



Terms of Reference

VS6 - representing Infrastructure Bodies across the Liverpool City Region

Statement of purpose

1. The VS6 network provides a focal point for Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) infrastructure / support providers to debate, influence and shape policy at the Liverpool City Region (LCR) level; to consider how to develop a collective response; and to consider how we may work together more formally.
2. VS6 provides public and private sector partners working at the Liverpool City Region (LCR) spatial level a formal point of contact to engage with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, through the infrastructure / support providers.
3. VS6 is required because infrastructure / support organisations provide a vital conduit to VCFSE organisations, and wider communities (of interest and geography) and their engagement is vital in improving and addressing issues of inclusion, employment and healthy and strong communities across the city region footprint.
4. VS6 provides a clear conduit (through its members) to the sector. Members of VS6 have a collective reach, communication and feedback channels to over 8,000 VCFSE organisations within LCR.

Membership

Membership of VS6 is open to VCFSE organisations which meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Operating at borough and/or Liverpool City Region (LCR) level and based within the area
- and**
- ✓ a primary focus to provide representative, networking and voice functions, alongside practical support services, to other VCSE organisations
- and**
- ✓ can demonstrate a proven track record and significant reach into their locality/community of interest.
- and**
- ✓ with the ability and commitment gather views and feed back to their members on issues of significance in relation to emerging LCR policy
- and**
- ✓ prepared to contribute and adhere to the membership values and working practices of VS6
- and**
- ✓ prepared and expected to represent VS6 at a LCR or borough level, and feedback

Members can agree to co-opt additional organisations where this is believed to be beneficial in terms of strategic, policy input or to fill gaps in geographic reach.

We will review membership and the need for co-option on a regular basis.

Membership expectations

- All members will aim to ensure positive and effective working relationships within VS6, with the wider VCFSE operating within LCR, and with public sector partners.
- All members of VS6 will seek to create an environment of mutual respect and trust adhering to the highest standards of equal opportunity and non-discriminatory practice
- All members will provide a high level of constructive support, challenge and debate, and recognise the value of honesty within discussions
- Members of VS6 will observe the confidentiality of discussion within meetings, and the sensitivity of some issues
- It is recognised and accepted that there will be occasions where members of VS6 may potentially be competing with each other for funding or resources. VS6 encourages collaborative approaches but, where this is not possible, members should be clear that they are competing and the reasons for doing so.
- If a member is unable to attend the meeting, they will contribute views by email in advance of the meeting which will be taken into account by the other members during discussion.
- Members are expected to work within, and 'speak with one voice', on policy issues that VS6 have debated and agreed.
- Members representing VS6 at external partnership meetings (for example LEP EU committee etc) are expected to formally feedback to the network, and ensure that their messages and views are in line with the policy direction / approach agreed.
- It is recognised that members have different levels of resources available to them to be able to contribute to the work of VS6. Whilst VS6 will consider securing external resources to support its work, initially members are expected to consider how they contribute resources: this may be financial, or donating time, meeting venues, providing administration etc.

Values

Transparency – in our working together, we will be clear, honest and truthful. We will undertake our roles, as representatives and outside with partners and stakeholders in a clear way, being open about our role and motivation

Honesty – we want our interactions to be positive and to ensure that we work together well we will be honest about our intentions, our role and our behaviour. We will be a joint voice on the things we agree and honest and respectful about the things we don't

Proactive and Responsive – we are committed to taking action. Together and individually we want a partnership that does things and makes a difference for our sector and communities in the LCR. We will be clear about our parameters and expectations and expect active participation

Authentic Leadership – We come together to make a difference, we know our sector, understand its contribution and impact and take seriously our role as advocates for the sector. We will be clear about what we can and can't do and be honest and robust if required in our dealings with those whose views we seek to try and shape

Real – we are coming together for the common good, our partnership is about improving lives and communities in the City region. We are the custodians of the offer of the sector and will articulate this whenever we can.

Meeting structure and format

- To achieve the statement of purpose, meetings will require:
 - consistent attendance
 - an 'action focus', with members able to take responsibility to action, implement and report back in a timely manner
 - Formal agendas, with supporting papers, to enable members to prepare and consider items and policy issues in advance of the meeting

Governance arrangements

- Organisations seeking membership will be asked to submit an application, and their membership will need to be approved by 2/3 of the current membership
- Members will agree to contribute to the costs of VS6 through paying an agreed annual membership fee
- Meetings of VS6 will be considered quorate when more than 50% of members are present.
- At the start of each meeting, members will declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest and then absent themselves from decision making in any such areas
- Members of VS6 will elect a chairperson and other officers if required, on an annual basis. This chairperson can be a member of VS6, or an external appointment if members feel that this is required for external credibility and / or independence.
- VS6 will meet as often as required to achieve the purpose set out
- Meeting dates will be set as far in advance as possible, and with no less than two weeks notice. Agenda and papers will be sent to members at least a week in advance of a meeting.
- The VS6 will seek to reach decision by consensus but otherwise decisions made be made by a simple majority. If voting, one representative from each member organisation shall be allowed to vote. The network will take into account views submitted by members unable to attend the meeting.

Review

- These terms of reference will be reviewed by the network in January 2016