

Strong Communities

**A Social Infrastructure Plan for Voluntary and Community Action
in the Milton Keynes & South Midlands Growth Area**

Social Infrastructure is defined as:

Building strong communities through the continuing development and delivery of activities, resources and support to strengthen the skills and confidence of people and community groups to enable them to take effective action and play leading roles.

September 2006
Version 2

About this Plan

This Plan is the result of a commission by the Milton Keynes - South Midlands (MKSM) Social Infrastructure Group, established by the Councils of Voluntary Service (CVS) and other local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure organisations from across the sub region. The Group is recognised as a working group of the Inter Regional Board's Environment and Quality of Life sub group. Funding for the work has come from the Government's Regional Offices for the East and South East of England under the 'ChangeUp' Programme (which is investing in the development of the supporting infrastructure for the Voluntary and Community Sector).

The brief for the research set out as its aim *'to stimulate what we term the social infrastructure in the growing communities, and to assess what level and pattern of resources is needed to do that.'* (Consultant Brief, February 2006, page 5) The Brief defined Social Infrastructure as *'the organisations and activities that enable people to create, run and sustain the voluntary and community groups, volunteering opportunities and social networks required for sustainable existing and new communities.'* Within the context of major planned growth in the MKSM sub region the brief stated that *'a clear gap in the formal plans developed to date concerns the needs for developing the social infrastructure of new and growing communities...'* It identified key questions as:

- *'How do we deliver both the physical and human infrastructure/ foundations to allow communities to form, develop and be nurtured over time?*
- *How do we design and define future neighbourhoods and places where people will want to call home?'*

The brief also set out a number of more specific expectations which can be summarised as researching and developing a plan for the investment in social infrastructure across the MKSM area. Following a formal tendering process, *Community Renewal* was selected by the Social Infrastructure Group to carry out the work. This was undertaken by its Principal, Nigel Boldero, during March to June 2006.

This Plan is also a contribution to the wider debate about the provision of infrastructure for growth. It recognises that ongoing discussions within the MKSM Inter-regional Board, with Local Delivery Vehicles, Local Planning Authorities, Local Strategic Partnerships and other partners may lead to changes in how the Sub-regional Strategy is implemented. This Plan will need to reflect any such changes and may therefore be updated from time to time.

The latest version of the full Plan can be viewed on the website www.voluntaryworks.org.uk and any follow up contact should be made with one of the members of the Social Infrastructure Group, whose details are set out in Appendix 1.

The author acknowledges and thanks those funding the project, the Social Infrastructure Group and those involved in interviews, supplying information and in other ways for their time and contributions.

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Contents	Page
Summary & Recommendations	4
1: Background	7
Context	7
Methods	11
2: Social Infrastructure – what it is and why it is important	15
What is Social Infrastructure?	15
Social Infrastructure – why it is important	20
Social Infrastructure – the expected results and how we can measure these	32
3: Guiding Principles for Social Infrastructure	37
4: Planning, Resourcing and Delivering Social Infrastructure	39
The Approach to Planning	39
The Investment Model	41
Resourcing Social Infrastructure	46
Planning & Delivery Process for Social Infrastructure	49
Roles and Responsibilities in Delivering Social Infrastructure	54
5: Recommendations	61
Appendices	63
1: MKSM Social Infrastructure Group	63
2: Interviews Conducted	65
3: Survey of VCS Organisations in MKSM	66
4: Consultative Workshops	73
5: Sustainable Communities	77
6: Social Infrastructure Investment Model	81
7: Planning Obligations	89

Summary

1. The Plan has been commissioned by the Social Infrastructure Group of the EQoL sub group of the Milton Keynes – South Midlands Inter regional Board. It aims to examine the scope and need for investment in social infrastructure in the growth areas, which are expecting over 140,000 new dwellings in the period 2001-2021. A variety of Local Delivery Vehicles are operating in the area to deliver this growth and the context for and types of new development also vary. Social infrastructure is mentioned as an important requirement in the sub regional strategy.

2. 'Community Renewal' has undertaken the work and used a variety of methods including a survey and consultative workshops with voluntary and community organisations, literature research, fieldwork and interviews. The work was completed between March and June 2006.

3. A range of government documents and research findings are examined to explore what is meant by 'social infrastructure' and its importance. These findings point to the importance of investing in a range of activities and organisations in order to build community capacity and so lead to 'strong communities', which in turn are an important aspect of 'sustainable communities'. It is acknowledged that other themes such as green infrastructure, cultural, community safety and health and social care can all contribute to and benefit from investment in social infrastructure. This is especially relevant in communities created by or affected by new development. Strong communities are defined as- *Active- Organised- Participative- Accepting- Connected- Fair.*

4. Social infrastructure is defined as '*Building strong communities through the continuing development and delivery of activities, resources and support to strengthen the skills and confidence of people and community groups to enable them to take effective action and leading roles.*' It is made up of a number of components; community development work; a community base; a representative community or residents group; grants for start up and development of community and voluntary organisations; community learning/ leadership development; volunteer development.

5. Six important outcomes of investment in social infrastructure are identified and proposals made for the development of action research, monitoring and evaluation to measure and learn from the investment made. Based on the field work and other research 10 'guiding principles' are also proposed for social infrastructure development and delivery.

6. An approach to planning is set out which attempts to provide tools for use at strategic and more local levels. An Investment Model is described which enables the calculation of investment in a 'typical' new development over a six stage/ year period taking account of the variations in mix and scale of social infrastructure needed at different times. This is used to calculate a total investment requirement for the sub region over the period 2006 - 2021, which amounts to £129m. This equates to approximately £700 per new dwelling. It is proposed that this investment is made by a mixture of developer contributions (minimum 75 %) with the balance from public funds. In addition developers

would be required to provide an initial community base and site for a long-term community facility and associated costs. The adoption of a 'tariff' approach to funding as has been developed in Milton Keynes is recommended for wider adoption in the sub region.

7. A planning and delivery system is set out which features the focusing of voluntary and community sector involvement in social infrastructure through new partnerships and through new 'Social Infrastructure Managers' relating to each Local Delivery Vehicle and the creation of a 'Social Infrastructure Impact Assessment' as the focus for assessing the needs for social infrastructure investment on a development by development basis.

8. The results of a survey of voluntary and community organisations and 5 consultative workshops are analysed and found to show that awareness of the growth area agenda and plans is mixed with many organisations having only a general appreciation of plans and the possible impact on their organisation (i.e. they expect a general increase in demand). Some are beginning to consider new ways of providing services. The options for delivering the various aspects of the 'social infrastructure package' are examined.

9. As well as provision of social infrastructure at a local level, it is proposed to fund the provision of a range of activity at sub regional level through a 'Sub Regional Social Infrastructure Fund'. This will fund the costs of: social infrastructure managers and the running of the social infrastructure partnerships; training and networking for staff involved in social infrastructure provision; an action research, monitoring and evaluation programme; specialist advice (e.g. for social enterprise/ asset development); and 'front end' costs of community development and associated costs prior to commencement of a development.

10. A number of recommendations (see over) are made to various important organisations and groups in order to move forward the proposals in the Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To MKSM EQoL Sub Group and MKSM Inter regional Board:

1. That the Plan be endorsed by the MKSM Environment and Quality of Life Sub Group and by the Inter-regional Board with a view to it being recommended for adoption by the various Local Delivery Vehicles, Local Strategic Partnerships and Voluntary and Community Sector across the sub region.

To the Voluntary and Community Sector in the sub region:

2. That the Social Infrastructure Group, with assistance from the public sector, seek funding to establish a 'MKSM Social Infrastructure Fund' to meet the range of sub regional needs highlighted in the Plan (Social Infrastructure Managers and Partnership costs; training and networking for social infrastructure staff; action research, monitoring and evaluation; specialist advice; front end funding of community development work).

3. That the VCS in each LDV area discuss and agree the formation of Social Infrastructure Partnerships with appropriate coordination responsibilities undertaken by a local VCS infrastructure body.

4. That these Partnerships should be recognised as the focus for VCS involvement in planning for the MKSM area and its constituent growth areas.

To Local Strategic Partnerships:

5. That Local Strategic Partnerships in the MKSM sub region be asked to endorse this Plan; agree in principle to participate in the planning, resourcing and delivery model as set out in the Plan; and to seek the necessary resources to fund the initial contribution towards social infrastructure from the public sector or other sources of £175 per dwelling.

To Local Delivery Vehicles/Local Planning Authorities:

6. That consideration is given in those areas outside Milton Keynes to establishing a 'tariff' model for the calculation, collection and management of 'Developer Contributions' under 'Planning Obligations' law and guidance.

7. Within Milton Keynes the two Planning Authorities (Milton Keynes Council and Milton Keynes Partnership) should seek to bring their 'tariffs' into line; use the figures proposed for contributions per dwelling for social infrastructure and adopt the scope of services and other investment for social infrastructure as set out in the Plan.

8. That the sum of £525 per dwelling should be the initial sum required of developers, the understanding that this is added to by a sum of £175 per dwelling by public agencies or similar sources towards Social Infrastructure Costs. This should be included in an appropriate Supplementary Planning Document as the initial basis for negotiations over particular developments, and kept under review and amended on the basis of experience on the ground and other relevant information.

9. That developers be required, through appropriate Supplementary Planning Documents, to provide or fund initial community bases and Social Infrastructure Reserve Sites in accordance with the standards set out in the Plan.

10. That LDV's/LPA's agree and participate in the system for planning, resourcing and delivering social infrastructure as set out in the Plan.

1: BACKGROUND

Context

1. A recent Monitoring Report on the Sub Regional Strategy for MKSM sets out the context for this Plan:

'The Milton Keynes & South Midlands area was identified in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan: Building for the Future (February 2003) as one of four key growth areas alongside M11 corridor (London / Stansted / Peterborough / Cambridge), Ashford and Thames Gateway. The strategic challenges facing the South East include the need to increase housing supply, make home ownership more affordable, tackle transport and other infrastructure issues, address issues concerning skills and the labour market and to tackle deprivation and the need for urban renewal. These growth areas have been identified as having a key role in accommodating the growth required to ensure that the economic success and international competitiveness of London and the wider South East is sustained. The Sustainable Communities Plan makes it clear that new or expanded communities in these four growth areas should be sustainable, well designed, high quality and attractive places where people will choose to live and work.....' (Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy: Annual Monitoring Report 2004/05- Background)

2. The MKSM area comprises parts of three government office regions: the East Midlands, the East of England and the South East. It covers an area of 4,850 square kilometres and has a population of about 1.5 million. The sub region contains all districts within Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire, part of Buckinghamshire (Aylesbury Vale) and the two unitary authority areas of Milton Keynes and Luton.

3. The MKSM Sub Regional Strategy was published on 17th March 2005 by the Deputy Prime Minister. The purpose of this Strategy is to provide 'a clear, agreed, sub-regional strategy for the period 2001-2021, and a long-term spatial vision for the sub-region towards the year 2031.' (Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy: Annual Monitoring Report 2004/05- Background)

4. The objectives of the Strategy are:

- *To achieve a major increase in the number of new homes provided in the area, meeting needs for affordable housing and a range of types and sizes of market housing*
- *To provide for a commensurate level of economic growth and developing skills in the workforce, particularly in the high value, knowledge-based sectors*
- *To locate development in the main urban areas to support urban renaissance, regeneration of deprived areas, recycling of land and sustainable patterns of travel*
- *To ensure that development contributes to an improved environment, by requiring high standards of design and sustainable construction, protecting and enhancing environmental assets (including landscape and biodiversity) and providing green space and related infrastructure (green infrastructure)*

- To meet existing infrastructure needs and provide for requirements generated by new development by investing in new and improved infrastructure, by planning to reduce the need to travel and by creating a shift to more sustainable modes of travel

- To create sustainable communities by ensuring that economic, environmental, **social** and cultural **infrastructure** needs are met in step with growth

(*emboldening added - Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy, March 2005, page 11*)

It is this last objective which gives rise to the term ‘social infrastructure’ and to the need for this Plan.

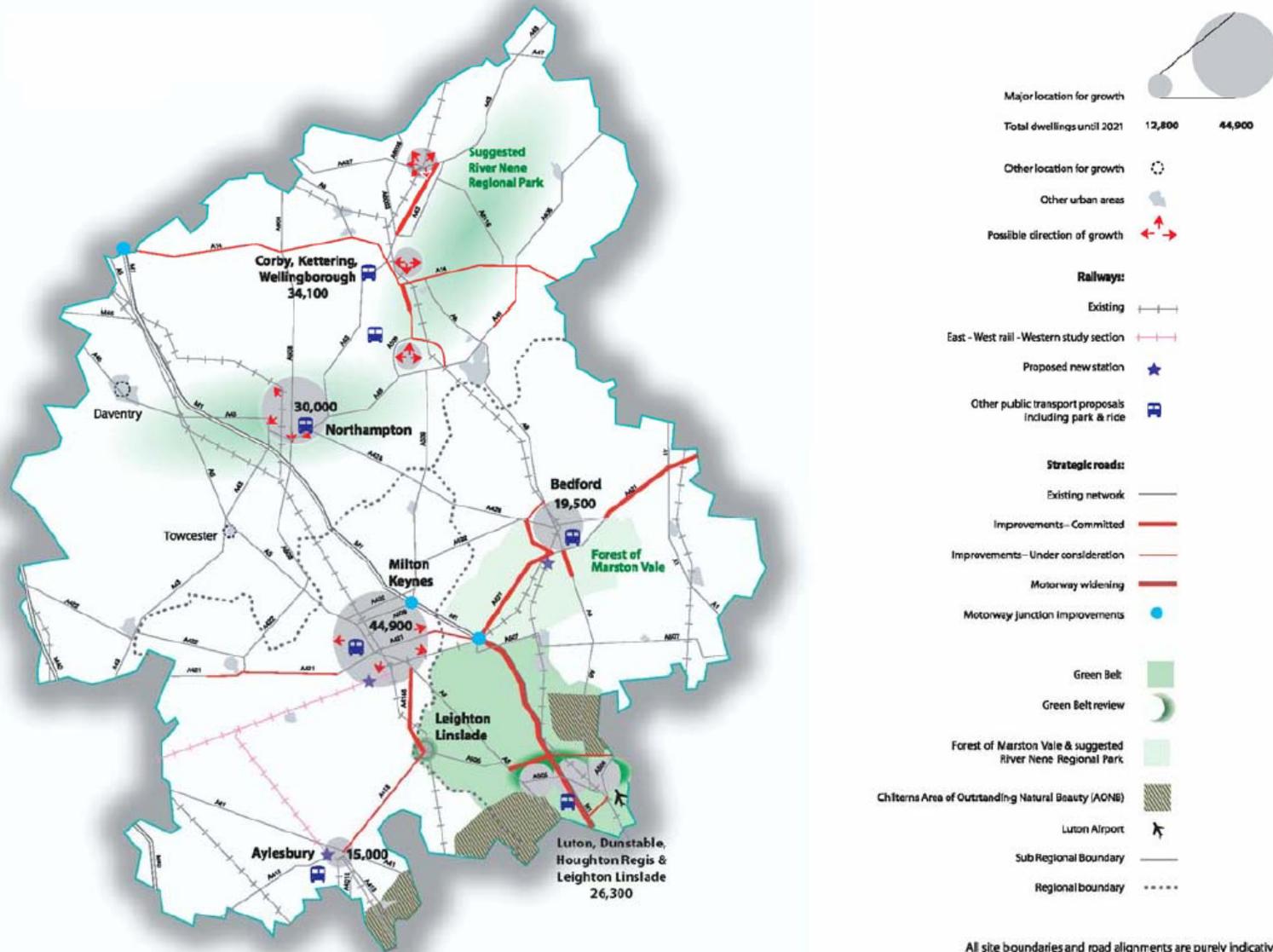
5. The following map (Figure 1) sets out the sub region area and the main growth assumptions in the Sub Regional Strategy. Table 1 sets out a summary of the additional dwellings planned for the sub region over the periods 2001- 2021 and 2021- 2031 as set out in the Sub Regional Strategy. These figures relate to the ‘main development areas’ as defined in the Strategy. In addition areas outside of these are expected to see further housing growth of around 41,400 (0 in Luton and Beds, 35400 in Northamptonshire and 6000 in MK and Aylesbury Vale) between 2001 and 2021.

Table 1: Planned New Dwellings in the MKSM Sub Region: 2001- 2031
(main development areas only)

Location	2001-2021	2021-2031 (provisional)	Total 2001- 2031
Luton/Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Linslade	26,300	15,400	41,700
Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale	19,500	10,000	29,500
Aylesbury	15,000	8,500	23,500
Milton Keynes	44,900	23,700	68,600
Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough	34,100	28,000	62,100
Northampton*	30,000*	17,500*	47,500*
Totals (note: other locations to be considered just beyond growth area)	169,800	103,100	272,900

* The MKSM SRS highlights Northampton as an important location for growth. However, as a result of a high court challenge, the figure for the number of new homes to be provided in the town was quashed on 31 January 2006. Government is currently taking stock of the implication of this judgment. ‘However, the Government remains committed to housing growth in Northampton - not only providing more homes at more affordable prices but also building to high design and environmental standards, supported by the right infrastructure - transport, hospitals, schools, parks and leisure facilities’ (Sources: MKSM Sub Regional Strategy, ODPM, 2005 and DCLG website, June 2006)

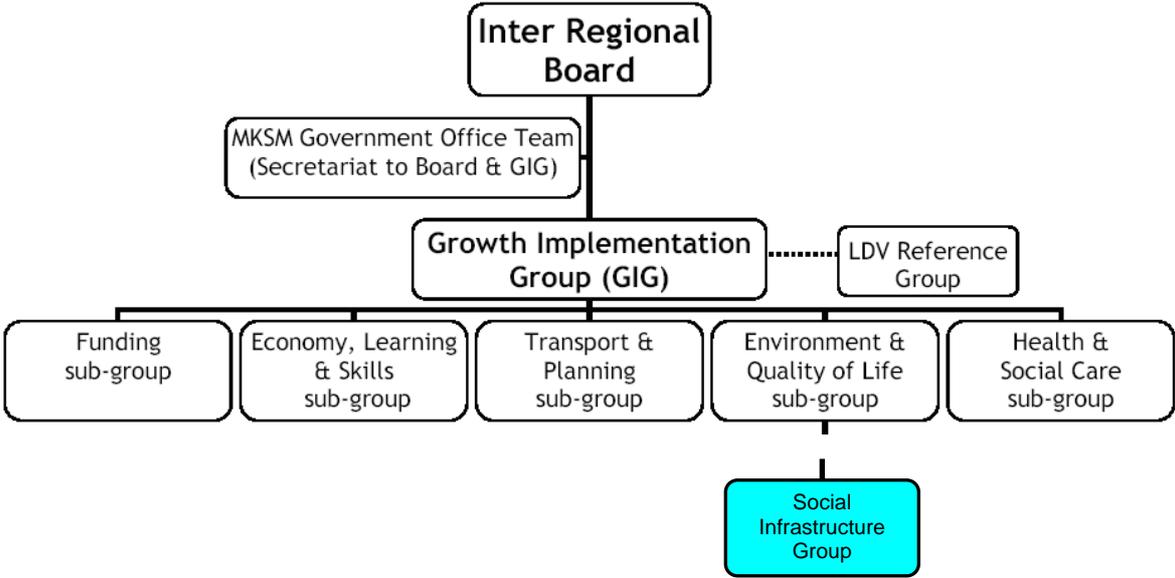
Figure 1: Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Spatial Diagram



All site boundaries and road alignments are purely indicative
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6. Within the Sub Region, there is an Inter- regional Board, chaired by a Government Minister. The Inter-regional Board brings together local authority leaders, senior management from Government agencies and other key stakeholders in the Growth Area. It is supported by a set of more specific groups and staff as shown in the following diagram (Figure 2). The Social Infrastructure Group is a working group of the Environment and Quality of Life Sub Group.

Figure 2: MKSM- Inter-regional Board and supporting structure



(Source: Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy: Annual Monitoring Report 2004/05-Delivery, amended to show Social Infrastructure Group)

7. There are also a number of ‘Local Delivery Vehicles’ (LDV’s) established to lead the achievement of the growth targets in the Sub Regional Strategy. These vary across the area and are summarised in Box 1 below. This table and the research undertaken indicate that across the sub region there is a range of different patterns of development:

- large new areas of housing planned alongside existing urban centres (e.g. in Milton Keynes),
- smaller developments again adjacent to the fringes of urban areas (e.g. in the current green belt to the north of Dunstable and Houghton Regis),
- significant, largely freestanding developments (e.g. the Wixams south west of Bedford),
- town centre and urban infill and intensification (e.g. Luton, Aylesbury and Milton Keynes),
- smaller developments in and around some of the area’s market towns and villages.

8. This variety is mirrored by different numbers of landowners and developers in the different localities, so making the strategic negotiation and development of housing and associated facilities more or less challenging for the various LDV’s. Investment to achieve the growth targets is coming through a combination of private and public funding. Private investment in new housing is added to by developer contributions to infrastructure projects through what are termed ‘planning obligations’ under Section

106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as substituted by the Planning & Compensation Act 1991) as well as through public investment from various government and other public agencies.

10. In addition, central government is investing funding to help unlock and promote new development. This takes the form of the 'Community Infrastructure Fund' which is used to undertake important transport infrastructure projects (around £106m has already been invested in the MKSM under this joint ODPM/Department of Communities & Local Government and Department for Transport Programme). Over £200m of other funding has been allocated under the 'Growth Areas Fund' for projects between 2003 and 2008.

Methods

11. Following an inception meeting with members of the Social Infrastructure Group, the work undertaken for this Plan has been approached so as to:

- Identify the need and scope for developing 'social infrastructure' in the existing and planned communities in the MKSM growth area
- Develop costed proposals assuming that the voluntary and community sector (VCS) will provide the majority of this.

12. The work has been planned to take due account of the different circumstances and requirements in the various parts of the sub region; considered different approaches to meeting these; explores ways in which proposals can be integrated with the plans of public and other not for profit organisations and includes work on a summary version for publication and use to effectively present the Plan to these and other audiences.

13. The work has used a variety of information sources on which to base the resulting Plan:

- Field visits and interviews (both face to face and telephone) with a wide range of individuals and organisations (Local Delivery Vehicles, social infrastructure practitioners, community representatives in new communities, local authorities etc.) to gauge their involvement and experience of provision of social infrastructure, their views towards its importance and the ways it should be provided (Appendix 2 lists those interviewed)
- A survey of VCS organisations organised via e-mail through the members of the Social Infrastructure Group. This aimed to establish VCS organisations' involvement in social infrastructure work, evidence of unmet needs and views on the future provision of social infrastructure (Appendix 3 sets out the survey material and a list of those responding)
- 5 Consultative Workshops with a range of organisations to explain some of the background to the project, set out information on social infrastructure and explain and seek comments on some of the emerging issues and ideas from the work (Appendix 4 sets out a summary of the meetings held, programme and other materials).
- Literature and web searches of material of relevance to the research and development of the Plan.

Box 1: Local Delivery Vehicles and patterns of growth in MKSM

Aylesbury

Aylesbury Vale Advantage, a company limited by guarantee, will oversee the growth proposals and drive forward delivery in the area, seeking to enhance the urban environment with activity focused on the town centre renaissance and improved urban public green spaces. The impending provision of 15,000 new homes (2001 - 2021) with an additional 3,300 within The Vale of Aylesbury (not including any growth directly related to the urban area of Milton Keynes that may be identified through a cross-border Local Development Document with Milton Keynes Council) will provide the opportunity to secure quality design and construction.

Bedford/Kempston/Northern Marston Vale

Town centre development, economic regeneration and transport infrastructure improvements will support 19,500 new homes between 2001-2021 in Bedford and the Northern Marston Vale. A local delivery vehicle, "Renaissance Bedford" was established in summer 2005 to co-ordinate and support the work of local partners to take forward this agenda.

Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis and Leighton Linlade

The MSKM SRS identified the towns of Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis as effectively one conurbation forming the largest urban area in Bedfordshire, with nearby Leighton Linlade also able to absorb growth. The SRS sets out that 26,300 homes will be provided between 2001-2021 alongside substantial economic and urban regeneration. Discussions are continuing on the form of the local delivery vehicle but in the interim the local authorities have formed a working group and have established a Joint Planning and Transportation Committee.

Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes has been one of the UK's fastest growing urban areas and it is expected to continue this role by accommodating around 44,900 new homes by 2021. New development will be delivered through a combination of urban intensification and the development of new sustainable urban extensions. The planned development, including significantly enhanced public transport infrastructure, will help Milton Keynes embrace its growth potential to mature as a major regional centre. An Urban Development Area and associated Partnership Committee - Milton Keynes Partnership, a sub-committee of the Board of English Partnerships - has been established to act as a statutory delivery agency to ensure that the sustainable growth of Milton Keynes will be focused and co-ordinated effectively. Milton Keynes Partnership has been pioneering the use of standardised developer contributions (referred to locally as a "tariff"). This approach to infrastructure funding secures substantial contributions from developers to help meet the cost of local and strategic infrastructure associated with growth. Milton Keynes Partnership's Business Plan, prepared with partner organisations, sets out infrastructure costs and priorities, combining main stream public sector and other sources of funding with developer contributions to deliver the full range of necessary local and strategic infrastructure and facilities.

North Northamptonshire

The growth of Kettering and Wellingborough, along with the regeneration of Corby, will provide a major boost to the economic viability and the cultural vitality of the area. A former local delivery vehicle - North Northants Together (NNT) - has merged with Catalyst Corby to create an expanded, updated local delivery vehicle called North Northants Development Company, which came into operation in May 2006 as an Urban Regeneration Company. In addition, North Northamptonshire's five local authorities (Districts of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, Wellingborough and Northamptonshire County Council) have become the first to use a new provision of the 2004 Planning Act to join together and create a vehicle for strategic planning. This Joint Committee will provide an innovative approach so that the five authorities will be able to work together strategically to provide sustainable communities through a common vision, plan and delivery programme.

West Northamptonshire

There is a major opportunity to boost the economic strength of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester through brownfield regeneration and high quality design focusing on key town centre and urban fringe sites. The development of the River Nene Regional Park is providing a significant green space for Northamptonshire. The West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC), a statutory delivery agency, was set up in December 2004 to ensure that the sustainable growth and regeneration of West Northamptonshire is driven forward in a focused and coordinated way. The WNDC is developing a framework that will set out how the regeneration of West Northamptonshire will be achieved and in December 2005 the WNDC launched a prospectus, "Realising the Opportunity", which sets the scene for regeneration and growth activities over the next ten years and beyond. The WNDC received a block grant of £25million from the second round of Growth Areas Fund to support priorities over the next two years in this prospectus, the emerging growth delivery plan and corporate plan. WNDC's investment is likely to focus on town centre regeneration and unlocking development opportunities on brownfield land.

Source: DCLG website, June 2006, updated for North Northamptonshire

14. The remainder of this report draws upon the information gained from these sources. Section two sets out the definition and important contribution of social infrastructure towards building 'strong communities' in more detail. It also places social infrastructure in a wider context of action to achieve sustainable communities and establishes a set of expected outcomes and associated indicators for further development as a tool for monitoring and evaluation of planned investment.

15. Section three, using information from a series of case studies (blue boxes -'Social Infrastructure in Practice' -are shown throughout the Plan) and the literature search sets out some guiding principles for the development and delivery of social infrastructure.

16. Section four develops a model for investment in social infrastructure and includes ideas about how the various elements of social infrastructure may be needed at different stages of the development of a new community. This is translated into a costed investment plan over the period 2006- 2021, including consideration of the investment requirements of VCS infrastructure organisations and associated funding. Potential sources of funding for this are considered, including through 'planning obligations' on developers under Town and Country Planning legislation. This includes discussion of the strategic approach being developed in some areas (e.g. the 'tariff' in Milton Keynes). A contribution per dwelling figure for investment in social infrastructure is identified.

17. This section concludes with proposals for the planning and delivery of social infrastructure in terms of a process and examination of potential roles and responsibilities. The Plan concludes with a series of recommendations aimed at ensuring that its various proposals are considered and taken forward by a range of important bodies.

Social Infrastructure in Practice- Grange Park, Northamptonshire

Key features: This new settlement on the edge of Northampton commenced in 2001 and is still being developed to an ultimate size of between 3,000 and 4,000 people, probably by 2007. It is largely private accommodation for sale (around 10% social rented/ affordable housing), developed by three developers. High levels of out commuting as few employment opportunities locally for many of those living here. There appears to have been relatively little coordination and strategic planning for the overall development of the 'village', and the three- way ownership of community sites/ assets by the developers is complicating the process of securing their transfer and proper development by the community through the parish council.

Some facilities were planned in tandem with housing growth and some have been provided, but with no input from the existing or developing community. There have been problems with delays and the design of some facilities and also a lack of clarity over need and long term responsibility (including maintenance costs); e.g. the bowling green which only now has a club taking on responsibility. Some facilities are apparently ready but cannot be used because of delays in their transfer to the parish council and associated issues over insurance etc. Some issues concern the standards to which some facilities have been provided; e.g. sports pitches, which are considered not to be satisfactory and may have to be reconstructed. The large number of open spaces, play areas etc. whilst an attractive feature of the development, are also a cause for concern to the parish council who will ultimately take on responsibility for them and have to raise funds via their precept on the council tax. Many areas of land and community buildings not yet transferred to parish council, which was established in 2003.

Through the Section 106 Agreement, Northamptonshire ACRE has provided a community development worker since before the establishment of the parish council and the role was initially to assess the needs of the population, develop the structures required by the growing community and to build its capacity. A new worker came into a 2 year contract in 2003 and her role became increasingly associated with supporting the Parish Council at a time when it did not have a clerk. The worker was also based at the Community Centre, which opened in 2003 (and on which there was no community design input and which suffers from some important design problems). The Community Development worker and parish council attempted a range of projects and activities to help build community involvement but some of these have not received much support and have not progressed.

Some of the population of the new development is relatively transient and the overall profile is of individual prosperity. The population profile is thought to have made it more difficult for the parish council and others to engage effectively with local people. However, a range of community groups now uses the community centre, progress is being made on some aspects of the transfer of land and assets and a greater range of community facilities (including most recently a pub) is being developed.

Lessons:

- Importance of overall coordinated planning of new developments especially where several different developers are involved.
- Early community involvement in the design and shaping of a new community even if these people live adjacent to rather than in the area being developed- it is recognised that the process of integration of the new Grange Park community has been more difficult as a result of not doing this.
- Community input to the decisions about which community facilities are provided, their design and specification, in order to ensure the facility is needed, can be managed long term and is of the right design to meet known or emerging needs.
- Early community facility provision being handled with flexibility to avoid commitments to buildings before the community is fully established and needs are clear- the community centre would have been designed differently if it was being provided now.
- Pacing and clarifying the role of community development input according to the stage of development- e.g. an 'Information Officer' might have been a more effective role in the early stages of the development rather than to pursue ideas for community activities which the still- forming community was not, on the whole interested in.
- Clear and detailed section 106 legal agreements to which the community (especially if a parish council or similar body exists) should be a party. These should include detailed specifications for certain public assets- e.g. sports pitches.
- Early thought being given to the overall scale of public assets being created and the likely impact of this on a local organisation's ability to cope (e.g. with maintenance responsibilities) and the financial implications, which will ultimately fall to the community to meet.
- Providing special support to parish councils or similar community bodies in the technical and legal aspects of asset transfer and ownership etc. - i.e. adjusting the types of support given to community forums at different stages of the development process.

2: Social Infrastructure- what it is and why it is important

What is Social Infrastructure?

18. The Social Infrastructure Group has taken as the starting point for its definition of social infrastructure that set out in the Home Office statement on Community Capacity building published in 2004 (*'Firm Foundations- the Government's Framework for community capacity-building'*):

'Activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in the development of their communities.'

19. This followed the Home Office review of community capacity- building, which found that:

'the Government will only achieve many of its objectives if it fully involves citizens and communities. This means investing in successful efforts to build the skills, abilities, knowledge and confidence of people and community groups, to enable them to take effective action and play leading roles in the development of their communities. It also means expanding learning and development within public services, so that professionals, practitioners and policy-makers are better equipped to engage with citizens and communities. The review highlighted the need to recognise both geographical communities – neighbourhoods, parishes – and communities of people with a common interest or identity.'
(*Firm Foundations, page 3*)

20. This perhaps suggests that community capacity-building and the investment in social infrastructure to achieve this is justified mainly in relation to what it can do to help the delivery of a range of government programmes through more effective *community involvement*. The increasing importance of this was found from earlier research carried out for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM):

'Community involvement has been a growing aspect of urban policy for at least 10 years...However, it occupies an ambiguous position, mostly lacking specific aims and targets. There is a tendency for community involvement objectives to get swallowed up into the objectives of other fields or to dissipate as programmes unfold.' (*'Searching for Solid Foundations', by Gabriel Chanan, published by ODPM, 2003*)

21. Subsequently Government has taken action to *'empower citizens to work with public bodies to set and achieve common goals'* in its *'Together we can'* Programme (*'Together we Can' Action Plan, Home Office 2005*). This sets out to develop three *'essential ingredients'*:

'1. Active Citizens: people with the motivation, skills and confidence to speak up for their communities and say what improvements are needed.'

2. *Strengthened communities: community groups with the capability and resources to bring people together to work out shared solutions.*

3. *Partnership with public bodies: public bodies willing and able to work as partners with local people.'*

22. The Government's Strategy is focused on strengthening citizen engagement in delivering success across eight key public policy areas.

23. Even more recently work has been underway on Government Policy with regard to the future role, structure and financing of local government, featuring the tantalising prospect of 'double devolution' whereby Central government might transfer some of its functions and controls to local government level and in parallel local government would do the same with regard to neighbourhoods and local communities. The outcome of this review is expected later in 2006 and may well have significant implications for the growth in community capacity building activity in order to forge a new relationship between neighbourhoods and local government. This could add further weight to the case for investment in social infrastructure.

24. The 'Firm Foundations' review also identified a number of outcomes from community capacity- building of wider importance than local governance and community engagement in public policy delivery:

- **'Social capital and cohesion** – *enabling communities to develop a common vision and sense of belonging where people from different backgrounds feel valued for the part they can play in making their community a better place to live, as well as having the ability to network beyond their own neighbourhoods.*
- **Community self-help** – *building the capacity of community-led service providers to plan and deliver activities and programmes to meet local needs.*
- **Participatory governance** – *enabling citizens, individually and collectively, to have a greater say in decisions that affect their communities' well-being.*
- **Sustainable involvement** – *increasing the confidence and capacity of individuals and groups to participate actively in their communities in ways and through structures that are supported and maintained from within those communities.'*

('Firm Foundations'- page 7)

25. The Framework goes on to identify a number of objectives for community capacity-building, one of which is ensuring *'that appropriate support is accessible at neighbourhood, parish or community level.'* The Framework recognises that:

'In ChangeUp, the Government has set out its Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector as a whole. ChangeUp recognises however, and this review has emphasised, that if citizens and communities are to get the support they need to become more actively involved, that support must be within easy reach, within their neighbourhood or parish, or focused on the community of interest with which they identify. The review picked out the key components of such support:

- **A meeting space or a base** (sometimes called a 'hub') which is available, welcoming and accessible to all. This could be a physical hub such as a community centre or village hall, school, community flat or shop, or development trust or settlement, or a virtual hub such as a website or e-mail network.
- **Access to seed corn funding**, most often small grants funds or community chests, which have proven very cost-effective in stimulating grass-roots activity and capacity building.
- **Access to support** provided by **workers with community development skills**, within the framework of values that underpin community development. A recent survey

Social Infrastructure in Practice- Community Mobilisers, Milton Keynes CVO

Key features: The Community Mobiliser Programme was developed in 2003 to deliver the Children's Fund programme in Milton Keynes. Community Mobilisers work out of schools (mainly infant) and support children and young people and their families to be the 'architect of services to meet their needs'. They use a range of participatory methods to help people articulate their needs, identify appropriate solutions and to develop, commission and deliver services. 'Local Action Groups' are developed, made up at least with 50% of 5 -13 year olds, to develop plans and to allocate a defined budget (upwards of £5,000 per year).

There is an underpinning belief that active school involvement is integral to the success of the project and subsequent development of local communities. The Programme, using Children's Fund money, has recently been extended to 2008. Examples of projects undertaken include breakfast clubs, Saturday play schemes, arts and crafts clubs, holiday activity schemes etc, the strength in these projects is that they have local residents leading the delivery of the activities etc.

CM's work in parallel with other community workers from a range of other agencies and organisations- efforts are being made to coordinate activity. Action is also in hand to encourage parish councils to take on long term responsibility for the provision of small grants, in turn devolving responsibility to Local Action Groups. Within all the estates that CM's are based, the parish council contribute to the financial costs of sustaining the project, with residents from the local action groups becoming more formally involved in the activities of the parish council.

Lessons:

- Involvement of families and children/ young people in actively defining needs and solutions helps to build individual and collective confidence and skills.
- This specific focus has helped get adults involved in wider community activities.
- Engaging other elements of the wider community and public services as support for community capacity building is important.
- Using a common interest (e.g. young children) as the catalyst for working with a local geographical community (usually a particular estate). This enables specific needs to be targeted and responses tailored to these needs.
- Availability of small grants helps to seed new activities and ideas.
- Perceived 'independence' of Community Mobilisers helps communities take responsibility for problems, whereas those employed by public agencies can be perceived as 'owning' problems for their agencies.
- CM approach helps develop community capacity and independence. This is further helped by CM's using a range of sites/ venues rather than one, so avoiding a direct association with a particular location and its organisation and also helping to avoid 'cliques' building up in a particular venue.
- Work with other agencies to coordinate action, define 'principles' of community development work and focus on outcomes for particular communities is helping to reduce duplication of effort and promote a coordinated approach to community development work.

has uncovered the wide range of fields of work and organisations in which community development workers are found. The critical element is that they have the scope to start from the goals and needs that communities and groups define for themselves, helping them to learn the knowledge and skills needed for active involvement and to support their own groups.

- **A forum or network** that is deliberately inclusive, open and participatory, that is owned by and accountable to the community. This could be for example a network of community groups, a broad-based community association, a tenant management organisation or a neighbourhood partnership. It will ensure that individual actions and initiatives are drawn together in mutual support, rather than left to fragment and divide communities.
- Access to high quality and appropriate **learning opportunities** to equip people for active citizenship and engagement. These will range from formal courses, through mentoring to informal sharing of ideas and experience. All must be grounded in people's own experiences, and be seen to have direct practical value.'

(‘Firm Foundations’- page 11)

26. A recent guide to community capacity building (*‘Strengthening communities- a guide to capacity building for communities and the public sector’- Steve Skinner, Community Development Foundation, 2006*) concludes that the building of community capacity has potential benefits for a number of different, but related policy areas:

- *‘Effective public services*
- *Sustainability, regeneration, and enterprise*
- *Civil renewal*
- *Community cohesion*
- *Strong communities’ (Page 7)*

27. Though all of these areas are of importance, the benefits relating to ‘strong communities’ are perhaps most relevant to new or changing communities – those created by or affected by growth. Based on Government policies in neighbourhood renewal, community cohesion, civil renewal and local area agreements, the Guide defines a ‘*strong community*’ as one which is ‘*active, organised, participative, accepting, connected and fair.*’ (Page 18). This is turned into a working definition set out in Box 2 below.

Box 2: Working Definition of a 'Strong Community'

Active- people are active in tackling community problems and improving the quality of life.

Organised- people come together to form and sustain organisations that deal with common problems and provide effective and accessible services.

Participative- people and groups contribute to decisions that affect their lives, contribute to civic life and the governance of institutions and services.

Accepting- people are accepting of each other, with an understanding of different cultures, traditions and beliefs, with the diversity of backgrounds and circumstances being positively valued.

Connected- there is a sense of belonging; people and groups from different backgrounds have contact and communication and, where appropriate, there is joint working between groups.

Fair- people from different backgrounds and identities have similar life opportunities with equal access to services, employment and resources; groups are actively tackling exclusion and discrimination.'

Source: 'Strengthening communities- a guide to capacity building for communities and the public sector'- Steve Skinner, Community Development Foundation, 2006

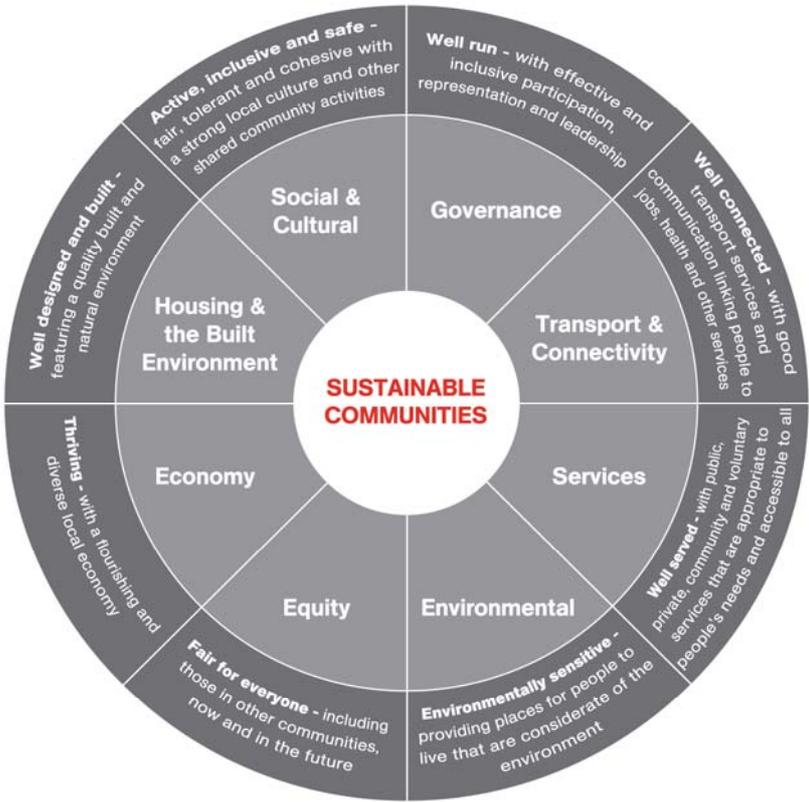
Social Infrastructure- why is it important?

28. Based on the above, it appears that there are a range of reasons for investing in social infrastructure of the kinds identified in 'Firm Foundations' in order to secure improved 'community capacity'. The concern of this Plan, however, is with the case for investment in more specific circumstances surrounding the areas of housing growth in MKSM. This is primarily concerned with the creation of 'sustainable communities'.

29. The 'Sustainable Communities Plan' published by the Government in 2003 suggests that there are a number of important components to new and established communities if they are to be judged 'sustainable'. See Figure 3 below and Appendix 5 for a full description. Among the components (originally proposed by the Egan review 'Skills for Sustainable Communities'- ODPM, 2004, and subsequently further developed by the ODPM.) is featured:

- 'ACTIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SAFE - Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities
- WELL RUN - with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership
- FAIR FOR EVERYONE - including those in other communities, now and in the future'

Figure 3: Sustainable Communities (source- RENEW North West)



30. These are components which echo the outcomes for community capacity-building mentioned in 'Firm Foundations' and which suggest the need for a range of similar actions and investment. This is further supported by an independent review of the Sustainable Communities Plan, (*'Sustainable communities and sustainable development- a review of the sustainable communities plan'*- Professor Anne Power -Sustainable Development Commission, 2004). Power identifies three core aims for sustainable communities one of which:

*'• **social well-being** arises from a sense of security, belonging, familiarity, support, neighbourliness, cohesion and integration of different social groups, based on respect for different cultures, traditions and backgrounds.'*

She goes on to propose four 'essential building blocks ' of sustainable communities, including:

*'• **community organisation and neighbourhood management** are essential to social networks and urban viability, ensuring well maintained, secure conditions which are the prerequisite of stable, long-term, participative and cohesive communities...'*

31. Power develops this building block into a series of measures (see box 3), most, if not all of which echo 'Firm Foundations' and suggest the need for investment in social infrastructure.

32. Similarly, the recently completed Health and Social Care Project for MKSM highlights the importance of social capital in sustainable communities and in particular the potential impact on health and well-being:

'The relationship between any particular group and the wider society is critically important. A sense of community identity and belonging is important for health and wellbeing. These are often described in terms of social capital and social cohesion. There are issues around how social capital should be defined and measured. This also means that ways of developing social capital are not always clear. Social capital can be defined as those social resources available to a community. How much trust and belonging is there within a community:

- A sense of belonging can be good for health if it provides people with support and confidence to reach out to the wider society.*

- Social capital can be bad if people are bound into a group that is at odds with mainstream society: violent behaviour and behaviours such as smoking, excessive drinking, risky sexual activity, and poor diet in these contexts may have serious health consequences.'*

(From- - *'Spatial Planning Checklist'- Components of Sustainable Communities-* Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Region- Health & Social Care Project 2005)

Box 3: Measures to support community organisation and neighbourhood management

(Source: 'Sustainable communities and sustainable development- a review of the sustainable communities plan'- Professor Anne Power -Sustainable Development Commission, 2004- page 15 ff):

1. **Neighbourhood management**, involving a locally based team to repair, maintain and supervise neighbourhood conditions on behalf of the community, is essential for the long-term wellbeing of a modern urban community.

2. **Community safety** – tackling fear of crime as well as crime itself, accidents, pollution, vandalism, graffiti, and all the small signs of neglect that encourage crime – is central to people feeling secure, at home, and comfortable with their neighbourhood.

3. **Residents have a vital role in decisions** about neighbourhood conditions, plans and initiatives. All ages, classes and groups need to have a stake in local decisions and the real opportunity to help shape what happens. Brokering community relations and community priorities is not easy and requires local leadership, fostered by a real sense of ownership. Local services, local budgets, and neighbourhood management structures greatly help this and there are many successful models, e.g. there are over 400 popular neighbourhood warden schemes, supported by local authorities and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

4. **Community organisation and development** often happens spontaneously within communities, triggered by a threat or a funding opportunity or a special event or a simple desire to make things work and bring people together. In urban areas where there are more anxieties and lower confidence in the potential to succeed, external support will often be necessary. Local councils, churches, charities and voluntary organizations often play this community development role.

5. **Creating meeting points and facilities** that are clustered around focal centres of activity such as the local school or shops or health centre, generates a lot of community activity and a sense of belonging, security and cohesion. Higher density neighbourhoods can more easily generate this critical mass of activity and contact. Meeting points are particularly important for mothers with children and can transform the viability and attractiveness of a neighbourhood.

6. **Many communities are fast changing and becoming more racially diverse.** This raises many questions for existing residents and newcomers alike. Communities will survive the challenges and strains of change if people are prepared for change, if help is to hand and if existing residents' livelihoods are not being threatened. Given a chance to be generous when others are in need, most people will be. For these reasons, brokering community conditions and setting in train measures to foster cohesion and a positive sense of community are crucial to the survival of urban neighbourhoods. Particularly for these reasons, building and reinstating mixed income, mixed tenure, mixed use communities will be vital to our urban future. Over time, smaller communities all over the country will be caught up in the same processes of change and diversification, requiring constant effort to integrate, include and harmonise social relations.'

33. The 'Hedra' Report produced for the MKSM Health & Social Care Sub-Group cites data that suggests that in MKSM there may already be in the region of 20,000 volunteers (whole time equivalent) in the social care sector and 1,600 in the health care sector. Based on a projected increase of 124% in the number of people over 75 years by 2031 (this group of people are the highest users of health & social care services) the increasing demand for voluntary sector workers is clearly substantial. This local work also reflects the evidence base on the impact of good and bad design on health and national policy on promoting good health as set out in 'Choosing Health' (*Choosing Health- White Paper, Department of Health, 2004*). This policy embraces all aspects of individual lifestyle and provides many case studies of public health interventions for improving health. As local health and social care organisations plan

for future health services, so they must plan for implementing *Choosing Health*. The Wanless report, (*Securing Good Health for the Whole Population*, Wanless, D. (2004), HMSO, London), which underpins *Choosing Health*, clearly demonstrates the big gains to be made through improving population health via community engagement. These gains are not just through an increase in life expectancy over a twenty-five years period, by 2.9 years for men and 2.4 years for women but also in financial terms. Wanless estimated, that based on the three scenarios he presented, 'slow uptake', 'solid progress' and 'fully engaged', in absolute terms the gap between the best and worst scenario was around £30 billion by 2022/23, or half of the current NHS expenditure. Wanless also found that achieving "*the 'fully engaged' scenario would leave health services far better prepared to face the changing demography of the population...*" Clearly this is of major significance in terms of the future demography of the MKSM population projections.

34. It is also clear that other themes in sustainable development can play an important part in developing community capacity and social capital. Work undertaken by the EQoL Group of the MKSM Inter regional Board on 'green infrastructure' (*Planning Sustainable Communities- A Green Infrastructure Guide*- EQoL Group for Milton Keynes & the South Midlands April 2005) sets out some important principles:

'Principles

- *Green Infrastructure (GI) should provide a focus for social inclusion, education, training, health and well being through community involvement and life-long learning*
- *Encourage community involvement from the outset in design, implementation and care as local communities are often well placed to identify the type of GI that suits their needs best and it helps ensure long-term management and ownership of GI sites*
- *Encourage the involvement of special interest groups as they can have a fundamental role in building strong local commitment to the changing landscape'*

35. This work sets out clear examples of how environmental projects can effectively provide a focus for community engagement and relationship building, e.g. the Forest Of Marston Vale Trust, and also how voluntary and community- based delivery and management organisations can have a long term role in looking after physical assets, e.g. Milton Keynes Parks Trust. Similarly, in the broader cultural sphere, arts, sport and other activities are also able to bring people together and develop community cohesion. Significant numbers of volunteers work in sport and cultural organisations. The provision of Social Infrastructure must also take into account the needs of faith communities, which may also want a presence in new housing developments, and of the cultural needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community groups. Social Infrastructure investment has an important part to play in encouraging positive interaction and understanding between different ethnic, religious and cultural groups, a factor of increasing importance as the new communities seem likely to feature a more diverse population through economic and other immigration from within the European Union and beyond. The guidance published for the MKSM area sets out among its principles:

'Community Engagement and Cohesion

- *Cultural activity is an effective part of programmes which help reduce the likelihood of young people offending and of neighbourhoods falling into decline. Community led initiatives – often enriched and animated by cultural activity – help build cohesion and ownership.*
- *Cultural activity has the capacity to engage all sections of community in the processes of building healthy, vibrant and inclusive neighbourhoods. Investment in culture, and support and encouragement for a wide range of cultural activities are integral to setting the conditions for inclusive and forward-looking communities. ‘*

(‘Living Spaces’- Culture and Sustainable Communities in Milton Keynes and the South Midlands - Guidance for Local Delivery Vehicles Consultation Document, David Powell Associates Ltd. in association with Professor Martin Elson for the MKSM Culture Task Group, 2005)

36. To sum up, in the context of creating ‘sustainable communities’, there is a case for action to invest in a number of programmes alongside *social infrastructure* to promote *community capacity* and so help the development of *strong communities* (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Relationship between Social Infrastructure, Community Capacity and Strong Communities



37. But is there any more specific evidence to support the investment in social infrastructure in communities created or affected by the growth area policy? In a review and comparison of policies towards the post war New Towns and the new growth areas (*‘From new towns to growth Areas- lessons from the past- Jim Bennet, IPPR 2005*), the author establishes the very different assumptions and aims of the two policies. However in relation to social development he states:

‘The (New Town Development) corporations employed significant numbers of staff in social development. Their aim was to help foster social networks between the new residents and help them to settle into their new homes. Undoubtedly this would have been an important service in the early days, as families who have moved long distances, faced the prospect of moving to an unfurnished new home, surrounded by other houses still being constructed and possibly without any local shops, services or public transport. The media often included stories about the problems of loneliness and adjustment faced by families earning the tag of “new town blues” (Pitt, 1972). Social development continued to be a significant function in the development corporations for many years. The areas of activity that they were engaged in fell into three broad categories:

- *Community development – encouraging the engagement in sport and social activities, including supporting new residents;*
- *Social planning – inputting into the planning decisions to ensure that they were sensitive to social issues;*
- *Information and participation – in spite of their lack of accountability, ensuring that residents were involved in planning decisions (Brooke Taylor, 1972).*

The effectiveness of the investment in staff to support the development of social networks has never been formally evaluated, yet the fact that the later New Towns still had a strong emphasis on social development would suggest that it was perceived as having benefits (Gardiner, 2004).'

38. Bennet also reveals that this work on social development in the New Towns was hampered by a lack of timely investment in physical community and social facilities (including shops as well as public cultural facilities). He also comments on the notion of the 'neighbourhood' as being used largely as a planning tool for ensuring access to a range of public services and not in any real sense as the creation of a 'community' where people felt a natural affinity or identity. Alongside other aspects of urban design, he concludes that the rigid adoption of neighbourhood planning may have contributed to the feelings of social isolation summed up in the phrase 'New Town blues'.

39. However, he also finds that *'the key lesson for the Growth Areas is that large scale housing growth requires skills and capacity to address social development:*

1. Responsibility and resources for social development needs to be allocated to agencies with the capacity to deliver support to new communities;

2. Capital funding to support the provision of social, cultural and community facilities will also be essential to the creation of sustainable communities.'
(Page 17).

40. Other recent research findings also suggest the importance of investment in social infrastructure in areas of growth. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in an audit of resident's views on the design of new private housing (*'What it's like to live there: the views of residents on the design of new housing'*, CABE, 2005), found remarkable similarities in the comments of 241 residents interviewed from 11 schemes. As well as comments on physical design issues such as car parking and a 'sense of place', interviewees also commented on the degree of 'social interaction':

'With the exception of one development, there was little sign of social or commercial interaction between those living in the new developments and the wider neighbourhoods in which they are located. This lack of interaction is also evident within the development: although people often knew their immediate neighbours, this only occasionally extended to socialising on any scale. There had been attempts in some developments to hold an event, such as a barbeque, but none of these appeared to have attracted many people or been described as a success.

Many residents felt that they had busy lives with work and family, and they did not seek to make friends or socialise within the development. One-person households and young families were often more concerned than others with the absence of a focus or facilities to help generate contact between residents; families with young children were the most likely to have some chance of coming together because of a shared interest in childcare and school. By contrast, those households with two or more working adults were more likely to highlight the busy nature of modern living and their preference for privacy. Many of them had frankly very little desire to socialise with their neighbours or the wider community.’ (Page 32)

41. The report suggests that the absence of appropriate local facilities where social interaction can take place is probably one factor in explaining these findings. The findings also underline the importance of a person’s stage in their ‘life cycle’ in influencing their readiness to engage their neighbours.

Social Infrastructure in Practice- Cambourne, Cambridgeshire

Key features: Outline planning permission for new settlement west of Cambridge was granted in 1994 and this was followed by a start on the development four years later. The new settlement comprises over 1,000 acres and has planning consent for 3,300 dwellings (of which c.27% will be social or affordable housing). Just over half the dwellings have been built, a further 700 are expected to be built through the Local Development Framework Consultation, which will be the subject of a new ‘Section 106’ agreement. Three developers and a consortium of 3 housing associations are responsible for the housing development.

Some community and commercial facilities have been provided including a supermarket and more recently a range of smaller shops. A temporary community centre was provided by the church and the District Council in an old school portakabin and later on an early sales centre on site was used by the community. Another building houses the library, medical practice and some offices. A community centre has also been provided and a youth partnership group has been supported by the District Council to provide a temporary youth venue.. There are 2 primary schools, but the development was not originally of a scale to justify a new secondary school. Community facilities’ provision is linked to stages (trigger points) in the occupancy of the house building. Housing associations were not party to the Section 106 agreement and the developers retain considerable control over the timing and design of the dwellings. The original Section 106 agreement does not allow for technical or policy developments since it was signed unless all parties agree to any changes.

The local authority employed a community development worker in Cambourne from 1999 who has been actively involved in supporting the formation of a residents association and a ‘Service Providers Liaison Group’, which has formed into a partnership of residents, developers, local authorities, voluntary organisations and housing associations. A ‘Management Liaison Group’ had also been established as an example of a new Parish Council. The community development worker provided some support to this new body in the form of training, advice and an experienced consultant to help with their infrastructure eg writing policies. The Council has made or advised on a range of grants available to support community groups of various kinds. The Housing Association consortium also provides a community development worker. The nearest Village College and other groups provide some community learning. Some volunteering is being developed.

Lessons:

- Partnership approach to planning new development- e.g. Housing associations should be involved in discussion and negotiation of Section 106 agreements- a development consortium/partnership including those likely to be involved is needed from the earliest stages of planning.
- Community facilities should be developed as housing development progresses- this was not the case with the Community Centre, being provided 1 year later than planned.
- Full community involvement in design of community facilities, with support from agencies as to possible uses of community facilities.
- Availability of community development worker and small grants to support new groups etc.
- Importance of good working relationship between community development worker and planners and other agencies
- Do not constrain community facilities to entirely non-commercial uses, as income generation is important for community groups running them.
- The need to provide training and advice to community groups and parish council early on.
- Commercial facilities (e.g. Supermarket Café) can perform valuable role as informal meeting places.

42. The study also highlights other factors in influencing the overall 'success' or sustainability of a new development such as overall housing numbers and the mix of dwelling sizes and tenures (including the design and location of affordable and social housing) and the detailed design of neighbourhoods, including the provision and positioning of a range of community and other facilities (*further supported by a recent review 'Balanced and Mixed Communities-a good practice guide- Cambridgeshire Horizons, 2006*).

43. A further study into the attitudes of prospective residents and existing residents in the Thames Gateway Growth area also highlights the importance of investment in social infrastructure for both existing residents and those moving into the new housing (*'Gateway People- The aspirations and attitudes of prospective and existing residents of the Thames Gateway- Jim Bennet and James Morris, IPPR, 2006*). This study found that:

'Perhaps the most troubling insight was into the ill-informed and suspicious attitudes of the existing residents we interviewed in the outer areas of the Gateway. While this was a small sample, there was virtually no dissent from the view that the Gateway development was unlikely to bring any significant benefits to participants and would lead to significant tensions between new and existing populations...

These concerns were underwritten by a general sense of powerlessness and exclusion. Participants felt that their part of the world was generally ignored by the Government, and that within their locality they were ignored by the 'authorities'. They simply did not believe that growth might correct this perceived imbalance.....contd.

Community cohesion

The strength of negative views about the impact of housing growth and the prospect of greater diversity in the local community is very worrying. There are three key areas where policy responses could help to improve the prospects for cohesive communities in the Growth Areas.

Firstly, there is clearly a need for greater involvement of existing residents in the development of local delivery bodies' plans. Greater public involvement has the potential to increase the extent to which investment in the Growth Areas addresses existing residents' concerns about the quality of infrastructure and public services. Reflecting existing residents' views and needs in the investment and delivery of new services should address the perception that new investment only benefits the new residents.

Secondly, as well as taking on board the views of existing residents, delivery bodies need to plan ahead as to the public service requirements of new communities and ensure that there is adequate capacity in core public services in advance of the growth in population. Lack of public services' capacity to cope with growth was a key issue for existing residents and a potential source of significant tension between new and existing residents.

Thirdly, local delivery bodies should place a greater priority on community facilities and community development in their plans. Access to culturally specific services and places of worship was identified as a key need for prospective BME residents. In order to achieve cohesive communities local authorities and delivery bodies need to

assess the capacity of the community and voluntary sector and have a strategy for addressing weaknesses and gaps. This is likely to require additional resources. They will need to develop approaches with this sector to expose myths, confront racism and involve new and existing residents in activities, including cultural activity, to build a shared sense of community.'

44. These findings are supported by recent research in the rural areas surrounding Milton Keynes, focusing on local voluntary and community groups (*'Rural Communities: Infrastructure Needs and the Growth Agenda- North Buckinghamshire and Rural Milton Keynes'- Neil Gardiner Consultants, March 2006*):

'The research showed significant evidence of feelings of 'helplessness' or 'resignation' regarding the development of the city. Some participants expressed views such as "what can I do about it – the wheels are already in motion" whilst others seemed to consider that the changes would not affect them:

"it won't happen"

Overwhelmingly, the evidence was that people did not feel engaged, involved or consulted, and that there was a significant lack of comprehensive and clear information on the development. In many cases this had led to a degree of cynicism about engagement and involvement, often not simply confined to the development of Milton Keynes. Policy and change were often seen as "decided elsewhere" (regionally and nationally as well as locally) and it was perceived that there were very few real opportunities to get involved and 'make a difference'.

This report goes on to highlight how rural voluntary and community groups place a great deal of importance on 'community development', events and other tools for 'community building', development of community leaders and the need for help in organising voluntary activity:

'Community development support to help rural communities to address issues of concern was identified as useful, making sure that the views of local people were brought together and expressed in a way that would "make a difference". The need for support to help to make things happen, a person to act as a catalyst was seen as necessary and positive, particularly where the person was part of the community. In some cases this led to discussion of community leadership, mentoring, buddying and the sharing of resources, ideas and best practice..'

45. To sum up, there is a variety of evidence that points clearly to the importance of investing in social infrastructure to build community capacity and so help to create strong communities. These communities are more complex than those planned under the New towns programme and raise a number of important issues, not least being the ways in which they can be successfully integrated with people already living in or near to the new developments. Investment in social infrastructure to achieve strong communities is of particular importance in these circumstances because:

- **People lacking previous connections or social relationships need opportunities and help in forming new links and to develop the bonds which build ‘social capital’ and contribute to strong communities, always recognising that there will be some people who choose not to actively engage with their neighbours or the wider community.**
- **People coming together in new communities often lack an immediate and appropriate service infrastructure and require help to identify different types of need and, where appropriate, help in forming together to lobby for these, meet the needs themselves or to tap into wider service networks.**
- **People living in existing communities alongside or in areas of growth should be involved in shaping the physical form, facilities and character of growth areas (including helping to develop or maintain a ‘sense of place’ and with the formation of socially cohesive communities), need help to adjust to the influx of new people, and to embrace the opportunity that this growth might bring to improve their own circumstances (e.g. in provision of public or other services through increased scale).**

46. The remainder of this Plan is based upon a definition of social infrastructure, which is both practical and appropriate. This acknowledges that there is a wide range of other themes and investment programmes which are important for the establishment of truly sustainable communities, and recognises that to be fully effective these different themes and programmes need to be coordinated and look to opportunities to mutually reinforce each other (e.g. the use of community- led environmental or cultural programmes to help develop social relationships and personal confidence and skills, the promotion of health and well being through involvement in community initiatives or the achievement of mutual security and stronger community cohesion through appropriate community safety programmes).

47. Having considered the scope and range of needs to be met, the following definition of effective social infrastructure has been agreed by the Social Infrastructure Group:

Building strong communities through the continuing development and delivery of activities, resources and support to strengthen the skills and confidence of people and community groups to enable them to take effective action and play leading roles

48. In the context of this Plan the focus of this investment is on **communities created or affected by new housing development**. Social Infrastructure will consist of six key activities as set out in Box 4 (developed from the activities mentioned in 'Firm Foundations'). These activities have been developed to include:

- The provision of a small **operating budget** to community development staff in order to provide 'welcome' materials, information and events and activities to foster community development.
- The provision of grants for local voluntary/ community group **development** as well as for **start up and early running** of small scale community projects and initiatives to provide advocacy, social interaction or services to a particular neighbourhood or community. Development grants should be available both for groups set up in new/ adjoining communities and to help other voluntary service providers adjust to increased demand for their services (e.g. through developing the skills, organisational capacity or new delivery methods).
- The addition of **volunteering** as a key element of social infrastructure to reflect the important part this plays in promoting community self help and support. This is focused on 'formal volunteering' (defined in the National Citizenship Survey as 'Giving unpaid help through groups, clubs and organisations to benefit other people or the environment' (*National Citizenship Survey 2005, Preliminary Results, Home Office 2006, Definitions*)).

Box 4: The scope of Social Infrastructure for MKSM

1. Community facilities- access to a meeting place or a base that is available, welcoming and accessible to all and owned and/or run by voluntary/ community organisations (e.g. community centres; village halls; other venues where a range of services and activities of benefit to a particular community are provided). This is in addition to other more informal meeting places (e.g. pubs, cafes). There is a need for early, perhaps temporary provision in a new community to provide an initial focus. In the longer term a permanent base will usually be needed.

2. Community development- paid or unpaid workers with skills to support particular communities in identifying and meeting their needs directly or to advocate on their behalf. This includes existing communities of **place, identity or experience** affected by housing growth- to help them to shape, contribute to and benefit from the plans. A small operating budget will enable 'welcome' materials and information as well as support for community events and initiatives to foster community development.

3. Groups and organisations- providing support (usually from a VCS infrastructure body) for the setting up of a local forum or network that is inclusive, open and participatory, owned by and accountable to the community. Also included is support for 'locally grown' organisations providing activities, services, community development and advocacy of a community's needs.

4. Grant funding- locally resourced and run programmes (within a local authority district or more locally) aimed at stimulating grass roots activity and capacity-building. Grants will support the start up and early running costs of groups developed in new/adjoining communities as well as the development of these and existing, specific voluntary service providers to take the steps necessary to respond to the expansion in demand for their activities.

5. Learning and skills development- opportunities to equip people for active involvement in, and support to, their own groups and communities.

6. Volunteering and other mutual support- access to opportunities to volunteer through programmes supporting their recruitment, development and effective deployment to benefit a particular community or some of its members.

Social Infrastructure- what are the expected results and how can we measure these?

49. Investment in social infrastructure should result in six outcomes which together describe a 'strong community' and which are at the heart of creating a 'sustainable community':

- **Better design**- improved design and functioning of developments created in the growth area through active participation of existing and new residents and local VCS infrastructure bodies in the planning process.
- **Better relationships**- the creation of positive relationships within a community and between it and neighbouring communities (both of place and interest).
- **Better self help**- people who are actively involved in supporting other people in their community.
- **Better government**- residents who are self confident and have the skills to be actively involved in the governance of their community and its relationship with outside agencies and organisations.
- **Better services**- the creation of locally-based, viable activities and services run by and for the community.
- **Better health and well-being** – individuals who are generally healthier, better able to recover from ill health or withstand challenges to their personal circumstances and who are able to participate in a range of cultural, recreational and sporting activities.

50. These outcomes provide the driving force for investment in social infrastructure and should form the basis of a system to measure and learn from this investment. The measurement of results, though important, is complex, especially when trying to ascertain the causes of particular features in a community. For example what level of community involvement in planning and design exercises can be judged to be healthy? Should we be concerned if a large number of people do not wish to interact with their neighbours? How many community groups can be thought of as the 'right' number for a particular community?

51. Notwithstanding these difficulties it is important to develop a series of measures and associated research which can together, and with appropriate adjustment to local circumstances, be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of investment in social infrastructure and learn lessons for future planning and delivery.

Social Infrastructure in Practice- de Havilland Development, Hatfield and the de Havilland Housing Partnership

Key features: Development of around 2400 dwellings (c1500 to date) on former airfield. Approximately 70% owner-occupation with balance affordable and social housing. A Local lettings policy has been agreed to ensure that the social mix of particular parts of the development is considered when allocating people in housing needs from the Council's waiting list.

The Development was commenced in 2001 and is likely to be completed in 2008. A Master Plan was set out and due to changes in planning policy a greater number of dwellings has been delivered. In practice due to changes in demand there has been an unexpected growth in private rented housing, much of it for students of the nearby University of Hertfordshire. The growth in student numbers, plus parking are probably the two most significant issues for residents.

Full public facilities have been planned but there have been some delays in delivering some of these due to a number of reasons. Similarly there have been problems securing rights over land and other permissions to get small scale but important facilities such as post boxes and community notice boards provided. There was no provision for young persons (youth) play areas in the original master plan, and work is in hand to try to rectify this.

The Housing partnership, which was originally set up and led by the Borough Council, incorporates the two Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and housebuilders developing on the former British Aerospace site. However membership has been extended to include RSL's who have developed sites adjacent to BAe. It appears to have been very successful in achieving the major goals for the site achieving a mix of housing which meets local needs. An agreement exists between the partners: has no legal status and does not therefore bind partners to meeting its provisions. There is no other formal mechanism for partnership working which includes the wider range of public agencies, VCS or residents. A Residents Association has been established and is organising activities and events and has a very successful website. It is in receipt of funding from the Development Partnership.

In addition the Partnership via Aldwyck Housing Association employs a 'Sustainable Communities Worker' post, funded for 3 years (2003-2006) by a successful bid for Innovation and Good Practice Grant from the Housing Corporation. The key areas of activity for the post holder are directed by the Partnership. The requirement for this post was a key objective of the partnership. A period of further funding has been agreed to allow a further period 2 days per week (Jan- June 2007) and then 1 day per week (July – Dec 2007).

Apart from a regular newsletter, the community development worker carries out an annual survey of residents which has proved to be useful in identifying local issues, targeting resources and 'taking the temperature' of the community with regard to living in the new development. The community development worker has also become formally involved in the Local Strategic Partnerships and the informal and formal contacts made through this have proved to be beneficial in engaging with voluntary and community groups and other bodies in order to meet some of the needs of the de Havilland development (e.g. under 5 's provision). The active residents association tends to be issue related as the full infrastructure of the site has not yet been completed rather than more general or positive. Several public community events have been held providing training, interest and some have been targeted on deprived residents in order to support the whole community. The funding of these events comes from the Partnership and VCS

Lessons:

- A broadly- based, effective partnership is critical to ensure overall coordination and planning of new developments, with a partnership agreement which is credible and enforceable and encourages a collaborative approach to the overall development and dealing with issues as they occur over the development period. This should include agreement and protocols for sharing information about residents and others in relation to, for example, community development work and anti social behaviour.
- The annual resident's survey is a good source of information on resident's views and concerns.
- The Local Lettings Policy is important in ensuring consideration is given to social mix in the social housing elements of the development (30% of the total).
- The Sustainable Communities Worker's formal and informal links to the Local Strategic Partnership have proved beneficial in linking the new development and its need into mainstream community planning.
- A 'reserve fund' as part of the original development agreement could have made it possible to deal with unforeseen issues as the development unfolds.

52. As well as the use of indicators of achievements and outputs (e.g. numbers successfully completing a training course), it will be important to measure the impact

or outcomes of the investment. The approach should include the use of 'action research' including case studies. The approach to evaluation should get beyond the use of summary indicators. Contributions from community development workers, residents, voluntary and community groups and public service agencies all have a part to play in understanding the impact of social infrastructure investment.

53. But summary indicators do have a part to play and Box 5 sets out a selection of indicators developed by the Audit Commission and IDeA to measure *community involvement*, an important dimension of 'strong communities'. These have been selected and grouped under each of the key result areas mentioned above, to demonstrate that relevant indicators already exist and can be used to help measure the impact of social infrastructure investment in a new or changing community. Further work can be done to develop these and other indicators (e.g. for the immediate outputs of different aspects of social infrastructure) as part of the monitoring, research and evaluation programme that is needed.

54. In this regard, other work has been completed and could provide a useful reference for the development of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system (e.g. 'Assessing Community Strengths'- Steve Skinner and Mandy Wilson, Community development foundation, 2002; 'Achieving better Community Development' (ABCD)- CDF (various); Measures of community- Gabriel Chanan (CDF), Active Community Unit, Home Office 2002)).

55. The list of indicators should be further developed into a system for collecting, analysing and using data as investment in social infrastructure takes place across the growth area. A comprehensive system needs to be developed as part of the investment in social infrastructure and funding for its development and delivery is needed.

Box 5: Possible Indicators of Successful Social Infrastructure

Investment (source: *Library of Local Performance Indicators: community involvement- Audit Commission/ IDeA*)

1. Better design

- Percentage of current statutory plans which have been written with community involvement

2. Better relationships

- Percentage of people surveyed who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
- Percentage of people who (a) know their neighbours (b) trust their neighbours
- Social inclusion and community involvement

3. Better self help

- Extent and influence of the voluntary and community sector in the locality
- The extent of volunteering
- The extent of individuals' (a) participation and (b) active involvement in local voluntary and community activities
- Percentage of people surveyed who have worked in a voluntary capacity during the past 12 months
- % of people surveyed who said they had done a favour for a neighbour, or their neighbours had done a favour for them, in the past 12 months

4. Better government

- Percentage of residents who feel that the council takes notice of its residents' views
- Percentage of adults surveyed who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area
- Percentage of electoral canvass forms [Form A's] returned
- The percentage turnout for local elections
- Percentage of seats where two or fewer candidates stood for election at the last local elections
- (a) Proportion of the local population represented by a local neighbourhood forum - (b) Level of support provided to neighbourhood forums - (c) Proportion of the local population represented by town and parish councils
- Percentage of pupils who attend schools with a Parent Teacher Association or equivalent (a) Primary - (b) Secondary
- (a) Type of organisation assessed - (b) Auditing community involvement: score against an audit checklist
- Percentage of local people surveyed who have taken positive action to resolve a local issue
- Proportion of direct consultation carried out during the year that is in accordance with principles of good practice
- Percentage of citizens who feel well informed about local affairs

5. Better services

- Number of local authority owned facilities and services that are managed under community management arrangements
- Percentage of local schools that make their halls available for community use out of school hours
- Percentage of community and voluntary organisations receiving support from local authorities and/or other sources who feel that the support provided has improved their confidence and ability to manage their community organisation
- Range of support provided for community and voluntary organisations

6. Better health and well-being

- The percentage of residents surveyed satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live
- The percentage of residents surveyed who consider their neighbourhood is getting worse

3: Guiding Principles for Social Infrastructure

56. A range of case studies and published research has been studied as part of the work for this Plan. Several are summarised in various blue boxes throughout this Plan. They and other literature reveal a range of useful information which can be consolidated into a set of principles for adoption by those planning the delivery of social infrastructure development. Box 6 sets out 10 key principles with some more detailed explanation.

Social Infrastructure in Practice- Bpha (Bedford Pilgrims Housing Association)

Key features: The association runs a community development team which provides community development support to new and existing developments. The service is provided to a defined neighbourhood/ estate, even though this probably contains residents who are not tenants of the association. The association appears to have a good reputation with funders and has succeeded in securing a range of project funding to support local initiatives in its areas of operation, many ideas developed by their team of community development workers; e.g. developing projects based on using ICT, physical and mental exercises to combat social exclusion, pre employment counselling and environmental and community safety projects associated with neighbourhood renewal programmes. It has found that the development of one project tends to contribute to others and they interact positively.

At a new development in Arbury, Cambridge, the association is working with two other Housing associations who are using a mixture of public funding (Housing Corporation) to provide £100,000 towards a community development officer and youth work, a contribution from a developer contribution under a section 106 agreement of £70,000 plus other public agency funding. A joint planning group exists to help coordinate community development and other activity. This is an approach that Bpha will try to duplicate on other new development sites.

The approach features the use of a 'community house' – a residential property converted for use as a base staff, community activities and as a surgery for other public and VCS workers and agencies. This –usually a two bedroomed property- works well as an initial focus for community activity, the running costs and lost rent (in the region of £9,000 per annum) are absorbed by the Association through its rental and project income. Planning restrictions are important to limit potential nuisance to neighbouring residents e.g. a maximum of 10 users at any one time.

A half time Community Development worker per 500 dwelling development is allocated in the early days of a new development with an increase in the time available as the development grows.

Lessons:

- The importance of an initial community base- a 'community house' to provide a focus for new communities
- The positive effects of having a network of projects underway with a range of different funding sources to enable learning and to open up new possibilities for funding local initiatives
- The importance of joint planning arrangements where a range of different housing providers are operating in a new development
- The importance of community development workers acting for the whole community, not just residents of the association.

Box 6: Guiding Principles for Social Infrastructure

1. Involvement- People in communities affected by new development will be involved in shaping this and to encourage potential bridge building to the incoming residents. Local VCS infrastructure bodies will be actively involved in identifying and advocating the need for Social Infrastructure development and in developing mechanisms to engage new residents, help them to form relationships and in some cases create more formal groups and organisations.

2. Sustainability- Organisations developed in new communities will have their long term viability and development considered and planned for from the start; e.g. enterprise and income generation potential. Those negotiating Section 106 agreements will set out and agree a detailed specification for facilities and assets to be funded (and possibly transferred) so that there is no doubt about the standards, qualities, scale and timing of the action to be taken. Those negotiating Section 106 agreements and planning permissions, will ensure that the overall design of the development takes due account of long term maintenance needs and costs of public facilities, especially where these are expected to transfer to a local community organisation. New developments, especially the larger ones, will include provision and creation of community assets that are able to generate income for local groups expected to run them. Multiple use facilities and use of existing buildings (including currently redundant ones) should also be considered in this respect.

3. Coordination- Public/ community facility provision will be planned to be in step and coordinate with the rate of development of new houses, with an initial community base being in place at the same time as the first houses. An appropriate mix and style of social infrastructure activity will be developed which takes into account the agendas and priorities of public and other agencies and seeks to maximise the contribution of social infrastructure to these; e.g. health promotion. The potential for joint use of proposed community facilities and possibly looking at the opportunities for new ways of providing public and other services in areas of growth will feature in detailed planning discussions.

4. Support- There will be provision of people with appropriate expertise in community development early on in the planning and development of new housing and associated facilities. Support for new communities will be tailored to their particular needs and feature training and development opportunities for those potentially or already in positions of community leadership. Appropriate technical support (e.g. on the Section 106 system) will be made available to community groups as they become more involved in the development of their area.

5. Communication- There will be an early commitment to open, transparent, honest and effective communications between the community, developers and public bodies to build trust and effective relationships during the life of the new development and possibly beyond.

6. Inclusion- Social infrastructure investment will ensure that all sections of the community are communicated with and their particular needs are considered, whether through their shared location, or because of common experiences or interests.

7. Empowerment- Appropriate social infrastructure investment will be provided to help develop individuals, groups and communities to enable them to take control of their futures and be able to take action with reducing levels of external support.

8. Learning- Action research and other systems for monitoring, reflection, evaluation and learning from investment in social infrastructure will be developed, which enable strategic and local planners to adjust and develop future plans and investment.

9. Collaboration- Social infrastructure investment will encourage mutual support and action between groups and organisations in existing communities and associated new developments.

10. Comprehensiveness- Social infrastructure investment will cover all residents in a new and associated existing community and not be focused on a particular group; e.g. social renters, a particular ethnic or cultural group etc.

4: Planning, Resourcing and Delivering Social Infrastructure

57. Having examined what social infrastructure is, established its importance to communities created or affected by new housing development and set out some guiding principles for its development, there is a need to identify a plan for its development over the MKSM sub region as planned growth is implemented. There are perhaps three key questions:

- What should the approach to planning for social infrastructure be?
- How can this plan be resourced?
- How should the plan be delivered?

The Approach to Planning

58. Earlier material has established not only the importance of social infrastructure to building community capacity and so leading to strong communities, but it has also indicated how important it is to plan for this- otherwise provision may not be made or will be made in an uncoordinated or ill- timed way. Some of the examples of social infrastructure investment shown in the various blue boxes illustrate some of the difficulties which could result:

- *Poorly designed facilities which bear little relationship to community needs*
- *A community which is essentially a dormitory and lacks any sense of community well-being*
- *A community which starts to show the symptoms of social failure with rising levels of crime, poor care for the environment and other evidence of dysfunction*
- *A development with people that are isolated and excluded from existing or adjoining communities with consequent problems of access to services, support and resulting poor individual health.*

59. It is also clear that because of the wide range of variables involved in creating strong, sustainable communities that an approach to planning is required which on the one hand enables a coherent plan and investment to take place across the sub region, but which retains flexibility to adapt to local needs and circumstances.

60. The guiding principles for social infrastructure investment set out in the previous section are one tool which will help with the planning of action at local levels. A further tool is required which identifies the total investment likely to be required in social infrastructure over the period of growth in MKSM. It also needs to provide a basis on which to plan, resource and deliver this at more local levels, especially as negotiations take place around planning permission and 'planning obligations' or section 106 agreements.

61. However, there are major uncertainties about the future of the 'planning obligations' system and also over the right mix, style and levels of social infrastructure needed in any one setting at a particular time. Therefore the overall approach to planning needs to:

- Develop a model for strategic planning and investment in social infrastructure which provides a platform to help those involved in the wider planning of the MKSM growth area.
- Enable this model to be applied to local developments and with other tools ensure that adequate attention is given to and provision made for social infrastructure.

Social Infrastructure in Practice- Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire

Key features: This Council of Voluntary Service/Volunteer Centre provides a range of support services to VCS organisations in the South Bedfordshire area and is developing its capacity in the field of social infrastructure development in relation to new developments in Leighton Buzzard.

A substantial new development (of around 1000 dwellings) is underway and Voluntary and Community Action saw the opportunity to develop an action research project on the provision of social infrastructure services to new communities. Their proposals included the provision of a 'community house' as a meeting place and base for the project and a 'Community Mobiliser' (worker) to welcome new residents and work with them in the development and provision of social activities, the promotion of volunteering and the formation of new community groups. A part-time Development Officer would also provide some initial support, advice and training for local community groups. A small budget for 'start up' grants was also proposed and local groups would also be able to tap into Voluntary and Community Action's other services (including Volunteering and Funding Advice).

These proposals were welcomed by the landowner/developer who brought on board a house builder to provide the planned facilities. The provision of two adjoining three-bedroom houses was not possible and after negotiation a two-bed apartment over three garages (with the garage walls removed!) was made available. Detailed drawings of the proposed community house were agreed and building work commenced; fitting-out was delayed while a change of use planning application was submitted.

However, an original Section 106 agreement had provided for interim community facilities on an adjoining site. The developer no longer believed these were possible as progress was proving to be problematic and had taken nearly three years, still with no agreement locally. A request from the developer to use the section 106 funding to meet some of the costs for Voluntary and Community Action's project was turned down by the local Planning Authority because it wanted to hold to the terms of the original Section 106 agreement. Nevertheless, the local Planning Authority has recognised the importance of providing social infrastructure and has included this in a development brief for a new phase of development in the area. Local developers will be expected to contact Voluntary and Community Action and to include provision of interim community facilities, Community Mobilisers and associated running costs in their planning applications for the building of new communities.

Lessons:

- The importance of good working relationships between developers, the local planning authority and voluntary sector partners on the wording and progression of Section 106 agreements
- The importance of early agreement on practical plans to fulfil social infrastructure requirements and their inclusion in design briefs for development – this allows for the provision of new social infrastructure from early on in a development and for suitable properties to be identified.
- The idea of a 'social infrastructure package' of a community house, with running costs, staffing, small grants and a range of other support from one VCS agency as a possible model for wider application.

- Build in thorough and systematic monitoring and evaluation arrangements. These will enable lessons to be learned about the scale and style of social infrastructure investment and adjust the assumptions made in the strategic model as well as helping to inform the development of good practice and local provision.

The Investment Model

62. A basic planning model for social infrastructure investment is set out in Appendix 6. The model is made up of the following components:

1. A Six Stage Community Capacity-building Process for new communities (see Figure 5). This is a simplified model of the steps in a new community's development and the typical elements of social infrastructure likely to be needed. In reality the pace of each stage will vary and the model will be complicated by the overlapping development of housing and other facilities in phases. Provision is also made for ongoing action research, monitoring and review in order to adjust social infrastructure provision in a particular location, and also to feed into collective learning about effective practice and to refine the investment model for the future.

2. A capacity profile of the scale and mix of Social Infrastructure which are likely to be needed at different stages in this process for a 'typical' new development (together with judgements about the variations in quantity and mix needed for different scales of development).

3. Cost assumptions for these elements of social infrastructure, based on estimates gathered from interviews and other relevant sources.

63. These three components are then put together to arrive at overall cost estimates for social infrastructure investment for the sub region as a whole, for each LDV area and for typical developments of different sizes. A total contribution for social infrastructure investment is calculated which results in a figure of approximately £700 per planned dwelling. Table 2 shows the overall estimates for the sub region and local areas in the period 2006-2021 (and the breakdown in potential contributions from developers and other public sources) and Table 3 the overall estimates (average per annum) of different elements of social infrastructure created over the same period from this investment.

64. Appendix 6 also outlines more detailed proposals for varying the ratios of social infrastructure provision on community development staffing (allowing for the more stepped increase and decrease in capacity according to development size) and for the provision of an initial community base and site/ investment for a long term community facility through creation of 'social infrastructure reserve sites'. The provision and setting up of the initial base and the reserve sites is proposed as a developer responsibility in addition to a contribution to the costs of other social infrastructure investment mentioned above.

65. The model allows the overall costs and content of social infrastructure to be defined and planned. However, in addition it is recognised that the development of

community capacity and the growth of 'strong communities' are influenced by a number of other factors:

- The mix of dwelling sizes/ types and the consequential household mix
- The tenure mix of the development which can have implications for the backgrounds and needs of the people making up the new community
- The particular and emerging needs for support to groups within a particular development from a range of voluntary and public bodies
- The opportunities for building community capacity through engaging local people in projects which have a mix of aims; e.g. development of community open spaces or community woodlands, creative arts or other cultural projects.
- The detailed design and density of the housing and its location with regard to a community base.
- The presence of a range of other community and similar facilities which encourage social interaction e.g. pubs, clubs, shops, schools etc,

66. The model is primarily useful as a way of calculating the level of social infrastructure investment required overall and at more local levels. However, at local level it is no more than a guide as the particular scale, phasing, existing context and needs for social infrastructure and the resultant use of the investment will need to be determined development by development. A later section describes a 'Social Infrastructure Impact Assessment' which could be used to make this assessment.

Figure 5: Community Capacity Building - ‘Six Steps to Sustainability’



Table 2: Social Infrastructure Investment in MKSM growth areas 2006-2021

Area	Target Dwellings 2006-2021	Population estimate (2.3 per dwelling) ¹	Total S.I. investment (£'s)	Developer S.I. investment (£'s) ²	Public S.I. investment (£'s)
Aylesbury Vale	12384	28483	£8,668,800	£6,501,600	£2,167,200
Milton Keynes	39915	91805	£27,940,500	£20,955,375	£6,985,125
Luton and South Beds	23207	53376	£16,244,900	£12,183,675	£4,061,225
Bedford and Mid Beds	17393	40004	£12,175,100	£9,131,325	£3,043,775
North Northamptonshire	28038	64487	£19,626,600	£14,719,950	£4,906,650
West Northamptonshire	22335	51371	£15,634,500	£11,725,875	£3,908,625
Additional Northamptonshire	35,400	81420	£24,780,000	£18,585,000	£6,195,000
Additional MK/AV	6,000	13800	£4,200,000	£3,150,000	£1,050,000
Total MKSM	184672	424746	£129,270,400	£96,952,800	£32,317,600
<i>Amount per dwelling</i>			£700	£525	£175
<i>Annual Averages 2006-2021</i>	12311	28316	£8,618,027	£6,463,520	£2,154,507
Notes:					
1. Household size as used by the Health and Social Care project in their population projections.					
2 In addition it is proposed that provision is made for an initial community venue and for longer term 'Social Infrastructure Reserve Sites' to be used by local community and/ or voluntary organisations to meet longer term needs in defined communities. See Appendix 6 for a fuller explanation.					

Table 3: Social Infrastructure created 2006-2021 (annual averages)

Area	Community Development staff (average full time equivalent per annum)	Support for community organisations (average full time equivalent Development Officer per annum)	Start up/initial running grants (average number per annum, including initial community base)	Development grants (average number per annum)	Numbers of formal volunteers (average number per annum)	Community learning (average people/places per annum)
Aylesbury Vale	3	1	13	5	875	19
Milton Keynes	10	2	43	16	2821	61
Luton and South Beds	6	1	25	9	1640	36
Bedford and Mid Beds	4	1	19	7	1229	27
North Northamptonshire	7	1	30	11	1981	43
West Northamptonshire	6	1	24	9	1578	34
<i>Additional Northamptonshire</i>	9	2	38	14	2502	54
<i>Additional MK/AV</i>	2	0.3	6	2	424	9
Total MKSM	46	9.3	197	74	13050	283

Resourcing Social Infrastructure

67. As can be seen the model reveals an estimated need for investment of over £129m in the sub region in social infrastructure over the next 15 years (equivalent to £700 per planned dwelling if all development in the sub region is included). What options are there for funding this?

68. Providing and resourcing the infrastructure needed for new communities have been key issues in the roll out of the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan. Traditionally developers have been asked to make contributions under the 'planning obligations' provisions of Town and Country Planning Law which enable a contribution to be made towards the costs of infrastructure which meets certain 'tests'. Appendix 7 contains further information on planning obligations.

69. National proposals for the development of a 'Planning Gain Supplement' are currently under consideration and would, if implemented, have far reaching implications for the existing system of planning obligations- developers would have the option of paying a standard levy on a development rather than entering into local negotiations, which is the hallmark of the current system.

70. In Milton Keynes the planning authorities have developed their approach to planning obligations based on the most recent planning advice (*ODPM Circular 05/2005 'Planning Obligations'*). The Milton Keynes Partnership, where it is the planning authority, has set a tariff of £250 per dwelling developer contribution to strategic investment in voluntary and community organisations/ activity (out of a total tariff of £17,215 per dwelling). Public funding in addition to this is being sought. MK Partnership has also formed a legal agreement with several large developers to pool these contributions and to make them available in advance of housing development to enable front end provision of important facilities before or as new developments get underway.

71. Milton Keynes Council require provision of £190 per dwelling for voluntary and community organisations/ activity on sites where they are the planning authority and in addition seek provision of a community house and a one off contribution of £10,000 (which is matched) to contribute to a range of activities (see Appendix 6 for more details).

Social Infrastructure in Practice- Community Enterprise Hubs in north Kent

Key features: A Community Enterprise manager has been appointed by the local Council, through a local regeneration agency, to work with the VCS to co-ordinate a district-wide community enterprise strategy. £850k capital funds (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) is being distributed between 5 projects. These are all enhancing existing centres so as to make income-generation a possibility (including a healthy living centre, multipurpose community centre, a Foyer and an early years centre.)

European Union 'Urban' funding was earmarked for a multi purpose centre in Dartford led by a consortium of three community groups. The project is also likely to include a doctor's surgery, child care and space for community groups. In Medway a site for a community Enterprise Hub project will be initially managed by the local CVS but which in due course will have independent status. This hub is to provide central resources and facilities for an expanded network of Community learning centres. Churches are also working with the Council to expand the community learning network.

Lessons:

- Investment in income generating facilities to foster diversified range of income and greater security for community groups.
- Scope for development of multi use facilities which meet a range of public and VCS needs.
- CVS as host of initial development with move towards independence for centre.

72. Within the MK partnership's total 'tariff' per dwelling of £17,215 a sum of £4,943 is sought for what the policy states as 'social infrastructure' but this includes a wide range of public service provision as well as provision by the Voluntary and Community Sector- the latter constitutes only £250 per dwelling out of the overall total (just over 1%). Nonetheless even this amount has yielded £3.75m for the ten-year period 2006- 2016 and work is beginning on a business plan for the use of this funding over the period. The first instalment of £1m has already been paid over to Milton Keynes Council of Voluntary Organisations as the holding body for this funding.

73. The tariff approach appears to be successful in binding together private and public agencies in a partnership approach to strategic planning and investment. This reduces the uncertainties for all parties in terms of identifying the resources to develop the necessary infrastructure for new development. Private contributions via the tariff help to encourage public agencies to 'lever in' the other funding required to achieve the necessary investment. Some other LDV's across the MKSM growth area are in the course of investigating the adoption of a tariff. Whilst the context and nature of new development varies across the sub region, it appears to offer an approach, within existing legislation, which is very helpful in securing the funding and facilitating the planning for new infrastructure.

74. The proposed approach to planning for social infrastructure (as defined in this Plan) can easily fit within a tariff approach and is also adaptable to more traditional approaches to section 106 negotiations on a development-by-development basis. However, the scale of resources required to meet the anticipated investment in social infrastructure is such that planning obligations alone may not be able to meet the need and it may also be judged appropriate that the public sector contributes something to the total required. Having said this it will be important to:

1. Clarify the basis of any tariff contribution to the 'Voluntary and Community Sector'

In the Milton Keynes example this funding could include, for example, help for voluntary organisations not grown or based in the new communities but which nevertheless provide support into them as their needs become evident. It will be recalled that these organisations are included in the social infrastructure investment model developed in the Plan, but only insofar as funding the *changes* needed for them to be in a position to respond to expansion of demand for their services. The ongoing running costs of expanded provision would need to be funded from other sources, possibly from the expanded council tax revenues of local authorities.

2. Review and expand the contribution of the tariff to social infrastructure

(as defined in this Plan) in Milton Keynes and in other places where this might be developed to ensure a greater contribution to the overall costs involved than is currently the case. The investment model for social infrastructure developed in this Plan shows that a sum of £700 per dwelling is likely to be needed with provision of initial and longer term community bases as an additional requirement. Further discussions are needed at sub regional and LDV levels on what proportion of a total tariff should be contributed towards this as a 'planning obligation'. As the majority of the social infrastructure investment is concerned

with building new communities it is proposed that this should at a minimum be 75% of the required sum, i.e. £525 per dwelling (as shown in Table 2).

3. Consider and develop other sources of funding

If contributions from developers under 'planning obligations' will meet only a proportion of the costs involved, then other sources of funding will need to be identified.

Possible sources here include public agency grants/ project funding/Service Level Agreements, lottery grants, interest on funds committed to an endowment fund for grants giving etc. Local

Strategic Partnerships (LSP's) and the evolving system of 'Local Area Agreements' provide an important focus for strategic investment in a locality. They should be engaged for ongoing discussions about sources of public funding to be levered alongside contributions to social infrastructure investment from planning obligations.

In the longer term social infrastructure provision should look to income generated from social enterprise activities (e.g. associated with community organisations using 'Social Infrastructure reserve sites' as assets for income generation as well as community support). There is a growing range of funding sources for social enterprise including those with a mixture of grants and loans

Social Infrastructure in Practice- Milton Keynes Community Foundation

Key features: Independent grant-making charity, with total grants of £5million since 1987. Grants of £707,947 in 2005/06 to 160 voluntary and community organisations for projects that benefited the whole community including people with special needs, other disabilities, children, youth, older people and of artistic and cultural life.

Grants of three types:

1. Small grants up to £1500 for set up costs, equipment, hire of facilities etc;
2. Community Grants of up to £7,500 for capital costs, equipment, project funding;
3. Development grants for up to £75,000 over three years for organisational development.
4. The Foundation will also award extra ordinary grants

The Foundation promotes philanthropy through personal and corporate giving. The Foundation also holds property assets, gifted from the previous Development Corporation, some of which are let and provide income (though the majority of the tenants are voluntary and community organisations who receive a subsidised rent and in 2005/06 equates to an additional £511,898 benefit to the sector), others which are 'community reserve sites' (CRS) these are plots of land within Milton Keynes for long term leasing to voluntary and community groups able to develop them for community benefit. 15 of the CRS have been developed or in the process of being developed of which 6 sites have been developed by faith organisations, most of which also provide facilities and services to the immediate community.

The Foundation also holds a flagship building in central Milton Keynes which is being developed as a resource base for the voluntary and community sector.

Lessons:

- Using an endowment-based grant organisation with assets that can be used to benefit the VCS directly or indirectly though generating income for grant giving in the long term.
- Reserve sites provide communities with earmarked land for community benefit. Though most of these appear to date not to have been developed by community groups that have grown up in the immediate neighbourhood the facilities generally provide a benefit to these areas (e.g through access to meeting spaces).
- Value of clear application and appraisal processes for grants and sites.
- Milton Keynes Community Foundation possibly provides a model for grant giving as part of Social Infrastructure development as well as a vehicle for holding community reserve sites until these are required for development.

such as the 'Adventure Capital Fund' and FutureBuilders (though the latter is more closely related to the delivery of public service contracts).

It may also be appropriate to look to central government to fund an element of social infrastructure provision through future rounds of its *Growth Area Fund* (which has been used to date to fund a range of revenue and capital investment aimed at opening up areas for development) or other special funding. As the next section will indicate, this is particularly relevant to some aspects of this Plan which are appropriately developed at a sub regional level and which are critical to ensuring the effective planning, delivery and evaluation of social infrastructure investment.

4. Encourage Local Planning Authorities to adopt the tariff approach and develop supplementary Planning Documents to cover the overall approach to planning obligations. Within this, reasonable contributions to social infrastructure as defined in this Plan should be identified. Wherever possible it will be important to take a strategic partnership approach which enables developers and public agencies to contribute resources to enable the required infrastructure to be developed 'in step' with housing and population growth.

Planning and Delivery Process for Social Infrastructure

75. The previous sections have dealt with the overall approach to strategic planning and investment in social infrastructure. This section focuses on the processes and responsibilities for more local development and delivery as well as needs for supporting investment at sub regional level.

76. It is clear from the interviews and other research carried out for this Plan that there is a need for a systematic, properly resourced and structured approach to investment in social infrastructure. A vital element in this is the effective coordination and collective approach by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) across the sub region and at more local levels. At Sub regional level, the **Social Infrastructure Group** provides a good foundation for this collective approach. At local level the picture is more mixed, with some areas benefiting from a strong, inclusive representative body and in others the picture being more fragmented. It is clear that the VCS in each local delivery area needs to be encouraged and supported in forming into a collective voice with regard to social infrastructure development, both to act as effective advocates and in relation to the delivery of social infrastructure on the ground. It is proposed to establish a **Social Infrastructure Partnership** for each LDV growth area, led by a VCS infrastructure organisation.

77. At the same time it is clear that if social infrastructure is to be effectively promoted and planned for, people with the right knowledge, skills and experience to contribute to strategic and more detailed planning and development work are needed. A key part of the model for planning and delivery, therefore is the appointment of people who can play this role on behalf of the VCS and who can also help to support the collective action and contribution of the VCS in local areas. A 'Social Infrastructure Manager', sitting firmly within the VCS, and relating to each growth area and its Local Delivery Vehicle is proposed.

78. The **Social Infrastructure Managers** would be specifically accountable to the 'Social Infrastructure Partnership' established in each of the two LDV areas covered and would be hosted by an appropriate infrastructure body such as a CVS. Similarly, such an organisation would be best placed to coordinate and support the working of the proposed Social Infrastructure Partnership. Social Infrastructure Manager work programmes and time allocations to each LDV would be based on the relative scale and complexity of forthcoming housing development programmes in each LDV area.

79. With these staff in post and the VCS able to offer a coherent contribution to strategic and local negotiations and planning for social infrastructure, a basic model for planning and delivery for individual developments can be designed. Figure 6 sets this out. Key features are:

- The **close working** of Social Infrastructure Managers with their Social Infrastructure Partnership and LDV's in relation to forward planning and negotiations about social infrastructure provision at both strategic and scheme levels. This includes identifying and agreeing an initial investment in community consultation and development work with the communities affected by or adjoining the proposed new development.
- The development of a '**Social Infrastructure Impact Assessment**' (S.I. I.A.) at the early stages of planning for new development schemes, carried out by the S.I. Manager. This would result in proposals for social infrastructure development based on the packages and investment model in this Plan, but adapted to suit local circumstances and needs as revealed in the S.I. I. A. This would feed into detailed negotiations about a particular development. S.I.A.'s would be undertaken for all developments above, say 25 dwellings, and would vary in their depth and complexity according to the size and nature of particular developments, but all could consider other aspects of the design of the development which have a bearing on community capacity and the development of strong communities.
- Once a detailed plan for S.I. investment in a particular scheme has been agreed and is formalised in a **Section 106 agreement** or equivalent, together with agreement for public sector contributions to this package (possibly via the LSP), it would be the responsibility of the Partnership, with support from the S.I. Manager, to identify suitable organisations to deliver this and to propose these to the LDV for a more formal **commissioning process**, with a 'Service Level Agreement' or similar document as the basis for this. This would become the focus for monitoring and review of the service provided and should feature key performance indicators and other reporting requirements. A formal framework agreement would describe and regulate the relationship between each LDV and its Social Infrastructure Partnership and provide core, standard conditions for each contract to provide social infrastructure.

Social Infrastructure in Practice- Blackthorn Good Neighbours, Northampton

Key Features: The project was established through Lottery Community Fund funding in 1998 to support and assist the development of residents living in the Blackthorn neighbourhood of Northampton. The project ran for 6 years. Its aims were to address some of the social problems on the estate through volunteering and local action: to foster a sense of belonging and to engender a feeling of community. A prime objective was to address the issue of social exclusion and in so doing improve social cohesion.

Some of the activities of the project were:

- A community house facility with a full time staff member and support by two part time staff
- Drop in session
- Training courses provided to enable people to develop their own skills and abilities; e.g. IT, cooking on a budget.
- Health walks
- Holiday Play scheme,
- Mums and Tots Club
- Breakfast Clubs at both local schools,
- Volunteers were also found, and supported, to run uniformed groups on Blackthorn.
- To be a focus for other agencies to provide services e.g. Welfare Rights outreach services

Much of the early work involved working at a very personal level with people, addressing problems, providing support and slowly gaining trust. Gradually the workers at the project began to engage with local people, introducing the idea of volunteering to provide their own services and then supporting those activities.

Many activities, which were initially set up by the project, then became managed by groups of local residents supported by staff from Blackthorn Good Neighbours.

As lottery funding came to a close Blackthorn Good Neighbours was supported to become an independent charity with a management committee. It moved into Blackthorn Community Centre and funding was secured for one member of staff.

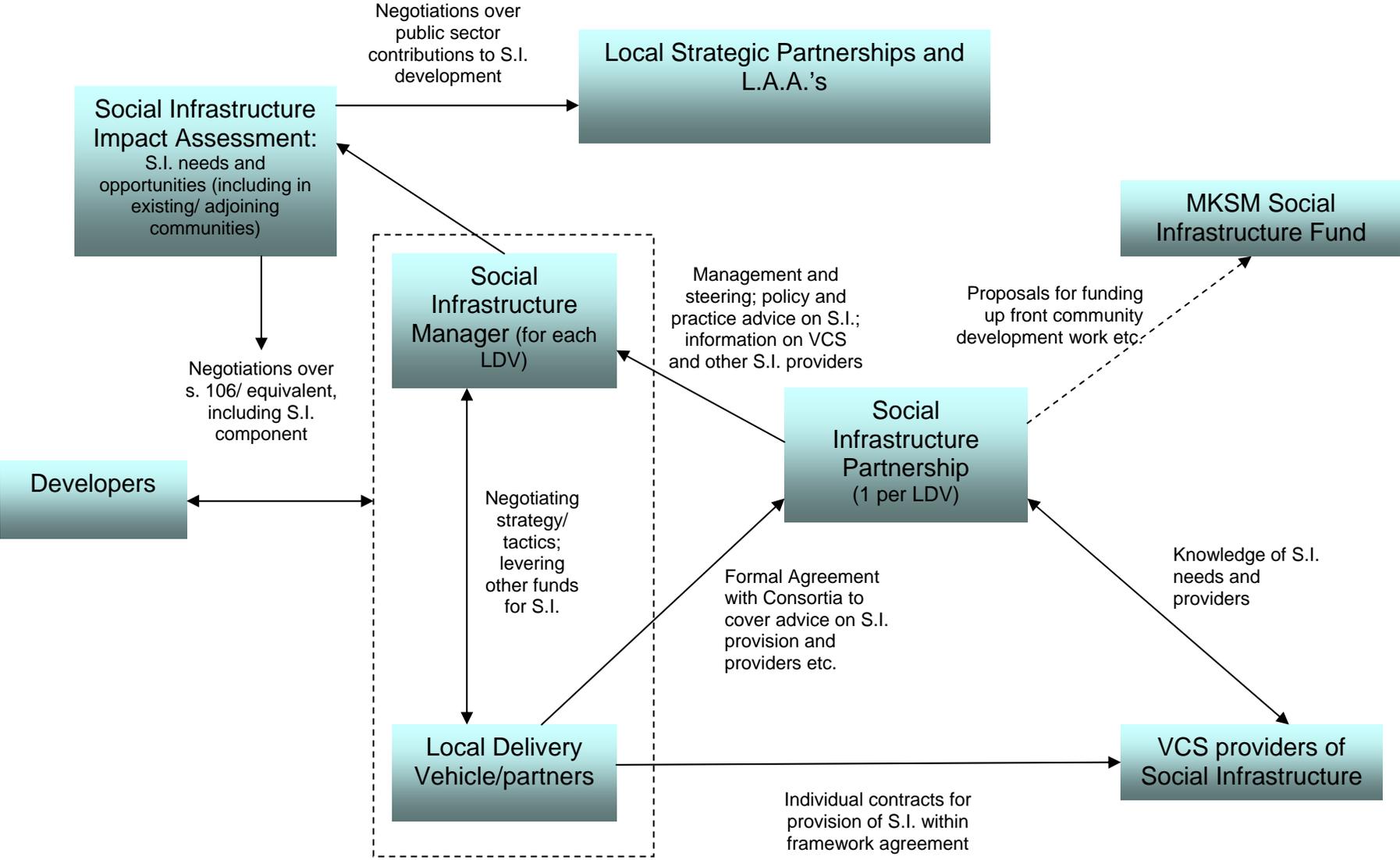
Lessons:

- Volunteering can be an integral part of wider social infrastructure development, encouraging local people to play an active part in delivering services to meet local needs
- It takes time for some people to gain confidence as individuals and then to become more actively involved in their community
- Initiation of activities in the early days may need external help, but over time this can be replaced by local people running things themselves.
- Attention to long term funding before initial grant ended.

- It is proposed that the Social Infrastructure Group, with assistance from the public sector, set up a **'MKSM Social Infrastructure Fund'**. A full proposal would be needed for this including funding options (such as a future round of central government 'Growth Area Funding' or via the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review). This Fund would meet the costs of a number of things which are both necessary and appropriately organised at the sub regional scale (though it may be that items 1 and 5 in the following list could be more effectively administered at local level):
 1. Funding to meet the costs of the proposed **Social Infrastructure Managers** and costs associated with the setting up and operation of the various **Social Infrastructure Partnerships**.

2. A **programme of training, development and networking** across the sub region focused on those staff and others involved in developing and delivering social infrastructure; e.g. community development workers, staff of LDV's etc.
3. Provision of **specialist advice** to assist with the long term development of strong communities; for example the funding of ongoing advice and support to community organisations in respect of asset and social enterprise development.
4. The development and operation of an **action research, monitoring and evaluation programme** to inform strategic and detailed planning of social infrastructure, including the development of social infrastructure indicators.
5. The funding of **community consultation work and associated community development staffing in advance** of section 106 and associated funding being agreed.

Figure 6: Basic Planning & Delivery Model for Social Infrastructure in MKSM



Roles and Responsibilities in Delivering Social Infrastructure

80. Having set out a process for the planning and delivery of social infrastructure it remains to consider which organisations are best placed to deliver this. An attempt was made to gauge the existing and potential roles of VCS organisations in this through a survey of voluntary and community organisations and a number of workshops, held for these organisations, in four parts of the sub region.

VCS Survey

81. Members of the local CVS's (except Northamptonshire where a brief request for input was made via the Northampton Voluntary and Community Forum in its newsletter) were emailed/ circulated with a request for comments and other organisations were asked for a more extensive response to a number of questions (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the survey material and list of respondents). This was designed to gain a general view of VCS organisations' awareness of the growth area plans, the extent to which they are thinking about the implications for the services they provide and how these are provided as well as their views on the important features of social infrastructure. The overall response totalled around 40, which represents a very small percentage of the total organisations made aware of the work. The following points arose from the survey:

- The majority of respondents were voluntary organisations providing a variety of services and there was a reasonable spread across the whole of the sub region.
- Most organisations were aware of the growth area plans albeit only in general terms in most cases.
- Most organisations were unable to provide evidence of whether their services were already under pressure from unmet needs or demands.
- Despite the careful definition of 'social infrastructure' in the covering material on the survey, many organisations seemed to consider social infrastructure in its widest sense, including public services and facilities of various kinds.
- Most organisations were of the view that the growth area plans would have a general impact on their services, and require them, if funding was available, to expand.
- Few organisations had thought about the implications of new growth areas on the ways that they provide services, though some had begun to consider outreach, hub and spoke or mobile options to reach new communities.
- Many respondents mentioned a community base or meeting place as an important aspect of social infrastructure for a new community, but several also mentioned the wider issue of provision of facilities and services.

82. These findings, though not reliable as a sample of the VCS generally in the area, do point to a likelihood that many VCS organisations will need to be helped to consider the implications of growth and supported in grasping what this means in

terms of expansion or changes to structures and systems. This conclusion is backed up by findings in a more intensive local study of rural voluntary and community organisations surrounding Milton Keynes (*Gardiner, March 2006 op cit*), which found:

'Key themes running through the responses were:

- Rural voluntary and community groups having relatively low levels of awareness of the infrastructure support services available*
- Very limited connections or linkages made, either between communities with similar issues of concern and or between interest groups*
- Significant lack of clarity over the role of existing infrastructure organizations and the services they provide*
- Follow up interviews and other research work indicates a key need for direct community development support*
- Very varied levels of awareness and understanding of the Milton Keynes Growth Agenda and of the impact this will have on rural communities in the area*
- Limited feedback on the support needs of groups and the need to carry out further research to investigate this more fully*
- Wide range of organisations providing infrastructure support, with no clear or integrated structure apparent*
- Limited awareness of future developments, indicating a low level of strategic or long-term planning*
- Limited awareness of issues and therefore of likely advice and support needs.'*

83. Local CVS's have traditionally played the lead role in supporting local voluntary and community organisations. CVS's, working to inform and assist these organisations with the planned provision of a **'Strategic Reserve'** in the social infrastructure investment plan will be able to help these organisations and existing communities understand the growth plans, grasp opportunities and make the changes needed to meet the expanded demand for services which many voluntary organisations will witness.

84. For example the specific population structure (age, household size, ethnic group etc) that is likely in the next 15 years will have potentially significant consequences for some of these organisations. Work on population projections for the sub region is underway and the current projections are recognised as in need of refinement. The work undertaken by the MKSM Health and Social Care Project is perhaps the most recent and credible projection available. Even these are only able to indicate changes in total numbers and age structure.

85. This work indicates the following projected changes in the sub region's population between 2006 and 2021:

- Overall net growth of 340,000 people across the sub region, giving a population in 2021 of 1.974 million.
- Growth in the numbers of children aged up to 14 of around 10%
- Growth in those aged 15-74 of over 21%
- Growth in those aged 75 or over of just over 52% (a numerical rise of more than 50,000 people)

86. Clearly these trends have significant implications for different types of organisation and will, on the face of it, particularly increase the pressures on those involved in supporting older people, their carers etc.

Consultative workshops

87. The five consultative workshops for VCS organisations drew approximately 80 people in total and proved to be useful in explaining the basis of the project and of engaging participants in thinking through their approach to social infrastructure investment in two case studies (see Appendix 3 for details). These proved interesting in drawing out the following key issues, among others, which have been used in developing this Plan:

- The importance of considering approaches to investment which help new residents to integrate with those already living in an area or next to it; ideas included recruiting existing residents to act as ‘welcomers’, locating new public facilities so as to encourage mixing of different residents, etc.
- The significance of many other factors in influencing the quality of life and strength of communities in new developments, including design and location of housing and other facilities, parking provision, green infrastructure, cultural and sporting activities etc.
- The importance of community consultation in identifying needs and designing social infrastructure provision.
- The opportunities for investment in existing community facilities near to new developments as a way of improving provision for the existing community and of encouraging mixing.

Delivery Options

88. The information gained from the survey and workshops, though limited, was helpful in assessing the overall potential for the VCS to play a leading role in social infrastructure. With this information, the following paragraphs discuss the possible organisations able to play a part in delivering the most important elements of the proposed ‘social infrastructure package’.

Community Development staffing

89. A number of organisations already provide community development work around the sub region, some in new and growing communities. These include VCS infrastructure bodies such as CVS’s (e.g. MKCVO’s ‘Community Mobilisers’) and Rural Community Councils. Housing Associations are also involved in this work, based on their involvement as developers of social housing in new communities but, as case study material demonstrates, very much taking an holistic approach to the whole community’s needs.

90. Local authorities provide a range of community development and associated support work, including employing a Neighbourhood Support Worker in Milton Keynes growth areas (who provides information and signposting to new residents and liaises with a multi-agency group to influence provision). In Luton workers assist Community Development Trusts and other community organisations in community centre management and other initiatives, including turning their attention to the implications of government policy on developing the neighbourhood element to local government and improving access to public services.

91. In some areas (notably Milton Keynes) there appears to be a considerable amount of what might be termed 'community development' work carried out by a range of workers from a variety of agencies and organisations. This has led to a recognition that one of the issues here is to improve coordination and avoid duplication (*'A Neighbourhood of Choice'*- discussion paper for MKCVO, Marion Cole, January 2006). The development of outcome-based approaches to community development such as the 'Place Check' model being piloted in Milton Keynes (which appears to be similar to the parish plans approach in rural areas) and work to formulate a framework for community development to ensure some consistency of approach will help to ensure a cost effective and 'joined up' approach to community development. In other parts of the sub region the current levels of community development work are patchier and are often focused on existing deprived communities (e.g. South Bedfordshire).

92. It may be argued that community development workers who are not employed by a principal public or other agency (e.g. a landlord) might be able to foster greater self reliance among communities than would otherwise be the case. It is sometimes argued that this is because these workers are able to generate greater self reliance because they or their organisations rarely 'own' the problems or issues confronted and they do not fall foul of tensions created for workers employed by a local authority who may find it difficult to advocate on behalf of a community to their employer..

93. It is also important to recognise the potential shift in local government work and structures, which might come as a result of the forthcoming government review. As noted above, this may bring devolution of powers and responsibilities to neighbourhood level, with all that that might bring in terms of adjusting government systems and enabling local people to be more directly involved in the workings of local democracy. Arguably, this will bring further demands on local authorities and other public agencies to strengthen their community engagement processes and activities to improve understanding and access to their services. Rural Community Councils already provide support to parish and town councils to enable their establishment and development.

94. All in all, these are all trends which point to the need for significant investment in the skills needed to engage with and build strong communities. The overall approach locally should be one of collaboration and partnership with different agencies and organisations working together to put in place the most effective community development staffing possible, recognising that the skills needed may vary at different stages of the development process (e.g. from early community consultation to information provision and signposting for new residents, to work in helping new community groups to form and developing and promoting local volunteering opportunities).

Community Bases and Community Reserve Sites

95. The provision of initial and longer term bases for the community is an important part of the overall 'social infrastructure package'. Under the proposed Investment Model developers will be looked to to identify and make available suitable temporary accommodation (perhaps on occasions using space in other facilities) and for sites of an appropriate size and location to meet potential future needs in that community. As

far as temporary bases are concerned a range of potential voluntary groups might be involved in running these, though it will usually make sense for this to be the same organisation that is providing the community development staffing as the worker will probably be making use of these premises as a base.

96. As far as long term provision is concerned, the passing over of a 'Social Infrastructure Reserve Site' to a 'holding body' upon grant of planning permission and section 106 agreement would seem to make sense, following the model adopted in the past in Milton Keynes, through the Community Foundation. This type of organisation appears to be appropriate for holding such resources, though outside Milton Keynes Community Foundations are at different stages of development and none presently performs the same role as MK's Foundation on community reserve sites. Further development of their capacity, perhaps with help from MK's Foundation is one approach, alternatively it might be appropriate for reserve sites to be held (along with responsibilities for security and maintenance) with the local authority.

Support for community organisation development

97. CVS's provide training, advice and other support for community organisation development and, alongside community development support to such organisations, specialist advice and expertise (e.g. in relation to constitutions, legal forms, funding etc.). This will be an important element of the total social infrastructure package.

Grants for start up and development

98. As with Social Infrastructure Reserve Sites, where a body has or develops expertise in running grants schemes and has the potential advantage of combining specific grants with other funding support, this would appear to be a desirable model. MK's Community Foundation and its sister foundations across the sub region provide the obvious model here. Alternatively, other infrastructure bodies such as CVS's, RCC's etc. all have experience in running specific grants schemes and could be appropriate deliverers in a local context.

Learning and development

99. It seems likely that a range of learning opportunities for those people interested in developing their leadership or similar role in the community will be needed. These can be based on experiences to date through CVS's, initiatives such as 'Regen school', the 'Renewal Academy' and other projects to engage residents and develop their individual capacity and skills. Preparatory work in this field has already been undertaken within the East of England and it is understood that EEDA are looking at commissioning a programme in community leadership. It would make sense to use this and any other local development work, and to take it further in conjunction with the newly established regional *Centres of Excellence in Sustainable Communities* (e.g. *Inspire East*) who may also have funding to support development of an approach to provision of training and development programmes across the sub region. A sub regional organisation or consortium responsible for delivering this

Social Infrastructure in Practice- Wixams Development, near Bedford. Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity

Key features: A major freestanding development has been in planning for some years and is about to get underway. This would result in a 'new town' of around 13,000 people, rising to nearer 20,000 if the immediate surroundings are included. One developer has been leading the planning of the development over an extended period of 17-20 years. The emphasis of the development is on high quality and features a town centre and four neighbourhoods together with a new railway station, health facility, schools, library and other public buildings. The plans include provision of a community hall as part of a multiple use community facility (including a base for faith groups, the police etc.) and it is assumed that this may require adaptation in due course as community needs change.

A Community Development worker was recruited in 2000 through an agreement between BRCC and the developers so as to provide someone able to act as a facilitator for consultation and communication channel between the developers and local residents. The expectation is that this agreement will continue as the development gets underway, but acknowledging that the role will change to providing support to the developing community rather than facilitating a 'parish plans' type approach to local community involvement in the statutory planning process and wider communication between the interested parties prior to the development getting underway.

A 'Joint Parishes Steering Group' was established to facilitate involvement from existing communities in the shaping of the development. A 'Residents Forum' is in the course of being set up which will provide an informal body which is expected in due course to evolve into a new Town Council. Alongside this there are plans to create a 'Community Trust' which will receive a range of public assets (e.g. an assembly hall, open spaces etc.) and this will take on responsibility for their maintenance. Interestingly, the developers have agreed to the use of an 'up front' section 106 payment to help bring forward the development of a new school, seen as a critical early facility for the new community.

Lessons:

- Early, open, honest dialogue between developers and existing communities important in developing trust and effective communications.
- Agreeing broad framework of section 106 agreement but leaving 'room for manoeuvre' as detailed requirements and needs become clearer.
- VCS seen as credible player in discussions about the development
- Early plans for governance and service provision of substantial new community
- Importance of securing contributions from well informed elected members who truly represent local people
- Effective communication based on attention to local circumstances and needs, rather than a 'standard approach'. This approach takes time and it is challenging to maintain community interest in the development process
- The development process is complex and it is important that any community development worker keeps up to date and informed about all aspects of the development as these may have an impact on the development the community.
- Use of multiple use facilities to meet initial community meeting place requirement with acceptance that there will need to be adaptation later.
- Development of community trust model of asset maintenance and service provision.

service could be linked effectively with that suggested under the 'MKSM Social Infrastructure Fund' for sub regional training and networking for staff and others involved in social infrastructure provision.

Volunteering

100. Volunteer Centres are already in place around the sub region to work both with organisations on a brokerage basis to create and meet volunteering opportunities and to work with local communities to develop local schemes. It makes sense to use them to develop volunteering schemes in new communities.

Social Infrastructure Strategic Reserve

101. This Fund will be created for each development to fund unforeseen local social infrastructure needs and to support voluntary and community organisations to adapt to expansions in population and demands for their services. The uses of the fund will need to be clearly identified as relating to and benefiting the development generating the resources for the fund, even though some of these may be more 'strategic' in nature (e.g. contributing part of the costs of work to enhance a particular voluntary organisation's activities across a wider area). Its administration lends itself to a VCS infrastructure body and in this context is probably best administered by the local CVS or similar body.

MKSM Social Infrastructure Fund

102. This fund, to support sub regional actions as already described, is a strategic fund that should be administered jointly at sub regional level. The MKSM Social Infrastructure Group, with one member acting as 'banker' would seem to offer the most appropriate existing vehicle for this role.

5: Recommendations

To MKSM EQoL Sub Group and MKSM Inter regional Board:

1. This Plan is endorsed by the MKSM Environment and Quality of Life Sub Group and by the Inter Regional Board with a view to it being recommended for adoption by the various Local Delivery Vehicles, Local Strategic Partnerships and Voluntary and Community Sector across the sub region.

To the Voluntary and Community Sector in the sub region:

2. That the Social Infrastructure Group, with assistance from the public sector, seek funding to establish a 'MKSM Social Infrastructure Fund' to meet the range of sub regional needs highlighted in the Plan (Social Infrastructure Managers and Partnership costs; training and networking for social infrastructure staff; action research, monitoring and evaluation; specialist advice; front end funding of community development work).

3. That the VCS in each LDV area discuss and agree the formation of Social Infrastructure Partnerships with appropriate coordination responsibilities undertaken by a local VCS infrastructure body.

4. That these Partnerships should be recognised as the focus for VCS involvement in planning for the MKSM area and its constituent growth areas.

To Local Strategic Partnerships:

5. That the LSP's in the MKSM sub region be asked to endorse this Plan; agree in principle to participate in the planning, resourcing and delivery model as set out in the Plan; and to seek the necessary resources to fund the initial contribution towards social infrastructure from the public sector or other sources of £175 per dwelling.

To Local Delivery Vehicles/Local Planning Authorities:

6. That consideration is given in those areas outside Milton Keynes to establishing a 'tariff' model for the calculation, collection and management of 'Developer Contributions' under 'Planning Obligations' law and guidance.

Continued/...

7. Within Milton Keynes the two Planning Authorities (Milton Keynes Council and Milton Keynes Partnership) should seek to bring their 'tariffs' into line; use the figures proposed for contributions per dwelling for social infrastructure and adopt the scope of services and other investment for social infrastructure as set out in the Plan.

8. That the sum of £525 per dwelling should be the initial sum required of developers, the understanding that this is added to by a sum of £175 per dwelling by public agencies or similar sources towards Social Infrastructure Costs. This should be included in an appropriate Supplementary Planning Document as the initial basis for negotiations over particular developments, and kept under review and amended on the basis of experience on the ground and other relevant information.

9. That developers be required, through appropriate Supplementary Planning Documents, to provide or fund initial community bases and Social Infrastructure Reserve Sites in accordance with the standards set out in the Plan.

10. That LDV's/LPA's agree and participate in the system for planning, resourcing and delivering social infrastructure as set out in the Plan.

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Community Renewal
-creative solutions

Appendix 1: MKSM Social Infrastructure Group

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Appendix 2: Interviews Conducted

NAME	ORGANISATION
Andrew Longley	North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit
Anne Laing	Voluntary Action Luton
Bhagwan Sagoo	Luton Borough Council
Bob Purser	Northamptonshire Churches
Cheryl Montgomery	Milton Keynes Partnership
Chris Watts	Renaissance Bedford
David Atkinson	Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis and Leighton-Linslade Growth Area Joint Planning & Transportation Committee
David Livermore	Milton Keynes Council of Voluntary Organisations
Dawn Bason	MKSM Health and Social Care Project
Geoff Collins	Aldwyck Housing Association /de Havilland Housing Partnership
John Gelder	Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire
John Walker	Consultant to MKSM Board and West Northamptonshire Development Corporation
Julia Holmes	Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
Julia Seal	Milton Keynes Community Foundation
Karen Boddy	Vale Volunteers
Kevan Crane	Circle Anglia Housing Association (RSL consortium, Cambourne)
Laurie Hurn	Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
Liz Thomas	Aylesbury Vale Advantage
Marek Lubelski	Luton Borough Council
Marion Cole	Consultant, MKCVO
Mark Smith	Mid Bedfordshire CVS
Martin Trinder	North Bedfordshire CVS
Maureen Baker	Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association
Moriah Priestley	Milton Keynes Council
Neil Gardner	Buckinghamshire ACRE
Paul Chaplin	Northamptonshire CVS
Peter Waterman	<i>Formerly</i> Milton Keynes Development Corporation
Rachael Abbott	Northamptonshire ACRE
Ruth Stone	Milton Keynes Council of Voluntary Organisations
Sarah Kennedy	Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis and Leighton- Linslade Growth Area Joint Planning & Transportation Committee
Simon Evans	North Northants Development Company
Stephen Kelly	West Northamptonshire Development Corporation
Susannah Harris	South Cambridgeshire District Council (Cambourne)
Tony Talbot	Marston Vale Trust
Tony Walker	Grange Park Parish Council
Tracey	Grange Park Parish Council
Vicky Pietersen	Aldwyck Housing Association

Appendix 3: Survey of VCS Organisations in MKSM

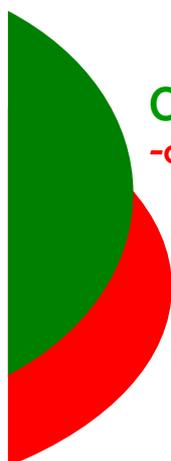
The following survey form was sent round to those on the membership lists of the CVS's across the sub region (except Northamptonshire where a shorter survey was circulated to members of the Northampton Voluntary Forum in a regular newsletter. In addition a small number of responses to a similar shorter version of the survey were returned. The following organisations (approximately 40) sent in responses to the survey.

Organisation	Functions	Geographical area covered
Age Concern Buckinghamshire	Services for elderly, support for linked groups	Buckinghamshire
Autism Bedfordshire	Support for families with children and adults on autistic spectrum	Bedfordshire and Luton
Aylesbury and District Access for All	Representative org on access, advise, consult etc.	Aylesbury Vale
Bangladesh youth league	Range of community services (not just youth)	Parts of Luton
Bedford Borough Council-Sports Development Unit	Development of sports opportunities in borough	Bedford Borough Council area
Bedford Creative Arts	Educational organisation and gallery that uses contemporary visual arts to Engage and develop communities	Bedford and surrounding villages (and tour professional exhibitions nationally)
Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation	Grant maker and development of links with VCS infrastructure services to help development of long term support for community.	Bedfordshire and Luton
Bedford Pilgrims Housing Association	Housing Association - range of support for SI	Bedford, Corby, Mawsley; - Arbury, Cambridge soon
Brook	Sexual health services for under 25's	MK
Brookside Residents Council	Residents association	East Northamptonshire
Buckinghamshire Foundation	Grant making	Buckinghamshire
Buckinghamshire Association for Blind	Support and services to blind- resource centre	Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes
Citizens Advice Bureau-Dunstable	Info and advice to individuals	South Bedfordshire
Citizens Advice Bureau-Milton Keynes	Information and advice to individuals; support for VCS organisations in development of Human Resources material and employment advice	Milton Keynes

Organisation	Functions	Geographical area covered
Centre for Meditative Arts		
Community Mediation- Milton Keynes	Mediation in community.	Milton Keynes, parts of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire
Girl Guiding South Bedfordshire.	Uniform youth organisation	South Bedfordshire plus
Healthy Living Centre	Improve health and well-being of residents staff at 2 schemes	Aylesbury (specific locations)
Leighton Buzzard and District Multiple Sclerosis Society	Care and welfare of MS sufferers and families	Leighton Buzzard and surrounding villages
Living Archive	Cultural, community and economic development	Milton Keynes
Luton Foyer	Range of info, advice and support (young people?)	Luton
Mediation Bucks	Services- via trained mediators	Buckinghamshire (excluding Milton Keynes)
Milton Keynes Council for Voluntary Youth Services	Umbrella organisation for the Voluntary Youth Sector, supporting & developing both small youth groups & the larger voluntary organisations working with young people, who employ paid workers	Milton Keynes
Milton Keynes Cultural Alliance (MKCA)	Umbrella organisation with a membership of some 20 arts, heritage, museums and galleries	Milton Keynes
Milton Keynes Community Foundation	Grants and comm. property administration	Milton Keynes
Milton Keynes Family Mediation service	Services to public	Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire
Milton Keynes Heritage Association	Coordination and devpt. of heritage	Milton Keynes
Northampton YWCA	Support for young women	Northampton plus?
Oakley Road Day centre	Day centre for frail elderly	Rural north Bedfordshire
Rainbows GB	Training and resources for peer support for children affected by divorce, bereavement other separation from parents	National - 10 school sites in Luton and district
Rethink Bedfordshire carers Support service	Support for carers of mentally ill	Bedfordshire (not Luton)
Sangham Women's Group	Network and Social support for Asian women	Marsh Farm, Luton

Organisation	Functions	Geographical area covered
Sight Concern Bedfordshire	Services to blind/ part sighted	Bedfordshire
Spoke	Advocacy for adults with sensory, physical and communication disabilities	Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Bedford and north Bedfordshire - some in Milton Keynes and Northampton
Stables Theatre	Run theatre/ conf/ training centre	Wavendon- & Milton Keynes
Stroke Association, Family Support Service	Service/ support for strokes and families	Bedford, North Bedfordshire, mid Bedfordshire
The Befrienders	Friendship, respect, opportunity and choice to people with range of mental health needs	Bedfordshire and Luton
Volunteer Centre Milton Keynes	Assist orgs recruit and develop volunteers	Milton Keynes

SURVEY FORM



Community Renewal
-creative solutions

The Old School
School Road,
Haveringland,
Norfolk, NR10 4QE

April 2006

**Dear colleague,
Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area -
Investing in Social infrastructure**

You have probably heard about the proposed growth in housing, population and associated facilities in the area covering Milton Keynes, Aylesbury Vale, Luton, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire over the next 25 years or so. The precise scale and location of new housing and other facilities is not yet fully clear in some parts of this area. However, a substantial growth in population is being actively planned for. It is important that these plans take into account the needs for 'social infrastructure' (ways of building the capacity of communities) so that strong neighbourhoods are created and people enjoy a supportive community life, with the opportunity and encouragement to be active and involved in community life.

The Social Infrastructure Group for the area (made up of the local CVS's) has commissioned me to research and develop a 'master plan' for social infrastructure provision. It is important that the voluntary and community sector contributes to these plans and therefore I would be grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete a brief survey.

A sheet setting out further background information is attached as well as a short series of questions for you to answer. Please return the completed questionnaire form by email to: nbold@lineone.net or post it to me at the above address **to arrive by 12th May 2006** in order for it to be taken fully into account.

Thank you in anticipation for your participation.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Boldero

Background Information

Survey Aims

1. To identify voluntary and community organisations already involved in providing Social Infrastructure in the growth area.
2. To describe the Social Infrastructure services and activities that they currently provide and any evidence of unmet needs or demands.
3. To gather their judgements on how the expected growth in population might affect them and how they might respond to this.
4. To get their views on the most important elements of social infrastructure provision in new communities

Defining social infrastructure

Social infrastructure is the range of activities, organisations and facilities supporting the formation, development and maintenance of social relationships (or social capital). It is sometimes described as 'Community Capacity'. Social infrastructure is found within communities of place or other common interests (e.g. ethnicity, culture, religion, age, gender). In context of the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area we are concerned with the development of social infrastructure in the areas of new housing, but where these are adjacent to existing communities to identify ways in which the new development can be helpful in improving social infrastructure in these existing areas.

The elements of social infrastructure

Community facilities- access to a meeting place or a base that is available, welcoming and accessible to all and owned and/or run by voluntary/ community organisations (e.g. community centres; village halls; other venues/ places where a range of services and activities of benefit to a particular community are provided).

Community development- paid or unpaid workers with skills to support particular communities in identifying and meeting their needs directly or to advocate on their behalf

Groups and organisations- a local forum or network that is inclusive, open and participatory, owned by and accountable to the community. Also included are those organisations providing services, community development (including personal learning & development which benefits the wider community) and advocacy of a community's needs and those infrastructure bodies supporting these front line voluntary and community organisations.

Grant funding- locally resourced and run programmes (within a local authority district or more locally) aimed at stimulating grass roots activity and capacity-building (supporting voluntary and community groups to provide the range of activities and services above).

Learning and skills development- opportunities to equip people for active involvement and to support their own groups and communities.

Volunteering and other mutual support- access to opportunities to volunteer through programmes supporting their recruitment, development and effective deployment to benefit a particular community or some of its members.

THE SURVEY

Please answer the following questions on behalf of your organisation.

1. Name of organisation:

2. Please describe your organisation's role and activities, if any, in the provision of 'social infrastructure' (in all types of community both existing and newly established):

3. In which areas does your organisation undertake these activities?

4. Can you describe any evidence of how those affected by or receiving these activities view or value them?

5. How many paid staff (full time equivalent) does your organisation employ?

6. How many volunteers (total number) does your organisation make use of?

7. What are your main sources of funding at present?

8. Name and position of person completing this form:

9. Telephone/ email contact details for the above person:

10. Can you describe any evidence of unmet need or demands for the social infrastructure activities your organisation provides?

11. What do you know about the proposed new housing and population growth within your operational area in the next 10-25 years?

12. How do you think this growth will affect the need/ demand for the social infrastructure activities you provide? (please quantify this, if possible)

13. What implications is the growth likely to have on the way that you are organised and how you provide social infrastructure activities?

14. What do you think are the most important elements in social infrastructure provision in new communities or neighbourhoods?

THANK YOU for COMPLETING THE SURVEY- PLEASE EMAIL OR POST THE FORM TO Nigel Boldero (email nbold@lineone.net) by 12th MAY 2006

Appendix 4: Consultative Workshops

Five consultative Workshops were held as follows:

- Luton and South Bedfordshire area- Houghton Regis 23rd May 2006
- Bedford and Mid Bedfordshire area- Bedford, 26th May 2006
- Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale area - Milton Keynes, 25th May 2006
- Northamptonshire area- Northampton, 8th June 2006
- Milton Keynes- (additional open meeting associated with Business Planning for VCS Tariff Funding) - Milton Keynes- 13th June 2006

In total approximately 80 people attended these meetings with numbers ranging from 10 – 35. A typical programme is set out below and the two case studies used in the events follow.

MILTON KEYNES AND SOUTH MIDLANDS GROWTH AREA-
SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

SEMINAR FOR VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

LUTON AND SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE
23RD MAY 2006

OUTLINE PROGRAMME

12 noon
Lunch

12.30pm
Welcome

12.35pm
Presentation- Nigel Boldero

1.15pm
Questions and discussion

1.30pm
Discussion groups- case studies

2.30pm
Feedback from Groups and discussion

2.55pm
Concluding remarks

MILTON KEYNES SOUTH MIDLANDS GROWTH AREA- SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

CASE STUDY 1

Your group is a consortium of voluntary and community organisations aiming to coordinate the participation of the sector in the delivery of social infrastructure in a part of the MKSM growth area.

A new residential development is being proposed by a developer at the edge of an existing urban area. This does not yet have planning permission or a section 106 agreement in place. The area will ultimately contain around 3,000 new dwellings, probably mainly family housing for sale with some affordable and social housing, yet to be determined. The developer also expects some local shops and other facilities to be provided, along with schools, doctors surgery etc. The first phase of this development is the subject of the currently proposed planning application and is for 500 dwellings, with further phases to follow over the next 10 years.

The development area lies next to an existing community which is of post war 'over spill' housing for London and which has, over the years, developed a reputation as being a deprived area. Information suggests that it experiences a number of problems; poor educational achievement; high unemployment; above average crime, including anti social behaviour by the community's high child population. This neighbourhood is in receipt of some special help from Government funds, but there are still many issues to be tackled; for example it has an old, but well used community centre (near to the proposed new development), a few local shops, poor child care and play facilities, and a bland and poorly maintained environment.

Your Consortium has been invited by the Local Delivery Vehicle (which is also the planning authority for the particular development), for your suggestions as to the range of investment that is going to be needed in the new development in Social Infrastructure, its phasing and ideas as to how this might be provided, including the suggested sources of funding or other resources.

As a group please discuss the situation and answer the following:

- 1. What do you think are the most important elements of social infrastructure that need to be provided?**
- 2. Which of these elements are needed soon and which could be delayed until later?**
- 3. Do you have any ideas as to how these ideas could be provided, who they will benefit and how they might be resourced? (including sources other than the developer's contribution via a section 106 agreement)**

You should be prepared to give some brief feedback on your discussions to the main group.

MILTON KEYNES SOUTH MIDLANDS GROWTH AREA- SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

CASE STUDY 2

Your group is a consortium of voluntary and community organisations aiming to coordinate the participation of the sector in the delivery of social infrastructure in a part of the MKSM growth area.

A new residential development is being proposed by a developer on a former factory site near to the centre of the local town. This does not yet have planning permission or a section 106 agreement in place. The proposed development is of 100 one and two bedroomed flats, with 50% for sale and the remainder let as social housing by a local Housing Association, all aimed at probably younger single people or couples. The developer is also hoping to include some ground floor shops or other non- residential uses as part of the development.

The development site is close to the commercial centre of the town, with plenty of shops, offices and other uses. It is also next to a Victorian neighbourhood of mainly terraced housing where the population is predominantly of Asian origin (mainly Bangladeshi) and there is relatively young age structure. This neighbourhood is within an area of relatively high deprivation, with high unemployment levels (especially among women), and low educational achievement. There is a thriving community resource centre which is home to a Community Development Trust which is providing a range of learning, health, childcare and similar services at the centre.

Your Consortium has been invited by the Local Delivery Vehicle (which is also the planning authority for the particular development), for your suggestions as to the range of investment that is going to be needed in the new development in Social Infrastructure, its phasing and ideas as to how this might be provided, including the suggested sources of funding or other resources.

As a group please discuss the situation and answer the following:

- 1. What do you think are the most important elements of social infrastructure that need to be provided?**
- 2. Which of these elements are needed soon and which could be delayed until later?**
- 3. Do you have any ideas as to how these ideas could be provided, who they will benefit and how they might be resourced? (including sources other than the developer's contribution via a section 106 agreement)**

You should be prepared to give some brief feedback on your discussions to the main group.

Appendix 5: Sustainable Communities

(Source: Department for Communities and Local Government Website)

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

The components of sustainable community

Sustainable communities are:

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well run
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built
- Well connected
- Thriving
- Well served
- Fair for everyone.

Sustainable communities embody the principles of sustainable development. They:

- balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental components of their community
- meet the needs of existing and future generations
- respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally also to make their communities sustainable.

Sustainable communities are diverse, reflecting their local circumstances. There is no standard template to fit them all. But they should be:

(1) ACTIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SAFE - *Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities*

Sustainable communities offer:

- a sense of community identity and belonging
- tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, background and beliefs
- friendly, co-operative and helpful behaviour in neighbourhoods
- opportunities for cultural, leisure, community, sport and other activities, including for children and young people
- low levels of crime, drugs and antisocial behaviour with visible, effective and community-friendly policing
- social inclusion and good life chances for all.

(2) WELL RUN - *with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership*

Sustainable communities enjoy:

- representative, accountable governance systems which both facilitate strategic, visionary leadership and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations
- effective engagement with the community at neighbourhood level, including capacity building to develop the community's skills, knowledge and confidence
- strong, informed and effective partnerships that lead by example (e.g. government, business, community)
- strong, inclusive, community and voluntary sector
- sense of civic values, responsibility and pride.

(3) ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE - *providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment*

Sustainable communities:

- actively seek to minimise climate change, including through energy efficiency and the use of renewables
- protect the environment, by minimising pollution on land, in water and in the air
- minimise waste and dispose of it in accordance with current good practice
- make efficient use of natural resources, encouraging sustainable production and consumption
- protect and improve bio-diversity (e.g. wildlife habitats)
- enable a lifestyle that minimises negative environmental impact and enhances positive impacts (e.g. by creating opportunities for walking and cycling, and reducing noise pollution and dependence on cars)
- create cleaner, safer and greener neighbourhoods (e.g. by reducing litter and graffiti, and maintaining pleasant public spaces).

(4) WELL DESIGNED AND BUILT - *featuring quality built and natural environment*

Sustainable communities offer:

- sense of place - a place with a positive 'feeling' for people and local distinctiveness
- user-friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone including children and older people
- sufficient range, diversity, affordability and accessibility of housing within a balanced housing market
- appropriate size, scale, density, design and layout, including mixed-use development, that complement the distinctive local character of the community
- high quality, mixed-use, durable, flexible and adaptable buildings, using materials which minimise negative environmental impacts
- buildings and public spaces which promote health and are designed to reduce crime and make people feel safe
- accessibility of jobs, key services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling.

(5) WELL CONNECTED - *with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services*

Sustainable communities offer:

- transport facilities, including public transport, that help people travel within and between communities and reduce dependence on cars
- facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling
- an appropriate level of local parking facilities in line with local plans to manage road traffic demand
- widely available and effective telecommunications and Internet access
- good access to regional, national and international communications networks.

(6) THRIVING - *with a flourishing and diverse local economy*

Sustainable communities feature:

- a wide range of jobs and training opportunities
- sufficient suitable land and buildings to support economic prosperity and change
- dynamic job and business creation, with benefits for the local community
- a strong business community with links into the wider economy
- economically viable and attractive town centres.

(7) WELL SERVED - *with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all*

Sustainable communities have:

- Well-performing local schools, further and higher education institutions, and other opportunities for lifelong learning
- high quality local health care and social services, integrated where possible with other services
- high quality services for families and children (including early years child care)
- good range of affordable public, community, voluntary and private services (e.g. retail, fresh food, commercial, utilities, information and advice) which are accessible to the whole community
- service providers who think and act long-term and beyond their own immediate geographical and interest boundaries, and who involve users and local residents in shaping their policy and practice.

(8) FAIR FOR EVERYONE - *including those in other communities, now and in the future*

Sustainable communities:

- recognise individuals' rights and responsibilities
- respect the rights and aspirations of others (both neighbouring communities, and across the wider world) also to be sustainable
- have due regard for the needs of future generations in current decisions and actions.'

Appendix 6: Social Infrastructure Investment Model

1. An investment model has been developed to enable an overall cost of social infrastructure investment to be calculated and to provide a tool for more local negotiation and discussion about the needs of particular developments and areas. It uses three key components:

1. A Six Stage Community Capacity-building Process (see figure 4 in the main report). This has been used to arrive at a six year investment period with one year being equivalent to each stage in the process. In reality the lengths of these stages will vary as will the needs of any existing or adjoining communities. As a result the overall resources provided for social infrastructure in a particular development will need to be used flexibly in response to local needs.

2. A profile of the scale and mix of Social Infrastructure which are likely to be needed at different stages in this process for a 'typical' new development (together with judgements about the variations in quantity and mix needed for different scales of development).

3. Cost assumptions for these elements of social infrastructure, based on estimates gathered from interviews and other relevant local sources.

2. Looking across the sub region, the need for and provision of social infrastructure will be running at different stages in this phased model in different places so that agencies providing the social infrastructure will need to manage the deployment of staff and other resources to best effect according to the roll out of the development in a particular area, and in relation to separate phases of development. For the purposes of planning and delivering social infrastructure these developments need to be treated as 'self contained', albeit in reality provision will be delivered to respond to local circumstances.

3. **Table A** below sets out the results of applying the model to a 1,000 dwelling development together with the basis of the capacity and cost assumptions included.

4. Most elements of the Investment Plan can be scaled up or down to give appropriate capacity and financial figures for different sizes of development, though some flexibility will be required in the particular mix and pacing of different elements of the overall package. (See later for proposals on the scale of community development work which will affect the overall costs according to the size of development).

5. This yields a total requirement of approximately £707 (say £700) per dwelling for the social infrastructure identified. It is proposed that a minimum of 75% of this (£525 per dwelling) is contributed by way of a planning obligation on the part of the developer of the new housing, with the balance (£175 per dwelling) being contributed from public sources via the relevant Local Strategic Partnership.

Table A: Social Infrastructure Investment Plan for a 1,000 dwelling development

Social Infrastructure Component	Investment period						Totals
	Shaping (Year 1)	Planning (Year 2)	Engaging (Year 3)	Growing (Year 4)	Consolidating (Year 5)	Maintaining (Year 6)	
1. Community Development Work ¹	£7,260	£14,520	£36,300	£36,300	£36,300	£13,200	£143,880
2. Community Organisations Development ²			£5,808	£5,808	£6,468	£4,224	£22,308
3. Running cost of community base ³			£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£20,000
4. Grants- start up, initial running ⁴			£23,000	£23,000	£23,000		£69,000
5. Grants- Organisation development ⁵				£34,500	£69,000	£103,500	£207,000
6. Community Learning ⁶	£8,000	£12,000	£20,000	£20,000	£20,000	£12,000	£92,000
7. Volunteering development ⁷			£5,000	£10,000	£15,000	£23,000	£53,000
8. Strategic Reserve ⁸		£100,000					
Totals	£15,260	£126,520	£95,108	£134,608	£174,768	£160,924	£707,188

Notes to Table A:

1. Community Development Work. Assumed to be the following capacity requirements:

Year 1- 0.2 full time equivalent; year 2- 0.4 f.t.e.; year 3- 1 f.t.e.; year 4- 1 f.t.e.; year 5- 1 f.t.e.; year 6- 0.4 f.t.e.

Salary rate assumed to be £25,000 per annum, with 20% on costs and 10% management overhead (total £33,000 p.a. for 1 f.t.e.), plus operating budget of 10% of total annual staffing cost.

2. Community organisations development. Assumed to be the following capacity requirements for a Development Officer to provide specialist advice/ training in addition to Community Development worker:

Year 1- 0.2 f.t.e.; year 3- 0.2 f.t.e.; year 4- 0.2 f.t.e.; year 6- 0.1 f.t.e.

Costs assumed to be £22,000 p.a. salary per f.t.e. plus 20% on cost and 10% management overhead (total £29,040 p.a. for 1 f.t.e.)

3. Running cost of community base. Assumed to be 4 years operating costs at £5,000 p.a.

4. Grants- start up, initial running. Assumed to be average of 12 grants of £5,000 paid over 3 years, with 15% on cost for administration

5. Grants- organisation development. Assumed to be average of 6 grants of £30,000 paid over 3 years with 15% on cost for administration.

6. Community Learning. Assumed to be total of 1% of forecast population (i.e. 230 people) participating in 'Regen school' type courses costing £4,000 each. Programming shown in table as 2,3,5,5,5,3, places/people per annum over the six years.

7. Volunteering development. Assumed to be build up of numbers of volunteers from year 3 (100), year 4 (200), year 5(300) year 5 (460), that last year representing 20% of the forecast total population participating in formal volunteering. Based on Citizenship Survey 2005 figure of 29% of over 16 population participating in formal volunteering. Cost assumed to be a per volunteer support cost of £50 p.a. (full cost) based on advice from CVS's/ Volunteer agencies.

8. Strategic Reserve. Assumed to be a sum of £100 per dwelling paid over upon signing of S.106 Agreement/ grant of detailed planning permission and held to fund unforeseen social infrastructure needs and also to fund development of voluntary organisations in the wider area so that they can adjust and build their capacity to cope with the overall growth in population.

6. In addition to the items covered in Table A, two further elements of the overall investment package are proposed, both of which should be a requirement for full funding under planning obligations on developers:

1. A building or equivalent investment in an initial community base, provided at the beginning of housing development. This will include meeting the costs of conversion, fitting out and re conversion where appropriate.

2. ‘Social Infrastructure Reserve Sites’- provision of a freehold site or sites in a suitable location (or equivalent investment in existing facilities) to be set aside for social infrastructure development in the longer term as the community matures and is able to develop, manage and maintain a community asset which will be owned by an organisation in that community. This could be for a community resource centre, community allotments or other asset, which could include income – generating activities.

7. Milton Keynes Council has developed a Supplementary Planning Policy on provision of Community Houses and associated activities as well as ‘Reserve Sites’ for a range of future community uses (see Box 7).

Box 7: Community Houses and Community Reserve Sites Provision in Milton Keynes

‘2.6 Community Houses

2.6.1 The Council’s Leisure and Recreation SPG adopted in January 2005 sets out the standards for meeting places and the level of contributions sought from new developments towards such new facilities, including meeting places. In the first phase of a development of sufficient size to generate the need for a meeting place, the developer in cooperation with the Council will provide a temporary community house, prior to the completion of a meeting place. This will facilitate in the settlement of communities within these newly built areas and has occurred in areas such as Tattenhoe and Kingsmead where slightly modified dwelling houses have been used for this purpose.

2.6.2 A contribution of £10,000 will also be sought which will be matched by the Council and other public, private and voluntary bodies to assist in the delivery of a broad spectrum of activities and services to the new neighbourhoods. These will help combat isolation on the developing estate and support the development of community activities within the locality. The community house allows the various new communities present to have a common point of reference in terms of essential information on Council services as well as other organisations including Sure Start and Relate. They also assist in facilitating the development of local groups e.g. Pre Schools, Parent & Toddler, over 50’s, religious and ethnic groups. Residents Associations.

2.6.3 There are basic specifications, which are required in order to ensure that the community house will adequately accommodate a range of community activities. It needs a couple of large rooms where group activities can take place and four smaller rooms, toilets on each floor and a small kitchen facility. It also has to be compliant with Disability Discrimination Act requirements.....

2.13 Reserve Sites

2.13.1 For new housing development in City Expansion Areas the Council seeks a standard provision of 0.75 hectares per 1000 population (Policy CF9 in the adopted Plan and Policy C9 in the 2nd Deposit Plan) for reserve sites. These are sites that are left undeveloped to accommodate unforeseen local needs. These have the potential to accommodate a wide variety of not yet identified community facilities including local shops, health facilities, special needs housing, religious facilities, private housing, etc.

(Milton Keynes Supplementary Planning Document Social Infrastructure, September 2005)

8. **Milton Keynes Community Foundation** is responsible for a number of 'community reserve sites' handed over at the demise of the New Town Development Corporation. These have been allocated to a variety of voluntary and community organisations, including a number of faith organisations, on long term leases.

9. Though these sites as they are currently allocated appear to offer local communities a range of meeting and other facilities as well as meeting the needs of the lead organisation, in many cases these organisations do not relate specifically to the local community or any organisations developed in that area.

10. It is proposed that a policy for the provision of 'Social Infrastructure Reserve Sites' is included in social infrastructure provision. This should be clearly allocated with the prime purpose of providing a long term base and other facilities for the local community (and so development work with that local community can be geared up to that end). However, should no demand from this source be forthcoming after, say 15 years, then the site should be made available more widely, but with a proviso that some elements of its use relate to the needs of the immediate community.

11. No attempt to quantify or cost the provision of an initial or longer term community base has been attempted as this is the component of social infrastructure provision which is likely to vary the most between developments. For example, there may be opportunities to invest in current community facilities in existing or adjacent communities which can help to build a new, wider community.

12. Similarly there are various options open for the provision of an initial community facility as well as a 'community house', e.g. space in another community facility such as a shop, school or health centre or provision of a temporary building etc. Therefore it is proposed that planning for both initial and long term community facilities (a place for community meetings, events, provision of services, information etc.) is carried out on a development by development basis but within guidelines, as set out in Table B.

13. Both the initial community base(s) and Social Infrastructure Reserve Sites should be included in the detailed planning permission and within section 106 agreements as a 'planning obligation' on developers. Provision for both types of asset should be considered on a development by development basis, with provision according to local needs (e.g. it might be more appropriate to set aside funding to invest in an existing centre or base in an adjacent community than set aside land).

Table B: Proposed standards for provision of initial community base and Social Infrastructure Reserve Sites

Size of development (or individual phases)	Nos. of Community Bases (minimum of c. 200m ² area)	Nos. of Social Infrastructure Reserve Sites (of 1 hectare each)
0- 24	Usually none	None
25- 100	Discretionary (based on Social Infrastructure Impact Assessment)	Discretionary (based on Social Infrastructure Impact Assessment)
101-1000	1	Discretionary (based on Social Infrastructure Impact Assessment)
1001- 3000	1 (minimum size increased to 300m ²)	1 site
3001-5000	2 (min size 200m ² each) or 1 (400m ²)	2 sites
For every additional 1,000 dwellings above 5000	1 additional (200m ²)	1 additional site

14. As noted above most items of the Investment Model can be appropriately scaled up or down in relation to the overall size of the planned development. However for **Community Development staffing** it is suggested that planning is based on a more 'stepped' approach to the capacity required.

15. For example, it is likely that there will be little variation in the time required from a community development worker in the early stages of a larger development of say 1000 dwellings, and the amount of time required for smaller developments where as much community consultation and work to engage new residents could well be needed. Likewise for larger developments the level of staff input might be roughly the same, but there will come a point where a 'step change' in community development staffing is required. These suggested step changes are set out in Table C.

16. Although the Table below associates years with each stage of the development, in reality these are likely to be extended, particularly when house building is phased, with each phase taking several years to complete.

Table C: Proposed standards for provision of community development staffing

Size of development (including individual phases)	Community Development staffing level for each stage of development (f.t.e.)					
	Shaping	Planning	Engaging	Growing	Consolidating	Maintaining
0-100						
101-500	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.3
501- 1000	0.2	0.4	1	1	1	0.4
1001-3000	0.4	0.5	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.4
3001-5000	0.5	0.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.5
For each additional 1000 dwellings (or pro rata amounts below this)	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1

Note: The provision of an operating budget for the community development worker should be pro rata to the overall staffing costs in any one year as within the main Investment Model.

Appendix 7: Planning Obligations

(Source: 'Health and Social Care Services Provision for the Future- Report of the MKSM Health and Social Care Project, 2006)

'Planning Obligations

2.43 A planning obligation, also known as a Section 106 Agreement is an agreement entered into between a developer and the Local Planning Authority (LPA). They provide a means to enable the proposed development to proceed and to meet the needs of the local community associated with new development by securing contributions from developers towards the provision of infrastructure and services. Such planning obligations may restrict the development or use of land in a specified way, require specified operations or activities to be carried out in relation to the land, require the land to be used in a specified way, or provide the payment of a financial sum to the LPA or public body. Section 106 Agreements are usually entered into prior to grant of planning permission.

2.44 Under the current system, there are requirements for planning obligations to meet a series of 'tests' as follows:

- to be necessary;
- to be relevant to planning;
- to be directly related to the proposed development;
- to be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and
- to be reasonable in all other respects.

2.45 Planning obligations are used to contribute to a range of impacts, such as transport improvements, education, and health facilities. In the case of large scale development, it is likely that the Strategic Health Authority or the Primary Care Trust will be consulted at this stage in relation to the provision of health facilities or contributions towards health facilities.

2.46 Proposed changes to the planning obligations system have been put forward by the Government in its consultation paper. As part of these proposals, the Government is proposing a two-pronged approach:

- the Government is proposing to revise policy on planning obligations, and
- new legislation is proposed to enable an optional planning charge, which could be used as an alternative to negotiated planning obligations.

2.47 The new policy would encourage LPAs to set out formulae in their plans (LDDs) to calculate the scale of contributions and would introduce an optional planning charge. Also proposed is the option of encouraging voluntary pooling of planning obligation contributions where this is the most appropriate way of meeting the needs of a development. Should these proposals go ahead, then Strategic Health Authorities should ensure that they influence LDDs and any formulae that they include relating to planning obligation contributions.

2.48 The introduction of an optional charge would mean that the developer could choose to pay a fixed charge rather than a conventional negotiated planning obligation. This would clearly have implications for developer contributions to local healthcare facilities, and if these proposals were to go ahead it would be vital for the NHS to get involved with the LPA in setting these charges.'