

The State of the Sector, June 2015. Executive Summary

This report is designed to raise awareness and understanding about the contribution and 'value' to the local economy of the Third Sector in Greater Lincolnshire.

Greater Lincolnshire is the title for the collective of 3 top tier local authorities of Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, and North East Lincolnshire (the latter two are both unitary authorities).

Methodology

Behind this report is a breadth of research which collectively demonstrates the work of the sector. This research includes:

- The 2015 Survey, circulated across Third Sector Networks
- Charity Commission data returns, via the Open Charities website
- Community mapping
- National and Local reports

Key Findings

- Third Sector is responsible for employing in the region of 14,500 people in Greater Lincolnshire.
- 4,577 vacancies were created in 2014-15 by the sector in Greater Lincolnshire.
- 20% of organisations reported that they employ an Apprentice.
- Small community groups operating at a local level contribute a total of £310,133,070 in volunteer hours per year.
- Charities in Greater Lincolnshire spend over £407million per year, making the sector a significant contributor to the local economy.
- 20% of organisations reported an income of more than £1 million.
- 70% of organisations identified themselves as a registered charity.
- In 2010 the National Survey of Charities and Social Enterprises demonstrated a rise in reports of delivering public services, from 14% in 2008 to 24% in 2010.
- Over 70% of organisations reported that they work in partnership with others.
- Organisations across Greater Lincolnshire are increasingly working together to achieve positive outcomes for local communities.
- The work of community groups and organisations make towns and villages safe, vibrant, and appealing places to live and work.

Recommendations

- Where statutory funding is offered to voluntary sector organisations, focus needs to be on goals that enable a thriving Greater Lincolnshire, promote social inclusion, and build on strengths in communities. Avoid approaching communities from targeted perspectives as a general funding ethos, unless there is a recognised value and need for doing so.
- Continue to grow partnerships across sectors and within sectors, ensuring strengths are pooled, and that there is a primary focus on community need and a focus on outcomes.
- Providing support to organisations to enable them to demonstrate the impact they are having individually and collectively in their local area has been identified as a beneficial next step for the sector. Organisations reported to us that they didn't record much of the work they were doing, for example the number of volunteer hours and what this equates to in terms of impact on outcomes for communities, employability, and financial equivalency. This is generally because they are caught up in the great work they do and the tasks in hand. We recommend that organisations work together to identify training and share knowledge, in order to further demonstrate the outcomes relating to their activity. This will help with individual funding applications and demonstrate an even greater impact of the sector.
- Valuing and enabling shared learning at community level is essential, but as suggested by the research into Asset Based Community development, it requires approaches that recognise importance of growing learning within and across communities. It is recommended that future planning is focussed on supporting and enabling the process of participatory learning that is inherent in children, and adults, learning by engagement in the organisation of community activities.
- Recognise the nature of volunteering as a fundamental part of inclusive communities and aim to encourage the progressive development of participative skills in young people, for example through informal partnerships between schools and community activities, community arts, sports, heritage, and environmental sustainability.

Conclusion

The Third Sector is a major contributor to the quality of life and economic vibrancy in Greater Lincolnshire, particularly through their role as community builders. The preventive and positive outcomes of the Third Sector's involvement reduce the costs to other services and enables greater independence and sustainability for individuals and whole communities. The contribution of the sector brings more than a financial value. It creates outcomes that enhance the quality of life in Greater Lincolnshire, in turn making it a great place to live, work, and invest.

Full Report

The State of the Sector Report can be obtained at www.involvinglincs.org.uk or by emailing enquiries@involvinglincs.org.uk