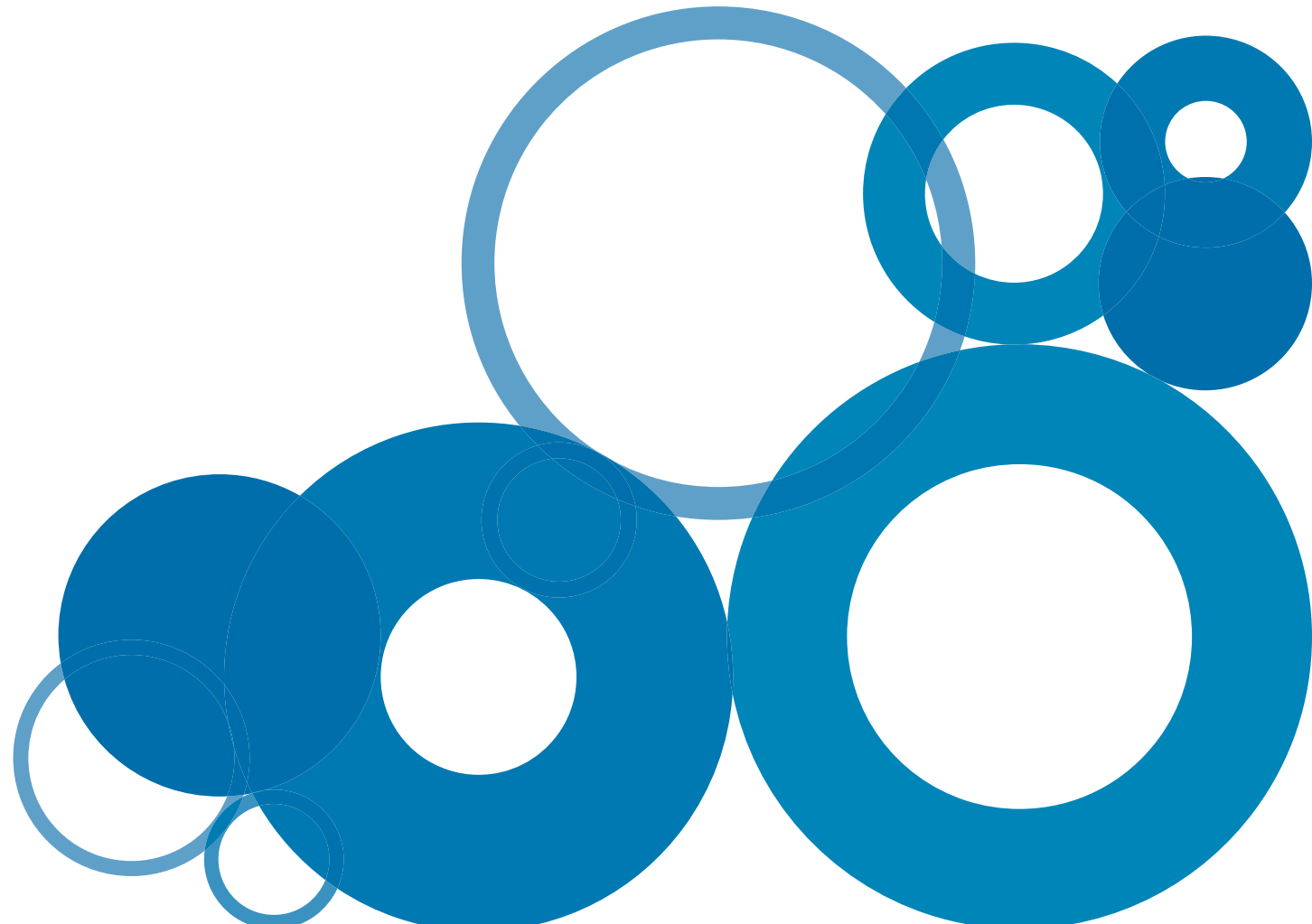
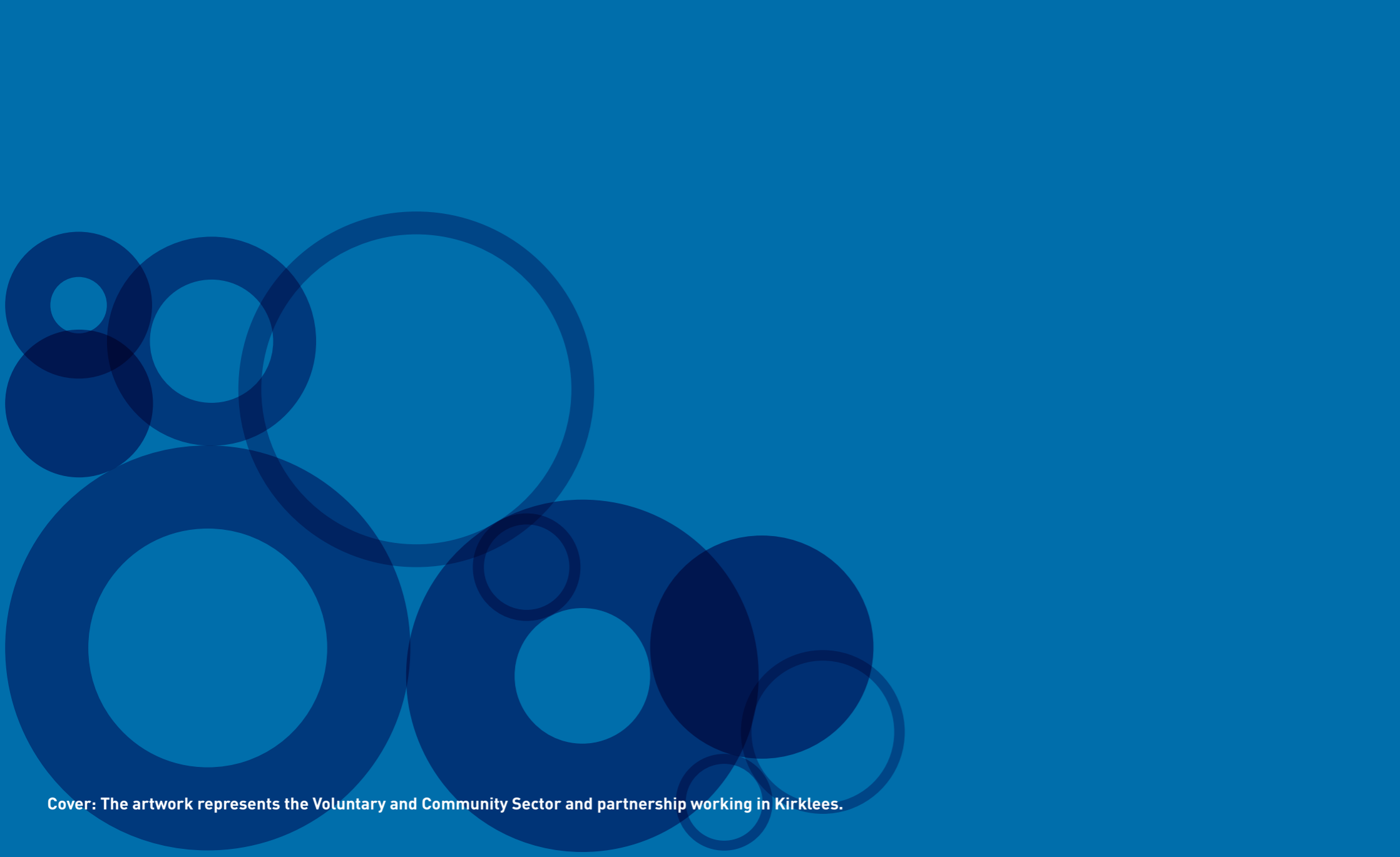


Partnerships to serve local people

Five year strategy

2008-2013





Cover: The artwork represents the Voluntary and Community Sector and partnership working in Kirklees.

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Partnerships to serve local people

Foreword

We are delighted to present the five-year strategy for Kirklees Partnership's voluntary and community sector.

The Partnership recognises that volunteers, and voluntary and community organisations, make a valuable contribution to improving lives and delivering good quality services in Kirklees. This strategy has been put together following extensive consultation during the summer of 2007 with a diverse range of individuals and organisations within Kirklees.

The strategy is our starting point for the transformation of public services in Kirklees – the same thing is happening all over the country.

Working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector is key to making this programme a success. The latest local government White Paper - 'Communities in control: real people, real power' - lays out a decisive shift in control of service provision, away from central government to the local level, shaped and led by local communities.

This reflects our own localities agenda in Kirklees. What people want are services that are flexible, responsive, and tailored to meet individual need - not bureaucratic convenience.

The transformation will mean a big change in the role of local authorities as commissioners of services, not just as providers. It calls for new thinking and new skills from public sector agencies as well as the voluntary and community sector. This strategy outlines our shared responsibility and commitment to work together to achieve this transformation and our vision of Kirklees.

Subsequent action plans will be implemented and monitored through the Kirklees Partnership. We hope you can support the strategy and play an active role, as together we make it a reality over the coming months and years.



Merran McRae
Director for Adults and Communities, Kirklees Council

Introduction

This strategy is a map to take us to where we want to be. It is a starting point. Along the way it is certain that more areas for improvement and development will arise.

We know that change takes time so we have set a five-year strategy. The workstreams and action plans to support the strategy are being developed.

Updates can be found on the Kirklees Partnership website (www.kirkleespartnership.org)

Where are we now?



The Voluntary and Community Sector in Kirklees

Kirklees has a diverse Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). It is made up of thousands of organisations that range from local neighbourhood groups to district-wide organisations and branches of national charities. These organisations are staffed and run by volunteers and paid workers. Many of them are registered charities with boards of trustees, some are also limited companies.

The VCS is not static so exact figures can be elusive, but there are at least 2,000 active organisations in Kirklees.

Voluntary and community sector organisations often require support and assistance. They require specialist advice such as financial and legal guidance; they need access to information such as examples of best practice and peer support. There are a number of organisations and networks that provide this 'infrastructure support'.

What does it do?

The VCS responds to need and reflects people's aspirations. It delivers services such as playgroups, sports clubs, lunch clubs, help lines, counselling services and training courses. VCS organisations are advocates for individuals, groups and communities; they represent their views and opinions. Faith groups and organisations are also part of the VCS.

How is it funded?

VCS organisations raise funds to finance their activities. This is done through charitable donations, securing grants and providing paid-for services. Members of the Local Strategic Partnership such as the council, NHS, police, schools and colleges commission services from the VCS. Kirklees Council does this to the value of more than £30 million. NHS Kirklees and other partners also make a significant contribution.

Working together

The Voluntary Action Network (VAN) has been developed to enable VCS organisations to contribute at the highest level to the strategies that ensure the delivery of the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The network plays a valuable role in developing strong leadership and an effective voice for the VCS in Kirklees.

Members of the Local Strategic Partnership work with the VCS at every level. Our aim as the Kirklees Partnership is for the VCS to play an integral part in the design and delivery of services that local people want and need.

Our achievements so far

The development of joint commissioning arrangements across the partner agencies in order to develop consistent and accessible support to the VCS.

A successful bid to Treasury for the 'Civic Partnership Project' that will establish a:

- pilot programme of case studies looking at the four LAA blocks to demonstrate partnership working
- clearing house to set standards for VCS delivery and commissioning
- partnership academy to improve cross sector skills.

Successful retention of a strong grant funding base (over £2 million in 2008/09) to support VCS development and growth which is essential in sustaining a strong community foundation.

Consultation with the VCS on infrastructure support needs in order to develop capacity building commissioned activity.

Development of a range of volunteering initiatives including an annual volunteering celebration event for the communities of Kirklees.

The Community Facilities project has built on guidance from the 'Quirk' initiative to support the VCS to develop clear and viable business cases for the transfer of council owned community buildings to the community. To aid this activity, core management standards and a detailed implementation plan have been developed.

Where do we want to be?

Our vision

We want Kirklees to be a place where everyone works together to improve the quality of life for people in Kirklees and to build healthy, safe and strong communities.

Commissioning and support for the VCS

An audit of VCS organisations showed that commissioning was a central concern.

The main concerns were:

- funding to enable involvement in commissioning or providing services
- the extent of that involvement and at what stage
- the relationship with the statutory sector.

This strategy is therefore focused on using commissioning to get measurable outcomes to help the Kirklees Partnership ensure local people get the services they need.

However, not all the VCS organisations are in the business of commissioning. This strategy also acknowledges their role in contributing to the well-being of local communities, especially through the localities.

Support for them will take the form of:

- re-affirming the role of grant aid to small and medium-sized groups and organisations

- supporting those organisations to play their part in contributing to the life and success of communities
- promoting the role of volunteering and supporting recruitment of volunteers
- making volunteering and community work a foundation for the new localities
- ensuring suitable community facilities managed/owned by the VCS are at the core of contributing to local community benefit.

What we will do

To improve the partnership between the public, voluntary and community sectors we want an environment where there is respect and understanding.

The focus of our work will be to:

- improve our cross sector working arrangements to encourage good practice and consistent approach
- work together to build social capital by valuing VCS action and independence
- engage and communicate effectively with each other in the public interest
- recognise and respect each sector's roles, added value, challenges and constraints.



How are we going to get there?

Our commitments

1. We will fully implement the Kirklees Compact

The Kirklees Compact (a government initiative to improve working relationships between public and voluntary and community sectors) was signed by all partners in 2005.

Work is underway to establish:

- a process whereby Compact implementation can be measured and monitored
- regular reporting to the Kirklees Partnership and the programme board.

The Compact already has a set of outcomes to be achieved and these will help inform the action plans of this strategy. More information about the Compact can be found at www.kirkleespartnership.org.uk

2. We will ensure we communicate effectively with each other and people will know who can help them

Effective information management is essential between partners. Information needs to be easily accessible and easy-to-navigate. These standards should apply whether enquiries are made by individuals or organisations.

We will adopt a consistent approach across organisations to communications, information sharing, advice, or signposting.

This means:

- partnership organisations will publish contact details and make it clear how to contact the appropriate people
- partnership organisations will ensure they promote a customer service approach to information management
- all communications will be clear and jargon-free.

3. We will work together to support the VCS to build capacity and fulfil its potential

Organisations require different levels and types of support to build capacity and achieve their potential. We recognise the diversity of need and have a shared responsibility to support the development of the VCS in Kirklees.

Our plans for the VCS will include:

- support to access technical and professional advice from the partnership
- raising awareness of funding opportunities and bidding processes to enable access to develop provider functions



- jointly reviewing funding mechanisms including interim arrangements to ensure continuity of local activity
- developing the VCS capacity to manage or own community facilities ensuring sustainability and community involvement.

4. We will help volunteers to help local communities

Volunteers play a vital role in improving the lives of people in our local communities. We want to increase the number of volunteers in Kirklees and provide them with practical support.

We will develop plans to include:

- agreeing a definition on volunteering and means of measuring its benefits to the community
- identify communities where there are few volunteers and target support appropriately
- encouraging the level of volunteering in the community (through reducing barriers to entry, expenses, systems and processes that 'wrap around' volunteering)
- employee volunteering initiatives within public sector organisations.

5. We will ensure grant funding is available in Kirklees to help meet local needs.

Local VCS groups have been very clear about the need for grant aid to support some activities where appropriate.

Information systems and schemes are much improved but there is a need to ensure all local grant givers have systems that are joined up, open, clear, transparent, proportionate and user friendly. Increasingly, more links will be made with the localities across Kirklees.

It is important that all grant schemes can demonstrate value for money and will need a degree of proportionate performance management, ie still linked to outputs and outcomes monitoring.

Small grants are contributing to high quality services for local people and addressing key priorities of community strategies.

All partners recognise their importance. Some grant schemes are operated by the VCS themselves so all sectors are involved in every aspect of this work.

Our shared commitment: [we will have a fair, equitable and open process for organisations to submit bids for support and funding.](#)

This means processes for all local grants need to ensure:

- high quality information is available
- systems and processes are fair, equitable, proportionate and clear
- wherever possible, schemes are joined up and locality based
- all schemes have criteria which are needs driven and regularly reviewed to be responsive to new policy directives
- support is available to the VCS to develop ideas into bids for funding
- standardisation of forms and processes for submitting requests where possible
- increased clarity on how decision-making will happen, including giving feedback and rights of appeal
- grants are used to bring communities together and build social capital.

6. We will ensure delivery of high quality services for local people through effective commissioning and contracting arrangements.

In our joint commitment to deliver high quality services in communities, we will use commissioning and delivery arrangements for the greatest impact and outcome. We will be open and transparent in the way we design and develop services to meet local needs. We will make informed decisions and be clear about who can make them.

Kirklees Council and NHS Kirklees, as well as many voluntary organisations, both commission and provide services. We need to find a balance between using the expertise of people in designing services and ensure there are no unfair advantages when it comes to contracting for those services.

Involvement of the VCS and its representation should reflect as much as possible the diversity of the community in Kirklees. We will look to improve representation and participation of the VCS at all levels both strategic and operational.

Our shared commitment: [to have joint, open and transparent commissioning and contracting arrangements.](#)

This means further improvements will be made to all commissioning processes to ensure:

- all commissioners look to involve the sector at all stages of the commissioning process
- new ideas and innovation identified by the VCS are listened to and fed into commissioning forums
- commissioning bodies involve the relevant VCS partners to shape and design future services that are being contracted
- we regularly assess the extent of the involvement and engagement of the VCS
- clear processes are used to allocate resources to deliver core services
- there is a clear focus on robust performance management, ie outcome/output monitoring quality not to be compromised in efforts to secure services
- VCS to be valued and supported (see section 3 on capacity building)

- decisions on service delivery to be made regardless of sector but determined from the citizen's perspective
- protocols are developed for organisations to accommodate and recognise the transition from grant aid to commissioned services
- all commissioners need to consider the true costs of in-house delivery when looking at what is to be contracted out.

Next steps

Implementation of this strategy will be through the development of detailed action plans overseen by a multi-agency project team.

Workstreams will be developed for each commitment, taking into account cross-cutting themes and other activity being carried out by the Kirklees Partnership. The action plans will be published on the Kirklees Partnership website.

What success will look like

People told us they would know that this strategy was working when there is:

- better services that improve the health and well being of local people
- balanced commissioning arrangements with more services being delivered by the VCS for the good of the people in Kirklees
- locally-based VCS organisations, growing in size and professionalism and having a greater influence on policy development
- emergence of new organisations and partnerships around service delivery
- real engagement with individual voluntary organisations, demonstrated in the way the statutory sector listens and acts and vice-versa
- proper use by partners of VCS organisations in delivering best value for the people of Kirklees
- regular exchange of information and advice between the statutory sector and VCS key players
- jargon-free information about what is going to be done and what cannot be done, fed back to the community in an open and honest way.

Monitoring and evaluation

Activity will be monitored by the VCS Programme Board which is accountable to the Kirklees Partnership Executive. In addition, the Project Team will check progress and comment on developments. Key questions for evaluation include:

- are improved systems in place for grants and commissioning?
- are more people volunteering?
- are services for local people improving?

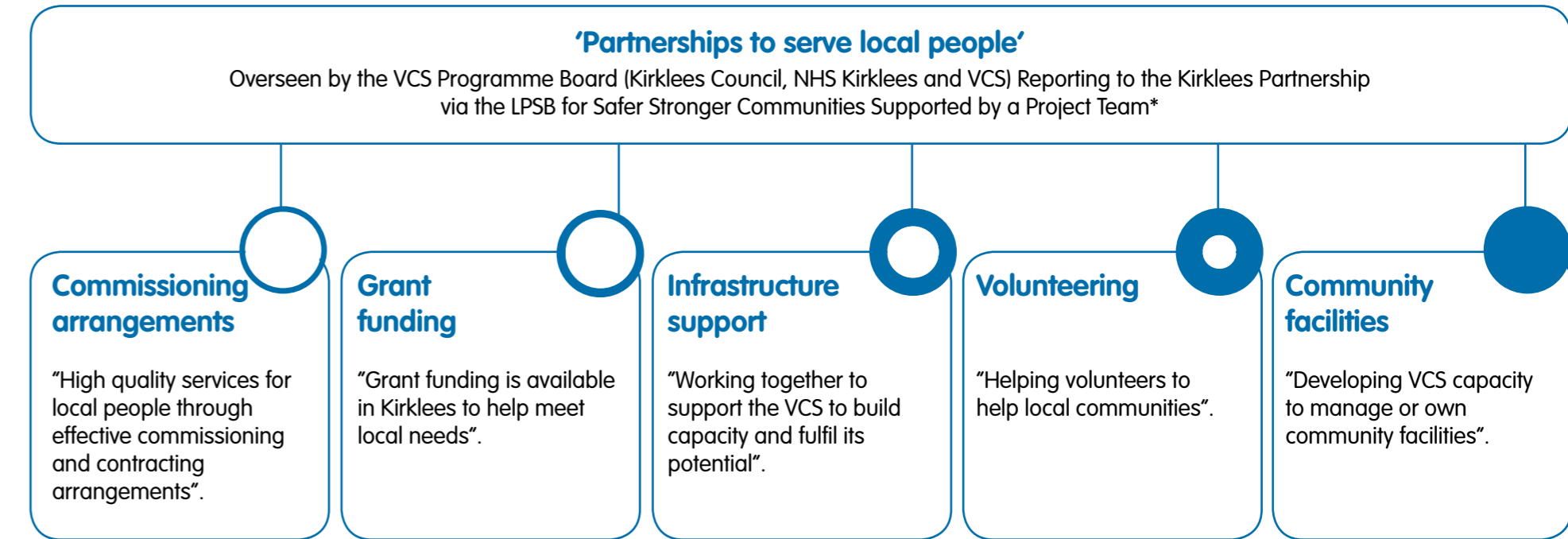
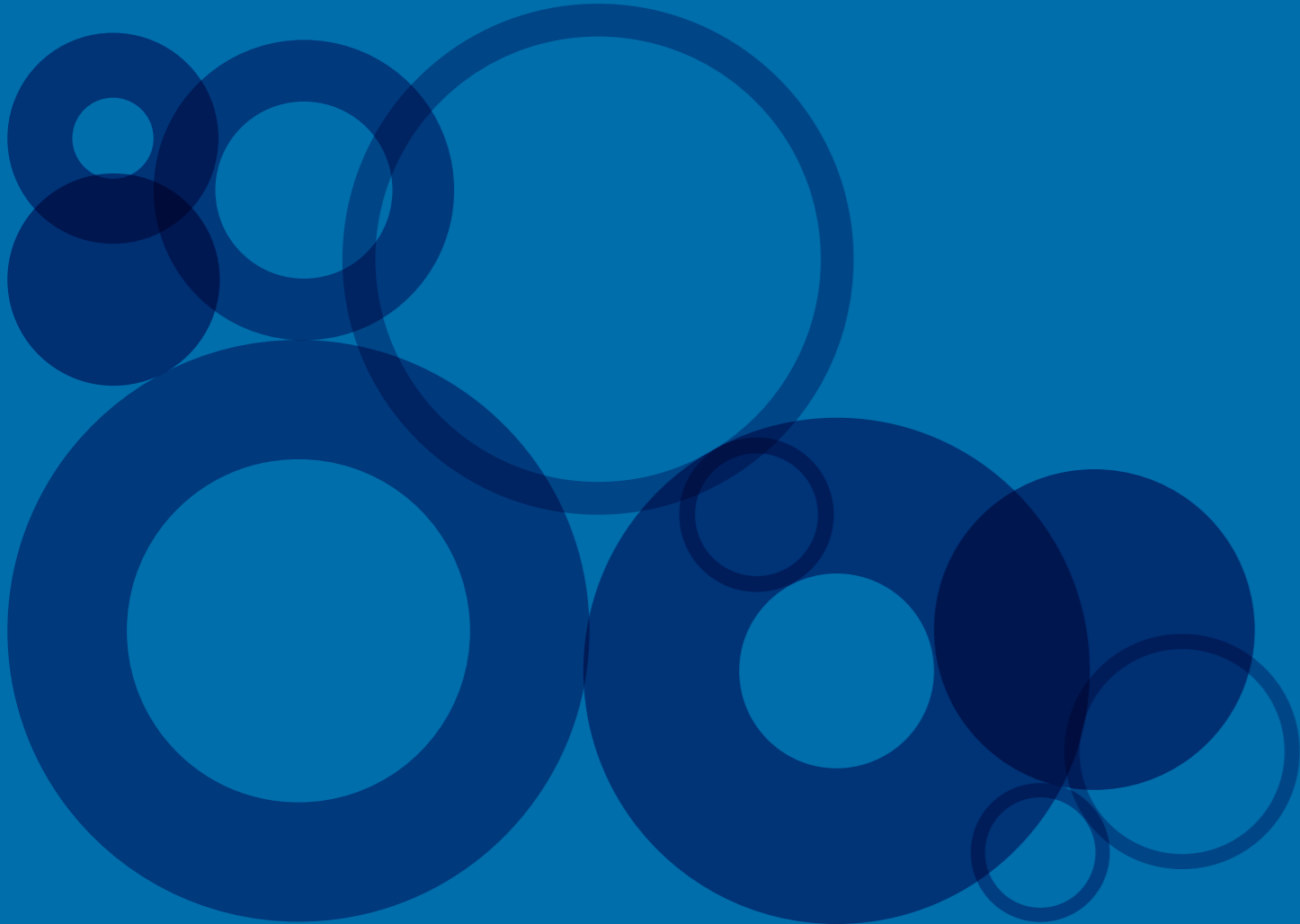
Performance will also be measured within the framework for the Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets.

The two key targets that relate to the VCS are:

- participation in regular volunteering, N16
- a thriving third sector, N17.

Appendix A

Chart to show workstreams from the VCS Strategy



- Drivers:**
- Local Area Agreement (LAA) Indicators
 - Quirk/Council Community Buildings policy
 - Quest Research
 - Invest to Save Programme
 - Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) Framework

*The above work streams are managed by a Project Team made up of key officers that reports to the Programme Board.

The Project Team have responsibility for: VCS Strategy and Compact implementation and improved communication. The Project Team also have lead responsibility for the LAA national indicators for 'participation in regular volunteering' (NI6) and 'a thriving third sector' (NI7).

Information in other formats

We are committed to ensuring that communication is clear, plain and available for everyone. This strategy can be made available in languages other than English. It can also be made in large print, audio CD, audiotape and braille.

For copies, please telephone 01484 518457. If you have any comments or questions please email: vcs.strategy@kirkleespartnership.org

બીજા સ્વરૂપોમાં માહિતી

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નકલો માટે, મહેરબાની કરી 01484 518457 નંબર પર ટેલિફોન કરો, જો તમે કોઈ ટીકાટિપ્પણ કરવા માંગતા હોય અથવા તમારે કોઈ સવાલો પૂછવા હોય તો મહેરબાની કરી ઇમેઇલ કરો: vcs.strategy@kirkleespartnership.org

以其他形式编制的资料

我们致力确保沟通资料清晰、简明和可以提供给每一个人。根据这个政策，除了英语外，这些资料都可以编制成其他语言，以及大字体、录音光碟、录音带和凸字版本。

欲索取这些资料，请致电 01484 518457 查询。如果您有任何疑问，请寄电邮至 vcs.strategy@kirkleespartnership.org 告知我们。

ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ

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This strategy is available online at www.kirkleespartnership.org/VCS
May 2009

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Chcemy być pewni że komunikacja jest jasna, prosta i dostępna dla każdego. Strategia jest do nabycia w językach oprócz angielski. Można też ją dostać w dużym druku, na płycie kompaktowej, na taśmę i w piśmieniu wypukłym dla niewidomych (braille).

Proszę telefonować numer 01484 518457 po kopie. Jeśli chcesz oferować swoje zdanie lub masz jakiegokolwiek pytania, pr wysłać email do: vcs.strategy@kirkleespartnership.org

