need for *Changing the Dynamics* was identified during the preceding two projects. In 2011 WMCETT ran the *Change Exchange*, a project which involved representatives from across the lifelong learning sector, as well as organisations like LSIS, the SFA, BIS Local, the LEPS, local authorities, and Jobcentre Plus.

Change Exchange examined the new government's policy and funding changes and brought organisations together to ask them how they were responding to the new policies. Many participants seized this opportunity to forge new links with individuals and organisations that they had not met before, despite in many cases having worked in the same area for some time. Often most enthusiastic were representatives from Further Education to meet representatives from the Third Sector. It became apparent that the interests of both sectors were beginning to coincide under the pressure of the new policies; whereas previously, funding regimes, professional boundaries, silo thinking and competition had held them apart.

Changing Landscapes followed *Change Exchange* in 2012. *Changing Landscapes* was designed to track the unfolding impact of the policy change. *Change Exchange* had shown that *New Challenges, New Chances* was demanding changes to structures and behaviours, but how were these progressing? New research was designed to follow this up. Clever Elephant undertook interviews with representatives from nine FE College, five ACLs, five LEPS, two private sector training providers, two Third Sector training providers, BIS and LSIS. Among *Changing Landscapes'* (eight main) findings, the following were prominent and highlighted the issues that led to *Changing the Dynamics*:

- Providers report that it is difficult to engage strategically with Third Sector, and infrastructure organisations were looking at how they might position themselves in that role.
- Partnerships and collaborations appear to be informed by previous histories and assumptions. In some cases, these relationships need facilitation.

- Currently the way the whole further education system is funded makes collaboration difficult.
- Colleges should be encouraged to work with others in their local communities.

Changing the Dynamics involved working with four of the FE colleges with which WMCETT had already had contact, and four Third Sector Infrastructure bodies, whose role WMCETT had become increasingly aware of in the preceding two projects. The methodology was designed to provide a mechanism for FE Colleges and the Third Sector to engage with each other strategically in four geographic areas. Clever Elephant has strong connections with the Third Sector and was able to broker this new set of relationships, and discuss with them what they would find most useful to explore, discuss and develop in terms of joint strategies and approaches.

This value of this approach was endorsed later by what our *Changing the Dynamics* participants said in interview. Here is a sample of comments made by FE representatives:

- *If there was an active infrastructure organisation here, we would certainly link with them....*
- *If we had decent partnerships with the Third Sector then..... we need to have dialogue*
- *The greatest change that we need is to be able to develop informal and formal relationships with the Third Sector. To do this we need to develop clear lines of communications and a student referral route.*
- *The key to any engagement with the Third Sector is information. We need to know what organisations there are in our locality, what they do and who they are involved with. We need someone to come in to liaise with the FEC.*

Here is a sample of comments made by representatives from Third Sector Infrastructure:

- *The college now commissions out far less work than previously to VCOs and this is reducing its points of contact with the community. At the same time the college does seem to realise that it needs to do a lot more in the community and with the community. However they seem to think they can do it on their own but they don't have a clue about community development. It would be so much easier if they would work with the Third Sector..... we are willing and can see the value of their expertise and systems but sadly they seem to think that training is just something that the Third Sector plays at.*
- *They really don't understand that they are not getting the community through their doors, just those people that are comfortable with the college setting. they do need to acknowledge that we reach communities they don't go anywhere near and that this is a specialism that they should value.*
- *Every sector has good and bad practitioners whether in the FEC or in the Third Sector, but the FEC stereotypes all Third Sector providers as somehow amateur. This is a real mistake.*

Rationale: Co-Production and Methodology

Co production processes underpinned the methodology used in the project. This is what the FE representatives said concerning the research processes and outcomes:

- *I think that there is a gap in terms of finding help, support and advice around the issue of the relationship between the Third Sector and Further Education. It would be really helpful to have some case studies illustrating good practice.*
- *Active dialogue could be helpful – as not yet at the stage of identifying how to take forward – we need to look at case studies from elsewhere, that are about to be published; need to select model closest to us.*

Here are some things the Third Sector representatives said:

- *The FEC doesn't really know how to engage with the sector but it is difficult to get them to let us help them to hear us. Lots of dialogue needs to happen, it's urgent and it's crucial, but they know that.*
- *If FEC and VCS could sit at the same table, discuss and understand the issues that they both share, and work out how we can work together effectively. We both need to know what each other does and delivers and we both need to recognize the others' expertise skills knowledge and experience. Both parties must be less precious and recognize that there's good and bad in each.*
- *They need to recognize that engaging with marginalised communities takes a very different skills set to that held by a teacher or lecturer. They need to appreciate that community development is a professional skill in its own right.*

These comments reflect on the importance of getting the research right and basing it on the actual and current relationship between the two sectors. Getting the relationship right in turn has important implications for learners' access to college provision (especially those learners most marginalised in our society), and improving quality and practitioner understanding. It involves changing organisational practices in both sectors. *Changing the Dynamics* itself demonstrates the value of a co-productive approach to subject and process; it used the expertise of preceding project participants to focus on an interface which they themselves had identified as a priority and definitely in need of attention.

3. Methodology

As described in the preceding chapter, the methodology involved active engagement with senior representatives from FE colleges and Third Sector Infrastructure. Four geographic areas were selected to participate in the study, two urban (one a city which is particularly ethnically diverse, the other a town in the same conurbation); one rural shire, and one county with several prominent and fairly diverse market towns. Each area was served by one FE college and had one acknowledged Third Sector Infrastructure organisation.

The methodology involved designing a research framework based on previous learning, conducting interviews with selected interviewees from the key sectors to explore the local status quo; collating the findings and extracting from these both general and locally-specific barriers or good practice in terms of collaboration between the college and the Third Sector. Researchers asked respondents if they would engage in structured dialogues with their local opposite number, and all agreed.

The content of the structured dialogues was agreed in discussion with interviewees. Co-producing the content in this way gave everyone confidence that discussions would focus on the things that mattered to them ('everyone is a resource'). This approach engaged appropriate 'dialoguers'. Briefing sheets were prepared for each dialogue providing feedback on what each other had said. Responding to a loud and clear message from interviewees that they expected "*agreed joint actions as a result*", the structured dialogues duly took place in each of the four localities. At least three participants contributed to each dialogue: either the college Principals or a Vice Principal or Departmental Head, the Chief Executive or a prominent Trustee from the local Third Sector infrastructure organisation, a provider of community-based learning and/or a Local Authority ACL lead.

After the dialogues, the researchers began to draft the four case studies. They re-contacted participants to update on their post-dialogue activity. They extracted the important learning points so far. These made plain those assumptions and barriers that were impeding – or indeed helping – local relationships. The case studies illustrate both positive and negative aspects in the strategic engagement of FE colleges and Third Sector Infrastructure.

In order to maintain the co-productive approach, WMCETT then invited all four case study participants to come together for a 'sharing practice' workshop in June 2013. At this stage participants were also asked to evaluate the project and assess its impact on their own work.

Initially it had been intended to use this time for a dissemination event. However the contracting LSIS timetable and the sheer weight of learning emerging from the research dictated a change of plan. This event would now consolidate the new relationships

developed in the structured dialogues and extend the timeline of the case studies, so they could become the tool for learning which everyone wanted. Dissemination was deferred to a date after 30 June 2013 (the end date for *Changing the Dynamics*). WMCETT would arrange dissemination of the report and findings to the wide network of sectors and agencies with which it had engaged during *Change Exchange* in 2011 and *Changing Landscapes* in 2012.

4. Findings

What has been learned from taking part in this project?

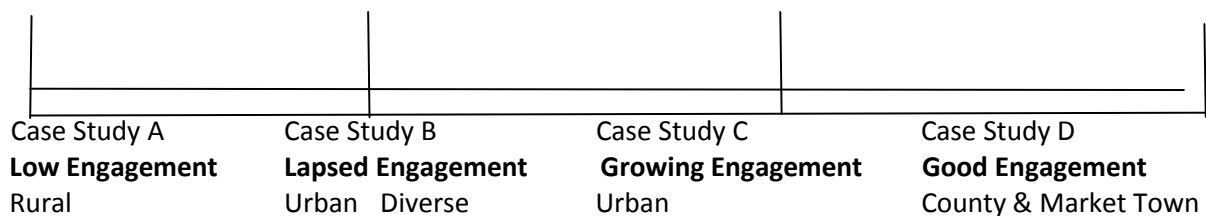
Different Starting Points

The research identified that the four case study areas were at different points on a spectrum of co-working and engagement. These comments from the initial interviews signalled how wide apart these starting points were:

FE Sector: *“Not sure this is even on our radar “right through to “We have been working with the community for such a long time. We are aware that times are tough for the Third Sector and that they need our help more”.*

Third Sector: *“The fact is that he Who is he- should we change to ‘we have’? YES SHOULD BE WE HAVE never been approached by the FE college despite being a well-established third sector organisation in the community” and “The college wants us to bring people in but is reluctant to passport to voluntary organisations as they’d then lose their own delivery which results in redundancies” through to “Let’s work together to see what the Third Sector can deliver; let’s pilot some things”.*

Starting Points: Engagement Spectrum



Each area had its own particular mix of negatives and positives, reflections often based on organisational memories and practices that themselves had arisen from particular circumstance, history and long-gone individual player. Getting rid of past negativity was an important first step in the structured dialogues. (In fact, actually meeting and interacting with someone from the other sector did a great deal to dispel these local myths.)

A full and anonymised record of the interviews can be found in Appendix 1.

The aim was to enable the four areas to move along the spectrum to a point that they both

agreed was desirable and useful to them in their locality. Where engagement was already mutually desired or initiated, the dialogue could start from a stronger footing than where, frankly, neither sector saw much mileage in getting together:

- *Development will depend on people's willingness to look beyond – including my own.*
- *New word, won't make any difference.....*
- *Our community is about learning, not tea drinkers in village halls.....*

Although it should be noted here that the potential impact of changing policy was universally acknowledged:

- *New Challenges, New Chances' aspirations have not penetrated here, we are in back to basics mood.....*
- *...The report by Baroness Sharp, the college has as a key principle " energise our community".*
- *Over the last 18 months colleges have felt increased pressure to be more creative in the curriculum offer that they make.*
- *It will change more soon.*

The aim of the structured dialogue was to reflect the local *status quo* back to our local participants, to enable representatives to establish the level of engagement they wanted, to explore *if* and then *how* they would like to take their relationship forwards, and to come out of the dialogue committed to at least one change action.

This works both ways: the Third Sector and the college need to do things differently afterwards. There needs to be a mutual commitment agreed, otherwise it's just another talking shop.

Brokering Information and Sharing It

Each dialogue therefore opened with feedback on the local context, attitudes and level of relationship. Each group then discussed issues specific to their locality. Each was supported to discuss the following topics:

- What's in the way of a good relationship between us? Our current concerns and barriers (historical, cultural, financial, administrative, operational, communication, other?)
- What would a good relationship between us look like? (what might it involve in terms of information, accountability, negotiation, partnership work and playing to strengths, other?)

- What are we doing already that we could build upon? (In terms of current opportunities where we already act together and use our difference well?)
- How can we start to improve our relationship? What is our local ambition and what are our future opportunities?
- Can we jointly identify one important joint action to take away and each deliver?

The content and outcomes from the structured dialogue sessions are incorporated in the four case studies below. The case studies also indicate the measurable impact of this initiative on relationships in the four areas. In the meantime here are some of the most important learning points that have emerged from them all.

Commonly Described Barriers to Mutually Beneficial Relationships

The barriers most frequently described by participants were:

- **Attitudinal:** an attitude of disrespect for each other's expertise, often based on a local history of being 'let down' in one way or another
- **Informational:** not really knowing what the other does; acting on the basis of partial or stereotyped information
- **Cultural:** Third Sector being seen as 'kindly' and the FE sector as 'hard-nosed' e.g. the Third Sector is over ambitious for its learners in terms of the qualifications and outcomes they might achieve, whereas the colleges is a business and has to take a less risky, 'more realistic' approach. Third Sector feeling that the college is more concerned with keeping its workforce than meeting the needs of the marginalised communities with which it works
- **Performance:** historical lack of synergy in the performance indicators used by the two sectors. This underpins the different cultures e.g. Third Sector sees college's drive to get people *job* ready whereas the third sector's function is to get people *learning* ready
- **Organisation and Structure:** at any given time there will be many different connections and interfaces between the Third Sector and the college, involving staff from different departments, organisations and projects. This is too ad hoc for strategic decision-making. There needs to be a central point of contact for information sharing and strategic discussion
- **Financial:** the dominance of ring fenced funding for students, often in outcomes-

driven programmes, has made the sectors compete rather than cooperate, and held them back from cross referral. They view each other as competitors

- **Administrative:** fear that the Third Sector will not provide evidence about the quality of its provision, making it a high-risk option. Also the fear that community-based sub contractors increase college risks through poor financial and administrative record keeping. Counterbalanced by the Third Sector's view that the college demands too much bureaucracy, disproportionate to the size of delivery contract
- **Language: Community Accountability:** the colleges in the study did not share a consistent definition of the term 'community', and treated 'accountability' as a flexible concept. Their definitions did not align with the Third Sector's concept of 'community' (as in 'the voluntary and community sector') or 'accountability' to users.

General Learning Points

Here are some important general learning points that the four case studies illustrate:

The Further Education Sector and the Third Sector have very different cultures. These differences reflect different organisational ecologies and each has responded differently to changes in policy and funding. The result is that, whilst both have the wellbeing of their learners and beneficiaries at heart, they deliver their services quite separately in most cases, and they deliver under different conditions. They do not share a common language or understand each others' values.

This is important when central government policy is promoting "community accountability". Our research shows that understanding of even the single word "community" is wildly variable (excluding NEETs groups for instance from this category in one case, but including local businesses). It also shows that "accountability" is used by colleges to cover almost any type of participation, from a simple customer decision to buy what's on offer through to full-scale citizen engagement in curriculum design.

So whilst the two sectors generally have principles and aspirations about quality and inclusivity, and are sincere in their responsibilities to the "communities" which they serve, they generally work at a considerable distance from each other. Collaboration between the two is hampered, sometimes even prevented by linguistic cross wires, cultural difference and local misinformation. In these times of austerity, however, silo thinking and silo delivery is no longer an option. This is why this research is important.

Our key learning therefore is that more needs to be done to broker and support the relationship between the Further Education Sector and the Third Sector.

How do we overcome attitudinal, cultural, financial and linguistic barriers, and build mutual trust and indeed respect for what each does best? How do we help them get to know each other and move along the spectrum of mutual engagement to a point of advantage?

In answering this question we also need to take into account the very real issue that the environment for this transformation is likely to go on being characterised by constant change and discontinuity. Even amongst our small group of participants over a relatively short period of under a year, we experienced significant changes of personnel, gaps as people left and significant shifts in policy and structures. Carrying through an inter-sector change process requires sufficient continuity that individuals can build trust and define and agree their shared ambitions. Repeated discontinuity will make the change process significantly more difficult. The best way to maintain a purposeful change process under such conditions is to ensure that there is a clear and written understanding of shared aims and a practical bite sized action plan that allows sufficient time for transformation to take place. This will reaffirm the transformation agenda to 'old hands' and make it transparent and understandable to those who come in later in the process. Our participants found that the strongest common denominator was that both sectors placed the learner and his/her needs firmly at the centre of their own work and at the centre of the collaborative work. This research has shown that by adhering to this core value, previously unconnected or hostile agencies can be brought willingly to the table, negotiate complicated barriers to co-operation and seek new ways of working and co-producing what the learners need.

5. Evidence: Case Studies

As we have seen in the previous chapters, each of the four geographic areas in our study was at a different starting point and had different barriers to co-production. In the case studies that follow we report on where each started from and what journey each undertook and what each achieved in the short time span that has followed. A short summary of the critical learning points follows each case study.

Case Study A

Introduction

The focus for Case Study A is a large rural county with a widely dispersed population of 183,600 and an older age profile in comparison to the national average. The FE College provides for two core groups, 16 to 19 year-olds and adult learners with a total of 6,000 students. The College has a history of working operationally with Third Sector providers to support students. A recent innovation for the College is the housing of the Third Sector adult literacy provision having secured the contract for this work from the Local Authority. The staff of the well-established registered charity which previously held the contract were transferred to the College to maintain the expertise and continuity. This service is heralded by the College as a way of reaching into local communities.

The Third Sector local infrastructure organisation is a membership-based organisation with a turnover of £1m. The organisation is newly formed as it has recently completed a merger of three established membership organisations. It is in the early stages of developing plans and forming strategic relationships as a new entity. It aspires to being a main conduit to Third Sector providers including those who deliver learning and development to local communities.

The relationship between the FEC and the Third Sector had previously been through the network hosted by the Local Authority's Adult & Community Learning. This was now disbanded, so there had been little contact of late other than through the ad hoc relationships the College has, and more recently through the Adult Literacy service now within the College, mostly at an operational level.

Dialogue focus and outcomes

The College Principal, the Chief Executive of the Third Sector infrastructure organisation and the manager of the Adult Literacy service participated in the research and the facilitated dialogue. The exploratory discussion focused on what the relationship between the College and the Third Sector could achieve, as this was new ground. There was consensus that it

would be more productive if the focus was on a co-ordinated rather than strategic approach.

The dialogue covered issues based on the need to understand each other's cultures and ways of working before they could identify where working together would bring mutual advantage. Potential development opportunities were identified such as joint bidding, bespoke and cross sector learning, information dissemination, work placements and volunteering for students. The Third Sector was keen to develop a relationship with the College that would build capacity in the sector's workforce.

Learning point

This initial contact between the FEC and the Third Sector infrastructure organisation was welcomed as a positive beginning to a developing relationship by both parties and that developments are moving along a spectrum of engagement. However, in recognising that there could be meaningful outcomes to benefit communities through joint work, there is a reality to what can be achieved as there are competitors in the market place and so no monopoly position for either party.

Case Study B

Introduction

Case Study B is focused on a large town within an urban conurbation with a population of 269,000 and higher than average unemployment. The FE College which is rated as outstanding by Ofsted, provides a range of learning opportunities for over 10,000 students including a vocational sixth form, Higher Education, and an Apprenticeship Scheme. They are pro-active with their offer to local communities, using the local Area Partnership structure to make these links. The Third Sector infrastructure organisation in the town provides support services for its members and acts as conduit for the voice of the sector. There are 600 – 700 Third Sector organisations in the town, registered on their database. They have been without a Chief Officer for a while, and have recently made a new appointment. This has resulted in a lapse of engagement between the Third Sector and other local organisations including the College.

Dialogue focus and outcomes

A Third Sector infrastructure organisation trustee and two senior officers from the College participated in the research and the facilitated dialogue. The issue of a lack of communication between the two organisations was identified, which left the College knowing very little about the Third Sector, for example about the sector's work in learning and training and working with priority groups, such as NEETs or Troubled Families. This

had been a key concern as there were real opportunities for joint working to reach into communities and to meet the College's vision.

Through the dialogue many areas were identified for potential joint working for mutual benefit and the recent appointment of a Chief Officer was seen as a real opportunity to make this happen.

- The College recognised the offer they can make to Third Sector organisations to develop their businesses, including those who provide learning opportunities to communities with publicly funded contracts.
- The infrastructure organisation can contribute to the College's community accountability by disseminating information to the sector through its bulletins and newsletters.
- Other longer term aims included setting up cross-sector referral routes, for example Third Sector organisations offering apprenticeships and the potential to undertake joint bidding tapping into the College's resources using Grant Finder software and their bid-writing capacity.
- The College was keen to support the Third Sector by providing students on work placements for example business start-up and IT students.
- There were mutual advantages that do not necessarily involve money.

They are now working together on a joint action plan with a number of objectives, for the College to provide support to Third Sector organisations who are under resourced and under staffed, to develop access to apprenticeships and to provide students with volunteering opportunities in the community.

Learning Points

The College was enthusiastic about the need for a thriving relationship with an active Third Sector infrastructure organisation to deliver their ambitions and had been somewhat frustrated at the lack of communication and engagement. They saw the opportunity of a new Chief Officer as a unique opportunity to seize upon to mobilise the relationship. The College was keen to gain access to the wider Third Sector and an up-to-date profile of what it delivers and where. Counter to this is the reality in terms of the capacity of the infrastructure organisation and how this fits with their work priorities.

CASE STUDY C

Introduction

A city in an urban conurbation with a population of 249,470 was the focus for this case study. It is one of the 10% most deprived Local Authority areas in England, with an unemployment rate of 8% of the population. The FE College has 4,500 students accessing a range of provision, including a Higher Education Centre, an Apprenticeship Scheme, an A level Centre and a range of vocational courses including work-based learning. The local Third Sector infrastructure organisation is well established, providing its members with a range of services to support their work and advocates on their behalf, acting as an honest broker. Working with many other partners the organisation also serves as the lead and accountable body for large development programmes such as health and employment schemes.

There is a strong history of cross agency working in the city in education and training. There has been a developing relationship between the College and the third sector infrastructure organisation, with a specific focus on the need to broker the relationship between Third Sector learning providers and grant funding through the College. The involvement of the Council's Adult Education Service has also been instrumental in this relationship, as they are a major deliverer of local community learning, with a substantial turnover and a large staff team.

Dialogue focus and outcomes

The College's Director of Corporate Planning and Development and the Local Authority's Head of Adult Education Services took part in the research and the facilitated meeting, with a follow up meeting held with the Chief Executive of the third sector infrastructure organisation. There is an ambition to establish a Community Learning Trust (CLT), to act as a repository for community learning. This is the focus of a pre-existing group, the Learning Partnership, which is now referred to as the CLT Board. A range of stakeholders are involved including the College, the Local Authority, the local infrastructure organisation, Third Sector providers, art galleries, museums and libraries. They are currently observing other emerging CLTs.

The dialogue highlighted a number of uncertainties and issues.

- The FE College was going through a period of change with a revision of their strategic plan under the leadership of an interim principal.
- The legacy of the relationship between the Third Sector and the College, in terms of access to funding, was in evidence, which contributes to the deficit of a collective approach from the sector.
- Third Sector providers continue to act independently and this impacts on the

capacity of the infrastructure body's role as an intermediary.

The need to move towards joint accountability for sharing resources to achieve outcomes for community learning was identified as key which requires a cultural step change. The question raised in this context was “do we need to keep everyone happy, or work towards getting the best outcomes for learners in the city?”

It was recognised that the CLT needs to broaden its membership to include for example the health service and the police and that a smaller executive group needs to be established to focus on future plans. A strategic plan is needed to evidence community need and the strategic use of resources along with an agreement about roles and the deployment of organisational resources.

Learning Points

To achieve the aspiration of a local CLT there is a need for a shared vision and strategic leadership from the College and the Third Sector infrastructure organisation, which presents real challenges. Their respective roles and contributions are currently undermined by current circumstances. Within the Third Sector there are ongoing issues to address of impartiality and representation which hinder strategic development. Within the College whilst it undergoes a period of revision, it is unclear how it will relate to the CLT proposal and how it will want to engage with the third sector.

(Note: during the research period the key contact within the College left his job and a new principal was appointed.)

Case Study D

Introduction

This case study is based on a rural and urban county-wide area which includes significant market towns with a total population of 543,900. Over the past 10 years the working population has not increased at the same rate as the rise in births and rise in population over 65, so there is an increasing dependency ratio. The unemployment rate at 5.8% across the county is smaller than the national and West Midlands figure, but the unemployment rate among under 24 year olds is more than twice the rate of those over 24. The NEET rate has fallen but with more in the north of the county. The FE College is one of the largest in the country with six centres spread over two counties supporting 18,500 students accessing a diverse programme of courses including Higher Education and apprenticeships. The county-wide Third Sector infrastructure organisation is well established following a merger of local district infrastructure organisations five years ago. It is an active organisation providing a wide range of services for Third Sector organisations to support their work.

There is an existing shadow Community Learning Trust (CLT), initiated by three Third Sector membership-based organisations in partnership with the County Council's Adult & Community Learning service. The CLT at this stage is working as an unincorporated partnership which aims to bring training providers together to improve the experience of the learner and efficient use of resources by co-ordinating the training and learning that is offered across the county. It has been promoting the benefits to a wider spread of organisations including the local FE College.

Dialogue focus and outcomes

The College Vice Principal, the Third Sector infrastructure organisation's Training and Quality Manager and the Adult & Community Learning Head of Service participated in the research and the facilitated dialogue. The ambitions of the emerging Community Learning Trust were explored in detail. The following points were discussed in the context of seeking to work more collaboratively in the future.

- The CLT is unique in the county in that it focuses on learners, not on providers, taking a whole person approach, without any disjunction in their learning between providers, addressing the stop/start approach with agencies competing over learners. It has developed a framework and a development plan with some protocols, and currently involves the Third Sector and the ACL. There is a desire to introduce new players now, for example the FE College and the University.
- Competition for funding works against collaboration and money may be a barrier to relationship building. Each partner may be operating a different business model and subject to different rules and constraints; therefore there is the need to identify the spaces where organisations can work together, such as the CLT.
- The Local Authority currently favours outsourcing ACL services through commissioning and the outcome and impact of this is as yet unclear. The uncertainty has resulted in drop in the level of learner engagement.
- Commissioners sometimes assume there is duplication rather than variation and specialisms in the provider market, not recognising the complementary relationship that exists between providers; this creates competition rather than collaboration and impedes the quality and breadth of provision.
- The College is currently organising a conference with other agencies with the aim of creating access to a mixed learning economy of providers and provision. This needs to be seamless with the CLT to provide a seamless progression route.

The participants agreed that a multidisciplinary approach to community learning and community development is needed and suggestions for taking this forward were made:

- ✓ Promote an integrated curriculum with tangible output, to which all contribute
- ✓ Set up seamless referral networks and learner transition routes

- ✓ Cross sector shadowing opportunities for the CLT and College staff
- ✓ The CLT brokering student work placements with Third Sector employers

As a result of the dialogue between the College and the Third Sector infrastructure organisation the College has now endorsed their involvement with the CLT and signed the Memorandum of Understanding, becoming a formal partner in the development. This positive decision resulted from the College realising that they need to be proactive to meet the needs of the wider community and that interdependency, in spite of budget cutbacks and the efficiencies to be achieved, makes eminent sense.

The Third Sector infrastructure organisation appreciate the positive contribution the College brings to the development of the CLT both for the learner in the market place, but also to strengthen the CLT structure, for example at a governance level.

A combined stakeholder action plan is being developed and within this it is recognised that there is a need to determine the market place from the perspective of providers from all sectors and identify those in need of learning opportunities and services. The partners share the concern about the level of input required to bring the CLT's ambitions to fruition and it is hoped that resources are secured in the future to address this. There is a potential opportunity for the Local Authority to have the CLT development in their sights in recommissioning Adult & Community Learning.

Learning points

Involvement in the research helped participants to test out assumptions through an impartial third party, which facilitated honest and open discussions. The College was previously seen as “culturally removed from the table” when in fact there was an appetite within the College for collaboration and co-opetition. It is also important to note that the representative from the College had only recently taken his appointment, previously it was perceived that there was not a contact there for the development discussions to happen.

There is an issue of sufficient capacity within partner organisations to meet the demands of getting the shadow CLT set up formally, along with the recognition that more partners are needed and that mistakes may be made along the way.

This development is in the context of policy change and operational uncertainties, for example the future of the Adult Community Learning Service, however, having the right people at the table is essential to building relationships. A range of partner representatives is needed with the vision and commitment to work together to achieve their common goals, i.e. not seeing the individual learner as a commodity but a person on whole journey, along with the attitude that in itself it will be a learning opportunity for all involved.

6. Conclusion

Changing the Dynamics explored these issues:

- Community accountability (in particular responding to the outcomes of the *Dynamic Nucleus, Colleges in their Communities* report, 2011)
- Third Sector strategic engagement with FE colleges (encouraging both to work towards co-production in their localities)
- Captured emerging models and new ways of working across the two sectors

It has resulted in change, both at a micro level in the case study areas and in terms of the learning that has emerged. It has also improved morale, improved communication, increased understanding and mutual respect. The evaluation feedback from participants was very positive largely based on their appreciation of the opportunity for facilitated and impartial discussions between all parties. Please see Appendix II for the collated evaluations.

Below we report on the comments made by respondents and highlight the most significant ones. Evaluation questionnaires were circulated to all participants, with eight out of twelve responding. The questions were open in order to secure a sophisticated response rather than a simple tick box choice.

- When asked if the project had helped with local development four said yes, two felt it was too early to say and others commented on the importance of an impartial broker and an opportunity to leap over barriers.
- In response to questions concerning the future relationship in their area all respondents were enthusiastic to continue but were realistic about the difficulties presented by local changing circumstances, policy and fiscal barriers and by entrenched and ingrained histories.
- When asked what had been most useful to them, responses ranged from 'everything', interviews, structured dialogues etc, through to a very clear endorsement of the facilitated and structured dialogues: *"the facilitated dialogue, great"* (participant comment).
- In response to the question about anything they would like done differently the chief finding was that participants would have wanted a far longer process involving *"pre and post meetings to the facilitated dialogues"* and *"far more facilitated discussion"*;
 - *"Was pleasantly surprised, much more value, very beneficial to him, great for those who want to see and seize an opportunity, to make good use of the facilitated dialogue"*

- In asking if they would recommend others in their sector to be involved the response was a unanimous yes and two people said *“absolutely yes”*.
- When asked if they would take in another future relevant project everyone said yes.
- Other comments elicited reflections on the fact that the research had been *“project good, timely and useful”*, *“very timely”* and *“academically and intellectually stimulating”* and that participants would have valued a longer development phase not least to be able to identify the right people from the very beginning.

What further issues has the project identified and how might these be addressed?

Scratching the Surface

The case studies and learning points in Chapter 5 scratch the surface of what is a complex and entrenched problem. Local organisations, despite wishing the best service for their customers, learners, users or clients, still work away separately, sometimes duplicating each other’s provision and/or competing inappropriately. This creates frustration and comes at a cost to both.

Further Research

The learning points and barriers listed in Chapters 4 and 5 would greatly benefit from further testing and refining. This could turn this snapshot into a toolkit. As we said at the beginning of this report, in times of austerity better value comes from breaking barriers down and treating everyone as a potential resource, and source of knowledge, information and innovation that can benefit service quality. Even funding sometimes (the Third Sector for example can currently access Talent Match and Fulfilling Lives funding that involves learning for the most disadvantaged). No-one should be written off as simply a cost.

Limitations of the Study

This research was based on co-productive methods and was geared towards increasing co working in local learning services, at each stage from curriculum (re-)design through to community-tailored delivery. It would benefit greatly from being extended to more areas. Our single-figure case studies cannot possibly capture the particular and multiple barriers faced by colleges and the Third Sector in localities elsewhere, so that learning remains untapped. We have only been able to extract lessons from evidence found in our four areas.

Real Opportunities for Further Research

As well as exploring the barriers to coproduction in other places, the research would also benefit from involving other important and interested players. The arrival of Community Learning Trusts for example and of other programmes involving supporting learners (such as the fund for Troubled Families) offer a really good opportunity to bring key players from

different sectors together to explore 'whole person', 'no wrong front door' approaches to the delivery of learning. .

Addressing all these issues now would support and broker brand new, un-silo'd joint working, which surely is the way of the future.

APPENDIX 1

CHANGING THE DYNAMICS IN THE FE AND SKILLS SECTOR: COLLATION OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS FROM FE AND THIRD SECTOR

Third Sector:

- Current Practice – within sector (questions 1 - 3)
- Current Practice – with FE (questions 4 – 8)
- Functions, plans/potential (questions 9 - 12)
- Concerns and opportunities (questions 13 – 15)
- Other comments

FE:

- Current Practice – within college (questions 1 – 4)
- Community accountability (questions 5 & 6)
- Policy impact? (questions 7 – 9)
- Concerns and opportunities, relationship with Third Sector (questions 10– 14)
- Other comments

Third Sector
Current Practice – within sector (questions 1 – 3) Question 1: 1 How many member Third Sector organisations do you have whose main remit is delivering FE training, learning and skills? Approx no Question 2: Do they meet/communicate between themselves as a separate subsector group? Question 3: If yes, please outline the arrangements <i>e.g. actual/virtual network, purpose, frequency, attendees, local/other geography?</i>
Case Study A: 1. 240 members in total, no categorisation as yet 2. No 3. n/a Case Study B: 1.D/K have 600+ members in total 2. No 3. There are no Third Sector network meetings here. There is no strategic structure that enables TS organisations to join up. Case Study C: 1. 20 (inc those who do some as well as other roles) 2. Yes 3. Have Community Learning Trust model in place, but didn't go for pilot status. This has been based on

forum that Adult Education hosted. This is a members' learning platform, there are five community learning organisations who are leading lights.

Case Study D:

1. Zero
2. No
3. N/a

FE Sector

Current Practice – with FE (questions 4 – 8)

Question 4: Is the FEC involved?

Question 5: Are other FE stakeholders involved e.g. LA ACL

Question 6: If yes to Q 4 or 5 above, please say why they were invited, who attends and how they are involved

Question 7: Does your infrastructure organisation have regular contact with local FE?

Question 8: If yes, please describe how this came about, your experience and any benefits. Say which FECs.

Case Study A:

4. No
5. No
6. No response
7. No
8. N/a

Case Study B:

4. No response
5. No response
6. No response
7. No
8. NB. Previously the members of the Third Sector infrastructure organisation board have represented the TS in LA directorates but no rep in FEC. New CEO being recruited now

Case Study C:

4. Yes, FE sits on CLT
5. Yes, LA
6. No
7. No, not an enduring relationship; not met new principal yet.
8. Battleground between college and sector, e.g. recently the Community Development Fund (of £220k) which goes to college and is distributed via Learning Partnership (old LSP partnership) raised issues as their subcontracting criteria prevented access by the sector. Lobbying resulted in 85% being passported to VCS, 20 organisations came forward, 11 got some money. The sector met with a representative from the college and one from the ACL to get this result.

Case Study D:

4. No

5.No

6.No

7.Yes

8. Third sector Infrastructure organisation CEO sits on a consultative board for the local Colleges. One College has expressed interest in bringing the community into the college and the infrastructure organisation did arrange a forum for community organisations to take place on college premises where the FEC speaker was supposed to set out the kind of links that could be usefully made. However the main speaker cancelled and feedback from community groups was that the replacement speakers didn't address how to link the third sector and the college. Also the college did not turn up to the Third Sector Compact event even though it had booked a stall there This unreliability has created a negative view of the college, a feeling that the voluntary sector is very low let down on its list of priorities.

3. Functions, plans/potential (questions 9 – 12)

Question 9: What do you think are the main functions of the college?

Question 10: Have changes in FE policy and funding over the last 12 months or so had an impact on the local Third Sector?

Question 11: Is the Third Sector in your area planning to do anything differently with regard to FE as a result? Please explain your answer

Case Study A:

9. Can understand that they will see Third Sector providers as competition

10. No response

11. Yes

12. Working with the Chief Officer of the Adult Literacy Project we hope to put in place a forum/network of training and education providers in the county; there used to be a network but it is not in place any longer (was organised by the Council). Trying to move beyond what that did, e.g. we would like to move into more collaboration, joint bids etc.

Case Study B:

9. The visible signals when you go in to the college are that they are a further education 6th form college.

They cater for 16-19 year olds seeking qualifications. There are no older people visible other than staff

10. Yes

11. d/k Can speak for own organisation but can't speak for whole sector as no mechanism to gather views or info. Interviewee feels that there is not enough certainty about what the college will be doing to be able to plan any response, and that the limitations and expectations coming out of SFA with regard to subcontractors makes him wonder whether it's worth the administrative hassle and whether any subcontracts would contribute enough towards his core cost to make it worth the hassle

12.

- My organisation is well aware that the introduction of loans and charges, the reduction in fee remission available, and the changes to welfare benefits will have a big impact on its ability to deliver training to this local community. He doesn't blame the college as they are simply doing what they have to do as instructed by the government. However the impact at community

level is going to be significant.

- “Already we find that term 2 is the hardest term to keep people on courses. It's straight after Christmas, everyone's broke, its cold, it is a dark, and we often have to offer reduced rates or free training to keep it going. The expectations from government and funders don't seem to have been worked through for their adverse impact on communities like ours.”
- “The college needs to take a much wider view of the needs of the community here.”
- “Do you pay your gas bill or do you pay £200 to go on a course?”
- “I've often seen the college recruiting in September according to all the rules, then panicking towards the end of the financial year to fulfil contractual requirements when it ignores all the rules. So why can't they ignore the rules in September, which would give our community a better chance?”
- “The college doesn't need to deliver everything itself. It could subcontract to the Third Sector” (interviewee knows of only one organisation that has a sub contract with the FEC, to deliver plastering to deprived and troubled young people, because the college can't deliver it itself).

Case Study C:

9. College wants VCS to bring people in, and VCS want to deliver the goods. College is reluctant to passport to voluntary organisations as they then lose their own delivery which results in redundancies etc. They want accredited providers, but this doesn't necessarily lead to quality practice.

10. Yes

11. No

12. The market place has to be shared, but not sure how this is going to be divvied up.

There is nothing different planned, talk of more outsourcing, FE being a business, but colleges think they can do it all, (this was Ofsted criticism). They look down on sector, but very good provision.

Case Study D:

9.

- To deliver accredited training and vocational courses as a steppingstone between school and higher education.
- To get people *job* ready (whereas the Third Sector's function is to get people *learning* ready)
- (I do hope that now it is more than just this that there is more of a community focus. A great many people that we work with would not go through the door of the college for a learning experience.)

10. Yes

11. Yes

12.

- The college now commissions out far less work than previously to VCOs and this is reducing its points of contact with the community. At the same time the college does seem to realise that it needs to do a lot more in the community and with the community. However they seem to think they can do it on their own but they don't have a clue about community development. It would be so much easier if they would work with the Third Sector.
- We have seen that the college is beginning to want to develop a relationship with the Third Sector; we are willing and can see the value of their expertise and systems but sadly they seem to think

that training is just something that the Third Sector plays at. They really don't understand that they are not getting the community through their doors, just those people that are comfortable with the college setting. The Third Sector infrastructure organisation CEO is strategically well-placed to persuade them to engage, but they do need to acknowledge that we reach communities they don't go anywhere near and that this is a specialism that they should value.

4. Concerns and opportunities (questions 13 – 15)

Question 13: What most concerns the Third Sector in your area about FE, if anything?

Question 14: What would most move the relationship forward between FE and the Third Sector in your area? What if anything would the Third Sector most like to ask FE to do/change/deliver?

Question 15: What would a well-functioning Third Sector relationship with FE look like?

Case Study A:

13. No response

14. There is a capacity building opportunity for the sector in governance, good trusteeship, perhaps we could work with the college on this? But big reality check needed re priorities – see below

15. Not sure this is even on our radar - we are looking at premises, viability, golden days are gone. In the current environment there needs to be a big reality check, it is increasing difficult to get people together, need new business model for networks not nice, have to give things up to get somewhere. The current environment may force people to operate in a different way, there is a need to work together to serve demand in the market place rather than compete, but it is as usual about competition versus collaboration.

Case Study B:

13.

- The lack of community-based provision
- The fact that we have never been approached by the FEC despite being a well-established Third Sector organisation in the community, either to act as a subcontractor or even to hire rooms in these buildings, out of which the college could deliver to the local community
- The only regular contact made is when the college each year places a single NVQ student on a short placement. Tokenistic?

14.

- Communications, communications, communications.
- The Third Sector needs to be invited to the table so that the FEC starts to understand what the Third Sector is and the type of services that it delivers - and vice versa
- “We need a realistic information exchange to educate each other as equals on what we deliver.”
- “Communication to underpin a knowledge share”

15.

- A good indicator would be the FEC providing bespoke services to our communities
- Our residents will not travel on and off buses on a cold winter's night to do a course in the college; but they will come here because it's local

- It would not be a tokenistic relationship; there would be proper engagement particularly at the curriculum building stage. At this point the college should be discussing with us what can be subcontracted to the Third Sector and what can be better delivered by the college, almost a hub and spoke model with the college as the hub.
- “Let's work together to see what the Third Sector can deliver; let's pilot some things”

Case Study C:

13. What the college want from sector and what sector wants is a tension.

14. We need wider collaboration – reaching learners in the community, providing community learning, will colleges come out to do this?

15. No response

Case Study D:

13.

- CLT: Our real fear is that they will try to reinvent the wheel and set up a CLT with none of the right people around the table. The Third Sector infrastructure organisation has worked extensively with other Third Sector membership organisations on an initiative to form a CLT. This will be launched on 1st March 2013 this initiative could be the basis of a formal Community Learning Trust. If the local authority decides to outsource ACL, SFA funding (ACL in the county currently gets over £1 million) could go in to the CLT. However there is a strong possibility that colleges might bid to set up a CLT - or that the local authority will not want to give up the budget and try itself to set up a CLT. The latter is less likely as the infrastructure organisation staff have worked very closely with the county's ACL staff.
- SFA: SFA funding really is the most sustainable funding around so if it comes into a community learning trust that doesn't relate to the VCS or link to marginalise communities, it is unlikely to be spent in a way that benefits the people that Third Sector works with them for
- Stereotyping: Every sector has good and bad practitioners whether in the FEC or in the Third Sector, but the FEC stereotypes all Third Sector providers is somehow amateur. This is a real mistake.
- The FEC doesn't really know how to engage with the sector but it is difficult to get them to let us help them to hear us. Lots of dialogue needs to happen it's urgent and it's crucial, but they know that.

14.

- If FEC and VCS could sit at the same table, discuss and understand the issues that they both share, and work out how we can work together effectively. We both need to know what each other does and delivers and we both need to recognize the others expertise skills knowledge and experience. Both parties must be less precious and recognize that there's good and bad in each. They need to recognize that engaging with marginalised communities takes a very different skills set to that held by a teacher or lecturer. They need to appreciate that community development is a professional skill in its own right

15.

- The CLT is currently a network set up in readiness to develop into a Community Learning Trust. It is likely to become a CIC and have two different groups one of providers and deliverers and one for commissioning and contracting. SFA funding and other grants should come into it. The FEC should support and engage with the initiative as a community led CLT. That would look like a

good relationship.

5. Other comments (question 16)

Case Study A:

No response

Case Study B:

- Concerning the structured dialogue: each conversation should end with the question 'what will you do in the next two weeks that will demonstrate the difference that this conversation has made?'
- This works both ways: the Third Sector and the college need to do things differently afterwards. There needs to be a mutual commitment agreed, otherwise it's just another talking shop.

Case Study C:

No response

Case Study D:

- Unfortunately it is likely that the decision concerning a county wide CLT will be determined by personalities and position of the various advocates in the various public agencies, rather than by what is best for the people who live here.
- CLT Pilots - these are coming to an end now. The Exeter pilot involved LA ACL and Exeter CVS so we will look at this to see if it is a model that works.
- BIS Skills Funding Statement 2012 to 2015: this brings the funding information up-to-date. It also talks about community learning p.13 paras 42-44
- 43: "We will require all directly-funded providers of community learning to deliver a truly locally-determined learning offer that conforms to the objectives set out in New Challenges, New Chances (December 2011) and piloted in 2012/13 AY by 15 CLTs. Providers will need to operate in strong local partnerships to ensure their plans and strategies are underpinned by engagement in consultation with communities, Local Authorities, LEPs and other key local stakeholders."

APPENDIX II

COLLATION OF EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Has Changing the Dynamics research project helped with local development? Y/N//too early to say

- Absolutely yes
- Too early to say, especially in light of changes in College (new Principal from 1st May)
- Yes, mainly links for us as new organisation with the well-established FE College
- Has indirectly, opportunity of the forum to provide detailed discussion useful – share in structured but informal way to identify synergies and opportunities; good that it was neutral, probed in non-threatening way, professionals talking to each other without having to worry about own institution – this encouraged me to involve the college
- An area we were working in anyway, was useful in bringing together key agents with impartial third party
- Yes, initial meeting with colleagues at active dialogue, to break the ice and build trusting relationships with Third Sector infrastructure and LA; philosophically all coming from the same place
- Yes
- Too early to say

Summary: 4 x yes, 2 x too early to say.

Comments: useful dialogue, the impartiality of the research helped to break the ice, and to identify common ground.

2. What would you like to see happen over next year in relation to the new work you have started with e.g. exit strategy, mainstreaming relationship etc.

- Build on where have got to and have clear pathway to a Community Learning Trust
- Develop relationship in next year or so, have had a mainstream relationship with College, but potential for changes now, as have to develop new relationship
- Mutual beneficial relationship where we can cascade local information and develop and explore learning opportunities to a broad range of local organisation – an approach that helps us maximise take up and value for money and importantly more opportunities to build capacity within our sector and workforce and mutually respectful relationship emerging with providers
- Relationship between ACL and Third Sector is symbiotic, shared culture, going from strength to strength going forward. Strategic and operational relationship through emerging CLT as an entity, using the collaborative framework to offer opportunity to engage FEC on shared agenda on an equal footing – FEC not playing a senior partner role
- We have already started, met with infrastructure organisation CEO now and he has met with Business Development Manager and myself too, really useful and productive meeting. CEO has also met with the SMP and executive to talk about his role and the

challenges and where College fits. I am meeting with him separately to get an action plan in place

- All required on voluntary basis to have mechanism to question and evaluate the impact of what we're doing. To signpost opportunities, be a reflective process, a dig in the ribs to keep on message is needed
- Build relationship with few voluntary organisations
- I would like to see that a more collaborative way of working could be sought and look at how we can work together to deliver services via the Third Sector to the local community.

Summary: develop and build mutually advantageous relationships.

3. What do you think was the most useful part of the project e.g. initial interviews, facilitated dialogues, being the focus of this research, other, please explain?

- All of it, has really opened my eyes to the restrictions Colleges have to face. Over time real moves, third sector used to be an add on, hope this really isn't the case any longer.
- Only came to one meeting, the facilitated dialogue
- Facilitated dialogue to learn more about different cultures, ways of working and needs that have not been clearly articulated in the past. Good to be able to focus on strategic approach rather than gets bogged down in detailed initiatives, projects and operational matter
- Forum of the facilitated dialogue very useful experience. There is a place for the wider network as well, as with previous projects
- Not involved in early stages, all been useful in trying to develop, useful as a sounding board and an exploration
- Facilitated dialogues, initial meeting, and consequent meetings with infrastructure organisation and LA – to unpack the elephant in the room. Getting us to focus on what's really going to make a difference, not about self interest, not being able to see the bigger picture
- Meeting with CEO of local infrastructure organisation
- I felt the meeting with partners to discuss the barriers, issues and what needs to be done to address such issues was a good focal point and it allowed us to talk through and see how we can move forward.

Summary: facilitated dialogue seen to be most useful, as a way to tease out issues, generate a better understanding of each others' cultures and explore potential links

4. What, if anything, could have been done differently?

- Thought focus could have been on more local issues, but wouldn't have gained understanding of bigger picture, as input at the beginning
- Would have been helpful to have had pre and post meetings to the facilitated dialogue
- Hard to engage, particularly on regional basis due to geography and capacity, both of which hard to overcome and not related or caused by this project – a significant challenge for all participants I am sure
- More facilitated discussions could have taken place, would have liked an opportunity and

would have taken it up. Cannot comment on research plan. Able to have had seminars to focus on issues affecting the sector to deepen understanding, could have been spins off e.g. focus on emergence of social enterprises.

- Would have been useful to have had sight of report before this conversation
- Was pleasantly surprised , much more value, very beneficial, great for those who want to see and seize an opportunity, to make good use of the facilitated dialogue
- Not finished yet, depends on what comes out of it
- None

Summary: more involvement with participants, both pre and post the research dialogues to support a greater understanding and potentially to gain more from the research project.

5. Would you recommend involvement in a similar research project to others in your sector?

- Absolutely
- Yes, makes people think even if nothing directly out of it at the time
- Yes, at strategic level in particular
- Yes
- Yes, as sector really important to be involved in research, got lot to give and got a lot to learn
- Absolutely - yes
- Yes
- Yes

Summary: unanimous yes

6. Would you take part in another relevant research project in the future? y/n/ d/k

- Yes
- Yes
- I would
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes

Summary: unanimous yes

7. Do you have any other comments?

- Thank you, has really been very timely for us.
- No
- I hope this research and learning will culminate in a tangible outcome for our local sector, including stronger partnership with College. There is a meeting between infrastructure organisation and College next week to discuss and to look at what the potential opportunities might be.
- Academically and intellectually stimulating

- Learning point for us, in project planning aims of research be clearer about what project is about before we come into it, then we can get the right people involved from the very beginning
- What happens next – now research is completing, how will this feed forward? Cannot make final meeting in June, really wanted to come, queried possibility to contribute afterwards? College will make sure conversation is held with Third Sector and LA ACL – they are now meeting monthly and College is very keen to get this stakeholder plan up and running.
- Project good, timely and useful. What difference did it make is big question?
- No

Summary: stimulating, useful, timely, prompted participants to meet with each other as a follow up and developments are being discussed.