

A POINT TO PROVE – Implementing the West Midlands Social Enterprise Framework

Version 4 – August 2004

Contents

Purpose of this document	2
The Social Enterprise Framework	3
The regional infrastructure	6
Sub-regional infrastructure	9
Networks	10
Strategic priorities – local and sub-regional	11
Local partners: a checklist of contributing organisations	11
The action plan for Social Enterprise	13
Current activity	14
Future activity	16
Investment routes	24
European Funds	24
Local Government	26
Public procurement	28
Small Business Service	29
Skills, learning and the labour market	29
Lottery distributors	30
Advantage West Midlands	31
Regeneration Zones	31
Clusters	33
High technology corridors	33
Developing new services	34
The permeating tests	34
Locate the initiative in the priorities	36
Consult & calibrate	36
Learn from best practice	37
Demonstrate impact	37
Outcomes	37
<i>Appendix 1 – Ambitions and priorities – Action Plan</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Appendix 2 – Activity map of services and projects</i>	<i>44</i>

Purpose of this document

“A Point to Prove” – the Social Enterprise Framework for the West Midlands – describes the “what” elements of the approach to growing social enterprise in the region. The Framework is designed to be a durable statement of the priorities for the 10 year planning horizon of the West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy. It should be sufficiently resilient to withstand structural economic and social change in the West Midlands.

This implementation document starts to answers the “who” and “how” questions for the Framework. It identifies the lead delivery organisations for implementing the Framework; it provides advice to agencies that are considering taking forward social enterprise development; and it offers guidance for how future initiatives should be designed to support the strategic objectives in the Framework.

A Point to Prove is a route map to catalyse, co-ordinate, shape and guide the work of regional and sub-regional partners as they seek to work together to stimulate the development of a competitive and forward-looking regional sector that will underpin regional wealth generation and social good in the long term. The Framework is also designed to raise the profile and awareness of the sector.

Delivering a Point to Prove is a shared task. As John Edwards speaking for Advantage West Midlands stressed in February 2003, “social enterprise across the region needs a single voice” and partners need “a clearer understanding of what the social enterprise sector is and the contribution it can make to the West Midlands region.” All regional partners – including local authorities, the LSC and Jobcentre Plus, AWM and the voluntary sector – have a role to play, whilst local support agencies and networks have a different but complementary role too. Partners outside the sector – providing business support and channelling investment funds – also have a significant role. This document aims to clarify the respective roles and contributions of these partners.

The Social Enterprise Framework

The West Midlands Social Enterprise Framework aims to support the growth of social enterprise – businesses that have a primarily social objective and whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community.

In the West Midlands, social enterprises make a significant and increasingly important contribution to the economy and quality of life of the region. Through innovation and entrepreneurship for the public good, social enterprises contribute to a balanced and inclusive economy, providing employment, engaging socially disadvantaged people, developing new skills and providing goods and services often in under-served markets. They promote self-help, community empowerment and offer models for business practice in which profitability is not the sole objective for a trading enterprise.

The valuable role of social enterprise is recognised in the West Midlands Economic Strategy ¹ which identifies the sector's potential to promote economic growth and address social and economic exclusion. Regional partners are committed to supporting and equipping the social enterprise sector to develop and grow into a self-directing and mutually supporting network of social enterprises, support agencies, intermediaries and other key partners.

The West Midlands Economic Strategy aims to develop a diverse and dynamic business base; promoting learning & skills; creating conditions for growth; and regenerate communities. Social enterprises contribute towards these primary aims and support two main commitments in the West Midlands Economic Strategy by:

- Developing entrepreneurship, sustaining businesses and creating wealth;
- Social and economic inclusion – primarily by delivering better services to deprived or excluded communities

The Framework also recognises that social enterprises contribute to delivering many of the Government's key policy objectives, particularly by:

- helping to increase productivity and competitiveness
- contributing to socially inclusive wealth creation
- regenerating local neighbourhoods
- helping to deliver better public services
- contributing towards active citizenship and a more inclusive society

The Framework has nine strategic ambitions, each of which contains a set of objectives which set out the real detail of what the framework calls for. The strategic framework is accompanied by a series of Permeating Themes which are represented in the diagram below.

¹ Delivering Advantage - the West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan 2004 - 2010



Each of the Strategic Ambitions – which are abbreviated below – contains a series of objectives and a more detailed explanation of these priorities can be found in the strategic framework document. The nine Ambitions seek to:

- Create and use a comprehensive and accessible base of **intelligence** on market opportunities and other critical information – and to learn from evidence.
- **Network** together to ensure that social enterprises, support agencies and other partners are co-ordinated, learn from collective experience and progressively engage with a wider set of partners and establish a higher profile.
- Strengthen **citizenship** by harnessing the commitment of individuals to invest time, energy and commitment into the region's social enterprise base
- Encourage **entrepreneurship** by growing an expanding pool of energetic and innovative social entrepreneurs to develop future enterprises.
- Increase **funding** into the sector by increasing the supply of specialist forms of finance, ensuring that conventional investors understand social enterprise and by helping social enterprises to become more investment-ready
- Engage and integrate social enterprises with **mainstream business advice** services to ensure a comprehensive package of services that meets the needs and priorities of social enterprises is available.

- Ensure that sector-specific **specialist support agencies** work alongside mainstream services and are targeted on meeting social enterprise needs.
- Expand the potential for **public sector contracting** by ensuring that both the demand and supply sides of public procurement are configured in a way that provides realistic opportunities for social enterprises.
- Develop **clusters and sectors** amongst social enterprises to strengthen markets within which social enterprises trade.

The Framework applies 4 Permeating Themes to each of these Ambitions to ensure there is a comprehensive and unified vision of where the sector must go and that the Framework is coherently delivered and reflects the specific pressures facing social enterprises. These themes are:

- Supporting sustainability: enterprises should develop stronger trading activity, reduce their reliance on grant-aid and aim for long-term provision in areas previously characterised by market failure.
- Embedding values of social enterprise – primarily by continually demonstrating how collective action meets the needs of communities and individuals.
- Responding to diversity – reflecting the differing nature of organisations within the sector itself and by responding to historic patterns of discrimination and the rich plurality of communities that social enterprises serve
- Co-ordinating access to better meet sector needs – making the most of existing infrastructure by re-focussing the services of mainstream agencies to support social enterprise plus new services to stimulate innovation or where gaps are identified

The regional infrastructure

The lead organisation for the Social Enterprise Framework in the region is the West Midlands Social Enterprise Network. This provides accountable leadership to drive the Framework, bringing together the region's expertise to provide an over-arching strategic voice for the sector that engages with the major regional agencies, local government and public sector purchasers. It will also be the management body for a delivery executive that will implement a number of tasks that the Framework Action Plan identifies as the Network's responsibility.

The Network will co-ordinate, review, inform and influence policy within the region by having ownership of the Social Enterprise Framework, oversight of delivery mechanisms, monitoring and review and will develop the Framework Action Plan and monitor outcomes.

It will be the primary source of advice to regional agencies on social enterprise policy, programme design, funding and cross cutting policy themes. This may include the requirement to:

- Identify, and respond to, gaps in the regional development of social enterprise
- Assist in the identification of resources for social enterprise development
- Promote good practice within local and sub-regional partnerships
- Advise on development of new markets and delivery models

The Network will also co-ordinate activities that promote and develop the region's social enterprises:

- Providing a regional sector champion role
- Developing intelligence about the sector, mapping activity, promoting good practice models and evaluation of successful activity
- Raising the sector's profile and marketing its capacity

It will maintain information and intelligence about the sector and business opportunities engaging in:

- Market research and investigation
- Identifying market and sector niches
- Identifying growth opportunities and expanding markets
- Strengthening sector clusters

The Network will provide a regular information flow to and from members, intermediaries, local government and other regional and national agencies by:

- Dissemination and coordinating information
- Networking across the region

■ Providing training and capacity building services

The Network's membership is drawn from a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies across the West Midlands and nationally. The Network is not a meant to be a body that "represents" social enterprise. Instead it is a group that brings together the main public, private and voluntary sector organisations that have an interest or a contribution in promoting social enterprise as a business model in the region – for a variety of reasons that may meet their own organisational mission: these could be as diverse as reducing poverty, advancing social inclusion, better delivery of public services, increasing employment rates or improving productivity in the voluntary sector.

The rationale for the membership structure is based on a determination to achieve a balance that ensures it is comprehensively representative, has authoritative status within the region but is also inclusive. The membership is not permanently fixed and it is recognised that some gaps still exist – not least amongst social enterprise themselves and in particular representatives for black and minority ethnic-led social enterprises. The Network's membership therefore currently includes the following – although this is not an exhaustive list as other social enterprises and support organisations may be added as appropriate:

- | |
|---|
| Advantage West Midlands |
| Association of British Credit Unions Midlands Area |
| Birmingham Co-Enterprise |
| Business in the Community West Midlands |
| Business Links |
| Confederation of Co-operative Housing |
| Countryside Agency (West Midlands Office) |
| Coventry and Warwickshire CDA |
| Development Trusts Association West Midlands Region |
| Embrace West Midlands |
| Government Office for the West Midlands |
| Groundwork |
| Housing Corporation |
| Learning & Skills Councils |
| Midlands Community Enterprise Partnership (MCEP) |
| Regeneration Zones (x6) |
| Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) |
| Regional Finance Forum |
| Social Firms Network |
| West Midlands Co-operative and Mutual Council (WMCAM) |
| West Midlands Minority Ethnic Business Forum |
| West Midlands Local Government Association |
| West Midlands Regional Assembly |
| West Midlands Small Business Service |
| West Midlands Social Firms Partnership |

Whilst the Network could be a separate legal entity, it might replicate the example of bodies such as WM Regen, the Enterprise Board or the Minority Business Forum. Following this model, the Network might benefit from having an independent identity and status but be a legal part of Advantage West Midlands. If

this model were to be agreed, AWM would be the employing organisation for its staff although accountability will be to the Network and its Executive. In the short term, the Network remains an unincorporated body that is assisted but not underwritten by AWM and its Executive will need to speedily determine the preferred legal entity that will permit the network to enter into any undertakings in its own right.

The roles that are identified in the Framework Action Plan that are the operational responsibility of the Network are:

- Providing a regional sector champion role, raising the profile and awareness of social enterprise and marketing its capacity
- Developing intelligence about the sector, mapping activity, promoting good practice models and evaluation of successful activity
- Engaging in market research and investigation, identifying market and sector niches, opportunities to grow and expand markets and strengthening clusters
- Dissemination and coordinating information, networking across the region and providing training and capacity building services

To deliver these services and activity, the Network will need to be supported by an implementation executive capable of delivering those parts of the Social Enterprise Framework that are identified above. The executive would also need to provide a secretariat function to the Network and to undertake liaison with local and regional government the SBS, AWM, the Regional Enterprise Board and to support the work of Network representatives within their respective organisations.

The executive team function will require some direct financial assistance and in-kind support. The best placed agencies for this would be regional funders and agencies able to offer indirect support – through secondment and aid in-kind. Not all the operational responsibilities need to be directly delivered by the Network executive but could be supplied by partner organisations working to priorities agreed by the Network and managed by the executive.

The model for delivery of Network support is therefore a hybrid model combining directly employed core staff and functions supplied by partner organisations. The core functions that need to be fulfilled by the support team – either directly or through partners – will include:

- policy and secretariat support to WMSEN
- sector champion role
- networking activity; events management
- activity mapping; market investigation; research; lobbying
- regional web portal and other electronic dissemination

Sub-regional infrastructure

Across the West Midlands a great deal of social enterprise infrastructure is already in place. These solutions have developed over time in line with local priorities, capacities and opportunities. A Point to Prove, does not seek to replace or dictate these local arrangements. Indeed it is one of the guiding delivery principles of A Point to Prove that it builds on and works with existing local infrastructure before it seeks to develop new organisations. Nevertheless, it is true that coverage across the region is neither uniform nor universal and that the stress placed on local involvement in the regional picture calls for a view on the breadth, strength and vitality of sub-Regional networks and strategies.

The Social Enterprise Framework assumes that robust sub-regional networks will underpin the Action Plan contributions listed below – particularly activity that promotes networking and influencing at a regional, sub-regional and local authority level. There is already a strong base of collaboration in the region. Many of sub-regional networks already exist and have been strengthened by the development of ad-hoc networks and supported by regional investments from SRB or the Single Programme. However, as our analysis of existing investment (detailed at Appendix 2) illustrates, there is considerable variety in the degree of sub-regional support – and this partly reflects the different historical strengths and different character of social enterprise formation in each sub-region. It should be a goal of the Framework to ensure that all sub-regions – rural and urban – should have sufficient infrastructure to appropriately meet the needs of growing social enterprises.

A key piece of action research undertaken for WMSEP – the Social Enterprise Support Infrastructure project led by Co-operation Black Country (CBC) – documents the current state of sub-regional networking – both existing organisations and emerging sub-regional infrastructure – and identifies:

Coventry and Warwickshire	Does not currently have a dedicated social enterprise partnership. CWEDA is the main – though not exclusive – provider of support for social enterprises alongside a range of development services supplied by local authorities.
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	A strategic group for social enterprise is emerging – based on Community First, Worcestershire County Council, Herefordshire County Council, Herefordshire Voluntary Action, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Business Link.
Staffordshire	State of the sector relatively weak and support provision is patchy. Business Link is preparing to develop a strategy for the County. Two infrastructure initiatives identified – CEDAR Project (a partnership between local authority and CVS) and the social enterprise sub-group of the Southern Staffordshire Partnership.
Birmingham and Solihull	Birmingham and Solihull Social Economy Consortium (BSSEC) – a strategic alliance of service providers and the most established partnership in the sub-region.
Black Country	An emerging sub-regional partnership, Community and Social Enterprise (CASE) in a sub-region with a substantial number of specialist support providers
Shropshire	An emerging sub-regional network based on Marches Community Enterprise, Shropshire County Council, Business Link, Telford and Wrekin

Partners in regional and sub-regional agencies along with the sector itself need to collaboratively determine the right structure for their area. Whilst we recommend that different configurations may best suit local circumstances, two options should be considered first:

- A network hosted by each Business Link – thereby ensuring that each sub-regional network has a minimum, consistent level of support and a high degree of commitment from Business Links and other regional agencies.
- A network embedded within each of the sub-regional Partnerships. Whilst this would overlay a broadly similar approach to all sub-regions, each sub-region has designed local arrangements that reflect local circumstances. Of the sub-regional organisations currently established some already lead on activity for more than one sub-region and outside the conurbation, this may be an approach that would ensure the fullest coverage within the region.

In addition to sub-regional infrastructure, the Framework also recognises the existence of regional and national-level infrastructure that supports different types of social enterprise or beneficiary groups. For example, the Institute for Social Entrepreneurs has a regional role for the development of Social Firms supporting business creation and employment for disabled people. Equally, there are thematic networks and trade associations such as those supporting worker cooperatives, credit unions or BME social entrepreneurs.

Networks

Notwithstanding the suggestion that Business Links or the existing sub-regional Partnerships assume the lead role, development of networks within the region must be informed by accurate and timely inputs from all partners and existing networks in the sub-regions. A strong fabric of local agencies and networks could accelerate the sector's development further by advocating solutions, providing insights and delivering initiatives.

No one single template for local delivery exists: some areas have well-established Co-operative Development Agencies supporting the sector, some have local authority or Business Link teams and partnerships taking an agenda forwards. In other areas, new networks are emerging from within the sector itself. In the midst of this diverse tapestry of structures and remits, each must be sure that they are equipped to contribute effectively to the regional agenda and secure the required influence for the area.

The principles for delivering strategy at the regional level should be used in the sub-regions to influence the shape and structure of local solutions:

- The principle of **local delivery** not only endorses stronger local arrangements, it should also encourage local partners to consider the most appropriate configuration for capturing and advocating the priorities which emerge from the sometimes very local markets in which some social enterprises trade.

- At the same time a balance must be struck – taking a **rounded view** of the local sector's needs and avoid simply presenting a case for preferred local partners.
- Ensure that a knowledge base of **best practice** in social enterprise development can be sustained within the partnership and the sub-region.
- Contribute to sustaining the **regional framework** and identifying gaps in support – for example quality assurance, training and development and support for social entrepreneurs.
- Local networks should seek to identify **individuals** who are capable of anticipating future issues and challenges, but recognise such attributes will always be in short supply for the long term.
- The need to understand the **progress** being made is just as important at the local level as it is to the region, indeed the aggregate picture of local progress will inform the monitoring of regional progress.
- Substantial and direct involvement by the **social and private sectors** to ensure that networks are not dominated by public sector priorities and have credence in the eye of local social entrepreneurs.
- Although many of the investment resources are managed outside of the local area, local networks should ensure they have the **respect and confidence of funders** to ensure their funding streams achieve local aims and actions.

Strategic priorities – local and sub-regional

As well as having the right institutional arrangements in place, partners in the sub-regions should also be thinking through their local strategic priorities. When establishing a set of local priorities, local partners should not feel constrained by the regional Social Enterprise Framework, but should be aware of its priorities.

Local partners will clearly make more progress in regional discussions if they are able to show how their local priorities contribute to the agreed regional framework. A Point to Prove has been drafted with flexibility – local partners should interpret priorities around local needs and objectives.

To demonstrate congruence with regional priorities, a number of suggestions should be borne in mind during any process to agree a sub-regional strategy. One obvious way is to use the nine-ambition structure to clearly demonstrate congruence whilst allowing local partners to inject a great deal of local context.

Local partners: a checklist of contributing organisations

Whichever agency takes forward the local agenda, they should seek to ensure that a representative group of agencies are bound into the initiative. Four broad groups of agency could be expected to get involved:

- **Social enterprises:** (and organisations moving into the social enterprise sector) and as best able, representing the diversity within the sector locally, by size, market, social concern, geographic market etc.
- **Intermediary bodies:** agencies established to support social enterprise development such as Cooperative Development Agencies, local mutual support networks, local funding and investment bodies and in some places voluntary sector development agencies.
- **Public agencies and partnerships:** particularly those funding social enterprise solutions locally and developing the environment in which social enterprise operate, whether as partners, investors or clients. This includes local authorities, Business Links, Learning & Skills Councils, Regeneration Zones (a wide range of other regeneration focussed partnerships)
- **Private companies:** from which social enterprises can learn and with which enterprises can share their experiences and values and potentially collaborate.

A definitive checklist of agencies to involve would be too prescriptive – each locality has different priorities and is emerging from a different operational context. Local solutions must emerge from local priorities and discussions. The list above simply acts as a prompt.

The action plan for Social Enterprise

The West Midlands has a substantial infrastructure of agencies focussed on delivering areas-based regeneration, business support, community development and skills. Each of these public agencies or sectors have committed themselves to supporting the Social Enterprise Framework – in particular by ensuring that the mainstream services they currently deliver are focussed on supporting social enterprises. A sizeable investment is also being made in the region through AWM’s single programme and legacy SRB to supporting specialist agencies and to other development services – and most of these are analysed below and documented at Appendix 2.

The Action Plan summarised below (and shown in more detail at Appendix 1) contains an indicative list of the Framework Ambitions and objectives and identifies those organisations that are best placed to lead on the Framework’s components – and an early indication of the potential funding source for these services. The Plan identifies a combination of existing mainstream resources and the funding that may need to be identified in order to develop some new infrastructure. Business Links, rural agencies and local authorities have contributed to this action plan and endorsed the relevant “lead” organisation assignments. The implementation plan still requires some discussion with the LSCs and Regen Zones to confirm organisational roles and funding routes.

In summary the main – although not exclusive – lead roles for delivering each of the Framework’s nine Ambitions are:

Using intelligence	WMSEN
Networking together	WMSEN
Championing citizenship	Voluntary sector bodies
Encouraging entrepreneurship	Business Links, LSC, LEAs
Funding the sector	Enterprise Board, Business Links
Influencing general business advice	Business Links
Delivering sector specific expertise	Business Links
Expanding the contracting arena	WMLGA/Centre for Excellence in Procurement; WMSEN
Targeting clusters and sectors	WMSEN, Cluster Opportunity Groups

The critical point about the Action Plan is that – consistent with the Framework’s 4th permeating theme – it seeks to identify the services of existing support agencies and to bring their mainstream resources more effectively to bear on social enterprise rather than to create new infrastructure. Nonetheless, there is a clear leadership, intelligence and coordination role for the Social Enterprise Network and additional resources will need to be secured in order to discharge these functions.

Business Links, in particular, will play a significant role in the delivery of the Framework’s main ambitions and it is recognised that individual Business Links are not configured identically throughout the region. Whilst all of the region’s Business

Links have expressed a commitment to adjusting services and priorities in order to support social enterprise, the precise shape of these commitments will inevitably vary from one sub-region to another and be subject to local discussions about scale, focus and priorities.

Current activity

The West Midlands has historically benefited from a substantial investment in social enterprises. However, many social enterprise organisations in the region believe that a significant amount of current and past funding has been mainly project-based, time limited and has not made a significant or sustainable difference to the sector's capacity. Current levels of investment are reasonably high, but dedicated funding remains relatively piecemeal and geographically imbalanced.

A Point to Prove is designed to ensure the best fit between currently funded project and the priorities and actions in the Framework. However, the analysis of current funding commitments and the needs described in the Framework identifies levels of activity across most of the Framework's Ambitions and Objectives, but also significant gaps.

Mapping of existing activity at the regional and sub-regional level shows there are some 29 projects and services currently running (a full listing of the projects and services is at Appendix 2). All but 3 of these projects achieve a "high" rating for their degree of fit with the Social Enterprise Framework.

In total, the review identifies £10.7 million of activity that has been funded since 2001 (and is still continuing). Seventeen are due to finish in 2004 whilst another twenty-two will continue beyond 2004 and a further ten are in development.

Whilst the 17 projects that are completing in 2004 had a combined lifetime value of £2.7 million, the 12 projects continuing beyond 2004 represent a substantially greater investment – having a combined lifetime value of £7.6 million.

The match between activities and the priorities identified in the Social Enterprise Framework reveals a marked skewing towards just 2 of the 9 ambitions – and a marked absence of activity in 2 others:

- **Using intelligence** – only 2 projects are identified with a total funding of less than £80,000 – of which the largest project (WMSEP) completes in 2004.
- **Networking together** – there is only 1 project identified that primarily supports this Ambition with 2 others in development. However, some 6 other projects that are primarily categorised as fitting the Encouraging Entrepreneurship ambition also contain elements of networking as part of their general support functions.
- **Championing citizenship** – there are 6 projects with a committed funding value of £1.8 million although all of these projects conclude in 2004.

- **Encouraging entrepreneurship** – there are 9 projects with just over £5 million of total funding committed. Some £4.6 million represents committed funding for activity that continues beyond 2004.
- **Funding the sector** – excluding the Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) operating in the region (see below) there are no specific current projects primarily aimed at securing investments into social enterprises.
- **Influencing general business advice** – there are no specific projects matching this ambition.
- **Delivering sector specific expertise** – there are 7 projects including with £2.9 million of funding committed – of which £2 million is accounted for by just 1 major project in the Black Country.
- **Expanding the contracting arena** – there are no projects currently funded or underway – that would improve social enterprises' ability to bid for public contracts.
- **Targeting clusters & sectors** – there are 3 projects currently delivering services representing just £284,000 of funding committed.

This analysis of currently funded activity does not include the relevant CDFIs in the region, of which we identify four in particular:

- Aston Reinvestment Trust provides access to finance for small businesses and social enterprises that are unable to access full finance from commercial banks in the Birmingham area. Since 1997, ART has provided approximately £5 million in loans from its own resources and from other lenders. Loan size ranges from £2,000 to £40,000.
- Advantage Community Loan Fund is a regional fund managed by the national Local Investment Fund specifically supporting Social Enterprises in the West Midlands with loans from £15,000 to £85,000 – partners are Unity Trust and AWM.
- A new CDFI for Coventry & Warwickshire is currently in development and which is expected to have capitalisation of £3 million. Partners behind the venture include Business Links Coventry & Warwickshire CDA, Warwick University Science Park.
- Black Country Re-investment Society aims to supply loans ranging from £5,000 to £25,000 has been formed under the leadership of Cooperation Black Country. Capital is currently being raised.
- The Halal Fund provides loans and equity finance to all forms of businesses primarily those owned and managed by socially excluded groups from Muslim communities (within the Objective 2 areas of the region). No interest is charged but debt repayment includes an addition attributable to business growth. The business must not use any other interest-based capital and must trade ethically.

A number of smaller and/or emerging sources of finance available to social enterprises have been identified and these include:

- Arrow Fund managed by Business Link provides loan guarantees to micro-enterprises in the deprived areas of Birmingham and Solihull
- Warwickshire County Council manages a Small Business Loan Scheme for enterprises in Warwickshire
- The West Midlands Inclusive Fund – an emerging fund that will provide non-interest-bearing finance for enterprises across the region
- Marches Rural Reinvestment Trust – a rural loan fund in the very early stages of development
- North Staffordshire Risk Capital Fund – emerging fund that will provide loans to enterprises in North Staffordshire
- Sandwell Advice & Moneylinks – an emerging loan fund for individuals/microenterprises initially in the Greet Green NDC area

A number of national CDFIs, including commercial banks, have a specific operation targeted at the West Midlands – and these include Co-operative Action, Prince's Trust, Co-operative Bank plc, Bank of Scotland Community Banking, Nat West and Royal Bank of Scotland, Triodos Bank, Industrial Common Ownership Finance (ICOF) and Charity Bank.

In addition to CDFIs in the region, there are also two relevant services within the AWM Access to Finance portfolio – the Investment Readiness service (currently in development) and the Access to Finance E-portal – that provide support to social enterprises as part of their service to SMEs.

Future activity

The mapping of existing activity shows a good read-across between the Social Enterprise Framework and much existing activity. However, it also reveals a number of gaps in services and projects. In addition, regional partners, networks and support organisations in the West Midlands have helped to identify new services to help underpin the support requirements of social enterprises in the region which would further meet the Framework's Ambitions and help to deliver key parts of the regional priorities.

To give a sense of what additional services and infrastructure might be created, a set of 14 priority service proposals has been developed. These are indicative and are intended to show how new services could fill gaps – linking back to the analysis of current activities, identified need and to the Framework. They are ordered against each of the Ambitions and the degree of need identified from our activity mapping and summarised as:

Timescale Ambitions	Immediate	Short-term	Medium-Long term
1 Using intelligence (High)	Social Enterprise Core Team Social Enterprise Portal	Social Enterprise Yellow Pages	Opportunity seeker
2 Networking together (High)	Social enterprise excellence awards	Sector Champion	
3 Championing citizenship (Medium)			Masters in Social Business Administration
4 Encouraging entrepreneurship (Low)			Step Forward to Social Trade
5 Funding the sector (High)		Private Risk, Social Return	
6 Influencing general business advice (High)	Train the advisor	BME Success	Reach Out
7 Delivering sector specific expertise (Low)			Best on Tap
8 Expanding the contracting arena (High)		Grow Contracting	
9 Targeting clusters & sectors (Medium)			New Frontiers

The descriptions below briefly set out the objectives of each service, the kinds of activities that might be undertaken, how and where the activity fits into the strategic framework and the range of outcomes they will contribute to.

1	Social Enterprise Network core team
Objective	To provide a core team supporting the Network and delivery of functions identified in the Action Plan (Appendix 1) as the Network's responsibility
Activities	Provide secretariat support to the Network and supply technical support for core research and dissemination services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support "sector championship" lobbying, influencing and policy development • Monitor the Framework • Manage market intelligence, information services through web portal
Fit to Social Enterprise Framework (WMSEnt)	Ambition 1: Using Intelligence: Objectives - Maintaining map of the sector; Develop an intelligence gateway; Establish a programme of market investigation Ambition 2: Networking Together: Objectives - Sector champion role; stimulating joint initiatives Ambition 8: Expanding the contracting arena: Objectives - Influencing policy and practice; Identifying market niches

	Ambition 9: Targeting clusters and sectors (all 3 Objectives)
Fit to regional priorities	This project would contribute to all Framework objectives and consequently would support Pillars 1, 2 and 4 of the WMES by helping to create new businesses, develop the capacity of existing social enterprises and help voluntary organisations begin to trade thereby growing the sector, creating jobs and delivering new services and products in under-served markets.

2	Social enterprise portal
Objective	To provide a single accessible information point about the social enterprise sector in the West Midlands, in particular, to exploit and disseminate the results of WMSEP's portfolio of SRB-funded action research.
Activities	Develop a web based information gateway to provide information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sector and its contribution to the region • Contact details for key sector representatives and organisations • Sign-posting to support resources and support services for the sector • Details of public funding opportunities • An online learning and skills resource • Sector specific information
Fit to Social Enterprise Framework (WMSEnt)	Ambition 1: Using Intelligence: Objective 2: Develop An Intelligence Gateway About and For The Social Enterprise Sector by providing the electronic platform upon which the gateway can be built. Ambition 1: Exploiting Intelligence: Objective 3: Improve Sign-Posting To And Knowledge Of Specialist Providers under Strategic Ambition 7 by providing better access to support services.
Fit to regional priorities	The information gateway would directly provide assistance to businesses and could become a delivery outlet for learning opportunities. It would support Pillars 1, 2 and 4 of the WMES by helping to create new businesses, develop the capacity of existing social enterprises and help voluntary organisations begin to trade. Consequently, it would grow the sector, create jobs and deliver new services and products in under-served markets.

3	Social enterprise Yellow Pages
Objective	To provide a directory of all social enterprises and sector service providers in the West Midlands.
Activities	Develop and maintain a web based directory to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an online "Yellow Pages" information service to publicise social enterprise products and services – aimed at end users, to encourage inter-trading, inform business advisors and others; this would include support service organisations – legal, accounting, business development and training suppliers • Produce market intelligence about the state of the sector by gathering data for the Social Enterprise Network to maintain "snapshot" headlines about the sector by compiling information about each listed social enterprise's services and products, markets, trading turnover, employment scale and geographical areas served <p>The service would be self-servicing. Individual social enterprises and suppliers would be responsible for maintaining their own firm's current information and be asked to maintain "private" information in a secure environment about their firms. This would ensure that contemporary sector information was maintained without having to undertake future surveys of enterprises in order to understand the health of the sector and its supply infrastructure.</p>
Fit to WMSEnt Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambition 1: Using Intelligence, Objective 1 (Maintain a robust map of social enterprise activity) and Objective 3 (Establish an authoritative regional programme of market investigation)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambition 6: Influencing general business advice, Objective 2, (Promote social enterprise as a business model) – by providing a rounded picture of social enterprise activity in particular geographical areas • Ambition 9: Targeting clusters and sectors, Objective 1 (Capitalise on existing cluster initiatives) – by helping firms to inter-trade and develop collectively
Fit to regional priorities	The service would be a marketing tool to develop businesses – thereby contributing to Pillars 1 and 4 of the WMES contributing to growth in businesses and jobs; and increasing employment amongst disadvantaged population groups.

4	Social Enterprise excellence awards
Objective	To raise the profile of social enterprise in the West Midlands by highlighting excellence, successful management, sustainability and social impact.
Activities	High level sponsorship of awards to be undertaken on an annual basis with recognition event(s), tangible benefits to award winners and raising the profile with decision takers, conventional business people, investors and mainstream business support organisations.
Fit to WMSent Framework	Ambition 1, Using Intelligence, Objective 4 (Generate a knowledge pool of excellence) Ambition 2, Networking Together, Objective 1 (Sector championship role)
Fit to regional priorities	This would support Pillar 1 of the WMES to raise the profile of sustainable social enterprises by increasing the visibility, reputation and quality standards of social enterprises.

5	Opportunity seeker
Objective	To endow the Region's social enterprise sector with proactive, informed and valuable information on new market opportunities.
Activities	Opportunity seeker would identify new business opportunities for the social enterprise sector to exploit. A small team of market researchers would undertake a programme of enquiry and study into new markets. A proactive programme of dissemination would be undertaken in conjunction with other support to prepare enterprises for exploiting emerging opportunities.
Fit to WMSent Framework	Objective 3 of Strategic Ambition 1 which seeks to Establish An Authoritative Regional Programme Of Market Investigation.
Fit to regional priorities	By supporting businesses this project would lead to the establishment of new social enterprises and new jobs in the Region. This would support Pillar 1 of the WMES by developing new businesses, markets, products and services whilst contributing to growth in GVA and to employment.

6	Regional social enterprise champion
Objectives	To recruit a focal point individual to reflect sector developments and priorities in the Region and to assume responsibility for delivering a Point To Prove.
Activities	The Regional Social Enterprise Champion would adopt a leadership role in the Region which would involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a contact point for senior public and private sector partners to discuss sector developments. • Energising and co-ordinating social enterprises and their intermediaries to deliver A Point to Prove. • Facilitating and encouraging the establishment of new approaches to social enterprise support and striving continually for better quality support.
Fit to	Objective 1 of Strategic Ambition 2: Networking Together: Supporting A

WMSEnt Framework	Regional Sector Champion Role.
Fit to regional priorities	This project would indirectly contribute to all Framework objectives and consequently all of the WMES priorities that social enterprises support.

7	Masters in Social Business Administration (MsBA)
Objectives	To provide a high quality programme of education in social enterprise strategic management for social enterprise directors.
Activities	A certified course for social enterprise board members and senior managers to acquire the skills and insight required to build large, sustainable and growing social enterprises. Based around established programmes for mainstream businesses such as the MBA, the MsBA would provide oversight on international practice, established enterprise theory specific arenas such as marketing, finance, HR, market research and product development.
Fit to WMSEnt Framework	Strategic Ambition 3: Championing Citizenship as it would address Objective 2: Raising Standards In Social Enterprise Activism by providing improved skills and insight.
Fit to regional priorities	This project would directly lead to learning opportunities which in turn would generate a range of outputs that support the WMES in particular Pillar 1 by creating new businesses and jobs and Pillar 2 by raising skill levels, particularly in management and leadership.

8	Step forward to social trade
Objectives	To provide a programme of support to established and nascent enterprises seeking to move into the social enterprise sector.
Activities	This project would promote the importance of social enterprise to voluntary organisations and mainstream businesses. Following up audience interest, a specialised one to one programme of support would be provided to facilitate the transition into the social enterprise sector. It is expected that there would be voluntary organisations keen to adopt a stronger trading focus in the income and a number of mainstream businesses (working in challenging circumstances) which could operate more effectively as constituted social enterprises. The one to one support would involve a diagnosis of issues, followed by an agreed and bespoke mentoring relationship which would guide businesses towards the social enterprise sector.
Fit to WMSEnt Framework	Strategic Ambition 4 by Encouraging Entrepreneurship and in particular delivering on Objective 3: Support And Encourage More Organisations To Trade For A Social Purpose.
Fit to regional priorities	This service would deliver a programme of business support and could be expected to generate new jobs and businesses, although caution must be applied to the potential for substitution effects. It would contribute towards Pillar 1 and 4 of the WMES leading to greater regional output and community cohesion.

9	Private risk, social return
Objectives	To build a stronger appetite and capability for using investment sources to build the Region's social enterprise base.
Activities	Building appetite and capability requires a number of interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perhaps, using the regional social enterprise web portal this project would promote the range of investment opportunities available to social enterprises. Liaising with investment managers to build a better understanding of the challenges which social enterprises face in more positively managing

	<p>investment funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing advice and support to social enterprises on preparing the ground for new channels of investment into their businesses.
Fit to WMSent Framework	Objective 3 of Strategic Ambition 5: Help Social Enterprises To Become More Investment-Ready.
Fit to regional priorities	This project would provide a new suite of business support to social enterprises in the Region. This would support several of the Pillar 1 actions to have a comprehensive suite of start-up and expansion finance for social enterprises and associated business/ investment readiness support.

10	Train the advisor
Objective	To provide training to Business Link advisors on the distinctiveness of social enterprises and to help understand their specific business support needs
Activities	Short courses delivered in situ for Business Links advisors – responding to specifically articulated need by Business Links.
Fit to WMSent Framework	Ambition 6 Influencing general business advice, Objective 1 (Ensuring mainstream business support services are appropriately promoted and delivered to social enterprises)
Fit to regional priorities	This would support Pillar 1 of the WMES by improving the quality of business assistance which is an identified action in WMES Pillar 1 to ensure mainstream business support helps support the growth of sustainable social enterprises. This should generate growth in business output and growth in employment.

11	BME success
Objective	To make specialist support available to Black and minority ethnic led social enterprises and to ensure an effective interface between specialist BME support, BME business leadership and mainstream business development agencies
Activities	Develop a specialist referral service for BME social entrepreneurs, to develop working protocols with mainstream business development agencies and to support some social enterprises developing in unique social and market circumstances.
Fit to WMSent Framework	Ambition 6 Influencing general business advice, Objective 1 (Ensuring mainstream business support services are appropriately promoted and delivered to social enterprises)
Fit to regional priorities	This would support Pillar 1 of the WMES, specifically actions that encourage an enterprise culture amongst under-represented population groups and that tailor the work, accessibility, and relevance of business support to existing businesses and start-ups from minority ethnic communities. It would also support Pillar 4 by linking opportunity to need, whilst also complementing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement of the WMES and the West Midlands Concordat.

12	Reach out
Objectives	To encourage social enterprises to make better use of mainstream business support services in the Region.
Activities	This would deliver promotional material to the sector which packages and promotes Small Business Service and other existing mainstream business support services. It would use established communication channels into the sector. Joint road shows with the sector and mainstream business support providers would be held to build awareness of the services on offer and to discuss how these services could more effectively meet social enterprise's needs. A major focus of this initiative would be to break down the mis-conceptions on both sides about what social enterprise support needs are and

	how they could best be met. Growing from this initiative would be a stronger understanding of the role of those specialist support providers in the region.
Fit to WMSEnt Framework	Objective 1 of Strategic Ambition 6: Influencing General Business Advice as it boosts take up of mainstream services and as well as providing a platform for identifying how those services could be more appropriate to social enterprises.
Fit to regional priorities	This initiative would lead to greater up-take of business assistance which is an identified action in WMES Pillar 1 to ensure mainstream business support helps to develop a stronger base, raise the profile and support the growth of sustainable social enterprises. This should generate growth in business output and growth in employment.

13	Best on tap
Objectives	Build the quality of the Region's social enterprise support providers
Activities	Provide an accredited training programme in social enterprise support and advice, drawing on national and international practice. This learning programme would cover all aspects of social enterprise business support and would establish an accredited standard on which social enterprises could rely to ensure the advice they are receiving is drawn from a recognised pool of excellence.
Fit to WMSEnt Framework	Strategic Ambition 7: Delivering Sector Specific Expertise and it would directly contribute to Objective 1: Build The Quality Of Specialist Support Providers.
Fit to regional priorities	Improving the quality of business support providers would directly generate new learning opportunities and indirectly lead to increased uptake of business assistance.

14	Grow contracting
Objectives	Build social enterprise contract management capacity.
Activities	Through a bespoke support and advice service, social enterprises managing service delivery contracts would receive on-going mentoring and coaching input to help them through the challenges faced in managing services to a high quality standard. A range of support is likely to be required, but particular emphasis is likely to be placed on service standards, financial management and contract compliance. The project could draw upon an extensive array of advice sources from across the Region and beyond.
Fit to WMSEnt Framework	Objective 4 of Strategic Ambition 8: Expanding the Contracting Arena and specifically focus on building the capacity of social enterprises to effectively manage contracts after they have been secured.
Fit to regional priorities	This service would be a specialist advice service that met the actions in Pillar 1 of the WMES to ensure that mainstream business agencies support the growth of sustainable social enterprises. As social enterprises become more adept at negotiating and delivering supply contracts, this should indirectly lead to new jobs and businesses as capacity is built up – and as procured activity is retained more locally.

15	New frontiers
Objectives	Drive forwards social enterprise creation in new target growth sectors.
Activities	This programme of support would hand pick (or create) a small number of social enterprises capable of building a presence in nascent markets which are set to grow and where there is a realistic scope for social enterprise trade to take hold. Drawing on existing and emerging study into sector growth and market potential, this project would work intensively with a small band of entrepreneurs and public partners to establish new social enterprises in agreed market areas. Over time the nature of the support would grow, as new entrants arrive and

	<p>scope for clustering behaviour materialise. As new cluster and market opportunities appear, a fresh set of enterprises would be brought forward. Cluster development would be coordinated with Cluster Opportunity Groups in clusters that directly match those identified in the WMWMEs and help develop new clusters of social enterprise activity as they emerge. The service would be supported by online resources through the Social Enterprise Web Portal.</p>
Fit to WMSent Framework	<p>Strategic Ambition 9 (Targeting Clusters & Sectors) Objective 2: Target High Growth Potential Social Enterprise Clusters</p>
Fit to regional priorities	<p>This would support Pillar 1 of the WMES and the efforts to concentrate resources on cluster-based growth. New business and jobs would emerge from this service as social enterprise based clusters grow contributing to greater regional GVA and employment.</p>

Investment routes

The Action Plan identifies indicative lead organisations for delivery of the Framework alongside potential funding routes. Many of the needs identified in the Framework will be delivered by mainstream organisations that already supply business support or community development services, which fund skills and guidance or which deliver substantial public services.

Delivery of the Social Enterprise Framework to its full extent depends on the active engagement of many partners, in particular, local government, the voluntary sector, the Learning & Skills Council, Business Links, AWM and a number of other central government agencies and departments – in particular those coordinated by the Government Office for the West Midlands. By helping to grow the social enterprise sector, these agencies will be helping to deliver elements of the shared ambition for the West Midlands – as expressed in the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Concordat and defined in the region's Tier 2 and PSA targets.

Social enterprise support activity does not automatically have a claim over the resources of these mainstream service organisations, instead each will have to be persuaded of the strategic fit between proposed activities, the agency's own priorities and the likely shared regional benefit.

A number of agencies therefore represent potential investment partners for delivery of the Social Enterprise Framework – although no one single agency is likely to be the primary source of support. This action plan therefore anticipates a mixed economy of different funding routes to support the actions identified.

European Funds

The West Midlands is in the final 2 years of its 2000-2006 allocations from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund.

The Funds support two broad types of activity in the region – Objective 2 which is directed towards renewal of industrial, urban and rural areas; and Objective 3 which aims to improve labour market conditions.

Objective 2

Objective 2 has been a substantial investment source in the region. The West Midlands has received more funding than any other Objective 2 programme in the UK and is the second largest in Europe. Only parts of the West Midlands are eligible for Objective 2 funding – with eligible areas are defined on a ward-by-ward basis within each local authority district within the region. In general terms, nearly all the conurbation is included, most of the rural West and the mainly urban parts of Staffordshire and North Warwickshire. Objective 3 funds can be used throughout the region. Some major investments in Social Enterprise have already been made using Objective 2 funds and these include: Winning Investments in the Social Economy (WISE) in the Black Country; Enabling Social Enterprise in Birmingham;

Capacity Building and Business Advice for Social Enterprise in Coventry & Warwickshire and; Developing the Creative Industries in Coventry & Warwickshire.

Objective 2 funding is very closely aligned with Pillars 1, 3 and 4 of the WMES and is intended to improve infrastructure, businesses and support social regeneration and environmental sustainability. Its priorities are:

- Supporting Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in order to modernise the region's traditional manufacturing base and to capitalise on high growth sectors.
- Creating the conditions for employment growth – by supporting strategic regeneration packages, by helping to secure new jobs in development areas, by removing barriers to markets, employment and training and by developing ICT capacity in order to remove these barriers.
- Regenerating communities – by developing social capital and enabling communities to implement local solutions to need, by helping to increase employment in disadvantaged areas, improving neighbourhood services, and by increasing skill levels in disadvantaged communities.

The funding guidelines and past experience show that Objective 2 is particularly well suited to supporting Credit Unions, community businesses, community transport services and for developing infrastructure in the voluntary sector. Objective 2 only part-finances project costs – usually 45% or 50% – and consequently requires match funding. Application for funding has to be made through the Government Office and is undertaken using a structured bidding round process. These are announced periodically and can be accessed at www.westmidlandsworkingtogether.org.uk. However, all the £575m given to the West Midlands under the 2000-2006 Objective 2 programme has now been allocated to more than 400 projects across the region.

Objective 3

Objective 3 funding is primarily delivered through co-financed programmes administered by the Learning and Skills Councils in each of the sub-regions, by Job Centre Plus throughout the region and by two local authorities – Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and Birmingham City Council. The five priorities for Objective 3 are broadly consistent with the main themes of Pillar 3 of the WMES:

- Active labour market measures – to integrate non-employed people and address barriers to work
- Equal opportunities and social inclusion – specifically helping the most disadvantaged population groups
- Lifelong learning – to increase skill levels within the region particularly amongst the non-employed
- Adaptability and entrepreneurship – improving the skills of people in work and to increase levels of entrepreneurship and support business development training particularly for women and disadvantaged groups.

- Increasing the participation of women – to reduce the levels of disadvantage faced by women in the labour market

There are currently only three identified projects using Objective 3 to fund social enterprise support activity and these are examples where both Objective 2 and 3 funds are both used within more complex funding mixes.

The West Midlands ESF Objective 3 programme, has been increased recently to just over £316 million. Although just under £200 million of the Programme has already been allocated – through 7 separate funding rounds – to nearly 600 projects across the region, no new funding rounds have yet been announced.

Equal

One part of the European Social Fund is a £200m national funding route called Equal. This emphasises new and creative ideas that test and promote new means of combating discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, both for those in work and for those seeking work, through trans-national co-operation. Equal operates across 8 thematic fields that specifically include Entrepreneurship and Social economy.

The Equal programme funds activity that is implemented by strategic partnerships called Development Partnerships that address one thematic field of choice. Trans-national links are an essential element in the initiative for promoting the transfer of knowledge and good practice between partnerships and between member states. Equal is structured in 3 stages called “Actions” – with a preparatory phase of up to 9 months; a period of implementation; and a phase of networking, dissemination of good practice and impact on national policies.

The second call for programme proposals – that would run from late 2004 to 2008 – recently opened and a proposal – supported by WMSSEN – was submitted by a regional Development Partnership proposing an approximately £2 million programme based on the concept of “Ability to Trade”. This would include actions to test new ways in which social enterprises can improve their viability, develop trading activity and stimulate demand from public and private sector procurement sources.

There are no regional allocations for Equal but, of the £120m available in this second round, 10% has been earmarked for support under the Social Enterprise theme. Although Equal has a 50% intervention rate, this can be matched entirely by in-kind resources.

Local Government

Local authorities in the region have a triple role – as seed-funders of new initiatives in their areas, as public service purchasers and as strategic partners in delivering the regional framework.

The West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) has been a member of the Board of the West Midlands Social Economy Partnership representing local authority interests in the social enterprise field. Both WMLGA and the West Midlands Regional Assembly are represented on the West Midlands Social

Enterprise Network in order to link local authorities and other Regional Assembly partners with social enterprise activity, particularly on key issues such as public procurement.

Several of the individual local authorities in the region already support social enterprise – either through their purchasing activity, through service level agreements and contracts or by directly funding development and support services.

Social enterprise has a clear function in helping local authorities to deliver services into disadvantaged communities and to help meet the strategic goals of local government. Amongst these are activities that will contribute towards meeting PSA “floor targets” for the region – a minimum level of improvement in public services that achieve better outcomes to the economy, health, education, housing, environment and public safety conditions of the region – and of individual local authority areas. The key indicators for local government are:

- Improving the employment rate of disadvantaged areas and population groups – particularly lone parents, ethnic minorities, people aged 50 and over, and those with the lowest qualifications
- Neighbourhood Renewal – raising the levels of social inclusion, and prosperity – primarily by promoting better integration between different public service providers in the poorest areas to achieve “a step-change in the quality of service delivery” that results in improved economic prosperity, crime reduction, better housing, health, education and physical environment.
- Helping to build an enterprise society “in which small firms of all kinds thrive and achieve their potential” with, specifically, an increase in “would-be entrepreneurs” – the number of people going into business, an improvement in the overall productivity of small firms, and more enterprise in disadvantaged communities.
- In rural local authority Districts, particularly those with “consistently poor economic performance”, there is an expectation that improvements will be made to reduce the gap in productivity and improve the accessibility of services to rural people. Specifically these are access to public transport, participation in training, educational attainment, access to healthcare, access to cash services, and access to the internet.

In addition to their mainstream budgets, a number of local authorities in the region receive extra funds to help overcome disadvantage in their localities. Within the conurbation, there are seven local authorities that have been allocated a total of £116 million from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) for the 2 year period 2004/5 and 2005/6. These are Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Stoke-on-Trent, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The NRF is made available to the 88 most deprived local authorities in the country and is intended to support a wide range of activities that improve public services in disadvantaged communities across the 5 “domains” of activity: Crime, Education and Skills, Housing and the Physical Environment, Health, Work and Enterprise.

The NRF is managed in collaboration with each authority's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Each LSP is a single non-statutory, multi-agency body that matches the local authority boundaries and aims to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. Local partners working through a LSP are expected to agree multi-agency responses to tackle deep-seated, multi-faceted problems within their areas and take many of the major decisions about priorities and funding for their local area.

The NRF funds are used therefore as part of the overall public spending mix to stimulate new services, develop capacity within deprived communities and improve mainstream services to produce better outcomes in the most deprived areas. The NRF can be spent in any way that tackles deprivation in the most deprived neighbourhoods, particularly, but not exclusively, in relation to the "floor targets" and to local targets set out in the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy agreed by each of the LSPs.

Public procurement

Public agencies, particularly in the health service and local government are increasingly realising that a more diverse supply base will help achieve their Best Value obligations whilst also improving supply quality and helping to boost their local economy. At the heart of a new approach to public purchasing is a partnership with private, voluntary and public sector suppliers to help deliver improvement of public services and the renewal of public assets like healthcare facilities, schools, libraries and highways. New patterns of procurement are likely to stimulate market innovation, including improved service delivery, for example, by making use of recycled materials, fair trade products or services that have been designed and delivered by people who are closer to the end-user.

The Government's latest strategy and guidance published for local authorities² makes clear that smarter procurement is an essential element of cost effective and efficient services that can help local government to:

- realise economic, social and environmental benefits for their communities
- achieve Community Plan objectives, build social cohesion and promote equality of opportunity for service users, businesses and council staff
- be sustainable for the communities and areas served
- deliver consistently high quality services that meet users' needs
- provide savings and better value for money
- deliver services through different structures and in new forms.

New models of local government procurement are therefore intended so that, by 2006, Councils will procuring products and services through "sustainable partnerships they have forged with a range of public, private, social enterprise and voluntary sector organisations". The aim is to achieve a mixed economy of service provision, with ready access to a diverse, competitive range of suppliers providing

² The National Procurement Strategy for Local Government, ODPM, October 2003

quality services, including small firms, social enterprises, minority businesses and voluntary and community sector groups. A key theme identified by ODPM is therefore to stimulate new markets and achieve community benefits by:

- Promoting diverse and competitive market sources of supply, including procurement from “small firms, ethnic minority businesses, social enterprises and voluntary and community organisations”
- Developing “supply chain partnerships” to develop the capacity of small firms, ethnic minority businesses, social enterprise and voluntary and community sector suppliers.

Business Link Birmingham & Solihull and Birmingham City Council are already developing a pilot “procurement portal” initially to publicise public contracts of up to £75,000 to Birmingham-based SMEs. Partners in healthcare and local government may want to explore funding further capacity building initiatives that could embed the principle of supply chain partnerships for SMEs and social enterprises.

Small Business Service

In an arrangement that has been piloted in the West Midlands, each of the region’s Business Links have submitted their annual plans for approval by AWM rather than by the DTI’s Small Business Service, and, from 2005 this relationship will be made more explicit as the SBS management function is passed to AWM. In practice, therefore, the mainstream services of Business Links are becoming closely aligned to the strategic management of AWM and this will help ensure that many of the Framework’s expectations can be met.

The West Midlands Enterprise Strategy commits partners to developing an enterprise culture that encourages people from under-represented groups. It pledges Business Links to fostering a stronger base of social enterprises, to help raise the sector’s profile and support the growth of sustainable social enterprise businesses.³ The Strategy also pledges, by 2005, to improve the provision of information and support to social enterprise by establishing “effective social enterprise support networks” that promote and develop the sector.

Skills, learning and the labour market

The Social Enterprise Framework identifies actions to grow social enterprises by encouraging entrepreneurship by promoting social enterprise as a career option and by supplying social enterprise management learning programmes. The Learning & Skills Council, Connexions Service and Jobcentre Plus are potential investment partners for these actions that will increase employment in deprived areas and improve the quality of leadership, management and workplace specific skills.

The West Midlands Economic Strategy sets a number of high-level targets for delivering a skilled, motivated and adaptable workforce that can attract employers and good jobs to the region and support modernisation and diversification of the

³ WMES, Actions 1 & 7

current business base. The Strategy recognises endemic weaknesses in both basic and higher level skills and a shortage of occupation specific and intermediate skills in some sectors.

During the course of 2002, Advantage West Midlands and its partners – in particular Jobcentre Plus, the Learning & Skills Council, Government Office West Midlands, and the West Midlands Higher Education Association – developed a set of key actions.⁴ These are under-scored by Actions in the WMES to meet the goals of Pillar 2 of the regional economic strategy. Actions that have a close relevance to the social enterprise sector include:

- Ensuring job opportunities offer equal access for all
- Improving management, leadership enterprise and entrepreneurship skills
- Skills to enhance growth industry clusters
- Support for innovation and entrepreneurship to develop new businesses.
- Improved working conditions and better work-life balance

The WMES commits partners to specifically “improving access and suitability of management training for SMEs including not-for-profit organisations” and to champion the workforce development implementation of the Government’s Voluntary and Community Sector Workforce Development strategy in the region.

The investment priorities of the local Learning & Skills Councils – particularly using co-financed ESF and their discretionary Local Investment and Development Fund – should be well placed to support actions identified in the Framework and the WMES that can support learning and workforce development services aimed at social enterprises.

Lottery distributors

Funds that originate from the National Lottery are intended for use by voluntary and community groups and are eligible to fund social enterprise support activity. The two most relevant lottery distributors – the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund – merged earlier in 2004 to form a single organisation “The Big Lottery Fund”. The main priorities of the current organisations have been carried forward with a combined annual funding level of approximately £60m for the West Midlands. Social Enterprise are expected to assume a more prominent role in the new distributing body’s priorities but, for the time being, priorities and funding scale can only be judged from the inherited programmes.

The Community Fund’s programme for medium sized projects – of up £60,000 – has supported capital and revenue projects over 1-3 years. The main funding objectives were quite generally defined – to help people and communities facing severe, long-term, difficult-to-tackle disadvantage and projects that try to prevent or reduce future disadvantage to improve the quality of life in the community. Support for larger scale projects was more tightly focussed on supporting particular population groups - children and young people; older people; disabled people;

⁴ Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA), 2002

black and minority ethnic communities; refugee and asylum seekers; and people in areas disadvantaged by social and economic change, whether urban or rural.

The New Opportunities Fund concentrated on services that improved education, health or the environment – with a focus on the most disadvantaged. The grant priorities that may be relevant to social enterprise support included:

- Children's play and environmental projects
- Out-of-school activities for young people
- Improving sports facilities for young people and the wider community
- Promotion of community based recycling, reuse and recycling projects.

“Fair Share” was a joint funding programme of the New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund that has mainly supported disadvantaged areas that have received less than the average amount of Lottery resources since 1995. It has targeted six priority areas in the region – Dudley, North Solihull, Walsall, Tamworth, Cannock and Newcastle under Lyme. The Fund concentrated on the same disadvantaged groups and types of area as the Community Fund’s large grants programme but it had a specific priority to build infrastructure and capacity.

Advantage West Midlands

Advantage West Midlands is a substantial player in the region – with commitments to support the development and growth of the social enterprise sector. As a strategic agency, its core role is to promote the delivery of long-term strategic objectives – through its influence or its own investment funds.

AWM has a key role in marshalling the services of other public agencies behind the strategic goals of the West Midlands Economic Strategy. But it also has a direct influence on business support services through its performance agreement with Business Links. In order to support its long-term objectives, AWM also has an investment fund – the Single Programme – which it can deploy to support these objectives. The Agency is channelling its Single Programme investment through the three delivery vehicles of Regeneration Zones, Business Clusters and High Technology Corridors.

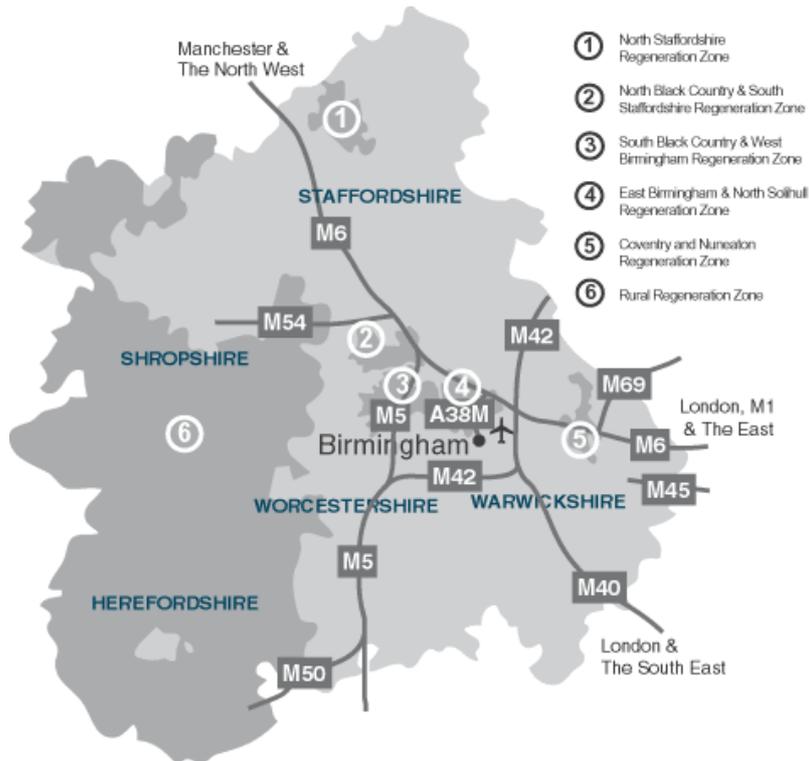
Funding from AWM is primarily routed through the Regeneration Zones or investments that are designed to support industry Clusters or High Technology Corridors. These funds are only one part of the regional funding mix and are primarily intended to unlock other investment resources.

Regeneration Zones

The six Regeneration Zones in the West Midlands are urban and rural areas that are characterised by deprivation and the adverse impact of economic change. Cutting across local authority boundaries, the Zones are areas with a high concentration of need, but also of high levels of opportunity or proximity to growth. They contain a third of the region’s population and over half its unemployment. Over the next 3 years, Zones will mobilise up to £400m of public funding from

AWM, European sources and local partners and deploy this public funding alongside private sector investment in ways that achieve more holistic forms of regeneration and can link need with opportunity.

Zones are individually responsible for developing their own set of strategic priorities and for supporting local partners to bring forward co-ordinated local solutions which harness a range of funding sources. Each of the six Zones has already established a strategic vision and a tranche of initial projects which are beginning to deliver. It is within the Zones that many of the key initial decisions are being made about how best to support the sector.



It will be for Zones themselves to commission services that meet their identified objectives. However, the WMES commits regional agencies to focus activity within the Regeneration Zones that pilots social enterprise projects to test models of best practice for the region.⁵ Zones may want to take the opportunity presented by the production of A Point to Prove to review their existing strategic commitments to the social enterprise sector to understand the contribution they are planning to make to the agreed strategic objectives. The review might explore how Zones could focus their business support and community engagement plans to support social enterprises to ensure a better fit with the strategic commitments set out in A Point to Prove. As the Social Enterprise Framework comes to achieve more influence, over time, there will be a more evident rationale for ensuring that Zone Implementation Plans have linkage to the regional social enterprise Framework and its nine Ambitions.

⁵ WMES, Action 39

Clusters

As the West Midlands economy modernises and diversifies, clusters of growth potential firms in emerging sectors have begun to develop. Firms in these sectors are beginning to benefit from a common pool of technology, skills, specialist finance, premises and customers and are developing supply chains between different tiers within their sector. Ten clusters have been identified for the main focus of publicly-backed investment and these include four sectors where social enterprises have some scale and significance: Environmental Technologies; Food and Drink; Specialist Business and Professional Services; Tourism and Leisure. The Social Enterprise Framework identifies that the sector also has considerable strength in childcare, health and social services. In housing particularly, the position of social enterprises is likely to become more significant as Housing Associations in the region begin to reinforce their identity as social businesses and deliver a wider range of services in their local communities, either independently or in partnership with other social enterprises.

The Framework therefore recognises the potential for social enterprise sector development within AWM's cluster development programme. Ambition nine commits the Framework to *Capitalising On Existing Cluster Initiatives* and highlights which of the region's priority clusters may encompass social enterprise potential. In order to concentrate efforts on those markets which demonstrate the greatest opportunity and to make best use of the Cluster Programme, the West Midlands Social Enterprise Network would take a regional lead in negotiations with the Cluster Opportunity Groups which have been formed to oversee each of the Clusters. Cluster related projects which fit one of the region's target sectors should adopt a regional perspective and be proposed initially for endorsement before being presented to the Cluster Opportunity Groups.

High technology corridors

Three corridors of opportunity for technology and knowledge-based industrial growth have been identified that radiate from the conurbation centre – between Birmingham and Worcester; from Wolverhampton to Telford; and from Solihull to Coventry and North Warwickshire. The Corridors purposefully focus on long-term growth and restructuring in sectors with a significant technology potential. Although the majority of social enterprises are in relatively low technology and people-centred service industries, nonetheless, a proportion of the sector concentrates on ICT, environmental technology, media and communications. Support for these “higher-end” businesses might therefore be marshalled within the overall investment framework for the corridors – and to benefit from initiatives that:

- Supply high quality premises, particularly business incubators
- Engage with trade and export activities
- Support links with research and development
- Benefit from knowledge transfer and innovation services
- Develop relationships with higher education institutions

Developing new services

The delivery of a Point to Prove is critically dependent upon partner agencies and individuals across the West Midlands coming forward with initiatives that will stimulate real and lasting strategic change within the sector. This does not necessarily mean new projects and application to public agencies for fresh funding. Many of the Framework's Ambitions can be delivered by creating new relationships, better co-ordination and changing behaviour – none of which require substantial additional funds.

This section sets out seven advice points to partner organisations – either social enterprise support organisations or other delivery organisations – that will help to guide ideas for new initiatives. It is essential that proposals show how they have used an evidence base to demonstrate need, potential demand and likely outcomes.

The permeating tests

The four Permeating Themes have been designed to influence the shape of initiatives which come forward in support of the strategy. It is vital that project developers apply each of the Permeating Theme tests when they are developing project ideas. The following pointers should be considered in relation to each of the 4 themes.

1. Sustainability

Support services need to show how their client enterprises are committed to reducing dependency on subsidies (grants) over time and have a clear and robust plan for how they might bring this about. Support should be directed on building real **market awareness** and extending the capacity of beneficiaries to **trade** in their chosen markets. Finance directed towards enterprises should only be in the form of grants where there is no realistic alternative. **Loans and other forms of risk sharing support** should always be considered before grant provision. Projects should seek evidence of their clients' **enthusiasm and/or ability for trade** through evidence of:

- legal constitutions which allow them to trade and have suitable financial systems in place
- a clear understanding of their customer base, its needs plus the resources and plans for marketing products to clients
- business plan and cash-flow forecasts for income and expenditure

2. Values

Interventions must demonstrably either promote or respond to the values of social enterprise clients. Many social enterprise support needs may be the same as those

of mainstream businesses, but the need to market and deliver support to what is a distinct sector should not be underestimated. Project developers should think through what the specific values of the intended beneficiaries are and what particular implications follow.

Potential support providers should demonstrate an **understanding of the values** within their target client base and set out how they will tailor their services to accommodate these values in the support they provide: evidence of a shift away from narrow profit enhancing focussed support should be provided.

Projects should demonstrate a clear and considered **understanding of their beneficiaries**, including their location, aspirations, the local context, priorities, genesis and the requirements that throws up in terms of how the services must be marketed and delivered.

Evidence of how **established social enterprise networks** will be used to communicate with the sector should be provided in support of project ideas.

Consideration of existing **counter-part support** and how it will be **harnessed and supplemented** should be encouraged. In particular consideration should always be given as to whether existing providers could more effectively penetrate the market for social enterprise support.

3. Diversity

The diversity within the sector demands that all initiatives coming forward are clear about which segment of the social enterprise sector they are targeting. This will allow a review to be periodically undertaken to ensure that all bases are being covered. Projects must not only understand their client group, but must also demonstrate how they have tailored their scheme to meet its specific needs.

A clear demonstration should be contained in all project descriptions of specific target clients in the social enterprises sector. Segmentation can be approached by considering: geographic market industry or sector operating scale and, beneficiary group (e.g. BME, disability, a local community/ neighbourhood etc)

Substantive **reviews of existing provision** should be contained in all proposals. A quantitative and qualitative assessment of the gaps and opportunities in the current support fabric should be set out with a clear vision of how the proposed project will truly add to what is already in place and not simply duplicate.

Projects should specifically state how they will **meet the specific needs of their identified clients and ensure accessibility**, for example, projects targeting the specific barriers BME enterprises face in establishing a trading base in the market.

Existing channels for promoting services to target clients should be considered and utilised to ensure maximum penetration into the target market.

Strategic networks should also occasionally **cross check activities** in their local area to ensure comprehensive coverage of the diversity within the sector and to minimise any potential for duplication

4. Co-ordination

Projects must demonstrate that they better co-ordinate and promote existing services before they propose new solutions. Much already exists in the Region and projects should show that they have considered and rejected the possibility of improving existing provision before they construct new infrastructure or new approaches.

Proposals should contain a review of existing similar provision and other service providers which could reasonably be expected to deliver similar services. reviews should also include organisations from outside the local area which could deliver the service remotely under contract as well as existing local agencies. This should consider:

- the **potential for improvement and expansion in existing services** as well as their short-comings before advocating new solutions.
- the scope for better co-ordinating existing services through **better planning, sign-posting, resource allocation and target setting** should be addressed in all proposals.

Locate the initiative in the priorities

All initiatives coming forward must demonstrate their contribution to the strategic priorities set out in the strategic framework document. The first step towards demonstrating fit is to locate the initiative in the framework Objectives. The framework has nine numbered Ambitions each containing a series of Objectives and projects should identify at least one of these Objectives to ensure a fit with the Framework.

It is possible for projects to address more than one Objective at a time, but a stronger case for fit to strategy is always made when fewer rather than more objectives are targeted. Demonstrating fit is not just a tick box exercise, it requires serious consideration of what suite of activities best address the targeted objectives. The strategy is built upon a review of the sector's current standing and priorities and has been designed to encourage projects which meet those needs. Those developing new ideas should read the strategic framework and reflect **not just where but how their initiative** responds to the stated objectives.

Consult & calibrate

Projects and services which reflect the true needs and demands of their target clients will usually achieve their goals more easily and cost-effectively. The best way of ensuring that services are tailored to client's needs is to engage with the sector and undertake some consultation. Utilising existing social enterprise networks in the region is often the easiest way of gauging sector needs. If suitable networks are not present or not able to provide a complete perspective, efforts to undertake one to one consultations should be undertaken. Project developers should provide a detached analysis of client's needs and redesign their project around stated concerns. Consultation is intended to calibrate and refine

strategically valuable interventions rather than to redesign the strategy. Evidence of consultation and its impact on the project proposal should be provided.

Learn from best practice

Although solutions from outside the Region cannot be transported wholesale into a different environment and be expected to work as effectively, many lessons have been learnt in the past which could be used to improve the effectiveness of new projects coming forward in the West Midlands. Project developers should undertake a review of practice (good or otherwise) to understand what has and hasn't been tried and worked already. Documented evidence of sector practice and evaluation evidence of its impact is patchy and so applicants may need to undertake some primary research by visiting similar projects elsewhere in the UK. Practise reviews should not be restricted to the social enterprise sector - lessons from mainstream enterprise and community development activities – and from mainstream SME business support – are likely to be equally valuable.

Demonstrate impact

All public investment – be it from the Regeneration Zones, other regional funding routes or from mainstream agencies such as the LSC or Business Links – will need to clearly demonstrate an impact or quantifiable effect.

Most of the public agencies in the West Midlands have agreed performance targets that improve the economic competitiveness and social inclusiveness of the region. In developing new ideas for social enterprise support, proposals will need to show how their impact can be shown – particularly how they contribute to broad “outcomes” that reflect the longer-term improvements to the economic and social conditions of the region. Proposals that rely on funding partly or wholly derived from AWM will also have to quantify results using a framework of “outputs” such as jobs created, businesses supported or training activity delivered.

Outcomes

The investments of regional partners – such as local government, the Government Office West Midlands, AWM and the LSCs – must contribute to a suite of targets known as “Tier 2 Outcomes”. The relevant Tier 2 targets to which social enterprises and could contribute are set out below, with some additional commentary.

Project developers must consider how their service might contribute to the outcomes. The clearest way to demonstrate impact is to define objectives against which that success can be measured – using one or more of the following outcome targets. This list is not exhaustive and will not reflect the local outcomes which partners locally are seeking to achieve. The most successful project will also commit to a monitoring and evaluating performance against these targets.

Sustainable Economic Performance: this outcome is one of the leading PSA targets for central government and is designed to show improvement to the sustainable economic performance of each region, measured by the trend in growth of Gross Value Added per capita and broader quality of life in the Region.

Social enterprises clearly have role to play in both respects. Although social enterprises are not likely to be major generators of GVA, they have an important role to play in laying the foundations for wealth creation and contribution to quality of life through service delivery and community participation.

Regeneration: achieving neighbourhood renewal by promoting economic development and investment in the most deprived areas (i.e. bottom 20% by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation). Social enterprises can act as a stepping stone to work and be a focal point for wider community activities which can contribute to reducing deprivation in wards. This target will be measured by progress in the Income and Employment domains of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Rural: This outcome intends to reduce the gap in productivity between the Region's rural areas (Herefordshire, North Shropshire, Oswestry & South Shropshire) and the rest of the country and improve accessibility to services for rural people. Social enterprises can contribute to regenerating vulnerable market towns through new services designed to meet local needs which are delivered by locally controlled enterprises. Target services include public transport, access to post-16 education, health care, access to cash and access to information on public services. New economic activity such as co-operatives and farmers markets are also emerging which make a contribution to rural renaissance.

Employment: This outcome focuses on increasing the employment rate in the region – and reflects a key PSA target. Social enterprise can provide a spring-board for hard to employ groups into the labour market by providing training advice and support to prepare people for work as well as creating mainstream employment opportunities for others.

Skills: This outcome is about improving the level of qualifications of the workforce in order to meet the priorities set out in Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) and to help meet national learning targets. As stated earlier, social enterprises can play a role in directly providing training and skills development as well as delivering preparatory support to those entering training & education, particularly in the basic skills arena.

Enterprise: building an enterprise society in which small firms of all kinds thrive and achieve their potential. Success will be measured by the number of people considering going into business, overall productivity of small firms, and the level of enterprise in disadvantaged communities. Clearly social enterprises have a key role to play in this through positive demonstration by stimulating enterprise and wealth creation effect in deprived communities.

Innovation: This outcome focuses on new product, process and service introductions and other aspects of technological and organisational change. Although much of the focus of this outcome is on technology, science and industry, the social enterprise sector can position itself as an innovator in both service delivery and as a model of alternative practice to mainstream businesses.

Appendix 1

A Point to Prove: Social Enterprise in the West Midlands Strategic Framework – ambitions and priorities – action plan

	Indicative lead delivery organisation(s)	Funding / delivery route
<p>Ambition 1 – Using intelligence</p> <p>The social enterprise sector and its partners will build and utilise a comprehensive and accessible base of intelligence on market opportunities and threats to inform their plans for future development of the sector and to better understand the impact they are having on the region.</p>		
a) Maintain a robust map of social enterprise activity	WMSEN – for Enterprise Board	AWM – regional priority
b) Develop an intelligence gateway about and for the social enterprise sector	WMSEN – Regional web portal	AWM – regional priority
c) Establish an authoritative regional programme of market investigation	WMSEN (builds on existing Action Research)	One-off funding not yet identified
d) Generate knowledge pool of excellence on sector developments	WMSEN Regeneration Centre of Excellence	Funding to be identified
<p>Ambition 2 - Networking together</p> <p>West Midlands social enterprises, support agencies and other partners will reap the benefits from being part of a fully joined-up, co-ordinated and networked sector. Effective idea and experience sharing will strengthen the sector and make it more dynamic and better able to grow and prosper long in to the future.</p>		
a) Supporting a regional sector champion role	WMSEN core	via Enterprise Board
b) Stimulating joint initiatives within the sector	WMSEN and sub-regional support agencies	Regeneration Zones and other area based funding

	Indicative lead delivery organisation(s)	Funding / delivery route
<p>Ambition 3 – Championing citizenship</p> <p>The West Midlands will harness the commitment of individuals to invest the time, energy and commitment into the region’s social enterprise base. In particular the passions of young people will be channelled into building engagement with the wider community on their door-step through social enterprises.</p>		
a) Build awareness of opportunities and value of community participation and involvement	Councils of Voluntary Service	Mainstream – core activity, Lottery, EU funds
b) Raising standards in social enterprise activism	Regeneration Centre of Excellence	Mainstream – core activity
<p>Ambition 4 – Encouraging entrepreneurship</p> <p>The West Midlands region will continue to nurture and grow an expanding pool of energetic and innovative social entrepreneurs to develop tomorrow’s enterprises.</p>		
a) Promote social enterprise as a career option	Connexions, LSC enterprise advisory service; Local Authorities, Local Education Authorities; Business in the Community; Princes Trust	Mainstream – core activity
b) Roll-out recognised social enterprise management learning programmes	Business Links and LSC	Mainstream – core activity
c) Support and encourage more organisations to trade for a social purpose	Business Links, CVS and other voluntary sector umbrella bodies	Mainstream – core activity

	Indicative lead delivery organisation(s)	Funding / delivery route
<p>Ambition 5 – Funding the sector</p> <p>The social enterprise sector will benefit from a wide range of conventional and specialist forms of capital by becoming an attractive sector for funders that have confidence in the sector’s ability to secure and utilise its investment.</p>		
a) Increase supply of specialist finance	Advantage CDFI Action Group (NEF)	CDFIs, EU funds, Phoenix Fund
b) Get conventional lenders to understand the sector	WMSEN – for Enterprise Board	AWM – regional priority
c) Improve enterprises’ investment readiness	Business Links and Access to Finance Group	Core activity
<p>Ambition 6 – Influencing general business advice</p> <p>Social enterprises will make full use of the mainstream business advice services available in the region to build their capacity and sustainability. Providers of mainstream business support will ensure that a rounded package of services to meet the needs and priorities of social enterprises is available locally.</p>		
a) Ensure mainstream services are appropriately promoted and delivered to social enterprises	Business Links	Core activity
b) Ensuring social enterprise is effectively promoted as a business model	Business Links	Core activity
c) Build a network of social enterprise advisors	Business Links	Core activity

	Indicative lead delivery organisation(s)	Funding / delivery route
<p>Ambition 7 – Delivering sector specific expertise</p> <p>The West Midlands region will develop and access an integrated network of specialist providers, working in harmony with mainstream services and targeted on meeting specific social enterprise needs.</p>		
a) Build the quality of specialist support providers	Business Links	Core activity
b) Ensure the availability of a comprehensive spread of specialist services	Business Links	Core activity
c) Improve sign-posting to and knowledge of specialist providers	Business Links and specialist providers	From core funds and from other regional sources
<p>Ambition 8 – Expanding the contracting arena</p> <p>Social enterprises in the West Midlands will seize procurement opportunities in the region and contract holders will work to ensure their procedures for letting contracts provide realistic opportunities for social enterprises.</p>		
a) Influencing policy and practice in contracting bodies	WMLGA/Regional Centre of Excellence for Procurement WMSEN	Local Authority and other public services – core activities AWM – regional priority
b) Identify market niches and opportunities to grow and expand markets	WMSEN – builds on existing research	AWM – regional priority
c) Ensuring enterprises are equipped to bid for available contracts	Business Links Tendering Portals	Core activity
d) Managing contracts profitably and to high quality standards	Business Links	Core activity

	Indicative lead delivery organisation(s)	Funding / delivery route
<p>Ambition 9 – Targeting clusters and sectors</p> <p>To build stronger clustering behaviour in the social enterprise sector and to progressively build a stronger sense of sectors and markets within which social enterprises trade. Seize the potential of clustering programmes by establishing sector specific clustering</p>		
a) Capitalising on existing Cluster Initiatives	Cluster Opportunity Groups WMSEN	AWM – and other regional funds
b) Target a limited number of dedicated high growth potential social enterprise clusters	Cluster Opportunity Groups WMSEN	AWM – and other regional funds
c) Raising clustering theory awareness	WMSEN – builds on existing Action Research	Regional funds

Appendix 2

A Point to Prove: Social Enterprise in the West Midlands Activity mapping of services and projects underway or in development ⁶

Lead delivery body	Project Name	Brief Project Description	Ambition - strongest fit	Degree of fit	Area	Total funding	Time-scale	Funding mix
All Saints Action Network (<i>WMSEP</i>)	Community Consultants	Test the viability and demonstrate development process in forming a trading social enterprise offering community development consultancy services	Encouraging entrepreneurship	High	Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull	£78,000	2003 - 2004	SRB6
Association of British Credit Unions (ABCUL)	Creating wealth in the West Midlands through sustainable Credit Unions	The project is focusing on three linked strands; Building Beacon credit unions for the West Midlands; Cascading good practice across the region; and Protecting the savings of low income credit unions.	Championing Citizenship	High	All WM	£750,000	2004 -	
Association of British Credit Unions (<i>WMSEP</i>)	Creating wealth in the West Midlands through sustainable Credit Unions	Continuing to Build Beacon credit unions for the West Midlands, Cascading good practice across the region; and Protecting the savings of low income credit unions.	Championing Citizenship	High	All WM	£200,000	-2004	SRB6
Birkbeck College University of London (<i>WMSEP</i>)	Building Sustainable Footballers Trusts in the West Midlands	Set up a training programme to help sustainability of existing footballers trusts, create new trusts and explore collaboration between trusts and other community organisations	Championing Citizenship	High	All WM	£116,700	2002 - 2004	SRB6 and various match funding

⁶ Does not include Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs)

Lead delivery body	Project Name	Brief Project Description	Ambition - strongest fit	Degree of fit	Area	Total funding	Time-scale	Funding mix
Birmingham & Solihull Social Enterprise Consortium (accountable body is Diocese of Birmingham)	Social enterprise and the voluntary sector	Voluntary sector-specific awareness-raising, information, referral on social enterprise	Encouraging Entrepreneurship	High	Birmingham & Solihull	£90,000	2003 - Mar 2005	Birmingham CAN SRB4
Birmingham Co-operative Housing (WMSEP)	Co-operative and Resident Controlled Housing - building the network and spreading the word	Draw out lessons learned by housing co-ops, create networking opportunities and promote the model in housing strategy throughout the region	Delivering Sector Specific Expertise	Medium	All WM	£218,150	2002 - 2004	SRB6 and various match funding
BME Social Enterprise Consortium (WMSEP)	BME Participation	Mapping exercise to establish the number, type, demographics and needs of BME social enterprises	Using Intelligence	High	Regeneration Zones	£13,000	2003	SRB6
Business in the Community (WMSEP)	Business Bridges	The project will build links or 'bridges' between large firms and companies in the social economy, with a core group of 8-12 social enterprises.	Encouraging Entrepreneurship	High	All WM	£50,700	2003 - 2004	SRB6
Business Link and Solihull, Birmingham and Solihull Social Economy Consortium	Growing Businesses in the Arc/ community businesses to opportunity in East Birmingham and North Solihull	Raising awareness of Social Enterprise in the two zone areas.	Encouraging Entrepreneurship	High	Regeneration Zone in Birmingham	£390,000	2003 - 2005	
CAB	Upskilling Communities	Raising the skill levels of community activists to engage in social enterprise activity	Championing Citizenship	High	Walsall	£500,000	2004 -	SRB/ERDF/ ESF
Co-operation Black Country (WMSEP)	Social Enterprise Support Infrastructure	Facilitating the development of local and sub-regional social enterprise support infrastructure models. Working in all 6 sub-regions.	Networking Together	High	WM	£125,000	2002 - 2005	SRB6

Lead delivery body	Project Name	Brief Project Description	Ambition - strongest fit	Degree of fit	Area	Total funding	Time-scale	Funding mix
CBC (in partnership with Women's Business Development Network)	Winning Investments in the Social Economy (WISE)	A comprehensive package of support services and infrastructure: help with operational management, human resources; diversity and equal opportunities, social entrepreneurship, and appropriate quality standards; sector based clusters; information and marketing intelligence; networks; IT infrastructure; facilitating knowledge and good practice; supporting under-represented groups; developing the Black Country Reinvestment Society	Delivering Sector Specific Expertise	High	Black Country	£2,000,000	2000 - 2006	SRB6/ERDF/ESF
Co-Enterprise	Enabling Social Enterprise	Providing business development support and advice to social enterprises.	Encouraging Entrepreneurship	High	Birmingham	£1,000,000	2001 - 2005	Birmingham Council & ERDF
Co-operative College (<i>WMSEP</i>)	Creating and Supporting Members and Stakeholders in SE	Investigate ethnic and gender diversity in co-op membership and look towards encouraging participation in co-ops in the community, membership support and sustainability	Championing Citizenship	High	All WM	£132,380	2002-2004	SRB6
Coventry & Warwickshire Co-op Development Agency (CWDA)	DRIVE	Entrepreneurship Skills Training for Social Enterprise	Encouraging Entrepreneurship	High	Coventry & Warwickshire	£163,600	2001 - 2004	SBS
Coventry City Council (CCC), CWDA, BITC, CVSC	CBED	Capacity Building and Business Advice for Social Enterprise	Encouraging Entrepreneurship	High	Coventry & Warwickshire	£2,960,000	2002 - 2005	ERDF and various match
CW Business Support Consortium	PIE in Business	Business Advice and development support for social enterprise	Encouraging Entrepreneurship	High	Warwickshire	£207,550	2002 - 2006	SRB6
CWDA	Credit Union Development	Support for Coventry and Warwickshire Credit Unions	Delivering Sector Specific Expertise	High	Coventry & Warwickshire	£275,000	2003 - 2007	CCC, SRB6

Lead delivery body	Project Name	Brief Project Description	Ambition - strongest fit	Degree of fit	Area	Total funding	Time-scale	Funding mix
CWCDA	Social Enterprise in the RZ	Social Enterprise development support and advice	Delivering Sector Specific Expertise	High	Coventry & Nuneaton RZ	£131,330	2003 - 2005	Regeneration Zone
CWCDA, Arts & Media Training, CCC	Developing the Creative Industries	Social Enterprise support for the creative industry	Targeting clusters & sectors	High	Coventry & Warwickshire	£154,700	2002 - 2007	ERDF and various match
CWCDA, CBC, Cooperatives UK (WMSEP)	Going it Together	Action Research project into co-operative development models	Delivering Sector Specific Expertise	High	Herefordshire	£222,100	2002 - 2004	SRB6
Disability West Midlands (WMSEP)	Barrier Free Communication	Facilitate the set up of a Social Enterprise run by disabled people, research the process of forming the group and barriers and look to replicating in other areas	Targeting clusters & sectors	High	Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull	£103,500	2002 - 2004	SRB6
Kajans Womens Enterprise (WMSEP)	Black Cultural Industries and the Social Economy	Awareness raising in disadvantaged communities and building expertise to support and form social enterprises	Championing Citizenship	High	Birmingham, Black Country and Solihull	£125,800	2002 - 2004	SRB6
Marches Consortium (WMSEP)	Co-operative and SE in the Curriculum	Awareness raising project for schools and colleges, including producing engaging resources and teacher support and training	Encouraging entrepreneurship	High	All WM	£103,100	2002 - 2004	SRB6
National Community Boats Association (WMSEP)	All Aboard for Leisure and Learning	Explore how waterway use can be encouraged in the wider community and establish a best practice model for boating partnerships	Targeting clusters & sectors	Medium	All WM	£84,000	2002 - 2004	SRB6
Parish of Bilston Special Projects	Teleresourcing	Establishing the scope for social enterprises to offer call centre and telemarketing services and establishing such an enterprise and researching its experiences	Targeting clusters & sectors	High	Bilston, Black Country	£45,000	2003 - 2005	SRB6

Lead delivery body	Project Name	Brief Project Description	Ambition - strongest fit	Degree of fit	Area	Total funding	Time-scale	Funding mix
Social Enterprise Partnership GB (SEP)	EQUAL programme	Research and develop new occupational standards for people working with and for social enterprises by working with the national occupational standards setting body SFEDI (Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative). Research will focus on two occupations: the social enterprise manager and the social enterprise adviser.	Delivering Sector Specific Expertise	High	All WM	£45,000	-2005	ERDF, SRB6 and various match funding
West Midlands New Economics Group	Sustainable Housing in Small Heath	Establishing how existing housing stock can take advantage of renewable energy and the opportunities available for social enterprises in undertaking this work	Delivering Sector Specific Expertise	Medium	Small Heath, Birmingham	£10,000	2002 - 2004	SRB6
WMSEP	Baseline Phase III	Create a repeatable method of capturing SE activity, provide a forum for networking and information sharing	Using Intelligence	High	All WM	£60,000	2003 - 2004	SRB6

