

**GEARING UP FOR GROWTH:  
SUPPORTING THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR  
IN MILTON KEYNES**

**(MILTON KEYNES DRAFT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN)**

**DECEMBER 2005**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.**

**1. Introduction**

This draft Plan has been developed by the consortium of Local Infrastructure Organisations (MKCLIP) and aims to set out the proposed activities for the next three to five years - the maximum realistic timeframe in view of the expansion planned for Milton Keynes.

The Plan provides:

- an outline of our proposals to develop and improve infrastructure support to frontline organisations; and
- an opportunity for stakeholders (i.e. VCOs and others) to consider and review the Plan, and raise any issues that should be taken into account in the final IDP - due to be published in April next year.

The Plan aims to ensure that voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) in Milton Keynes receive the support and services they need to meet the needs of their members, taking into account the proposed growth and expansion of Milton Keynes.

**2. Context**

The Plan has been developed within the context of the:

- Proposed growth and expansion of Milton Keynes: The planned rapid expansion of Milton Keynes means that the voluntary sector infrastructure needs to ensure that it has the capacity to provide support to existing VCOs groups, and the sector can stimulate and support the development of new communities and groups. Current projections estimate that voluntary and community sector activity will need to increase by 50% within a relatively short time period of 11 years.
- Proposals to fund the future growth of the infrastructure through the Roof Tax: The Roof Tax proposal aims to fund infrastructure development in the new areas and provides a unique opportunity to plan for growth through funding mechanisms which will ensure that monies are made available in advance.
- The government funded initiative (ChangeUp). The purpose of this initiative is to build the capacity of frontline voluntary organisations through the

development of an efficient and effective infrastructure<sup>1</sup>. The aim is that by 2014, the needs of frontline VCOs will be met by infrastructure support which is:

- available nationwide
- structured for maximum efficiency
- offers excellent provision
- accessible to all
- truly reflects and promotes diversity
- sustainably funded.

### **3. Timescale**

The Plan focuses on the next five years of development. It is not feasible to take a longer view at this stage until further information about the expansion of Milton Keynes becomes available. The Plan is a living document, and will be reviewed as and when decisions about future funding from the Roof Tax are more advanced.

### **4. Priorities**

The main priorities for this Plan are as follows:

- Supporting and strengthening consultation and engagement with voluntary organisations and community groups, particularly with regard to the growth and expansion of MK - which will remain a key issue for the next 10-15 years.
- Publicising and promoting infrastructure services and support so that all VCOs are aware of what is available and how to access them.
- Supporting and developing emerging and existing VCO networks that exist to serve and represent the interests of the range of diverse community groups in MK.

### **5. Aims and Objectives**

To promote and support the development and sustainability of all VCOs across MK, through the provision of effective, efficient and inclusive services.

- By ensuring that the consortium is and remains 'fit for purpose,' and that its member organisations continue to work together to identify how services and support can be provided more effectively to VCOs
- By providing a single point of access for information, advice and support for all VCOs, and to provide website facilities so that all VCOs can publicise and promote their services.
- By improving the services provided to small and new VCOs in MK to ensure they receive the support they need to develop

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on ChangeUp and definitions of infrastructure are contained in appendix 1.

- By increasing and improving the provision of support and services which help build and sustain the capacity of VCOs - particularly in the following areas:
- By strengthening / improving support to volunteers and increasing access to, and take-up of a range of sustainable, inclusive volunteering opportunities.

To ensure that all VCOs have a strong and effective voice in responding to the needs and interests of their local communities, and are actively involved in shaping and influencing consultations on local policy, public service delivery, and growth and expansion in MK.

- By supporting and strengthening consultation and engagement with VCOs

To develop and support representative, inclusive and participative infrastructure and networks for sharing information, good practice, skills and knowledge

- By supporting existing infrastructure / networks and developing new infrastructure where there are 'gaps', for example, community development, rural areas and across faiths.

### Inclusion and Diversity

This Plan seeks to ensure that infrastructure services and support meets the needs of all VCOs. The needs identified from the Grassroots project have informed and shaped the development of this Plan, and are addressed and embedded within the aims, objectives and activities described.

The infrastructure services and support provided seeks to encompass all disadvantaged groups who face inequality of opportunity to access adequate and appropriate support for their needs, to enable the growth and development of cohesive, sustainable communities across Milton Keynes.

### **6. Monitoring and Review**

The working environment for the voluntary sector in Milton Keynes is changing rapidly. This Plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed to keep pace with the changes. A thorough review will be held at least annually from 2006 to 2010.

Monitoring and review arrangements will focus on developing baseline targets against which improvements resulting from implementation of this Plan can be evaluated.

It is envisaged that Capacity Builders will be up and running by April 2006 with responsibility for the first two years of ChangeUp funding from April 2006 to March 2008. During this time it is envisaged that the Roof Tax proposals will have been

established. Therefore the first review of this Plan will take place in the winter of 2006 to ensure that it remains a good fit with local priorities and expansion plans.

## **7. Consultation**

This draft version of the Plan will be open to consultation until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. The Plan will then be revised in the light of comments received and published by the end of April 2006.

We would like to encourage a broad representation of views from:

- A diverse range of VCOs across Milton Keynes and the surrounding rural areas
- Public and private sector bodies with an interest in the VCS, including partners in cross-sector partnerships such as the LSP, public sector funders of the VCS and procurers of VCS services.

A number of events will be held over the consultation period (from January to March 2006) and copies of the Plan will be available at these workshops. Information on these events will be publicised in the New Year.

Copies of the Plan are available from the websites of Age Concern MK ([www.ageconcernmk.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernmk.org.uk)) and MKCVO ([www.mkcvo.co.uk](http://www.mkcvo.co.uk)), or you can request a copy by email or post from MKCVO (see below for contact details).

Feedback on the Plan can either be made in writing or by email and should be forwarded by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 to:

**May Chung**  
**MKCVO, Acorn House, 351 Midsummer Boulevard**  
**Central Milton Keynes MK9 3HP**  
**Tel: 01908 661623**  
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# SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT TO THE PLAN

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This draft Plan has been developed by the consortium of Local Infrastructure Organisations (MKCLIP) and aims to set out the proposed activities for the next three to five years - the maximum realistic timeframe in view of the expansion planned for Milton Keynes.

The Plan aims to ensure that voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) in Milton Keynes receive the support and services they need to meet the needs of their members, taking into account the proposed growth and expansion of Milton Keynes.

This Plan is an evolving document and needs to remain fluid to ensure that, as MK expands and grows, new and emerging communities and groups receive the support they need - the shape and structure of the support provided needs to reflect the future and existing needs of the sector.

The Plan will continue to be informed by ongoing consultation with frontline organisations - through the range of communication mechanisms already in existence.

The Plan has been developed within the context of the:

- proposed growth and expansion of Milton Keynes
- proposals to fund the future growth of the infrastructure through the Roof Tax
- the government funded initiative (ChangeUp) to build the capacity of frontline voluntary organisations through the development of an efficient and effective infrastructure<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. THE IMPACT OF THE GROWTH AGENDA

Growth is a way of life for Milton Keynes<sup>3</sup> which shapes and focuses the agendas for both the public and voluntary sector. The next ten years or so will see a significant increase in the population of Milton Keynes - over 32,500 new dwellings with a projected population increase of 80,000 by 2016. By 2031 Milton Keynes is planned to double in size with an overall increase of 71,000 new homes.

This will create a vibrant city-region with a population of some 340,000. This large programme of house building will need to be matched by significant new infrastructure, public services and community development.

Key characteristics of the current resident population indicate specific need for support and services in a number of areas:

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<sup>2</sup> Further information on ChangeUp and definitions of infrastructure are contained in appendix 1.

<sup>3</sup> The city has grown from around 40,000 in 1967 to 220,000 in 2005.

- A young population: It is one of the top ten areas nationally for numbers of people under 16 years of age. 0 - 4 year olds are expected to increase in number by 17% to over 17,000 by 2011
- Couples in their 30's with young families are more than double the South East average
- People living in council owned properties are more than double the South East average
- Single parents and young adults with children on income support almost double the South East average
- A rising 'young elderly population (those aged between 65-74) expected to increase by nearly 50% between 2001 and 2011
- BME population has increased from 5.8% of the population in 1991 to 9.3% in 2001 - a proportion that will continue to grow as Milton Keynes expands
- Economically active disabled people - higher than the national average
- Health inequalities - a 12 year difference in life expectation for babies born in the healthiest and least healthy wards in Milton Keynes.

### **The local voluntary and community sector**

The planned rapid expansion means that the voluntary sector infrastructure needs to ensure it has the capacity to provide support to existing VCOs groups and that the sector can stimulate and support the development of new communities and groups.

Projections estimate that voluntary and community sector activity will need to increase by 50% (i.e. 450 new groups, or the equivalent expansion of existing groups) within a relatively short time period of 11 years.

### Current profile of the sector

Milton Keynes has a rich and diverse voluntary and community sector. Its key characteristics are as follows:

- 1163 voluntary organisations in the unitary authority area. Of these, 561 are registered charities and 602 are not.
- The largest number of groups operate in the areas of arts, music and drama, sport and pre-school playgroups
- In 2001, over 700 organisations were surveyed by telephone, 50% of which kept no service statistics; only 7% undertook formal research into local social needs
- There is a widespread lack of knowledge about legal, financial and fundraising matters among organisations surveyed
- 67% of local organisations have no paid staff
- Only 2% have 20 or more staff
- Only 13% of organisations have an annual income of £10,000 or more

- Little professional fundraising takes place across the sector - this appears to be due to lack of knowledge about sources of funding, inadequate infrastructure to support it and little research data with which to construct a case for support

There is acknowledgement of the important contribution made by the voluntary and community sector in the Community Strategy and in the planning process of MK Partnership (the delivery vehicle for growth) and detailed discussions are underway as to how best to ensure support for capacity building for existing organisations, as well as support for groups that will emerge from the new communities.

Partners involved in the local voluntary sector infrastructure partnership (MKCLIP) recognise that in order to meet the challenges of growth and support, their services will have to be delivered differently to make maximum use of scarce resources.

### **Key challenges**

- Meeting the needs of pockets of deprivation within a generally affluent area
- Stimulating development of groups that are under - represented in the voluntary and community sector
- Ensuring the sustainability of the existing frontline service delivery organisations
- Building the capacity of the local infrastructure organisations to meet current demands of the sector
- Meeting the tight demands faced by the growth agenda in terms of planning and implementation - the finalised Growth Plan is scheduled to be completed by June 2006
- Addressing the declining priority given to community development
- Meeting the needs of rural communities (20% of the population of Milton Keynes Borough lives in a rural community).

### **3. THE ROOF TAX (TARIFF)**

The Roof Tax proposal aims to fund infrastructure development in the new areas and provides a unique opportunity to plan for growth through funding mechanisms which will ensure that monies are made available in advance.

This is a new method for collecting funds from developers to cover some of the infrastructure costs associated with the expansion of Milton Keynes and will be utilised in all areas where MK Partnership<sup>4</sup> (MKP) have jurisdiction over planning. Current discussions between MKP and the Voluntary and Community Sector are

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<sup>4</sup> [Milton Keynes Partnership](#) created in June last year is responsible for growth, development and investment in the new city. It is a sub-committee of the national regeneration agency English Partnerships and brings together Milton Keynes Council, Local Strategic Partnership representatives from the health, community and business sectors, English Partnerships and independent representation.

covering issues such as how and when the money will be identified for the VCS; how it is to be transferred; to which organisations; and, for what purposes. Of significance is the agreement of all parties, that the independence of the sector is important.

The tariff will apply until the master plans for the areas have been implemented - currently anticipated to be completed by 2016. It will be applied for the first time on the Broughton Gate development on the east side of MK (current developments are covered by the existing section 106 agreements). Discussions to explore the processes and systems that can be trialled at this development commenced in November this year, and it is envisaged that preliminary agreement on the procedures to be adopted will be drafted by the end of this year.

#### **4. THE CHANGEUP PROGRAMME**

##### **Background**

ChangeUp was developed in response to the government's cross-cutting review of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery<sup>5</sup>. The review found that many frontline VCOs, especially the small and medium sized were unable to access the support they need. The government's response to this was to develop a shared strategy to underpin the capacity of the sector - the framework for this is ChangeUp<sup>6</sup> which was published in June 2004. This document recognises that the voluntary and community sector plays a crucial role in delivering public services and in building strong, cohesive and self-determining communities

ChangeUp describes the support that frontline VCOs need (as agreed by the sector). It is the Government's initiative to modernise and improve the support services (usually referred to as infrastructure) provided to frontline voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. The aim is that by 2014, the needs of frontline VCOs will be met by infrastructure support which is:

- available nationwide
- structured for maximum efficiency
- offers excellent provision
- accessible to all
- truly reflecting and promoting diversity
- sustainably funded.

The programme is jointly funded by the Home Office and Defra.

Its focus is on how capacity building support and infrastructure for the sector should develop to address the key support needs shared by most organisations in the sector, these being:

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<sup>5</sup> The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery 2002. HM Treasury

<sup>6</sup> ChangeUp: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector. Active Communities Unit. June 2004

- Performance improvement
- Workforce development and leadership
- ICT
- Governance
- Recruiting and developing volunteers
- Funding voluntary and community sector activity

These are supported by six national ChangeUp hubs of expertise to progress the aims of ChangeUp in the above areas.

The investment is focused upon 'catalysing' a step-change in the support available to frontline organisations for the longer term. The ChangeUp programme in this area is delivered through the Government Office for the South East (GOSE). Further information on ChangeUp is attached in Appendix 1.

The ChangeUp programme consists of three main stages of funding: Early Spend, Main Spend and Capacity Builders.

### **Early Spend**

In the South-East, the Early Spend Programme included an extensive range of activities (delivered through RAISE) which included 14 sub-regional, locally based projects spanning development, exemplar and gap initiatives, serving to test out differing problems and solutions in the delivery of infrastructure services.

The MK project was the exemplar initiative for the Thames Valley sub-region. The aims of the project were to:

- produce a 'Health Check' for infrastructure activity that could be disseminated across the region
- build capacity of MK Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs) to work more effectively with each other (MKCLIP acting as the vehicle for this)
- explore with funders long term investment in infrastructure
- develop a LIO Infrastructure strategy for consideration by the MK Local Strategic Partnership.

The Health Check<sup>7</sup> clearly identified the requirements of LIOs in order to meet the identified needs of the sector. The resulting Local Infrastructure Organisation strategy was used as the basis of discussion to agree joint objectives and activities, and identified which activities could be undertaken within current resources and which required additional investment.

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<sup>7</sup> Milton Keynes Voluntary and Community Sector: Local Infrastructure Strategy. 2004

### Summary of findings from the Health Check:

- There existed a broad range of services provided by LIOs to support groups in the effective delivery of their services. A broader range of choice could be offered by improving co-ordination and referral systems across the LIO members
- Services provided tend to be reactive, with all LIOs reporting a lack of capacity to meet increased need if services were actively promoted
- Recognition of the increasing importance and future potential of InCCA
- Shared consultation fatigue due to the combined effect of local and national initiatives
- Infrastructure activity is delivered as an integral part of service delivery and this is subject to the continuing success of project applications, and an increasing reliance upon short-term project funding used to underpin infrastructure functions.

Analysis by function and specialist areas was also undertaken and these are summarised in a separate report<sup>8</sup>.

### **Main Spend**

GOSE agreed that the Main Spend ChangeUp investment for MK (announced at the beginning of 2005) could be used to build upon the comprehensive work already completed during the Early Spend phase. MKCLIP agreed that the most effective approach was to address areas of the infrastructure investment plan where information was lacking and/or areas which required further testing. MKCLIP partners were invited to put forward proposals for consideration for twelve-month pilot projects which would help to progress some of the areas/challenges identified from the health check. This funding was used to build upon the existing work programme and consists of activities which could not be incorporated within the existing resources of the infrastructure organisations.

Milton Keynes received £100,000 to fund the pilot projects and to develop a local Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) by March 2006. Additional funding of £40,000 was awarded at a later date to develop work with hard to reach communities through the Additional Support programme

Development workers appointed to undertake these projects have sought to identify areas where there are mutual gains and benefits across the local infrastructure organisations. The outcomes and issues identified as the projects have progressed have formed an essential part of the process in informing the content of the IDP.

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<sup>8</sup> The report containing information on the ChangeUp Projects and other work undertaken this year is available from MKCVO

Five main projects were funded - together with funding for a project co-ordinator. Additional projects undertaken include; a personnel project supported by the Community Foundation; research and proposals to develop an approach to community capacity building (funded by the MK Partnership); and, research and development of a proposal to implement an intranet facility for the sector.

<b>Projects funded through ChangeUp</b>	<b>End date</b>
ChangeUp co-ordinator to co-ordinate the projects, develop the Infrastructure Development Plan, and provide secretariat support to CLIP. Lead agency: MKCLIP	March 2006
Development of Older People's groups Lead agency: Age Concern MK	June 2006
Supporting Play needs in rural areas Lead agencies: MKPA/MKCYVS	March 2006
Dissemination of a Volunteering toolkit to ensure high quality recruitment and support of volunteers. Lead agency: Volunteer Connections	May 2006
Social Enterprise pilot / Securing wider engagement of the VCS in ICT Lead agency: Women & Work	April 2006
Grassroots Project researching the support needs of hard-to-reach and marginalised groups. Lead agency: MKCLIP / Steering Group led by MKREC	May 2006

### **Capacity Builders**

From April 2006, the Home Office is handing lead responsibility for ChangeUp policy and investment to a newly created Government appointed agency called Capacity Builders.

Further continuation funding for 2006/07 and 07/08 will be available from GOSE, and Capacity Builders will then take over the fund management of the ChangeUp investment.

It is envisaged that interim funding for some of the proposals will be resourced from Capacity Builders and then later funded from the Roof Tax and other long term funding sources.

### **5. MKCLIP - the local consortium of infrastructure organisations**

Milton Keynes Community Local Infrastructure Partnership (MKCLIP) - formerly the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly - is the local infrastructure partnership which has managed the ChangeUp projects. It was established in 2004 as a result of the work undertaken on the Early Spend programme. The aims, objectives and principles of MKCLIP are attached in appendix 2.

### Role and membership of MKCLIP

Regular meetings have provided a forum for input to policy and strategy across a wide range of MK-focussed issues. Members represent interests in most sectors of the community and expertise in areas that include property management, community development and engagement, advice, guidance and developmental support, funding skills development and training, volunteer recruitment, support and retention (see appendix 3 for details of current members). Current 'gaps' in membership include disability/health and social care (for people under 50 years of age)<sup>9</sup> and sport - the Sport Alliance has expressed an interest in participating in the work of the consortium later this year.

### Communications with member organisations

Currently, there is outreach to over 2,000 organisations who are the frontline members of MKCLIP, enabling strong information flow and facilitation of consultation and engagement, through weekly email alerts and 6-weekly meetings of MKCLIP, plus regular newsletters and open meetings. MKCLIP holds regular open meetings to enable and facilitate debate on current MK-focused issues for the sector enabling voluntary organisations and community groups to contribute and engage with planning and policy issues.

Formalised communications strategy still to be developed.

### Links to the strategic framework for MK

MKCLIP reports directly to the LSP, and actively participates in the planning of MK through its role as the LSP representative for Community at Milton Keynes Partnership.

MKCLIP actively participates in the implementation of the Community Strategy and is the lead body for the following components:

- Developing a Community Engagement Strategy
- Developing the following Codes of Good Practice to accompany the Local Compact:
  - Funding Code of Practice
  - Consultation Code of Practice
  - Volunteering Code of Practice and Charter
  - Learning and Skills Development Code
- Developing a Volunteering Strategy for MK
- Bringing the issue of Social Enterprise and sustainability to the city agenda.

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<sup>9</sup> Gaps also include involvement with the Supporting People agenda – CLIP has taken the decision that it currently lacks the capacity to undertake work or involvement in this area.

## **SECTION TWO: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROPOSALS**

This section provides information on the proposed programme of work to develop infrastructure to improve the delivery of support and services to local VCOs. It focuses on providing support effectively and efficiently through a co-ordinated approach. The work plans have been developed and informed by the Health Check findings, the interim outcomes from the projects and other work undertaken during the year (available as a separate report).

The purpose of ChangeUp (and of this Plan) is to create a framework of infrastructure that:

- delivers easy access to support especially for the smaller and medium sized organisations and groups
- strengthens the best of what already exists
- plugs the gaps in current provision
- looks for economies of scale
- reduces duplication
- seeks complementary funding

Further work is needed to generate baseline information and targets and this reflects the fact that work is still ongoing.

### **TIMESCALE**

The Plan focuses on the next five years of development. It is not feasible to take a longer view at this stage until further information about the expansion of Milton Keynes becomes available. The pace of change will be rapid over the next few years, and it is envisaged that the composition of the new incoming population may be quite different when compared to that of the existing areas - new communities may have different needs and requirements. The Plan is a living document, and will be reviewed as and when decisions about future funding from the Tariff are more advanced.

### **PRIORITIES**

The main priorities for this Plan are as follows:

- Supporting and strengthening consultation and engagement with voluntary organisations and community groups, particularly with regard to the growth and expansion of MK - which will remain a key issue for the next 10-15 years.
- Publicising and promoting infrastructure services and support so that all VCOs are aware of what is available and how to access them.
- Supporting and developing emerging and existing VCO networks that exist to serve and represent the interests of the range of diverse community groups in MK.

## **AIM**

**1. To promote and support the development and sustainability of all VCOs across MK, through the provision of effective, efficient and inclusive services.**

**1.1 By ensuring that the consortium is and remains 'fit for purpose,' and that its member organisations continue to work together to identify how services and support can be provided more effectively to VCOs**

CLIP member organisations have faced considerable pressure during the last year dealing with the growth agenda and managing ChangeUp. Whilst the ChangeUp work has provided considerable opportunities for developing and testing new methods for delivering support, it has incurred a substantive cost in terms of the management and administrative capacity required to run the projects.

In the medium term, this level of work is not sustainable, without additional resources and has provided the impetus for the consortium to examine how and where services and support can be delivered differently, so that the project outcomes can inform future service structures.

During the last year, membership of CLIP has increased as the consortium has sought to ensure appropriate representation and involvement from other infrastructure organisations and interested stakeholders. It has now reached a size where its effectiveness will begin to diminish unless it begins to delegate specific tasks and areas of work to smaller work groups.

Future work will focus on the following activities<sup>10</sup>:

- Review the frequency of CLIP meetings (possibly moving to quarterly meetings) and establish sub-groups to undertake clearly defined areas of work and report back to CLIP. These will include, for example, the intranet project, consultation and further development of this Plan, and VOICE, the voluntary sector training and development forum.
- Review the shape and structure of the consortium, focusing on areas where services and support could be rationalised and where improved, co-ordinated working could enhance and increase the support and services provided to VCOs. In the short term, this will include:
  - reviewing the membership criteria and clarifying the roles and core services of the member organisations possibly moving to a 'hub and spoke'

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<sup>10</sup> Timescales to be determined dependent upon funding (e.g. the continuation funding). Longer term funding of the consortium will be incorporated into the overheads of each LIO member.

model of delivery with generic services provided from one or more 'hubs', and core services delivered from the 'spokes'

- exploring the feasibility of sharing 'back-office' facilities, office space and information where there are potentially clear gains or synergies to be made for the VCOs served by those organisations.

- At present, CLIP is chaired on a rotating basis - greater clarity of direction and objectivity would be achieved if the meetings were chaired by an individual independent of the CLIP members. Work on identifying possible contacts will be undertaken as part of the above review.
- In the medium term, CLIP will undertake a planning and co-ordinating role for existing community development / voluntary sector activity to identify 'gaps' in provision and aim to develop a profile for effective, sustainable communities. The growth agenda imposes considerable pressure on planning, and it is envisaged that the mapping and profiling undertaken (working with the Observatory) could be used as a basis for developing 'growth indicators' for LIOs to incorporate in their own business planning cycles - so that infrastructure activity supports and keeps pace with population expansion.
- Implementing a shared contact / membership database so that all VCOs receive relevant and timely information on issues that affect them. This will also include establishing common referral protocols across the LIO organisations.
- Rationalising or co-ordinating existing printed information (such as newsletters) to avoid overload and duplication of infrastructure information, and a move towards monthly information email alerts to all VCOs which will contain targeted information that is appropriate/relevant to their areas of interest, for example, funding opportunities, training, and consultation on growth.
- Establishing a means for evaluating the performance of infrastructure services, through the development of joint performance indicators which are linked to tangible benefits and outcomes for front-line VCOs.

**1.2 By providing a single point of access for information, advice and support for all VCOs, and to provide website facilities so that all VCOs can publicise and promote their services.**

All of the ChangeUp projects endorsed the Health Check findings, that many of the VCOs were unaware of the services and support already available, unsure of where to go or who to contact. The ChangeUp project workers have, as part of their work,

collected the needs of the VCOs contacted and then referred on, or sign-posted groups to other LIOs services and support. This has been very successful with membership databases updated across the LIOs, and many of the identified needs have been met as the projects have progressed, as much of the information and support required was already available.

Future work will focus on the following activities:

- Intranet: Developing and implementing a voluntary sector intranet which will provide an easily accessible, centralised source of information and support to all VCOs. This will widen access and improve the availability of support and services to all VCOs.

The intranet will provide VCOs and networks with the following services:

- A directory of services and free web pages for all VCOs so that they can publicise and promote their services and activities.
- A web portal through which to access signposting and referral services from the infrastructure organisations
- An active entry in the web-based directory of groups
- A group website which will be signposted from the directory
- An online group calendar
- Bulletin boards and forums which can be created by individual groups and networks and the facility to participate in forums / on-line consultations run by infrastructure organisations.

Implementation will be phased over a three year period, and it is envisaged that 900 groups and 150 group websites will be registered during this first phase.

- Directory of resources: During the early part of next year a LIO directory of resources will be developed and distributed to all VCOs and rural infrastructure organisations (for example, rural CVS and parish councils). This will be combined with the consultation process for this Plan.
- Funding advice service: Previous and current work has identified the key priority area for VCOs is assistance with obtaining advice on funding. A funding advice service will be delivered through InCCA from January next year. The support provided will include the provision of a funding advice support worker who will provide an in-depth service to all VCOs which will also include, workshops and meetings around funding issues, a funding fair and email alerts on funding opportunities.

- Provision of HR advice and information (detailed below).

### **1.3 By improving the services provided to small and new VCOs in MK to ensure they receive the support they need to develop**

The limited resources of many small and new VCOs mean that they often lack the capacity to investigate areas where help could be provided, or to explore the services and support that are available. It is generally recognised that more intensive support is required for start-up groups, and smaller groups that wish to develop, and that an initial face- to- face contact with a support or outreach worker can provide considerable help to the smaller groups in exploring and identifying their needs and requirements.

The ChangeUp project workers were able to provide advice and some support to the smaller community groups as part of the process. Contact with many of the small community groups during the course of the Grassroots project found that those groups that had established links with community development / neighbourhood workers provided a stark contrast to those without, as they had received considerably more support with, for example, finding premises, administration and dissemination of information, and promotion of their activities and events.

#### Future work will focus on the following activities:

- Increasing the support provided to small and new VCOs, through outreach support services which will establish links between community workers, projects and networks and work with the groups to make initial contact; identify needs and then provide appropriate services and support with development.

There are two possible options for the provision of outreach work:

- Specialist outreach workers (between three to four full time workers in total) focusing on the specific services and support provided by each LIO (which may require each LIO to seek funding and to include this as part of their individual business plans) or,
- The provision of (one or two) generic outreach workers targeted at specific areas (for example, urban and rural areas, or focusing on expansion and surrounding areas) whose role would be to make initial point of contact , identify needs and then refer back to the appropriate services for specialist support. Although LIOs may still need to have outreach workers in post to take the referrals from the generic workers - especially when VCOs have been made aware that infrastructure support exists

- The project work also identified a need for outreach work to be more flexible in terms of the hours available: future work will test whether this would be of benefit to VCOs.

#### **1.4 By increasing and improving the provision of support and services which help build and sustain the capacity of VCOs - particularly in the following areas:**

##### Future work will focus on the following activities:

- Training and skills development:
  - Continue development of the VOICE training provider database (which will be linked to the intranet) to provide all VCOs with one point of access to the provision of training opportunities and, to develop web-based courses
  - Provide access to learning and development support for all VCOs with the support of a learning and development worker who will coordinate the training needs of all VCOs, and will develop / commission courses where there are 'gaps'.
  - Provide / facilitate training and development needs of the emerging Community Development Partnership.
  - The training providers' network, VOICE, will produce its business plan later this year, which will provide further information on training opportunities.
  - VOICE will be holding an open meeting in December this year which will be attended by the LSC and MKELP - the focus of VOICE will be to lobby and advocate so that the voluntary sector is included in the future plans of these two agencies.
- Use and application of ICT

The interim findings from the ChangeUp project indicates that whilst there is an undoubted demand for computer based training, the main obstacles are a lack of capacity for individuals to attend training courses, and the costs of the courses.

  - The ICT project will aim to increase access to courses by identifying funding opportunities for ICT training (working in conjunction with the funding advice service), and will seek to continue to run the ICT suite premises and facilities as a social enterprise to generate income to subsidise ICT training provision to VCOs.
  - The MKC E governance initiative to provide broadband facilities to VCOs will broaden usage of ICT, particularly among hard to reach communities.

The ICT ChangeUp project is undertaking a training needs analysis of VCOs and this will then be used as the basis for delivering courses that are tailored to the needs of the sector.

*ICT technical back-up/support to VCOs remains a gap at present*

- Practical support - back-office / secretarial facilities and premises/meeting facilities. There are already a number of facilities available to VCOs such as hot-desking / office support at MKCVO, and conference rooms available at Acorn House. The new Age Concern MK building at Peartree Bridge will provide a range of facilities and is due to open next year.

Feedback from VCO networks indicate that small VCOs struggle to find suitable meeting premises which are accessible and affordable.

- In the short term, an audit of existing community and social facilities will be undertaken and a directory of facilities will be available to all VCOs as a database available eventually via the intranet (or on the Observatory). At a later date additional work will explore the availability of other meeting spaces such as schools. Any identified shortfall in provision will be fed into plans for future growth and expansion.

- To publicise and promote existing administrative / secretarial support available to VCOs, initially via InCCA and then via the intranet - this will be included in the LIO resource directory.

*Include reference to Shifting Sands report and other facilities that will be provided by the Community Foundation to VCOs - waiting for further information.*

- Increase support to VCOs through the provision of a comprehensive HR and employment law service to the sector, which will be accessed via a website (due to go live in April next year).
- Increased support to VCOs through the provision of Community Accountancy services, further information will be made available next year.

### **1.5 By strengthening / improving support to volunteers and increasing access to, and take-up of a range of sustainable, inclusive volunteering opportunities.**

All VCOs rely upon volunteers and there are particular challenges in ensuring that the number of volunteers increases in proportion to the changing population as MK expands and that they can be adequately supported. It is estimated that an additional 7,000 volunteers will require support over the next 10 years.

Future work will focus on the following activities:

- Improving the training programmes currently provided to ensure they meet the identified needs of VCOs, and improve volunteer management.
- Extending the support provided to all VCOs by providing outreach services (irrespective of membership) to promote volunteering to groups of people currently unable to engage with the core services provided, and to recruit volunteers from under-represented groups.
- Exploring the feasibility of providing a volunteer co-ordinator to work with smaller VCOs that do not have the capacity to manage volunteers, focusing on working with smaller community groups and those that have traditionally found it difficult to use volunteers.
- Exploring options for attracting volunteers to meet the identified shortage of trustees and management committee members.
- Providing a more comprehensive 'agency' service, which includes , for example, improved communication systems for matching volunteers to include skills testing, training, screening etc

A Volunteering Strategy will be produced later this year which will provide further information and will be based upon the analysis of the volunteer survey

**AIM**

**2. To ensure that all VCOs have a strong and effective voice in responding to the needs and interests of their local communities, and are actively involved in shaping and influencing consultations on local policy, public service delivery, and growth and expansion in MK.**

**2.1 By supporting and strengthening consultation and engagement with VCOs**

Future work will focus on the following activities:

- Supporting the role of the Community Involvement Officer who will continue to ensure that VCOs are involved effectively in the growth and expansion areas.
- Ensuring that consultation protocols are adopted and implemented - this includes the Compact Consultation Code of Practice and Statement of Community Involvement.
- Developing a robust community engagement strategy and ensuring that it is adopted and endorsed by the key stakeholders
- Providing secretariat support to the existing networks and forums which play a key role in providing a 'voice' for their members (see below).

## **AIM**

### **3. To develop and support representative, inclusive and participative infrastructure and networks for sharing information, good practice, skills and knowledge**

#### **3.1 By supporting existing infrastructure / networks and developing new infrastructure / networks where there are 'gaps', for example, community development, rural communities and across faiths.**

These networks will be vital in ensuring that effective communications, links and alliances are made and sustained between the infrastructure organisations and the community groups served by the networks. They also provide the mechanisms for securing and strengthening consultation across the sector. As new community groups develop, it will be important to ensure that they have access to the support and representation of these networks and to provide them with an effective voice in the future development of services.

Many of the existing networks are at an early stage of development (for example, the development of a Faith Council), or lack capacity and resources to develop and grow. As MK expands these networks will play an important role in forging links with new community groups and providing them support and information. The outcomes from the Grassroots project identified the need for practical, secretarial and administrative support to those networks that formed the Steering Group for this project.

#### Future work will focus on the following activities:

- Providing secretariat support to all the existing VCO networks - this may include, for example, maintaining membership databases, organising meetings/events, and circulating agendas and minutes of meetings. This will also include support to networks that span the voluntary sector and other public service agencies, for example, the virtual network established during the Grassroots project.

In the medium term, implementation of the intranet will reduce the level of support required as the networks will be able to use their own websites and information links to circulate information and contact member groups through bulletin boards etc.

- Maintaining and strengthening the cross-sector Community Development Network and to expand its role to include training and skills for all those involved in community development work across MK.

- Community Development (CD)
  - Expand and co-ordinate community development activity across Milton Keynes ensuring that it keeps pace with expansion
  - Build the capacity of the sector to enable VCOs to respond to growing needs and to ensure that community activity is sustainable in the medium to long term.
  - Establish networking, best practice, monitoring and evaluation of existing and future programmes of CD activity building upon the continued operation of the Community Development Network
  - Build links, partnerships and networks between existing and new communities
  
- Rural communities. Continue work to strengthen communication and collaboration between rural VCS and MK infrastructure agencies to improve support and services to rural VCOs, including:
  - Developing a model for building capacity and developing community groups
  - Developing sustainable outreach support that is integrated across the infrastructure providers
  - Actively promoting LIO services to rural infrastructure organisations and exploring opportunities for joint funding to meet identified needs of rural groups, and promote membership of LIOs amongst rural VCOs.

A rural proofing tool / checklist and detailed action plans will be developed between January and March of next year, following completion of the rural project

### **Inclusion and Diversity**

The Grassroots project has established contacts and linkages with a wide range of networks, forums and community groups. This Plan seeks to ensure that infrastructure services and support meets the needs of all VCOs. The needs identified from this project (which broadly reflect those of small and developing community groups and networks) have informed and shaped the development of this Plan, and are addressed and embedded within the aims, objectives and activities described.

The infrastructure services and support provided seeks to encompass all disadvantaged groups who face inequality of opportunity to access adequate and appropriate support for their needs, to enable the growth and development of cohesive, sustainable communities across Milton Keynes.

The role of the REC is to be widened in the near future to include all equality issues, and infrastructure organisations will work collaboratively to support this new role.

## **Social Enterprise**

Social Enterprise in Milton Keynes is still at an early stage of development:

### Future work will focus on:

- Continuing to run the ICT suite as a social enterprise and to undertake an evaluation of the Project to identify the lessons learned for future development of the concept
- Proposals to develop an enterprise gateway in Wolverton (in collaboration with MKC) which may then begin to put Social Enterprise on the agenda.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing Social Enterprise facilities in the expansion areas of MK as a means to providing sustainable services and support.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The working environment for the voluntary sector in Milton Keynes is changing rapidly. This Plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed to keep pace with the changes. A thorough review will be held at least annually from 2006 to 2010.

Monitoring and review arrangements will focus on developing baseline targets against which improvements resulting from implementation of this Plan can be evaluated.

It is envisaged that Capacity Builders will be up and running by April 2006 with responsibility for the first two years of ChangeUp funding from April 2006 to March 2008. During this time it is envisaged that the Roof Tax proposals will have been established. Therefore the first review of this Plan will take place in the winter of 2006 to ensure that it remains a good fit with local priorities and expansion plans.

## **CONSULTATION**

This draft version of the Plan will be open to consultation until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. The Plan will then be revised in the light of comments received and published by the end of May 2006.

We would like to encourage a broad representation of views from:

- A diverse range of VCOs across Milton Keynes and the surrounding rural areas
- Public and private sector bodies with an interest in the VCS, including partners in cross-sector partnerships such as the LSP, public sector funders of the VCS and procurers of VCS services.

A number of events will be held over the consultation period (from January to March 2006) and copies of the Plan will be available at these workshops. Information on these events will be publicised in the New Year.

Copies of the Plan are available on the websites of Age Concern MK ([www.ageconcernmk.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernmk.org.uk)) and MKCVO ([www.mkcvo.co.uk](http://www.mkcvo.co.uk)), or you can request a copy by email or post from MKCVO (see contact details below).

Feedback on the Plan can either be made in writing or by email and should be forwarded by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 to:

**May Chung**  
**MKCVO, Acorn House, 351 Midsummer Boulevard**  
**Central Milton Keynes MK9 3HP**  
**Tel: 01908 661623**  
**Email: [May.chung@MKCVO.co.uk](mailto:May.chung@MKCVO.co.uk)**

## APPENDIX 1: FURTHER INFORMATION ON CHANGEUP

### Definition of local voluntary and community infrastructure

Infrastructure is defined by ChangeUp as, the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support and develop, co-ordinate, represent and promote front line organisations thus enabling them to deliver against their objectives more effectively. They may be known as 'umbrella bodies' or as second tier because they exist/or partly exist to support the first tier or frontline organisation whose role it is to deliver services or give advice direct to individuals or communities, or who campaign and advocate on a specific issue. LIOs may be direct service providers too.

Local Infrastructure Organisations are usually generic (supporting all frontline organisations within a particular geographic area) like MKCVO which provides support to all VCOs, or specialist - consisting of those that support a particular sub-sector of the voluntary and community sector, for example Age Concern MK or MKPA, or offer a particular area of expertise such as the Community Foundation, for example.

### Website links to further information on ChangeUp

#### National ChangeUp

- [HM Treasury's 2002 Cross Cutting Review of the Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery](#)
- [National ChangeUp Framework \(Home Office\)](#)
- <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/changeup>
- <http://www.nacvs.org.uk/>

#### National Hubs

Governance: [www.governancehub.org.uk](http://www.governancehub.org.uk)

Volunteering: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/missions.php?id=1075>

Performance improvement: [www.performance-improvement.org.uk](http://www.performance-improvement.org.uk)

Workforce development: <http://www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk>

Funding and finance: [www.cafonline.org/policy](http://www.cafonline.org/policy)

ICT: [www.ictconsortium.org.uk](http://www.ictconsortium.org.uk)

## **APPENDIX 2: AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF MKCLIP**

### **Aim**

To sustain and improve the provision of infrastructure services, and provide effective mechanisms for the delivery of both generic and specialist infrastructure services which support the diverse needs of the voluntary and community sector in Milton Keynes.

### **Objectives**

- To increase collaborative and strategic partnership working between infrastructure organisations on policy, information and services;
- To promote awareness and understanding of the roles and services of MK CLIP and our members amongst all voluntary organisation and community groups so that they can better connect with our services;
- To strengthen targeting of hard to reach groups to ensure equal access to information and services;
- To promote local sector development by providing capacity building support to meet existing needs and to identify unmet support needs
- To increase access to, and the take-up of a range of sustainable volunteering opportunities;
- To enable local voluntary organisations and community groups to establish an effective voice in response to the needs and interests of local communities;
- To represent our member groups/organisations/provide an interface between the sector and local statutory agencies, and provide a consultative forum/dialogue for the sector on local policy consultations and issues;
- To keep our member groups/organisations informed and involved on issues and services related to the infrastructure of Milton Keynes.
- Provide an input into local policy development; disseminate briefings and information on national policy and contribute to local and national policy consultations where relevant.

Membership is open to those organisations delivering services to frontline VCOs in any of the following areas:

### **Functions:**

- Start-up and development support including capacity building
- Play an integral part in both the regeneration and growth in MK
- Regular consultation with and monitoring of services by users
- Involvement by users in development
- Networking / Events
- Advice, information, signposting, assistance
- Partnership function and brokerage
- Informed representation

- Policy development and input / consultation with national and regional organisations
- Research

## **Principles**

### Valuing the voluntary sector

Shared values representing diversity and scope of the sector

Committed to best practice in relation to issues of diversity

Supporting and utilising the Compact and its Codes

Mutual understanding and recognition of professionalism across sectors

### Representative and accountable

Transparent and accessible

Robust and accountable in their governance structures

Able to provide representation & leadership

### Working well together

Promoting mutual respect and trust between infrastructure bodies

Awareness of role (contribution and connections) in relation to other agencies

Networked - horizontally and vertically

Co-ordination rather than duplication of effort

Promoting good communication within the sector and externally

Includes working collaboratively and in partnership

Equality of partnership with statutory and private providers

### Providing high quality services

Responsive to the needs of users

Fit for purpose

Operating to agreed service standards

Capable of monitoring own effectiveness

### Providing advice and information

Able to signpost effectively

Pro-active and flexible in responding to needs and new opportunities

Developing skills and knowledge which inform the sector

To ensure services are delivered within the legal framework

### **APPENDIX 3: CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF MKCLIP**

MK Council for Voluntary Organisations  
Age Concern MK  
MK Racial Equality Council  
Women & Work  
MK Play Association  
MK Council for Voluntary Youth Services  
Volunteer Connections  
Community Foundation  
Citizens Advice Bureau  
City Counselling Centre MK  
MK Cultural Alliance