



**End of Scheme Evaluation for Portsmouth's SRB
Rounds 5 & 6**

PORTSEA COMMUNITY BOARD



Social Solutions Limited

June 2006

1 Introduction

Social Solutions Ltd was commissioned by Portsmouth City Council to undertake a final evaluation for Portsmouth's Single Regeneration Budget Rounds 5 & 6.

2 Executive Summary

In order to fully and usefully evaluate the Single Regeneration Budget rounds 5 & 6 in Portsmouth, it was decided that each of the five Community Boards would be looked at on an individual basis and a separate evaluation report would be produced for each area board.

This evaluation has aimed to capture the activity and findings in the Portsea area over the lifetime of SRB funding and has been broken down into the following sections:

- Impact of the local Community Board
- What has changed for the local community, particularly in relation to the SRB strategic objectives
- Community Warden Scheme
- Lessons Learned, highlighting Good Practice, Challenges and Future Development
- Selected Project Case Study
- Appendices, including Financial Analysis and Residents Survey

In relation to the impact of the Community Board, this group has developed considerable strength and gained a high degree of expertise over the lifetime of SRB. It has always been a well supported group in terms of local residents' involvement, therefore ensuring that SRB money was allocated for and spent on meaningful projects that would benefit the local community as a whole. This high level of involvement from local residents, who have developed a strong and focused voice over the years, has ensured that the community's genuine needs and wishes have been reflected in the projects that have emerged by means of SRB funding.

What has changed for the local community? The local area has seen many positive changes as a result of SRB funding. These have been collated in relation to the following SRB strategic objectives:

Financial Investment – SRB channelled much needed financial investment into some of the most disadvantaged parts of this community. Projects based on developing employment related skills (e.g. ICT) in the local community then in turn potentially fed into

and enriched the local community. Feedback indicated that the local economy and business community has benefited greatly from its experience of being involved with and working alongside local residents.

Community Involvement & Capacity Building – Throughout the lifetime of the SRB funding programme, community involvement and local capacity building has received high priority focus, both from the Portsea Community Board and from local residents. The skills and confidence of local residents have grown and developed in remarkable ways through this experience. This group has found a strong voice that is both valued and heard, a reflection that true capacity building is taking place, and the individuals involved feel that they genuinely matter and can actually make a difference.

New Opportunities - SRB funding in Portsea was used to set up numerous, successful and innovative projects which met this particular objective, many of which focused on developing skills in ICT and educational enhancement, making it possible for all sections of the community to further their education and employment chances. The new John Pounds centre played a significant role in creating new opportunities in the Portsea area.

Physical Environment - Portsea has experienced a high level development to its physical environment. Improving physical infrastructure and environmental renewal in the Portsea area has provided a very important focus within the realms of urban and community regeneration. Both housing and the local environment have improved through upgrading housing, traffic calming schemes and resident parking.

Community Safety - In order to meet this particular objective, Portsea Community Board supported a number of projects in their local area along the lines of increasing youth provision in the area, providing more training opportunities and meaningful activities for young people and, of course, supporting the extremely successful Community Warden Scheme.

Due to the huge success of the Community Warden project, initially piloted in Paulsgrove & Wymering and then rolled out in the Heart of Portsmouth, it was decided to dedicate a separate section to this scheme highlighting the immense and far reaching impact it has had within the community. There is much evidence that the community wardens have played a highly significant role in creating a safer local environment, with feedback praising the positive inroads into reducing the fear of crime and increasing levels of reassurance amongst community members. Evidence indicates that much of the success of the community warden scheme lies within the special relationships they have worked hard to build, both with

residents in the local community and with partner agencies, with a view to linking up services and bridging gaps.

Lessons learned reflects good practice and challenges faced by the developing Community Boards, aspects which are crucial to the implementation of effective future development. In relation to the Portsea board, there are many examples of good practice, but one overriding element has been the encouragement of SRB funded projects to look to their future early on and the importance of putting in place plans to become secure and sustainable in the long-term, so enabling them to continue services which have become so valuable in the Portsea community. Inevitably, alongside the empowering element to receiving and allocating SRB funding, the process as a whole also brought with it many new challenges and situations for board members, in relation to skills needed to carry out their role efficiently. This resulted in a steep learning curve for all involved. Some of the challenges highlighted, reflected this learning curve, particularly in terms of best methods for assessing particularly well planned projects. With regards to the future, however, the Portsea board manifested themselves very early on as a strong group with a powerful voice, determined to continue their work in the community. The board's transition to Portsea Action Group (PAG) beyond SRB funding was very smooth, as PAG 99 was already a very well established group and was already functioning in the capacity of a company limited by guarantee. Therefore, this board did not have the same degree of challenge and uncertainty that some of the other community boards had experienced, and were able to move forward smoothly in a sustainable and independent way.

It was proposed that one SRB funded project from each board area should be selected for evaluation and board members together with SRB co-ordinators were consulted in this decision making process. For Portsea, the selection process resulted in focusing on the John Pounds Centre. The aim of this project was to create a healthy living community and resource centre in, a welcoming social focus to promote healthy lifestyles and activities. The redevelopment of the John Pounds site was identified as a priority by the residents of Portsea, through the 'Planning for Real' process, and residents' involvement and participation has continued to be high on the agenda all along. The John Pounds Centre has proved a huge success so far, not only in terms of meeting aims but also in relation to direct feedback from users, which has been extremely positive. Taking into account the fact that the centre is still very much in its infancy, it has made good progress with regard to achieving outputs and is set on course to continue this progress. To date, two of the SRB outputs that had been approved have surpassed the achievement that had been originally forecast, these being the number of new child care places provided and the area of brownfield land that has been remediated. It is important to

highlight two important elements with regard to the success of this project. Firstly, the partnership with PCC would not have worked as productively as it did without the high degree of involvement on the part of the residents. Secondly, the resident group worked very closely and consistently with a senior council member, promoting quite a unique relationship and the development of a high degree of trust and commitment. It is important to note that the John Pounds Centre won the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors south east regional top award in the Community Benefit category, however, it is equally important to note that this project has been a remarkable success from the local community's point of view also, with feedback revealing that residents felt that the new centre had responded to the needs of the local community and had made a difference to their lives.

3 Activity

For this sort of community focused evaluation, it was important to capture the personal and professional views of all Community Board members, whether resident, agency or service provider representatives, and equally the views of the local residents themselves. SSL, therefore, used a mixture of questionnaire feedback forms, resident surveys, focus groups, face to face and telephone interviews. Feedback was also gathered at Community Board meetings, as the groups approached the end of their SRB funding as well as from background information on the SRB programme and specific local projects.

4 Findings

Although the percentage of completed feedback forms returned by Community Board members was not particularly high, the views and opinions expressed within them and voiced at board meetings proved to be very insightful and passionate. With regard to the residents' survey, local people were generally extremely willing to spend time talking about their community, how they felt about living there and comment on any changes they have experienced over recent years. Where quotations are included in this report, bold and italic application is used within quotation marks.

4.1 Impact of Community Board

Portsea Community Board is a partnership between local residents, local voluntary and community groups, local business, the PSEH Partnership, Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire Constabulary. The board has always enjoyed a high representation from elected local residents and local businesses. In addition, the board has also been broken down into 2 specialist sub-groups, who have met independently and reported back on a regular basis at board meetings. These sub-groups cover the following areas: The Children and Young People's Sub-group and the Health Sub-group.

Throughout the years of SRB funding, Portsea Community Board has developed considerable strength as a group as has gained a high degree of expertise over time. It has always been a well supported group in terms of local residents' involvement, therefore ensuring that SRB money was allocated for and spent on meaningful projects that would benefit the local community as a whole. This high level of involvement from local residents, who have developed a strong and focused voice over the years has ensured that the community's genuine needs and wishes have been reflected in the projects that have emerged by means of SRB funding.

Quotations from both Community Board members and agency representatives share positive recognition of the important role played by Portsea Community Board:

'Our community is heavily involved with the community board and has been very successful in providing many better services for our local people, along with local business people'

'Empowered local people – local residents felt that they were involved with decision making in their own community'

'Struck by the intense and immense commitment to the local community and to the people living in it'

'The legacy of SRB funding programme will remain for years to come'

The formation of PAG 99 (Portsea Action Group 1999) has also reflected the long-term commitment, determination and dedication of this local community and has always functioned very effectively alongside the Community Board until the recent full incorporation.

4.2 What has changed for the local community?

➤ Financial Investment

One of the strategic objectives of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) rounds 5 & 6 was to support and promote growth in local economies and businesses. SRB funding channelled much needed financial investment into some of the most disadvantaged parts of the community, and although there were few projects that were directly aimed at local business, there were many based on developing employment related skills (e.g. ICT) in the local community which then in turn potentially fed into and enriched the local community. Many facilities offered within the John Pounds Centre, such as the ICT suite, have given members of the local community an opportunity to acquire new skills in the job market. In addition, it was felt that the local economy and business community has benefited greatly from its experience of being involved with and working alongside local residents.

Many projects have brought alongside them the need to employ local labour and in doing so boost the local economy.

Examples of the sort of SRB funded projects aimed at developing education and employment skills, which have, both directly and indirectly, provided a boost to local economy and business, would be:

- John Pounds Centre
- Portsea Community Day Care Nursery

➤ Community Involvement & Capacity Building

Throughout the lifetime of the SRB funding programme, community involvement and local capacity building has received high priority focus, both from the Portsea Community Board and from local residents. There has always been a strong element of community involvement and empowerment in this area, allowing board members and local residents to fulfil their potential in key decision making roles regarding the regeneration of their local area. Over 60 people have been directly involved with PAG and the community board over the years and the community as a whole has shown a very strong involvement in all projects made possible by SRB

funding. The skills and confidence of local residents have grown and developed in remarkable ways through this experience. They have found a strong voice that is both valued and heard, a reflection that true capacity building is taking place, and the individuals involved feel that they genuinely matter and can actually make a difference.

The Children and Young People's Sub-group have exchanged news and information on what was happening and available in Portsea and discussed issues affecting young people in the area. As a group they have always seen the involvement of residents, parents of children and young people, and young people themselves as a key to community capacity building and empowerment and therefore to any future development. Likewise, the Portsea Youth Centre has encouraged Young People to get involved in community based activities and inter-generational initiatives.

In addition, SRB funding was used to assist in the production of the community newspaper, The Portsea Post, a now well established community newspaper which informs, promotes and highlights all the positive and important issues affecting Portsea residents. The Portsea Post is committed to reflect the views and priorities of local residents who are encouraged to suggest, write, research, interview features and contribute too the newspaper in any way they feel able to. In addition to providing training in journalism and desktop publishing to enable local residents to design and produce their own individual publications, the Portsea Post also achieves the following:

- Provides details of advice, support services and the prevention of problems
- Gives information on local events that may be of interest to residents feeling isolated and depressed
- Gives details of support for children, older people and carers
- Offers a focus for neighbourhood action and provides a framework for multi-agency work
- Encourages residents to gain skills that provide effective gateways to employment

The Portsea Post has enabled local residents to become more informed about the range of services on offer to them and increased their awareness of the social benefits to which they were entitled. This information was then integrated with other community news, produced by the residents themselves, adding to the impact; residents took the responsibility for writing features and collecting community news, photography and cartoons, proof reading, designing quizzes and puzzles and distributing bulk copies to

community venues. The Portsea Post carries detailed and extensive local information.

As the support manager of Portsmouth Council of Community Service commented '***The community newspapers are targeted on exactly those neighbourhoods that most need our input. They get through both to residents and to busy community activists. Through the newspapers, a small group can reach out to thousands of people in their area - there isn't a notice board in any building that can do that.***

Examples of the sort of community involvement and capacity building projects which successfully gained funding from SRB would be:

- The Portsea Post – Community Newspaper
- St George's After School Club – Sunrisers and Sunsetters

➤ **New Opportunities**

One of the principal objectives within the SRB programme was to improve the employment prospects, education and skills of local people, including addressing social exclusion and improving opportunities for the disadvantaged. SRB funding in Portsea was used to set up numerous, successful and innovative projects which met this particular objective, many of which focused on developing skills in ICT and educational enhancement. As one board member commented, '***with the training and courses available, we have made it possible for all sections of the community to further their education and employment chances.***

The Portsea Youth Centre has been able to offer a number of educational and learning based activities within its programme, including a Driving Proficiency Course, an Art Project, a Book Club and a Drama Group. The internet suite has also proved to be a very popular service provided by the Youth Centre, which young people can use to write their CV's and develop their IT skills.

The Portsea Community Day Care Nursery was able to expand its facilities and is now part of the extended schools service. Parents are able to take advantage of all the courses and workshops that take place at the centre. In addition, a Financial Administrator has been taken on; staff continue to attend training with 2 staff members currently on Highscope training. 4 staff members are also working towards NVQ3, 2 of them being local people.

At the instigation of the Health Sub-group, some funding was used to employ local people, after training, to go out into the community and spread the message on issues such as dental health and healthy eating. So far 8 people have completed Basic Nutrition Training and there is an Additional Diploma in Nutrition Course which is open to all the Heart of Portsmouth residents.

Undeniably, the new John Pounds Centre has been instrumental in creating new opportunities. These are dealt with in more detail in the case study section later on in the report.

Examples of the sorts of projects and groups which opened up new opportunities would be:

- John Pounds Centre
- The Portsea Youth Centre
- The Portsea Community Day Care Centre
- Health Sub-group

➤ **Physical Environment**

Portsea has experienced a high level development to its physical environment. Improving physical infrastructure and environmental renewal in the Portsea area has provided a very important focus within the realms of urban and community regeneration. Investment in the physical fabric of the local community has had an extremely positive effect on residents living in the vicinity. Feedback from the residents' survey indicated that local people cared very much about the physical environment in which they live and were both aware and appreciative of the revitalisation of public spaces and buildings brought about through capital investment from SRB funding.

Again, the new John Pounds Centre has made a huge difference to the physical environment in Portsea. Great detail has been paid not only to the internal layout of the building but also to the whole external appearance. The hoardings bear artwork which has been developed by local residents, who were equally involved in producing the outside features in the courtyard.

Generally, both housing and the local environment have improved through upgrading housing, traffic calming schemes and resident parking.

➤ **Community Safety**

Tackling crime and drug abuse and the improvement of community safety is one of the main strategic objectives within the SRB programme. In order to meet this particular objective, Portsea Community Board supported a number of projects in their local area along the lines of increasing youth provision in the area, providing more training opportunities and meaningful activities for young people and, of course, supporting the extremely successful Community Warden Scheme.

The Children and Young People's Subgroup contributed significantly to addressing community safety issues in Portsea. The subgroup met on a regular basis to discuss issues affecting young people in the area, involving residents, parents, young people and service providers at every stage. This element of involving the community and professionals together to change something that they were concerned about was seen as key to future developments. This group achieved many positive outcomes by means of exchanging information about local services, hearing concerns from residents and finding ways to address those issues, a number of which involved concerns over community safety issues.

In a similar vein, the Portsea Youth Centre achieved a great deal in terms of engaging with young people and encouraging them to become involved in activities that were both fun and educational, thus guiding them away from behaviour that may result in community safety issues.

Community Wardens are a continuous, recognisable and approachable point of contact for residents and each day deal with a myriad of issues and concerns, such as vandalism and anti social behaviour. Community Wardens have initiated Acceptable Behaviour Contracts in all warden patrol areas to deal with persistent nuisance. They have also collected and delivered evidence that has contributed directly to court action resulting in Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOS) and the closure of houses used for Class A Drugs. Police analysts claim there has been a significant reduction in incidences of juvenile nuisance in all areas patrolled by community wardens. The wardens have, therefore, played a highly significant role in creating a safer local environment.

Feedback from local residents has confirmed that the wardens have had a very positive impact in Portsea and have made inroads into reducing the fear of crime and increasing levels of reassurance amongst community members. Feedback from the wardens themselves suggested that the key to this success was based on linking up services and bridging gaps. The wardens will still be delivering the scheme beyond SRB funding, but it will be aligned to

neighbourhood policing which has introduced new beats in keeping with the new neighbourhood policing schemes implemented at national level.

In addition to the community safety aspects of the community warden's work focused on in this section, a number of specific initiatives set up by the wardens in Portsea are highlighted in the following section of the report, as well as the overall success of the scheme citywide.

Examples of the sorts of projects that promoted and improved community safety in Portsea were:

- Community Wardens
- Children and Young People's Sub-group
- Portsea Youth Centre

4.2 Community Warden Scheme

Due to the indisputable and continuing success of the Community Warden scheme, it seems appropriate to dedicate a section of this report to this initiative.

'Working together with residents and partner agencies, wardens have helped to make Portsmouth a cleaner and safer city'.

The Community Wardens scheme piloted successfully in Paulsgrove, then extended into the Heart of Portsmouth, has proved a huge success by taking ownership of neighbourhood 'beats' and providing a highly visible, uniformed presence between 10am and 10pm. The Community Warden Manager commented that:

'By acting as a visible deterrent to criminals and a reassuring presence to residents, our wardens provide a vital link between communities, local authorities and police, making Portsmouth a safer place for everyone'.

Residents have reported feeling safer and more reassured now that wardens patrol their neighbourhoods. Police analysts claim that there has been a significant reduction in incidence of juvenile nuisance in all areas patrolled by the wardens. Patrols conducted at critical times and in crime and disorder hotspots have helped Police drive down vehicle crime, burglary and criminal damage. From fly tipping to graffiti, abandoned vehicles to drug dealing or intimidating behaviour, the wardens have acted on behalf of residents as 'professional witnesses' and gathered vital evidence

that has helped to prevent a minority of people ruining the quality of life of the majority.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has awarded the prestigious Warden Quality Standard to the Portsmouth Community Warden Service, in recognition of their work, and asked them to set up a regional resource centre to train wardens from schemes across the southeast.

Much of the success of the community warden scheme lies within the special relationships they have worked hard to build, both with residents in the local community and with partner agencies. Community Wardens work closely with other council departments such as Housing and the Anti Social Behaviour Unit, as well as the Police and Hampshire Fire and Rescue. This multi agency approach has ensured that all interested parties are consulted and that viable solutions can be tailored to successfully tackle and solve each individual problem.

Eight community wardens have recently gained the Level 1 Award in Community Sports Leadership, a nationally recognised qualification giving knowledge and understanding to deliver and organise sporting events. As one warden commented,

'These activities work to deter ant-social behaviour by giving young people the opportunity to develop their sporting skills and team building within the community'.

In addition, the work of the wardens has recently been recognised by Portsmouth Police with a 'Multi Agency Department of the Year' award. As the community warden manager stated, '

We value greatly our close working with the police and are delighted and honoured to receive this award.....We are confident that the links established over the last two years will grow and strengthen as Community Wardens work alongside the police as part of new neighbourhood policing teams'.

With regard to the Community Wardens in Portsea, there has always been a strong sense of togetherness within this community, and here the wardens work closely with partnership agencies and utilise existing facilities within the area. These include the Youth Club, John Pounds Community Centre, St George's Beneficial School and Portsea Venture Playground. The wardens have also been involved with the Youth Inclusion Support Panel and Portsmouth Youth Offending Project. The Portsea wardens have also helped to sign post residents towards existing facilities and events in their area, to encourage their continued use by residents. The wardens have become actively involved in the community and regularly

attend Portsea Action Group meetings. Both the community warden office and a police surgery are very accessible to the public, being situated within the John Pounds Centre, which adds to the development of community safety in the area.

4.4 Lessons Learned

- **Good practice**

Portsea Community Board has grown and developed as a group over the years, facing challenges and decision making with a positive attitude and determination, in order to ensure that the forward route provided the very best opportunities for the community as whole. At times, this route has presented the group with a steep learning curve, but the focus has always remained true and centred on the benefit for local residents. This approach has resulted in the establishment of a high degree of expertise, both within the board and within PAG.

The significance of a good relationship between the community board and PAG, and more latterly the Trust, should not go unrecognised. Excellent communication was maintained between these groups, which proved crucial to the smooth running and success of the overall programme. In a similar vein, there was a very strong partnership with PCC, especially with regard to the John Pounds redevelopment, based on a high degree of involvement of local residents and consistent interaction with PCC senior staff.

A further strength was the level of flexibility that was maintained in terms of some ideas working more effectively than others, giving rise, therefore, to a need to resist rigidity whilst remaining equally focused on long-term objectives. The Portsea board worked hard to continually establish a balance, whilst remaining flexible in its approach.

There are many examples of good practice, but one overriding element has been the encouragement of SRB funded projects to look to their future early on and the importance of putting in place plans to become secure and sustainable in the long-term, so enabling them to continue services which have become so valuable in the Portsea community. An example of this would be the establishment of the Community Trust set up at the John Pounds Centre. In the same vein of forward planning, by keeping some money back to serve as a bit of a cushion for later e.g. for post construction amendments on capital build, forward thinking projects were able to demonstrate good practice.

One of the projects which exemplifies good practice is the Access Point project, which was pioneered in Portsea and then rolled out to other areas and was a great success, winning a national Honour presented in London.

As one board member commented,

'Over a period of approximately 9 years, the Planning for Real experience, the local wish list, the meetings, plans etc for the new John Pounds Centre and the eventual building and setting up of a Community Trust to manage the facility has proved not only a challenge but an example of good practice to be admired'.

- **Challenges**

Inevitably, alongside the empowering element to receiving and allocating SRB funding, the process as a whole also brought with it many new challenges and situations for board members, in relation to skills needed to carry out their role efficiently. This resulted in a steep learning curve for all involved. Some of the challenges highlighted, reflected this learning curve, particularly in terms of best methods for assessing particularly well planned projects, have incorporated sound exit strategies and therefore have a high chance of succeeding.

In addition, the challenge for the community was to rationalise the many wishes and expectations of various sections of the community to bring forward a compromise plan to suit most people. The importance of keeping the interests of the local community at the heart of the decision making process was most strongly felt.

Although the Access Point project was a great success, its long-term sustainability was dependent on securing further funding, either from local or national sources. This funding proved not to be forthcoming at the time, resulting in this valuable local asset being unfortunately withdrawn.

- **Future Development**

The Community Boards primary function was to enable communities to determine and monitor the use of SRB within their local areas. When this funding ended on 31.03.06, the original function and purpose was no longer relevant. Understandably, there was a certain degree of anxiety initially amongst a number of community boards about the immediate future beyond this date. Having said this, over the years as the boards have become well established and

the great commitment of local residents has been recognised, their role as an effective forum for local communities to share their opinions and concerns became increasingly apparent. For the Portsea board, the transition to Portsea Action Group (PAG) beyond SRB funding was very smooth, as PAG 99 was already a very well established group and was already functioning in the capacity of a company limited by guarantee. The group was already aware of the necessary legal requirements, the roles of directors and company secretary, already had accountants who dealt with their finances, already covered their own administrative duties and already had their own treasurer appointed. Therefore, the Portsea community board did not have the same degree of challenge and uncertainty that some of the other community boards had experienced. On the contrary, they were very able to move forward smoothly in a sustainable and independent way. By having a proper legal structure PAG will be able to bid for grants independently. They will also be able to become trustees of a community asset and reinvest any surplus from this investment into other local social regeneration proposals.

The newly incorporated PAG group continues to meet monthly and has been able to maintain 8 members from the community board, representing a good range of specialist areas, including:

- St George's Church
- St Georges School
- University of Portsmouth
- 2 x voting members from PCC
- Gunwharf Management
- Historic Ships Trust
- Local Housing Office

As part of the incorporation process, bank accounts have been set up, directors and company secretaries appointed, objectives, memorandum and articles prepared. Additional support and guidance will be provided through the Cultural Shift programme, funding secured by Portsmouth City Council. An element of this project will support these boards through this initial phase and training events and workshops will be offered, covering the legalities and responsibilities of the new roles members will be taking on. This will be a new venture for both the boards and Portsmouth City Council and is expected to require high levels of support in the short term. The Cultural Shift team, in the form of a manager and a development worker, will take on an important role over the next two years.

With regard to the sub-groups, SRB support, in terms of administration, has been progressively withdrawn from the sub-

groups over the last year . The groups that have continued have done so through support of other agencies facilitating and leading the meetings. The Community Newspaper sub-groups have already been relatively independently run for some time. Financial support for the production of the Portsea Post is an ongoing problem as it is not currently self-sustaining. However, a grant has been secured which will help with production costs for a further 2 years and advise groups on options to become self financing in future through advertising revenue.

In addition, each area board will also receive £10,000 Community Chest money, to enable them to make awards to local community groups over the coming year; £1,000 of this money can be used specifically for administration and running costs.

Portsmouth City Council has also been in contact with other business support agencies such as Business Link Wessex, Social Enterprise Coalition, Development Trust Association and will refer the boards to these agencies when appropriate. In practical terms, there will be no further administration support available to the boards after 31.03.06, for example time tabling meetings, sending out agendas and minutes, arranging venues, facilitating meetings, following-up queries, inviting speakers and making transport arrangements for some residents. Some residents have offered to take on these tasks and it has been suggested other agencies may offer some practical support but this has not been confirmed. In addition, the PCC investigated the cost of providing limited clerking support to the meetings which may provide a short term solution. In conclusion, although the PCC has a civic responsibility to support and encourage the boards, considering their primary objectives are for social regeneration, this would only be through assisting them in finding external funds for their continuance, not in terms of being able to offer any significant financial support.

4.4 Project Case Study

It was proposed that one SRB funded project should be selected to evaluate from each board area and board members together with SRB co-ordinators were consulted in this decision making process. For Portsea, the selection process resulted in focusing on the John Pounds Centre.



- **Project description**

The redevelopment of the John Pounds site was identified as a priority by the residents of Portsea, through the 'Planning for Real' process. SRB funding was used to create a flagship community resource centre, which now provides much needed activities and services for the local community of Portsea and for those living outside Portsea. It also provides the focus for social and economic development and health improvement, which has in turn created a positive statement about the Portsea community through this creation of a new landmark facility.

The centre provides the following facilities:

- Local Housing Office
- Library
- Youth Centre
- Multi-purpose halls (suitable for community use, sports, arts performance space and functions)
- Seminar, meeting and training rooms
- Sessional crèche facilities
- Community studios, workshops and office
- Health and fitness facilities
- Café

- Exhibition spaces
- Information and advice facilities
- IT suites
- Hairdressing and beauty salon
- Arts and Craft studio (with resident artist)

The inspiration and shared vision for the centre, derived from discussions by the project leader with residents and other stakeholders at the end of 1999, is as follows:

'A vibrant focus for Portsea and the gateway to a happier and healthier life for all'.

- **Project aims**

To create a healthy living community centre in Portsea, a welcoming social focus that promotes healthy lifestyles and activities.

Within this remit the centre aims to:

- encourage people to access lifelong learning opportunities
- encourage enjoyment of reading and make library facilities easily accessible
- place a café with healthy food and affordable eating at its heart
- give access to facilities for sport and fitness for all
- provide access to ICT
- provide access to affordable childcare
- provide opportunities and activities to young people
- contribute to the regeneration of Portsea and provide information and advice about the surrounding area

- **Activity**

In order to ascertain to what extent the original aims of this project were met and to gain an overall vision of monies approved and spent and outputs achieved, the following activity took place:

- Feedback forms from Community Board members
- Residents survey feedback
- Interview with project manager
- Informal feedback via community board meetings
- Incorporation of information from board meeting minutes
- Internal monitoring and evaluation information
- Collation of project funding summary figures
- Collation of project outputs summary

- **Findings**

Initial funding for this project totalled £542,480 of which 82% (£442,480) came from SRB funding. The Redevelopment phase subsequently totalled £6,240, 296.39, of which 16% (£1,000,000.39) came from SRB funding. Source breakdown is outlined in the summary table below.




PROJECT FUNDING SUMMARY			
JOHN POUNDS CENTRE			
Funding Agent	Approved	Forecast	Actual
SRB Capital	£442,480	£442,480	£442,480
Private Funds	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Total	£542,480	£542,480	£542,480
REDEVELOPMENT PHASE 2			
SRB Capital	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000.39
Lottery	£500,000	£500,000	£492,500
PCC	£4,735,925	£5,660,000	£4,747,796
Total	£7,160,000	£7,160,000	£6,240,296.39

The concept for this project began in its infancy through local residents working together and capacity building in conjunction with the council in 1997. The process continued with a Planning for Real experience in 1998, followed by the residents agreeing on an action plan in 1999. Also in 1999, PAG99 (Portsea Action Group 1999) was officially formed, which then became the driving force behind this entire project.

When SRB subsequently came along, the funding opportunity fitted in perfectly with PAG's concept for the centre. The Executive Steering Group, including resident representatives from PAG, and agency reps, together built up a vision of what they wanted from the Centre. John Pounds Community Trust was set up to run it. The developing relationship between the community/PAG and the Trust was very important, as it was crucial to keep good and clear communication between the two. In addition, a resident monitoring group was set up. In terms of the overall project, residents are now involved in assessing whether original objectives were met. The Trust has a finance officer who reports back to the Trust, e.g. on revenue, room usage etc.

The John Pounds Centre is proving a huge success so far, not only in terms of meeting aims but also in relation to direct feedback from users, which has been extremely positive. Taking into account the fact that the centre is still very much in its infancy, it has made good progress with regard to achieving outputs and is set on course to continue this progress. To date, two of the SRB outputs that had been approved have surpassed the achievement that had been originally forecast. These are the number of new child care places provided and the area of brownfield land that has been remediated. In addition, three outputs achieved exactly what had been originally forecast, namely the number of new health facilities, the number of new sports facilities and the number of new cultural facilities. Although a number of outputs have not yet achieved their forecast figures, namely the numbers predicted to access the new health, sports and cultural opportunities and facilities, the steady increase in numbers so far indicates that it is only a matter of time before these targets are fully achieved.

Output (Redevelopment Phase)	Approved	Forecast	Actual
New child care places provided	40	20	25
Ha. Of Brownfield land remediated	0.06	0.03	0.30
New Health Facilities	2	1	1
New Sports facilities	2	1	1
New Cultural facilities	2	1	1
Community Groups	0	0	0
Local people: access to new health opps/facs	6,000	3,000	438
Local people access new sports opps/facs	6,000	3,000	375
Local people: access to new cultural opps/fac	6,000	3,000	1,716
Voluntary organisations supported	0	3	0
Construction jobs	16,034	16,034	13,810

	Actual greater than forecast
	Actual same as forecast
	Actual less than forecast

Feedback from the community board, service providers and the local residents themselves has been extremely positive. Portsea community board meetings were held at the John Pounds Centre, and PAG will continue to meet there. The following comments have been gathered from individual users, agencies, SRB team members, young people and private/public organisations:

'the centre is great for meetings and social functions'

'the centre looks beautiful and is really well designed, the finishing touches are really smart'

'it is a smart and sophisticated venue that provides good service and charges manageable rates for smaller organisations'

'the building is very light and has been well designed'

'very good working environment'

'the building is very light airy and spacious and is very accessible for wheelchair users'

'friendly, helpful staff'

'the centre has many new, wonderful facilities available for the local community'

'the centre has an extremely enthusiastic, energetic and committed staff team, who will go on to achieve wonders'.

Local residents participated in a survey, of whom 20% were male and 80% were female and the majority fell within the 41-50 yr age group and had lived locally for more than 10 years (80%). 90% of those interviewed use the John Pounds Centre on a regular basis. Of these, 22% use the Friday Club, 8% use the crèche facility, 15% use the Fitness Suite, 30% attend the library, 17% use the café and 8% use a variety of facilities on a regular basis. Before coming to the John Pounds Centre, 67% of those residents regularly attending the centre had used similar facilities elsewhere previously, yet 78% of interviewees felt that their experience in the new centre was '**a lot better**' and 22% that it was '**very much better**' in comparison. The reasons given for this included, '**friendliness**', '**welcome feel**', '**close proximity**', '**talks and trips**', '**meeting friends**' and '**dancing**'. Although none of the residents interviewed had been

involved in any aspect of developing the centre, all residents felt that the new centre had responded to the needs of the local community. When asked what sort of difference residents felt the centre had made to their lives/lives of other family members, 89% said it had made **'quite a big difference'** and 11% said it had made **'a very big difference'**. Data and comments collated from this survey can be found in Appendix B.

Although the centre is mostly known for the community services it provides, it is important to mention that the business facilities it is able to offer are of a very high standard and are in increasing demand for groups and organisations seeking central business meeting/conference facilities. The centre accommodates business groups of 2 to 250, with services including audio and visual equipment, internet and a choice of breakout rooms. The high standard of facilities is reflected in this comment from a recent conference organiser,

'the centre's team was very helpful in planning our event. The venue was very good value, offering high standard facilities and excellent catering'

Given the length of time the project took, there needed to be a certain amount of flexibility and natural evolution in the way the objectives were met, as some ideas worked better, or not as well as, anticipated. Examples of what was unanticipated, therefore enforcing the need to maintain a flexible approach, would be the following: the fact that no one had fully anticipated just how successful the conference/meetings rooms would be; also, no one had fully appreciated the massive potential for the arts side to build up – the centre has the largest public access kiln in Portsmouth, plus an artist in residence; lastly, the office space rented out to community groups and new start-up businesses proved more popular than had been foreseen and therefore could have covered a larger area. A further valuable lesson learnt, was the importance of holding back some of the money for post construction amendments. This turned out to be essential because of the time lapse between planning and building. The sum of money served as a much needed cushion at a later date, highlighting the importance of focusing back on how projects progress and evolve.

In keeping with the importance of maintaining a flexible approach, there were inevitably a number of challenges and lessons learnt along the way, requiring a willingness to balance and adjust plans along the way. Examples of these would include the following:

- project objectives relating to the fitness suite were probably slightly over ambitious, so they needed to be brought back down to a more realistic level

- hair and beauty department was originally based in 2 separate rooms, but were subsequently put together in one room allowing the other room to be rented out as office space
- on a recruitment issue, staff needed to be employed on a much more part time basis than was originally envisaged
- there was an oversight in having no trading capital when the business plan was set up, whereas there should really have been a float with which to start

It is important to highlight two important elements with regard to the success of this project. Firstly, the partnership with PCC would not have worked as productively as it did without the high degree of involvement on the part of the residents. Secondly, the resident group worked very closely and consistently with a senior council member, promoting quite a unique relationship and the development of a high degree of trust and commitment.

The John Pounds Centre has recently won the RICS (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors) South East Regional top award in the Community Benefit category, giving Portsmouth a hat trick at the RICS South East Awards. As well as their regional prizes, the Spinnaker Tower and the John Pounds Centre have also won a place at the National Awards final, which will be held in London in October. The Royal Institute was very impressed with the work that had been done with residents prior to opening and the continued involvement throughout. Winning the community benefit award, which looks for outstanding achievements in providing community facilities that are easy for people to use, are well-liked and improve the environment, the judges said the new facility is

'ambitious and successful and is set to play a major role in the ongoing regeneration of the area'

Significantly, this project has been a remarkable success from the community's point of view. Since the very beginning with the Planning for Real Exercise, wish lists etc have been involved over the years with the total concept, layout, colours, art work, interior and exterior finishes. The architects and local planners have been very sympathetic to the community's needs and the resulting building and its facilities has the admiration of all who visit and use it. As PAG commented,

'We now have an outstanding centre, not only for all the people of Portsea but for the whole city to use and enjoy and we are indeed grateful to all concerned that our dreams have been realised'.

5 Conclusions

- Portsea Community Board has gained an impressive degree of expertise, reflecting a highly skilled group who are confident, professional and forward planning with a community voice that is both heard and valued.
- Community Involvement and Capacity Building have received high priority focus, achieving a particularly high level of involvement from local residents. This has resulted in a feeling amongst residents that they genuinely matter and are able to make a difference to their community.
- The high level of community involvement has also ensured that the local community's genuine needs and wishes have been reflected in the projects that have emerged from SRB funding.
- Good practice was particularly evidenced in the Portsea board's encouragement of SRB funded projects to look to their future early on and put plans in place to become secure and sustainable in the long term.
- The board's transition to a limited company, Portsea Action Group, at the end of SRB funding was particularly smooth and the organisation was very able to move forward in a sustainable and independent way. This was principally due to the existence of PAG 99, already a very well established group and already functioning as a limited company.
- The Community Warden project had an immense and far reaching impact locally, playing a significant role in creating an increased feeling of community safety.
- Projects revealed added value and greater success where the local community and other agencies had linked up effectively and worked together.
- The John Pounds Centre has proved a huge success so far, both in terms of meeting aims/creating new opportunities in the Portsea area and in relation to residents' extremely positive feedback.

6 Appendices

A. Financial Analysis

B (i) Residents Survey – Background Data

B (ii) Residents Survey