

Oxfordshire Voluntary and Community Sector
Infrastructure Development (OVID) &
Additional Support Programme (ASP) Consortia

**CAPACITY BUILDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT FOR THE
VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR
IN OXFORDSHIRE**

Local Infrastructure Development Plan
&
Report of the Additional Support Programme

March 2006



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FOREWORD

The Oxfordshire Local Infrastructure Development Plan marks the starting point of a process for improving Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure in Oxfordshire that will take a number of years to complete. The Plan incorporates information about the need for VCS infrastructure services in Oxfordshire, the gaps in current provision, and the particular needs of rural and ethnic minority communities. It outlines the broad principles of a strategy for ensuring that VCS infrastructure services are available in all parts of the county, and sets out the framework for a business development plan as a starter for continuing discussion over the ensuing weeks and months. There is no doubt that some elements of this Plan will be changed in the course of those discussions. It is also important to note that while officers of the local authorities have been actively involved in developing the Plan, the proposals are so far untested within the political arena due to the tight timetable involved. The Plan is therefore a proposal document, not a bid for funds. Specific proposals will be brought forward over the next year as part of a process of dialogue on the Plan with the voluntary and community sector's partners.

Funders and key stakeholders including front-line VCS organisations have been involved and consulted throughout the preparation of the IDP and its content has been shaped by their views. They support the broad principles and priorities for infrastructure development set out in the IDP. Discussions with individual stakeholders will take place after the publication of the IDP in order to further develop their engagement.

Oxfordshire started work on ChangeUp against a background of relatively undeveloped VCS infrastructure services and public/voluntary sector partnerships. The ChangeUp process has taken much more time than any of us would have imagined, though it has also been very creative and productive. The picture that has emerged is of a vibrant voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire but one which requires an effective infrastructure to help it develop.

Discussions on the Plan between the organisations represented round the table have, at times, revealed significant differences of viewpoint. Positive efforts have been made to recognise them and work them through and now there is a real opportunity to take things forward very positively. To do so will require a commitment from the VCS to continue to deepen existing patterns of collaborative working, and from the statutory sector both new money to take forward some of the specific tasks outlined in the Business Plan and, possibly as importantly, a willingness to channel some of the money already going to the VCS into infrastructure development. If there is the will to do these things then the evidence from the experience of other counties is that Oxfordshire could gain a great deal and it is my hope that everyone reading this document will respond positively.

I am immensely grateful to the members of the Steering Group and Consortium drawn from both the statutory and voluntary sectors for their unstinting hard work and their willingness to listen to each other, and to North Harbour Consulting for the professional support and analysis that they have provided. The analysis, proposals and Plan, whilst they have not been 'signed off' in a formal sense by any of the organisations named in it, do have a substantial degree of consensus lying behind them.

The Rt. Revd. Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester,
Chair, OVID Consortium and Steering Group
March 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The exact number of Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) in Oxfordshire is not known, and estimates of the number of groups and organisations vary. Estimates produced as part of the background work for this Plan suggest that there are at least 3,000 voluntary and community groups in the county, and probably nearer 4,000. Two thirds of them are small groups operating at a local level, entirely dependent on volunteers to carry out their work, and with very little recourse to public funding - or indeed funding of any kind.

A survey of VCOs undertaken for the project¹ found 10,000 voluntary management committee members and volunteers supporting the groups that responded. That is an average of 27 volunteers in each group. Bearing in mind that these results reflect the information provided by around one fifth of the county's voluntary and community organisations, the findings suggest that there may be as many as 80,000 volunteers across the County if the results were scaled up *pro rata*.

The survey also found that committee members give on average 9.9 hours per week to their group or organisation. Other volunteers give 6.4 hours per week. Between them, volunteers working with the VCOs that responded to the survey give more than 1.5 million hours of their time each year; and the value of this voluntary effort is £7.9 million per annum if costed at the national minimum wage. Scaled up to reflect the size of the sector as a whole, the value of voluntary effort across the county could be as much as £40 million.

Looked at overall, the VCS appears to be characterised by a large number of small groups that depend heavily on volunteer support, that operate at a very local level, and which receive relatively small amounts of statutory funding. This proliferation of small local groups means that the sector is fragmented, with organisations working in isolation with limited resources and without clear strategic direction. Much of the focus is on direct service delivery with only a limited understanding of the importance of effective strategic planning or infrastructure support. To some extent this is inevitable when the sector is so reliant on local volunteers who give their time and effort to deal with specific local needs and problems. However, networking opportunities have been scarce in some districts. The ChangeUp process has been an important opportunity to raise questions about what the sector does, how it is supported, and how groups can come together for mutual support and to achieve a more collective voice.

20% of the VCOs that replied to the survey said that they had not been able to find the infrastructure support services that they needed due to the non-availability of services, or the perceived lack of appropriateness of the services that do exist to their circumstances. The highest priority needs identified by the groups were:

¹ A questionnaire was sent to 2,084 groups and organisations based in Oxfordshire, with other questionnaires sent to organisations providing services within the county from elsewhere. This included some regional and national organisations. 396 VCOs based in Oxfordshire responded to the survey - a response rate of 19.1%. The response rate varied from local authority district to district, with a range of 14% in Oxford City to 26% in West Oxfordshire.

- information, advice and support for people wanting to start up a new group or organisation;
- information and advice on funding;
- help with recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers;
- help with gaining access to premises and facilities;
- information and advice on public policy, good practice and legislation.

Groups associated with the BME, Minority Faith, Refugee and Asylum Seeker, Gypsy and Traveller communities had a similar list of requirements but placed even greater priority on help with starting a new group, and access to premises and facilities.

Local authority representatives broadly agreed with the list of service priorities identified by the VCS and tended to emphasise services that promoted organisational capacity.

To back up the survey of front-line VCOs, the OVID Consortium carried out a survey of organisations providing infrastructure support services to the sector. The overall conclusions drawn from this survey are that the provision of infrastructure and capacity building services to front-line VCOs is unstructured. While some providers collaborate with each other, others are working in isolation and there is a general lack of liaison among providers. The organisations that provide infrastructure services are also responding to demands in a reactive rather than a planned way. There is a lack of resources to develop infrastructure for the VCS on a sustainable basis because a great deal of the funding is annual, and subject to a variety of pressures. Annual funding inhibits long term planning.

Having identified significant issues in the range of support services that are available and in the way these services are delivered, the OVID Steering Group considered a number of options for bringing about improvements. The possibility of developing a new CVS or similar body in those districts where no such body currently exists - South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire - was considered with expanded services in the other two districts - Cherwell and Oxford City. However, it was obvious to all concerned that such a proposal was not affordable in Oxfordshire, and ultimately not even desirable when it has been demonstrated elsewhere that small district level CVSs are not necessarily the most effective way of providing support to front line organisations.

In its place, the steering group proposes a network of information and support points at sub-district level, configured according to the natural geography of the county. The Oxfordshire LIDP sets out a strategy for creating volunteering and advice 'hubs' in market towns and larger villages where there is a need and a demand, coupling this with support services delivered via paper and electronic means plus training programmes organised at district or county level wherever these are existing infrastructure providers.

The Oxfordshire LIDP also proposes a mix of improvements in the way that support services are delivered at present, with some new or different services. The proposals are grouped into seven broad themes. They are:

- Developing support for volunteering;
- Improving information resources;
- Supporting organisational development;
- Supporting community capacity building;
- Promoting diversity and equality;
- Using the expertise and resources of the larger Faith Communities for the benefit of the wider VCS;
- Enhancing networks and partnerships, and promoting the sector to partners and the wider community.

Some of the financial and organisational costs of delivering this programme can be met from within existing resources. However, it is inevitable in an exercise of this kind that new financial resources are also needed if the plan is to be realised in its entirety. The OVID Steering Group has estimated that the global cost of the LIDP programme in the 2006/2007 financial year is around £825,400. Of this, £408,600 is existing funding or has already been approved from DEFRA, ChangeUp and other sources. This leaves around £417,000 to be raised from a number of different governmental and charitable sources. This sounds like a lot of money, until it is realised that this sum represents just 3.5p in every £1 that the County and District Councils currently invest through funding of all kinds for the voluntary and community sector.

The LIDP programme also involves further mapping work and the development of options for how some service requirements can be met. Additional proposals will be brought forward in due course that will require funding in the period 2007 to 2010.

INTRODUCTION: THE CHANGEUP BRIEF

The ChangeUp Framework

- 1.1 The ChangeUp programme was launched by the Home Office Active Communities Unit in June 2004 as a direct response to the 2002 review by the Treasury of the role of the voluntary sector in the delivery of public services. It aims to create a framework for building capacity and developing infrastructure support for front-line voluntary organisations and community groups².

“Frontline groups and organisations are formed by and harness the skills, resources and passion of paid and unpaid activists. Enabling people to become active in their communities and supporting frontline organisations is at the heart of the Government’s commitment to renewing civil society and involving voluntary and community sector organisations in service delivery, especially in meeting the needs of those who are socially excluded. Many groups and organisations, however, are prevented from achieving their potential because they cannot access the support and expertise they need to improve and expand. This Framework meets that problem head on. But creating the support system frontline organisations need takes years not months. The Framework therefore sets out a ten year vision for building the capacity of frontline organisations and putting in place the infrastructure support they need. It identifies the key actions which should be taken immediately and in the longer term to turn that vision into reality.”³

- 1.2 The intention is that by 2014, the needs of frontline voluntary organisations and community groups (VCOs) will be met by support services which are:
- 1.2.1 available nationwide;
 - 1.2.2 structured efficiently, avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort;
 - 1.2.3 offering high quality provision that is accessible to all while reflecting and promoting diversity; and
 - 1.2.4 sustainably funded.
- 1.3 Over the past year, front-line organisations, infrastructure service providers such as councils of voluntary service and rural community councils, local authorities and other stakeholders have been collaborating across England on a strategic planning exercise that will shape the structure of support services that best suit the needs of frontline organisations in their areas, and how they should be funded. These ‘Local Infrastructure Development Plans’ (LIDPs) must be completed by early 2006 so that work can start on developing good quality infrastructure provision for the voluntary and community sector (VCS).

² A glossary of terms is given in Annex 1.

³ Active Communities Unit, ChangeUp: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector (2004), The Home Office, Ministerial Foreword page 5

ChangeUp in Oxfordshire

- 1.4 In Oxfordshire voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) and local authorities have come together to form the OVID (Oxfordshire VCS Infrastructure Development) Consortium to implement the Change Up programme for the benefit of all VCOs in the county, whether they work in rural areas, market towns or in the City of Oxford. The project has been funded by Home Office Active Communities Directorate and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through the Government Office for the South East (GOSE). It has been managed by a Steering Group appointed by the Consortium. Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) was appointed by DEFRA as lead body for the 2005/2006 work programme. North Harbour Consulting Limited and Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) were appointed to carry out parts of the work programme. Membership of the Consortium and the Steering Group, and the names of the consultants who took part in the project, are listed in Annex 2. Following a decision by the Steering Group to circulate the lead role, Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) will take over as lead body on 1 April 2006. On this date management of ChangeUp and its associated funding nationally will pass from the government offices to a new national body, Capacity Builders. This Local Infrastructure Development Plan is the result of the OVID Consortium's work over the period 2005 to 2006.

The Additional Support Programme (ASP)

- 1.5 As part of the ChangeUp programme in the south east of England, an Additional Support Programme (ASP) has paid particular attention to the capacity building and infrastructure needs of Black and Minority Ethnic communities, Minority Faiths, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, and Gypsies and Travellers. Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council (OREC) is the lead body for this programme within the county, assisted by Refugee Resource who managed the ASP Media Project. Additional work with Gypsies and Travellers was undertaken by a team led by two people that had worked for the recently terminated Reaching Travellers Project. The main findings and recommendations from the ASP are reflected in this county wide LIDP, and the report of the ASP is attached to this LIDP as a working document.

Social Enterprise

- 1.6 The Oxfordshire Social Enterprise Forum (OSEF) has contributed to the social enterprise aspects of this document. OSEF has its own Action Plan to develop social enterprise in Oxfordshire and will work with organisations in the VCS that wish to start or increase trading as social enterprises.

Changes in local government

- 1.7 The LIDP for Oxfordshire has been drawn up to meet the needs of the county as it is defined in 2006. We are aware that there is a suggestion that two-tier authorities will disappear during the timescale of this plan, i.e. before 2014, but we do not wish to second-guess the results of any such reorganisation. Only if the county were to be divided into more than one unitary authority would we need to review the design of the services proposed in this plan. However, if we are successful in setting up small-scale local hubs, then any one of these could be considered for further development if required.

PART 1: MEASURING THE NEED FOR VCS INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

2. A PROFILE OF OXFORDSHIRE

2.1 Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural county with the City of Oxford and a number of market towns, London-orientated commuter settlements and large villages embedded within it. The county has a total population of around 619,800 people living in 241,000 households.

Ethnicity

2.2 The 2001 Census identified around 95% of the population of Oxfordshire as white, with the remaining 5% falling into 13 different categories of Black and Minority Ethnic groups. As a percentage of the local population,

2.2.1 13% of Oxford's population were from Black and Minority Ethnic communities;

2.2.2 5% of the population in other urban areas were from these communities; and

2.2.3 2% of the population in rural parishes were from these communities.

2.3 A more comprehensive examination of ethnicity is contained in the report of the ASP programme (attached to the LIDP).

City of Oxford

2.4 More than one in five of the county's population (around 135,000 people) live in Oxford. The City has an international reputation for education and research, tourism, business and culture. In industry and the arts, it provides jobs for almost 100,000 people and has more than 7.6 million visitors each year. Yet there are significant pockets of deprivation.

2.5 Oxford has the highest percentage of people claiming low income and unemployment benefits in the county of Oxfordshire. Of its 24 political wards, the city has one that is among the 10% most multiply-deprived wards in England and Wales.

2.6 There is a lower rate of owner occupation in Oxford than the county and national averages, and a higher rate of private renting with houses in multiple occupation. It has 7 wards among the 10% most deprived wards for housing in England and Wales.⁴ In addition, the City has ongoing problems relating to rough sleepers and transient communities whose movements in and out of poverty are harder to quantify.

2.7 There is a 15 year gap in life expectancy between the best and the worst wards in the county and Carfax ward in Oxford is ranked among the top 1% most deprived areas in England on the health indicator. It is likely that this result is strongly influenced by the number of hostels for the homeless in that area.

2.8 Levels of long term unemployment are higher than the regional average. Four wards have worklessness rates of over 10%, more than double the Oxfordshire average. There is also a worryingly high percentage of people with no qualifications at all and therefore a problem of low skills and low earning potential amongst the working population.

⁴ Oxford Community Strategy: Oxford- Setting the Scene (2004), Oxford Community Partnership, <http://www.oxfordpartnership.org.uk/oxford.asp>

- 2.9 In one ward in Oxford (and one ward in Banbury), 40% of adults have no qualifications. 18% of all households do not own a car or van - which again is around half the national average.
- 2.10 The City has other characteristics which make its citizens especially vulnerable to poverty⁵. Twice the number of young people between 16 and 24 compared to the national average are likely to live on low incomes. There are high numbers of students and pensioner households with extremely low incomes; high numbers of people from black and minority communities on low incomes - particularly the South Asian Community; newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees for whom Oxford has a particular attraction; and higher than regional average levels of children under five in lone parent households are also likely to live on low incomes. Poverty is associated with other forms of deprivation. For example, of the 13 areas in the county ranked in the top 10% most deprived nationally on the crime measure, 11 are in Oxford.

Oxfordshire's rural districts

- 2.11 The remainder of county shows considerable contrasts compared with the City of Oxford. It is the most rural county in the south east region with more than half the population living in settlements of less than 10,000 people.⁶ Four of the five local authority areas are defined as 'accessible rural areas'⁷ and work undertaken by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) for the Oxfordshire Rural Social and Community Programme⁸ shows that the county is characterised by a large number of small rural communities in addition to these larger settlements. 37% of the county's population lives in a rural parish whose population is 5,000 or less, and many rural parishes have more than one settlement, so that the average size of rural settlements is under 900. The dispersal of population in the countryside has significant implications for both residents and service providers. Indeed, rural isolation is a significant factor in social exclusion for many people.
- 2.12 Generally, the county's economy is robust and the working population is more highly qualified than in many other parts of the country. Key industries include international publishing, high tech business and biotechnology, car manufacture and motor sport. Nevertheless, 2.2% of the population is unemployed - around half the national average.
- 2.13 Successful as the local economy is, however, Oxfordshire shares many of the challenges associated with rural areas generally. There has been a long-term decline in the number of jobs in agriculture, an increase in service sector employment, and casual and seasonal work is common. Younger people have been leaving rural parts of the county because of poor employment prospects, and the lack of affordable housing.

⁵ Oxford City Council, Fight Poverty Campaign: <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/fight-poverty.cfm>

⁶ Statistics for the county in this section are taken from a number of sources - the Oxfordshire County Council website: <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicsite>, About Oxfordshire; from the Oxford City Council and Oxford Community Partnership websites: <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/index.cfm> and <http://www.oxfordpartnership.org.uk/index.asp>; and from the 2001 Census Area Statistics website: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/38-A.asp> unless otherwise referenced.

⁷ Tarling et al (1993), The Economy of Rural England, Rural Development Commission, updated by the Countryside Agency 1999

⁸ John Hardwick (2005), Oxfordshire Partnership for the Rural Social and Community Programme Business Plan 2006 - 2008, unpublished draft, page 3

- 2.14 Yet the rural population has been growing, and this growth is forecast to continue because of inward migration by people moving out of towns for quality of life reasons. As a result, there have been profound changes in the social structure of communities and the economic structure of local housing markets. House prices are increasing, there has been an increase in housing need and a higher level of demand for affordable housing. More than 70% of all households in the county are owner occupiers - slightly above the national average. The ratio between average earned incomes and average house prices⁹ is similar to the regional average for the south east region in the Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts (1 : 4.6). However, the ratio is higher than the regional average in West Oxfordshire (1 : 5) and in the City of Oxford (1 : 5.4) where house prices are relative expensive compared with average incomes. In Oxford, this is one of the factors leading to a lower than average proportion of households living in the owner occupied sector.
- 2.15 A recent study by ORCC¹⁰ confirmed that there are a number of barriers that cause isolation and exclusion in the countryside. These include:
- poverty - barriers include debt, the cost of housing, and low incomes among pensioners;
 - insufficient employment - under-employment, seasonal work and vulnerable working environments are the main problems rather than unemployment;
 - affordable housing - young people in particular have few housing options, and Housing Benefit for those aged under 25 is only available for a single room letting;
 - transport and distance from services for people who do not own or have access to personal transport;
 - racism - 50% of Vale Housing Association's Black and Minority Ethnic Tenants said that they had experienced some form of racial harassment, and there is evidence of significant discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers;¹¹
 - stigma, discrimination and social isolation among people that are perceived as different - for example, ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, or people with mental health or sexuality issues; and among people living in isolated properties away from rural settlements - for example, farmers' wives, retired or disabled people.

⁹ Prof. S Wilcox, Centre for Housing Policy, University of York (2004), [Affordability differences by area for working households buying their homes - 2003 update](#), Joseph Rowntree Foundation

¹⁰ David Fisher (2004), [Breaking down the barriers: Social exclusion in Oxfordshire](#), Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, pages 14 and 15

¹¹ See also [Oxfordshire Infrastructure Development Plan: Report of the Additional Support Programme](#), Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council and Refugee Resource

4. THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR IN OXFORDSHIRE

- 4.1 An important characteristic of many communities is the degree to which they rely on volunteers to provide and manage key facilities (e.g. community centres and village halls) and deliver important services (e.g. children's play, informal care networks, or transport for local residents). The voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire is extremely diverse, with large numbers of small groups carrying out a wide range of different activities at a very local level. In contrast, there are relatively few medium to large organisations that operate at district and county level. Their work is supplemented by regional and national bodies.
- 4.2 The exact number of VCOs in the county is not known, and estimates of the number of groups and organisations vary. The directory maintained by OCVA contains more than 1,000 voluntary and community organisations. The listing on the County Council's website¹² contains almost 3,000 contacts. Research carried out for OCVA during the 'Early Spend' phase of ChangeUp identified 117 groups in Didcot and 153 in Bicester - i.e. approximately one VCS group per 200 residents¹³. Extrapolated across the county this would confirm the figure of around 3,000 groups. However, it is unlikely that any of the existing listings are comprehensive. Comparisons other comparable rural counties suggest that there could be as many as 4,000 voluntary and community groups, societies and organisations in existence in Oxfordshire.

The mapping survey of VCOs in Oxfordshire

- 4.3 The lack of information about the VCS in Oxfordshire was a significant handicap for the ChangeUp planning process in the county. To overcome this, a survey of front-line VCOs was carried out¹⁴. The survey was in two parts - a mapping survey to investigate the characteristics of the VCS, and a survey of the use being made of infrastructure support services at present to identify the quality of these services and any gaps in provision.¹⁵ This was the first survey of its kind carried out on a county wide basis in Oxfordshire. Detailed results are written up in a series of working papers. These are listed in Annex 3.

¹² <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicsite/doitonline/finditonline/clubssocieties>

¹³ *Filling the gaps*, OCVA 2004

¹⁴ 2,084 survey questionnaires were sent to organisations based in Oxfordshire. 396 were completed and returned from Oxfordshire organisations - a response rate of 19%.

¹⁵ A questionnaire was sent to 2,084 groups and organisations based in Oxfordshire, with other questionnaires sent to organisations providing services within the county from elsewhere. This included some regional and national organisations.¹⁵ 396 VCOs based in Oxfordshire responded to the survey - a response rate of 19.1%. The response rate varied from local authority district to district, with a range of 14% in Oxford to 26% in West Oxfordshire.

- 4.4 Types of organisation: The different types of group that responded to the survey may reflect three different stages in the evolution of VCOs in the county:
- 4.4.1 small informal groups without a constitution and that operate without external funding accounted for 16% of respondents (particularly highlighted in the ASP work);
 - 4.4.2 more formally constituted groups that have a written constitution accounted for 29% of respondents;
 - 4.4.3 registered charities accounted for 43% of respondents.
- 4.5 The third category indicates a level of organisation, formality and structure that non-registered groups may not yet have achieved. Registration as a charity requires an income of more than £1,000 a year, a Memorandum and Articles of Association or Trust Deed, a trustee committee, an identified correspondence address and an annual return to the Charity Commission that must be made every year by law.
- 4.6 Area of activity: Almost two thirds of the VCOs that responded to the survey (61%) said that they worked in a very localised area.
- 4.7 Period of time in existence: A large majority of the VCOs that responded to the survey (84%) were established at least ten years ago. Only 2% of organisations said that they were formed in the two years prior to the survey. This suggests either that the rate of innovation in the VCS is low compared with other comparable areas, or that innovation occurs within existing organisations rather than through new organisations being started. The survey of infrastructure support needs suggests a possible third contributory reason - VCOs said that there is not enough support for people wishing to start a new group, and for newly formed groups. This was borne out by the face-to-face interviews conducted with BME and faith groups. Absence of services for new start-ups might have a dampening affect on new start-ups.
- 4.8 OCVA has awarded start-up grants through the Community Champions programme to some 15 individuals per year since 2003 and it is possible that these embryonic groups have not responded to the survey because they lack time, confidence and language skills. Nevertheless, none of the infrastructure bodies currently has the resources to provide one-to-one support for newly forming groups on a county-wide basis. Nor do they have the resources to review emerging social and economic needs and trends, and to respond to them by promoting new community initiatives and responses that might include the formation of new groups.
- 4.9 Activities: The groups and organisations that responded to the survey were involved in a very wide range of activities. The most common were the provision of advice and information, education and training, sport and recreation, provision of emotional support (befriending, counselling, bereavement support, pastoral care, and rehabilitation), play and youth work, social care and welfare, activities relating to arts media and culture, and running a village hall or community centre.
- 4.10 Beneficiaries: The benefits of the sector's work were widely spread through the community - older people, children and young people were the participants or beneficiaries most commonly mentioned. A substantial number of VCOs said that they have an 'open door' policy providing their services to all members of the community.
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- 4.11 Social exclusion: However, relatively few organisations that responded to the survey (less than 1% in each case) were working with what could be described as unpopular or stigmatised groups such as homeless people, people with issues associated with drug, alcohol or substance abuse, offenders, ex-offenders and those at risk of offending, or people with issues associated with their sexuality. Similarly, few organisations were working with people from the Additional Support Programme groups - people from Black and Ethnic Minorities, refugees and asylum seekers, people from minority faiths, or Gypsies and Travellers; nor were they working with victims of crime, violence or abuse, or with service and ex-service people who are known to be vulnerable to poverty, homelessness and exclusion on discharge from the armed services or those asylum seekers and refugees who have not succeeded in their application for leave to remain in the country.
- 4.12 This may reflect a degree of conservatism in the way that VCOs and their volunteers set their priorities. Interviews with ASP groups revealed that this was a particular problem for them as there seemed to be a relationship of mistrust between statutory agencies and BME organisations which affected their access to funding and partnership opportunities. However, a rough estimate of groups listed on the OCVA database shows around 13% working with the groups identified in 4.11. About a third of the groups listed on the OCVA database provide services to people with disabilities or mental health issues - groups that overlap with the socially excluded groups identified above. Nevertheless, these might be areas of work where new service developments should be considered.
- 4.13 How many people or organisations are served: Each organisation was asked how many people or organisations used its services or took part in its activities. VCOs providing services or activities for individual members of the public divided into two groups - those involved with between 25 and 150 people each year; and those involved with between 300 and 500 each year. This appeared to reflect the division between groups operating at a local level, and groups operating at district or county level. A rough calculation from these results shows that the organisations that responded are running activities or providing services for around 300,000 people each year.
- 4.14 Volunteering: The survey found 10,000 voluntary management committee members and volunteers supporting the VCOs that responded. That is an average of 27 volunteers in each group. Bearing in mind that these results reflect the information provided by 19% of the voluntary and community organisations as identified on various contact management systems, and that these lists are incomplete, the findings suggest that there may be as many as 80,000 volunteers across the County if the results were scaled up to reflect the probable size of the Oxfordshire VCS as a whole.
- 4.15 The survey also found that committee members give on average 9.9 hours per week to their group or organisation. Other volunteers give 6.4 hours per week. Between them, volunteers working with the VCOs that responded to the survey give more than 1.5 million hours of their time each year; and the value of this voluntary effort is £7.9 million per annum¹⁶. Scaled up, the value of voluntary effort across the county could be as much as £40 million.

¹⁶ Costed at the 2005 national minimum wage level of £5.05 per hour.

- 4.16 These estimates are supported by recent of research into the VCS across the south east (*Hidden Asset*, RAISE) which found that the VCS employs about 6% of the region's workforce, contributes 3.4% of GDP, and supplies volunteering labour worth £932 million. 726,000 people across the region are believed to volunteer (one in 11 of all residents).
- 4.17 The cost/benefit ratio between its public funding and the value of its volunteer input in therefore very great indeed. Although volunteers donate their time, they are not a free resource since they will need, for example, to be insured and to receive expenses if they are undertaking activities such as driving people to and from hospital appointments. As VCOs begin to grow and evolve, the number of volunteers they need also grows and groups need to think about employing a coordinator or paid staff to underpin voluntary work. This is the point at which the need for financial support becomes critical. The ASP target group findings suggest that volunteers tend to remain with their small organisations if there are possibilities for them and their groups to derive some benefit from the involvement. Only a tiny minority (two to three) ASP groups have paid staff.
- 4.18 The appointment of paid staff does not necessarily mean that the need for volunteers disappears, however. Research undertaken elsewhere suggests that as the number of paid employees increases, the number of volunteers also increases but at a slower rate than before staff were employed.¹⁷
- 4.19 The need to employ paid staff requires new skills on the part of management committees. As the following sections show, there is almost no affordable advice on recruiting and managing employees, or on a range of human resources issues, available in Oxfordshire. This affects the ASP groups adversely, as well as the rest of the sector.
- 4.20 Premises: 10% of VCOs had no premises at all, while 50% said they used either a member's home or premises that they hire as and when they need them. Small BME and faith groups tended to function in this way as information about available premises was not disseminated through appropriate channels.
- 4.21 Income: Half of all VCOs covered by the survey said that their total annual income is £5,000 or less, while a further 25% said that their annual income is between £5,000 and £25,000. At the other end of the scale, 10 organisations (3%) said that they have an income of £500,000 or more. In part 2, these findings are used to calculate a possible annual demand for infrastructure support services.
- 4.22 Voluntary organisations and community groups in Oxfordshire depend on many different sources of funding to sustain their work. Only 30% of them said that they receive funding from the county council or one of the district councils, and only 14% say that half or more of their total income is from one of the Oxfordshire local authorities. 11% say that they obtain funding from regional, national or EC governmental sources, while only 3% say that they receive funding from the NHS. The Learning and Skills Council has in the past funded more than 100 VCOs but the ending of ESF co-financing may reduce their capacity to fund in future.

¹⁷ North Harbour Consulting Limited (2003), Economic and Social Audit of the Community and Voluntary Sector in Brighton and Hove, Brighton and Hove Dialogue 50:50 Group

- 4.23 A separate unpublished study undertaken for the OVID Consortium shows that at least £12 million per annum is being paid to VCOs in Oxfordshire by local authorities in the form of grants, service level agreements or contract payments. However, there is no information on the total number of organisations that are in receipt of local authority funding across the county.
- 4.24 The overall picture given by the survey results suggests that although a substantial sum is invested each year in support for the VCS by local authorities, a large proportion of this funding is in relatively small grants to small VCS organisations operating at a very local level, while at the other end of the scale a few larger organisations receive substantial amounts of local authority funding. This suggests that those with a track record of getting funding continue to do so whilst emerging groups, especially within the ASP sector, failed to attract any funding or did not know where to apply.
- 4.25 Of the district councils, only Oxford City Council regularly supports VCOs with three year service level agreements although other local authorities are moving in this direction. Most current funding arrangements last for one financial year. This pattern of funding makes service development very difficult, and has led to a culture in which forward planning is under-developed or non-existent.
- 4.26 After local authority funding is accounted for, the main sources of funding were, in descending order, investment income and rent, donations, legacies, membership and activity fees, and income from trading. Further research into the trading aspect of VCOs is needed. Information on this will emerge from the work to be undertaken by OSEF as part of its Action Plan commitment to mapping the social enterprise sector in Oxfordshire. Income from one of the National Lottery schemes and other charities (15%), or from corporate sponsorship (8%) made up the remainder.
- 4.27 Networking and representation: The picture that emerges from this survey is that while there is a large number of very local voluntary and community organisations they frequently work in isolation from other groups doing similar work elsewhere in the county. A significant section of the ASP target group have very little knowledge of ways of accessing services or making their needs known. Networking and skill sharing opportunities between them are limited. In Cherwell, the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum has been quite successful in bringing groups and organisations together. The Forum works alongside the district council in an affective and productive way. However, opportunities of this kind are not common across the county, although the beginnings of a similar forum are emerging in South Oxfordshire.
- 4.28 As part of the ChangeUp programme, OCVA convened VCS networking events in Oxford, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire and at county level which showed clear evidence of demand for opportunities to network, share experience and develop a voice for the sector. A summary of discussions at the forum meetings is given in the next section. In addition OSEF, like other specialist networks operating in the county, offers some networking and skill-sharing opportunities for social enterprises and these are set to increase now that it is about to receive funding from SEEDA in support of its activities.

- 4.29 Without a combination of opportunities to network, and reliable infrastructure support from experience providers, the VCS at local level appears quite fragmented. However, use of the term 'fragmented' requires some explanation. Small, local groups run by volunteers are not always aware of who else is doing similar work in their district or across the county. Nor do they always know who to go to in order to access the support they need. Conversely, the infrastructure providers cannot identify all of these groups and are not in a position to map the demand for their services. The mapping work carried out for the ChangeUp work programme has begun to identify some of the groups across the county and some of the gaps in service delivery. But more needs to be done to identify who is doing what, where. Without this information, the potential of networking and better infrastructure services will not be realised.
- 4.30 There is an additional related issue here. It seems likely that were the full demand for infrastructure support services to be known, the existing providers would not be able to meet the demand given current resources. More complete mapping is therefore essential if both funders and providers are to be able to plan ahead.

5. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR SUPPORT NEEDS

The survey of VCS support needs

- 5.1 The survey of front-line VCOs undertaken as part of the OVID work programme obtained information about the support services that these groups and organisations say they need, whether these services are currently available, whether they meet the need, and if not what the priorities would be for new services.
- 5.2 Main support services used: Almost two thirds of the groups and organisations that responded to the OVID survey said that they had used at least one of the infrastructure support services listed in Annex 3. The most commonly used services, which correspond closely with the services most used in the OCVA survey of members conducted in 2005, were:
- 5.2.1 information and advice on funding;
 - 5.2.2 help with recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers;
 - 5.2.3 help with access to premises and facilities;
 - 5.2.4 information and advice on public policy, good practice and legislation;
 - 5.2.5 development of skills and knowledge through learning.
- 5.3 The ASP target groups placed most emphasis on the services identified in 5.2.1 and 5.2.3. However, responses from the ASP groups that took part in this survey and from additional interviews undertaken with them, reveal that infrastructure organisations may be failing to provide a service to BME organisations who find it easier to approach front-line agencies for support.

- 5.4 Although the survey treated the development of skills and knowledge through learning as a service in its own right, the steering group has come to the conclusion that it is better viewed as a mechanism for providing support that cuts across most of the other areas. A review of training needs conducted by OCVA and Oxford Brookes University¹⁸ found that the topics VCOs wanted to see covered were very similar to the support requested by respondents to the OVID survey.
- 5.5 Support providers: The list of organisations providing these services was extensive, and included the main VCS infrastructure organisations within Oxfordshire, local authorities, regional and national charities and government agencies. Yet there was little evidence of collaboration or joint working between these agencies from a user perspective. This was commented on by users who said it was not always clear who was providing which services. More mapping needs to be done of who else is providing specialist infrastructure services alongside direct service provision to the general public, and in the field of community capacity building which would involve also the work of local authorities and others.
- 5.6 The lack of clarity over which organisations are providing which support services is mirrored in the feedback from ASP community groups because the bulk of information that is disseminated to VCOs does not get translated into community languages. In spite of efforts to produce translated material, there appears to be no strategy to disseminate the material to BME and other groups in need of help for whom English is not their mother tongue. The image projected by infrastructure agencies does not 'invite' BME and other groups to make the initial contact with a view to accessing funding or obtaining other types of information.
- 5.7 Comments made during the VCS forum meetings (see 5.25 onwards) also indicate that there is a pressing need to improve the availability of information about what support services exist and which organisations are providing them to all VCOs in the county. A mixed economy of infrastructure providers is not necessarily a disadvantage, so long as service users and potential service users are clear about who they should go to for the particular form of help they need.
- 5.8 While the research described in this section does not make specific reference to VCOs seeking advice on trading or on developing social enterprises, the references to, for example, the need for help with 'business planning' and 'employment and human resources', as well as the importance attached to advice on 'funding' suggests that there is potential for this
- 5.9 Gaps in provision: 20% of the VCOs that replied to the survey said that they had either not been able to find the services that they needed or services that met their needs. Thus it is a combination of availability and appropriateness that limits the effectiveness of current service delivery.

¹⁸ OCVA and Oxford Brookes University, (2004), [Mapping Learning](#)

- 5.10 The highest priority needs identified by the groups responding to the OVID survey were:
- 5.10.1 information, advice and support for people wanting to start up a new group or organisation;
 - 5.10.2 information and advice on funding;
 - 5.10.3 help with recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers;
 - 5.10.4 help with access to premises and facilities;
 - 5.10.5 information and advice on public policy, good practice and legislation.
- 5.11 Research among rural community groups under the Early Spend programme revealed a priority need for community capacity building support to facilitate local community action planning and self-help initiatives and for work to address social exclusion. (*OVID Main Spend Proposal 2004*). The main issues identified by the ASP groups related to funding and access to premises.
- 5.12 Other infrastructure services that users said were needed or should be improved were information, advice and support on:
- 5.12.1 organisational development, including good governance, management and business planning;
 - 5.12.2 employment and human resources;
 - 5.12.3 information and communication technology;
 - 5.12.4 partnership building and brokerage.
- 5.13 The OVID survey found that the support services that have been used most were also among the services that respondents said were not available when they needed them, and which were their top priorities for improvement. There are two possible explanations for this. Either there is an excess of demand for certain support services over supply; or these services are not uniformly available across the county. With reference to the ASP target groups, the services may also not be culturally sensitive or accessible at the time of need.
- 5.14 There is other independent evidence to support the OVID survey findings that so far as mainstream VCOs are concerned services might not always be available. The OCVA membership survey carried out in 2005 offered a range of scores from 1 to 6 against which members could evaluate its services, with 6 being high. The responses indicated that most members rated the usefulness of OCVA services 5 or 6, with no score below 4. In addition, most members rated the services excellent or good value for money. The only questions which had any scores below 4 were about whether the services were available at a time and a place that suited the respondent.
- 5.15 Mutual support: The existence of gaps in the supply of services tended to be confirmed by the finding that around one third of all the VCOs that responded provide some support to other VCOs. This support is being provided by organisations that mainly use other peoples' infrastructures services for their own use, and tended to be focussed on small groups or groups starting up. Whilst there is a need to know more about the level and type of support being provided here, there may be some scope for encouraging established VCOs to work in collaboration with the main infrastructure providers as advisors or mentors to new and small groups in their areas.
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The Faith Communities

- 5.16 One gap we are very conscious of in drafting this IDP is the lack of specific information we have been able to get on many of the faith communities in the county, and the larger churches in particular. Some of the smaller denominations, together with some of the recently established minority faith communities, are reasonably well-represented in the ASP work but even then there are some significant omissions.
- 5.17 Within Oxfordshire the faith communities involve many thousands of people. The 2001 census has 78% of the population responding to the religious affiliation question with over 80% saying they are Christian and 20% from other faith or belief system groups (Atheist, Humanist, Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, B'hai, Jewish). These minority faith groups live mainly in the urban areas of Oxford, Banbury, Didcot and Abingdon whilst in the rural areas there are very few from non-Christian faith communities.
- 5.18 In the rural areas the Christian churches provide a variety of social and voluntary facilities. These are carried out in many cases on an informal basis, fulfilling needs as they arise so adding to the community cohesion in the villages and market towns. In urban areas the community activities tend to be more organised (c.f. The Church Communities Community Action Directory produced under the aegis of St Aldgate's Parochial Charity) but not particularly co-ordinated.
- 5.19 The Church and other faith communities provide activities both for their own members and for the wider community. These include provision of support and counselling services for the more deprived or disabled members of society; such as people with physical or mental disorder or lacking shelter or employment. Studies elsewhere in this country point to an average of two or three such activities per church so the total of these for the Churches in the County as a whole must be well in excess of 1,000.
- 5.20 The Church of England in Oxfordshire with its 264 churches handles a budget from voluntary giving of around £10 million each year. The Orthodox Churches with only two places of worship have annual voluntary giving in excess of £50,000 each year, and the other traditions have proportional budgets of which a proportion is being contributed to social and community causes. Add to that the dozens of Church Schools, or the many hundreds of volunteers they have put through CRB checks and we recognise that there is a resource here that could be integrated very profitably on both sides into the life of the VCS sector as a whole. However this is not happening at present and some positive action needs to be taken on all sides to enable it to do so. There is also the consideration that many of these communities are significant in world terms whilst being minorities only when taken in the local context.
- 5.21 One of the problems with the larger denominations is that they have been used to working fairly independently and have not seen themselves as part of the VCS. Nor have they been reliant on external funding. For instance the 300 or so Church of England churches in Oxfordshire are now raising around £5m a year through voluntary giving simply to pay their clergy, and the total raised through voluntary contributions to run their churches and care for their buildings is more than twice that amount.

The OVID district and county fora

- 5.22 As part of the OVID work programme, OCVA set up five networking opportunities for voluntary and community organisations following the successful model already established in Cherwell by Banbury CVS. These were run in each of the districts, with a sixth forum at county level for organisations with a county-wide remit. In addition to being opportunities to bring VCOs together with their local authority partners, the forums provided an opportunity to undertake qualitative work on the sector's support needs through workshop discussions.
- 5.23 Funding: Workshop participants said information about available funding is not communicated well by donor agencies - in particular, BME and other 'hard-to-reach' groups do not know where to look. There was a feeling that funders are inflexible, application forms are long and complicated, and reporting processes waste valuable resources (particularly when multiple donors have different reporting requirements). Very small groups said that they struggle to gain recognition from funders. ASP groups have mentioned the lack of support and guidance in filling in cumbersome forms for very small grants. Lack of paid staff within these groups leads to failure to meet deadlines for the submission of applications.
- 5.24 Other points made were that:
- 5.24.1 grants are only available for pilot projects, special projects or start-up work while core operational costs and continuation funding for long-term service development are sidelined - especially within the ASP communities;
 - 5.24.2 money should be channelled towards essential services and less towards feasibility studies and 'government bureaucracy' - possibly an oblique reference to projects like ChangeUp;
 - 5.24.3 short-term, time-limited funding limits long-term planning and stability;
 - 5.24.4 the amount of money offered is never enough to match needs, while non-statutory funding is difficult to attract.
- 5.25 Volunteering: Forum participants said that there are insufficient volunteers to cope with the demand, and that ways of attracting and recruiting more volunteers are needed. Retired people who would have previously volunteered now work longer, while the younger generation is driven by excitement and immediate results in the form of international volunteering or high-level campaigns (e.g. Comic Relief). In response to this problem there was a feeling that VCS organisations and volunteer bureaux do not sufficiently promote themselves to the public or to their funders, so that the benefits of volunteering or the opportunities that are available are not widely known.
- 5.26 In particular, rural areas and small towns across Oxfordshire lack volunteer information centres to promote volunteering, attract volunteers, and match them with groups whose work they could contribute to. Those that exist are sometimes perceived not to 'welcome' members from minority groups.

- 5.27 There was a strongly held view that using volunteers is not necessarily the cheap option that funders believe it to be. Volunteers need to be supervised and managed. They will stay with an organisation when there are the resources to invest in their development and they feel that it is worth their while. Where organisations are not resourced to provide an adequate framework for recruiting and developing volunteers, there is increased pressure upon volunteers to fulfil managerial roles - this leads to unrealistic expectations in terms of finding those that can take on leadership and positions of responsibility;
- 5.28 Risk: Risk assessment has to be taken seriously where volunteers are working with vulnerable people or where the activity itself carries some risk. Criminal Records Bureau checks are complicated, time-consuming and put people off. They are sometimes offensive to long-term volunteers who feel that their integrity is being called into question. Insurance costs money and litigation is also a threat. VCS infrastructure services currently available do not include advice and support in any of these areas except for specific work with transport groups.
- 5.29 Partnership working: Participants said that more opportunities to network are necessary to develop the sector. Smaller organisations need partnership working more than larger ones, and competition between larger organisations is a block to effective collaboration. These comments were further evidence of a fragmented voluntary sector that lacks a common vision of its role. There are also missed opportunities for mutual support and information or resource sharing. In addition, BME and refugee organisations feel that there is insufficient respect and recognition for the work that they undertake in partnership with mainstream bodies.
- 5.30 Local authority partners: Workshop participants did not believe that their statutory partners had a strategic vision of the role of the VCS. It was said that statutory bodies do not effectively co-ordinate resources with VCS organisations yet, when there is a short-fall in service provision within the statutory sector, the VCS is called on to fill the gap. This sometimes looked more like crisis management than strategic planning.
- 5.31 New Groups: Participants said that information and advice for start-ups are not available in one place. This is compounded by confusion over the different roles of infrastructure service providers, gaps in their services for new groups, and a tendency for the scene to change quickly. Amongst the ASP target groups, problems arise through changing legislation and ignorance about the rules laid down by bodies such as the Charity Commission.
- 5.32 Premises and facilities: Groups said that the challenge for VCOs is to secure low cost, permanent premises in an appropriate location with adequate facilities and enough space to allow for flexibility and growth. Rural communities increasingly rely on community transport facilities, putting more pressure on the VC sector to buy a minibus and find volunteer drivers.
- 5.33 Summary: The picture that emerges from the survey and from the forum discussion groups is one of relatively uncoordinated infrastructure support from a number of providers, gaps in provision, and services possibly of varying standards - although service users were noticeably unwilling to express criticism of current provision. This mosaic of provision as experienced by VCOs in Oxfordshire reflects the fragmentation and lack of strategic development of the sector as a whole.
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- 5.34 Looking at how provision should be delivered, a significant number of VCOs stressed in consultation that help and support should be locality based - and by this they were not even always prepared to consider district level as 'local'. What was also clear was that there was less concern about who should deliver the support - for example, many VCOs that responded to the user survey said that they valued the assistance they received from their local authority. Nor were people concerned about what the 'behind the scenes' mechanism for support delivery was. So for instance, so long as local delivery points were available, organisations were not concerned about how that was managed at the trustee / organisational management level. Local delivery points could be run by local VCOs, by local branches of district or county-wide bodies, or by partnerships with their local authority.

6. THE INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT PROVIDERS

- 6.1 To back up the survey of front-line VCOs, the OVID Consortium also carried out a survey of organisations providing infrastructure support services to the sector¹⁹. These organisations fell broadly into four groups:
- 6.1.1 voluntary organisations providing 'generic' support services to VCOs of all kinds within the county - OCVA is the leading provider alongside Banbury VCS. ORCC can be viewed as a generic infrastructure provider but is also appropriately regarded as a specialist provider, since it works specifically with rural communities and a range of different rural community groups;
 - 6.1.2 voluntary organisations providing 'specialist' support services to particular types of VCO, or to VCOs working in a particular field of activity - ORCC, OREC and Oxfordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services are prime examples;
 - 6.1.3 voluntary organisations providing frontline services to the general public but who also provide support services to smaller 'partner' groups, such as Age Concern Oxfordshire; and
 - 6.1.4 local authorities and other statutory bodies that provide support associated either with funding or with service commissioning and delivery - all of the district councils and the county council fall into this category.
- 6.2 The overall conclusions drawn from the provider survey are that the provision of infrastructure and capacity building services to front-line VCOs is unstructured. While some providers collaborate with each other, others are working in isolation and there is a general lack of liaison among providers. The organisations that provide infrastructure services tend to respond to demands in a reactive rather than a planned way. There is a lack of resources to develop infrastructure for the VCS on a sustainable basis because a great deal of the funding is annual, and subject to a variety of pressures.
- 6.1 An important point arising from the work undertaken with ASP communities is that they feel their groups are consulted in a tokenistic way at the stage of grant applications. No information then filters through about the application outcome. The next time ASP groups have contact with infrastructure agencies is when a new project is under way which requires 'consultation' with their groups.

¹⁹ Questionnaires were sent to 90 organisations based within and outside Oxfordshire that were known to provide some kind of support to VCOs. 21 organisations replied including most of the significant Oxfordshire providers, an overall response rate of 23%.

- 6.2 Some of the services that have been identified as missing or as priorities for further development in the Users' Survey and by participants in the various workshops around the County have very few providers. This is particularly true for:
- 6.2.4 advice and support for new groups starting up - which helps to explain why larger VCOs are being called on to provide assistance to start-ups;
 - 6.2.5 information and advice on funding;
 - 6.2.6 volunteer brokerage;
 - 6.2.7 access to premises and facilities;
 - 6.2.8 organisational development;
 - 6.2.9 employment and human resources;
 - 6.2.10 information and communication technology.
- 6.3 In the past, the generic and specialist infrastructure providers have tended to work in parallel domains. Collaboration between them and with the generic infrastructure providers has varied. This is one of the contributory factors behind the lack of co-ordination between different infrastructure providers.
- 6.4 Duplication has also been mentioned in responses. A sub-group of OVID was asked to look into this issue in relation to the services of OCVA, ORCC, Banbury CVS and West Oxfordshire Volunteer LinkUp, as the main generic infrastructure providers. It was clear immediately that their services were different but complementary. There were no examples of direct duplication or overlap. Indeed, significant gaps were identified in the range and depth of infrastructure services currently provided to the VCS by the four organisations, and there are significant financial threats to the continuation of a number of them. The OVID steering group concluded that the distinctiveness of their different missions, roles and identities as organisations had value. It helped successful engagement by the different service users and by other stakeholders, and it provided a clearly-defined focus for Trustees and staff. Nevertheless, they recognised that services to VCS organisations in the county would benefit by a shared commitment to:
- 6.4.4 more collaborative working and sharing of resources;
 - 6.4.5 on-going dialogue and mutual support at Trustee and at staff level;
 - 6.4.6 looking collectively, in the light of the OVID IDP Programme, at priorities for infrastructure service development in the light of local needs and at development opportunities, in order to produce an agreed joint action plan;
 - 6.4.7 speaking with a collective voice to funders and other key stakeholders and asking for a collective voice in return.
- 6.5 A statement to this effect has been agreed by the Trustees of the four organisations.
- 6.6 More generally, there are three difficulties that prevent a more coherent package of infrastructure support services being delivered in Oxfordshire.

- 6.7 Firstly, large parts of the county do not have a generic voluntary sector infrastructure provider at a district or local level. Only Cherwell District, which has the benefit of services provided by Banbury CVS in parts of the district, and Oxford City which has OCVA, East Oxford Action and a number of other agencies, are exempt from this observation. Parts of West Oxfordshire are served by Volunteer Linkup - a volunteer centre that provides some other services but not across the entire district. It seems possible that the large number of other types of organisation from whom the smaller groups in each district seek advice is a symptom of this absence of local provision.
- 6.8 Secondly, the county-wide infrastructure bodies are not resourced to provide between them a comprehensive range of services. For example, ORCC focuses exclusively on rural communities. It provides capacity building and service development support, plus some of the core infrastructure services for networks of VCS groups that focus on the provision of particular services or issues - village halls, playing fields, transport, or village shops. OCVA, on the other hand, does provide many of the generic infrastructure services, but is not resourced to do so comprehensively, consistently across the county, or on a long-term basis.
- 6.9 The third issue of whether the provision of infrastructure support services was or should be a priority for statutory funding is considered in the next section.

7. CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND OTHER PARTNERS ON THE NEED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

- 7.1 The OVID Consortium set out from beginning of the project to actively involve local authorities and other statutory partners in its work. Each local authority and the main health bodies were invited to take part in the Consortium (although the health sector has not in fact done so). The OVID Steering Group has had regular attendance from a county council representative, a representative from Oxford City Council, and a representative from South Oxfordshire DC attending on behalf of all the rural district. Local authority representatives have played a significant part in OVID's work.
- 7.2 Voluntary sector members of the Consortium are also members of a number of district level and county bodies led by local authorities. These include bodies such as the Oxfordshire Compact Group, the Oxfordshire Community Partnership and in some cases the district strategic partnerships, Children & Young People's Plan implementation, the Oxfordshire Partnership for the Rural Social and Community Programme, and the Oxfordshire Rural Forum. There has also been a series of informal meetings with members of specialist officer-led bodies. Those attending these meetings and forums have taken the opportunity to promote ChangeUp. More recently, the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement has touched on aspects of the OVID Consortium's work.

- 7.3 Prior to drafting the LIDP, the culmination of the consultation process with local authorities and other statutory partners was a presentation and independently facilitated workshop with local authority officers and representatives of the NHS Primary Care Trusts and Thames Valley Police Authority to discuss the findings of the research and to explore options for the future. In the course of this workshop, representatives of the statutory bodies broadly agreed with the list of gaps in current infrastructure service provision that had been identified through the service user and service provider surveys. However, these needs were prioritised in a slightly different sequence from the sequence preferred by VCOs. The statutory partners tended to place greater emphasis on services that would promote and enhance the organisational development and performance aspects of capacity building.
- 7.4 The Steering Group considered whether a new CVS or similar body should be created in those districts where no such body currently exists - South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire - with expanded services in the other two districts - Cherwell and Oxford City. NACVS helpfully provides a model core budget for running a district-based CVS such as exist in many other counties of the south-east. If such a network of CVSs were to be set up then, according to this model, it would require £153,830 per district plus an extra £47,740 to add a volunteer centre function to each CVS, making a grand total of over £1 million (not far off the total being spent in Hampshire and Northamptonshire).
- 7.5 It was obvious to all concerned that such a proposal was not affordable in Oxfordshire, and ultimately not even desirable when it has been demonstrated elsewhere that small district level CVSs are not necessarily the most effective way of providing support. It was accepted however, that a network of mainly volunteer advisors might be needed at local level who could offer basic information and advice, and who could signpost groups to the places where the services they needed were available.
- 7.6 In place of a network of district CVSs as is common in other counties, the OVID Consortium proposes to base this LIDP on a network of support points at sub-district level, configured according to the natural geography of the county. This would be backed up by high-quality provision at the county and regional level made available to people over the telephone, via the internet, via briefings and newsletters, and through training courses and distance learning packages. This strategy is described in more detail in Part 2, Section 12.
- 7.7 A considered joint response to the Oxfordshire LIDP by the local authorities is attached to the report at Annex 4.

7.8 PART 2: THE OXFORDSHIRE VCS LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2006 - 2014

A VISION FOR VCS INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT IN OXFORDSHIRE

The aim of the Oxfordshire VCS Infrastructure Development Plan is to provide good quality and cost-effective support services for voluntary and community organisations that assist them to achieve their aims, and achieve maximum benefits for all of Oxfordshire's diverse communities while fostering the principles of diversity, accessibility and inclusion.

8. PRINCIPLES ON WHICH INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT SERVICES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED

- 8.1 Consultation within the Consortium and with VCOs that attended the district and county forum meetings has produced a set of principles that it is believed should govern the planning and development of infrastructure support services for Oxfordshire in the future.
- 8.2 There should be:
- 9.2.1 a comprehensive range of support services;
 - 9.2.2 based on flexible and creative solutions reflecting the needs of different kinds of community, different voluntary and community organisations, and differing local circumstances;
 - 9.2.3 available to all and offering equality of access;
 - 9.2.4 outcome focussed; and
 - 9.2.5 aiming to cover both urban and rural parts of the county to replace the 'post-code lottery' that exists at present.
- 9.3 Provision should be based on:
- 9.3.1 a 'mixed economy' of services provided locally, at district and county level, regionally and nationally, by providers from the VCS or its statutory and business partners;
 - 9.3.2 drawing wherever possible on existing services within the county, in adjacent counties, or at regional and national level;
 - 9.3.3 avoiding unnecessary duplication, and achieving value for money;
 - 9.3.4 working in partnership with each other and with statutory and private sector partners;
 - 9.3.5 within a framework that is sustainable and accountable.
- 9.4 These principles were developed by the steering group drawing on recommended policy and good practice for the voluntary and community sector promoted by the Home Office Active Communities Unit, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS) and others.

10. STRATEGIC INFLUENCES ON SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

- 10.2 Key factors in determining the strategy for delivering support services in Oxfordshire are:
- 10.2.1 the preponderance of small groups operating at a local level;
 - 10.2.2 the relative isolation of many of these groups, particularly BME, Faith, Refugee and Asylum Seeker Groups and Traveller communities;
 - 10.2.3 their dependence on volunteers as the basis for their work;
 - 10.2.4 the extent to which service development is being hampered in a number of organisations - and in a number of areas - by a shortage of volunteers;
 - 10.2.5 a lack of regular and consistent funding, and the dependence of many small groups on self-generated income;
 - 10.2.6 the absence of key support services and the under-funding of others;
 - 10.2.7 the lack of understanding of social enterprise and an under-developed social enterprise sector;
 - 10.2.8 the priorities for support services communicated to the OVID Consortium through the user survey, the VCS district and county forums and through other surveys undertaken in 2003 and 2004.

Addressing rural and urban support needs

- 10.3 A recognition of the significantly rural nature of the county has helped to shape the proposals for infrastructure service development. The Consortium will also need to ensure that the means and reach of service delivery are appropriate, given this geographical and social context.²⁰
- 10.4 The LIDP proposals for the development of volunteering support and information hubs in market towns and larger villages seek to build on the functions of existing established rural service centres. The proposed District VCS fora should provide new local mechanisms for networking, discussion and links with policymakers. The Consortium will give ongoing attention to making these initiatives accessible to rurally-based VCS groups. Means of achieving this would include:
- 10.4.1 appropriate location of services and activities including rotation around different service centres;
 - 10.4.2 linking up with existing rural VCS networks for communication by electronic means, mailings and newsletters to supplement opportunities for face-to-face engagement;
 - 10.4.3 providing outreach services, where resources are available, and 'piggy-backing' on the work of existing outreach staff employed by infrastructure service providers and others, where this is feasible.

²⁰ The specific infrastructure and capacity-building support needs of rural communities and rural community groups are not dealt with in detail in the IDP but are examined in a separate Working Paper (number 16).

- 10.5 The strengthened working links between generic and specialist infrastructure service providers and the linkages between the ChangeUp initiative and DEFRA's Rural Social and Community Programme, which are being achieved through the work of the Consortium, should make a positive contribution to promoting rural service reach.
- 10.6 The Consortium is equally conscious of the pressing need to address the support needs of VCS groups in Oxford City, in Banbury and also the growth towns in the county, which have received a majority of the new housing development planned for the county in recent years under the Country Growth Towns policy of successive structure plans, but which have not generally also been able to develop the social and community infrastructure that should go with it. OCVA, Banbury CVS, West Oxfordshire Volunteer Link Up and other agencies have been working to meet needs in these areas, including some recent pioneering OCVA service delivery in Bicester and Didcot funded through the ChangeUp programme. However, limited resources restrict what can be done in these significant areas of population at present, including areas of deprivation in the county.

11. MEASURING THE DEMAND

- 11.2 All organisations need access to information, advice and support from time to time, but what they need will vary depending on what they do, their stage of development, and the responses that they need to make to events and conditions in their working environment. As the ChangeUp programme recognises, there can be no 'one size fits all' approach.

"The largest organisations usually have the capacity to house support specialists (such as finance managers, HR managers and volunteer managers) and to purchase expert advice. The largest part of the voluntary and community sector is, however, made up of medium and small organisations. Some of the support needs of these organisations are similar to those of micro and small businesses. "However, much of the generic support available is in the form of expensive professional services that few voluntary and community organisations can afford... They are therefore largely dependent on free or subsidised support ... provided through voluntary and community sector infrastructure which also plays an integral part in maintaining the independence of the sector..."²¹

- 11.3 The notion of different 'stages of development' is one that is relevant in Oxfordshire, and has been incorporated into the thinking about how infrastructure support services should be developed in the future. A simple classification system has been devised as a basis for thinking about the services that are needed, and how they should be delivered. The system recognises:

11.3.1 community capacity building that:

- stimulates thinking among individuals that have identified unmet needs and might be thinking about starting a new group
- helps get communities to start the first stages of organising themselves
- supports inter-community networking on common issues of concern, and
- facilitates partnership with the wider network of voluntary sector and statutory bodies;

²¹ Active Communities Unit, (2004), op. cit., page 20. See also the table on the following two pages.

- 11.3.2 the needs of individuals who are setting up a new group including those with an awareness of the needs of the ASP communities;
 - 11.3.3 the needs of organisations that are happy with what they are doing, have no ambitions to grow or develop new services, but who nevertheless need advice or support ('steady-state groups') including several self-contained BME faith groups;
 - 11.3.4 the needs of more ambitious organisations who are thinking of developing new activities, or who wish to expand their operations;
 - 11.3.5 the needs of organisations that are tendering for contracts, developing a range of services for the public and perhaps thinking of becoming social enterprises;
 - 11.3.6 the needs of organisations with in-house capabilities or the resources to buy in the help they need.
- 11.4 Although organisations of all sizes could come within any of these categories, it is likely that categories 11.3.1 to 11.3.3 will include many of Oxfordshire's small or medium-sized organisations and categories 11.3.4 to 11.3.5 will consist mostly of medium-sized or large organisations.
- 11.5 Given the diversity of VCOs in Oxfordshire, the simplest way of quantifying how many or what proportion of VCOs fall into each category is by measuring financial turnover. Using the data obtained from the survey of service users, a table for measuring the potential demand can be calculated (Table 1 - next page). However, this method of calculation taken by itself does not produce results that reflect the experience and existing case loads of the main infrastructure providers. OCVA estimates that it works with around 20-25 start ups a year in Oxford alone but since some of these will not actually make it as far as formally constituting themselves they will not all fall within the global 3,000. OCVA workers have an ongoing case load of more than 200 organisations needing support each year. This involves one-to-one development, training, funding advice, and volunteer brokerage, but OCVA does not hold figures on turnover. An informed guess would be that at least half of these groups fall into the 'medium' category in that they are large enough to employ paid staff. Since OCVA has not historically been funded to carry out development work outside Oxford it would be reasonable to assume a demand for support to at least another 100 groups outside the city if resources permitted. This gives a total of 300 for OCVA alone.
- 11.6 ORCC supports a different set of groups and has a combined annual caseload of at least 300 rural community groups. The vast majority of these are likely to be small and to have a turnover of less than £5,000 per annum. West Oxfordshire Volunteer Linkup provides support on volunteering to around 90 groups each year, so it can be assumed that Volunteer Linkup and Banbury CVS between them support another 150 groups at least.

Table 1: Demand for services from VCOs at different stages of development

Type of VCO	Annual Turnover (£)	Number of VCOs*	Annual Demand**	Type of support required
New groups	£0 - £5,000	2.0% * 3,000 = <u>50</u>	20% = <u>10</u>	Confidence building, raising awareness, clarifying aims and objectives, action planning, thinking about constitution and governance, assistance with networking, hand-holding and mentoring etc
Small local groups, no growth planned	£0 - £25,000	73% * 3,000 = <u>2,200</u>	10% = <u>300</u>	Basic advice under any of the generic support headings with some signposting
Small local groups, growth planned				Basic advice under any of the generic support headings with some signposting, plus more advanced support or specialist advice in the area of planned change
Medium size organisations	£25,000 - £250,000	18% * 3,000 = <u>540</u>	10% = <u>54</u>	Basic plus advanced advice in generic areas such as tendering and contracting, human resources, business planning and financial management, plus specialist support
Large organisations	More than £250,000	7% * 3,000 = <u>210</u>	10% = <u>21</u>	Basic training for less experienced volunteers and staff, plus occasional advanced generic or specialist advice

* The number of VCOs is calculated by multiplying the rounded up proportion of VCOs in each turnover band from the User Survey by a notional figure of 3,000 figures to represent the minimum size of the VCS in Oxfordshire. If the number of VCOs in the county is significantly greater than 3,000 the difference will largely be made up of small local groups who will fall into the second or third categories of 'small local groups'

11.6 The table when put together with existing knowledge suggests that between 600 -700 Oxfordshire VCOs might require some form of support each year - and possibly more. The calculation is by its nature imprecise, and a margin for error should be added. Of these:

11.6.1 65% (390) might be small groups with a turnover of £25,000 per annum or less requiring basic or targeted advice who would probably not be able to afford much in the way of payment for the services they receive;

11.6.2 25% (150) might be medium-sized groups with a turnover of up to £250,000 per annum who would need a range of services from basic to advanced support, and who might be able to make some financial contribution towards the cost of services they receive.

- 11.7 The remainder might be either:
- 11.7.1 5% (30) informal groups or new start-ups who need support through their early stages, and who could not be expected to pay for this support; or
 - 11.7.2 5% (30) large organisations with a turnover of more than £250,000 per annum who, it could be assumed, are in a position to pay for all the services that they receive.
- 11.8 Between two third and three quarters of the groups that need infrastructure services each year will be small or small-to-medium sized groups operating at a local or district level. This dispersed pattern of demand means that in order to be effective the most basic infrastructure services associated with support for volunteering, information and advice on funding, premises and organisational development will also need to be easily accessible - if not actually provided at - a local level.

12. THE STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

- 12.1 The OVID Consortium's strategy for deploying a range of local infrastructure support services in the future works from the starting point that all small and medium-sized VCOs need volunteers. The mapping survey of VCOs in Oxfordshire has shown that as many as 80,000 volunteers are centrally involved in the full range of activities and services carried out by the voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire. Impressive as these statistics are, 'shortage of volunteers', 'lack of volunteers with the right skills' and 'difficulties in recruiting suitable volunteers' were given as common reasons for the inability of groups to sustain their services or develop them further. Some parts of the county - for example, Abingdon and Thame - do not have a volunteer centre at present, while the volunteer support groups that exist in other places are small scale service providers (car clubs, for example) rather than accredited volunteer centres.
- 12.2 Only OCVA and West Oxfordshire Volunteer Linkup are accredited volunteer centres, and neither of them has sufficient funding to operate across the county (OCVA) or across the district (Volunteer Linkup). The provision of better information and support for recruiting, training and managing volunteers is therefore the top priority identified by groups in their response to the infrastructure needs survey.

Local services

- 12.3 The strategic objective is to achieve a focal point for the support of volunteers and volunteering in all the localities where they do not exist, and to strengthen and expand the operations of the existing accredited providers so that there is coverage across the county. The aim is to establish a series of volunteering information-points in Oxford, market towns and possibly the larger village settlements in rural areas. These volunteering info-points would be linked together as a network, and would draw on the combined experience and resources of the accredited volunteer centres already in existence.
- 12.4 Linked with the volunteer info-points would be a series of local information resources, established by the VCS in partnership with local authorities and other partners. In each locality served by a volunteering info-point or accredited volunteer centre, a library of reference material and sources of advice related to the support needs identified by smaller VCOs would eventually be established.

- 12.5 There would be directories and other reference material that people could read on site, as well as links to telephone and internet advice services that might either be provided at district or county level, or which would make use of regional and national resources including national charities, the umbrella organisations for specialist areas of work and the sector as a whole, and the six national specialist 'hubs' being developed as part of the continuation of ChangeUp.²²
- 12.6 The volunteer info-point and information resource might be located in a volunteer centre, another voluntary organisation's offices, a local library or a council area office.
- 12.7 In order to facilitate their use by inexperienced local VCS groups the hubs would need to be supported as far as possible by human resources - i.e. by advisers. The model might be analogous to the 'micro business advisors' employed by Business Link²³ and some Chambers of Commerce²⁴. They could help groups find the information that they need, promote the services that are available, and could also form the front line in providing basic advice and signposting for the other priority services needed at a local level.
- 12.8 This could be achieved by a variety of means:
- 12.8.1 use of existing staff in organisations hosting a hub, if appropriate and if finance could be found to support some additional hours;
 - 12.8.2 visits by staff of the district or countywide infrastructure service providers, where there was capacity;
 - 12.8.3 use of volunteers, so long as resources were available for adequate training²⁵ and on-going back-up support and quality assurance from the central service providers.

²² The six national hubs are sponsored by the Home Office Active Communities Unit and are intended to provide information and advice, and signpost to regional support services, in the fields of Governance, Volunteering, Workforce Development, Financing the Voluntary and Community Sector, Information and Communication technology, and Performance Improvement. Although information from the hubs will be accessible to everyone, it is unlikely that they will be able to provide advice to large numbers of VCOs on an individual basis. The ICT hub, for example, is planning to set up a referral system to local infrastructure bodies such as councils of voluntary service which are more accessible, and will list accredited ICT companies and professional 'circuit-riders' who will mainly operate at a more local level.

²³ Business Link Wessex runs Business Advice Clinics for organisations with less than ten employees. Advice sessions last one hour, and are free of charge to the owner or manager of the business. The sessions are designed to give information and advice, a 'reality check' for current plans, and an action plan to achieve the business's objectives.

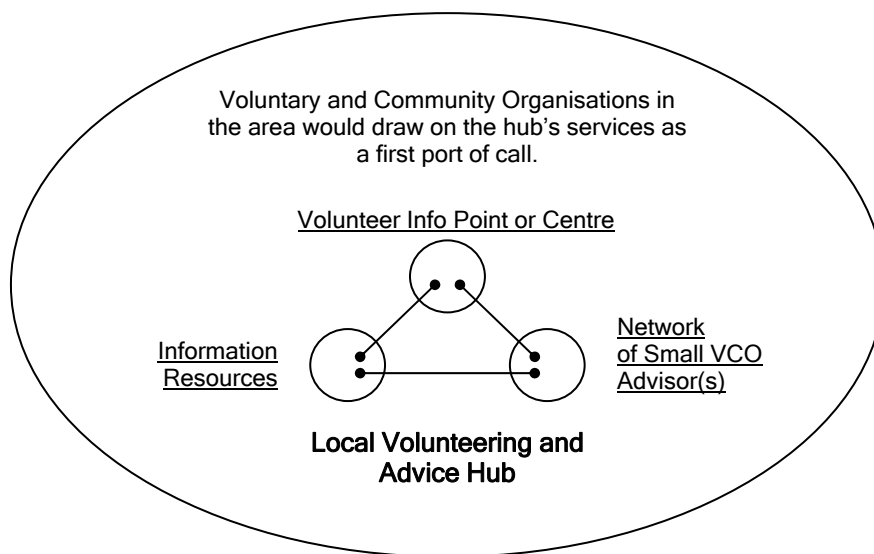
²⁴ Chambers of Commerce typically offer free telephone help lines, free legal expenses insurance, training courses and workshops, a business consultancy service, an online business information service and other benefits.

²⁵ In the same way that the quality of advice being provided to social enterprises is going to be assured in future by promoting a recognised qualification for advisers, it will be vital to ensure the quality of any advice provided to VCOs. Poor advice is in the end worse than no advice. We expect the Performance Improvement Hub to play a key role here in establishing a benchmarking system and a suitable quality assurance framework.

12.9 The network of local volunteer information points, the ASP Community Network and information resources - a 'Local Volunteering and Advice Hub' - could be based on existing organisations where they exist. Gaps would be filled in a variety of ways - for example, through virtual information resources where no suitable opportunities to create a physical presence exist. It is possible that some hubs might develop particular areas of expertise, whose advice on that subject might be drawn on by VCOs in a neighbouring town or village.

12.10 The way a local volunteering and advice hub might develop is shown diagrammatically in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1



12.11 The local volunteering and advice hubs would probably be used in different ways by VCOs at different stages of their development.

12.11.1 There will be a demand from steady-state groups who will need help to promote their work and replace volunteers who are leaving. They may also want access to information that is relevant to their activities, and their activists may wish to be involved in training and mentoring programmes that develop their skills and knowledge.

12.11.2 There will be a wider range of demands from those small groups that are seeking to develop or extend their activities and services. For example, they might need help with carrying out a feasibility study for a new service taking fully into account the needs of the ASP target groups, improving their governance and financial management to cope with a more demanding role, or they may need to develop new skills or more advanced ICT systems. For them, the level of information and advice available at the most local level may not be sufficient, and they would be signposted to appropriate sources of information, advice and training elsewhere.

- 12.12 Well-established services providers - medium and large - are less likely to be reliant on the local volunteering and advice hubs, as they will have more experience of where to go for information, advice and training at district and county level. The larger ones will have the resources to buy-in consultancy and training services. It is anticipated, therefore, that medium and large VCOs will use the services available from generic providers such as OCVA, and specialist networks and resources at county, regional and national level. Nevertheless, the availability of the local hubs will make it easy to carry out basic research or check back with a small VCO advisor on their doorstep should the need arise.
- 12.13 Funding has been applied for from the ChangeUp Continuation Fund to undertake a feasibility study and pilot the establishment of volunteer information points and VCS basic support networks in market towns and other settlements across the county. Depending on the outcome of the feasibility study and pilot programme, a plan for developing local volunteering and advice hubs across the county will be submitted to funders for support towards the end of the 2006/2007 financial year. The objective will be to have a network of these local hubs in operation by the end of March 2010.

County-wide infrastructure services

- 12.14 This network of front-line provision through local volunteering and advice hubs would draw upon, and be backed up by more comprehensive services, information resources and training programmes established by OCVA, ORCC, OREC, by the lead bodies for specialist networks, and by regional and national resources. At present, funding for generic infrastructure services in Oxfordshire is extremely fragile. It relies in most cases on annual funding, which means that infrastructure providers are living a hand to mouth existence which makes forward planning and service development almost impossible.
- 12.15 Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA): Building on its current work, the Consortium sees OCVA as having a well-defined developmental role for the sector, in addition to any specific or time limited projects that it runs. Its long term responsibilities would include:
- 12.15.1 promoting, facilitating and supporting the development and on-going operations of the local volunteer and advice hubs - directly where there is currently no other district-wide body (Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse), and in partnership with the district-level body in the other two areas (Cherwell Council for Voluntary Service, and Volunteer Linkup West Oxfordshire);
 - 12.15.2 providing information services such as a telephone advice line, a dedicated website, an e-newsletter and briefings, and reference library services centrally, and for the local hubs, including compiling content from third party sources, and where necessary commissioning new content;
 - 12.15.3 being the lead trainer and/or organising training programmes for most (but not all) of the subjects identified as priorities by user survey respondents and taking into account the priorities of ASP target groups - alternative options need to be explored for the provision of advice, support and training in three key areas of interest - Employment and Human Resources, Health and Safety, Protection and Insurance, and Information and Communication Technology;

- 12.15.4 promoting, facilitating and supporting a range of partnerships and forums that involve the sector as a whole at county level, and where necessary at district or local level with the aim of giving the VCS opportunities for networking, developing a common strategic vision, and representing the sector's views to its statutory and business partners.
- 12.16 OCVA has been able to significantly increase its provision of infrastructure services over the past two years, largely thanks to funding from regional and national bodies. However, during 2006 OCVA will lose much of this increased capacity as short-term funding comes to an end. Perhaps most critically, the volunteer centre will no longer have a full-time manager and will have to reduce its opening hours if not close. A worst case scenario will see OCVA operating only with a chief executive, an information officer and some basic administrative support by January 2007. This worst-case scenario is a cause for concern if the proposals contained within the Oxfordshire LIDP are to be carried out.
- 12.17 Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC): In addition to its rural community development work outlined in paragraph 6.8, ORCC is the lead body for the DEFRA Rural Social and Community programme which has many potential links with the ChangeUp process. The OVID Consortium sees these two programmes as complementary and envisages that ORCC will collaborate closely with OCVA in the development of local volunteering and advice hubs, the development of information services, and support for partnerships and forums in rural areas.
- 12.18 ORCC faces a review of its SLA with DEFRA in 2007/2008 financial year, which is also the final year of the Rural Social and Community Programme (RSCP) which is funding key ORCC posts in 2006/07. The Consortium welcomes the match funding being made available through the RSCP to support the employment of a worker to continue the OVID work programme in 2006/07.
- 12.19 Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council (OREC): OREC is currently broadening its approach beyond dealing with racial incidents and racial discrimination into the broader fields of community development and capacity building within Black and Minority Ethnic, Minority Faith, Refugee and Asylum Seeker and Gypsy and Traveller communities. The Ovid Consortium believes that OREC is a key partner in raising awareness of diversity issues and providing infrastructure support services for all VCOs in the county, including race and cultural awareness training, mentoring programmes and translation and interpreting services through the trained Interpreters' Panel.
- 12.20 Other specialist networks: While the specialist networks have a very important function in providing information advice and support within the particular area of activity, in most cases they do not have the expertise or resources to provide generic infrastructure support. It is therefore critical to the success of these sectors of work that their smaller and less experienced network members have access to generic support services. In the past, the generic and specialist infrastructure providers have tended to work in parallel domains. Collaboration between them and with the generic infrastructure providers has varied. This is one of the contributory factors behind the fragmentation and lack of co-ordination of current infrastructure provision.

- 12.21 For this model of service development to work, far greater levels of collaboration and coordination between generic and specialist infrastructure service providers at local, district and county level than exist at present will be needed. In future, it is essential that higher levels of collaboration and joint planning are achieved between all these bodies. New partnerships need to be forged. The joint preparation of plans under both ChangeUp and RSCP has already gone a long way towards forging stronger relationships between them. A high priority for 2006/2007 will be work with specialist providers, for example, on making links between the LIDP and the ongoing work to develop the Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan.
- 12.22 The organisations are keen to continue and build on this. In addition, the involvement of specialist networks in promoting, facilitating and supporting the local volunteering and advice hubs, and in developing county-wide generic support services is critical and should be promoted through their active involvement in the OVID Consortium or its successor body. The OVID Consortium therefore considers that it is critically important for the networks to work closely with the local volunteering and advice hubs and the county level infrastructure providers. For its part, the Consortium will actively promote the relevance of its work to the specialist networks, and seek their active participation in its future work.

13. DELIVERING THE PRIORITY SERVICES

- 13.1 The LIDP proposals are grouped into seven broad themes. They are:
- 13.1.1 Developing support for volunteering;
 - 13.1.2 Improving information resources;
 - 13.1.3 Supporting organisational development;
 - 13.1.4 Supporting community capacity building;
 - 13.1.5 Promoting diversity and equality;
 - 13.1.6 Using the expertise and resources of the larger Faith Communities for the benefit of the wider VCS;
 - 13.1.7 Enhancing networks and partnerships, and promoting the sector to partners and the wider community.

Developing support for volunteering

- 13.2 All frontline organisations depend on volunteers to run their management committees and trustee boards. This is what defines an organisation as 'voluntary'. Many more use volunteers to deliver critical social and welfare services such as driving elderly people to the doctor or to do their shopping, helping children to read, befriending people with disabilities and long-term illnesses, or providing respite to carers.

CASE STUDIES

Helen and Douglas House are hospices which advertise their volunteering opportunities through OCVA. They needed support, however, to turn a general request for help into specific opportunities and to make those opportunities sound attractive.

The Porch/Steppin Stone is a voluntary organisation that works with formerly homeless people and advertises for volunteers but needed advice about policies, especially payment of expenses in order to attract volunteers from more diverse backgrounds. In addition to recruiting volunteers, clients of the organisation have been encouraged to volunteer themselves, as a first step on the road back to employment. For vulnerable volunteers, good advice about benefits and CRB checks is essential.

- 13.3 The work of these volunteers represents a real saving to the public purse. Some of the volunteers themselves are assisted back into paid work through volunteering, if they are for example recovering from illness or have been in prison or abusing drugs and alcohol. Volunteering therefore has a significant economic value. Experience demonstrates that this is an area of activity where local ownership is crucial, yet in large parts of the county there is no convenient way for people to find out about suitable opportunities, and volunteer-involving organisations have no support in marketing their opportunities to the general public and in complying with good practice and the law. The OVID consortium therefore regards the setting up of a solid and comprehensive support network for volunteering as the cornerstone and top priority of this infrastructure development plan.

Improving information resources

- 13.4 The provision of reliable and up-to-date information is seen as a further priority. Under the LIDP proposals, providing basic information on a wide range of issues of concern to the VCS should be one of the responsibilities of the local volunteering and advice hubs. In each local resources library there would be current editions of the main good practice manuals and directories containing information about funding, for example, that can be accessed along with information available on the internet by local groups for themselves. Local information of this kind would be a resource for VCO advisors if available, who would use it as a basis for advice and signposting. This would be supplemented by information and training for more experienced groups at county level via OCVA, and national and regional information resources including the hubs. As part of this theme there is a proposal to create local directories of premises and facilities that are available for use by smaller voluntary and community organisations, and to improve access to information about changes in the law, government policy and good practice.

Supporting organisational development

- 13.5 This area of service delivery includes a potentially long list of topics starting with advice on constitution, governance and management, and evolving towards governance and leadership in growing or changing organisations, financial management and business planning, health and safety, risk assessment and insurance, equality and diversity, and support in a crisis.

CASE STUDY

Africol is a group that started in 2003 when a member of the African community in Oxford applied to OCVA for a Community Champions grant to undertake health promotion work among people of African descent. In the past three years Africol has become a formally constituted group, has developed policies and procedures, found office premises, started a youth drop-in service, attracted local statutory funding, and now advertises its own volunteering opportunities through OCVA.

- 13.6 It also includes advice on funding and assistance with funding applications and tenders; advice on employment and human resources issues; advice on issues such as health and safety, risk assessment, protection of vulnerable people and Criminal Records Bureau checks, and insurance; performance management; and use of information and communication technologies (ICT).
- 13.7 The most cost effective way of providing a basic service across the county is via the local volunteering and advice hubs, if suitable advisors can be recruited and trained. They would provide information and advice plus signposting for both new and steady state groups, while training courses organised at county level and delivered centrally or in venues at district level would fit the bill for most developing and advanced VCOs. This implies a need for ongoing resources for training.
- 13.8 This wide range of information, advice and support services is of critical important to the sustainability and development of the VCS in Oxfordshire, and it is worth going into a little more detail on some of these topics.

Advice on funding and assistance with funding applications and tender proposals

- 13.10 There are a number of paper directories and internet websites that list possible sources of funding for VCOs. Some of these contain a substantial amount of information but this requires experience and prior knowledge to interpret. However, many small VCOs do not have sufficient knowledge to interpret which of many possible sources of funding are appropriate for them. Nor do they always know how to make an application that stands a chance of being successful. Three possibilities then arise - either time is wasted making inappropriate funding applications; or the group gives up before an application is made; or - a problem particularly flagged up by ASP groups, the group becomes cynical and disillusioned.
- 13.11 Following consultation with VCOs at local level around the county, the OVID Consortium has concluded that making information more widely available is a necessary but not sufficient condition for self-help among less experienced VCOs. While the surveys found that advice about funding is more widely available than advice about volunteering, the wealth of information from directory sources needs to be interpreted in the light of local knowledge. Very inexperienced groups may need some degree of hand holding in choosing an appropriate funder, putting a funding application together, or when tendering for the first time. This is particularly relevant to the ASP target groups and BME communities who are linguistically disadvantaged.

- 13.12 The OCVA funding advice worker (learning disabilities) has found that it is also crucial to ensure that groups receive the appropriate support to become fundable: constitution and legal format, aims and objectives, policies and procedures, and business plan. A group seeking funding advice will often turn out to need more basic organisational development first. They are also often unaware of what other groups are doing and another useful result of the funding work done with learning disability groups has been the joining up of projects for funding.

CASE STUDY

VOX is a charity that aims to integrate people with learning disabilities into the wider community. The group has used the funding resources at OCVA but they have also benefited from advice about volunteering policies and are working towards the establishment of a gardening project that will generate income. OCVA staff have supported them in a number of ways that go beyond funding, including speaking at their events and conferences.

- 13.13 For those VCOs who contract with local authorities, the NHS and others, particular support and advice is needed on public procurement as they consider how they can tender for public services, start trading or set up a social enterprise. Basic guidance on this is available and there are also now a number of local, tailored, training packages, offered through Business Links and others. In addition, officers of some local authorities may provide advice about funding or contracting but this is not consistent. OVID and its partner organisations hope to do more to publicise what is available.

Employment and human resources including employment of volunteers

- 13.14 This important area of advice and support for the VCS is not currently supported by any of the VCS infrastructure providers apart from good practice advice provided by OCVA for volunteer managers and coordinators. Good practice and legal requirements around the employment of volunteers could be dealt with by the local volunteering and advice hubs once they are successfully set up, with backing from OCVA. This is however dependent on OCVA maintaining a post that specialises in volunteering.
- 13.15 Many small groups also need advice when they employ staff. ORCC with national support from ACRE do provide basic information which is often adequate for village hall committees. What is needed is a much more broadly based service that is available to all VCOs across the county. The OVID Consortium believes that advice and support on employment law and human resources issues is a specialised area of work that requires a specialist input. OCVA will through its information work and the web portal ensure that existing national support is more widely advertised. OVID will also monitor the progress of the hubs in this area and if gaps are not filled they will commission work in year 2 of this plan to develop local proposals.

Health and safety, protection issues, risk assessment, Criminal Records Bureau checks and Insurance

- 13.16 This is one of a number of gaps in current provision in Oxfordshire. None of the organisations currently associated with the OVID Consortium feels qualified to provide advice and support in this specialised field. The University First Aid Unit acts as an umbrella body for Oxfordshire and OVID will contact them to determine how far they are able to cope with the increased demand. OCVYS intends to carry out a feasibility study into providing CRB checks for youth organisations and could potentially extend this to others. OVID will investigate the options for managing a block insurance policy in year 2 of this plan.²⁶

Performance management and monitoring

- 13.17 Advice and support on performance management is the focus of one of the national hubs. OCVA has been using the well-respected PQASSO system for its own internal use. This system is likely to form the basis for any revised national framework. While awaiting guidance from the hub OCVA intends to train a member of staff as a PQASSO mentor to support local groups who wish to undertake the process. The consortium recognises that monitoring procedures laid down by some funders are cumbersome for the ASP target groups and many other small VCOs who do not have paid personnel to carry out monitoring and reporting work. The OVID Consortium will seek to negotiate 'light touch' monitoring systems that are more appropriate for small or inexperienced organisations receiving relatively small amounts of funding.

Information and Communication Technology.

- 13.18 Advice and support on ICT is needed for both inexperienced computer users, and more advanced users, linked to developing skills, purchasing hardware and software, use of the internet, and developing a website. It also needs to be recognised that some groups, including the ASP target groups, have virtually no budgets to access appropriate ICT services. The National ICT Hub has ambitious plans to develop online and telephone information services plus a network of local advisors. The OVID consortium will maintain a watching brief and seek to ensure that Oxfordshire benefits from any relevant national programmes.
- 13.19 The generic infrastructure providers feel that local ICT advice and support in Oxfordshire is better provided through technical specialists. The OVID Consortium strategy is to identify and list these providers, and also signpost to regional and national sources of support.
- 13.20 OCVA's capital bid to ChangeUp on behalf of the OVID Consortium will result in the development of a dedicated web portal for the VCS in Oxfordshire which will offer individual groups the opportunity of developing their own website. Capital funding for this project has been approved and will include some initial training of groups that want to set up their own websites. However, further training and support will be needed in the longer term.

²⁶ Hampshire Voluntary Care Groups Advisory Service, sponsored by the Winchester and Portsmouth Anglican Diocesan Councils of Social Responsibility, provides these services for more than 200 local 'care' groups across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight with funding from NHS PCTs and Social Services.

13.21 It also needs to be recognised that some groups, especially in the ASP target groups have virtually no budgets to access appropriate ICT services. Helen to insert. The development of services in this area needs to be sensitive to the requirements of VCOs at different stages in their development. New groups, including those from the ASP target groups, may require information plus mentoring and support. More experienced groups in most cases will need information and training that is slightly more advanced than their current stage of development to lead them forward. Some of this work has already been going on. Support for organisational development has been available to Oxford-based groups at least since 2002. This support now needs to be rolled out across the county.

Supporting community capacity building

13.9 There are a number of agencies involved in community development and community capacity-building across the county. These include both VCOs and statutory bodies. In rural areas ORCC has a key role to play (see case study). However, there is no clear picture of what these various initiatives are doing, and research undertaken by the OVID Consortium has not so far identified the full range of work going on in communities. There is scope for further mapping. What is clearly needed in this area of work is a collaborative approach between the different agencies involved so that opportunities for joint working, areas of potential overlap, gaps in coverage and unmet training needs can be identified. This could possibly be achieved through the development of a new county-wide community development forum as a means of networking and liaison. This would need to complement any existing specialist professional networks and training opportunities already available for community development agencies and workers. Serious consideration should also be given to how seed corn funding can best be provided to support development projects.

CASE STUDY

In Tackley, the village shop and post office had closed; the village hall was outdated and underused; the adjacent playing field lacked facilities for all ages; and there was a lack of affordable housing. ORCC's team of specialist advisory staff helped local volunteers and the parish council achieve a community shop established in a dedicated area within an enlarged and improved village hall incorporating coffee shop area and changing rooms; a multi-purpose hard surface area on the playing field; and plans for additional affordable housing when a suitable site has been identified. This involved the ORCC's Village Shops Development Worker (community shop feasibility study, retail advice, access to shop funding); the Village Halls Adviser (Charity Commission permission for shop in the charity hall building and access to hall funding); the Rural Transport Partnerships Officer (provided funding for cycle racks); the Rural Housing Enabler (needs survey and subsequent planning processes) and the Playing Fields Association Community Development Officer (based in same office) (multi-use play space design, project planning and funding).

Promoting diversity and equality

- 13.10 There is currently no advice or training on diversity awareness available for the voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire, either generally or on specific aspects of diversity including work with BME and other minority communities. A number of groups involved with the user survey and the district workshops said that they wanted to know more about working with minority and excluded groups. Groups involved in the ASP work said that they were uninformed about services provided by the VCS generally, and some said that these services were not provided in a way that was appropriate for people from their culture and background. Various reasons were given for this. These included difficulties over speaking or reading the English language; failure to understand cultural issues such as women from some communities being interviewed by male staff, or being asked to discuss personal or family health issues with a stranger; and a 'colour-blind' approach to service provision that assumes that a one size service fits all.
- 13.11 It appears from these various sources that there has been a widespread failure to engage with the needs of minority communities and groups on the part of the VCS in Oxfordshire, as in many other rural areas. Gypsies and Travellers in Oxfordshire do not currently have any representative or voluntary organisation that is specifically targeted at meeting their needs. Nor do they receive support from other sources with the exception of the Gypsy Education Service. These findings exactly mirror the reasons for developing a National Compact code of good practice for partnership between government and Black and Minority Ethnic VCOs.

"The BME voluntary and community sector works to tackle the disadvantage experienced by the communities from which it springs. However, despite their work with a diverse range of groups and communities, many BME voluntary and community organisations continue to be excluded from the traditional structures of the voluntary and community sector."²⁷

CASE STUDY

The Redbridge Traveller Women's Support Group was set up by a group of Irish Traveller women, completely of their own volition and initially with no external support or advice, over a decade ago. A supportive local church allows the group to meet in their hall, and thus premises are normally not an issue. The women feel that they have many unmet needs, most of which have never been adequately addressed. The Reaching Travellers Project provided further access to IT equipment and software, educational and training support, but this is no longer available as the Project was discontinued. Although they have little funding and support from outside, they have developed their activities to include not only peer and educational support for their group members, but in addition, information, including formal and informal presentations about Irish Traveller culture for non-traveller individuals, groups and organisations.

²⁷ Active Communities Unit (2004), *Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organisations - Compact Code of Good Practice*, Home Office, pages 2 and 3

- 13.12 The OVID Consortium recognises that more needs to be done to promote diversity and race equality. There are four strands in this work programme: making culturally and linguistically appropriate infrastructure support services available for all Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, Minority Faith Groups, Refugee and Asylum Seeker Communities and the Gypsy and Traveller Community on exactly the same basis as other community-based VCOs; making diversity training available to the whole sector; supporting an initiative that will explore with people from the Gypsy and Traveller communities whether and in what form a voluntary organisation to meet their needs should be launched. A county-wide interpreting and translation service is also required. A Diversity Forum will be promoted by OVID to oversee the development of this programme. The Media Project developed as part of the ASP programme will continue, and will become a model to be followed by the VCS as a whole.

CASE STUDIES

B.K. Luwo Women United is a voluntary group set up by women from Northern Uganda and now attracting women from a range of cultural backgrounds. It runs free sewing, knitting and embroidery classes and provides social and emotional support, with the aim of breaking the barriers of isolation that refugees can experience, preserving their cultural heritage and integrating more with the community. Their coordinator attended the media training programme for ASP target groups. She reported that the training was very helpful both to her personally and to the organisation. Through seeing herself being interviewed on the video and getting feedback from other participants, she gained a lot of confidence in talking to the media. Following the training, she took part in an article in the local newspaper covering the work of her group, as part of the International Women's Day celebrations. Since the media coverage, more people have started attending the group.

Improving information and support for faith-based social and community activity

- 13.13 The Faith Communities in Oxfordshire undertake a wide range of social and community activities. They also provide support for other communities and voluntary organisations. Some of the initiatives that have been developed by faith communities have developed into independent charities, although initially established by a church or some other religious group. These include Gatehouse and the Porch in Oxford City, the Religious Education Resource Centre in Banbury, a variety of unattached youth workers in places such as Didcot, Botley, Kidlington, Summertown, Banbury established by Churches Together groups, individual congregations, denominational or faith community groupings. These facilities rely in the main on volunteers and voluntary organisation and can, because of limited resources, appear to be inward looking and concerned with maintenance rather than outreach.

CASE STUDIES

The Orthodox Church in Canterbury Road, Oxford serves the majority of the Orthodox Christians in the county, and beyond. It has a regular congregation of 150-200 people from diverse national backgrounds; Greek, Cypriot, Russian, Romanian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Finnish, African, North American, and the Balkans in particular with the majority from Greek speaking and Russian speaking migration. As part of its community outreach it provides children's classes in Greek and Russian language and culture. Similar classes are also provided from other minority congregations across the city. The Mosques provide schools in Arabic for their children and congregations from Korea, China, and Africa provide similar cultural and language schools to their communities.

- 13.14 Few of the non-worship activities impose access criteria based on commitment to a particular faith tradition. With legislative changes and the strict interpretation and or enforcement of hygiene and health and safety regulations, many now need help to understand and to implement these requirements for their organisations. As a first stage, this would involve mapping the social and community activities being undertaken by faith communities, and promoting links with non faith-based social and community activity undertaken by VCOs in Oxfordshire.

Enhancing networks and partnerships, and promoting the sector to partners and the wider community

- 13.15 The ChangeUp process has demonstrated that there is considerable work to be done to improve networking and partnership within the VCS, and between the VCS and its partners in the statutory sector. Improved networking between generic and specialist infrastructure providers will be promoted through the development of a series of joint working protocols; while improved networking for the sector as a whole and especially smaller VCOs will be promoted through continuation of the district level fora that were initiated during the ChangeUp process. The Ovid Consortium will also seek to build new links with the Faith Communities through joint work with Churches Together in Oxfordshire, inter-faith bodies and the minority faith communities.
- 13.16 The OVID Consortium has also concluded that the sector needs to develop a more coherent view of its role and contribution, and promote this to its partners and the wider community. The development of a promotional strategy for the sector in Oxfordshire is seen as a high priority for 2006/2007 if the ChangeUp work programme is to achieve the support it needs to be successful in later years.
- 13.17 One key area in which partnership working between the VCS and statutory sectors is essential concerns information sharing. There are a number of information systems that contain data about the VCS in the county but on current plans, each of these systems is likely to develop independently of the others to meet the needs of the managing organisation rather than the needs of the VCS and its partners as a whole. The OVID Consortium aims promote collaboration in the following areas of work:
- 13.17.1 development of an information sharing protocol between VCS organisations and between the VCS and its statutory partners;
 - 13.17.2 a feasibility study of the potential for unifying data classification systems and data collection systems;
 - 13.17.3 discussion of the future ownership and use of the mapping data collected as part of the OVID Consortium's work, and of possible links to the Oxfordshire Observatory.
- 13.18 Development of a cross-sector protocol on consultation with the voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire is also on the agenda for future work.

PART 3: THE OXFORDSHIRE VCS INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN - BUSINESS PLAN 2006 - 2014

14. THE BUSINESS PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Budget Model

- 14.1 Responsibility for implementing different aspects of the Oxfordshire LIDP will be shared between a number of different organisations. Each has its own approach to planning and budgeting. For the purposes of the LIDP business plan the OVID Steering Group has adopted a standardised costing model for each proposal irrespective of which organisations would be involved in the activities concerned. The model recognises the principle of full cost recovery, and is calculated on the basis that all direct activity costs must bear a fair share of organisational overheads. The model is in the following form:
- 14.1.1 Staff costs: Assume Full Time Equivalent posts; budget assumes NJC scale point 29 for all officer and worker grade posts (£23,175 per annum gross for 2006/2007) unless otherwise stated in the proposals;
 - 14.1.2 NIC plus Occupational Pension Scheme Employer's Contribution: add 20% of officer/worker gross salary; £4,635
 - 14.1.3 Staff On-Costs (such as recruitment, induction, training, travel/mileage allowance, end of contract redundancy, and subsistence, etc): add 15% of officer/worker gross salary; £3,476
 - 14.1.4 Sub-total: Staff costs £31,286
 - 14.1.5 Other direct project costs: calculate and add these as required;
 - 14.1.6 Sub-total: direct service/project costs
 - 14.1.7 Add: fair share of organisational overheads (e.g. rent, heat and light, cleaning, telephone, broadband, insurances, finance and admin work, audit, set aside into any sinking fund or depreciation fund for fixtures, fittings and equipment etc) @ 20% of salary costs £3,476;
 - 14.1.8 Add 20% share of senior management time assuming that CEO in small infrastructure organization plays role in delivery of each service beyond just management oversight. £4,635 (This may not apply in all cases provided there is adequate core funding to cover these costs. It is included here for the avoidance of doubt.
 - 14.1.9 Total Service/project revenue costs. £39,397 (say, £39,500 per post)
- 14.2 The model assumes that each service will make some contribution towards the provider's core running costs as well as the direct costs associated with service delivery. It also assumes that there will be a contribution towards the costs of overall direction and management from a chief officer. But having a chief officer in post is a fundamental requirement that over-rides the particular contribution towards the costs of such a post from particular services. Some proposals may also require a separate capital budget.

Risk

- 14.3 A risk assessment has been undertaken for the programme as a whole. This identifies risks associated with the programme, their likelihood of materialising (i.e. high, medium, low, very low), who carries the risk, and the steps that will be taken to minimise or avoid the risk. The model follows the basic principle that risk should be carried by the body in the best position to manage it. The Consortium will ensure that further risk assessments are undertaken for projects being started from 2007 onwards and for those proposals that will be subject for further study and feasibility testing. The risk assessment would form part of that further work.

Summary of proposals and costs

- 14.4 Each proposal is subject to a business planning assessment in the following format:

- 14.4.1 Title of the proposal;
- 14.4.2 Aims of the proposal in terms of planned outcomes;
- 14.4.3 Services to be provided;
- 14.4.4 Outputs;
- 14.4.5 Milestones;
- 14.4.6 Resources required;
- 14.4.7 Budgets for years 1, 2 and 3.

- 14.4.8 A summary of the proposal costs is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Oxfordshire LIDP programme costs

Ref No	Proposal	Existing Funding and Approved Funding in 2006/07	New Funding Required	TOTAL
LIDP 1	Developing support for volunteering	£ 74,475	£ 72,925	£ 147,400
LIDP 2	Improving information resources	£ 42,588	£ 40,620	£ 83,208
LIDP 3	Supporting organisational development	£ 142,600	£ 67,750	£ 210,350
LIDP 4	Supporting community capacity building	£ 83,000	£ 84,000	£ 167,000
LIDP 5	Promoting Diversity and Equality	£ -	£ 101,500	£ 101,500
LIDP 6	Improving information and support for Faith-based social and community activity	£ -	£ 50,000	£ 50,000
LIDP 7	Enhancing networks and partnerships and Promoting the sector to statutory partners and the wider community	£ 65,967	£ -	£ 65,967
TOTAL		£ 408,630	£ 416,795	£ 825,425

Detailed proposals and costs - see following pages

LIDP PROPOSAL 1: Developing support for volunteering							
Aim(s): To increase levels of volunteering in order to maintain and improve front line services; to improve the skills and life chances of individual volunteers.							
Service	Lead body	Outputs	Milestones	Resources	Budget yr 1	Budget yr2	Budget yr 3
Volunteer brokerage in Oxford and across the county	OCVA / Volunteer Centre Oxon	Baseline survey for number of volunteers matched; 1,500 potential volunteers per annum; 400 organisations advertising opportunities via OCVA and Volunteer Link-Up	Funding to be secured; Extension / Appointment of Volunteer manager at OCVA	1 FTE* - current funding ends on 31.3.06	£39,500*	Plus inflation	Plus inflation
Volunteer brokerage in Cherwell District	Banbury CVS		Funding secured for continuation / extension of current work in Banbury	Currently 8 hrs per week; double to 16 Pro rata to £40k less volunteering time	£6,000 existing; increase to £12,000 - includes volunteer effort	To be determined based on availability of volunteer manager	To be determined based on availability of volunteer manager
Volunteer brokerage in West Oxfordshire	Volunteer Linkup		Funding secured for continuation / extension of current work in West Oxfordshire	Currently 1.2 FTE; requirement 2.5 FTEs	£25,600 approved; plus£21,800 required	Plus inflation	Plus inflation
Brokerage services in other places where none exists	OVID via OCVA		Feasibility study completed; 10 venues identified by 31.3.07	0.5 FTE . Funded in 2006/2007 from OVID Continuation Fund	£21,000 = half of Continuation Project (exclusive of consortium expenses)	This then turns into good practice support in years 2 and 3	
Employee volunteering	OCVA	10 Employers signed up to implementing a scheme	Extension of County Council scheme to all directorates and district councils; schemes in place at 5 private sector employers	Within* above	Within * above	Within *	Within *
Continued							

<p>Support for good practice in volunteering: Training workshops and networking events Dissemination of information Helpline support and outreach visits to outlying hubs</p>	<p>OCVA, Banbury CVS, Volt Linkup</p>	<p>30 volunteer managers attending events 40 people attending courses Support to 40 volunteer-involving groups via helpline or visits 6 OCVA newsletters pa include info from Volunteering hub Support to local hubs depending on set up</p>	<p>4 volunteer managers' networking events per annum 4 short courses pa on recruiting and retaining volunteers Set up telephone advice line for groups and local volunteering hubs</p>	<p>0.5 FTE from yr 2 plus 10% of training officer</p>	<p>£4,000 (10% training officer) £2,500 direct costs of courses</p>	<p>£20,000 plus inflation, plus direct costs</p>	<p>Ditto plus inflation</p>
<p>Raising awareness and encouraging volunteering: Within local communities Among BME and other minority groups Among young people Faith communities Among other socially excluded and vulnerable groups</p>	<p>OVID via its membership, in particular ORCC, OREC, OCVYS, OCVA, Banbury CVS, Volunteer Linkup</p>	<p>4 visits pa to e.g. homeless or asylum seeker groups (OCVA) 1-1 interviews for 50 vulnerable individuals seeking volunteer placements More young people encouraged to volunteer Work with 4 rural communities to help them recruit and</p>	<p>Initial pilot project in one community</p>	<p>Included in * above Within existing resources</p>			

		support new local volunteers to support community organisations (ORCC) OCVYS work with young people					
Accredited training for volunteers	OCVA, OCVYS	20 volunteers achieve certificate each year	OCVA accredited as ASDAN centre 2 nd pilot course completed and evaluated July 2006 2 ASDAN courses per year thereafter	Trainer/ mentor, venue, 20% FTE training officer	£8,000 (20% training officer) plus £6,500	Plus inflation	Plus inflation
Recruitment and training for Trustees / committee members	OCVA	40 management committee members attend training per year	3 evening classes funded by ChangeUp early spend extra project in year 1 4 evening classes pa thereafter	Trainers plus venues plus 10% of training officer	£2,500 direct costs plus £4,000 (10% Training Officer)	Plus inflation	Plus inflation
Existing or approved funding for 2006/07					£74,475		
New Funding required					£72,925		
TOTALS					£147,400		

LIDP PROPOSAL 2: Improving information resources							
Aim(s): To make information accessible to VCOs throughout the county at a local level about funding opportunities, public policy, good practice and the law in order to improve their effectiveness.							
Task	Lead body	Outputs	Milestones for new activities	Resources	Budget yr 1	Budget yr2	Budget yr 3
Mapping and bringing information for the VCS together from a number of different sources	OCVA Generic plus specialists	Annual update to existing library contents; prompt response to new issues, legislation etc Specialist requirements to be mapped	Existing activity	Information officer 1 FTE*.	£39,500 of which £25,600 currently funded	Plus inflation	Plus inflation
Maintaining and updating the main OCVA Information resource open to the public five days per week	OCVA Generic		Existing activity	Within * above	Within * above plus £2,000 pa pubs and subs	Within * above plus £2,000 pa pubs and subs	Within * above plus £2,000 pa pubs and subs
Telephone helplines	OCVA, ORCC, OREC, OCVYS, BCVS, and other specialists, advice centres and LAs	Information available when required; 100 calls per week taken by the generic providers; consider simple record systems for logging satisfaction	FAQs posted on web portal by 31/12/06	Within above	Within above	Within above	Within - above
VCS Web Portal	OCVA for OVID	50 groups create a website in yr 1; system set up for groups with existing web site to link to	Website online by 1 April 2006. Factsheets and toolkits by 30/9/06	Capital grant from ChangeUp of c. £50k over 3 yrs			

		portal 20 factsheets published on portal for main topics					
Mailings inc Newsletters	All generic providers and some specialists	Regular publication to various timings	Existing activity	Within above	Within * above plus £5,000 print, post and mailing pa	Within * above	Within * above
E-mailings	All generic providers and some specialists	Regular publication to various timings 10 networks set up via portal in year 1		Within existing or planned resources	Within * above	Within * above	Within * above
Creation of directories of premises and facilities	OVID Consortium	To develop five district wide directories of premises and facilities available to VCOs, with information about location, facilities, parking, public transport, disabled access, cost of hire/rent, contact details; information available in an online directory accessible to local volunteering and advice hubs, local libraries etc, with option to	Completion of each directory; availability of each directory	To be negotiated with individual district councils	To be agreed	To be agreed	To be agreed

		register/update online.					
Establishing local info points	OVID Consortium via OCVA	Identification of ten places with a combination of a PC and reference books	Feasibility study to be completed by 31 March 2007, Bid for funding for pilot outlets in 2006	See also Developing Support for Volunteering Estimate capital funding of £1,000 per outlet for books plus £500 internet subs plus £500 for shelving, furniture, labelling etc. plus £2,000 PC and broadband if not already in place			
Feasibility and piloting models for small VCO advisors	OVID via OCVA, ORCC and OREC Banbury CVS	Identification of possible models for establishing local advisors; costed proposals for piloting possible models in Yr 2/3 including development of Banbury CVS		Working group of OVID members serviced by Continuation Fund worker	See Developing Support for Volunteering		
Promoting/marketing the availability of information to VCOs	OVID inc statutory partners	Directory of VCS support services in Oxfordshire; Publicity on available services	Directory completed by 31/3/07; Publicity via leaflets, web portal etc during second half of 2006/2007	Working group of OVID members serviced by OCVA Information Officer	Within * above		
Translation and interpreting services	OREC	Directory of languages needed in the county produced List of existing translated material drawn up	Abridged material re: relevant infrastructure services e.g. funding cycles, by 30.9.06	OREC sessional staff with Oxfordshire Translation and Interpreting Unit	£19,750	Plus inflation	Plus inflation
Existing or approved funding in 2006/07					£42,588		
New Funding required					£40,620		
TOTALS					£83,208		

Quality standards, managing performance inc risk assessment	OCVA & OCVYS generic; specialist providers will continue to promote own standards	5 groups supported through PQASSO each year	OCVA staff member trained as PQASSO mentor by 31/12/06	£750 training, travel plus licence to deliver PQASSO	£750	Plus inflation	Plus inflation
H & S inc risk assessment, insurance	ORCC, OCVA, BCVS, OREC	Publication of web links to useful sites on portal plus include in leaflets see LIDP2 Develop further in yrs 2 and 3 with specialist providers and statutory orgs		See LIDP2	See LIDP2	See LIDP2	See LIDP2
CRB checks	OVID Consortium via OCVA, OCVYS, ORCC and others	Survey of existing agents plus options for broadening existing services	Options appraisal with recommendations for service development by December 2006	Working group of OVID members	No resource needs identified at this time	To be determined	To be determined
HR and employment law	OVID Consortium	Publication of web links to ACAS, Sandy A etc. on portal and in leaflets and mailings (see LIDP2) Watching brief on national workforce hub to identify future options for the delivery of services associated with employment, human		Included in LIDP2 for yr 1	To be agreed	To be agreed	To be agreed

		resources.					
ICT	OVID Consortium	Watching brief on ICT national hub aiming to get their support for survey to identify sources of information, advice and support on ICT within the county, and at regional and national level; and preparation of a directory for signposting to these services	Deferred until year 2				
Existing or approved funding for 2006/07					£142,600		
New Funding required					£67,750		
TOTALS					£210,350		

LIDP PROPOSAL 4: Supporting community capacity building							
Aim(s): To build on and strengthen support for communities and community groups to develop and take action through capacity building and community development work and to promote liaison and joint working among the agencies involved							
Task	Lead body	Outputs	Milestones for new activities	Resources	Budget yr 1	Budget yr2	Budget yr 3
Community capacity building in rural areas	ORCC	Support to 50 groups on parish action planning and implementation p.a.	Existing activity	2 FTE - current funding ends March 2008 after which new funding required	£83,000 (secured)	£83,000 + inflation (secured)	£83,000 + inflation (secured)
Strengthen and extend support in rural areas	ORCC	Support to 75 groups p.a.	Funding secured New appointments made 25% increase in annual parish caseload by year 2	2 additional FTE	£79,000	Plus inflation	Plus inflation
Capacity building with ASP communities	OREC with support from OCVA	Development of confidence in establishing ASP community VCOs, and in self-advocacy	Agreement of a programme of work with selected groups; approval of funding; recruitment of a community development worker	Diversity Development Worker post included in Proposal 5			
Mapping provision of community development support in urban and rural areas within the	OVID Consortium with CD Forum	Report Interested agencies	Mapping brief produced Researcher	Working group of OVID members and others interested	£5000		

county and assessing whether there are unmet needs in particular areas e.g. growth towns		discuss findings and agree future action	appointed Report produced Agency meeting held Action plan agreed				
Facilitating a Community Development Forum for Oxfordshire	OVID Consortium	20 agencies working in urban and/or rural areas meet p.a. On-going sharing of information on caseloads & work programmes	Initial meeting of agencies to explore need and feasibility If need agreed:- Means of resourcing identified Terms of Reference; Membership agreed Forum meets in early 2007 Protocol for information sharing agreed	Initially working group of OVID members and others interested 0.25 FTE for ongoing Forum, support	Support work is within existing resources of agencies	Within existing resources	Within existing resources
Existing or approved funding for 2006/07					£83,000		
New Funding required					£84,000		
TOTALS					£167,000		

LIDP PROPOSAL 5: Promoting Diversity and Equality							
Aim(s): To promote diversity and racial equality in Oxfordshire within and through the voluntary and community sector							
Task	Lead body	Outputs	Milestones for new activities	Resources	Budget yr 1	Budget yr2	Budget yr 3
Creating a Diversity Forum for Oxfordshire	OVID Consortium via OREC, Refugee Resource and other diversity bodies working with disabled people, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender people etc	To develop an Oxfordshire Diversity Forum tasked with carrying forward and broadening aspects of the ASP programme to include other stigmatised and excluded social groups.	Enter into a Partnership Agreement with Refugee Resource and Oxfordshire Council for Disabled People. Undertake a training needs analysis with OVID Consortium members. Produce a training programme on race, culture and disability awareness.	OVID member organisations / OCVA and OREC sessional workers and staff members	To be determined	To be determined	To be determined
Providing specialist infrastructure and capacity building services for the ASP communities	OREC, Refugee Resource	Strategic business plan for the development of infrastructure services that meet the particular needs of the ASP communities at county and district level, including the way services should be delivered	Joint work with OCVA and the Diversity Officers within local authorities and the NHS	Business Plan to be developed by OREC within existing resources	£39,500	Plus inflation	Plus inflation
Promoting diversity	OVID Consortium	To develop a Diversity	Establish good working	OREC / Refugee	£20,000	Plus inflation	Plus inflation

awareness and good practice within VCOs	via OCVA (disability); OREC and Refugee Resource(race equality); and others	Training Programme for the VCS in Oxfordshire to cover basic diversity awareness, followed up by a specific focus on working with particular groups and minorities.	relationships with local authority and NHS Diversity Officers. Identify existing cultural and diversity events and training; identify gaps and opportunities Promote expanded programme of events and	Resource / OCVA			
Developing a voluntary organisation to represent and meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities Research options Launch new organisation	OREC in partnership with Traveller groups Sponsored by OREC on a 'promote and float' basis with advice and support from OCVA	Feasibility study prepared with and by people from the travelling community	Proposal for a new VCO for Gypsies and Travellers complete by July 2006 Steering committee of people from the travelling communities formed. New VCO registered as a charity.	Fieldwork with Gypsies and study report written with support from OREC	£10,000 £32,000	£50,000	- £50,000
Existing or approved funding in 2006/07					£0		
New Funding required					£101,500		
TOTALS					£101,500		

LIDP PROPOSAL 6: Improving information and support for Faith-based social and community activity							
Aim(s): To identify and support the social and community activities being undertaken by Faith Communities; to promote links with non Faith-based social and community activity undertaken by VCOs in Oxfordshire.							
Task	Lead body	Outputs	Milestones for new activities	Resources	Budget yr 1	Budget yr2	Budget yr 3
Compile a directory of social and community activities undertaken by Faith Communities Involve all faith communities in a collaborative effort to become involved in and support these activities wherever possible.	Churches Together in Oxfordshire or single denominations in co-operation with others.	A directory with contact details of Faith Community provision throughout the County	All congregations of Faith Communities contacted; Social and community activities recorded	A project officer with comparative religion	£50,000 first year to include start up costs and equipment as well as personnel.	£39,500 + RPI	£39,500 + RPI
Provide authoritative advice to all faith-based groups on the scope and implementation of relevant legislation and regulations for their particular activities	Churches Together in Oxfordshire or single denominations in co-operation with others including the generic VCS infrastructure providers	Information and advice available Procedures guide available	Service available Procedures and guidance available	Same project officer in year 1; in years 2,3 a person who has comparative religion skills to ensure the material produced is available across faith communities	Included above tailored to cultural and religious needs.	£39,500 + RPI	£39,500 + RPI
Existing or approved funding in 2006/07					£0		
New Funding required					£50,000		
TOTALS					£50,000		

LIDP PROPOSAL 7: Enhancing networks and partnerships and promoting the sector							
Aim(s): To improve joint working and collaboration with the VCS, and between the VCS and its statutory and business partners To raise the profile and improve public knowledge and awareness of the voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire.							
Task	Lead body	Outputs	Milestones for new activities	Resources	Budget yr 1	Budget yr2	Budget yr 3
Improving links and communication within the VCS	OVID Consortium	Steering groups in place for each forum by 31/3/07 Directory of 1,000 groups on portal with 50 groups taking up free websites in year 1	5 district forums events and 1 county forum event in year 1	Cherwell forum paid by Cherwell DC Consortium expenses plus 0.5 FTE Project worker employed through ChangeUp continuation funding and Defra RSCP yr 1 Web portal	In kind (Cherwell) £12,667 (ChangeUp) £20,800 (Defra RSCP) See LIDP 2 for portal capital funding	tic	tic
Improving links and information sharing between generic and specialist infrastructure providers	OVID Consortium	Rolling programme of protocols developed for improved liaison and collaborative working between generic and specialist infrastructure providers working across districts and	Partnership protocol between generic OVID providers and OCVYS and OREC in year 1. OCVA, ORCC, Banbury CVS share databases via portal	Professional facilitation	£4,500 allowed for in OVID continuation funding	No ongoing costs identified at this stage	No ongoing costs identified at this stage

		at county level. Data sharing protocols between OVID and OCIS and MIND/Mental Health Matters in relation to portal.					
Raising the profile of VCS groups in the wider community		Voluntary Voice column in Oxford Times continues weekly. Extend to other local media in Banbury, Witney etc. Seek funding to build on ASP media project to train VCOs in working with the media (include in short course programme) Websites for smaller groups including ASP groups via portal (see above)	Funding achieved	Included in Info officer see LIDP 2 Part of training officer see LIDP 3	Included elsewhere		
Improving links and communication between the VCS and the statutory sector	OVID Compact steering groups LSPs	Compact codes of practice for consultation and policy appraisal, volunteering, BME groups, community	Compact compliance and funding fair 2006	Compact secretariat Expenses for VCS	£20,000 0.5 post £3,000 Compact secretariat £5,000 expenses for	Plus inflation	Plus inflation

		groups Representational structures agreed in 2006/07 for: Rural forum OCP, Public Service Board (building on experience of Children & Young people board)	OVID procurement and commissioning event April 2006 to link with LAA.	reps to engage with statutory initiatives	VCS reps		
Extending the ASP Media Project principles to the promotion of the VCS in Oxfordshire	OVID Consortium	A small group of VCS volunteers and employees in each district, and at county level, trained and able to deal with the media	Project established - September 2006; First groups trained April 2007; Follow up training annually	Training run by volunteer journalists and media people	Within existing resources	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
Promote collaboration and joint working between Faith and non-Faith based social and community activity	Churches Together in Oxfordshire or single denominations in co-operation with others including the generic VCS infrastructure providers via the OVID Consortium	Dialogue between faith and Non-Faith based activities and services at local and county level	Exchange of information Quarterly meetings between OVID and Churches Together and other inter-Faith bodies	Within existing resources	Within existing resources	Within existing resources	Within existing resources
Existing or approved funding in 2006/07					£65,967		
New Funding required					£0		
TOTALS					£65,967		

18. Risk Assessment

1. The model of developing local volunteering centres and information points fails due to a lack of suitable local partners.	
How might the risk arise?	There is a lack of interest in taking part. There is interest but there is a lack of local organisational capacity and resources.
Likelihood of the risk materialising High, Med, Low, Very Low	Medium, will vary from place to place. Medium to high, will vary from place to place.
Significance	High. This is the crux of the whole strategy.
Who manages the risk?	The OVID Consortium, bearing in mind that many factors for success are outside its control; the RSCP Partnership whose programme will be adversely affected.
Who would be affected?	The local groups that are currently less well supported in some parts of the county, and the communities that they serve.
Action to be taken to minimise risk	The feasibility study to be undertaken under the auspices of the OVID Consortium will need to be realistic in terms of the options for developing these local hubs, and identify a small number of pilot or demonstration projects that can be used to promote the concept in other areas over a period of time - i.e. a cascade effect.

2. The LIDP programme fails to deliver the quality and range of services that front line organisations need and/or expect.	
How might the risk arise?	<p>Infrastructure providers fail to listen to their customers' needs.</p> <p>Infrastructure providers fail to deliver the services that are needed in terms of quantity, quality, equity or accessibility.</p> <p>Lack of resources at the level of the Consortium partnership needed to monitor the ongoing work programme.</p>
Likelihood of the risk materialising High, Med, Low, Very Low	<p>Low.</p> <p>Low, provided that the resources to undertake the programme are available.</p>
Significance	<p>High. If the Consortium fails to monitor and ensure that service providers listen and deliver, then the purpose of the whole programme is frustrated.</p>
Who manages the risk?	<p>The OVID Consortium, the RSCP Partnership and individual infrastructure service providers.</p>
Who would be affected?	<p>The end users of VCS front line services - the communities that are served by the VCS.</p> <p>Front-line groups that would not have the quality of support that they need to effectively discharge their missions; their sponsors in local government and elsewhere who would not achieve the delivery and value for money that they think they are paying for.</p> <p>The OVID Consortium would lose credibility and be unable to deliver the programme.</p>
Action to be taken to minimise risk	<p>The OVID Consortium will move from a strategic planning role to a monitoring and reviewing role as the programme gets under way.</p> <p>The OVID Consortium will promote the take-up of recognised quality standards by all infrastructure bodies, as a first stage in encouraging take-up by the sector more generally.</p> <p>The OVID Consortium will negotiate resources to support the programme's management and administration.</p>

3. There is a breakdown in the OVID partnership	
How might the risk arise?	<p>There is a failure to establish an effective working relationship between the infrastructure bodies currently part of OVID and those that are not part of it..</p> <p>There is a failure to establish an effective working relationship between the VCS / VCS infrastructure providers and the statutory sector / statutory sector infrastructure providers.</p> <p>There is a breakdown in relationships between infrastructure bodies that are currently part of OVID.</p> <p>There is a breakdown in relationships between VCS infrastructure bodies and front line VCOs.</p> <p>Individual members of the partnership or national and regional infrastructure bodies are required to, or choose to, compete with each other for the provision of VCS infrastructure services and associated funding.</p> <p>Lack of resources at the level of the Consortium partnership needed to sustain an ongoing work programme.</p>
Likelihood of the risk materialising High, Med, Low, Very Low	<p>Medium, will depend on the response of individual organisations and networks.</p> <p>Low, but may vary from statutory body to statutory body.</p> <p>Very low.</p> <p>Low.</p> <p>Medium.</p> <p>High.</p>
Significance	<p>1 - 5 High. A fundamental principle of the OVID Consortium and the LIDP would be in breach.</p> <p>6. Lack of resources to take the Consortium forward puts the delivery of the programme in jeopardy.</p>
Who manages the risk?	The OVID Consortium
Who would be affected?	<p>The end users of VCS front line services - the communities that are served by the VCS.</p> <p>Front-line groups that would not have the quality of support that they need to effectively discharge their missions; their sponsors in local government and elsewhere who would not achieve the delivery and value for money that they think they are paying for.</p> <p>The OVID Consortium would lose credibility and be unable to deliver the programme..</p>
Action to be taken to minimise risk	<p>Partnership protocols to be signed up to.</p> <p>An active and ongoing programme of communication and consultation.</p> <p>The OVID Consortium will negotiate resources to support the programme's management and administration.</p>

4. The LIDP programme loses impetus because of a lack of leadership or because initial leadership is lost.

How might the risk arise?	Key leaders of VCS organisations lose enthusiasm and energy, leave the field of play and are not replaced.. High level champions do not emerge throughout the statutory sector (local government, LSP, health, police, etc);
Likelihood of the risk materialising High, Med, Low, Very Low	Medium, may vary from organisation to organisation. Medium, may vary from organisation to organisation.
Significance	High. Without effective and committed leadership, the programme will flounder.
Who manages the risk?	Trustees of the infrastructure service providers who will need to support and sustain their senior managers; the OVID Consortium Members and senior managers in public bodies; the OVID Consortium.
Who would be affected?	The end users of VCS front line services - the communities that are served by the VCS. Front-line groups that would not have the quality of support that they need to effectively discharge their missions; Their sponsors in local government and elsewhere who would not achieve the delivery and value for money that they think they are paying for. The OVID Consortium would lose credibility and be unable to deliver the programme.
Action to be taken to minimise risk	The OVID Consortium needs to be able to monitor the wellbeing of the organisations that are involved in delivering the programme; and provide advice and support where needed. The cross sector protocols need to ensure engagement with the LIDP programme at a senior level; the OVID Consortium needs to encourage high level involvement from partner organisations through its programme of partnership and promotion.

5. Insufficient funding is obtained to deliver the programme, or particular proposals and actions within the programme	
How might the risk arise?	<p>The proposals are not considered worth funding, either because funders do not see the need, or because they think the proposals are not fit for purpose.</p> <p>Funders think they are worth funding but do not have the funding available</p> <p>Competition for funding between front line service providers and infrastructure providers is resolved in the interests of front line agencies - VCS infrastructure is not given sufficient priority.</p> <p>There is funding for some parts of the programme but not other parts.</p> <p>Funders decide that some VCS infrastructure tasks should be undertaken within their own organisations rather than via funding for VCS infrastructure providers.</p> <p>National funding requires matched funding from local authorities, which is not available.</p> <p>Short term or start-up funding in the early years might not be sustained over the ten years of the programme.</p> <p>National funding will prioritise geographical areas of greater socio-economic need such as inner city areas..</p>
Likelihood of the risk materialising High, Med, Low, Very Low	<p>Low.</p> <p>High.</p> <p>Medium, may vary from place to place, and funder to funder.</p> <p>Very high.</p> <p>Medium, may vary from place to place, funder to funder or project to project..</p> <p>Medium.</p> <p>High.</p> <p>High.</p>
Significance	High. Under any of these scenarios the programme would either not start up, would not satisfy the needs of front line VCOs and the communities that they serve, or would be unsustainable.
Who manages the risk?	Funders at all levels.
Who would be affected?	<p>The end users of VCS front line services - the communities that are served by the VCS.</p> <p>Front-line groups that would not have the quality of support that they need to effectively discharge their missions; their sponsors in local government and elsewhere who would not achieve the delivery and value for money that they think they are paying for.;</p>
Continued	
Action to be taken to minimise	The OVID Consortium must continue to make the case locally, regionally and nationally for why good infrastructure support is a

risk	<p>necessary pre-condition for an effective VCS.</p> <p>The OVID Consortium must develop a funding strategy based on the principle of a mixed economy.</p> <p>The OVID consortium and the infrastructure providers must continue to ensure that any proposals put forward for funding are based in real need, well thought through, and backed by a business plan.</p>
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6. The importance of local VCS infrastructure provision is downgraded in favour of national and regional initiatives.	
How might the risk arise?	<p>Capacity Builders decides to prioritise national and regional ‘centres of excellence’ and the national hubs so that they take a disproportionate amount of the available funding.</p> <p>DEFRA changes its policy of resourcing rural infrastructure and community capacity building support with decisions devolved to local partnerships</p> <p>National and regional umbrella organisations make their pitch for local service delivery.</p>
Likelihood of the risk materialising High, Med, Low, Very Low	<p>Medium.</p> <p>Medium.</p> <p>High.</p>
Significance	High. The focus for supporting local infrastructure would then devolve unreasonably upon local resources and voluntary effort.
Who manages the risk?	Capacity Builders. DEFRA
Who would be affected?	<p>The end users of VCS front line services - the communities that are served by the VCS.</p> <p>Front-line groups that would not have the quality of support that they need to effectively discharge their missions; their sponsors in local government and elsewhere who would not achieve the delivery and value for money that they think they are paying for.</p> <p>The OVID Consortium would lose credibility and be unable to deliver the programme.</p>
Action to be taken to minimise risk	<p>All partners involved in the OVID Consortium would need to lobby effectively at regional and national level to ensure that this does not happen.</p> <p>All partners to the Rural Social and Community Programme would need to support the programme.</p>

7. Lack of a supportive political environment	
How might the risk arise?	<p>There is a change in national government and/or in national government policy and priorities.</p> <p>There is a change in local government and/or local government policy and priorities.</p> <p>Local government reorganisation changes the operating environment for VCS infrastructure bodies.</p> <p>Elected members do not engage with the LIDP development process at a sufficiently strategic level.</p>
Likelihood of the risk materialising High, Med, Low, Very Low	<p>High.</p> <p>High.</p> <p>Medium.</p> <p>Low, but may vary.</p>
Significance	<p>Medium. To some extent, there is independent funding available to support ChangeUp, and some of the actions outlined in the LIDP could be undertaken within existing resources in the short to medium term.</p>
Who manages the risk?	<p>Central and local government. The Local Strategic Partnership(s).</p>
Who would be affected?	<p>The end users of VCS front line services - the communities that are served by the VCS.</p> <p>Front-line groups that would not have the quality of support that they need to effectively discharge their missions; their sponsors in local government and elsewhere who would not achieve the delivery and value for money that they think they are paying for.</p> <p>The OVID Consortium would lose credibility and be unable to deliver the programme.</p>
Action to be taken to minimise risk	<p>The OVID Consortium will actively promote cross-sector partnership and promote the value of the VCS contribution locally, and at the regional level.</p>

Annex 1

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

'VCS'

This is a shorthand reference to the Voluntary and Community Sector.

'VCOs'

This is a shorthand reference to Voluntary and Community Organisations.

'Capacity Building'

*"... activity that empowers and strengthens the ability of voluntary and community organisations to develop their organisations, systems, people and skills so that they are better able to define and achieve their objectives; engage in consultation and planning; manage projects; and take part in partnerships, social enterprise and service delivery."*²⁸

'Community Capacity Building'

"Activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development their communities."

'Infrastructure'

*"... the facilities, organisational structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support and develop, co-ordinate, represent and promote front line organisations thus enabling them to deliver their missions more effectively."*²⁹

'Infrastructure Organisations'

Infrastructure organisations are:

*"... those whose primary purpose is to provide infrastructure functions or services (support and development, co-ordination, representation and promotion) to front line organisations. They are sometimes called umbrella organisations, second tier organisations or intermediary organisations."*³⁰

'Generic Infrastructure Organisations'

Generic infrastructure organisations provide support to all VCOs within a particular geographic area.

²⁸ Active Communities Unit, (2004), op. cit., page 15

²⁹ Active Communities Unit, (2004), op. cit., page 15

³⁰ Active Communities Unit, (2004), op. cit., page 15

'Specialist Infrastructure Organisations'

Specialist or 'sub-sectoral' infrastructure organisations provide support to VCOs working with specific communities such as Gypsies and Travelers; specific client groups such as the elderly or people with learning disabilities; BME and faith groups; or within specific service areas such as health and social care.

'Infrastructure Support Services'

In practical terms, infrastructure support might include any or all of the following:

- support for individuals starting up a new group or organisation;
- assisting with access to premises and facilities - meeting rooms, offices, equipment etc;
- giving advice and information on recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers and operating a volunteer recruitment service;
- giving advice and information on how to recruit, train, manage and develop employees including compliance with employment legislation, equal opportunities etc;
- developing the organisation, including:
 - governance and leadership;
 - organisational management;
 - social inclusion, race equality and diversity;
 - service development and planning;
 - setting targets and quality standards;
 - performance monitoring;
 - business planning;
 - funding and financial management;
 - marketing;
 - health and safety;
 - risk management and insurance;
 - problem solving and support in a crisis.
- information, advice or assistance in relation to public policy, relevant legislation, significant developments that impact on the sector's operating environment, and best practice;
- specialist support in particular areas of service delivery - for example, meeting professional standards in child care provision;
- information and communication technology - strategies for deploying ICT, access to low cost support / equipment and software, ongoing ICT support;
- skills & training - developing the organisational and professional skills of employees and volunteers including management committees;

- partnership building / brokerage - bringing together frontline organisations and other public and private sector organisations for joint/co-operative policy making, planning and service delivery;
- policy and research: collecting and providing evidence in order to influence policy, planning and service delivery;
- advocacy / representation: on behalf of voluntary and community groups to policy makers, service planners and funders.

'Social Enterprise'

A social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners. Social enterprises are diverse. They include local community enterprises, social firms, mutual organisations such as co-operatives, and large-scale organisations operating nationally and internationally. There is no single legal model for social enterprises. They include companies limited by guarantee, industrial and provident societies, and companies limited by shares. Some organisations are unincorporated and others are registered charities.

'PQASSO'

PQASSO is a quality assurance system designed by Charities Evaluation Services specifically for small voluntary and community organisations, or for project teams within larger organisations.

Annex 2

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE OVID CONSORTIUM AND STEERING GROUP, ASP
STEERING GROUP AND CONSULTANTS**

Name of Organisation	Consortium Member	Steering Group Member
The Right Reverend Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester	Chair	Chair
Age Concern Oxfordshire	Yes	Resigned 10/05
Banbury Council for Voluntary Service	Yes	Yes
Cherwell District Council	Yes	
Churches Together in Oxfordshire	Yes	
East Oxford Action	Yes	
Faringdon Voluntary Services	Yes	
Mental Health Matters	Yes	
Oxford City Council	Yes	Yes
Oxfordshire Area Consortium for Patient and Public Involvement	Yes	
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	Yes	
Oxfordshire Council of Disabled People	Yes	
Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (previously Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action)	Yes	Yes
Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services	Yes	
Oxfordshire County Council	Yes	Yes
Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum	Yes	Yes
Oxfordshire Play Association	Yes	
Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council	Yes	Yes
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council	Yes	Yes
South Oxfordshire District Council	Yes	Yes
Vale of White Horse District Council	Yes	
Wantage Community Information Centre	Yes	
West Oxfordshire District Council	Yes	
West Oxfordshire Volunteer Link-up	Yes	Yes

ASP STEERING GROUP

Name of Organisation	Steering Group Member
Regional ChangeUp Co-ordinator	Glyn Evans
Regional ChangeUp ASP Co-ordinator	George Mathew
Advisory Service for Traveller Communities	Lucy Beckett & Diana Senior
African Descendants Support and Development Group / Social and Health Care	Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan
Asian Cultural Centre	Javed Malik
Arise Enterprises	Lonah Hebditch
Banbury CVS	Jim Flux
Oxford City Council Neighbourhood Renewal	Val Johnson
Oxford Diocese	Alison Webster
Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action	Alison Baxter
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council	Meryl Smith
Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council	Chinta Kallie & Charity Chiwunya
Refugee Resource	Amanda Webb-Johnson
SACRE / Guru Kripa Kshetra	C K Vadivale
Social Inter-Faith Network	Bede Gerrard

CONSULTANTS

The following people worked for North Harbour Consulting Limited in the course of this project:

John Palmer (Managing Director); Salma Ahmed (Director); Steve Holloway (Associate Consultant); Helen Brafield (Associate Consultant); Catherine Ely (Associate Consultant).

Jeremy Spafford (Independent Consultant) acted as facilitator for the workshops with VCS and statutory organisations.

Annex 3

LIST OF OVID WORKING PAPERS

TITLE	AVAILABILITY
WP1 - Review of the Oxfordshire Compact	Not available
WP2 - Survey of Infrastructure Services elsewhere in the GOSE Region	Not available
WP3 - A note on Information Systems	Available
WP4 - Duplicate database records	Not available
WP 5 - Structures for Infrastructure Delivery	Not available
WP 6 - Results of the Infrastructure User Survey - Final Report	Available
WP 7 - Results of the User Survey Mapping Data - Final Report	Available
WP 8 - Results of the Infrastructure Provider Survey - Final Report	Available
WP 9 - Results of the ASP Infrastructure User Survey - Final Report	Available
WP 10 - Profile of Oxford City User Survey Results	Available
WP 11 - Profile of the Cherwell DC User Survey Results	Available
WP 12 - Profile of the South Oxfordshire DC User Survey Results	Available
WP 13 - Profile of the Vale of White Horse DC User Survey Results	Available shortly
WP 14 - Profile of the West Oxfordshire DC User Survey Results	Available shortly
WP 15 - Final Report on the District and County Forum Meetings	Available
WP 16 - The Infrastructure Support Needs of Rural Communities and Rural Community Groups	Available

Working Papers contain background information intended to inform discussion within the OVID Consortium and Steering Group, together with preliminary results for surveys and reports of meetings and workshops. Some working papers are not available either because they are confidential or because they are no longer relevant. They are available as electronic copies delivered by email only from Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (info@ocva.org.uk).



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Annex 4

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Dear Meryl

OVID consultation - joint local authority response

I am writing on behalf of the local authorities in Oxfordshire to submit a joint local authority response to the OVID Infrastructure Development Plan. The Leaders and Chief Executives of the following councils have agreed the response set out below:

- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford City Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council

Whilst this response outlines our collective points of agreement, it is important for the Consortium to note that there are a number of issues that each local authority will need to comment on in greater detail. Some local authorities have already submitted more detailed comments on individual proposals as part of the consultation. This joint response should be considered within this context.

As our response points out, the proposals will require further discussion and consideration by both the statutory and voluntary sector before some, or all, of the proposals are implemented.

Joint Local Authority Response to OVID

“The OVID project has been a complex and sensitive project involving a wide cross section of interests and the background papers reveal the quality and depth of the research undertaken.

We welcome the report, particularly as the OVID Consortium has presented it as a development plan for further discussion, and not as a bid for funds. The plan identifies opportunities for changing the approach to infrastructure support in Oxfordshire. It also presents challenging questions about funding gaps, sustainability and choices about priorities.

However as a result of the Rural Social & Community Fund bid and this OVID submission we expect additional funding to be made available via central govt, Capacity Builders and Lottery Funds.

At this stage it is difficult for us to respond to the proposals in detail and discussions will take place in due course as part of the development process. The local authorities will continue to play their part in the Consortium and are committed to working with the Voluntary and Community Sector on these issues.”

Yours sincerely



Gwenllian Davies
Communities Team Manager

Annex 5

STATEMENT OF CONFORMITY WITH THE GOSE CHANGEUP CRITERIA

GOSE Criteria (<u>Consortia Guidance Paper</u> , pages 6 / 7)	Ovid Consortium Comment
Evidence of need and how it will be met across a wide range of interests	Evidence of need was collected via Oxfordshire's first ever VCS mapping and infrastructure needs survey, the parallel survey of infrastructure providers, the district and county forum meetings and other consultations. This is quantitative and qualitative information referenced in (a) working papers; and (b) Part 1 of the LIDP.
Consultation processes - plans to ensure accountability to users and extend the reach of services to non-users	The mapping and infrastructure needs survey questionnaire was sent to 100% of the VCOs identified on a number of contact databases held by the county council, OCVA and others. There was a 20% overall response rate although this varied between districts. All the major infrastructure providers were also covered with a response rate of 21%. There were six district and county forums, a number of meetings with ASP target groups plus 1:1 interviews. Later in the programme there were two consultation events (a) with VCS and (b) with statutory bodies. The final consultation on the draft LIDP with a feedback pro forma was sent to all those organizations who had participated in some way in the previous work programme - including those that had returned survey questionnaires. The evidence of need and strategy for developing infrastructure services have been endorsed by (a) consultation on the LIDP with the VCS; and (b) consultation with LAs and other statutory partners.
Build on what exists - what is the current capacity of infrastructure providers to deliver a comprehensive service?	This was assessed through the survey of major infrastructure providers, plus a mapping exercise undertaken by the four main generic VCS infrastructure providers. The conclusion in the LIDP is that some of the actions proposed can be undertaken by existing bodies and existing resources; but many of the essential services that are not provided at present or where there are gaps will need additional resources. The fragility of the sector is noted in the report and issues of sustainability remain unresolved.
Benefit - The extent to which infrastructure support is equitable across the area and targeted at marginalised groups	Current provision is something of a post-code lottery with different parts of the county being able or not able to access the services they need. Services may not all be accessible and appropriate for the ASP target communities. Proposals in the LIDP address the issue of making services more uniformly available to all at local and county level; and making services accessible and more appropriate to different communities.
Links between County and Unitary consortia	Not applicable. There are no unitary authorities in the Oxfordshire sub-region.
Continued	

<p>Relationships - balance and relationship between generic and specialist infrastructure; links between rural and urban services; links between local, sub-regional and regional infrastructure</p>	<p>There is further work to be done on mapping the coverage of specialist infrastructure services, and the way in which generic and specialist services might be linked up in future. There are issues to be resolved about the connection between service delivery in Oxford City and in the remainder of the county, which is predominantly rural. The LIDP's underlying strategy is predicated on the need to achieve links between local, district-level and county services. Work remains to be done on the connections with regional and national infrastructure once the National Hubs and regional services are established and more is known about the way they will work.</p>
<p>Services - what existing services might be consolidated and extended? What other services might be considered?</p>	<p>See proposals in the LIDP - and particularly summary Table 2 on page 48.</p>
<p>Delivery - To what extent has the consortium explored the most effective way of delivering support functions?</p>	<p>The LIDP proposals for delivering better services across the county are based on a strategy that promotes local volunteering and information hubs, supported by district level services where they exist, and county level services from generic providers. This model of provision seems best suited to the provision of accessible services in a rural area where not everyone has access to the internet. Local hubs will be supported by telephone, internet services plus county-wide services.</p>
<p>BME engagement - What is the extent and role of BME organisations in the process of developing specialist infrastructure support?</p>	<p>Significant progress has been made in engaging with the ASP target communities. This will be built on through proposals 5 and 6 in the LIDP and in the continuation programme. The Media Project is seen as a model of good practice which will be continued and expanded into other areas of VCS work.</p>
<p>Specialist VCS - what is the extent of engagement and role of specialist infrastructure support organisations?</p>	<p>Oxfordshire was starting the LIDP process from a fairly low base. The work programme tended to concentrate on the work of the generic service providers although some specialist networks and providers were involved in the Consortium. Work to engage with more of the specialist is a priority for 2006/2007.</p>
<p>Sustainability - Does the LIDP represent value for money? How are stakeholders being engaged / how will they be engaged?</p>	<p>The Consortium believes that the LIDP represents good value for money. The likely cost of work requiring new investment is thought to represent around 3.5% of the current estimated value of all local authority funding in the county. There is a need to map the totality of public sector funding for the VCS in the county. The issue of sustainability is a concern given the realistic limits to local government funding, and the uncertainty about the way in which Capacity Builders and some other potential funders will support ChangeUp continuation. This is covered in the Risk Assessment (Risk 5, page 70). Stakeholders will be engaged individually and collectively through ongoing discussion within the OVID Consortium (which will continue), the county-wide Compact Steering Group, the LAA and the county and district level LSPs (if the latter continue).</p>
<p>Continued</p>	

<p>Strategic developments - How does the LIDP relate to the community plans being developed by the LSPs and other strategic developments?</p>	<p>See above. We are aware that the future role of LSPs in two-tier authorities is under review and that this issue will continue to evolve.</p>
<p>Diversity - Does the proposal reflect the diversity of individuals, communities and organisations including rural areas?</p>	<p>The mapping and needs assessment drew responses from widely different groups and organisations representing many different interests. The proposals reflect this, recognising the different needs and aspirations of urban and rural communities, ASP target groups and other excluded groups.</p>
<p>Compact compliance - Has the development of the LIDP been compliant with the commitments in all the local Compacts?</p>	<p>There is currently one Compact for the whole of Oxfordshire, which currently has a protocol on funding. The protocol on consultation is under development. The approach to consultation and involvement of the VCS and its statutory partners adopted in the LIDP process goes well beyond the requirements of the current Oxfordshire Compact.</p>
<p>Monitoring and evaluation - How will the consortium monitor and evaluate the work? Does the proposal show willingness to share learning and contribute to evaluation?</p>	<p>There is agreement in principle that the OVID Consortium will take on responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the work. The methodology forms a strand in the early work programme - see Risk 2, Action to be taken, page 67.</p>
<p>Is a transparent mechanism to 'rural-proof' the work in place? (Additional DEFRA requirement)</p>	<p>The OVID Consortium has ensured throughout the process that the work programme and proposals have been rural-proofed - paragraphs 10.3 to 10.6, pages 29 to 30; and Working Paper 16.</p>