

South Forum Management Review Day



26th September 2007 Quality Hotel Sunderland Report



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Introduction

In November 2006 Sunderland South Forum held a development day where an action plan for progress was drawn up. Since that time, the membership of the South Forum has grown considerably and new funding has been granted to provide future administrative support. Members of the management committee therefore believed that it would be advantageous to take time to review progress to date, and develop a work plan which would reflect these conditions.

In order to achieve this, a review day was planned where the staff, management committee and external advisor of the South Forum would work with independent facilitators to enable them to revisit their previous action plan, identify and consolidate good practice, and agree principles for future action. This is a report of the process of the day.

Attendance

Pat Burn, Stuart Porthouse, Cllr Peter Gibson, Jemma Cole, Jackie Nixon, Vera Brydon, Eileen Dunn, Judith Morgan, Vivienne Metcalf, Mary Pattinson

Reviewing objectives of the day

A short session was held with participants to help them identify areas that they wished to address.

Several areas were raised:

- The work plan
- Help to reflect backwards
- The Vision
- Aims and Objectives and the Constitution

- The *Government White paper* and links with statutory agencies
- How to get more community involvement

After discussion it was agreed that a separate session could be held to review the *Aims and Objectives and Constitution* of the South Forum at a later date, leaving this day to review progress, construct a Vision and work plan. It was agreed that the following programme would help to achieve the aims of the day.

- Where have we come from? - Beginnings and development of the South Forum
- Where are we now? - Achievements and Vision
- Where do we want to go? - Making the Vision a reality
- Constructing a realistic work plan

Where have we come from?

The history and development of the South Forum was considered, the purpose of this was to allow members of the management committee understand how it had become established and developed. It was apparent that all members of the South Forum were currently involved because they were committed to strengthening local communities.

Where are we now?

The development and achievements of the South Forum had been significant since the last development day. The work of the development coordinator has made a positive and significant impact on the forum's ability to achieve the targets set in 2006.

The following areas of work were listed as positive achievements:

- The South Forum was now 'Bigger and Better', the number of groups involved with the forum had risen from 35 - 100.
- More community groups were actively involved in the South Forum.
- Networking between groups had increased and improved.
- Local people now had increased access to ICT training.
- New computer had been acquired by the South Forum.
- The South Forum website and e newsletter had greatly improved the dissemination and accessibility of information to Forum members and local people.
- Training taster events had been held.
- Wider membership and attendance at the forum had enabled an audit to be made of genuine concerns of residents in the South Forum area by gathering and collating their views on a range of issues affecting the quality of their lives.
- The views of South Forum members were fed into City Wide committees, including the Community Development Network, Safer Sunderland Group, and the Community Development strategy Group.

Where do we want to go? - The Vision

A short exercise on 'assumed knowledge' was held to help participants understand how important it was for management committees to ensure that there was a common understanding about future direction between all members.

Therefore, in order to help the management committee begin to formulate a vision; time was allocated to allow small groups consider their own personal 'visions'.

The following is the list:

- To continue and sustain the existing work of the South Forum by developing a successful funding strategy.
- To encourage and bring in more groups to join the South Forum.
- To become more successful at what we do well.
- Review the Aims and Objectives.
- Consider the collective good, create something substantial, not become just a talking shop.
- Do more networking.
- Be a successful umbrella organising, offering support to new groups, helping them with Governance training.
- Monitor and evaluate in a way which demonstrates our successes.
- Find funding for a second development worker, this would enable the current coordinator to be able to work more strategically.
- Develop a sense of pride in the community.
- Develop an active community.
- Retain the focus on grass roots groups.
- Continue to prevent isolation through the work of the South Forum.

The participants then went on to construct a Vision which encompassed all these ideas. Three versions were developed.

Vision1

To be recognisable by individuals and groups in the South Area as a link to give on going support to the needs and issues of the local community.

Vision 2

Recognise, promote and celebrate successes in order to keep existing groups and attract new and emerging groups. Encouraging and promoting a shared vision for the South Area to encourage and facilitate community groups to take ownership of their area issues.

Vision 3

Continue to be sustainable by organising regular successful meetings, collectively bringing together groups within the area and to develop and grow within the community.

It was agreed that all three 'Visions', were very similar and that a single vision could be drawn out of all three.

All agreed that this would be a task that would be completed relatively easily.

Promoting the Vision

The issue of promoting the Vision to residents of the South Forum was considered, and several strategies were put forward for taking this forward.

- A Glossy magazine is to be produced and funded by the Local Authority; there will be one which will concentrate on community development in the South Forum area. This will be an excellent vehicle for informing residents of the work of the South Forum.
- Articles on the work of the South Forum could be included in the CVS newsletter which has a circulation of 800.
- There was a general consensus that the South Forum needed to be 're-branded', with a new logo.

- The directory that was being compiled of members of the South Forum could be used to promote the new 'brand'.
- Members of the South Forum would be asked to add, *'Member of South Forum'* to their literature. This would have a double effect, of promoting the South Forum, and also to demonstrate that groups were involved in a partnership with others in the area.
- There could be targeted publicity in the form of leaflet drops.
- The Annual event was a great opportunity to promote the work of the South Forum.
- Continue to develop the web site, in order to raise the profile and promote the work of the South Forum.
- Using the Press, issuing press releases. *Agreed, that all contact with the Press should be co-ordinated by the Development Coordinator. This would ensure that a constant and reliable message went to the community.*

Constructing a realistic work plan

The following represent the targets that the South Forum hopes to achieve in the coming year. It was acknowledged that the new administrator post should make a real difference, and free up the development coordinators to support and develop more groups in the South Forum area. The aim is to fill the administrator post by November / December, and the work plan was constructed with the recognition that the new worker will require induction support and time from the current development coordinator.

Work Plan 2007 - 2008

Tasks	Responsible for / Deadline
Continue to co-ordinate and support all the groups and individuals that are engaged with the South Forum	Development Coordinator / Admin Worker Ongoing
Organise South Forum monthly meetings	Development Coordinator/ Admin worker Ongoing
Participate in appropriate City Wide strategy groups to enable the views and concerns of South Forum members to be raised with decision makers	Development Coordinator Ongoing
Re - brand the South Forum. Contact graphic designer re new logo. Finalise the Vision.	Development Coordinator & Management Committee Begin Oct 2007 - Complete Dec 2007
Change management committee sub group meetings to bi-monthly. Develop new Terms of Reference.	Management Committee Complete December 2007
Revisit South Forum Business Plan	Management Committee / Finance & Funding sub group

	Complete Jan. 2008
Audit all groups on South Forum records - check details to see if they are still active. Produce an up to date South Forum directory, disseminate widely.	Admin worker Complete March 2008
Produce Funding Strategy	Management committee / Finance & Funding sub group Complete March 2008
Implement the Review day recommendations for promotion and marketing	Development Coordinator Complete March 2008
Organise Annual Event	Development Coordinator Complete July 2008

It was agreed that this plan would give the main direction to developing the South Forum during the next twelve months.

These actions would help the management committee and staff move forward together.

