

■ Forward

We wish to thank all of the individuals and organisations who took part in assisting us to put together this Social Enterprise Strategy. Without all of the valuable time and information we would never have been able to come up with such an array of innovative and practical solutions.

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1. Background

The Derby community network has commissioned the development of a social enterprise strategy for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Derby. With ever increasing pressure on the VCS to deliver more services in a shrinking grant environment the social enterprise option has been embraced by some as a miracle solution for the sector. This has a certain appeal for central government in believing that otherwise grant dependant organisations will find a good business opportunity and start earning their way toward sustainability.

In order to develop a proper framework for VCS organisations in Derby to benefit from this culture of enterprise it was necessary to gauge current understanding of social enterprise at various levels. Voluntary and Community sector organisations were surveyed and some participated in focus groups. A range of stakeholders from the public sector, the VCS and social enterprise and business support organisations were interviewed and also took part in focus groups.

Not surprisingly the range of opinions about social enterprise, what it is and what it does, were as varied as the range of those expressing them. One of the key targets in developing this strategy will be to define social enterprise as it relates to Derby's VCS organisations.

There is not technical legal definition of social enterprise rather a working definition formulated by the social enterprise unit when it was part of the department of trade and industry "a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners'. There are also guidelines which suggest that social enterprises earn 50% or more of their income from trading activities.

Recently the social enterprise unit has moved from the DTI to become part of the office for the third sector. This is a cabinet office which gives the third sector a high profile within the government. Some in the social enterprise sector see this as a positive move while others believe it will add further confusion to ill defined sector. The office of the third sector has published a social enterprise strategy but it remains relatively unchanged from the previous work done by the DTI.



2. National, Regional and Local Strategies

The most recent report issued nationally is from the Cabinet Office, Office of the Third Sector a social enterprise action plan, Scaling New Heights published in 2006. This plan followed and was informed by extending a businesses survey in 2005 to include social enterprises. This survey estimated that around 55,000 businesses with employees fitted the Government's definition, with a combined turnover of £27b, contributing around £8.4b to GDP or 1.3% of total turnover of all businesses. A previous survey identified that most social enterprises were small with an annual turnover of under £100,000, the median was £285,000 and one in five turned over above £1m. The survey confirmed involvement of the sector in a wide range of economic activity – training, social care, housing, leisure and childcare.

The above report forms the policy context for the role of social enterprises, it is the DTI that provides the resources, through the Small Business Service, to support the growth and development of the sector.

The plan seeks to deliver action through 4 inter-related objectives;

- Foster a culture of social enterprise
- Ensure the right information and advice is available to those running social enterprises
- Enable social enterprises to access appropriate finance
- Enable social enterprises to work with government

The report recognises that social enterprises contribute to its vision of creating a fairer and more just society by meeting social needs, encouraging ethical markets, improving public services and increasing enterprise. In this regard they add value to the economy and communities as a whole. The 2005 survey found that 17% reported that their focus was to help the environment, 34% help both the environment and people and 49% people alone. Over half of the social enterprises in the survey were located in the 40% most deprived areas – hence contributing to the government's neighbourhood renewal agenda.

The government has established the right for social enterprises to register with Companies House as Community Interest Companies (effective from 2006) which doesn't change their legal status, however does allow them to report differently and trade using a 'CIC' style which differentiates the trading organisation to external parties. This is widely held as a helpful move by the sector.



The thrust of what the government intends to put into place is based on strong advice, mentoring, standards and finance. The Change Up programme exists to support voluntary and community sector organisations. This is delivered via Capacitybuilders – an arms length body which aims to secure a high quality and sustainable future for front line infrastructure organisations. Capacitybuilders will integrate support for social enterprises as part of its remit. Further the Office of the Third Sector will work with partners at national, regional, sectoral and local levels to address gaps in provision.

Regional Development Agencies are established to co-ordinate economic activity and growth in each of the regions. For the East Midlands the agency is emda. Their Regional Economic Strategy recognises that social enterprises deliver their targets for social inclusion. In support of this the agency supported the establishment of Social Enterprise East Midlands (SEEM) to act as the key infrastructure organisation to drive forward the delivery of support and advice services to the sector. Separately emda supports sub-regional partnerships in the delivery of their own objectives. For Derby this partnership is the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership.

The key regional organisation is SEEM for support to the sector. SEEM published a social enterprise strategy for the region following a survey of enterprises. The report clarified key roles for SEEM and are relevant to the City. These are;

- Delivering actions to improve the quality of, and access to, support for social enterprises
- Identifying and accessing additional funds to support SE development
- Promoting social enterprises
- Undertaking strategic development of the sector – in particular key sub-sectors
- Supporting regional and sub-regional SE networks
- Developing practical tools to increase the trading capacity of the sector
- Collecting and sharing information

According to research undertaken in 2001 there are 1905 social enterprises in the East Midlands. This is a conservative estimate. The 3 key agencies involved in policy formation and service delivery for the region are SEEM, emda and Business Link. From April 2007 Business Links form part of the emda management structure and control. In addition other infrastructure and umbrella organisations exist with a role in Social Enterprise development. These include Development Trust Association, Engage east midlands, VOICE east midlands, CVS, Local Authorities, Co-operative Development Agencies and the East Midlands Community Investment Partnership.



The Local Government Act 2000 gave Local Authorities a duty of 'well being' in their areas to improve all areas of service delivery to the community. Each of the areas have established Local Strategic Partnerships. For Derby this is the Derby City Partnership and they have an adopted Community Plan and manage neighbourhood renewal funds. The duty of well being enables LSP's and their members to provide or commission services based on social benefit as well as cost effectiveness. This should be incorporated into strategy. Individual areas of public service and organisations eg health, transport should consider ways of working and procuring the services of SE agencies to support the delivery of improved services and well being in communities.

In Derby, Neighbourhood Renewal recognizes the potential of the sector in revitalizing certain areas. While social enterprise has a mention in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy it is difficult to find reference to social enterprise specifically in other city strategies and documents. We can infer from the impetus to create stronger and safer neighbourhoods in which people are happy to live and work, that the social enterprise model would be a good fit. As new strategies and plans for the city are formulated it is vital that social enterprise is included.

One of the key aims of this work has been to ascertain the level of perception groups have on how well they do or can affect local decision making in the Neighbourhood sphere of operation and within the city. There still appears to be a lack of confidence, especially at the most grass roots levels among organizations. This however, starts to become less of an issue among the more enterprising/ entrepreneurial individuals and organizations. It would appear that those more willing to take risks in order to affect change had a stronger belief that they could actually be part of making that change happen. This gives a strong message that we must enable a programme to develop and nurture the community entrepreneurs out in the neighbourhoods making a difference.

3. Rationale

There are several challenges in developing a social enterprise strategy for the VCS in Derby. The most prominent in these challenges is to define what is meant by social enterprise. Of the many definitions that exist the consistent message across all of them involves trading activity to achieve a social purpose. Unfortunately this is not a straight line relationship in its application to the VCS.



Many, in fact most VCS organisations would be hesitant to define what they do as trading. Even in situations where an organisation delivers a public service under contract there is some confusion about what type of income this might be considered. The organisation may be reluctant to classify the provision of service to a client (service user) as sales of a service to a buyer (service commissioner). There is almost a fear that use of business like or economic terminology will taint the purity of the service and cause the client to be viewed as a mere commodity.

Many organisations, rightly so, view services to clients as their primary objective. This could be broadly defined as their social purpose. How they sustain that service, whether through grants, contracts, donations or volunteer time is the potential for enterprise activity exists.

Rather than placing a set definition on what a social enterprise is, it may be more useful to define an organisation's relationship to the general economy. This can be further refined to capture the range of the social economy, that which stretches from the fringes of the public sector at one end to the margins of the private sector at the other. This is a broad continuum of economic activity along which all organisations can find a place.

There is no magic line that once crossed an organisation suddenly becomes a social enterprise. There is no legal definition of social enterprise although certain guidelines have been suggested and widely acknowledged by both government and practitioners in the social enterprise field. For example the DTI set a benchmark of 50% income from trading as a characteristic of a social enterprise. Organisations that have not yet achieved that level of earned income but that have plans to do so might be better referred to as 'emerging' or 'aspiring' social enterprises. By using this reference there will be a better understanding of the support needs of this type of organisation.

There are a small but growing number of VCS organisations who are setting earned income generation targets and showing a high degree of interest in the pursuit of earned income. Rather than setting a goal to become a social enterprise, they are looking for new and different ways to sustain their activity. On the whole it would appear that the VCS are shifting to a more enterprising way of working rather than converting wholesale to social businesses. These organisations would derive greater benefit from developing an income diversification strategy as opposed to a full blown plan to take them 'to market' as mainstream business advice might provide.

Some organisations may only ever manage to achieve 20% of their income through trading but this can have a profound effect on the organisation for example:

- The grant burden is reduced by 20% or
- They can give more services to clients or
- They can use the money to pilot a new programme
- The enterprising approach may catch on throughout the organisation by broadening its outlook and becoming more pro-active about income generation

The questions we need to be asking:

- What do social enterprises need?
- What kind of intervention is most appropriate and when?
- How do we segment the sector?
- What gaps are there in provision?
- What should we do about them?

Some organisations may not ever achieve earned income, nor ever be interested in doing so. After critical analysis of activities, organisation style and potential some organisations will have to conclude that social enterprise is not right for them. Those that come to this conclusion should not cave in to external pressures to try to re-invent their organisations. They should breathe a sigh of relief and carry on doing what they do best.

These organisations may benefit from an external evaluation or by undergoing some process to examine what they do. Many organisations do not make time for planning and development, critical factors for success in the business world. Application of business like techniques may be useful in determining direction and aligning activities to the group's mission.

Then there are those organisations that from their outset have developed a trading activity that is able to compete in the open market. They may choose to organise their legal structure under a social enterprise business model whereby any profits or excess are not shared by the individuals in the enterprise. The income and profits will be used to sustain the social mission. For example a group may set up a catering company as a means to provide employment and training opportunities for people who are long term unemployed. Any profits will be ploughed back into the company for the additional support needs of staff.



Public Sector seeking to help Voluntary Sector

Social Economy	Moving into	Social Enterprise	
Grant	Commissioning Procurement	Trading/Earned income	
Projects	Contracts	Have 'something to sell'	
Something good to do	Process driven mission related		
	Need very high quality intervention to improve/move		Differing % in each
	'Operational'	'Entrepreneurial'	Starting here is simpler!




'Service' should be service orientated but service provider focus.

Is it about service you provide vs 'The service' as an organisation

Confusion of customer role

Is there a gap of care which gets squeezed out through commissio

Customer focus 'the customer'

commissioner /customer funder - user



Needs in the Social Economy are Operational
Needs in developing Social Enterprise are Entrepreneurial

In-depth analysis of responses to surveys, information from focus groups and interviews with stakeholders reveals that there is a high degree of importance placed on trying to define social enterprise. By placing too much emphasis on what a social enterprise is it is too easy to lose sight of what social enterprise can do. There is a strong tendency to define process rather than embrace the transformative powers of social enterprise. It might be better to place social enterprises within the broader context of the social economy which captures all of the VCS organisations in Derby. This way it can be more clearly defined what actions are required to allow enterprising activity to flourish and create a more logical process of moving toward a sustainable and vibrant sector.

There are conditions which must be present in order for this to take place. This strategy will endeavour to make recommendations towards achieving this. Based on a wealth of information gathered there are some key issues that need to be addressed in order for people to feel comfortable taking on an enterprising way of working. These issues are not new however a new approach must be sought in addressing them. For example the language of the sector must change to reflect the new way of thinking. Funding should be referred to as investment and capacity can be thought of in terms of resource.

The VCS in Derby can strengthen its position and stabilize its future by being more confident in its role as an economic driver. Even small neighbourhood groups that run on volunteer power have an economic value worth taking note of. Volunteers deliver services that may otherwise have to be funded from the public purse. This is why the surveys asked organisations to estimate how much of their time and services were not directly paid for. While not everyone was able to answer this question it starts to paint a picture of the monetary value of the sector. Much more needs to be done to fully quantify the economic impact of the social economy, including social enterprises in Derby. Only then will the public and private sector have full appreciation of the ability of the VCS to drive economic and social change.



4. Methodology

The development of a Social Enterprise strategy for Derby City's Voluntary and Community sector, on behalf of the Derby Community Network has been an interesting and ever moving piece of work.

An agreed process was used to gather information via surveys of the VCS. While we did not have a large return rate, the quality of the information returned was extremely valuable.

The survey headlines include:

26% of organisations identified as a Social Enterprises or engaged in some enterprise activity

67% of organisations consider it of high importance to provide employment, training or volunteering opportunities for people in their local neighbourhood

74% would like access to more suitable business support

69% need better access to funding

While the surveys confirmed some of what we already knew there were still a few surprises, which were encouraging. Unfortunately, there were a number of key organisations that did not have either time or inclination to return a survey. What did please us was the number of 'new to us' organisations that returned a form. Special effort was made to ensure a mixture of organisations from large. to small volunteer led, to fully staffed, so we achieved a broad representation from across the sector.

We also interviewed a number of stakeholders that were identified as either having a direct contribution to SE development or were associated to SE in some significant way. Since the strategy is focused on Derby the main players are from the city. We also spoke with regional bodies from SEEM as the regional SE infrastructure organisation.

Finally, we conducted a series of focus groups with a range of organisations and individuals from across the city. The focus groups allowed us to probe a few topics in more depth than we could in the surveys. These were extremely useful in terms of quality of information, ideas and solutions and getting at the heart of issues. It is also apparent the need to form a Social Enterprise network for the city to strengthen the voice of the sector.



5. Social Economy

How can we define something so large and quite diverse? From all of the information we have gathered, people listened to and documents read we have to conclude that having a definition for this work is important for people. That being said, defining what a social enterprise is or is not, should not make any difference to how an organisation operates. If an organisation wishes to conduct itself in a more business like manner while being 100% grant funded does this make it a social enterprise? The answer to that question, after much deliberation and research would have to be no. All organisations should be encouraged to approach their work from a point of view that maximises available resources, but doing so does not turn them into businesses.

The real defining factor between what is seen as enterprising and what can be called a social business is in the definition of its market.

The social economy organisation generally exists in areas of deprivation, seeing client groups with high levels of need be they social, physical, economic, educational etc. Its primary purpose is to assess needs.

The social business has a clearly defined product or service that it intends to sell to a specific customer group. How it distributes its profits make it a social or private entity.

THE SOCIAL ECONOMY CONTINUUM



5.1 How is a Social Economy developed?

Social economy organisations, which make up a large portion of the VCS in Derby usually emerge because someone or some group of people have discovered a need in their local community. While this is a broadly generalised statement it is fundamentally true.

Within this mix of organisations there are those who are informal in nature and those with quite complex legal, financial and operational structures. Among this group are those who wish to achieve a mix of funding which may include earned income. Rather than full on business advice these organisations would benefit from specialist input regarding income diversification strategies.

We have heard many times that the public sector has difficulty in knowing how to deal with the voluntary sector due to its diversity. Because of this many small, informal organisations can miss out on opportunities even though they are developing ground breaking work. It is sometimes an easier option for the public sector to chose organisations that more closely reflect the way they operate – more structured, more formal etc. What may prove beneficial is for some consortium arrangement to happen where by work is channelled through a managing partner arrangement. The managing partner does not actually have to be a delivering partner – just efficient at managing work and contracts.

Capacity needs to be developed within an organisation that acts on behalf of the sector as a contact manager. This is a potential role for DCN as the entry portal to the Derby City Partnership and thereby wielding city-wide influence. DCN would gain resource through management fees which would sustain the information and lobbying role for the Voluntary and Community sector.

6. Trading Social Enterprises

These are defined by the ability to trade in the open market. These social businesses have the opportunity and the ability to transform economies. The legal framework for social businesses, the Community Interest Company can go a long way towards identification to the private and public sector. Anyone wishing to start up a social business should be encouraged to use this company formation.



The community interest declared by the company gives a clear statement as to the social purpose of the organisation. In declaring a community interest the company must undergo a test by a regulator and report every year on how they are performing against this interest. The CIC form also has an Asset Lock which provides a way for the company's assets to be kept from being disposed of in an unscrupulous manner, or for less than market value.

The CIC gives an organisation the ability to trade openly within a profit generating business model, but the asset lock and community interest statement give clear accountability to its members and stakeholders. There is more flexibility for directors to be paid members of staff, thereby more closely aligning strategic and operational matters. It would also encourage more individual social entrepreneurs in community settings to start up social enterprises as they do not have to give over control of their idea to a management board as in a traditional charity or company structure.

When embarking on the journey to become a social business there are some key reasons in order for this to make a sensible option and more likelihood for a successful outcome. For example Mrs J wants to start up a catering business because she is really a marvellous cook, she believes she can deliver a service far better than any other competitors and she likes the idea of being her own boss. She has experience working in commercial kitchens and some food service qualifications. However, she feels lucky to have come from a deprived background and to have made a good living despite a not so great start. She wants to share her good fortune with young people in her old neighbourhood and help some of them escape the cycle of poverty. She seeks investment and starts up Mrs J's and registers her business as a Community Interest Company. This social business has an opportunity to change the lives of countless young people who otherwise might be consigned to a future of low achievement, petty crime and drug addiction.



7. Critical Factors for Success

7.1. Enterprising approach:

Organisations can examine the way they operate across a range of areas from client services to how they secure office supplies. It is a way to embed a more pro-active approach and less reactive to circumstances. It incorporates planning but lets the planning be a guide and not an exercise for its own sake. Some would call this behaving in a more business like way but that would presume that all businesses run at top form and totally efficiently. This is not a comparative exercise. It is a way for organisations to take control of their own destiny. They need to be aware of what the market forces are that define the potential investment but without losing sight of the mission at hand.

7.2. Spotting opportunities

Many organisations get so wrapped up in what they are doing it becomes difficult to recognise what is happening in the world outside. They strive to deliver services in ever more difficult circumstances that many operate in a continual survival mode. In order to spot opportunities and potential they need to be open to them and aware of them.

They should be able to say “maybe we can try this” instead of “we’ve never done it this way”.

To say “maybe we can reach more clients if we talk to x about a joint project”

Instead of

“we know what is best for our clients and we don’t need any help”

There maybe simple opportunities to do things like share an admin worker, ask a local business to support mini bus hire for a trip or getting a university student to design a website. Or the opportunities may be more complex: redesigning parts of your service to fit a social care criteria, making a joint application with others to formulate an entirely new service turning an idea into a money making venture.

This is about thinking a little bit differently and keeping an open mind. There is also the challenge when one spots an opportunity to have the flexibility and capacity to act on it. It maybe helpful to have other partners available at short notice and good reason to network to form external relationships.



7.3 Recognise business limitations

These may have to do with the marketability of your product or service or they may have to do with the business ability of people running the organisation. For example if you have a great in-house training programme that you feel is a must do for everyone in your line of work then you've got to find out who that market is. It may be that there are only 50 others in the country that do your kind of work – no market=no business. It is important to find these things out prior to investing lots of time, energy and resources. Also, if you are launching a new product you must have someone on board that knows the process- -how is it made? How do we package it? What is the right price? How do we get it in the hands of paying customers? Do we sell it wholesale or direct to the public? Someone who is the 'best youth work manager in the world' is not necessarily going to know these things – vols, managers, etc – may have a head for the clients but not a head for numbers – this won't work in a business environment.

7.4 Be willing to kill off or change something that isn't working

This is probably one of the most difficult and anxiety ridden processes that an organisation can consider. As much of the work that happens in the VCS is driven by a community need or desire to assist, help out or generally make life better – programmes can have deep personal and emotional ties. It can be quite a challenge to face the reality of a programme that no longer meets the needs of our client group or own community. It is interesting as often a group or committee forms to address a specific issue. Yet once the issue is addressed/ resolved the organisation tends to carry on – sometimes with little purpose. Then there is the continuous cycle of trying to find grant funding to keep the organisation going. It would be useful perhaps for an organisation to have access to an external resource to assist with the evaluation of ongoing need for projects/ programmes.

7.5 Find ways to financially support things of high community need

Social Enterprises need to make a financial profit but the community profit, the social good 'the change you are trying to make' they are equally as important. In fact it is often the 'profit' made on one programme that supplements and supports another. When taking up a new opportunity, it is critical to consider many factors:

- Will it make money?
- Will it lose money?
- If it does lose money what is the level of community need?
- Do we do it well or should it be done by someone else?

7.6 Critical evaluation of ideas

In our many experiences talking to and working with social enterprises we have found that when a new idea springs up, the excitement and planning takes over and sometimes the idea takes on a life of its own. Many organisations, while they understand very well who their clients are – don't really know who their customers are. This is where the differences start to become clear between what is enterprising activity and what is a trading social business.

8. Funding

Funding was cited in surveys, focus groups and interviews as a critical issue for VCS organisations. However for those in the sector who wish to adopt an enterprise approach they must stop thinking about funding in traditional terms and start focusing on building investment in their organisations. Funding is generally short term and single project based. Investment, on the other hand is about building a solid financial base for the future.

The types of investments now available to the sector have changed to reflect this longer term approach. Many of the newer initiatives include loan finance, a concept that is still quite frightening for a majority of organisations. There is a Community Finance organisation in Derby which has a business lending portfolio of just over £300,000. While this is available to social enterprises and VCS organisations not one so far has taken up the offer. This may be down to several reasons; lack of knowledge of what is on offer, fear of risk by volunteer board members or unwillingness to let go of the safety of the grant culture.

Mixed funding that includes grants and loans include Futurebuilders, The Adventure Capital Fund, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. All of these provide an investment along with business support. The Big Lottery is now investing in social enterprise and local small grant funds are examining how they can best support the growing sector with start up capital.



9. Capacity Building and Support Needs

The VCS is inundated with initiatives intended to build the capacity of the sector. The over use of the 'capacity building' terminology might lead us to believe that the sector in fact has no capacity at all. Those we surveyed and talked to cited lack of capacity as a barrier which keeps them from engaging in more enterprising activity; nearly as critical as lack of funding. Indeed some of them feel there is a direct relationship between lack of funding and lack of capacity; if they had more money capacity would not be such an issue. With more money organisations could buy-in more people and thereby increase their capacity. While this is probably true for many organisations there just is not more money to be had, so this issue must be addressed in other ways.

In order to explore how the capacity issue can be addressed we must make one very important observation. Because the background information was gathered from a range of sources, not just VCS organisations, there appears to be some differing view-points on what this lack of capacity means to the various stakeholders. When discussing capacity with the VCS we heard things like lack of time, resources, people to do the work, heavy burden of paperwork, not enough time in the day, etc. When discussing lack of capacity with those outside the VCS we heard things like lack of skills, performance measurement, training needs, fragmentation, standards and accountability. There was also great admiration expressed for the work of the VCS, but a general feeling that there would have to be some way to introduce more processes driven working practices in order for the sector to be considered a major player in the world of procurement. Public procurement is viewed as one of the most likely growth areas for social enterprises and enterprising VCS organisations. This gap in thinking about what capacity means will need to be addressed in order for any 'capacity building' initiatives to be effective.

The support needs of the sector can begin to take shape at this point related to where an organisation is in its life cycle. What the sector needs to know is where and how it can access this support. The table below will identify what is currently available as well as identify gaps that exist in the provision.



Social Enterprise

Social Economy Organisation

Start-up/Pre-trading	Business advisor/ Family or friends	Establish the mission/ purpose	Community Development Worker
Planning growth & Development	Specialist programmes at regional level	Apply for funding	Funding Advisor
Mature Organisations		Re-visit the client need	Outside consultants
Changing markets	Professionals in certain fields	Re-focus the organisational mission	Board & Staff

10. Public Sector Procurement

Futurebuilders investment fund, is a central government initiative to invest in VCS organisations that have potential to deliver public services. Investments are made to assist organisations to increase capacity. They provide working capital so that transition from grant to contract can be achieved in a way that is least stressful to the organisation. This is a major consideration as most grants are paid in advance and most contracts are paid in arrears. Very few VCS organisations will have the financial capacity to enter into these kinds of arrangements. If payments are made quarterly in arrears many organisations would be vastly over stretched to pay three months of wages in order to deliver a new contract.

Futurebuilders can also invest working capital to allow organisations to scale up their operations. Most public sector commissioners will not be in a position to let very small neighbourhood based contracts. So once again it will be larger organisations or even private sector organisations that are most likely to be successful. While a local community group may be delivering fantastic results at grass roots level they may never get

a look in at some of the work on offer.

10.1 The commissioning scene in Derby

In Derby the entire Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations scheme is under review. It is felt that some organisations receiving grants for a number of years are in fact delivering services on behalf of the Local Authority. If this is the case then the LA are obligated to seek a higher level of accountability than has been previously considered. Funding agreements are more likely to become contracts and this brings a new set of priorities for both the commissioner of services and the organisation delivering the contract.

Currently the Head of Procurement is working with commissioning officers to provide clarity about which services are to be commissioned and to ensure that all procedures are followed. Currently all contracts with a value over £50,000 have to be advertised in the public domain unless it is a case of only one or two contractors in the country that can deliver the service. Derby City tendering opportunities are available on the Source Derbyshire web site. It is being suggested that commissions of all sizes are made public during this transition period. This may provide opportunities for those not previously in receipt of a council grant to come forward, thereby increasing competition and creating a more realistic marketplace.

Organisations must seriously consider whether or not contracting is the right form of income for them. For example if an organisation has difficulty meeting the outputs set out in a Funding Agreement it would be unlikely except in the most extreme cases for any claw back to occur. It would probably affect their ability to get a grant for the following year or if they do get a grant it may be reduced, but they will not generally have to pay money back. If an organisation enters into a contract they will be legally obliged to uphold the terms of the contract or risk not being paid. For many organisations this will not be a problem as other sources of funding have become more rigorous in terms of accountability. For some the transition will not be so easy and in fact will make some clear distinctions between those organisations that can deliver and those who cannot.

There are ongoing initiatives such as the Compact between the VCS and the City Council, the national Capacitybuilders Programme, Social Enterprise East Midlands BEST Procurement programme that are in place to ensure the VCS is prepared to operate in a contract culture.



11. Business support

In order for any organisation to undertake trading activities whether it be 10% or 100% of their yearly income, the right business support applied at the right time can be critical in determining success. Mainstream business support is delivered by Business Link, but by their own admission they do not always get it right when working with social enterprises. While 80% of the needs of private and social enterprises are the same it is that critical 20% difference that causes difficulty for a mainstream profit oriented business advisor.

There are regional and national initiatives under review which are aimed at the development of Social Enterprise Business Advisors. The Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative has now incorporated social enterprise standards within its accreditation framework. There is also a national qualification Understanding Social Enterprise VRQ level 5 which will form the gateway module for a suite of training that will lead to a full university level qualification for social enterprise business advisors and managers.

At a regional level seem is working closely with emda to build the capacity of advisors with a specialism in social enterprise. It is anticipated that money will be made available for the training and accreditation of advisors who can then be paid from the mainstream pot to provide mentoring and support to social enterprises. This will be good news for Derby as these initiatives come on stream.

Previous survey work across the DDEP sub-region flagged up that most social enterprises and VCS organisations did not seek business support from mainstream organisations. They chose either to go it alone or seek advice from other social enterprises and VCS infrastructure organisations. This was not always best as most of these organisations do not have business expertise and therefore advice may have put organisations at unnecessary risk. It is anticipated that as sector specialists become available social enterprises and enterprising VCS organisations will take up the services on offer.

12. Asset Development

Since this report was started the Quirke Review has been published and there is clear message from the highest levels of government that communities can derive great



benefit from making use of assets. Assets will provide a key element for ensuring that wealth is embedded in communities. In our survey only a small number of organisations actually indicated that they owned assets but many of them are interested in knowing more about how to acquire and maintain an asset.

13. Recommendations and Case Study Examples

On the basis of the information gathered through the surveys, interviews and focus groups the following recommendations should be considered as critical factors for the development of a thriving and enterprising VCS in Derby. They take account of the various points in the organisational life cycle and have broad application across the full spectrum of Derby's social economy organisations. It is hoped that the DCN Steering Group may adopt some of these initiatives and lobby for resources to take them forward.

- Develop a range of initiatives and processes that allow VCS organisations to evaluate where they fit along the social economy continuum
- Encourage the use of holding companies or consortia arrangements to perform 'back office' functions for clusters or groups of smaller organisations to free up more time for direct service delivery. This will increase capacity in two ways: increase income generation for the holding company and increase time resource for those buying in the service.
- Develop a Contract Management organisation to work alongside the public sector commissioners to negotiate opportunities for the sector. The Public sector commissioner can achieve economy of scale by letting one contract and the contract manager can sub-let the contract work in manageable sizes so that even small grass roots organisations have a chance to tender for work.
- Develop a training programme for front line community development workers to improve economic literacy. This will enable them to be more aware of organisations that have enterprise potential so that they can be sign posted to the appropriate business support.
- Develop a pool of Social Enterprise business advisors so that those undertaking trading have access to appropriate assistance and advice .
- Champion an enterprise start up fund which will allow the feasibility testing of ideas and then lead on to larger investments for robust plans. It needs to account for some of the ideas not bearing fruit and allow organisations to abandon these ideas. It

should be coupled with business mentoring support to assist the process.

The case study examples that follow are to illustrate how some of these recommendations may be put into action. The case studies have been based on knowledge of organisational circumstance but have been embellished in some instances for illustrative purposes. Therefore organisations have not been named specifically. Even though two of the examples involve local park initiatives they are for illustration and not to demean Parks Department.

■ Case Study Example1

A group of community residents in area A have joined together to draw attention to the run-down state of their local park. After relentless campaigning they have managed to get the attention of the Local Authority Parks Department (Parks), a local councillor and others working on neighbourhood regeneration schemes.

Over the past few years a great deal of progress has been made. There is a member of staff from Parks who works directly with the community group. Investment has been made in new lighting, pathways and play equipment. Overall, the Park is in a much-improved state and local people are starting to use it on a more regular basis.

The next challenge is to create a new community centre as the old building has fallen into a state of disrepair that would be too costly to fix. The idea is to seek investment for a new building that will be managed and directed by the community organisation.

The challenges are many as the local group and Parks try to move forward in a way that is sensible and realistic for both parties:

- The group has had difficulty recruiting and retaining members in any numbers
- The same one or two people from the group tend to go to all of the meetings, events, etc. and not try to include others
- Parks is unsure whether the group in its current form lacks has the capacity to manage a new building.
- Income generation opportunities for the new building have not been properly market tested
- Investment for the new build will be mostly capital and not revenue, which will affect forward planning
- The building can only be a certain size, as predicated by the guidelines for buildings on open space. This may not accommodate all of the group's ideas.

- The group is suspicious that Parks are not always forthcoming with information about the size of the building.
- Group does not yet have any formal legal structure although it has been around for several years
- Ongoing debate about who will employ staff to run the building, the group or Parks.

In an ideal setting Group A and Parks will form a Partnership agreement that plans, develops and co-manages the site. Investment is acquired, the building put up (community led with guidance from Parks) and the keys are handed over so the community can get on with it. The enterprises running from the building will be robust and profitable, the site will be well used by local people and others from across Derby and the management group will be strong and directive. The building will provide jobs, training and volunteering opportunities, which will benefit local people for many years to come.

The Reality

The current community group, while capable, determined and committed is struggling to find and keep new members. All of them are volunteers with other pressures and priorities in their lives, which come first. The driver of the group has been involved since day one and has found it hard to share responsibilities with anyone else in the group. This has put some people off and causes great concern for Parks.

When the building becomes a reality it is expected that the group will have to employ someone to manage it. No one in the group has recent experience of employing staff. In addition the group will have to provide staff cover in the event of sickness and holiday entitlement. They will have to decide how they will handle this as a small group of volunteers. It may work out fine on a short-term basis but this model is not sustainable. Inevitably someone scheduled to provide 'cover' to run the building will have an emergency arise which prevents them from doing so. They may not be able to find someone to step in. This will cause confusion and ill will from anyone hiring the facilities when they discover they do not have access. If this scenario is repeated word gets around quickly and soon bookings will decline.

Once business starts to slide costs cannot be maintained, staff will be made redundant and the building may have to close to regular use. In a few years time the building may fall into a state of disrepair, be vandalised regularly and once again provide no useful

benefit to the local community. Responsibility will revert back to Parks who will log it in as another 'community failure'. No one involved in this project wants to see this happen.

An Alternative

The community group establishes a partnership relationship with a more established organisation with a track record in building management. This external organisation employs the staff (preferably from the local area) and is paid a management fee. In the event that staff is off sick or on holiday it is up to the external organisation to provide cover as part of the contracted arrangement. This provides seamless operations and no business interruption. The building opens, meetings carry on and no one hiring the building need ever know the arrangement.

The external organisation may in fact provide a range of services such as Business development, accounting and marketing to name a few. With the operations under control the community group can concentrate on developing services, strategic planning and gaining new members. The group can learn all phases of managing the building and seek training to cover any skills gaps. Eventually there may be a time when external management is no longer required and the group will have developed the capacity to take over the role. Alternatively this external management arrangement may be ongoing as the group may wish to maintain a strategic rather than an operational role.

This scenario of community management has issues across many of Derby's neighbourhoods, not just those considered to be deprived. There are a number of Local Authority owned community facilities that are used infrequently, run by volunteers that do not have the time or the inclination to develop more activities and services. As a result these buildings are in various states of disrepair and causing a major backlog for the Asset Management Department. It may be more cost effective and community friendly to divert repair resources into a community asset management 'social enterprise' that can develop activities and look after the buildings. Buildings that are used regularly are better maintained and not as likely to be vandalised.



■ Case Study Example 2 Underfunding/ Wrong approach to start-up

Group B has been operating a community organisation in Derby for the past six years. Their social aim is to engage with those furthest from society's mainstream, building confidence and encouraging them to move forward. They accomplish this using a variety of community development techniques. They have worked with refugees, homeless people and many others experiencing extreme disadvantage. Group B has been considering new ways to generate income so that they can become more financially sustainable as grant funding is more competitive and more difficult to access. Lately they feel they spend all of their spare time fundraising and not enough time developing and delivering services.

Group B responded to a tendering opportunity to run a café in a newly opened building on their local park. It seemed like a great opportunity as millions were spent on the renovation and the marketing effort would surely attract a lot of visitors. Since the café would be fully equipped as part of the building work Group B saw a chance to get involved in a turnkey operation with no initial capital outlay. All profits could go back into supporting the primary activities of the main group. Additionally the business would give their clients opportunities for training and employment in food service. This fit very well with the organisation's mission. They felt this was a win-win situation since a few of them had a bit of food service experience, and the rest they could learn 'on the job'.

Reality

Since the Parks Department commissioned the contract it was they who decided when the café was to be opened. The grand opening event to showcase the newly renovated Park was scheduled for late September so they felt the café should be up and running for that weekend. In retrospect the decision to open a café in a park at the start of the Autumn/ Winter season may not have been a sound business move. Things were running well at first since the novelty of the new facility drew visitors and custom started to build. Once the weather turned more wintry business fell off quickly and the café struggled through the next few months.

The café is located in the building, which is in the centre of the park. Visibility from the street is non-existent and therefore eliminates possibility of attracting passing trade. It is also within a 1/2 mile radius of the highest concentration of takeaways in the city presenting high level of competition. Marketing was not budgeted for and therefore efforts were more reliant on word of mouth, rather than a sustained campaign.

The café struggled through its first winter and the following spring but custom never reached a level reasonable enough to overcome previous losses. A few new things were tried to increase business; outside catering and a local sandwich delivery service. Unfortunately these came too late in the day to have any positive effect. By this time staff, were on reduced hours and the café became reliant on volunteers and group members. The café remained closed on some days, which alienated customers and caused a further decline in turnover.

The management committee of group B found themselves further and further drawn in to keeping the café afloat, and less involved in the primary group. This was the exact opposite of what was initially envisaged. They found themselves in the position of fundraising not just for their main activities but also for working capital for the café, the very business that was intended to generate excess profits.

Finally after trying unsuccessfully to find working capital and unable to negotiate a part-time spring/ summer lease Group B had to give up the café. This caused disappointment among the group and all who had worked so hard to make the café a successful social enterprise. It also presents Local Authority with further rationale for not working with community organisations.

The Learning/ what could have been done differently

- If Group B had more control over the contract they might have been able to negotiate a different start-up date, perhaps in the spring after the park grand opening.
- More direct input from a food service specialist might have led to better predictions of income and expenditure and cash flow.
- An investment of working capital up front would have enabled the group to grow custom steadily and ride out the slow periods.
- The business start-up phase is very stressful and brought undue pressure on the main community group activities. Working capital would have enabled the group to run this activity completely independently with a different management group, staff and company structure.
- Marketing was an afterthought rather than an integral part of business planning. Given the location of the café this was a critical error.
- Critical analysis from a properly trained and accredited Social Enterprise Business Advisor might have led Group B not to have undertaken this business opportunity at all.

■ Case Study Example 3 (Collaboration)

Organisation C came upon an opportunity to tender for a pilot programme on behalf of a public sector agency. The programme was to provide outreach services to single parents to raise awareness of benefits available through training and employment initiatives. The tender specification was in line with an organisational mission to build the skills of unemployed people. They viewed this as a chance to expand their services to an especially hard to reach client group. The tender allowed for innovative approaches to be tested while delivering against a core set of targets.

Organisation C noted that the programme was to be piloted in two areas of the city. In one of the areas Organisation C already had a programme in progress. Organisation C had previously done some work in the other area but not very recently. Organisation C decided to contact Organisation D, a long established community organisation, to discuss the potential of collaborative working should the tender be successful. An agreement was reached and the programme was tendered for jointly with Organisation C acting as the accountable body. This added strength to the tender as it could be demonstrated that by using local knowledge the programme could get up and running quickly. This joint approach proved successful and a contract was let.

The logistics

- A full time member of staff was recruited to deliver the project as it was felt this would give more continuity than one part time staff member would in each organisation.
- The staff member spent 1/2 of the week working from Organisation C and 1/2 of the week working from Organisation D. These were set days so as to create minimum disruption within each organisation, and that other staff would be aware of the schedule if having to take messages from clients.
- Contract was tendered with Organisation C as lead partner and contract manager because they had more contracting experience than Organisation D.
- Staff member was employed by Organisation D as a way to divide back office responsibilities and not to impose a power imbalance in favour of Organisation C (the larger of the two).
- Both organisations were able to recover a pro rata portion of overheads in direct relationship to the division of work.

The Results

Organisation C could have taken on and delivered the entirety of the contract independently. Directly involving Organisation D in delivery, and not just paying lip service to involving them in a 'partnership' role, brought benefit to the community in a more direct

manner. Organisation D was made financially stronger by having a direct share of the contract. This was in line with Organisation C's mission to promote opportunities for locally based initiatives, which help make communities stronger.

The pilot project ran for two years under this collaborative arrangement. It was the first pilot programme in the country to achieve its contract outputs. The programme went on to over-achieve its outputs in every quarter. Both organisations had long established relationships and networks to call on. This enabled the programme to get off to a flying start. The synergy developed between the organisations allowed the pace to be maintained.

On the down side the pilot became a victim of its own success. The public sector agency mainstreamed the service, which was the result the organisations were hoping for. Unfortunately the agency decided to bring delivery back in-house and not to out-source as they now had the 'formula' to achieve results.

Positive learning

- Voluntary sector organisations set the pace for a way of working to bring better services to the community
- Organisations C and D formed a strong bond that set each one up for future collaborations with other organisations.
- The staff member became permanently employed by Organisation D, as they were able to secure more work as a result of the pilot success.
- The voluntary sector had a direct influence in shaping public service delivery.



■ Appendix 1

Additional Resources for Social Enterprises

<http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk>

Social Enterprise Coalition

SEC is the UK's national body for social enterprise. The voice for the sector, we support and represent the work of our members, influence national policy and promote best practice.

Social Enterprise Coalition
Southbank House
Black Prince Road
London SE1 7SJ

<http://www.socialenterprisemag.co.uk/homepage.asp>

Social Enterprise, now in its sixth year, was the UK's first monthly magazine devoted to providing accessible, comprehensive news and practical help for everyone interested in social enterprise. It is published by Make A Difference Publishing Ltd, a joint venture between New Start Publishing Ltd and the Community Action Network (CAN).

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/social_enterprise/

In the Office of the Third Sector we have responsibility for policy making affecting social enterprise. We also help promote and champion social enterprise, take action needed to address barriers to the growth of social enterprises and identify and spread good practice for the sector.

Formerly part of the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) Small Business Service (SBS), the Social Enterprise Unit launched on 9 October 2001 by the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Patricia Hewitt. Following the Cabinet reshuffle in May 2006 the unit moved to the Office of the Third Sector.

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?type=RESOURCES&itemId=1073792678>



<http://www.sel.org.uk/>

Social Enterprise London is an agent for change. We work with individuals, enterprises, organisations and government to make social enterprise happen.

Supported by a management Board that brings together some of the country's leading social entrepreneurs and a staff team that combines expertise in the voluntary, public and private sectors, SEL is a dynamic, customer focused development agency.

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Organisationpolicy/Commissioning/Social-enterprise/index.htm>

Social Enterprise London is an agent for change. We work with individuals, enterprises, organisations and government to make social enterprise happen.

<http://www.setas.co.uk/>

This website has been developed by the Social Enterprise Training & Support Consortium (setas) as an information resource to help you find the most appropriate social enterprise training, support or relevant publication. This website provides links training and support providers, and specialist publications specifically about social enterprise. www.setas.co.uk brings together details of these valuable resources available nationwide in one website.

<http://www.sepqb.co.uk/>

The Social Enterprise Partnership implements infrastructure and systems development, capacity building, research and development for the social enterprise sector in the UK.

<http://www.networks.nhs.uk/networks/page/155>

This is the home page of the Social Enterprise Network. We also have a resources section which covers social enterprise in health and care. What is the Social Enterprise Network? Formed in 2005, the Social Enterprise Network is the only national network for those with an interest in social enterprise and social entrepreneurship in health and care.

For more information, please contact the Network Coordinator, Chris Dabbs, Chief Executive of the Community Health Action Partnership. If you want to join the Network please contact krishna.patel@networks.nhs.uk

<http://www.supply2.gov.uk/>

Supply2.gov.uk is a dynamic new government-backed service designed specifically to give companies easy access to lower-value contract opportunities (typically worth under £100,000) offered by the public sector



<http://www.ssec.org.uk/>

The Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition is a collective lobbying and campaigns voice for social enterprise in Scotland. It is a membership-led organisation representing the needs and interests of social enterprise to politicians, policy makers and opinion formers.

Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition
c/o LINK 45 Albany Street
Edinburgh
EH1 3QY
Telephone: 0131 557 1516
Email: admin@ssec.org.uk

<http://www.nearbuyou.co.uk/>

nearbuyou is a national trading network for social enterprises and those that wish to trade with them. Find tenders, offers and requests or search for social enterprises near you. All member services are free to social enterprises.
info@nearbuyou.co.uk or phone 01603 615200.

<http://www.wyselink.co.uk/>

Yorkshire Forward has now approved a further £5.7m in social enterprise support until 2008. This will be delivered by Business Link and its concessions in partnership with the Social Enterprise Support Centre (SESC).

Our aim is to support:

- Social enterprises that are already in business
- New start-up social enterprises
- Existing social organisations who wish to start selling products or services in addition to receiving grants

The West Yorkshire Social Enterprise Link will provide:

- A team of social enterprise advisers for each district delivering tailored business support
- Procurement support via a specialist adviser
- Business development grants
- Learning grants
- Support for specialist clusters
- Social reporting
- Specialist support for social enterprises from the BME sector



West Yorkshire Social Enterprise Link
Unit 4 Meadow Court, Millshaw Business Park, Leeds LS11 8LZ
Tel: 0845 833 6000 Fax: 0113 383 7700 Email: info@wyselink.co.uk

<http://www.socialenterprise-sunderland.org.uk/>

Social Enterprise Sunderland (SES) aims to: 1) promote, develop and support co-operatives and other forms of community-based enterprises throughout the City of Sunderland, and 2) use enterprise for regeneration and social inclusion for Sunderland's most excluded communities and residents.

Hendon Co-operative Centre
44 Mowbray Road
Sunderland
SR1 8EL
T 0191 565 0476 F 0191 510 1105
ses@hendon-hub.org.uk

<http://www.nesep.co.uk/>

We are a development agency for social enterprise in the North East. Our aim is to foster strong and vibrant social enterprises across the region.

stacey@nesep.co.uk
Starting Point, Wawn Street
South Shields
Tyne & Wear
NE33 4EB
0191 427 2150

<http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/socialenterprise/>

Heriot-Watt University has established a Social Enterprise Institute (SEI) located at its Edinburgh Campus. The business of the institute is the provision of research, training, business planning, education and consultancy services for all stakeholders in the social economy.

<http://www.socialenterprise-east.org.uk/>

SEEE is a membership and networking organization for social enterprises and others. We also have a strategic influence on national, regional and local policy relating to



social enterprise. Our primary aim is to support and promote the social enterprise sector in the East of England.

Social Enterprise East of England
Bedford i-Lab,
Priory Business Park,
Stannard Way,
Bedford, UK MK44 3RZ
Tel 0845 606 6296
E-mail: admin@seee.co.uk

<http://www.enterprisenorthumberland.co.uk/>

Social Enterprise Northumberland (SEN) has provided a comprehensive support package to social enterprises across Northumberland since 2004 and continued Northumberland County Council support to the sector going back over 10 years. Funded by the authority, ERDF and Northumberland Strategic Partnership Single Programme funds, it has given advice and support to over 300 potential and existing social enterprises, assisting in the creation of 47 new enterprises and 97.1 new jobs. At any one time the team works with approximately 50 social enterprises between them. There is currently a team of 4 people with a range of skills including legal structure, business planning, marketing, manufacturing and so on. For specialised advice such as personnel and accountancy the support of consultants is enlisted.

SEN works with a number of partner organisations to deliver social enterprise support including District Authorities, community organisations such as Community Action Northumberland and Wansbeck and Blyth Valley CVS, Sure Start and Business Link for the North East, Northumberland Business Services with whom we work closely often using their premises to interview clients sometime jointly with the Business Link Advisor.

Social Enterprise Northumberland
The Business Centre
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF



<http://www.seyh.org.uk/>

Social Enterprise Yorkshire and the Humber is a not for private profit company established to represent, promote and drive forward the development of the social enterprise sector in Yorkshire and the Humber.

<http://www.sesep.org.uk/>

The South East Social Enterprise Partnership (SESEP) was formed in January 2002 by Social Firms South East (SFSE), the Development Trusts Association (DTA SE) and Coops South East (Coops SE). Following a very successful first round of ESF Co-finance delivery, UnLtd, an organisation that makes awards to social entrepreneurs, was invited to join with SESEP. This extends the scope of the partnership in order to: Bring together the collective resources and experience, To share common issues for those needing information, advice, guidance and support in their goal of sustainable social enterprise development.

<http://www.osef.org.uk/>

This site aims to provide you with all you need to know about social enterprise, particularly in Oxfordshire.

<http://www.thesocialenterprisepeople.co.uk/>

The Social Enterprise People exists to develop social and co-operative enterprises in Cambridgeshire and the surrounding areas. If you are starting or developing any of the following, we can offer support and represent your interests:

- Trading activities in a voluntary or community organisation
- A business that exists primarily for a social or environmental purpose, reinvesting surpluses to that end (a 'social enterprise')
- An organisation that is jointly owned by its members or is otherwise democratically controlled
- A business that employs people with learning difficulties or physical or mental disabilities
- Activities, policy etc related to social or co-operative enterprise

The Social Enterprise People is a networking group for Cambridge Co-operative Development Agency (CCDA) which has been supporting local co-operatives since.



19 The Social Enterprise People
Unit 8, Chesterton Mill
French's Road
Cambridge
CB4 3NP
View directions

01223 360 977

01223 509 040

info@thesocialenterprisepeople.co.uk

<http://www.seem.uk.net/>

This website is a key resource for social enterprises and those interested in social enterprise in the East Midlands. The site is intended to be a one-stop site for all information on social enterprise in the region. It will be of value to those running social enterprises, those starting out or those just wanting to find out more about the sector. Among the pages you will find information on business support, funding, our projects, jobs in the sector and news and events.

Social Enterprise East Midlands
Foxhall Business Centre
Foxhall Road
Nottingham
NG7 6LH
Telephone: 0115 845 6434 Fax: 0115 845 6440
email: info@seem.uk.net

