Improving neighbourhoods and supporting active communities

the impact of the Single Community Programme

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Contents

1. Forward

2. Executive Summary

3. Overview of Government Policies on Community Participation
   Summary of findings

4. Section 1
   Findings in Hull: The Single Community Programme – helping to build stronger neighbourhoods
   • How communities contribute to improving health, reducing crime and improved learning (a mapping exercise)
   • How the SCP adds value
   • Small Grants (Community Chest) Make a Big Difference – SCP contribution to the smallest groups
   • Representing Different Views – SCP contribution to enabling the VCS voice at a strategic level
   • Learning to make a difference – SCP contribution to learning for neighbourhood renewal
   • Delivering a Difference - SCP Contribution to Service Delivery and Floor Targets
   • Barriers to evidencing impact

5. Section 2
   Guidelines, exercises and approaches to accessible and participative methods of assessment
   How networks can facilitate planning and assessment of SCP and the individual contributions of community and voluntary organisations.
   • Appendix 1
     Methodology used in Hull
   • Appendix 2
     Overview of government policies on community participation and evidence of impact

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Foreword

It is now over 4 years since the Government published the National Strategy Action Plan “A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal.” In writing the foreword, Prime Minister Tony Blair painted a powerful picture of his vision for the future. He said

“My vision is of a nation where no-one is seriously disadvantaged by where they live, where power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many not the few. This Action Plan is a crucial step in creating one nation, not separated by class, race, or where people live.”

The aim of the strategy, to ensure that within 10 to 20 years no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live, continues to be the central driver of our work in neighbourhood renewal. Whilst we can see major progress against floor targets in our region, the scale of the task that remains cannot be underestimated.

This report focuses on the contribution the voluntary and community sector is making towards realising the National Strategy’s vision. The research is based on the City of Hull, but could easily apply to any of the neighbourhood renewal areas in the region where voluntary organisations and community groups are key partners in neighbourhood renewal. It demonstrates the vital role the sector plays in forming a conduit between communities and the statutory sector providers on whom they rely. The report profiles a small cross section of what is an incredibly broad sector and demonstrates the contribution made in both strategic planning and service delivery. We should not lose sight of why this work is so important. The National Strategy makes it clear:

“Communities need to be consulted and listened to, and the most effective interventions are often those where communities are actively involved in their design and delivery, and where possible in the driving seat”

This is a time of real change, with new initiatives like Local Area Agreements – designed to reduce bureaucracy and get investment where it most matters – having a real impact. We need to recognise and build on what has been achieved by the Single Community Programme. To create sustainable communities we must support active citizens and community groups out in neighbourhoods, and have the voluntary and community sector around the partnership table. We must also ensure that public funds are spent effectively, with public services improved and programmes delivering against floor targets.

This report helps us further understand and appreciate the unique role played by voluntary and community organisations. It also provides accessible and participative ways of measuring the sector’s contribution to neighbourhood renewal and I commend it to you, both as a fascinating snapshot of the sector and as a practical manual for performance management.
Executive Summary

This report aims to assess the role of the Single Community Programme (SCP) in Neighbourhood Renewal and focuses on activity funded through the programme in Hull.

Hull is one of the 88 most deprived local authority districts identified by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) as the focus of the National Strategy Action Plan; A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal. The Single Community Programme (SCP) runs in each of these priority areas and aims to develop community participation through four strategic goals:

- Governance – developing a community ‘voice’ that enables communities to participate in decision-making and increase the accountability of service providers
- Social capital – increasing the confidence and capacity of individuals and small groups to get involved in activities and build mutually supportive networks
- Service delivery – ensuring that local communities are in a position to influence service delivery and where appropriate, participate in service delivery.
- Social inclusion and community cohesion – developing empowered communities capable of building a common vision and a positive identity where diversity is valued.

The SCP aims to support:

- The development and maintenance of a Community Empowerment Network
- Community learning for neighbourhood renewal
- The development of active and resourceful communities, including through small grants
- Community involvement at the neighbourhood level.

The report was commissioned in two phases, the first phase examining government intent and policy around community participation. The second phase involved working with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Hull to assess the impact of SCP funded activity. Work in the second phase concentrated on three thematic areas of the Hull Community Strategy: Health, Crime & Community Safety and Learning. The work develops in the process a method of assessing impact, which can be implemented by other VCS organisations.

The first phase identifies strong intent on the part of government ministers and government departments to involve communities and the VCS in a range of government agendas and across departments such as the DEFRA Rural Strategy and the Department of Health public health agenda and in supporting neighbourhood renewal programme planning and implementation. Whilst there are many claims for the benefits of community participation, the evidence base is weak and published research has identified the difficulties in evaluating any one policy in such a complex arena. The desk research also identifies the lack of research methods that are easily accessible to the VCS to evaluate its own effectiveness. The detail of the findings from Phase One are contained in Appendix 2 with a summary contained in the section "Overview of Government Policies on Community Participation"

The Impact of SCP on Community Activity in Hull

In attempting to identify the value added by SCP, the report explores how community and voluntary groups perceive their contribution to neighbourhood renewal and how they are being supported through the Single Community Programme. It concludes that Hull benefits from an impressive array of community led activity and is contributing towards improving quality of life in priority neighbourhoods, building social capital and community cohesion both directly and informally. The Single Community Programme has supported many of these
developments – often through the small grants programme initially – but there are also many examples of the value of information sharing, networking and representation at strategic and delivery levels of the LSP and the forging of links with other service providers.

For a variety of reasons however, tracking the links between the VCS activity and the SCP is difficult, not least because groups seldom associate the support they have received with the programme. Small community groups rarely have the resources to support robust evaluation procedures and there are often inhibitions about claiming achievements. There is a tendency to regard organisations with paid workers as the staff team. This is a particular issue for networks where the aim is for the members to identify themselves as ‘the Network’ and to recognise their contribution as being part of ‘the Network’ (i.e. the sum of all its parts) as appropriate.

That said, some clear benefits of the SCP as defined by voluntary and community groups in Hull emerged, including recognising Hull Community Network (HCN) as:

- A focal point, frequently used first point-of-contact and good sign-poster (for both VCS and statutory sector partners)
- An effective information source
- A networking vehicle to share good practice within the VCS
- An effective learning provider (particularly though the “How your city works” programme)
- An effective broker between the VCS and the statutory sector applying the local Compact
- Enabling VCS influence on LSP policy and programme delivery
- Supporting service delivery through practical support accessing funding
- A catalyst for networking and two-way information flow through the development of forums
- A vehicle to help statutory sector partners access communities

It is clear when assessing community activity in Hull that many small and often volunteer-dependant organisations make a significant impact on the three thematic areas without necessarily having their efforts identified. Whilst the contribution to service delivery is highlighted, it is beyond the scope of this report to assess in detail the contribution VCS activity makes to improving quality of life and well-being through building social capital, empowering individuals, stimulating community pride and bringing people together. In the climate of service delivery, these contributions should neither be underestimated nor forgotten.

The main text of report examines in some detail examples of VCS activity that is contributing towards the three thematic priority areas. These are:

**Health**

A lot of the activity at community level aims to have a positive effect on health, whether it is reduced isolation through community involvement or access to information about personal health and health services through increased contact with organisations. A selection of identified contributions to improved health includes:

- Involving young people in teenage pregnancy work
- Community venues provided as a base for health work
- Positive health / stress, mental health
Crime and Community Safety
For many VCS organisations reducing levels of crime and improving community safety are primary areas of concern and positive outcomes result from a whole range of community activities, which involve a wide range of people.

Contributions to crime reduction and community safety identified include:

- Education re anti-social behaviour
- Tackling bullying
- Safe and diversionary activities for children and young people
- Safe meeting places / social spaces
- Reducing crime and fear of crime
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Parental responsibility for young people
- ‘Holistic’ complementary therapies for less well off

Learning
The extent of VCS provision that supports mainstream educational provision for 5–16 year olds is particularly impressive.

Examples identified include:

- ICT (all ages)
- Play for adults and children
- Arts / creativity / imagination
- Individual programmes and community accreditation
- Raising expectations / aspirations
- Involvement of parents
- Raising awareness of cultural diversity at community level (and anti-racism)
- Simple and fun opportunities to engage people in learning
- Encouragement and enabling of take up for basic skills courses

This is just a snapshot of VCS activity in Hull which prior to the SCP had not been fully recognised as contributing to service delivery in the same way as statutory provision. The SCP has aimed to address this imbalance through funding VCS involvement in strategic development, brokering cross-sector relationships, helping to identify un-met need and “kick-starting” community activity.
Small Grants
A key component of the SCP is the Community Chest providing small grants designed to support community initiatives and learning strategies to enable greater community participation in neighbourhood renewal. The fund is administered by Hull Community Investment Fund (HCIF) with grant decisions being taken by a panel of community members. The main text of the report details examples of how Community Chest grants have made a significant impact on community activity in return for a relatively small investment.

A summary of the Community Chest grants profiled follows:

- Volunteers developing a strategic plan resulting in funding to appoint a Project Manager, run an out-of-school club for three years, provide wraparound care in two local schools and potentially, run a children’s centre (£5,000)
- Relocation and re-launch of a development education centre enabling greater accessibility (£2,600)
- Definition and development of a pre-school cultural diversity project to promote multiculturalism and break down barriers between communities (£3,600)
- Equipment and material costs to provide community based education and support in using computers (£2,500)
- Materials and tools to develop a community garden for young people promoting learning and developing self-esteem (£1,000)
- Travel and accommodation costs to enable young people to take part in challenging country walks (£3,000)
- Running an awareness day for people with eating disorders bringing 200 people in contact with a self-help group (£3,900)
- Equipment and publications to support a volunteer led welfare rights services for people with disabilities providing assistance to over 1,000 people in 10 months (£5,000)
- Attendance for volunteers at a national credit union conference (£4,460)
- Research into how communities of interest can influence policy and decision making (£3,800)
- Preserving a youth club threatened with closure, maintaining a safe environment for young people (£5,000)
- Equipment and volunteer training in preparation for winter play schemes

Representing Different Views – SCP contribution to enabling the VCS voice at a strategic level
HCN members identified a range of examples how HCN has facilitated the VCS voice at a strategic level including organising elections for representatives for the LSP, influencing policy, developing and implementing protocols, engaging the statutory sector with the VCS and communities, raising awareness of government policy and leading on specific pieces of work such as the Community Engagement Framework.

The report also highlights how VCS representatives supported by HCN significantly influenced the allocation of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF), making a positive contribution to a revised commissioning process. HCN supported VCS groups in bidding for NRF resources resulting in a total of £667,503 being awarded to ten groups to deliver against floor targets and improve quality of life. HCN has also spent a considerable amount of time working with communities, the Housing Department and the LSP to facilitate a VCS voice in Hull’s housing agenda. This resulted in statements of need and proposals from Housing Forums organised by HCN across the city, better information provision and changes within the Housing Department.
HCN is currently active in facilitating input from the VCS to the city’s ‘vision for Hull 2020’ and the accompanying action plan, which will form the revised Community Strategy. HCN is also involved in supporting the strategic working of other organisations, notably Preston Road New Deal for Communities, addressing under-representation on the LSP.

**Learning to Make a Difference – SCP contribution to learning for neighbourhood renewal**

Examples of learning support funded by SCP include the provision of grants from the Community Learning Chest, the facilitation of networking events, commissioning and delivering training, and in particular, the ‘How Your City Works’ course which to date has involved over 50 participants and is soon to be profiled on renewal.net. HCN has developed a Community Learning Strategy to co-ordinate its learning activities and provide a framework for the allocation of Learning Chest grants. The ‘How Your City Works’ course established by HCN in partnership with the University of Hull has spawned a network of ‘Graduates’ who meet monthly to consider how the learning from the programme can be used to influence service provision. Recognising the continual need for consultation and the facilitation of groups, HCN has successfully piloted a Community Facilitation course for local people providing the skills necessary to enable effective VCS input to policy development and delivery. These initiatives have encouraged residents to take a more active role in public life and in particular, the various sub groups of the local area partnership.

**Delivering a Difference - SCP contribution to service delivery and floor targets**

There are many examples in Hull of how VCS activity is contributing to improving the quality of life in Hull. Asserting how the SCP has contributed to such initiatives is however difficult and two methodologies are used to demonstrate the impact; mini case studies and ‘critical paths’ developed at a participative workshop.

The case studies featured are:

- A project providing activities and environment to improve skills in personal development with non school attendees (13 years plus) which has improved attendance at David Lister School and increased achievements post 16. Calls to the police to deal with youth crime/disturbances in the local area have also reduced by 25-30%
- A community run project providing a range of out of school play, learning, diversionary and healthy activities. Local parents are trained to be volunteer activity workers which increases parental ownership of the project and build relationships between local people
- A community based charity where young people devise their own programmes of evening activities covering recreation, fundraising, and issue based discussions. Alternative learning packages are being devised for 14–16 year olds from local schools.
- A project to encourage vulnerable people to take an active role in the community, enhancing educational opportunities for young people and providing complementary experiences.
- An independent community development organisation working in 5 areas across the City addressing a broad range of neighbourhood renewal priority themes
- A city wide charity with a focus on sport aiming to transform the lives of people who are disadvantaged in some way e.g. ‘deprived’, poorly educated, socially excluded to counter anti-social behaviour and drug misuse

A further three organisations are profiled using the ‘critical path’ methodology. This charts the historical context of the organisation against the present context and across a project development timeline, illustrating the SCP contribution and the impact this has had on the project.
Each case study demonstrates its contribution to Neighbourhood Renewal, illustrates achievements and outcomes, shows the evidence base and how the SCP has added value. SCP added value identified includes small grants, information and sign-posting, practical help including fund raising and support, training and skills development, networking and representation, and access to NRF.

**Guidelines, exercises and approaches to accessible and participative methods of assessment**

Section 2 of the main text features guidelines on how networks can facilitate planning and assessment of SCP and the individual contributions of community and voluntary organisations. There is still a lot of work to be done to track the impact of SCP upon floor targets, and one ‘tool’ alone cannot provide the evidence. The key thing is to put into place systems and / or processes which are effective, engaging and as ‘unobtrusive’ and developmental as possible, and can help with evidencing outcomes - the ‘so what?’ factor (rather than gathering information about how many newsletters are produced for example). At the end of the day, the main aim is to have an information base which informs what you do, how you do it and why it’s significant for neighbourhood renewal.

Guidelines include:

- Develop good working relationships with other organisations. Take up opportunities to network and develop partnership working
- Publicise/promote what you do, why and how it has an impact on the community.
- Make your own issues and recommendations widely known
- Develop your own plans of action
- Acting as a conduit to the community will attract other service providers to work with you
- Current activities may need to be more closely focused / targeted around floor targets
- Demonstrating linkages with other projects is also helpful
- Research on what’s needed and how activities impact on the community and help quality of life in the area is important
- Many of the statistics and evidence needed by community groups/voluntary organisations lie with the statutory organisations. There is little point in small organisations with few resources trying to compile huge databases. Agencies may be willing to write letters or provide testimonies as to the value of your organisation’s contribution to floor targets around learning for example
- Finally, it is worth using existing indicators such as the Audit Office Quality of Life Set, particularly as these will be used by other agencies

Exercises and approaches to evaluating impact featured in the main body of the report are:

- Mapping community and voluntary sector activity in relation to the community strategy
- Generating information about the impact of SCP
- Illustrating a holistic approach and the value of collective activity
- Critical path analysis – or tracing the development of community and voluntary groups over time, and the contribution of SCP
- Celebrating community activity and profiling achievements
- Example of a Planning Tool
All these types of participatory exercise require skilled facilitation. In Hull, the Network is running a community facilitators’ course to boost the number of people with confidence and skill to undertake facilitative tasks.
An Overview of Government Policies on Community Participation

Summary of Findings

Public commitments

All government departments currently state some commitment to community involvement. This is not so new. In 2000, Gordon Brown stated:

‘It is my belief, after a century in which, to tackle social injustice, the state has had to take power to ensure social progress, that to tackle the social injustices that still remain the state will have to give power away, not just devolving power to empower local communities, but also enabling community and voluntary organisations to do more.’

Since then, the departments of ODPM and the Home Office have repeatedly, and jointly, stated their commitment to, and support for, community involvement, community participation, community engagement and latterly, community development. For example, at the core of the Home Office Active Communities philosophy is ‘a vision of strong, active, and empowered communities – increasingly capable of doing things for themselves, defining the problems they face and then tackling them together’:

ODPM and the Neighbourhood Renewal Agenda

ODPM has initiated a whole raft of programmes, which recognise the vital contribution that the VCS and community members can play. The New Deal for Communities and the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder programmes called for community led regeneration and the Single Community Programme has aimed to raise the profile and quality of community involvement, as well as its strategic development, at the city-wide and neighbourhood levels.

The pilot round of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) has recently been completed and the second phase will involve a further 66 authorities. This is leading to roll-out across the country by 2007. LAAs are designed to, amongst other things; improve the relationship between local people and local governance structures, and to build citizen engagement in the planning and delivery of services within neighbourhoods. One of the four LAA blocks is that of ‘Safer and Stronger Communities’ and has community participation as a mandatory outcome which LSPs are to seek to achieve. In the supporting LAA guidance, ODPM stresses

“If we are to get the best from this process of devolution, it is essential that the engagement of citizens and the voluntary and community sector is seen as an integral part of the process. There is increasing evidence that community engagement is crucial to delivering sustainable change.”

1 The Civic Society in Modern Britain”, lecture by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, at the 17th Arnold Goodman Charity, 2000
2 Annex B. Strengthening Community Engagement and Empowering Communities; LAA Guidance, 2005
Home Office - Active Communities and the Civil Renewal Agenda

ODPM’s commitment to community participation is mirrored in the Civil Renewal agenda.

Following a review of community capacity building and subsequent consultation process, the Home Office published Firm Foundations3 which sets out a cross-Government plan of action to support community capacity building more effectively.

‘This means investing in successful efforts to build the skills, abilities, knowledge and confidence of people and community groups, to enable them to take effective action and play leading roles in the development of their communities.’

Four priorities for action as the basis for change illustrate ways in which the Government seeks to achieve this:

- The development of a much more comprehensive and coherent menu of learning opportunities for community engagement
- The targeting of efforts to build strong, sustainable community anchor organisations
- The promotion of local action-planning as a vital tool for involving citizens and community groups
- Stronger collaboration and co-ordination at local, regional and national levels

This philosophy is embedded in the Home Office led, but inter-departmental strategy, ‘Together We Can’. Together We Can is underpinned by three key principles:

1. **Active citizens**: people with the motivation, skills and confidence to speak up for their communities and say what improvements are needed;
2. **Strengthened communities**: community groups with the capability and resources to bring people together to work out shared solutions;
3. **Partnership** with public bodies: public bodies willing and able to work as partners with local people.

The accompanying action plan (launched June 2005) identifies cross governmental outcomes and how different polices and programmes interact to meet them. For example, community participation will be promoted through:

- The DEFRA Rural Strategy;
- The DFES ‘Every Child Matters: Change for Children’ and Citizenship Education;
- The DOH Patient and Public Involvement in Health Strategy;
- The DTI Social Enterprise Strategy;
- The DCMS Cultural Regeneration Strategy;
- The Home Office’s own Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy and Change Up Strategic Framework for Capacity Building and Infrastructure for the VCS;
- The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and Neighbourhood Governance policies of ODPM.

Whilst this intends to promote a coherent approach, community engagement has been a feature of different departmental strategies and programmes for some time. Some further examples are:

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3 Firm Foundations, HO, 2004
• The DfES supporting a wide range of initiatives and programmes in partnership with the VCS to encourage greater involvement in decision-making including:
  - Sure Start
  - Extended schools (featuring new relationship between statutory service providers and local communities)
  - LSC funding for adult and community learning
  - The Connexions Neighbourhood Support Fund programme enabling smaller VCS organisations to engage with local strategic networks and partnerships for the first time

‘It is important for schools to engage with local organisations and community groups. Some disaffected young people may be more willing to relate to local people than to those identified with schools or welfare systems. Community groups can act as ‘an honest broker’ between the young people and the system they have rejected.’

• DEFRA’s Rural White Paper 2000 speaks about ‘people living in rural areas being fully involved in developing their community, safeguarding its valued features and shaping the decisions that affect them... A healthy voluntary and community sector is essential to the effective functioning of society – urban and rural’

“To enable everyone to play an active and full part in society by providing effective, affordable support for local volunteering, social capital, community action and voluntary sector provision of services in the rural areas throughout England”

• DoH - through its public health agenda, has focussed on ‘community-based frameworks to affect the broader social, environmental and economic factors that influence and underpin relative inequalities in health’.

• DWP states that ‘When communities are able to develop their own training programmes, career advice centres and small businesses, the effect on local prosperity is often far greater than when job creation or skills development schemes are imposed from above.’

• DCMS argues “Art and sport can not only make a valuable contribution to delivering key outcomes of lower long-term unemployment, less crime, better health and better qualifications, but can also help to develop the individual pride, community spirit and capacity for responsibility that enable communities to run regeneration programmes themselves.”

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4 Community Capacity Building and Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in Rural England, DEFRA, 2003
Section 1

Findings in Hull: The Single Community Programme – helping to build stronger neighbourhoods

This section explores how community and voluntary groups perceive their contribution to neighbourhood renewal and how they are being supported through the Single Community Programme.

How communities contribute to improving health, reducing crime and improved learning

There is a huge array of community activity in Hull. Using a ‘mind-mapping’ exercise and ‘post-its’, participants at a workshop identified a whole range of topical issues, and relevant VCS activities and involvement within about 30 minutes. This is illustrated on the following page.

What was really interesting from the exercise was that many of these VCS organisations were small and community led and very often operating through volunteers. Many of these kinds of groups are often ‘below the radar’ when it comes to identifying what’s going on in the VCS and without the community network might not be on the map.

This piece of work aimed to focus on three floor target areas – health, crime and learning, and these themes were used to stimulate the mapping exercise. Throughout the report therefore, the examples of activity are mostly related to these three themes but not exclusively. Voluntary and community based activity usually derives from perceived community need and this rarely fits into neat thematic boxes. Much of the activity described cuts across at least two if not more thematic areas and community groups have a clear understanding of the complexity of other activity and its outcomes and how activity in one area has outcomes across other floor target areas.

In addition, VCS activity is about more than service delivery. It is about supporting the development of social capital; it is about the personal empowerment of the individuals concerned; it is about stimulating community pride and a sense of community; it is about people working together. All of these things have an impact on people’s quality of life and sense of well being and contribute towards making liveable communities. It was beyond the scope of this research to assess this kind of contribution to residents and communities in Hull, but its value should be neither underestimated nor forgotten in the climate of service delivery. As one person said at the Community Chest Celebration event, ‘at the end of the day, the biggest thing is that we had fun together … why can’t they just pay for enjoyment …it’s so important’.
**HEALTH**

A lot of the activity at community level aims to have a positive effect on health, whether it be reduced isolation through community involvement or access to information about personal health and health services through increased contact with organisations e.g. Community Routes, Search, Preston Road NDC, Hull & East Riding Chinese School, Hull and East Riding Hindu Cultural Association, Hull DOC, Orchard Park Community Centre, Longhill Link Up Trust detached youth work project. Others provide specific activities covering a range of target issues and activity e.g. Bransholme Women’s Centre: alternative remedies programme, therapeutic activities, young women’s advice, domestic violence, child crisis; homelessness; drug awareness; pregnancy advice, information and guidance

A selection of the contributions to improved health include:

| Involving young people in teenage pregnancy work | Hull & East Riding Chinese School | Rhema Youth Project | Crisis Pregnancy Centre |
| Community venues provided as a base for health work | Dads Against Drugs | Autistic society | Bransholme Urban Ramblers – mental well-being | Longhill Link Up Trust | Hessle Road Network |
| Positive health / stress, mental health | Lighthouse | Hull Vineyard Church – a free café for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed; help people feel accepted as part of a community. | Home Start volunteers support those isolated and stressed | Eating Disorder Support Group, self help group - facilitated by trained counsellors, telephone and email support, work with community mental health teams | Bransholme Urban Ramblers, work towards alleviating loneliness | Hessle Road Network | South Bransholme Community Centre mental health group |
| Leisure facilities, fitness | Dads Against Drugs | Gypsyville Forward, healthy eating and fitness | Dales Fitness Centre | Hessle Road Network |
| Self-help support for parents | Dads Against Drugs | Voices In Play Ltd - healthy eating during activities, indoor / outdoor exercise and activities | Victim support – guidance, practical help assisting recovery | Longhill Link Up Trust, baby clinic and parent support |
| Health awareness programmes e.g. healthy eating | Longhill Consortium | Hessle Road Network | Dads Against Drugs | Home Start Family Group, first aid courses, healthy eating | Longhill Link Up Trust, community café and kitchen, healthy eating | PRFCA healthy food community café e.g. special needs adult social club, meals on wheels, outreach | 1st avenue Community Centre e.g. healthy eating café | Eating Disorder Support Group, raising awareness with health workers, schools etc |
## CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

For many VCS organisations reducing levels of crime and improving community safety are primary areas of concern and positive outcomes result from a whole range of community activities which involve a wide range of people. For example, HANWaG aims to empower communities to participate in crime reduction and to reduce their fear of crime, and Community Routes, Hull DOC Preston Road NDC, Search and Hull Chinese Community are all trying to help make Hull a safer place to live as part of broader strategies about improving the quality of community life. Some of this work, whilst significant is, therefore, not so obvious. At the same time there are some more high profile VCS initiatives within the city that involve a range of statutory partners e.g. the Domestic Violence Forum and Goodwin Development Trust.

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<td>Reducing Crime Association</td>
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<td>Longhill Residents Association</td>
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<td>‘Chill Out’</td>
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<th>Goodwin Development Trust, providing highly visible reassuring presence, minimising fear of crime</th>
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<td>Substance Misuse User Involvement Project</td>
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<tr>
<th>Parental responsibility for young people</th>
<th>Life education</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Community Focus</td>
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<td>Dads Against Drugs</td>
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<tr>
<th>‘Holistic’ complementary therapies for less well off</th>
<th>Hull and East Riding Hindu Cultural Association</th>
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<td>ICT (all ages)</td>
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<td>- Longhill Link UP Trust, cyber café</td>
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<td>- Longhill Consortium</td>
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<td>Play for adults and children</td>
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<td>- Respect – Bilton Grange Community Centre</td>
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<td>- Longhill Link Up Trust, baby clinics, Tots Spot, holiday clubs</td>
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<td>- Dads Against Drugs</td>
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<td>- Label of Love (youth groups and activities and events)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts / creativity / imagination</td>
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<td>- Label of Love (arts and creativity in lessons in schools)</td>
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<td>- Autistic society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual programmes and community accreditation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Longhill Link Up Trust, community café and kitchen. Training opportunities</td>
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<td>- Dads Against Drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Neighbourhood Renewal Learning Curve course partnership of Hull DOC community network, city council, University of Hull etc</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Longhill Consortium volunteer training</td>
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<td>- Young People’s Learning Consortium (Hull DOC)</td>
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<td>Raising expectations / aspirations</td>
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<td>Involvement of parents</td>
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<td>- Hull Chinese Community</td>
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<td>Raising awareness of cultural diversity at community level (and anti-racism)</td>
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<td>- Label of Love (raising awareness of culture and religions)</td>
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<td>- PRFCA education, student placements</td>
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<td>Simple and fun opportunities to engage people in learning</td>
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<td>- DCSI</td>
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<td>- Thorpes Community Association</td>
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<td>- Longhill Consortium</td>
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<td>- Orchard Park Community Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hull Council for Disabled People</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouragement and enabling of take up for basic skills courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hessle Road Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dads Against Drugs</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Home Start e.g. signposting to further education</td>
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This is just a snapshot of what is happening across Hull and of course many community based projects work across several themes in response to local needs. Much of this work has been unrecognised in the past, the VCS has not been defined as a service provider in the same way as statutory sector services have, nor were they been able to influence the shape of service provision in a strategic way.

The Single Community Programme has aimed to address this imbalance, through its financial support for greater VCS involvement in governance of strategy at city wide and neighbourhood levels, resources to 'kick-start' community activity, connecting VCS organisations with statutory service providers to ensure appropriate and relevant provision in line with the Community Strategy, and to ensure that different interests, and those often excluded from access to mainstream provision, are profiled and met.
How the SCP adds value

Much of the activity described has its roots in community needs and community based agendas – local people would have put in their voluntary effort (sometimes with the help of paid workers) to improve community life with or without the Single Community Programme. So, is there any added value provided by the Single Community Programme?

In Hull, SCP is delivered through Hull Community Network and Hull Community Investment Fund (CIF). HCN is in contact with 859 VCS organisations across the city, has a steering group of thirteen, elects six VCS representatives to Cityvision (the LSP) and two people to each of its eight sub boards, and has a staff team of five who provide co-ordination, support and strategic development. Hull CIF administers the small grants programme through as panel of community members and staff support.

Throughout the research, a number of common themes emerged.

1. For many VCS organisations, HCN is a focal point and therefore the first point of contact. Indeed, HCN was seen to be very effective at signposting for both VCS and statutory organisations;

2. HCN provides opportunities for two way awareness raising through network forums and publications i.e. VCS organisations are made aware of funding streams, practice from other groups etc at the same time as sharing their own learning and practice. The network enables members to be both givers and receivers of information;

3. Network meetings allow groups to gain a lot of information in a small amount of time;

4. Small amounts of money can have big consequences – there were many examples of Community Chest grants ‘kick starting’ purposeful community development;

5. Community Chest grants help to build the confidence of the individuals concerned – voluntary activity is valued as meaningful and worthwhile;

6. There is a lot of learning to be gained about approaches to community activity from the Community Chest applications. This can usefully be fed back to the voluntary and community sector;

7. The HCN course “How your city works” has been particularly successful as a learning strategy to build knowledge and skills and engage individuals in group development and neighbourhood renewal;

8. HCN has been central in moving forward the formal relationship between the VCS and statutory organisations through the Compact (significant for developments around NRF and neighbourhood level working);

9. Representation on the LSP and sub boards has led to some influence over policy and programme delivery e.g. transport policy, housing delivery;

10. Whilst HCN reps have a responsibility to promote the interests of the whole sector, the personal relationships that are formed between the individual reps and other partners’ representatives have helped to improve working relationships;
11. HCN enabled VCS access to NRF through its representation on Cityvision and practical support to organisations making NRF applications. This has in turn supported VCS organisations to deliver services;

12. HCN has enabled groups to come together around particular themes and interests. Examples are housing forums, the network of BME groups - Hull All Nations Alliance (HANA) and a learning event;

13. HCN has supported statutory service providers to engage communities. For example, HCN helped to get people involved at community level in developing the project in all seven areas of the Social Capital and Health project run by West Hull PCT, has supported the LSP in its review of the community strategy, and is supporting involvement in the council ‘Area Partnership and Neighbourhood Management’ pilots.
Small Grants (Community Chest) Make a Big Difference – SCP contribution to the smallest groups

Small grants are one very important practical way of providing the help that is needed in many communities, particularly in the areas of greatest deprivation and amongst communities - for instance many black and minority ethnic communities - that are disadvantaged or marginalised. A few hundred pounds might pay for publicity, or a venue to meet for a new group; a thousand or two might buy a computer or pay for a series of training events for a group that's more established. In every case, the impact can be quite disproportionate, in sparking off enthusiasm, releasing new energy and voluntary effort, and making things happen to improve the quality of life in their community."

Recipients value the fact that there is a pot of money for local communities within Hull and the examples below provide a flavour of how the money has been used and the difference it has made. But there is more to the Community Chest than this – the way in which it has been administered is also important. Groups have valued:

- Helpful and understanding staff who “answer our enquires and take us through the process”. ‘There is always someone at the end of the telephone’;
- The turnaround is very quick (the appraisal panel meets monthly). This enables groups to plan more effectively as they are not waiting months for a decision;
- There is a monitoring procedure in place which promotes accountability but it isn’t over burdensome (indeed it is seen as a model of good practice compared to some of the statutory pots of money).

Many community groups point out that Community Chest is ‘not small grants to us’ and there are numerous examples of how the Chest has ‘taken some of the pressure off’ and kick-started a whole range of activities and development. It should not be underestimated what the buying of a computer can do for example; as one group said ‘the money transformed what we do’. For another group, gap funding enabled six young people to go away, undertake activities and then to carry out a feedback presentation. This led to increased confidence, team building and fund raising. Other benefits of small grants funded through the Single Community Programme include culturally diverse events, and wider community awareness through increased learning around diversity; form filling; knowledge of floor targets and specific benefits to the Community Chest panel members. Panel members have valued the opportunity to share learning across the city e.g. knowledge of what impact projects have had in other parts of the City with the result that a lot of knowledge about what works and what evidence exists within the Panel.

SMART -A case study to demonstrate impact (‘… the impact can be quite disproportionate, in sparking off enthusiasm, releasing new energy and voluntary effort, and making things happen to improve the quality of life in their community.’)

SMART (Sport, Music and Art) project had been running since December 2003. It was formed to help run activities in the new Space for Sport and Arts Building on Longhill which provided a fantastic building but no paid staff.

The project ran on volunteers until, in June 2004 they were successful in obtaining £4,100 from the Community Chest fund. This money was used for running an ‘envisioning’ day for

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2 ibid
all the volunteers and others who were seen to be good partners in the development work e.g. from the local school, the education authority, Sure Start and others who might be potential future funders. Plans from the day led to:

- Securing funding to employ a project manager (ME);
- £45k over 3 years to run an out of school club;
- £52k over two years has been secured from Sure Start to provide wraparound care in two of the local schools;
- Nine local people have been employed in paid positions and also some of the volunteers have gained employment within the local school.

SMART is now in the process at the moment of obtaining funding from Sure Start to run one of the children's centres in Hull - potentially half a million pounds for a new building. Not a bad return for less than £5,000!

More examples of Community Chest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Learning, Training and Education / Community Cohesion.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Development Education Centre – DEC Hull (promotes multiculturalism and the breaking down of barriers between communities – primarily works with children and their families).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the money was for?</td>
<td>2 grants: £3,600 to developing a pre-school cultural diversity project, and £2,500 to contribute to relocation costs and a ‘re-launch’ event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What difference it made?</td>
<td>• Helped the group to better understand the needs to be met; • Helped the group to focus on developing the project effectively; • Has kick started the project to the point where are now looking for major funding Opportunities; • Enabled relocation to the city centre from West Hull, making DEC accessible to schools and VCS organisations from all parts of Hull; • Enabled DEC to hold a ‘show case’ event to publicise the project, resulting in more work and more benefit for schools across the city.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Learning, Training and Education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Voice Box Community Newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the money was for?</td>
<td>£2,500 - computers, office equipment, stationery. To provide education and help to people who would find it difficult to go to a large class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What difference it made?</td>
<td>• Providing education and support within a community to help people to be able to use a computer without feeling intimidated; • Help to make our own office look more presentable; • Raised the credibility of Voice Box – further funding and employment of a worker for 6 months.</td>
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</table>
## Topic: Learning, Training and Education
### Group: Rainbow Community Garden
**What the money was for?** £1000 for gardening tools, soil storage box, seeds, pots and gloves, various gardening aids e.g. rooting powder, tray, twine etc.
**What difference it made?**
- Been able to offer volunteers and children better tools, more things to grow, learning more about growing own veggies
- This has increased the number of youngsters involved
- Garden has gained award
- Raised out self-esteem
- Opened doors for further funding

## Topic: Health
### Group: Dales Strollers
**What the money was for?** £3,000 for travel to events, accommodation at a youth hostel, publicity of events etc
**What difference it made?**
- Given local children the opportunity to take part in challenging country-walks – most of them hadn’t spent time in the country at all;
- Walked more than 1000 miles as a club in 2004;
- The activities allow people to meet others and to engage across the generations (6 to 83 years) adding to the direct health benefits of walking;
- The activities have led to members taking the initiative in arranging other walks themselves e.g. in the evenings;
- Gets people out of their homes and into the country.

## Topic: Health
### Group: Eating Disorders Support Group
**What the money was for?** £3,900 for Awareness Day, and £4,967 for Conference.
**What difference it made?**
- Brought 200 people into contact with the group;
- Increased knowledge and confidence;
- Reduced isolation and anxieties;
- Increased awareness of support group and give assurance go both sufferers, carers and families;
- Much improved links with service providers – opportunity to influence provision of mental health services for young people.

## Topic: Economic Development / Communities of Interest
### Group: Hull Council of Disabled People
**What the money was for?** £5,000 to support development of volunteer run welfare rights service (paid for welfare rights handbooks, getting paperwork in place and computers.
**What difference it made?**
- The service has ‘hit the roof’. Volunteer advisors are now seeing six people a day and it is estimated that in the last ten months up to one thousand people have been helped, and this is rising steadily;
- An effective partnership with Hull City Council ensures that supervision is provided to the volunteers and the service.
**Topic:** Social Capital / Community Learning / Economic Development (indirectly)  
**Group:** Hull Credit Union  
**What the money was for?** £4,460 to support 14 volunteers going to national credit unions’ conference  
**What difference it made?**  
- Volunteers learnt about government initiatives, financial literacy and organisation development for credit unions, and networked with other credit unions;  
- Team building – the group had got bogged down in day to day delivery and some tensions - this provided an opportunity to get to know each other socially away from the pressure of running the organisation.

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**Topic:** Governance / Communities of Interest  
**Group:** African Forum  
**What the money was for?** £3800 to carry out an on-going research project into how local communities can influence policy and decision-making.  
**What difference it made?**  
The report has been disseminated throughout the City via HCN  
The report aims to raise awareness within communities as to how decisions are made and also how they can participate and actually influence how these decisions are arrived at.

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**Topic:** Community Development / Volunteering  
**Group:** Bransholme Methodist Church Youth Club  
**What the money was for?** £5,000, mainly for staffing and review of club  
**What difference it made?**  
- BASIC @ Bransholme is still running - but for the fund the club would have folded;  
- Some teenagers meet in a safe environment;  
- Some of the community appreciate a safe place for their teenagers to go.

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**Topic:** Community Development Playschemes  
**Group:** Hull Community Playschemes  
**What the money was for?** Volunteer training preparation for winter playscheme – TV/video purchase, community play celebration  
**What difference it made?**  
- Boosted confidence of local people as volunteers – developed social capital;  
- Introduced people to community work skills and working together;  
- More consistency in the work.
Representing Different Views – SCP contribution to enabling the VCS voice at a strategic level

In brief (as identified by HCN at ‘Away Day’)

| • A community/voluntary sector voice - participating and influencing at different levels – grass roots to the top! |
| • Influencing housing debate and sub board structure- forums, report, liaison with Hull Housing Department; |
| • Elections and more than 22 supported reps on LSP board, sub boards and other organisations- chairs of two sub boards, election of East Hull reps; |
| • Influencing debates at grass roots- Quest network event- Audit Commission Guide to Good Practice; |
| • Influence and Impact of Community and Voluntary sector contribution to Neighbourhood Renewal e.g. small grants; community activities; |
| • LSP community engagement framework and strategy; Compact development and implementation; |
| • Neighbourhood Renewal Fund- Commissioning and support to groups; |
| • Influence and impact on the LSP- Governance Handbook, Compact, staff recruitment, reps. on LSP board, sub boards and other organisations, vice-chair LSP; |
| • The Community Strategy review - participation of the VCS; |
| • Community engagement framework – HCN led on this as an LSP partner |
| • VCS impact on quality of life – through the “Because we are worth it” research; |
| • LAAs – raising awareness within the voluntary and community sector. |

Examples in more detail

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)

HCN influence has been significant in the improvements made by the LSP to the NRF allocation process.

Two years ago, HCN reps on the LSP challenged the decision to allocate a large part of the NRF to local authority services and activities (this was despite a series of workshops to look at priority themes and the kind of activities that could deliver against them). The following year (2004, planning for NRF 2005/06) the LSP agreed to design a commissioning process. The NRF working group which includes network reps, set out the floor targets and requested that agencies and organisations submit applications showing how they would deliver against the floor targets.

Although some of the NRF was already committed and it was more of a bidding process than a commissioning one, this method helped to raise the profile of the VCS and raised awareness that the VCS could be part of the delivering the Neighbourhood Renewal agenda.

Within a very tight timescale, HCN staff took on the role of enabling community and voluntary groups to make applications. The network circulated information to the VCS and supported groups to write bids. Each applicant had to identify an LSP sponsor - HCN reps on the LSP took on this role for the VCS.
The NRF commissioning group included three HCN reps. The process of sifting applications on the basis of high / medium / low impact on NR floor targets was felt to work reasonably well. The result is that there are now ten community and voluntary organisations in receipt of NRF totalling £667,503, to contribute to improvements in the quality of life in Hull.

HCN feels that it has helped to make the case that NRF is not just about extra money for mainstream statutory sector work – it has to relate to neighbourhood renewal and the VCS has a significant role to play in delivering priority floor targets. This process was difficult for the VCS as it doesn’t tend to have the monitoring systems and evidence base in place in the same way as other service providers do. Significantly however, the NRF allocation includes £50,000 for the Network itself – to research proposals to support pilot neighbourhoods develop their own action plans to address neighbourhood renewal issues, and a sum for Hull City Venture to provide support to the sector regarding the monitoring of NRF monies.

‘Housing in our City’

Housing is a fundamental issue in Hull and the Network has spent considerable time working with communities, the ‘Cityliving’ Partnership and Hull’s Housing Department to further community engagement and address housing issues.

In 2003 the Network worked with HANWaG (Humberside Association of Neighbourhood Watch Groups) to facilitate nine Housing Forums with a range of communities within the city - from communities of interest to geographical communities. The Network particularly wanted to reach groups who are not normally part of the housing debate. The Forums were an opportunity for the Network’s housing representatives to consult with members to find out how people felt and obtain their views.

Each Forum began with an overview of the causes of the housing situation across the city presented by an elected Network housing representative using background statistical information provided by the Hull City Council’s Housing Department. Participants then explored housing issues city-wide and locally and suggested solutions in workshops and open debate.

Views of different communities were collected in a variety of ways, including comments from people responding to Hull Community Network’s website discussion board on housing and some young peoples’ views were obtained in a Hull Community Network information session held with young trainees at the Hull Chamber of Commerce. Part of this session involved young people discussing problems and solutions about where they lived. They also took part in designing and drawing their ideal home describing what facilities, services and relationships they would need.

A feedback workshop to discuss and agree the major issues arising from the consultations illustrated a range of concerns e.g. in East Hull, improvements were needed to the housing stock but people wanted to say there as long as improvements were also made to the environment; job creation; crime reduction; education and local facilities. Lack of information was also cited as an issue for people - whilst people may have detailed knowledge about local issues because they live there, very little information was being delivered to communities to help them engage in dialogue with other agencies and the Council and make informed choices and decisions. There was little information available to help communities to understand the wider issues i.e. there was a gap between their knowledge and what they needed to know.

Presentations were made to the appropriate partnerships, including ‘Cityliving’, the housing sub-board of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the recommendations were well
received. Subsequent discussions between Hull Community Network representatives and Hull City Council’s Housing Department led to easy to read, useful, relevant information and statistics about housing in the city and government legislation affecting homes throughout the country (Decent Homes Standard) for the Network sponsored Housing Forums.

This work has informed further debate about housing and local neighbourhood development, showed what could be achieved through a city wide network working alongside other partners and contributed to changes within the Housing Department.

Other contributions to strategic working in Hull

Community Engagement Framework: HCN has taken the lead in the development and agreement of the Community Engagement Framework with LSP partners so that service providers and individuals can engage in an effective manner with the community. HCN is also developing a toolkit of good practice for people which can easily be accessed.

Governance document of the LSP: The HCN was instrumental in developing the governance document for the working of the LSP (City Vision) and at one point had one of the sub-board reps as the deputy chair of the LSP.

Chairs of Sub Board: Two of the HCN reps chair their particular sub-boards – housing and environment.

Community led area partnerships: HCN staff have taken the lead in supporting successful (by the amount of community participants) area partnership events. The staff have also facilitated sessions at all area partnership events so that local people get a greater say in the plans each area is trying to formulate.

Community Strategy Review: HCN is working with the LSP to engage the VCS in discussions on a vision for Hull in 2020 and an accompanying detailed action plan. A report “What’s Hullish about Hull” has been produced by the network following a series of consultation workshops to feed into this review.

An example of how HCN has supported strategic working of other organisations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preston Road New Deal for Communities</th>
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<tr>
<td>• NDC under-representation on LSP addressed by HCN - enabled elections to City Economy sub board (residents and officers) through providing linkages and support;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• LSP membership has had impact on outcomes e.g. increased funding opportunities, improved training and increased numbers of people into employment;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• HCN rep on LSP City Transport sub board has links with NDC and enables NDC to influence City Transport policy – membership of sub board through HCN;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Involvement in LSP enabled links e.g. with JCP, Jobs Action Team, Hull CC Economic Development Service etc. and has improved working relationships with them;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “HCN brings a new dimension”.</td>
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</table>
Learning to Make a Difference – SCP contribution to learning for neighbourhood renewal

In brief (as identified by HCN at ‘Away Day’)

- Learning Curve Pilot in West Hull - City wide roll-out;
- ‘How Your City Works’ course and 50+ graduates – an outline will soon be available on renewal.net;
- Graduates group- networking between east and west;
- Training, support for reps on steering group and LSP and community development workers;
- Neighbourhood Renewal workshops – building skills, knowledge and confidence;
- Community Learning Chest;
- Grants also available for individuals;
- The Fund Panel.

Examples in more detail

The Single Community Programme includes a community learning strand. Many networks have struggled to implement this in a strategic way, preferring to address it through the small grants process.

Community Learning Strategy

HCN is developing a strategy to co-ordinate its learning activities and to provide a framework for the allocation of small grants. It has already developed a whole range of training packages e.g. for an induction and training package for LSP reps, and has run a course many times, entitled “How Your City Works”. This has been successful not only in Hull but is now being adopted by others around the country and will soon be available via renewal.net

‘How Your City Works’

One of the key objectives of the ‘How Your City Works’ course is to highlight that Hull City is more than the local authority and to put the role of the local authority, however crucial, into perspective. The course comprises 10 half day modules, which are held weekly. The modules address issues such as city finance, power (i.e. who holds it), how to influence decisions, and discrimination. The modules are taken from a University part time degree course and can be a ‘taster’ for further education.

The value of the course can be assessed in different ways. There are positive statements about the learning e.g. “I really enjoyed the course. It sorted out the LSP and the Hull Community Network and where we fit in. The Network is a strand to help us get on the ladder and having an input into the Local Strategic Partnership” (Course Participant, Longhill Consortium); and there have been demands for further development opportunities which have led to the creation of Hull Community Graduates.

Participants have gone on to stand for election on the various sub groups of the local area partnership some have even gone on to chair these events. One participant has even put themselves up for election for the City Council. Others have change jobs to work closely with
the community e.g. two graduates have become wardens and one managed to get a position with HCN.

**Hull Graduates**

About eight months ago, ‘How Your City Works’ course graduates felt they wanted to reflect upon why people attend the course and its value. Monthly meetings have been set up to look at how their learning can be effectively used and to develop an information exchange resource.

Achievements of the Graduates to date include giving advice and support to help people develop their self esteem and skills and to effectively influence service provision. An example of this is a recognition that working constructively with partners enables your voice to be better ‘heard’. The graduates have also run sessions called ‘When East Meets West’ (Hull) to overcome a divide between community groups in East and West Hull and to share issues and solutions.

**Community Facilitation**

This has been developed by HCN in partnership with other organisations and agencies. The course is being run to assist local people to respond to:-

- A continual need for consultation and the facilitation of groups;
- Draft strategies such as a community plan consultation;
- Neighbourhood regeneration strategies;
- Preventing consultation being about token representatives;
- The continual need for consultation;
- To prevent continual ‘doing to the community’.

The first course attracted 14 participants from a cross section of the community including Graduates from the ‘How Your City Works’ course, residents, community group and voluntary sector representatives and representatives from the LSP board.

The central idea was to run a one off course or at least pilot the programme. However it appears to have captured the interest of local people and following an evaluation, another course is planned – there is a list of interested people waiting to undertake the programme. In addition to the list of those expressing an interest, the SRB6 Community Development Team in East Hull also wants to deliver the course.
**Delivering a Difference - SCP contribution to service delivery and floor targets**

**Bilton Grange Community Centre**

- Runs a project to engage with non-school attendees (13 years plus).
- Provides activities and environment to improve skills in personal development – self-esteem, confidence, communication, relationships, team work, problem solving and decision-making.
- Project has worked closely with David Lister School since 2000 – pupils attend during school week, holidays.

**Making a difference**

Improved attendance records at school and increased achievements post 16 (Jan to July 2003) for 37 pupils. David Lister Pupils attaining 5 or more GCSEs A*-C 2001 24%, 2003 32%.

‘Many young people’s lives have been changed and enhanced by attending the Community Centre…David Lister fully support any future developments that allow the Centre to increase its provision to a greater number of pupils.’

Decrease of between 25-30% in calls received by police to deal with youth crime/disturbances in local area.

The above snapshot is an example of VCS activity and how it is contributing to improving the quality of life for people in Hull. It is not hard to find these. It is more difficult however, to ascertain how the Single Community Programme has contributed. Different research methods were used therefore to ‘get the whole picture’ and the there are two types of illustration below; mini case studies developed through interviews and desk research, and ‘critical paths’ developed at a participative workshop.

**Case studies developed through interview**

**Voices in Play**

**Primary Theme: Learning, (but also community safety and health - one impacts on the others)**

**Context**

In early 2004, concerned about the lack of activities for children in the area, a local woman organised a meeting for residents and encouraged them to put their names forward as volunteers to look at possibilities. A thousand questionnaires were circulated for both for parents and children and the analysis led to an activities programme.

Within a few months an office base was secured with £2,000 from the Community Chest and small amounts of funding were gathered to run a whole range of activities. VIP is now a thriving community run project providing a whole range of out of school play, learning, diversionary and healthy activities.

In December, VIP made a successful NRF application for £135k
**Contribution to Neighbourhood Renewal**

Local parents are trained to be volunteer activity workers which increases parental ownership of the project and has built relationships between local people. The adults do a lot of the activities with the children, this has led to families spending time and working together.

All adult volunteers have to undertake mandatory courses such as APCP level 1 (child protection), First Aid, health and safety, and food hygiene. Courses are accredited and each volunteer keeps a portfolio as they are developing their skills and knowledge.

A wide range of children are benefiting from the activities, e.g. a young carer, a drug user, a child with difficulties at school. Health Visitors make referrals to VIP.

VIP aims to put the fun back in to learning whilst working a structured way. Several activities include a learning experience which is accredited, for example a trip to the Mining Museum was accredited through DFES.

VIP is working closely with other providers and are setting up an advisory group with relevant bodies e.g. the police (who already provide funding for a preventative motorbike project), the BEST team, Connexions, the youth offending team etc.

**Achievements / outcomes**

There are now twenty active volunteers and twenty young people were paid to work on the project last summer. 240 children participated in a youth crime prevention initiative in one year.

Withdrawn children and those with mental health difficulties have been seen to develop, build their confidence and are now asking for jobs. Indeed, North British Housing Association offered interviews for apprenticeships to eight young people from the project. VIP believes that involvement has stimulated children and young people to think and ask for the ‘unaskable’ – to believe they can ask for things.

The physical activities have had a positive effect on health e.g. weight loss, and parents have commented on a reduction in alcohol consumption (VIP will not allow young people to go motor biking / go-karting on early Sunday mornings if they have been drinking the night before).

The interest of other agencies is a testimony to the success of this community project - PAYP would like VIP to be a service provider and North British HA has proposed that the VIP model could be rolled out by VIP across its housing areas outside Hull – funded through its 10% social budget.

**Evidence Base**

Photos, videos and tapes are made to record evidence. Parents talk of children's behaviour improving at home and school. Letters of support have been provided by a number of agencies including the police and park rangers about the difference the project has made – a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour in the area.

**Value added by/through SCP**

**Community chest grant from CIF**

‘The small grants are what got us off the ground by providing us with an office base’.

**Information from HCN about strategic developments / Access to other funds via HCN**

HCN made VIP aware of potential NRF funding and supported the volunteers to write its bid.
**Hessle Road Network**

**Primary Themes: Learning and Health** (improving educational attainment and Increasing life expectancy)

**Context**

Hessle Road Network (HRN) is a community based charity established in the late 1990s. It was set up by local people in St Andrew’s Ward who were dissatisfied about their lack of influence on regeneration and the lack of opportunities for young people.

The Management Committee started a youth project of evening activities. Several years on, this is now much more than a youth club. Young people devise their own programmes of evening activities covering recreation, fundraising, and issue based discussions. Alternative learning packages are being devised for 14 – 16 year olds from local schools.

St Andrews Ward is the third highest ranking disadvantaged ward in the UK. The Standard Mortality Ratio for this ward for people under 75 is nearly twice the national average. In other words, people are dying much younger in this ward than in the rest of the UK. West Hull PCT recognised that vulnerable groups do not always access health services such as clinics and surgeries but identified that many people in the ward were making use of low key and informal health services provided by HRN. Hessle Road Network was therefore seen as an effective conduit for the PCT to reach the local community and provide health services in a community setting. HRN were able to bring in health agencies and other organisations to some of their community events to provide information and support on residents territory.

In April 2005, HRN received £50,000 from NRF for its work in raising the educational achievements of young people and improving the health of members of the local community.

**Contribution to Neighbourhood Renewal**

**Learning**

HRN provides opportunities for the personal and social development of young people. OCN (Open College Network) accredited courses are run, covering a range of topics from emotional issues to event management. Several young people have gained OCN qualifications and two are now applying to do a foundation course in youth work. And it’s not just young people who are benefiting, adults who have had a poor experience of education are also undertaking OCN courses – in one case, this has led to a university application.

HRN has taken this work a step further and developed successful working relationships with schools and projects developed:

- The Transition Project works with young people from Endeavour School who are not in mainstream education. Basic skills and team work are included in the curriculum and accreditation is provided through ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network);
- The Excel Club is run with Pickering school – young people (some are referred, some volunteer themselves) attend twice a week for 2 years and engage in team building and confidence building activities as well as work focused programmes such as business development. Again, accreditation is provided through ASDAN.

**Health**

HRN is opening up opportunities for healthier lifestyles - working in partnership with the statutory sector. Current Health Promotion activities include:

- ‘Walking to Health’ sessions;
- Community lunches for older people;
- Articles about healthy living etc in their quarterly newspaper which has a circulation of 4,000;
- Joint work with Hull Warmzone to provide better insulation, particularly targeted at older people on a low income;
- Community events where health agencies are present e.g. Health Day in June where 70 local people attended;
- Smoking Cessation groups;
- Keep fit (Boulevard Beauties) – provides social support as well direct health benefits.

In all its work, HRN believes that its informal approach is the key to the successes achieved.

**Achievements / outcomes**

It is often difficult to assess increases in confidence but there is evidence that the behaviour of the young people is improving, that they are engaged in positive activities e.g. some are currently making a film, some are volunteering for another organisation, and one young person who hadn’t been in mainstream education for four years has asked to join the programme. The accreditation and further educational qualifications being achieved is testimony to the value of community based learning programmes for both adults and young people. More OCN courses are being planned in conjunction with the youth service.

It’s too early to assess impact on increasing life expectancy, however close working between the PCT and HRN is improving opportunities for the most vulnerable and ‘at risk’ people to develop healthier lifestyles.

**Evidence base**

HRN believes that there is greater potential for delivering services and showing its value than it can take advantage of. It would like to produce case studies and disseminate its best practice, but doesn’t have the time. It is however, keeping a diary of the Transition Project’s progress and receives positive feedback from other service providers; “These are pupils who previously lacked confidence and are generally not ‘in your face’ pupils. They have blossomed in the environment and it is excellent” (Assistant Headteacher, Endeavour School; in Hull Daily Mail, 14.5.05).

**Value added by SCP**

**Networking with other VCS groups / Information sharing**
The staff at HRN value access to information about what's going on at the city-wide level and with regard to Neighbourhood Renewal issues. HCN meetings are seen as the best opportunity to talk to others and share information in a small space of time - “We are a small set up and need people to keep us in the link”

**Community Chest grant from CIF**
Young people successfully applied for money for a sessional worker for the Transitional Project. The accessibility of the form meant that young people themselves could participate in filling in the application.

**VCS Representation and Influence on LSP and on sub-boards / Access to other funds via HCN**
The opening up of NRF to the community and voluntary sector has enabled HRN to employ two youth development workers for the schools liaison work. HCN provided support around identifying funding for the project and supported HRN to make a successful NRF application.
## Bilton Grange Community Centre - Respect Projects

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Primary Theme: Learning</th>
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### Context

The project started 1997 with Lottery funding to encourage vulnerable people to take an active role in the community. Many groups use the Centre and there are good working relationships with Social Services, Police, Health, Probation, YOT, Connexions, Hull College, local schools. The project is currently funded by the Tudor Trust, Global Grants and NRF. The management committee includes nine volunteers, primarily from the local community.

### Contribution to Neighbourhood Renewal

The Centre is very inclusive and everyone is welcome. People tend to move between groups which include social, creative and ICT groups and projects. Respect Projects aim to enhance educational opportunities for young people and to provide complementary experiences.

### Achievements/outcomes

Increased school attendance levels average 28% at Archbishop Thurstan School and 13% at David Lister School. There are increased learning/skills opportunities with 37 pupils achieving at post 16 at David Lister School. The young people illustrate improvements to self esteem, confidence, communication, problem solving, decision making, team work, handling conflict, relationships. There has been a decrease of 25-30% in number of calls to Police re youth crime and nuisance.

### Evidence Base

Internal recording systems are in use and the project evidences it’s achievements through the production of booklets, leaflets, publication of letters of support, photographs and videos of activities. These are circulated to interested parties (e.g. ward councillors).

Externally, impacts are recorded by schools which benefit from the Project’s activities. A letter from the Head Teacher at David Lister school highlights the excellent working relationship and acknowledges that successes are due to the environment and facilities provided to meet the needs of the pupils. Pupils have shown ‘massive’ improvements in the confidence, relating to others and other general social skills.

The school also records attendance levels and reductions in calls received by the police to deal with youth crime, which have improved as a result of attending the Centre. The David Lister Transition Programme believes that attendance at the Centre greatly contributes to personal development and the Centre is an integral part of the Programme. Increased pupil attendance is also evidenced by a record provided by Archbishop Thurstan school.

### Value added by SCP

**Information from HCN about strategic developments**

Support and information regarding Neighbourhood Renewal is seen as invaluable; “HCN is a lifeline for communication”. HCN supported the process which led to respect gaining £50,000 from NRF.

**Community Chest grant from CIF**

Development funding has been provided. Marketing support is provided by CIF officers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hull DOC (Developing our Communities)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Theme:</strong> Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Established in 1996 to address the lack of meaningful community development work across Hull. Hull DOC is an independent organisation, formed to successfully apply for SRB funding. The project works in 5 priority areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution to Neighbourhood Renewal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key floor target areas: reducing drug use; building community capacity; increasing community involvement, engaging with those not already engaged, increasing learning, increasing employability, reducing teenage pregnancy, reducing early mortality, reducing smoking, increasing breast feeding, reducing alcohol consumption, reducing fear of crime, increasing community safety, increasing youth involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievements / outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with Community Focus (attached to Police - a community approach to tackling drugs); community development and capacity building projects based in communities; funding through DAT for a user involvement project; youth development projects, Young People’s Training Consortium, umbrella for Neighbourhood Support Fund projects in Hull, employs workers in Sure Start programmes. Good relationships with Connexions and Eagle House.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence base</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hull DOC has internal monitoring systems in place and records statistics of the numbers of people accessing the project. The Volunteer Support Project records a whole range of outcomes, e.g. people securing employment, and also records the numbers of volunteers working with the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People's stories provide evidence e.g. a former drug user accessing the project and later becoming a member of staff at Hull DOC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance, achievements and outcomes are recorded for courses developed in partnership with HCN, including Learning Curve, ‘How Your City Works’ course and the Facilitators Course.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Value added by/through SCP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic influence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The local authority funded the West Community Development Project which emerged from HCN and Hull DOC working together and taking part in an Area Partnership Conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCN staff supported Hull DOC obtain funding from the City Council (Community Initiatives Budget) to enable the employment of a community development worker as well the training up of apprentice development workers. This need was identified by HCN through local residents who had completed a ‘How Your City Works’ course.</td>
</tr>
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**Dads Against Drugs – DADs**

**Primary Theme: Crime / Community Safety**

**Context**

DADs began in 2001 when a neighbourhood watch group became concerned about anti-social behaviour and drug use on around a nearby disused railway line. Money was sought to carry out some participatory research in the neighbourhood and DADs was born. It has a focus on football (and other sports) and aims to use this to transform the lives of people who are disadvantaged in some way e.g. ‘deprived’, poorly educated, socially excluded. A fun and inclusive football programme has been designed to boost self esteem and promote social integration, healthy lifestyles and crime reduction. In addition, follow on programmes have been developed e.g. non formal education (basic skills and GCSE’s) and an employment scheme.

DADs has moved from being a small community group to a city wide charity with paid staff and is now in receipt of NRF.

**Contribution to Neighbourhood Renewal**

DADs targets three broad groupings of people – those who are ‘slipping through the net’, those who are not accessing services and minority ethnic groups. Consultation is carried out to determine perceived needs and a strategy is developed, focusing on football but also providing access to outreach programmes and services.

DADs promotes an anti-drug and anti-crime message and runs marketing campaigns in different communities. In addition, the activities themselves promote improved health and fitness and access to learning opportunities. The organisation believes it has a social responsibility role and therefore works with other service providers to ensure that needs are met. Issues covered have included sexual health and racism. DADs is setting up a specialist recruitment agency for ex drug users who are looking for work.

**Achievements/outcomes**

DADs has created full time jobs with its own organisation and employs additional workers on a temporary basis as resources allow.

Fifty volunteers are working towards accredited training and two people have gone on to undertake university based sports degrees following their DADs voluntary activity.

**Evidence Base**

200 adults and young people per week take part in football and outreach activities, football theatre, and basic skills. DADs works with 50 ‘problem’ children and young people on a weekly basis. DADs believes strongly in developing an evidence base for its work and has commissioned several pieces of research to support this.

**Value added by/through SCP**

**Information from HCN about strategic developments**

‘HCN keeps us informed … and makes the case for community groups.’

**VCS Representation and Influence on LSP**

DADs is now in receipt of NRF following support from HCN.
Information gathered through participatory ‘critical path’ exercise

Much of the above information about service delivery organisations was gathered through interviews with individual members of the groups and organisations concerned, alongside some background research prior to meeting to them and some follow up research afterwards. Whilst a lot of information was gathered, it was time consuming. Another, and more participatory, method was used at a workshop for community network members. This produced equally valuable information for assessing the value of the Single Community Programme. Some examples are illustrated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.M.A.R.T</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context of group/project one year ago</strong></td>
<td><strong>Project Development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Voluntary helpers</td>
<td>September 04: Envisioning away day Full time staff member, LEA funding Sure start funding 26k EYD £42k funding NRF funding £30k</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sport music arts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• No clear direction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• No funding (SRB6 Community Chest)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge of Management team</td>
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**Contribution of SCP to project development**

Opportunity to network with other groups through HCN - forums
Information from HCN about strategic developments – told us about children’s centres
Training / learning opportunities provided by HCN – HYCW NRF days
VCS representation and influence on LSP – HYCW (How Your City Works)
Community Chest grant from CIF - £4,200 for envisioning day, led to information about other grants and funding
Access to other funds via HCN – NRF funding
Support to work with statutory agencies by HCN – partnership working information i.e. partnership agreements, Compact and SLAs.

**Impact on project**

Has build the employment of all the volunteers
Has brought money to the community
Has provided relevant training and support
Has added to the life of the community
Education has been improved
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Voices in Play</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context in Jan 04</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Established and identified need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had time committee dedication. Boldness try anyway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Everyone else used jargon</td>
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**Community chest grant from CIF** – start up grant, plus funded first joint project

**VCS Representation and influence on LSP** – without HCN involvement, wouldn’t have got NRF

**Information from HCN about strategic developments** – learnt about NR and developed NRF bid

**Access to other funds via HCN** – HCN helped to fill in application

**Opportunity to network with other groups and organisations through HCN** – opportunity to pick peoples brains and find out and learn about other activities.

**Impact on project**

Learning/ skills/ training, Community spirit, involvement, employment.

Positive social behaviour/ confidence. Community up-skilling, pride on personal level.
## Giroscope - Housing/ Regeneration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context in Early 2003</th>
<th>Project Development</th>
<th>Context now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong>&lt;br&gt;Partly highly skilled team.&lt;br&gt;Good fundraising capacity.&lt;br&gt;Respect of sector.&lt;br&gt;Very successful at core activity.&lt;br&gt;Good linking in sector of operation.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Weaknesses</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lack of direction.&lt;br&gt;Poor relationships and links in city.&lt;br&gt;Low morale.&lt;br&gt;Lack of people coming through.&lt;br&gt;Gaps in knowledge.</td>
<td><strong>Early 2003</strong>&lt;br&gt;Joined HCN (Cityliving/ Cityvision).&lt;br&gt;Start of Pathfinder Research.&lt;br&gt;Shedding surplus staff.&lt;br&gt;Training for staff (Operational).&lt;br&gt;Publishing of “housing in our city”.&lt;br&gt;Began training courses for wardens.</td>
<td><strong>Spring 2004</strong>&lt;br&gt;Took on trainee builder.&lt;br&gt;Began with activate (trainees).</td>
</tr>
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### Contribution of SCP to project development

**Community Chest Grant from CIF** - Paid for Administrator.<br>**VCS Representation and influence on sub-boards** - Joined Cityliving.<br>**VCS Representation and influence on sub-boards** - Participation in developing ‘Landlord’s accreditation’ process.<br>**VCS Representation and influence on LSP** - Beginning to make statutory partners aware of role of Giroscope.<br>**Information from HCN about strategic developments** - Influence on Pathfinder.<br>**VCS Representation and influence on sub-boards** - Promoting “Housing in Our City”.<br>**Opportunity to network with other groups and organisation through HCN** - Forum/Newsletter.<br>**Community Chest Grant from CIF** - Operational Training.<br>**Opportunity to network with other groups and organisations through HCN** - Housing Forums.<br>

### Impact on project

Provides a successful model, Improvement of HSG Stock.<br>Skills Development, Employment.<br>Occupied Houses reduce crime in an area.
Barriers to evidencing impact

Attributing the contribution of one programme, and a relatively very small one at that, is always difficult. It is particularly complex when the programme is not just about providing funds for a particular project as in this case. We therefore had to spend a lot of time, greater than anticipated, in helping groups and organisations to make the connections between the Single Community Programme, Hull Community Investment Fund, Hull Community Network, the LSP, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, floor targets etc.

In addition, many of the people we tried to engage are busy volunteers, or people working in very small projects, and they have very little capacity to evaluate the impact of their own projects, never mind consider how SCP is helping them to deliver. The main problems we found were:

- The majority of groups did not know what the Single Community Programme is;
- There is a lack of understanding about the Network’s role vis-à-vis the LSP;
- There is a lack of understanding about the relationship between the Network and small grants;
- People forget the processes that lead to an achievement or specific outcome;
- People take support and infrastructure organisations like HCN for granted, they are just part of the landscape;
- There is a tendency to regard organisations with paid workers as the staff team – this is a particular issue for networks where the aim is for the members to identify themselves as ‘the Network’, to take some responsibility for its development and effectiveness, and to recognise their contribution as being part of ‘the Network’ (i.e. the sum of all its parts) as appropriate;
- Many of HCN’s members are not directly working on neighbourhood renewal agendas (though they are doing very worthwhile work), and don’t therefore have a lot to say about the impact of SCP;
- The empowerment approach of the Network staff does not always sit comfortably with claiming credit for outcomes.

Tracking the relationship between VCS activity, the input of the Single Community Programme, primarily via Hull Community Network (HCN), and positive improvements to the quality of life of communities in Hull, has also been difficult. There are a number of reasons for this including:

- The lack of robust monitoring and evaluation procedures within community and voluntary organisations (often due to lack of resources and the scale of the projects – many said they would like more help with this);
- Poor access to the monitoring information held by other organisations including statutory sector organisations;
- Lack of assertiveness within the VCS – inhibitions about claiming achievements;
- The difficulty of pinpointing exactly what made a difference – several organisations stated that they didn’t have a particularly strong relationship with Hull Community Network and weren’t really sure what it did – yet when asked specific questions like, ‘how did you know about that?’ or ‘who helped with this?’ or how did that decision come about?’, they suddenly remembered that HCN played a significant role;
- Equally, organisations do not always recognise that Hull Community Network is its membership, and is more than the team of paid workers based in the HCN office. It can be difficult therefore to separate out what an organisation has done in its own right, and what it has done as part of the Network;
The Single Community Programme itself is not widely known and there is a lack of understanding that the small grants programme is part of this and should support and feed into the network’s development. People tend to know the delivery organisations (HCN and Hull Community Investment Fund) and sometimes the individual staff rather than the organisations, but connections between them are not necessarily made.

These factors above meant that the postal survey provided very little useful information. The one to one interviews provided more information as people could be prompted and asked direct questions relevant to the project (based on background research) but this is time consuming. As the piece of work developed, therefore, we looked at workshop based participatory exercises that networks could facilitate and planning and evaluation tools that even small community groups could operate. These tools are examined in detail in Section 2.
Section 2

Guidelines, exercises and approaches to accessible and participative methods of assessment

How networks can facilitate planning and assessment of SCP and the individual contributions of community and voluntary organisations.

Many of the community groups in Hull (including those without paid workers) keep very effective monitoring records of numbers and types of users, number of volunteer hours etc. Very few however have the capacity to operate outcomes based performance management processes or undertake in-depth evaluations. Overwhelmingly though, VCS organisations did say they would like more help with evidencing the effects and impact of their work.

This section outlines the process used in some of the workshop and collective exercises, contains some pointers to practice and identifies useful questions to address when attempting to evidence contribution. The experience of this piece of work is that people need help in making the connections between what they do, the community strategy and contributions of others (in this case, the contribution of the Single Community Programme via HCN). Community empowerment networks can support community and voluntary organisations to use these tools themselves and/or can facilitate sessions (either specific events, or through slots at quarterly meetings for example) which over a period of time build an evidence base.

There is still a lot of work to be done to track the impact of SCP upon floor targets, and one ‘tool’ alone cannot provide the evidence. In most cases, the information gathered came through a variety of means and involved a lot of chasing up, tracking down of evidence letters from other service providers etc. The key thing is to put into place systems and/or processes which are effective, engaging and as ‘unobtrusive’ and developmental as possible, and can help with evidencing outcomes - the ‘so what?’ factor (rather than gathering information about how many newsletters are produced for example). At the end of the day, the main aim is to have an information base which informs what you do, how you do it and why it’s significant for neighbourhood renewal.

An outcomes focus

Networks can encourage members to think, plan and evaluate with an outcomes focus. This means starting from a vision about what needs to improve and what needs to change in order to improve people’s quality of life. Self-help groups are often very clear about this but as organisations develop the vision can get lost. Once organisations plan their activities in relation to the change they want to create, then they can begin to focus on how to assess how much difference they are making, and what is helping them to do this.
Useful guidelines for community groups and voluntary organisations in contributing to neighbourhood renewal

The following guidance is closely based on HCN guidance to the sector:

- **Develop good working relationships with other organisations.** Take up opportunities to network and develop partnership working, not just with grass roots workers but with senior and middle management and the decision makers. This requires ensuring that you are on mailing lists and in the ‘information loop’;

- **Publicise/promote what you do,** why and how it has an impact on the community. Many agencies are not aware of the work of community and voluntary sector and that it may contribute to achieving NRF floor targets. Make your own issues and recommendations widely known. Develop your own plans of action;

- Community and voluntary sector have products that others want such as access to people in communities that many service providers can’t reach. Acting as a conduit to the community will attract other service providers to work with you. Partnership working with these agencies is important especially if groups are already doing activities that contribute to floor targets e.g. West Hull Primary Care Trust needing to reduce mortality rates in St Andrews Ward are supporting a local community network with NRF so that they can develop their smoking cessation classes and other health related activities further;

- Current activities may need to be more closely focused / targeted around floor targets;

- Demonstrating linkages with other projects is also helpful;

- **Research on what’s needed and how activities impact on the community** and help quality of life in the area is important. (Needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation);

- **Many of the statistics and evidence** needed by community groups/voluntary organisations lie with the statutory organisations e.g. Police (crime); Primary Care Trusts (health) etc. There is little point in small organisations with few resources trying to compile huge databases. The information collected by others should be available to all – the figures illustrating reduction in crime cannot only be attributed to police activity for example, and the VCS may well have played a part. Also, agencies may be willing to write letters or provide testimonies as to the value of your organisation’s contribution to floor targets around learning for example. Voices in Play for instance had letters from Park Wardens and the Police, and Pooh Bear Reading Assistance Society has quotes from schools throughout its annual report.

Finally, it is worth using existing indicators such as the Audit Office Quality of Life Set, particularly as these will be used by other agencies. ‘Proxy measures’ are useful here e.g. it is widely accepted that smokers are less healthy and more likely to die young, than non-smokers. A community organisation running a smoking cessation class with a 50% success rate can therefore legitimately claim to have increased life expectancy and the health of the community.
Exercises and approaches

1. **Mapping community and voluntary sector activity in relation to the community strategy** (see the findings from this exercise in Section 1)

Participants
Relevant community and voluntary organisations. This exercise works well with a lot of participants. At the Hull event, there were around 60 people.

Resources
Lots of space for people to sit round tables
Pens
Post-its
Large wall space, covered with paper e.g. 8 pieces of flipchart paper joined together. In the middle draw a circle with the name of the city or district, the name of the network and the LSP inside.

Process

- Identify the key floor target themes and write these into circles around the outside of the wall map;

- Ask participants what they think are the key issues that need working on in relation to the floor target areas e.g. for health it could be reducing drug use, promoting healthy eating, reducing stress etc. As people say each one, write it onto the wall map with a line connecting it to the relevant floor target area (it may connect to more than one);

- Ask for examples of groups and organisations that see themselves as a provider of services. They should say the name of their group and what they are contributing to on the wall map. Write the name of the group onto a post it and stick it on the appropriate place. Just take a few to get the ball rolling;

- Everyone should then take some post-its (you may want to colour code them by overall floor target theme), write the name of their group on to them and stick them onto the appropriate place(s) on the map.

Within half an hour or so, you will have a map of the range of activity taking place, of who in the VCS is providing services and which floor targets they are contributing to. This information allows the network to target specific groups for theme based forums, partnerships and mail-shots for example.

Frequency
This exercise could usefully be repeated once a year.

It provides a useful starter for breaking into thematic workshops to share perspectives on the work and any currently used indicators of achievement.
2 Generating information about the impact of SCP

Participants
Relevant community and voluntary organisations / network members

Resources
For 8 – 28 participants, you will need 4 tables for people to sit around. For more people, you will need a large room with space to walk around.

Pens
Post-its

4 pieces of flipchart paper headed:
− networking and influence;
− community learning;
− small grants (Community Chest);
− neighbourhood level services and partnership.

Each flipchart should be divided into 3 columns or rows with the sub-headings:
− What has been valuable over the last 4 – 6 months;
− Successes and achievements;
− Anything that has happened as a result - ‘spin offs’.

Process

• Either place a flipchart on each table, or place them around the walls of the room;

• Ask small groups to consider the three subheadings, write onto post-its and stick onto the flipchart. If people are working at tables, move the flipcharts round every 10 minutes, if the flipcharts are around the room, ask people to move around;

• When everyone has had a chance to discuss and contribute to all the flipcharts, ask them to cluster the post-its on the chart in front of them;

• Take feedback from each group on the key points raised.

Frequency
This exercise should be done fairly frequently e.g. every 3, 4 or 6 months, to ensure that people don’t have to remember too far back. It’s a kind of group generated diary.

An alternative approach would be to have the headed flipcharts around the room at the start or in the break of regular network meetings, and allow, say, 20 minutes for people to add things. As the year goes on, the information generated could be printed onto handouts alongside the flipcharts.
3 Illustrating a holistic approach and the value of collective activity

The Single Community Programme aims to resource and support:

- Social capital;
- Governance;
- Service delivery;
- Community cohesion.

This exercise is similar to the one above but with different headings.

Participants
This exercise is probably more suited to more actively involved network members, steering groups and staff.

Resources
Pens
Post-its
Flipchart paper

Process
- Draw a large triangle with the social capital, governance and service delivery marked on each of the points. In the middle mark community cohesion;
- Ask the participants to work in pairs and to identify any achievements in relation to the aims. They should write these down and stick them onto post-its;
- Once everyone has finished, ask the group to help analyse whether there is any relationship between what’s been written down in relation to the four aims.

For example, an effect of people being supported to work together as a group (social capital) may have led to their influencing / providing a local service. It may be that at the original point of something being noted, there is no effect yet but that at a later date it can be tracked back. Equally, the triangle can help networks to plan strategically – they may be strong as regards ‘governance’ but identify that this is making no difference to their contribution to service delivery, or there may be several examples of increased community activity but still little to report around improving community cohesion. In this way, it can provide an agenda for action which can be periodically assessed.

The significance of this approach is that it ensures that the community network doesn’t get dragged into only considering issues around service delivery (which can be a pressure with the introduction of Local Area Agreements and the focus on services and floor targets). This enables networks to illustrate how the whole thing fits together and to make the case for continued support for wider VCS activity.
4 Critical path analysis – or tracing the development of community and voluntary groups over time, and the contribution of SCP (see completed paths in section 1)

Participants
Voluntary and community groups; also other partners - agencies and service providers. This probably works best if there is more than one person from each group.

Resources
Pens
‘Prompt’ cards
Long pieces of paper e.g. wallpaper, marked out as follows:

| Strengths and weaknesses of group/project 1/2/3 years ago and the context in which the group / project was operating e.g. active involvement in group, clarity of purpose and direction, relationship with other organisations and agencies, resources, morale, knowledge and experience, links and networks | Strengths and weaknesses of group/project now and the context in which the group / project is operating e.g. active involvement in group, clarity of purpose and direction, relationship with other organisations and agencies, resources, morale, knowledge and experience, links and networks |

Process
- Give each group or project a prepared long piece of paper;
- Ask each to identify:
  Strengths and weaknesses of group/project 1/2/3 years ago (this will depend on the frequency of the activity and the age of the group) and the context in which the group / project was operating. They should write this onto the paper;
- They should mark into the top box above the timeline any developments, changes and achievements, what they have achieved as a group or within their community or area of work over the time period – what happened and approximate date;
- Give everyone some different coloured ‘prompt’ cards, with the titles:
  - VCS Representation and Influence on LSP / sub-boards;
  - Information from the community network about strategic developments;
  - Information from the community network about service delivery;
  - Opportunity to network with others through the community network;
  - Support to work with statutory agencies by the community network;
  - Community chest grant;
  - Access to other funds via the community network;
  - Training / learning opportunities via the community network.

They should use the cards provided to map where SCP has made a difference, how and at what point on the time line, and stick them into the box below the timeline.
The very bottom box is for the groups to identify how the development and achievements in the top box have contributed to delivering the Community Strategy and floor targets;

Finally, groups complete the right hand column - strengths and weaknesses and context now;

The advantage of using differently coloured cards for the SCP headings means that if the timelines are displayed, patterns of what groups find most useful are easy to ascertain.

**Frequency**

This exercise could be used once a year, perhaps as a celebratory exercise at the end of the year. Our experience in Hull was that it was very popular – people like to reflect on their own group / project and highlight achievements. However, it does require around an hour to complete.

**An alternative** and quicker method is to create a large network path. In this case it would just have a timeline in the middle with a starting date (now) at one end. This could be placed on the wall at all network meetings and people could be asked to use any of the prompt cards as appropriate to log how SCP has helped. Over the course of 6 to 12 months, the network would gather information about the impact of SCP.
5  Celebrating community activity and profiling achievements

The aim of this event was to combine an opportunity for small groups to profile themselves and their achievements, to network and learn from each other, and to provide information about the impact of small grants. It therefore included lunch and had an informal feel.

Participants
Those who have received small grants (Community Chest).
This works with large numbers of people (in Hull we had around 70)

Resources
Large space
Post-its
Pens
Long piece of paper on the wall (wallpaper) with a line across the middle from left to right
Arrow shapes or post-its
Sticky labels

Process
• Small groups are often quite isolated, so even with a large number it is good to ask people to introduce themselves. As they say who they are, ask them to also specify the area of the work they are engaged in e.g. health, crime and community safety, housing, capacity building / general community involvement, communities of interest such as young people, disabled people, BME groups;

• Create a graph on the wall with post-its - use them as building blocks to visually record the numbers of groups working around each theme / area of work;

• Facilitate a celebratory style of information sharing. Ask groups to come to the front / stand in the centre etc., and briefly say what their group is about, what they applied for from Community Chest and what difference it made. (It is worth asking a few people before hand to kick this off – in Hull we then had no shortage of groups wanting to speak and lots of applause!);

• Break the participants into smaller groups, based on the thematic areas identified at the beginning. Allow a small of time for them to ask questions of each other, follow up points from the presentations etc.;

• Give each project a post-it and ask them to note down what they received the grant for, and how much it was for, and an arrow shape to note down what difference the money has made;

• Finally give each project a sticker on to which they can write the name of their group. They should then place them on the timeline on the wall – the sticker and post-it above the line and the arrow shape pointing up from under the line.

This exercise should provide opportunities for networking with others working on the same kind of things e.g. play activities, environmental activity etc.

Frequency
This will depend upon how many groups have been in receipt of small grants. It may be that the event is run several times a year, but for different groups.
6 Storytelling

This is an approach to structured reflection and the drawing out of insights. It was a useful exercise with the HCN LSP reps and Steering Group.

Resources
Paper
Pens
A5/4 sheets of paper

Process

• Prepare one person beforehand that you think will be able to critically reflect on their involvement and experience;

• Ask everyone to listen (they are not allowed to interrupt), they can make notes if they wish;

• One person spends about 15 minutes telling their story e.g. experience of being a community rep, how they got involved, what’s it been like, what’s worked well, influence generated etc.;

• Others can then ask questions for clarification of the story for up to 10 minutes;

• Encourage others to enter into discussion about the topic, reflecting upon how the story matches with their experience;

• Give everyone a piece of A4 or A5 paper and ask them to write down the key insights generated from the input and discussion;

• Cluster the insights as collective learning from the exercise.
7 Example of a Planning Tool

The overall questions to ask when planning are:
What problems are we trying to solve?
What will make change happen?
How can we help to make this change happen – what are our objectives?
What results do we want to see from our actions?
How will we measure our progress – what are our indicators?

To evaluate using the indicators, the questions are:
What information do we already have?
What additional information do we need?
Who else might have some of this information?
What methods can we use to collect additional information?
Who is going to analyse this information?
How will we use this information?

The following tool may be useful to help small organisations plan, measure and assess progress and development.

Process

• Provide a template (see below) and agree appropriate questions at a workshop (facilitated by the CEN?) and amend table if necessary
• Each organisation ticks the relevant boxes
• Each organisation lists its areas with a 0,1 or 2 star response
• Decide which areas need to be increased to 3, 4 or 5 star and therefore prioritised?
• Ask organisations scoring highly i.e. 3, 4 or 5 star, to share what they are doing and how
• Organisations spend time planning how to increase their star ratings, including the role of the CEN and support required from others
• Decide how often the exercise needs to be carried out – do it as an event (annually/6 monthly/quarterly)
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A note on the exercises

All these types of participatory exercise require skilled facilitation. In Hull, the Network is running a community facilitators’ course to boost the number of people with confidence and skill to undertake facilitative tasks.

Community Facilitators Course

The Community Facilitators course was developed in partnership with Hull DOC, Hull Community Network, Hull and East Yorkshire Participatory Appraisal Network and the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Hull.

The rational for the course is to assist local people to respond to:
- A continual need for consultation and the facilitation of groups;
- Draft strategies such as a community plan consultation;
- Neighbourhood regeneration strategies;
- Preventing consultation being about token representatives;
- The continual need for consultation;
- To prevent continual ‘doing to the community’.

The aims of the course are to:
- Enable people to examine the process of facilitation;
- Recognise the importance of reflective practice and evaluation within facilitation processes;
- Examine the techniques involved in engaging people to participate;
- Analyse the values and principles that underpin effective facilitation;
- Provide an opportunity to work with others to develop skills in facilitation.

The course is three days in duration and is accredited through the University of Hull with 10 credits towards a University Foundation Award.
Interview Questions

1. GENERAL

1.1 Please describe your project and discuss how it fits with the 3 themes (& any others).
1.2 Which floor target areas is your project/activity primarily concerned with?
1.3 Has your project/activity achieved any outcomes yet? If so, what are they?
1.4 Have any of these outcomes contributed towards any local, regional or national strategies to your knowledge, or influenced decision making and/or the way neighbourhood renewal services are delivered? If so, what is the evidence?
1.5 Are you aware of the CEN and what it does?
   If no, provide information about the CEN; probe further as to whether or not their project/activity has ever been engaged?
   If yes, what has been the nature of your involvement with the CEN?
1.6 What was particularly valuable about your involvement in the CEN?
1.7 Is there anything the CEN could better provide? (e.g. communication/information/signposting; support for reps on partnership boards; sharing ideas/good practice/learning; networking; funding etc.)
1.8 What more would you like from the CEN to help you with your project/activity?
1.9 What do you hope to achieve?
1.10 (How) do you plan?
1.11 (How) do you assess progress and impact – what is your evidence base?

2. HEALTH (example of specific thematic questions – could be applied to any floor target area)

2.1 How many people are accessing your project/activity? – CEN role in this?
2.2 Has your project/activity achieved any ‘quick wins’ yet? – CEN role in this?
2.3 What has your project/activity achieved? Examples:
   - Increase in life expectancy?
   - Reductions in teenage pregnancy – statistics?
   What is the evidence/how are the outcomes measured?
   How is the long term issue of health outcomes addressed?
   Can the CEN help?
2.4 Is your project/activity delivered locally or city wide? Is it appropriate for local delivery? If it is and is delivered locally, has the CEN been involved and in what ways?
2.5 Is there any evidence of your project/activity impacting on any of the other neighbourhood renewal themes?
2.6 Is it making a difference? In what ways? How do you know?
Postal survey for community and voluntary organisations

(Include an introduction, outlining the purpose and aims of the Single Community Programme.)

1. Name of organisation

2. Contact details (name, email, telephone etc.)

3. Does your organisation prioritise: (please tick all that apply)
   a. Health
   b. Learning / education
   c. Crime / community safety
   d. Housing
   e. Employment
   If it is not one above, please specify

4. Could you estimate how many people are actively making use of activities you provide in relation to:
   a. Health
   b. Learning / education
   c. Crime / community safety
   d. Housing
   e. Employment
   f. Other – please specify:
   (If you have not got records of this please give an informed estimate (e.g. number of activities/ events and times - probable average number of attendees).

5. Would you consider your organisation to be:
   a. Community driven
   b. Led by paid workers

6. Have you co-operated with one or more other voluntary and community organisations in the past year as a result of the community network? Can you explain who with and how?

7. Have you benefited from a small grant? (Community Chest)

8. Has the existence and role of the community network and its community representatives on the Local Strategic Partnership or thematic partnerships helped you to have a positive effect in your work?
   Yes / No
   Please explain

9. Do you feel that in the past year you have found out or learnt anything as a result of community network contact that has helped you to improve your neighbourhood / issue of concern in some way?
   Yes / No
   Please explain

10. To your knowledge, has community representation on partnerships resulted in any of the following over the past year:
a. More funding and/or contractual opportunities for the VCS
   Yes (please explain)  No  Don’t know

b. Better understanding between public agencies and local residents
   Yes (please explain)  No  Don’t know

c. More joint-working arrangements between public agencies and VCS organisations
   Yes (please explain)  No  Don’t know

d. Better targeting of resources or services to deprived neighbourhoods or sections of the population
   Yes (please explain)  No  Don’t know

11. How have any of these made any difference to people’s quality of life in relation to:
   a. Health
   b. Learning/education
   c. Crime/community safety
   d. Housing
   e. Employment
   f. Other – please specify:

And finally …
12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you.
Appendix 1

Methodology used in Hull case study

- Meetings with HCN staff;
- Two workshops for network members and other stakeholders (one at the start and one towards the end of the study);
- Desk research and design of framework;
- One to one interviews with some member projects;
- One to one interviews with some statutory organisations;
- Meeting with Community Chest Panel;
- Workshops with HCN Steering group members and LSP reps;
- Workshop with groups in receipt of Community Chest;
- Workshop meetings;
- Postal survey.

Initial Workshop for HCN Members

Aims
The aims of the workshop were to ensure participants understand the purpose and scope of the NRA activity; participants have clear understanding of the role of the network and its staff team; clarify the themes on which to focus; NRAs identify proposed projects for follow up interviews; and to assist NRAs to gather information to help build the questionnaire and interview schedule.

Process
Participatory exercises were held to:

- Identify key issues and to map voluntary and community sector activities across Hull, particularly in relation to:
  - Crime and Community safety
  - Health
  - Learning and Education.
- Begin to develop indicators and questions to assess effectiveness of activity and impact on floor targets.
- Share perspectives on the contribution of HCN to community and voluntary sector development and its impact on floor targets.

Note: the mapping exercise was a quick way of logging understanding of the thematic areas and relevant activities. It also involved everyone (and it was a very large workshop). Some participants found it difficult to ‘get into’ the indicators session.

Desk Research

Aim
The aim of the Desk Research was to identify relevant existing documentation and glean as much background information as possible in order to ensure opportunities for duplication were limited and the process was as streamlined and informed as possible.
Process
Search of network information for minutes of meetings, PMF Assessments, relevant LSP strategy documents and monitoring information. In addition, NRF applications were scrutinised.

One to one interviews
Aim
The purpose of the one to one interviews was:

• To identify how the project/activity has contributed towards achieving Hull’s floor targets in the Health, Crime & Community Safety and Learning theme areas (perceived or evidenced);
• To identify if the project/activity has made any impact on local, regional or national decision making/strategies (perceived or evidenced);
• To identify if and how the CN/SCP has helped the project/activity achieve any of the above through it’s activities (e.g. grant funding/networking/other support);
• To develop a method of monitoring and measuring the above, which can be implemented by everyone.

Process
Projects volunteered their assistance at the Workshop and additional organisations were identified by the Network or through LSP and NRF papers. An interview schedule was designed and agreed, and meetings held. Each interview lasted approximately 2 hours with a wide range of organisations across all sectors. Many organisations provided further project specific information in a variety of forms. Over twenty organisations were interviewed.

Note: A lot of information was collected through the face to face interviews, and they proved to be valuable because they allowed for prompting e.g. how do you know that, what difference did that make, how did that come about, but wasn’t that as a result of xxx decision at the LSP, etc? In addition, the interviews provided an opportunity to give out information about the Network.

Workshop with HCN Steering Group and LSP reps
Aim
To identify the degree to which the network has been influential on the LSP and sub-partnerships, and to assess performance in relation to the aims of the Single Community Programme.

Process
• A storytelling approach was used to start discussions and identify key benefits of the representative function of the network.

• This was followed by a participatory exercise to identify what has been successful, what has helped, and what has got in the way of meeting the governance, social capital, community cohesion and service delivery aims of SCP.
**Community Chest Celebration workshop**

**Aim**
To bring together community groups that have received a small grant, and to share how it has benefited their project.

**Process**
- A few participants were asked beforehand to prepare a brief presentation on what their group is about, what the money was for, and what difference it has made. This encouraged others to speak up about their project.
- Organisations identified how the grants have helped them to contribute to neighbourhood renewal using a collective time line exercise.

**Note:** The day itself was of enormous benefit to the participants - they were applauded after their presentations, the event supported people to feel (rightly) proud of their achievements, and there was great deal of informal networking. The timeline exercise worked well as a method of gaining information. CIF is proposing to run these events every six months.

**Postal survey**

**Aim**
To capture information from a wider range of voluntary, community and statutory organisations and to test a different set of questions to those posed in the one to one interviews.

**Process**
Two questionnaires were designed, one for VCS organisations and one for statutory agencies. These were kept deliberately short but did include questions based upon some of the NRU Toolkit of indicators for community participation.

**Note:** many people answered ‘don’t know’ to many of the questions. This was in part because their group is not directly relevant to the neighbourhood renewal agenda and they don’t necessarily know about or understand the role of the Network. The questionnaires, in fact, were disempowering to some groups as they felt they had to apologise for not answering. Also people often need help in making the connections between community chest, the Network, the LSP, decisions that have been made about services etc. For this reason, the interviews were more effective.

**Feedback and Development workshop.**

**Aims**
To share learning to date and to test out its validity and to gather more information about the contribution of SCP.

**Process**
- A small number of organisations were asked to make presentations about their projects, and how SCP has contributed to their development.
- Each organisation developed a Critical path analysis – relating the group’s development to neighbourhood renewal and to the Single Community Programme.