

# WEST SUSSEX SOCIAL ENTERPRISE STEERING GROUP (WSSESG) ACTION PLAN 2007-2009

June 2007

This is a reviewed document (from the action plan submitted to SEEDA in 2005) that aims at providing more focus in the activities delivered by the WSSESG. It takes into account changes in support provision and organisations occurred over the last two years.

Deadlines on outputs have been fixed only for the first year with a view to adjust these if necessary after March 2008.

## OUR VISION

"We want to create an environment where social enterprise can grow and thrive and play its full part in contributing to the sustainable development of West Sussex".

Our vision recognises that:

- social enterprise is a tool to achieve smart growth in our county,
- it helps diversifying the economy base,
- it contributes to create an inclusive economy where all can play a part in raising sustainable productivity.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

- I. To actively promote social enterprise and what it can accomplish in West Sussex.
- II. To enable and facilitate an environment where social enterprises are supported and can support each other.

## **I. To actively promote social enterprise and what it can accomplish in West Sussex**

The three themes or group of activities proposed under **Objective I** aim to contribute to the following strategic priorities:

### **Help recognise the potential and raise awareness on social enterprise**

We are working to enable a wider audience to know more about social enterprise by disseminating information and best practice via the web or literature made available. This will raise awareness about social enterprise and what it can achieve.

Becoming more enterprising allows funding dependent initiatives to survive well after the funding is entirely or partially gone. Realising this entrepreneurial potential is essential to ensure activity amongst the community and voluntary sector is not constrained or indeed restricted by funding issues.

Self-sustaining social enterprise activity can make an enormous contribution to the economy in the county. As businesses they naturally contribute towards creating a wealthier economy. As organisations with strong social objectives they help the public sector saving resources. In addition to this their beneficiaries are very often local to the organisation, as are their employees.

Social enterprise, as a business model, has to be understood and put in the right context; some organisations will find this approach useful when the services or products they offer cover a gap in the market. For these organisations, the cultural shift relies on clear, up to date information, made available to the right audience on a customised basis to enable them to justify their decision to change.

As part of our activity to raise awareness we will also ensure that social enterprise achievements and successes are celebrated. We will aim for this information to reach a wide and varied audience even outside of the usual networks.

Finally the events proposed will aim to raise awareness of social enterprise as well as of the support available. In addition the event to be held in January will be focused on showcasing business models to help the social enterprises participating promote their products and services.

**Ensure social enterprise is taken into account when developing key policies:**

- **Procurement**
- **LAA**

Social enterprises should be made aware of the plethora of opportunities that the public sector represents for small local businesses. Accessing public contracts could make the difference between achieving financial sustainability or not. To make this happen support needs to concentrate on developing the capacity of social enterprises so they are able to meet the needs of the public sector.

Likewise raising awareness amongst the whole of the public sector on how social enterprises are efficient and reliable providers should be a priority because of the benefits that social enterprise can bring into public services delivery. Equally, the public sector needs to know about the barriers they face to access public procurement contracts so policies and processes are not exclusive of social enterprise.

The Local Area Agreement aims to align resources and partners to achieve common objectives. Social enterprises as business models which are set to achieve a double or triple bottom line should feature in the LAA and have acknowledged their role in building up sustainable communities.

-----**ACTIONS TO BE DELIVERED**-----

**Gathering and disseminating information, knowledge and best practice**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Budget (£)</b>
An information bulletin	Monthly bulletin produced	Monthly from Sep 06	ICIS	£700- WSCC
Web Page for the West Sussex Social Enterprise Network (WSEN)	Accessible information on web pages	Dec 07	WSSESG (WSCC lead)	£10,000-WSCC

Write and publish fact sheets	2 fact sheets produced and published	Nov 07	SEAs	£250-WSCC
Write and publish case studies	6 case studies produced and published	March 08	WSCC	£250-WSCC
Capture baseline data for a sample of 6 social enterprises currently trading (part of the Profit Net programme)	Financial information in database	September 07	Brighton Uni	N/A
Monitor increase in trading as a percentage of income for the 6 social enterprises as above	Development recorded to inform future support strategy in West Sussex	September 08	Brighton Uni SEAs	N/A
Provision of quality information and support services to Social Enterprises, to enable them to plan the development and growth of their individual organisations	Training and development of dedicated Social Enterprise Business Advisers, located at Business Link and other partner organisations, who provide quality one-to-one advice and support to social enterprises, etc.  Raised awareness of this dedicated support throughout WSSSEN Network, to aid referrals into the specialist service	On Going	SEAs	From £10,000 SLA
Enabling social enterprises the opportunity to access brokerage services and support from both mainstream commercial consultancy groups and also support from other social enterprises	Development of Social Enterprise Business Support Network established and managed through the National Business Link Supplier Match Service.	On Going	Business Link	N/A

Keep database updated and relevant	Reliable information to help target support	On Going	WSCC with all partners providing information on new or existing social enterprises on an on going basis	N/A
Business directory published	Business directory published and on-line (web site)	Dec 07	WSSESG (WSCC and Brighton Uni lead)	Needs to be found
Tailor made information to organisations and circumstances	3 presentations delivered to organisations with potential to develop social enterprises	March 08	All partners WSSESG	N/A
Keep up to date with the development of the credit union along the coast, making connections where appropriate	TBA	On going	WSSESG (Worthing CVS lead)	N/A

## Events

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Hold conference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote trade amongst organisations as the way forward to achieve objectives and sustainability;</li> <li>• showcase products and services;</li> <li>• launch the network;</li> <li>• launch database;</li> <li>• launch business directory.</li> </ul>	1 event held	Jan 08	WSSESG (Brighton University and WSCC lead)	Brighton Uni, WSCC and AirS (from £10,000 SLA)
Roadshows to promote social enterprise and the support available	4 roadshows	March 08	SEAs (AirS and Business Link lead)	From £10,000 SLA

Participate in events across the county as appropriate to promote social enterprise to a varied audience	3 events	March 08	SEAs (AiRS and Business Link lead)	From £10,000 SLA
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**Ensure social enterprise is part of key policies such as procurement and the LAA**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Provide opportunities for social enterprises to network and to be able to work with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>organisations, including those from the private sector, that access public sector contracts to explore sub contracting opportunities;</li> <li>other social enterprises to bid for contracts together.</li> </ul>	5 social enterprises accessing or being part of a public contract	March 08	SEAs	From £10,000 SLA
Work towards procurement policies that do not exclude social enterprises : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perform survey amongst public sector bodies to check the state of their policies;</li> <li>hold initial meeting with procurers from public bodies: Local Authorities, PCTs and further education.</li> </ul>	Better opportunities for social enterprises engaging with the public sector as providers of services	Oct 07	WSCC lead reporting to WSSESG	N/A
Enable and encourage public sector procurers to access and share information and best practice on social enterprise and procurement practices respectively via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fact sheets;</li> <li>case studies;</li> <li>the network;</li> <li>a session in the web site.</li> </ul>	Wide exchange of information useful for both social enterprise practitioners and public procurers	Oct 07	WSCC lead reporting to WSSESG	N/A

Provide information to those leading in the in the LAA refresh for 08-09 to ensure social enterprise presence in the document as a true contributor to achieving <i>sustainable communities</i> .	Key targets included in refreshed LAA	Sep 07	WSCC lead reporting to WSSESG	N/A
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## II. To enable and facilitate an environment where social enterprises are supported and can help each other

The three themes or group of activities proposed under **Objective II** aim to contribute to the following strategic priorities:

### **A support system that is effective and that helps social enterprises to thrive:**

- **advice and information;**
- **training;**
- **networks**

The support available in West Sussex for social enterprises has improved and has been increasing for the last two years.

Not only is Business Link still providing this support with dedicated staff but three organisations from the voluntary sector have staff getting qualified via the Professional Development for Social Enterprise Advisers training programme. These organisations, which are also increasingly operating as social enterprises are:

- ICIS-Information for life
- Voluntary Organisations Liaison Group (VOLG)
- Action in rural Sussex (AirS)

There is a commitment from these organisations and Business Link to operate in a way that ensures customers in need of support regardless of background or stage of development they are at receive quality support when they need it. ICIS information for life will get involved in the provision of information mostly.

In addition the other organisations part of the Steering Group also have a commitment to provide information and refer for further advice to the qualified Social Enterprise Advisers.

The above will provide a tight knitted referral system where quality support is provided swiftly and in a way that meets the requirements of the client.

To guarantee high standards of support it is important that those organisations in the county that are committed to the provision of advice have qualified advisers to deliver it. Likewise, organisations that may provide information such as WSCC or the CVSs also need to ensure that the officers involved in this task have the right knowledge. The provision of training for support organisations is therefore a priority and as such it is reflected in the actions to be delivered.

The provision of training in business skills for voluntary and community groups will assist them to embrace social enterprise as a solution to carry out activities and specific projects in their area in a sustainable way. Training will be focused in helping these groups to explore enterprising opportunities to increase their income by trading.

Training for established social enterprises will contribute to their continuous improving helping them strengthening the business and making growth a more certain prospect.

The idea behind the provision of training is to ensure that good ideas don't go to waste but rather contribute to an innovative provision of services and products in West Sussex.

A network that encompasses both social enterprises and support organisations will help exchanging ideas, information, best practice and even foster business opportunities for those involved.

The WSSESG is also committed to support the Profit Net network and facilitate its advancement in the county.

The visit programme will enable social enterprises to meet with peers and develop professional peer relationships. The network will also support this. Following this approach we will also encourage and facilitate collaboration between the private sector and social enterprise. This with a view to encourage learning, investment and trading opportunities for both private businesses and social enterprises.

Specific sectors such as care and community transport will be encouraged to cluster in order to foster a culture of mutual learning and peer support. A Profit Net approach will be used in order to organise the clusters. It has been identified that

potentially a considerable number of social enterprises in these sectors could need focused support due to changes in their delivery and funding framework.

From a support provision point of view making the right connections with other policies, programme and networks that may influence social enterprise is essential. Links to the Change Up Steering Group and to the regional networks will be maintained and develop as necessary in order to guarantee that social enterprises in West Sussex have the right level of influence.

**Specific support for key sectors to improve the provision of services to the community**

Co-ordination of support for social enterprises to ensure that different sectors and business models are appropriately assisted is key. The WSSESG should also support the SEAs to assist in identifying and exploring new opportunities and gaps in the market. This is important because it is being increasingly acknowledged that social enterprises can play a role in the delivery of services to the community in West Sussex.

There are three particular areas of activity for which the social enterprise concept is and will become more important principally due to the need of some delivery organisations to self sustain their activity financially. The three areas are:

- Community Transport
- Care
- Village Halls

The actions to be delivered reflect the sort of activity planned and on going in order to ensure that social enterprises delivering services within the sectors above can reach their full potential as social enterprises when this is appropriate.

-----**ACTIONS TO BE DELIVERED**-----

**Provision of business and other support**

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Budget</b>
To provide business and other support required effectively to potential, emerging and established social enterprises	60 social enterprises advised	March 08	SEAs	£10,000 SLA for AirS

Encourage and facilitate effective referral to ensure that social enterprises regardless of background or stage of development always receive the information and advice they need	30 social enterprises referred to appropriate support	March 08	SEAs and WSSESG	N/A
Provide business support that enables social enterprises meet up public sector procurement requirements	10 social enterprises advised	March 08	SEAs	£10,000 SLA for AirS
Ensure social enterprises in West Sussex are aware of business support opportunities from Business Link and how to access them	30 social enterprises accessing support opportunities from Business Link	March 08	Business Link	N/A
Encourage social enterprises to attend the finance clinics run by Business Link in Sussex	6 social enterprises attending	March 08	Business Link	N/A
SEAs to work proactively together to ensure consistency in provision	Effective and efficient provision of support	On going	SEAs	£10,000 SLA for AirS
SEAs to report to WSSESG as appropriate	WSSESG aware of successes and issues to be addressed	On going	SEAs	N/A

### Training for social enterprises and support organisations

Actions	Output	Deadline	Responsibility	Budget
Social Enterprise Advisers and those providing information to social enterprises to have the right skills and accreditation where appropriate	At least 2 accredited organisations providing on going advice	Nov 07	AirS Business Link	£10,000 SLA for AirS
	Legal structures training courses delivered for organisations providing information to social enterprises	October 07	WSCC	£1,000
Make available practical training for potential, emerging and established social enterprises around specific topics	20 social enterprises attending training	March 08	WSSESG (WSCC lead)	£4,000

## Networks

Actions	Output	Deadline	Responsibility	Budget
Set up a social enterprise network in West Sussex	1 Network for social enterprises and support organisations	Jan 08	WSSESG (WSCC, Brighton Uni and Business Link lead)	£1,000
Support the Profit Net model	N/A	On going	WSSESG	N/A
Encourage West Sussex social enterprises to participate in visits to other social enterprises and private businesses	10 social enterprises attending	March 08	WSCC	£700
Enable opportunities for private sector collaboration with social enterprises	3 private business collaborating with social enterprises	March 08	WSSESG (Brighton Uni and Business Link lead)	N/A
Encourage a care cluster and a community transport cluster network	2 cluster or sector sub networks created	March 08	Brighton Uni	N/A
Make links to the Change Up Programme	Exchange of information between WSSESG and Change Up Steering Group	On going	VOLG	N/A
Ensure links between WSSESG and SESEN and the Regional Steering Group	Appropriate regional presence for WSSESG	On going	WSCC	N/A

## Work with specific sectors

Actions	Output	Deadline	Responsibility	Budget
Write action plan for the social enterprise element of the Partnership for Older People Projects (POPPs)	Action Plan	Done	WSCC	N/A
Help WSCC Adult Services recruit human resources for the social enterprise element of the POPPs bid	SEAs in post	TBA	WSCC	N/A
Provision of support for community transport initiatives with sustainability issues	3 community transport initiatives increasing income by trading	March 08	AirS, Brighton Uni, WSCC	£10,000 SLA for AirS

Produce a tool for supporting community transport initiatives in West Sussex to become more enterprising and less dependant on grants	Toolkit	March 08	AirS and WSCC	£10,000 SLA for AirS
Support WSCC Transport Co-ordination team in producing sustainability criteria for their grants to Community Transport groups	Criteria	TBA	WSCC	N/A
Support work with village halls that wish to increase their income by becoming more enterprising	3 village halls increasing income by trading	March 08	AirS,	£10,000 SLA for AirS