



*WOKINGHAM DISTRICT
CHANGE UP CONSORTIUM*





*INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT
FINAL PLAN*

2005 - 2014



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Introduction

The Government set out a new plan to improve the infrastructure support available to frontline voluntary and community organisations. This was a long-term vision, that by 2014, frontline organisations would have support, that was nationwide, efficiently structured, and both reflected and promoted diversity. Crucially, it should be sustainably funded.

Wokingham District was allocated £100,000 to develop an Infrastructure Development Plan, with a further £25,400 for specific work around BME groups, faith groups, Travellers, Refugees and Asylum seekers. Community Voluntary Action – Wokingham District (CVA-WD) was chosen by Government Office for the South East (GOSE) to be the lead agency and accountable body for Wokingham District to draw together suitable partners to establish a consortium, which then took forward the development of and will be responsible for implementation of the infrastructure development plan for the District.

The main ChangeUp themes are:

- Performance improvement
- Workforce development
- ICT
- Governance
- Recruiting and developing volunteers
- Funding and enterprise

Following the announcement from GOSE in early December 2004 of the allocation of money to formulate an infrastructure development plan, CVA-WD wrote to all the voluntary and community groups, operating within the district asking them to prioritise their needs for infrastructure support. An open forum meeting was held on the 11th January 2005. As a result four key areas of support were highlighted and eight organisations came forward to sit on the consortium.



The four key areas were:

Funding support and guidance

Recruitment and retention of volunteers

Training


Representation support including trustee and governance

Background


Prior to January 2002 there was little infrastructure support to the 400 + voluntary and community groups and organisations working within Wokingham District. What did exist was patchy and uncoordinated with many organisations forced to use services from infrastructure organisations in neighbouring districts. Wokingham Voluntary Sector Forum (WDVSF) and Wokingham District Volunteer Development Agency (WDVDA) were the only infrastructure organisations operating within the district, but were severely under funded and operated on either a part time or solely voluntary basis.

In January 2002 Wokingham District Council for Voluntary Service (now Community Voluntary Action-Wokingham District) was formed with funding from the Community Fund. The organisation has achieved much within its short lifetime, taking on a central role in the partnership and engagement of the public sector with the voluntary and community sector. It quickly developed a range of support services including funding advice and development support roles and a training brokerage, which has enabled the sector for the first time in its history to access training locally rather than having to travel to training events. The funding advice function was particularly successful, bringing over £2 million of external funding into the area in less than three years, despite only being a part-time post.

Unfortunately funding for the Funding Advice project came to an end in December 2004, along with the core Community Fund grant. Since then the CVA has obtained core funding from Wokingham District Council of £40,000 per annum and £15,000 from Wokingham PCT. This leaves a shortfall of approximately £5,000 on the previous funding from the Community Fund and therefore there is no dedicated funding advice function at present. There was also a risk of the local



training provision project finishing at the end of October 2005 when the Learning and Skills Council funding ended. Both of these support services are amongst the four key support services the sector has indicated it needs.




The Wokingham District Volunteer Development Agency ceased to operate in June 2004 and since then Wokingham Volunteer Centre has successfully applied for and gained accreditation from Volunteering England. It has taken on this role with no additional funding, but obtained £12,000 development funding from Wokingham District Council in April 2005 and then a further £2,000 for one year, from Wokingham PCT specifically for the recruitment of community transport drivers.


Community Council for Berkshire (CCB) continues to offer support on rural issues within the district and is the lead body for the County-wide ChangeUp consortium. Its main areas of work in the district are Parish planning, village halls, rural transport and Rural housing as well as taking the lead on rural policy. It no longer undertakes a “CVS” role within the district.

BME groups and organisations within the district historically have had no infrastructure support apart from the generic support offered by the CVA. There is, however a strong BME forum within the district with approximately 30 groups represented. The BME population of Wokingham District as given in the 2001 census is 6.1% and has been growing significantly since then. At the start of this planning process there was only one BME organisation that had offices in the district and there has been an historical tendency for the BME community to use infrastructure services and office bases in Reading Borough.

At present there is a large and wide faith community in the District, with a number of non-Christian Groups tending to use places of worship outside of the District. This is likely to change over the coming years as the BME population continues to grow. There are five “Churches together” groups in the District and it is felt that one “Wokingham District Churches together” would aid communication and strengthen faith group work with the wider community. This would also make



inter-faith work easier to achieve and the faith community as a whole become more inclusive in strategic partnership work.



There is virtually no history of social enterprise in the district and the combination of lack of knowledge and fear is something that will have to be overcome in the mid to long-term of any development plan. Some organisations do not realise that they are already operating, at least in part, as a social enterprise. It is apparent that education of the sector about this issue is needed in the district. There is however a realisation that there may be opportunities for other income streams, which may arise from membership subscriptions (although unlikely due to small funding of membership groups) or more realistically shared accommodation such as community café, rental opportunities and savings on shared back office support to frontline organisations.

There have been a number of surveys and research reports carried out in the district between 2002 and 2005 and this evidence has been used alongside continued consultation to drive the development plan. An over-riding issue that has re-occurs through out all recent surveys and reports are that of mergers, closer partnership working and the need for a one-stop shop for the key voluntary and community sector services. An attempt to address these issues will be part of the longer-term vision of the development plan. The other obvious areas of concern for the sector are with regard to its long-term financial sustainability and its capacity to deliver the services needed.

Wokingham District is an affluent area, scoring very low in the Government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation, although there are a small number of "pockets" with significant problems. Property prices are high and there is a large proportion of the population that commutes to work outside of the district (Approximately 43%). The district has a large number of international and national corporate organisations, but again, a significant number of the employees live outside the district, which creates an environment of low community spirit and poor corporate social responsibility.



These factors create additional problems for the voluntary and community sector in the district, including the recruitment of volunteers, the involvement of the private sector and applications to external funding sources. Despite these problems, there is a thriving voluntary sector of over 400 organisations operating in the district, which with the proper support and infrastructure could be strengthened to enable it to meet the needs of the sector and community for the 21st century.

Terms of reference for the Wokingham District ChangeUp Consortium

Purpose

Wokingham's Voluntary and Community sector was allocated £100,000 to identify the support structure and services it needed to flourish and by March 2006 produce a final development plan to take that infrastructure through to 2014. A further £25,400 was allocated for work with BME and other groups requiring additional support. The Consortium set up a sub-group to oversee this particular work, mainly comprised of BME representatives from the Wokingham District BME Forum. The consortium's purpose was to drive and oversee this process. Initially, it agreed broad milestones, the achievement of which then indicated clear progress towards the development plan. The role of the consortium thereafter was:

- Establish principles and methodology
- Establish a work plan
- Commission any work
- Facilitate and oversee the development of the plan
- Participate fully in the development of the plan
- Market and communicate the plan
- Agree any project work undertaken
- Agree its final form
- Oversee its implementation



Membership

Central to the success of the development and implementation of the plan was the principle of stakeholder participation. Involvement or participation was felt to be important throughout the decision-making process. Accordingly, the consortium was made up of as broad a range as possible of groups and organisations from Voluntary and community, Statutory, private and Social enterprise sectors. The consortium sought to have a fair representation in relation to gender, race, age and various interest areas.

Although membership was in principle open to all organisations that had an interest in the Infrastructure plan, in reality, it was limited to a “manageable” number of representatives, which in turn gave a balanced, broad and knowledgeable input into the process.

Obligations of each participant:


- Represent their organisation’s views
- Communicate consortium developments to their own organisation
- Communicate their own and any other organisation responses to the consortium
- Act to further the purpose of the consortium and thereby act in its interests
- Seek to promote the consortium and increase awareness of it
- Seek to find the best solutions to the long-term strengthening and improvement of Infrastructure services to the Voluntary Sector.

Meetings

Meetings occurred as regularly as was deemed necessary by the consortium and the frequency was determined by the progress of the work plan. In addition, consortium members made every effort to attend open forum meetings and any other planned events.

Mechanism of reporting structures

The Infrastructure Consortium sought to add to the partnership structures in Wokingham through regular communication and consultation with all stakeholders.



In particular, this was carried out through open forum meetings, conferences, via the “Volunteer” newsletter and other partner’s publications, through the BME forum and the Local Strategic Partnership. It was important that communication and links were developed with the wider Regional and National ChangeUp process to avoid duplication and to achieve best value with the County-wide Consortium and regional and national hubs. It was also the aim of the consortium to engage the private sector wherever this was possible, which will continue to be explored through LAA, the District Economic Forum and the LSP. It is also vital that the integration of the local Compacts and implementation of their action plans is used as a mechanism to ensure that all parties adhere to their commitments.

Accountability

Community Voluntary Action- Wokingham District as lead and accountable body was responsible to GOSE for the administration of funds for ChangeUp including those specific for the additional support programme. CVA-WD also made details of expenditure available to the Consortium for monitoring purposes.

Decision-making

Each member of the Consortium has one vote within the Consortium when a vote may be necessary, provided they are present and have been actively involved.

Secretariat support

CVA-WD took responsibility for administrative tasks associated with the consortium and the wider ChangeUp work. During the first year, this took the form of ten hours per week admin time to support the Consultant in drawing up the initial plan and the associated projects.

Reimbursement

The expenses of staff of organisations represented (whether Statutory or voluntary) incurred as a result of attending Consortium meetings were expected to be covered by their organisations. Expenses incurred by attendance of any unpaid workers and additional meetings (such as regional meetings) were met by the consortium.



Wokingham Additional Support Programme Group

Terms Of Reference

The group membership was comprised of representatives from the different communities of the district identified by the Wokingham BME forum. Despite attempts by the consortium (and later by the project worker) it was not possible to get representation from the traveller community. At the time the group was set up, there were no identified Refugees or Asylum seekers within the district.

Each member of the group had one vote in any decision making process. In addition a member of CVA-WD and WDC attended in a non-voting capacity.

The group managed and monitored work deemed appropriate to the ChangeUp process.

All members of the group were expected to communicate with and inform their respective communities and the wider BME forum on issues relating to ChangeUp.

The group assisted CVA-WD (the lead agency and accountable body for ChangeUp in Wokingham District) in monitoring and in the accountability for financial information.

Two members of the group were elected on to the main consortium

The group's main purpose was to further strengthen the BME sector as a whole in Wokingham District and not specific communities.

The group met as regularly as required to ensure ChangeUp targets were met.

The group elected it's own Chair from amongst its membership.

CONSORTIUM MEMBERSHIP

NAME ORGANISATION (AREA OF REPRESENTATION)

Margaret Clayton CRUSE (Voluntary Sector/Frontline)

John Evans Earley Charity (Funding)

Rose Green WDC (Community Development Worker)


Anita Grosz Wokingham District Cultural Partnership (Culture/LSP)

Ashwani Gupta	WDC	(Social Inclusion)
Caroline Holden	WDC	(Income generation)
Dianne King	WDC	(Elected Council Member)
Lillian King	Crescent Resource Centre	(Voluntary Sector)
Christine Knox	Wokingham Volunteer Centre	(Infrastructure)
Daguo Li	Thames Valley Chinese Association	(ASP group)
Kate Long	Crescent Resource Centre	(Voluntary Sector)
Sue Moore	Wokingham PCT	(Health)
Deborah Morris	Wokingham Black Consultative Forum	(ASP group)
Simone Pickrell	Headway-rdi	(Social Enterprise)
Sue Roberts	WDC	(Council Partnership/Policy Officer)
Claire Robertson	MENCAP	(Voluntary Sector/Frontline)
Ian Saxton	CVA-WD	(Infrastructure)
Jeremy Sharpe	Wokingham Churches	(Faith)
Sue South	WDVSF	(Infrastructure)
Glyn Evans/George Mathew	GOSE Consortium Support	


METHODOLOGY

Following the announcement from GOSE in December 2004 of the initial ChangeUp allocation for Wokingham, Community Voluntary Action – Wokingham District (CVA-WD) informed all the Voluntary and community groups on its database of the news, called for an open forum meeting on the 11th January 2005 and distributed a questionnaire, asking for the sector to indicate its priorities for service support.

At the 11th January meeting the results of the questionnaire were announced and it was agreed that the four priority areas; Funding, Training, Volunteer recruitment and representation should be the initial focus of the development plan. The basis of a consortium was formed and further consortium meetings were arranged. At the first consortium meeting it was decided to appoint a project manager for fifty days to oversee the development of the plan up to the stage of submitting an interim draft plan to GOSE for approval by mid June 2005. It was also decided that the



best way forward to address the gaps in infrastructure support would be to invite proposals for six month pilot projects that would be evaluated in late February/early March 2006 in readiness for a full and final development plan by the end of March 2006.




A list of key stakeholders were identified by the consortium, to be interviewed by the project manager and to contribute to the consultation (list below). This included members of the consortium to allow for further detailed discussion than could be achieved at consortium meetings. The consortium also decided to hold open consultation/ progress report meetings with the remainder of the sector, once project proposals had been received and before an interim plan was sent to GOSE for approval.

Since the original core development plan allocation was announced, a further ring-fenced sum of £25,400 was allocated by GOSE to support the development of an infrastructure plan for Additional Support. Through the Wokingham District BME Forum a Wokingham BME ChangeUp group was formed to work through an initial plan and to engage with the wider Consortium in the development of a long-term strategic plan. Two elected persons from the BME group were given places on the main consortium.

Members of the Wokingham Consortium also attended the county consortium in order to strengthen links and to avoid duplication of resource. One example of this action was that although it was known that some voluntary and community groups in the district would benefit from ICT support, this work was not progressed at Unitary level because of the work being carried out elsewhere and at County level communication and information would be gained through a web portal system.

The Consortium received six pilot project proposals of which five were initially considered to fit the criteria for ChangeUp plus the Additional Support project. The proposers of each project were invited to present their ideas to a series of open ChangeUp meetings for consultation and indications from the wider sector



for preferences. All five proposals were deemed to meet the ChangeUp criteria, and after a number of meetings and discussions the Consortium agreed to submit all pilots for GOSE approval.

All pilot projects were evaluated in early March 2006 and evidence is included in the appendices of this final development plan.

Stakeholder list interviewed

Doug Patterson, CE of Wokingham District Council,
Sue Heatherington, CE of Wokingham PCT,
Elaine Cook, CE of CCB (County Consortium lead agency),
Jeremy Sharpe, Chair of Wokingham District Voluntary Sector Forum,
Christine Knox, Manager of Wokingham Volunteer Centre,
Claire Robertson, Manager of Wokingham Mencap,
Keith Seville, Chair of Wokingham BME Forum.
Anita Grosz, Wokingham Cultural Partnership,
Caroline Holden, WDC Income Generation Officer,
Hugh O’Keeffe Partnerships PCT,
Keith Burns WDC Corporate head of Strategy and Partnerships,
Kate Long, Manager of Crescent Neighbourhood Learning Centre,
Lillian King, Manager of Crescent Resource Centre,
Simone Pickrell, Director of Headway-rdi and Director of house mates services Ltd(social enterprise organisations),
Ian Saxton CE CVA-WD,
Josie Wragg and Ashwani Gupta WDC Social Inclusion Officers,
Peter Watson, WDC Procurement Officer,
Rev. Dan Tyndall Wokingham Faith Groups
and as already mentioned continued contact and two way reporting to the Local Strategic Partnership and the County Consortium.




Wokingham District Infrastructure Development Plan

Throughout the development process, the consortium has considered the long-term consequences of what is proposed, alongside the more obvious short-term needs and benefits. The requirement to produce a Development plan to 2014 (and beyond) that is sustainable and will add real value to the whole community of Wokingham District is a major task. It was decided to divide the plan into three time lines; short-term to April 2007, mid-term to March 2010 and a long-term vision to 2014.

The consortium has sought to address the issue of sustainability by involving key partners and potential funders from the very beginning and to look at areas such as social enterprise as possible alternatives to the sectors' historic reliance on grant rounds and general funding applications. We estimate that the cost of meeting all of the support areas highlighted by the surveys and the consultation process (including existing service delivery) would be in the region of £220-250 K pa. This would represent a massive increase on current financial provision for infrastructure support services within Wokingham District, but the total amount is not excessive for a population of the size of the District and has been achieved in many other areas of the country.

Due to the delayed, but very welcome announcement of the additional support grant for BME and other groups, the short-term part of the overall plan for Additional Support had slightly different time scales with a different approach. It was decided that a Development/capacity worker should be employed, firstly to map all BME groups working in the District, secondly to discover their needs and then to begin working towards a fully constituted BME support organisation for the district.

Outside of the specific service support areas for the sector, the plan needs to address other recurring issues, such as a "one-stop shop" that can accommodate all of the



infrastructure organisations and share back office support. The other key issues that need to be investigated are those of strategic alliances, possible mergers and closer partnership working across the sector. These issues have been raised a number of times by both external partners and from within the sector itself, not only during this project but also in previous consultations. These two issues run hand in hand and the creation of a “one-stop shop” could prove to be the catalyst to achieve closer working practices.

If all of the above can be achieved by March 2010 then the voluntary and community sector front-line services that operate within the District will have a firm infrastructure support foundation that together with support from the six national hubs of excellence will enable it to provide increased services more efficiently.

Sustainability will continue to be an issue for an area like Wokingham, but the Consortium will endeavour to resolve this problem in a number of ways by:

Further work with Social Enterprise Berkshire to explore ways of engaging the sector.

Attempting to engage the private sector, initially through the LSP.

The employment of a Funding advice worker within the sector, to reduce reliance on grants from the local statutory sector and to encourage an inflow of money from outside the District into local groups and projects.


By continuing and strengthening the Local Funding Forum.

Savings on expenditure back office facilities and other overheads via potential mergers and closer working.

By widening support to frontline organisations to enable them to achieve core funding through improved partnership working and contract relationships.

Short-Term (March 2007)

The initial short-term strategy for Wokingham Changeup Consortium had been determined by information gathered through surveys, questionnaires and interviews since 2003 (These were in the original draft plan and can be obtained from CVA-



WD). This information led to the Consortium deciding to use pilot projects to test support services in some of the areas that the voluntary and community sector had indicated they needed. Six proposals having been considered by the Consortium and consulted on with the wider sector were chosen to take this work further. NB See financial summary page on page 41 for costs of these projects and estimates for future costs.

PILOT PROJECTS

All interested parties were invited to put forward proposals for consideration by the consortium for six-month pilot projects. The successful ones were evaluated and the results have determined the content of the final development plan. There are obvious financial restrictions on the number of pilot projects that the consortium could trial, but all parties were encouraged to submit proposals and if unsuccessful for pilot status the consortium would endeavour to find other sources of funding to enable them to come to fruition. All proposals were asked to include a full description of the project, how it met the ChangeUp criteria, expected outcomes, costs and (as far as possible) an exit strategy. It was decided by the consortium that those proposals that fitted the criteria, but, which could not be included for financial reasons in the initial phase would be considered in the mid to longer term of the development plan.

A number of proposals were received from individual organisation, which could either be an element of another proposal or were linked to other proposals by partnership working (where this has occurred it has been indicated). Six proposals were received in addition to those discussed and agreed by the BME sub Group for the ASP work. One of these was found not to fit the criteria for ChangeUp by the Consortium and therefore the six remaining proposals (including the BME proposal) that follow are those that the Consortium wished to be part of the short-term plan. This does not exclude additional proposals for inclusion in the mid to long-term plan.



The funded projects were: (full descriptions under own headings below)

The project designed to deliver the Additional Support Programme (ASP)

Funding Advice

Training

Volunteering

Forum partnership work

Faith

ChangeUp workers from each of the pilot projects met for a lunchtime meeting at least once each month. This gave them time to discuss activity, exchange ideas and contacts, develop any possibilities for joint-working, plan for the future and support each other.

Wokingham struggles to attract funding into its VCS, partly because at district level it just doesn't register on any kind of deprivation index. However the relative affluence of one area over another should be largely irrelevant when analysing basic infrastructure needs and in this context, the small size of Wokingham District should not be a critical factor. Put bluntly, a house needs a roof to stay dry whether it rains a lot or a little. Wokingham District (despite its name) is a Unitary Authority. Infrastructure organisations in unitary areas have to deal with issues that in two-tier areas are split into separate county and district level functions. As there is no County Council at all, there is the further need for co-ordinating work that is spread across the six different unitaries (i.e. The Learning & Skills Council).

All the projects have been successful to some degree and there have been a number of learning points, which were an important factor in finalising the Development Plan. It does need to be borne in mind that most of the projects were at least one month later in starting than envisaged and they also covered a difficult period over Christmas and New Year. One of the influencing factors for some of the projects in reaching their objectives was that, although the project leads met frequently and attempted to exchange information, there was competition for time and audience, because of the shortness of the project's lives.



This brings into focus the issue of the capacity of the voluntary sector as a whole. There is an acceptance that it needs to improve its partnerships, skills, knowledge and services, but a strong and sustainable infrastructure would not only enable the sector to fulfil its own aims and objectives, but also would also contribute to ensuring effective community engagement and planning for the statutory sector.

An unfortunate outcome of all of this work, is that a number of the projects, although proving their worth, will not have immediate continuation and are therefore unable to build immediately on the foundations they have made due to lack of appropriate funding. The reduction of ChangeUp funding and the uncertainty of future delivery of resources through Capacity Builders, combined with the delay in the Big Lottery BASIS programme will have a big impact on areas like Wokingham, which have additional problems in attracting funding due to its perceived affluence.

The inclusion of the district in the second phase of the roll out of Local Area Agreements has meant it has been possible to include training and volunteering as elements in stretch targets utilising pump-priming money for these functions. The substantially reduced ChangeUp funding available for 2006/07 has meant that it has been possible to slightly prolong the life of the ASP project and to continue very minimal support for the partnership Development project. However, the most urgent priority (for the sector) of Funding advice was unable to access, either LAA pump-priming or the ChangeUp continuation funding. At the time of writing, all hangs on a successful bid to the Big Lottery BASIS fund and even if such a bid is successful, there will be a significant gap in funding to continue the post until that funding comes online.

It needs to be recognised that Wokingham District was starting from a very low position of infrastructure support. Most areas of the Country will have a much longer history of infrastructure organisations providing the kinds of services to the sector that are relatively new in this District. These projects have provided a plethora of evidence of both need and good working practices, to be used in arguing the case for strengthening the sector via the development plan and any




future funding bids.



The consortium will continue to meet at least six times a year to make sure the development plan is implemented and monitored to ensure that an over-arching view of infrastructure needs can be assessed on a regular basis.

For a more detailed analysis of the projects, please see Appendix Two at the back of this report. Listed below are the relevant conclusions and recommendations for each of the Pilot Projects





Recommendations and Conclusions




Additional Support Project


The BME sector have welcomed this project, particularly having a focal point for independent support and advice, but are concerned that when the project finishes at the end of May 2006 that a lot of the good foundations made will be lost and the situation will revert back to the previous situation. The importance of sustainable funding to build upon this work is a source of concern to the community. There remains a need to strengthen the leadership and coordination of the BME groups in the district and whilst it is felt that this could be assisted through training workshops and peer mentoring schemes, this is no real substitution for a dedicated worker within the sector. A worker provides a constant and continued focal point and basis of support and is seen by the BME communities of a commitment to their inclusion and involvement within the District



Funding Advice Worker Project

This project has confirmed the need for a Funding Advice worker in the District and the lack of funding for the continuation of this project full time will have a number of negative consequences for the sector. Although there is the possibility of funding through the Big Lottery Fund's BASIS programme, this is not guaranteed and even if successful is unlikely to be in place before 2007. Advice on Social Enterprise is now covered by a new county-wide organisation, Social Enterprise Berkshire, but





there still needs to be a local focal point of information for groups as this is still a new, often unexplored and misunderstood area of possible financing for the sector. Without a local contact to direct groups towards Social Enterprise Berkshire, the connection may not be made.

The only objective that was not fully achieved by this project, because of the change in project worker and the holiday period, was more detailed work with the Funders Forum. This needs to become more established and to attract a local private sector representative.

There is also an emerging area that is gaining all party support of delivery of public services through the Voluntary and community sector and social enterprise. Although this will not affect the majority of Wokingham groups it will gain increasing importance for a proportion of front line organisations and therefore it is important that this is kept on the agenda of the District Economic forum, the LSP and the LAA in order to maximise any opportunities that may arise.

An Application to BASIS for a full time advice worker needs to be made soon as possible.

The Funders Forum should continue and expand to explore all funding opportunities and link with any regional or national progress on uniform application forms. Work should continue to engage the private sector.


Continue appropriate referrals to Social Enterprise Berkshire

Training Co-ordinator Project

This project was aimed specifically at underpinning and strengthening the V&C sector in workforce development and governance areas and on the whole has succeeded. However there are a number of issues and learning points arising from this project, which need to be heeded and acted upon if the sector is to have a robust, accessible, long lasting and comprehensive training programme.

A wider database of contacts is needed to ensure fuller coverage of possible participants.

There were too many courses in too short a time. (This is a result of targets set to fill gaps of knowledge, due to lack of training in the District prior to LSC funding



and attempting to catch up with other unitary areas and the six month time span of this project.) Therefore courses must be spread at reasonable intervals to avoid burnout of participants. Core courses need to be provided on a regular basis and taken to various areas around the District.

Linkages must continue to be made with training providers both in the District and with neighbouring areas to obtain value for money and avoid duplication.

Volunteering Project

Outreach work is essential alongside passive recruitment strategies and as a consequence more resource and time is needed to carry this out efficiently.

A manageable database similar to Volunteering England is needed to support and record activity in a controlled manner.

Improved premises would be an asset in welcoming potential recruits, in terms of offering good access and a positive image of the sector

December and Christmas in particular is not a good time for any recruitment and this project in particular suffered most through timing.

Recruitment messages have to be targeted, but consistent and continued for a longer period of time.

The sector needs a robust volunteer support organisation, with increased opening hours and resource.


The Centre needs to review its business plan, with specific recruitment targets and strategies for the mid to long term. It should concentrate on the core task of recruitment of volunteers for all VCS groups within the district and set up its Volunteer transport project as an independent charity in it's own right.

To employ the use of an answer phone system.

Forum partnership worker Initiative

This is essentially a long-term initiative and excellent foundations have been laid with further events planned post this report deadline. It is hoped, although on reduced hours, that there will be greater understanding of the Forum's work and wider representation (this has already been achieved in part).

There is an increasing need from the statutory agencies for greater representation



from the voluntary sector. Support and processes for these roles is essential for that to happen and there is a need to recognise this is a long-term activity and will/cannot happen overnight.

Funding for this project will continue from 1 April 2006 for 6.5 hours a week through to September 2006. At this point, capacity becomes a real issue for building on this excellent foundation due to the long-term nature and intensity of this type of development work. This limits any immediate expansion plans, however this should ensure the commencement of the election process with representatives in place on the Children's Partnership Board and the Youth Partnership Board and 'Speakeasy' fully supported within the next 6 months.

Churches/ Faith Groups Community Capacity Building Initiative

Some of the results from the questionnaire are very interesting and highlights the importance of the Faith community within the wider sector even if its not always recognised by itself. Some work has been done concerning bringing the 5 Churches together, but further work still needs to be carried out. It was recognised at an early stage of this project that the Christian faith had to sort its own organisational structures out before making efforts to move forward with other faith groups and although it is recognised that this takes time, but there still seems to be some resistance in forging real Inter faith dialogue and relations.

There is a bid for £10,000 from a trust to continue this work.

Continue to work towards a unified Wokingham Churches Together structure, which will benefit the sector by adding clarity over funding issues and a single point of contact.

The above recommendation will also give a stronger foundation for increased Inter faith dialogue and work and in turn strengthen funding opportunities in general.



Targets - *Short-term*



Target One

Production of a separate Full ASP report by May 2006

Produced by the ASP worker

To be a Reference document for all partners and for potential funders

Target Two

Big Lottery BASIS bid for funding post

Produced by the Funding Advice Worker

To enable post to become full time April 2006 / but probably not in place until January 2007

Target Three

BME Forum constituted by December 2006

To be achieved initially through ASP work till May 2006 then CVA-WD and BME working group

To have a fully independent constituted BME organisation to act as a focal point and to access direct funding to the sector.

Target Four

Governance and Trustee training pilot in place by March 2007

To be delivered possibly through working with the National Governance Hub

To trial and use Mosaics method of training producing a package of training for trustees

Target Five

Training and Mentoring scheme workshops for BME groups - ongoing

To be delivered by the Training coordinator

To strengthen leadership and knowledge

Target Six

Representative training, hopefully by March 2007

To be delivered by CVA-WD development worker and Training coordinator

To enable full and proper representation of the sector on all boards

Target Seven

Widen CVA-WD database/contact list

Delivery through CVA staff





To enable wider participation in training and other events/information



Target Eight

Update the Volunteer Centre business plan to include increased opening hours

To be delivered by WVC Manager

To enable Volunteer Centre to reach LAA targets

Target Nine

Produce a rolling training programme for newly recruited volunteers

To be delivered by WVC, CVA-WD and Crescent Centre



To aid full support package for volunteers and improve recruitment and retention

Target Ten

Volunteer Centre to improve its IT capacity and database by March 2007

Possibly through volunteering or IT Hub capital monies



To enable WVC to reach LAA targets and improve service to volunteers

Target Eleven

Representation processes in place

To be delivered by CVA-WD development worker using GOSE interim ChangeUp funding

To complete pilot project initial work in this area by March 2007

Target Twelve

Unified Wokingham District Churches together by March 2007

Possible £10,000 grant from private trust/Big Idea team

To enable Christian faith groups to have a focal point and to work on further integration with the V&C sector



Target Thirteen

Inter faith conference by March 2007



To be delivered by the Big Idea team/ BME working group/ CVA-WD development worker

To enable communication between communities and harness the power of faith groups in the District

Target Fourteen

To communicate and advertise all of the above to the wider sector and its partners.





Delivery by CVA-WD, Voluntary Sector Forum and all consortium members

An open event to discuss and share this plan is planned for early May 2006, but otherwise this work is ongoing

Target Fifteen

Continue to review IDP

All consortium members

Target Sixteen

Social enterprise workshops and business support within the next year

CVA Funding Advice Worker and Social Enterprise Berkshire

To encourage organisations to plan for long term funding and to bid for statutory contracts

Target Seventeen

Increase support for public service procurement

CVA Funding Advice Worker and Social Enterprise Berkshire


Keeping it on the agenda and development of contract relationships and contract delivery

Mid-term (2008-2009)

A large part of the mid to long-term plan is based on the evaluations from the pilot projects. However there are some key issues for Wokingham District voluntary sector, which both the sector and the Consortium already acknowledge and recognise have to be in place for a strengthened infrastructure and in turn, for front line organisations to have confidence and clarity about the support that will be available.

Key linkages

Wokingham District Voluntary and Community Sector already has key links with Wokingham District Council and Wokingham Primary Care Trust through Compact arrangements and representation (currently via CVA-WD) on the LSP. The CVA is the Lead Body for the Community Development chapter of the Community Strategy, and ChangeUp is now one of the priority actions in the plan. Discussions



have already taken place to produce a tripartite Compact and to introduce a Compact way of working into the LSP. These were expected to be completed by the end of 2006, but PCT mergers may have an impact on this target date.

It is expected that the countywide development of a web portal system for the Voluntary sector will be in place during 2006. This will help a wide range of voluntary and community groups to publish their details online and take advantage of a virtual presence online. (See Berkshire Voluntary Sector Forum Change Up Development Plan)


With the intended formation of a BME infrastructure organisation in the district it is expected that social inclusion issues, such as proper engagement, accessibility to services and increased participation and representation for the all excluded groups in the district will be much improved. The focus will be on four main areas BME groups, Children and young people, older people and people with disabilities. A start has already been made in all of these areas with strong BME and older people forums and Wokingham as a Pathfinder Children's Trust.

Support from regional and national hubs is still in its infancy, but Wokingham believes it is in a very good position to maximise any support available and will continue to maintain its links with sub-regional, regional and national activities to learn best practice and to avoid duplication of effort.

Sustainability

Because of its relative affluence, Wokingham has difficulty in attracting and achieving much in the way of external funding that is open to other areas of the country. Funding is the main concern and top priority for the voluntary sector in Wokingham District, but through the funding advice and training pilots it is expected that both application success and education in different funding methods can be improved for front line organisations.

The district welcomes the news of further ChangeUp money and of the Big Lottery Fund's intention to support bids for infrastructure organisations, but is still



wary of the amounts available to areas like Wokingham. It is important therefore for the Consortium and the sector as a whole to work with external partners in exploring joint applications where possible. The continuation of the Funding forum is important, with one of its aims being to sustain any successes from the initial ChangeUp work. It is also very important that the compact process and the LSP partners recognise the need for a strong foundation of infrastructure support that will enable frontline organisations to deliver more efficient services to the community. Levels of support for the VCS infrastructure are much lower than in most areas and the need to convince statutory partners of the value to be gained by investing in this area remains a priority for the sector.

Wokingham has many international and national companies situated in the district, but as previously mentioned there is a lack of community and corporate responsibility from the private sector. Engagement between the sector and business is very weak and Corporate Social responsibility is an area where much more work needs to be done. It is hoped that during the mid-term period and possibly through the CVA and the LSP partners, a central point of contact or brokerage can be formed. This will enable voluntary and community groups to access funding, goods in kind, volunteers and possibly sponsorship from the private sector in a coordinated way.

Partnerships and alliances

During the medium term of this plan it is expected that infrastructure organisations will lead by example in exploring closer working relationships, alliances and mergers. Discussions amongst infrastructure organisations have been going on for the last three years in the district (see appendix 3.6 available from CVA-WD) about possible mergers and the ChangeUp process has brought the idea of alliances and partnership working to the forefront once again.

Close partnership work between the CVA, WVC and Wokingham Sector Forum has grown and improved over the last two years, but clarity of service support is still needed and mergers are seen as high-risk strategy with the main concern over funding. During this mid-term period of the plan the infrastructure organisations



will explore strategic alliances on areas of mutual interest to generate benefits and value that would be unlikely for organisations on their own. In such an alliance organisations will retain independence while contributing resources other than cash. This might include access to volunteers, local knowledge, special skills or access to technology. To be successful the partners will need to have clarity of objectives, vision and purpose alongside strong governance to form the new partnership's identity. The Consortium will need to explore all possible avenues for strategic alliance in conjunction with addressing sustainability issues.

It is expected that by 2009 alliances and mergers will have been explored with the result being that any mergers will have been formed by this date. This will give Wokingham District voluntary and community sector a clear and secure foundation to build on for the longer term of the plan.

Accommodation

Accommodation needs for the sector as a whole are a real issue and the “one-stop shop” for infrastructure organisations would be a sensible solution bringing clarity and savings in back office operations. The most likely method of obtaining such premises is through planning gain and negotiations with statutory partners are already under way to find possible solutions. It is hoped that by the end of this period in the plan, a suitable central infrastructure site can be found and be operational. The bringing together of a number of organisations under one roof would possibly free some office space for other voluntary and community groups and strengthen alliances and partnerships.

Targets - *Mid-term*

Target Eighteen

Enable and support BME groups to have proper processes and where appropriate constituted, this work being ongoing

Initially ASP worker continued by BME working group and CVA-WD



In order for groups to access and attract funding streams and to strengthen their independence

Target Nineteen

Specialised funding workshops for BME and small groups ongoing

To be delivered by CVA-WD Funding Advice and development workers and training coordinator.

It has been shown that BME and small groups require different advice to larger organisations

Target Twenty

Develop and expand Voluntary sector Forum management committee

CVA-WD development worker/ Voluntary sector Forum MC

The Committee needs strengthening to support new strategy and to aid the VSF identity

Target Twenty One

Develop Websites for all infrastructure organisations by March 2009 latest

Possibly through the IT Hub and links with County wide Action for All

To aid information access and work loads

Target Twenty two

“One-Stop Shop” opened by March 2010

All partners, LSP, WDC

This could be achieved through planning gain on a number of large proposed building projects due to be undertaken in the District. Would also enable the infrastructure organisations to become part Social enterprises.

Target Twenty three

Full VCS involvement within all Neighbourhood areas by March 2010

All partners, CVA-WD development worker

The representation agenda and work will indicate success or failure of this work

Target Twenty Four

Mergers and strategic alliances of organisations explored

Work for the ChangeUp Consortium

Important area of work for the consortium and partners to investigate fully.


Probably only achievable with a purpose built Volunteer Resource centre




Long-term (2010-2014)



With various funding streams and amounts as yet undecided it is difficult to have any certainty past 2009 and therefore almost impossible to plan past this date. The Wokingham Consortium is confident that if the actions in the short to mid term plans have been realised by 2010 then the infrastructure support to front line organisations will have been greatly improved and strengthened.







A significant factor in long-term planning concerns what the District itself might look like by this period in the plan. Wokingham District is below the perceived optimum size for a Unitary Authority (despite being the most populous within the former county of Berkshire). There is a very real possibility that the Boundary Commission may significantly alter the size (or even the existence) of Wokingham District by 2010.



Sustainability is a continuing issue for the sector, but it is hoped with the evidence and reports gathered in the preparation of this plan that funding can be obtained to continue the work of the pilot projects until 2009 and then in turn using the results from those pieces of work be in a position to attract further funding to 2014 and beyond.

If the accommodation issue is not addressed in the mid term (i.e. by 2010) then any expansion or mergers would be unlikely and the some of the above targets may not be achievable. In other parts of the country where the local VCS own suitable buildings, they have reaped huge benefits and can often bring in income as social enterprises by renting out parts of the building for events, training or even renting to private businesses. It would also allow the organisations to expand and utilise back office facilities. To explore one particular example, funding of Voluntary and Community groups at a local level in Japan is often achieved by gifting a significant office building to the local equivalent of a CVS. The group then uses the rental income from the part of the building it does not use to fund it's running costs. A similar mechanism is used in many parts of Italy (where local Authorities have a





statutory duty to fund voluntary organisations). Although it involves significant capital outlay, it can reduce (or sometimes eliminate) the need to provide further grant funding. In the UK, where planning gain is achievable, then this should be a possibility, provided the Local Authority supports it. It is hoped that some of the work suggested by the National Finance hub around the promotion of Local Authority Asset transfer will benefit the consortium in this area.

If everything that has been put in place and planned in Wokingham and pan-Berkshire can be sustained financially through to 2009/10, then Wokingham District VCS Infrastructure will be in a very strong position to support and strengthen the front line organisations. This will in turn enable the Infrastructure organisations to explore further alliances and partnerships within the frontline organisations and help them become more reactive to any further change and opportunities and aid them in delivering the statutory service agenda.

Targets - *Long-term*

Target Twenty Five

Review progress and consolidate plan

All partners and consortium members

Consortium will need to continue to meet regularly in order to implement and review the plan

Target Twenty Six

Review and adjust infrastructure organisations business plans

Infrastructure organisation's own management committees, external partners and the consortium

To be in position to be proactive over any changes

Target Twenty Seven

Continue to build on years 2005-2009 actions

Use any LAA rewards to reinvest into any plans/programmes

Decisions to be made on LAA reward results and in discussions with consortium and partners



Reference Documents

All available from CVA-WD

Initial appendices from draft plan, which include:

Initial work plan

CVA Questionnaire December 2004

CVA Monitoring and Evaluation Report October 2003

Training needs survey CVA and Crescent Centre Autumn 2004

Funding advice needs survey Autumn 2004

PDF Consultancy Report on Wokingham Infrastructure 2003

A full report for each of the pilot projects will be published after March 2006

A separate and detailed ASP report May 2006



Appendix One - Financial summary of projects

The Pilot projects are shown with their running costs for the six month duration of span. This cost is artificial in that pay levels were not competitive and accommodation was provided rent-free by WDC in temporary premises. The figure following is an estimation of the full annual running cost for each project. The difference is accounted for by the full running cost being done on a full-cost recovery basis.

ASP - full-time post	(£25,400)	£33,000
Funding advice – full-time post	(£23,120)	£33,000
Training - part-time post	(£17,819)	£25,000
Volunteering 10 hours extra	(£7,875)	£20,000
Partnership work - part-time post	(£15,318)	£25,000
Faith Post - part-time post	(£12,851)	£25,000
Total cost	(£102,383)	£151,000



Appendix Two - Summary of the Projects





Additional Support Project

Evidence of need




Contained within the total sum of money for the ChangeUp project in Wokingham District was £25,400 specifically reserved for work in the “Additional Support” field. This is money earmarked for work with the BME community, the Faith community, Travellers, Refugee and Asylum-seekers. The district has a significant minority of residents who fall within the category of a BME population. Currently many people in this community access groups and facilities outside of the District boundary (notably in Reading). Wokingham District Council discovered whilst canvassing this community in 2004, that there was a desire to be able to access facilities and groups within the district. Although there is a successful BME Forum operating in the district, this is an unincorporated group facilitated by the Local Authority. At present it has no independent resources it can draw upon for particular pieces of work. Accessing the Travel community within the district is very difficult. There are no Voluntary groups working with this group. As far as is known, there are no refugees and asylum seekers in the district.



Aims and objectives



Wokingham District currently has no infrastructure organisations devoted to work specifically with the categories in the Additional Support programme. Although this kind of support obviously falls within the remit of CVA-WD, the forum and the Volunteer centre, these organisations have limited resources and simply do not have the capacity to offer specialist work to such groups. ChangeUp money has provided a way of researching and quantifying the needs and aspirations of this population and the following project was designed to take this work forward.





Project description including vision statement



Following consultation with various members of the BME consultative group, it was agreed that CVA-WD should employ a project worker for a set period to carry out the following work:

Mapping the groups and organisations used by the local “Additional support” population, whether based within the district or not;

Working with the BME Forum to develop its role and (if appropriate) to help it become an established independent organisation within its own right;

Facilitating contact with the Development Worker at CVA-WD to ensure any relevant groups emerging during the life of the Project are supported and helped to achieve their aims;

Producing a report on the needs of the “Additional Support” population together with proposals for taking this forward beyond the end of the Project.

The worker was employed full time at SO1 scale for a period of six months (September 2005– March 2006). Although CVA-WD was the formal employer, the work programme was approved and monitored by the BME ChangeUp group, with which the worker attempted to meet regularly. The project has now received continuation funding via the ASP Change Up allocation for 2006/07, which will allow it to continue until 31st May 2006.


Summary of the ASP project work



The main objective of this project was to map, survey and identify existing and emerging BME groups within Wokingham District, with an aim of discovering their needs and any possible obstacles or barriers in achieving these aims.

Methodology

The initial month was dedicated to making contact and reaching as many BME groups as possible. This was achieved by;



Distributing flyers and leaflets across Wokingham District and the adjoining parts of Reading Borough (where most groups currently access their services)

Using existing databases to send out letters and e-mails announcing the project's aim and requesting information on known activity and other group contact details.

Material was also collated from desktop review of previous research carried out by WDC, CVA-WD, the BME Forum and independent organisations within Wokingham and neighbouring areas.

The project lead also held one-to-one interviews, focus group interviews and attended local and regional conferences. Workshops were held across the community with both BME and non- BME populations using questionnaires as a means of assessing need and obstacles. Stakeholders, policy and decision makers from the Local Authority, Primary Care Trust and Thames Valley Police were also consulted. (many of whom attend the BME forum).

BME Population

From the research conducted, there seems to be a consensus that the BME population is literate, well educated and employed. It is estimated that the BME population in the District has risen quite considerably in the five years since the 2001 census figure of 6.1% and is probably now somewhere between 8 and 10%. In four wards of the District over 10% of the population were from BME communities, which is well above the average for England and Wales (8.7%) and the South East (4.9%). At present, a majority of this population access community services, such as health, social and recreation facilities outside the District, mainly in Reading.

Deprivation/Marginalisation

Wokingham is generally perceived on most indicators as an affluent area, being in the best five of most indices for England. However there are pockets of deprivation within the District with people who are socially excluded and marginalised from mainstream society. The BME population is recognised as being marginalised, although this has improved in recent years, mainly through the work of the BME forum.



Some of the factors affecting the BME Voluntary and Community sector include:

A lack of specific infrastructure support and any sustainability of such services rendered to them.

Lack of community and cultural centres for ethnic minorities.

Poor representation on wider community and statutory forums.

Lack of Specific and targeted training opportunities to improve skills for those involved in community work.

Some distrust and non-belief in current services being available to the whole community.


A large diversity of ethnic communities, whose wide and varying needs are difficult for organisations such as CVA-WD to address within generalist support services.

BME Forum

The Forum was formed in December 2002 and has continued to grow in size and importance. Its members include the wider community, WDC councillors and officers, PCT managers and good cross section of the various ethnic groups. At the start of this project one of the Co-Chairmen resigned and the Forum was therefore more concerned with finding a suitable replacement than with moving on to consider formal constitution of the body. It was more appropriate to allow the Forum time to adjust to new leadership before moving to a full a constitution (which is likely to happen by the end of 2006). In preparation the project worker will draw up an outline constitution and discuss this with the working group, before her post finishes at the end of May. There is mixed opinion within the BME Forum about its future around its independence and legal constitution,, but also an understanding of the benefits it would bring.

Project Highlights

It was discovered through the project that there are thirty seven active groups operating within Wokingham giving support and/or working directly with the BME population. More than half of these groups have come to notice since the beginning of this project and the majority of the older groups have been somewhat dormant due to lack of funding, resources and infrastructure support (see reference



document full details). Towards the end of March it was discovered that there are a few refugees living in the district, which previously was thought not to be the case. It is believed there are still no Asylum seekers. Eight out of ten BME groups find accessibility to funding and resources very difficult, some of the reasons put forward for these difficulties are:

Many don't have bank accounts

Many don't have constituted status

They are new or not established

Lack of knowledge about what support is available

Bureaucratic language in application forms.

Many needs for funding do not fit the normal criteria i.e. specific religious requirements.

The project has laid the foundation for improved work with Thames Valley police via the Community Race Relations Officer and meetings have been arranged to build trust and relationships between the BME population and Police, but this is seen as a long term project and will probably need some additional funding to support this initiative, because the police have very limited resources they can draw on and the CRRO has to cover the whole of Berkshire.

Conclusion and recommendations

The BME sector have welcomed this project, particularly having a focal point for independent support and advice, but are concerned that when the project finishes at the end of May 2006 that a lot of the good foundations made will be lost and the situation will revert back to the previous situation. The importance of sustainable funding to build upon this work is a source of concern to the community. There remains a need to strengthen the leadership and coordination of the BME groups in the district and whilst it is felt that this could be assisted through training workshops and peer mentoring schemes, this is no real substitution for a dedicated worker within the sector. A worker provides a constant and continued focal point and basis of support and is seen by the BME communities of a commitment to their inclusion and involvement within the District.



Funding Advice Worker Project

Evidence of need

This rated the highest priority when the local voluntary and community sector was questioned about the infrastructure support it had the most need of. CVA consistently receives requests for funding advice that cannot be met within present capacity. In addition, without a dedicated worker, the ability to carry out necessary research to identify and keep abreast of any changes in funding possibilities is severely reduced. This role was not included in LAA targets as it was thought other funding streams may be more suitable, such as Big Lottery BASIS.

Aims and objectives

The aims of this project were two-fold. One was to provide a service to the Voluntary and Community sector in Wokingham to give fund-raising advice and to help with developing fundraising strategies for individual groups. The second part of the project was to look into the wider arena of sourcing funding for the local VCS sector. The project also looked at Social Enterprise, which is not a well-known concept amongst most VCS groups in Wokingham District at present. It was hoped that the project would also be able to increase corporate participation with the voluntary and community sector and to ascertain whether the CVA could act as a broker for funding initiatives or in-kind benefits. Members of the consortium had already expressed a wish for a “funding forum group”, made up of the statutory partners, private trusts and this post holder, which would explore sustainability issues post ChangeUp. Another element of this project was to assist all the other pilot projects secure funding for continuing their work beyond the six-month trial period (where appropriate).

The post was a full-time one at the grade of SO1, which is in line with comparable posts within CVA-WD (although below the going rate for such work nationally).

Summary of Funding Advice Project

Any shortcomings in the project were not helped by the change of Funding Advice worker (after 6 weeks) and the seasonal holiday period of Christmas and the New





Year occurring within the timeframe of the project.



A total of 44 groups have consulted with the funding advice worker since the beginning of the project. Contact with all of the groups is on going. In addition to this 32 people representing a range of local groups, attended a funding workshop at the Voluntary and Community Sector Conference.

Advice has been given on:

Trust finding	26 groups	
Application completion	9 groups	
Social Enterprise	7 groups	
Running fundraising events	2 groups	
Constitutions and Governing Documents	5 groups	
Appeals	2 groups	
Planning	16 groups	

Funders Forum

A Funders forum has been established and one meeting has been held. The current make up of the forum is:

- Two from Wokingham District Council
- One from Wokingham Primary Care Trust
- One from Berkshire Community Foundation
- One from the Earley Charity (a local grant-giving fund)
- One from Big Lottery



The topics covered included:

- Sharing Information
- Adapting forms to make them similar and easier to complete
- Using simpler language or explaining terminology





Library

Over 20 new publications, both hard copy books and directories, and on CD-Rom, have been bought to increase the scope of the existing CVA library. Where appropriate, newer editions have been purchased.. Files of paperwork about a number of major trusts and other funding information have been rationalised and amended where necessary. All out of date information has been removed and everything in the library fully catalogued.

In addition to this, a laptop has been set up to use as an online funding tool. A subscription has been made to Trustfunder to assist identifying funding sources and bookmarks have been set up so that it is easy to find the websites of trusts, companies and other funding aids. The CD ROMs give the library an added and modern dimension. The information available on the laptop supplements the information held in the library and can be transported to locations outside of the office when appropriate.

Difference to the Voluntary Sector

This project has made the following differences to the sector:

Assisted groups in funding their projects and work

Informed groups about potential funding sources

Shown employees and volunteers of groups the importance of completing applications properly

Helped groups explore other ways of fundraising

Assisted individuals and groups on the road to creating social enterprises

Given groups access to funding aids

Created dialogue between major local funders

Coaxed local funders into reconsidering the design of their application forms


Ensured that groups have governing documents that do not debar them from obtaining funds




Conclusion and recommendations




This project has confirmed the need for a Funding Advice worker in the District and the lack of funding for the continuation of this project full time will have a number of negative consequences for the sector. Although there is the possibility of funding through the Big Lottery Fund's BASIS programme, this is not guaranteed and even if successful is unlikely to be in place before 2007. Advice on Social Enterprise is now covered by a new county-wide organisation, Social Enterprise Berkshire, but there still needs to be a local focal point of information for groups as this is still a new, often unexplored and misunderstood area of possible financing for the sector. Without a local contact to direct groups towards Social Enterprise Berkshire, the connection may not be made.



The only objective that was not fully achieved by this project, because of the change in project worker and the holiday period, was more detailed work with the Funders Forum. This needs to become more established and to attract a local private sector representative.




There is also an emerging area that is gaining all party support of delivery of public services through the Voluntary and community sector and social enterprise. Although this will not affect the majority of Wokingham groups it will gain increasing importance for a proportion of front line organisations and therefore it is important that this is kept on the agenda of the District Economic forum, the LSP and the LAA in order to maximise any opportunities that may arise.



An Application to BASIS for a full time advice worker needs to be made soon as possible.

The Funders Forum should continue and expand to explore all funding opportunities and link with any regional or national progress on uniform application forms. Work should continue to engage the private sector



Continue appropriate referrals to Social Enterprise Berkshire




Training Co-ordinator Project



Evidence of need


A key priority for infrastructure support identified through Consultation was the provision of local, relevant and affordable (preferably free) training for local groups. At the outset of this project, CVA funding for training brokerage through the Berkshire Learning & Skills Council (LSC) was about to come to an end. This was not an ideal source of funding in any case, in that the restrictions placed on what could be provided through the programme meant that many of the needs of the sector could not be met.




Aims and objectives



The aims of this project were two-fold. Firstly to provide a service to the Voluntary and Community sector in Wokingham by providing Training sessions that were requested by local groups and under pinned the sector as a whole. The second part of the project was to prove that Training provision is best done by matching locally identified needs to tailored courses (except where such training can be accessed by an existing provision). A recent evaluation of LSC training provision for the VCS in Berkshire was critical of its inflexibility of provision and lack of understanding of what was needed by the VCS.





Project Aims:

- To provide evidence of need for local training provision matched with local needs
 - To provide evidence of costs for, and effectiveness of, a locally based training programme
 - To deliver a range of training courses to local VCS groups
- 

Project description including vision statement

The project looked at training that can support individual volunteers as well as the more usual provision of training to VCS groups. Although not specifically costed for this pilot, it was hoped that at least one Training session (into the ways Voluntary and Community groups work) for elected Members and Officers from





the Statutory Authorities could also be provided and money has been set aside to run this following the local elections in May.


Access to appropriate and affordable training is necessary for all groups in the VCS. There is an increasing weight of responsibility for VCS groups to comply with a range of different legal requirements, as well as acquiring the necessary skills to carry out the principal work of the individual groups. Without this infrastructure support, many groups would be unable to function, especially the smallest groups, which often operate on an entirely voluntary basis. The post was graded at SO1, which is comparable to the outgoing post holder's rate of pay. The post was for a part-time worker of 18.5 hours per week for the six-month period of the project.

Summary of Training Project

The training project has shown that there is a need for training that is matched to the needs of the voluntary and community sector. There are some key courses, which have been well attended and popular with delegates and could be run on a regular basis to support the work of the sector. In the first 4 months of the project 14 courses have been completed and 126 delegates have attended. Feedback from delegates has been very positive with average rating of good to excellent for trainers and the courses. With very few exceptions, the courses run were over-subscribed and demand exceeded provision.

The training project has sought to deliver courses in a number of new locations around the district. There is a high administration input for any course that is running for the first time. There are likely to be timesavings if courses are repeated. The project also promoted training offered by other providers and acted as a referral point to book people onto these courses. In the first 4 months of the project 20 people were referred on to courses run by other providers.

The project developed an e-bulletin service to notify people about the range of courses and sent this to all known VCS groups and contacts within the District. This has been very successful and could be extended. One key issue for CVA-WD



and other providers of training aimed at this group must be providing a number of core courses on a regular basis so that people can pick up on courses on more than one date, and this also meets the need of repeat training due to high turnover of staff and volunteers.

The evening included “taster” training sessions and this was so successful we repeated the format at the Voluntary Sector Conference. One notable success was the use of Mosaic, a training group who write and perform sketches themselves to highlight issues and provoke discussion. With DVD clips, cartoons, and group work they create a lively and effective workshop.

Sally Hassock, from the National Governance Hub, attended the Trustee evening and was very impressed. We have since had discussions with the Hub about developing a pilot project for Trustees using Mosaic’s alternative approach. We have been invited to bid for Pilot Project funds to develop an interactive guide for boards and committees to assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Conclusions and recommendations

This project was aimed specifically at underpinning and strengthening the V&C sector in workforce development and governance areas and on the whole has succeeded. However there are a number of issues and learning points arising from this project, which need to be heeded and acted upon if the sector is to have a robust, accessible, long lasting and comprehensive training programme.

A wider database of contacts is needed to ensure fuller coverage of possible participants. There were too many courses in too short a time. (This is a result of targets set to fill gaps of knowledge, due to lack of training in the District prior to LSC funding and attempting to catch up with other unitary areas and the six month time span of this project.) Therefore courses must be spread at reasonable intervals to avoid burnout of participants. Core courses need to be provided on a regular basis and taken to various areas around the District.

Linkages must continue to be made with training providers both in the District and with neighbouring areas to obtain value for money and avoid duplication.



Volunteering Project

Evidence of need

Local research showed that the role Wokingham Volunteer Centre (WVC) fulfils within the District was a top priority for voluntary and community groups. Earlier you said it was Funding Advice as top priority. The Centre is normally open during weekday mornings for 15 hours per week, 50 weeks of the year and staffed by the centre manager, an admin officer (each paid for only 10 hours per week) and many dedicated volunteers. Volunteer interviews, each of which may take an hour or more, are conducted within the core opening times. In 2004-05, the centre placed over 100 volunteers in around 50 groups, an impressive statistic for such a small Centre.

WVC were aware that many potential volunteers, especially students and those in employment, could not access their services during standard opening times. Also, national and local research has shown that more people would volunteer if they know how to, knew what was available and could access a personal service to help them. Even though the Centre offers email and telephone advice and information, their clients still prefer face-to-face interviews and experience showed that those personal contacts are infinitely more successful in generating successful and long-lasting placements.

Aims & objectives

WVC aimed to improve access to their services by extending the opening times to include the critical hours during the lunchtime period. The aim was to place 50 additional volunteers during this six-month pilot.

Change Up funding covered an increase to the centre manager's paid hours from 10 to 20 per week. An admin worker was employed for 10 hours per week to provide support and to free up time for the Manager to use on volunteer outreach and recruitment.



Results of project

The project has shown that outreach work is essential to increasing the numbers of volunteers in hard-to-reach groups. Under the new LAA funding, the VC have committed to increase the proportions of young and BME volunteers dramatically and are planning a new programme to work more proactively with local companies. A business plan is currently in preparation.

Conclusions and recommendations

Outreach work is essential alongside passive recruitment strategies and as a consequence more resource and time is needed to carry this out efficiently.

A manageable database similar to Volunteering England is needed to support and record activity in a controlled manner.

Improved premises would be an asset in welcoming potential recruits, in terms of offering good access and a positive image of the sector

December and Christmas in particular is not a good time for any recruitment and this project in particular suffered most through timing.

Recruitment messages have to be targeted, but consistent and continued for a longer period of time.

The sector needs a robust volunteer support organisation, with increased opening hours and resource.

The Centre needs to review its business plan, with specific recruitment targets and strategies for the mid to long term. It should concentrate on the core task of recruitment of volunteers for all VCS groups within the district and set up its Volunteer transport project as an independent charity in it's own right.

To employ the use of an answer phone system.

ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHICS

		Within extended hours	Totals 2005/06 (Totals 2004/05)
Age range	<19	13 (+30?)	14 (6)
	19-24	4	12 (18)
	25-34	2	15 (20)
	35-50	4	32 (30)
	51-65	3	39 (41)
	>65	5	33 (13)
Gender	Male	10 (+10?)	61 (46)
	Female	21 (+20?)	86 (82)
Ethnicity	White	31 (+30?)	140 (120)
	Mixed	0	0 (0)
	Asian/Asian British	0	1 (4)
	Black/black British	0	0 (1)
	Chinese/other	0	6 (3)
Employment status	Unemployed	1	16 (3)
	Employed	5	25 (33)
	Non-employed	5	31 (44)
	Student	14 (+30)	21 (11)
	Retired	6	52 (20)
Disability	Physical	1	9 (1)
	Mental ill-health	2	5 (2)
Method of accessing WVC services	Internet/email	6	14
	Telephone directory	1	2
	Wokingham Times volunteer corner	5	34
	CMHT Employment Club	2	10

Young Persons Road show	13 (+30)	13
Other road shows		21
Personal contact	4	15
Leaflets at various locations		7

N.B. (1) The extended hours figures include the 19 volunteers placed through direct contact with the Centre and the 12 sixth form girls, for whom details are known, which makes 31 in total. The notional 30 volunteers signed up by MV and Me2 Club are known to be students, <19 years of age, a mixture of male and female (approx. ratio 1:2), and predominantly white (these data shown in brackets as possible but not definite, and are not added into the totals for the year).


Figures for employment status for 2004/05 do not add to the total of 128 as we do not have those details for all volunteers. Likewise figures for employment status and age for 2005/06 do not add to 147 due to some incomplete information. Some people, a minority admittedly, simply do not want to give this information!

Totals for 2005/06 do not include figures for March as this report was requested and submitted by 10/3/06. It has been a fairly quiet month thus far and the final year end totals are unlikely to be much different from those reported

Forum partnership worker Initiative

Evidence of need

Wokingham District Voluntary Sector Forum (WDVSF) is a key infrastructure organisation within the Wokingham District that works alongside and in partnership with Community Voluntary Action – Wokingham District. Members of the ‘Executive Action Group’, which oversees the role of WDVSF all participate on a voluntary basis and the majority of members hold key roles within their own voluntary/community sector (VCS) organisations.



The main way in which WDVSF supports the voluntary and community sector are through assisting in the production of 'The Volunteer' Newsletter, which focuses on issues relevant to the sector. It assists in the coordination of regular community lunch forums and annual conferences. Finally, it has had a key role in developing systems through which members of appropriate community groups can achieve representation on various key committees. Examples of issues highlighted and supported through the work of the forum include older people, young people, health, physical and learning disabilities and various socially excluded groups.

Aims and objectives

To employ (through CVA-WD) a 'Forum Partnership Worker' for 18.5 hours per week, whose role was as follows:

Coordinate representation on various committees in Wokingham District.

This will be achieved through:

Partnership working with statutory and voluntary groups/individuals

Training & support for voluntary/community groups

Facilitating feedback, information sharing & consultation with appropriate voluntary/community groups

Develop and support 'community contacts' in all specific geographic parts of the District

This will be achieved through:-

Selecting volunteers to act in these roles in their own areas

Organising for community contacts to attend appropriate community work training through 'Training for Work In Communities' (TWICS)

Summary of Forum Partnership Project.

Re-launch of the Forum with an event held as an introduction to the project in October, with 34 people attending representing 24 organisations. Highlighted Forum work at various events from individual groups, conference events to strategic meetings e.g. Children's Trust Board and with other initiatives e.g. Neighbourhood



Policing Action Groups, Children's Centres, Extended Services for Children & Young People and working to ensure links between these and the wider VCS.

Produced the new look Volunteer newsletter produced in January 2006 highlighting the plans and achievements so far of the project to provide a platform for future news and reports. An Event planned for June 21 following the local elections to promote and inform on the structure of the voluntary and community sector in the district, inviting elected members, strategic heads and officers from our statutory partners. Through raising awareness of the Forum and the representation process, requests for representatives have been forthcoming either through CVA or direct e.g. Adult Area Protection Committee, Parents and Carers 'Speakeasy' project led by WDC.

Overall support for the Forum and the reps process is growing with a likely place secured on the overarching Local Strategic Partnership after April 2006. The structure of the LSP is changing with a separate Executive Management Group leading an Extended LSP. The Forum would have a place on the latter.

Process established within Children and Young People's Services for Forum reps with Forum places secured for the two main Partnership Boards which sit under the Children's Trust Board, i.e. The Early Years and Childcare Partnership Board and The Youth Partnership Board .

Formulated and developed induction and support package for representatives including:

- Initial introduction sheet
- Contact details of Forum and strategic body
- National and regional overview
- District wide VCS structure and interest area
- Make up of the statutory sector and how it all fits together
- The role of the elected representative
- Training and development opportunities

Currently in discussions to formulate a process for expenses

Set up process for representation and reporting

Role descriptions



Voting form to select representatives

Reps reporting form to the wider represented voluntary and Community sector interest area

Feedback form from the wider represented voluntary and Community sector

Identified current structures within the statutory sector following discussions with key players in WDC to establish overall picture and where the VCS fit in

Established current VCS input and existing networks that already work well e.g.

Older People's Forum which has geographically community based groups which ultimately feed into the Older people's Partnership

Used Children and Young People's Services as a pilot area for the development of the representation process due to the changes within the statutory sector at this time and the lack of VCS groups involved

Held an informal lunchtime event on 3 March to introduce and promote the idea of a dedicated network/forum for all VCS groups that deal with children, young people and their families/carers, which was attended by 38 people from 34 organisations.

This will encompass information sharing, communication and a platform for the election of representatives. Importantly, have the potential to create greater involvement, getting the VCS voice across and enlighten and empower, together with a chance to influence policymaking. This will sit beneath the main VSF

Established picture of existing communities and networks within the five identified VCS geographical areas of the district

Held a Community Lunch event in the Southern Parishes attended by 28 people, both local and district wide. This was following discussions with a local contact who links to many local groups and residents and who has participated in the 'Training for Work in Communities' (TWICS)

Named 'Community Contact' representing the Northern parishes is in place and has completed TWICS

The Earley Forum, a network for the VCS in the area has been poorly attended recently, therefore a lunchtime event will be held on 18 May. All areas of the community will be contacted and invited to link into other initiatives and networks e.g. Neighbourhood Action Group (Police initiative), the Town Council, Youth, and Health etc. This will promote awareness and encourage community links within



the area and provide a means to establish a community contact

Have established with other Community Development Workers, a Wokingham District Community Development Workers network meeting which will ensure that all relevant information and details of all projects and initiatives are shared amongst those working at the 'grass roots'

Conclusion and recommendations

This is essentially a long-term initiative and excellent foundations have been laid with further events planned post this report deadline. It is hoped, although on reduced hours, that there will be greater understanding of the Forum's work and wider representation (this has already been achieved in part).

There is an increasing need from the statutory agencies for greater representation from the voluntary sector. Support and processes for these roles is essential for that to happen and there is a need to recognise this is a long-term activity and will/cannot happen overnight.

Funding for this project will continue from 1 April 2006 for 6.5 hours a week through to September 2006. At this point, capacity becomes a real issue for building on this excellent foundation due to the long-term nature and intensity of this type of development work. This limits any immediate expansion plans, however this should ensure the commencement of the election process with representatives in place on the Children's Partnership Board and the Youth Partnership Board and 'Speakeasy' fully supported within the next 6 months.

Short term aims (next 12 months)

A stable and agreed straightforward structure of Children and Young People's Services with redefined Terms of Reference for the Partnerships and confirmation of their respective decision making powers

An established VSF CYP network with groups talking to each other, sharing experiences and elected reps from this network as members of the Early Year's and Childcare Partnership, The Youth Partnership Board, The Speakeasy project and the Local safeguarding Children Board fully supported by the Forum with a two way feedback process in place



Process for expenses for elected reps in place

The VSF CYP network fully embedded and well known within all areas of Children and Young People's Services with links to all existing initiatives e.g. Children's Centres and Extended Services for Children and Young People. This will be the natural link and pathway for consultation and information sharing

Expansion and development of the election process into another interest area e.g. The Disability Partnership Board and The Learning Partnership Board with the development of an interest area network using review of process in CYP Services

Links to results of the Faith Groups project and the ASP project encourage and promote links across the whole community

Neighbourhood Action Groups as voluntary led bodies becomes members of the Forum and CVA linking in to the existing VCS networks

Enhanced and joined up community links in Earley, with community contact identified

Greater awareness of VCS structure within the statutory sector, private sector and elected members of the district council following promotional event

Medium term plans (2007 – 2010)

Investigate sustainable funding to include the employment of a development Worker to steer the project through its long term strategy

Develop and expand the existing VSF management committee to support the new strategy

Enhanced support for representatives through dedicated and ongoing training programmes either through additional funding or working with CVA-WD training programme has three year funding through the Local Area Agreement

A dedicated website to fully promote the Forum, providing a further medium for reps reporting; a notice board for information on all initiatives in all sectors to keep the relevant people fully informed. This will also strengthen the identity of the VSF

Review the process within Children and Young People's Services, the successes, failures and lessons to be learned




Long term aims (2007 – 2010)



A robust two way communication and feedback process in place between the Partnership Boards and the VSF CYP network including links to the Children's Trust Board (CVA as strategic rep for VCS)


A better informed VCS dealing with Children and Young People which is beginning to think more proactively towards as key players in the provision of services

Expansion and development of the election process into other interest areas e.g. health, leisure, environment (on a rolling programme) with the development of interest area networks (using review of process in CYP Services and disability)



Full VCS involvement in the first seven Children's Centres (by 2010) with all areas of the community involved at all levels

Full VCS involvement in the first three Extended Services for Children and Young People sites by 2008 and a further four by 2010 with all areas of the community involved at all levels



Established and workable links within individual neighbourhoods with all networks at grass roots i.e. police, local authority, health and the VCS


Clear links from grass roots/communities/neighbourhoods to strategic/decision making bodies

Churches/ Faith Groups Community Capacity Building Initiative




Evidence of need

Within the Wokingham District, there are at least 45 churches of varying denominations and many independent/affiliated faith-based voluntary/community groups. Of these, some are already actively engaged within their local communities and others less so.



Over the past two years, there have been a series of conferences and training events held to encourage greater involvement by other churches/faith groups in their local areas. These include a series of 5 workshops run in partnership with The Shaftesbury Society during 2004 focusing on 'Community Engagement' and were





all well attended. Following a consultation with around 20 faith representatives, this project was supported unanimously by those present as offering a positive and essential mechanism in building the capacity of faith groups in relation to community initiatives.

Aims and objectives

0-6 Mths

a) Carry out an audit of church/religious buildings and community activities to establish possible future developments

Done - This bit of work is a major stepping stone not just in the data and information that it now provides by way of an up to date database but as part of the process of engaging faith groups and creating further opportunity for future relational and partnership development potentials.

b) Build increased capacity within the faith sector to benefit the local communities

Ongoing – depending on funding. It is possible that some limited funding may be made available from a Christian support organisation that will enable the Faith In The Community (Wokingham) Planning Team to employ on a one day a week basis a worker to support the Team in continuing to build the capacity of the Christian faith community in Wokingham. The mapping exercise reveals great potential for expansion in engaging with local authorities and also provides data on the considerable voluntary contribution made to communities in Wokingham by faith groups.

c) Develop strategy for engaging with faith groups locally and consider the development of an 'inter-faith structure'

The process of seeking engagement with all faith groups has been continued through the mapping exercise and it is proposed to have a Conference in May to launch the results and discuss these with community representatives and representatives of



all faith groups in Wokingham. This Conference is seen as another opportunity to create an environment in which to explore potentials for developing relational links with all faith groups.

6 Mths-2 Years

d) Create a trust through which churches/faith groups are able to employ grassroots project workers to serve people of all faiths and none in their local communities.

Not currently a top priority as little evidence of need found through consultation so far. As this is not now seen as a top priority the Faith In The Community (Wokingham) Planning Team is to develop an agreed set of simple protocols governing its operation so that its activities and purpose are clear and understood. The protocols will be based on the values of integrity, openness, and support to faith groups in Wokingham in developing capacity service to others in the community.

e) Run multi-faith conference including consultation on the Development Plan and on liaison with other faith groups


Discussions currently taking place in relation to setting up a 'Multi-Faith Forum'. Unlikely to be set up before 2007.

f) Signpost faith groups to other means of support locally e.g. CVA/WDVSF Ongoing. The platform built as a result of the Mapping Exercise and other emerging faith group developments such as the "The Cornerstone" Project, The "Big Idea", "Woodley Lookout", Christian Community Action, area based projects and linked activities are continuing to develop a strong network for the exchange of information and working together effectively. Even so there is a great deal more that can be achieved and greater capacity of service capable of being developed. Developing the strength of the network clearly enhances the ability to signpost and for mutual awareness etc.

g) Encourage and nurture partnerships where possible

Ongoing. These already exist in many ways – please see above of just some examples.

The mapping exercise evidenced a high degree of faith group partnership working in Wokingham and that more (19 faith groups) were interested in developing partnership. There is growing relational networking between faith groups in



Wokingham and the work of the Faith In The community (Wokingham) Planning Team will continue to support and develop this and new initiatives and projects involving faith groups working together across a range of service areas.

h) Develop a framework for consultation

Taking place through wider voluntary sector systems such as CVA/WDVSE.

To a degree a framework for consultation, service and support already potentially exists through the five Churches Together groups and the Berkshire Churches Together organisation. The Faith In The Community (Wokingham) Planning Team have decided to meet with leaders of these groups to discuss the issues raised by the mapping exercise to explore ways in which further community service can be released by working together where it seems appropriate and where there is need. The launch and Community Conference in May and a planned Conference in June for all Christian faith groups in Wokingham provide opportunity for consultation and for exploring the release of further initiatives involving working together.

There has been a building momentum over the past few years toward greater engagement with authorities. This is evidenced by the mapping exercise research, through the examples of developments referred to above and the increased growth in activity of faith groups working together. If the limited funding to employ a worker to support the work of Faith in The Community (Wokingham) Planning Team materialises the potential to stimulate and develop release of projects involving teams of people from different faith groups working together will continue to add impetus to capacity building in the faith sector.

Summary of Faith project

Although an effort was made to include other faiths in the survey carried out, but the majority of responses were from Christian groups and the consortium will need to continue to explore other methods of reaching non-Christian and smaller groups to develop relationships and partnerships in the short to medium term.

The initial phase of the research employed quantitative methods, primarily an in-depth questionnaire from which there was a 35% direct response, representing 44%



of the churches and faith groups. Data was collected from an additional 18 web sites representing a further 27 faith communities, so in total data was amassed from 84% of all those identified. A comprehensive and up to date database for primary and secondary contacts, addresses, telephone, email and web sites was established.

It proved difficult to engage with minority faith groups in the Wokingham District. Black Minority Ethnic (BME) groups currently represent 8-10% of the local population. A large proportion of BME residents are Christians and most members of the minority faiths appear to worship in Reading or Slough.


The mapping exercise identified those faith communities with their own premises. Many have facilities available for hire and obtainable for use by the wider community.

There was overwhelming agreement that service to the community is a key role within the faith sector. A small minority believed that the scope of their service and the development of new projects were limited by lack of funding. Two of these were Christian charities with significant running costs. Six faith groups felt that their projects were limited due to lack of expertise or professional advice. The project identified that some crosscutting interface was taking place

between statutory agencies and the faith sector. 46% of the respondents have worked with the statutory agencies at some point, the primary ones being Social Services, Community Drugs and Alcohol teams, Early Years Service, Health and Education.

The Wokingham faith groups are committed to serving the community and have financial resources and professional expertise that are of value. There is capacity to develop greater partnership with the statutory agencies, identifying and meeting existing gaps in service provision. Many churches and faith groups are already working in partnership with other churches and the LSP and there is positive energy to develop this in the future through-enhanced networking. A faith community conference would be considered. In addition to the LSP there is great potential for future partnership working between the faith sector and the wider VCS.

Any kind of development of inter-faith working was very difficult to achieve. Enthusiasm for such work was limited with not all faith groups and churches responding positively to the idea. Lack of co-ordination amongst the different



clusters of local Christian churches was one barrier and the non-Christian faith groups have no co-ordinated response, with many of them being based outside of the district. Such a piece of work is still desirable, but a lot of preparatory work will need to be done before it is possible to take this further.

Conclusion and recommendations

Some of the results from the questionnaire are very interesting and highlights the importance of the Faith community within the wider sector even if its not always recognised by itself. Some work has been done concerning bringing the 5 Churches together, but further work still needs to be carried out. It was recognised at an early stage of this project that the Christian faith had to sort its own organisational structures out before making efforts to move forward with other faith groups and although it is recognised that this takes time, but there still seems to be some resistance in forging real Inter faith dialogue and relations.

There is a bid for £10,000 from a trust to continue this work.

Continue to work towards a unified Wokingham Churches Together structure, which will benefit the sector by adding clarity over funding issues and a single point of contact.

The above recommendation will also give a stronger foundation for increased Inter faith dialogue and work and in turn strengthen funding opportunities in general.

*This report was researched and produced
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by

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