Attendees:
Liz Catterson (Chair), Finlay Laverty, David Cameron, Alastair Cameron, Joanne Farrow, Laurie Russell, Tommy McDade, Robin Turner, Theresa Haran, Fiona Malcolm, Donna MacKinnon, Stephen McConnachie, Judith Thomas, Christine Mulligan, Paul Ferretti, Blyth Deans, Lynn MacKinnon, Jane McCormack

Apologies:
Jeanette Hagerstrom, Laura Sexton, John Reid, Margaret Wallace.

1. Welcome and Apologies
Liz welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of previous meeting
The content of the last meeting’s note was accepted by Theresa and seconded by Finlay.

3. Matters arising
Joanne confirmed that Emma Rich from SCVO has been agreed as the SCVO representative for the SEF.

Judith confirmed Liz Burns will attend the wider Forum where there will be a 30 minute presentation on SDS Regional Skills Assessment.

Christine clarified that David Souter is the Scottish Government lead for the Third Sector Challenge Fund.

Alastair updated on the networking event for Third Sector Challenge Fund. Bidders are to meet with local authorities.

4. Third Sector National Delivery Challenge Fund – Presentation and discussion

Comments:
- TSCF and CPP bids both provide opportunities for third sector delivery. There was some discussion around CPP’s who have indicated that they will not be procuring services, and Joanne agreed to raise this with SG ESF colleagues. SG ESF and CPPs have been working on a simplified cost model for delivery of ESF programmes. It was noted that there had been no consultation with the third sector in relation to this.
- Awaiting CPP model being agreed and sector may propose another model to SG ESF if they can’t wait any longer
- Funding is only for three years; as the aim of the Fund was to give longer term security, this has not been found popular

AP – Joanne to follow up with SG ESF and check whether they would consider two different funding models. Also to check on what guidance SG are giving CPPs in relation to inclusion of third sector within local delivery.
5. DWP update

Stephen provided an overview on the expansion of Universal Credit and talked the group through the slides he will present at the wider TSEF meeting on 19 March. He will provide further detail at the wider meeting but emphasised the following points:

- Jobcentre Plus will continue to support people who exceed 16 hours’ work per week; previously they would not
- Under the Smith Commission the various DWP employability programmes are not being devolved per se; rather, ‘space’ will be devolved for the SG to develop programmes to support people at risk of becoming long-term unemployed and to support disabled people.

**AP – Stephen to access example from in work support pilot**

**AP – Stephen to email the slides prior to the wider meeting on the proviso that they are not shared.**

**AP – Stephen to ask the wider forum for suggestions on how to define ‘long-term unemployed’**

Fuller discussion of UC at main forum – AP Questions

6. Update on Work plan

Judith provided an update on the work plan, stating that by the end of March three learning events will have taken place. Judith has circulated the draft note on the Glasgow event but has not received any feedback to date. 250 invites have been sent for the forthcoming local events in Edinburgh and Dundee, where the key statements will be tested and topics will be member-led. Judith will set up a Survey Monkey for those unable to attend.

Judith asked members to feed back to her good examples and case studies of TSIs linking into employability.

**Update on Information Hub**

Paul advised that the Information Hub is now more functional. He circulated a draft questionnaire framework and requested any feedback and additions by 6 March. He added that he could conduct telephone interviews for any additional information with anyone who considers the information too confidential for a questionnaire. He assured the group that the responses will be anonymous.

**AP – Feedback on questionnaire by 6th March 2015**

**Engagement with TSIs**
Robin Turner, Routes to work, gave an update on engagement with TSIs

**Excerpt from “Supporting A Stronger Third Sector” – The second report by Voluntary Action Scotland (VAS) on the impact of Scotland’s 32 Third Sector Interfaces (2013/14)**

Future Priorities

7.14 Although the monitoring form did not ask the TSIs to identify their key priorities, as it did in 2012/13, there were some general trends which emerged. Some were explicitly identified as priorities going forward while others have been inferred from the commentary the interfaces included within their reports. These included:

- Prioritisation of activities – A number of TSIs felt that an increased demand on their services as a result of a more complex legislative landscape and reductions in grant and local authority funding had led to a strain on their own resources. As a result it will become increasingly important for the interfaces to identify the key needs in their local areas and to prioritise their activities and outputs accordingly;
Collaborations and partnerships – Many of the TSIs referred to on-going and new partnerships as strengthening their activities around each of their core functions. This will continue to be important, particularly with regards to the Key Findings Page | 66 introduction of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill and the forthcoming work on health and social care integration. Working in collaboration with other agencies may also help to lessen the chances of duplication of the support activities being delivered throughout the third sector in Scotland;

Third sector engagement in Community Planning – A number of the TSIs referred to maintaining a high level of third sector involvement in Community Planning as one of the key challenges in this area, particularly in the long term. In their 2013/14 monitoring reports, some TSIs mentioned adapting the approaches they had taken to connect with third sector organisations, such as localising thematic networks. This helped to increase their effectiveness and will continue to be a priority in the coming year;

Strengthening volunteering – Many TSIs reported that they had increasing numbers of volunteers registering for their services who required additional support before they could take up a placement. In addition to this, some mentioned that there were not enough placement opportunities in their local area to meet demand. As a result, this was highlighted as an area for continuing development from the TSIs so that volunteering can continue to grow.

7.15 This does not represent an exhaustive list of priorities and the interfaces will continue to develop activities to support and strengthen volunteering, third sector organisations, social enterprises and the third sector’s relationship with Community Planning.


Measuring Performance Group
Blyth advised that progress within this work group has been stalled, given that SEF only met on 26th Faberaury to discuss this issue. SEF has asked officials from SG, UKG and Local Government to develop further work in this area, and bring back to the next meeting of SEF. Joanne will ensure that TSEF are kept updated and included in this work.

7. Business Case for 15/16
Finlay provided an update on the Business Case for 15/16.

The main points were

- How can the TSEF position the sector in the coming year?
- What does ‘good’ look like for employability and welfare?
- The group could have a key role if equality is going to attract increasing focus.
- How can the group use current resources better, for example, the 250 member organisations, social media and learning events?
- With the devolution of employability services there will be lots of opportunities for the sector to present what they want to do. The group have a wide range of experience in the area and could be a conduit to the development of new programmes.
- The TSEF would like to work to their own agenda rather than the SEF’s and keep it as high-level as possible.
- They would like to build the capacity of the sector to be in a position to respond to future change and opportunities.
- They would like to seek alliances with different bodies, developing social media to send messages and be a more energising forum.

AP – Members to email Fin to volunteer or offer suggestions

Liz advised that she will be stepping down as Chair at the end of March but will still feed in to the Business Case.
8. Feedback on SEF
Laurie provided an update on the SEF, first meeting with the new Minister, highlighting a need for a more robust system for evaluation. The full Cambridge report will be available once the SEF note has been cleared and published.

Joanne gave an overview of the Cabinet Secretary's comments on the Fair Work agenda from February’s SEF meeting, and an insight into the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare. Scottish Government Ministers’ current position is that they need more detail and clarity about DWP’s employment programmes and the implications of devolution.

AP – Cambridge Policy to be circulated once cleared (please see http://www.employabilityinScotland.com/policy-and-partnership/scottish-employability-forum/)
AP – Joanne will arrange meet with Emma Rich from the SCVO Board to update on the work of SEF and the TSEF.

9. Proposed agenda for wider forum meeting on 19th March 2015

AP – Joanne to discuss with Judith how best to encourage members to feedback Work plan – what should we do next year?

AOB

Refreshed Strategy published first week in March, focusing on tackling inequalities.

First meeting of Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare to be held on 10 March 2015.