

VOYC Devon Business Plan 2015-2020

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

1.1 VOYC (previously VYS Devon) is a well-respected specialist infrastructure network for those voluntary and community sector groups that work with and for children and young people. Established in 1964, VOYC is a diverse and rapidly growing network of networks of national youth organisations and children and young people's organisations. The membership includes 24 network organisations; these include Devon Scouts and Girlguiding, 150 Individual youth and community organisations that work with and for young people and 36 affiliates. All these together support a network of just over 2500 children and young people's settings.

Often called 'Second tier' or 'Umbrella' organisations, they support frontline Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Organisations. Infrastructure organisations such as VOYC provide structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills to support and develop, coordinate, represent and promote front line organisations, thus enabling them to deliver their missions more effectively.

The CEO of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), Joe Irwin highlighted that "Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure is often undervalued, but it is nevertheless essential. The importance of infrastructure in the form of road, rail or broadband is well understood – but voluntary and community organisations (VCO) also need infrastructure. Without this they are like cars without roads, trains without tracks, smartphones with no signal. Trade unions have the TUC and trades councils, businesses have the CBI and Chambers of Commerce; even the churches are organised in diocese"¹.

1.2 VOYC Vision

We want Devon to be a place where all children and young people are supported to achieve their full potential.

1.3 VOYC Mission / Aims

VOYC will champion and strengthen Children and Young People Organisations in Devon by:

- Promoting good practice, efficiency and effectiveness of the voluntary and community sector in Devon within its members' organisations for children and young people up to 25 years.
- Providing timely and relevant information and advice to member organisations in all aspects of work with children and young people.
- Actively supporting the work of its member organisations to deliver services to children and young people without discrimination so as to develop their physical, mental and spiritual capacities.

¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2013/sep/27/navca-transforming-local-charity-infrastructure>

- Maximising the opportunities to member organisations to obtain support from financial and non-financial sources for the furtherance of this work.
- To vigorously represent at all appropriate levels the interests of its members in the furtherance of their work with children and young people.
- To innovate, explore, develop and assist our members deliver the best for their children and young people.

1.4 The VOYC Values:

- Being committed to providing accessible, high quality services for everyone working with children and young people within the VCS.
- Valuing the talents, skills and expertise of its stakeholders, staff and members of the Trustee Board; encouraging their participation in the policy making and strategy process.
- Ensuring that all organisations from within its membership have an equal right to access opportunities and participate in decision making.
- Value its own independence and that of its member organisations and recognises the importance of this independence in relation to its function of acting as the voice of the children and young people's voluntary and community sector.
- Value its members shared commitment to children and young people and those staff (paid & unpaid) who work with them and being committed to act as an advocate on behalf of the sector in these areas.

SECTION 2: EXTERNAL REVIEW

2.1. The formation of the coalition between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in May 2010 produced a deficit reduction plan with an ambitious target and a reliance on spending cuts to achieve this. Public expenditure is forecast to fall by roughly £30 billion in real terms between 2009/10 and 2015/16, a fall of 4%

2.2. Devon County Council's Youth Service has been under review during the period of this work after a consultation period which ended on the 27th April 2014. On 11 June 2014 it was announced that the Youth Service annual budget would be cut from £3.8million to £2.1 million, reducing staff numbers from 144 to 54. Eight 'hubs' would be retained by the local authority with 24 centres to be "handed over to local groups." A copy of the report² submitted to the DCC cabinet meeting by Tim Golby (Head of Social Care Commissioning) and John Smith (Head of Communities) states: *"it is clear that communities may need more flexible help in realising their ideas for running services and asset.* It was also set out in the report that *"We wish to provide funding for Devon-wide 'umbrella' support through regular communications, training, policy and funding advice."* £100,000 of funding for 'advice and infrastructure' was identified which VOYC Devon should regard as a key opportunity in the months ahead.

² <http://www.devon.gov.uk/loadtrimdocument?url=&filename=SCC/14/20.CMR&rn=14/WD245&dg=Public>

2.3. VOYC's currently delivers a Devon County Council Infrastructure Contract in partnership with the network of eight CVS's. The "Universal Infrastructure Offer" is based upon the NAVCA framework of Five Performance Standards covering development; support; liaison; representation and strategic partnership.

2.4. The Children's Alliance described by some as a 'quasi-Childrens trust' was set up in Devon and launched with the first meeting in July. The Children's Alliance will be a key strategic body in the forward operating context for VOYC Devon and it is of significant benefit to the organisation. Mark Goodman (VOYC CEO) was elected as the VCS Representative on the Alliance in July 2014.

2.5. Following the dissolution of the Transforming Local Infrastructure partnership, two generic voluntary infrastructure partnerships have formed in Devon – Devon Voluntary Action (DeVA) and Devon Live. Some believe that the process that has led to this separation has done reputational damage to VCS Infrastructure in the county. However, during the process VOYC Devon has maintained working relationships with all parties and has made decisions on the basis of what it considers to be in the best interests of children and young people's voluntary organisations.

SECTION 3: INTERNAL REVIEW

3.1. VOYC Devon has 1.7 FTE members of staff and a Board of Trustees drawn from member organisations plus co-options and independent chair and vice-chair. The organisation's income in 2013/14 was c£60,000 of which approximately half was grant funding from Devon County Council, with significant other income from an (on-going) contract to deliver part of the Targeted Families Support Programme (c10%) and the organisation's training programme (c12%) – an income stream that is growing year on year.

3.2. Feedback from Stakeholders that has informed this document has been taken from the report by South West Forum (August 2014) that was commissioned by VOYC Devon to assist the organisation with its strategic development. The work included Six stakeholder interviews with representatives from the following organisations / departments:

- ☒ Social Care Commissioning, Devon County Council
- ☒ Education, Employability and Skills, Devon County Council
- ☒ Public Health, Devon County Council
- ☒ Devon Safeguarding Children Board (independent)
- ☒ Voluntary Sector Infrastructure (DeVA and Devon Live)

In addition nine telephone interviews were conducted with representatives of voluntary and community organisations working with children and young people in Devon. These organisations were:

- ☒ Children's Summer Club, Barnstaple
- ☒ Tiverton Anglican Churches
- ☒ Kids Who Care, Unite
- ☒ Cheriton Fitzpaine Brownies (leader) & Lapford Pre-school (staff)

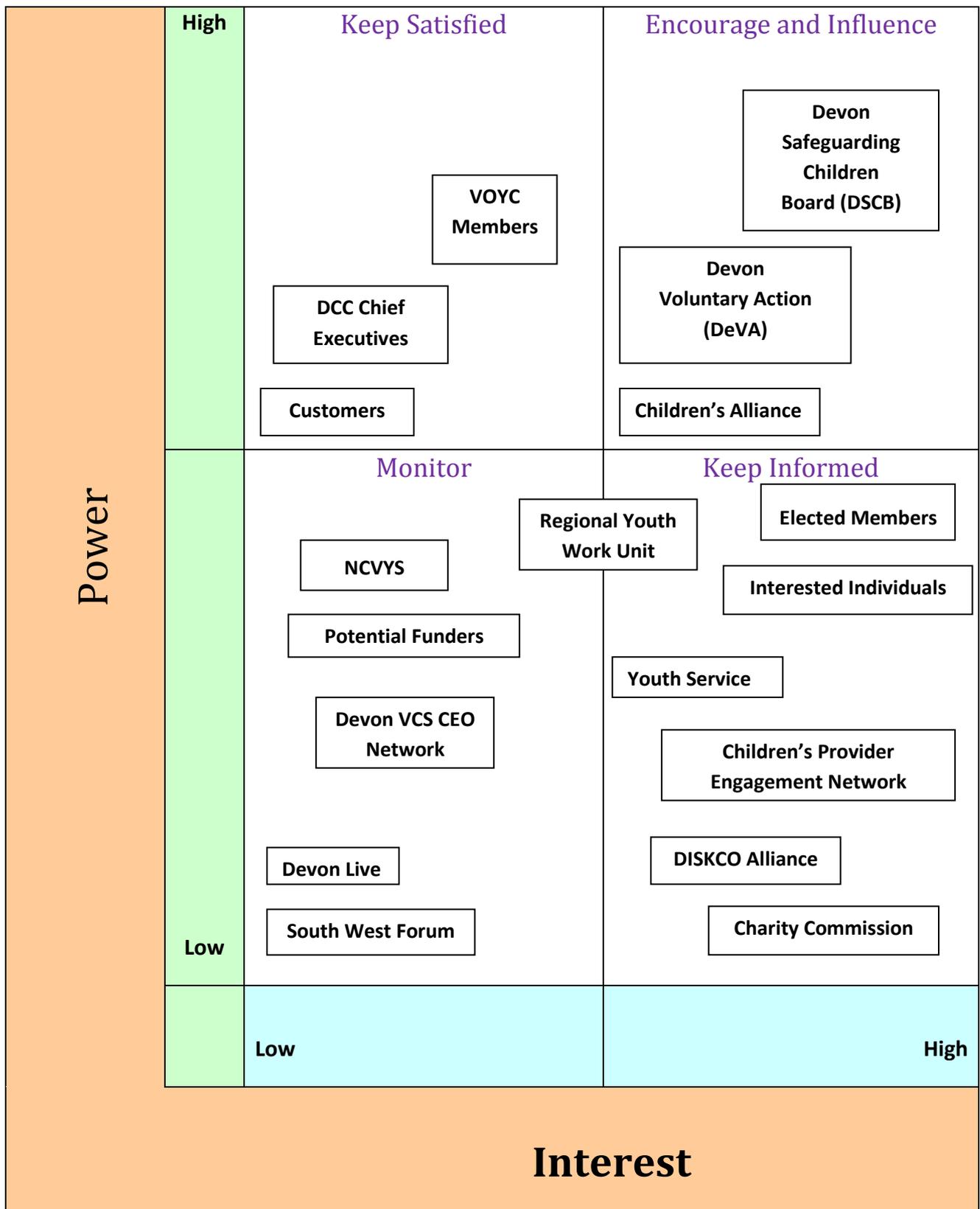
- ☒ Neroche Woodlanders
- ☒ Children & young people’s worker by a group of Anglican Churches in Sidmouth
- ☒ Poughill Youth Club
- ☒ Culm Valley Children’s Centre
- ☒ Youth worker with Christchurch in Paignton and Youth Genesis

In addition a survey was designed and distributed in hard copy at the VOYC Devon AGM and by email to the VOYC Devon mailing list. The survey was designed to provide further quantitative insight into the information gathered through the telephone interviews conducted. Twenty eight responses were received.

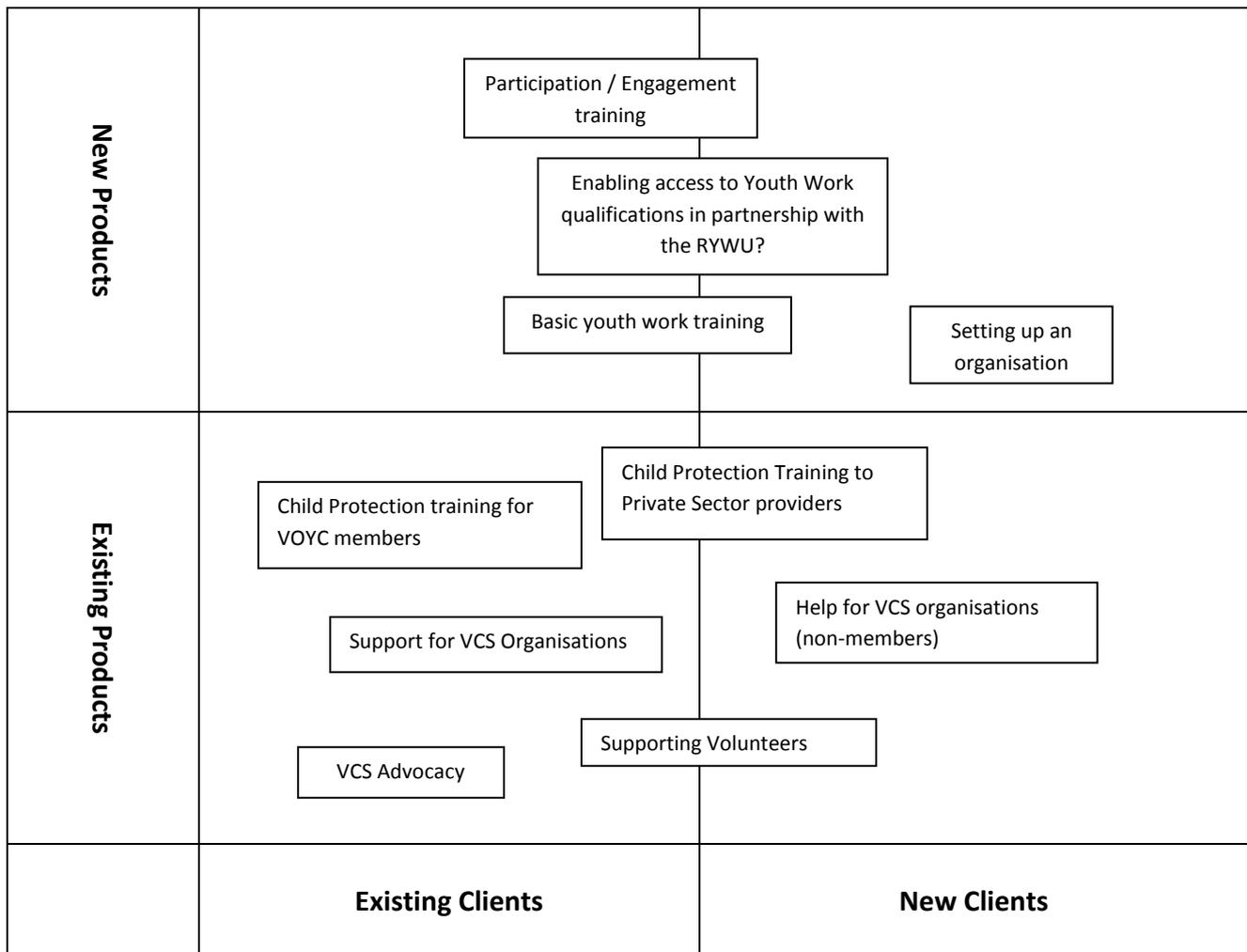
3.3 STAKEHOLDER SWOT ANALYSIS

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding (including training) offer • Engagement with the DSCB. • VOYC Newsletter • New VOYC Devon branding • Experienced staff team • Recognised by Agencies and the VCS as the lead organisation for Children and Young People infrastructure work • Skilled and motivates Trustees 	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support Agencies in building up sufficiency of provision within the VCS. • Ensuring that the VCS understand Outcome based commissioning • To be recognised as the single point of contact for Commissioners • With the development of the Children’s Alliance VOYC has the opportunity to evidence how it can play a brokerage role for commissioners • Help commissioners ensure that organisations are (and feel) consulted. • Provide local groups with the opportunity to network and share ideas. • New website and Social media tools • Significant change in the delivery of services (e.g. Early Help) requires improved links between Agencies and the VCS
<p>WEAKNESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding amongst Stakeholders of the VOYC role in representing the sector • The current vision and mission statements need to be changed • Does not have a quality assurance mark • No way of measuring the impact of VOYC work • Knowledge of VOYC Devon amongst VCS • Perceived as still being predominantly about the Youth Sector • Staff team have little capacity for development work • Lack of a clear communications plan • Lack presence in Local Communities 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of trust amongst VCS Infrastructure partners • The majority of funding is short term (12 month grant funding) • Reducing budgets mean funding goes to delivery rather than Infrastructure

3.4: VOYC Stakeholder Power / Interest Matrix



3.5. VOYC MARKETING ANALYSIS



SECTION 4: CONSIDERING THE FUTURE

4.1. John Hart (Leader of Devon County Council) in a recent interview³ says the authority has already found savings of £128 million following cuts in Government funding of 60 per cent in real terms from 2011 to 2016.

But he’s now warning that further cuts of £50 million will have to be made in the next financial year with £34 million the year after.

Cllr Hart finished by saying that “I will do my very best to deliver a budget that reflects what people want, but we should all be prepared to see more services delivered in different ways, and by different groups where we can no longer provide them.”

4.2. The VCS will be required to evidence the impact (the overall change they seek to achieve) with clear outputs showing how this will be achieved. This will in future be significantly more important

³ <https://www.devonnewscentre.info/spending-cuts-to-continue-says-county-council-leader/>

than evaluating, monitoring and or measuring. There will be a need for the VCS to be able to define:

- **Impact:** the broad or longer term effects of a project or organisations work;
- **Outcomes:** the intermediary changes, designed to achieve overall impact;
- **Experiences:** how people feel whilst being involved in receiving services;
- **Outputs:** the services, projects and work activities designed to achieve Impact

4.3. There is undoubtedly a changing landscape of and for Infrastructure organisations, with the following factors needing to be understood:

- What will be the impact of the cuts in funding be on Local Infrastructure organisations?
- The need to build relationships with key staff in Agencies so as to understand just what the Agencies want and what they will pay for from Infrastructure Organisations?
- Is it possible to create markets in which Infrastructure Organisations can generate income?
- How are relationships between existing Infrastructure Organisations being re-configured?
- What will it mean in terms of changing delivery mechanisms to allow for on-line support; peer to peer learning; community organising and supporting new organisations / social enterprises?

SECTION 5: OUR STRATEGY

5.1 STRATEGIC AIMS

ONE: To act as a champion for the children and young people’s voluntary and community sector, ensuring that their experiences are at the core of public policymaking;

TWO: To provide practical help and support to the children and young people’s voluntary and community sector so as to ensure that practice becomes more effective;

THREE: To act as a broker and facilitator of networks, partnerships and consortia so that voluntary and community sector become more efficient and sustainable;

FOUR: To be entrepreneurial and look to maximize income from selling existing services to new customers.

5.2 PRIORITIES

ONE: To act as a champion for the children and young people’s voluntary and community sector, ensuring that their experiences are at the core of public policy making.	
Impact	Outcomes
The VCS have a voice in relation to the design and delivery of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. VOYC Devon communications project an assertive, energetic and well-connected organisation. Ensuring that there are key messages being delivered for target audiences. ii. VOYC are recognised as being the champion for the VCS on the DSCB and Children’s Alliance. iii. There is evidence of the impact made by the VCS in both the design and delivery of services to children and young people.

TWO: To provide practical help and support to the children and young people's voluntary and community sector so as to ensure that practice becomes more effective.	
Impact	Outcomes
There is an innovative and enterprising sector, that can demonstrate the difference it can make to support work with children and young people whilst attracting income from a wider range of sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The resources e.g. the skills of the people and buildings, available within the network are better utilised; ii. The sector is commissioning ready in terms of quality assurance, working in consortia, bid writing and demonstrating impact. iii. Not for Profit Organisations have a well trained workforce that enables them to achieve better outcomes and better experiences for their service users.
THREE: To act as a broker and facilitator of networks, partnerships and consortia so that voluntary and community sector become more efficient and sustainable;	
Impact	Outcomes
Maximising the benefit of peer support networks, ensuring opportunities are promoted to members and gaps identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Voluntary and Community Organisations network and collaborate for mutual benefit.
FOUR: To be entrepreneurial and look to maximize income from selling existing services to new customers.	
Impact	Outcomes
VOYC widens its customer base	The organisation is less reliant on grant / contract income.

SECTION 6: MEASURING OUR IMPACT

The difference we make

VOYC has been using the NCVO Infrastructure Programme (VIP). This is a framework and tools that have been developed for use by any organisation that exists to connect, support and represent a group of organisations in a sector. This is specific to Infrastructure Organisations and can be used to demonstrate the difference VOYC makes to the groups / organisations it works with.