

**FINAL REPORT FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
October 2017**

1. Introduction

New Futures Buckinghamshire was an innovative support and development opportunity for Buckinghamshire's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The scheme was commissioned by **Buckinghamshire County Council** ("the Council") in late 2013 and was formally launched by the appointed fund manager, **GrantScape**, at the end of February 2014. The initial period of funding was for two years to January 2016. The Council recognised the success of the scheme and decided to extend support until March 2017, but further funding could not be made available and the scheme closed to new applicants in March 2017. As at the end of October 2017 almost all delivery has been completed, with only 4 stage 2 packages now scheduled to complete in November

Support from New Futures Buckinghamshire has been delivered in 2 phases as follows:

- Stage One comprises a free half-day's dedicated development planning support for each eligible group. This is provided by **Community Impact Bucks**.
- Stage Two then provides one or more free bespoke support packages (each of up to three days) which are delivered by a panel of specialists appointed by the County Council. These specialists are termed **Approved Providers**.

This Report summarises the take-up of support from New Futures Buckinghamshire throughout the life of the scheme, by Buckinghamshire-based VCS groups. Whilst we are able to provide the names of the groups that have applied and that are receiving support, for confidentiality reasons we cannot give details of their individual development needs unless authorised to do so.

2. Expressions of Interest (Eoi) Received

In total, the scheme has received:

- **78** eligible Eoi's (note: this counts the Atlas Partnership as 6 groups).
- **4** ineligible Eoi's. GrantScape did not have the opportunity to speak with these groups before they applied.
- **4** groups supported for one package only linked to the Community Led Programming Initiative (CLP) being run separately by Community Impact Bucks. One group had previously applied independently to NFB. There were no EOI's for the three new groups.

The eligible EOI's have come from:

- Stewkley Community Enterprise (March 2014)
- Swan Credit Union (April 2014)
- Chiltern Music Therapy (April 2014)
- Chiltern Rangers CIC (April 2014)

- Chiltern Wood Recycling Project (June 2014)
- Aylesbury Youth Action (June 2014)
- High Wycombe Shopmobility (June 2014)
- Atlas Partnership - submitted by Buckingham, Winslow & District CAB (July 2014)*
- Community Care North Bucks (July 2014)
- Stoke Mandeville Spinal Foundation (July 2014)
- Burnham Health Promotion Trust (October 2014)
- Empower to Cook (October 2014)
- Amersham and Chalfont Hockey Club (October 2014)
- Long Crendon Village Association (October 2014)
- IQRA – Women Association (October 2014)
- Wycombe Heritage and Arts Trust (October 2014)
- Bucks Play Association (November 2014)
- OK Our Kids (December 2014)
- Inspire, You, Me, Us (December 2014)
- CHAT Children Health and Therapy (December 2014)
- Vana Trust Charity (December 2014)
- Bucks Search and Rescue (December 2014)
- The Clare Foundation (January 2015)
- Botley Playing Fields Association (February 2015)
- Amersham Museum (February 2015)
- Voices and Choices CIC (February 2015)
- Talkback (February 2015)
- M.A.R.E.S. (February 2015)
- Community Impact Bucks (March 2015)
- Hazlemere Community Association (April 2015)
- Mediation Buckinghamshire (May 2015)
- Amersham Museum (June 2015)
- Follyfoot Healing with Horses (June 2015)
- Horizon Sports Club (August 2015)
- Young Deaf Activities (August 2015)
- Buckinghamshire Mind (September 2015)
- Youth Concern (September 2015)
- Wrights Meadow Centre (October 2015)
- Haddenham Cycle Training (October 2015)
- Thornborough and Coombs WE Trust (November 2015)
- Little Chalfont Charitable Trust (November 2015)
- Khepera CIC (December 2015)
- Chiltern Counselling (January 2016)
- Headway South Bucks (January 2016)
- Wycombe Environment Centre (February 2016)
- Wycombe Youth Action (February 2016)
- Horses Helping People (February 2016)
- Road Farm Countryways CIC (February 2016)
- Chalfont St Giles Youth Club (March 2016)
- Risborough Area Community Bus (April 2016)
- Chesham Youth Centre (April 2016)
- The River Ministries Community (April 2016)
- Sparkles (April 2016)
- Thomley Hall Centre (May 2016)
- The Strategy (Bucks) CIC (July 2016)
- Aylesbury Vale Rape Crisis (July 2016)
- The Oasis Partnership (August 2016)
- Chiltern Woodlands Project (August 2016)

- Women’s Cultural Arena (September 2016)
- Marlow Museum (September 2016)
- One Can Hope (September 2016)
- Men in Sheds High Wycombe (September 2016)
- Southcourt & Walton Court Comm. Project (October 2016)
- Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Rugby (October 2016)
- Me, Myself, I (October 2016)
- Aylesbury Multicultural Community Centre (November 2016)
- Enrych Buckinghamshire (December 2016)
- Buckingham Canal Society (January 2017)
- Chiltern MS Centre (January 2017)
- CPRE Buckinghamshire Branch (February 2017)
- Youth Enquiry Service (February 2017)
- Lindengate (March 2017)
- Caribbean Elderly Hairoun Centre (March 2017)
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For over 50% of these groups, the initial source of the introduction was Community Impact Bucks.

The four groups supported in respect of the CLP programme were@

- Thomley Hall Centre
- Ivinghoe Ols School Community Hub
- Winslow Big Society
- Stoke Poges Good Neighbour Scheme

3. Operational Areas in Bucks of Groups Supported by new futures buckinghamshire

The Districts of Buckinghamshire in which the groups being supported by the scheme operate are as follows:

- Aylesbury Vale District 21
- Chiltern District 11
- South Bucks District 6
- Wycombe District 15
- All 4 Districts 32

Note: The sum of the above exceeds 78, as some groups operate in 2 or more (rather than all) Districts.

4. Support for Buckinghamshire County Council’s Priorities

In their EoI’s, groups were asked to identify which of the County Council’s priorities their activities contribute to. Please note that 16 priorities were originally listed for selection, but that these reduced to 15 as of January 2016, with one new one being added relating to community safety.

The number of groups selecting each priority was as set out in the table below, ranked by volume. The top three priorities have been consistently the most supported areas over the life of the scheme.

Improving the lives of vulnerable adults, families and/or children	44
Improving the quality of life for people with care and support needs	42
Providing positive activities for disadvantaged children and young people	32

Improving the public health of disadvantaged Buckinghamshire residents	31
Increasing the numbers of young people volunteering	28
Supporting the provision of skills training or other interventions to improve the employability of local people	26
Helping communities to provide more services for themselves	25
Delaying and reducing the need for care and support	24
Making sure young people are prepared for the world of work and adult life	18
Enabling all communities to access key education services and facilities	15
Working, or planning to work with, the County Council to deliver services in new or different ways	12
Supporting young children to be ready for school	10
Improving and protecting the Green Belt, AONB, Rights of Way and Green Spaces	9
Improving the “public realm” in towns and villages (i.e. places accessible to all without charge, such as streets, parks, squares, arcades and public buildings)	9
Improving community safety, and reducing crime and the fear of crime	6
Reducing car use by promoting and developing sustainable travel choices	5
Reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill by increasing the amount of waste we all reuse, recycle, compost and divert	5

5. Groups’ Progress through new futures buckinghamshire

An overview of the progress made through the scheme is as follows:

Stage One

- **68** groups have received their initial development planning support from Community Impact Bucks.
- **1** group (the Atlas Partnership of 6 organisations) advanced directly to Stage Two, in agreement with the County Council. **1** group (Community Impact Bucks) did not require support.
- **3 CLP** groups received their development planning support from Community Impact Bucks
- **4** groups did not take up the offer of their development planning support.

Stage Two

- **149** specialist support packages have been delivered (includes 6 for Atlas Partnership). The standard time for a specialist support package is 3 days, although in a small number of cases additional time has been allowed in order to meet the needs of the group. For some groups a shorter support package, of 1.5 or 2 days has been sufficient.
- **8** specialist support packages are still in course and due to finish in November
- **5** specialist packages were scoped but did not proceed. 3 of these were for groups that did not wish to take them forward, whilst 1 group’s priorities changed and 1 group had to close.

6. Groups' Feedback on Stage One of new futures buckinghamshire

Following completion of Stage One, each group is asked to complete and return a voluntary Service Evaluation form. 37 forms have been provided.

GrantScape

Feedback as regards the quality of overall support received from GrantScape was as follows:

- Excellent 26 groups (70%)
- Good 11 groups (30%)
- Average or Poor 0 groups (0%)

A selection of comments received was as follows:

- All very easy and straightforward. Nice to not have too many hoops to jump through!
- Simple and effective process to follow.
- We have been really pleased with the application process and the speed of things has been really impressive. The only area where it would have been good to have more clarification is the relationship between GrantScape and Community Impact Bucks, plus the expert advisors that are signed up to help each organisation. It would be useful to know how these people were chosen and also to have some advance information on their background and experience.
- Helpful and polite service.
- The contact with GrantScape has been effective. However, it isn't clear as a layperson who has the responsibility for the process – is it GrantScape or Community Impact Bucks?
- The process has been quick, efficient and straight forward.
- The support so far has been very beneficial to us.
- We are very pleased with the process so far. The consultants you have provided are both good and have made a positive start, Roger Davies of Gazella HR is particularly impressive.
- It wasn't always possible to get through to someone over the phone although once one got through, issues were dealt with professionally. It took some time to get a response hence the low rating but one assumes that this could have been due to bureaucracy and not necessarily staff related. *(GrantScape note: We received this group's EoI on 15/12/14. No constitution was attached, although the group indicated it was in their EoI, so we asked for this on 16/12/14. This was posted to us, but didn't arrive until after Christmas. We confirmed support on 08/01/15 - our office was closed from 24/12 – 05/01).*
- It took several weeks for the eligibility decision, but "Beggars can't be choosers" – we recognize that any help we can received for free is very welcome whatever the delay might be. *(GrantScape note: We were unable to confirm eligibility until this was confirmed by the County Council. There was a delay in our receiving this.)*
- The process was explained well. It told us what we could and could not get out of this program. It made it clear that they would be facilitating this and not "doing it" for us. This was good to know

Community Impact Bucks

Feedback as regards the quality of overall support received from Community Impact Bucks was as follows:

- Excellent 29 groups (78%)
- Good 8 groups (22%)
- Average or Poor 0 groups (0%)

A selection of comments received was as follows:

- Very professional and offered insightful ideas throughout.
- 10/10 so far. Very professional service, totally happy.
- No problems, but being a small team and CIB being flexible made the logistics very easy.
- Support was informal but still very informative. Friendly and knowledgeable session leader.
- We were really impressed with CIB's prompt service and also found the planning session very useful on a general development level - good questions which raised a number of topics which were useful to discuss.
- The meeting was friendly, open and informal enough to promote good discussion. As a result it was very productive and there were several spin off development ideas that were proactively pursued around the theme of sustainability as well as development of the direct support proposals.
- We were very satisfied with the support given and appreciated the time given to the planning session which was well worthwhile.
- The Development planning session was well structured and valuable to us.
- The session seemed overly long. A lot of information to take in.
- We were all pleased and really impressed by the standard of the material provided by CIB. In particular, Diane Rutter was excellent, she did a brilliant job of encapsulating our needs and taking us through the first steps. An invaluable experience.
- Sara Greenwood was very knowledgeable and good at thinking on her feet. She helped us to focus on the areas we really need to start with. Really impressive.
- The feedback received from the planning session helped us to identify areas of need for our organisation. We found staff very professional and eager to help. The appointment was at a mutually convenient time

7. Stage Two Specialist Support Packages

The **10** support areas for which bespoke specialist support packages are available through New Futures Buckinghamshire are as follows:

- Finance and Income Generation
- Strategy and Planning
- Governance and Legal Structures
- People, HR and Employment
- Marketing and Communications
- New Ways of Working
- Performance
- Research and Evidence Gathering
- ICT Services
- Facilities and Supply Management

For the **76** groups (i.e. counting Project Atlas as 6 and including 3 of the 4 CLP groups who had not previously received support from NFB) that have successfully advanced to Stage Two, **157** specialist support packages have been scoped for delivery, and have been delivered as follows:

• Finance and Income Generation	34
• Strategy and Planning	39
• Marketing and Communications	34
• People, HR and Employment	18
• Governance and Legal Structures	14
• ICT Services	10
• New Ways of Working	3
• Performance	3
• Research and Evidence Gathering	2
• Facilities and Supply Management	0

The Approved Providers to whom work has been allocated are as follows:

- Tina Marshall (Creating Sense)
- Stephen Low
- Nikki Mattei (Through Their Eyes)
- Hilda Stearn (Ministry for Growth)
- Roger Davies (Gazella Ltd) (*moved away*)
- Deborah Ginns (The Art of Communications)
- Stephen Huggett (Artefii)
- James Baddeley (James Baddeley Consulting)
- Suzi Lewis (SpiresHR)
- Justin Smith (Bongo IT)
- Huseyin Djemil (Green Apple Consulting)
- John Palmer (North Harbour Consulting)
- Grant Hayward (Collaborent)
- Hazel Finney (Community Impact Bucks)
- Anne Burton (Community Impact Bucks)
- Michael Hunt (Community Impact Bucks)
- Nick Phillips (Community Impact Bucks)
- Giles Robertson (Green Banana Marketing)
- Janet Allen (Shoestrings)
- Julian Lomas (Almond Tree Consulting)
- Michael Schindler
- Michila Critchley
- Rose Challies
- Karen Pawlowska (Take One Business Communications)
- Sara Greenwood
- Ben Temple
- Louise Wheeler
- Flo van Diemen van Thor

8. Groups' Feedback on Stage Two of **new futures buckinghamshire**

Following completion of each specialist support package, groups are asked to submit a standard Completion Statement. This enables them to provide New Futures with information on the effectiveness of the intervention and on the quality of the input from their Approved Provider(s). GrantScape then shares this information with the Approved Providers and Community Impact Bucks.

130 Completion Statements have been received thus far. As can be seen, the feedback is very positive and has continued to reflect the very high levels of satisfaction with the support provided.

Specialist Packages - Value to the Group

The rankings ascribed by the beneficiary groups were as follows:

- Very Valuable 72 (55%)
- Valuable 48 (37%)
- Fairly Valuable 10 (8%)
- Not Valuable 0 (0%)

Approved Providers - Effectiveness of Overall Support

The rankings ascribed by the beneficiary groups were as follows:

- Excellent 97 (74%)
- Good 28 (22%)
- Average 4 (3%)
- Poor 1 (1%) *Provider no longer used*

Although the survey referred to in section 9 has not been repeated in 2017, the following are just a small selection of comments received from groups who have recently completed packages.

This is our third package of support from New Futures and once again the output has exceeded our expectations. It is important to us that all the data we hold in the organisation is treated respectfully and in line with legislation. This advice has helped us understand what we need to do to be fully compliant with GDPR which comes into effect next year.

Buckinghamshire Mind

The support from New Futures professionals has been invaluable in helping our organisation with everything from finance and business development, to marketing and communications. It has been one of the sole reasons that our organisation has achieved such success over the last few years.

Chiltern Music Therapy

This has been a very valuable experience, in particular the ability to get expert advice and an external opinion for our project. As a small volunteer-based charity, we did not have the experience and knowledge needed to be successful in raising funds for a capital project. The consultants provided were able to work closely with our management team and each of the three packages has been highly effective in helping us to move forwards towards achieving our goal.

Amersham Band

Offered much friendly and highly unique professional service to us, Always offered reliable solutions, which developed our creativity

Women's Cultural Arena

We are grateful for the manner in which this package has been developed and delivered, from the initial briefing with members of the CIB team to the selection of the preferred consultant and the swift and considered methods used to achieve the objectives of the support package.

Lindengate

9. new futures buckinghamshire Evaluation Survey

In addition to the detailed feedback collected from beneficiary groups at the time of each package's completion, an Evaluation Survey was undertaken in Q4 2016 using "Survey Monkey". This was sent to **44** groups that were in a position to reflect on the value of New Futures' support with a sensible degree of hindsight.

Responses to the Survey were received from **16** groups (1 representing the 6 Project Atlas groups). As the following table shows, New Futures has clearly been of considerable benefit to the vast majority of respondents, with nearly **94%** rating it valuable or very valuable.

Looking back, please rate the overall value of the development support that you received from New Futures.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not Valuable (did not meet your goals and objectives)	0.0%	0
Fairly valuable (did not meet all your goals and objectives, but was still useful)	6.3%	1
Valuable (met your goals and objectives)	37.5%	6
Very Valuable (exceeded your goals and objectives)	56.3%	9

Quotes included:

- "I am not sure how we would have managed without this support. I feel more optimistic about our ability to develop services and to identify and attract additional Trustees to help us achieve this."
- "Our efficiency increased due to areas being identified where we were weak."
- "As we are a small charity it was very helpful for us to have access to specialist support via the New Futures programme. We needed help particularly with regard to developing new policies and procedures relating to staff, Trustees and volunteers."
- "It was very valuable for a small charity to have access to professional help which is usually not affordable. It was also good to get opinions of people who are not connected with the charity."
- "An invaluable service. It has made a big difference to us."

The Evaluation Survey also asked questions focused specifically on **Buckinghamshire County Council's six Objectives for New Futures** when the scheme was launched. The responses received were as follows:

Please rate the extent to which New Futures has helped your organisation by increasing its ability to deliver high quality services.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not Applicable	0.0%	0
Low	0.0%	0
Medium	18.8%	3
High	62.5%	10
Very High	18.8%	3

Quotes included:

- “We are a new organisation and the support we have received from New Futures has been invaluable in developing our business and associated strategies and processes.”
- “This support has given us an opportunity to step away from our normal working practices and to develop new ways of thinking and working, to improve and sustain the charity.”

Please rate the extent to which New Futures has helped your organisation by improving its proficiency in using resources effectively.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not Applicable	6.3%	1
Low	0.0%	0
Medium	25.0%	4
High	50.0%	8
Very High	18.8%	3

Quotes included:

- “This support has allowed us to look objectively at our resources, define our gaps and to identify ways to target these skill and thereby improve the governance of our board.”
- “New Futures assisted a key part of our charity to review their structure and bring in a more efficient way of using the skills of the volunteers. Very successful exercise.”

Please rate the extent to which New Futures has helped your organisation by improving its resourcefulness in finding new and innovative ways of delivering services, and/or improving people's access to them.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not Applicable	37.5%	6
Low	0.0%	0
Medium	25.0%	4
High	18.8%	3
Very High	18.8%	3

Quotes included:

- “An output from the fundraising strategy work is a successful bid to the Lloyds Foundation - raising £73k over 3 years. This funding will focus on improving access to services and promoting a more recovery focused model of delivery.”
- “A new board comes together with a range of different expectations of the same service. New Futures volunteers have helped us clarify our message to improve people's access to our services.”

Please rate the extent to which New Futures has helped your organisation by improving its flexibility in being able to respond quickly to the needs of Buckinghamshire's residents and communities

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not Applicable	50.0%	8
Low	6.3%	1
Medium	18.8%	3
High	12.5%	2
Very High	12.5%	2

Quotes included:

- “We are now better able to reach them with a targeted and effective marketing strategy.”

Please rate the extent to which New Futures has helped your organisation to encourage people and communities to do more for themselves by increasing volunteering, neighbourliness and/or local involvement.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not Applicable	31.3%	5
Low	0.0%	0
Medium	50.0%	8
High	18.8%	3
Very High	0.0%	0

Quotes included:

- “As the organisation strengthens and grows we expect to see more volunteers wanting to join us.”
- “We are reaching more people as volunteers through improved marketing.”

Please rate the extent to which New Futures has helped your organisation to become more ready and able to bid for and win contracts for public services.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not Applicable	43.8%	7
Low	0.0%	0
Medium	18.8%	3
High	25.0%	4
Very High	12.5%	2

Quotes included:

- “We are very confident that the current package from New Futures will prove very valuable in improving our marketing and presentations.”
- “Part of the focus of the Lloyds bid is impact measurement. By being able to explain this impact more clearly to stakeholders we expect to be more contract-ready in the future.”

The Evaluation Survey asked groups about the **key lessons learned** during the support received, and whether they would do anything differently if starting again. Responses included:

- “Have a relatively clear focus on what you would like to achieve but be flexible as new ideas and information evolves.”
- “Importance of having a methodical approach and setting a timetable for action - we haven't always succeeded in keeping to the timetable but having the goals in place is very important.”
- “We found it very useful having someone seeing the charity from " outside" and helping us reflect on what we needed to do to improve etc. and then supporting us in the implementation.”
- “All projects made us stop and think about who we are and what we are doing and how we are doing it. We needed to change some things and not others.”
- "To think outside the box and look at the wider picture."

The Evaluation Survey also asked whether the support from New Futures had provided any **unexpected benefits**. Responses included:

- “I think it helped us as a Board of Trustees to work even more closely together.”
- Our marketing and communications took on a focus that was different from what we would have done without the expert analysis.”
- “We did make useful contacts during the process and are trying to collaborate with other similar charities.”
- “The evaluation session with Community Impact Bucks was helpful as it gave the team time to reflect on priorities and celebrate the progress made thus far.”
- “It has given the whole team an opportunity to bond and to understand each other more, leading to even better team working.”

Finally, the Evaluation Survey asked about what, if any, **actions** the respondents had decided to take to build on the support received from New Futures. Responses included:

- “We have invested in specific expertise for fundraising, and defined our approach to the corporate sector.”
- “Updating the charity's constitution, job descriptions and communication between participants.”
- “The package off support we received has highlighted where certain of our existing policies and procedures need to be reviewed and updated so we have further work to do on this.”
- “Main actions are identifying and recruiting appropriately skilled Trustees and specialist volunteers. With this additional resource we will be able to develop our services and support more clients.”

10. new futures buckinghamshire Case Studies

Alongside the Evaluation Survey, Community Impact Bucks conducted a number of detailed Case Studies with recipients of New Futures' support. These have been provided separately to Buckinghamshire County Council.

The groups involved included Buckinghamshire Mind, Chiltern Rangers, Chiltern Music Therapy and Stoke Mandeville Spinal Research.