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Dear Colleague

## **Third Sector Development Strategy**

Third sector organisations have a crucial role to play in the future of Swindon. Voluntary and Community groups are crucial to social cohesion and the satisfaction that people feel about living in Swindon. As Senior Officer lead on the Safer and Stronger Communities of Swindon's Local Area Agreement, I am keen that this role is recognised widely by all partners across Swindon – both within the third sector and outside it.

You may be aware that in July 2007, we held an initial visioning workshop on the third sector, involving a wide range of third sector and statutory sector partners. This was followed up by a further workshop in November 2007 to identify specific objectives to make that vision reality. Many thanks to those of you who were involved in these. Following these workshops, we have developed a draft strategy for third sector development and are now in a position to consult with you on this.

This strategy highlights and capitalises on the special contribution that the third sector can make to achieving Swindon's objectives and priorities. It sets out a clear strategic direction of how the Partnership wants to develop the capability and support the activities of the third sector in Swindon. It is built around the following five themes, which were identified at the workshops last year:

- Recognising difference
- Financial stability and independence
- Organisational development
- Governance
- Relationships

I now would like to invite the thoughts and comments of all those organisations working for and with the third sector in Swindon. Your input is vital to ensure that the Strategy properly reflects the diversity of views from and relating to the third sector. I

enclose a Feedback Form for your completion and the sections of the document have all been numbered to allow you to accurately reference your comments.

This consultation is being carried out in line with Swindon's Compact Consultation Code of Practice. The period during which you can send your thoughts relating to this strategy will begin on receipt of this letter and continue through to Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2008. You will also have the opportunity to contribute to this consultation at the following events.

- Third Sector Development Strategy Workshops - 24<sup>th</sup> June, 3-5pm and 6-8pm. An invitation with further information will be sent out nearer the time.
- Stronger Communities Forum – 9<sup>th</sup> July, further information to be confirmed.
- Voluntary & Community Forum – 24<sup>th</sup> July, further information to be confirmed.

There will also be various online opportunities to view and comment on the Strategy. You will be informed of these as soon as they are up and running.

Once the consultation period has ended, all of your comments will be considered individually by the Strategy Development Group, which is made up of representatives from statutory and third sector organisations. You will receive detailed feedback on whether or not any changes you suggested will be used in the final document, and reasons why.

I would like to thank you very much for your involvement and your comments and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

*Chris Sivers*

**Chris Sivers**

Director of Community, Swindon Borough Council  
Senior Officer lead for Safer and Stronger Communities of Swindon's Local Area Agreement