

## **Devolution + Sustainability – Bryan’s Notes**

*These are the notes I made during the presentations. Purely my own thoughts and interpretation of what was said. They may be useful, they may not. I like collecting soundbites.*

### **Naz Ghodrati**

As a sector we are all built on trust and building communities, we feel passionate about communities. We also know our communities are dealing with multiple challenges and a lot of increased capacity.

Our focus should be ‘how are we going to work differently?’.

How do we connect as a sector to be imaginative and creative?

Creativity doesn’t work in silo; Warrington has a rich history of working together. Over the next two years we have a challenge on how we come together and find solutions.

We deliver a purpose in our community, and it can be argued that we need to work collectively about how we can shift into the new ways of working and present what we do.

### **Michelle Hill**

Commitment to social justice drew me to the sector.

‘It’s not working’ - how do we admit to that and how do we change it?

Stripped everything back and work out what we do. Less bothered about *how* but *what*.

We put the client in the centre of a circle. We look at some of the bigger picture elements which deals with the person, that builds resilience and means we can work on whatever happens. We try to make the circle secure.

Some people don’t have the protective factors which mean that they can’t build their own circle of protection.

Admitting and acknowledging who we were meant that who we were affiliated to doesn’t fit and were we ready to walk away from something bigger.

Adaptability begins with believing that we can serve the community without constraints.

Look at the cause and challenge from all the layers of the challenges.

Big change comes with big limits and a drain on people and resources. Doing the right thing is hard.

Model the behaviours of leadership is a part of delivering and working with change.

Systematic growth pulls you in different directions

Having a holistic approach can open conversations about specific demographics of service users.

We make no apologies for ambition as we are good what we do.

Run with objectives rather than a plan. Embed them into how we talk and how we behave, they are used at all opportunities and in daily work. Link everything to the 'golden thread'. All this is rooted in values.

If you speak to anyone within the organisation, we hope all team members would say the same.

Knowing what we're not good at and admit that we're not good at it.

Selling/Trading our services, seeing some of our work as products.

Spun out elements into a profit with purpose subsidiary.

Other providers purchasing services from us and what we do.

Growth through gathering reach and taking risks – being ambitious for the cause but committing to who we are

Open to our learning, quick to say sorry, radically transparent, believe in generous collaboration – not about doing it alone – working with others.

Working on a joint committment

## **Mel Sproston**

Connect local donors to local need.

Before applying, make sure you're ready, credible and well governed.

Strong financial management and you know you will make an impact.

3 unrelated directors or trustees.

Clear decision-making procedures.

Transparent leadership

Confidence in safeguarding funds through strong financial procedures.

Involvement of people you support

Collaboration with other funders.

CCF Devolution

Should mean more funding controlled locally – place-based solutions

Greater need for collaboration and connection within the sector

VCFSE are the trusted organisation on the ground.

Support for local priorities

Demonstration of impact will be more important than ever

Provide local knowledge and insight

Unlocking greater investment into local areas

We are greater than the sum of our parts.

### **Owen Roberts**

Financial wellbeing in communities – purpose driven and non-profit

It's about resilience, do you have all the financial resources to manage life moments?

Born out of communities trying to get rid of loan sharks.

Loan sharking involves storing and trafficking money. Workplace loansharking is rife.

Buy now pay later is currently the biggest creation of debt.

So what? Unify wants to be able to deliver the services in a range of settings – a personal and digital combination.

Knowing that we might not be the actual solution.

Interconnectivity. Being part of the system. Having a presence and understanding the challenges.

Swap branches for being out in the community, using the community to influence where we go next.

### **Eleanor Blackburn**

Our connectivity and our business portfolio make C+W the strongest in the north.

Transfer of power and funding away from London and giving it to local authorities

This is a combined authority with a strategic remit.

Allowing decisions on strategic funding.

The first meetings of the combined authorities will begin April 2026

May sees the first meetings of leaders

June – statutory committees commence – a lot of process.

Statutory committees will be politically proportionate.

The mayor is a powerful person, whilst decisions are made by leaders, the mayor is the representative

The VCFSE representative position depends on the leaders of the board and how the voice is heard in that Shadow Board and space.

More power to local areas and local neighbourhoods EDCEB (2025)

Mayoral Strategic Authority runs until 18 months when it is decided to become an Established Combination Strategic Authority

Sector has a key role in providing insight into communities, social value, innovation and bridge between authorities, advocacy for marginalised communities

It will take time to set up all the arrangements of the systems and the ways of working.

### **Stephen Fitzsimons**

Centre for Cities 2026

Omega + Birchwood Park

6% Warringtonians go to Manchester

Opportunities to connect to businesses – attend events and connect

Networking and connecting to business for the VCFSE – how can we support orgs to be able to sell themselves.