



CONSORTIA DEVELOPMENT FUND

INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLAN 2008-11

Consortium Name : Bedfordshire and Luton VCS Infrastructure Consortium

Area of Benefit : Bedfordshire and Luton

Lead Body : Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire

Contact details:

John Gelder - Director
Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire
Bossard House
West Street
Leighton Buzzard
Bedfordshire
LU7 1DA

Tel: 01525 850559
Mobile: 07976 640451
Email: john@action-southbeds.org.uk

Summary of Consortium Infrastructure Business Plan 2008-11

Vision

A vibrant, effective, sustainable and inclusive Third Sector where all individuals and communities are empowered to play a full part in local voluntary and community action.

Our Mission

To provide effective support services to Third Sector organisations; enabling them to develop their capacity to deliver quality services that meet the needs of their communities.

Key Needs Identified

Main Outcome	Timeframe
To enable Third Sector organisations to become involved in the whole process of local government reorganisation and modernisation, including the formation of new Third Sector fora, representation on new strategic partnerships and the development of policy and service delivery plans.	April 2008-March 2010
To enable Third Sector organisations to develop and engage in partnership working.	April 2008-March 2011
To build cohesion through engagement with newly arrived communities and migrant workers, empowering them to participate effectively in communities and place shaping.	April 2008-March 2011
To increase social enterprise awareness and expertise, and enable Third Sector organisations to become more financially sustainable through earned income.	April 2008-March 2011
To enable local Third Sector organisations to compete for public service contracts and, where appropriate, encourage consortia working.	April 2008-March 2011
To enable Third Sector organisations to develop their communication and marketing strategies and skills.	April 2008-March 2011
To develop a properly funded and structured Volunteer Centre network across Bedfordshire and Luton designed to deliver a substantial increase in the number of volunteers and organisations that are better equipped to recruit and retain volunteers.	April 2008-March 2011
To enable Third Sector organisations to acquire the skills needed to run their financial affairs.	April 2008-March 2011
To provide IT support and advice to Third Sector organisations.	April 2008-March 2011
To improve quality by enabling local Third Sector organisations to work towards an appropriate quality standard or framework such as PQASSO.	April 2008-March 2011
To provide generalist advice, information and development services to frontline Third Sector organisations in order to help them become better equipped to seek funding and stronger service providers for their beneficiaries.	April 2008-March 2011
To employ a Strategic Development Officer to manage the work of the Consortium, including delivery of the projects set out in the Strategic and Business Plans; to provide for fund management arrangements, staff training and development, increased stakeholder engagement, the embedding of equality and diversity issues and the widening of Consortium membership.	April 2008-March 2011

NOTE: the majority of these outcomes need a three-year timeframe in order to embed themselves within the sector and/or increase the breadth, depth, quantity and impact of the work to be undertaken.

What are the aims and objectives of the Consortium?

NOTE: Use of the word sector means the Third Sector, which we have taken to include voluntary organisations, community groups, charities and social enterprises.

Aims

1. To promote awareness and understanding of the roles of the Consortium and its constituent members across the sector and within other statutory, private and public agencies.
2. To work collaboratively to make full and best use of infrastructure resources.
3. To seek to develop a stronger representational voice for the sector by working in partnership, thereby increasing recognition by other sectors.
4. To identify and respond to opportunities and threats facing the sector.
5. To seek to achieve best practice and continuously improve the quality of services delivered through the sector, together with the selection and adoption of appropriate techniques to measure the quality and impact of services.
6. To ensure that equality and diversity issues are addressed throughout the Consortium's work.
7. To identify gaps, shortfalls and insecurity in current structures and to reach agreement on ways of tackling them, whether by developing and transforming existing structures and/or by developing new solutions.
8. To build partnerships with funders to secure stable solutions to fill those gaps and reduce insecurity in organisations that are working well.
9. To establish protocols and mechanisms for joint working that will allow a 'holistic' approach to be taken and innovation to be nurtured.
10. To co-ordinate and prepare a needs-led Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP), Strategic Plan, Business Plan and action-based Delivery Plans.
11. To seek endorsement of these Plans by the widest possible cross-section of stakeholders, including voluntary and community sector bodies, support agencies, commissioning bodies and likely funders.
12. To develop investment proposals for these Plans as required.

Strategic Objectives

NOTE: Our strategic objectives are short and concise so that stakeholders know, and can remember, what the focus of the Consortium is.

Volunteering - Recruit more volunteers, develop more volunteering opportunities and increase the capacity of organisations to support volunteers.

Capacity Building - Developing skills, knowledge, structures, funding and other resources.

Voice - Support the sector to have a stronger voice.

Partnerships - Enable and encourage partnership working.

Community Cohesion - Build cohesion by responding to the needs of existing, new and growing communities.

Profile - Raise awareness of what the Consortium is and what it does with its stakeholders.

Strategic Approach to Delivery - Work strategically and in collaboration with one another and the public sector on policy and services.

Please provide evidence of Third Sector frontline need

Local Needs Data

Evidence collected and updated from 961 frontline organisations through *Volbase* mapping of the sector during 2006 – 2007 has highlighted the top needs of Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) in Bedfordshire and Luton. The top 25 needs identified in the Bedfordshire and Luton State of the Sector Report 2006 were:

Ranking	Need	No. of TSOs identifying need	Ranking	Need	No. of TSOs identifying need
1	Fundraising and Funding Advice	517	14	ICT for Voluntary Organisations	72
2	Volunteer Recruitment	359	15	Communications Skills	67
3	Marketing and Promotion	251	16	Charity Accounting	67
4	Volunteer Support/Management	166	17	Business Plan Development	67
5	Health & Safety	164	18	Trustee/Management Committees	64
6	First Aid	136	19	Leadership Skills	59
7	Training and Skills Development	106	20	Budgets and book-keeping	59
8	Managing your Organisation	100	21	Making Meetings Work	58
9	Support from Businesses	82	22	Staff Management	53
10	Child Protection	82	23	Financial Management	53
11	Project Development/Management	80	24	Quality Assurance	47
12	Team Building	78	25	Partnership Working	46
13	Premises and Property	76			

Infrastructure Consortium Research

BME VCS Infrastructure Support

Research was commissioned by the Consortium & published in 2006; it found a need for the following:

- consolidation and, where necessary, improvement of what already exists
- an increase in, and diversification of, services and activities
- business and action planning models
- the provision of long term community development support
- improved funding stability
- improved partnership working between and across communities
- an increase in the number and diversity of volunteers including trustees
- enhanced cultural awareness in the statutory and voluntary sectors
- a range of training provision to meet specific needs
- an independent interpretation and translation service for the County.

Social Infrastructure

The *Strong Communities* report, published in September 2006 sets out important research on the social infrastructure needs of new communities. The report recognises the need to engage the support of local planners and developers to ensure we can support the organisations and activities that enable people to create, run and sustain the voluntary and community groups, volunteering opportunities and social networks required for new and growing communities.

Social Enterprise and Public Sector Procurement in Bedfordshire & Luton

The report, published in December 2005, was commissioned by the Consortium to inform its work in these areas. It revealed a number of issues and obstacles affecting Third Sector involvement in public sector procurement, including significant factors to do with how the public sector organises and practices procurement and its perception of the sector to take on contracts. It also found that few Third Sector organisations could be regarded as 'procurement ready'. The report proposed:

- improving the generic and associated support for VCS organisations in developing their income streams and sustainability;
- developing a new capacity and focus to foster growth and development of new public sector procurement opportunities and an effective VCS response; and
- the development of more effective links between the VCS and public sector procurement bodies.

Bedfordshire Volunteering Survey 2006

In May 2006, Volunteer Centre South Bedfordshire and Volunteer Centre Bedford commissioned an evaluation of residents' informal and formal volunteering participation and awareness of volunteering opportunities in their community. The consultation also asked questions on reasons for not volunteering and what could be done to increase levels of volunteering across the County. 10% of respondents said more information or opportunities would encourage them to volunteer and half of all the respondents felt not very or not at all informed about local volunteering opportunities.

Infrastructure Development Strategy Consultation and Survey

The Consortium has undertaken extensive research, listened to the sector and held discussions with stakeholders. It has identified a range of strategic objectives, outcomes and projects designed to meet the priorities of the sector and the needs of front line organisations. The Consortium has consulted widely on its proposed projects and while there are tensions within the sector about what is relevant to specific organisations there is broader recognition that much of what is proposed will be of greater relevance to the sector as a whole.

There were clear messages from front line organisations that funding was their major concern. Our projects on Social Enterprise, Procurement and Generalist Advice all seek to address this concern. Local Third Sector organisations were also very concerned about their need for generalist advice and more volunteers; aware of the need to develop more effective marketing and communications, and improve quality. Some of our projects seek to address these concerns.

There was strong recognition that the sector needed to address the forthcoming local government reorganisation, improve community engagement and develop more effective partnership working, as well as improve its marketing and communication. Our Strategy and Business Plan seek to address and modernise the sector's work in these areas.

NOTE: details of the policy context to support the needs of Third Sector frontline organisations are included in the Infrastructure Development Strategy and will be published on the Consortium website.

What are the outcomes and long term changes that your Consortium intends to bring about?

The Consortium's outcomes for 2008-2014 are:

Third Sector support services work more strategically and in collaboration with one another and the public sector on policy, information and services.

To achieve this outcome the following long term changes will need to take place:

- public sector will have an improved understanding, and recognise the role and work, of Third Sector support services in Bedfordshire and Luton
- the Consortium is recognised by the wider statutory sector
- equality and diversity is embedded across all objectives and activities of the Consortium
- clear protocols for membership and operation of the Consortium are in place.

Rural, urban and hard to reach Third Sector organisations are aware of and better understand the roles and services offered by the Consortium and its constituent members and are better connected with our services.

To achieve this outcome the following long term changes will need to take place:

- more Third Sector organisations have an improved understanding, and recognise the role and work, of Third Sector support services in Bedfordshire and Luton
- increased capacity of the Consortium to deliver effective support services that narrow the gap between supply and demand.

Local communities and Third Sector organisations have the skills, knowledge, structures, funding and other resources to fulfil their potential for responding to the needs of, and providing services to, their communities.

To achieve this outcome the following long term changes will need to take place:

- Third Sector organisations develop more sustainable means of income generation
- Third Sector organisations develop and implement good practise in governance, financial management, service delivery, performance improvement and in managing people (volunteers and staff).

The people of Bedfordshire and Luton engage in active citizenship and are better able to access a diverse range of volunteering opportunities that meet both the needs of volunteers and local volunteer-involving organisations.

To achieve this outcome the following long term changes will need to take place:

- Volunteer Centres are effectively structured and funded
- Increased public awareness of local Volunteer Centres and the benefits and opportunities for volunteering.

Third Sector organisations have a strong voice and an active involvement in influencing the decisions that shape the community in which they operate.

To achieve this outcome the following long term changes will need to take place:

- the development and implementation of more effective community involvement and consultation mechanisms with public sector agencies and within the Third Sector
- Third Sector organisations develop and improve their marketing and communications.

The Third Sector contributes to, influences and benefits from opportunities for greater partnership, collaborative and cross-sector working.

To achieve this outcome the following long term changes will need to take place:

- Third Sector organisations recognise the benefits of engaging in public policy, place shaping and partnership working
- Third Sector organisations develop and improve their partnership working skills
- take time to build and nurture effective and inclusive local networks, build relationships and get people involved.

Who are your beneficiaries and stakeholders and how were they involved in the process?

There are over 3500 Third Sector organisations operating in Bedfordshire and Luton that have access to the support services offered by the Consortium and its members. Of those that have provided data (50%) their beneficiaries include:

Carers and Families

Beneficiaries	Number of Organisations	Beneficiaries	Number of Organisations
Carers	114	Lone Parents	145
Families	253	Older People	313

Children and Young People

Beneficiaries	Number of Organisations	Beneficiaries	Number of Organisations
Children 0-4	191	Young People 14-19	355
Children 5-7	294	Young People 20-25	239
Children 8-13	342	Young People NEET	26

Communities

Beneficiaries	Number of Organisations	Beneficiaries	Number of Organisations
BME Communities	138	Rural Communities	132
Faith Communities	132	Urban Communities	61
Local Residents	488		

People with Disabilities

Beneficiaries	Number of Organisations	Beneficiaries	Number of Organisations
Learning Difficulties	140	Physical Disabilities	186
Life limiting Conditions	117	Sensory Disabilities	107
Mental Health Issues	98		

Public Sector Stakeholders include:

Bedfordshire County Council
 Luton Borough Council
 Bedford Borough Council, Mid and South Bedfordshire District Councils
 Learning and Skills Council Bedfordshire and Luton
 Bedfordshire and Luton Primary Care Trusts
 Bedfordshire and Luton Police Authority
 Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Authority
 Local Strategic Partnerships for Bedfordshire, Luton, Bedford, Mid Bedfordshire & South Bedfordshire
 Town and Parish Councils throughout Bedfordshire
 Bedfordshire and Luton Connexions Partnership
 The Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton

We have used a variety of methods to involve Beneficiaries and Stakeholders, including:

Evidence collected and updated from frontline organisations through *Volbase* mapping of the local sector during 2006 - 2007 highlighted the top needs of Third Sector Organisations. See page 4.

Previous Stakeholder Consultation Exercises and Events held during 2005-2007 to inform the development of our Infrastructure Investment Plan and previous/current ChangeUp Projects, including research on the support service needs of BME communities.

Consultation Events for Strategy and Business Plan took place during the period 3-7 December 2007 with invitations sent to organisations and individuals from contact details held by all Consortium members. 51 people attended four consultation events, one in Leighton Buzzard, two in Bedford (including one for BME organisations) and one in Luton.

A Consultation Survey and Newsletter was sent by mail or email to 2690 organisations and individuals. The information and survey were also available online through the Consortium's portal website and stakeholders also received email, newsletter and personal 'prompts' encouraging them to go online to complete the survey. A total of 171 responses to the survey were received.

Consultation with organisations serving the main equality strands included:

Equality Strand	Number consulted with	Consultation Method
Age - older people	313	Direct Mail and Consultation Event Invite
Age - children	342	Direct Mail and Consultation Event Invite
Age – young people	355	Direct Mail and Consultation Event Invite
Disability	300	Direct Mail and Consultation Event Invite
BME Communities	138	Direct Mail, Email & BME Consultation Event Invite
Women	157	Direct Mail and Consultation Event Invite
Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual	33	Direct Mail and Consultation Event Invite
Faith	132	Direct Mail and Consultation Event Invite
Total	1770	

Discussions with key Stakeholders, in particular local authorities.

Neighbourhood Estates - within South Bedfordshire there are three priority (deprived) estates – Parkside, Tithe Farm and Downside. Downside already has an Estate Plan and regular agency meetings identifying need, which are attended Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire. Voluntary and Community Action and Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity are actively involved in the development of Estate Plans for Parkside and Tithe Farm.

Within Bedford, several priority wards have been identified – Queens Park, Cauldwell, Kingsbrook and Harpur. Although no formal infrastructure is presently in place to address issues on these estates, Consortium members work with many Third Sector organisations in these areas.

Voluntary Action Luton works within the Super Output Areas of Biscot, Dallow and Northwell and in partnership with the Marsh Farm Development Trust, which is part of the New Deal for Communities programme in Luton.

Consortium members also support the development of Towns and Parish Action Plans.

Please provide a summary description of the projects identified and match against stated objectives

Representation and Impact of Local Government Reorganisation

Project Description

Two-tier local government in Bedfordshire is being reorganised into two unitary authorities covering Bedford Borough and 'Central Bedfordshire' (the area of the current Mid and South Bedfordshire District Councils). Over the next two years, while planning and transformation takes place, the project will enable the Third Sector to become involved within the whole process of local government reorganisation and modernisation. It will establish new Third Sector fora; contribute to the formulation of new strategies, policy and service delivery plans; and involve the sector in a range of new Partnerships.

Outcomes and Outputs

To monitor and respond to public policy developments and other issues affecting the Third Sector as a result of local government reorganisation in Bedfordshire.

To empower Third Sector organisations to have a strong voice and an active involvement in influencing the strategic, planning and service delivery decisions that will shape the new local authorities in which they operate, including the delivery of a range of Local Area Agreement targets and a greater involvement in local partnerships.

To support and develop elected, skilled and competent representatives that are able to advocate the needs of service users and the Third Sector, while having a greater influence on key decision-making partnerships.

To develop and facilitate effective community involvement & consultative mechanism with new local authorities and within the Third Sector.

Outputs

2 Third Sector support organisations engaged in local government reorganisation on behalf of the sector.

2 Third Sector forums (one in each new unitary authority) and 6 sub-sector networks/forums (three in each new unitary authority) established and supported.

40 Third Sector organisations engaged in local partnerships/networks/forums

18 elected/appointed Third Sector representatives engaged in key cross-sector local partnerships/fora.

Strategic Objectives

Capacity Building

Partnerships

Voice

Profile

Strategic Approach to Delivery

Partnership Working Skills

Project Description

Work undertaken by the local authorities, other statutory agencies and partnerships is more engaging with the Third Sector and there is a general consensus that all agencies can improve their collaborative and partnership working.

The project will enable Third Sector organisations to develop and engage in partnership working. It will promote the concept of working collaboratively, enabling the sector to make informed decisions about whether and how to work collaboratively. Local Third Sector organisations will gain the skills, knowledge, structures and resources to develop their partnership working arrangements.

Outcomes and Outputs	Strategic Objectives
<p>To provide a range of training, networking and other activities designed to develop a local culture of collaboration and enable local organisations to identify and progress to potential partnerships that provide responses to local community, public policy and service delivery priorities in Bedfordshire and Luton.</p> <p>To provide a range of resources on partnership working, along with intensive one to one advice and guidance to organisations that wish to collaborate.</p> <p>To undertake joint working with the NCVO Collaborative Working Unit, local public sector organisations and the National Support Services for Collaboration and Partnership.</p> <p>Outputs 216 organisations engaged in 27 partnership and collaborative networking events/activities. 180 organisations engaged in 18 training workshops. 126 organisations receive intensive support through consultancy, one-to-one meetings and/or small groups, of which 72 engage in local partnerships.</p>	<p>Capacity Building</p> <p>Partnerships</p> <p>Voice</p>
Community Empowerment	
<p>Project Description Bedfordshire and Luton is affected by significant levels of inward migration. The Consortium has recognised the need to build cohesion through engagement with newly arrived communities and migrant workers, empowering them to participate effectively in local communities and place shaping, particularly within neighbourhoods, towns and parishes.</p>	
Outcomes and Outputs	Strategic Objectives
<p>To provide training and support to, and facilitate greater participation by, community groups from under-represented sectors of the community and empower them to participate in place shaping, particularly within neighbourhoods, towns and parishes.</p> <p>To develop and support local community partnerships, created between existing community groups and newly arrived communities, that can actively participate in local forums and consultations to shape and develop strategies, policies, activities and services in response to local need.</p> <p>To enable local authorities to improve their community empowerment practice through engagement in Planning for Real projects in urban areas.</p> <p>Outputs 50 community groups from under-represented sectors of the community receive training and support. 10 community partnerships created and supported. 3 local authorities engaged in improving their community empowerment practice.</p>	<p>Community Cohesion</p> <p>Capacity Building</p> <p>Voice</p> <p>Partnerships</p>

Social Enterprise	
Project Description Within the voluntary and community sector there are significant numbers of organisations that are looking to develop greater financial sustainability. These organisations need to understand how they can adopt a social enterprise approach to their work, the issues they need to address and the development needs they may have. We will seek to increase social enterprise awareness using a variety of media and events; and offer intensive one-to-one information, advice and guidance, training and networking opportunities to organisations.	
Outcomes and Outputs To develop specialist expertise support to VCS and social enterprise organisations, including the development of responses to local market and procurement opportunities. To raise awareness of the potential for VCS organisations to undertake social enterprise activity (either through greater trading or the formation of new social enterprises). To provide training, consultancy and support to existing and emerging social enterprises. Outputs 216 organisations engaged in 18 social enterprise awareness events. 180 organisations engaged in 27 training workshops. 126 organisations receive intensive support through consultancy, one-to-one meetings and/or small groups, of which 72 undertake more social enterprise activity (either through greater trading or the formation of new social enterprises).	Strategic Objectives Capacity Building Profile Partnerships
Procurement	
Project Description The procurement project will provide training and support to enable local Third Sector organisations to compete for public service contracts and, where appropriate, encourage consortia working.	
Outcomes and Outputs Third Sector organisations receive training that builds their capacity to tender. Third Sector organisations receive support in developing tenders and a collaborative approach to tendering. Outputs 30 training workshops held. 60 organisations supported.	Strategic Objectives Capacity Building Partnerships
Marketing and Communications	
Project Description The value of a strong brand lies in the impression left with anyone who comes into contact with the branded product. It is imperative that the Third Sector must be aware of its brand image; this is how its customers view their organisation. The project will enable the sector to develop its marketing and communication strategies and skills through training courses, one-to-one sessions and mentoring.	
Outcomes and Outputs To provide a series of one-day training workshops, enabling participants to gain an understanding of the principles of successful marketing and	Strategic Objectives Volunteering

<p>communication, within the Third Sector. To build the general knowledge of Third Sector organisations in foundational marketing principles, including the primary understanding of creating organisation and service awareness.</p> <p>Increase the level of awareness of Third Sector organisations, activities and services, within the voluntary, community, public and private sectors.</p> <p>Outputs 72 training workshops held. 50 organisations engaged in training, advised and supported.</p>	<p>Capacity Building Voice Profile</p>
<p>Modernising Volunteering</p>	
<p>Project Description The need for a constant stream of volunteers has been established through a number of surveys of frontline voluntary, community and public sector organisations as one of their primary requirements. The project will develop a properly funded and structured Volunteer Centre network across Bedfordshire and Luton that is designed to deliver a substantial increase in the number of volunteers and organisations that are better equipped to recruit and retain volunteers.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and Outputs</p>	<p>Strategic Objectives</p>
<p>A modernised, collaborative network of Volunteer Centres across Bedfordshire and Luton, standardising good practice and procedures - with a clear strategy and objectives.</p> <p>Improved volunteer management by volunteer-involving organisations.</p> <p>Increased awareness amongst the general public of their local Volunteer Centre, the range of volunteering opportunities available, and how to get involved in volunteering.</p> <p>A year on year increase of at least 10% per annum in the number of volunteers signposted by the Volunteer Centres to organisations and a diverse range of volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Outputs Creation of a clear strategy for the development of volunteering in Bedfordshire and Luton and a common countywide procedures manual for the Volunteer Centres.</p> <p>10% increase each year for three years in the number of volunteers signposted to a diverse range of volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>40% of all volunteer-involving organisations have participated in training courses/networking events relating to good practice in volunteer management.</p> <p>20% increase in awareness of their local Volunteer Centre among the general public.</p>	<p>Volunteering Capacity Building Profile Strategic Approach to Delivery</p>
<p>Community Accountancy</p>	
<p>Project Description Community Accountancy is becoming increasingly established as a means by which Third Sector organisations can acquire the skills needed to run their financial affairs. The project will provide financial advice, information and training to the trustees and officers of local Third Sector organisations. It will also offer low-cost payroll services, preparation of final accounts and independent examination of accounts.</p>	

Outcomes and Outputs	Strategic Objectives
<p>To provide generalist advice, information and development services to local Third Sector organisations in order to help them become better equipped at managing their financial affairs.</p> <p>Outputs 150 Third Sector organisations develop sound financial management skills and procedures. 100 Third Sector organisations gain extra capacity by benefiting from payroll and accountancy services.</p>	Capacity Building
IT Support and Advice	
<p>Project Description The provision of IT support and advice to local Third Sector organisations through newsletters, information sheets, online advice guides, training courses and workshops as well as consultancy to enable them develop and implement a strategy that meets their IT needs and improve their overall effectiveness. The project would consist of a full-time 'Circuit Rider' providing technical advice and support together with a part-time Project Co-ordinator who would support the 'Circuit Rider' to run and promote the project.</p>	
Outcomes and Outputs	Strategic Objectives
<p>To enable Third Sector organisations to have access to appropriate IT advice and support.</p> <p>To enable Third Sector organisations to improve their knowledge and make full use of their existing IT hardware and software.</p> <p>To enable Third Sector organisations to improve their effectiveness by developing and implementing an appropriate IT Strategy.</p> <p>Outputs 50 organisations supported to develop a practical IT Strategy to improve their efficiency. 24 organisations supported to implement their IT Strategy to improve their efficiency.</p>	Capacity Building
Improving Quality	
<p>Project Description Funders are increasingly expecting applicants to demonstrate that they are providing services that are of a high quality, through the use of PQASSO and other standards. The project will provide support, guidance and advice to local Third Sector organisations that want to work towards an appropriate quality standard or framework.</p>	
Outcomes and Outputs	Strategic Objectives
<p>To provide Third Sector organisations with training and support to help them achieve a quality standard, including PQASSO.</p> <p>Outputs 15 training workshops held. 90 organisations supported.</p>	Capacity Building

General Advice, Information and Development	
<p>Project Description The project will seek to provide generalist advice, information and development services to frontline voluntary and community organisations in order to help them become better equipped to seek funding and stronger service providers for their beneficiaries.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and Outputs</p> <p>To provide generalist advice, information and development services to Third Sector organisations in order to help them become better equipped to seek funding.</p> <p>To provide generalist advice, information and development services to Third Sector organisations in order to help them become stronger service providers for their beneficiaries.</p> <p>Outputs 420 people from Third Sector organisations have their capacity developed through learning and skills development.</p> <p>420 organisations have improved understanding of, and access to, funding sources that are appropriate to their activities.</p> <p>300 organisations are better equipped to act as stronger service providers for their beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Strategic Objectives</p> <p>Capacity Building</p>
Consortium Development and Management	
<p>Project Description The project will seek to employ a Strategic Development Officer to manage the work of the consortium, including delivery of the projects set out in the Strategic and Business Plans. It will also provide for fund management arrangements, staff training and development, increased stakeholder engagement, the embedding of equality and diversity issues and the widening of Consortium membership.</p>	
<p>Outcomes and Outputs</p> <p>To develop team working, internal relationships and partnership arrangements within the Consortium to ensure it is strategic, credible and influential in strengthening the Third Sector locally.</p> <p>To performance manage the Consortium's Business Plan projects.</p> <p>To ensure that equality and diversity issues are embedded within the Consortium's work.</p> <p>To provide effective stakeholder/user engagement and communication.</p> <p>To ensure there is increased recognition and role for the Third Sector in local partnerships and strategies.</p> <p>To ensure there are increased skills among support providers, particularly in commissioning and evaluating impact.</p> <p>Outputs 24 Consortium meetings held.</p> <p>12 quarterly reports submitted to Capacitybuilders.</p> <p>3 Fit for Purpose self assessments undertaken.</p>	<p>Strategic Objectives</p> <p>Profile</p> <p>Strategic Approach to Delivery</p>

Please provide details of research into any similar or related services or projects provided by other organisations

The Consortium is aware of other providers within the sub-region that provide support services to the Third Sector. Within the sub-region there are not the economies of scale that exist in larger Counties to provide a plethora of sub-sector support services, which tend to be met by Consortium members.

Social enterprise activity amongst active social enterprises is supported (mainly through networking opportunities) by the Bedfordshire & Luton Social Enterprise Network and Social Enterprise East of England, with which we have good working relationships. They do not provide, or have the capacity to provide, the services being offered by the Consortium, which focus on supporting voluntary and community organisations that want to become social enterprises. Business Link East is also able to support social enterprises that emerge from or operate in the business community; VCOs would not approach them for advice.

Local colleges and universities sometimes provide training courses on organisational management and leadership that they target at the sector. We have found these to be not well attended by staff, trustees and volunteers from Third Sector organisations; their courses are often delivered without any sound knowledge of the sector or its operating environment. The Learning Partnership also offers funding advice, which tends to focus on funding opportunities to support learning. Local authority Community Development Officers may also offer occasional funding and general advice to community groups but they are now tending to refer such enquires to Consortium members.

Payroll services for Third Sector organisations are currently provided by Bedford Borough and South Bedfordshire District Councils although there is likely to be some uncertainty as to whether these will continue given local government reorganisation is about to take place.

National Support Services, NCVO and NAVCA all provide valuable resources that local support service providers can access and use. We often work in partnership with these agencies to deliver local training workshops and events. Regional networks also provide us with opportunities to deliver joint training, events and services; the regional IT Circuit Riders Project and the Trustees Together network being examples where this is working well.

What are the key targets that you plan to achieve within each of the three years?

2008-2009	
Representation and the Impact of Local Government Reorganisation	<p>3 Third Sector support organisations engaged in local government reorganisation on behalf of the sector.</p> <p>2 Third Sector forums (one in each new unitary authority) and 6 sub-sector networks/forums (three in each new unitary authority) established and supported.</p> <p>40 Third Sector organisations engaged in local partnerships/networks/forums.</p> <p>6 elected/appointed Third Sector representatives engaged in key cross-sector local partnerships/fora.</p>
Partnership Working Skills	<p>72 organisations engaged in 9 partnership and collaborative networking events/activities.</p> <p>60 organisations engaged in 6 training workshops.</p> <p>42 organisations receive intensive support through consultancy, one-to-one meetings and/or small groups, of which 24 engage in local partnerships.</p>

Community Empowerment	10 VCS organisations advised and supported. 2 community empowerment partnerships created and supported.
Social Enterprise	72 organisations engaged in 6 social enterprise awareness events. 60 organisations engaged in 9 training workshops. 42 organisations receive intensive support through consultancy, one-to-one meetings and/or small groups, of which 24 undertake more social enterprise activity (either through greater trading or the formation of new social enterprises).
Procurement	10 training workshops held. 20 organisations supported.
Marketing and Communications	24 training workshops held. 14 organisations engaged in training, advised and supported.
Modernising Volunteering	Creation of a clear strategy for the development of volunteering in Bedfordshire and a common countywide procedures manual for the Volunteer Centres. 10% increase in the number of volunteers signposted to a diverse range of volunteering opportunities. 13% of all volunteer-involving organisations have participated in training courses/networking events relating to good practice in volunteer management.
Community Accountancy	40 organisations develop sound fund management skills and procedures. 30 organisations gain extra capacity by benefiting from payroll and accountancy systems.
IT Support and Advice	10 organisations supported to develop a practical IT strategy to improve their efficiency. 4 organisations supported to implement their IT strategy to improve their efficiency.
Improving Quality	5 training workshops held 30 organisations supported.
General Advice, Information and Development	140 people from Third Sector organisations have their capacity developed through learning and skills development. 140 organisations have improved understanding of, and access to, funding sources that are appropriate to their activities. 100 organisations are better equipped to act as stronger service providers for their beneficiaries.
Consortium Development and Management	6 Consortium meetings held. 4 quarterly reports submitted to Capacity Builders. 1 Fit for Purpose self assessment undertaken.
2009-2010	
Representation and the Impact of Local Government Reorganisation	3 Third Sector support organisations engaged in local government reorganisation on behalf of the sector. 2 Third Sector forums (one in each new unitary authority) and 6 sub-sector networks/forums (three in each new unitary authority) established and supported. 40 Third Sector organisations engaged in local partnerships/networks/forums. 18 elected/appointed Third Sector representatives engaged in key cross-sector local partnerships/fora.

Partnership Working Skills	<p>72 organisations engaged in 9 partnership and collaborative networking events/activities.</p> <p>60 organisations engaged in 6 training workshops.</p> <p>42 organisations receive intensive support through consultancy, one-to-one meetings and/or small groups, of which 24 engage in local partnerships.</p>
Community Empowerment	<p>20 VCS organisations advised and supported.</p> <p>8 community empowerment partnerships created and supported.</p> <p>3 local authorities engaged in improving their community empowerment practice.</p>
Social Enterprise	<p>72 organisations engaged in 6 social enterprise awareness events.</p> <p>60 organisations engaged in 9 training workshops.</p> <p>42 organisations receive intensive support through consultancy, one-to-one meetings and/or small groups, of which 24 undertake more social enterprise activity (either through greater trading or the formation of new social enterprises).</p>
Procurement	<p>10 training workshops held.</p> <p>20 organisations supported.</p>
Marketing and Communications	<p>24 training workshops held.</p> <p>18 organisations engaged in training, advised and supported.</p>
Modernising Volunteering	<p>10% increase in the number of volunteers signposted and to a diverse range of volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>13% of all volunteer-involving organisations have participated in training courses/networking events relating to good practice in volunteer management.</p>
Community Accountancy	<p>55 organisations develop sound financial management skills and procedures.</p> <p>35 organisations gain extra capacity by benefiting from payroll and accountancy services.</p>
IT Support and Advice	<p>20 organisations supported to develop a practical IT strategy to improve their efficiency.</p> <p>10 organisations supported to implement their IT strategy to improve their efficiency.</p>
Improving Quality	<p>5 training workshops held</p> <p>30 organisations supported</p>
General Advice, Information and Development	<p>140 people from Third Sector organisations have their capacity developed through learning and skills development.</p> <p>140 organisations have improved understanding of, and access to, funding sources that are appropriate to their activities.</p> <p>100 organisations are better equipped to act as stronger service providers for their beneficiaries.</p>
Consortium Development and Management	<p>6 Consortium meetings held.</p> <p>4 quarterly reports submitted to Capacitybuilders</p> <p>1 Fit for Purpose self assessment undertaken</p>
2010-2011	
Partnership Working Skills	<p>72 organisations engaged in 9 partnership and collaborative networking events/activities.</p> <p>60 organisations engaged in 6 training workshops.</p> <p>42 organisations receive intensive support through consultancy, one-to-one meetings and/or small groups, of which 24 engage in local partnerships.</p>

Community Empowerment	20 VCS organisations advised and supported. 10 community empowerment partnerships supported. 3 local authorities engaged in improving their community empowerment practice.
Social Enterprise	72 organisations engaged in 6 social enterprise awareness events. 60 organisations engaged in 9 training workshops. 42 organisations receive intensive support through consultancy, one-to-one meetings and/or small groups, of which 24 undertake more social enterprise activity (either through greater trading or the formation of new social enterprises).
Procurement	10 training workshops held. 20 organisations supported.
Marketing and Communications	24 training workshops held. 18 organisations engaged in training, advised and supported.
Modernising Volunteering	10% increase in the number of volunteers signposted to a diverse range of volunteering opportunities. 14% of all volunteer-involving organisations have participated in training courses/networking events relating to good practice in volunteer management. 20% increase in awareness of their local Volunteer Centre among the general public.
Community Accountancy	55 organisations develop sound financial management skills and procedures. 35 organisations gain extra capacity by benefiting from payroll and accountancy services.
IT Support and Advice	20 organisations supported to develop a practical IT strategy to improve their efficiency. 10 organisations supported to develop a practical IT strategy to improve their efficiency.
Improving Quality	5 training workshops held. 30 organisations supported.
General Advice, Information and Development	140 people from Third Sector organisations have their capacity developed through learning and skills development. 140 organisations have improved understanding of, and access to, funding sources that are appropriate to their activities. 100 organisations are better equipped to act as stronger service providers for their beneficiaries.
Consortium Development and Management	6 Consortium meetings held. 4 quarterly reports submitted to Capacitybuilders. 1 Fit for Purpose self assessment undertaken.

Please provide a risk assessment of the business plan

Description of risk	Impact	Probability	Existing controls & action required to mitigate the risk	Lead responsibility
Networking and awareness events fail to engage Third Sector organisations.	Failure to bring about increased capacity of local Third Sector organisations.	Low	Targets contained in this project are realistic and based on estimate of potential market for delivery.	Director of Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire.

Training outputs and outcomes not achieved.	Failure to bring about increased capacity of local Third Sector organisations.	Low	Targets contained in this project are realistic and based on estimate of potential market for delivery.	Lead Partner for each project
Partnership and fora events fail to engage Third Sector organisations.	Failure to bring about increased involvement of local Third Sector organisations.	Low	Targets contained in this project are realistic and based on estimate of potential market for delivery.	Lead Partner for each project
Difficulty in appointing a Strategic Development Officer or post holder resigns.	Lack of support to Consortium members, delays in implementing new projects or loss of knowledge and experience.	Low	Salary in line with similar posts. Good Recruitment and staff procedures in place.	Director of Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire.
Failure to Appoint staff or retain project.	Project commencement could be delayed. Project would stop whilst replacement found or existing staff reallocated.	Low	Salaries in line with similar posts. Funding of three years to be sought. Training, support and line management all budgeted for.	Lead provider for each project.
Long term sickness of staff.	Failure to meet proposed targets etc. Reduced capacity to deliver.	Low	Service delivery spread across a number of organisations to reduce this risk. Extra workload to be absorbed by other service providers where possible.	Lead provider for each project.
Failure to identify organisations to develop an IT strategy.	Project could not achieve all the outcomes.	Low	This project has been developed in response to identified need and received positive support in consultation.	Chief Officer of CVS Mid and North Bedfordshire.
Consortium is deemed to be not fit for purpose.	Failure to realise the ambitions of the Consortium and fully meet the needs of the sector. Damage to reputation of Consortium among peers, stakeholders, funders and public sector agencies and partnerships.	Low	Consortium demonstrates it is fit for purpose through publication of quality Strategic and Business Plans, and effective tract record of delivery.	Director of Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire.
Lack of capacity in member organisations to deliver projects, attend to Consortium business or make quarterly reports.	Failure to meet project targets, deliver outputs or meet reporting deadlines.	Low - Medium	Strategic Development Officer in post to provide increased support where needed. Payments to partners dependant upon meeting targets, outputs and reporting deadlines.	Director of Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire.

Organisations receiving intensive support do not have the capacity to engage in project.	Failure to bring about increased capacity of local Third Sector organisations.	Low-Medium	Provide more intensive support as required and work with organisations to increase their capacity.	Lead Provider for each project.
Local Government Reorganisation timetable changes.	Possible confusion within Third Sector as to what is happening. Risk of consultation failure and failure to bring about increased involvement.	Medium	Close liaison with local authority officers will enable risk to be mitigated.	Director of Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire.
Low take-up of Community Accountancy service.	Reduced capacity-building within Third Sector.	Medium	Financial management has been identified by the sector as an area of need. Service will be publicised regularly and effectively to all sector contacts across the consortium.	Business Development Manager Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity.
Increased competition for funding from outside and within the sector.	Failure to realise the ambitions of the Consortium and fully meet the needs of the sector.	Medium	Strategic positioning and increasing the commissioning and procurement skills of members.	Director of Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire.
Insufficient funding to deliver work of Consortium, including Business Plan projects.	Failure to realise the ambitions of the Consortium and fully meet the needs of the sector.	High	Funding from Capacity Builders and other funders identified. Strategic Development Officer to make applications for additional funds.	Director of Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire.
Political, economic, geographic and social factors change operating environment.	Strategic and Business Plans need to be refreshed. Consortium could be 'blown off track'.	Medium	Strategic and Business Plans take account of current issues, operating environment and anticipated change. Keeping well informed of public policy issues, the needs of the sector and continued stakeholder engagement to enable plans to be adjusted.	Director of Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire.
Demand exceeds capacity of the project.	Expectations of Third Sector organisations raised but may not be fully met.	High	Clear project outline agreed. Provision of advice via website will meet some needs of those unable to access full services. Modification to method of delivery would be considered.	Lead Provider for each project.