

**Leys Linx**

**SRB5**

**Capacity Building  
on  
Blackbird Leys**

**An Evaluation**

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## Key Findings

### 1 History

- 1.1 The Leys Linx SRB Scheme was initiated by professionals on the estate to help develop the capacity of local groups and individuals and build a stronger community.
- 1.2 It was a small scheme and in the first year suffered from insufficient capacity in the lead partner (Leys CDI), poor engagement from the local authorities, unrealised match funding commitments, confusion over delivery methods and staff who were unable to progress the scheme's objectives.
- 1.3 In March 2001, Oxford City Council took over the role of accountable body and lead partner. The scheme was restructured and the outputs renegotiated.
- 1.4 Despite a critical interim report in March 20021 and a highly critical systems audit in December 2001, Leys Linx is now regarded as a great success with potential to thrive beyond the SRB funded period.

### 2 Achievements

The Scheme's mission describes four aims which can be summarised as deepening local democracy, helping individuals to access services and opportunities, supporting community groups, improving local service delivery.

- 2.1 **Deepening local democracy:** The participatory learning work has gone a long way to addressing this but no structures have been developed to allow community involvement in big strategic decisions.
- 2.2 **Helping individuals to access services and opportunities:** Information, Advice and Guidance work is beginning to have an effect as is one to one work and signposting at the Leys Linx Centre and ICT training through BLITZ.
- 2.3 **Supporting community groups:** Many community groups have benefited from the Community Chest and the renovation of community buildings.
- 2.4 **Improving local service delivery:** Significant new initiatives are in development and Leys Linx has a crucial role to play in advocating for the interests of the residents and groups on the estate. This is working well already and could be taken much further. Local authority commitment to a Neighbourhood Management model will be needed before traditional mainstream services include themselves in a locally coordinated framework.

### 3 Successes (see section 4 of the report)

- Consistent mission
- Effective recovery from a poor start
- Effective scheme management
- A strong Board

- The flexibility of SEEDA
- The use of a delivery plan
- Being small but thinking big
- Participatory learning as a core methodology
- Capacity building of community groups
- Networking and signposting
- Improvement of community buildings and resources.

#### **4 Problems (see section 5 of the report)**

- Vacant posts
- Poor engagement from strategic players
- The coordination function
- Capacity building of community groups
- Increasing community involvement in local democracy and decision making
- Making public services more accountable and accessible
- Onerous reporting requirements

#### **5 Priorities for the future (see section 7 of the report)**

- Create a lasting structure probably combining the CDI with the Partnership Board to create a new Leys Linx (CDI) strategic body.
- Secure staff to service this body including a coordinator (using the Neighbourhood Management model), an administrator and the existing City Council CDO post.
- Secure strategic commitment from the City Council, the County Council and other bodies such as the PCT, LSC, Thames Valley Police, ATMOSPHERE, BBL Housing Consortium, SEEDA and GOSE.
- Secure funding for these posts from one or more of these bodies.
- Use the existing work plan (appendix F) to secure the individual projects and use the participatory learning methodology to nurture a wider group of community activists and organisations to help inform the work of Leys Linx.

# 1 Introduction

The Blackbird Leys Linx SRB5 Scheme will come to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004. It is required by the government Regional Development Agency (SEEDA) to commission an independent evaluation of the work. This report presents the findings of that evaluation.

## 1.1 Aim

This report aims to provide SEEDA, Oxford City Council and those people in Blackbird Leys closely involved with the scheme with an understanding of how effective the work has been so that lessons can be learnt for future regeneration work on the estate and elsewhere. The findings of the report may be summarised and reproduced for dissemination more widely thereafter.

Specifically, it will examine

- the extent to which the scheme has moved towards its mission statement
- the effectiveness of the various strands of the scheme
- the strengths and weaknesses of the overall approach adopted
- potential for sustainability beyond the life of the scheme.

The original bid was submitted in April 1999 with an overarching aim of 'community-based capacity building in Blackbird Leys' based on the partnerships created out of previous SRB schemes in the area. This aim was refined following a Board away day in January 2001 as follows:

- to strengthen the representative voices in Blackbird Leys by giving local people a real say about what happens now and in the future, and the means to take part in decision making processes
- to help individuals to make better use of the services and opportunities on offer on Blackbird Leys
- to support new and existing local community groups and organisations to be more effective through the provision of information, advice, training and access to practical resources like funding
- to work with all local agencies in developing, planning and delivering services to ensure that services delivered in Blackbird Leys are coordinated, accessible, well publicised and meet local needs.

National strategic objectives are set out in the delivery plan as follows:

- Enhance the employment prospects, education and skills of local people.
- Address social exclusion and enhance opportunities for the disadvantaged
- Promote sustainable regeneration, improving and protecting the environment
- Support and provide growth in local economy and business
- Tackle crime and improve community safety

## 1.2 Methodology

The findings of an interim evaluation by Mike Kingham were published in March 2001 and a systems audit was conducted by ECOTEC in December of that year. Regular reports on outputs have been submitted to SEEDA throughout the life of the scheme.

Quantifiable outputs and SRB systems are important and are discussed in this report. However, that information is already known. This evaluation has therefore focussed on trying to uncover how the various interviewees have perceived the scheme so that a deeper understanding can be gained of what has worked well, what has not worked so well and why. The reason for evaluating the scheme is in part to determine whether public money has been spent wisely but also, crucially, to help identify ways of taking the work forward to benefit the inhabitants of Blackbird Leys. This report therefore explores how the capacity building work can best be sustained. The evaluation process had six strands:

<b>Strand</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Method</b>
1	To understand and describe context	Read relevant reports (eg delivery plans and interim evaluation report)
2	To describe the scheme	Present milestones based on information provided by the scheme manager
3	To examine the effectiveness of the five elements of the scheme	Meet with those involved in each of the elements to examine strengths and weaknesses and lessons for the future
4	To understand the perspective of residents on Blackbird Leys who may not have been directly involved in the scheme	Interview as many residents as possible using local researchers training in participatory learning techniques
5	To understand the perspective of activists on Blackbird Leys who have chosen to be directly involved in the scheme	Interview a group of community activists involved in the scheme
6	To understand the perspective of partner agencies and providers who have contributed to delivering projects within the scheme.	Interview representatives of partner agencies individually and/or in a group.

### **Strand 1**

Documents provided by the scheme were examined to provide context.

### **Strand 2**

The scheme manager provided a history of the project and a review of outputs, which is summarised in section 2 (below) and appendix C.

### **Strand 3**

Six project evaluation seminars took place – each one involving around five professionals and local residents who had been active in that particular project. These workshops evaluated the following areas of work:

- The Community Against Drugs project
- Work on Domestic Violence
- The Community Chest
- The Leys Linx Centre
- Kingfisher Green
- Work on Training and Support

Participants in each seminar were asked to describe the background to the project, its purpose, funding, staffing, management and governance arrangements and activity. They were then asked to assess its strengths and weaknesses and how best to sustain what was working well and improve or change what was not working so well. The findings of these seminars are summarised in section 3.

#### **Strand 4**

Trainees on a participatory learning course have undertaken parallel research to discover the views of residents who have not been directly involved in the delivery of the scheme. This research is still in process at the time of writing and will report separately. A community conference, organised by local residents, is planned for 1<sup>st</sup> November where a further opportunity to involve local people in considering the impact of the scheme and planning for the future will be available. A description of the residents' research process is attached as appendix D.

#### **Strand 5**

Community activists were involved in the project evaluations in strand 3 and conducting the research in strand 4. Six residents took part in a group interview to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the scheme and issues around sustainability.

#### **Strand 6**

Six professionals representing the key strategic players were interviewed individually. Eleven people took part in a group discussion (appendix A). Interviews were informal and semi-structured using prompts to explore the following issues (appendix B):

- What was the mission and did it change?
- What were the main successes?
- Which projects failed to achieve as much as they could?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the way in which the overall scheme has been managed?
- Has the 'capacity' of individuals and groups been 'built'?
- Have service providers been able to improve how they work in the area?
- What needs to happen next to sustain the work?
- What are the lessons for the future of regenerative work?

The findings from strands 5 and 6 are summarised in sections 4, 5, 6 and 7.

The SRB5 Scheme has come to be known as Leys Linx and is referred to as such throughout this report. The Leys Linx Centre is a facility, originally known as The Shopfront, from which Leys Linx and other initiatives have operated.

**Throughout the evaluation process, interviewees were assured that they would not be quoted directly so as to facilitate greater openness.**

## 2 History of the scheme

### 2.1 Origins

Blackbird Leys is known to be a deprived area. It is in the worst 10% of wards in England according to the 2000 Index of Local Deprivation and is the most deprived ward in Oxfordshire. It is also in the worst 10% of wards in England in terms of housing (measured by numbers of homeless households, levels of overcrowding and poor private rented sector stock). Only 8% of its residents are educated to degree level and 45% have no qualifications at all. It also has the highest level of those providing care between 20 and 49 hours a week of any ward in the city and the lowest income per household. So in terms of housing, education, health and income the indicators are not good ([www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)).

The original bid for this scheme was submitted in April 1999. It was drawn up by locally based professionals who had been involved in previous SRB rounds in the area and, though formally supported by both the City and County Councils, interviewees reported that it was not seen as a priority as the local authorities were more focussed on securing the much larger scheme proposed for East Oxford. The bidders were motivated by a desire to find ways of developing the capacity of individuals and groups to build community networks and were particularly concerned that the new community of 4,500 inhabitants in Greater Leys had not had the opportunity and support that they needed to create a strong neighbourhood. A large proportion of the new tenants had been allocated housing by the City Council on the basis of their vulnerability and a Community Appraisal conducted by **redacted** had shown that there was little social infrastructure to accommodate their needs.

The bid was successful and the first delivery plan approved in November 1999. The CDI (Blackbird Leys Community Development Initiative) was the lead partner and the TEC (Heart of England Training and Enterprise Council) was the accountable body. The SRB grant allocation was £335,150 over the life of the scheme with match funding of £230,045 from public sources and £77,121 from private sources. It was a small scheme.

### 2.2 The themes

The scheme was designed around five themes:

- Involving the Community
- Community Safety
- Training and Support
- Kingfisher Green
- The Shopfront (later known as the Leys Linx Centre)

These are described in section 4.

### 2.3 Milestones

Late approval of the delivery plan meant that Year One to March 2000 saw few developments other than the appointment of a Neighbourhood Worker (employed by the CDI) and a Community Resource Worker (employed by the City Council) in January 2000. In the first full year (Year Two), the scheme made little progress and, following a critical interim evaluation and a board away day, the mission was clarified and the management of the scheme was reorganised. The TEC ceased to

exist and was replaced by the LSC (Learning and Skills Council) so Oxford City Council took on the role of accountable body and lead partner. A scheme manager was then appointed. As can be seen from the milestones presented below, the scheme got off to a slow start but has since gathered momentum.

Year	Date	Milestone
1	Nov 99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery plan approved</li> </ul>
	Jan 00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood Worker and Community Resource Officer appointed</li> </ul>
2	Jun 00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation process to identify local needs begun</li> </ul>
	Nov 00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resignation of both workers</li> </ul>
	Dec 00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Community Get Together focussing on community needs analysis</li> </ul>
	Jan 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External evaluation of the scheme undertaken by Mike Kingham</li> <li>• Partnership Away Day to determine future of the Scheme</li> <li>• Scheme manager employed in a consultancy role</li> </ul>
	Feb 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second Community Get Together focussed around the Community Chest and promoting involvement in community activity</li> <li>• OCEDAR (Oxfordshire Community Education Development at Ruskin) agree that BBL (Blackbird Leys) will be one of 3 pilot areas within their Community Learning Project funded by the DfES (Department for Education and Skills) and agree to participate on the Scheme's Training and Support Group</li> </ul>
	Mar 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 3 Delivery Plan submitted</li> </ul>
3	Apr 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme re-organisation effected</li> <li>• Oxford City replaces TEC as accountable body</li> <li>• Oxford City Council replace the CDI as the lead partner responsible for staffing issues, scheme reporting and appraisal system</li> <li>• Neighbourhood worker post replaced by that of Scheme Manager</li> <li>• Rationalisation of the scheme bringing together all the sub-projects under the remit of the new Scheme Development Project with one single appraisal- with the exception of the Leys Linx Centre formerly known as the Shopfront Project</li> <li>• New reporting procedures for projects</li> </ul>
	May 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third Community Get Together on Participatory Learning approaches to community development with 50 people attending</li> </ul>
	Jun 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme Manager appointed and scheme named Leys Linx</li> </ul>
	Jul 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.8 CDO (Community Development Officer) appointed – employed by City Council</li> </ul>
	Aug 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Involving the Community Group wound up with functions absorbed by the Scheme Manager, CDO and the Shopfront Project</li> </ul>
	Sep 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leys Fair held with Leys Linx funding coordinator costs</li> <li>• Fourth Community Get Together on new developments on the estate including the Neighbourhood Nursery (NN)</li> <li>• Terms of reference for Leys Linx approved</li> <li>• Fifth Community Get Together about the development of the BBL Community Centre</li> </ul>

	Oct 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEEDA agree to renegotiate scheme outputs</li> <li>• Leys Linx organises a community response to the allocation of funds from the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative (NNI) for BBL by establishing a Steering Group</li> </ul>
	Nov 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford Swindon and Gloucester Co-op (OSG) agree to formulate bid for NNI funding with a view to inputting tender to deliver the NN on the estate</li> </ul>
	Dec 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful bid to Sports England to support black and minority ethnic (BME) women to participate in sport and sports leadership</li> <li>• Part time SRB CDO appointed</li> <li>• Partnership Board away day</li> <li>• Systems Audit undertaken by ECOTEC producing a poor rating</li> </ul>
	Jan 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part time admin worker appointed to Leys Linx</li> </ul>
	Feb 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council CDO resigns and post frozen</li> </ul>
	Mar 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leys Linx agrees to promote the NNI and other under 8s services on the estate and chairs the NN Steering Group until October 2003 when the Local Neighbourhood Group is formed</li> <li>• Sixth Community Get Together on Public Art on the Leys</li> <li>• Year 3 Delivery Plan submitted</li> </ul>
4	Apr 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bid submitted by Oxford Brookes University and Leys Linx to ATMOSPHERE for funding (11.5k) for the Community Against Drugs (CAD) Programme</li> <li>• Community Arts Steering Group launched</li> <li>• Partnership Board discusses dissemination and communication strategy on the Leys</li> </ul>
	May 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Claims training for all scheme projects and sub-projects</li> <li>• First participatory learning course</li> </ul>
	Jun 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Arts group consolidates</li> </ul>
	Jul 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership Away Day exploring the benefits and frustrations of partnership working</li> <li>• Seventh Community Get Together on volunteering opportunities</li> <li>• Sports England project operational with Leys Linx as lead partner</li> </ul>
	Aug 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondment to Leys Linx to undertake monitoring of community chest beneficiaries (6 hours a week for 6 months)</li> </ul>
	Sep 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Leys Community Network held bringing together paid and unpaid workers on the estate</li> <li>• Leys Fair held with Co-ordinator costs met by Leys Linx</li> <li>• European Social Fund (ESF) bid submitted with Ruskin College to develop the Leys Community Learning Project</li> </ul>
	Oct 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAD Programme approved by ATMOSPHERE</li> <li>• Second participatory learning course</li> <li>• As part of its work within the NN Steering Group, Leys Linx supports the need for the OSG and Primary Care Trust (PCT) to explore a joint Health Centre/NN on Dunnock Way</li> </ul>
	Nov 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESF bid successful with 80k allocated</li> <li>• Secondment from City Council to co-ordinate the Sports England project (10 hours a week)</li> <li>• Eighth Community Get Together on all the initiatives taking place on, or being proposed on the estate</li> </ul>

	Dec 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council 0.8 CDO vacancy filled by SRB CDO</li> <li>• Partnership Away Day to explore possible models of governance and Year 5 Delivery Plan</li> <li>• OCEDAR project finishes</li> </ul>
	Jan 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 staff appointed to Leys Community Learning Project (ESF funded)</li> </ul>
	Feb 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SRB CDO vacancy filled</li> </ul>
	Mar 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAD project completed: drugs conference held and project report published</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	Apr 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership Board agrees forward strategy</li> </ul>
	May 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second wave of funding from ATMOSPHERE for the CAD Project approved (30k)</li> <li>• Worker resigns from Leys Community Learning Project</li> </ul>
	Jun 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third Participatory Learning course delivered on health (ESF funded)</li> <li>• “Life after SRB event” organised by East Oxford Action</li> <li>• Staff appraisals undertaken by Scheme Manager</li> </ul>
	July 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal evaluation of all scheme projects undertaken</li> <li>• LSC and Ruskin College support appointment of two new staff to take forward the Leys Community Learning Project</li> <li>• Second Community Drugs conference</li> <li>• Leys Linx make representation to the PCT to inform local people about the development of the new Health Centre</li> <li>• Funding from the Healthy Living Fund for CAD agreed (3k with more to come)</li> <li>• 9k funding accessed from Crime Retail Initiative for Community Centre Music Studio</li> </ul>
	Aug 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding from Children’s Fund for drugs awareness work in local schools agreed (34k)</li> <li>• Input into post SRB arrangements submitted by Neighbourhood Renewal Unit to City Executive</li> </ul>
	Sep 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SRB CDO resigns</li> <li>• Leys Learning Network convened to plan integrated submission of bids from the Leys for ESF co-financing</li> <li>• Sport England Development Worker appointed to undertake outreach for the Afya project (Sporting opportunities for women from an ethnic minority)</li> <li>• Recruitment for CDO post</li> <li>• Leys Fair held with the cost of the coordinator met by Leys Linx</li> <li>• Leys Linx have representation on the Aisled Barn Working Group highlighting the needs which exist on the estate for dedicated training space, offices and childcare facilities</li> <li>• “Bottom up” evaluation of the scheme</li> <li>• Partnership Board Away Day</li> </ul>
	Oct 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third Community Drugs Conference</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Nursery Group established to run new NN funded by the NNI</li> </ul>
	Nov 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Conference</li> </ul>

NB £1k = £1,000

## 2.4 Outputs

SRB schemes are measured for effectiveness against standard outputs. A review of outputs up to Quarter 1 of 2003/04 is presented in appendix C. When the scheme was reconfigured in early 2001, SEEDA agreed to the scaling down of some targets to allow for the reality of time lost due to staffing problems and lessons learnt which had refocused the mission. Other new and demanding targets were introduced. All save two of the revised targets had been met or exceeded by the end of Quarter 1 of this year. Anticipated outputs for the lifetime of the scheme show that some targets will be exceeded by very large margins. Most notable successes are as follows:

- 70 training weeks are expected to have been provided. The target was 20.
- 1000 young people are expected to have benefited from projects to promote personal and social development. The target was 540
- 650 people are expected to have been given access to new cultural facilities. The target was 100
- 35 people over the age of 60 and 120 women are expected to have benefited from community safety initiatives. The targets were 5 and 60 respectively.

Two targets will not be met. Only 400 people are expected to have been given access to new community healthy facilities (target 750) and only 50 will be using improved sport facilities (target 100). On closer inspection, however, it should be noted that the targets for **using** improved health facilities and **being given access** to new sports opportunities have been exceeded by a large margin. This is confusing and suggests that those completing monitoring forms interpreted the phrases differently.

## 2.5 Key Indicators

The Key Indicators throughout the project have been ambitious and in most cases have been achieved. Three have not:

- In Year 4, the Community Safety Project was due to introduce work around protective behaviours with young women. This was planned and organised but is reported to have met with no response.
- The formulation of a constitution for the Community Chest has been deferred in the hope that the Residents' Panel can be integrated into the post SRB governance arrangements.
- The Kingfisher Green has not been developed as a community resource, although efforts are being made in the last 6 months of the project to demonstrate how its potential to fulfil this function can be realised.

## 2.6 Spend

The scheme is on course to spend its full allocation of SRB funding which is £335,150. It is on course to achieve its public match-funding targets of £230,045 with inputs by the end of Quarter 1 2003/4 of £190,600. The same is true of the private sector match-funding target of £77,121 with inputs to date of £73,300. Most of the match funding partners who signed up to the original bid have fulfilled their financial obligations regarding inputs.

It was noted by interviewees that the County Council, which was to input £80,000 of match funding over the lifetime of the scheme from Community Education, has struggled either to input the funding at the levels promised or to substantiate its contribution for quarterly claim purposes to reflect the important interventions and resources it did make available. This was as a result of some confusion within the County about which department was responsible for match funding input, stop-go input at Partnership Board level and pressure on staff to undertake SRB bureaucracy requirements. In spite of this the scheme has drawn a wealth of expertise and input from the County Council most notably as follows:

- From Community Education in relation to the BLITZ project,
- From Under Eights Officers in relation to the development of the Neighbourhood Nursery and Children's Centre
- Substantial help and advice in more recent times from the Economic Development Unit.

Given the small-scale nature of the scheme, it has been important to draw down additional funds from sources such as the Crime Retail Initiative, Sport England, The European Social Fund, ATMOSPHERE, the Children's Fund, the Healthy Living Initiative and the Oxfordshire Community Foundation. In addition to the private and public match funding committed above (£307,166), the Scheme will bring in an additional £150,000 to support projects in 2003/4 and beyond. Substantial efforts have been made to attract ESF funding via the Learning and Skills Council from 2004 onwards. Four integrated bids have been submitted from the Leys for around £1.3 million led by the County Council's Adult Basic Skills Service and the Learning and Culture Division in partnership with the Leys Community Learning Project.

### 3 The projects

The scheme was structured around five sub groups each of which was tasked with finding ways of delivering in line with one of the themes. The following section presents views expressed in seminars facilitated by the evaluator to explore each theme.

#### 3.1 Involving the Community

The bid presented the following aims:

- A. To involve the community in the creation and on-going development of a community development plan, so that it reflects community priorities
- B. To inform all groups and individuals working in Blackbird Leys about the community's priorities, resources and willingness
- C. To increase community participation at all levels of community life, with a particular emphasis on involvement in the local democratic process through the Parish Council
- D. To install, and encourage the use of, IT equipment at three or four points around the estate to facilitate networking locally but also more widely within the country and abroad
- E. To operate a 'Community Chest' to provide local organisations with easy to access grants for supporting small scale local initiatives.

Involving the Community was perceived to be central, underpinning all other work, and was the project through which the scheme's employees were paid. However, it was this theme that the Partnership Board had most difficulty in defining. Indeed, much of the first year of the scheme was spent trying to work how best to approach the work. When the scheme was reconfigured in early 2001, a new Scheme Development project was created to support the running of the scheme and the Involving the Community project was wound up on the basis that inclusive approaches should be built into all of the work and a separate theme was unnecessary.

Of the five aims boxed above,

- A. has been adopted as a key function of the new Area Committee arrangement of the City Council. Since the scheme was refocused and restructured in 2001, greater emphasis has been placed on delivering projects than community planning. *'We wanted less consultation and more action on the points we'd already been consulted on.'* The community conference planned for 1<sup>st</sup> November 2003 is being organised by residents and is expected to include a community planning process.
- B. has become part of the information brief of the Leys Linx Centre (see 3.5)
- C. is being addressed mainly through the participatory learning training and the CAD (Community Against Drugs) work but interviewees report that no progress has been made with regard to the involvement of more people in the democratic process through the Parish Council. This was seen as an area in which the scheme had failed to deliver (see section 5.4).
- D. has been addressed to some extent through Kingfisher Green and the BLITZ project in the Leys Linx Centre but networking opportunities around the estate have not been developed.
- E. has been developed successfully and is examined further below.

### 3.1.1 The Community Chest

The Community Chest is a small fund made available to community groups and allocated by a panel including local residents.

#### Purpose

Interviewees identified three aims for the project:

- To give small organisations easy non-bureaucratic access to small pots of funding
- To use the process to identify other capacity building needs which could be followed up by CDOs
- To involve residents in decision making on grant allocation using their local knowledge and to generate local ownership

#### Activity and funding

Around £25,000 has been donated to 35 different groups. Grants range from £100 to £1000 and are allocated once or twice a year. In the last round, 2 out of 13 applications were refused. The Community Chest is publicised via Leys News, posters and word of mouth. Grants are allocated by a panel consisting of professionals and residents, which has dropped from involving 10 to about 5 people over time. It was slow to get going in Year One because of a lack of staff available to provide administration and training to panel members. Since 2001, administrative costs have been absorbed by the Scheme and the City Council so all funds have been channelled directly to community groups. The Chest has been over subscribed. Paper monitoring followed up by telephone monitoring of groups has produced a 90% return rate but staff have been unavailable to carry out more detailed monitoring to actually see projects delivered on the ground and the extent to which capacity has been increased as a result of Community Chest funding.

#### Management and partnerships

The project was originally managed by the CDI but is now financially managed by SRB and City Council staff on behalf of the panel. It is the panel that determines policy, strategy and allocation criteria.

#### Strengths identified by interviewees

Interviewees confirmed that the Chest has succeeded in being easily accessible and has made a positive difference to small community groups that are struggling. It has identified and dealt appropriately with conflicts of interest and has successfully involved residents in running the project.

*'It has done what it is supposed to do.'*

#### Weaknesses identified by interviewees

- Monitoring:  
Interviewees noted that active monitoring of groups had not been possible and that the requirements of the SRB scheme did not always produce information that was useful locally. Ideally, every project should be visited by panel members to gather evidence of success and offer support. Some thought that the application and monitoring forms could be more user friendly.
- Marketing:  
Marketing had been successful but some thought that it could be more varied.
- Resident involvement:

The process for recruiting new residents to the panel could be improved by, perhaps, inviting representatives of groups that had received funding in the past and offering training and childcare expenses to panel members. It was noted that there are no young people on the panel.

- **Funding:**

The project had hoped to attract top-up funding from the business sector but had failed to do so.

#### The Future

To sustain the project beyond April 2004, a new management arrangement and funding source will be required. A variety of models have been explored and the Oxfordshire Community Foundation have offered to take responsibility for core funding of £5,000 per year and management of the fund.

A further £5,000 per year needs to be raised to allow the project to grow. Approaches could be made to nearby businesses such as the Greyhound stadium, BMW, Tesco and Oxford United FC.

A mechanism needs to be created to administer the application process, monitor and support beneficiaries and recruit and support resident panel members. This may be a role that could be undertaken by the City Council CDO.

*'The Community Chest needs to be funded and managed by a competent agency but it must not jeopardise local ownership.'*

## 3.2 Community Safety

The bid stated that the scheme would 'establish a coherent integrated local strategy for community safety by linking and targeting existing initiatives to achieve a positive impact on both the actual incidence as well as the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.' A series of actions were proposed including:

- A. Creating a community safety plan for Blackbird Leys
- B. Creating an area base for the Community Beat team
- C. Prioritising police resources into problem-solving with children and young people
- D. Introducing restorative justice, reparation and mentoring initiatives in partnership with the Youth Offending Team (YOT)
- E. Piloting training to help with early detection of domestic violence
- F. Supporting an inter-agency initiative to tackle drug abuse
- G. Linking with Education Action Zone, other educational and training schemes and the Healthy Living Centre to increase support to vulnerable young people and families

The Community Safety theme grew out of concerns expressed via the LRA (Leys Residents Association) and the Parish Council about drugs, burglary, litter, vandalism and anti-social neighbours. The bid proposed the creation of a coherent local partnership to tackle anti-social behaviour with a budget of around £8,000 over the life of the scheme. After the first year of meetings of a Community Safety Forum, there was no apparent action. Interviewees described the process as '*all talk*' and '*frustrating*'. The only active members of the forum were focussed on domestic violence so, in March 2001, a steering group on domestic violence was formed and Thames Valley Partnership was employed to initiate a community development approach. Two community safety events took place in March 2002 and September 2003 enabling over **200** people to learn more about a wide range of community safety initiatives. These events are the only evidence of broad community safety approaches as outlined in the box above. Oxford Citizens Housing Association (OCHA) led a move to abandon the broad strategy in favour of targeted work on domestic violence and drugs.

### 3.2.1 Domestic Violence

The key purpose of this project was to raise awareness of domestic violence, which is reported to be the biggest crime on the estate. A community group of local residents, entitled WINGS, has been receiving capacity building support from the project since August 2001. WINGS is now poised to be able to offer support to the victims of domestic violence via a phone line. Direction has been supplied by OCHA but day-to-day support has been limited because of CDO vacancies. The main outstanding aim for the project is to make WINGS sustainable. This requires funding to pay for a coordinator.

### 3.2.2 Drugs

#### Background

The Leys Residents Association and the Parish Council had expressed concern about drugs on Blackbird Leys and the Independent Working Class Association was promoting direct action against drug dealers. In response a local parent of a drug

user, supported by the scheme, established a support group called Positive Links, which at one time included as many as 50 residents. However interviewees reported that the group struggled due to a lack of capacity and the fact that volunteers felt exposed to attack from dealers. In October 2002 £11,500 was secured for the CAD project as a result of a joint bid by Oxford Brookes University and Leys Linx to ATMOSPHERE (Oxford's Community Safety Partnership).

### Aims

Interviewees described the aims of the project as follows:

- To draw down funding for work on drugs
- To help provide jobs and opportunities for people struggling with drugs
- To create a visible response to drugs based on the views of local residents
- To help build a safer community that people want to stay in and be part of.

### Activity

A group of residents were trained in participatory learning techniques and were paid to facilitate action planning in their local community. The project set out to

- Identify need
- Map existing services
- Identify gaps in services
- Plan developments to fill those gaps
- Prioritise and action plan
- Provide an ongoing network to review progress on the action plan.

The facilitators consulted their neighbours in 17 different groups such as schools, community groups, users and ex-users. They also interviewed a total of 180 people on the street. 227 people were consulted in all. Interviewees were asked

- How do drugs affect you?
- What needs to be done?
- Who by?
- What next?

Their findings were published in March 2003 and a public meeting took place on 30<sup>th</sup> April to seek views on next steps. In May, a further £30,000 was secured from ATMOSPHERE for a second phase, which will focus more on delivery of initiatives as well as the ongoing involvement of residents and will allow for the employment of three residents for a day per week.

A trainer, the City Council substance misuse worker, Oxford Brookes University and Leys Linx staff supported the local facilitators.

### Strengths identified by interviewees

- Ownership by local people with knowledge of the issues
- Well thought through ground rules about not identifying drug dealers to make it easier for people to speak out
- Creative planning
- Opportunities for the skills of facilitators to emerge and for the development of new skills
- Strong support from the relevant agencies
- The creation of three part time jobs for local people

- The development of a drop-in at the Leys Linx Centre
- The contribution of the trainer who is now moving to a mentoring role
- The likelihood that the project is sustainable beyond SRB.

#### Weaknesses identified by interviewees

- Agencies wanted to present their own version of the issues instead of listening to the community
- The report was rushed due to lack of time
- There was no base from which to work until very late
- No way has yet been found to hold agencies to account
- The facilitators need to develop their skills in tracking actions arising from their plan.

#### The future

The project has the infrastructure and funding in place to continue the work for a further year so is focussed on delivery rather than capacity. They wish to establish a base where they can be contacted easily and from which they can organise events. In terms of specific actions, they intend to work with service providers to introduce the following:

- Sharps bins for needles
- Outreach work to help prevent problematic drug use including work in schools in partnership with the Children's Fund
- Training for community volunteers
- A one stop shop for drug users seeking treatment via the PCT

### 3.3 Training and Support

The bid stated that the scheme would help coordinate and promote existing training providers by

- Employing a worker to provide advice and assistance to voluntary groups on financial management, administration and fund-raising
- Creating a mentoring scheme
- Developing new responsive training opportunities

#### Background, origins and early problems

This theme arose from a desire from community groups to access local training and a lack of clarity about what training was available. The CDI had already published Leys Training – a guide to training opportunities and the Training and Support group was established to link training needs to existing resources. Interviewees reported that there was an identified need for a worker to build the capacity of local groups with regard to support and training and to help develop mentoring schemes and a bank of volunteers. The sector required coordination.

However there were problems at the outset. Most providers dropped out of the group early on because with a budget of just £2,000 per year, it was not obvious what they could gain by attending. Indeed the purpose of the group was confused.

*'Is it about capacity building or is it about increasing and improving local delivery by providers or both?'*

The County Council committed match funding of £20,000 per year via the East and South Oxford Community Education Committee (EASOCEC) to co-ordinate training activity. Interviewees observed that, in reality, EASOCEC did not have the capacity to deliver and expressed strong views about the failure of some key partners to commit adequately to the aims of the Training and Support Group:

*'The original providers on the group were not the right providers.'*

*'Everyone wanted something from it without putting anything in.'*

*'The match funding in the original bid was not real.'*

*'The partnership was not real.'*

#### Progress

As with other themes, progress began to be made following restructuring of the scheme in 2001. The interim evaluation suggested greater emphasis should be given to the Connexions priority of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), labour market preparation and support and the creation of a One Stop Shop. The Leys Linx scheme manager took a greater role in the development of the group to support EASOCEC in its lead role and by September 2001 it had facilitated a number taster sessions, a training fair and an audit of providers. The Training and Support Group was then reduced to a number of core providers and developed its terms of reference as a clearinghouse linking local learning need to provision and coordinating new developments. Ruskin College joined the group in early 2002 and

agreed that Blackbird Leys should be one of the pilot areas for their DfES funded Community Education Development project (OCEDAR).

*' We only started to do the job once Ruskin got involved.'*

Leys Linx and OCEDAR jointly employed a trainer to run participatory learning courses using a model developed by Oxfordshire Development Education Campaign (ODEC) which was in turn based on approaches that have been used for many years in developing countries in the southern hemisphere (see appendix D). This allowed for genuine community involvement in identifying need as well as developing the skills of the individuals involved. It also formed the basis of the CAD project (see 3.2.2). The OCEDAR Project also played a key role identifying the learning needs of a wide range of community organisations and developing training to meet these needs. This took the form of workshops and residential courses.

A further £81,000 was then secured from the European Social Fund (ESF) via the Learning Skills Council (LSC) for the Leys Community Learning Project, which built on the lessons of the OCEDAR project by developing customised training for local groups. This was delivered by Ruskin College and steered by the Training and Support Group. The project faltered due to staff illness, with a new Co-ordinator and outreach worker coming into post in the summer of 2003. The project has been put back on track and is well on the way to achieving the original outputs, milestones and outcomes, with the exception of numbers of people achieving accredited training. The opening of the Leys Linx Centre in March 2002 and the BLITZ (Blackbird Leys Information Technology Zone) project in June 2002 saw the creation of a One Stop Shop providing information, advice and guidance on training opportunities. Public events were organised such as a promotion of Working Families Tax Credit and organisations such as Co-operative Futures, OCVA and Business Boffins were engaged in supporting local community enterprises. The training needs analysis informed local developments such as the new training room in Blackbird Leys library and the networking and coordination functions of the Training and Support Group have now been taken on by the newly formed Leys Learning Network. Other work by the Training and Support Group has led to a locally delivered diploma in pre-school practice course and a series of Open Information Events.

In September 2003, further bids were submitted to ESF to sustain Leys Community Learning and three complementary projects.

#### Strengths identified by interviewees

Given the shaky start, this project has clearly been a remarkable success. Output targets have been exceeded. Interviewees were keen to emphasise the crucial role played by the scheme manager in forging partnerships with providers such as Ruskin College and the participatory learning trainer, Pippa Bobbett. He was also very successful in drawing down significant levels of funding from ESF. All the interviewees described the project as a major contribution to capacity building and community development which is particularly impressive given an SRB budget of just £9,000 over five years. Indeed one could argue that this project has been an excellent example of how well SRB can work by making a small investment to help create productive partnerships that engage the community and lever in significant investment.

### Weaknesses identified by interviewees

It was suggested that some of the most significant barriers to learning had still not been addressed. It was suggested that residents on the estate are reluctant to attend school or college and will not leave the estate for training. Taster days, for example, failed to attract large numbers of new learners because they took place in college. Childcare arrangements were described as poor. Insufficient opportunities for work related training and training progression had been developed. The insecurity of funds for BLITZ beyond June 2004 is a source for anxiety.

Poor performance in the early days was put down to the following factors:

- Lack of capacity within EASOCEC
- Insufficient funds in the budget to meet the requirements of the delivery plan
- Confused objectives
- The freezing of the seconded CDO post by the City Council for 9 months in Year 4 on account of budget cuts
- An inability to engage Oxford College of Further Education
- The lack of a good training venue on the estate

### The future

To develop the work further, interviewees identified the following priorities:

- Establish the Leys Learning Network as the coordinating body for training and support on Blackbird Leys and attach development worker time to service the group and offer support to community groups wishing to access training.
- Work with the newly created CfBT post to investigate what skills local employers want.
- Create dedicated learning spaces in venues such as Leys Linx in the evening, the Barn, an empty shop, the new training room in the library, Kingfisher Green and the Leisure Centre.
- Secure ongoing funding for Leys Learning and BLITZ via ESF and for outreach work via the County Council (though interviewees noted that citywide outreach work is apparently due to be reduced).
- Engage the new Oxford and Cherwell College in Leys based training opportunities for new learners.

### 3.4 Kingfisher Green

The objectives of this project were to

- Develop the empty Kingfisher Green building (1000 sq. ft.)
- Provide office space for the Leys Residents Association (LRA) and Leys News Ltd
- Provide meeting space for local residents and community groups and house training and advice sessions
- Provide access to computers for local residents

#### Background

The Kingfisher Green building was an empty shell on the new Greater Leys estate that was intended to be a shop but had not been taken up. It had become 'an eyesore'. Both the LRA and Leys News required office space and the building had additional potential as a community resource. The SRB grant allocation was matched with planning gain funds from Oxford City Council and covered the capital required for refurbishment and £2,000 per year revenue. Interviewees confirmed the original aim and added that the project was an attempt 'to put this side of the estate on the map.'

The site was successfully refurbished in March 2001 and has provided excellent office facilities for both community organisations. It is run by the user groups in partnership with the landlords (Blackbird Leys Housing Consortium). Additional support had been provided by a CDO employed by Ealing Family Housing Association (EFHA) though the post has been vacant for some time and greatly missed by the user groups. In addition to office space, the site has created meeting space, opportunities for training and volunteering and access to IT.

Leys News has been the chief publicity agent for Leys Linx and LRA has taken forward projects such as the Community Garden on Gillian Park with the support of Leys Linx. LRA has also benefited from grants from the Community Chest and training from OCEDAR.

#### Strengths identified by interviewees

- Since moving into Kingfisher Green, Leys News has become more secure and appointed a second worker.
- The office space works very well (though the LRA office would benefit from a partition)
- It offers quiet uninterrupted meeting space
- IT sessions run every Tuesday by BLITZ have been very successful (though they are dependent upon a volunteer from LRA being available to act as key holder and for health and safety reasons)
- It has created a resource in an outpost of the estate where nothing else is based
- It has created scope for LRA to develop.

#### Weaknesses identified by interviewees

- SRB reporting requirements were regarded as onerous for a relatively small amount of money (£2,000 per year)
- The location is a weakness as well as a strength. It is hard to find, has poor parking facilities and is felt, by some, to be unsafe to walk to at night.

- Signage is required both towards and on the building.
- Access is difficult if Leys News workers are not present.
- Community development work linked to the building was left to the LRA, which currently consists of 6 volunteers only three of whom are available in the daytime. This is an unrealistic expectation. Paid CDO time is required to coordinate community development work and act as key holder for the building.

Interviewees noted that some believe that Kingfisher Green is under used. Indeed development of the building as a community resource was a key indicator of success for the scheme. The LRA is essentially a representative and campaigning body and is not necessarily an appropriate agent for community development work.

*'The members determine its focus not the SRB board.'*

Work is ongoing to try and find ways to develop this area of work but interviewees noted that to provide excellent office space to important community organisations is an adequate outcome on its own.

The LRA has struggled during the lifetime of the scheme to attract members despite significant investment of training, funds and facilities. Some observed that a paid staff input might be needed if the Association is to consolidate and grow.

### 3.5 The Shopfront (later known as The Leys Linx Centre)

This project aimed to

- Provide an easily accessible base for the SRB partnership
- Provide an IT access point
- Create an information drop-in
- Provide a permanent base for the Credit Union

Interviewees identified three core functions for the Leys Linx Centre: providing services, involving the community and co-ordination.

#### 3.5.1 Services

This is the most complicated project to describe and evaluate because the Leys Linx Centre, which opened in March 2001, has become the base for a wide variety of functions including the coordination of the Leys Linx scheme itself. It is home to BLITZ, the Leys Credit Union as well as outreach sessions undertaken by the Information and Guidance Service (IAG) the Agnes Smith Advice Centre, the Pensions Service, Oxfordshire Housing Rights, Parents Information Service and an information and sign posting service provided by the CDO seconded to the scheme from the City Council. Moves to improve the external appearance of the Community Centre are being co-ordinated at the Centre, a volunteer strategy has been developed and initiatives such as the Community Market and Community Art project are coordinated from the centre. In September 2003 a website ([www.blackbirdleys.com](http://www.blackbirdleys.com)) was launched.

##### Strengths of services provided identified by interviewees

- The Credit Union has an ideal base and is well organised
- Meeting and training space is available
- A wide range of advice providers offer services
- The location is central
- The centre is well supported by the City Council building manager and the various staff based at the centre work well together
- The link to BLITZ (the IT Hub) is very productive
- Paper information is well presented and accessible
- The space and staff are flexible and responsive to the needs of users
- A hand basin is now available in the interview room making it suitable for clinical use by the healthy living initiatives.

##### Weaknesses of services provided identified by interviewees

- There is only one centre based CDO who needs to be present so that the Centre can remain open and therefore is unavailable for outreach. A second worker would make it easier to draw people in
- The organisation of information is a relentless task that does not get the attention it needs
- Links with Street Wardens could be improved
- An information board on local activities should be regularly updated (particularly for people new to the area)
- A counselling or more informal listening service should be available

- The centre is not yet functioning as a drop-in. This is partly because opening hours are inconsistent due to staffing problems and partly because the layout of the building is off putting to casual callers if a formal meeting is taking place in the main room. The furniture creates a meeting room rather than drop-in atmosphere. The centre needs to rediscover clarity of purpose by relaunching itself as a drop-in with a desk for members of the public to use and someone available to greet visitors whenever the centre is open. This will require more staff.
- Guest agencies are expected to send two workers to provide cover but often only send one. This requires the CDO to be present in the building for safety reasons.
- New regulations from the Financial Services Authority have forced the Credit Union to be preoccupied with systems. Greater capacity for outreach work should become available over time.
- The centre needs a cleaner.

### 3.5.2 Involving the community

As the Involving the Community Group was wound up (see 3.1), the Leys Linx Centre has been a significant vehicle for working towards this central aim. One interviewee described the Centre as *'the place where we ask ourselves how to involve the community in local activity'*.

#### Strengths of involving the community function identified by interviewees

- Residents are starting to use the centre but *'it is taking a long time'*.
- The skills and availability of the CDO has enabled important individual support to be offered around issues such as domestic violence, bereavement and literacy problems.
- Effective signposting to services and community developments on the estate is happening.
- The engagement of local people in BLITZ and the Credit Union fosters community ownership and pride in the services.

#### Weaknesses of involving the community function identified by interviewees

- There is not enough space for people to drop by and feel welcome (see 3.5.1)
- The Parish Council has not become involved and routes for residents to have a political voice have not been developed
- Local residents are not sufficiently engaged in the management of the centre
- Despite active marketing, there is still poor local awareness of Leys Linx and Leys Linx Centre
- Workers living locally have blurred roles, which can be hard to manage.

### 3.5.3 Coordination

Interviewees noted that it is hard to know when the Leys Linx Centre stops and the broader Leys Linx Scheme starts. Although scheme management is a separate function, it is linked very closely to the centre. Some observed that the partnerships that underpin the scheme are *'not real'* and it would help to define what a partner is expected to do to qualify for the title.

*'Commitment from practitioners is strong but there is no long term commitment to Blackbird Leys at a strategic level.'*

The centre has successfully coordinated operational developments leaving strategic issues to the scheme management. Signposting between the Credit Union, Advice

Centre and IT Hub, for example, has worked well. Interviewees noted that for the broader function of coordinating developments on the estate to be done properly, a neighbourhood coordinator post will be needed to succeed the current scheme manager when he leaves at the end of March 2004.

#### **3.5.4 The future**

Interviewees were keen to understand the long-term intentions of the City and Council Councils with regard to regenerative capacity building work on Blackbird Leys. They also noted that legal accounting demands might push the Credit Union into becoming a citywide agency, which may affect dynamics in the centre.

The following issues were identified as central to sustaining and developing the work at the centre:

- Create a Neighbourhood Coordinator/Manager post
- Secure the City CDO post and ensure it remains based in Blackbird Leys
- Create an administrator/receptionist post
- Employ a cleaner
- Secure running costs
- Secure ongoing revenue funding for the Credit Union and BLITZ
- Improve marketing of the centre with an LED display, improved information displays in the centre and outreach work.
- Reintroduce the focus on drop-in
- Maintain the building – keeping it smart and friendly.

## 4 Successes

### 4.1 A consistent mission

Interviewees were all pleased, and to some extent surprised, to notice that the scheme had managed to stay true to its original mission. There were major difficulties in the first 18 months of delivery which are discussed in section 4.2 but following a change in management arrangements and a restructuring of the scheme, everybody was very positive about the extent to which the delivery had contributed towards the central mission of community development and capacity building. The SRB input could be summarised as a mechanism to test ideas about how to build capacity by providing resources and focus:

*'We have been trying to find out how to turn somewhere into a community and how to find out if you've succeeded.'*

### 4.2 Effective recovery from a poor start

The scheme struggled in the first two years. Interviewees noted that the CDI did not have the capacity to manage the process, the TEC offered good support via their representative but as an agency held back from active involvement and the City Council had to be pressurised to commit staff promised as match funding in the bid. At the outset the City and County Councils were not engaged at a strategic level, the Partnership Board had not arrived at a clear definition of the central concept of capacity building and the staff that were employed were unable to deliver.

By January 2001, the staff had resigned, a critical interim evaluation report had been published, the TEC had announced that it could no longer be the accountable body given the launch of the new Learning Skills Councils, the Partnership Board members were becoming frustrated and, apart from the renovation of Kingfisher Green and The Shopfront, nothing seemed to be happening. One Board member was heard to suggest that perhaps the money should be handed back and SEEDA were expressing serious concerns about the scheme.

Then everything changed. The City Council took over the role of accountable body and appointed a scheme manager and an away day helped the Board to rediscover its mission and focus. Some were very concerned that a community led initiative was becoming a top down City Council dominated project but *'to their credit'* the City facilitated a process, which returned the scheme to a capacity building agenda. Renegotiation of the outputs with SEEDA and a restructuring of the scheme to focus on involving the community through project delivery rather than as a project in itself allowed those involved to see real meaning behind the words. In December 2001, a systems audit of the scheme scored Leys Linx lower than any other SRB scheme in the South East. All the recommendations in the systems audit have since been addressed thanks to the efforts of the scheme manager with effective supervisory and administrative support from the City Council's Neighbourhood Renewal Manager and SRB Administrator respectively. It also seems that the Partnership Board's decision in early 2001 to employ a part time administrative support worker enabled the scheme to run more smoothly.

So a failing scheme has in three years turned itself into a success thanks, in large part, to effective management. One interviewee noted that, although it is important

to hold onto the benefits of community led initiatives, it is crucial to learn the lesson that regenerative work cannot be undertaken without the engagement of the local authorities and complex accountability frameworks need large agencies with sophisticated systems to manage them.

#### **4.3 Effective scheme management**

Although it is certainly the case that all of the positive outcomes described in this report have depended on a wide range of agencies and individuals who have shown great commitment, all interviewees confirmed that one person deserves great credit for the achievements of the scheme. **Redacted** was appointed as scheme manager on a part time basis during 2001. It was he that successfully effected the restructuring of the scheme, renegotiated with SEEDA, responded positively to the systems audit, forged the partnerships that led to the participatory learning approach, drew down large sums of money for innovative project delivery and turned the Board into a strategic partnership that could pick up on funding opportunities and bring a local perspective to major innovations. He also attended to the detail of facilitating small community groups to work in partnership with huge statutory service providers. It is a delicate role answering to the City Council, the Partnership Board and the wider community. Perhaps one of the scheme manager's greatest achievements was being able to manage the bureaucratic process without letting it stifle community development work:

*'Networks of community groups generate energy; bureaucratic processes deaden enthusiasm.'*

Systems are important but it seems that personalities are what make the biggest difference. Making a good appointment is absolutely crucial to the successful delivery of a project of this complexity.

*'SRB schemes have the personality of the scheme manager stamped all over them and much of the success of this scheme is quite simply due to **redacted**.'*

#### **4.4 A strong Board**

Most interviewees described the Board as strong, decisive, inclusive and well chaired. One interviewee felt that, although the away days were strategic, regular Board meetings tended to get bogged down in operational detail and failed to take the overview. However, though some of the creative thinking may have taken place outside meetings, there is no doubt that key players from the Board moved towards adopting an effective strategic role during the lifetime of the scheme. This has meant that Blackbird Leys has been well placed to forge productive partnerships for service development and a very local perspective has been incorporated into the planning of such initiatives as the Neighbourhood Nursery and the new Health Centre.

#### **4.5 The flexibility of SEEDA**

The willingness of SEEDA to renegotiate outputs and allow a restructuring of the scheme enabled the work to acquire a clearer focus. The interim evaluation and subsequent systems audit were appropriately harsh and helped provide momentum for change. Without this rigorous attention and problem solving approach from the key funder, the scheme may have taken longer to recover. Most of the recommendations from the interim evaluation have been acted upon or put aside for

good reasons. However, recommendations on the Neighbourhood Management model are being addressed somewhat late in the day and progress on community safety and preparation for the labour market has been hampered for reasons discussed elsewhere in this report (see sections 3.2 and 3.3 respectively).

#### **4.6 The use of a delivery plan**

Several interviewees commented that the delivery plan, which is central to the SRB process, has been a useful tool and should continue to be used post SRB. Monitoring requirements could be more tailored and user friendly in future but the plan itself has been very helpful in setting priorities, gaining consensus and measuring progress.

#### **4.7 Being small but thinking big**

This scheme had modest financial resources at its disposal and could have limited itself to delivering a small contained project. Instead it went out and sought partners such as Ruskin College, ODEC (to develop a training capacity building methodology), Oxford Brookes University (with its expertise around drugs work), the LSC and the local authorities with their capacities to identify and lever in funds. It also invested heavily in supporting important local developments such as:

- The Healthy Living Initiative
- The Crime Retail Initiative
- The Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative
- The PCT LIFT Initiative to support the development of new health facilities on the estate
- The Afya Sport England Project geared at encouraging the participation of local women from BME communities in sport and sports leadership
- Developments at the Community Centre

*'The only way to make this meaningful was to draw down money and find associate partners.'*

#### **4.8 Participatory learning as a core methodology**

The participatory learning (PL) work was seen by all as an impressive project. There was some regret that it came late because, as one interviewee commented, *'this is what it is all about.'* The work was supported by Ruskin, Oxford Brookes University and ODEC with strong partnership working between the PL trainer, the scheme manager, the City Council substance misuse worker and the community facilitators. It should be said that the independent PL trainer has played a key role in the development of this approach by providing a vision of what could be achieved and commitment and expertise to facilitate the process of PL learning locally. This approach enabled the scheme to make progress with its objectives on community safety, training and involving the community. It was based on a sound methodology of helping people to acquire skills, access employment and take control of the process. A community conference is being planned and organised by residents that have been involved in PL training. It is worth noting that East Oxford Action benefited by introducing a similar approach via *Mapping Matters* at an earlier stage and Barton SRB arrived at the same idea in the final few months of the scheme wishing they had thought of it earlier. One interviewee noted that the CAD project

was a microcosm of what the scheme has achieved and could have done more of with more time and resources.

#### **4.9 Capacity building of community groups**

This was central to the mission and was described as a weakness as well as a strength (see 5.4). The Community Chest was a particularly effective mechanism for building capacity and, in addition, considerable support has been given to the following groups:

- Oxford Mobile Crèche
- Positive Links
- WINGS
- Leys Tackling Drugs Network
- Local Market Group
- Community Arts Group
- Community Garden Group
- Leys News
- Leys Residents Association.

#### **4.10 Networking and signposting**

Resident activists highlighted the role that Leys Linx has played in linking agencies together and steering individuals to projects that would suit them. This is partly partnership development work and partly individual advice and information work, the former being a strength of the scheme manager and the latter a strength of the CDO seconded by the City Council. Some interviewees commented that not enough one to one work had taken place in supporting and mentoring community activists. However, when asked what the scheme had done well, one activist replied as follows:

*'It has given people the idea that they can change things. We feel able to do things and expand what we do.'*

#### **4.11 The improvement of community buildings and resources**

Community buildings at Kingfisher Green, the Leys Linx Centre and the Community and Youth Centre have all been significantly improved. The BLITZ project is an excellent community resource.

## **5 Problems**

### **5.1 Vacant posts**

The scheme has been dogged by unfilled vacancies. Several interviewees spoke wistfully about what could have been done if the scheme had been properly staffed. There were two problems. Firstly, posts were not filled. The City Council were unable to fulfil their commitment to allocate a 0.8 CDO post to the estate until August 2001 and then when the officer resigned in February 2002, froze the post for nearly a year. This was due to budgetary problems internal to the Council. EFHA were unable to replace their community worker promptly when they left early in 2003 – this was not a core SRB post but has had an impact on the ability of the LRA to develop the usage of Kingfisher Green and has affected other local projects. Secondly, staff that were appointed moved on very quickly. One interviewee complained that outsiders have no commitment to the estate and only local people should be employed. Another noted that, although it is always tempting to appoint local people, it does not mean you get the right person for the job. The scheme has been unlucky but it should be noted that staff on a time limited scheme who do not have a personal investment in seeing the project through are likely to move onto a permanent job if they have the opportunity.

In any event, the consequence was that the scheme manager and the remaining CDO have spent much of their time covering other people's work as well as doing their own jobs, unable to leave the office or get involved in intensive work with either individuals or community groups.

### **5.2 Poor engagement from strategic players**

The City Council did not engage with the scheme in the early days and failed to deliver their promised CDO input at the inception of the scheme. However, once it took on the role of accountable body and lead partner, it became an excellent strategic facilitator for the scheme with substantial member input. The City is now central to developing a citywide regeneration strategy with local deliverables.

As a key partner the County Council has had stop-go engagement and has had no consistent officer input at Board level. It seems to have over promised on its match funding contribution to lifelong learning initiatives and only partially delivered as the lead partner of the Training and Support Group. One interviewee noted that there is very limited officer time committed to the social inclusion agenda and was unsure as to how the County will contribute to a forward strategy on broader regeneration issues. However strong, supportive and highly productive partnerships have been forged with different departments within the Council and its contribution in the fields of Early Years and lifelong learning in relation to ICT services have become central and invaluable. More recent input by the elected member of the County Council is reported as significant because of her willingness to encourage officer input regarding particular projects or initiatives and more strategic engagement with the scheme.

### **5.3 Coordination function**

The scheme aspired to providing a coordinating function on the estate, particularly with regard to community safety and training. It has been very effective at identifying need, forging partnerships, attracting funds and developing projects but it still does not have the status to coordinate the delivery of mainstream services. For

example, one interviewee observed that surveys demonstrate that residents on Blackbird Leys *'like their homes but do not like their neighbours'*. The scheme has had little or no impact on nuisance neighbours, vandalism, litter and other forms of crime and anti-social behaviour because it has not had a strategic role with regard to community safety. However, Leys Linx with the support of a Neighbourhood Coordinator certainly has the potential to adopt that role in the future.

#### **5.4 Capacity building of community groups**

Although this was also seen as a strength (see 4.9), some regret was expressed about the lack of support available to community groups with regard to training and the lack of staff availability for one to one work with the crucial individuals that keep these groups going. The Leys Residents' Association was a signatory to the original bid and regarded as a key player but membership has been transient and the Association seems no stronger now than it was four years ago. Similarly the CDI has been central to the scheme and the forward strategy but, although it has been very successful at facilitating the development of other groups, its own capacity has not been greatly strengthened as a result of the scheme.

#### **5.5 Increasing community involvement in local democracy and decision making**

This was core to the mission and all agree has not been progressed. The scheme has not engaged significantly with the Parish Council, with a lack of concerted effort to make this body the vehicle for widening participation in the democratic process, as was originally envisaged. Although the scheme has related to the City Council Area Committee no significant engagement from residents has occurred and resident involvement in the Board is limited. Some observed that young people and children had not been involved as protagonists in the scheme at all. There is no doubt that the PL process has involved people in decision making but no structure has been developed to facilitate the ongoing development and deepening of democracy. Several interviewees felt that they had learnt that community involvement was more to do with supporting a few motivated individuals than galvanising a whole community.

*'I may want people to be engaged but a lot of people don't want to be. That's not poverty - it's life. Some people are activists and some people aren't'*

Despite the gloomy figures from the Office of National Statistics (section 2.1 above), one interviewee noted that since the scheme was designed more tenants on the estate have come into work. Anecdotally, the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation via Oxford Social Letting Agency (OSLA) with somebody in work has risen from under 10 to over 100 out of a total of 800. As economic prospects continue to improve and unemployment falls, they argued, so those not in work are increasingly likely to be vulnerable.

*'It gets harder to build capacity because the people you are reaching out to are harder to reach.'*

#### **5.6 Making public services more accountable and accessible**

It is certainly the case that service providers are beginning to come to Leys Linx as a way of accessing the local community to identify need and involve the community in planning. However, some interviewees commented that many public services

are becoming more centralised not less and, overall, the scheme has had a negligible impact on how traditional mainstream services are delivered.

#### **5.7 Onerous reporting requirements**

SRB monitoring requirements are complex and with regard to capacity building activity can seem unrelated to the substance of the work. For small community organisations this was regarded as onerous and out of proportion to the level of grant being received.

## 6 Evaluation of progress towards the mission

The Leys Linx mission is

- A. to strengthen the representative voices in Blackbird Leys by giving local people a real say about what happens now and in the future, and the means to take part in decision making processes
- B. to help individuals to make better use of the services and opportunities on offer on Blackbird Leys
- C. to support new and existing local community groups and organisations to be more effective through the provision of information, advice, training and access to practical resources like funding
- D. to work with all local agencies in developing, planning and delivering services to ensure that services delivered in Blackbird Leys are coordinated, accessible, well publicised and meet local needs.

Based on the views presented in sections 4 and 5, the achievement of the scheme can be summarised as follows:

- A. The participatory learning work has gone a long way to addressing this but no structures have been developed to allow community involvement in big strategic decisions and within the structures that make them.
- B. Information, Advice and Guidance work is beginning to have an effect as is one to one work and signposting at the Leys Linx Centre and IT training through BLITZ.
- C. A lot of community groups have benefited from the Community Chest and the renovation of community buildings with a limited number of community organisations receiving in depth capacity building support
- D. Significant new initiatives are in development and Leys Linx has a crucial role to play in advocating for the interests of the residents and groups on the estate. This is working well already and could be taken much further. Local authority commitment to a Neighbourhood Management model will be needed before traditional mainstream services include themselves in a locally coordinated framework.

## 7 Priorities for the future

The Partnership Board produced a work plan at an away day on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2003 to take forward plans for sustaining the work of the scheme (appendix F). There are a series of tasks, some big some small, which need to be completed before March 2004 to guarantee the survival of the individual projects and groups that the scheme has been supporting. The most urgent task, however, is to determine how best to maintain the work of Leys Linx itself.

### 7.1 Structure

Several interviewees suggested that the CDI should inherit the work. It has an appropriate mission and constitution to undertake this task but has not significantly developed since it tried and failed to assume this role at the beginning of the scheme. Employing workers with complex job descriptions requires significant infrastructure. At its away day, the Board suggested that the CDI could become Leys Linx by absorbing the existing Leys Linx Partnership Board on to its management committee and expanding community representation and involvement. Leys Linx (CDI) would then become the strategic body for Blackbird Leys working to a delivery plan signed off by all partner agencies. Work is ongoing to examine the constitutional implications and to consult with partners. Subject to legal and financial issues being adequately addressed, this seems like the best solution. In any event, interviewees were clear that an ongoing Partnership Board is needed for Blackbird Leys and that the identity created for Leys Linx has potential to be meaningful beyond SRB. Indeed some would say that the coordinating function of the Partnership Board is still in its infancy and requires sustained investment over the long term.

### 7.2 Staffing

A newly constituted Leys Linx would mean little without high quality paid staff to service the Board and lead the ongoing implementation of annual delivery plans. Interviewees identified five posts that would be required:

- a neighbourhood coordinator inheriting and developing the role of the scheme manager
- an administrator and receptionist inheriting a combination of the roles of the current administrative support worker and the City Council SRB administrator and providing occasional reception services in the Leys Linx Centre
- a CDO additional to the CDO seconded from the City Council
- retention of the City CDO on Blackbird Leys
- a community treasurer and fundraiser

Of these, the highest priorities are the neighbourhood coordinator, part time administrator and retention of the City CDO on Blackbird Leys.

Interviewees local to the estate have prioritised neighbourhood **coordination** and interviewees representing strategic authorities have prioritised neighbourhood **management**. The different terms create different emphases but should not obscure the fact that they are essentially the same thing. The neighbourhood **management** role is more ambitious in that it is an attempt to give enough status to the function so that mainstream public services refer to it when planning and evaluating service delivery. For such a role to function well at a strategic level, adequate CDO time needs to be available to carry out the equally crucial role of

signposting and capacity building both in and from the Leys Linx Centre. The ongoing development of Leys News, the Credit Union, LRA, WINGS, Afya, Oxford Mobile Crèche, CAD and similar groups will depend upon the availability of CDO support.

A 0.8 CDO is already employed by the City Council to work at the Leys Linx Centre. If a neighbourhood coordinator and other posts are to be created, it may be that the City Council is well placed to employ them within its Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. However, it is important that the post holder remains accountable to Leys Linx. If the right management support can be put in place, Leys Linx could take on the responsibilities of employment and therefore be in a position to attract resources to support the ongoing costs from other agencies with a strategic interest.

### **7.3 Strategic commitment**

The **City Council** is currently shaping a strategy to develop regeneration work across the city. It is likely to have two strands:

- A regeneration federation working across the city to coordinate bids and share resources, good practice and expertise
- Exploration of a neighbourhood management model to take forward the work of SRB, linked to Area Committee Plans.

Introduction of genuine neighbourhood management incorporating the coordination of mainstream public services will take time and care to introduce even as a pilot. An interim arrangement may be needed to ensure that the momentum created by Leys Linx is not lost.

The **County Council** has a significant role to play regarding economic regeneration and would be able to further its own objectives more effectively through a thriving Leys Linx. However so many departments are implicated in the broader regenerative role that ownership will be needed across directorates. Involvement could also be raised in the Council's Social Inclusion Group.

**Other strategic bodies** such as the City and County Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), the PCT, LSC, Thames Valley Police, ATMOSPHERE, BBL Housing Consortium, SEEDA and GOSE have an interest in securing ongoing coordination and should engage with the Leys Linx board.

### **7.4 Funding**

There are unlikely to be pots of money at central or regional government to which Blackbird Leys could bid for broad regeneration or capacity building work. Service development will depend on sophisticated fundraising and the bending of mainstream budgets. Both these require local coordination. Funding for a neighbourhood coordinator or manager almost certainly needs to come from some or all of the strategic bodies mentioned in 7.3.

### **7.5 Community involvement**

The most obvious way in which the community can be involved in the development and delivery of services is through the various projects which are potentially free standing but, as discussed, require the support of a central coordination function. The involvement of members of the community in the Board itself and in the wider democratic process is best progressed through the nurturing of individuals with

direct links into the wider community to create a wider pool of activists that are knowledgeable of and responsive to local need. The participatory learning approach has proved itself to be an excellent tool with which to take this work forward.

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## Appendix A Interviewees

### Individual interviews

Redacted

### Group interviews included

Redacted

Six project evaluation group interviews involved around five professionals and local residents who had been active in that particular project. They examined the following projects:

Drugs  
Domestic Violence  
Community Chest  
Leys Linx  
Kingfisher Green  
Training Support

## **Appendix B      Interview prompts**

### **BLACKBIRD LEYS SRB**

#### **Evaluation by Jeremy Spafford**

##### **Issues to be covered in interviews with professionals**

- 1    What did Blackbird Leys SRB set out to achieve? Did its mission change over the years? If so, in what way and why?
- 2    Why and how did your agency become involved in Blackbird Leys SRB?
- 3    Please describe the main successes that you feel came out of BBL SRB projects. Please be as specific as possible.
- 4    Please describe ways in which BBL SRB projects failed to achieve as much as they could.
- 5    Please describe the strengths and weaknesses of the way in which the overall scheme has been managed.
- 6    To what extent has the 'capacity' of individuals and groups on BBL been 'built' as a result of BBL SRB?
- 7    To what extent have service providers to BBL residents been able to improve how they work in the area as a result of BBL SRB?
- 8    What needs to happen next to ensure that the work of BBL SRB is sustained?
- 9    If you were responsible for managing a similar scheme in Blackbird Leys in the future, what would you do the same and what would you do differently?

Interviews will last a maximum of 60 minutes and will be semi structured leaving opportunities for the interviewee to raise issues of importance to them, which are not covered by these questions. Interviewees will be identified in the appendix of the report but comments and quotations will not be directly attributed. A report will be presented to the Blackbird Leys SRB board by the end of October 2003.

(for more information contact Jeremy Spafford on 01865 715220)

## Appendix C

### REVIEW OF OUTPUTS UP UNTIL Q1 2003/4

CODE	OUTPUT DESCRIPTION	Original outputs	Renegotiated outputs July 2001	outputs to Q1 2004				Anticipated lifetime outputs
1A	Number of jobs: (i) Created (ii) Safeguarded	5.5 (0.5) 10 (2)	2.3(.5) 0.5	3.3 (.3) 0.5				3.3 (0.5) 0.5
1E	Number of training weeks	125	20	67.05				70
1J	Number of young people benefiting from projects to promote personal & social development	1080 (100)	540(54)	867(40)				1000 (100)
3D(i)	Number of empty dwellings brought back into use	0	0	1				1
3E	Reduction in number of difficult-to-let dwellings	0	0	1				1
5A	Number of people who benefit from community safety initiatives (i) Total number of people benefiting (ii) Number of total aged over 60 (iii) Number of total who are females	100 (8) 10 (1) 60 (6)	100 (8) 5 (1) 60 (6)	187(5) 26 99(2)				250 (25) 35(4) 120 (12)
5C	Number of community safety initiatives	7	5	7				8
7A	(i) (iii) People given access to new community health facilities (ii) Number of people given access to new community sports opportunities (iii) People given access to new cultural facilities (iv) Number of new health facilities (v) Number of new sports facilities (vi) Number of new cultural facilities	1000 0 0 2 0 0	750 (75) 0 100 2 0 0	393 (33) 5 581 (141) 2 0 5				400 (40) 50 (40) 650 (150) 2 0 5

CODE	OUTPUT DESCRIPTION	Original outputs	Renegotiated outputs July 2001	outputs to Q1 2003-4				Anticipated lifetime outputs
7B	(i) Numbers using improved health facilities (ii) Number of people using improved sports facilities (iii) Number of people using improved cultural facilities (iv) Number of improved health facilities (v) Number of community sports facilities improved (vi) Number of improved cultural facilities	1000 100 0 100 5 0 5	500(50) 100 100 3 0 2	798 (4) 15 624 (16) 8 0 5				900 (90) 50 (40) 650 ( 160) 2 0 5
8A	(i) Number of voluntary organisations supported (ii) Number of community groups supported	10 (2) 5	10 (2) 15(2)	29 30(4)				29 (2) 30 (3)
8C	Number of individuals involved in voluntary work	40 (5)	40(4)	54 (3)				60 (6)
8F	Number of capacity building initiatives carried out	15 (2)	15(1)	23				25
9A	Value of other public & private funding attracted (i) Total SRB spend (ii) Total other public spend (iii) Total private sector spend.	335,150 217,500 48,500	335,150 230,045 77,121	265,000 190,600 73,300				335,150 300,000 77,121
10A	Childcare places provided.	0	50(5)	64				70 (7)
11	Number of businesses benefiting from improved networking, advice and resources	0	2	3				3

## APPENDIX D

### Community based evaluation

Alongside the evaluation process detailed in this report, a group of Blackbird Leys residents have organised a parallel evaluation to involve a wider range of people in the Leys communities. The two processes were planned to complement each other.

The purpose of the community-based evaluation was to include the voice of residents who are not centrally involved in community development work. The SRB 5 scheme was intended for the benefit of the whole community and it is accountable to the whole community. While it is obviously not possible to get the views of everyone on the estate, it was felt to be important to find a way to reach those whose voices will not be found within this report.

To tackle this, a process was set up whereby residents were trained in methods of participatory evaluation. Two morning training events were held which involved eight local residents all of whom brought previous skills and experience in community consultation, evaluation and group work. Training was provided to help the group deal with key issues such as objectivity, dealing with cynicism and coping with people wanting to dominate discussion with their own agenda. The sessions covered the role of the facilitator and the skills, strategies and ideas they need to maintain an inclusive, creative environment during their research.

Plans were devised to collect information from informal settings - in the street and in shopping centres, outside supermarkets, factories and schools and in the pub. Teams of facilitators were deployed to work in those settings over six sessions during the period of one week. The activities used in participatory evaluation are designed to avoid the questionnaire approach, which can be off-putting and formal and instead uses a range of attractive, fun, visual methods where people can write their own comments and see the comments of others allowing for interaction and collective discussion. The process generates a public debate on these issues which itself affects local involvement in decision making which was one of the objectives of the Leys Links scheme.

These activities, using charts and post it notes in this case, raised the following questions:

- What has improved over the last 5 years in BBL?
- What has got worse?
- What would you like to change about it?
- What community facilities do you use?
- Where do you get your information about community issues?
- Comparing 5 years ago and now, do you feel involved in the decisions made about the estate?
- Comparing 5 years ago and now, do you feel involved in community organisations?
- What helps/prevents your involvement?
- Have you heard of SRB 5 and if so can you name one thing that it has done?

Using some data from a trial session, the residents group were trained in analysing data looking for dominant themes and particular viewpoints. They were introduced to the concept of “triangulation” a key part of theory in participatory evaluation, which demonstrates the need to verify data from one group with information from another group.

Issues of difference between one group's viewpoints and another and the reasons for that were discussed. These skills enable the residents' evaluation team to analyse the data and make recommendations to the Partnership Board.

The premise on which participatory evaluation is based is that the beneficiaries of the project lead it and they are involved in all stages of it – from design to the presentation of the recommendations.

The beneficiaries of the project – in this case the residents of the Leys:

- have an insight into the key issues and questions to be raised.
- have knowledge of local opportunities for getting a wider spectrum of people's views
- have local relationships and credibility with people on which to base more open and honest discussion.
- can bring local perspectives and insights to the analysis of data

Their sense of ownership over the recommendations mean that they are more likely to be acted on in a range of different settings. They are in a good position to communicate the findings and recommendations to the community they live in – an important principle of participatory evaluation which asserts that the information belongs to the community it came from and should be reported back to them.

Working with a residents team is, in itself, a capacity building initiative where skills can be used in other local settings and organisations in the future.

Redacted

Participatory Learning Trainer

## **Appendix E Partnership Board**

Leys CDI  
Leys Credit Union  
BBL Housing Consortium  
BBL Parish Council  
Leys News  
Leys Residents' Association  
Oxford City Council  
Oxfordshire Council  
Learning and Skills Council  
Hamilton Trust  
ACCAN  
Thames Valley Police  
The Dovecote Parent and Carers Centre Committee  
Agnes Smith Advice Centre  
Ruskin College  
Oxford Brookes University

The Partnership Board has met quarterly throughout the scheme.

In addition to core partners the scheme has worked in a less formal way with a wide range of operational partners (eg. Blackbird Leys Community Centre Manager, Ealing Family Housing Association (EFHA), Oxford Swindon and Gloucester Cooperative Society, Early Years Development Partnership, the Healthy Living Initiative, PCT, etc)

### **Project/sub project leads**

Leys Linx Centre: Leys Credit Union  
Training and Support Group: Technically EASOCEC but role undertaken in reality by Scheme Manager  
Kingfisher Green: EFHA (post vacant since March 2003)  
Community Chest: Scheme Manager  
Scheme Development: Oxford City Council and Scheme Manager  
Community Safety: OCHA

## Appendix F Leys Linx SRB work programme from 23/09/03 meeting at Jubilee 77

	Issue	Factors	Tasks	Who	When
1	Securing a structure *	CDI to become Leys Linx (CDI) and incorporate the current SRB board structure. Local authority engagement and community involvement crucial.	Review constitution of CDI and consult Charity Commission. Consult partners and hold special meeting	CDI	Draft by 6 Oct
2	Securing staff *	Need a neighbourhood coordinator, administrator, centre manager and CDO post based on BBL. Need to feed into Val's proposals to City exec and Fergus' proposals to Area Committee. Need to liaise with Leisure services review re Centre manager (possible letter from David as chair?)	Prepare a paper to include a profile of BBL, proposals for structure (see 1), and proposals for delivery including HR implications. Draw on evaluation. Paper to be adapted for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City exec</li> <li>• Area committee</li> <li>• City and County LSPs</li> <li>• County Chief Exec's dept</li> <li>• PCT</li> <li>• Housing Consortium</li> <li>• EASOCEC</li> <li>• LSC</li> <li>• GOSE/SEEDA/SERA</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• ATMOSPHERE</li> <li>• Learning and Culture</li> <li>• Local groups</li> </ul>	Scheme manager and CDI	Draft by 14 Oct
3	Community Chest *	Oxfordshire Community Foundation is funding £5K and offering management of the fund	Raise a further £5K and organise administration of the scheme as well as a residents' panel to award grants	New CDO/City CDO	Jan 04
4	Leys Linx Centre *	Bid already into Comic Relief	Secure further funding and link to management of community centre	Credit Union	Jan 04
5	Drugs work *	Funded to ¾	Need further funding from ATMOSPHERE/GOSE	Scheme manager and CAD	Jan 04
6	Wings *		Need funding for a coordinator	New CDO/City	Jan 04

				CDO	
7	Leys Learning *	Waiting for ESF co-financing bid (should know by Xmas)	If necessary go back to EASOCEC/SEEDA	Scheme manager	Jan 04
8	Leys Residents Association *	Housing Consortium will maintain	Reinvigorate community garden project (£20K secure)	New CDO/City CDO	Jan 04
9	Afya *	Requires ongoing management to be mainstreamed	Link in to City Active Communities	Scheme manager	Jan 04
10	Looking After Yourself *	Requires ongoing management to be mainstreamed	Link into OPF (Julie Smith)	Scheme manager and CDI	Jan 04
11	Community Art Project *	Discrete one off projects that can be revived as necessary	Continue with Leys Linx Art project and then await further developments before starting another	City CDO	Jan 04
12	Community Market	Slow to take off and distracting CDO from urgent tasks re sustainability	Shelve this project until more resources become available	City CDO	Oct 03
13	Kingfisher Green	Potential for further development as community resource but secure as office space	None	-	
14	Leys News	Secure subject to ongoing fundraising	Need £5K for next year	Leys News Board/ CDI	Mar 04
15	Credit Union	Secure subject to ongoing fundraising	Fundraising and linking into citywide scheme	Credit Union	Mar 04
16	BLITZ	Funded to 06/04	Bid led by County Council	County Council	Jan 04
17	Oxford Mobile Crèche	Needs to link in well to Neighbourhood Nursery	None	-	

\* Starred issues require urgent input from SRB staff and board members

NB Although fundraising for BLITZ sits with the County, the process should be closely monitored by the scheme manager (notes by Jeremy Spafford 29/09/03)

## Appendix G      Abbreviations

ACCAN	African Caribbean Community Action Network
ATMOSPHERE	Action To Make Oxford a Safer Place (Community Safety Partnership)
BBL	Blackbird Leys
BLITZ	Blackbird Leys Information Technology Zone
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CAD	Community Against Drugs
CDI	Blackbird Leys Community Development Initiative
CDO	Community Development Officer
CfBT	College for British Teachers
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EASOCEC	East and South Oxford Community Education Committee
EFHA	Ealing Family Housing Association
ESF	European Social Fund
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
IAG	Information Advice and Guidance Service (Connexions)
IT	Information Technology
LRA	Leys Residents Association
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NN	Neighbourhood Nursery
NNI	Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative
OCEDAR	Oxfordshire Community Education Development at Ruskin
OCHA	Oxford Citizens Housing Association
OCVA	Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action
ODEC	Oxfordshire Development Education Campaign
OSG	Oxford Swindon and Gloucester Co-op
OSLA	Oxford Social Lettings Agency
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PL	Participatory Learning
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
TEC	Heart of England Training and Enterprise Council
YOT	Youth Offending Team
£1k	£1,000