

**BUILDING CAPACITY OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR
INFRASTRUCTURE IN HAMPSHIRE**

**Bid to the Defra Capacity Building and Infrastructure
Strategy Programme by the Hampshire Consortium**

Consortium Lead Body: Community Action Hampshire

July 2004

SUMMARY OF BID TO THE DEFRA CAPACITY BUILDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY PROGRAMME

This document is a bid by the Hampshire Consortium for funding totalling £97,000 to implement an integrated programme until March 2006 comprising the following five interlinked components:

- **Improving and Developing the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in order to improve support and services across rural Hampshire**
- **Specialist infrastructure support for Children, Families and Youth Services groups**
- **Information Network support for Community Development Workers**
- **Creating a countywide information resource for VCS Social and Healthcare providers**
- **Linking support to BME groups and individuals in rural areas to combat social exclusion**

Capacity Building and Infrastructure Strategy Programme RURAL PREPARATORY PROGRAMME: January – July 2004

BID BY THE HAMPSHIRE CONSORTIUM

1.0 CONTEXT TAKEN FROM DEFRA ADVICE

- 1.1 As part of the Government's commitment to strengthening voluntary and community action and organisations throughout England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Active Community Unit (ACU) in the Home Office are committed to ensuring that support for voluntary and community organisations in rural areas is available to a similar standard to that available in towns and cities.
- 1.2 The Departments agreed to join forces on the particular needs and circumstances of rural England. Final details will be announced following analysis of the responses to the ACU consultation on voluntary and community sector infrastructure during early 2004, but resources will be available to invest in strengthening infrastructure in rural areas during the period July 2004 – March 2006.
- 1.3 The background and context for the rural sub-programme are set out in the Defra policy paper '*Community Capacity Building and Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in Rural England*'. The programme is also seen by Defra as an important contribution to its work on modernising rural delivery, by taking forward a principle recommended by Lord Haskin's review, namely that the community and voluntary sector should play a bigger role in policy design and delivery.
- 1.4 To coincide with the ACU Early Spend Programme Period (January – June 2004) Defra asked Government Offices for the Regions (GOs) to commission preparatory work in the 38 existing and former shire counties. Consortia of voluntary and community organisations have been invited to undertake this preparatory work and to submit draft proposals for the mainspend, to be returned no later than 25 June 2004. Fully worked up submissions are to be received by GOSE by 16 July 2004. Defra will expect to invest in strengthening infrastructure in line with the agreed proposals in the period July 2004 to March 2006.
- 1.5 There is no presumption of national funding beyond March 2006. The investment may be used to modernise or otherwise equip the consortium members to improve their effectiveness as a one-off effort, or to develop local funding and other partnerships locally in a way that will sustain continuing activity.
- 1.6 This commissioning invitation was issued to all county level voluntary and community infrastructure organisations. It invited them to form a consortium of infrastructure bodies within the county, including those operating at shire district and, where appropriate, unitary authority level, to make a joint proposal as to how they plan to strengthen support for voluntary and community organisations, community capacity and volunteering within the area.

2.0 HAMPSHIRE'S PREPARATORY PROGRAMME

- 2.1 As the county's Rural Community Council and a countywide Council for Voluntary Service, Community Action Hampshire accepted GOSE's invitation to take the lead role in forming a rural consortium. Members of the partnership agreed to work together to develop proposals and to nominate one of their number to receive funds on their behalf. Community Action Hampshire was nominated to be the accountable body to receive funds for undertaking the preparatory research, and for funds arising from a Consortium bid, if successful.
- 2.2 The initial funds for the period January – July 2004 have been used, for forming the consortium, establishing needs, commissioning research, and developing proposals for mainspend work. The resources used have been restricted to undertaking feasibility work to inform the development of longer-term initiatives within a possible final consortium bid.
- 2.3 The Consortium's work has, therefore, been concentrated on commissioning research and preliminary scoping reports within six of the seven types of activity suggested by Defra as being appropriate for support during the development phase:
- *Sharing of good practice, including successful agencies supporting the development of improved infrastructure in weaker areas.*
 - *Identifying local needs, gaps and duplication.*
 - *Increasing collaboration and strategic working between infrastructure agencies, including on policy work, information and services; and building more effective links between generic and specialist infrastructures.*
 - *Establishing service delivery consortia or partnerships, including those that bring together large and small organisations to build knowledge, capacity, and funding/procurement opportunities.*
 - *Further development of initiatives that are already demonstrating success.*
 - *Development of proposals for new or reconfigured capacity building services and initiatives, including use of feasibility studies or piloting, 'market testing' demand, research, consultation and consultancy.*
- 2.4 A Consortium Steering Group was set up to commission, monitor and progress the work, consisting of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Policy and Information from Community Action Hampshire, plus representatives from Hampshire County Council, Winchester Area Community Action (on behalf of the Hampshire CVS network), Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Hampshire County Federation of Women's Institutes and Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils. Following the first two meetings at the end of April, and after consideration of preliminary investigations, it was agreed to commission preliminary scoping reports from specialist consultants in four topic areas. This followed initial conversations aimed at building up a picture of where to prioritise and concentrate research, and to identify broad areas where there were not only apparent gaps in knowledge and support, but where a strong case could be made out for improved infrastructure, network support and capacity building for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Hampshire.
- 2.5 The four areas were:
- 2.5.1 **Analysis and clarification of the respective roles and services of district CVS and CAH as both Rural Community Council and a countywide CVS.** What can a rural district CVS offer? What is best delivered at a more strategic, countywide level? Where are the economics of scale, if any? Where are the gaps and how might they best be filled? What overlap – if any – exists, and how might this be dealt with?

Would the network be widened and strengthened by the inclusion of other non-CVS countywide VCS bodies?

- 2.5.2 **Building an improved infrastructure and network for Community Development Workers.** Overall, this would be aimed at improving the mechanisms for addressing the Social Inclusion agenda. Explore the practicalities of creating a serviced CDW network for Hampshire that brought together all the CDW's in CAH, the CVSs, local authorities, housing associations, armed forces, youth service, etc. Any such network should, most importantly, have direct links into training and sharing experience. It would also, in all likelihood, be impractical to exclude in the long term CDWs in Portsmouth and Southampton, although the initial focus would be on rural areas.
- 2.5.3 **Establish the extent of existing knowledge/lack of knowledge on BME groupings (and possibly travellers) in rural areas.** Build on good practice and initiatives with travellers in the New Forest and Hart. By mapping, turn anecdotal evidence into statistically robust information; establish residential patterns; education, social and healthcare needs, means of accessing services, extent of exclusion, etc. This would also form a major contribution in addressing the Social Inclusion agenda.
- 2.5.4 **Building on experience and previous good practice, create a single serviced social and healthcare providers' network for the whole of Hampshire.** This might or might not eventually include Portsmouth and Southampton. Should such a network concentrate on contract and management support, training, negotiation, mediation, etc., by means of dedicated project time, members' sharing of experience and mutual peer support? Or, should it focus on being a single access point for information, signposting to support, etc.?
- 2.6 The specialist commissioned consultants focused their research primarily on the six recognised "Rural" districts in Hampshire: Basingstoke and Deane, East Hampshire, Hart, New Forest, Test Valley and Winchester. However, because there are SEEDA and Countryside Agency designated market/small rural towns in the districts of Eastleigh (which is also parished), Fareham, Gosport and Havant, it was considered unreasonable to exclude these areas entirely. Rushmoor district and the unitary cities of Portsmouth and Southampton were not included in the various initial studies, although it was recognised that a significant number of the existing networks, project workers and providers that were being targeted would be based there, and it might prove unrealistic to exclude these areas in the longer term.
- 2.7 The four preliminary scoping reports from consultants were received on 1 June and the whole Consortium met on Friday, 11 June to consider the reports, debate them through a workshop process, and reach decisions on the proposed content of a draft bid. By the end of the day a clear mandate was given to proceed on aspects of all four areas researched plus one more:
- 2.7.1 Scoping work on specialist infrastructure support for children and youth services groups currently provided through the Hampshire Children and Families Forum and the Hampshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services. To identify the potential for developing co-ordinated working and better links and co-operation with the CVS network, and providing specialist/generic infrastructure support.

3.0 SOME FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT RURAL HAMPSHIRE

- 3.1 According to recent evidence, (The State of the Countryside in the South East, 2003), the rural population in the region has increased by 11.6 % since 1981. But one should not ignore the deep structural changes underpinning the rural sector in the local and regional economies. As a result, rural issues are integral in both the South East and Hampshire's economic strategies. Thematic areas include competitive businesses, vibrant communities, effective infrastructure, and sustainable use of natural resources.
- 3.2 In Hampshire and IOW 59% of wards are classified as rural. Rural areas in Hampshire and IOW support 290,000 jobs across all industry sectors, this equates to 37% of all jobs in the area. As with urban areas two thirds of all jobs are full-time and 50% of the labour force is female.
- 3.3 21.3% (80,185 ha) of Hampshire is covered by AONB designations and Hampshire County Council has calculated (mid 2001 estimate) that about 365,000 people live in rural areas and settlements up to 10,000 population. 90% of the county is rural; there are 251 parishes.
- 3.4 The total population (mid 2001 estimates) of the six designated rural districts in Hampshire (Basingstoke and Deane, East Hampshire, Hart, New Forest, Test Valley and Winchester) is 732,300, covering an area of over 340,000 ha. Adding in the four other districts included within the scope of this bid (Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport and Havant), for the reasons explained above in Paragraph 2.6, the total population of the districts covered in this countywide consortium bid is **1,150,000**, covering an area of **364,000** ha.
- 3.5 The Consortium considers that encouraging a vibrant and expanding rural economy is an essential priority and challenge within any strategy, and the creation of a stronger VCS infrastructure is a key partnership objective.
- 3.6 Economic expansion in rural areas is outstripping growth in urban areas. Over the last 5 years employment growth in rural Hampshire and IOW has been 9% and net business unit growth 10%. Indeed, rural areas now account for almost 50% of business units and if trends continue will overtake urban areas as the location of choice for business.
- 3.7 Just as significantly, three out of every five net new jobs in Hampshire and the IOW between 1997 and 2002 were in businesses located in rural areas. Whilst on average rural businesses are smaller than those in urban areas, the evidence suggests that rural areas are extremely important in some key business sectors. For instance, around 50% of hotel and catering employment (including restaurants and bars) is in rural areas, likewise 45% of all construction, 38% of manufacturing and 37% of business services employment is rural based.
- 3.8 Net employment growth (in notional and real terms) in rural areas has outstripped that in the urban conurbations over the last 5 years. The main gains have been in Construction, Transport, Hotel and Catering and Business Services, and although there have been reductions, the losses encountered in Manufacturing and Public Administration have been less severe than in urban areas. Only in **Health and Social Care**, and Financial Services has the rural economy fared less well than the urban economy.
- 3.9 In April 2004 SEEDA launched the new Small Rural Towns Programme. With total SEEDA funding of around £7mn the programme will run for seven years. This extends the programme run since 1999 to areas hitherto excluded such as

Hampshire. The Hampshire Market Towns Partnership was launched on 9 June. The programme aims to attract, create and sustain new jobs and businesses in rural towns, recycle non-agricultural brownfield land, provide business advice and provide training in basic skills, ICT and higher level skills. Community Action Hampshire is a member of this new Partnership and has a place on the programme's Steering Group. It is expected that up to 32 smaller rural towns in Hampshire will benefit from the programme over the next seven years.

N.B. Grateful acknowledgement for some of the information in this section to Hampshire Economic Partnership's Report "Informing Our Future 2004."

4.0 THE HAMPSHIRE CONSORTIUM BID

4.1 The following organisations were invited to be part of the Hampshire Consortium and have contributed to the preparation of the bid:

- 1) Community Action Hampshire (Accountable body)
- 2) Community First, New Forest (CVS)
- 3) Eastleigh Community Services (CVS)
- 4) Fareham Community Action (CVS)
- 5) Voluntary Action for East Hampshire (CVS)
- 6) Winchester Area Community Action (CVS)
- 7) Test Valley Community Services (CVS)
- 8) Gosport Voluntary Action (CVS)
- 9) Havant Council of Community Service (CVS)
- 10) Basingstoke Voluntary Services (CVS)
- 11) Hart Voluntary Action (CVS)
- 12) Citizens' Advice Bureau (New Forest)
- 13) First Steps Pre-School and Family Group (countywide)
- 14) Hampshire Children and Families Forum
- 15) Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
- 16) British Red Cross, Hampshire
- 17) Swaythling Housing Society
- 18) Community Development South East
- 19) The Environment Centre (countywide)
- 20) Hampshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services
- 21) Campaign to Protect Rural England
- 22) Hampshire County Federation of Women's Institutes
- 23) Age Concern Hampshire
- 24) Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils
- 25) Hampshire County Council – Environment Grouping, Social Services and Policy Unit
- 26) Eastleigh Borough Council
- 27) Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
- 28) SEEDA (Two representatives attended the Consortium day as observers and indicated support for its outcomes)

4.2 A signature sheet indicating support on behalf of Consortium members is appended at the end of this bid.

4.3 Addressing Defra's Vision: The Consortium, in developing this draft bid, has been mindful of the guidance on what a successful support structure for a capacity building and infrastructure strategy might encompass:

- *Effective networking and co-ordination of 'frontline' community development, volunteer support and expert advisory staff.*
- *An agreed means of delivering support to voluntary and community organisations working in the area.*
- *A clear strategy for recognising diversity and then meeting the needs of particular groups, including black and minority ethnic and those socially excluded.*
- *Sustainable mechanism to ensure continuity and capacity building.*
- *Consistency of community support relative to need throughout the county.*
- *Increased and better supported volunteering.*
- *Greater community involvement in local service delivery.*
- *Lifting the capacity of the weakest communities and targeting rural social exclusion through voluntary and community activity and new social and community enterprise.*

- *Protocols and service level agreements between, for example, CVSSs, VBx, CABx, RCCs, local authorities, youth networks, legal advice services and other providers clarifying roles or delivery responsibilities.*
- *Consideration of case for mergers and/or new organisations.*
- *Shared back office functions (ICT, information, insurance etc).*
- *Common training and learning provision accessed by all parties.*
- *Co-ordinated small grants provision with consideration of common gateway.*
- *Wider network for information, good practice exchange, learning and representation, including community organisations (parish councils, WI, Young Farmers, faith communities, village halls etc.) and social enterprises at district, linked to county, linked to regional level.*
- *Signposting to specialist advice and support services.*
- *Improved community development support, community meeting places, transport schemes, small grants and working with representative forums/parish councils.*
- *Mechanisms for sustaining the effort, building on good practice and disseminating learning.*
- *Community and voluntary sector partnerships better able to engage effectively with LSPs and their members at district and county level and with RDAs and GOs regionally with links to all Community Strategies (district and county).*
- *More effective connection with sub-regional, regional and national good practice and delivery, including, for example, Futurebuilders, regional economic strategy.*
- *Improved integration of urban and rural infrastructure.*
- *Strengthened local and sub-regional Compacts making a difference in practice.*

4.4 The Consortium is putting forward proposals for integrating and strengthening the local infrastructure within Hampshire, focusing on the rural areas but considering also the needs of urban parts of the whole area and the urban/rural interface (or Rural Urban Fringe). Thus, in preparing our proposals, the Consortium has:

- *Consulted local voluntary and community organisations to produce evidence of the need for further investment in local infrastructure.*
- *Explored local funding and income earning opportunities with potential funders.*
- *Drawn up proposals for sustainable local infrastructure development.*
- *Carried out mapping work to build on local intelligence on what exists and what is needed.*
- *Considered how successful VCS infrastructure bodies can support the development of improved infrastructure in weaker areas.*
- *Increased collaboration and strategic working between infrastructure bodies on policy, information and services.*
- *Built more effective links between specialist and general infrastructure.*
- *Scoped/researched/carried out feasibility studies such as 'market testing' demand for a proposed project or service.*
- *Identified need in specialist priority areas such as volunteering, social enterprise and black & minority ethnic communities.*
- *Considered how best to support the sector in tackling the often dispersed and 'hidden' social exclusion in rural areas.*
- *Considered how best to deliver community development and build capacity in rural communities.*
- *Identified opportunities to enhance the sector's role in delivering public services, particularly those that are important in rural areas and those in the Government's priority public service areas:*
 - Health and Social Care
 - Crime and Community Cohesion
 - Education and Employment
 - Housing and Homelessness
 - Children and Families

- 4.5 The Consortium has also paid careful regard to ensuring that priority areas of the Countryside Agency's work are addressed, namely Capacity Building within rural communities, mainstreaming the "Vital Villages" programme into the Community Strategy process, Market Town Healthchecks, Rural Urban Fringe, Affordable Rural Housing, Rural Community Development, and Integrated Rural Services. Wherever appropriate, elements of this ongoing work have been factored into the content of the bid.
- 4.6 The Consortium's bid has five common threads throughout its integrated structure:
- All proposals are intended to improve communication and information flow.
 - All proposals would improve infrastructure support across (rural) Hampshire.
 - All proposals would build capacity and bring benefits of shared experience and improved services.
 - All proposals would develop the capacity of the CVS network to provide support in specialised areas.
 - All proposals aim to provide single points of access for information, support and signposting at the appropriate level.
- 4.7 The Consortium bid for Hampshire is an integrated programme of research and project work in five discrete areas, four closely interlinked within the common theme "Improving the Infrastructure", and one intended as a demonstration case study of a project to address an identified need and gap in provision. All five areas relate to building the capacity of the CVS and countywide VCS network in Hampshire to meet the needs of individuals, groups and voluntary organisations through access to better information and service support.
- 4.8 The Consortium has not considered in detail in this bid issues around ICT or HR projects, which have been covered in Hampshire within the ACU Early Spend Programme. However, the Consortium has consulted colleagues on the Isle of Wight over the content of the Hampshire bid, and it is understood that the IOW bid is primarily focussed on improving ICT provision and building VCS capacity by that means. We have agreed with our colleagues on the IOW that, if the Hampshire bid is successful, we would wish to work closely with them to ensure they derive the appropriate benefits from elements of our programme, in particular those relating to a Community Development Workers Network.
- 4.9 In preparing this bid, members of the Consortium have also had regard to the potential of "Futurebuilders" and the government's drive to raise the capacity of the voluntary sector to deliver quality services. We note also that the Race Equality Agenda as set out in the Race Amendment Act places a statutory responsibility upon both funders and providers to work in a "harmonious and non-discriminatory way to improve the quality of support to BME and socially excluded groups in the community."

5.0 THE FIVE COMPONENTS OF THE INTEGRATED BID

5.1 **Improving and Developing the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in order to improve support and services across rural Hampshire**

The consultant's Report (by a former CVS Chief Officer) set out various recommendations which have been agreed for implementation by the CVS Chief Officer Network as part of their own developmental work outside the scope of this bid. These relate mainly to the adoption of protocols to clarify relationships and joint working, and do NOT form part of this bid.

One recommendation is outstanding and is included in the bid:

"To research and explore, as a matter of priority, other models of a suitable infrastructure to meet the needs of the VCS in Hampshire and in the sub-region, with specific reference to rural areas. To undertake further consultation work on appropriate models, and to develop, if appropriate and agreed, a new infrastructure for Hampshire, including the rural areas".

The consultant drew attention to successful alternative models of VCS infrastructure in Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Derby, and Greater Manchester. Non-CVS/RCC attendees on 11 June pointed out the pitfalls of too much introversion by the CVSS and CAH, in sorting out their own working arrangements. There are other VCS structures and hierarchies (e.g. in relation to wildlife) with which CVSS rarely currently come into contact.

Another objective of this element of the bid would be to capture the mapping and linking of generalist and specialist infrastructure, so that they work more closely together and there is a clear matrix of what each offers. This would include the recently formed Social Enterprise Support Network in Hampshire and the multiplicity of diverse environmental infrastructure interests. It would also embrace the outcomes of that element of the bid contained below at 5.2: "Specialist Infrastructure Support for Children and Youth Services Groups."

5.1.1 **Who will benefit?**

All generalist and specialist organisations within the existing Hampshire rural infrastructure would benefit in that the mapping and consideration of alternative models of delivering support would lead, if adopted in due course after consultation, to a strengthened VCS infrastructure with better access to information and opportunities for co-ordinated working.

5.2 **Specialist infrastructure support for Children, Families and Youth Services groups**

This work emerged from workshop discussions facilitated by a CAH officer, and involving the chairs of Hampshire Children and Families Forum, Hampshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services, First Steps Pre-School and Family Group, and two CVS Chief Officers (Winchester and Fareham). Proposals were brought to the workshop and developed through discussion to:

"Undertake scoping work on ways of providing specialist infrastructure support for children, families and youth services provided through HCF and HCVYS. Identify the scope for co-ordinated working and better links and co-operation with the CVS network. Explore ways of developing the links between specialist/generic infrastructure roles through some form of new model/membership of the CVS countywide network."

It was considered vital to find a way of overcoming the present fragmented structures and it was subsequently agreed that this work was closely related to the exploratory research envisaged in the proposal at 5.1 above.

5.2.1 **Who will benefit?**

It became clear during the discussions in the workshop, and some prior notification had been given of the issues that were going to be raised, that there was a good deal of confusion and ignorance around "who does what" in the somewhat disjointed network support structures for children, families and youth services. In particular, funding mechanisms are through a variety of statutory sources, and they do not provide the basis for a seamless service provision. Whilst it can be argued that children, families and youth services are only one of a number of specialist VCS structures, it was concluded on balance that the scale of the scoping work needed on ways of providing better specialist infrastructure support was such as to warrant a separate strand of work within the integrated bid. It was agreed that the role of the CVS network in a future model was likely to be pivotal, and thus the comments above in 5.1.1 also apply. The Consortium also noted the stated intention by the government to invest more within this VCS sector.

5.3 **Information Network support for Community Development Workers**

The consultant's Report (by a former CDW and RCC officer) indicated widespread support for setting up a serviced network, but identified that Community Development South East was already engaged in setting up, with some limited SEEDA funding, a series of sub-regional CDW networks, including one for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

It was agreed to:

"Undertake further consultation on the most appropriate form of network/forum; to consider the funding implications, structures and sustainability in collaboration with Community Development South East and the Isle of Wight RCC". There is general support for finding and funding a means of supporting, as part of the VCS infrastructure, an information network focusing on policy developments, identification of training needs and opportunities, and exchange of information and experience. This would provide a much-needed network support for CDWs in the districts without the need for them to attend regular meetings. It was considered that part of the development of this strand of the bid should be the development of an integrated CVS website. The importance of the "single point of access" was emphasised.

It was agreed that careful consideration would need to be given to exactly what would constitute a "single point of access", in particular what would an integrated CVS website entail and comprise? Would it be for public use, restricted to specialist infrastructure workers, or an intranet for them, or both? Work is in progress on an integrated website project called "evolve" to provide a database mapping VCS activity across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This is likely to be marketed as a gateway into the VCS, so the dedicated CVS website development implied within the infrastructure bid could serve as not only an access point to specialist infrastructure support, but also linked to the new evolve website.

Community Development South East (CDSE) is currently working with SEEDA and others to secure funding to help develop a network across the whole south-east region, and in particular to develop a sub-regional structure. It was agreed that the most pressing need was to get the whole process going. The process will need to be organic and be responsive to change as it develops through consultation. The clear

message from the Consortium is that the CVS network would work closely with CDSE and our colleagues on the Isle of Wight in order to avoid duplication and to develop a single support network as rapidly as possible.

It was also agreed that any network development needed to be cross-sectoral and include voluntary, community, public and private as well as universities and colleges. It could also not be restricted to forms of purely electronic communication and the need was recognised for face to face talking and the provision of some paper-based materials.

The Consortium noted that there is now a substantial amount of activity related to Community Development training happening across the south-east, and CDSE in conjunction with University College, Winchester have just submitted a bid to ESF EQUAL for £1 million plus to create a programme of CD training from grassroots to degree level across the region.

5.3.1 **Who will benefit?**

The consultant undertook 14 telephone and two face-to-face interviews. Eight other submissions /responses were made via email. A contacts list was also drawn up and is now held on file and on the database.

The respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of such a network. Although during the mapping exercise a number of other networks were identified it was deemed that this one would be sufficiently different to warrant support, as it had huge potential especially if it had a dedicated coordinator. It would, however, need to ensure that it was focused and relevant at all times to its client base.

Quotations from CDW respondents:

- It would be good to know what others are doing and to have contacts and support. It's a lonely place and workers can become isolated. It can also be scary at times.
- Good opportunity for networking and exchanging information, ideas and drawing on others experience.
- Value meeting face-to-face meetings as well as receiving e-mails.
- It would bring together people working together directly with communities but who currently do not necessarily know what else is going on in their locality.
- It would allow for high quality training to be delivered working with a range of communities and contribute to raising skills levels.
- It would allow for Community Development Workers to promote and move towards adoption in Hampshire of a recognized standard and common approach.
- A serviced network would have potential to carry more weight with employers and has potential for lobbying for policy/funding etc.
- It would give Local Authorities and others the opportunity to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the network demonstrating partnership approaches to meeting the needs of communities.
- It would provide an opportunity for Community Development Workers to be informed of strategic policy changes, consultation on government documents etc., which is directly relevant to them rather than finding out about it second or third hand.
- It would be fantastic and good to know who is doing what and be able to learn where to access people.
- It would ease the work of people who work across LA boundaries and go into areas where there are already established Community Development Workers. They would no longer be seen as a threat but an opportunity for partnership working.
- Anything that encourages exchange of ideas and information would be greatly welcomed.

- It's a great idea as long as it is sufficiently resourced for a suitable length of time. Otherwise – with the best will in the world it will fold due to lack of enthusiasm.

But.....

- Time pressures on individuals are considerable therefore there must be something to be gained in giving up the time. Need to guard against it being a talking shop.
- Exchanging information can be difficult as often workers are "closed". They are lacking in trust and are concerned about their jobs and future funding of their posts and do not want someone else taking their ideas. They therefore see themselves in competition with other workers.
- The diversity of backgrounds could make it hard to form links.
- Being a rural area the main problem is reaching everyone.
- It would need longer term funding to avoid the usual pattern of building something that works well, only for it to be lost when the short term funding ends and no one feels responsible for its future funding.

Respondents identified the following as mechanisms best suited for sharing good practice within the network:

- List all the projects that are going on in each person's area, identify the best practice from them and share through newsletters with relevant contact details.
- Information share at the start of each meeting but if there are large numbers involved then may be attendees could bring written material on projects to circulate and be taken away.
- Make use of umbrella groups such as TWICS (Training for Work in Communities) or HCYVS (Hampshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services and local compacts).
- An e-mail network (a national one already exists).
- Training & workshop sessions.
- Regular communication. Whatever the form there is a need to check that what has been sent has been received.
- Face-to-face sessions are best. Can send papers out but they don't always get read.

Conclusions

- In principle there was widespread support for the setting up of a serviced network.
- Communication is clearly vital.
- Respondents valued the opportunity to network because they work in isolation, but felt any meetings held must be focused.
- Training was seen as a high priority for respondents but it has to be relevant.
- Community Development Workers have many constraints on their time and the fact that a number of networks have already failed is indicative of how important it is to get the balance right in a whole variety of ways; from the appropriateness of training right down to the frequency of meetings and where they are held. If it is seen to be of no value to them people will vote with their feet and simply not participate.
- The diversity of backgrounds could be a two edged sword. Whilst many were keen to network with other Community Development Workers outside of their specialism, when it came down to training it was very clear that many would want this either kept within their specialist field, or for it to be very generic.

5.4 **Creating a countywide information resource for VCS Social and Healthcare providers**

The consultant's findings on this topic closely mirror in many respects those in relation to Community Development Workers: strong support for a single point of access to information and signposting to sources of specialist support and training, but a feeling/message that providers' needs are so diverse that "one size will not fit all" and there is no time to attend lots of meetings. Indeed, the sizes and resources of social care providers vary from the tiny voluntary care group operating in a single community to the large countywide bodies like Age Concern and Red Cross, providing day centres, lunch clubs, transport, and volume domiciliary care contracts. It was agreed that there is a need to:

"Create a countywide mechanism to promote information flow, develop a sense of cohesion, and identify opportunities for partnership support and liaison. This "information machine" should analyse strategic information relevant to providers' work, co-ordinate research and analysis being undertaken elsewhere; and disseminate information through a variety of means appropriate to the needs of the provider, including e-bulletins and a website". This work would be targeted at the needs of smaller groups who operate without the benefit of national or umbrella organisations, and any resultant information service, such as the development of an interactive website, could again form part of the improved infrastructure support through the CVS network.

5.4.1 **Who will benefit?**

The consultants contacted a diverse sample of 44 providers and nine infrastructure organisations across the county. They found a commonality in the need for information, particularly information relevant to the needs of clients. There was no one way in which such information could be delivered because of the difference in capacity of the respondents to receive information.

Some organisations are closely linked with their local CVSs, whilst others are part of a more specialist infrastructure (e.g. Homestart, Red Cross). Some respondents would like to hear from informed speakers at network meetings – others have no time to attend further meetings. Some respondents would appreciate e-bulletins – others have no computers, and therefore are glad of newsletters. Some respondents are interested in communicating with organisations across Hampshire – others are not interested in anyone operating beyond their own district.

The consultants recommended an information system that builds on, and strengthens, existing communications mechanisms.

Benefits identified by infrastructure organisations:

- It is "difficult for a relatively small organisation to link into strategic planning and implementation"; a "policy analyst could be helpful" - Hampshire-wide health charity
- It "would be really good to have a policy analyst to pick out important points - to wade through the garbage!" - CVS
- We would welcome a "centralised source of countywide information that can be cascaded out to groups by email" - county officer of national charity
- We "need a policy person to research and write articles which are more meaningful, informative and up to date" – countywide infrastructure organisation
- A centralised information source "could provide more detailed and current information to go out on a website and in newsletters. CVS staff do not have allocated time" - CVS

- Information should be sent to the central office for distribution "because groups are inundated with information" – voluntary care group adviser

Benefits identified by provider organisations:

- "Information sheets would be wonderful - e-bulletins brilliant!" - local branch of national organisation
- "Some sort of synopsis of information sheets and newsletters would be useful" - housing association
- "Electronic briefings would be very useful" - district wide mental health charity
- "An opportunity to find out how others are responding to changes and to link to standards frameworks" – regional care provider
- "Information about funding, how things are changing and the impact on voluntary organisations"
- Would help us to "know what is happening in the rural areas" – countywide disability charity
- Would support me to know "what is going on in the big wide world; as a lone worker there is the potential for becoming disconnected" – local group of national charity.
- It is important "not reinventing the wheel, sharing best practice"
- "We only get a couple of newsletters a year [from our national body]" - local representative of national charity.

Some issues about providing a countywide information resource:

- 'We don't have a computer network' - local housing organisation'
- "Not good at reading on screen so would have to print it [an e-bulletin] off – which costs" – branch of national charity
- "Information needs to be relevant to ex-offenders accommodation" local housing provider
- "Not computerised at present – would need resources for equipment and training (many older volunteers may be wary of training)"
- "Plain English and jargon free"
- It would need "an executive summary at the start to flip through – clear signposting"

Reasons to support an information system in preference to a countywide network based on regular meetings of providers:

- "Time limited so very difficult to get to forums" - small voluntary organisation
- "Limited staff time - need to look at how useful forums are, will they address issues that are important to our clients at the moment" county-wide disability charity
- "Already invited to many social services and health meetings"
- "Problem with lack of staff so difficult to attend meetings"

5.5 The above four strands of the bid are all interlinked in that they are intended to develop a seamless service providing information and signposting for all VCS groups including those the CVSs do not currently work with. It is anticipated that Defra funding would be used to provide a signposting and advice service by linking the generic CVS network and the specialist groupings of other large countywide or umbrella networks. The service would consist of:

5.5.1 Web-based signposting and information exchange

5.5.2 Telephone support and signposting on a one-to-one basis

5.5.3 Targeted advice across the network by highlighting sources of specialist knowledge

- 5.5.4 Rural policy work to complement what is already provided by CAH to enable the wider consortium to respond more effectively to parts of government consultation relevant to individual members
- 5.5.5 Paper-based information and newsletters to VCS specialist and generalist infrastructure as relevant to identified needs
- 5.5.6 Targeted meetings and seminars as appropriate; possible one-off conference for social and healthcare providers
- 5.6 **Linking support to BME groups and individuals in rural areas to combat social exclusion**

This final strand of the work is proposed as a specific measure to address a gap in present provision, and the Consortium agreed it should be regarded as a “showcase” exemplar or case study of a project to combat identified social exclusion. The consultant’s Report identified a number of disparate examples of good practice work going on in different parts of Hampshire (New Forest and Hart with travellers/gypsies; Basingstoke and Eastleigh, mainly Asian groups). There was strong agreement that a Project Officer was needed to pull together what was already going on and develop links and research on mapping what was happening “on the ground”. The project would avoid any replication of work already undertaken, but would provide specialist support and training to Community Workers.

The Consortium resolved to:

“Create a multi-agency consortium to use Defra (and possibly ACU) funding to increase the social inclusion of minority groups. The consortium to be drawn from BME communities, VCS, statutory and private sectors in order to promote the holistic approach. Create a single point of access to information, data and services available. Draw up a strategy and development plan through participation of minority groups and practitioners. Develop clear, robust links to Local Strategic Partnerships and the Hampshire Compact.”

The Consortium envisaged employment of a full-time specialist project worker and also the development of further funding bids to ACU, and to statutory authorities in Hampshire for the 2005/06 financial year onwards.

The first task would be to identify where the BME groups and individuals are located. To a limited extent the mapping of what is happening on the ground has already been done in a number of discrete unrelated geographic areas, but it is still not known where the isolated BME groups and individuals are in rural areas, because the research and “knocking on doors” has not been done.

The specialist worker would need to develop a strategy as a core part of the work, and would also work with the CDW’s network in training on BME issues, build on the good work undertaken in Hart, Eastleigh, Basingstoke and New Forest, and do new case work in areas where nothing has happened. The Consortium noted that the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires those in receipt of public funding to be actively promoting good race relations and reaching out to do proactive work, yet it was felt that the CVS have not taken this on board yet – this point is made quite strongly in the ACU’s Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework published in June 2004.

It was also felt strongly that the specialist worker should aim to create a single point of access for information, and to support the participation of local groups through an easily accessible small grants scheme.

5.6.1 Who will benefit?

The consultant considered how this project would give benefit equally to the various groups across the county. At the same time benefits to BME groups in all four of the other strands were identified and noted. BME groups would benefit through the following work programme consisting of three key areas of work in rural Hampshire, which all meet Defra objectives and build on work undertaken within the other components of the bid:

- 5.6.2 Create a multi agency consortium (BME, VCS, Statutory, Voluntary and Commercial groups) bringing together small and larger organisations to build knowledge and to further map and review data on BME services, thus identifying local needs, gaps and duplications including for example social and healthcare providers and children and youth services.

The consultant identified the following gaps in culturally acceptable service availability:

- Parent support groups
- Early education
- Library services
- Homework clubs
- Connexions
- Teenage pregnancy advisers
- Medical counselling (heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes – Asian community)
- Healthy eating advice (Gypsy and Traveller community)
- Confidence building and volunteering
- Accessing work and training opportunities
- Through this multi agency consortium supporting community workers trusted by BME groups, these communities would be better consulted in order that practitioners develop and deliver more needs led, culturally acceptable services

- 5.6.3 Create a single point of access for information, data and services, linking E-Volve and Hantsnet (with new children's portal planned 2004/5). This will increase collaboration within and between practitioners and BME groups / individuals and creating effective links with generic and specialist structures. A full time worker would manage this information point and the multi agency consortium / forum which will also be able to effectively signpost one to one support and translation for effective information access. Community Development Officers and BME Practitioners will be facilitated to share and further develop initiatives that are demonstrating success e.g.

- Housing Association mentoring schemes to tackle racism
- Laptop loan scheme for Gypsy community
- First Steps Family Group
- Positive Action Through Housing (PATH) scheme
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS)
- Oak Meadow mentor scheme for dispersed minority pupils
- Borough / District Community workers
- Forest Bus (New Forest)

- 5.6.4 Create a countywide (rural areas) strategy and development plan, linked with LSP's and the Hampshire Compact with full participation by members of BME communities through a small grants programme. Thus addressing the issues for BME communities whilst developing proposals for capacity building, services and initiatives. The following issues were identified during consultation:

- Not having a voice in the community

- Not having culturally acceptable services (female GP's, single sex leisure opportunities, youth groups and pre-schools that reflect culture etc)
- Poor transport
- Bullying / Racism
- Helplines are not translated
- Training and employment is inaccessible
- Translated materials are not available
- Places of worship (too few)
- Larger houses needed
- Street lighting needed
- Translation services needed
- BME 'Champion' in each Borough / District Council needed
- Better medical advice and help lines
- Drugs / alcohol advice needed

The strategy would reflect long term planning and consistent funding streams, helping to improve the voluntary sector infrastructure, acknowledging and resourcing workers to be well trained and supported in order to build the trust of the community.

BME communities will benefit in the ways outlined above; e.g. multi agency consortium, single point of access for information and a countywide strategy, but this will only be achieved through improving and developing the voluntary sector infrastructure in Hampshire, which is currently fragmented and under represented by BME service providers. This bid will enable the sharing of good practice to improve infrastructure in weaker areas and support development workers to meet the needs of BME communities linking them with specialist providers such as social and healthcare, children, youth and families providers, who in turn will be more aware of their needs through BME participation in a countywide strategy and development plan.

6.0 FUNDING STRUCTURE FOR THE BID

6.1 The Consortium anticipates the following funding structure for the integrated bid:

6.1.1 Creating a linked information, signposting and web-based resource under the aegis of the Defra Consortium, to enable a single point of access by all generalist and specialist VCS groupings.

The Consortium will, if successful in this bid, set up in conjunction with the CVS Network a Steering Group to determine in staffing terms how best to deliver this objective; whether by a full/part time Information Worker appointment(s); where to host/locate such an access point; the balance between staffing and consultancy costs; the extent of enhancement possible to existing arrangements without additional staff. However, the Consortium recognised the clear messages received about the importance of adequately and sustainably resourcing the developmental work.

Set up costs are estimated as follows:

- Employment costs over 18 months to 31 March 2006: £26,000 (including on-costs)
- Consultancy fees and contributions to and within the CVS Network: £15,000
- Website development: £5,000

Total for this element of the bid: £46,000

6.1.2 Creating a BME mapping and support project in rural areas to build on and enhance work already undertaken

This element of the bid, if successful, would result in the appointment of a specialist/generic BME project worker supported by a cross sectoral Steering Group drawn from relevant stakeholders. The appointment would be initially for an 18 months contract to 31 March 2006. Supplementary/match funding would be sought from ACU with immediate effect, and from Hampshire County Council and key local authorities for the 2005/06 financial year onwards.

Costs are estimated as follows:

- Employment costs over 18 months to 31 March 2006: £48,000
- Create a small grants pot to enable participation in consultations and meetings by isolated BME groups and individuals: £3,000

Total for this element of the bid: £51,000

6.1.3 The total amount sought by the Hampshire Consortium is £97,000 for the period to 31 March 2006.

7.0 TIMETABLE AND MILESTONES

- 7.1 August/September 2004:
- Set up a Consortium Steering Group to oversee implementation of infrastructure support and development work.
 - Commission further specialist consultancy work as required
 - Advertise and appoint specialist BME Community Development Worker: target start date 1 October
 - Seek further ACU funding to support BME work
 - Identify and invite membership of stakeholder Steering Group to support BME Worker project
- 7.2 October 2004 – March 2005:
- Start process of applying for continuation funding for all elements of the bid from County and district councils and other agencies as identified
 - Set up funding working group within the Hampshire Consortium to oversee above work
 - Commence website development
 - Set targets and milestones for BME worker (October 2004)
 - By end of month 6 (March 2005) BME project worker to have made contact with target number of groups and individuals and be working in and with target number of communities and district council areas
 - BME worker to commence work to agreed programme of mapping with outcomes agreed by Steering Group
- 7.3 April 2005 – March 2006:
- The Consortium, in conjunction with the CVS Network, will complete process of identifying, applying for and securing necessary funding to sustain all aspects of the completed work beyond March 2006
 - Complete website development (by October 2005) and launch
 - Complete work around generalist and specialist VCS infrastructure support (by October 2005) and test systems put in place for effectiveness; set target for obtaining user feedback
 - Complete linking of website and database information to “evolve” project (by mid 2005)
 - Target (by October 2005) to confirm engagement of specialist BME project worker fully funded to at least October 2007 or (preferably) March 2008
 - BME worker’s Steering Group to meet every two months to review progress and set targets for casework. Set milestones for progress at May, August and November 2005; February 2006

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 In preparing this draft bid the Consortium has been mindful of the need to meet Defra's threshold criteria as set out in paragraph 21 of the advice/guidance, viz

- *Evidence of need and how it will be met.*
- *Clear and measurable outcomes, in line with the Vision.*
- *Consultation and stakeholder support.*
- *Collaboration, including skill sharing and promoting communication and open working between organisations and sectors.*
- *Sustainability, or test out the sustainability of a longer-term project.*
- *Potential to attract support from other funders and purchasers.*
- *Benefit to diverse VCOs, including through addressing inequalities in current provision, and targeting small and marginalised groups.*
- *Commitment to best practice, including reflecting and promoting diversity and community empowerment principles.*
- *Willingness to share learning and contribute to evaluation.*

8.2 We recognise that the bid is for significantly more than the £60k minimum specified in the DEFRA guidance. However, we see the proposal as a comparatively complex one, with *inter-related* parts, which thus cannot be readily disaggregated.

8.3 We are also mindful of the scale of the area in question, and the difficulty of securing funds from outside the county for much work in rural areas; this is an historical dilemma. For example, the former Rural Development Commission had *no* 'rural development areas' in Hampshire and hence SEEDA's rural priorities in *its* early years have been equally biased against the county. The most recent national round of service level agreements between the Countryside Agency and rural community councils used a formula which *increased* the grant aid to most RCCs, but *decreased* that offered in most *south-eastern* counties, *including Hampshire*. Yet rural hardship and deprivation classically occurs in small pockets which many statistical analyses fail to identify.

8.4 This bid therefore offers an opportunity to bring significant, structured and co-ordinated benefits to the rural VCS in Hampshire and is commended to GOSE.