



## CONSORTIA DEVELOPMENT FUND

### **INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLAN 2008-11**

**Consortium Name : Bristol Consortium**

**Area of Benefit : Bristol**

**Lead Body : Voscur**

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### **Summary of Consortium Infrastructure Business Plan 2008-11:**

We have experienced much change in the sector in Bristol over the past three years, with two reviews of local infrastructure and wider sector funding, resulting in instability for the sector as a whole; changes in the Primary Care Trust and restructuring within the local authority. There has been a reduction in local authority Community Development staff and a refocusing of their activity, resulting in less direct support for groups. The Local Area Agreement and its current 'refresh', coupled with the end of regeneration funding streams and Bristol's failure to attract Working Neighbourhoods fund signal further changes ahead for the sector.

Bristol has a strong tradition of voluntary and community action, supported by independent infrastructure organisations that have developed as a response to need. The Government's ChangeUp agenda brought those organisations together to form the Consortium with the aim of providing co-ordinated and well-resourced infrastructure support services for front-line groups in Bristol. Public sector agencies now look to the Consortium as the representative voice of the VCSE sector.

It is important at this time that the Consortium is strong enough to meet the challenges and opportunities currently facing the sector in Bristol. The Consortium recognises that in order to improve our effectiveness and joint working between specialists and generalists, we need a dedicated Consortium co-ordinator who will help us strengthen and develop the Consortium.

Following a period of major change within the Black Development Agency (BDA), it is important that Voscur and BDA (Bristol's two Councils for Voluntary Service) continue to develop their partnership through the joint planning and delivery of practical support to groups in the 'Sustaining the Sector' programme that was started last year with investment from Capacitybuilders. This will be vital for groups' survival in the light of the 'funding cliff' that we will hit from March 2008.

Building cohesion at a local level means that it is also important at this time that we continue to modernise and strengthen volunteering infrastructure, increase the number and widen the diversity of people volunteering, through helping volunteer placements better manage and support their volunteers.

There are opportunities for us at this time to strengthen the Compact, influence procurement and commissioning processes and support the implementation of full cost recovery. We will also need to be able to support groups (particularly Equalities and socially excluded groups) engage with the new neighbourhood governance structures and continue to ensure that we are supporting groups to influence decision making.

Underpinning this, the Consortium needs to be able to demonstrate quality and value for money, and ensure that front-line groups have access to appropriate locally delivered infrastructure support.

## **What are the aims and objectives of the Consortium?**

### Vision

Communities in Bristol benefit from a strong, diverse and sustainable voluntary, community and social enterprise sector

### Mission

To provide and accountable, representative and well-resourced infrastructure for Bristol's voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sectors.

### Aims

To have a sustainable, united, efficient and active Bristol Consortium with members having both resources and skills to successfully implement the aims outlined in the Consortium strategy and business plan.

To ensure that all Bristol VCSE organisations have easy access to all infrastructure support services by 2015.

For the Bristol Consortium to be recognised as the representative voice of the diverse Bristol VCSE sector and as equal partners with the statutory sector in co-ordinating the delivery of services to the local community.

To have robust BME, equalities and other specialist expertise working together to ensure specialist support services are available where appropriate and that the frontline VCSE organisations they represent, have full access to and benefit fully from infrastructure support.

### Objectives

To influence those local, regional and national policies that impact on our communities.

To work with the sector and other stakeholders to identify and meet the current and future infrastructure needs of frontline VCSE organisations.

To ensure that plans we develop are intelligence led, and that they influence and inform planning at other levels.

To ensure our plans reflect the equalities and diversity needs of the area.

To establish, agree and deliver strategic priorities for infrastructure investment in line with identified needs and ChangeUp/Capacitybuilders objectives.

To ensure our plans reflect the equalities and diversity needs of the area.

To represent and promote the interests of the VCSE sector by providing a clear case for investment in infrastructure support services.

To recognise and engage with other stakeholders in the development and delivery of strategic plans.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> sector frontline need**

**The DCLG Indices of Deprivation 2007** tell us that Bristol has 39 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% nationally for multiple deprivation, of which there are 14 LSOAs in the most deprived 3% and 4 in the most deprived 1%. Despite this, Bristol will not receive Working Neighbourhoods fund. This will add to the impact of the wider regeneration 'funding cliff' that will affect many groups in Bristol from 2008. Groups working at neighbourhood level and Equalities communities of interest will need support in seeking alternative funding/income generation opportunities, and/or 'mainstreaming' their activities.

**Bristol City Council Evaluation of the Neighbourhood Renewal and Neighbourhood Management Programmes (2006 –2008)** identifies that the engagement of residents is potentially more effective through interventions delivered by the third sector.

**Community Foundation Network: 'The Local, Voluntary and Community Sector, its impact and funding issues - A Study of Knowle West, Bristol (Aug 2007)'** states "88% of organisations expressed concern about funding for the future and cited the forthcoming end of a number of streams of regeneration money in March 2008 – the 'funding cliff'"

**Bristol Partnership – Social Enterprise themed event 2007**, promoted the benefits of and identified support needs of Social Enterprises in Bristol

**Voscur Big Lottery Funded Equalities and Neighbourhood Work Evaluation (2007)** – following consultation, recommendations for further work with Equalities Communities of Interest include: more work with disabled people, especially black disabled people; support for small groups to fill in funding application forms and write policies; disability equality training, more free equalities training; more proactive lobbying to bring about change; development of links between Bristol Partnership and small equalities groups; more joined up working.

**An evaluation of C3 (a European Union EQUAL funded programme that aims to promote and support performance improvement in the social economy) 2007** demonstrated a need for appropriately targeted performance improvement support for small voluntary and community organisations.

**Voscur training needs survey 2006//07** highlighted the need for more in-depth governance and fundraising training. Publicity and marketing, legal, personnel and human resource issues were also significant training needs in the sector locally. These needs are reflected in the results of the **Workforce Hub UK Voluntary Sector Skills survey 2007**.

**Bristol Partnership Community Engagement report (produced as a result of partnership working between the Bristol Partnership, Bristol City Council and the Bristol ChangeUp Consortium) (2006)** highlighted that there are groups outside

of regeneration areas that do not benefit from community development support or regeneration interventions and struggle to engage with support services. The report also identified that groups need support in developing accountability structures, roles and responsibilities of management committees, one-to-one 'hand-holding', specific skills development programmes, effective use of ICT, volunteer development programmes; identification of barriers to engagement by equalities communities.

**Volunteering Bristol Survey of Volunteers (Dec 2006) and the Bristol ChangeUp Consortium Survey of VCSE Organisations in Bristol (as part of the Bristol City Council LAA Consultation) November 2006** identified gaps in resources needed to help recruit volunteers effectively. The VCSE Survey also confirmed the essential role volunteers undertake in the delivery of services by the VCSE sector.

**Avon and Bristol Law Centre Community Groups Legal Service (which ended in 2006) evaluation stated:** 'It remains a matter for concern that the growth and sustainability of groups in Bristol (and in the surrounding unitary authority areas) is threatened by the current lack of specialist legal and governance support. It is in the interests of local authorities and other statutory agencies, strategic partnerships, local infrastructure organisations and funders that this support is offered free of charge and in a way that is tailored to groups' specific needs.'

**Bristol ChangeUp Consortium Infrastructure support needs mapping (2005)** (which informed the Consortium's IIP)– 1,177 surveys sent to Consortium member groups identifies a range of support needs including support needs in funding and financing the sector, Equalities practice, ICT support, governance, workforce development and volunteering support.

**The Snap Shot Report - (2005) identified the following support needs of BME groups:** lack of effective business planning; inadequate financial management; inadequate premises and/or equipment; poor image of the sector; affordable training & learning opportunities; general on-going training; technical skills development; training in funding applications; contract management; increased accountability; support with finance; support with personnel issues; fundraising; funding information; funding support and advice; securing public funding and advice; how to complete funding applications.

**What are the outcomes and long-term changes that your Consortium intends to bring about?**

Procurement and commissioning arrangements are appropriate, transparent and accessible. Smaller groups and groups working with isolated or excluded communities have equal access to contracting/funding opportunities.

Bristol's frontline VCSE organisations are better able to improve their organisational performance through advice and support from the Bristol Consortium.

Bristol's VCSE sector workforce will have access to learning and development opportunities to meet the skill gaps identified through sector consultation. Employers have improved access to support and advice on Human Resources issues.

Bristol's frontline VCSE organisations will have access to affordable and reliable ICT support services that are appropriate and user-friendly with relevant ICT advice available.

Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector organisations will have access to comprehensive, up to date accurate information on issues relevant to the sector locally.

Board members of Bristol's VCSE organisations are aware of their responsibilities and good practice and have access to accurate and helpful information and development opportunities.

VCSE engagement will be underpinned by a strengthened Compact. All Compact codes of practice will be implemented. Full cost recovery will be understood and implemented by all partners.

Bristol has an effective and high-quality volunteering infrastructure reaching, recruiting and placing a greater number and diversity of people coupled with improved volunteer management.

Bristol's frontline VCSE organisations are able to take advantage of opportunities to diversify their income sources, demonstrate increased skill in contract negotiation, and achieve better standards in effective fundraising.

The diverse views of the local voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector will be effectively and accountably represented to external bodies. The sector will have an increased and strengthened role as an integral part of local planning and policy making.

The ChangeUp Consortium will bring together VCSE organisations, networks and communities to promote interaction and foster positive community relations to create cohesion in local areas. BME, Equalities Communities of Interest and socially excluded groups will have increased capacity so that they are able to offer better services and to influence the development of public policy and practice.

Public sector partners will recognise the value of, and invest in local infrastructure support services. The sector will have access to comprehensive, locally delivered, infrastructure support services.

Local infrastructure organisations and front-line groups will be working to quality standards that are recognised by all partners and the Bristol Consortium will be acknowledged and supported as the main delivery agent for infrastructure support services locally.

Local groups will have taken ownership of and will be successfully managing public assets as a route to sustainable community development and income generation.

## **Beneficiaries and stakeholders – their involvement in the process**

Our beneficiaries and stakeholders include all groups in the combined membership of Consortium partners and other VCSE groups in Bristol who benefit from our services and our public and private sector partners within the Bristol Partnership.

The Consortium's membership comprises groups from all Equalities strands. The Consortium supports and facilitates the Consortium of Black Groups, Children and Young People's Networks, Older People's Networks (including BME elders network), and the Bristol Equalities Network, amongst others.

Bristol Consortium commissioned an external evaluation of its effectiveness in 2007. Stakeholders consulted included senior officers from different departments within the local authority, the Government Office for the South West, the local strategic partnership and Connexions.

The 2007 evaluation of Voscur's Equalities and Inclusive Neighbourhoods work consulted with a range of Equalities groups including the LGB forum, Age Concern, Black Development Agency, Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI), Education Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH), West of England Centre for Integrated Living (WECIL), Bristol Race Forum, Bristol Women's Forum, Golden Agers' Club, Bristol and District People First, Bristol Primary Care Trust, Safer Bristol Partnership, Bristol Partnership, Avon and Somerset Police, Abolition 200, Bristol Partnership Against Racial Harassment, all of whom valued the work and made recommendations for its future direction.

The Consortium has organised and delivered stakeholder events for LAA blocks and cross cutting Equalities events to give front-line organisations the opportunity to influence the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.

In partnership with the local authority, the Consortium has organised two Community Cohesion events (a conference and follow up seminar) which attracted over 100 participants which and helped us identify support needs and shape future services.

In 2005, the Bristol Consortium commissioned external research into the infrastructure support needs of the sector in Bristol. The research identified support needs in funding and financing, Equalities practice, ICT support, governance, workforce development and volunteering support, reflecting regional and national findings. This was followed up with stakeholder events in 2006, which fed into the updating of our IIP.

Bristol Partnership Community Engagement mapping undertaken in partnership with Bristol City Council Community Development team and the ChangeUp Consortium reiterated the need for local infrastructure support services to support community engagement.

In response to Bristol City Council's recent proposal to open up infrastructure support to market forces, our members and public sector partners told us that this was unacceptable to them and were concerned to see that infrastructure support is

delivered by local organisations.

Partners continuously evaluate their work to show that we are meeting need and developing services in response to need. (Examples can be supplied)

For example, analysis of evaluation forms from Voscur's training sessions demonstrate that participants value Voscur's training and want Voscur to deliver more training and diversify its offer. Ongoing evaluation of Voscur/BDA funding advice work shows that groups value this service highly and want more of it.

Volunteering Bristol conducts an annual survey of volunteers and volunteering using organisations to assess volunteer support needs in Bristol.

### Projects matched against stated objectives

Objective	Project
<p>To have a sustainable, united, efficient and active Bristol Consortium with members having both resources and skills to successfully implement the aims outlined in the Consortium strategy and business plan.</p>	<p>Employ a Consortium Co-ordinator            Implement the Consortium Development plan (to include plan and organise team development activity; develop the Equalities sub-group; branding and promotion of the Consortium; public sector engagement; joint research and intelligence sharing; review membership; review local VCSE activity and infrastructure support needs.)            Develop, maintain and update the Bristol Consortium website as a portal and link to sources of infrastructure support for Consortium members and front-line organisations            Influence policy and practice at regional level so that it supports local infrastructure and front-line groups</p>

<p>Modernising the sector - Strengthen the Black Development Agency and Voscur Sustaining the Sector partnership</p>	<p>Produce a joint action plan to further develop a holistic approach to smaller neighbourhood, BME and Equalities groups to include:          deliver organisational health checks and action planning using C3 PERFORM model;          broker and support partnership working/mentoring where appropriate;          deliver funding advice and support.          sign-post to Social Enterprise Works for enterprise advice and support;          deliver fundraising training programme;          deliver Outcomes, Full Cost Recovery and Monitoring and Evaluation training;          monitor funding approaches and work with funders to ensure applications are accessible and that groups are able to meet changing requirements.</p>
<p>Modernising the sector - Promote and encourage diversity in volunteering and improve the management of volunteers within front-line organisations.</p>	<p>Identify support needs of volunteers.          Work with volunteering placement to address support needs.          Promote and disseminate 'A guide to supporting volunteers from Equalities groups.'          Provide one-to-one and peer group support to promote and establish good practice in volunteer management – target newly established and smaller groups not yet ready to pursue formal accreditation.          Support established organisations to pursue quality standards in volunteer management.</p>
<p>Modernising the sector - Increase the capacity of social enterprise organisations</p>	<p>Deliver enterprise advice and support to new start and existing social enterprises working in Bristol's areas of deprivation, BME communities and newer migrant communities</p> <p>Deliver Performance Improvement support to social enterprises using C3 PERFORM tools</p>

<p>Modernising the sector - Influence procurement and commissioning processes so that they are accessible to VCSE organisations</p>	<p>Establish baseline of current processes.          Raise awareness amongst Bristol Partnership and local authority commissioners of Audit Commission recommendations.          Track implementation of recommendations.          Work with Compact steering group and Improvement and Development Agency in delivery of training to commissioners locally to raise awareness of sector opportunities.          Revise Compact guidance following consultation.</p>
<p>Modernising the sector - Increase VCSE awareness of commissioning processes</p>	<p>Compile guide to commissioning procedures as part of Compact guidance.          Promote and disseminate guidance.          Deliver training/workshops on Bristol Partnership members' commissioning processes.</p>
<p>Modernising the sector - Develop and strengthen the Consortium training and learning partnership (bringing together specialists and generalist support providers)</p>	<p>Continue to develop and deliver a comprehensive, affordable and accessible sector skills training programme utilising Consortium members' specialisms and expertise and/or commission external trainers where appropriate.          Co-ordinate training/learning activities of Consortium members.          Promote and brand training and learning opportunities as a Consortium offer.          Promote and sell training to a wider audience.          Influence policy and practice.</p>
<p>Employers in the sector have improved access to support and advice on Human Resources issues.</p>	<p>Review audit of quantity and quality of advice currently available          Undertake feasibility study into provision of sustainable HR support.          Signpost to Signpost to sources of support.</p>

<p>Bristol's frontline VCSE organisations will have access to affordable and reliable ICT support services that are appropriate and user-friendly with relevant ICT advice available.</p>	<p>Provide targeted support to smaller, socially excluded and equalities groups.          Provide a directory of ICT support services.          Provide an ICT help-line and signposting service.          Provide information via website and newsletter on latest ICT related initiatives.          Promote and provide information and support on Open Source applications          Deliver local, accessible training.          Provide ICT health checks and strategy development.          Influence policy and practice.</p>
<p>Modernising the sector - VCSE engagement will be underpinned by a strengthened Compact. All Compact codes of practice will be implemented. Full cost recovery will be understood and implemented by all partners.</p>	<p>Review Compact and its codes of practice.          Promote and get ownership from all partners.          Deliver full cost recovery training to partners.          Secure commitment to full cost recovery from partners as part of sign up to funding/procurement guidance.</p>
<p>Modernising the sector - Board members of Bristol's VCSE organisations are aware of their responsibilities and good practice and have access to accurate and helpful information and development.</p>	<p>Sign-post to Avon and Bristol Law Centre advice service.          Deliver training in National Occupational Standards for Trustees, Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees, Involving Service Users,          Promote good governance practice through Consortium publications.</p>
<p>The diverse views of the local voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector will be effectively and accountably represented to external bodies. The sector will have an increased and strengthened role as an integral part of local planning and policy making.</p>	<p>Support and contribute to the Bristol Partnership Community Engagement plan.           Develop and maintain accountable representative structures.           Elect and support representatives to a range of strategic and cross sector decision making bodies across the city.</p>

<p>The ChangeUp Consortium will bring together VCSE organisations, networks and communities to promote interaction and foster positive community relations to create cohesion in local areas.</p>	<p>Support and contribute to the delivery of the Bristol Partnership Community Cohesion Action Plan</p> <p>Plan and organise joint events, communities of practice and network meetings.</p> <p>Support the engagement of BME, equalities communities of interest and socially excluded groups with neighbourhood governance structures.</p>
<p>BME, Equalities Communities of Interest and socially excluded groups will have increased capacity so that they are able to offer better services and to influence the development of public policy and practice.</p>	<p>Provide targeted capacity building support to Equalities Communities of Interest and socially excluded groups at a grass roots level.</p> <p>Support the engagement of BME, equalities communities of interest and socially excluded groups with the Bristol Partnership through its Equalities Action Group and the Partnership Board.</p>
<p>Embed quality standards within the Consortium Promote quality standards across the sector</p>	<p>Audit quality standards within the Consortium Develop an action plan to implement the achievement of quality standards across the Consortium and its membership</p>
<p>Local groups will have taken ownership of and will be successfully managing public assets as a route to sustainable community development and income generation.</p>	<p>Establish a working group in order to respond to the Bristol Asset Transfer policy.</p> <p>Develop an action plan in order to help the local authority successfully transfer assets and support groups to take over public assets.</p>

**Research into similar and related services or projects provided by other organisations:**

Bristol Consortium researched the range of infrastructure provision in Bristol in 2006. At that time, there were no other organisations duplicating the work that the Consortium is delivering and proposing. Where an organisation offers a specific infrastructure support service, such as Bristol Community Accountancy Project, the Consortium has commissioned that organisation to undertake a particular piece of work (such as delivering training).

Bristol City Council's Community Development team have reduced the number of



Community Development staff and refocused their work. Their direct support to front-line groups has reduced (particularly in the areas of organisational development, funding advice and governance support) and they are directing more groups to Consortium members for support.

RISE (regional social enterprise infrastructure organisation) is working with South West Regional Development Agency to enable the Commissioning of a regional social enterprise business support service to the South West. We would anticipate that through Social Enterprise Works, this service will benefit groups in Bristol.

Although there has been ICT support available nationally and regionally, this cannot meet the needs of the whole of the sector across the region. It cannot reach those smaller and front-line Equalities groups most in need of tailored, affordable, accessible, local support.

Creating Excellence from time to time delivers training in Bristol, which although not sector specific, does sometimes benefit our members. Creating Excellence has agreed to liaise with us and work with and through us to deliver locally where possible. There are private sector training providers delivering training in Bristol; this is often expensive and specific to a particular discipline. There is no other comprehensive, generic, sector training programme on offer. No other organisations are able to target the range of groups that the Consortium has direct access to through its membership.

We are often asked or commissioned by national organisations to deliver training and events in Bristol, or to work in partnership with them to deliver locally. Organisations funded to deliver specialist support often want to do it in partnership with a local generic organisation (such as Voscur) or an organisation that has access to a specialist audience (such as the Black Development Agency).

NAVCA Circulation is an excellent source of information for the sector, which as members we adapt and add to for a local audience, as are e-publications from Urban Forum, London Voluntary Services Council, Third Sector Daily and South West Forum (for regional news). There are currently around 50 different e publications relating to sector issues that we scan, filter and disseminate for a local audience.

### Key targets to be achieved during 2008-11

Year	Project	Target
2008 - 11	Consortium Development	Functioning and effective Consortium delivering high quality services  Secure 3 year investment into

		<p>infrastructure organisations from the Local Authority</p> <p>Secure wider public sector investment into Consortium</p>
2008 – 11	Sustaining the Sector	<p>X PERFORM health checks</p> <p>X Action planning</p> <p>X Targeted support</p>
2008 - 11	Increase capacity of social enterprises	<p>X Advice sessions</p> <p>X PERFORM health checks</p>
2008 -11	Modernising volunteering	<p>X vols placed</p> <p>X Quality standards in place</p> <p>Updated Equality and Diversity policies in place</p>
2008 - 09	Procurement and Commissioning	VCSE sector procurement and commissioning strategy as part of Compact
2008 - 11	Training and Learning Partnership	Annual Consortium sector skills training/learning plan and programme delivered
2008/9	Human Resources support	Audit of advice available
2009 -11		Feasibility study
		Action plan
		Helpline/face to face support delivered.
2009/10	ICT support	<p>Secure resources to continue and develop current level of support after 2009</p> <p>Continue to develop and deliver support</p>
2008/09	Strengthened Compact	Agree revised Compact and Compact codes
2009	Governance	<p>X advice sessions</p> <p>Secure commitment for ongoing support from local authority</p>
2008 - 11	Influencing	X groups engaged with local

2008 - 11	Community Cohesion and Integration	governance structures LAA includes sector target X partnerships include VCSE representation Plans reflect VCSE input
2008	Equalities support	Community Cohesion action plan in partnership with BCC and other stakeholders delivered
2008 - 11		Seek funding to continue direct support to Equalities groups after 2009 Targeted support to BME groups Targeted support to Equalities groups
2008 - 11	Quality Standards	Audit standards, produce action plan, Achieve standards
2008 - 11	Asset Transfer	Set up working group Develop action plan Deliver support

**Risk assessment of the business plan – including how risks will be contained and mitigated**

Description of risk	Impact	Probability	Existing controls and action required to mitigate the risk	Lead responsibility
Lack of resources to secure engagement of partners, recruit Consortium co-ordinator, or deliver	Consortium ceases to exist	Medium - high	Maintain good working relationships with partners	All
	Loss of skilled staff		Ensure independence of partners so that they	All

front-line services			can function without a consortium structure	
Failure to secure wider public sector investment for local infrastructure support	Front-line groups will not get the services that they need	Medium	Brand and promote the Consortium and its activities. Engage with public sector partners	All
Failure of BASIS to invest in local infrastructure support	Front-line groups will not get the services that they need	Low	Submit well researched, evidence based application that meets locally agreed priorities	All
Failure to secure ownership and sign up to Compact codes of practice	Engagement with the public sector will be more challenging	Medium	Maintain engagement with Compact steering group and continue lobbying of public sector partners	All

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## **Attached appendices**

1. Milestones and targets
2. Organisations responsible for management of or lead on projects
3. Monitoring outputs and outcomes
4. Total cost of proposals
5. Estimated staff requirements
6. Fundraising plan
7. Marketing plan
8. Consortium structure
9. Track record of delivering similar projects
10. Summary of the consortium membership