



**Social Audit**

**Dee Valley Community  
Partnership Ltd**

**Summary of Social Accounts**

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006**

**Dee Valley Community Partnership Ltd  
Community Enterprise Centre  
Well Street  
Cefn Mawr  
Wrexham  
LL14 3AL  
(01978) 814920  
[www.dvcp.co.uk](http://www.dvcp.co.uk)**

---

## **1. Introduction to DVCP Social Accounts**

Following participation in the ESF Wrexham Social Economy Project and specifically attending a Social Economy Network event on Social Accounting and Audit, Dee Valley Community Partnership Limited was keen to undertake the process of Social Accounting to enable us to identify and report on the strengths and weaknesses of our organisation.

For further information on the full report see [www.dvcp.co.uk](http://www.dvcp.co.uk)

## **2. Welcome**

Dee Valley Community Partnership is a community regeneration company that promotes partnership working and collaboration. It is involved in social, economic, physical and cultural projects and activities and work towards achieving objectives and actions via a strategy and action plan. DVCP is currently funded via the local authority, Wrexham County Borough Council, but is however involved in income generation activity such as letting commercial office space. DVCP is part of the Development Trust movement, being an asset based Development Trust, with the intention that all activities and projects are not dependent on grants in the future and is therefore working towards being self sufficient and sustainable.

It is our pleasure to present an evaluation of the work DVCP has done in meeting its social objectives form the period 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006. I hope you find the information informative.

## **3. Achievements**

The social accounting process has highlighted a number of achievements for DVCP:

- Dedication by the staff and board of directors of DVCP to the social accounting and audit process, as it is only a year (July 2005) since the Social Accounting Awareness Workshop facilitated by Wrexham Social Economy Process.
- An excellent response to the process from the staff, board of directors, tenants, partners and the wider public.
- Almost £3,500 was spent on training for staff, board members and individuals from the local community during the social accounting period and what amounted to the inception year of DVCP.
- Two local members of the community have been employed by DVCP during the course of this social accounting period.
- During the course of this social accounting period the DVCP Community Enterprise Centre has provided employment for twelve individuals, nine of whom live in the local community area. (75%).

- DVCP Inward Investment plus leverage funding has secured over £458,156 of funding for the local community.
- DVCP has built a strong and positive working relationship with Wrexham County Borough Council and in particular the Economic Development Department who are committed to assisting in the development of DVCP.
- Positive feedback on DVCP values and on our environmental and heritage objectives. The community recognise that through the employment of a Community Heritage Officer, projects to promote our local heritage are producing a sense of pride in the local community.
- Through the wider public community consultation, six individuals expressed an interest in becoming involved in the work of DVCP.

## 4.Mission, values, objectives and activities

### **Mission:**

***To work with the public, private and voluntary sectors, empowering people and the community to work towards regeneration and social inclusion; to develop and create a culture for sustainable social, economic and environmental enterprise.***

### **Values:**

**Social Justice** - enabling people to meet their needs and have greater control over the decision-making processes which affect their lives.

**Participation** - facilitating community involvement by people in the issues which affect their lives based on full citizenship, autonomy, and shared power, skills, knowledge and experience.

**Equality** - challenging the attitudes of individuals, and the practices of institutions and society, which discriminate against and marginalise people.

**Learning** - recognising the skills, knowledge and expertise that people contribute and develop by taking action to tackle social, economic, political and environmental problems.

**Co-operation** - working together to identify and implement action, based on mutual respect of diverse cultures and contributions.

**Objectives (covered during the Social Accounting Period)**

- 1. To increase opportunities for local people by encouraging them to take an active role in the social and economic life of the community, which expands social contacts and local networks. (Community Development)**

By.....

- 1.1 *Developing and delivering a marketing/publicity strategy*  
 1.2 *Providing small and larger pots of funding to local community/voluntary groups to expand and develop their projects and activities.*

- 2. To reduce anti-social behaviour, isolation and disadvantage by improving local amenities, social education and access to information (Social Development)**

By.....

- 2.1 *Improving community information;*

- 3. To improve the physical and natural environment and safeguard the heritage of the area and increase local pride (Environmental)**

By.....

- 3.1 *Promoting awareness with an aim to preserving the local heritage i.e. establishing local history groups within schools, intergenerational initiatives.*  
 3.2 *Supporting the implementation of the Cefn Commercial Regeneration Strategy.*

- 4. To improve job prospects for local people and support local residents by providing information, training courses, work experience, and paid employment which is appropriate to their needs. (Training and Employment)**

By.....

- 4.1 *Delivering adult advice and guidance in relation to jobs, education and training*  
 4.2 *Promoting learning, training and employment opportunities*

- 5. To improve the prosperity of the area by providing and letting commercial premises to new and expanding businesses (Premises Development)**

By.....

- 5.1 *Secure the transfer of actual assets that generates a long term income stream to deliver upon social, economic and environmental objectives;*

- 6. To foster an enterprise culture by encouraging self reliance and innovation by enabling people to be more involved in business development activity (Sustainable Development).**

By.....

- 6.1 *Promoting the concept of community enterprise that encourages self-reliance, risk and innovation;*

## 5. Main issues, conclusions and recommendations

### Values:

- The lack of feedback from community groups is a real concern, for future social accounts another way of consultation could be used to gauge progress. Face to face meetings or workshops could be implemented. More effort needs to be made to promote the work of the trust within community groups to ensure that they are all aware of our objectives and values.
- Staff and partner organisations could be asked to comment further where the response indicates that the trust is neither doing well or not do so well. This would then highlight areas of concern.
  - Suggested follow up, Increase one to one interaction with community groups to promote opportunities and partnership working

### Objective 1 -

- Look at ways of attracting further membership to DVCP with a view to building on relations with the wider community and community/voluntary based groups.
- Consult with the Board of Directors on the possibility of changing the Arts & memos to enable the trust to expand its membership area eligibility.
- Continue with the small grants scheme, with a view to looking at simplifying the application process.
- To look at the impact of our small and larger grants during the next social accounting process.
  - Suggested follow up, Increase publicity and relevant good news stories in the community. Find a way of selling the advantages of membership with the wider community.

### Objective 2 –

- Use the Cefn Chronicle further, as a way to integrate with the community groups in the area. These are the people working on the ground who could support us to achieve our strategic objectives in the community, and allow the community groups to further strengthen their projects and activities in the area.
  - Suggested follow up, again, promote the work of DVCP.

### Objective 3 –

- Community Heritage Officer to build upon community based heritage preservation work that has started.
- DVCP to work towards achieving environmental objectives in the future from a project and education prospective.
- Investigate if linkages can be made to other objectives that achieve environmental goals such as the small grants scheme (e.g. funding towards Play Areas, etc)
  - Suggested follow up, investigate further opportunities to engage groups to facilitate environmental projects, with the view of DVCP playing a supportive role in delivering environmental projects.
  - Investigate if objectives can be reduced/simplified where cross-over's exist.

**Objective 4 –**

- Investigate ways of creating further job opportunities and paid employment for local people as this is clearly a weakness not being addressed in the social accounts.
- Investigate whether the Advice and Guidance Service should be promoted in neighbouring wards such as Chirk, Ruabon/Penycae and Llangollen Rural.
- Investigate why a low number of people from Plas Madoc are accessing the advice and guidance service.
- Explore why 50% of the community were not aware of objective 4 (Training Objective) and identify how this will be addressed in the future.
- Promote the advice and guidance contract and its achievements to DVCP Board.
- Investigate ways of capturing training feedback from external deliverers.
- A strength of the social accounting process has shown that although we gather information on completers, what actually happens to these people after training, do they progress into paid employment? Are we losing the opportunity to fully meet this objective?
  - Suggested follow up, Board of Directors to debate the above issues?

**Objective 5 –**

• Explore implement a better system for maintenance and reporting problems. (Although this was already recognised, as the building is still technically under the ownership of the Local Authority, maintenance is currently outside of the control of DVCP)

- Have a bi-monthly tenant meeting for people to air their views and share communication (as recommended by our tenants).
- Encourage the board to be more involved in building management issues to enable them to be more comfortable with this objective and give them the ability to make more informed decisions.
- Build up a further asset base that safeguards the viability and sustainability of DVCP and its respective community on an economic and social basis.
  - Suggested follow up, Start the bi-monthly tenant meetings as a matter of urgency;
  - Involve the board more in building management issues;
  - Ensure that maintenance is logged and carried out more efficiently.

**Objective 6 -**

- Further promote the concept of community enterprise in the future
- Offer support and training to DVCP volunteers and partner organisation in the future.

### **Priority on ranking of objectives**

- As a priority the Board of Directors need to pick up the issue of sustainability and why it is not classed as a priority for the future existence of DVCP
- Look at the reasons why local people do not want to be involved and ways of overcoming those barriers and encouraging participation in the work of DVCP.
- It does appear that the community and board prioritise business activities less than those of social/community. With grant funding being more competitive, especially for existing activity costs, work will need to be undertaken to think about innovative ways to secure income, i.e. social enterprise and promote this concept with the board and local community groups.
  - Suggested follow up (linked with Objective 6), promote the importance of sustainability with our board of directors and within community groups (reducing grant dependency).

### **Feedback from Employees**

- Look at the reasons why the staff do not like working with the community to see if there are ways to address this.

### **Feedback from Committee Members**

- Look at the consultation questionnaires to see if they can be made simpler to understand.

In line with the feedback from the board members:-

- Run training on roles and responsibilities for committee members;
- Investigate ways of attracting young people and new blood onto the committee
- Investigate ways of attracting more business owners and managers onto the committee

### **Partnership Working**

- There is a need to develop more positive relations with some community groups. Further consultation with them will allow us to get behind the reasons for the negative comments and strive to improve relationships.
- Continue to build on the strong relationship with Wrexham County Borough Council. This support will enable us to build upon our objectives and reduce grant dependency over a period of time as projects and activities become sustainable.

## 6. Strengths and weaknesses of the Social Accounting Process

### Strengths

- All staff and Directors have been positive about the Social Accounting process throughout and have pulled together to ensure all the strands come together enabling the report to come to fruition. Different members of staff had different skills ranging from interaction with the local community when conducting face to face questionnaires, using different IT packages to Data Analysis and Presentation.
- The training sessions facilitated by Alan Kay gave the opportunity to understand the technicalities of the social accounts. The work undertaken monthly was therefore able to be easily used for the preparation of the accounts.
- A lot of quantitative information already existed for numerous activities which were reported on. By closely analysing this information it gave a real sense of achievement and focus which can now be reported as a positive selling point.
- Helpful to identify further action needed i.e. the issue of the importance of sustainability with the board of directors. Also the consultation with the community and community groups.
- The social accounting process highlights that a communication problem exists between both members of the public and our community groups. It may be recognised amongst some that DVCP follows a strategic focus for delivering some of the objectives, but our community focus is important as well. An opportunity arising from this process is to try and engage further with these stakeholders to sell the positive message of social, economic and physical regeneration in their community.

### Weaknesses

- On this occasion and on reflection from the poor feedback perhaps further consultation methods could be used in future to collect Qualitative information such as focus groups, instead of relying on purely questionnaires. This was a particular weakness with the Community Groups and to an extent the wider Community as they did not understand some of the questions which gave over a mostly "Don't Know" response. Simplifying those questionnaires used in the next social accounting period could assist the process.
- Need to establish the right questions to ask all stakeholders and the best ways of asking them.