



End of Programme Evaluation  
SRB VI Ryde 2000  
Isle of Wight

January 2006

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Commissioned on behalf of the  
Isle of Wight Economic Partnership

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'*development trust*' model of regeneration to challenge what was described at the time of the 'interim' evaluation of Ryde 2000 as a '*grant dependency culture*' on the part of the Island's voluntary and community sector organisations (CCD, 2004a). Policy drivers at the regional level of government are also situated within the context of two particular features of the local institutional environment: a fragmented and poorly co-ordinated voluntary and community sector and the parochial nature of local political relationships.

The Chapter concludes with an overview of the development and management of the SRB VI Programme. It particularly draws attention to the 'devolved' arrangements for steering Ryde 2000, the funding cuts that it experienced in its latter years as well as its change in emphasis from the achievement of the '*employment and learning*' (SO1) and '*social inclusion*' (SO2) strategic objectives at the start of its lifetime to the development of the Ryde Public Realm Strategy (2003-04) and, in the final part, to the achievement of the '*physical infrastructure*' (SO4) strategic objective.

### ASSESSMENT OF MOVEMENT TOWARDS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Chapter Three assesses Ryde 2000's movement towards its strategic objectives through an examination of achievements against its output and outcome targets. In terms of outputs, the Programme had achieved 29 of its original 66 output targets (including spend) by the end of December 2005 with three months left to run. However, it must be noted that due to some significant changes that occurred part way through the Programme's funding period, including the introduction of new '*Tier 3*' targets and across-the-board cuts to revenue funding in 2004-2005, with SEEDA's agreement, the original output targets reduced in importance.

With regard to outcomes, as was noted at the interim evaluation stage, the nature of some of the indicators chosen and the supporting data renders the analysis somewhat difficult. In addition, the relevant data had not been collected by IWEP for all targets. The evaluation team endeavored to access this data where possible and from the information available conclude that achievement of outcomes has been somewhat mixed. There have been modest successes in (some) aspects of the education theme as well as clear achievements in terms of the quality of, and access to, play areas. Capacity building outcomes also appear strong. Funding has been secured from the Department of Transport to take the transport interchange forward and the first phase of town centre improvements is in progress. However, other outcome targets have been less successful. Delays in implementing the planned Health Village agenda has meant that there has been less progress than anticipated in providing Ryde residents with access to new and improved health facilities. The housing theme in particular appears to have fallen considerably short of its intended targets. Finally, support for business activities appears to have been limited, although evidence suggests that this aspect has been taken on by SEEDA directly which complicates the evaluation task.

## **CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF THE VALUE OF THE PROGRAMME AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE COMMUNITY: REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS**

This Chapter critically appraises the value of the Programme and its effects on the community through a re-examination of five of the six projects selected for review at the time of the interim evaluation: Crossways Community Gardening, George Street Centre, Island Build, Ryde Art Works Carnival & Celebratory Arts and the Family Learning Programme (the sixth project, Ryde Development Trust, is examined separately).

**Crossways Community Gardening (CCG)** began as a pilot capacity building project under SRB V, with revenue funding of £96,000. It was transferred to SRB VI in March 2001 and received further funding to a total of £228,010. CCG met its output targets and established good links with other SRB funded projects in Ryde. However, it was found that the project had struggled to generate sufficient income to sustain itself in the medium-term as a viable community enterprise, and also that it had been unsuccessful in securing further grant funding. Consequently, it was terminated prematurely in February 2005. A key obstacle that had impeded the progress of business planning appears to have been the (continuing) lack of a proper allotments strategy on the part of the Isle of Wight Council. Hence, the evaluation team would regard CCG as something of a missed opportunity.

**George Street Centre.** Ryde Baptist Church was awarded £245,000 of SRB VI funding in October 2001, terminating March 2004, to refurbish the George Street Centre (Baptist Church), following a serious fire. The SRB bid was for help with the capital costs of refurbishing the main building. Despite some delays in completion of the building, the Centre was officially opened in July 2004. It has therefore been possible to review the progress of the project in its first 15 months of operation as a community facility. Early indications are that the George Street Centre is a successful and well-managed project, with excellent facilities that serve as a valuable resource for the whole community.

**Island Build.** This project was set up to increase skills levels within the Island's construction sector and complements the Government's New Deal programmes by meeting the costs of training and providing an additional period of support in wage-subsidised employment. The project started in September 2001, with SRB funding of £148,989 (to March 2004) matched by contributions from the European Social Fund and Job Centre Plus. Island Build was extended to March 2006, with additional ESF (£144,500) and SRB (£94,335) funding. Project delivery has been successful, with actual outputs in excess of planned outputs. Project sustainability was a key issue at the time of the interim evaluation. However, indications are that Island Build has made significant progress in developing its exit strategy, which is based on re-positioning itself as a key player in the Island's Construction Employer Learning Hub.

One of the main positive lessons from Island Build – and most of the lessons from this project are positive – is the demonstration effect of successful involvement by the Ryde Development Trust in mainstream service delivery in a way that is likely to be sustainable into the future. Another is the pro-active positioning of the project at the centre of a learning network (hub) that has enabled it to play a strategic, as well as a delivery, role in relation to the Island's construction sector. This is linked to a third lesson: the importance of good research and needs analysis, as well as strategic vision, in bringing about cultural change in organisations (in this case the Island's small construction firms) and in facilitating effective partnership working. The one negative lesson that can be drawn concerns the apparent lack of *'joined up'* thinking between funding agencies and service providers with regard to the development and delivery of the AIF and its *'Educated Island'* Action Plan. Specifically, it was suggested that neither the local Construction Employer Learning Hub nor RDT/Island Build had been adequately consulted prior to the adoption of the Action Plan.

**RAW Carnival & Celebratory Arts.** This project aims to increase the capacity of Island residents to deliver high quality celebratory arts events. Over the two years from April 2003 to March 2005, the project received SRB funding allocations totalling £230,000, with matched funding from the Lottery, European Social Fund and Learning and Skills Council (Carnival Island, £250,000) as well as commercial sponsorship from other organisations. The project has met or exceeded its output targets and there is strong evidence to suggest that the RAW Carnival & Celebratory Arts project, in particular, and arts-based regeneration in general, have made an important contribution to the achievement of Ryde 2000's learning and employment, business development and social inclusion strategic objectives. Indeed, a study of the economic impact of the 2003 Ryde Carnival commissioned by Ryde Development Trust found that it brought upwards of £1 million into the local economy by way of additional spend. In terms of sustainability, the carnival-related programme has a secure future in terms of access to the resources needed to consolidate existing developmental activity in Ryde and across the Island: expertise, appropriate location; prospective revenue streams; and regional and national standing.

**Family Learning.** The Family Community Learning project was awarded £249,946 of SRB VI funding in August 2002 (ending March 2006), with matched funding from the Isle of Wight College, individual schools, Sure Start, the New Opportunities Fund and UK Online. The project aims to raise educational achievement in the local community, to enable parents to gain accreditation for adult learning and to improve the motivation and attitudes of both parents and children to learning. Inspection of the project file indicates that, despite the adverse impact on project delivery of budget cuts and early loss of SRB grant (March 2005), most planned outputs were met or exceeded. Unravelling the determinants of performance in individual schools, or clusters of schools, is a difficult task for the evaluator. In particular, from a methodological point

of view, it is highly problematic to separate out the influence of any one variable, such as family learning, from that of a range of others. However, indications are that the project has been successful in so far as it applies to pupil achievement in primary schools and to the achievements of adult learners (parents) but that it has had a relatively limited impact to date in Ryde's middle schools.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND MAINSTREAMING

Through a systematic review of project exit strategies and their outcomes, this Chapter considers what level of sustainability and mainstreaming has occurred in relation to the SRB VI Programme. The post-SRB outcomes of '*social inclusion*' pilot projects such as Streets Ahead, HYPPA, RYIP, Family Support Workers and Family Learning, endorses the claim that SRB VI has been used to '*gap fund*' activities which are now being mainstreamed in various ways (2005-06 Delivery Plan, para. 5.21), including through multi-agency partnerships in support of locally agreed priorities (LPSA targets; the draft Local Area Agreement). The overall performance of the '*social economy*' cluster of projects, as measured by success in securing alternative income streams and sources of funding post-SRB VI, is strong. This suggests that a significant re-alignment in the philosophy and practice of voluntary and community-based organisations is taking place in Ryde that will enable the sector to successfully accommodate the switch in emphasis away from social regeneration projects in the AIF's strategic funding priorities.

The performance of mainstream business support organisations in delivering Strategic Objective One and Strategic Objective three has been weak. This finding underlines the significance of the contribution of arts-based regeneration and of Ryde-based organisations (Ryde Business Association, Ryde Development Trust) to the achievement of the programme's '*business development*' and '*employment and learning*' objectives. It is too early to come to any definitive conclusions about the sustainability of Ryde Town Improvements/THI and the prospects of leveraging additional private sector investment into the town.

## RYDE DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Chapter Six is devoted to an assessment of Ryde Development Trust (RDT) as a core component of the Ryde 2000 Programme. As an emerging development trust, RDT received SRB VI grant funding of £249,793 in January 2002 to work in partnership with the local community, voluntary sector, business organisations and public agencies to promote the sustainable regeneration of Ryde. The principal roles of the Trust are to oversee the delivery of the Ryde Regeneration Strategy (which was developed prior to the SRB VI bid) and to undertake direct delivery of some aspects of the strategy. After examining the delivery of specific projects the Chapter provides a '*holistic*' evaluation of RDT which focuses on the Trust's effectiveness to date in co-ordinating the holistic regeneration of Ryde. The Trust's strategic vision for Ryde focuses upon the

relationship between arts-based regeneration and the development of the public realm and it is seen to have been instrumental, in partnership with the Isle of Wight Council's Arts Unit, in developing and marketing the town's carnival and arts festival: together these events have made Ryde a 'niche' tourist destination and they are a major contributor to the town's economy, as well as pivotal to the achievement of community involvement and adult learning objectives. RDT's overall record is one of considerable achievement in helping to break down the barriers between statutory agencies and the local community, particularly through its extensive programme of community consultation.

Turning to corporate governance, an undoubted strength here is RDT's commitment to transparent decision-making and open access to information. However, one aspect of programme delivery appears to have fallen somewhat short of 'best practice'. This concerns the relative lack of attention given to project reporting (in the broad sense of opportunities for periodic review). One final observation regarding corporate governance is that, whilst acknowledging the good practice that has taken place by way of local needs assessments and consultation exercises, there seems to have been a tendency in the deliberative fora of the working groups, for the Ryde community to speak with a 'professional' accent. As such it may be an opportune time to think again about the most appropriate way(s) of involving the local community in the formal governance of the Trust.

The Chapter concludes with a discussion of RDT's prospects of sustainability. During the course of the fieldwork a considerable degree of optimism over the Trust's prospects of securing financial viability was encountered. RDT has set up a trading company in response to the withdrawal of SRB funding, which is now earning sufficient income from letting the Trust's desk and office space, and from selling its consultancy services to local authorities and other organisations, to enable it to make a contribution to the Trust's cash reserves.

## CULTURAL CHANGE AND THE SRB VI PROGRAMME

This penultimate Chapter of the report discusses the extent to which cultural change has resulted from the SRB VI Programme, through a brief, synoptic account of the Programme's impact on key institutional stakeholders: statutory authorities; voluntary and community organisations; and the business sector. In terms of the statutory authorities, it concludes that, whilst the main driver of organisational change on the Island, as elsewhere, is the pressure to deliver national targets, a reading of the Isle of Wight's draft Local Area Agreement suggests that one of the main legacies of the SRB VI programme is the mainstreaming of its social inclusion and learning projects. And it seems likely that SRB VI has induced cultural change in two further ways - one is the 'demonstration effect' of carnival and festival-related activities in promoting acceptance of the importance of arts-based regeneration on the part of mainstream agencies; and the other is the Ryde Public Realm Strategy, and its model of community engagement

in land-use planning which has been influential in shaping the Island's new Local Development framework. To the extent that the LAA heralds a *'step change'* in the way that the public sector engages with voluntary and community sector organisations, it seems likely that this, too, is a significant indicator of cultural change. Such commitments may owe something to the programme's record of achievement in building community capacity in Ryde, and to RDTs performance in delivering *'niche'* public services in areas such as play development and training and employment, although this is difficult to establish with certainty. Finally, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that the SRB VI Programme has contributed to cultural change in the business sector in three distinct ways: through the growth of a new *'entrepreneurialism'*, spawned by the success of arts-based regeneration and evident in the creation of start-up businesses in Ryde catering to a new market for carnival and festival-related cultural products; through changing attitudes to issues of health and safety, training and procurement on the part of the Island's construction companies; and, through changing perceptions of the value of regeneration funding on the part of Ryde's small, independent retailers.

## CONCLUSION

The concluding Chapter of the report draws the evaluation findings together to present an overall assessment of the SRB VI Ryde 2000 Programme. It suggests that whilst the Programme has not achieved all of its stated aims and objectives it has nevertheless made a positive contribution to the regeneration of Ryde despite the difficult institutional, policy and funding context within which it has operated. The Chapter goes on to highlight areas of good practice and lessons that can be learned for future delivery, with particular reference to firstly, the Ryde Development Trust and secondly, the extent of cultural change that seems to have occurred within key organisations as a result of their SRB activities.