

Voluntary and Community Sector
Infrastructure Investment Plan

Delivery Plan 3
2004-2006
Regional Priorities

BEDFORDSHIRE & LUTON VCS INFRASTRUCTURE CONSORTIUM

Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Investment Plan 2004-2006

INTRODUCTION

This third Delivery Plan supplements the Infrastructure Investment Plan 2004-2006 prepared in June 2004. It is designed to take forward work extended from the first Delivery Plan approved in June 2005 and the second Delivery Plan approved in October 2005 as part of the new Capacity Builders Continuation Fund. It has been put together by members of the Consortium – a diverse group of Local Infrastructure Organisations serving equally diverse communities within Bedfordshire and Luton. The Consortium offers core services within key areas of activity namely;

- a voice for the interests of local groups and the promotion of the sector
- the facilitation of links between organisations and with other stakeholders
- the promotion and supporting of best practice
- the provision of leadership
- technical support (ICT, human resources, marketing, finance etc.)
- the recruitment of volunteers

The Infrastructure Investment Plan included a description of the **key challenges** facing the Consortium and set out a **vision** for the Consortium and for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) as a whole; a **strategic aim** and a set of **strategic objectives**.

Delivery Plan 3 Proposals

In summary, the Delivery Plan sets out to address issues of regional significance in accordance with the criteria set out by ChangeUp East:

VCS Engagement in Local Area Agreement for Bedfordshire

To undertake public opinion research into the levels of volunteering within Bedfordshire

VCS Engagement in Local Area Agreement for Luton

To undertake research on the levels of community engagement through participation in decision making structures e.g. within neighbourhood partnerships and the engagement of voluntary and community sector within the Luton LAA process.

MKSM Social Infrastructure Research

To undertake research into the social infrastructure needs of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area and the creation of new communities.

Investment

The total investment required is as follows:

	Revenue	Capital
VCS Engagement in Local Area Agreements - Bedfordshire	15000	0
VCS Engagement in Local Area Agreements – Luton	10000	0
MKSM Social Infrastructure Research	36000	0
Total Investment Required	£61000	£0

VCS ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

Objectives

To undertake public opinion research into the levels of volunteering within Bedfordshire.

Outline of Proposal

The consortium would work in partnership with the Bedfordshire LAA to commission a public opinion survey on the levels of formal volunteering within Bedfordshire using questions from the Government's Citizenship Survey 2003. The survey would include specific sub-samples of respondents from deprived communities and respondents who are young people. The results of this research would be widely disseminated and used to provide baseline data for two of the reward targets agreed with stakeholders.

Current Situation and Evidence of Need

An extensive trawl of the internet and enquiries with Volunteering England, at the Home Office and elsewhere has revealed a dearth in research material on the levels of volunteering at local level. The Government's own Citizenship Survey only covers the United Kingdom and specific regions; it does not reach down to a sub-regional or district level.

The Local Area Agreements Guidance (published by the ODPM, June 2005) includes a mandatory LAA outcome *to empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decision making and the delivery of services* and a specific indicator of the *number of adults undertaking more than the specified amount of volunteering*.

Discussions between the Consortium and the Bedfordshire LAA Team have led to the inclusion of two reward targets and one non reward target on volunteering within the LAA submission to GO-East at the end of November 2005. These are:

- (15) Increase in defined formal volunteering [Reward]
- (16) % Increase in defined formal youth volunteering [Reward]
- (19) Increase defined formal volunteering among BME communities and other under-represented groups

The LAA Team support the Consortium's proposal to undertake a local survey to establish the baseline data needed to monitor the targets, which will need to be done in accordance with the Home Office requirements (the LAA Team are currently in discussion with GO-East to establish these requirements).

The results of the research would inform not only the LAA process but other emerging work on youth volunteering, the development of social infrastructure for the MKSM growth area and work currently being undertaken through *ChangeUp* as part of the Consortium's strategy for developing sustainable volunteering in Bedfordshire & Luton.

Outcomes

Outcomes for the project will include:

1. a public opinion survey of the levels of volunteering within Bedfordshire, including the levels of volunteering amongst deprived communities and young people;

2. a comprehensive analysis public opinion research into the levels of volunteering within Bedfordshire, including volunteering amongst deprived communities and young people;
3. provision of baseline data for the Bedfordshire LAA reward targets on volunteering;
4. wider dissemination of the findings so as to inform the LAA processes locally and other emerging work on volunteering;

Management and Delivery

The research will be managed jointly by the Bedfordshire LAA team and the Consortium's Sustainable Volunteering Implementation Group [precise arrangements have yet to be worked out]. The Director of Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire will also be closely involved as he has experience of research methods (through his MA in Community Education) and previous work with MORI on a national public opinion survey on Scouting. The experience of local authority officers who have worked with MORI on residents' panels' surveys will also be utilised.

We envisage the research being procured through an Invitation to Tender. The report would be presented to the Consortium and to representatives of the Bedfordshire LAA team and the results widely disseminated.

The timetable for this work will be as follows:

Preparation of research brief and commissioning of research	December 2005-January 2006
Issue and agree Invitation to Tender	January – February 2006
Research undertaken and preparation of report	February -March 2006
Consideration of report and how to use research data as baseline evidence in monitoring LAA targets by Consortium and LAA representatives	end March 2006
Dissemination of report findings	April 2006

Costs and Sustainability

	Revenue	Capital
Public Opinion Survey	up to 14000	0
Project management and publication of findings	circa 1000	0
TOTAL for Bedfordshire	£15000	£0

Priority will go to funding the public opinion survey research and using as large a sample as possible. If this can be done for a little under the funding available the balance will be used, first to prepare and disseminate the findings and then to cover the costs of managing the project (limited to 10% or less). If there are insufficient funds remaining to publish the findings then these will be limited to dissemination through Information Sheets, newsletter articles and the Consortium's portal website.

VCS ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT FOR LUTON

Objectives

To undertake research on the levels of community engagement through participation in decision making structures e.g. within neighbourhood partnerships and the engagement of voluntary and community sector within the Luton LAA process.

Outline of Proposal

Voluntary Action Luton (as a member of the Consortium) will work with the Luton LAA to commission research on the level of community and voluntary sector involvement in decision making and community activity in identified neighbourhood areas and through the Luton Assembly.

Current Situation and Evidence of Need

An extensive trawl of the internet and enquiries with Volunteering England, at the Home Office and elsewhere has revealed a dearth in research material on the levels of volunteering at local level. The Government's own Citizenship Survey only covers the United Kingdom and specific regions; it does not reach down to a sub-regional or district level.

At ward and neighbourhood level statistics indicating public involvement in, or influencing of, decision making is equally not available.

Luton will be unfairly positioned in showing developmental steps for the forthcoming periods with the loss of significant funding streams into the town and to the voluntary and community sector. Measures need to be identified which recognise the impact this will have on potential VCS activity and ability to influence decision making. The current high levels of activity are likely to fall back after April 2006 and thus the ability to maintain status quo will itself require considerable voluntary and community stimulus over the next few years. By using less traditional routes, ie through the development of neighbourhood engagement, we hope to succeed.

The Local Area Agreements Guidance (published by the ODPM, June 2005) includes a mandatory LAA outcome *to empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decision making and the delivery of services.*

Extensive discussions between the Luton Assembly and the Luton LAA Team have led to the current potential inclusion of a target which may attract the reward elements within the LAA submission to GO-East. This is:

Percentage of known VCS groups and organisations accessing capacity building assistance, and showing an increased growth in their engagement with and ability to influence decision makers. **Reward**

The LAA Team support the Consortium member's proposal to undertake a local survey to establish the baseline data needed to monitor this and other targets which meet neighbourhood involvement, which will need to be done in accordance with the Home Office requirements (the LAA Team are currently in discussion with GO-East to establish these requirements). At this point the Reward target above has to be agreed between the LAA Team and GOEE.

The results of the research would inform not only the LAA process but other emerging work on the development of social infrastructure for the MKSM growth area and work currently being undertaken through *ChangeUp* as part of the Consortium's strategy for developing sustainable volunteering in Bedfordshire & Luton.

The Luton Assembly Committee members and Voluntary Action Luton have engaged in meetings between the LAA lead agency, GO-East, the LSP (Luton Forum) Theme Groups and worked on the Outcomes and the performance indicators under the Safer and Stronger Communities block, as well as the other three blocks.

LAA partner agencies are positive about the prospect of using some *ChangeUp* funding to establish baseline data on voluntary and community engagement and activity as part of the LAA process. Therefore, to take this forward to the next stage it will be necessary to establish baselines in respect of:

- the numbers involved in attending capacity building training
- the numbers accessing development support
- the numbers engaging with neighbourhood partnerships
- level of involvement of VCOs across the 4 blocks of the LAA
- the numbers engaging with the CEN events and workshops
- the numbers involved in networks, Local Empowerment Networks, Health & Care, other networks for interest
- Consultations through the CEN, linking with neighbourhood areas and influencing LSP.
- the level of satisfaction in influencing decision making by the statutory organisations by VCOs engaged with the Community Empowerment Network .

In addition we would need to monitor the following in order to understand the impact on the voluntary and community sector of the loss of significant funding streams to Luton:

- Proportion of public expenditure spent on direct service delivery by the voluntary and community sector
- Number of VCOs receiving project funding above £4,000 from a local statutory organisation

The level of funding made available from ChangeUp will determine the ability to establish baselines at the beginning of the LAA programme.

Outcomes

Outcomes for the project will include:

1. Provision of baseline data on neighbourhood community activity in identified areas for the Luton LAA;
2. Provision of baseline data on the availability of locally accessible small grants for VCS to provide services in 2005;
3. A wider understanding of the impact on local voluntary and community sector activity by the lower provision of grassroots funding;
4. Wider dissemination of the findings so as to inform the LAA processes locally and other emerging work on neighbourhood developments;
5. Provision of baseline data on the involvement of voluntary and community sector engagement within the Luton LAA process.

Management and Delivery

The research will be managed jointly by the Luton LAA team and Voluntary Action Luton/LBC Community Development Team [precise arrangements have yet to be worked out]. The experience of local authority officers will also be utilised.

We envisage the research being procured through local Teams. The report would be presented to the Consortium and to representatives of the Luton LAA team and the results widely disseminated.

Voluntary Action Luton would continue to employ and manage a facilitator/coordinator for the Luton Assembly and use current staff, e.g. the Information Officer and Admin staff and CEO, to develop, despatch and analyse survey material.

The timetable for this work will be as follows:

Preparation of research brief and commissioning of research	Mid January – mid Feb 2006
Issue and agree Invitation to Tender	February 2006
Research undertaken and preparation of report	March 2006
Consideration of report and how to use research data as baseline evidence in monitoring LAA targets by Consortium and LAA representatives	end March 2006
Dissemination of report findings	April 2006
Ongoing facilitation of VCS engagement within Luton LAA process	January – June 2006

Costs and Sustainability

	Revenue	Capital
Neighbourhood Research in selected neighbourhoods	up to 4500	0
Community Empowerment & Funding Research	4000	0
Project management and publication of findings	1000	0
Other associated costs	500	0
TOTAL for Luton	£10000	£0

Priority will go to research. If this can be done for a little under the funding available the balance will be used, first to prepare and disseminate the findings. If there are insufficient funds remaining to publish the findings then these will be limited to dissemination through Information Sheets, newsletter articles and the Consortium's portal website.

IMPORTANT NOTE: funding will not be released until either the LAA Reward Targets or the Research Brief has been agreed by GO-East.

MKSM SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE RESEARCH

Objective

To undertake research into the social infrastructure needs of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area and the creation of new communities.

Outline of Proposal

The MKSM Social Infrastructure Group, in association with the MKSM Environment and Quality of Life sub-Group, will commission research (through an invitation to tender) research into the social infrastructure needs of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area and the creation of new communities. It will analyse the current and future infrastructure needs of the voluntary and community sector and its capacity to meet the social infrastructure needs of the Growth Area.

The research undertaken will have a considerable impact on the work of the MKSM Board and its EQOL sub-Group; the Local Delivery Vehicles, local authorities and public sector organisations across the MKSM growth Area, as well as the voluntary and community sector. We will disseminate the results widely within the growth area, to the Home Office and the ODPM, as well as a range of national voluntary and community sector organisations.

Current Situation and Evidence of Need

Local VCS infrastructure organisations, for those areas making up the designated Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area, have come together to consider how issues around social infrastructure can be addressed and the contribution the voluntary and community sector (in particular) can make to this aspect of the Sub Regional Strategy. It has become known as the MKSM Social Infrastructure Group.

The MKSM Growth Area is planning the growth of the region to accommodate significant growth in the population of the area. Co-ordinated planning for the whole sub-region is being conducted into the cross-cutting areas of land development, housing, employment and the economy, education, health and social services. The MKSM Board has set up the Environment and Quality of Life (EQOL) sub-Group to look at and advise on how the Sub Regional Strategy can create an attractive and diversified green environment, a high quality of life, a sense of place, and places for which people feel a sense of belonging. The issues raised by the MKSM Social Infrastructure Group have now been incorporated into the EQOL Business Plan and the Group is now a member of the EQOL sub-Group.

The MKSM Board is chaired by a minister from ODPM and GO-East attend meetings, we believe Michael Hargreaves is leading on this; he will be able to advise as to who is on the MKSM Board. The MKSM EQOL Group is chaired by Roy Linfield, with Louise Johnson providing officer support; both are from the Environment Agency in the East Midlands. Other members include Sport England, English Heritage, English Nature, The Wildlife Trust, Northamptonshire Police, East Midlands Arts Council. Joel Carre from Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Consortium/BRCC, John Ambler of GOEM and Barry Louth of EERA also sit on the Group.

For businesses to be encouraged to locate and grow in the MKSM growth area, employers will need to be confident that workers will choose to move and/or stay in the sub region. People will chose to live and stay in communities if, as well as being serviced by education, health and other services, they provide a thriving, sociable, enjoyable and supportive social environment. The objectives of the Sub-Regional Strategy include:*to create sustainable communities by ensuring that ... social [and other] infrastructure needs are met in step with growth* [source: MKSM Sub-Regional Strategy [page 11], March 2005]. A definition of *Social Infrastructure* is available on request.

Some initial research shows that the MKSM Strategy (March 2005) will result in 169,800 new homes being built in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area by 2021. Within Bedfordshire & Luton this figure is 45,800 (subsequent figures shown in brackets relate to Bedfordshire & Luton). We estimate that there will be a need to create and develop a total of 2,340 (631) new voluntary organisations and community groups within the incoming population and that there will be over 175,000 (47,300) new volunteers within the growth area by 2021.

Researching the Capacity Required

In order to gain the understanding needed and to be able to plan for growth the MKSM Social Infrastructure Group (supported by the MKSM EQOL sub-Group) believe there is a need to carry out some far reaching research that will inform this work. The proposed research aims to identify how to stimulate social infrastructure in the growing communities, and to assess what level and pattern of resources is needed to do that.

We propose a sub-regional study into the voluntary and community sector's capacity that will be needed for it to support fully the economic and social aims of the growth plans. That capacity assessment needs to be aligned with a review of the other public and not-for-profit organisations that are or may be engaged in developing the social infrastructure.

To be effective, that study will need to consider the respective needs of helping new communities develop successfully *and* of continuing support in areas and communities already established. It will need to assess the pattern and timing of additional support across the whole area, to match the voluntary and community sector's contribution with that of the developments of new build communities and other areas of population growth.

It will also need to consider the different ways in which the social infrastructure can be encouraged and sustained in different areas and in different communities. There is a range of experience around the country to suggest appropriate roles and interventions for different types and ages of community. The nature and pattern of those interventions will clearly influence on value, or cost, of such work. The resource implications of those alternative strategies will need to be assessed.

The research will also be expected to lead to recommendations on how the interventions of the voluntary and community sector can be integrated into the plans and programmes of public sector and other not-for-profit bodies.

Given the growth agenda for the sub-region, the study is to explore how the voluntary and community sector can be involved in contributing to the development of successful new and growing neighbourhoods and towns. It is to make recommendations about where, when and how key interventions will be needed, to estimate the staffing and number of volunteers likely to be needed, to make recommendations on the most effective ways of integrating that work within the plans and work of other bodies, and is to estimate the total cost per annum at each stage of the sub-region's development.

Specific components of the brief will include:

- an assessment of the current capacity of the voluntary and community sector in each Local Authority area falling within the Growth Area: this review to include identification of specific and/or major gaps, pressures, or needs, and also to assess the relevant experience in different CVSs of work supporting communities, growing communities and new communities;
- an assessment of the patterns of growth planned across the sub-region in terms of new and growing settlements, and the consequent need for voluntary and community sector support in the development of those communities;
- a review elsewhere in the country of strategies and models that have been effective in developing and sustaining thriving communities in different circumstances and stages of their life;

- identification of key roles for the voluntary and community sector in the sub-region's growth plans, specifically to support the development of successful communities, and recommendations for the most effective roles and interventions to be considered;
- identification of the resources implications for the voluntary and community sector in different areas of the sub-region and at different stages of its growth, together with identification of possible resource bottlenecks: this is to include an estimate of the added numbers of both paid staff and volunteers that will be needed, and consideration of innovative ways of funding the sector; it is to encompass both capital and revenue funding options;
- an estimation of the added funding needed in the sector if the recommendations are to be adopted, and the pattern of such funding needed by sub-area and at different stages of growth;
- recommendations on how the engagement of the voluntary and community sector can best be integrated into the plans of the MKSM Environment & Quality of Life sub-Group and Local Delivery Vehicles within the Growth Area;
- recommendations on the implementation of good practice developing in areas such as procurement and VCS engagement in local delivery systems, such as Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships.

Dissemination

The research undertaken will have a considerable impact on the work of the MKSM Board and its EQOL sub-Group; the Local Delivery Vehicles, local authorities and public sector organisations across the MKSM growth Area as well as the voluntary and community sector. We believe this work will be the first of its kind in the country and that it will be of wider interest to other growth areas, Inspire East, the Home Office and the ODPM; as well as a range of national voluntary and community sector organisations, such as Volunteering England, the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service and the Community Development Foundation.

We intend to publish the report and to prepare an executive summary in a glossy and readable format that will fit alongside other publications produce by the MKSM EQOL sub-Group (for example on Green Infrastructure or Crime and Community Safety). These will be disseminated widely and used to promote the need for social infrastructure issues to be properly addressed within the growth agenda.

Outcomes and Links to Regional Strategy

Outcomes for the project will include:

1. a comprehensive analysis of the social infrastructure needs of the MKSM Growth Area and how the voluntary and community sector can respond to these needs;
2. recommendations on the implementation of good practice and how the engagement of the voluntary and community sector can best be integrated into the plans of the MKSM Growth Area;
3. an Executive Summary of the report in a glossy and readable format to be disseminated widely and used to promote the need for social infrastructure issues to be properly addressed within the growth agenda.

These outcomes will link to the following priorities set out in the Integrated Regional Strategy:

- Achieve high quality and sustainable solutions in Growth Areas and other parts of the region facing growth and regeneration pressures.
- Address the causes and implications of persistent deprivation and social exclusion wherever it exists in the Region.

- Effect a step change in the efficiency of resource use and the management of the Region's distinctive natural and built environmental assets.

These outcomes will link to the following objectives in the Regional Social Strategy:

- To improve the life chances of adults through learning and skills development (SO4)
- To promote active aging and reduce social exclusion of older people (SO5)
- To support the development of sustainable communities (SO6)
- To increase access to services, especially for disadvantaged groups (SO7)
- To develop social networks, community assets and promote community cohesion (SO8)

Management and Delivery

The research be managed by the MKSM Social Infrastructure Group, but be conducted by an independent research firm, selected through competitive tender. The report would be addressed to the MKSM Environment and Quality of Life sub-Group.

The research will be undertaken in consultation with the voluntary and community sector. This will help with the organisation of the research, and with accessing directly relevant experience in the MKSM growth area. It will also ensure that the plans being developed are consistent with actual or potential capacities in the voluntary and community sector within the MKSM growth area.

The provisional timetable for this work will be as follows:

Preparation of Invitation to Tender	November - December 2005
Issue Invitation to Tender	January 2006
Selection of researcher, contracting and briefing	February 2006
Research undertaken and preparation of report	February – March 2006
Consideration of Report at MKSM Social Infrastructure Group	end March 2006
Consideration of Report at MKSM EQOL sub-Group	6 April 2006
Preparation and dissemination of Executive Summary Report	April – May 2006
Dissemination of Final Report and Executive Summary	June 2006

Costs and Sustainability

	Revenue	Capital
Commissioning and management of research contract	5000	0
Research contract fee	25000	0
Publication and dissemination of research findings	6000	0
TOTAL	£36000	£0