Third Sector Reference Group (TSRG)

Minutes of Meeting

September 7th, 2.30-4.30pm (hybrid)

Present

- Stephanie-Anne Harris, Bruce Crawford, Steve Lawrence, Ran Majumder, Helena Richards, Jonathan Ssentamu, Charlie Cumming, Paul Wilson, Kimberley Swan, Laurene Edgar, Benjamin Napier, Shelly-Ann Brown

Apologies

- Biddy Kelly

1. Visitor Levy Participatory Budgeting Presentation

Presentation

Michael Edwards, Project Manager Your Voice: Visitor Levy at the City of Edinburgh Council, presented proposals for the participatory budgeting element of the Edinburgh Visitor Levy, branded as "Your Voice Visitor Levy".

Key Points

- Edinburgh Visitor Levy commenced collection in summer 2026, charging 5% on paid accommodation for the first five nights.
- £2 million has been allocated over three years for participatory budgeting, with approximately £1.7 million for grants and £300,000 for administration.
- Funding will be distributed across Edinburgh's 17 wards, with additional weighting towards areas experiencing higher deprivation.
- First-year grants will be up to £10,000 for one-year projects, with multi-year funding anticipated in later rounds.
- Projects must demonstrate benefits for both residents and visitors. Examples discussed included:
  - Community arts
  - Cultural events
  - Sporting activities
  - Parks and green spaces
  - Heritage and community history projects
- Public voting will determine successful projects following an eligibility assessment.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of 13 August 2026 were approved with no amendments.

3. Matters Arising

Funding Steering Group

- First workshop took place on 31 August.
- Discussions focused on characteristics of effective grant programmes, eligibility criteria and priorities.
- Further engagement sessions are planned between now and Christmas.

Community Transport

- Chair has followed up again regarding outstanding community transport issues.
- Matter remains active and under consideration.

Third Sector Connects Event

- Event confirmed for 18 November 2026.
- Venue booked at Thomas Godfrey Hall.
- Planning group currently includes Paul Wilson, Bruce and Stephanie-Anne. Additional volunteers welcome.

4. TSRG - Sub groups update

<u>Prevention Working Group Update</u>

Update provided by Ran Majumder.

- Terms of Reference revised to Version 2.
- Work undertaken on governance arrangements, membership development and engagement register.
- Approximately 8 to 9 potential members have been approached.
- Revised Terms of Reference to be circulated to TSRG members for comment.

<u>Adult Protection Working Group</u>

- Positive first meeting held.
- Follow-up meeting scheduled.
- Productive discussions have taken place with:

o Independent Chair of the Adult Protection Committee.

o Principal Social Worker.

Change Management Group

- Continue efforts to progress Change Management Group activity.
- Concerns raised regarding lack of communication and momentum following previous work on housing support and change management activities.
- Chair continuing efforts to reconvene relevant partners and identify priorities for future work.

Ethnic Minority Engagement Subgroup

- Initial subgroup meeting held.
- Discussion focused on:

o Barriers to ethnic minority participation.

o Opportunities to strengthen engagement.

o Increasing representation within TSRG activities.

- Engagement has commenced with organisations

5. AOCB

- Third Sector Connects Planning

o Members discussed inviting speakers with expertise in prevention, public sector reform, evaluation and funding advocacy.

o Planning group to develop programme for Third Sector Connects on 18 November 2026.

- Income Maximisation Tender - update given by Benjamin:

o Tender publication has been delayed beyond expected timescales.

o Lack of communication from the Council has created uncertainty for organisations preparing bids.

o Delays may affect approval timelines and programme delivery.

o Members discussed the need for sufficient notice periods where grant-funded staffing may be affected.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 5 October 2026; 2.30-4.30pm, hybrid