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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Best Practice Handbook is part of the Interim Evaluation of the UK-URBAN Community Initiative in England, Wales and Scotland undertaken by EKOS LTD and mtl-consultants, on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR).

The Handbook presents a compilation of best practice case studies, based on the results of the Interim Evaluation. To offer a comprehensive insight into the URBAN - Action Planning Process undertaken so far, the Handbook would be used best in combination with the Interim Evaluation Report.

The Interim Evaluation and the case studies presented in the Handbook refer to a limited time span, only the first two years of URBAN Programme implementation in the UK and therefore concentrate on the assessment of processes rather than individual project delivery and results.

The reader will find in the following, four chapters highlighting experiences from some of the key areas of URBAN Programme implementation including, the Building of Community Structures, Capacity Building, Funding Arrangements and Programme Management Technicalities. Each chapter presents some contextual information and a number of case studies of best practice, which have been identified during the Evaluation. The Handbook, therefore, is a document entirely based on the UK-URBAN experience during the period of end 1998 to September 1999.

The key conclusions of the Interim Evaluation were:

- that URBAN has successfully engaged community groups in the development of locally based regeneration activities;
- that a successor Programme for the UK should be welcomed; and
- that the experience of existing Groups should not be lost at the end of the current period, and where appropriate Urban Programme Groups (UPGs) should be supported to continue their work.

On the basis of the above conclusions, the Handbook might be able to inform future programmes on some key issues of community involvement in Action Planning Processes.

The Handbook has been compiled from contributions from a number of URBAN regions and EKOS would like to thank all of the regions for their availability, time and efforts involved.

In the Appendix, a list of all UK-URBAN regions, a matrix of good practise examples and key UPG-contacts are given to allow the reader to acquire further information and detail directly at source, if and when, required.

Chapter 2

ACTION PLANNING AND BUILDING COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

2.1 CONTEXT

The URBAN Action Planning Process is based on the concept of community involvement and a community-led partnership approach. Action Plans, which are developed on the basis of community participation and which are perceived as 'owned' by the local community, are more likely to address local need appropriately and to develop more sustainable regeneration projects.

The Action Plan, if produced comprehensively and in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, can be a most effective strategic document by providing a fundamental framework for directing funding resources towards areas of highest need.

It is not necessarily the degree of precision in identifying individual project activities, which makes the Action Plan a useful document, it is rather its capacity to allocate resources towards areas of highest need. This is whilst acknowledging that local area regeneration is a dynamic, community based process, which ought to incorporate a sufficient degree of flexibility, innovation and risk taking to allow for the community to develop sustainable projects, capacities and relationships.

The biggest challenge for URBAN and its Action Planning Process therefore, was to facilitate community involvement effectively by securing the active engagement and participation of local people in the decision making processes of this programme.

The administrative requirement for the implementation of URBAN was, for each URBAN area, to establish an URBAN Partnership Group (UPG) as the core decision making body. At UPG level all sectors involved in the regeneration process of the URBAN area met and decided upon programme management issues. On average, the pro rata distribution of seats on the UPG was split 50/50 between statutory/professional sectors and the community.

The involvement of the statutory/professional sectors with their long established structures and capacities in regeneration programmes was, in principal, no problem. It was the community sector and the local community at large, which were less prepared and structured to participate in the decision making processes of complex European Structural Fund Programmes like URBAN.

The first chapter of this Handbook, therefore, introduces the reader to some best practice identified during the INTERIM EVALUATION, regarding the building of successful community and partnership structures, which facilitate an effective involvement of the local communities in URBAN Action Planning and its management.

The first case studies in this chapter feature two exceptional examples of strong community mandates, which are fully integrated into the overall URBAN Partnership structure. This is followed by an introduction of two community organisations, which were set up to function as umbrella structures for the local community to be represented on the UPG and to liaise with statutory bodies and to influence other regeneration activities in future.

2.2 CASE STUDIES

**THE NOTTINGHAM
PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL**

Structure

The Partnership Council is made up of seven Forums as well as an Executive Group comprising representatives from each of the Forums. The Forums aimed to create a mechanism through which all those who lived and worked in the Partnership Council area could have an input in determining how URBAN should be allocated.



Three of the Forums are Resident Forums each covering around a third of the partnership area. In addition, there is a Local Business Forum, a Voluntary Sector Forum, a Public Sector Forum, and the Area 4 Committee of Nottingham City Council.

The latter, like other Forums nominates three representatives to sit on the Partnership Council Executive.

The structure enables each Forum to organise itself in any way in which its members see fit. This recognises that different Forums may develop different approaches to involvement and consultation. It also recognises that whilst there are common agendas across Forums, each Forum brings with it a unique perspective. However, the responsibilities of all the Forums are the same: that is to ensure that the views, opinions and perspectives of both their existing and eligible membership is represented on the Partnership Council through Forum representatives.

How it started

The first step taken by the Partnership Council Steering Group (in setting up the Partnership Council) was to carry out a feasibility study and commission a survey to find out if local people really wanted to participate in making and influencing decisions made about their area. 84% of those surveyed supported the idea of developing a Partnership Council and 42% said they would wish to get involved. The task of the Steering Group was to ensure that all the partners were involved in creating the structure and decision making processes of the Partnership Council.

This has meant that participants gained a sense of ownership of the structure and, therefore, a sense of responsibility to ensure that it functions as an effective, consensus-seeking, decision making body.

A labour-intensive start to get people interested

In seeking the involvement of residents, 12,000 leaflets were distributed in the Partnership area inviting residents to one of nine public meetings throughout the area. As well as additional publicity in the local media, local radio, posters in local shops, pubs and post offices, volunteers spent a total of twenty-eight evenings door-knocking in their neighbourhoods to inform residents both about the public meetings and the Partnership Council.

The Partnership Council set to work

Forums were established in autumn 1996 with the first prime objective to develop an Action Agenda based on Action Points discussed and agreed at each Forum. The Partnership Council met for the first time in March 1997. The first major tasks facing the Partnership Council were those relating to its role as the delivery vehicle for URBAN. Before approaching these tasks, the Partnership Council needed to be constituted and it needed to adopt a decision making culture which ensured that it enabled all its representatives to contribute equally.

The Partnership Council has decided that it will become a Company Limited by Guarantee with the long-term aim of seeking charitable status. It also appointed a facilitator and a minute taker. Its constitution reflects its need to be accountable and transparent while continuing to work in a way,

which reflects the views of its constituent parts. In practice this means that it needs to continue to seek and reflect the views of those who will be affected by its decisions.

The writing of the URBAN Action Plan

The strategy for URBAN was therefore developed through the Forums, each Forum identifying five priority Action Points within each measure of the original URBAN bid. These Action Points were drawn together by Forum representatives on the Partnership Council.

The Partnership Council's unique structure and decision making processes brought local people together with those from the Public, Voluntary and Business sectors to set out an Action Plan and to come together in working groups to translate the aspirations of that Action Plan into costed and contracted projects (refer to the Chapter on 'Programme Management Technicalities').

Working in 'real' Partnership

In continuing to adhere to the principles of partnership, genuine participation and democratic accountability, the Partnership had struggled with the structures, forms, and procedures, which accompany European Funding.

As well as creating links between those in the local community and those with city or countrywide responsibilities the Partnership Council has also striven to develop links between different groups within the local community.

The Partnership Council's structure recognises that sustainable change is dependent on the commitment of all those who have a commitment to the local community.

This must include those who work as well as those who live locally. The commitment of those who work locally in the Public, Voluntary and Business Sector is crucial to increasing the effectiveness of local services and creating sustainable regeneration.

In their working relationships Working Groups and Partnership Council Board members have developed an understanding of the perspective of others, have learned to respect and value knowledge and experience whether it be local or professional. Task focused activity builds teams and mutual respect as well as opening up opportunities and worlds. Many of those who have participated have gone on to get jobs, sought further training, fulfilled life long dreams and moved on.

The URBAN Programme has provided opportunities to develop links dissolving some of the barriers which exclude people from participating in a wider world this process has acted as a powerfully cost effective process of social inclusion.

Lessons Learnt

- The Structure, which engages local people in participating in decision making needs as much planning and thought as the projects, which are informed by that process. The Partnership Council engaged local people at every level of the decision making process.
- The decision making process needs to engage people at every level. Some participants will wish to express their views at one off consultation events. Some will participate on planning or decision making groups. All contributions need to be valued and planned into the process.

- Creating democratic legitimacy by engaging as many people as possible in developing the Action Plan created a framework in which subsequent decisions could be made and legitimised the authority of participants to make those decisions.
- The engagement of those who work locally in the public, voluntary and business sectors to the success of regeneration.
- The engagement and commitment of other public agencies and the Local Authority is critical in order to implement a local agenda.
- The role of Nottingham City Council in enabling its Workers to participate in Working Groups, negotiating a role for the Accountable Body which was enabling and providing links through a Area Committee Structure was critical to the development of the Partnership Council. Participatory democratic structures were seen as complementing rather than competing with more traditional representative structures.
- The Process and structures need to balance action with genuine participation. Partnership demands that both elements are regarded as equally important.

For more information, please contact:

Partnership Council
Christina Ashworth
Nottingham
Tel: 0115 970 8200

THE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE, SHEFFIELD

The Community Alliance in Sheffield has received great interest and support from the UK URBAN Network, as it is seen as a good working partnership, which is both community led and sustainable beyond the life of URBAN.

The Community Alliance is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

Successful Community Participation

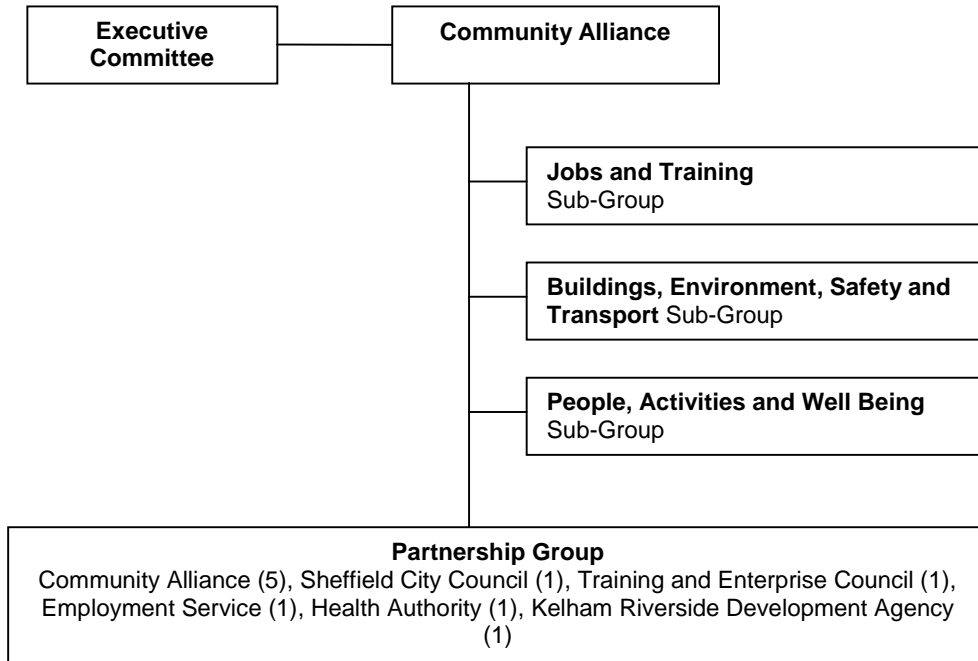
The success of the Community Alliance is reflected in its capacity to continually increase local interest in regeneration issues. More people than posts available seek election as Executive Committee members; sub-groups experience an increase in community participation; and previously disenfranchised community members become re-engaged in regeneration processes.

Key factors for the overall success of the Community Alliance are:

- The Executive Committee as the main control body of the Alliance, is 100% community run as a strong community mandate is essential to balance local power and decision making structures.
- All Community Alliance staff (10) are employed and managed by the community and accountable to the Executive.
- The Community Alliance is based on a broad remit of issues, focussing on the regeneration of its community in a wider, long-term sense and accesses a wide range of funding sources to meet its objectives.
- The Alliance has successfully established wider partnership relations with key organisations in the region and participates in mainstream decision making processes.
- The availability of the Futures Fund (refer to Funding Chapter) enabled the Community Alliance to fund capacity building activities in an un-bureaucratic and effective way
- The Action Plan was designed by the community and hence is sufficiently community needs oriented.

The Overall Community Alliance Structure

The Community Alliance includes an Executive Committee, staff and three sub-groups, which are the core mechanism for Community Involvement. The Partnership Group provides the key link between community and statutory bodies as explained in the following:



The Community Alliance

The Community Alliance has a constitution, a bank account, and an Annual General Meeting each September.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is an 100% community body. 11 directors/trustees are responsible for all financial and legal matters concerning the company. All directors are elected at the Annual General Meeting, with a maximum of three years service per person in one post to ensure transparency.

The Executive employs all staff at the Community Alliance, it meets on a monthly basis and sends representatives to the Partnership Group, the Evaluation Group, the URBAN Management Committee and the SRB Board.

Community Alliance Staff Team

Currently, all staff are funded by URBAN and SRB sources, see details below:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Role</u>
Executive Director	Strategic management of Community Alliance and major projects.
Programme Co-ordinator	Day to day management and co-ordination of the work of the Community Alliance.
Administrator	Provides administrative support and reception for the project.
Development Workers (3)	Responsible for the three Sub-Groups of the Alliance.

Sub-Groups

There are three sub-groups each supported by a Development Worker and chaired by a local person. The sub-groups are the core mechanism of community involvement and project development in Sheffield's URBAN regeneration issues. The location of sub-group meetings rotate within the area and are held at different times to give everyone a chance of attending. Childcare costs and transport are provided. On average 20 to 30 people attend sub-group meetings with local representative attendance usually at 50%. The frequency of community reps. attendance rose over the last year and Sub-Groups meet on a bi-monthly basis.

The Partnership Group

The Partnership is structured in a 50/50 manner with five Community Alliance representatives and another five representatives from the Health Authority, the City Council, the Training Enterprise Council (TEC), the Employment Service and the private sector.

The Partnership group decides strategy, initiatives and funding for the area. The group works to ensure a coherent, co-ordinated and strategic framework to regeneration in the area, which will outlast the current funding regimes.

How it all started

The appointment of a Community Development Consultant in 1997 and the calling of a public meeting to inform local people what was happening in the regeneration process of their area were instrumental activities in starting partnership work. Local people were encouraged to become more involved and to set up the Community Alliance.

The first task of the newly formed Alliance was to ensure that it had the support of local people and that it reflected their views and priorities for the regeneration of the area. The Alliance organised a Community Conference in May 1998, which attracted around 100 people, a record for any consultation process in the area. A number of workshops were arranged on key themes and a full Conference Report was made, which informed the local SRB/URBAN bidding rounds.

The Community Conference was vital to establish the community involvement process. Previously, community participation in Sheffield was low and debates often confrontational, however the conference created the right environment and vision for the community to seek a new start.

Supporting Publicity

Regular issues of the Community Alliance News are produced and this free newsletter is delivered to around 3,500 homes in the area. The newsletter covers a balance of local news stories, Community Alliance and funding news including information regarding sub-group meetings, community conferences and other

planned events. Local people contribute articles and use the newsletter to advertise meetings and events and they also help with its delivery.

The Future

The remit of the Community Alliance enables a more open approach towards regeneration and partnership creation as its set up is not programme based. This wider remit allows the Alliance to explore alternative funding routes like Lottery Funding, Health Authority Partnerships, future Objective One, etc.

The intention is to set up the Alliance as a Development Trust and various routes of diversification have been explored already. For example, possibilities include the take over of management responsibilities for a major local Training Centre and also the management of local amenities.

Lessons Learnt

Too many meetings are to be avoided. Experience has demonstrated that sub-groups are most effective if run on a bi-monthly rather than a monthly basis.

More training is needed for staff/paid workers in terms of dealing with communities.

Dealing with the bureaucracy and complexities involved in URBAN needed an almost unacceptable amount of time and was experienced as the main problem during the early years of setting up the Community Alliance.

For more information on the Community Alliance, please contact:

Community Alliance Project Netherthorpe and Uppertorpe
Janet Skirrow
Tel: 0114 266 1991

THE NORTH GLASGOW COMMUNITY FORUM

The North Glasgow Community Forum was set up in 1997 to provide an effective interface between the local community groups and Glasgow City Council and other statutory bodies in the area.

Its legal structure is that of an unincorporated voluntary organisation with its own rules and constitution.

The Community Forum meets on a monthly basis, holds AGMs, produces Annual Reports and is subject to independent evaluation to demonstrate accountability.

The Community Forum employs six members of staff and incorporates thirty members. All six neighbourhoods within the Glasgow North area are represented. The remaining members are from a wide variety of community and voluntary groups operating in North Glasgow. Through the system of representation the Forum brings together in excess of 200 active groups in Glasgow North.

How it started

The local development agency, Glasgow North Limited, initiated the set up of the Community Forum in an attempt to formalise a previously existing Community Team. The Community Team operated as an unstaffed structure since 1992. In 1997, the North Glasgow Community Forum replaced the Community Team to provide a framework for community representation regarding URBAN and Social Inclusion Partnership activities.

Its independence was established through the fact that staff were not

directly employed by the local authority or any other statutory body.

Programme Independence

The constitution of the North Glasgow Community Forum states its objectives as:

- the promotion of education, training, employment, and health; and
- the relief of poverty.

The Forum's Business Plan includes a needs analysis of the area and identifies areas of desired project activity. The Business Plan represents an area-specific regeneration strategy reflecting local need and skills shortages. It is not geared towards accessing a particular funding regime.

Key Roles

The key roles of the Community Forum are:

- to liaise on behalf of the local community with all relevant statutory bodies;
- to bridge the gap between labour market needs and the present low levels of skills and qualifications.

The Forum facilitates capacity building measures and training activities including an URBAN funded Community Development Training Programme. This covers ten full-time trainees in the field of community work, twenty part-time trainees learning essential skills and forty others undertaking financial or personnel management courses.

Funding Sources

On the basis of the Business Plan, funding sources for the operation of the Forum itself and related activities are identified. Key funding sources include the Priority Partnership Area Grant, Social Inclusion Partnership Fund, National Lottery Charities Board, mainstream European Funding and URBAN.

Local Links

There are direct links with two local colleges and the Community Forum ensures that their services are designed and adjusted to fit the particular needs of the local area.

For more information, please contact:

URBAN European Initiative (Glasgow
North)
Eddie Warde
Tel: 0141-347 1769

WATCH – WORKING ACTIVELY TO CHANGE HILLFIELDS LTD.

Since 1994 the Hillfields Partnership has brought together local people with the City Council and other statutory organisations to work together for the regeneration of Hillfields.

At the heart of the Partnership has been the Core Working Group with elected representatives of local interests including residents, traders, voluntary and community groups, together with City Council officers. Bids from the Hillfields Partnership have successfully attracted Government funding from URBAN and SRB.

The Core Working Group recognised that it would need to change and develop, to build on its success and work for the future. With support from the City Council, the Core Working Group commissioned external consultants to work with them and with the wider community to create a legal entity, which would be viable and sustainable, accountable to local people and able to provide the community focus for the regeneration of Hillfields and capable of managing SRB and other resources.

This development process passed a significant milestone in April 1998, with the launch of a new organisation 'WATCH' (Working Actively To Change Hillfields Ltd), incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee. The founder members who have been involved in helping the new organisation define its aims, elected an interim Organising Committee of 21. This committee reflects a broad range of community and voluntary groups in Hillfields, Hillfields residents, and supporters of regeneration work in the area. WATCH succeeded the Core Working Group, which wound-up to allow WATCH to take over its responsibilities. WATCH is now managing the SRB and URBAN programmes for Hillfields.

The overall objective of WATCH is:

- to seek to secure, co-ordinate and manage resources for the social, economic and environmental improvement of the area for the benefit of people living and working in Hillfields.

There are more than sixty voluntary and residents organisations in Hillfields and WATCH brings them all together under one umbrella in order that they may speak with one voice and work in concert. WATCH has established clear and defined decision making processes so that all members know how it works and how decisions have been arrived at.

The organisation pays particular attention to the views of children and young people living in the area and actively seeks to involve them in its work. Whilst WATCH has been built on the basis of the regeneration and improvement of the area, including accessing grant making regimes operated by the Government and European Community, its aim is to become self sustaining for the benefit of the entire Hillfields Community.

For more information, please contact:

WATCH – Working Actively To Change Hillfields Ltd.
12 Victoria Street,
Hillfields
Coventry CV1 5LZ
Tel: 01203-550 563

NETWORKING

The UK-URBAN Community Initiative maintains the UK-URBAN Network through which quarterly conferences, visits and exchanges and a newsletter are organised.

The results of the INTERIM EVALUATION have shown that the Network activities under the UK-URBAN initiative could be regarded as active, comprehensive and of benefit to UPGs.

The exchange of project experience through networking can contribute significantly to the development of new ideas, to increased awareness of developments and to the transfer of know-how.

The attendance of national and international conferences, in general helped to establish contacts and to gain an improved vision of the URBAN programme. There have been a number of visits to the European Commission in Brussels (Sheffield, Huyton, etc), which helped familiarisation and understanding of the overall processes and structures and enabled the participants to put their individual URBAN programmes in context relative to the wider administrative structure. This wider appreciation of processes and structures helped to overcome apprehension in dealing with European Programmes and facilitated improved know-how.

The experience of many UK-URBAN areas was that visiting and studying other URBAN regions and their projects enabled them to put their own approaches into a wider perspective and gather ideas for future project development. In many cases, even trans-national links, like the exchange between Glasgow North and Cork in Ireland, led to the actual transfer and adoption of particular projects.

In the following, a list of Good Practice should highlight some of the Lessons Learnt by a number of URBAN areas:

- networking activities must feature in the Action Plan to be an eligible item for European funding;
- the use of in-kind contributions can cover networking expenses for community representatives as much as possible;

- sending representatives who are practitioners and actually run projects themselves has a higher impact and effect on the benefit of the visit or exchange;
- visits and exchanges must be prepared with greatest care to achieve effectiveness. Themes and topics of interests should be identified between the parties beforehand, the visit should be well structured and provide in-depth information and know-how of practical relevance to the visiting group;
- sending particular target groups, i.e. Youth, Childcare-Women's Group, etc. to conferences or visits can have very good capacity building effects in many ways;
- de-briefing sessions between the networking members and the remaining UPG should be a standard procedure and conducted in a way so that decisions can be made how to disseminate gathered experiences and information to the wider community; and
- time and effort should be invested in considering how to transfer know-how and project experiences from other regions most effectively to one's own area.

2.2 GOOD PRACTICE POINTS

GOOD PRACTICE POINTS

1. The intention to involve local communities in the Action Planning Process requires a clear understanding and communication of the nature, extent and methods for involvement;
2. Existing structures might be able to fit the programmes requirements regarding partnership, community involvement etc.;
3. Building networks in the community is seen as the key to bringing groups together and to develop common objectives and awareness;
4. Community briefings must be comprehensive to ensure that the community is not misled with regard to the likely complexities and challenges of the Programme;
5. Community's new decision making roles can be a culture shock for statutory agencies;
6. Consultation and community involvement needs time and resources to accommodate the additional co-ordination and management that this process requires;

GOOD PRACTICE POINTS

7. In order to reach a sufficient understanding of URBAN and the Action Planning process, the community needs capacity-building action delivered at the outset and in parallel to the development of the Action Plan;
8. Partnership does not happen automatically, it needs to be created, nurtured and sustained;
9. Recognising mistakes, starting again with a strong independent chair to UPG and to the development of good, open communication can all be turning points; and
10. Output targets in Action Plans should allow for flexibility to accommodate more pilot/innovative actions.

Chapter 3

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES

3.1 CONTEXT

The URBAN Action Planning process was based on the concept of a community-led partnership approach, with the ultimate aim of funding and delivering projects, which more effectively addressed local need.

Local communities however, often lack the appropriate skills and knowledge to access funding programmes, to manage programmes and projects efficiently and to participate more effectively in the decision-making processes. Capacity building initiatives address these constraints and seek to increase local communities' abilities to participate in decision-making processes relevant to the regeneration of their area.

The delivery of capacity-building projects were therefore, an integral part of the URBAN Community Initiative and the majority of Action Plans identified capacity building as one of their strategic aims. Often, capacity building was identified within its own single Measure, recognising the fact that a capacity building programme was vital in supporting the active and informed involvement of local people in the regeneration of their community.

Capacity building in URBAN was generally geared towards two levels:

- at Programme management and organisational level, to increase the capacity of partners on the Urban Partnership Group in managing European funding and related processes; and
- at local community level, to increase the capacity to develop and implement projects.

The contents of capacity building plans varied accordingly and usually addressed capacity development in the following areas:

- basic team management skills and general understanding of community involvement in regeneration (geared at UPG members);
- technical programme management skills (geared at UPG members);
- community project development skills, confidence and awareness raising, skills development to overcome exclusion (geared at community members); and
- networking activities (geared at UPG and community members).

This chapter presents good practice examples for each of the above capacity development areas by giving a summary of the particular content and structure of a selected range of capacity building plans.

3.2 CASE STUDIES

THE LEASOWE UPG TRAINING PROGRAMME

In Leasowe, Capacity-Building of UPG members and involving community representatives has been undertaken through a tailored training programme. The training programme consisted of a series of short courses delivered by an appointed external consultant.

The objective of the training programme was to overcome widely perceived communication barriers in the URBAN process, improving the decision making capacities of UPG members and involved community representatives as both partners and URBAN decision makers.

The design and content of the training programme was based on a training needs analysis. The training needs questionnaire and a number of focus groups with board and sub-group members addressed strategic, operational and individual levels of skill needs, which subsequently informed the design and contents of the programme.

Over a period of five weeks, the following self-standing short courses were offered on a one-day per week basis:

- What is URBAN and how does it fit with other regeneration initiatives;
- Involving the Community in regeneration;
- Identifying and interpreting community wants and needs;
- Project development and project management;
- Marketing;
- Team building;
- Effective planning;
- Time management;
- Interpersonal Skills,
- Roles and responsibilities of Board members;
- Using community economic development to tackle poverty; and
- Opportunities for local economic initiatives.

The course was tailored to serve the URBAN agenda, targeted at the objectives to reduce poverty, to create partnership and to improve access.

The fundamental idea of the training course was to break down perceived barriers, to raise confidence levels and to use a reciprocal learning approach. Each course module was based on the COLB-Learning Cycle representing the notion that through theory, planning,

action and reflection, we all can learn and improve reciprocal understanding and partnership.

To maximise the training, speakers were invited from Government Office, the private sector, SRB etc. in order to familiarise participants with persons relevant to URBAN.

The training programme was accessible to all members of the UPG and URBAN sub-groups while free childcare arrangements were made available.

The 18 registered participants were free to choose and attend any of the courses offered according to their particular interest.

At the end of the training programme each participant received a signed 'Record of Achievement' indicating their successful completion of course units. This certificate has proven very successful and useful, particularly for community representatives, as it acknowledges commitment and achievements. The certificate is also

being used in the job seeking activities of the participants.

Good Practice:

- incorporating relevant individuals as speakers during the training sessions;
- provision of workbooks for future reference;
- certificates for participants; and
- Dedicated Community Development Worker

For more information and detail, please contact:

Leasowe URBAN Initiative
Jennifer Naylor,
Whetstone Lane,
Birkenhead, L41 2SA,
0151 647 9135, 0151 666 2794,
urban@wirralpathways.demon.co.uk

CAPACITY BUILDING IN COVENTRY, HILLFIELDS

In Coventry, the Hillfields URBAN Partnership Group has benefited greatly from an extensive capacity building programme targeted mainly at the UPG members themselves, at their skills in managing URBAN and at their role to act as filters, catalysts and animateurs for their communities.

The capacity building programme offered a comprehensive range of training and networking activity, and was submitted by Coventry City Council on behalf of Hillfields UPG.

In addition, the programme incorporated very successfully the use of 'Volunteer Time' as match funding for extensive capacity building and networking activities, which is demonstrated in more detail in the 'Funding Arrangements' chapter of this Handbook.

In Hillfields, like in most other URBAN regions, the UPG members had no prior experience of managing a Regeneration Programme part funded from European

Structural Funds and lacked comprehensive and even general awareness of relevant technical skills regarding eligibility, funding and reporting systems.

The key objectives of this three and a half year programme were:

- Development of the UPG as an effective programme management group including monitoring, evaluation and impact analysis;
- Support the UPG in their role as community representatives who can assist local groups design and deliver innovative projects;
- Capacity building for the UPG in the fields of programme management, appraisal and reviews, contracts management, business planning and project management;
- Helping to shape and develop baseline objectives and solutions that will be sustainable beyond the life of URBAN by mainstreaming, networking and adopting best practice from the rest of the UK and Europe; and
- Assistance in understanding the role of the European Union in regeneration and economic development.

The programme concentrated on supporting the UPG not just in the above areas but also with their own personal development, training and management skills. Among specific areas where support and expertise was required were:

- Project Development and Preparation;
- Learning to make full use of EU formats;
- Budget Management;
- Project Selection techniques including key aspects of Project Scoring and Appraisals;
- Learning the critical aspects of setting up and operating Project Delivery systems especially when working as partnerships and in using Service Agreements and/or Contracts;
- Performance and Programme Monitoring;
- Project Approvals;
- Learning the rules of adherence to financial, audit, records keeping and contract requirements;
- Annual and Semi Annual Reports on the URBAN Initiative in Hillfields; and
- Networking and adoption of Best Practice.

Training in the above topics was highly technical in nature in the context of European Funding and the specific Programme Outputs are detailed **Table A** below.

TABLE A: PROGRAMME OUTPUTS

<u>Output</u>	<u>Number</u>
UPG Members trained/mentored	13
Training and Network Weeks Equivalent	174
Training Sessions Completed	10
National Conferences supported	4
Trans-national Networks Events supported	3
National Networks Events attended	14
UPG/UMC Meetings attended	24
Community Groups assisted	15
Seminars attended	3
DETR Evaluation study financed	1

The above outputs show that the programme not only incorporated training related outputs, but it also acknowledged the time (and costs) incurred by UPG members in attending meetings and network events as countable outputs (in terms of number of events/meetings attended).

The delivery of training started in 1998 and was undertaken by a mix of service providers, including Coventry County Council, external consultants, and Statutory Agencies with SRB experience. By the end of 1999 the programme was 95% on target in terms of the application budget and output figures.

This capacity building programme is a good example of best practice with regard to its clear approach and comprehensiveness, it is particularly interesting because of its funding structure as 40% of total Programme costs were provided by Volunteer Time.

Through the programme locally based UPG members acquired valuable skills to manage and co-ordinate other regeneration and socially beneficial Programmes that previously, were the sole prerogative of Statutory Agencies. This outcome was one of the key objectives of URBAN as defined by the EU Commission in seeking to establish locally based 'bottom-up' management solutions to regeneration issues.

For further information, please contact:

Coventry City Council
URBAN Programme Manager
Robert Cope
Tel: 01203 833731, 01203 833169

THE CAPACITY BUILDING PLAN, BRISTOL

The Capacity Building programme in Bristol is structured as a Business Plan and represents a comprehensive package of capacity building available to groups and communities within the URBAN focus area. The Business Plan corresponds to the objectives and output targets identified in the URBAN Action Plan.

The Bristol example is particularly interesting as it demonstrates a community oriented capacity building plan addressing identified community needs in a flexible and comprehensive manner.

The Business Plan is a detailed and clearly written document, identifying all key actions, funding structures, output targets, milestones, monitoring etc. It provides a good framework to guide and monitor the capacity building process over a three-year period. Particular attention has been given to incorporate and establish close links with SRB activities in the area and to establish continuous information flows with other schemes.

The Capacity Building programme is managed by the Community Development Unit (Bristol City Council), which is based in the focus area to allow for maximum accessibility. It was seen as essential to the successful implementation of the Business Plan to have employed a Community Development Worker providing continuity and an identifiable role within the local community. The Community Development Worker worked alongside the URBAN programme manager. This combination of posts proved to be very successful and, considering the technical and managerial effort required by URBAN, a necessary intervention.

At the outset of URBAN, it was recognised that community groups in the URBAN area were at different levels of capacity and awareness regarding project development and networking. A lot of small community groups existed, but very few with capacities to access available resources. Thereupon, the following needs were addressed in the Business Plan:

- A sense of powerlessness and a lack of ownership from local people;
- Lack of skills building within the community;
- Building trust within the local community;
- Existence of multiple barriers to training and employment activity (language, childcare responsibilities, lack of training and experience, lack of recognised qualifications); and
- Lack of engagement of locally based voluntary organisations in the regeneration process.

To respond to the above issues, a wide range of capacity building actions were incorporated combining area-wide activities like awareness raising and access to training etc. Support was also targeted at specific minority groups and community organisations. Establishing a Project Development Fund for local community groups created a further level of intervention.

The following capacity building actions are incorporated in the plan:

- Information (News-sheet, Resources Book);
- Training (Community Action, Community Enterprise, Funding, Mentoring);
- Resources (Project Development Fund);
- Advice and Project Support (Community Development Worker, Volunteer Support);
- Targeted Support (Asian Women, Refugees, Bangladesh and African Caribbean Women); and
- Local Ownership (Local Community Partnerships).

The intention was, throughout, to delegate and employ locally in order to increase levels of ownership and programme awareness. Training was therefore sourced locally and voluntary organisations, based in the area, were commissioned to undertake various elements of the plan for example the 'Resource Book'.

After one year of implementation, the Business Plan was on target and key successes were achieved.

After the first year, a review was undertaken to appraise and re-focus the Capacity Building business plan.

For more information, please contact:

Bristol City Council,
Bristol URBAN Programme Team,
Paul Owens,
Tel: 0117 903 6418

3.3 GOOD PRACTICE POINTS

GOOD PRACTICE POINTS

1. Capacity-building should start at the earliest possible date, before and during Action Plan development, in order to increase understanding and know-how of processes and therefore to improve efficiency of the Action Planning Process;
2. In light of the more qualitative character and impact of capacity-building measures, match-funding should be pre-arranged at source or should receive higher intervention rates;
3. The need to build capacity should not only be understood in regard to programme technicalities, but also with regard to working styles and attitudes. In this respect capacity need to be build at all levels to improve communication and understanding between statutory bodies and the community;
4. The effective involvement and capacity-building of marginalised groups' needs additional resources in terms of time and commitment, i.e. to overcome language barriers and allowances should therefore be made for additional officer time;
5. Small groups are easily overlooked and therefore loose out regarding access to information, capacity building, and funding;
6. Capacity-building needs to be understood as a permanent facilitation, accompanying a dynamic regeneration process through all its phases including planning, delivery, and management of projects. Residents need to be kept well informed of events and programme development;
7. UPG capacity building plans should include costs for networking and conferencing for community representatives;
8. Community involvement and capacity-building require a dedicated, long-term staff team, including programme manager, community development worker, and administration support;
9. A key ingredient for success is "*word of mouth*" and going with the grain of the community infrastructure;
10. Small arts, crafts, culture events and road shows are very good 'starter' projects to attract attention to programme and draw in the community; and
11. Locally based delivery agents should be used if possible.

Chapter 4

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 CONTEXT

Match-funding is one of the key funding principles of European Funding in UK. Structural Funds in mainstream programmes as well as in Community Initiatives can only co-finance a given part of eligible project costs. The remaining match funding must be found by the project applicant from other public and/or private sources.

During the Interim Evaluation, this match-funding requirement was identified as obstacle Number One regarding a smooth and successful implementation of URBAN.

Three key funding problems were identified in each of the UPG region:

- difficulty and lack of know-how to find match funding;
- lack of guidance and direction to use 'in-kind' contributions; and
- retrospective funding of ERDF-grants causing cash-flow problems.

Small community and voluntary organisations and groups were most effected by these funding difficulties, due to their lack of funding resources, capacity, and know-how.

The chapter will present a range of case studies reflecting good practise in overcoming the above mentioned obstacles. It should be noted that the local authorities as Accountable Bodies were the driving forces in finding solutions and thus enabling small organisations to participate in URBAN and access grants.

4.2 CASE STUDIES

COMMUNITY CHESTS

Community Chests as a form of delegated fund schemes have often been used to overcome match-funding difficulties for small community groups and for small-scale projects in URBAN areas. This form of funding does provide a variety of advantages from a community point of view. Firstly, it is often easier to apply for than other types of funding.

Secondly, the request to find match funding is eliminated for the applicant. Thirdly, the provision of funding for small-scale projects suits community based activities particularly at the beginning of programme activity and fourthly, community groups can gain a track record by starting with small-scale project management which can inform future larger scale funding applications.

A Community Chest is a delegated grant scheme, which enables organisations to apply for 100% project funding, thereby avoiding the search for match funding by the applicant.

A Community Chest is an ERDF/ESF project in its own right, co-funded either by other national programmes, local authority budgets and/or other funding sources and administered and managed by a lead partner.

Small or new community/voluntary organisations usually start off with the implementation of small-scale projects. Community Chests are therefore usually designed to facilitate access to small amounts of funding in a more simple, straightforward manner than it would be possible under direct ERDF/ESF application procedures.

A Community Chest, as a project in its own right, is monitored along the standard EU requirements i.e. appraisal criteria, outputs and achievements and value for money. Projects must, therefore, meet Action Plan objectives and ERDF/ESF eligibility criteria.

Community Chests do not remove the requirement for match funds, they are in effect a measure/project level version of central co-financing. In these cases, one or more agencies provided the co-financing to secure ERDF/ESF support but the applicant accesses funds at 100% using simplified systems. The bureaucracy is not reduced, it merely happens behind the scenes and at the aggregate level. This still represents a much more accessible form of support than other more conventional approaches.

Many UPGs have opted to establish a Community Chest in one way or another. In the following, the reader's attention is drawn to three examples:

- The Sheffield 'Futures Fund', which achieved major attention for its success;
- A scheme set up by White City, Sheperds Bush UPG, whose particular emphasis was to allow small local community groups without track record in project management to access URBAN; and
- A Community Chest targeted at an identified project development need in Liverpool Central.

THE FUTURES FUND/KEY FUND

A major key success in piloting a pre-matched fund was achieved in South Yorkshire. Based on a Government Office initiative, the 'Futures Fund', which subsequently became the 'South Yorkshire Key Fund', was developed. The Key Fund is an Objective 2 project and provides pre-match funding of 100% up to a maximum of £25,000 (paid up front) in a 12 month period for CED activities which help community groups create jobs, various volunteering activities or prepare people for work.

Managed by the voluntary and community sector, the Key Fund uses a 4 page, jargon free application form and offers project development support to applicants.

Based on the Key Fund experience, the European Commission and DETR encourage the Fund Management approach, in particular to commit remaining URBAN funds in view of the December '99 deadline.

For more details on the Key Fund, please contact:

Community Alliance
Sharon Ellis
Sheffield
Tel: 0114-267 1572

THE WHITE CITY COMMUNITY CHEST AWARD SCHEME

At White City Partnership, a community chest award scheme was established by the UPG in November 1998, which matched URBAN with SRB funding.

The Community Chest project was a two year fund offering grants up to a maximum of £5,000. The grants from this fund were available to support organisations and groups to develop and run activities to benefit local people in the designated URBAN area.

The particular objective in White City was to enable small groups without project management track record to access small amounts of funds and in so doing gain experience in project

management and reporting procedures.

This then allows groups to build up their expertise and track record for future 'bigger scale' applications.

An additional consideration for establishing a Community Chest was that the type and scale of projects developed by the local community usually required only small amounts of funding. EU match funding requirements and full ERDF/ESF application procedures were seen as in-appropriate mechanisms to facilitate this type of community based project development.

The White City Community Chest Award Scheme was managed by the UPG itself and relates to Measure 1 'To achieve the Regeneration of the Social and Economic Fabric of the Target Estates' of the local URBAN Action Plan.

Its total budget was £ 280,000 funded 50/50 through URBAN and SRB.

27.5 % of the total budget was allocated for administration, training, publicity. This includes the salary of a Programme Officer to oversee the delivery and promotion of the scheme over 28 months (Nov 1998 to March 2001). The remaining £ 203,000 was available for direct grant purposes with grants allocated over a number of rounds according to particular themes (such as arts, sports, education and learning etc).

Each round was launched at a local venue at which speakers presented the objectives and project opportunities relevant to the current theme. These were seen as very useful events for small groups and organisations in need of more specific guidance and direction regarding project ideas and development.

A further attribute has seen the projects interaction/relationship with other local community support staff working in the partnership area who have been designated as link officers and were available to assist groups of

individuals wishing to submit applications.

A three-step appraisal procedure incorporating direct interviews with the applicants ensured thorough vetting, appraisal and support of the applications and of those applying. Applications were usually turned around within six to eight weeks.

The success of the above scheme was based, primarily in the fact that 100% grant funding was available and that its small-scale approach to project development and implementation was suitable to the local community who were just starting to become involved in regeneration activities. The success also was also based on the fact that the project's own parameters in relation to qualifying activities and outputs have been set widely.

For further detail, please contact:
Jasminka Poparic
URBAN Partnership Group Ltd.
The Opportunities Centre
Shepherds Bush
London W12 7LL
Tel: 020 8746 2120

THE LIVERPOOL CENTRAL URBAN COMMUNITY CHEST FUND

The Liverpool Central URBAN Initiative found that applicants to the URBAN programme needed financial assistance with, for example, producing business plans, feasibility studies, development plans, architects drawings and piloting new projects to inform a full application to URBAN.

The established Community Chest aimed to:

- Enable new or existing organisations to research and inform their project proposal;
- Develop organisations capacity to effectively deliver a project; and
- Pilot new small projects.

Applicants could apply for up to £5,000 which did not require match funding.

According to UPG staff, Liverpool Central benefited greatly from the experienced gained from the

community chest, which operated from October 1998 to December 1999.

For additional information please contact:

Liverpool City Council
 Liverpool Central URBAN Initiative
 Annabel Hammond
 Tel: 0151- 233 5401

SPECIAL TARGET GROUP FUND

The Netherton Youth Action Fund provided financial resources for projects centred on Netherton's 14 -16 year olds.

The fund focused on the personal, social and vocational skills development of young people, e.g. activities that give new opportunities to improve education, training and employment opportunities, drama productions, arts and culture projects and projects to promote personal interaction development and raise confidence and self-esteem.

The fund was administered by Youth for Action, in conjunction with adult facilitators. Youth for Action is a group of Netherton young people aged 14+ who play a role in the on-going regeneration of the area.

The Youth Action Fund also funded a major Youth Festival for Netherton, which was attended by more than one thousand people at the beginning of October 1999. Youth for Action carried out the planning and development work for the Festival.

For further information please contact:

Netherton Partnership
 Mary Alpert
 Tel: 0151-3305800

MATCH-FUNDING AT MEASURE LEVEL

Liverpool Central overcame a major obstacle and piloted up front match

funding at measure level. This focused on Measure 2 'Action for Health, Employment, and the Environment' using Health Action Zone grant monies from the Merseyside programme. The experience was extremely refreshing and enabled project applicants to access 100% funding.

£ 1.5m of Health Action Zone monies had been matched with Merseyside URBAN. This has been very much a case of joining up programmes in practice.

For further detail, please contact:

Liverpool City Council
Liverpool Central URBAN Initiative
Annabel Hammond
Tel: 0151- 233 5401

FRONT FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

One of the more persistent barriers in URBAN is the limited cash-flow situation of small-scale applicants with regard to the EC requirement for retrospective ERDF funding. Community Groups and small voluntary sector organisations are very likely not to apply for URBAN funding, because of their general lack of financial resources to start initiatives with.

For many URBAN areas the lack of projects originating from community organisation was seen as major stumbling block and the removal of the key barriers was seen as vital to achieve overall URBAN objectives.

Various local authorities, committed to make URBAN a success for their local community groups, agreed to take pro-active steps and introduced front funding options for project applicants. This decision meant that the Accountable Body was prepared to take a certain investment risk.

The Bristol URBAN Programme, as one example of good practice, introduced up-front funding to facilitate community based project applications. It was agreed with Bristol City Council, the Accountable Body, to base the individual permission for up-front funding on a case by case basis, according to identified needs and requirements claimed by the applicant organisation.

Project applicants were asked to indicate their anticipated cash flow difficulties on the application form. The overall idea was that a viable project should not be put at risk purely because of standard payment regimes.

Payment in advance however, was only offered by exception, not as a general rule.

Any decision for up-front funding was based on a thorough appraisal process of projects. In addition, the applicant needed to assure that monitoring/reporting procedures were successfully installed.

The Accountable Body regarded the involved risk, based on the above conditions of careful appraisal and monitoring requirements, as low.

Project applications originating from the local community have drastically improved since this supportive step was undertaken.

Liverpool City Council did also operate a similar scheme of front-funding whereby for revenue ERDF grant, 25% grant was awarded up-front per financial year and 100% for capital ERDF.

For further detail, please contact:

Bristol City Council
Bristol URBAN Programme
Team
Paul Owens
Tel: 0117-903 6418

Liverpool City Council
Liverpool Central URBAN Initiative
Annabel Hammond
Tel: 0151- 233 5401

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS IN URBAN COVENTRY

The URBAN capacity-building programme in Hillfields, Coventry, incorporated very successfully the use of 'Volunteer Time' as match funding for extensive capacity building and networking activities.

Up to 40% of total Programme costs were provided by Volunteer Time contributing not only to activities such as UPG Meetings and Network Attendance, but also to training, mentoring and actual capacity building.

Community Reps on the UPG participated free of costs or charges i.e. 'in-kind', however, their time spent in the pursuance of their duties could be matched with ERDF grant. Thus, URBAN funding received for Volunteer Time was paying for any 'real' expenses incurred, like training, venue hire, overnight costs and travel etc.

All time spent was properly recorded on UPG Meeting Minutes and Timesheets covering UPG Events, Activities and Networking as well as Training Sessions according to project monitoring and recording requirements.

Volunteer Time was costed on the basis of the approved Volunteer Time Rate for Researchers as published for ESF and ERDF Projects in 1998, which was £10.85 per Hour.

The time needed by the UPG Volunteers to attend meetings, including National Networks, Transnational Networks, UPG and UMC and Training sessions was precisely costed in the ERDF application.

The total amount set in the project application was £56,581 which was eligible as URBAN match funding.

Because of its unusual funding structure the project application for this programme was submitted to the regional Government Office, despite its 'below delegation limit' status. The application was then forwarded to DETR, DfEE, and the Dti. All Government Departments involved welcomed this novel approach of funding wholeheartedly.

Using Volunteer Time in such an effective way was not only a real cash funding source for all operational expenditure needed to run URBAN successfully, but it also acknowledged and valued the contributions and efforts made by community representatives and had, therefore, a much wider impact.

The following Tables a) and b) provide some 'In-kind' claiming examples (the overall capacity building programme intervention rate is 46.75%)

a) UPG Training Course

TABLE A) UPG TRAINING COURSE	
'Real costs' (incl. Venue hire, trainer, lunch, creche etc)	£ 400
Volunteer Time (11 people x 5hrs @ £10.85)	£ 596
Total costs	£ 996
46.75% grant	£ 465

In this example, the UPG would receive more funding than 'real costs' incurred, which would not be eligible. Therefore, the intervention rate applied for such a claim needs to be reduced to 40.13%.

b) Attendance of Networking Conference

TABLE B) ATTENDENCE OF NETWORKING CONFERENCE	
'Real costs' (incl. Travel, hotel costs, subsistence etc)	£ 270
Volunteer Time (1 people x 5hrs @ £10.85)	£ 162
Total costs	£ 432
46.75% grant	£ 202

In example b), not enough grant can be claimed to recover all 'real expenses', in this case, additional funding sources or donations have to be found to cover the difference.

For further information, please contact:

Coventry City Council
 URBAN Programme Manager
 Robert Cope
 Tel: 01203 833731, 01203 833169

4.3 GOOD PRACTICE POINTS

GOOD PRACTICE POINTS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrangements for match-funding if not at source, then at least at measure level up-front. This not only helps the local community in accessing funding in a more simple, straight forward and less time consuming manner, but it also contributes directly to a more strategic and complementary use of available resources in a given region; 2. Community based regeneration programmes should incorporate delegated fund schemes, community chest or future fund mechanisms as a standard form of sourcing funding; 3. Community chests can take a long time to develop, but they are very effective; 4. The future fund concept should also be encouraged as a means of achieving greater complementarity between programmes in a region; and 5. Volunteer time is an eligible form of match-funding; it needs to become more widely accepted to enable small community and voluntary groups to access URBAN funding.

Chapter 5

URBAN – PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

5.1 CONTEXT

The complexities of managing European Funded Programmes have always been demanding even to the professional; Application Forms, Eligibility Tests, Appraisal Criteria and Scores, Claiming Forms, Grant Payment Procedures and Monitoring are administrative challenges which require technical know-how and expertise from programme management staff and project leaders alike.

In URBAN, programme management staff and Accountable Bodies (responsible for financial accountability and grant payments) provided support and advice to the URBAN Partnership Group in managing the above tasks and systems, to which the previous chapter on Capacity Building refers in more detail. However, the programme required not only capacity from its community UPG-representatives in the management of URBAN itself, but it also requested local community groups to become project applicants and project leaders in their own rights. This, in turn, meant that European programme and project management know-how needed to be transferred further 'down' into the local community.

As the report of the Interim Evaluation states, the lay-out and presentation of URBAN procedures and regulations has not been adjusted to accommodate a more community oriented approach. As a result, project applications from small community or voluntary groups, without the required managerial expertise, did not come forward for some time until certain steps were undertaken by UPGs and their staff to facilitate a more community based application process.

The following case studies show some of the actions achieved under URBAN regarding the facilitation of applications and project management at local level. Additional case studies include some lessons learnt with regard to project appraisal, which under URBAN, involved community representatives.

5.2 CASE STUDIES

THREE STAGE APPLICATION PROCESSES

ERDF and ESF application forms are complex, long, inaccessible documents, which at best have an off-putting effect on the non-professional. Many URBAN regions invested considerable time and effort to simplify the standard forms.

The overriding difficulty was that the information requested in the standard forms had to be collected in one way or another in order to satisfy Government Office and European Commission regulations.

The only way forward therefore, was to introduce and add simpler pro-forma application forms to the application process before the standard ERDF/ESF form needed to be filled in.

In the cases of Bristol and Heart of the East End URBAN Initiative, the complete application process included three stages:

1. Stage One:

The first stage represents an Advanced Notice Form; a short and simple tick-box form to inform the URBAN officers about the brief details of new intended projects. This form is used by programme officers, or the UPG, to check basic eligibility of the project and if the project should be taken to the next stage.

2. Stage Two:

The second stage includes the URBAN Pro-forma, or Initial Application Form;

a longer, more detailed form, which covers most questions of the ESF/ERDF Application Forms, but in a more accessible language and style. In addition, this form can be used to ask for more detail on the applicant organisation or to refer more specifically to the objectives, outputs and target groups of the relevant Action Plan, in order to enable the UPG or Appraisal Panel to assess the application more easily. Usually this form provides the basis for the UPG appraisal and, if in favour, for recommendation for final approval.

If the application was successful at this stage the project applicant is asked to fill in the standard ERDF/ESF application form.

3. Stage Three:

The third stage requires the applicant to fill in the standard application form. Having gone through the previous stages applicants have already developed a greater understanding of the information requested and can now relate easier to the standard ERDF/ESF forms.

The Three-Stage process allows the applicant to be slowly introduced to the amount of information required (usually UPG staff offer hands-on advice throughout the process) and it also enables the UPG appraisal process to pre-assess projects and predict programme development. In addition, this application system helps avoid a waste of time and effort for all involved, as in-eligible or in-appropriate projects are detected early on in the process.

For more information, please contact:

Bristol City Council,
Bristol URBAN Programme Team,
Paul Owens,
Tel: 0117 903 6418

OR
Heart of the East End URBAN Initiative
Linda Eziquiel
Tel: 0171 613 3674

GUIDES TO PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

In URBAN regions which invested in employing a dedicated URBAN programme staff team incorporating a post of Community Outreach Worker, the community at large and project applicants in particular, were offered a hands-on project development and management service. This service arrangement is very effective, but extremely time-consuming to the programme team. To help this process become more efficient, some URBAN regions developed Guides and Workbooks for project applicants, which lead them through the many details of project application and management. Two examples of excellent guides are briefly summarised below.

THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT WORKBOOK, LIVERPOOL CENTRAL

This workbook concentrates on the project development stage of any type of project seeking funding under any programme, although it has been specifically designed to suit the purposes of the URBAN initiative.

The approach of the workbook is clear and the language used simple. It addresses the novice small group who are planning to undertake a project.

It helps the reader to develop skills, share knowledge and build capacity in order to improve a project design and the overall quality of a project description.

The Workbook includes various checklists:

- ‘Things that help when developing a project’

- ‘Things that get in the way when developing a project’
- ‘Project development checklist’

Some of the topics the reader is guided through are:

- ‘Agree who the key people are to develop the project’
- ‘Estimate the numbers of people who will benefit’
- ‘Prove there is a need for your project’
- ‘Work out how much money is needed’
- ‘Work out where the money will come from’
- ‘Agree people you need and produce job descriptions’

For further detail please contact:

Liverpool Central URBAN Team,
Annabel Hammond,
Tel: Liverpool 233 5352

THE GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT, HEART OF THE EAST END

In contrast to the Liverpool Workbook, described above, ‘*The Guide to Successful Project Development and Management – Finding Your Way Around The Bureaucracy*’ focuses on helping the reader through important financial and administrative details of project management and project monitoring. It is a comprehensive, clearly structured and very readable document. Over 14 pages and 5 annexes, the Guide explains and opens up ERDF and ESF requirements and relates closely, but not exclusively, to ERDF/ESF application and monitoring forms and processes.

The guide is sent out to every applicant at an early stage after the successful approval of the initial application (Advance Notice Form, or Stage 1 of the application process, see above).

To give a brief insight into the structure of the Guide a selection of the contents’ headings is listed below:

Introduction

- Applying for URBAN Initiative Funds

Budgets and Outputs

- Realistic output estimates
- Proof of match funding

Project Management

- Record keeping requirements
- Forward funding & payment of grants approved
- Business plans for ERDF projects
- Sub-contracting elements of the project

Project Monitoring

- Introduction to project monitoring
- Compiling cash flow estimates
- Audits
- Significant changes to your project once running

The **Annexes** provide additional, most useful information for the project applicant:

- The application process
- What makes a good project?
- Measures, Strategic Objectives & Outputs
- Eligible and ineligible project costs
- ‘In kind’ match funding

For further detail and information please contact:

Heart of the East End URBAN Initiative
Community Development and Monitoring Officers
Tel: 0171 613 3674

SERVICE SPECIFICATIONS AND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS, NOTTINGHAM

In common practice, project applications are invited on the basis of the Action Plan document. Sometimes, the application process is determined by application rounds, or remains open throughout the programme commitment period. Either way, the process relies on the applicant to come forward with a particular project idea to fit the required measures and anticipated activities and outputs stated in the relevant Action Plan.

In Nottingham, the Action Plan is implemented through Service Specifications followed by Service Level Agreements. Service Specifications provide an innovative alternative to the approach mentioned above by allowing for a higher degree of local control and ownership over project development and timing of its delivery. Service Specifications prompt service providers to particular projects and enable the local community to direct the implementation of their Action Plan in a much more targeted way than otherwise possible.

The Nottingham approach to Action Plan implementation is based on a number of Working Groups developing Service Specifications based on the objectives and criteria of the Action Plan. Service Specifications are relatively detailed project outlines developed by the Working Groups in consultation with the Accountable Body and prospective service providers.

Once a Service Specification has been agreed by The Partnership Council and the UPG in Nottingham, an invitation for tender is advertised. Following the receipt of tender applications, the relevant Working Group appraises the tenders and recommends a tenderer to the Partnership Council.

After a decision has been reached a Service Level Agreement is negotiated between the Working Group, The Partnership Council and the successful service provider in consultation with the Accountable Body.

Only once the Accountable body has approved the Service Level Agreement is the completion of an ERDF/ESF application form arranged with the service provider. Once signed by the Accountable Body and Offer Letter issued, the project can commence.

The entire process, from the development of a Service Specification to the issuing of an Offer Letter, takes no more than eight weeks.

Service Specification as undertaken in Nottingham, offers a unique, truly community based and community led approach to Action Plan implementation.

For further detail please contact:

The Partnership Council
Christina Ashworth
Nottingham
Tel: 0115-970 8200

APPRAISAL GUIDELINES AND OTHER ISSUES

An initial introduction to project appraisal can be found in Annex 2 of the Government Office Guidance Note 2, covering Project Appraisal Checklists and Eligibility Requirements. As those guidelines are not URBAN specific, many UPGs decided to develop their own, more specific Appraisal Catalogues on the basis of Government Office guidance, usually divided into General Criteria and Measure Specific Criteria. Score ranges and weighting applied to the individual criteria reflect the importance given to individual URBAN issues.

Two or three-stage application processes facilitate a 'Stage One Appraisal' in order to pre-select eligible projects and applicants at an early stage. This sort of pre-appraisal also enables strategic checks to be made on how well the project fits Action Plan objectives, and to assess the projects' community base and orientation

RISK ASSESSMENTS OF APPLICANTS

The Heart of the East End URBAN Initiative included a risk assessment of project applications, which has proven a valuable exercise.

Each applicant is asked to provide a risk analysis of their project and to include statements regarding how they would guard against each identified risk or deal with each if the situation arose.

Applicants are advised to be realistic and not to state that there are no risks because every project has some risk involved.

During appraisal the Risk Criteria for assessment are:

- Stages of growth;
- Track record;
- Skills of personnel; and
- Scale and complexity.

For further detail and information please contact:

Heart of the East End URBAN
Initiative
Community Development and
Monitoring Officers
26 Calvert Avenue, London E2 7JP
Tel: 0171 613 3674

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Equal Opportunities are a key element of the URBAN initiative and projects should be assessed against relevant criteria and with the appropriate weighting this issue deserves.

In Leeds, a particular emphasis on Equal Opportunities has been applied to the Appraisal process by highlighting to each applicant in writing, that projects should show in detail (emphasised) how equal opportunity considerations would be applied in a practical way.

This request is assessed under Leeds' General Appraisal Criteria Nr. 5 Equal Opportunities, whereby each project application must score at least 4 out of 5 to be considered.

For more information, please contact:

Leeds City Council,
Martin Gregg,
Regeneration Policy Unit,
Tel: 0113 247 8220

GUIDANCE SHEET AND RULES GOVERNING THE UPG

The Rules governing the UPG in the Heart of the East End – URBAN Initiative are very comprehensive and lend themselves as good guidance for other areas:

1. Members' Roles and Responsibilities
2. Eligibility/Disqualification of Members
3. Disqualification
4. Notification of Membership Ceasing and Appeals Process
5. Remuneration and Expenses
6. Declaration of Interest
7. UPG Business
8. Chairing Board Meetings
9. Quorum
10. Deputy Representation
11. Voting
12. Speaking at Board Meetings
13. Task Groups and Sub-Committees
14. Press and Public
15. Disruption at Meetings
16. Deputation to be Received by a Committee
17. Petitions
18. Motions Affecting Employees
19. UPG Agendas
20. Record of Attendance
21. Dates of Meetings of the UPG
22. Urgent Business
23. Relationship of Members and Officers
24. Confidentiality of Information/Communications
25. Gifts and Hospitalitys

For further detail and information please contact:

Heart of the East End URBAN Initiative
Linda Eziquiel
Tel: 0171 613 3674

5.3 GOOD PRACTICE POINTS

GOOD PRACTICE POINTS

1. Urban Partnership Groups should have a clearly structured constitution to provide a basis for members to act and rely upon; the constitution and other relevant documents, i.e terms of reference, should be readily available and accessible;
2. Urban Partnership Groups require time and capacity-building to mature and work efficiently, ideally before any project development or project submission is processed;
3. Job descriptions for UPG members help clarifying roles and expectations;
4. The quality of project managers and UPG members is crucial i.e. strength of personality, social entrepreneurs, commitment, ready to take risk;
5. Local staffing arrangements and protocols could be usefully established with other regeneration programmes to provide for job security, progression and staff retention in short life programmes like URBAN (without infringing on individuals right to move to more secure employment);
6. It is seen as essential that Programme Management and, if possible, Accountable Body have a local presence i.e. an office in the area. This works both ways, making staff more locally aware and sensitive and the initiative more accessible and real to the community;
7. The development of a two/three stage application process facilitates more efficient project development;
8. First phase of application form should be simple and clear, so that people are not put off;
9. Hand-holding in project development should continue pro-actively throughout project implementation; and
10. Pro-active monitoring and reviewing of progress of projects and the overall programme helps identify gaps in service/project development.