



## Voluntary Sector Partnership Moray Survey Report November 2010

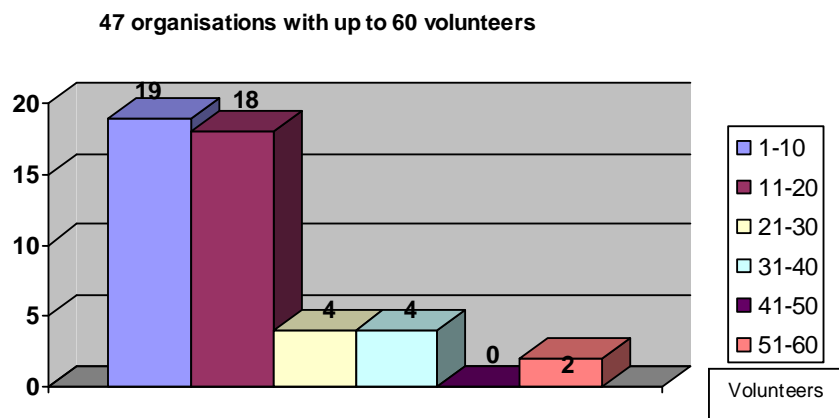
This year has seen a lot of positive activity around further development of Voluntary Sector Partnership Moray (VSPM). VSPM's role in Community Planning is now established and we're delighted to say that VSPM has voluntary sector representatives on Moray's Community Planning Partnership Community Engagement group and all of the Theme groups. As part of the ongoing development work of the VSPM, we are keen to look at our methods of communication so that we are able to inform the third sector in Moray about the issues that are being raised in Community Planning Partnership meetings. We also want to establish ways of gathering views from, and information about, the sector so that the voluntary sector representatives can take real issues and concerns to the table. As part of this process, in the summer and early autumn of 2010, we invited groups and organisations in the Third sector to take part in a short online survey. The survey was accompanied by a brief description of VSPM and its involvement in Community Planning. (This can be found at Appendix 1). We gathered responses from 79 organisations – which proved to be a 23% response rate.

### **Key questions we asked about the make up of the group/organisation.**

We asked for practical information about groups /organisations such as the size of the organisations as we felt that this would help us to gauge a group's / organisation's likely capacity to engage with VSPM. (Capacity could be in terms of human resources in order to physically participate.) As part of the survey we asked how many volunteers and or staff organisations had.

### *Groups / Organisations involving Volunteers.*

53 organisations responded. The total number of volunteers involved in these organisations was 2,035.



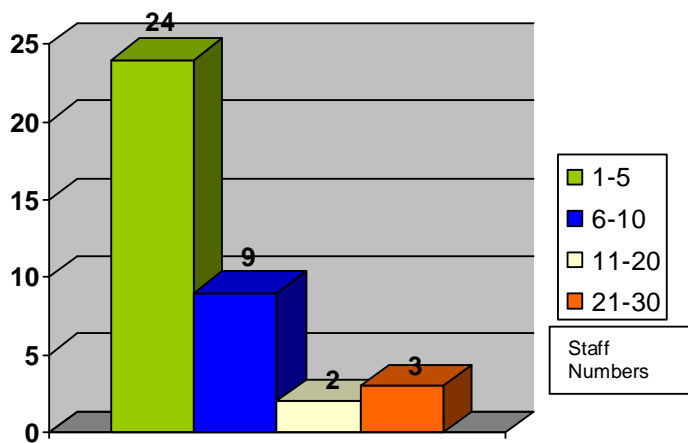
From the graph it is clear that the majority of organisations have between 1 and 20 volunteers.

Organisation	Number of Volunteers
Number 1	90
Number 2	114
Number 2	150
Number 4	170
Number 5	330
Number 6	400

There were, however, 6 organisations that reported having, between them, a total of 1,254 volunteers ie 62% of all the volunteers reported by respondents

### Groups / Organisations that have Staff

38 groups/organisations with full time staff



38 organisations reported having full time staff, 7 only part time and 12 a mixture of both. The majority of groups / organisations reporting full time staff, had between 1 and 5 people.

### Key Issues for groups / organisations

Part of the survey was aimed at gathering information about the issues groups and organisations in the sector felt were most important to them and also what kind of help and support they were looking for. Not surprisingly, the main concerns were around funding and difficulties around recruiting, and maintaining adequate volunteer numbers.

### What are the main issues that your group/organisation faces at this time?

Issue/Concern	No of comments.
Funding	55
Lack of Volunteers	36
Lack of in house skills	11
Inadequate premises	6
Lack of External support to our group	3
Impact of Legislation	3
Misc (publicity, low take up of service, IT)	3

### *What help/support do you think your group/organisation could benefit from?*

Help/support	No of comments
Fundraising/ help with funding applications	32
Recruiting volunteers	18
Training	16
Networking	6
Marketing / publicity	6
Access to free training venues	3
IT eg website building	3
Misc (external admin support, representation)	3

### *What works well?*

We asked respondents to tell us about what particular aspects of their group / organisation they felt worked well. We received many positive comments. Best practice also comes across in a lot of the following comments.

*“Team work, camaraderie and young and older crew working well together”*

*“Working together as a team towards a specific aim”*

*“Sharing of information and mutual respect”*

Respondents also paid tribute to the dedication and commitment of both their staff and volunteers.

*“Very dedicated group of volunteers providing services not available elsewhere.”*

*“The organisation has been established for 30 years and has a strong volunteer base of counsellors and executive committee members.”*

*“The project organisers throughout the area who voluntarily dedicate a lot of their own time to organising their volunteers.”*

*“Commitment of the people involved at all levels”*

Groups and organisations remarked on how well they managed to hold successful activities or events.

*“The group provides regular and successful events for the village and district and has done so for many years.”*

*“All users pull together for fundraising events”*

*“Community involvement and enjoyment is fundamental to success.”*

*“We’ve managed to do a lot with our limited resources”*

A strong belief in the vision and the mission of the organisation also comes across as something that groups are proud of.

*“Most volunteers remain long term due to belief in group’s objectives”*

*“Board communicates well and we have clear objectives”*

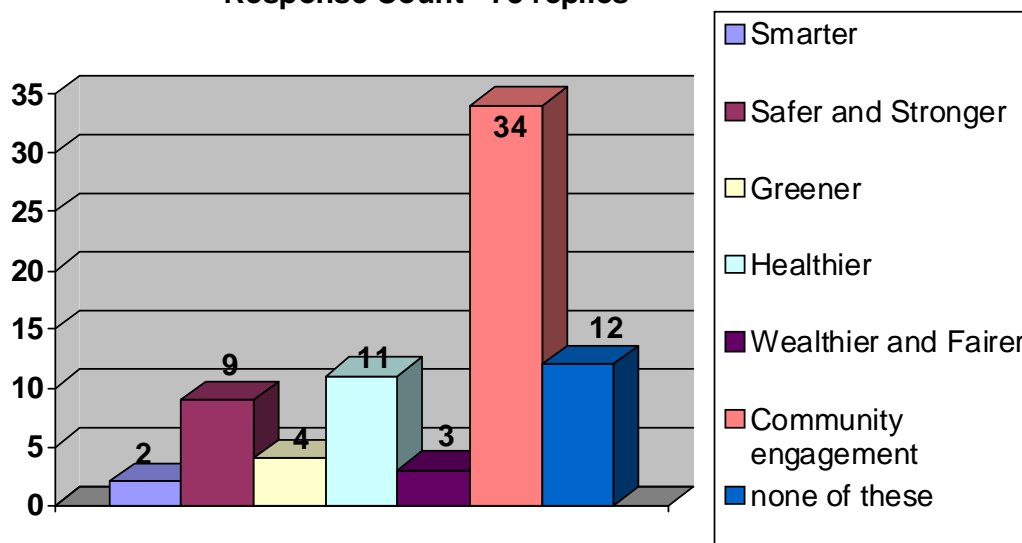
*“...the committee works very hard to maintain the high standards we have achieved over the years.”*

## Key questions we asked about the group's/organisation's focus

VSPM theme group representatives were keen to identify those groups / organisations that identified with their particular theme. We asked two questions in the survey to try and capture this information having first given an indication of what issues each theme group was addressing as outlined in the accompanying information at Appendix 1.

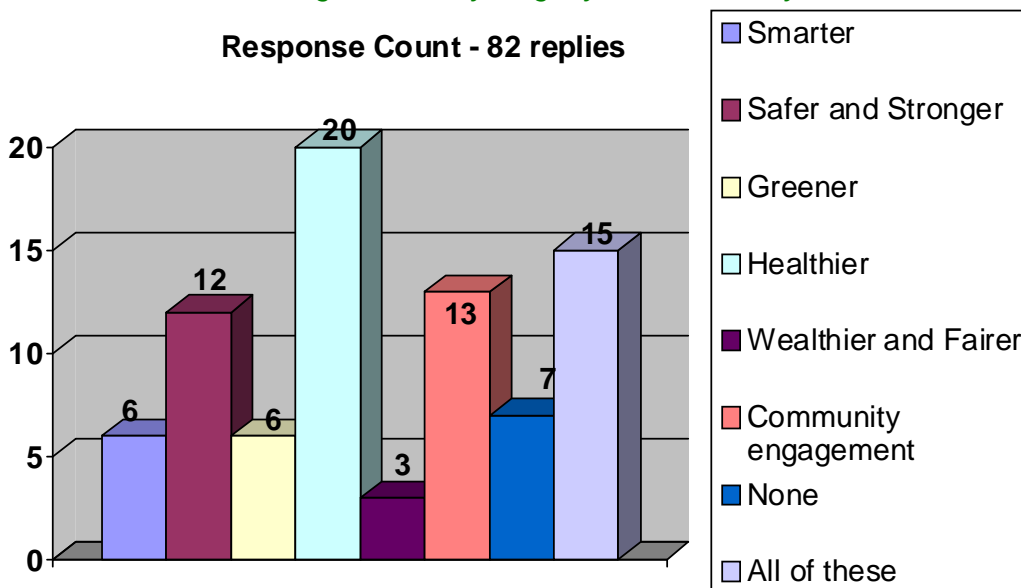
*Which of the following categories or themes best describes your group/organisation's primary focus?*

Response Count - 73 replies



*Which of the other categories, if any, might you also identify with?*

Response Count - 82 replies



We had a wide range of groups / organisations that identified with the Community Engagement Theme as their Primary focus. 15 groups/ organisations recorded that they identified with all of the categories. However, most groups / organisations identified with more than one theme group. Clearly our communication strategy will need to take a broad brush approach when communicating with the sector.

## Appendix 1



### Voluntary Sector Partnership Moray

#### What is Community Planning and why is it important?

Community Planning is a process whereby a local authority and other local agencies including community, voluntary, public and private sector organisations come together to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the well being of the area. We are all customers of the public sector, whether we are borrowing a book from the local library, visiting a GP or reporting a crime to the Police. In the past, the service providers acted mainly on their own when planning and delivering services to the public. Community Planning has been subdivided into 5 key themes; Greener, Smarter, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, and Wealthier and Fairer. There is also a group focusing on Community Engagement. Multi-agency Theme Groups meet to address issues within each of these themes.

#### What is the Voluntary Sector Partnership Moray and how does it fit in?

Voluntary Sector Partnership Moray (VSPM) is an independent support network of community, social enterprise, and voluntary sector organisations. Every theme group has a representative from VSPM at the table; the sector's voice is now at the heart of community planning. Each of our theme group representatives is eager to hear about the issues groups and organisations face and also to communicate back to the sector from the community planning process.

#### What are the VSPM theme groups?

**Safer and Stronger:** The Safer and Stronger Theme group addresses issues such as housing, homelessness, social inclusion, equality, road safety, antisocial behaviour fire and home safety and violence reduction.

**Greener:** The Greener Theme group addresses issues such as waste reduction, recycling, climate change, carbon management, and promoting good practice.

**Smarter:** Some of the issues for the Smarter group are; support for vulnerable children and young people, parenting, lifelong learning, education and training.

**Wealthier and Fairer:** The Wealthier and Fairer Theme group addresses issues such as social enterprise, money advice, community development, tourism and community transport.

**Healthier:** The Healthier Theme group is concerned with issues such as health improvement, community care, health inequalities, intervention, caring and service delivery.

**The Community Engagement Group:** The Community Engagement group has direct responsibility for ensuring that all sectors of the community are represented

and involved. The group supports voluntary and community activity and promotes networking across the sector.

### **What are the Benefits of the VSPM?**

The VSPM's aim is to benefit organisations by:

- providing opportunities for the Third Sector to share knowledge and experience and identify areas of good practice
- endeavouring to reduce the isolation experienced by some community and voluntary groups.
- supporting the sustainability of the sector
- being a forum for consultation on policy, service development and service delivery
- supporting new initiatives responding to grass roots needs
- providing for the support and development of social enterprise
- helping to create stronger infrastructure organisations in the sector over the long term.
- pulling together the evidence that demonstrates the impact made by the sector
- ensuring a collective voice
- enabling voluntary and community groups to contribute more effectively to Community Planning

There is more information about VSPM on our web site; [www.vspm.org.uk](http://www.vspm.org.uk) and about Community Planning at [www.yourmoray.org.uk](http://www.yourmoray.org.uk)