

# **‘A Ten Year Vision for the Voluntary and Community Sector in Medway’**

**Local Infrastructure  
Development Plan for Medway  
2005-2015**



**Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Medway  
31st March 2006**

# Foreword

Welcome to the Local Infrastructure Development Plan (LIDP) for Medway. The plan outlines a ten year vision for the Voluntary and Community Sector in Medway, and is based on the findings of extensive research and consultation undertaken with the sector over the last year in the Medway and wider Kent areas.

The rationale for the LIDP is the Government's ChangeUp Programme. ChangeUp is a Home Office initiative which is designed to increase voluntary and community sector involvement in the delivery of public services and to facilitate the development of the capacity of voluntary and community organisations to achieve their potential. This ten-year programme is an opportunity for the sector to lead a review of the support needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations, plan for improvement, to develop its capacity and to be an effective partner in driving forward the priorities for the Medway area.

It should be stressed that the LIDP is a working document and will therefore evolve over the next ten years, through an ongoing review process. For example, there are emergent needs of support for front line Voluntary and Community Organisations working with Children, Young People and Families as opportunities clarify within the Children's Plan. It is fair to suggest however, that the research conducted has provided an initial evidence based framework for the development of further infrastructure services across the Voluntary and Community Sector in Medway. These identified infrastructure priorities are captured in section six of the report, the Action Plan.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions that have been made by individuals representing the Steering Group of the Voluntary and Community Organisations in the Medway area, members of the Steering Group of the Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Medway (appendix one), together with those made by wider stakeholders.

There are emergent needs of support for front line Voluntary and Community Organisations working with Children, Young People and Families as opportunities clarify within the Children's Plan.

**Martin Featherstone**  
**Chair – Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Medway**

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## 1. The National Context

Government policy is now focused on ensuring that all work programmes are geared towards the development of Sustainable Communities. The government defines a sustainable community as:

*'Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.'*

'Sustainable Communities Plan' published Home Office February 2003'

Sustainable Communities are characterised by:

- **Governance:** Effective and inclusive participation and leadership.
- **Social and cultural:** Vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities.
- **Housing and the built environment:** A quality built and natural environment.
- **Economy:** A flourishing and diverse local economy.
- **Environmental:** Providing places for people to live in an environmentally friendly way.
- **Transport and connectivity:** Good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.
- **Services:** A full range of appropriate services, accessible public, private, community and voluntary services.

ChangeUp is a Home Office initiative which is designed to increase voluntary and community sector involvement in the delivery of public services and to facilitate the development of the capacity of voluntary and community organisations to achieve their potential. This ten-year programme is an opportunity for the sector to lead a review of its infrastructure needs, plan for improvement, to develop its capacity and to be an effective partner in driving forward the priorities for the area as well as the voluntary and community sector delivering its own priorities better as a result of the improvements to support services made through the ChangeUp process.

The mechanism for delivering the ChangeUp Programme was defined by the Home Office, and delegated to the Regional Government offices. It required that each area set up a Consortium to produce a Local Infrastructure Development Plan (LIDP) by March 2006. The aim of the plan was to, in consultation with the sector to map the sector, identify issues and gaps, and to produce a detailed ten year action plan to address these and plan for the future needs of the sector.

The three key requirements in the production of the plan were:

- It was integrated with existing priorities for the area.
- Reflected identified local need.
- The voluntary and community sector were asked to lead the process.

## **2. The Local Context**

### **Medway, The Place**

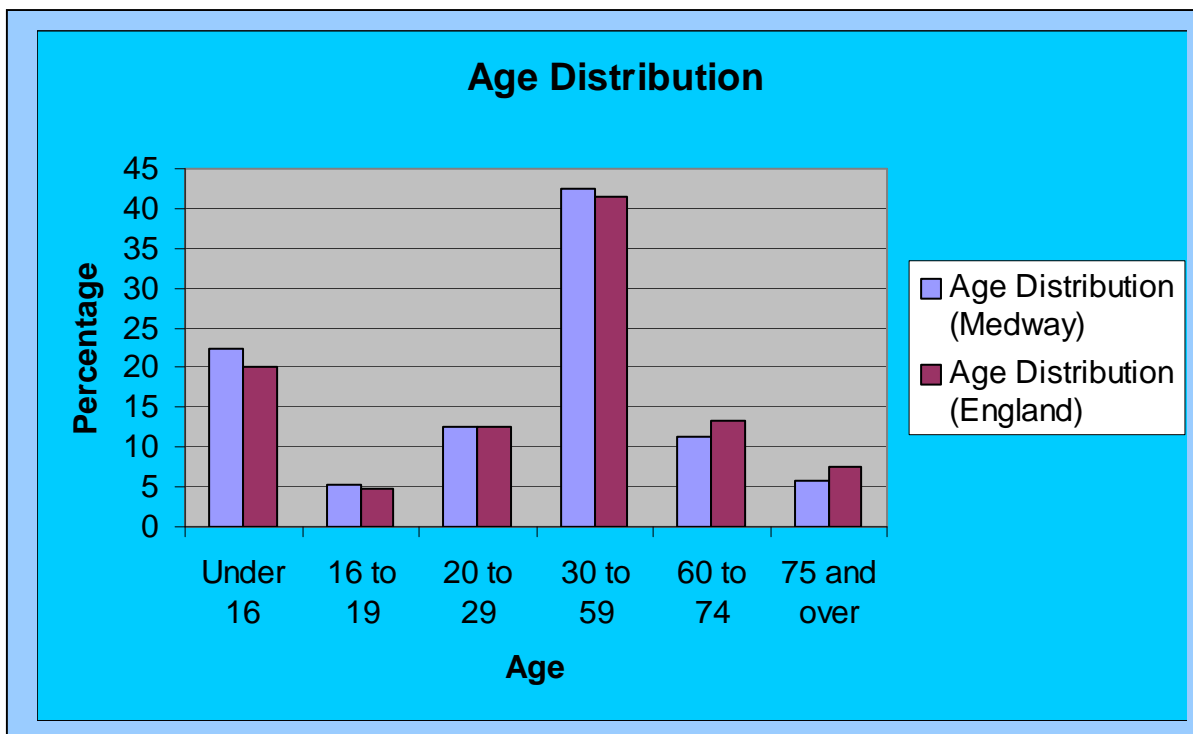
Medway is only 30 miles from London [to the west] and 40 miles from Dover [to the east] and is surrounded by Kent. Medway is characterised by a highly populated urban area situated around the River Medway estuary, to the north and west of which lie substantial rural areas. It is one of the largest urban conurbations in the South East outside London. Medway is part of the Thames Gateway, a national priority area for regeneration and growth. The Home Office has awarded Medway monies amounting to nearly £100m, to regenerate key areas of Medway which will provide opportunities for new housing, employment and infrastructure services.

At the centre of urban Medway is Chatham Centre, which will be developed into the city centre for Medway with the historic towns of Strood, Rochester, Gillingham and Rainham and larger villages in the more rural parts forming Medway. The River Medway is at the heart of this urban conurbation and provides a rich resource for commerce and tourism as well as a historical link for the area.

### **Medway, The People**

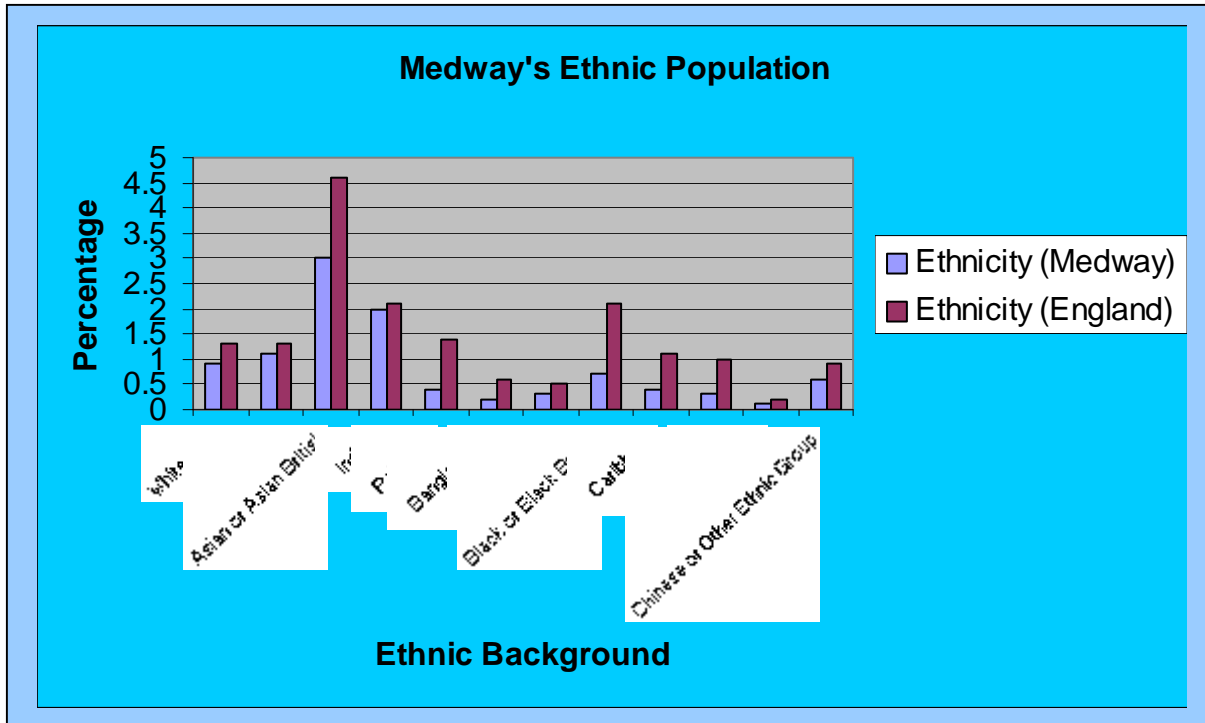
The population of Medway is 250,000. Like other parts of the South East, Medway is under pressure to provide more development with a population expected to grow to about 300,000 by 2020. This will impact on the demand for all types of services across Medway.

Medway has a younger population than average for England, but older people are living longer and more independently than 10 years ago. This means there will be an increasing demand for health and social care services for older people in the next ten years, and at the same time high demand for services to children and young people compared to other areas.



Single person households now make up almost a third of total households in Medway, reflecting the increase in family breakdown and the numbers of older people living on their own. Conversely, the proportion of traditional family households has declined to 50%; although this is higher than the rest of the South East. This reflects changes in the structure of communities and in the demand for services and for differing types of services.

Black Minority Ethnic Communities in Medway make up 5.4% of the population compared with 8.7% nationally. The ethnic minority communities in Medway are diverse and include several groups whose first language is not English. The Indian community is the single largest at 2% of the population.



Travel to and from work using public transport is consistent with the national average, although more people tend to use their car. Fewer households in Medway have no car [23%] than the national average of [26.8%]. A third of Medway households have more than two cars, which is slightly above the national average of 29%.

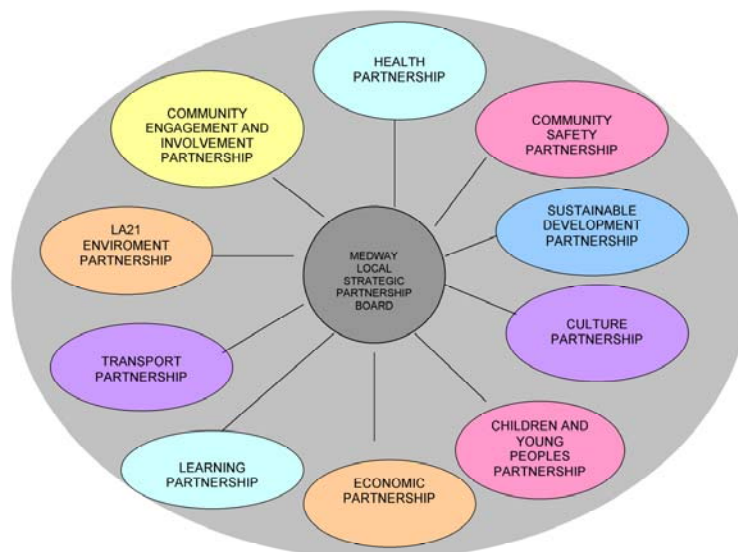
Unemployment levels, as in the rest of the South East are now low at about 2.5%. Employment levels in Medway are higher than national averages: 64.5% of people in Medway aged between 16 and 74 years are employed, compared to 60.6% nationally. On the other hand people in employment in Medway are more likely to be in lower paid and in lower skilled jobs than in other parts of the south east. It is estimated that 25.88% of employed people work outside Medway. Medway through increasing economic prosperity needs to attract employers to the area through the process of up-skilling the potential workforce.

While the proportion of people with no qualifications in Medway is consistent with the national average, only 8.6% of people in Medway are educated to degree level or higher, compared to 14.4% nationally. It is anticipated that the establishment of the Universities at Medway will contribute towards improving the skill base in the Medway area.

## Medway Local Strategic Partnership

The Medway Local Strategic Partnership brings together all the main organisations representing the community of Medway. These organisations include local businesses, voluntary and community organisations and public bodies like the police, health service and council. The improvements sought for Medway cannot be made by any one organisation working alone. That is the strength of working in partnership. Each member organisation will bring its own resources, be it money, time or staff skills and experience. There are new initiatives in Medway and work that needs to be undertaken to meet the needs of the community of Medway.

The Medway Local Strategic Partnership through its board has the role of co-ordinating the activities of ten lead partnerships, and through these partnerships monitoring the progress of the targets within the Community Plan and in the future the Local Area Agreement. The Medway Local Strategic Partnership Board includes a representative from each of the lead partnerships. Other members are from the council, Ethnic Minorities Forum, CVS and some of the important regional bodies in Medway, including the local Learning and Skills Council, Kent and Medway Economic Board and the South East of England Development Agency. The lead partnerships are responsible for developing the Community Plan for Medway. The plan contains priorities for Medway that are a result of broad-based feedback from residents and partner organisations. These priorities are indications of the wider strategic agenda for Medway. The Medway Local Strategic Partnership Board will take forward with its partners, this wider strategic agenda.



There are a number of partnership plans, which each lead partnership of the Medway Local Strategic Partnership, have oversight of, these form the action plans for the



Medway Community Plan. The Local Implementation Development Plan is also, in effect, one of these action plans, and reflects the Medway Community and Voluntary Sector developments, to deliver these priorities as an active partner within Medway.

Current priorities for Medway include:

- The renaissance of Medway to a city of learning, culture, tourism and high technology.
- Reducing unemployment, which will include enhancing the skills of the people of Medway.
- Enhancing and protecting the countryside and open spaces in Medway.
- Improving the health of the people of Medway, including reducing smoking, combating obesity and teenage pregnancy.
- Reducing the fear of crime.
- Offering alternatives to the use of the car.
- Maximising the independence of older people.
- Developing activities and opportunities for children and young people.

### **3. The Voluntary and Community Sector in Medway**

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) describes voluntary organisations as follows:

*'A voluntary organisation is interpreted broadly as a self-governing body of people who have joined together to take action for the betterment (as they see it) of the community and are established otherwise than for financial gain.'*

In recent times, organisations of this type are sometimes referred to as 'third sector' bodies, a catch-all phrase which covers charities, community and voluntary groups, faith groups, social enterprises, Industrial and Provident Societies and Community Interest Companies – all of whom have in common the fact that they are not established explicitly to make a profit. Some organisations may also benefit significantly from the work of volunteers, but not all by any means.

Voluntary and community sector organisations are distinctive and have the following characteristics and shared values:

- Act as advocates for particular groups with distinct values.
- Promote strong and positive community inclusion, particularly with those who might be regarded as hard to reach.
- Have a capability to innovate, experiment and test new ideas.
- Promote change through involving a local community or neighbourhood.
- Provide people with the opportunity to influence issues that affect their lives.
- Have the potential to add significant value through volunteering, securing external funding and other resources for the community.

- Any financial surplus generated must be reinvested in the organisation, and not defined or utilised as financial profit.
- Manage diversity and operate within an equal opportunities framework.

The Voluntary and Community Sector is a key partner in delivering public services to the people of Medway and is comprised of at least 580 separate organisations. The sector is an important employer within Medway contributing 3.4% to the GDP. Employing 1,740 staff and 1,141 volunteers (WTE). It has a turnover of £12 million per annum, is funded from a variety of sources and has responsibility for numerous properties.

The sector in Medway provides services to the following groups:

- Older people
- Environmental groups
- Sports and leisure groups
- Services to children and young people
- Services to carers
- BME Groups
- Pressure and lobby groups
- Disability groups
- Neighbourhood groups
- Rural groups
- Faith groups

A number of these services would be provided by local organisations, some as a local branch of a national or regional organisation. The organisations may be based and work solely within the Medway area, some will work across Kent and Medway and others will have a regional or national remit.

Examples of key infrastructure organisations and forums involved in the provision and development of infrastructure provision for the Voluntary and Community Sector in Medway include:

- Churches and Faith Groups.
- Council for Voluntary Service Medway.
- North Kent Community Forum.
- Community Enterprise Hub, supported by £630,000 from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups.
- Medway Council.
- Medway Primary Care Trust.

The key functions that underpin effective service delivery within the sector, include:

- Training.

- Representation and involvement in strategic planning.
- Fund raising.
- Communication and information sharing.
- Governance arrangements.
- Information Technology.
- Management of and access to volunteer or paid staff.
- Financial and performance monitoring.

#### **4. The ChangeUp Process**

In response to the ChangeUp Programme from the Home Office and the Government Office South East a consortium for ChangeUp was established in Medway, primarily to develop the Local Infrastructure Development Plan for the Voluntary and Community Sector. The Council for Voluntary Service Medway was commissioned by the Government Office South East to initiate and develop the consortium and to be the accountable body for the ChangeUp process in Medway, however the preparation of the Local Infrastructure Development Plan has been led by the consortium. The members of the consortium included representatives from key infrastructure organisations in Medway, voluntary and community sector provider representatives and officers from public sector organisations as observers, additional support was provided from GOSE. Appendix One contains the details of the members of the Medway ChangeUp Consortium.

The consortium reviewed work that had been undertaken in Medway and liaised with the Kent consortium and wider Kent organisations to inform the review process. A key reference document in the initial stages was the *Medway Infrastructure Report. J. Bateman 2004*. This report made some seventeen recommendations designed to improve the framework of collaboration between key infrastructure bodies. This report had built on work already carried out in Medway, which had contributed to the development of the Area Investment Framework for the Thames gateway, and other consultations, which have been undertaken in the Medway area.

#### **Methodology**

In April 2005 the Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Medway, contracted wpconsultancy to undertake a Medway, Voluntary and Community Sector mapping and infrastructure needs identification exercise. The mapping exercise was scheduled for completion by July 2005, and was funded through ChangeUp, the findings would form the basis of the Local Infrastructure Development Plan to be produced by the Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Medway.

The aims of the research:

- Identify the infrastructure needs of the Voluntary and Community Sector across Medway.
- Identify strategies for meeting these identified needs.
- Produce reports and recommendations to support the development and delivery of the Local Infrastructure Development Plan for Medway.

The objectives of the research:

- Effectively map the Voluntary and Community Sector across Medway.
- Map existing and proposed community facilities across Medway.
- Produce a report and recommendations that reflects the objectives and findings of the research and makes recommendations for future Voluntary and Community Sector projects with proposed funding and reporting mechanisms.

The methodology adopted involved:

- The preparation of a draft questionnaire.
- Agreement of final questionnaire format.
- All known VCS, VCOs were initially contacted by postal/e-mail questionnaire.
- The aims and objectives of the research were included in the CVS Medway newsletter and the wider press.
- Data analysis.
- Non returned questionnaires were followed up.
- Follow up action points included, telephone interviews and closing gaps in information that had been provided.
- One to one interviews with infrastructure bodies were completed.
- 3 briefings for the VCS took place, together with a needs identification workshop and a projects identification workshop.
- Further work was undertaken, with additional funding from the ChangeUp, Additional Support Programme. The aim of this work programme was to ensure that, organisations providing services to Black and Minority Ethnic communities had the opportunity to identify a priority list of needs that may differ from the more generic organisations. It must be emphasized, that while this specific research is extremely valuable, the ChangeUp initiative seeks to address the infrastructure needs of the whole voluntary sector in Medway, including Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. Medway Ethnic Minority Forum was nominated to conduct the Additional Support Programme ChangeUp research. Medway Ethnic Minority Forum is an independent, accountable, umbrella organisation of Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary and community organisations in Medway and is the 'voice' for the Black and Minority Ethnic sector in the locality. The findings of the Additional Support Programme research are presented in Section Five of the LIDP.
- A draft Local Infrastructure Development Plan, which was included on two occasions in the CVS Medway newsletter, was distributed to all voluntary and

community organisations identified from existing information and from the mapping process for comment.

- A flagship consultation event was held in Medway in January 2006, this gave a further opportunity for the Voluntary and Community Sector and wider stakeholders to comment on the Local Infrastructure Development Plan.

## **Response**

530 questionnaires were distributed to Voluntary and Community Organisations across Medway, 150 completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 28%. A further 40 (5%) questionnaires were returned through workshops and one to one meetings.

## **Findings**

In summary the research identified that:

### **1. The Voluntary and Community Sector in Medway comprises:**

- 580 Voluntary and Community Organisations.
- The equivalent of 1,740 full time staff are employed in the Voluntary and Community Sector in Medway.
- Voluntary and Community Organisations had an average turnover of £20,000, however, the range for this indicator was nil to £8 million.
- The Voluntary and Community Sector in Medway is funded through 52 funders, in addition significant private contributions are made to the sector.
- The sector in Medway has a turnover of circa £12 million, and contributes 3.4% to the local Gross Domestic Product.
- The sector operates from 85 actual or potential voluntary sector community facilities, of which 30% are owner occupied.

### **2. The sector in Medway has the following infrastructure needs:**

- Funding support.
- Volunteers.
- Information.
- A Voluntary and Community Sector Forum or network.
- Training.
- Project Development and incubator support.
- Governance
- Information Communication Technology.

### **3. The research has identified demand for the following infrastructure projects:**

- The development of a funding service.
- Developing the capacity in the existing provision in the area of volunteering.

- Information and database development.
- The development of a representative forum.
- The expansion of training provision.
- The development of capacity in the area of project incubator support.
- Governance.
- Information Communication Technology, particularly in the area of helpdesk provision.

### **Initial Project Development Programme**

The consortium for Medway determined from an analysis of the research, that they would use ChangeUp resources to not only develop an infrastructure plan but also to seed-corn, projects which began to address some of the issues identified through the mapping and consultation work.. A Medway ChangeUp Projects Co-ordinator was appointed in the Summer of 2005, tasked with taking work forward on behalf of the Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Medway.

- Establishment of an effective database, which is user friendly, co-terminus with other database in the region/nationally, provides links to other databases (i.e. Medway Council, GOSE). This project will be complete by the time this plan is to be submitted.
- A representative forum for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VOICE) to enable the sector to contribute to the wide ranging agendas across the whole spectrum of services.
- Community facilities programme.
- Training.
- Sector funding service.
- The consortium will need to consider its future role in managing the ChangeUp initiative and the actions identified. This could be achieved through the establishment of a representative forum such as the VOICE.
- Development/incubator services.
- Governance
- ICT
- Information

These project needs are expanded on in Section 5 'What was Learnt' and are also detailed in 'The Action Plan' in Section 6, which highlights the progress made to date in these areas and the outstanding work to be completed.

Meetings with the consortium in Kent took place at the start and towards the end of the consultation process. A number of potential areas for cooperation were identified and the challenge for both consortia is to explore these areas.

The Medway ChangeUp consortium is responsible for signing off the plan prior to its submission to GOSE and will ensure that as part of the plan the process for monitoring and reviewing the plan is implemented (section 7).

## **5. What was Learnt?**

The ChangeUp programme is geared towards improvement in the infrastructure for the Voluntary and Community Sector. This will inevitably focus attention on the areas, which could be improved. However the research and consultation carried out to inform the development of this plan identified that there are a large number and range of Voluntary and Community Organisations in Medway providing a rich diversity of services and opportunities in Medway. These organisations are operating and developing in a challenging and demanding environment, delivering services that add value to the communities within which they work.

The key Areas for development identified through the research are detailed below. Section 6, then presents this information in the form of an action plan.

- **Representation and involvement in strategic planning**

It is apparent that the sector in Medway does not have a shared identity or vision for itself, although conversely member organizations often have a strong vision, identity and sense of purpose. It is paramount that in order to maximise the opportunities and strengthen the impact and work of the sector that an agreed vision is adopted, by implication there is also an inference that a sector forum needs to be developed to provide the opportunity to ensure the vision is shared and owned.

It is clear that the sector is missing opportunities, by not linking effectively with the strategic agenda and inherent priorities. The impact of this approach, means that the resources available are not maximized, or effectively sourced, there is also the possibility of duplication and increased competitiveness for finite and decreasing resources, to the detriment of the wider Medway community and to the organisations themselves.

A key factor in ensuring that the Voluntary and Community Sector has a voice in the

strategic agenda of Medway, is the capacity of member organisations to commit resources, to actively engage in discussion, again lack of a joined up approach impacts on the potential strength of the sector to influence the strategic agenda and with it the use of resources. Further consequences of this approach could be inconsistent provision across Medway and therefore reduced effectiveness in championing causes.

The development of a representative 'VOICE' for the VCS in Medway, was therefore the identified solution. The VOICE would be characterized by being a voice for the sector as a whole, would be effective at championing individual causes, would identify critical issues and advocate on these and would facilitate the process of grouping the VCS by roles, for example, older and younger people.

- **Training**

There are two main issues in this area, firstly maximising the effectiveness of the current workforce including volunteers. Secondly, organisational development needs which include providing training in the key areas of fundraising, developing governance, representing skills, meeting skills, management skills and performance management. There is a potential in identifying detailed training needs to operate as a sector a training programme that better utilises resources and takes advantage of economies of scale.

A learning and skills programme for the VCS already exists including both accredited and non accredited courses. The programme is funded for three years responding to needs identified within the VCS over a four year period and builds on the experience of previous learning and skills programmes.

The current programme is funded by both the LSC and the Big Lottery enabling the programme to provide a varied range of short and longer term courses to meet the diverse needs of the sector.

Funding will need to be sourced to resource the programme beyond 2007, to ensure that the ongoing training needs of the VCS are met. Specific training needs that were identified in the research include:

- 1 Social enterprise.
- 2 Theatre and craft.
- 3 Umpire training.
- 4 Health and safety.
- 5 First aid training.

- **Funding**

Expertise required in this area that was identified in the research included assistance



with, advising on all funding sources including social enterprise, bid writing for core and project applications, comment and assessment of draft bids, partnership and consortium bidding and lobbying for local issues on funding.

- **Effective use of resources**

A joined up approach from the Voluntary and Community Sector will have positive outcomes in maximising the resources available to the sector. This could include the shared use of buildings for organisations, as in the development of Community Enterprise Hubs, across the area of the North Thames Gateway. Sharing expertise and centralising knowledge and information on funding and bidding opportunities would increase capacity within the sector and increase the ability of the sector to respond to funding opportunities. A major issue for the majority of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations is sustainable funding from whatever source. This impacts on the ability of organisations to plan effectively, to recruit staff and volunteers and to reduce the drain on their resources. The VCS is currently characterised by a culture of short-term piece meal and opportunistic funding, which severely impacts on its ability to deliver services. Influencing the transport agenda will ensure that local communities needs are met both directly and through the VCS services.

The development of a community facilities programme, would facilitate the effective utilization of resources, and to reflect the ChangeUp research would need to be a central high profile, sector owned, multi-purpose community facility offering evening and weekend 'social' use by both VCS organisations and the general public. This facility would be complemented by a number of smaller neighborhood facilities located throughout Medway, offering short-term, small sized, affordable incubator premises.

- **Communication and information sharing**

There are significant examples of good practice across the sector, however there is an evidence base that suggests that these are not shared either within the sector or externally, resulting in missed opportunities for effective service delivery. Resources are used inefficiently as the learning from developed good practice is not shared. Identifying good practice will facilitate the development processes of new and emerging organisations within the sector. The disseminating of good practice needs to be supported by robust information systems. Providing effective platforms to cascade the underpinning strategic plans will be key to achieving in this area.

- **Governance arrangements**

Evidence suggests that knowledge of the provision of effective governance of organisations varies across the sector. The cascading of information detailing best

practice in the area of governance will assist in the meeting of this sector need.

More specifically, a governance service that would meet the identified needs of the sector, would require an established system integral to which was a local REACH service. The process of establishing such a system would draw on experience gained through previous initiatives for example, Medway Links. Any system would require close links with the Chamber of Commerce. The provision of team building away days and guidance on registering as a charity would add value to the proposed service.

- **Information Service**

To meet the identified needs of the sector in this area, the information service would need to provide a comprehensive database, regular updates on key sector issues, the provision of specialist information to relevant specific organisations, advertising key sector in the region events, provide information on the work of statutory authorities and share information relating to other VCOs.

- **Information Communication Technology**

Detailed research was undertaken into the ICT needs of the VCS in Medway in 2002, this research identified two critical needs. The requirement for a local trouble shooting service for VCOs on ICT, and the establishment of a robust virtual network. These findings mirror those identified in the ChangeUp research. The ChangeUp research confirms the need for database and website training and an ICT troubleshooter resource.

- **Volunteering**

There was an identified need for a volunteering service, which focused on the six key functions of, brokerage, marketing of volunteering as an activity, good practice development, developing volunteering opportunities, policy response and campaigning and the strategic development of volunteering.

- **Project Development/Incubator service**

The ethos of what is required in this area of provision included, the identification of new projects to be developed in the VCS. To provide project management as projects develop and to steer projects to a level at which they can then operate at an independent level.

- **Black and Ethnic Minority organisations**

## **Background**

Medway Ethnic Minority Forum was nominated to conduct the Additional Support Programme ChangeUp research. Medway Ethnic Minority Forum is an independent, accountable, umbrella organisation of Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary and community organisations in Medway and is the 'voice' for the Black and Minority Ethnic sector in the locality.

## **Procedure**

In order to fully understand the issues and needs of the diverse Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary community organisations in Medway a cross-section of the community was targeted via a two-tier consultation process. New groups were mapped and information collected for a proposed database.

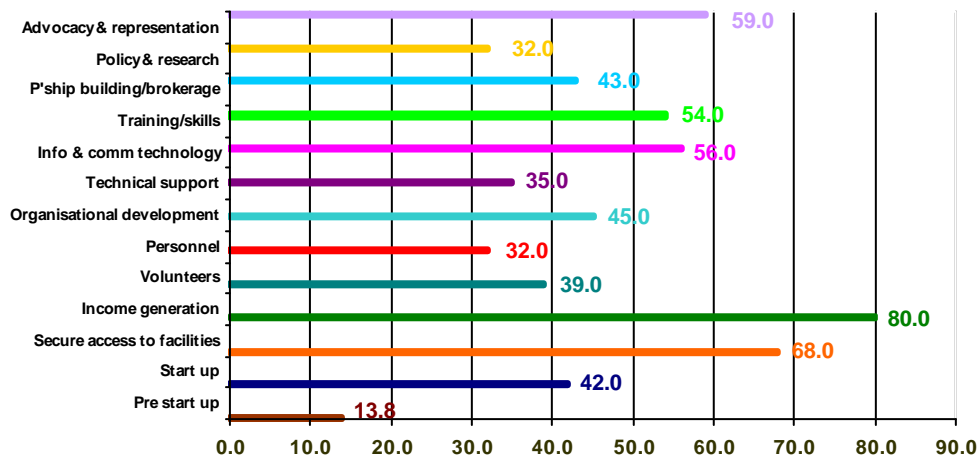
Overall 105 **executive members** of Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary community organisations were consulted in the Medway Additional Support Programme ChangeUp process. 73 of which participated in interviews and focus groups discussions lasting 2-3 hours. This was achieved via:

- 10 individual presentations to governing committees of voluntary community organisations.
- 30 meetings with individual voluntary community organisations, of which 13 were in-depth interviews.
- Attending 5 Medway Ethnic Minority Forum Board meetings and Away Day.

## **Key Findings**

The ASP findings seem to compliment the mainstream research and have identified similar support needs for the Black and Minority Ethnic sector. However, the **priority** and **importance** of each *need* is different for the Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary community organisations. The most immediate needs and concerns are shown below.

### Needs and concerns ranked in terms of relevance



On closer examination and with 'income' removed from the equation, findings reveal a more introspective, detailed and specific response to the organisation's infrastructure needs. These are illustrated below in order of greatest importance<sup>1</sup>:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Buildings/Building facilities         | 5. Recruiting paid staff                 |
| 2. Equipment                             | 6. Building fruitful partnerships        |
| 3. Organisational structure - governance | 7. Training and recruiting of volunteers |
| 4. Communication strategy                |  |

### **Additional Support Programme Project Focus**

The findings identified several new projects that were in addition to the mainstream projects. Some are presently underway in the form of a Black and Minority Ethnic database and the development of a communication strategy for the sector. Additionally, there is evidence for a need of a referral network to be established with voluntary/community groups and service providers, i.e. housing, benefits, schooling etc. The Medway Ethnic Minority Forum was recognised to be the most appropriate vehicle to signpost and advice.

These projects were identified as essential to strengthen the sector and as building blocks to better place the Medway Ethnic Minority Forum as a second-tier service provider, subsequently improving representation and co-ordination of activities to benefit the front-line organisations. Only then can Medway Ethnic Minority Forum work more effectively, influentially and be the most appropriate medium to utilise in order access the Black and Minority Ethnic community.

## **Future Projects**

Areas of future interest/projects and where need was seen to be unmet within the sector were:

- Youth development work – sports, cultural activities.
- Medway Carnival/Mela – celebrating Medway's diverse community.
- Establishment of a Black and Minority Ethnic Youth Forum/Council.
- Keen interest in social enterprise projects.
- Meeting the needs of older people within the community.
- Establishment of a multi-cultural community centre – supporting the citation in the Medway Community Plan 2004-2007.

The key findings from the research and mapping exercise are now captured in terms of deliverables in the LIDP Action Plan, which is presented in the next section of the report.

## Section 6

### LIDP Action Plan, 2006 - 2016

Area	Action	Indicator	Lead Organisations	Time line
Representative Forum	Develop VOICE group that functions as an effective representative forum for the VCS.	By end of March 2007 develop and implement a package of pro-active engagement techniques with both VCOs and the statutory sector.	CVS Medway VOICE membership Feedback from wider sector re; effectiveness of representation.	Year 1 End March 2007
Training	Implement strategy aimed at extending sustainability of existing training provision for VCS beyond 2007.	By end of March 2007, North Kent Training has funds to provide ongoing service that meets sector training needs.	North Kent Training and other providers.	Year 1 Sustainability Strategy Year 2 to 10 Training provision that is responsive to the needs of the sector.
Funding	Develop funding service that responds to the expressed needs of the sector, especially in the areas of bid writing and tool kit development.	Through funding service evaluation model.	CVS Medway and Corporate Bidding Service at Medway Council.	Year 1 Service established, work programme developed. Need to identify sustainable funding to maintain flagship service.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Lead Organisations</b>	<b>Time line</b>
Effective use of Resources	Map existing provision against findings of Community Facilities Research.	Sector owned multi-purpose facility and network of satellite facilities.	CEH Churches Together Medway Council BME Groups	Implementation and development over the 10 year period. Effective review and monitoring of provision.
Communication and Information Sharing	Develop mechanisms for cascading best practice across the sector.	Minimised need to re-invent the wheel as information is shared and fast forwards process development.	VOICE Sector Silos Local Strategic Partnership	Review VOICE impact after 1 year. Develop ongoing work programme thereafter.
Governance Arrangements	Develop local REACH service.	VCOs have access to a responsive Governance service which addresses charity registration and board development.	North Kent Training KYCVS CVS Medway	Establish Governance Service – Year 1 Review Performance – year 3 Review provision – year 4 onwards.
Information Service	Encourage use of completed database. Ensure that information is accurate and relevant. Develop outreach information mobile.	A well informed VCS. Evaluation model to be developed to measure effectiveness and impact of services provided.	VCS CVS Medway Individual VCOs KYCVS	Develop all services year 1, inline with funding constraints. Review end year 1, informs ongoing information strategy development.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Lead Organisations</b>	<b>Time line</b>
Information Communication Technology	Establish robust virtual network.. Establish local trouble shooting service. Provision of database and website training.	Evaluation of trouble shooting service and training provided.	Medway Council Private Contractor North Kent Training	Year 1 – establish ICT trouble shooting service, virtual network and deliver training. Year 2 onwards – develop service that reflects changes in technological development.
Volunteering	Further develop volunteering service based on six key functions from ChangeUp research. Link to PSA2.	Evaluation of service around six key elements of service package.	Medway Council Millennium Volunteers. Volunteer Bureaux. CVS Medway. Ethnic Minority Forum.	Year 1 – establish base line of current service delivery. Year 1 – establish volunteering steering group. Year 2 onwards develop service package and review mechanisms.
Project Development Incubator Service	Identification of new VCS projects, ongoing project management to independence.	Viewed in terms of new projects and their effective ongoing management and achievements of road maps to independence.	Hope in the Community Ethnic Minority Forum KCVYS CVS Medway	Year 1 Project identification, management and independence toolkits. Year 2 onwards – review impact of service and sustainability of projects after independence.



<b>Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Lead Organisations</b>	<b>Time line</b>
Communication strategy relevant to Black and Minority Ethnic Communities.	Publicise and promote communication strategy. Encourage use of established methods of seeking and providing information. Quarterly newsletter.	Improved channels of communication; greater trust and mutual understanding.	Medway Ethnic Minority Forum. Medway Council.	<p>Year 1 Establish web based information resources. Black and Minority Ethnic Directory.</p> <p>Year 2 Hold information events to share learning and best practice.</p>

Area	Action	Indicator	Lead Organisations	Time line
BME Specialist Referral and Advocacy Network	Widen participation to all BME communities, support groups and faith centres. Raise profile of MEM forum. Develop leadership and support role of MEM forum.	Greater awareness of service availability. Increased take up of services. Increased knowledge and understanding by statutory bodies. Increased participation in consultations.	Medway Ethnic Minority Forum. Medway Council. Medway Primary Care Trust.	Year 1 Set up protocols to provide information, advice and support.  Year 2 Develop short/medium term resource plans.
Maximise opportunities for partnership working.	Develop platforms that maximise the opportunities for partnership working with organisations based outside the Medway Unitary Authority boundary. Demonstrate synergy with the Medway and Kent LIDPs.	Resources are maximised and there is evidence of partnership working which extends beyond the boundary of the Medway Unitary Authority.	Kent VIC Kent CAN Kent based VCS infrastructure organisations. Other Kent based VCS organisations.	Year 1 Identify and source key networking partners.  Year 2 Develop work programme that demonstrates synergy with the Kent and Medway LIDPs.

## **Section 7**

### **Implementing the Action Plan**

Key to achieving the objective of effectively implementing the Action Plan, outlined in Section 6, will be the need for:

- An ongoing review of the membership of the Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Medway.
- The establishment of a process, that ensures the lead organisations detailed in the Action Plan are delivering their proposals to the time lines outlined in the Local Infrastructure Development Plan.
- To benchmark the detail in the Action Plan at regular review dates with end users, to ensure the plan is still relevant and delivers value for money to the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- The development of protocols that support the delivery of projects outlined in the Action Plan, for example, the pilot projects that were funded through ChangeUp. Protocols could include partnership agreements, which would provide empowering platforms for fostering ownership and accountability.
- The development of mechanisms that will provide progress updates to all stakeholders on the implementation of the plan.
- To introduce evaluation models that assess whether frontline Voluntary and Community Organisations are benefiting from the changes and improvements delivered, as the plan is implemented. These models should be linked to the overall process of delivering, monitoring and evaluating the plan.
- To develop systems that ensure the plan is reviewed on a regular basis, and that the content continues to be relevant to the evolving needs of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Medway.
- To ensure that the plan continues to be integrated with local plans and regional priorities, for example Social Enterprise.
- Ensure that the projects detailed in the plan, address issues relating to small community or neighbourhood groups or rural proofing.
- Evaluation mechanisms should also focus on the sustainability of support services. The issue of sustainability should be adopted as an overarching priority.

- Integral to the scheduled reviews of the plan, should be an assessment of progress made against actions. This should ensure that the work load of the plan is effectively project managed.
- Define and review on an ongoing basis the overall vision of the Voluntary and Community Sector, and the vision of each 'Area' in the action plan.

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All of the above reference documents can be obtained through Council for Voluntary Service Medway:

- Address: 5a New Road Avenue  
Chatham  
Kent ME4 6BG.
- Tel: 01634 812850
- Fax: 01634 840611
- Email [postmaster@cvs-medway.demon.co.uk](mailto:postmaster@cvs-medway.demon.co.uk)
- Website [www.cvsmedway.org.uk](http://www.cvsmedway.org.uk)

## Appendix 1

### Composition of the Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Medway (2005-06)

John Andrews	Partake Consultants
Julia Basindale	Hands Volunteer Bureau Rochester
John Brown	wpconsultancy
Barry Clout	Kent Council for Voluntary Youth Service
Crispin Davies	Government Office for the South East
Mark Dent	Corporate Bidding Unit, Medway Council
Parveen Dusanj	Additional Support Programme Consultant
Kim Eaglestone	Medway Primary Care Trust
Martin Featherstone	Council for Voluntary Service Medway
Vivienne Foulds	Learning and Skills Council
Symone Krista	Corporate Bidding Unit, Medway Council
Jane Love	Voluntary Sector, Grants and Contracts Manager, Medway Council
Claire Lynn	Medway Local Strategic Partnership
Kenny Mackness	South East England Development Agency
Pauline MacTaggart	Hands Volunteer Bureau Gillingham
Azhar Mahmood	Medway Racial Equality Council
Biffy Roche	Merge
Dave Simmons	Government Office for the South East
Clem Smith	Social Regeneration Manager, Medway Council
Cynthia Spicer	Chief Executive, Age Concern - Gillingham
Peter Southcombe	Churches Together
Alan Street	Hands Volunteer Bureau Rochester and CVS Medway
Inspector R. Walford	Kent Police
Gillian Wells	Council for Voluntary Service Medway

## Appendix 2

### Interpretation of Abbreviations and Definitions

It is important that there is a common understanding of the terms that have been used in this report

#### **Infrastructure** (RAISE definition)

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

#### **Infrastructure Element**

*....within an organisation, but which have other main aims and purposes.*

#### **Frontline Organisation**

*An organisation is one that is a direct deliverer of services to the public (or sections of the public).*

#### **Umbrella Organisation**

*Relates to membership organisations. Often the headquarters or central group provides a voice for its members (perhaps as a Council or Forum) nationally, countywide or area wide.*

### Abbreviations used in the Report

<b>LIDP</b>	Local Infrastructure Development Plan
<b>VICM</b>	Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Medway
<b>VICK</b>	Voluntary Infrastructure Consortium Kent
<b>CVS</b>	Council for Voluntary Service
<b>VCS</b>	Voluntary and Community Sector
<b>GOSE</b>	Government Office South East
<b>VCO</b>	Voluntary Community Organisation
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communication Technology
<b>BME</b>	Black Minority Ethnic
<b>ASP</b>	Additional Support Programme
<b>LSP</b>	Local Strategic Partnership