

Voluntary sector needs analysis: A local response

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1 **Executive Summary**

This project was established to research the needs of voluntary and community sector organisations across Nuneaton and Bedworth, and to produce a report for possible developments to meet those needs. Funding from Awards for All to Nuneaton and Bedworth Council for Voluntary Service enabled this research to be undertaken.

The study has arisen out of a direct response to concerns from within the voluntary and community sector about the amount and quality of support available locally. The research involved consulting with organisations within the local sector via a questionnaire process, then as appropriate through one-to-one interviews.

The study identifies that funding, especially for 'core' activity, is without doubt the greatest concern among organisations, with both the channels of support in finding appropriate funding and in achieving it being equally important.

The study shows that opinions on the provision of support is mixed, but that many seek this support from whichever channels are accessible or recommended, however many feel reliant on Nuneaton and Bedworth Council for Voluntary Service as their main, trusted provider. There is a range of providers and services available to the sector locally, but it is clear from the research that few are aware of the extent to which these are available, appropriate and accessible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Communication with and to the voluntary and community sector should be strengthened and increased.
- Nuneaton and Bedworth Council for Voluntary Service should continue to develop and sustain its own marketing and promotion.
- This research should be disseminated and discussed among local service delivery agencies and a coordinated approach developed to tackle the needs as raised in this study.
- With local service delivery agencies, Nuneaton and Bedworth Council for Voluntary Service should seek to increase and formalise networking practises among their community workers.
- Additional research may be necessary to further define the profile of the local voluntary community sector.

2 Introduction

This research study ('research') has been undertaken by Nuneaton and Bedworth Council for Voluntary Service ('NBCVS') with the support of Awards for All, the lottery grants programme aimed at local communities, throughout July and August 2005.

Having identified the issue that there are an increased number of support agencies working within the borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth and having had reports from the voluntary and community sector ('VCS') that they have been inundated with offers of support, NBCVS felt that further investigation into actual community 'need' was necessary. This research will therefore respond directly to these issues and seek to give recommendations for how NBCVS may move forward in a) fulfilling its role, and b) fulfilling community need.

This research, through a process of consultation with members of the local VCS, is integral to the shared understanding of the current needs of the sector and whether local, regional (and often national) organisations, be they voluntary, statutory or private, are supporting these needs. The research will be supplemented with input from statutory sector and other agencies working in the area.

The research will also provide, for essentially the first time in the area, documented evidence of the needs of the groups and how the support provided from all sources, including the statutory sector and various initiatives, are complementing or hindering the VCS's work.

As a trusted representative for and of the VCS NBCVS's independence, flexibility, contacts and understanding of community needs is valued. Therefore this study should be viewed as an influential piece of work for the whole sector and for those working in partnership with it.

3 Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- Investigate the actual needs of the VCS
- Receive a widespread response from the VCS, especially from groups and organisations who NBCVS have limited contact with
- Investigate current provision
- Consider whether provision matches need
- Decide how NBCVS can best meet these needs

4 Methodology

There will be three stages involved in the research. These will be:

Stage 1

Literature review: setting the context of the situation locally, and also the national agenda.

This stage will also include informal discussions with key members of staff at NBCVS who deliver community support and initiatives.

Stage 2

A call for participation will be made in July 2005, under the title 'Community Need: An investigation into service provision and future need'. A letter and a questionnaire (see Appendix 9.1) will be sent out with the NBCVS quarterly newsletter Interchange which goes out to in excess of 300 individuals working in the community and voluntary sector; however a manual check will be made that the questionnaire and letter only goes to community organisations operating within Nuneaton and Bedworth, and not to public or private sector organisations and those not serving the locality.

It will be made clear in the letter that this is to be an impartial, but independent, assessment of the situation, with all views made in the strictest of confidence unless otherwise agreed.

In the questionnaire there will be a request for further participation as appropriate, this will be used as an opportunity to both clarify some of the answers individuals give in their questionnaires and possibly respond to any questions they have of NBCVS; if this is necessary it will be carried out by the researcher in August 2005.

Stage 3

All information will be analysed and findings reported with a set of recommendations made about how NBCVS, and possibly other organisations, may continue to support the voluntary and community sector.

5 Context

5.1 Background

Having been active in the VCS in Nuneaton and Bedworth since its establishment in 1973 NBCVS has seen a number of changes, not least since central Governments greater recognition of the sector as the 'third arm' in public service provision alongside local government and the NHS.

During this time it has seen considerable changes within the VCS. For example in 2002 the national workforce of the voluntary sector was over half a million paid and unpaid workers. The sheer number of organisations who operate within different communities, both of location and interest, and those who collaborate with the sector, make it impossible to clearly define the VCS's boundaries.

There has also been a diversification and increasing of the support that is available to the VCS, both from traditional sources, like local government, but also a number of externally funded projects, some ex-local authority service providers and private sector businesses. There are voluntary organisations dealing with every conceivable area, from specific support for BME organisations, religious organisations, sports clubs, to those who support social enterprises.

This has undoubtedly had an impact on Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs) nationally as well as NBCVS as the VCS is increasingly in competition with public sector organisations and private profit-seeking enterprises, not least for contracts with local authorities but moreover in its core operational community development work and advocacy on behalf of the VCS. This is investigated in some detail in NCVO's Foresight project (see 5.2.1).

As the sector grows, competition for resources and influence is increasing. Locally there is a significant increase in partnership working, but nationally mergers, to concentrate resources, are on the increase, and this is inferred within Change Up (see 5.2.2). One active partnership is the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Development Agency ('CWLDA'), which is currently investigating ways of collaborative working to support the infrastructure functions, information provision and volunteering; the work of this, which will include shared resources and cross-region working, supports what is being said across the community. See Appendix 9.1 for membership of the CWLDA.

Through previous community consultation programmes NBCVS has received a clear message from numerous VCS groups and organisations that there is a

perception of too many organisations offering seemingly similar advice and support. Some said there was duplication and felt there was a waste of public funds, others suggested it was confusing who to approach for what help, others commented that there were mixed messages and inconsistency in support available, which was sometimes inferior. This in fact would not be observing the principles of the Compact (see 5.2.5).

As new structures and strategies emerge in the area the shape of the VCS must change in line with these. NBCVS is acknowledged as a key player and often leads the way in engaging with new developments, policies and practises, for example it continues to lead on the development of the Warwickshire Compact and is involved in the National Compact working group. NBCVS has also taken an active role in the Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone (CNRZ) since its inception in 2001, takes the lead on theme 1 of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Community Plan, 'Community and Involvement', and is also a partner in the Local Strategic Partnership.

As the acknowledged 'voice' of the VCS NBCVS is expected to be involved at all levels, but it is not always appropriate, or easy for the VCS to engage themselves. There is also an issue about NBCVS's ability to disseminate information to the VCS, as this is not currently specifically funded. From April 2003 to March 2005 NBCVS had a community development post funded by the CNRZ which was to enable communication of information about the Zone to the VCS, however the information throughout that period was of little tangible use or interest to the majority of the VCS in the area.

Previous local research has proven this (see 5.2.3 and 5.2.4). One of the difficulties that some organisations felt was that there is a positive drive by some support organisations towards only helping those VCS groups who want to either be enterprising or innovative in their services. The former is highlighted by the CNRZ emphasis on economic outputs, such as helping businesses, creating jobs, vocational training opportunities etc. The latter is an issue with funding streams in general, that funders are constantly looking for new, innovative projects. Both issues raise a gap in many groups' needs and objectives, having 'social' projects that are often for existing activity or core cost support; therefore both funding and associated support is often found to be inappropriate for groups needs.

NBCVS is a trusted and well-established organisation in the Borough, with the image of being experts in the field of the VCS. However with a shortage in appropriate funding streams for its ongoing development, and increased competition for those remaining funds, its capacity is increasingly being stretched, and it is this situation that allows other organisations into CVS's traditional marketplace.

However the demand for NBCVS services remains high, it must remain competitive and offer the breadth and depth of services it is renowned for. Its Mission Statement includes the aim “to monitor and, when necessary, investigate the social needs of the local community”, therefore this study will evidence the opinions, current and future needs (and wants) of the VCS. This will inevitably include investigating how the statutory sector and other various local initiatives are complementing or hindering this. This evidence will be used as the basis for the future direction of NBCVS work; recommendations will be built into the business plan that is currently being updated in line with local, regional and national developments within the VCS.

5.2 Literature review

5.2.1 NCVO (2005) Third Sector Foresight: *Strategic Analysis – The Changing Voluntary Sector Landscape*, London: NCVO

This annual report from NCVO gives an overview of the operating environment and strategic drivers for voluntary and community organisations. “The increasing number of organisations in the sector, combined with a blurring of the boundaries between voluntary, public and private sectors, is likely to increase competition for resources. An increase in joint working and mergers to address competitive pressure is inevitable.”

5.2.2 Home Office (2004) ChangeUp. Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector, London: Home Office

In its suggested framework for the provision of support for infrastructure organisations it “...points towards the need for new arrangements for the provision of advice and assistance. It will require the contribution of a range of providers and includes greater emphasis on collaboration, developing consortia including linking larger organisations with smaller ones and, where organisations choose to do so, merger” (Home Office 2005: 44).

5.2.3 Nuneaton and Bedworth CVS (2005) Continued Interaction of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Nuneaton and Bedworth with the Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone, Nuneaton: Nuneaton and Bedworth CVS

This recent feasibility conducted for NBCVS consulted with frontline organisations as well as Stakeholders from within the CNRZ on how the VCS may continue to engage with the regional strategy for economic development. One of the clearest recommendations was that the VCS

need additional resources to engage with strategy, and had become disillusioned with the specific impact within the sector. Results showed that smaller VCS organisations had not engaged with or even understood the CNRZ.

5.2.4 Nuneaton and Bedworth CVS (2005) The Mechanisms for Partnership Work across Nuneaton and Bedworth, Nuneaton: Nuneaton and Bedworth CVS

Another recent feasibility conducted on behalf of NBCVS, this study looked at how NBCVS had made initial, funded, attempts at local partnership working, looking at 2 specific partnerships in closer detail: the Nuneaton and Bedworth Community Plan and the Nuneaton and Bedworth Voluntary Forum (find further comments in 6.6). The main recommendation was that NBCVS need to seek additional resources for developing its ability to work within strategic partnerships in a sustained manner and to develop a wider vision of other local partnerships to best communicate information across the VCS.

5.2.5 The Warwickshire Compact (2005) The Warwickshire Compact 2005, Nuneaton: The Warwickshire Compact

Under the third Code of Good Practice, 'Community groups', it suggests that when setting the local policy framework public agencies should undertake to "Take account of the community sector's needs and role, when setting policies and procedures, or carrying out a regulatory role; ...Help create and maintain the conditions and support that help community groups to succeed" (Warwickshire Compact, 2005:25). When working in partnership public agencies should "Make sure that public agency employees working with communities are adequately trained to do so effectively" (Warwickshire Compact, 2005:26).

5.2.6 HM Treasury (2005) Exploring the role of the third sector in public service delivery and reform. A discussion document, London: HM Treasury

The document discusses the role of the VCS sector in the delivery of public services. The document is a statement by the Government of its understanding of the value of the 'third sector' and its ability to help deliver its objectives, building on the work of the 2002 Cross-Cutting Review (of which ChangeUp was also a result).

5.3 Current situation

There are an estimated 400 voluntary and community groups and organisations operating within Nuneaton and Bedworth, or whom NBCVS have regular contact with approximately 250 via its quarterly Interchange newsletter.

Recent research undertaken of behalf of NBCVS indicated that many groups feel that the amount and availability of support from NBCVS has decreased significantly due to staff capacity, which to some extent prompted this research to be commissioned.

There are two predominant VCS infrastructure organisations operating across Nuneaton and Bedworth, these are NBCVS and Nuneaton and Bedworth Volunteer Centre. Both organisations are involved in the current developments within the CWLDA (as mentioned in section 5.1).

At present NBCVS concentrates its efforts on providing the following services to the VCS:

- **Advocacy and Liaison:** Acting as advocate for the VCS through liaison with statutory and public bodies, as voluntary sector champion in defending it against increasing bureaucracy, and working in partnership at national, regional and local level.
- **Information:** Specific services provided are funding advice, quality assurance advice and support, policy and procedure advice, development of the Warwickshire Compact, production of a quarterly newsletter.
- **Infrastructure:** Organisation structure and development advice and guidance.
- **Training:** Working in either one to one or group settings. NBCVS runs a programme of training sessions although courses can also be tailor-made.

NBCVS can also offer some administration support and can also 'house' other organisations; these services are chargeable and advertised on the NBCVS website and in the newsletter. Its main services as laid out above are all provided free of charge, with the exception of some training, to all voluntary and community organisations within the borough of Nuneaton and Bedworth.

Nuneaton and Bedworth Volunteer Centre works specifically with individual volunteers and organisations involving volunteers in Nuneaton and Bedworth. They also seek to stimulate community activity, promote good practice and help to create opportunities to volunteer. NBVC and NBCVS recognise the proximity of their areas of work and often work closely together.

The main VCS delivery agencies from the statutory sector within the Borough include:

- Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council's Regeneration team is responsible for developing and managing the Community Plan in partnership with Local Strategic Partnership ('LSP') members and other community partners. They also have an annual VCS grants budget that NBCVS is contracted to manage. There are 4 Officers with remits within Community Safety, Heritage, Business and Community Development.
- Warwickshire County Council's Regeneration division: there is a team is responsible for delivering projects across the County that address social, economic and environmental disadvantage, these include Pride in Camp Hill and Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods ('BSN'). There is also a policy team that leads on strategic development and partnership working; they offer particular support in funding information, this support can also lead to bid writing on behalf of the VCS in large scale projects that are of strategic benefit to the County, for example an environmental group already working with a County officer on the regeneration of a particular area, or a community association working towards the creation of a children's centre.
- Warwickshire County Council's Area Office team: there is a dedicated Community Participation Officer who operates with a more strategic overview than perhaps a community development remit. The Officer facilitates relationships between the public and VCS organisations and County Council Councillors or the County Council on matters such as services or land. The Officer also works with infrastructure agencies to help build up projects that the County Council may be able to support. Anecdotal evidence suggests the remit of the Officer differs from its counterparts in the other districts across the County who have more or less community participation, depending on the availability of other local services, like CVSs.

Secondary agencies include:

- Warwickshire County Council's BSN project, which operates solely across the 11 wards in the Nuneaton and Bedworth side of the CNRZ. There are 3.5 staff dedicated to working within the community, 1.5 help to coordinate social and community enterprise, 1 coordinates environmental action, and another is specifically tasked to work within the Bedworth Heath ward as Community Development Officer.
- Pride in Camp Hill operates solely in the ward of Camp Hill, managing the physical, social and environmental regeneration initiative. There is 1 post dedicated to community development support.
- Coventry and Warwickshire CDA are currently funded to operate the CHEERS project in Camp Hill only, which is an employment and training initiative.
- Nuneaton and Bedworth Leisure Trust has a dedicated Leisure Development Officer to assist sports groups and organisations and those groups who

want to develop sporting activities with advice and funding. Other officers work in partnership with voluntary and statutory organisations.

- Private, usually profit making, organisations, some of which have contracts with the Borough and/or the County Councils.

6 Findings

6.1 Community Response

26 completed questionnaires were returned in the timescale allowed; approximately 250 questionnaires were distributed with Interchange, which would represent a 10% contact and response rate; such a percentage return was expected. 88% of respondents replied using the questionnaire, 12% of questionnaires were completed via the researcher. This was carried out by the researcher throughout July 2005. The questionnaires were based around a set of 19 questions (see Appendix 9.2) with the opportunity to express other comments and opinions outside of that questionnaire structure.

It was felt to be important to gather information in this way rather than target organisations NBCVS regularly work with so a view may be gained from those who do not receive NBCVS support or may have a perception of what support NBCVS do/do not offer. 58% of respondents were from organisations who NBCVS rarely or have never been known to work with directly.

The majority of organisations who responded would be considered small voluntary organisations (the researcher, by prior knowledge, classified 73% of organisations as 'small'); because of this it was no surprise that 81% of those organisations depended on volunteers to operate, and only 9 employed staff. Only 27% operate within specific geographic communities, 73% therefore operate across the Borough or the County (2 of these are actually national organisations also). The profiles of these are shown in figures 1 and 2.

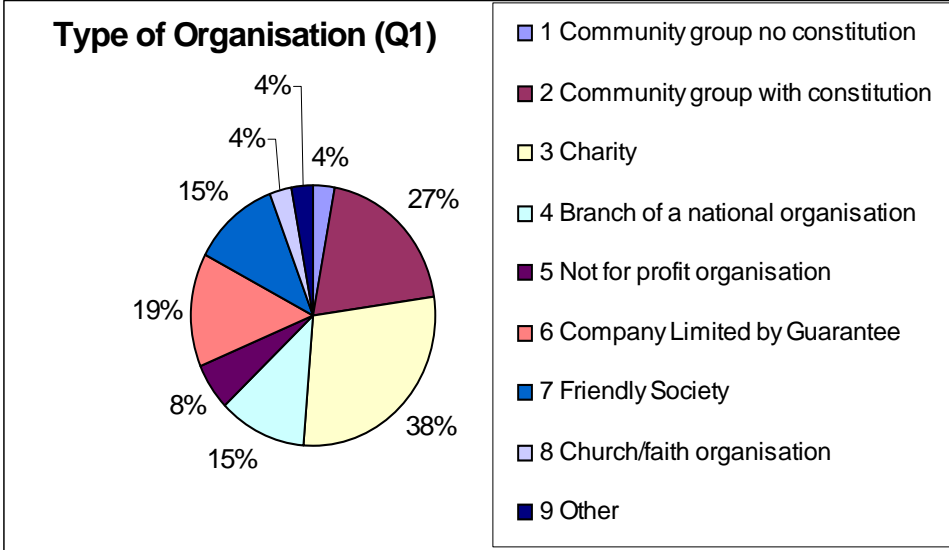


figure 1

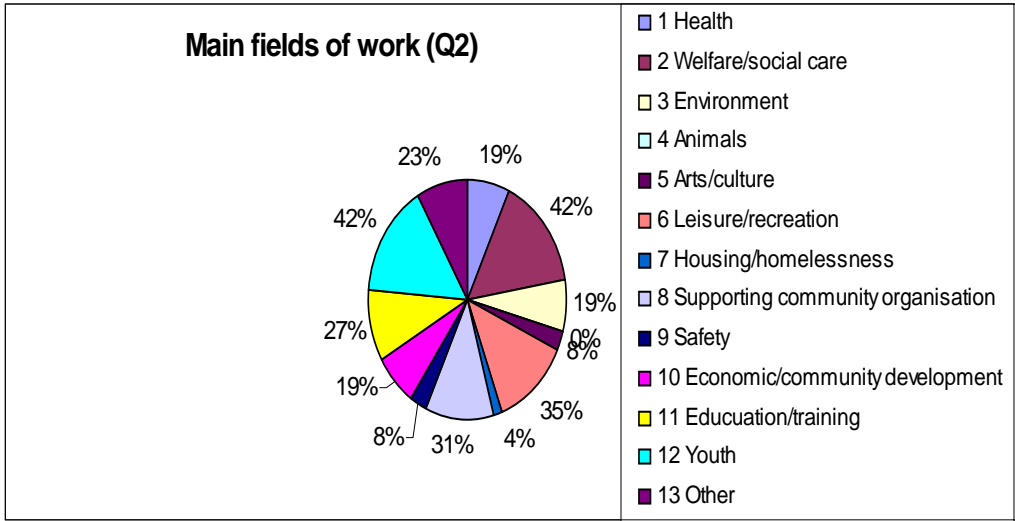


figure 2

6.2 Community Needs

Funding (the process of fundraising and accessing monies) and attracting volunteers were cited as the most common concerns of organisations that responded (shown in figure 3). Due to the average size of the organisations it is no surprise that so many shared the common concern of recruiting and retaining volunteers.

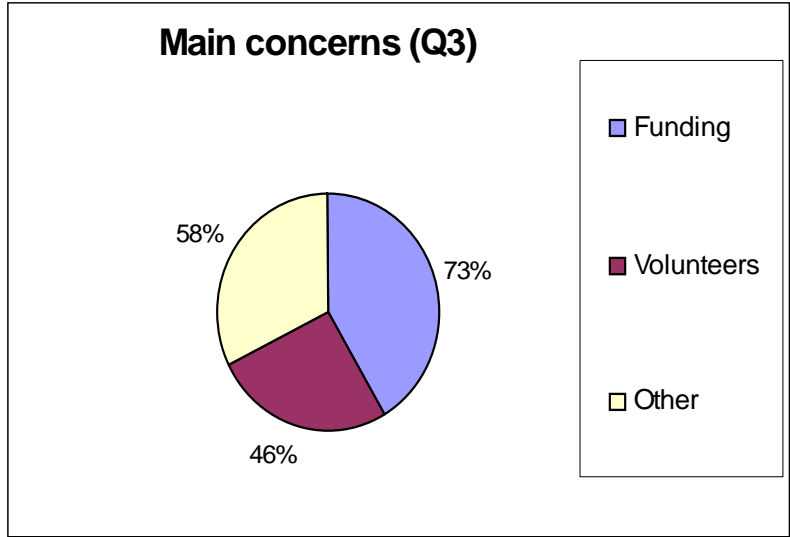


figure 3

Local authorities would perhaps argue that the VCS has never been so well off with access to its funds. For example both the Borough and County Council distributed money via their own small grants schemes and through the

Community Plan. However as with many funders the focus for these funds was on new project development rather than support for ongoing service delivery and/or core funding (as noted as an issue in section 5.1). One comment included:

"[there is] very little available for simply covering the basic costs of delivery of the service. Also the majority of funding seems to be for work with young people."

This comment also points to the concern that funders' priorities are changing, or becoming more focussed, for example the priorities within the West Midlands for Awards for All include: applications for new activities for BME communities, new activities for older people, developing organisational skills, and encouraging the use of community meeting places (as website 08/08/05).

As shown in figure 3 a further 58% had a range of, mainly ongoing, concerns that ranged from *"planning"* and *"capacity"*, to *"maintaining happy relationships within the organisation"*; many of their concerns were pertinent to their organisations only, for example *"promoting take up of benefits"*, *"lack of outdoor play area"*, or *"keeping up to date with housing legislation"*.

There were some less common answer answers, for example *"marginalisation"*, *"activism and campaigning"*, *"youth provision"* and *"supporting other local agencies"*. These concerns seemed to be in the domain of the more independent organisations that do not traditionally seek the support of NBCVS, and are concerns that NBCVS do not regularly support (as discrete areas, however these often fall in to other areas of NBCVS's work).

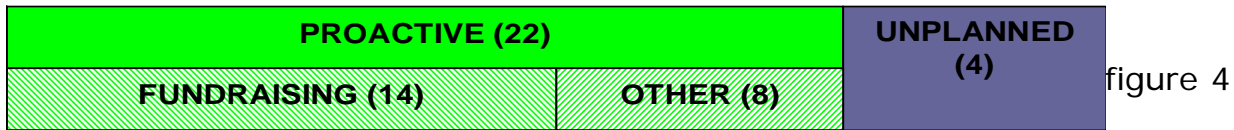
Organisations had a number of responses to how they were going to tackle their organisation's concerns, with 85%, as shown in figure 4, having a planned and proactive approach, with most including fundraising in their plans. Responses included:

"Working with CVS. Also hoping the recent building & community workers efforts will help tackle these."

"Our business plan is in place as a reference document, but all plans depend on gaining appropriate funding."

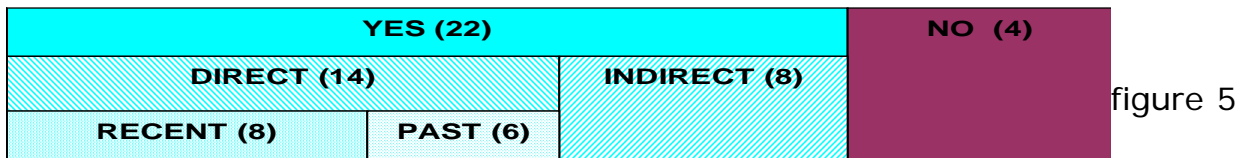
"I plan to attend more external meetings than I was able to last year, look into training opportunities, have recruitment drives for volunteers, funding plans & seek business support/sponsorships."

"Currently going through the Clubmark process to help improve our structures."



6.3 Community Support

85% of respondents had received support from NBCVS in some way, the majority of those that did had received direct support, in the way of training or funding advice for example; however there was a number of others who only claimed to have had support indirectly, in the form of information from Interchange for example (see figure 5).



If this percentage is attributed to the estimated 400 voluntary and community organisations active in Nuneaton and Bedworth then it suggests that NBCVS coverage is sound. However it must not be overlooked that there would be approximately 150 organisations that possibly do not have contact with NBCVS in any way. Relationships between community support workers across the Borough are on the whole quite close, with the practise of referring to appropriate agencies and service providers high; therefore it can be assumed that many of those organisations that are not seeking NBCVS support are independent of these support networks also.

Of the 26 respondents 13 organisations claim to have received no financial support from elsewhere (over and above one-off grants) and 10 have received no other support (advice and worker time for example). Figure 6 shows where the remaining 13 who had received financial support received their monies. Figure 7 shows where the remaining 15 who had received other support received if from.

figure 6

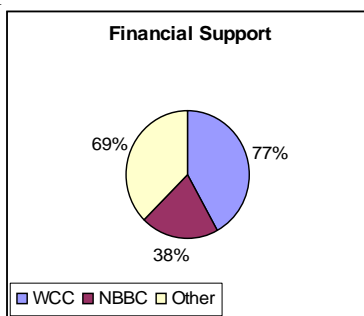
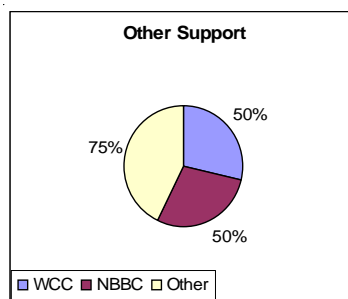


figure 7



The most common sources of 'other' financial support comes from BSN and also Primary Care Trusts (both Coventry and North Warwickshire were mentioned). The sources of 'other' support came from BSN, Coventry and Warwickshire CDA, Nuneaton and Bedworth Leisure Trust and North Warwickshire CVS.

Of the respondents 58% were affiliated to other organisations, only 2 of these offered specific financial assistance, the others received only advice and guidance, including training, policy guidance and some management support. This shows that still many organisations are run independently and there is a place for external support networks and agencies, such as local CVSs.

Over half of the respondents saw apparent changes/limitations in the type of support offered locally. Responses mostly surrounded financial issues. For example people felt there was both increasing and decreasing financial support available for covering core costs; this obviously reflects the individuals success/or failure in receiving this. The Government's ChangeUp document (see 5.2.2 for reference) recommends a positive move away from core funding to full cost recovery, something that NBCVS actively promotes in all its funding guidance. Comments included:

"Definitely greater limitations especially not getting core cost support...project funding seems wasteful of energy & resource."

"Improvement in funding for core finances, moving away from project funding...There seems to be much more available than before."

There were concerns about specific funding/support initiatives and their perceived accessibility; this accounts for national, regional and sub-regional initiatives. Comments included:

"[I feel we are] often left out of funding because it's going to statutory bodies, national organisations & large organisations like the Arena (CNRZ) & Olympics (Lottery)."

"We want to do social activities which are harder to get funded locally because it doesn't fit peoples priorities well enough, for example BSN – we don't want to get people into jobs or create a social enterprise so how can we benefit from the CNRZ?"

"All the help we've had has been linked with achieving local priorities [because we deal with social exclusion] we can help Borough & County hit their targets through partnership with us."

Some respondents pointed to the issues around NBCVS staff capacity, in terms of numbers of people able to help them and also the availability of those

people compared to what has previously been offered. In particular findings pointed to the difficulties with accessing funding support and also relevant, local and affordable/free training. For example: *"I feel that we have had less access to training from CVS than in previous years."* This statement can be qualified by the fact that there has been a 60% reduction in funding for NBCVS for its non-accredited training.

The section in the questionnaire about perceived gaps in local provision for the VCS (Q13) may have been misinterpreted by some respondents, as some referred directly to gaps in NBCVS service provision (which is analysed later in this research), however it was intended to consider more generic provision. Respondents did however give some valuable responses to additional services that would be beneficial to meet their needs:

"Too much emphasis is put on projects, there's not enough for organisations which are here for the long haul."

"I think Nuneaton & Bedworth is very well serviced, however each provider needs to be clear about what they can offer to whom."

"In Keresley support is difficult to obtain."

"CVS needs to be more proactive in supporting voluntary organisations, offering clear prices for resources/visits to organisations – as consultants would – would be good. Business advice."

"Our sector needs more communication/consultation from the 'powers that be' – locally & funders. There is still a place for the Voluntary Forum & a networking/talking shop for grassroots groups and organisations."

Note: See further comments about the Forum in 5.2.4 and 6.6.

6.4 Ways of Receiving Support

As referred to in section 5.3 there are a number of local delivery agencies currently operating in Nuneaton and Bedworth, offering support to the VCS. Each have their specialisms or specific ways of working, also most have specific targets and outputs to achieve, and there does appear to be blurred lines and grey areas differentiating the services. This can, and does, become confusing for the VCS as shown in earlier research (see 5.2.3); this was one reason this research was commissioned.

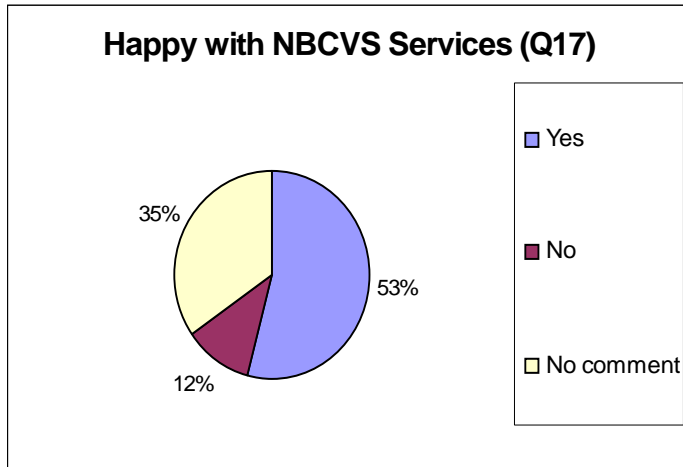


figure 8

The research did not ask for specific comments on other support delivery agencies, it only asked whether respondents were happy with NBCVS services. As shown in figure 8 the majority of respondents are 'happy' with the services, however a large number did not comment, this appeared to be on responses from those organisations who had not received NBCVS support recently or had never received it. 2 of those organisations that did not comment did however make suggestions about possible improvements:

"A website setting out the organisational structure, contacts & descriptions/post holders responsibilities etc would be helpful." Note: NBCVS has a website with staff and contact details, so it may be that this respondent is not aware of this, therefore NBCVS should consider its publicity of this.

"Better information about services & who provides them."

This latter comment possibly backs up the confusion the VCS feel about local service providers. 3 respondents who said they were happy with NBCVS services did however also comment negatively about accessibility issues.

Those respondents who said they were not happy with NBCVS services and explained this seemed to be around a lack of clarity by NBCVS about the services provided.

"It seems to be very limited in what it can help with – not sure if it can/does offer more than (predominantly) training & funding advice. Needs to diversify more to meet the more complex & increasingly professional needs of the sector – more staff with more 'professional' capacity."

"I'd have to say no as I don't understand what it does: CVS is something that is perceived but not properly understood, it's not something that engenders

ownership or understanding of what it is or its services...[you also need to] show you're accessible."

Whilst this research will not state actual comments made about other service providers, it must be emphasised that NBCVS is often requested to intervene as independent mediators when other organisations or agencies have previously been involved and perhaps made mistakes or given misinformation; this assistance is not funded whereas the initial 'incorrect' assistance often was. The findings highlighted this from a number of respondents. Figure 9 illustrates this issue.

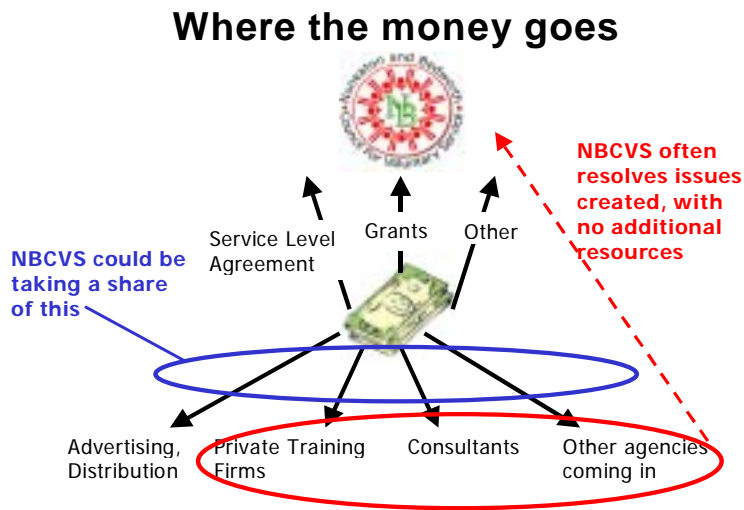


figure 9

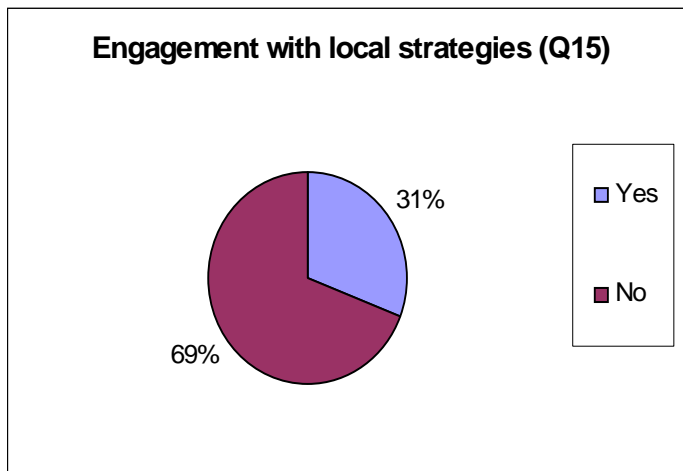


figure 10

Consultation and engagement with strategy is considered a large part of the support offered to the community. However answers to the question about how much respondents knew about local strategies such as the CNRZ or Community Plan (Q14), understanding was surprisingly low with only 13% knowing anything tangible of these. Figure 10 demonstrates how many people have engaged with these.

The Community Plan seems to be the one that most organisations knew something about with 6 organisations stating they had engaged by attending meetings.

It must therefore be questioned why so few people have engaged, and is it a failing of those leading agencies to muster the necessary support and community 'buy in' for what the strategies are trying to achieve. Respondents made some interesting comments on this subject:

"As a national organisation it is difficult to create roots in one area."

"Strategies are good, but I feel they pay lip service to consultation; the outcomes are intangible & it's difficult to raise enthusiasm... We're expected to attend but often little 'in it' for us – we want it to be clear we can gain or add value to the planning/strategy."

"[Often] consultation happens during day time which I can't get to because I work full time."

"Perhaps a report would do justice to this!"

"[I attended some meetings about] the Community Plan – although unsure about the exact purpose of some of the meetings."

The willingness to pay for services to the VCS was also considered in the research. There were equal numbers of people who would and would not pay for services; this was also split 50:50 between small and large organisations. Some clearly acknowledge that they must pay for some services, for example specialist training, however many stated they are simply not in the position currently to pay for support.

The type of support to be paid for was purposefully not defined in the questionnaire as it was hoped respondents would differentiate between levels of possible support, for example generic support and specialist or professional support, however few did. Comments included:

" [We] expect a certain level of support for free; we're fortunate to have access to people who could do work for us, but we would expect to pay for specialist work if we didn't have the contacts."

" The type of support we need for some things will need to be paid for. However we would expect some offered freely or because of partnership agreements."

" If we could get the funds...[although the provider would need to] prove their worth."

When asked whether they would pay for support from NBCVS 58% of respondents said they would, but again the questionnaire did not specify types of support that could be paid for although respondents did qualify their reasons more to this question. This figure should be seen as encouraging, however the 42% of those who would not pay must also be considered and their reasons why, is this because they need further clarification on types/levels of support, or is it something about NBCVS why they would not pay? Comments from those who would pay include:

" We would pay an annual affiliation fee to CVS if it entitled us to certain work. We'd pay CVS for specific & in-depth work - as long as we could get the funding for it."

" I'd be willing to pay for training as I do for other services I use."

" If we knew we'd receive the same quality as we would from professional consultants & I imagine CVS would be more competitively priced. It would be for the business plan work, specific training, possibly more in-depth funding development plans, however we would expect free 'standard' support."

" Why should CVS be free - businesses expect to have to pay...so why should community expect anything different (apart from free from the local authority)?"

6.5 Specialist Services

'Specialist services' can be split in to two distinct types of work: that available for different 'communities' and also specialist services for a more in-depth level of work. Currently the level of capacity to deliver either of these types of service in any great depth is not available via NBCVS. In regard to the former its services are open and appropriate for all, and the latter could be provided,

however the organisation does not publicise openly that this can be done; this inevitably incurs more staff time and resource which is unavailable, therefore would have to be provided on a paid-for basis. This is not how NBCVS currently operates, however this may need to be one of the recommendations of this study.

Specialist support for 'communities' is however available from other organisations, for example both the Borough and County Councils offer support to VCS BME organisations from specific workers/ departments, and enterprising organisations can be supported both financially and with targeted assistance by BSN (if targets/outputs are appropriate they can help with business plans, cash flow forecasts etc, as well as funding). This can be compared to the more 'generic' assistance offered by NBCVS. It can be noted however that NBCVS have a very good reputation for working with BME organisations, which form a high percentage of its 'client' base. Furthermore NBCVS deals with many organisations who have their aims to be more enterprising, from guidance on organisational change, legal issues and employment to funding advice.

None of the respondents pointed to a specific need for specialist support, in terms of particular 'community' provision, however some did point to needing support for more in-depth work. This reflects the general trend in requests made to NBCVS, which is why it is currently in the process of developing a set of 'First Steps' documents, funded by Warwickshire County Council, to be used by CVSs across the County as consistent guidance and templates for the VCS, including business plans, constitutions and policies.

This more 'professional' approach to developing organisations is a reflection of those organisations need to become more strategic in their approaches to seeking funding, and also may be a need to develop their service provision, and possibly in the direction of public service delivery. It is this shift that was an outcome of the Government's 2002 Cross Cutting Review, and is pointed to directly in ChangeUp (see 5.2.2) and HM Treasury's document (referred to in 5.2.6). However it must be noted that only 1 respondent inferred they would be looking to deliver public services (this was however a branch of a large national organisation).

It seems that most of the respondents have been fortunate enough to so far receive their support freely, and have not had to seek support via paid-for channels; those larger organisations who have had to seek more in-depth support, for example business planning, have sometimes received this from local service delivery agencies, however each had their conditions. For example one organisation stated that BSN were able to produce a business plan because they are based in the Regeneration Zone, another had support from Coventry and Warwickshire CDA because they had funding to specifically help Credit Unions.

Other organisations, like NBCVS, are therefore needed to assist all those other organisations that may also need this kind of support, which means working practises are becoming more diverse, however funding for this type of support is increasingly difficult to secure because it may be considered *too* generic. Alternatively some VCS organisations have often had to manage the work themselves, or depend on the skills of committee members. There does therefore appear to be a gap in provision which is to be filled by NBCVS, however as referred to earlier internal capacity and resource inhibits this, and many respondents, it is clear, are not aware of the exact services that NBCVS is able to offer. Comments include:

"May approach CVS if we knew that they could provide it, however I don't think they do, so we'd expect to pay for external consultancy."

"[We would seek] funding help from CVS; more experienced support is offered by others for personnel/employment issues & business planning."

"We would possibly employ a consultant to assist in progressing the delivery of our business plan to develop a more practical/delivery-driven document."

It is clear therefore that some organisations feel they would not approach NBCVS for more in-depth support anyway, let alone pay for it as discussed in section 6.1.3. There does therefore seem to be issues around the image of NBCVS portray, and peoples understanding of what it is and is not capable of providing, unless they have actually received more in-depth (irregular) support. This will be discussed further in the report's conclusions (see section 7).

6.6 Future Support

The majority of those asked whether they would actively seek future support from NBCVS confirmed they would (see figure 11). Those who said they would not confirmed they would seek others assistance in the first instance: *"We would seek support from other organisations - CVS has not offered [it]."*

Development and expansion of services was a key theme that was identified under future plans, however the most popular answer to the type of future support people need was advice and help around funding, with needs around seeking the most appropriate funders and help with completing applications. This seems to indicate that organisations are linking development purely to increasing funds, and in turn the type of help they will seek from NBCVS.

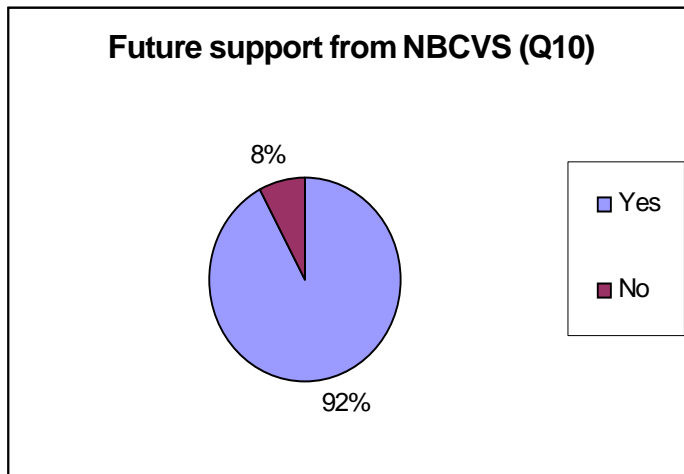


figure 11

In the context of future support that the VCS felt should be provided by other local agencies, included suggestions:

- *"A clear commitment to core funding."*
 - Note: NBCVS are positively employing a policy of full cost recovery as opposed to core funding with its own bids, as implied in ChangeUp (for reference see section 5.2.2), encouraging groups to do this in all their funding applications, and advocating this to funders.
- *"[There is] too much reliance of voluntary organisations to find information for themselves & doing the Government's work (national and local)...Perhaps the Borough should take on the Voluntary Forum so they have a better understanding of who's doing what where."*
 - Note: NBCVS provides up to date information via its website and Interchange on local and national issues of importance to the VCS; it offers the opportunity for advertising and promotion to others. The Borough Council has a 'Community' section on its website also.
- *"I do feel support for groups can be hit & miss from the local authority."*
 - Note: NBCVS has long been concerned with the consistency of support available from other local delivery agencies.
- *"[The local authority] need to be providing more information & bringing the sector together in a more strategic way - encouraging our participation in wider strategies so we understand more."*
 - Note: NBCVS is often felt to be responsible for this, but communication and resource is often a barrier, and the VCS sector must themselves also be represented. NBCVS were involved in the Voluntary Forum (an independent Forum which has been suspended, see 5.2.4 and 6.6) and continues to be involved with the Community Plan.

- *"Confirmed & ongoing funding for [agencies like CVS] for the provision of certain accepted & necessary structures, for example treasury [so we can get on with] providing community support that the [local authority] is aiming to achieve."*
 - Note: NBCVS is in receipt of funding from both the County and Borough Councils, however each are currently under review and not an ongoing certainty.
- *"Further community development of centrally owned & delivered services & facilities."*
- *"Advice centres."*
 - Note: NBCVS is part of a consortium to build a centrally located multi-agency community resource centre.
- *"Increased volunteer bureau outreach."*
- *"Business advice. Low cost accommodation. Opportunities for partnership bids. Support voluntary sector in a proactive way rather than them creating new charities or groups."*
 - Note: NBCVS sits on the board of BSN which, as mentioned in section 5.3, was established to improve opportunities for training and employment and create and support community enterprises in the 11 CNRZ wards across Nuneaton and Bedworth. Coventry and Warwickshire CDA also provide support to community enterprise and businesses, but is only funded to work in Camp Hill.

These suggestions will be presented to local partners as part of the recommendations and dissemination of this research.

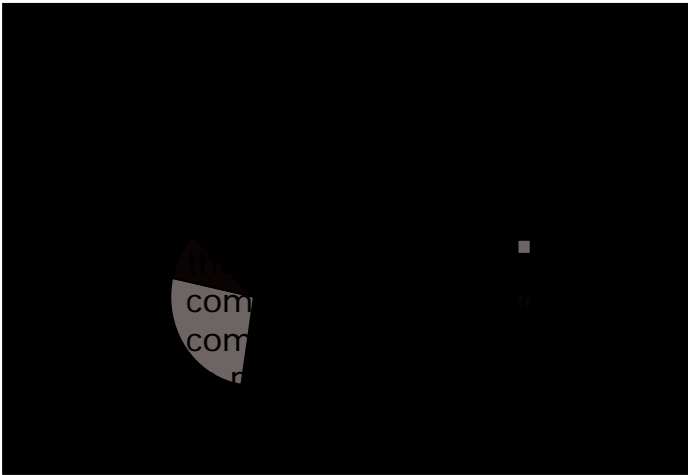
No groups stated they were unsatisfied with the support that was available and they were receiving locally in general, although some did indicate specific problems with specific agencies. Therefore it could be assumed that most groups are happy with services and the way they are being provided, however there could be improvements made. The following were some of the recommendations respondents made about extending NBCVS services:

- Handling employment issues/acting as employer on behalf smaller organisations
- Consultation on behalf of an organisation
- Marketing support (direct) and advice (indirect), including recruitment advertising/job opportunities
- Managing payroll/accounts/treasury service
 - Note: NBCVS are currently working in collaboration with North Warwickshire CVS to provide financial services in Nuneaton and Bedworth
- More extensive training
- Business planning and social enterprise support
- IT information and website creation/hosting
- Visits and formal presentations to organisations by NBCVS to explain/'sell' services

- Provision of a 'professionals' directory/sourcing service, for example solicitors, accountants, architects, builders
 - Note: there is a national network called 'ProHelp', run by Business in the Community, which lists local professional firms who provide free or discounted services to the VCS, however in the West Midlands these lists are limited to Birmingham and Staffordshire

Many of these suggestions seem to point towards more consultancy-type services, however all are resource and capacity heavy, unachievable in current circumstances. As a more achievable solution information and communication provision was highlighted in the questionnaire, which respondents were asked to openly comment on. This provides valuable insight into how future needs can be better served, and the ways in which the VCS expect to receive indirect support from NBCVS.

figure 12



respondents would prefer to receive information in
 VCS could do to improve its current
 respondents stated they would prefer more
 the Internet, although most wanted to continue
 evidence also. Comments about expanding the use

"Interchange is OK, but not regular enough – I understand it costs money to produce so perhaps email newsletters could be done too - also shows community what they too can practically achieve."

"Email is good - I'd like to be on a more regular mailing list (maybe monthly)."

"Provide fact sheets online - e.g. about the Community Plan and the Regeneration Zone – easy guides and introductions to complex strategies & pieces of work - there's too many assumptions we all know everything."

Note: NBCVS is the lead partner in developing First Steps (see 6.1.4) and a website; this work could possibly be extended to produce a glossary or jargon section, which would also be appropriate on NBCVS's own website.

The use of IT seems to suggest people do not want to see existing forms of communications disappear, but increase and add value to communication channels (3 people commented on increasing the regularity of communication).

6 respondents commented they value receiving hard copy correspondence, in particular Interchange. A further 2 respondents stated however that Interchange was not a valuable resource, one comment stated: "*[other newsletters] send more information that is more useful... In Interchange I often only look at the funding section. It would be nice to hear about what other groups are doing & what actually CVS does on a day-to-day basis. Communication needs to be less formal in getting people involved, starting with Interchange.*"

Note: Often where newsletters are professionally produced and well received there is a paid officer in post, and/or the newsletter is funded.

Note: One of the recommendations currently being investigated within the CWLDA is collaborative work and shared resources, one of which may be all the County CVSs developing a joint newsletter.

Additional suggestions about improving/extending communications included:

"Information sheets on meeting venues, Borough facilities, sector changes. A less formal news circular to make the reader feel part of something."

"Self praise is something that CVS has never done: [you should] advertise good & bad responses from community/who's been successful in fundraising or project delivery with help of CVS."

2 respondents made particular comment about NBCVS running events (over and above its training programme). NBCVS does feel this is a valuable avenue to pursue, capacity and resource allowing:

"...The Voluntary Forum had the potential to work well to transmit information but it just stopped - why?"

Note: The Voluntary Forum was financially supported by a post at NBCVS, funding for this ended in March 2005. Reference to this post and the Forum partnership was made in an earlier NBCVS study (see section 5.2.4). Also the committee made a decision that it would not be a decision-making 'organisation'; therefore there is a likelihood that they will find it difficult to get future funding. There is the suggestion that if agencies want this to continue then they should make a contribution to the running of it if they want it to be sustained/maintained.

"Perhaps running events on [complex strategies & pieces of work like the Community Plan or the Regeneration Zone]...also information events about employment issues, or what core cost Vs full cost recovery is for example."

Note: NBCVS has and will continue to host information events on issues when it felt it to be appropriate. For example when the CNRZ was launched NBCVS did not want to raise expectations about the possibility of funding, whereas Coventry CVS publicised this, however due to issues within the CNRZ no funding was available and their reputation within the VCS was damaged.

7 Conclusions

This research had a clear focus to identify the needs of the VCS in Nuneaton and Bedworth, and how best NBCVS can support the estimated 400 plus groups and organisations working here. Initial analysis of the results gained in this consultation point towards issues of funding, especially for covering core costs and long-term sustainability. However there are still a large number of 'hidden' organisations who do not engage through the normal routes with support organisations, like NBCVS and Borough or County Council departments; it will be difficult to understand the needs of these organisations until a clearer picture can be gained of where they are operating so service delivery agencies may target them more precisely than at present.

It was also the aim of the research to investigate if the provision of support matches VCS need. It can be answered that the area does appear to be fairly well serviced by a number of delivery agencies, with no large gaps identified, apart from the common VCS problems around funding, and also information communication. There does however appear to be a need for a more consolidated and consistent approach across those agencies and support providers.

Many respondents to the research had a limited understanding of the range and type of support available to them via infrastructure organisations like NBCVS or from statutory providers, many making suggestions about services that were already provided. This is a clear indication that all service delivery agencies must be a lot clearer about their publicity and advertising of services. Comments made in the research should be considered in the light of the VCS's perception about NBCVS's services and the organisation:

"[some of] the sector are rooted in their own traditions - more heed should be taken of evolving their roles in long term."

"I feel CVS offer a wide range of services but community groups (particularly faith community) are not sufficiently aware of the range & scale of what is on offer."

"It's all about partnership working, we don't understand properly what CVS does & they don't understand what we do; it's about perception &...often that's wrong. At the moment I don't see any benefits to affiliation."

These comments back up the argument that those organisations that do not regularly deal with NBCVS have a misunderstanding of the services and the organisation. These misconceptions can be tackled with clearer marketing and better communication; if an organisation was to work with NBCVS more regularly then they may have a very different opinion.

NBCVS have already begun to tackle this by going through a process of re-branding its marketing materials to bring its image more up to date, and is also being more proactive about self-promotion. In the past NBCVS have preferred the VCS themselves to shine and take credit, however there is an increasing realisation that it must also talk about itself to generate not only local support and increase 'business', but also to promote understanding of the organisation and its role (which is a clear finding within this research.)

It is essential for the effectiveness and sustainability of service providers, like NBCVS, to take on a developmental and consultative approach to reassessing their current service provision and considering new services to ensure they are the most appropriate they can be.

If service delivery agencies are fulfilling the community's *actual* needs rather than what is thought is needed it can be expected there will be greater community 'buy-in' to the organisation, as long as it is made explicitly clear about what can and cannot be delivered and to whom; thus not raising expectations. The greater the community feel 'ownership' of an organisation and its services, because ultimately all service delivery agencies are operating for the VCS, the stronger the sector will be.

The key local service delivery agencies should be working together to manage the expectations of the VCS, and to ensure that as far as possible the needs that they have identified as key to their development can be met. This should be led by NBCVS in a coordinated approach.

In light of the work that is currently happening within the CWLDA there is closer collaborative working across the County, and the different ways that infrastructure agencies work is under review by chief officers. However there is still a gap in formal networking locally between the main service delivery agencies, for example those listed in section 5.3. These organisations are still, in the majority, working in isolation of one another, there are no formal requirements to work in partnership or collaborate, to share successes or avoid duplication; this does however happen to a large extent informally, but is reliant on individual personalities.

There needs to be a greater emphasis and drive to bring these dislocated agencies together, and perhaps should be within the remit of each 'community development worker'; this could then be reported on not only internally but also to the VCS. This process directly considers the comments made about inconsistency, and sometimes inferiority, of support; it should be the responsibility of all agencies, working in a Compact compliant way to ensure their employees are "adequately trained" to work with the community (see 5.2.5) to create the conditions for success.

Without doubt the greatest need among respondents to the research surrounded accessing and gaining funding so the VCS may continue to provide its services. An expectation of funding from local authorities seemed to be a common issue within the research; at present this is distributed via 'small' community grants schemes, and also in 2005 via the Community Plan; both Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council also have practises that commission specific services from the VCS, which at present are limited (note: NBCVS is a recipient of funding in this manner from both Councils). Obviously NBCVS cannot access funding on any scale to assist the VCS directly, but can continue to provide the services to indirectly support the process. NBCVS are the only local organisation who, since 1999, have provided independent, unrestricted advice on funding across the Borough; offering both on the ground and strategic guidance.

At present this means having a dedicated Funding Officer with responsibility to support both the VCS and work with funders to increase awareness and opportunities, having an Officer to assist the VCS achieving quality standards, and offering 1:1 and training support to build community capacity. NBCVS have also secured funding from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust for a full time community development post from September 2005; it is also seeking additional funding to extend its training capacity and develop surgery sessions with its entire staff to ensure they are more accessible. These measures also go some of the way to respond to criticism from some respondents about NBCVS staff capacity and availability.

The surgery sessions will also increase the flexibility and extent of the services provided by NBCVS. This will be a smarter working practise for NBCVS, that is to say it will be able to extend its services without having to employ more staff/increase staff hours, without abandoning its crucial outreach work (which was of noted importance to a number of respondents). There could also be the possibility in the future of partnering with local 'professionals', for example accountants and solicitors, to offer pro bono support. Micro-training can also be provided in these sessions without incurring the financial and staff cost and time of a full training programme.

In line with meeting the VCS's main concerns it is clear from the research that above funding, as already mentioned, there are a diverse mix of needs (58% of respondents had concerns other than volunteers and funding). The majority of these needs can be defined as mediation and peer support needs, which can be supported by NBCVS; this role is probably the most underestimated and imprecise. As stated previously NBCVS offers 'generalist' support to any group or organisation across the Borough, unlike many other agencies who have restrictions on their work. There may be an argument that NBCVS should too be specialising its services, however it would be a concern that this would marginalize the VCS further. Therefore its approach remains generic and

The role as mediator and offering peer support is often personnel resource heavy, and if carried out in any more depth than is currently provided cannot be sustained without seeking further funding; however as mentioned above it is an imprecise service to get specific funding for. Currently this is provided on an ad-hoc basis, which means it can be 'fitted in' and contained within available staff hours, as an exception rather than rule. Therefore this specialist service is not promoted, which has the knock-on effect of few people knowing it can be done. The diverse staff at NBCVS are its strongest resource, their depth of expertise and transferable skills help the organisation to adapt to given situations and adapt its services to the needs of the VCS.

NBCVS do however have the ability to signpost to specialists, but there is the further argument that it should extending and diversifying its services to provide more specialist offerings, therefore increasing capacity, staff and ability to draw down funding. The findings show that most respondents would expect to pay for a level of specialist support, and would pay NBCVS for this cost allowing, so this could be an avenue for NBCVS to explore further. The findings suggest that all respondents are seeking to further develop their organisations, however as stated in 6.1.4 only 1 organisation spoke of delivering public services, so this indicates that their expected, current, development plans are limited. The situation in Nuneaton and Bedworth appears therefore not to be in line with Government expectations of current VCS capacity and its readiness to deliver public services.

There is strong emphasis within the findings about improved communication with the VCS. This is an area where it seems all service delivery agencies could improve; not only about their services but also about general information that affects the VCS. A more consolidated local approach to signposting and information provision is perhaps more crucial than ever in light of the number of service delivery agencies and the types and ways of supporting the VCS.

Suggestions included the benefits achieved in attending events, for example the Voluntary Forum was seen as a potentially useful information channel (see comments in 6.6), or increasing NBCVS training. The greatest number of comments surrounded NBCVS's provision of information and the clearest indication that there should be more use made of email and the Internet, and smarter use of its newsletter.

Communication can also be improved by increasing the VCS's involvement and engagement in strategy; from the research this seems to have been limited to engaging when funding has been available (CNRZ, Community Plan, Crime Reduction Partnership for example), therefore there appears to be little wider understanding of strategies. There needs to be a greater emphasis made by all partners within strategies affecting the locality to engage with the VCS more effectively, to increase information and tackle the notion within groups that

there has to be 'something in it' for them to engage (see 5.2.3 for similar recommendation in an earlier study).

Gaining evidence from research such as this is an important way for service delivery agencies to maintain communication channels between them and the VCS. Unless they are told what the needs are, where the gaps are, what is being done right (and wrong) the sector will never grow and move forward.

8 Recommendations

- This research should be disseminated as widely as possible among local service delivery agencies, who should be brought together as appropriate to discuss the results of this research and how the findings and recommendations may be approached and resolved for the future.
- Communication should be developed and increased:
 - NBCVS should continue to seek to increase its capacity to ensure the practical assistance it is renowned for can increase and be maintained and sustained. NBCVS also recognises the need to seek funding for an information post to ensure the issues raised in this study are tackled with regard to communication.
 - Further developing a 2-way conversation with the VCS; the onus should also be on the VCS to inform service delivery agencies like NBCVS just as much as those informing the VCS – they are after all the experts in their fields. For example NBCVS asks to be kept informed and anyone can promote relevant information/news in Interchange.
 - NBCVS must further develop its surgery sessions to ensure it is accessible to the VCS and also being flexible in its service delivery. Visitors to NBCVS should be monitored now and when surgeries are running to compare the change in staff working practises.
 - A training suite could be developed as a direct result of this.
 - Non-accredited training can be offered more regularly, and this will prove the case for additional, hard to attain, funding.
 - NBCVS should continue to look at methods of dissemination of information, including looking at increasing its use of email and the Internet, perhaps creating email distribution lists for sending newsletters more often (perhaps monthly), not only saving time and money but also increasing provision. The process of which can be aided by NBCVS continuing to develop its 'online office' database:
 - A targeted approach to contacting organisations with the most up to date and appropriate information.
 - Partners will also have access to the system (data protection allowing).
 - Facilitates the smarter use of statistics, developing stronger monitoring and evaluation of projects, including its use in increasing NBCVS's marketing and qualitative evidence for funding.
 - Regular analysis informs ongoing organisational development.
 - One of the recommendations from an earlier NBCVS study (see 5.2.4) was increasing information through structured information

sessions; on the whole people do not want to be involved in 2-way forums unless there is tangible action and they can gain something by their involvement.

- Events could also be extended to include, possibly an annual, community awards ceremony, which is motivational for the VCS and increases promotion of NBCVS and the VCS.
- NBCVS should define itself more clearly: it is after all what the VCS want it to be (as all service delivery agencies should be). A start has been made with this with initial rebranding but this does need further development:
 - Increased promotion and case studies about the types of work regularly done, and also those less regular, discrete, pieces of work to promote the diversity of work and capacity; this can be done and updated regularly online and via Interchange. For example NBCVS helped establish Nuneaton & Bedworth Doorway, it helped draw down money and managed for the first year the Healthy Living Network, and in the past year has acted as independent mediator where insolvency has impacted on an organisation and their way forward.
 - The perception by some of NBCVS as having a traditional approach should be actively disproved through its marketing and self-promotion, but also by its staff; often the first impression of an organisation is its building and perhaps NBCVS should consider its reception and entrance as a place to strengthen its self-promotion whilst the Voluntary Sector Consortium building is still at planning stage (see 6.6). There is also a case for more clearly defining the ethos, expectations (and often) 'limitations' of the VCS.
 - NBCVS should look to increase recognition amongst others of the contribution it makes to helping local groups and its interventions.
 - NBCVS should consider developing a list of 'additional' services, however the capacity must be in place to be able to deliver these services should anyone want the help/be in a position to pay for more in-depth work. NBCVS must carefully consider the payment for services, appropriate pricing structures and affiliation fees.
- Further research is necessary to discover the actual breadth, depth and value of the VCS in the sub-region, for example numbers of paid staff and volunteers, how many are looking at public service delivery.
 - The Government is currently researching this (see 5.2.6) but perhaps as this has not shown itself to be a major issue in this research does it mean Nuneaton and Bedworth has an under-developed VCS? Is Nuneaton and Bedworth ready for the Government's suggestions? Is it this far forward or something that will happen in the next 5 years, 10 years?
- Networking should be a 'remit' rather than an 'accident'; it should be ensured that everyone is aware of others roles and responsibilities; discussion needs to happen at management level, perhaps among

those agencies as listed in 5.3, about efficient and consistent community development practises.

- NBCVS should lead these discussions and collaborate with others to seek funding to develop a strategy for working in the VCS across all local agencies.
- NBCVS should also seek the recognition locally as the experts of the VCS, and the first port of call on all practical and technical issues. This includes defining the ethos of the VCS more clearly to some local service delivery agencies, ensuring it is understood and adhered to, also the roles of (and differences between) volunteers and paid staff.

9 Appendices

9.1 Membership of the CWLDA

Coventry Council for Voluntary Youth Services
Coventry and Warwickshire CDA
Coventry Voluntary Service Council
Development Team, Coventry Diocese
Nuneaton and Bedworth Council for Voluntary Service
Nuneaton and Bedworth Volunteer Centre
North Warwickshire Council for Voluntary Service
North Warwickshire Volunteer Centre
Rugby Council for Voluntary Service
Rugby Volunteer Centre
Stratford Council for Voluntary Service
Stratford Volunteer Centre
Volunteering Coventry
Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs
Warwickshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services
Warwick District Council for Voluntary Service
Warwick District Volunteer Centre
Warwickshire Rural Community Council

9.2 Community Questionnaire

Community Need

An investigation into service provision and future need

Organisation Name

Contact Name

About your organisation

Q1 What type of organisation are you? (please tick all that apply)

Community group, without a constitution or set of written rules

Community group, with a constitution or set of written rules

Registered charity (including exempt or excepted charities)

Branch of a national voluntary organisation

Other non-profit organisation

Company limited by guarantee

Registered Friendly Society or Industrial and Provident Society

Church/faith organisation

Other (please state)

- Q2 What are your main fields of work? (please tick all that apply)
- Health
 - Welfare/social care
 - Environment
 - Animals
 - Arts/culture
 - Leisure/recreation
 - Housing/homelessness
 - Supporting/working with community/voluntary groups
 - Community safety/criminal justice
 - Economic/community development
 - Education/research/training
 - Play/youth work
 - Other (please specify)
- Q3 As an organisation what are your main concerns, e.g. planning, capacity, volunteers, funding etc?
- Q4 What (if any) plans are in place to tackle these concerns?
- Q5 Are you affiliated any other organisation/s? If so what support do they give you?
- Q6 What support have you received from Nuneaton & Bedworth Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)?
- Q7 What support have you been offered or received from other local organisations, public, private or voluntary, e.g. Borough Council, Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods, private firms?
- Q8 Have you noticed any changes in the type of support offered/any conditions or limitations?

Future Support

- Q9 What future support will you need?
- Q10 Would you seek this support from CVS or another organisation? Why?
- Q11 Would you be willing to pay for support?
- Q12 Would you pay CVS for support? If so for what type of support?
- Q13 Do you see any gaps in local provision, e.g. support, voluntary action?

Local Strategies

- Q14 What do you know/understand about the Coventry & Nuneaton Regeneration Zone, Local Strategic Partnership & Community Plan?
- Q15 Have you engaged with these in any way? Please describe your experience of this.
- Q16 Have you engaged with these in any way? Please describe your experience of this.

CVS Services

- Q17 Are you happy with the way in which CVS can offer assistance? Would you recommend any changes to the way in which our services are provided?
- Q18 What services could CVS provide that it isn't already?
- Q19 In terms of CVS communicating information, what format is best, what else can CVS do/ provide that it isn't already?
- Q20 Any other comments
- Q21 Would you be happy to allow CVS to write a short case study about your organisation and its experiences about receiving support? YES NO

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9.4 Glossary of terms

BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BSN	Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods
CDA	Cooperative Development Agency
CNRZ	Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone
CVS	Council for Voluntary Service
CWLDACoventry and Warwickshire Local Development Agency	
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NBCVSNuneaton and Bedworth Council for Voluntary Service	
VCS	Voluntary and community sector