

# **THE LOCAL VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR, ITS IMPACT AND FUNDING ISSUES**

**A STUDY OF KNOWLE WEST, BRISTOL**

**AUGUST 2007**

**Lin Whitfield Consultancy**  
[www.linwhitfield.co.uk](http://www.linwhitfield.co.uk)

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## FOREWORD

This study was completed with the financial support of the Royal Bank of Scotland Group to provide some research evidence to underpin a session at the Community Foundation Network (CFN) conference 2007 chaired by Duncan Sloan, Head of Community Banking at the RBS Group to explore different approaches to the financing of organisations working to strengthen communities in the UK.

Based largely on anecdotal evidence community foundations have previously noted that charitable “enterprise” that could be funded sustainably by loan or equity finance was less significant locally that might have been expected given the profile that such activity has in the charity press and policy circles.

This research set out to provide some reliable evidence on what community organisations are contributing and what their views and plans are for the viable sustainable financing of their work.

The methodology adopted was to examine the charitable sector in one estate in detail. We chose to do this in Bristol as the local Community Foundation had already expressed in this research. CFN is grateful to Quartet Community Foundation for enabling the work and for recruiting Lin Whitfield who has completed the research with great diligence and professionalism.

CFN is a strategic partner of the Cabinet Office and this research will also form an important element of our input to the implementation of the Government’s Third Sector Review. .

Stephen Hammersley  
Chief Executive  
Community Foundation Network  
September 2007

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A. BACKGROUND

### Introduction

The **funding environment** for the local voluntary and community sector is a changing one, with an increasing focus on targets and outcomes, a steady shift from unrestricted grant funding to service level agreements, and a reduction in overall local government funding with a consequential squeeze on funding for the sector. Community Foundation Network (CFN), which represents the community foundation movement in the UK, has become more and more aware of anecdotal evidence from its members which suggests that these factors are having an impact on the funding available to support voluntary and community-led activity in communities across the UK.

In the early part of 2007, CFN developed a **research brief** to investigate the impact at a very local level of this changing funding environment. In particular, CFN wanted a detailed analysis of the voluntary and community sector in a defined local area, to include:

- A mapping of the sector, to include some segmentation eg size, age, beneficiaries, activities, reach
- An analysis of the types of funding currently being accessed across the sector, to include trading, contracts and service level agreements, loans, small grants, membership fees, and fundraising events; together with how organisations see their future financial sustainability
- An analysis of the outcomes and the impact of the sector and its activities, to include building community capacity and social and economic benefit

The **purpose of the research** was to provide CFN and community foundations with:

- Evidence in order to influence the policy agenda locally and nationally
- Information that will improve operations in matching funding between donors and the voluntary sector
- Research that will enable community foundations to be more strategic in their approach to funding

The work was focussed on Knowle West in Bristol, and took place between May and August 2007.

## Context

The Office of the Third Sector Review, published in July 2007, stresses the value of the role community-based organisations are playing in encouraging the active participation of communities in civil renewal. Yet national and regional research shows that **funding for small voluntary and community groups is declining**. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations' UK Voluntary Sector Almanac for 2007 shows the increasing dominance of a small number of very large charities, with the income share of the smallest charities declining most quickly: those with incomes of under £10,000 registered a 10.7% decline. The South West forum's survey on funding, undertaken in March 2007, revealed that all respondents except one reported funding cuts, and expressed significant and serious concerns.

## Methodology

One of the key challenges in the research was to achieve a reasonably comprehensive **mapping** of the sector in Knowle West. The methodology for this part of the work incorporated: researching the contact lists and databases of a number of agencies; 'foot-slogging' and asking questions round the major community venues in the area; and continually cross-referencing as much information as possible with key contacts in the area. A list of more than 60 groups based in the area emerged from this exercise, though this excluded some sports groups that function during the winter months only.

The groups were sent a simple, mainly tick box **questionnaire** to return in a stamped addressed envelope, with the option of filling it in electronically. The questionnaire covered:

- Basic facts to determine size, age, legal structure, charitable status, staff/volunteers
- The group's activities and projects: who takes part and how they benefit
- Sources of funding and funding issues

To achieve a good return rate, groups returning their questionnaires promptly were entered in a prize draw for £50. The return rate for questionnaires was 35%.

Follow-up **semi-structured interviews** were undertaken with ten groups in order to explore impact and to discuss future funding needs. Two additional interviews were undertaken with key statutory agencies in the area. Short telephone interviews were also undertaken with a small number of Bristol-wide voluntary organisations that run outreach sessions in Knowle West, in order to investigate the funding for this work.

## **Knowle West and its communities**

Knowle West is an estate in South Bristol of around 5000 households, built largely between 1931 and 1939. It is in an area with **high levels of deprivation**: Bristol City Council's 2006 ward profile for Filwood, which is the major part of the estate, shows that all the Super Output Areas in the ward are in the worst 10% in the country in terms of crime, and in terms of education, training and skills deprivation. In particular, Ilminster Avenue West ranks 7<sup>th</sup> out of the 252 SOAs in Bristol and 439<sup>th</sup> out of 23,482 SOAs on indices of multiple deprivation. Knowle West has been targeted with regeneration initiatives over a number of years: most recently, the area has received significant amounts of funding from the Government's Single Regeneration Budget, and European funding through URBAN.

The Census mid-year estimate for 2004 is that Knowle West has a population of 11,575; the majority of these are white (96.2% at the 2001 Census). It is a **tightly knit community**: generations have stayed since the 1930s. However, although local people see themselves as 'Westers' and are proud of this, there are a number of distinct communities in Knowle West and many residents stay within their home territory of within five to ten minutes' walk away. Knowle West has a long history of community activity, and it is clear that there are still a number of committed and skilled individuals working on an unpaid basis to make Knowle West a better place to live.

## **B. FINDINGS**

### **Profile of the voluntary sector in Knowle West**

The research established that there are between 45 and 65 independent voluntary organisations and community groups based in Knowle West and working in the area. It is not possible to more accurate than this as the configuration of very small groups in a local area is not only difficult to pin down precisely, but is also liable to change at short notice as key individuals move on, funding runs out, or users' needs change. Additionally, a number of projects or initiatives in the area which have a distinct identity and seem to be independent are structurally part of another organisation. During this research, direct contact was made with 25 independent groups and three projects that are part of another organisation.

30 voluntary and community organisations based in Knowle West focus their work almost entirely within the estate. Knowle West also benefits from a number of other city-wide organisations that run outreach or drop-in services in the area, in particular advice agencies and support and counselling agencies. For its size, Knowle West has an unusually large number of **community buildings**, eight in total (all voluntary except one), most of which act as a hub for a range of activities. All of them are struggling for resources. The Salvation Army and some of the local **churches** have a long track record of running

community activities, especially for children. A number of the former shops on the estate now house community initiatives.

Of the 25 independent organisations contacted during the research, 68% were established after 1990. This may be linked with the availability of regeneration funding from Bristol's Urban Programme (late 1980s – 1994), the Government's Single Regeneration Budget from 1994 and European funding schemes from 1999. 36% of the groups are purely **voluntary** and do not employ staff; of those that do, the largest **employers** are Knowle West Development Trust with 11 full-time and 4 part-time staff, and South Bristol Crossroads with 3 full-time and 30 part-time staff. The two smallest employers both have one full-time and one part-time post.

48% of the organisations have a **budget** this year in excess of £100,000, and three of them have a budget of over £250,000. This is a large number for an area of this size and may be linked with the availability of regeneration funding in the area. There are around 18-20 very small informal groups, including a Scout group, a writing group, a smallholders' group, a children's drama group, a number of sports groups, and a children's arts and crafts group.

36% of organisations that participated in the research are **unincorporated associations**, and 52% are **companies limited by guarantee**. Those with unincorporated status were all established before 1990. 64% are **registered charities**.

### **Voluntary sector activities**

Across the voluntary sector as a whole in Knowle West, there are projects and activities working in the fields of advice; arts, culture and media; care and support; education, training and skills; environment; health and wellbeing; and leisure, sports and social activities.

- Filwood Hope is the only **advice** agency now based on the estate, but a number of other South Bristol or city-wide advice agencies run specialist outreach sessions at different venues in the area.
- One major organisation on the estate works in the fields of **arts, culture and media**, education, training and skills, and the environment: Knowle West Media Centre is a multi-media organisation that runs a number of programmes of activities and projects, many of them targeted at young people.
- Groups providing **care and support** for specific beneficiaries in Knowle West include several that work across a wider geographical area, such as South Bristol Crossroads and Parentline Plus. Locally-focussed groups include a self-help group for isolated women, the Knowle West Against Drugs Service, and the Knowle West Domestic Abuse Project.
- Several initiatives on the estate provide **employment advice and training**, including the One Stop Job Shop run by Knowle West

Development Trust, and Re:Work, which runs training and placement schemes in the areas of furniture restoration and resale, construction, and garden maintenance.

- Two small organisations are focussed entirely on **environmental issues**. Northern Slopes organises clear-up days and tree-planting on the northern slopes area which borders part of the estate, and Buried Treasure helps people tidy up and look after their gardens in addition to undertaking environmental and recycling work in the community.
- Knowle West Development Trust runs a **community safety** initiative, Knowle Safe, with activities ranging from a motorbike project for young people to a witness protection scheme.
- Two major organisations on the estate work on **health** issues. The Knowle West Health Park Company runs one-to-one and group sessions designed to prevent illness, promote good health, and help people to adopt healthy lifestyles. Knowle West Health Association runs a number of projects, including a community kitchen, keep fit and healthy eating sessions, smoking cessation classes, a men's health group, and health and social care advocacy.
- There are five **social** clubs on the estate, and a number of activity clubs for older people. Young people are currently less well provided for as traditional youth work provision has been going through an extensive period of change. Youth Moves, the coordinating body, has shifted from being primarily a funding source for thematic work to working more strategically. There is a range of activities for children in the area.
- Several groups offer **services and support to other groups**; there is an award scheme for local **volunteers**, and a young people's volunteering scheme.

### The impact of the sector

Groups in Knowle West were asked to identify the differences their activities and projects were making to **users**. A range of outcomes were identified, with the following most frequently mentioned:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| • Increased confidence                    | 86% |
| • More friends                            | 78% |
| • New skills                              | 78% |
| • Improved physical and/or mental health  | 60% |
| • More involvement in the local community | 56% |

- Increased participation in other activities 52%
- Some have found jobs 52%
- Less involvement in crime or drug-taking 34%

Social benefits are well represented here, as might be expected, but there are also significant economic and health benefits. A range of other benefits were also reported, several of which focussed on quality of life.

A range of outcomes for **the community** of Knowle West were also identified, with the following most frequently mentioned:

- Providing opportunities for local people to learn new skills 60%
- Getting children and young people involved in positive activities 52%
- Creating more pride in the area 39%
- Cleaning up and improving the environment 34%
- Creating jobs in the area for local people 30%
- Making Knowle West safer 26%

There is evidence from this research that the voluntary and community sector in Knowle West has considerable impact on **strategic priorities** within Bristol. The sector is a major employer: it supports more than 170 jobs. Voluntary organisations are also bringing money into Knowle West in the form of grants and service level agreements, and circulating it within the area: they are spending it at post offices and local shops; and some of them are paying staff, many of whom live in the area and spend money locally.

Organisations such as Knowle West Media Centre, Re;Work and Knowle West Development Trust are contributing to priorities around education, learning and skills in Bristol. Knowle West Media Centre, Buried Treasure and Knowle West Development Trust are among the organisations having an impact on the environment, community safety and crime. A number of organisations have an impact on health and wellbeing, including Knowle West Health Association, the Knowle West Health Park Company and Knowle West Against Drugs Service.

The sector also has considerable impact on community capacity and social capital in Knowle West. Knowle West Media Centre focuses one of its five programmes on community communication, ensuring that the many voices in the area are heard and can have an impact. Many organisations are involving local volunteers, working in partnership with other local organisations, and bringing local people together to make things happen in the local community.

## Voluntary sector funding in Knowle West

The **main sources** of income for organisations in Knowle West are:

Source of income	Number of groups (%)
Small grants from local trusts	53%
Bristol City Council grant/service level agreement	42%
Funding from national Government initiative	39%
Fees from users	39%
Larger grants from non-local trusts	32%
Trading (including room hire)	28%
Contracts for providing services	25%
European funding schemes	21%
Fundraising events	17%
The Lottery or Awards for All	17%
Legacy	7%

28% of the groups rely on a combination of **fees, voluntary donations, fundraising events and small grants**. They are not in a position to access statutory, national Government or European sources of funding. The majority of these groups have been operating on the estate for many years, which suggests that their 'funding strategies' are ensuring their sustainability despite evidence of a hand to mouth and sometimes precarious existence.

36% of the organisations undertake an element of **trading**: this includes room hire, selling products, undertaking commissions and providing specialist services. With the exception of two small organisations, all these organisations that trade are registered charities and rely on securing an element of grant funding to survive. Income generation, on its own, is not a sustainable fundraising strategy for them.

36% of organisations seem to be heavily dependent on a combination of **statutory, national government and European funding**, and an additional two projects are funded solely through Neighbourhood Renewal. There will be major changes to some of these funding sources by the end of March 2008.

### Funding issues facing the sector

88% of organisations expressed concern about funding for the future. The issues they raised fall into five broad and overlapping themes:

- The forthcoming end of a number of streams of regeneration money in March 2008 – the '**funding cliff**'
- Difficulties with **contracting** arrangements, including a lack of recognition of **full cost recovery**

- The amount of **time spent searching for and coordinating funding**
- **Poor communication, lack of coordination and lack of understanding on the part of funders**
- **Local Authority politics and estate politics**

The '**funding cliff**' was elaborated on at length in almost all the interviews undertaken during the research. Knowle West has been able to access regeneration funding since the mid-1980s, and many groups are waiting to know what might be available rather than developing other strategies. There is a real fear that many services and activities will disappear after March 2008. There was also concern that most organisations in Knowle West are likely to be in competition for future funding at the same time.

Several organisations have had difficulties with **contracting** arrangements, either because of commissioning bodies' particular agendas or because of difficult relationships with partner providers. In large and small organisations alike, the lead member of staff is spending a great deal of **time** investigating, applying for, coordinating and reporting on funding.

### **Funding strategies for the future**

The majority of the **smaller organisations** are not interested in growth, but just want to be able to keep on going. The continuing availability of **small grants** is a vital part of their future funding strategy. Interviews undertaken with the **larger organisations** revealed a range of funding strategies, from the traditional dependence on the Local Authority to the entrepreneurial. Some organisations had detailed plans in place and were already implementing them, while others seemed to be leaving things rather late. Some are looking to do more work in partnership, or are gradually moving towards increasing income generation. **Small grants** play a part here too: they are invaluable for pilot work, one-off projects, bringing in specialist skills and capacity-building for staff and Trustees.

Despite the changing funding environment for the voluntary sector, the majority of organisations in Knowle West do not seem to be developing funding strategies that are markedly different from those prevalent in the sector eight to ten years ago. For most of the smaller organisations, income generation, social enterprise and playing an increasing role in the delivery of public services are simply not on their radar – and it is probably right that this is so.

For many of the larger organisations, **public sector funding through service level agreements** dominates their thinking, with a strategy that seems to be about working harder to lobby or to influence thinking at strategic level. In some cases, organisations are being **commissioned** for the delivery of some services. There is evidence that in a number of organisations, **partnership working** is alive and well and contributing to their sustainability: this is mainly within the sector rather than on a cross-sectoral basis. However, this is by no means universal, and some comments were made that revealed a lack of trust

in certain organisations and individuals that may make working in partnership difficult.

There are some pockets of **social enterprise** activity, but most voluntary organisations in Knowle West do not currently seem to be pursuing funding strategies that take them in this direction.

### C. CONCLUSIONS

It is tempting to draw the conclusion that Knowle West's voluntary sector is atypical: voluntary and community sector groups are more numerous and it has a bigger number of larger organisations that employ staff than would be found in many local areas. However, it is possible to discern a number of features that are likely to be found in local areas elsewhere.

There are a number of **small community groups**, often started and led by people with a passion. They often do not have aspirations of growth but just want to continue what they do: they are **largely self-funding** through fees and the occasional fundraising event, and **small grants** help as a pressure-easer and sometimes a lifeline in difficult times. Their impact on individuals and the community is in the areas of friendships, confidence, a sense of connectedness in the community, local pride, and health and community wellbeing.

Secondly, there are **community buildings**: Knowle West has more of these than most local areas. The smaller ones often operate largely as members clubs and also hire out rooms; the larger ones often act as a community hub and run a range of activities as well as hiring out facilities. Smaller community buildings can often be **largely self-funding** through operating as a bar and social club, but may need **small grants** occasionally for specific items, and larger grants for major repairs or refurbishments. Larger community buildings may have a mixture of **Local Authority funding, large grants and small grants**. The impact of community buildings depends on the activities: social wellbeing for individuals, particularly for those that act primarily as social clubs; but larger ones can be a catalyst for local activity.

There may be a few **organisations that are part of a national or regional network**, or have a geographical area of benefit larger than the local community. These organisations are based in premises locally so the local community often benefits disproportionately from their services and activities. Funding tends to be mainly **commissioning, supplemented by large and small grants** which may be for projects. Their impact on individuals and the community can be wide-ranging as they work in many fields: this can include economic benefits through employment and job creation, and health and wellbeing.

Lastly, there are local organisations that started life as **small initiatives that responded to a local need, and have grown**: they may have a number of projects and services, some of which are short term and some longer term. **Funding is complex and volatile** for these organisations, particularly if sources of Government money (through national initiatives and/or the Local Authority) have been available to enable the growth to take place. Serious

retrenching is invariably inconceivable to these organisations as they are meeting a demonstrable need. These are the organisations in the sector that are most **vulnerable to policy or strategy changes at national, regional or local level; and to shifts in power and agendas at Local Authority level**. Their impact can be considerable, and can cover social and economic benefits to individuals and to the wider community.

Although there may be a small element of income generation among local groups, **trading rarely features** as part of fundraising strategies, and for many groups it is not appropriate at all. Seeing the organisation as a business necessitates a huge shift in thinking for many in the sector. Where there are considerable amounts of Government funding available locally, there is less of a need to consider other strategies.

In areas where there is funding available from Government initiatives, a number of groups are likely to face problems simultaneously as the money comes to an end. These may not be as marked as the **funding cliff** in Knowle West, but projects will face closure, services will suffer, and groups may fold.

The impact of the voluntary and community sector at local level ranges across a wide range of social and economic areas, and contributes to many local, regional and national strategic priorities. Local organisations can enable many things to happen in communities through the provision of accessible facilities, user-friendly expertise and knowledge, and step-by-step encouragement.

## **D. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendations for Community Foundation Network**

1. CFN should circulate the findings of this research widely, particularly to other funders and those working at strategic level.
2. CFN should continue to emphasise that small grants are not only vital for the health of the voluntary and community sector at local level, but also for the building of strong communities.
3. CFN should continue to spread the message to its members that local knowledge enables good grant-making. It should encourage its members to get out and about in very local areas and to keep their local knowledge continuously updated.
4. CFN should continue to encourage its members to make sure that very local groups at grassroots level know about their grants and how easy it is to apply for them. It should stress the importance of using a range of methods, including using key local individuals to facilitate contact, and using successful applicants as local ambassadors.

### **Recommendations for funders**

1. Funders should recognise that small grants are not only vital for the health of the voluntary and community sector at local level, but also for the building of strong communities. They should work with each other to ensure that small grants remain available to local groups.
2. Funders should recognise that national agendas around commissioning the voluntary sector to deliver public services, and encouraging the development of social enterprises, are of limited applicability to most groups working at local level.
3. Funders should assess to what extent there may be a funding cliff approaching for the voluntary sector in their area. They should work with other funders and the sector at an early stage to develop strategies to minimise its impact.
4. Funders should recognise that the tribalism that exists in some local areas can lead to disputes between groups. They should develop mechanisms to deal with disputes at an early stage before organisations and their services are damaged.

### **Recommendations for the voluntary sector**

1. Local infrastructure organisations and development agencies should use the results of this research to continue to emphasise to funders that small grants are not only vital for the health of the voluntary and community sector at local level, but also for the building of strong communities.
2. Voluntary organisations should recognise that Government initiatives and regeneration funding offers opportunities for growth but not for sustainability: the best strategy is to use them for project work and acknowledge right from day one that the project will end. An exit strategy needs to be in place from the beginning and implemented, rather than dragging things out to the bitter end and leaving users and the community disillusioned.
3. Voluntary organisations should ensure that they are evaluating the impact of what they do, ensuring that this is known locally and demonstrating how this contributes to local strategic priorities.

## **SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

**1.1** The funding environment for the local voluntary and community sector is a changing one. Over the last few years, there has been an increasing focus on targets and outcomes, a steady shift from unrestricted grant funding to service level agreements, and a reduction in overall local government funding with a consequential squeeze on funding for the sector. “Sustainable funding” has become the mantra for fundraisers in the sector and has almost attained the status of a holy grail; voluntary organisations and community groups of all shapes and sizes are being exhorted to become more entrepreneurial; and central government and some national voluntary organisations are encouraging the sector to increase its role in the delivery of public services.

**1.2** Community Foundation Network (CFN), which represents the community foundation movement in the UK, has become more and more aware of anecdotal evidence from its members which suggests that these factors are having an impact on the funding available to support voluntary and community-led activity in communities across the UK. Community foundations are grant-making charities dedicated to strengthening local communities, creating opportunities and tackling issues of disadvantage and exclusion: they are in close touch with voluntary and community groups in their local areas.

This anecdotal evidence from CFN’s members was confirmed by responses to the Government’s Third Sector Review consultation. Particular concerns were expressed about core funding for local voluntary and community sector activity at grassroots level.

**1.3** In the early part of 2007, CFN developed a research brief to investigate the impact at a very local level of this changing funding environment. In particular, CFN wanted a detailed analysis of the voluntary and community sector in a defined local area, to include:

- A mapping of the sector, to include some segmentation eg size, age, beneficiaries, activities, reach
- An analysis of the types of funding currently being accessed across the sector, to include trading, contracts and service level agreements, loans, small grants, membership fees, and fundraising events; together with how organisations see their future financial sustainability
- An analysis of the outcomes and the impact of the sector and its activities, to include building community capacity and social and economic benefit

The purpose of the research was to provide CFN and community foundations with:

- Evidence in order to influence the policy agenda locally and nationally

- Information that will improve operations in matching funding between donors and the voluntary sector
- Research that will enable community foundations to be more strategic in their approach to funding

**1.4** It was decided to focus the research initially on Knowle West in Bristol, with the possibility of replicating it elsewhere at a later stage. The work took place between May and August 2007.

## **Context**

**1.5** The Office of the Third Sector Review, published in July 2007, states:

“The Government wants to ensure that all communities can thrive, with the capacity to bring people together to deal with common concerns and achieve change. At the heart of this active participation of communities in civil renewal and neighbourhood regeneration are community based organisations providing the platform not only to meet the needs of individuals but for empowerment of individuals to bring about transformation of communities. Community organisations also act as a bridge between individuals and the state, providing opportunities for people to express their voices, building democratic engagement.”

**1.6** Yet national and regional research shows that funding for small voluntary and community groups is declining. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations’ UK Voluntary Sector Almanac for 2007 shows the increasing dominance of a small number of very large charities, with the income share of the smallest charities declining most quickly: those with incomes of under £10,000 registered a 10.7% decline.

In March 2007 the South West Forum undertook a survey on funding amongst its membership, asking about increases and decreases. All the respondents except one reported funding cuts, and expressed significant and serious concerns.

“A clear picture of declining funding for 2007-08 and beyond has emerged, including, but not only:

- funding ending from or being cut by Local Authorities, Health Service, Central Government and the European Union
  - Big Lottery and other non-statutory funders being grossly oversubscribed
  - previously buoyant, able organisations unable to obtain any funding from any source
  - equalities organisations unable to secure new, or to retain existing, funding
  - inconsistencies and lack of clarity in contracting and procurement procedures
  - service reductions and staff redundancies as organisations close”
- from Forum Focus, May 2007

Although the South West Forum had expected to hear from voluntary and community organisations experiencing cuts, they make the point that they had not anticipated the responses they received from a much wider range of stakeholders. They were contacted by funders, funding advisors and public sector partners, with some of these responses being amongst the most strongly worded. Comments from the survey included:

*“City Council funding reduced from £37,190 in 2006-07 to £20,000 in 2007-08. Unitary Council funding reduced from £67,000 in 2006-07 to £44,000 in 2007-08. Young people’s service closed March 2007 due to ending of local authority funding – this contract was worth £215,000 in 2006-07”* – organisation working with disadvantaged people

*“One organisation applied to 30 charitable trusts in 2006 and raised £87,000. They applied again to the same 30 trusts in 2007 and didn’t even get a reply from 20 of them and raised in total £0”* – funding advisor

*“Our staff numbers have dropped from 22 to 18 in the past year. We have issued four redundancy notices in the past month. We can’t afford to stay in our current premises beyond the next couple of months”* – sustainable development charity

Declining sources of funding from Local Authorities, the Health Service, central Government and the European Union mean that increasing numbers of voluntary and community organisations are chasing small grants:

*“In the last two months application numbers have nearly doubled compared with the first two months – comparing with last year there is about a 15% increase so far”* – charitable trust

*“BIG has only offered twelve BASIS bids out of 100 applicants [in the region]”* – rural voluntary and community sector development network

## **Methodology**

**1.7** One of the key challenges in the research was to achieve a reasonably comprehensive mapping of the sector in Knowle West. There is no overall directory of voluntary and community sector groups in Bristol, and such publications go out of date quickly anyway. The methodology for this part of the work incorporated: researching the contact lists and databases of a number of agencies; ‘foot-slogging’ and asking questions round the major community venues in the area; and continually cross-referencing as much information as possible with key contacts in the area. A list of more than 60 groups based in the area emerged from this exercise, though this excluded some sports groups that function during the winter months only.

**1.8** The groups were sent a simple, mainly tick box questionnaire (appendix A) to return in a stamped addressed envelope. Groups were given the option of

filling in the questionnaire electronically but none of them requested this. The questionnaire covered:

- Basic facts to determine size, age, legal structure, charitable status, staff/volunteers
- The group's activities and projects: who takes part and how they benefit
- Sources of funding and funding issues

To achieve a good return rate, groups returning their questionnaires promptly were entered in a prize draw for £50. The return rate for questionnaires was 35%.

**1.9** Follow-up semi-structured interviews were undertaken with ten groups (not all of whom had filled in the questionnaire) in order to explore impact and to discuss future funding needs. Eight of these were face-to-face, and two were done by telephone. Two additional interviews were undertaken with key statutory agencies in the area.

Short telephone interviews were also undertaken with a small number of Bristol-wide voluntary organisations that run outreach sessions in Knowle West, in order to investigate the funding for this work. These organisations are listed in appendix B.

**1.10** The rest of this report is in four sections. Section two explains the context for the voluntary and community sector in Knowle West: a profile of the area and its communities. Section three analyses the sector in Knowle West, its activities and projects, and their impact on users and on the community. Section four considers funding, with an analysis of current funding and an assessment of future funding issues. Section five draws conclusions and makes a number of recommendations.

## **SECTION 2 – KNOWLE WEST AND ITS COMMUNITIES**

### **The area of Knowle West**

**2.1** Defining Knowle West is not a simple task. Information drawn from the Knowle Safe Directory, produced by the Knowle West Development Trust, tells us that it is an estate in South Bristol of around 5000 households, built largely between 1931 and 1939. Initially it was seen as a flagship for municipal housing schemes in Bristol, with families relocating from some of the worst slums in the city.

**2.2** Geographically speaking, the estate has boundaries which largely follow fairly major roads: to the east, the A37 Wells Road; to the south, the A4174 partial dual carriageway of Airport Road and Hengrove Way; and to the west, the A4174 Hartcliffe Way, which forms a clear boundary with Hartcliffe. On the northern edge, the geographical boundary is less clear, but follows the edge of higher ground to the south of the B3122, with its housing merging into the neighbouring area of Bedminster. However, these estate boundaries are not necessarily seen as the boundaries of Knowle West.

**2.3** Politically speaking, the majority of Knowle West is in the Filwood ward, which consists of eight Lower Level Super Output Areas (SOAs): Filwood Broadway, Glyn Vale, Ilminster Avenue West, Inns Court, Leinster Avenue, Novers, Throgmorton Road, and Wedmore Vale. However, many residents in Glyn Vale and Wedmore Vale, on the northern edge of the estate, do not identify with Knowle West but with Lower Knowle, which is in a different ward. The adjoining Knowle ward, to the east, includes two parts of the estate among its SOAs: Knowle Park and Ilminster Avenue East. However, many residents in Knowle Park maintain that there is a clear distinction between Knowle Park and Knowle West.

This research has chosen to use a fairly flexible definition of Knowle West, to include Knowle Park: the community centre there hosts several groups that draw users from across the estate.

**2.4** Economically, Knowle West has changed enormously since its flagship days. In 1938 a cinema, community centre and a wide range of shops opened on Filwood Broadway: local workplaces included the Wills Tobacco factory and the Robinsons Paper Products factory in nearby Bedminster. In the 1960s the estate had two thriving secondary schools, but both were closed down some years ago. There is now no bank on the estate, and few shops operate on the Broadway. Bristol City Council's 2006 ward profile for Filwood states that there are 2600 local jobs, against an average in other wards of 6574; 3264 people are economically inactive, against an average in other wards of 2634.

Knowle West is an area with high levels of deprivation. The Bristol Partnership's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy document of 2002 states:

"High levels of poverty are found in the area with limited local facilities and geographical isolation. Educational attainment is poor and there are high levels

of burglary and vandalism. The availability of work is limited and people lack the right skills. There is poor health, isolation and high levels of teenage pregnancies... Local residents identify bullying, crime, drug use, poor environment, transport and dumped cars as local priorities. The lack of a secondary school, lack of support for family structures and lack of things to do for young people also feature.”

The Indices of Deprivation 2004 consist of seven domains of deprivation, which are combined to give an overall measure of multiple deprivation:

- Income deprivation
- Employment deprivation
- Health deprivation and disability
- Education, skills and training deprivation
- Barriers to housing and services
- Living environment deprivation
- Crime

Bristol City Council's 2006 ward profile for Filwood shows that six out of the eight SOAs in the ward are ranked within the most deprived 10% of SOAs in England in terms of multiple deprivation. All the SOAs in the ward are in the worst 10% in the country in terms of crime, and in terms of education, skills and training deprivation.

In particular, Ilminster Avenue West ranks 7<sup>th</sup> out of the 252 SOAs in Bristol and 439<sup>th</sup> out of 32,482 SOAs in England on multiple deprivation. It is the worst in Bristol in terms of education, skills and training deprivation (35<sup>th</sup> in the country), followed by Throgmorton Road and Leinster Avenue (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Bristol, 49<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> in England). Inns Court is in the most deprived 10% of areas in England across five of the seven domains of deprivation.

Knowle West has been targeted with regeneration initiatives over a number of years. Most recently, the area has been in receipt of significant amounts of funding from the Government's Single Regeneration Budget, and European funding through URBAN. A report put together for Bristol City Council in March 2004 shows that over the seven-year period from 1997, Filwood received over £3 million from the City Council, over £20 million from national Government initiatives, and over £2 million from European funds. Funding has continued from these sources since 2004. In addition, over £1 million was contributed to projects through Lottery funding.

## **The people of Knowle West**

**2.5** Demographically, Filwood's population is younger than the average for other wards in Bristol. The Census mid-year estimate for 2004 is a population of 11,575, of which 9% are aged 0-4 years, 9% aged 5-9 years, and 8% aged 10-15 years. The average for other wards is 6% in all three categories. According to 2001 census data, 96.2% of residents are all white, of which 94.5% classify themselves as white British. There are few residents from Black and minority ethnic communities. More recently, a number of European migrants have rented houses in the area, notably Poles, Bulgarians and Hungarians, but many have moved on to areas in the north of England.

**2.6** Knowle West is a tightly knit community: generations have stayed since the 1930s. Between 2003 and 2004, a survey of Knowle West was undertaken by IRIS (Involving Residents In Solutions). Of the 235 residents who took part, 85% felt Knowle West was their community because of the people.

"Knowle West is a very stable community with 69% of residents never wanting to move and only 15% wanting to move sometime in the future. Those moving wanted to stay near Knowle West because they liked living near their relatives, and the area. Many residents (67%) living in Knowle West were born and brought up there. The remaining 33% who were not born in the area are not necessarily isolated: 51% had relatives living nearby or they had married into a Knowle West family. Most residents (79%) like living in Knowle West."

- from Engaging Residents in Knowle report 2004

**2.7** However, although local people see themselves as 'Westers' and are proud of this, Knowle West is not one community. Professionals who work in the area say that, in common with many other estates, there are a number of distinct communities within Knowle West. Inns Court and Filwood Broadway may adjoin each other, but residents see them and speak of them as different areas; Ilminster Avenue and Novers could be many miles away from each other rather than at opposite ends of the estate. Many residents stay within their 'home territory': even neighbouring Bedminster, which adjoins Knowle West on its northern edge, is seen as a long way away.

With so many longstanding families living in the area, there are also 'clans' within these communities. Clans can be a strong force for cohesion in communities, but when they fall out with each other the impact can be far-reaching.

*"There are tribal divides – people won't move across the estate beyond 5-10 minutes' walk."* – worker in a local group

**2.8** Knowle West has a history of community activity: the Knowle Safe Directory's brief history of the area states:

"Family life and young people have always been important on the estate – with lots of youth clubs, church based groups, scouts and community involvement in running these."

During the course of this research, it became clear that there is still a great deal of voluntary community activity going on, and a number of committed and skilled individuals working on an unpaid basis to make Knowle West a better place to live. The manager of a statutory agency comments:

*“There’s a view that in deprived communities, there’s no talent, no people with capability – but this isn’t the case. There’s just as much, but a lot is latent across generations. What people need is encouragement and opportunities.”*

## **SECTION 3 – THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN KNOWLE WEST**

### **Profile of the sector**

#### **3.1 Overall size**

At the time of writing, it seems that between 45 and 65 independent voluntary organisations and community groups are based in Knowle West and work in the area. There are two reasons why it is not possible to be more precise than this.

Firstly, a number of projects or initiatives which have a distinct identity and seem to be independent are structurally part of another organisation. For instance, a member of staff at Re:Work, a skills and training organisation, was adamant that Re:Grow, Re:Build, Re:Start and Re:Store were separate organisations with their own governing documents and management committees: they are in fact projects/schemes, but with their own distinct branding. Several 'independent organisations' turned out to be projects that are part of Bristol City Council. A number of people stated that Knowle West Domestic Abuse Project is an independent organisation, but it is actually part of Knowle West Health Association. Knowle West Going Green sounds like an environmental organisation, but it is in fact part of Knowle West Media Centre. After amending the original list of groups in the area to take account of this, we are left with a total of 57, but it is possible that at least five more groups may not be independent at all.

Secondly, the configuration of very small groups in a local area is not only difficult to pin down precisely, but is also liable to change at short notice as key individuals move on, funding runs out, or users' needs change. Most contacts knew that Knowle West Play Centre, a sizeable organisation in the area, had folded last year, but there was no real certainty about some of the smaller groups. For example, there is doubt over whether one of the Scout groups is still operating; several people thought that one of the performing arts groups was no longer running; and not everyone knew that the Youth Forum has wound up. In addition, individuals who initiate and run activities for community benefit sometimes change what they do. A contact at Knowle Community Association in Knowle Park stated that a girls group rented space in their annexe: over the last 20 years, a local resident has set up and run a range of activities in response to the needs of local people, including a support group for single parents, majorettes, a girls group, and a support group for disabled people. The group she runs, partly in the annexe at the Community Association and partly in her own home, is currently an arts and crafts group for children.

During this research, direct contact was made with 25 independent groups and three projects that are part of another organisation. This contact was either through a returned questionnaire, a follow-up interview, or both. For a list of these groups and projects, see appendix B.

### 3.2 Geographical spread

For its size, Knowle West has an unusually large number of community buildings, most of which act as hubs for a range of activities. Most offer meeting spaces for small community groups and/or a physical base for a number of voluntary organisations.

Four are relatively old and seem to have been purpose built: Knowle Community Association in Knowle Park, now in need of repair and refurbishment; Eagle House Community Association on the southern edge of the estate, which is small and looking to extend premises; Novers Park Community Association on the western edge of the estate; and Broad Plain Social Club which is fairly central. Knowle West Health Park is a multi-purpose site (including a walk-in NHS Health Centre) built with regeneration money on the site of one of the old secondary schools on the northern edge of the estate. The Mede Centre at Inns Court was purpose built with regeneration money on the site of church premises, and still has a church attached. The remaining two have been adapted for community use: Filwood Community Centre on the Broadway was originally a primary school; and The Park near the eastern edge of the estate has been remodelled from the old secondary school for boys. All these are voluntary sector organisations except The Park, which is run by Bristol City Council, and the Health Park, where the building is owned by the Primary Care Trust and an independent community interest company, Knowle West Health Park Company, rents the café and a number of rooms.

Given the distinct communities within the area, there is an argument for this proliferation of community buildings. However, all of them are struggling for resources, even The Park:

*“Although we’re part of the City Council, we have to operate as an ‘independent business’. The financial situation is tight but we will get no further support from the Council. We have to live within our means.” – Manager, The Park*

Leinster House also used to house a small number of voluntary organisations, but it has recently been demolished. Although some of these organisations have moved out of the area, Knowle West Media Centre is in temporary premises on the estate and developing a purpose built centre in the area.

The Salvation Army and some of the churches in Knowle West have a long track record of running community activities, especially for children. The Salvation Army’s community activities include an over 50s lunch club, an after school club, and a parents and toddlers session; St Barnabas and Knowle West Baptist Church both run parents and toddlers groups.

**3.3** A number of the former shops on the Broadway now house community initiatives. The Neighbourhood Renewal office is housed there and is the contact point for Knowle West Action Group and some other small scale schemes. Knowle West Development Trust houses two of its projects there,

Knowle Safe and the One Stop Job Shop, and three voluntary organisations have premises there.

### **3.4 Area of benefit**

30 voluntary and community organisations based in Knowle West focus their work almost entirely within the estate: 13 of the respondents to the questionnaire stated this, and there was enough anecdotal evidence during the research to confirm that this is also the case for a further 17 groups.

Two organisations based in Knowle West work across the whole of south Bristol; another five organisations work across the city; and three organisations work regionally or are part of a national organisation. The area of benefit for the others is not clear from the information available.

**3.5** Knowle West benefits from a number of other city-wide organisations that run outreach or drop-in services in the area, in particular advice agencies (see 3.13 below) and support and counselling agencies (see 3.15 below). Bristol Credit Union has a small outreach office within a voluntary organisation's premises on the Broadway.

### **3.6 Age**

Detailed information on 25 independent organisations was gathered during the research.

Two organisations were established before 1960: a group for disabled Scouts in 1952, and Knowle Park Community Association in 1959. A further six were set up in the 1980s. The remaining 17 (68%) were established after 1990: nine (36%) in the 1990s and eight (32%) since 2000. No organisations that had been set up between 1960 and 1980 seem to remain in Knowle West.

This pattern of growth of the sector in the area may be linked with the availability of regeneration funding. Knowle West's first input of regeneration funding came through Bristol's Urban Programme from the late 1980s until 1994. Significant amounts of regeneration funding came into the area through the Government's Single Regeneration Budget from 1996 and through European funding schemes from 1999.

### **3.7 Group size**

The size of groups can be defined by a number of dimensions, including number of paid staff, size of operating budget, and number and range of activities and projects. For the purpose of this research, two dimensions have been used: number of paid staff, and size of operating budget.

Of the 25 groups that provided information for the survey, nine (36%) are purely voluntary groups and do not employ staff. One has 16 staff who are either seconded from Bristol City Council or employed through another voluntary

organisation. The remaining 15 groups (60%) employ a mix of full-time and part-time or sessional staff (see table 1 below): many also involve volunteers.

In terms of numbers of full-time staff, Knowle West Development Trust is the biggest employer, with 11 plus four part-timers; in terms of total staff numbers, however, South Bristol Crossroads has three full-time and 30 part-time staff, and Parentline Plus (part of a national organisation) has 2 full-time and 21 part-timers. The smallest employers are Filwood Hope and Buried Treasure, which both have one full-time and one part-time post.

**Table 1: Employer size**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Total number employed</b>	<b>Full-time posts</b>	<b>Part-time posts</b>
South Bristol Crossroads	33	3	30
Parentline Plus	23	2	21
Knowle West Media Centre	18	4	14
The Mede Centre	17	1	16
Knowle West Development Trust	15	11	4
Knowle West Health Association	12	3	9
Knowle West Health Park Company	11	3	8
Re:Work	10	7	3
Knowle West Against Drugs Service	9	8	1
Disabled Christian Fellowship	8	3	5
Premier Workshops Trust			
Bristol Community Accountancy Project	6	3	3
Volunteer Reading Help	3	0	3
Buried Treasure	2	1	1
Filwood Hope	2	1	1
South West Adoption Network	2	0	2*
* plus 15 self-employed sessional workers			
<b>Total posts</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>121</b>

**3.8** Regarding budget size, three organisations have a budget of in excess of £250,000 for this financial year: Knowle West Development Trust, Knowle West Media Centre, and the Mede Centre. Knowle West Media Centre's budget excludes capital costs for their new building. A further nine organisations have a budget between £100,000 and £250,000 (see table 2 below), making a total of twelve organisations (48%) with a budget in excess of £100,000. This seems to be a large number for an area of this size. At the other end of the spectrum, two groups stated that they had a budget of under £500 for the year: the children's arts and crafts group and Knowle West Web.

**Table 2: Budget size**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Budget for this financial year</b>
Knowle West Development Trust	£800,000 approx
Knowle West Media Centre	£450,000 approx
The Mede Centre	£260,000 approx
Disabled Christian Fellowship – Premier Workshops Trust	£100,000 - £250,000
Knowle West Against Drugs Service	£100,000 - £250,000
Knowle West Health Association	£100,000 - £250,000
Knowle West Health Park Company	£100,000 - £250,000
Northern Slopes	£100,000 - £250,000
Parentline Plus	£100,000 - £250,000
Re:Work	£100,000 - £250,000
South Bristol Crossroads	£100,000 - £250,000
Youth Moves	£100,000 - £250,000
Bristol Community Accountancy Project	£50,000 - £100,000
South West Adoption Network	£50,000 - £100,000
Buried Treasure	£25,000 - £50,000
Filwood Hope	£25,000 - £50,000
Key Projects	£25,000 - £50,000
Bristol 133 <sup>rd</sup> (Newfoundland) Scout Group	£10,000 - £25,000
Knowle Community Association	£2,500 - £10,000
Filwood Community Dance Club	£1000 - £2,500
Knowle West Arts Promotion	£1000 - £2,500
Women of Worth	£500 - £1000
Children’s Arts and Crafts Group	less than £500
Knowle West Web	less than £500
Volunteer Reading Help	not stated

**3.9** By combining the analysis in tables 1 and 2, it seems that Knowle West Development Trust, Knowle West Media Centre, the Mede Centre, South Bristol Crossroads and Parentline Plus are the largest voluntary organisations based in Knowle West. The smallest groups in Knowle West are the ‘informal’ ones, of which there seem to be around 18-20. For instance, the following very small groups are all active at the Mede Centre:

- Bristol 269<sup>th</sup> (Mede) Scout Group
- Inns Court Residents Association

- Mede Centre Writing Group
- Mede Centre Smallholders Group
- Ryu Genki Judo Club

Other informal groups in Knowle West include sports groups: football (including an under 14 girls' team), boxing, karate, and netball. Most of these informal groups did not respond to the survey questionnaire, and it proved very difficult to get hold of the contact person to arrange a face-to-face or telephone interview.

### 3.10 Structure and status

All but one of the 25 organisations stated that they have a constitution or set of rules.

The legal structure of voluntary and community groups in Knowle West mirrors to a great extent the national trend in the sector towards incorporation. The two groups established before 1960 are both unincorporated associations. Of the six organisations that were established during the 1980s, all are unincorporated associations except one, which did not incorporate until 2000. Of the nine groups set up in the 1990s, seven are incorporated as companies limited by guarantee. One which was established in 1990 is an unincorporated association, and another appears to be a community interest company (CIC). Of the groups set up since 2000, one is a very small informal self-help group with no constitution; a new youth initiative set up a year ago is unincorporated; five are companies limited by guarantee; and one is a CIC.

**Table 3: legal structure**

Structure	Number of groups
Unincorporated association	9
Company limited by guarantee	13
Community interest company	2

**3.11** 16 (64%) of these 25 groups are registered charities. Of the remaining nine, two are CICs; four are very small initiatives that operate largely on a self-funding basis; two are organisations that see trading as a major focus in the future; and the last is a very new group that is considering registering.

### Activities and projects run by the sector

**3.12** Across the voluntary sector as a whole in Knowle West, there are activities and projects covering the following broad themes:

- Advice

- Arts, culture and media
- Care and support
- Education, training and skills
- Environment
- Health
- Leisure, sports and social

Most organisations work in a specific thematic area, but there are a small number that work across more than one.

### **3.13 Advice**

Since South Bristol Advice Centre moved premises out of Knowle West when Leinster House was demolished, Filwood Hope is the only advice centre based on the estate. ‘The Hope’, based on Filwood Broadway, is a faith organisation with over ten years’ experience of providing open door advice and support on just about anything for anyone in Knowle West:

*“We provide advice, counselling, help with letter writing and phonecalls – finding a solution to any kind of problem.”* – Acting Manager, Filwood Hope

Filwood Hope brings in a number of specialist advice agencies to run outreach sessions: Shelter, Bristol Debt Advice Centre and South Bristol Advice Centre all run a half-day session per week, and the Salvation Army run a two-hour drug rehabilitation session each week. The organisation is currently working with Age Concern Bristol to secure funding for a weekly half-day drop-in and a base for home visits for older people.

South Bristol Advice Centre still runs two half-day drop-in sessions per week in the area, one at the Mede Centre and one at Filwood Hope (see above): clients from Knowle West also travel to the Advice Centre’s premises for appointments, and the organisation still does some home visits to clients on the estate. Bristol Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) runs a weekly half-day drop-in session on welfare rights at the health centre at the Health Park.

Avon and Bristol Law Centre used to run employment advice sessions at Knowle West Health Park, funded by the New Opportunities Fund (now the Big Lottery Fund), but these ended when the funding ran out.

### **3.14 Arts, culture and media**

There is one major organisation on the estate working in the field of arts, culture and media. Knowle West Media Centre is a multi-media organisation that runs five programmes of activities, many of them targeted at young people. These

include a schools programme, a youth programme, a moving image programme, and a community communications programme that produces the Knowle West website, a community newsletter, and a young people's newsletter called Mouth of the South. Another longstanding group working in this field is Knowle West Arts Promotion, which runs regular drama activities for children and young people and an annual theatre production. The Mede Centre Writing Group is a small group that meets weekly.

### **3.15 Care and support**

There are a number of organisations providing care and support in Knowle West. Two organisations based on the estate provide support for a specific group of beneficiaries but deliver their services across a wider area than just Knowle West. South West Adoption Network works regionally to provide counselling, advice and support to people affected by adoption. South Bristol Crossroads is a domiciliary care agency providing care in the community for those aged over 18 and living in South Bristol.

Support for parents is provided by Parentline Plus, Parents In Partnership Advancing Inclusion (PIPA), and Knowle West Health Association through its crèche: this is in addition to a wide range of support provided by the statutory sector through the Footprints Children's Centre at The Park.

*“Parentline Plus runs parenting courses, workshops and groups, individual support for parents, teenage parents' groups, family days, lots of joint work with domestic violence projects, drugs and alcohol projects, children's centres and schools.” – Area Manager, Parentline Plus*

Two projects provide support for women. Knowle West Domestic Abuse Project is part of Knowle West Health Association:

*“We provide one-to-one practical and emotional support to anyone affected by domestic abuse in Knowle West, including the Freedom Project (a 12 week structured support group), a Chill and Chat women's support group, a Monday morning drop-in for anyone, a drop-in for pupils at Hengrove School [the local secondary school], a website, and an out of hours telephone service. We also recruit and train volunteers to help us with this work.” – Project Coordinator, Knowle West Domestic Abuse Project*

Women of Worth (WOW) is a self-help group for isolated women which provides opportunities for exercise, crafts, talks, art, and discussion:

*“For many this is their sole source of socialising. Here we can laugh, cry, have fun, learn new skills, or just talk.” – WOW group member*

Knowle West Against Drugs Service runs a city-wide support service for carers of drug users. Re:Work runs a buddying scheme for ex-offenders in Knowle West.

Three city-wide organisations, Off The Record, Womankind and Addiction Recovery Agency, run weekly outreach sessions at the Health Park, and Network Counselling runs sessions at Filwood Hope.

### **3.16 Education, training and skills**

Several initiatives on the estate provide employment advice and training for adults. One of Knowle West Development Trust's major projects is the One Stop Job Shop, based on Filwood Broadway. Opposite it is Re:Work, which runs training and placement schemes in the areas of furniture restoration and resale, construction, and garden maintenance. Urban Beat, based at The Park, delivers a blend of employment advice and training, and Buried Treasure's volunteers learn skills in gardening and recycling. Disabled Christian Fellowship (DCF) Premier Workshops Trust provides occupational activities for disabled people across the greater Bristol area, through making their own products and undertaking work for local companies.

For children and young people, many of Knowle West Media Centre's activities have aims relating to training and skills in media, and also in literacy. Volunteer Reading Help supports children who are experiencing literacy problems, and Knowle West Arts Promotion's drama work also has aims relating to education and skills:

*"They learn to mix and to communicate with others, and they develop their confidence."* – leader of Knowle West Arts Promotion

### **3.17 Environment**

There are two organisations in Knowle West that are focused entirely on environmental issues. Northern Slopes organises clear-up days and tree planting on the northern slopes area which borders part of Knowle West. Buried Treasure helps people tidy up and look after their gardens and undertakes environmental and recycling work within the community. Knowle West Media Centre runs an environmental and sustainability programme with a range of projects, and there is also a smallholders' group based at the Mede Centre.

Knowle West Development Trust runs a community safety initiative, Knowle Safe, which is based on Filwood Broadway. Its activities include a motorbike project for young people, a Community Justice Panel, a witness protection scheme, and CCTV.

### **3.18 Health**

There are two major organisations on the estate working on health issues. The Knowle West Health Park Company runs one-to-one and group sessions designed to prevent illness, promote good health, and help people to adopt healthy lifestyles. Physical activity, counselling, healthy eating, walking groups, and complementary therapy workshops have all featured in the Health Park's recent termly programme. Knowle West Health Association, based at Filwood

Community Centre, runs a number of projects, including a community kitchen, keep fit and healthy eating sessions, smoking cessation classes, a men's health group, and health and social care advocacy.

Knowle West Against Drugs Service provides second tier services for drug users, in addition to the city-wide support service for carers of drug users mentioned in 3.15 above.

### **3.19 Leisure, sports and social**

For adults, there are social clubs at Filwood Community Centre, Knowle Community Association, Novers Park Community Association, Broad Plain Social Club and Eagle House Community Association.

*"We run sequence dancing, whist, bingo, coffee mornings, and a Wednesday social activities group."* – Secretary, Knowle Community Association

There are also a number of activity clubs for older people, including an over 50s club and a reminiscence group at Knowle West Health Association, the Filwood Community Dance Club, and Knowle West Media Centre's Silver Screen Film Club.

*"All our members are OAPs, some over 90 years of age. We provide a dance and social afternoon every Monday (bank holidays excepted). This is an opportunity for everyone to come along and join in with the dancing, or just to sit and listen to the music, or talk to their friends. For several of our members, this is the only social activity they are able to attend. We also run three trips to Weston-super-Mare, one with a cream tea, where we take advantage of the facilities at the Winter Gardens (we pay for the coaches and the cream tea). We also provide a lunch at Christmas which is free."* – Treasurer/organiser, Filwood Community Dance Club

Young people are currently less well provided for as traditional youth work provision has been going through an extensive period of change. Youth Moves, the coordinating body, has shifted from being primarily a funding source for thematic work to working more strategically. Currently the Mede Centre and Broad Plain Youth Club are undertaking youth work. Key Projects is a young people's initiative on the edge of the estate which is doing some work in the area. Knowle West Media Centre and the Scout groups also work with young people:

*"We provide scouting for those with disabilities, including outdoor activities such as camping, canoeing, shooting, abseiling; also 'life skills' such as cooking. [We run a] Duke of Edinburgh Scheme for older members."* – Group Scout Leader, 133<sup>rd</sup> Bristol (Newfoundland) Scouts

Knowle West Development Trust has recently launched a young people's volunteering scheme, V4.

There is a range of activities run by the voluntary sector for children in Knowle West. The Mede Centre runs a range of play activities, Knowle West Arts Promotion provides drama activities, and in Knowle Park there is an arts and crafts group for children.

There are also a number of small sports groups in Knowle West that offer activities for adults, young people and children.

**3.20** A few activities and projects do not fit neatly under any of the themes listed above.

Several groups in Knowle West offer services and support to other groups. Bristol Community Accountancy Project provides training in all aspects of financial management, a payroll bureau service, annual accounts and independent examinations, and a one day per week helpline for members. Knowle West Web runs an internet café and provides a PC maintenance and repair service. Key Projects provides some organisational development support and volunteers for other projects in the area, and Knowle West Health Association, the Mede Centre and Knowle West Development Trust all provide some advice and practical support for small groups.

The Mede Centre runs a community transport scheme, and Hearts and Stars runs an award scheme for local volunteers. The Tree of Life Project, part of the Barnabas Institute, works in the areas of ancestry, spirituality, and peace and justice issues.

### **Impact of the sector**

**3.21** In the questionnaire survey, groups were asked to identify the differences their activities and projects are making. These were in two areas:

- difference to individuals using the activities and projects
- difference to the wider community in Knowle West

These sections of the questionnaire had a range of suggestions to make it easier for the smaller groups in particular to consider the impact of their work. All the groups filled in the section on users but three omitted the section on Knowle West as a whole. Many had clearly given these questions considerable thought, but one or two seemed to be making statements that might not be easy to substantiate, and one or two identified very few differences, particularly at community level, where the activities provided would suggest that there are more. The statistics that follow are based on 23 questionnaire responses, from 20 independent organisations and three projects that are part of a larger organisation.

### 3.22 Impact on users

A range of outcomes for users were identified by the groups, with the following most frequently mentioned:

- Increased confidence 86%
- More friends 78%
- New skills 78%
- Improved physical and/or mental health 60%
- More involvement in the local community 56%
- Increased participation in other activities 52%
- Some have found jobs 52%
- Less involvement in crime or drug-taking 34%

Social benefits such as making more friends, more involvement in the community and increased participation in other activities are well-represented here, as might be expected, but there are also significant economic and health benefits. The combination of new skills and increased confidence are powerful factors in employability, and it is not surprising that just over half the respondents to the questionnaire state that some of their users have found jobs. Many of the groups in Knowle West involve local volunteers. During the course of the research, it was clear that a number of paid staff in some organisations had started out as volunteers and had gained hugely from this.

More friends and more involvement in the community clearly contribute significantly to people's wellbeing and mental health, and reduced stress was also mentioned:

*"We provide a lifeline and a place to 'let go' if they have huge problems."*

*"Less worry when we carry out work on people's gardens and properties."*

A range of other benefits were also reported, several of which focussed on quality of life:

*"Understanding their situation...has helped people gain a sense of their identity, improve their self-esteem, and improve their relationships with others."*

*"Solving problems and giving helpful advice helps people to get their lives in order and to take responsibility for themselves."*

*“Parents and children are...happier, more confident, and communicating better with clearer boundaries.”*

*“We empower clients and let them be in control. We don’t do things at speed and we fit into their budgets.”*

### **3.23 Impact on the local community**

A range of outcomes for the community of Knowle West were identified by the groups that responded to the survey questionnaire, with the following most frequently mentioned:

- Providing opportunities for local people to learn new skills 60%
- Getting children and young people involved in positive activities 52%
- Creating more pride in the area 39%
- Cleaning up and improving the environment 34%
- Creating jobs in the area for local people 30%
- Making Knowle West safer 26%

A range of other benefits were also reported:

*“We build confidence for others that no-one is ‘alone’ if they have problems.”*

*“We’re supporting new initiatives and enabling other organisations to work in the area.”*

*“We’re making sure the facilities are made best use of.”*

*“We make voluntary organisations more efficient in their financial management.”*

*“We’re building networks of parents who are enjoying parenting more, supporting their children to learn, achieve and enjoy.”*

It is noticeable that fewer outcomes for the community were identified than those for users, so percentages are lower. This confirms findings in other independent evaluations: many groups find it difficult to assess the wider benefits of their activities.

### **3.24 Impact on strategic priorities**

There is evidence from this research that the voluntary and community sector in Knowle West has considerable impact on strategic priorities within Bristol.

The sector has impact on employment and the economy in Knowle West. It is clear from the analysis in table 1 on page 23 that collectively, the sector is a major employer in the area. The results of the survey and interviews have established that the sector supports more than 170 jobs: indeed, this total is an under-estimate, as at least four organisations that did not respond to the survey are known to employ paid staff. Voluntary sector organisations are not only bringing money into Knowle West in the form of grants and service level agreements, but are also circulating it within the area: they are spending it at post offices and local shops; and some of them are paying staff, many of whom live in the area and spend money locally.

Organisations such as Knowle West Media Centre, Re:Work and Knowle West Development Trust with their focus on training and employability are contributing to priorities around education, learning and skills in Bristol. Knowle West Media Centre, Buried Treasure and Knowle West Development Trust are among the organisations having an impact on the environment, community safety and crime. A number of organisations have an impact on health and wellbeing: Knowle West Health Association, Knowle West Health Park Company and Knowle West Against Drugs Service are the major players. In addition, Filwood Hope and other advice agencies, Knowle West Media Centre, some of the community centres, and the organisations providing support to parents, carers and older people all contribute to the wellbeing of individuals in the area.

There is also clear evidence from this research that the voluntary sector also has considerable impact on community capacity and social capital in Knowle West. Many organisations are involving local volunteers, working in partnership with other local organisations, and bringing people together to make things happen in the local community. Knowle West Media Centre focuses one of its five programmes on community communications, ensuring that the many voices in the area are heard and can have an impact.

*“The voluntary sector provides social activities for a community that can’t afford to go down town – meeting people, signposting, outings. The stuff that knits communities together.”* – Neighbourhood Renewal Facilitator, Bristol City Council

## SECTION 4 – FUNDING FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN KNOWLE WEST

### Current funding profile

**4.1** Organisations in Knowle West get their funding from a range of sources. Groups identified the following main sources of income: statistics are based on questionnaire and interview information from 25 independent groups and three projects that are part of a larger organisation.

**Table 4: Main sources of income**

Source of income	Number of groups (%)
Small grants from local trusts	53%
Bristol City Council grant/service level agreement	42%
Funding from national Government initiative	39%
Fees from users	39%
Larger grants from non-local trusts	32%
Trading (including room hire)	28%
Contracts for providing services	25%
European funding schemes	21%
Fundraising events	17%
The Lottery or Awards for All	17%
Legacy	7%
Voluntary donations from individuals or churches	3%
Donations in kind	3%*
*Groups were not specifically asked about donations in kind: this figure therefore represents a considerable under-estimate	

Further investigation of these statistics is revealing.

**4.2** Seven of the groups (28%) rely on a combination of fees, voluntary donations, fundraising events and small grants. They are not in a position to access statutory, national Government or European sources of funding:

*“We couldn’t apply for regeneration money – our understanding is that as a Christian organisation, we’re excluded.”* – Acting Manager, Filwood Hope

*“Our group has always funded itself. When we don’t have enough money, we have fun days and save the £1 subs until we have enough.”* – children’s arts and crafts group leader

*“We’re all voluntary, independent and self-funding from subscriptions. We’ve had the occasional small grant to help out with something specific.”* – leader, Knowle West Arts Promotion

Five of these seven groups have been operating on the estate for many years, which suggests that their 'funding strategies' are ensuring their sustainability.

However, the comments above are evidence of a hand to mouth existence, and for some it can be precarious:

*"We need help with fundraising without which our group may not survive."* – Chair, Key Projects

*"We constantly seek sources of funding. At heart we are a faith organisation – local Christian churches – and this closes many doors... We often need help with specific things ie a new PC or photocopier."* – Acting Manager, Filwood Hope

It is important to note the role that small grants play for these small groups. Research undertaken in 2004 on the impact of Quartet (then Greater Bristol) Community Foundation's grants identified that they can ease pressure:

*"Many small community groups run entirely by volunteers are able to 'tick over' and cover their general running costs through a mixture of fees and small fundraising events. From time to time, however, these groups need to spend a lump sum on a specific item of equipment or one-off activity. Using events to raise these funds in addition to general running costs puts a great deal of pressure on these groups: a grant from GBF can ease this."*

- from 'Evaluation of the Impact of Greater Bristol Foundation's Grants Programme, Lin Whitfield Consultancy 2004

**4.3** Nine organisations (36%) undertake an element of trading. Two of these are community centres that generate some income through renting out rooms. Two sell products: Re:Work's trainees renovate furniture which is then sold, and DCF Premier Workshop Trust's users make items for sale or for contracts with local businesses. Knowle West Media Centre undertakes commissions for some of its work. Bristol Community Accountancy Project and Knowle West Web charge for providing specialist services, but the latter is a very small operation with a budget of less than £500 (see table 2 on page 24).

*"It's hard to get funding from anywhere as we are a small group so if you can help, let us know."* – Treasurer, Knowle West Web

DCF Premier Workshop Trust and Bristol Community Accountancy Project both have a good mix of funding sources in addition to trading, but see their position as vulnerable:

*"We find it very difficult to secure funding as we are not an 'attractive' charity. We've had to put up our fees to survive."* – Community Accountant, Bristol Community Accountancy Project

*"We've had a legacy but you can't always expect one of those...we'll be told in September regarding [Local] Authority funding."* – Manager, DCF Premier Workshop Trust

Buried Treasure charges a flat hourly rate for its environmental and recycling work, and uses volunteers; it also acts as a broker for Bristol City Council on the provision of sacks for green waste, and undertakes some environmental consultancy work. The organisation has learnt from past experience and now has a strategy of remaining small and sustainable:

*“We were victims of our own success. We were asked to recycle computers, and took on 40 trainees and extra storage space for this. Then the company [we had the contract with] suddenly went bankrupt, and we ended up owing a lot of money and with a mega overdraft... we’re in our last year of paying the debt off. Now we research all the implications before we decide what we can do and how we can do it.”* – Manager, Buried Treasure

With the exception of Knowle West Web and Buried Treasure, all these organisations that trade are registered charities and rely on securing an element of grant funding to survive. Income generation through trading is not, on its own, a sustainable funding strategy for them.

**4.4** Nine organisations (36%) seem to be heavily dependent on a combination of statutory, national Government and European funding.

**Table 5: Heavy dependency on statutory and/or national Government and/or European funding**

<b>Main funding sources</b>	<b>Number of groups</b>
Local Authority, Neighbourhood Renewal and European	2
Local Authority, Neighbourhood Renewal and Primary Care Trust (PCT)	2
Neighbourhood Renewal and European	2
Local Authority and European	1
Local Authority	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

Seven of these nine organisations focus their work entirely in Knowle West. In addition, two projects are funded solely through Neighbourhood Renewal: Knowle West Domestic Abuse Project, and Knowle West Going Green. South Bristol Advice Centre’s work with clients in Knowle West is largely funded through European money, and Bristol CAB’s work in the area is primarily funded by Bristol City Council and the PCT.

There will be major changes to some of these funding sources by the end of March 2008: the impact on Knowle West may be considerable.

### **Funding issues facing the sector**

**4.5** “Sometimes it feels like the entire voluntary sector is about to collapse on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 and no-one else seems to know!” This quote from a voluntary sector senior manager in the South West Forum’s funding survey

sums up the feelings of many groups in Knowle West. 22 out of the 25 organisations involved in this research – a massive 88% - expressed concern about funding for the future.

*“All our work is done in close partnership with other organisations and parents’ groups. When the funding comes to an end this excellent joint work will take years to set up again – it’s very worrying.”* – Area Manager, Parentline Plus

*“Everyone’s future is vulnerable if there’s no more regeneration funding and/or the City Council cuts its funding to the sector.”* – Community Development Worker, Knowle West Health Association

Funding issues raised by groups fall into five broad themes, which to some extent overlap:

- The forthcoming end of a number of streams of regeneration money in March 2008 – the ‘funding cliff’
- Difficulties with contracting arrangements
- The amount of time spent searching for and coordinating funding
- Poor communication, lack of coordination and lack of understanding on the part of funders
- Local Authority politics and estate politics

Most of the quotations that appear in the rest of this section are deliberately left anonymous.

**4.6** The ‘funding cliff’ was elaborated on at length in almost all the interviews undertaken during this research:

*“Things are reaching a critical phase [for the larger groups]. There have always been regeneration pots of money [in Knowle West], and groups are used to almost a guarantee of it. There’s a lack of alternative strategies – they’re waiting for a ‘regeneration angel’ to turn up.”*

*“A lot of groups are providing similar things and waiting for funding to become available because of the area.”*

There was certainly evidence of some groups waiting to know what might be available, or looking to others, particularly Bristol City Council, for help with developing strategies for the future, rather than taking responsibility for their own destiny:

*“There are big questions about regeneration funding – what will come, and when? September? February?”*

*“The City Council isn’t doing any preparation for if there’s no funding for Neighbourhood Management...”*

*“No-one’s planning what to do about the funding cliff – not the City Council, not the groups...”*

There is concern that as March 2008 approaches, it is not only funding that will be affected:

*“Knowledge may go out of the area [as staff leave] before the money runs out.”*

A number of organisations have already cut services in the past, as certain sources of funding have come to an end and they have been unable to find replacement funds:

*“[One of our services] came to an end in March 2005 – it made a big difference to the estate, but the goalposts changed and we got no support from the City Council.”*

*“We’ve had to get rid of staff because there’s no money for youth work, and we’ve stopped two projects because of loss of funding. We’ve had to cut others back... Our budget’s about half what it was last year.”*

*“We’ve had to stop some activities as we simply don’t have the capacity any longer.”*

**4.7** Several organisations have had difficulties with contracting arrangements, sometimes because of commissioning bodies’ particular agendas.

*“When they re-commissioned all services, they did no proper evaluation about what worked well and what didn’t – they just wanted to commission with fewer agencies. In the end we didn’t get funding, and raised issues over the whole process – it got very messy. We were finally commissioned to run a specific city-wide service, but have had to stop most of the services we used to run and that are needed in this area. It feels like we were given money to shut up and stop making a fuss.”*

*“We’ve just secured major funding for quite a challenging project, but the funders have now changed the rules and withdrawn the weekly allowance for participants. They still expect us to deliver against the original targets though!”*

*“We don’t always score highly on the City Council’s agenda – they see us as health ie the PCT’s responsibility, and don’t see our community-building role and focus.”*

*“Regarding one of our projects, Supporting People may commission part of its work – mainstreaming, which is good, but what about the rest?”*

*Strategically the statutory agencies all go on about ‘referring people to specialist services’ but who will fund these specialist services?”*

One organisation had difficulties with relationships with partner providers:

*“One of the other agencies in the city working in our field has a working style which we don’t consider to be particularly effective at local level. [After a lot of discussion] we decided not to be part of their partnership, but this has made contracting very difficult. They’re liked by funders.”*

**4.8** In the organisations with larger budgets, the lead member of staff is spending a great deal of time coordinating funding. The sheer number of funders, all with reporting requirements, for some organisations is breathtaking. Knowle West Media Centre runs five programmes of work, each of which consists of a number of longer term and short term projects or commissions. Projects are funded through a wide range of sources across the fields of arts, media, heritage, regeneration, environment, education and training, young people, and health. Capital costs of the new building come from other sources including the Regional Development Agency.

*“I spend huge amounts of time coordinating funding, lobbying, and keeping our profile in the media.” – Director, Knowle West Media Centre*

*“We almost folded 18 months ago because of re-commissioning problems, and we’ll face the same situation again next year. It’s difficult to find time to do the fundraising – I’m halfway through three bids but now I’ve got some help from a fundraiser.”*

*“I spend a lot of time chasing money – I’ve put in five or six bids recently but they’ve all failed. Grants from two trusts have now come to an end, so I’ll go back [to these sources] as soon as I can.”*

There was also concern that all organisations in Knowle West are likely to be in competition for future funding:

*“The funding cliff is going to affect everyone, so we’ll all be going to the same sources of money.”*

Several larger organisations made the point that although small grants are invaluable for their project work, they are not a substitute for ‘proper core funding’.

*“You can’t survive on small grants if you’re the size we are. £20,000 here or there is a drop in the ocean.” – Director, Knowle West Media Centre*

Smaller organisations have a different view:

*“Our budget is £35-40,000 per year and we have funding for the next twelve months. I’m trawling directories of grant-making trusts – small grants are our bread and butter.”*

**4.9** The juggling of many sources of money is difficult enough, but it is exacerbated when funders communicate poorly between each other and do not coordinate well on strategic issues.

*“We in the sector are expected to work in partnership – it’s a pity they don’t!”*

*“In the City Council there’s a lack of ‘joined-up-ness’ between Departments and sometimes within Departments. We’ve had to argue that health is part of the Council’s responsibilities under regeneration – they’re very reluctant [to accept this] as they think it’s the PCT’s [responsibility].”*

*“Trusts won’t fund us because they say what we do is the Government’s responsibility. But local government seems to be sucking up all the resources.”*

There is also evidence of a lack of understanding of how the sector works:

*“Some Councillors have no respect for the independence of the voluntary sector – some have tried to use us as tools in their political arguments.”*

*“The Council doesn’t understand [the importance of having] a reserves policy.”*

Full cost recovery is an issue for several organisations:

*“Although Local Authorities contract... services from us, they do not pay a realistic amount to cover the statutory requirements an agency like us is required to have.”*

*“Schools and the Local Authority want to use us as a resource but it’s really hard to get cash [out of them] to pay for it.”*

*“If funders want us to play a development role, we need the core funding.”*

**4.10** There is evidence that Local Authority politics have had a negative impact on the voluntary sector in Knowle West over the last four years. The shift in power from a Labour-controlled administration to a situation of Lib Dem minority control brought with it a number of uncertainties and practical difficulties.

*“The Lib Dems see themselves as ‘of the community’, so they think they should be the focus and everything should go through them. We haven’t felt supported by them at all.”*

*“Knowle West Development Trust was seen as Labour’s “baby” – the Lib Dems did their best to destroy it.”*

*“Rolling over our funding for three months, then five months, then nine months has been a farce. How are we meant to retain staff?”*

Since May this year, Labour is in minority control and there is evidence of more optimism in Knowle West’s voluntary sector:

*“They seem to be listening more – I’ve had a couple of good meetings with Councillors.”*

*“We hope the new Community Partnership will succeed, but it’s getting caught up in the changing political agendas. Everyone agrees there should be one, but there are different shades of interpretation.”*

As has been mentioned earlier in this report, Knowle West is made up of a number of distinct communities, within which there are family clans (see section 2.7). It is inevitable that estate politics have an impact on the voluntary sector: local people are involved as volunteers and/or as Trustees, management committee members or Board members. Decisions made by the governing body of one organisation may affect partnership arrangements, the capacity of another organisation to deliver, and ultimately funding.

*“There are many quite young groups here, with infighting and division – communities are very complex places. There have been a number of disputes but a lack of understanding from the funders of the risks when people disagree – there are no mechanisms to deal with it. It’s been particularly noticeable over youth work in the area.”*

*“People need to come out of their self-importance. They need to be looking at the service, what others are doing, and how they can work together to deliver a quality service.”*

## **Funding strategies for the future**

**4.11** For the smaller groups, it is clear that the continuing availability of small grants is vital:

*“They’re very popular with small groups here. The Neighbourhood Renewal Community Chest ones from Quartet have been accessible at local level – they understand local needs, and groups can get help with the forms.”*

*“They enable us to do ‘the things on top’ [of the basics] – outings, the Christmas meal, a crèche.”*

*“If they’re easily obtainable, my staff can access them for projects, sometimes in partnership with smaller organisations.”*

The Bristol Partnership approved an allocation of £45,500 of Neighbourhood Renewal small grants for Knowle West for the period 2006-08. This has all been spent.

Many larger organisations also find small grants invaluable:

*“They’re especially useful for pilot work, so we can demonstrate the need and that the intervention works. Then we can go to larger funders. We’ve used them to bring in specialist skills, for instance for our development plan, and also for skills building for staff and Trustees.”*

One community centre run entirely by volunteers will need more than small grants:

*“The premises are leased from Bristol City Council, who have advised us that we need to raise £325,000 to repair and update the building over the next five years. With the enthusiasm of the committee and the support of the users of the community centre, we expect to achieve our goal.”* – Treasurer, Knowle Community Association

**4.12** As has been mentioned before, the majority of the smaller organisations just want to keep on going. Buried Treasure plans to stay small and sustainable:

*“We’re not about growing an empire. We want the project to be self-sufficient, so we manage it – we think like a business... I don’t have the time or the energy for dealing with a lot of voluntary sector politics.”* – Manager, Buried Treasure

**4.13** The interviews undertaken with the larger organisations in the area revealed a range of funding strategies, from the traditional dependence on the Local Authority to the entrepreneurial. Some organisations had detailed plans in place and were already implementing them, while others seemed to be leaving things rather late:

*“We don’t have a strategy yet for replacement funding but we’ll be bringing in a consultant to do a development plan, and I’ve just been on a really good course on developing a fundraising strategy.”*

The need to strengthen relationships with Bristol City Council was emphasised by several organisations:

*“Our strategy is about proving to Bristol City Council that what we do is good. We’re building alliances. I’m fairly optimistic that things will change.”*

*“We’re in a transition period after presenting our future strategy to the City Council. We’ve been told that if we deliver what they want to see, we’ll be given funding.”*

*“We shall continue lobbying, and get Councillors and MPs to support us.”*

Others are looking to work in partnership:

*“We need to be coordinating more between ourselves – sharing, co-locating, putting in partnership bids.”*

*“We’re discussing with the City of Bristol College how we can restart two projects which have closed. They’re very interested in being involved.”*

Knowle West Media Centre’s strategy is a long term one of moving towards increasing income generation.

*“We have a package based on the business plan that I’m presenting to a consortium of funders. I’m trying to get our programmes to look at income generation so that over time they’ll become self-sustaining, but it’s very hard and a steep learning curve. We’ve got a good team with a lot of commitment but not the skills set yet. Our new Media Centre will have six incubation units to house creative industries. We’re currently in discussions about whether we manage them or get someone else to, and how we can link in small business advice.”* – Director, Knowle West Media Centre

Another organisation has recognised the contribution that quality assurance can make to the search for funding:

*“We’ve been using quality assurance systems to prove the quality of what we do – two of our projects have gone through the process now. We need to market this.”*

**4.14** It is interesting to note that despite the changing funding environment for the voluntary sector described in section 1.1, the majority of organisations in Knowle West do not seem to be developing funding strategies that are markedly different from those prevalent in the sector eight to ten years ago. For most of the smaller organisations, income generation, social enterprise and playing an increasing role in the delivery of public services are simply not on their radar – and it is probably right that this is so.

For many of the larger organisations, public sector funding through service level agreements dominates their thinking, with a strategy that seems to be about working harder to lobby or to influence thinking at strategic level. In some cases, organisations are being commissioned for the delivery of some services, but it was outside the remit of this research to investigate how they were arriving at their costings.

There is evidence that in a number of organisations, partnership working is alive and well and contributing to their sustainability: this is mainly within the sector rather than on a cross-sectoral basis. However, this is by no means universal,

and some comments were made that revealed a lack of trust in certain organisations and individuals that may make working in partnership difficult.

There are some pockets of social enterprise activity, notably Knowle West Media Centre and Buried Treasure, but most voluntary organisations in Knowle West do not currently seem to be pursuing funding strategies that take them in this direction.

## **SECTION 5 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

**5.1** From the analysis in this research, it is tempting to draw the conclusion that Knowle West's voluntary sector is atypical. Voluntary and community sector groups are more numerous and it has a bigger number of larger organisations that employ staff than would be found in many local areas. The availability of regeneration money to fund the development and growth of local services rooted in the community is without doubt a major factor here: a quick comparison with other areas of Bristol where regeneration funding has been available shows a similar picture.

However, it is possible to discern a number of features that are likely to be found in local areas elsewhere.

**5.2** Firstly, there are a number of small community groups, often started and led by people with a passion. They are often not listed on databases or in telephone directories, but local people know about them: together, they form the fabric of community life. They often do not have aspirations of growth but just want to continue what they do: they are largely self-funding through fees and the occasional fundraising event, and small grants help as a pressure-easer and sometimes a lifeline in difficult times. Their impact on individuals and the community is in the areas of friendships, confidence, a sense of connectedness in the community, local pride, and health and community wellbeing.

**5.3** Secondly, there are community buildings: Knowle West has more of these than most local areas. The smaller ones often operate largely as members clubs and also hire out rooms; the larger ones often act as a community hub and run a range of activities as well as hiring out facilities. Smaller community buildings can often be largely self-funding through operating as a bar and social club, but may need small grants occasionally for specific items, and larger grants for major repairs or refurbishments. Larger community buildings may have a mixture of Local Authority funding, large grants and small grants. The impact of community buildings depends on the activities: social wellbeing for individuals, particularly for those that act primarily as social clubs; but larger ones can be a catalyst for local activity.

**5.4** Thirdly, there may be a few organisations that are part of a national or regional network, or have a geographical area of benefit larger than the local community. These organisations are based in premises locally so the local community often benefits disproportionately from their services and activities. Funding tends to be mainly commissioning, supplemented by large and small grants which may be for projects. Their impact on individuals and the community can be wide-ranging as they work in many fields: this can include economic benefits through employment and job creation, and health and wellbeing.

**5.5** Lastly, there are local organisations that started life as small initiatives that responded to a local need, and have grown: they may have a number of

projects and services, some of which are short term and some longer term. Knowle West has a number of these, including Knowle West Health Association which began in 1989 in response to the death of a nine-year old from glue-sniffing, and Knowle West Against Drugs Service which was set up by a group of mothers of drug-users. Funding is complex and volatile for these organisations, particularly if sources of Government money (through national initiatives and/or the Local Authority) have been available to enable the growth to take place. Serious retrenching is invariably inconceivable to these organisations as they are meeting a demonstrable need. These are the organisations in the sector that are most vulnerable to policy or strategy changes at national, regional or local level; and to shifts in power and agendas at Local Authority level. Their impact can be considerable, and can cover social and economic benefits to individuals and to the wider community.

**5.6** Although there may be a small element of income generation among local groups, trading rarely features as part of fundraising strategies, and for many groups it is not appropriate at all. Seeing the organisation as a business necessitates a huge shift in thinking for many in the sector. Where there are considerable amounts of Government funding available locally, there is less of a need to consider other strategies.

**5.7** In areas where there is funding available from Government initiatives, a number of groups are likely to face problems simultaneously as the money comes to an end. These may not be as marked as the funding cliff in Knowle West, but projects will face closure, services will suffer, and groups may fold.

**5.8** The impact of the voluntary and community sector at local level ranges across a wide range of social and economic areas, and contributes to many local, regional and national strategic priorities. Local organisations can enable many things to happen in communities through the provision of accessible facilities, user-friendly expertise and knowledge, and step-by-step encouragement.

## **Recommendations**

### **5.9 Recommendations for Community Foundation Network**

5. CFN should circulate the findings of this research widely, particularly to other funders and those working at strategic level.
6. CFN should continue to emphasise that small grants are not only vital for the health of the voluntary and community sector at local level, but also for the building of strong communities.
7. CFN should continue to spread the message to its members that local knowledge enables good grant-making. It should encourage its members to get out and about in very local areas and to keep their local knowledge continuously updated.

8. CFN should continue to encourage its members to make sure that very local groups at grassroots level know about their grants and how easy it is to apply for them. It should stress the importance of using a range of methods, including using key local individuals to facilitate contact, and using successful applicants as local ambassadors.

#### **5.10 Recommendations for funders**

3. Funders should recognise that small grants are not only vital for the health of the voluntary and community sector at local level, but also for the building of strong communities. They should work with each other to ensure that small grants remain available to local groups.
4. Funders should recognise that national agendas around commissioning the voluntary sector to deliver public services, and encouraging the development of social enterprises, are of limited applicability to most groups working at local level.
3. Funders should assess to what extent there may be a funding cliff approaching for the voluntary sector in their area. They should work with other funders and the sector at an early stage to develop strategies to minimise its impact.
4. Funders should recognise that the tribalism that exists in some local areas can lead to disputes between groups. They should develop mechanisms to deal with disputes at an early stage before organisations and their services are damaged.

#### **5.11 Recommendations for the voluntary sector**

4. Local infrastructure organisations and development agencies should use the results of this research to continue to emphasise to funders that small grants are not only vital for the health of the voluntary and community sector at local level, but also for the building of strong communities.
5. Voluntary organisations should recognise that Government initiatives and regeneration funding offers opportunities for growth but not for sustainability: the best strategy is to use them for project work and acknowledge right from day one that the project will end. An exit strategy needs to be in place from the beginning and implemented, rather than dragging things out to the bitter end and leaving users and the community disillusioned.
6. Voluntary organisations should ensure that they are evaluating the impact of what they do, ensuring that this is known locally and demonstrating how this contributes to local strategic priorities.

## APPENDIX A

### SURVEY: VOLUNTARY GROUPS IN KNOWLE WEST

#### About your group

1. Name of your group

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of person filling in this questionnaire

\_\_\_\_\_

Position eg Chair \_\_\_\_\_

3. When did your group start? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Does your group have a set of rules/constitution?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

5. Is your group a registered charity?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If no, are you planning to register as a charity? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

6. Is your group:

A company limited by guarantee \_\_\_

A community interest company \_\_\_

An industrial and provident society \_\_\_

None of these \_\_\_

7. Does your group have paid staff? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If yes, please state how many full-time \_\_\_ and part-time \_\_\_

## About your group's activities

8. What activities and projects does your group run?

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9. Who takes part in the activities:

Mainly people who live in Knowle West \_\_\_\_\_

Mainly people who live in South Bristol \_\_\_\_\_

People who live anywhere in Bristol \_\_\_\_\_

People who live outside Bristol \_\_\_\_\_

Other: please state \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are your activities for:

Anyone \_\_\_\_\_

Children and young people only \_\_\_\_\_

Older people only \_\_\_\_\_

Women only \_\_\_\_\_

Men only \_\_\_\_\_

Disabled people only \_\_\_\_\_

Any other specific group of people (please state):

11. What difference do you think your group's activities and projects are making to people who use them? (tick all that apply)

They're learning new skills \_\_\_\_\_

They're becoming more confident \_\_\_\_\_

Some have found jobs \_\_\_\_\_

They're more involved in the community \_\_\_\_\_

They're making more friends \_\_\_\_\_

They're starting to do other activities locally \_\_\_\_\_

They're less involved in crime or drug-taking \_\_\_\_\_

Their physical and/or mental health is improving \_\_\_\_\_

Other: please state \_\_\_\_\_

12. What difference do you think your group's activities and projects are making to Knowle West? (tick all that apply)

We're creating jobs in the area for local people

We're providing opportunities for local people to learn new skills

We're cleaning up and improving the environment  
We're making Knowle West safer  
We're getting children and young people involved in positive activities  
We're creating more pride in the area  
Other: please state \_\_\_\_\_

**13.** Does your group plan to develop new services or extend existing ones within the next two years? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

### **About your group's funding**

**14.** How much does your group have to spend for this year:

Less than £500 _____	£500 - £1000 _____
£1000 - £2500 _____	£2500 - £10,000 _____
£10,000 - £25,000 _____	£25,000 - £50,000 _____
£50,000 - £100,000 _____	£100,000 - £250,000 _____
Over £250,000 (please state) _____	

**15.** Where does your group's funding come from (tick all that apply):

Fees from members and users \_\_\_\_\_  
Fundraising events, such as jumble sales, summer fairs \_\_\_\_\_  
Small grants from local trusts, such as Quartet \_\_\_\_\_  
Grants from larger trusts, such as Lloyds TSB, Tudor Trust \_\_\_\_\_  
The Lottery or Awards for All \_\_\_\_\_  
National Government initiatives, such as Children's Fund, Sure Start, Neighbourhood Renewal \_\_\_\_\_  
Service Level Agreement with Bristol City Council \_\_\_\_\_  
Contracts for providing services \_\_\_\_\_  
Trading, eg selling products or charging for your expertise \_\_\_\_\_  
A loan \_\_\_\_\_  
A legacy through someone's will \_\_\_\_\_  
European funding schemes \_\_\_\_\_  
Other – please state: \_\_\_\_\_

Do any of your funding sources require match funding?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**16.** Looking into the future, how does your group see its funding:

We'll continue with our existing funding sources and don't think we'll have any real problems \_\_\_\_\_

Some of our existing sources of funding may change their focus or dry up – things might be a bit difficult \_\_\_\_\_

Most of our current funding comes to an end fairly soon – we'll need to develop new sources of funding if we're going to survive \_\_\_\_\_

We're already planning a fundraising strategy which includes new sources of funding, and feel reasonably confident things will be OK \_\_\_\_\_

Other – please state:

**17.** Have you any other comments to make that you think might be helpful?

***Thank you very much for your help.***

**All questionnaires returned by Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June will be entered in a prize draw. YOUR GROUP COULD WIN £50!**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **GROUPS AND PROJECTS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE RESEARCH**

#### **Groups based in Knowle West**

Bristol 133<sup>rd</sup> (Newfoundland) Scout Group  
Bristol Community Accountancy Project  
Buried Treasure  
Children's Arts and Crafts Group  
Disabled Christian Fellowship Premier Workshops Trust  
Filwood Community Dance Club  
Filwood Hope  
Key Projects  
Knowle Community Association  
Knowle West Against Drugs Service  
Knowle West Arts Promotion  
Knowle West Development Trust  
Knowle West Domestic Abuse Project  
Knowle West Going Green  
Knowle West Health Association  
Knowle West Health Park Company  
Knowle West Media Centre  
Knowle West Web  
The Mede Centre  
Northern Slopes Initiative  
Parentline Plus  
Re:Work  
South Bristol Crossroads  
South West Adoption Network  
Tree of Life  
Volunteer Reading Help – Bristol Branch  
Women of Worth  
Youth Moves

#### **Statutory sector in Knowle West**

Neighbourhood Renewal  
The Park

#### **Other Bristol groups**

Avon and Bristol Law Centre  
Bristol Citizens Advice Bureau  
Bristol Debt Advice Centre  
South Bristol Advice Centre