



## Thinking the Unthinkable

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2010 - 09:30 – 15:00  
The Mechanics Institute - Manchester

### Round Table Discussion Notes

The aim of the discussion groups was to get participants to think and talk about 'Thinking the Unthinkable' these were held in the afternoon after listening to the presentations delivered in the morning session.

Here are the bullet point comments made by each of the groups

#### **1. What would you do if a substantial amount (or even all) of your organisations funding is cut?**

- Focus on how to get more money in e.g extra funding, rattle tins
- With small organisations do you stop delivery front line to stop the funding crisis?
- Restructure – re evaluate jobs
- Start to plan early / plan ahead with uncertainties
- Think about collaboration
- Try to plan for the worst before the worst happens – never think there's not enough time
- Look after individuals emotions and feelings e.g informing staff of redundancies
- What services are out there to support us
- Options appraisal
- Budget analysis / alternative sources of funding
- Build a consortium / alliances
- Develop new products
- Organisational development
- Consult with customers
- Revisit core values



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- 2. What new opportunities are there which we don't understand yet – would shrinking and going back to basics really be a bad thing?**
- Look at what services can be cut without adversely affecting your service users. Is there an interim measure?
  - Getting small bits of funding rather than one large pot of money
  - Back to basics – review your organisation
  - Positive – re think the way you work, refocusing
  - Negative – loose added value
  - Use networking to pick up information and make links
  - Central recourse bank of skills and experience
  - Personalisation and individual budgets
  - Development of new products
  - Market research



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#### **3. What solutions should infrastructure help to provide?**

- Place for people to advertise opportunities but also find skills and resources
- Better relationships across sectors
- Social return on investment – benefits of working with third sector (monetary savings in long term)
- Evidence base – research already exists that can be useful for voluntary and community groups especially when looking at tenders etc.
- Forums for third sector organisations – share best practice and learn from each other.
- Information regarding new ways of working in the voluntary sector.
- Social awareness sessions
- Better planning and preparation
- Increased support
- Policy digest – policy influences (GMCVO, MACC, CN4M, Mcr Com Ctrl)
- Information on projects and skills within the sector
- Knowledge about other benefits in kind

#### **Key Learning Points**

**Group 1 – Don't panic there are options available but don't leave it too late.**

**Group 2 – Improve communication / continue communication. Create a safe space to continue the dialogue.**