

looking ahead

NAVCA 2006 - 11

NAVCA supports local infrastructure organisations in developing high quality services to their communities and is their voice nationally.

local focus national voice



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Foreword

NAVCA supports local infrastructure organisations in developing high quality services to their communities and is their voice nationally.

This plan comes at a key moment in our organisation's development. We are introducing our new Quality Award. There is continuing debate about our membership structure and how it should most appropriately reflect the changing shape of local infrastructure provision. We are in receipt of significant new income streams which both validate the developing work of the organisation over the past few years and enable us to introduce new services and enhance current provision. There are major changes in the way in which local government engages with and procures local voluntary and community sector services.

Our planning processes sought to take account of this broad context (as reflected particularly in the Issues paper) and distil it into a series of clear and attainable objectives. They aim to balance a short-term emphasis on task and delivery with a medium-term clarity around outcome and achievement.

This plan is written in the deeply held belief in, and commitment to, the importance of locally owned and grounded infrastructure organisations as being central to sustainable neighbourhood and community development. We also believe that the role of local infrastructure organisations will and must continue to grow in importance.

We have identified four strategic outcomes we wish to achieve by 2011:

- Government policies and practice at all levels will more accurately reflect the needs of local communities as a result of influence exerted through the voice of local voluntary and community organisations.
- Local infrastructure organisations will have strong governance and management and will be providing inclusive services that enable voluntary and community organisations to meet the needs of the communities they represent.
- Communities, supported by local infrastructure organisations, will be active, engaged, strong and connected and able to identify and address their own needs.
- NAVCA will have the resources it needs to achieve its strategic outcomes.

The plan is dependent on maintaining stable finances and the continued professional development of a loyal and talented staff team. They will require leadership from



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senior staff and trustees and an ability to understand the present and anticipate the future. Most of all NAVCA will continue to rely on the support of its members on whose behalf it speaks and to whom it provides essential services.

Fundamentally we believe that this plan paints an exciting and attainable vision which will deliver a powerful and articulate voice for local infrastructure organisations, better services for local infrastructure organisations and, through them, stronger and more vibrant local communities.

Mike Eastwood
Chair

Kevin Curley
Chief Executive

July 2006



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Issues that will influence NAVCA's work in 2006-11

1. Local voluntary action

- 1.1 Local voluntary organisations and community groups have always combined service delivery, volunteer and community involvement (what we now call civil renewal) and campaigning or advocacy work. Over the past 15 years, local organisations have become accustomed to changes in relationships with their local public funders. As first central government and then local authorities began to talk the language of targets, outputs and then outcomes, funding relationships changed from old style grant aid to service level agreements to contracts and now to a combination of commissioning and procurement practices.
- 1.2 At the heart of the relationship between local voluntary action and local public funding, there has always been competition between local organisations for funding from the same sources and there has always been tension arising from the need to provide services and to campaign for improvement in public provision. Especially where local government funding is concerned, it has never been easy for local politicians and officers to accept that local organisations will take their money and then campaign against what the local authority is doing.
- 1.3 To some extent the national debates around choice and public service delivery by voluntary organisations do not reflect local realities. Few local organisations aspire to taking over large sections of public service – day centres for disabled people across a county or mental health services for children and adolescents for example. Indeed, we already have local experience of groups – sometimes led by service users or parents – needing to advocate for improvements in services provided by large national charities under contract to local public funders. This is the context in which local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) will be working.
- 1.4 Most LIO work around public service delivery is likely to be small-scale. It will be about, for example, the delivery of rural day care for older people in village halls. It will be about the delivery of emergency accommodation by a women's aid group in partnership with a housing association. The LIO will need to persuade procurement officers in local public bodies to recognise the value of small-scale specialist provision in the voluntary sector. The issues which have attracted much national attention such as



how contracts are funded, how risks are shared, the length of contracts and the need to have more sensitive ways of doing business than simply using open competitive tendering are all relevant in the local context but the scale is very different from that which concerns national organisations.

1.5 Implications for NAVCA

- a) NAVCA will help members to influence local procurement practices in favour of small, local organisations.
- b) NAVCA will encourage LIOs to undertake some public service delivery where local circumstances make this necessary.
- c) NAVCA will encourage collaboration between national and local charities in preference to wasteful competition.

2. Local government modernisation and partnerships

- 2.1 The rapid pace of local government modernisation is set to continue over the next few years. The trend whereby local authorities provide leadership for local partnerships but deliver fewer services will continue. There will be a high expectation that the voluntary and community sector will participate fully in local strategic partnerships and in the processes of drawing up Local Area Agreements and local public service targets. However, there will continue to be a mismatch between Central Government guidance and the behaviour of many local authorities.
- 2.2 LIOs will need to collaborate in order to maximise their influence on the new local governance arrangements. Greater effectiveness is likely in the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas although some Community Empowerment Networks areas are likely to close. Resources for VCS participation in local partnerships outside the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas will continue to hinder participation.
- 2.3 A key issue for us is to decide how to get the right balance between sanctions and incentives. Do we promote good practice to local authorities in partnership with organisations like IDeA and the LGA? Do we promote the Beacon Councils scheme? Do we seek to use the threat of a low grading through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process to influence authorities? Do we encourage members to use public law to challenge the bad practices and Compact breaches of local authorities? The experience in Leicester has been that following legal action against



the City Council, relationships between the sector and the local authority have improved. It's unlikely that we will have the resources to do all of these at the same time.

2.4. Implications for NAVCA

- a) NAVCA will work with national partners, especially Urban Forum, IDeA, LGA and NCVO, to improve relationships between local authorities, other local public bodies and the local VCS.
- b) NAVCA will work with the Public Law Project so that LIOs are able to confidently engage with local public bodies by using public law to promote good practice and, where necessary, challenge bad practice.
- c) NAVCA will encourage the use of Compact Plus to improve the engagement of local authorities with the local VCS.

3. Neighbourhoods

3.1 The Government's interest in neighbourhoods will give a great boost to the community sector. Indeed a whole chapter of the Labour Manifesto in 2005 was devoted to 'neighbourhood arrangements' and the creation of the Department for Communities and Local Government provides further emphasis. The Government has said it will offer neighbourhoods a range of powers from which they can choose including community funds for local neighbourhoods to spend on local priorities and new opportunities for communities to assume greater responsibility or even ownership of community assets. We are likely to see the introduction of Neighbourhood Charters and what DCLG calls a menu of options for neighbourhood arrangements including new methods of engagement, new rights for neighbourhood bodies and new funding and resources.

3.2 All of this poses particular challenges for LIOs. Despite the fact that many LIOs have undertaken effective neighbourhood development work for many years there is still a view in Government that LIOs do not provide effective support for the community sector. The huge and varied demands on LIOs have indeed meant that there is frequently little capacity for intensive neighbourhood work. The new interest in community anchors and the formation of the Community Alliance (bassac, Community Matters, Development Trusts Association and the Scarman Trust) has reinforced a sense nationally that LIOs do not deliver in neighbourhoods. The Scarman



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Trust and the members of the Development Trusts Association are seen as offering solutions in neighbourhoods where the conventional VCS infrastructure organisations have failed to deliver.

- 3.3 The worst consequence of this was seen in Manchester in March when the City Council awarded a contract for capacity building with neighbourhood groups as well as other more general infrastructure services to the Scarman Trust. As a consequence it is likely that Voluntary Action Manchester will close. Scarman and other national organisations are positioned to compete with LIOs for funding from local public bodies especially for neighbourhood work. A more competitive environment, where local funders procure services from the sector rather than award grants, will create pressures for greater collaboration between LIOs and the development of tendering, negotiating and contracting skills which most do not currently possess. Significantly, funders are moving towards the purchase of specific services which avoid the nuisance of confident LIOs speaking up for the VCS on issues of public policy. It seems this emerging trend is mirrored in the advice field where some LAs are shifting funding away from Law Centres and Independent Advice Centres and instead purchasing specific services such as debt counselling from the private sector or VCS suppliers with no interest in interpreting advice work in policy terms and seeking to influence public bodies.

3.4 Implications for NAVCA

- a) NAVCA will continue to promote awareness of the community development work and neighbourhood work carried out by LIOs.
- b) NAVCA will promote collaboration rather than competition between national community development organisations and LIOs. However, where competition is necessary we will help members to develop the necessary skills.

4. Enterprising approaches

- 4.1 The pressure on LIOs to earn income from the sale of services and the ownership of lettable accommodation can only grow over the next few years. The tension between meeting the needs of local groups and raising funds by charging service users are well known. Some, by contrast, welcome the trend because of the increased local independence from statutory funding which an enterprising approach can deliver.



4.2 In 2004 we managed a project called Enterprising LIOs, funded by ChangeUp, which set out to look at different ways in which LIOs could be assisted to adopt more enterprising approaches and to diversify their funding streams. Ten LIOs were provided with free consultancy from the Development Trusts Association, the Small Business Service and NAVCA members which had already made progress in this field. The project demonstrated both the potential for helping organisations to become more enterprising and the significant culture and skills deficit barriers. Some of the challenges are the same as those posed by the increasingly competitive funding environment described in section 3 above. We will need to look at different strategies for meeting the needs of our members including direct delivery of skills training and partnership with other organisations which have developed expertise in this field.

4.3 Implications for NAVCA

- a) NAVCA believes that LIOs need to become more enterprising and more effective at earning income from trading and using their assets. We will work with national bodies to make available to LIOs opportunities for skills development in this field.
- b) NAVCA will explain to funders that LIOs need a core of strategic funding from local public bodies in order to deliver free services to small, local organisations and groups. We will also support members to make this case locally. Income from entrepreneurial activity will never be sufficient to enable LIOs to deliver a wide range of free services to local organisations and groups.

5. Regionalisation

5.1. We are not going to see elected Regional Assemblies over the next few years but it looks certain that the Regional Development Agencies and Regional Government Offices will exercise more and more economic and public policy influence. The Single Pots controlled by the RDAs have grown and now include new funds for rural as well as urban regeneration. In most regions much of the decision making about the use of this resource is delegated to Sub-Regional Economic Partnerships in various guises and, despite some seemingly reassuring rhetoric, RDAs are set to continue to be judged by Government on sharply focussed economic targets, primarily the number of jobs created and the number of businesses established. For the first time since Harold Wilson's government in the sixties there is no social regeneration fund which



the VCS can access outside the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. The challenge posed by our lack of access to the RDAs and their sub-regional bodies is enormous – as is the focus in RDA targets on narrow economic targets rather than those which recognise the interdependence of social and economic exclusion.

- 5.2. Regional Government Offices are more accessible than the RDAs. Their growing responsibilities – neighbourhood renewal, community empowerment, rural social and community programmes, community cohesion, accreditation and monitoring of local partnerships and Local Area Agreements – mean that the civil servants have growing influence on local VCS relationships with public bodies. High staff turnover and low levels of understanding of the VCS will continue to create great difficulties for us. Few national organisations – Volunteering England is one exception – have been able to resource regional work and as a consequence we rely heavily on LIOs to service their own regional activity with more or less support from the Regional Voluntary Sector Networks.

5.3 Implications for NAVCA

- a) NAVCA will work with national partners and Regional VCS Networks in order to influence the policies and practices of Regional Development Agencies and Regional Government Offices towards the local VCS.

6. Volunteers

- 6.1 The Home Office, the Treasury and now the Cabinet Office have all given volunteering a high profile in Government accompanied by significant new resources, especially for volunteering by young people. Associated with the personal enthusiasm of Gordon Brown, nevertheless the policy seems to be well embedded in Government for the foreseeable future.
- 6.2 Following the report of the Russell Commission there are new opportunities to engage young people in voluntary work. The Government is also investing in volunteer involvement in health and social care services and in NOMS, the recently combined prison and probation services. There is a significant risk that the investment will bypass LIOs and instead be taken up by national organisations.
- 6.3 Most volunteering takes place within local sports and arts organisations. Traditionally links between generalist LIOs and these groups have been



weak. There will be both policy and funding drivers encouraging LIOs to engage with the arts and sports sectors locally. We are developing a good relationship with Sport England and are planning to undertake work to encourage local collaboration between sub-regional Community Sports Partnerships and LIOs.

- 6.4 Corporate social responsibility commitments by the larger private sector companies have produced a range of projects which promote volunteering by employees and pro bono help from private sector professionals. Some LIOs are already involved in these projects, in partnership with Business in the Community and others.
- 6.5 We have needed to engage with Volunteering England over such matters as the Licence Agreement and the new Quality Standards for Volunteer Centres. We have published an agreement with Volunteering England which makes it clear that neither organisation takes a view on whether Volunteer Centres should be independent bodies or parts of LIOs and other hosts. In 2006 we will publish a Memorandum of Understanding which will further cement our collaborative relationship with Volunteering England.
- 6.6 Implications for NAVCA
 - a) NAVCA will sustain a collaborative relationship with Volunteering England so that issues to do with local volunteering can be addressed at national level when necessary.
 - b) NAVCA will encourage LIOs to offer infrastructure services to sports and arts organisations.

7. National coverage

- 7.1 Eight years ago NAVCA set out to ensure that there was a LIO (in those days we referred to CVS only) in every unitary authority and two-tier district in England. Much progress was made, thanks to six years' funding from the Community Fund. Depending on how we now view counties where infrastructure services are provided by one organisation, such as the Rural Community Council in Dorset, there are something like 20 to 40 areas either without provision of infrastructure services or with very limited provision. These are mostly two-tier districts in rural counties.
- 7.2 NAVCA has received a grant from the Big Lottery Fund in order to find out



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which LIOs established during the development project supported by the Community Fund have survived and why. The learning will inform the use of Big Lottery Fund resources for the creation of new LIOs, a strand of BASIS, the new Infrastructure Support Programme.

7.3 Implications for NAVCA

- a) If resources are available, NAVCA will use its expertise to extend LIO services to those districts where the local VCS lacks support. The emphasis will be on making LIO services available and not on promoting any particular organisational form. In some areas it may be necessary to form new organisations but this will not always be the case.

8. National and local: generalist and specialist

- 8.1 As mentioned in section 3, in Manchester the infrastructure services contract offered by Manchester City Council has been awarded to the Scarman Trust. In Kettering in Northamptonshire, the contract has been awarded to Groundwork. Both these organisations are national charities with some local activities but no local ownership or governance (although Groundwork operates by establishing controlled Trust Boards with local authority and VCS representation of some sort). A NAVCA position statement is attached as Appendix A. Undoubtedly national organisations such as the Scarman Trust will compete with LIOs for local authority and other local public funding. In the case of Scarman, we now have a published statement which commits us to collaboration rather than competition wherever possible. This has proved controversial for some members.
- 8.2 The competition between a big national charity and a consortium of LIOs led by Voluntary Action Manchester did at least make it easy for NAVCA to know whose side we are on. We have always argued that the best outcomes for the local VCS will be achieved if local groups own their own infrastructure. The local VCS, we have argued, can never be adequately represented locally by a national charity managed out of London. However, an equally likely scenario over the next few years is of local infrastructure organisations competing amongst themselves for funding from national, regional and local statutory sources and indeed the Big Lottery Fund. How can we translate our values – collaboration, co-operation, joint working – into effective local practice which avoids the conflict and waste represented by competitive tendering?



8.3 Another aspect of competition facing LIOs which will strengthen in the next few years arises from the focus in ChangeUp – and especially in the Capacitybuilders’ strategy – on supporting the development of frontline service providers. Already some in central and local government are asking whether more service development will be achieved by investing in specialist infrastructure rather than in generalist LIOs. These questions may well turn into investments made by Capacitybuilders. The new agency is also likely to seek funding from government departments other than the Cabinet Office in order to support specialist or sub-sectoral infrastructure. The scope for close alignment of investments between the new agency and Futurebuilders is obvious.

8.4 Implications for NAVCA

- a) NAVCA will encourage collaboration and joint bidding between local infrastructure organisations. It will also encourage collaboration rather than competition where possible with national organisations. However, the principle of the voice of the local VCS being owned by local organisations and groups will not be compromised.
- b) NAVCA will support LIOs which wish to improve their skills in competitive tendering by offering guidance and access to a group of specialist mentors.
- c) NAVCA will continue to explain to funders at every level why generalist local infrastructure is essential for a healthy local VCS. We will also help our members to make this case.

9. Funding

9.1 The pursuit of sustainable funding for the provision of local infrastructure services has always been a priority for trustees and staff of NAVCA members. As we look ahead, the funding context becomes even more difficult. Grant aid from local authorities and Primary Care Trusts has disappeared in many areas and been replaced by awards or investments made under service level agreements or contracts, sometimes after procurement or competitive tendering processes. The Single Regeneration Budget has gone and as described in section 5 it is very difficult for LIOs to gain access to the Single Pots operated by Regional Development Agencies. The European Social Fund, which has funded so much LIO training and capacity building work, is set to disappear as so much European money is recycled to new members of the Union.



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- 9.2 Despite some early success with the Big Lottery Fund – including the commitment of £155m for infrastructure support programmes – it does not look as though resources will be available in future years on the scale we were familiar with when the Community Fund was operating. Area Based Initiatives of the Sure Start or New Deal for Communities type have never offered much by way of resource to LIOs and, as Local Area Agreements are effective nationwide, it is difficult to see that other local strategic partnership players will give priority to funding LIOs – except for the purchase of specific engagement and representation work made necessary for the LSP and LAA by Government requirements, and hopefully scrutinised by Government Officers.
- 9.3 In the early ChangeUp guidance, issued by the Home Office, LIOs were urged to charge for their services and look to their own members for sustainable income. A similar message was contained in the report of the OPM/Compass independent evaluation of NAVCA's work. The new mantra is that by becoming more enterprising – for example by investing in buildings which can earn rent income – LIOs, like other successful social enterprises, will be less dependent on public funding and thereby more sustainable.
- 9.4 Implications for NAVCA
- a) The pursuit of sustainable funding for LIOs will remain at the heart of NAVCA's work.
 - b) NAVCA will seek to influence the work of the Big Lottery Fund so that it benefits the local VCS.
 - c) NAVCA will argue the case for the investment of central, regional and local funds in VCS partnership and engagement work. With this purpose in mind we will seek to influence guidance coming out of Government, the LGA and IDeA in particular.
 - d) NAVCA, in partnership with others, will press for a regeneration fund which enables the local VCS to tackle social and economic exclusion.



10. Performance standards

10.1 Our own current preoccupation with the development of new performance standards reflects growing demands from funders of the VCS generally for improved performance and evidence of the impact of funding. The distance of a typical LIO from end users makes the definition and evaluation of impact very difficult. It follows therefore that the development and use of performance standards which seek to define and measure outcomes and impact is similarly difficult. It has never been easy for LIOs to convince funders of the value they add by comparison with frontline voluntary organisations. As frontline service providers become more effective at demonstrating their impacts there is a real danger that funders will disinvest in LIOs which fail to provide convincing evidence of effectiveness and value for money. It seems likely that helping LIOs to use performance standards, accompanied by a Quality Award, and convincing national, regional and local funders of the value of the Quality Award will be a priority in the years ahead.

10.2 Implications for NAVCA

- a) Implementing the new NAVCA Quality Award will be a priority. A rigorous independent audit process will be used. The value and purpose of the Quality Award will be explained to central, regional and local funders.
- b) NAVCA is likely to further develop the Quality Award so that it is available to LIOs which do not follow the traditional model with five core functions.
- c) NAVCA will offer development support to LIOs so that they can achieve the Quality Award.

11. Governance

11.1 Governance of LIOs has sometimes been problematic. The membership base has sometimes resulted in Trustee Boards made up of people who see themselves as representing member organisations and sectional interests rather than understanding the trustee and governance role of a separate charity. Governance has sometimes been weak. This has sometimes led to inadequate support for Chief Officers, inadequate guidance and strategic direction or both. It is vital that Trustees are equipped both to support and challenge the performance of Chief Officers.



11.2 Implications for NAVCA

- a) NAVCA will offer support to LIOs which recognise the need to improve their governance.

12. Health, social care, families and children and vulnerable adults

12.1 Supporting local organisations in the broad field of health, social care and families' and children's services has always been a major feature of LIO work. Our failure at national level to obtain the necessary resources to support this local work effectively and the absence of any other national health and social care infrastructure organisations leaves a big gap. National children's organisations frequently do not make the links with other parts of the health and social care agenda. NAVCA has been unable to engage with Strategic Health Authorities or to work on the crucial issue of funding for LIOs from Primary Care Trusts.

12.2 This is a huge agenda with major challenges for LIOs. Children's services and services for offenders – to name but two – are being radically reorganised with little resourcing available for local engagement. This mirrors our recent experience with Health and Social Care partnership work where two requests for modest support from the Department of Health have been rejected.

12.3 Implications for NAVCA

- a) NAVCA will seek to influence the Department of Health and the NHS so that there is support for LIO engagement in the local health and social care agenda.
- b) NAVCA will collaborate with specialist organisations, including NCVCCO and NCVYS, in an effort to secure the resources needed to support effective local engagement in Every Child Matters.

13. Diversity

13.1 The development of NAVCA's Diversity Strategy has enabled us to identify priority areas where, with our limited resources, we can make a difference. We need to work out what practical difference we can make to our members' work as general awareness raising activities, such as workshops at events, have not been well supported.



13.2 ChangeUp has exposed tensions – and in some areas outright conflict – between white-led and black-led infrastructure organisations. The BME regional organisations which came into existence a few years ago have in every case been poorly resourced and in some instances poorly led. There is no longer England-wide coverage. We see rising levels of racism and discrimination in both rural and urban society. The general election campaign saw the demonisation of travellers and refugees and asylum seekers. It also saw in some areas a growing level of political support for the BNP.

13.3 Despite excellent practice by some NAVCA members, there are others which do not take the extra steps needed to make services accessible to BME groups. As a consequence we see, in some areas, a demand from BME groups for separate BME infrastructure. This is also reinforced by the difficulty BME groups have generally in accessing mainstream funding.

13.4 Implications for NAVCA

- a) Diversity issues have been mainstreamed within the NAVCA Workplan. However, a distinct Diversity Strategy now focuses action on a number of key priorities each year.
- b) NAVCA will look for opportunities to collaborate with the regional BME networks.
- c) NAVCA will encourage collaboration between generalist LIOs and BME LIOs. We will encourage BME LIOs to join NAVCA. The case for separate BME infrastructure has to be considered and resolved locally.

14. Technology

14.1 Where will technological change take us over the next few years? Will hard copy information and publications disappear? Will technology enable us to run most of our meetings from our desks? Will our website become our most important information and campaigning tool? These are part of a bigger series of questions about how we should deliver our services to members in the future.



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14.2 Implications for NAVCA

- a) NAVCA is already investing in improved ICT. We have installed a new database and launched a new website in June 2006. Most of our communication with members and stakeholders is now electronic. Much of our opinion and data gathering is electronic. We will soon be taking online bookings for events. Several staff already work remotely. We will make greater use of ICT to improve our effectiveness and seek to invest in improvements as opportunities arise.

15. Workforce development

15.1 Improving and modernising the skills of leaders including trustees and development workers in LIOs is an essential part of improving performance.

15.2 We are already embarking on national training programmes for generic development workers in core competencies, in the use of the principles of full cost recovery and in public law. We are also relaunching a programme of work to support Action Learning.

15.3 Implications for NAVCA

- a) The delivery of training programmes to LIO staff, in partnership with other organisations including acevo and the Public Law Project, will be a key feature of NAVCA's work during the period 2006 to 2009.
- b) We will work with NIACE and other partners to achieve sustainable funding for workforce development in the local VCS.

Kevin Curley
Chief Executive

Revised 10 July 2006



Statement of values and equal opportunities

1. The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) exists to promote and support local infrastructure organisations (LIOs) throughout England.
2. NAVCA celebrates our society as diverse in race, culture, faith and other beliefs, sexuality, abilities, gender and age.
3. NAVCA is committed to challenging oppression and prejudice and aims to promote both diversity and full access to opportunity in all areas of its work and structures.
4. NAVCA believes:
 - a) in working towards a just and participatory society;
 - b) that all people have equal rights to work towards social justice and to participate in decision-making processes and local action;
 - c) that priority should be given to working with communities and groups whose full participation in society is limited by economic disadvantage or institutional discrimination;
 - d) that the role of LIOs is to affirm and enable all people to play an active part in their community, both individually and collectively.
5. NAVCA has a fundamental belief in developing equal opportunities in all areas of its work and structures, and in particular will take positive action in the areas of: representation, services, employment and consultation.

In line with its values and belief, NAVCA will:

- continually work to become more aware of, and will work to make LIOs more aware of, oppression and inequality and the problems they may cause, how they affect us and the implications for our work;
- work to increase involvement and collaboration with other organisations to promote diversity and equal opportunities;



Statement of values and equal opportunities

- challenge practices, legislation and institutions which seek to discriminate against, or deny the rights of, individuals or groups on grounds of race, gender, sexuality, disability, age, class or geographical location.

In particular, NAVCA will:

- work to ensure that all its services to LIOs are provided in a way that promotes awareness of the rights and needs of women, people from black and minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and lesbians, gay men and bi-sexuals, and enables all people to have access to them;
- encourage the provision and use of premises and equipment to provide full access to all people who suffer discrimination and in particular people with disabilities;
- work to ensure the NAVCA Trustee Board, committees, working parties and staff reflect the diversity within and beyond the LIO network and in society as a whole and will encourage and support LIOs to do the same;
- work to develop a positive and inclusive culture and environment, regularly reviewing recruitment, employment and work practices to ensure that NAVCA best meets the interests and needs of all its current and potential staff and volunteers, in particular those from groups that suffer from exclusion or discrimination;
- seek to share its experiences and promote good practice in the area of equalities and inclusion throughout the LIO network and beyond.



Diversity strategy

What is this strategy for?

The purpose of this strategy is to set out how NAVCA intends to put its Statement of Values and Equal Opportunities into practice in the context of our plan for 2006-11. This strategy will underpin our day-to-day activities, which will be set out each year in the organisational work plan and in individual staff members' work plans.

We will review our progress with this strategy by:

- ongoing monitoring by the staff Equalities Group of thematic areas of work and annual reviews of progress with the strategy
- asking specific questions in future members' surveys
- linking it to regular reviews of our progress with organisational and individual annual plans, and staff appraisals
- individual review during supervision and appraisal

1. Supporting the voluntary and community sector on diversity

NAVCA's contribution to the diversity of the VCS has three aspects:

- using our national profile to promote diversity in general
- supporting our members to develop their local VCS
- supporting our members to develop their own organisations

1.1 Using our national profile to promote diversity in general (Trustee Board priority):

1.1.1 Outcomes

- NAVCA has incorporated the views and needs of marginalised groups into our national policy work.
- Partner organisations working with marginalised communities have a stronger voice at national level.
- NAVCA is recognised by national partners as active on diversity issues.



Diversity strategy

Indicators

- Examples of policy work which reflects the views and needs of marginalised groups and is based on evidence from members.
- Evidence of NAVCA's support to partner organisations working with marginalised groups and how this has made a difference, including positive feedback from partners.

1.2 Supporting our members to develop their local VCS:

1.2.1 Outcome

- Members recognise the advantages of good practice on diversity and the potential barriers.
- Members are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to incorporate diversity issues into their work.
- Members are able to provide the full range of their core services to marginalised groups, either directly or through partnerships with other support organisations.
- Members are working with an increased number of marginalised groups.

Indicators

- NAVCA is able to identify examples of good practice in service provision by members (e.g. in response to consultations, Quality Award audits, case studies for use in publications).
- Evidence that NAVCA is offering diversity focused products and services (e.g. conference workshops); increased take-up of these by members.
- Positive feedback from members about support on diversity and requests for more support in future.
- Members willing to share good practice with each other through NAVCA networks, events and publications.
- Evidence from members' survey of service provision to a wide range of marginalised groups (e.g. members have more BME groups in membership).
- Positive feedback from partners in diversity-related organisations about the relationship between their network and NAVCA members.



1.3 Supporting our members to develop their own organisations:

1.3.1 Outcome

- Members recognise the advantages of, and barriers to, good practice on diversity.
- Members are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to develop the diversity of their organisation.
- Members are diverse in terms of their workforce and trustees.
- New members are able to describe what actions they are taking to implement their values and commitment to equal opportunities and diversity.

Indicators

- NAVCA is able to identify examples of operational good practice by members (e.g. from Quality Award audits).
- Evidence that NAVCA is offering diversity focused products and services (e.g. conference workshops); increased take-up of these by members.
- Positive feedback from members about support on diversity and requests for more support in the future.
- Members willing to share good practice with each other through NAVCA networks, events and publications.
- Evidence from members' survey of diversity in staffing and trustee board.
- Evidence from new membership applications of action on EO and diversity.

2. Developing our own practice on diversity

In order to live up to our values and be a credible force for change, NAVCA must act as an example of good practice on diversity. To do this, we need to develop our work in a number of ways:

- creating a diverse and accessible workplace
- equipping staff and trustees with the skills to support good practice
- ensuring our services are accessible and promote good practice



2.1.1. Outcome

- A diverse workforce and an accessible workplace.

Indicators

- Evidence of improvement in recruitment from marginalised groups.
- Evidence of improvements to accessibility of office or incorporation of accessibility requirements in identifying new office.
- Evidence of action (in induction programmes and ongoing support) to enable staff and trustees from marginalised groups to participate fully in the organisation.
- Evidence of action to promote good practice and to challenge poor practice.

2.1.2 Outcome

- Staff and trustees have the skills to support good practice.

Indicators

- Evidence of ongoing action to meet skills needs.

2.1.3 Outcome

- Services are accessible to marginalised groups and promote good practice.

Indicators

- Positive feedback from members.
- Specific evaluations (e.g. event evaluations).
- Positive results from objective measurement (e.g. RNIB & Bobby website audit).



Strategic outcomes and objectives for 2006–11 and activities for 2006–07

Outcome 1

In 2011, Government policies and practice at all levels will more accurately reflect the needs of local communities as a result of influence exerted through the voice of local voluntary and community organisations.

Key Performance Indicator

In 2006/07, 80% of member LIOs had the knowledge to participate in Local Area Agreements.

Objective 1.1

Use consultation processes that enable NAVCA, using our members' experience, to influence Government and other stakeholders so that the local VCS voice has maximum impact.

Activities

- a) We will be the voice of LIOs on the Infrastructure National Partnership, using our members' experience to influence the development of Capacitybuilders. We will also work directly with Capacitybuilders.
- b) We will participate in the Governance Hub using our members' experience to influence the work of the Hub.
- c) We will participate in the ICT Hub using our members' experience to influence the work of the Hub.
- d) We will participate in the Workforce Development Hub using our members' experience to influence the work of the Hub.
- e) We will participate in the Performance Improvement Hub using our members' experience to influence the work of the Hub.
- f) We will participate in the Financing Hub using our members' experience to influence the work of the Hub.
- g) We will participate in the Compact Working Group and the BME sub group using our members' experience to inform the development of Compact Plus and the Compact Codes.
- h) We will ensure that our members' experience is available to HM



Outcomes, objectives and activities

Treasury, especially in relation to the Spending Review, the use of dormant accounts, public procurement and local VCS relationships with local public bodies.

- i) We will ensure that our members' experience is available to the Cabinet Office and DCLG, especially in relation to civil renewal, active citizenship, community cohesion, the modernisation of public service delivery, procurement from the voluntary sector and capacity building the voluntary and community sector.
- j) We will ensure that our members' experience is available to DCLG especially in relation to neighbourhood renewal, local government modernisation, voluntary and community sector engagement in Local Area Agreements and procurement. We will work with IDeA, LGA and Urban Forum on this agenda.
- k) We will ensure that our members' experience is available to the DfES, especially in relation to the development of children's trusts and the Every Child Matters agenda. We will work with NCVCCO, NCVYS, NCB and other national organisations with a shared interest in this agenda.
- l) We will ensure our members' experience is available to the Learning and Skills Council especially in relation to the delivery of training both for the VCS and by voluntary sector training providers for disadvantaged groups. We will work with NIACE on this agenda.
- m) We will ensure that our members' experience is available to the Department of Health, with particular regard to the contribution of the local VCS to health and social care.
- n) We will ensure our members' experience is available to the Big Lottery Fund in relation both to the development of funding programmes and the experience of the funding processes.
- o) We will ensure that our members' experience is available to the National Audit Office so that awareness of the needs of the local VCS informs their work programme.
- p) We will look for opportunities to develop our relationship with the Audit Commission so that we can influence the regulation and inspection of local authorities.
- q) We will provide a LIO voice to the voluntary sector press, especially *Third Sector* and *Regeneration and Renewal*, so that there is increased press coverage of local VCS issues.
- r) We will look for the resources to establish a senior post based in



London in order to enhance our voice on behalf of LIOs in relation to Government departments and other London-based stakeholders.

- s) We will ensure that our members' experience is available to Defra, especially in relation to the development of the new Rural Social and Community Programme.
- t) We will ensure that our members' experience is available to Defra in relation to the Sustainable Development Strategy and the CA2020 project 'Every Action Counts'.
- u) We will ensure that our members' experience is available to the Charity Commission, contributing to the Commission's regulatory and advisory roles.
- v) We will use our membership of the BURA (British Urban Regeneration Association) Development Forum to provide a LIO voice on regeneration issues to senior civil servants and Government Ministers at BURA events.
- w) We will develop our website as the primary means of collecting opinion from our members in order to inform our policy work.
- x) We will undertake a survey of NAVCA members so that we can advise Government and other stakeholders about changes in the funding of LIOs.

Objective 1.2

Facilitate LIO participation in partnerships and other multi-agency structures so that local policy making and resource allocation is informed by local VCS experience and skills.

Activities

- a) We will help LIOs to influence the processes for VCS engagement in Local Area Agreements and in the selection of LPSA targets.
- b) We will help LIOs to increase their influence on local strategic partnerships and the range of themed partnerships which feed into Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements.

Objective 1.3

Help LIOs to improve funding and procurement relationships between local voluntary and community organisations and local public bodies so that the sector can increase its involvement in the provision of effective local public services.



Outcomes, objectives and activities

Activities

- a) We will provide guidance, evidence and good practice examples which will enable LIOs to persuade local procurement officers of the value of contracting with small VCS organisations.

Objective 1.4

Establish collaborative relationships at national level between NAVCA and other infrastructure organisations so that collaboration between LIOs is made more effective.

Activities

- a) We will implement a Collaboration Agreement with NCVO. This will guide our joint policy work and provide clarity to members and stakeholders about our respective lead roles.
- b) We will review our Joint Statement on the provision of local support for volunteering with Volunteering England.
- c) We will take a lead role within the Community Sector Coalition, working closely with bassac, ACRE, Community Matters, the Scarman Trust and Urban Forum, so that the experience of LIOs which work with community groups is fed into the Cabinet Office, DCLG and other Government Departments.
- d) We will refresh our Collaboration Agreement with the network of BME Regional Voluntary Sector Networks and look for opportunities to undertake joint work especially in relation to maximising the influence on Government policy and practice of both generalist and BME LIOs.
- e) We will look to use the collaborative work we have undertaken with the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Voluntary Sector Network on supporting VCS engagement in Local Area Agreements to build collaboration with other members of the RVSF Forum.

Outcome 2

In 2011, local infrastructure organisations will have strong governance and management and will be providing inclusive services that enable voluntary and community organisations to meet the needs of the communities they represent.

Key Performance Indicator

In 2006/07, 10% of full member LIOs (30 members) achieved or applied for the NAVCA Quality Award.



Objective 2.1

Provide LIOs with relevant information and advice so that they can provide a better service to the local VCS.

Activities

- a) We will help LIOs to develop the role of local voluntary and community organisations as providers of public services by giving them information about funding opportunities for the development of services in priority public service areas.
- b) We will retain sufficient capacity within the NAVCA enquiries service so that enquiries of general interest to LIOs can be followed up effectively (e.g. LIO concerns about money laundering; concerns about the administration of Awards for All; concerns about the future of funding for Community Empowerment Networks).
- c) We will develop ways to provide support to LIOs facing crises or particularly challenging circumstances by using the strengths and resources of the membership (e.g. mentoring by experienced Chief Officers). We will also work in collaboration with CAF in order to offer a wider range of consultancy support both at times of crisis and for general development support.
- d) We will work with the Charity Commission to make advice, information and good practice guidance more available through LIOs to the local VCS.
- e) We will improve our regular email bulletin LINX and consider changing our information journal *Circulation* to a web-based and CD-based publication.
- f) We will increase the number of subscriptions to Trainers and Consultants Direct and put increased effort into promoting the resource in both the voluntary and public sectors.
- g) We will sustain a range of email networks for LIO Chairs, Trustees and various specialist staff.
- h) We will increase the effectiveness of ICT support for the local VCS provided by LIOs by linking together the large number of ICT services funded as part of ChangeUp.

Objective 2.2

Help LIOs to obtain improved sustainable funding streams so that they can provide stable services to the local VCS.



Outcomes, objectives and activities

Activities

- a) We will help LIOs to understand procurement processes and to submit high quality tenders for funds from local public bodies where competitive tendering processes are adopted.
- b) We will provide to LIOs promotional materials for use and adaptation locally which describe the impact of their work and the added value they give to local public funders.
- c) We will help LIOs to access the training and capacity building they need in order to become more enterprising and to increase their earned income.
- d) We will help LIOs to establish relationships with NDPBs and other public bodies which may support their work (e.g. Sport England).
- e) We will help LIOs to describe and cost the work they do in engaging the VCS in Local Area Agreements, the LSP, Children's Trusts and other local partnerships.

Objective 2.3

Provide LIOs with access to high quality and diverse learning opportunities, related to their priority concerns, so that they can draw on a wider range of skills when serving the local VCS.

Activities

- a) We will enable LIOs to understand and use the principles of full cost recovery by providing training in collaboration with acevo.
- b) We will work with NIACE to support learning and training consortia so that they in turn can deliver training to the local VCS in collaboration with LIOs.
- c) We will provide training to LIOs so that they can describe the outcomes of their work and monitor their performance against stated outcomes. We will work in partnership with CES to achieve this.
- d) We will implement a nationwide programme of training in core competencies for generic development workers in LIOs.
- e) We will provide training in the principles of Public Law in collaboration with the Public Law Project.
- f) We will provide support to LIOs so that they can use Action Learning to develop the skills of local VCS workers.
- g) We will provide induction training for new Chief Officers of LIOs.



- h) We will provide one-to-one telephone support for a pilot group of Chief Officers of LIOs during the first six months that they are in post and review its effectiveness.
- i) We will develop training for performance improvement workers in LIOs in collaboration with CES.
- j) We will provide support and networking opportunities for performance improvement workers nationwide.

Objective 2.4

Lead the development of high quality performance by LIOs, by implementing NAVCA Performance Standards and the accompanying Quality Award so that services to the local VCS and other stakeholders, including funders, are improved.

Activities

- a) We will implement NAVCA Performance Standards and the accompanying Quality Award.
- b) We will provide development support to LIOs to prepare them for assessment against the new Performance Standards and to implement subsequent development plans.
- c) We will commission work on adapting the Performance Standards for LIOs which do not conform to the traditional five function model.
- d) We will promote the Performance Standards and Quality Award to national, regional and local funders.

Objective 2.5

Broker services and shared resources for LIOs so that they can access these at lower cost.

Activities

- a) We will provide LIOs with access to a high quality employment law and tribunal protection service.

Objective 2.6

Promote joint working and collaboration by LIOs so that resources are not wasted on unnecessary competition.

Activities

- a) We will provide LIOs with good practice examples, evidence-based models and toolkits to encourage collaboration and joint work between LIOs.



Outcomes, objectives and activities

- b) We will review the agreement between NAVCA and the Scarman Trust so that collaboration between LIOs and the Scarman Trust is maximised and competition for resources minimised.

Objective 2.7

Support LIOs to become more diverse themselves and develop a diverse and inclusive local VCS so that discrimination is challenged.

Activities

- a) We will use the NAVCA Diversity Strategy in order to develop a more strategic approach to the promotion of diversity within LIOs.
- b) We will encourage a more diverse range of LIOs to join NAVCA, especially BME LIOs.
- c) We will develop the good practice section of the NAVCA website to include more examples of LIO work on equality, diversity and social cohesion.

Objective 2.8

Use NAVCA's knowledge and experience of developing LIOs so that LIO services are made available throughout England.

Activities

- a) We will capture the learning from the former CVS Development Project and provide this to Capacitybuilders and other stakeholders so that they can develop LIO service provision in those parts of England which are currently not served.

Outcome 3

In 2011, communities, supported by local infrastructure organisations, will be active, engaged, strong and connected and able to identify and address their own needs.

Key Performance Indicator

In 2006/07, 75% of member LIOs undertook advice and/or development work with neighbourhood groups in rural and urban areas.

Objective 3.1

Enable LIOs to support communities of place or identity which face discrimination or disadvantage so that inclusion and community cohesion are promoted.



Activities

- a) We will provide information and briefings so that LIOs understand and engage with the Neighbourhoods Agenda as it develops.
- b) We will help LIOs to understand and engage with Community Anchors as they develop.
- c) We will provide information and briefings to LIOs about the discrimination and disadvantage facing refugees and asylum seekers.

Objective 3.2

Help LIOs to access the resources local community groups need to implement urban and rural regeneration so that the local VCS can maximise its contribution to tackling social exclusion.

Activities

- a) We will promote understanding by relevant Government Departments, national voluntary organisations and other stakeholders of the neighbourhood work already undertaken by LIOs.
- b) We will seek to achieve LIO and wider VCS access to RDA single pots both for regeneration work and to tackle social exclusion in both urban and rural areas.
- c) We will help LIOs to deal with changes to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and funding arrangements for Community Empowerment Networks.

Outcome 4

In 2011, NAVCA will have the resources it needs to achieve its strategic outcomes.

Key Performance Indicator

In 2006/07, NAVCA drew up an Income Generation Strategy for 2007 – 11 with the full involvement of Trustees and staff.

Objective 4.1

Sustain a skilled, motivated and high performing workforce including Trustees, staff, internal volunteers and member volunteers so that the human resource potential needed to achieve NAVCA outcomes is maximised.



Outcomes, objectives and activities

Activities

- a) We will sustain the use of Investor in People as a learning and development tool.
- b) We will review NAVCA's compliance with PQASSO.
- c) We will review the effectiveness of the Trustee Board and its sensitivity to the needs of NAVCA's members.

Objective 4.2

Achieve a diverse range of incomes with a growing percentage of earned income so that NAVCA's sustainability and independency are maximised.

Activities

- a) We will draw up and implement a detailed Income Generation Plan and support individual staff members in achieving their income generation targets.
- b) We will expand the events programme drawing in more sponsorship and exhibition income.
- c) We will involve all staff in identifying new contacts for the database in relation to attendance at events and business support.
- d) We will increase the range of services offered to members and other voluntary and community organisations on a subscription basis.

Objective 4.3

Develop ICT systems so that the organisation is fully e-enabled to deliver effective services and increased income.

Activities

- a) We will implement the new database and integrated website ensuring sustainable development and maintenance arrangements.
- b) We will introduce online financial transactions giving priority to event bookings.
- c) We will extend remote access to central information where staff are required to work away from the office.
- d) We will develop integrated document and information management systems.
- e) We will develop systems to enable easy business to business information transfers.



Objective 4.4

Secure office premises which are fit for purpose so that staff and volunteers can work to maximum effectiveness.

Activities

- a) We will purchase or rent new offices in Sheffield or within the travel to work area.

Objective 4.5

Involve a wider range of national and local organisations in formal association with NAVCA so that services are available to more organisations and NAVCA's representative function is enhanced.

Activities

- a) We will introduce the new name for the charity – NAVCA.
- b) We will recruit new LIO affiliates, especially BME infrastructure organisations.
- c) We will recruit more national affiliate organisations.
- d) We will seek support from the AGM for broadening LIO membership of NAVCA and the associated changes to membership criteria.

Objective 4.6

Evaluate our work, learn from success and failure and celebrate success so that organisational learning is maximised and achievement recognised.

Activities

- a) We will undertake a members' satisfaction survey measuring progress against baseline data collected in two previous satisfaction surveys.
- b) We will use four Key Performance Indicators to measure the effectiveness of four key areas of our work.



Appendix A

Issues for NAVCA arising from the decision by Manchester City Council to award the contract for the provision of infrastructure support and capacity building services to VCS groups in 2005/08 to the Scarman Trust.

1. The primary concern of NAVCA is that local voluntary organisations and community groups get a good support, development and representation service from a LIO.
2. Traditionally we have always held the view that the LIO should be owned by local voluntary organisations and community groups so that it is highly sensitive to their needs.
3. The local authority is quite right to look for a provider of infrastructure services that can offer value for money by delivering effective and efficient high quality services (that is a Best Value approach).
4. We recognise that competitive tendering processes will become more common in this area of provision.
5. We believe that the local VCS should be consulted by the funder about the specification for local infrastructure services before tenders are invited. Consultees should include service providing organisations and community groups.
6. We are always concerned to know whether tendering processes have been fair to all concerned.
7. Where the award of a contract for infrastructure services will result in the closure or severe downsizing of an existing LIO we think that the funder should look at the longer term consequences for the local VCS and local public sector partners before making a decision about the award of the contract.
8. We think that the funder should always ask about the track record of the voluntary sector provider in the delivery of infrastructure services. We also believe that local knowledge of the VCS should be a requirement in the specification.



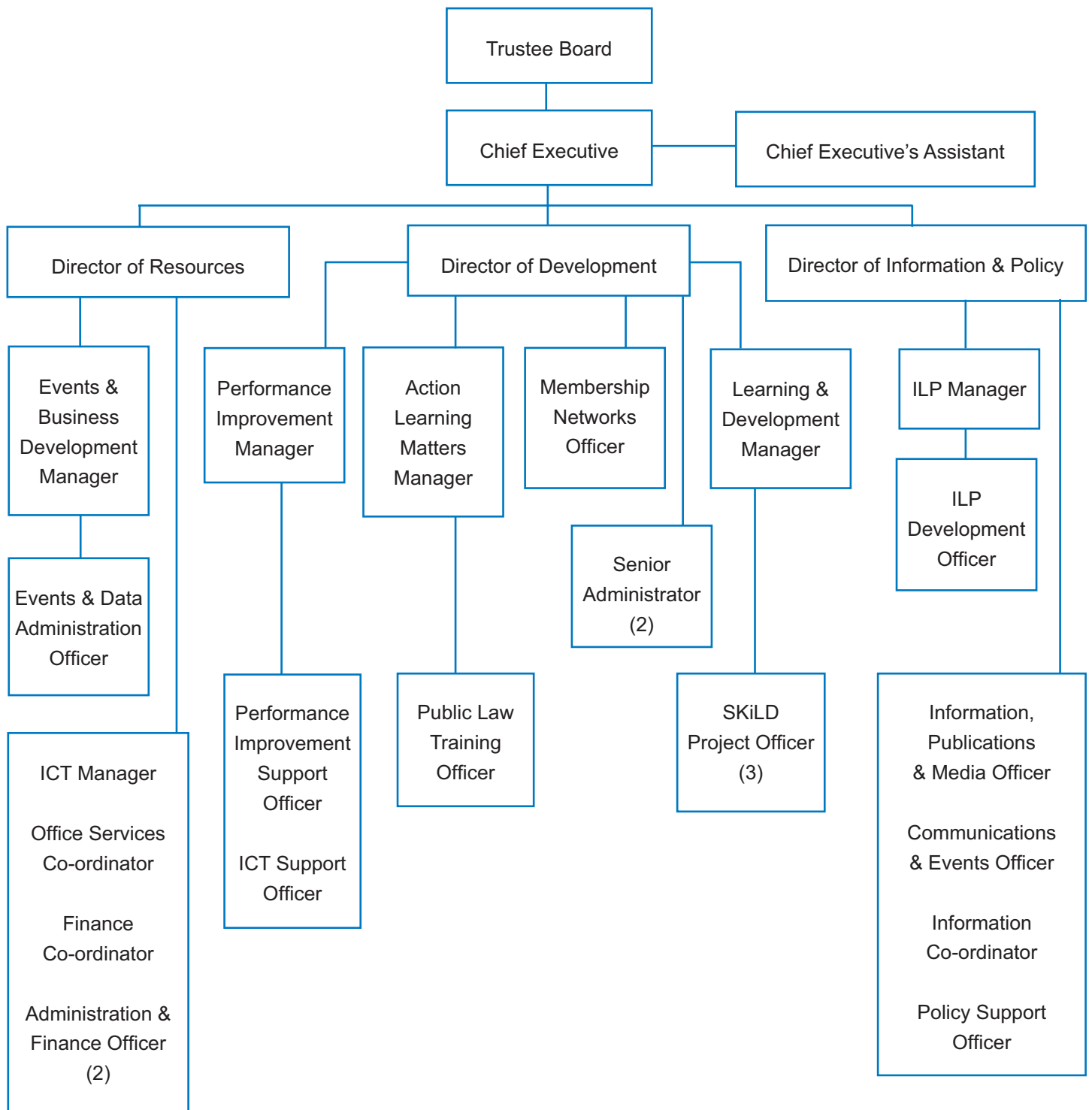
9. We believe that local authorities should purchase representation services from a LIO as well as capacity building services. This means purchasing the representation and strategic partnership functions as well as the support, development and liaison functions.

10. We believe it is quite possible for a national charity to deliver capacity building services in any locality in England. However, it is unlikely to be able to deliver other generalist infrastructure services from a national base. Nor is it likely to be able to build long-term sustainability for the local VCS. We will therefore continue to assert the primacy of local knowledge, responsiveness and advocacy and our belief that they should be integral to excellent infrastructure provision.



Appendix B

Organisational structure





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