

Cannock Chase, Burntwood
and Brownhills 'Accessibility'
Objective 2 Strategic
Development Package

“what if. . .?”



**Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills
'Accessibility' Objective 2
Strategic Development Package
Final Review and Exit Strategy**

Consultant's Statement

Wider Impact Consultancy is pleased to commend the Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills "Accessibility" Objective 2 Strategic Development Package.

We are pleased to confirm Package objectives have been broadly achieved and those associated with its delivery should be thanked and congratulated for their hard work over what have been in a number of cases, hard and eventful years.

Projects in the Package should be viewed as being successful in achieving their original aims and objectives, delivering activities as planned and in some cases exceeding their outputs targets.

Members of the Local Partners Group should be commended for their professionalism and hard work.

Edwin Lewis, Liz Minshall, Wider Impact Consultancy
September 2007

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Cannock Chase District Council Acknowledgement

The production of this report is a timely opportunity to acknowledge the assistance of numerous individuals, organisations and agencies who have contributed to the successful delivery of the Accessibility Package.

First and foremost our thanks go the Project Managers and members of the Local Partners Group without whom; we would not have had a Package! Their tenacity and unwavering commitment to the cause has been admirable.

In particular our gratitude goes to Bob Williams and David Bathurst who have had their eyes opened to the unique bureaucracy that only the public sector can create. Thanks are also due to those individuals, too numerous to mention, who provided material for dissemination through the Package newsletter and website. The willingness of individuals to share both their success (and occasional problems) has ultimately been of considerable benefit.

Note must also be made to the guidance and assistance which has been provided at key points over the duration of the Package, in particular Rick Ball and colleagues at Staffordshire University, Nigel Senior and colleagues at Staffordshire County Council, Denise Allman on behalf of the Staffordshire European Partnership and to various consultants who have provided specialist advice (Ecotec, G&H Consulting, Ekos and most recently, Wider Impact Consultancy).

Finally, it is appropriate for us to acknowledge colleagues at Cannock Chase Council who have supported the Accessibility Package at various stages from conception through to completion, in particular the contributions of Debbie Harris, Gillian Cheal (now Lichfield District Council), Amanda Robinson, Cllr. Doug Thomas and Cllr. Pat Ansell should be noted.

Glenn Watson Dawn Fellows

**Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills
'Accessibility' Objective 2
Strategic Development Package**



Report Commissioned by
Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills Local Partners Group

Delivered by
Wider Impact Consultancy
www.widerimpact.com

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1.0 Executive Summary

It is the view of Wider Impact Consultancy that the aims and objectives of the Accessibility Package have on the whole been achieved and there is clear evidence of 'good practice' which other areas can learn from.

Keys to the success of the Package have included:

- The role of Cannock Chase District Council
- The role of Dawn Fellows, Package Coordinator
- The energy and commitment of Project Managers
- The role and function of the Local Partners Group (LPG), which has clearly acted in a supportive role, which has benefited individual projects and the Package as a whole

Whilst the majority of projects have achieved objectives, there is still work to do, particularly in the cases of supporting the ongoing developments and delivery of the Chasewater Visitor Centre and the Hatherton Canal regeneration projects and linking canal networks within the West Midlands region, with objectives that include improving access and the economic viability of the area.

It is important that such work does not lose momentum and there is clearly still a need for a supportive network similar to the LPG.

Linked to the good practice achieved by the Package and the role of the LPG, there is clearly a role for the function of the LPG in the development and delivery of '**Sustainable Communities**' strategies, linked to the role of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and the Local Area Agreements (LAA). The function of the LPG has the potential to support **Block 4 – Economic Development and Enterprise**.

It is clear, a way forward for the succession of the majority of the projects within the accessibility Package is by maintaining and establishing positive and formal linkage with local authorities, Government Office for the West Midlands, agencies such as British Waterways and private sector organisations, which has the potential to create 'win win' outcomes, with long-term sustainable benefits to projects, LAAs and most importantly local community members.

2.0 Acknowledgements

Wider Impact Consultancy would like to thank those who have assisted with this commission, with particular reference to project staff, the Cannock Chase District Council team, members of key agencies, all of whom have taken precious time out from busy schedules to provide data and information, without which, this report could not have been completed. Particular thanks are extended to:

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3.0 Terms of Reference

Wider Impact Consultancy has been commissioned to carry out an independent evaluation and deliver an exit strategy for the Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills 'Accessibility' Objective 2 Strategic 'Package', as part of a review on the progress and achievements of the 14 projects within the Package.

The commission has focused on the success of the Package and provides information on:

- Good practice
- Value for money
- Economic, social and physical impacts
- Management of the Package
- Project delivery
- Performance

We have also reviewed linkages and synergies of the Package projects to other local regeneration activity in order to identify gaps in current provision that can be taken forward as scope for extending or complimenting future delivery and will also assist projects in targeting further potential funding.

4.0 Methodology

Our approach to this commission has been to take a focused view, looking back where appropriate to review the progress of projects and the Package as whole. We have been particularly interested in understanding lessons learnt, good practice and barriers to success.

We have due note of the mid-term evaluation carried out by EKOS (November 2005) and have incorporated updates on outputs noted.

The work programme has involved:

- Desk based research – reviewing Package and project records and back ground material
- Questionnaire surveys
- One to one interviews with programme managers and key partner agency members
- A focus group attended by members of the Local Partners Group

The report is delivered in two parts:

1. This **hard copy factual report**, which will focus on inputs, outputs and outcomes
2. A **web based innovative shorter multi-media report**, which incorporates film to summarise findings in the form of case studies

We recommend that both reports are read and viewed to gain a full insight into our findings. Copies of both reports can be obtained from Cannock Chase District Council, or by accessing our website

www.widerimpact.com

5.0 Introduction

5.1 Package Overview

The Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills (CCBB) Strategic Development Package area (referred to as the 'Package' hereafter) is one of 15 priority investment areas selected as part of the West Midlands Objective 2 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme. In line with the Single Programming Document (SPD) for the West Midlands a strategic plan was drawn up for the Package area in support of three Objective 2 ERDF Priorities of:

- 1. Developing a diverse and dynamic business base**
- 2. Creating the conditions for growth**
- 3. Regenerating communities**

The CCBB Package was developed as the next key regeneration plan for the Cannock area, building upon the 1994-1999 Objective 2 programme, the EU Rechar initiative for former coal mining areas, and legacy Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) programmes. In addition, the Package sought to complement the training, guidance and other human resource development activity being funded through the Objective 3 European Social Fund (ESF) programme. Table 1 below highlights previous regeneration funding initiatives in the Cannock area.

The availability of EU and national funding programmes has enabled the partnership to deliver a range of initiatives, including site redevelopments, tourism enhancements, other physical improvements, and associated learning and community economic development schemes. A highly positive feature of the Package strategy was the extent to which it sought to build upon previous investments, notably the development of the Lea Hall Colliery Site, visitor facilities at Chasewater Park, and public realm improvements in Chasetown and Brownhills.

Integrating Package projects with other activities in the area has been essential, given the limited availability of discretionary public match funding, particularly for resource intensive physical projects. The lack of regeneration zone status meant that an even greater onus was placed on building on existing activity and making creative use of the significant but limited ERDF funds available. This context was integral to the strategy and project mix set out in the Package document.

Table 1: Previous Regeneration Funding Initiatives in the Cannock Area

Previous funding initiative	Projects funded
RECHAR / Objective 2 ERDF	<p>Business Park developments - Towers Business Park, - the development of Lea Hall Colliery site, Arcadia Park project, Chasewater Heath Business Parks, Hednesford Brickworks</p> <p>Environmental improvements - Cannock town centre, Brownhills District Centre</p> <p>tourist attractions - Chasewater Visitor Centre development, Museum of Cannock Chase</p> <p>Infrastructure- Hednesford, Walsall – Rugeley Railway, Brownhills Neighbourhood Resource Centre, Brownhills and Chasewater Heaths Station</p>
SRB	<p>Trent Challenge part of regeneration strategy embracing Rugeley and Armitage with Handsacre</p> <p>Cannock Gateway – Various objectives relating to business competitiveness, employment, education, housing, health, crime reduction and shopping and recreational facilities</p> <p>Regeneration of Chasetown and Chase Terrace.</p>
ESF Objective 3	<p>ESF funding was available in the Cannock area to provide training and develop recycling programmes. Many of these projects have been sponsored by Cannock Chase Technical College and include:</p> <p>An ICT bus with crèche, the employment of a dedicated community outreach worker and supporting SME's to increase participation in learning and training.</p> <p>Other projects include: Rodbaston College development of recycling programmes, Armitage with Handsacre Village Hall and Training Centre – education and social opportunities and The Old Mining College Centre in Chasetown has undertaken refurbishment and an extension to support a range of social and community activities.</p>

The strategy developed for the CCBB Package area in the original Package proposal has been broad and included large private sector-led employment sites projects, Towers and Kingswood Lakeside Business Parks, both of which were envisaged to create substantial numbers of new jobs. Overall, a good mix of projects was evident and the independent assessment of the Package undertaken on behalf of Government Office for West Midlands (GOWM) recognised that the selection of a limited number of key activities could deliver a range of benefits for the area.

The financial implications of the intended projects portfolio were identified as £5.154m of ERDF resources in Phase 1 towards investment of £18.188m and £3.143m of ERDF resources in Phase 2 towards investment of £12.436m. An attractive leverage ratio of 1:3.7 was envisaged at an average intervention rate of 27%.

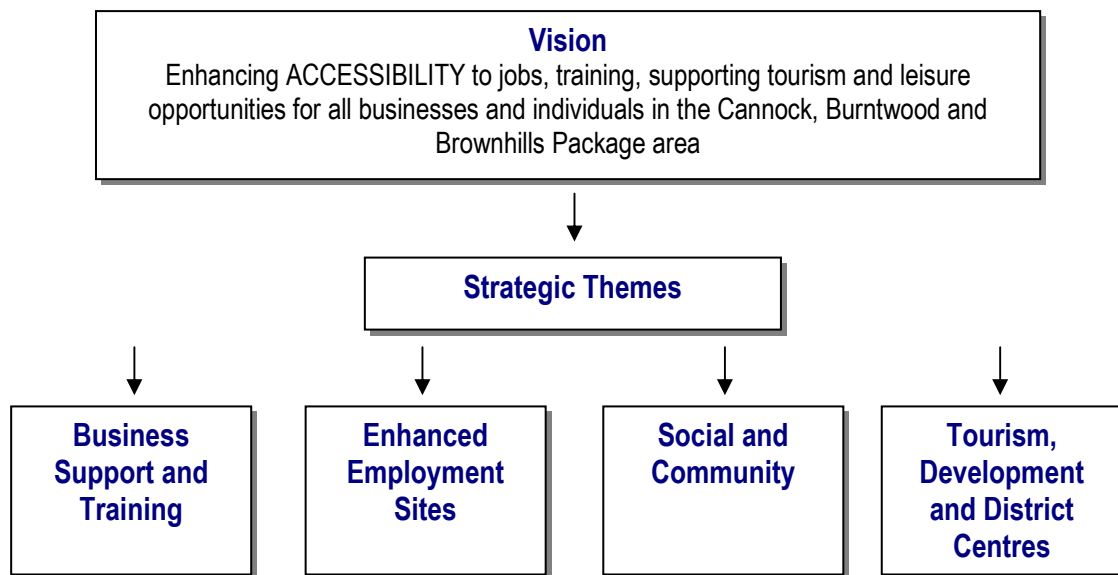
Nineteen projects were originally proposed for the first three years of the Package, together with a similar number of projects for the second half of the Package, commencing in 2004.

However, in the event none of the key employment site projects identified in the original Priority Two project portfolio proceeded. This was a disappointment, due to a range of circumstances resulting in schemes not proceeding through the Package:

- **Mill Green Infrastructure** - potential AWM funding was not ultimately forthcoming which, in the absence of other alternative sources of match funding, meant that this project could not be progressed.
- **Towers Business Park** – the scope of the scheme altered significantly which made ERDF support inappropriate.
- **Kingswood Lakeside** – in practice, did not require public intervention to proceed.

The loss of Advantage West Midlands (AWM) investment to the Mill Green scheme and other projects was a significant blow to the aspirations of the partnership and has probably had the biggest single impact on the effectiveness of the original Package vision.

Overall, the mix of projects supported through the final Package differs somewhat from the larger portfolio desired at the outset. The much reduced ERDF allocation £4.2m and the changing circumstances for many of the key employment projects has meant that the original aspiration of a broad mix of projects achieving significant direct impact has been downscaled considerably. The Package strategic document outlines the vision for accessibility Package as:



5.2 Mix of Projects

The Accessibility Package Strategic Development Plan was duly approved by GOWM. The purpose of the plan was to create a contextual framework for the long-term development and regeneration of the Package area into 2008 and beyond.

Table 2: Projects Approved by Priority

Priority	Project
One	Pristine Plus; Local BIC Incubators; Rugeley Cannock SME Support Project (subsequently withdrawn); New Opportunities for Growth in Burton and Cannock (subsequently withdrawn)
Two	Chasewater Visitor Hub; District Centres Management Initiative; Norton Canes - An Image for the Future; Burntwood: A place to invest: Southern Staffordshire Business Park Initiative; Canals - Contributing to a Better Brownhills; Hatherton Canals Regeneration: Implementation Support project; District Centre Regeneration (Brownhills area)
Three	Opportunities in Employment
Bold – projects not identified in the original Package document	

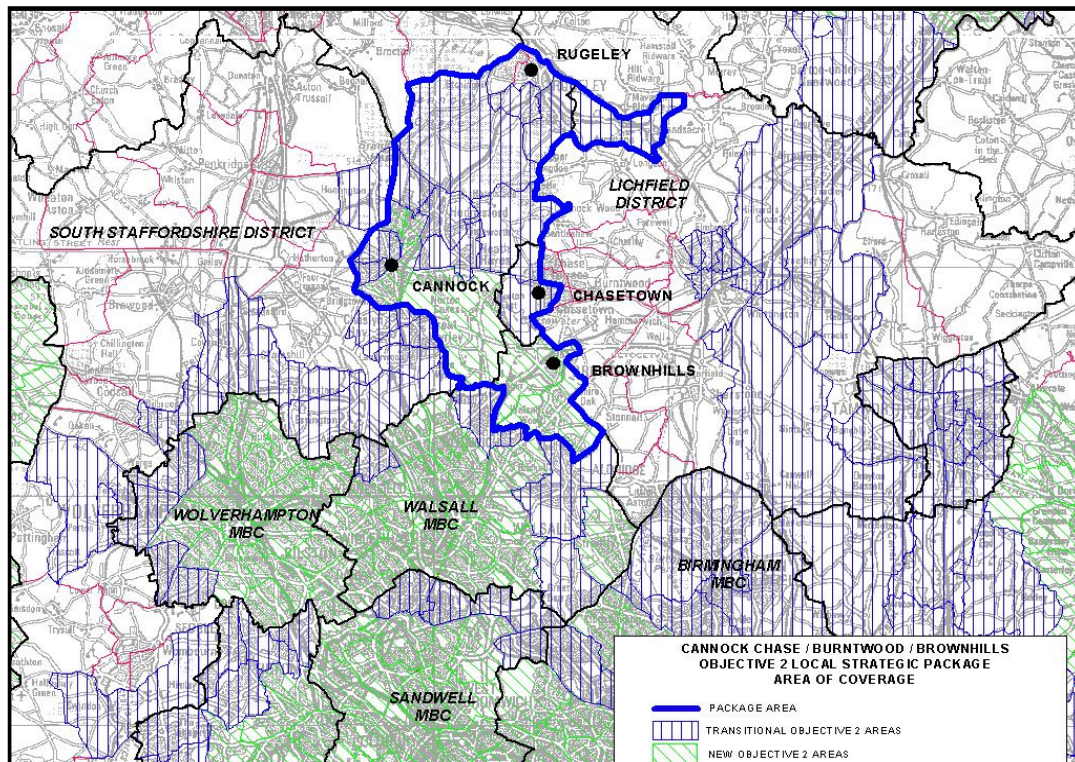
As highlighted at table 2, in Priority One, four projects were approved, although two of these were subsequently withdrawn by Business Link Staffordshire, thereby significantly reducing the potential for the Package to improve the competitiveness of the SME base.

In Priority Two, the key tourism schemes originally identified in the Package document, (Chasewater Visitor Hub and Hatherton Canals Regeneration) did go ahead. In addition, several new schemes to enhance the area's established business parks, and district centre improvements were included. A new project sponsored by British Waterways to bring the canal network in Brownhills back into use has been a significant addition, complementing the public realm and environmental improvements project.

In Priority Three, only one project, Opportunities in Employment was ultimately supported, largely due to the difficulties of developing and delivering activities targeting a small CED area which included parts of Broomhill and Chadsmoor as core eligible areas.

5.3 Package Area

The Package area borders four local authority areas of Walsall, Lichfield, South Staffordshire and Stafford.



The aim of this spatial strategy for the Package area would not only incorporate proposals for physical development, but also the mechanisms for the delivery of business support services and workforce training activities in conjunction with Priority One and Priority Three.

It is apparent the Package areas were chosen on the basis of their levels of development and investment at that time. They were locations with significant employment and infrastructure provision, considered to have the greatest potential to generate further significant employment opportunities and economic growth for the whole of the West Midlands region. The Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills Strategic Development Package area was viewed as possessing particular strengths in this respect.

In addition to employment factors, the designated Package area was also expected to demonstrate the potential for good public transport links, particularly to deprived areas, and access to the wider transport network.

Access to important sub-regional assets and infrastructure, such as education and training facilities, the ability to match fund investment and the ability to create effective linkages with other programmes in the area were all key considerations.

5.4 M6 Toll

It was also anticipated that the Strategic Development Package area would further enhance road access upon completion of the M6 Toll (formerly known as the Birmingham Northern Relief Road).

5.5 Local Partners Group

Cannock Chase District Council (CCDC), in partnership with other local partners, service providers and the private sector, are known as the **Local Partners Group (LPG)**, and is responsible for overseeing the development of the strategic plan for the Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills Strategic Development Package area.

5.6 Base Lines at Package Conception

The District of Cannock Chase lies in the south of Staffordshire and borders the West Midlands conurbation. The district is largely urban and its main centre is the town of Cannock. The district has a number of other district settlements, namely Hednesford, Rugeley, Brereton, Heath Hayes and Norton Canes.

The Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills Package area covers the former Southern Staffordshire coalfield area and comprises a number of Objective 2 wards in the districts of Cannock Chase, Lichfield and Walsall. The majority of the Package area however, centres around Cannock Chase with three wards in Lichfield district (Chasetown, Armitage with Handsacre and Chase Terrace) and two wards in Walsall District (Brownhills and Aldridge North and Walsall Wood in Walsall). The baseline assessments depicted in the Accessibility Strategic Document centred on Cannock Chase as the district boundaries provide the best geographical fit with Package area.

The lack of investment in the area is exemplified well by the tourism industry. Despite the fact that the Package area benefits from natural attractions such as Cannock Chase and Chasewater there is a lack of investment in tourist attractions, visitor facilities and transport infrastructure.

5.7 Key Messages at Package Conception

The key messages in terms of the Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills local economy and the area's physical and social environment that emerged from the baseline analysis are summarised as:

GDP in Cannock stood at £819m (latest data – 1998). Overall the economic growth rate of Cannock Chase, over the past 20 years as a whole, under-performed against both the national and West Midlands regional growth.

Cannock's employment actually contracted between 1995 and 1999 with the loss of 1,200 jobs. This was in marked contrast to the West Midlands and nationally where employment actually grew strongly over the same period.

Manufacturing very much remained the strongest sector in Cannock, with the proportion of employment in traditional and advanced manufacturing being more than 50% greater than the national average.

Cannock Chase lacked advantage in the higher value service sectors, underlining the comparatively poor performance of the district.

Only 12% of the working age population in Cannock were qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above – this was in marked contrast to the 20% in West Midlands.

Self-employment in Cannock was particularly low with less than 10% of the workforce.

There were particular pockets of deprivation in the Package area. For example, unemployment rates in Cannock South and Chasetown stood at 6.3% compared to 4.2% regionally.

Youth unemployment was particularly high in some wards, especially Broomhill where 30% of the unemployed categorised as youth unemployed and Chadsmoor at 29%. Brownhills was also the most deprived ward in the Package area and is within the 10% most deprived wards in England.

Reflecting the importance of connecting Priority Three communities with the opportunities created by the other two priorities is an important component of this Package. The Cannock CED area has been identified within the Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills Strategic Development Package.

This area covers large parts of the Broomhill Ward as well as some enumeration districts within Chadsmoor. 4,537 people live in the CED area which as is characterised above by high unemployment levels. As highlighted, unemployment rates in Broomhill for example stood at 5.6% in May 2001 with youth unemployment reaching 30%.

In addition, high levels of overall deprivation are widespread with Broomhill Ward falling within the 10% most deprived wards in the country in terms of income deprivation, health deprivation and disability, housing deprivation and child poverty.

It is important to note that some difficulties have been encountered by the voluntary sector when dealing with the complexities surrounding the Objective Two application process, which has meant that not as many applications had come forward as expected.

6.0 Mid-Term Evaluation

6.1 Introduction

EKOS Consulting (UK) Ltd were commissioned in November 2005, on behalf of the LPG to undertake a mid-term evaluation of the Package. In broad terms, the following summarises EKOS findings:

6.2 Added Value

In financial terms, the Package is characterised by a high degree of added value – few, if any, projects would have gone ahead at the same scale in the absence of EU funding. 100% additionality was evident in the Hatherton Canals, Norton Canes, Chasewater and Opportunities in Employment projects where alternative sources of match funding were limited. The Partnership's approach of selecting a number of schemes where EU funding was essential has limited the potential for overlap or substitution with other regeneration initiatives in the area. This is a positive feature of the Package.

6.3 Qualitative Benefits and Effectiveness

Priority 1

The performance and impact of the business support strand of the Package has been below expectations, due in part to lack of interest from companies and a move towards delivering regional priorities locally rather than specific projects for the Package area. The grants available to assist businesses were seen as too low and project sponsors had difficulty recruiting businesses to take up assistance. In practice, the restructure of Business Link Staffordshire resulted in a new approach to delivering business support which meant continuing with the two ERDF projects was not cost-effective and both were withdrawn.

Priority 2

Although a number of the physical projects funded through Priority Two are still ongoing, there are a range of qualitative benefits and positive lessons which have already emerged. First, the two largest tourism projects – Chasewater and Hatherton Canals – have sought to build upon and exploit some of the area's key assets. At Chasewater, a combination of a new attraction and related improvements is reinforcing the Park's status as a visitor location of sub-regional significance. Innovative design elements have been incorporated into the heritage centre, and a large increase in the number of volunteers has been secured, helping to sustain and enhance the benefits of the project.

Priority 3

The Opportunities in Employment project has been one of the most effective Package projects, in spite of not fully utilising the available grant. The scheme has successfully engaged with a significant number of residents in the target CED wards, increasing aspirations and equipping a proportion to become key workers/trainers, thereby extending the benefits. Extensive partnership working with BES, Cannock Chase Council has been a key feature; essential given the small target area and short time period for delivery.

6.4 Linkages and Synergies

The original Package plan set out a strategy and project portfolio which sought to maximise the links between projects in order to achieve benefits and impacts greater than sum of its parts. In practice, the scope for synergies was significantly reduced given the limited number of projects spread across the three priorities and a relatively large geographical area.

6.5 Sustainability and Forward Strategy

With the EU allocation to the Package fully contracted, and a number of projects complete or nearing completion, attention is rightly focused on how the investments and benefits from the Package can be sustained. In some cases, such as the Opportunities in Employment project, a follow on strategy has already been executed, with activity being mainstreamed via CCDC. Similarly, a new business led working group has been established to take forward the enhancement of the business parks in Chasetown, facilitated by the Burntwood: A Place to Invest project.

6.6 Package Coordination

It was agreed by GOWM in principle that it would be appropriate to devote a percentage of the approved EU allocation to each Package to cover the cost of essential administration, applicant support and other coordination costs. In the CCBB Package, this role has been performed by CCDC with an EU contribution of £278,011 from Priority Two over the lifetime of the Package. These monies have part-funded the salary costs of the Package Coordinator, website development, workshops and training sessions, production of a newsletter, and secretariat support for the LPG.

There was universal agreement amongst project sponsors on the effectiveness of CCDC in the coordination role. Their work was characterised as supportive, well-organised and helpful, particularly in relation to appraisal and monitoring visits. Open and consistent communications were highlighted as a particular feature.

It is apparent that the work of CCDC has enhanced considerably the operation of the Package, particularly given the complexities which many projects' sponsors operated within, including multi-measure approvals and core/transitional area profiles for finance and outputs.

6.7 Application, Appraisal and Monitoring

The CCBB Package has operated with a number of complexities and constraints which has adversely influenced the experience of project managers and stakeholders. A number of these relate to the mechanics of the Objective Two programme including a Package area comprising both core and transition areas across three local authorities, a very small Priority Three eligible area, and funding drawn from a number of Objective Two measures. Given this context, it was perhaps inevitable that developing and delivering projects would not be straightforward or easy to resource. Whilst a number of frustrations were identified by consultees, it was agreed that both CCDC and GOWM had, by and large, been helpful and supportive in helping to address problems.

6.8 Partnership Working

The designation of CCBB as an Objective Two Package required that a broad new partnership be established, containing three district councils, Staffordshire County Council, business support agencies, AWM, GOWM and other economic and social partners. The overarching partnership vehicle for the Package has been the LPG, which, it is generally recognised, has worked well. Chaired efficiently by CCDC, regular meetings have been held (initially six, then four per annum) with open and constructive discussion and debate. The meetings have provided a valuable forum for exchange of experience and for shared solutions to be developed to problems identified by project managers or GOWM. Given that the bulk of funding was contracted to agreed projects from the Package plan, the role of the LPG in project selection and development has been relatively limited.

7.0 Final Evaluation

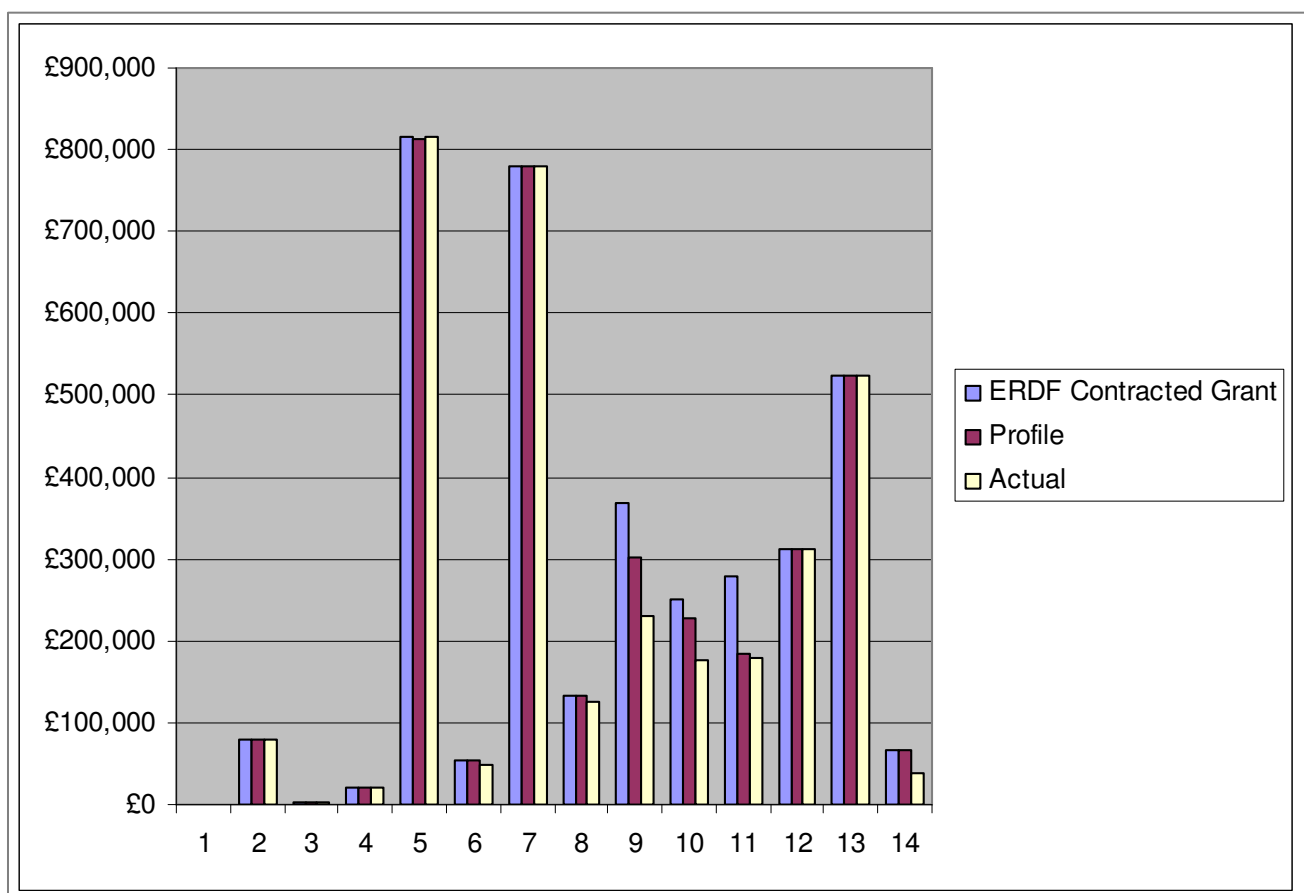
The actual cumulative ERDF/ESF grant spend is £3,333,098, compared to profiled ERDF/ESF cumulative grant amount of £3,501,712 at March 07, which is **95%** spend achieved.

7.1 Table 3 provides a summary of the current total Funding Package for each Priority.

Table 3

Priority	No. of Projects in Priority	Total Public, Private or Voluntary Match funds profiled			Total ERDF / ESF Grant claimed	Total Eligible Project cost
Priority One	4 Projects	Not known	Not known		£116,537	£172,518
Priority Two	9 Projects	3,540,046	1,028,568	291,519	£3,189,698	£8,081,048
Priority Three	1 Project	31,480			£38,103	£85,274
Overall Package Total	14 Projects	3,571,526	1,028,568	291,519	£3,344,338	£8,338,840

7.2 Figure 4 provides an outline of Package ERDF grant spend



Source: CCDC August 2008

Key:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. New Opportunities for Growth | 6. Burntwood: A Place to Invest | 11. Implementation Support Project |
| 2. Rugeley/Cannock SME Support | 7. Hatherton Canal Regeneration | 12. Southern Staffordshire Business Park Initiative |
| 3. Local BIC Incubators | 8. Norton Canes – An Image for the Future | 13. Canals Contributing to a Better Brownhills |
| 4. Pristine Plus | 9. District Centre Regeneration (Brownhills area) | 14. Opportunities in Employment |
| 5. Chasewater Visitor Hub | 10. District Centre Management Initiative | |

7.3 Appendix A

Appendix A provides a summary of reports that outline the performance of each of the projects in order of priority.

Table 5 provides a summary of project's financial status at March 2007

Table 5

Priority and Measure	Project Title	Applicant	Funding Source			ERDF / ESF Grant Claimed £	Eligible Project Cost £	Status
			Public	Private	Voluntary			
1.8	New Opportunities for Growth in Burton and Cannock	Business Link Staffs	Profiled 152,720	Profiled 1,012,919		874	2,989	Withdrawn June 04
1.8	Rugeley/Cannock SME Support Project	Business Link Staffs	Profiled 91,507	Profiled 1,529,998		80,423	46,012	Withdrawn June 04
1.8	Local BIC Incubators	Staffordshire and Black Country BIC	<i>Wider Project – 10% spend to Package</i>			3,238	9,523	Extended Dec 04-08
1.1	Pristine Plus	Staffordshire and Black Country BIC	<i>Wider project – 10% spend to Package</i>			32,002	113,994	Extended Dec 04-08
2.1	Chasewater Visitor Hub	Lichfield District Council	1,083,208		33,640	815,679	1,966,866	Ongoing Dec 07
2.1	Burntwood: A Place To Invest	Lichfield District Council	59,541	40,000		48,109	136,278	Completed March 04
2.1	Hatherton Canals Regeneration	Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust	652,125	50,650	130,000	779,530	1,612,252	Completed Dec 06
2.1	Norton Canes – An Image for the Future	British Business Parks	33,030	264,238		125,761	390,645	Completed March 06
2.1	District Centre Regeneration (Brownhills area)	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	369,274			231,266	579,175	Ongoing Ext Dec 07

2.2	District Centres Management Initiative	Southern Staffs Chamber of Commerce & Industry	132,000	116,789	127,879	177,446	444,389	Ongoing Ext Dec 07
2.2	Implementation Support Project	Cannock Chase District Council	67,000	212,100		178,187	357,074	Ongoing March 08
2.2/2.8	Southern Staffordshire Business Park Initiative	Southern Staffs Chamber of Commerce & Industry	169,919	344,791		310,846	825,824	Completed March 07
2.1	Canals Contributing to a Better Brownhills	British Waterways	973,949			522,874	1,768,545	Completed March 06
3.2/3.4	Opportunities in Employment	Business Enterprise Support Ltd	31,480			38,103	85,274	Completed Dec 04

Table 6 provides a summary of outputs and result comparisons with those reported within the EKOS mid-term evaluation (November 2005)

Table 6

	Output	MTE Profile	MTE Actual	Final Review Profiled Core	Final Review Profiled Trans	Actual Core	Actual Trans	Total Claimed in Package
Core	Business receiving financial support	24	28	31	17	21	40	52
	Businesses assisted	233	150	563	265	331	8	392
	Ha. of land improved	1	0	2.6	8	2.6	4	10.6
	No. of attractions created/upgraded	2	0	7	6	11		15
	Sq m of premises provided/refurbished	432	432	2053.5		2053.5		2053.5
Other	Public transport initiatives	2	0	1	1			
	Tourism marketing initiatives	2	0	1	1			
	Public realm enhancements	8	12					
	Facilities upgraded	5	3					
	Jobless beneficiaries trained	19	19	19				19
	Results	Profile	Actual					
Core	New jobs	119	103	378	297	135	40	148
	New sales	4,337,960	370,000	4760k	4647k	1030K	0	830k
	Safeguarded jobs	106	66	140	113	200	64	4
	Safeguarded sales (£)	2,000,000	0		161,187	750k		
	Gross visitors	19,900	0	67000				66000
	CED residents into employment	12	12	12		12		12
Other	Jobs taken up by local residents	0	3		70k	750k		
	Private sector leverage (£)	70,000	750,000					
	Gross overnight visitors	1,290	0	18				18
	Beneficiaries obtaining NVQ2 or equivalent	18	18	98		100		98
	People receiving advice and guidance	98	98					

Table 7 provides a summary of other significant Package outputs.

Table 7

Output	MTE Profile	MTE Actual	Final Review Profiled Core	Final Review Profile Trans	Actual Core	Actual Trans	Total Claimed in Package
Business Improved			240	107	2	1	3
Environmental Enhancements			16	8	14	8	24
Disadvantaged Entering into Employment					4		4
Business Start-ups					2		2
No. of Female Beneficiaries			18				18
No. of CED Residents Participating							117

The majority of projects original outputs were re-profiled as a result of the Objective Two programme mid-term review, reflecting significant changes to projects.

The above tables demonstrate the expected profiles as per project information and mid-term evaluation, the actual amounts claimed by projects, and the total amounts claimed through the Package, according to information supplied by CCDC or identified during project interviews.

7.4 Summary

The summary of outputs tables demonstrates that whilst at the time of the mid-term evaluation, when approximately one-third of projects had completed delivery, significant results have been achieved and claimed by the Package during the last 18 months in terms of:

- New jobs claimed at **148** compared with 119
- Business assists claimed at **392** compared with 150
- Premises improved or refurbished at **2053** sq' m compared with 432 sq' m
- **24** environmental enhancements claimed

7.5 Impact and Added Value

The visual impact of the Accessibility Package to the target area is clear, in terms of improving access to canals, improving surrounding environment and towpath access by construction and improvement of bridges. Business parks display clear signage with improvements to security for local industrial units.

The overall impact on the private sector is higher than expected; however the direct impact on beneficiaries in terms of improving access to jobs, education and training is not as strong due to the Package not delivering projects originally envisaged. The Opportunities in Employment project is the only Priority Three measure project to receive ERDF/ESF support and the only project that directly targeted the unemployed CED residents within the Accessibility Package area. This low cost project was highly successful, yet the impact is less visible. By its nature, it will take some time before the long term results are noticeable.

7.6 Economic Impact

The Accessibility Package overall can clearly demonstrate high value returns against the ERDF investment in terms of the large scale environmental improvements that have been effected for considerably small amounts of funding support due to effective partnership working and utilising available resources.

However, in some case assessing additionality and 'Value for Money' in terms of European Funding support for the Package area itself is not that clear cut, in so far as that some Package activity was part of a wider project and the additional benefit to the Package area was not clearly attributable. In other projects, some activities would still have taken place, but much longer or reduced timescales.

In the case of the two British Business Parks projects additionality is seen in the form of the October 2004 Staffordshire in Business Show that encouraged the businesses to inter-trade and to take their first steps in showcasing their products and services. **41** companies in total showcased their products and services. **20** companies gained one or more new clients as a result of the show and in the following three months generated over **38** new customers receiving **207** new enquiries.

Another effect has been the number of businesses relocating into the targeted areas encouraging further investment.

In terms of inward investment to Cannock Chase District, table 8 demonstrates a marked increase in companies moving into or setting up in the District over the last five years.

Table 8

	New Companies to Cannock	Total Estimated Jobs	Total Space Taken Sq' m	Total Average Wage Rates £
2004	8	504	58,002	9,770,815
2005	6	184	3,151	3,665,142
2006	2	18	530	370,451
2007	13	155	5,289	3,306,128

Source: InStaffs

This is borne out by Cannock Chase District Councils statistics relating to Business Stocks for VAT registered companies in Cannock Chase District which rose from **2,130** in 1994 to **2,770** in 2005.

Projects working on the canal improvements are apparently enabling private sector interest in land adjacent to the route of the canal, which it seems may not have occurred without the projects. For example, a planning application for a marina adjoining the Hatherton Canal is well advanced. It also seems likely that other similar private sector development will take place along the stretch of the canal route. Property and land values on the route of the canal are also rising.

The Projects have enabled other funding support on sections of the canal route outside the Accessibility area. For example external funding totalling **£300,000** has been secured to purchase Lock Cottage and **£250,000** has been secured to construct an aqueduct in the Lichfield area.

Although it is well recognised that there is a broad desire to restore derelict canals and improve access, there is little in the way of a structured national approach; the thrust being left to volunteer groups to do what they can. Without ERDF funding, securing crossings of the new M6 Toll Motorway would have been impossible, leaving an important part of the national system completely severed, which would have reduced Accessibility opportunities into the Package area.

The District Centre Management Project's town centre development activity has attracted visitors and tourism and brought about increased footfall into the Town Centre. All the activities brokered into the town have been enhanced by EU intervention which enabled various attractions such as the **Green Dream** event which raised awareness of environmental issues in an innovative fashion.

Priority 1 – Developing a Diverse and Dynamic Business Base

The Package has supported this priority and resulted in a clear impact on enterprise, innovation and employment. The local BIC Incubators and Pristine Plus projects, although only 10% activity in the Package area, have helped local business to improve their image, grow and become successful innovators, by seeking out innovation practice in the area and giving SME's the tools to manage innovation including grants for technical expertise, creating local employment opportunities.

Priority 2 – Creating the Conditions for Growth

Actions to support enterprise and employment are continued under this priority through the South Staffordshire Business Parks and Norton Canes – Image projects. The consolidation of four disparate, but similarly named industrial estates into one Business Park with four clearly zoned areas together with the establishment of business forums and creation of Business Improvement Districts in Staffordshire, has improved the image for SME's on these industrial sites, and contributed to the theme of accessibility.

Also under this priority the Package's most visual impact is demonstrable by extensive improvements in physical environment and attracting tourism. Further contributing to the Package theme of Accessibility, success lies in the improved physical appearances and access to canals and towpaths, creating easier access to town centres. For example, the Canals Contributing to a Better Brownhills and Hatherton Canals Regeneration projects have successfully contracted and delivered activities in partnership with the British Waterways Board, maximising on the use of available ERDF funds, which may have otherwise been lost.

The fore-sightedness of the partnership to acknowledge and support the importance of preserving the route of the historic Lichfield and Hatherton Canals against potential obliteration by new road works resulting from the M6 Toll, has paved the way for future links and use for the canals highways in the Midlands.

Local community members have improved access to the canal towpaths, as well as supporting a resource facility in the Brownhills Canoe and Outdoor Centre, providing a valued resource for local people and visitors to the area.

The Chasewater Railway Heritage Centre development is an attractive visitor environment that includes an improved railway experience, with a specially constructed Railway Centre and museum, improved parking and lakeside walks.

This Centre carries out the refurbishment of trains and railway artifacts of historical and local interest in safe and secure environment. Volunteers, including young people with limited mental or physical ability learn how to use appropriate tools and equipment, developing practical skills as well as developing skills such as social interaction and communication.

Once described as a *'muddy puddle in the middle of a slag heap'*, the area is now a natural park and visitor centre, ripe for further investment and opportunity.

The District Centre Management Initiative has delivered several major events and attractions in Cannock Town Centre and been instrumental in reducing and preventing crime amongst the local business community with the creation of the 'Chase Business Crime Initiative' in October 2006, which has **55** members. There has been a marked increase in tourism between 2003 and 2005, and visitors to the Cannock Chase District now stand at **3000**.

Priority 1 & 2 - Impact & Results

Under Priority One and Two actions, the Package overall has resulted in creating **140** new jobs, generating **£750,000** in new sales and safeguarded **£220,000** sales. Grant aid of over **£230,000** has been awarded to **45** businesses. This secured over **£750,000** of private sector investment and has triggered additional inward investment. In terms of Innovation support, **43** companies received advice and assistance with **5** companies supported with technical innovation / product development expertise, and **3** awarded Special Innovation Support grants totalling, **£14,494.34**.

Priority 3 - Regenerating Communities

Although the eligible area of Community Economic Development (CED) identified under the Package area is very small and only one project delivered under this priority, there were significant benefits to the community.

117 residents from the two most deprived wards in the CED area of Chadsmoor and Broomhill have benefited from assistance through the Opportunities in Employment Project, which encouraged attitudinal changes as well as providing training leading to NVQs for **19** hard to reach clients who have benefited from increased

confidence, skills, education and assistance into employment or self employment. ESF funding has enabled support for hardest to reach client groups with childcare support to encourage participation and facilitated statutory services to engage with project beneficiaries. Clearly none of this would have happened without the support of the Package and ESF funding.

7.7 Linkages and Synergies

There are clear linkages and synergies between the projects delivered under Priority One and Two. The District Centre Regeneration - Brownhills Project was quick to identify that a change in the planned activity to take into account the Pier Street Bridge, would benefit and link with existing canals improvements and support activity under the Canals Contributing to a Better Brownhills schemes.

All the Business support activity delivered by Norton Canes - An Image for the Future, Southern Staffordshire Business Park and Burntwood: A Place to Invest are clearly complementary, in terms of improving security and visual image of the Business Parks. The Local BIC Incubators / Pristine Plus projects continue the theme of supporting companies to ensure growth through innovation.

7.8 Good Practice

All the projects and partners cited the LPG itself as good practice, with true partnership working between public, private and voluntary sectors. LPG meetings have taken place regularly disseminating information as well as reporting on progress. The Accessibility website has been kept up to date with information and the 'Accessibility – EuroPackage' is widely distributed amongst partnership members.

Both Norton Canes - An Image for the Future and Southern Staffordshire Business Park Initiative Projects have been particularly successful at engaging the private sector within the Package area, with each Business Park managed by a steering group. Norton Canes was the first Business Park in Staffordshire to become a Business Improvement District (BID) and the Burntwood Business Park is well on its way to becoming the second.

The Norton Canes BID area is situated between the A5 and A5190 Cannock to Lichfield Road, occupying a major Gateway position into the Cannock Chase region, and important business location following the location of M6 Toll new service area.

The proactive involvement of the private sector in the regeneration scheme working in partnership with the public sector and the fact that the activity is being sustained through private sector support and the establishment of a new company is excellent good practice which can be replicated across the region.

The vision is for the Business Improvement Districts to become high quality business environments in Staffordshire, capable of attracting, developing and supporting a wide variety of businesses through the provision of safe, clean and connected business estates.

The three themes of improvement are:

- Providing a range of support functions that will benefit all businesses
- Increasing business security and preventing crime
- Implementing and maintaining image enhancements across the estates

Each BID lasts for 5 years, and enables businesses to contribute and, through a levy collected by LA, help prioritise the delivery of identified services for the business park in line with the BID proposals.

Linked with the business support and partnerships, Local BIC Incubators / Pristine Plus services are also elements of good practice to note, although contributing only 10% activity to the Package area. Pristine Plus processes and approach to innovation are deemed as exemplar practice by AWM and winners of 1:1 Best for Business Awards.

The Hatherton Canals Regeneration Project by Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust is an example of good practice, being a voluntary organisation, working in partnership with public and private sectors to improve the physical surroundings of the environment around the canals in the Midlands.

As volunteers, the Committee and project staff has worked closely with local authorities, British Waterways and Government officials, to ensure the use of the European Grant met with EU regulations. Without their tenacity, diligence and professional approach, the partnership support of British Waterways both in terms of providing match funds and technical expertise, this project is unlikely to have been able to effect such improvements to the canal towpaths, raising the physical image of the area and improving the quality of access for the local community.

The Trust receives national recognition for its work, with film and TV celebrity David Suchet as its Vice President. The Trust launched the “David Suchet Appeal”, turning a local issue into a national appeal, raising over **£400,000** nationally in support of the project. Trust activities have been subject to a debate in the House of Commons, following support and interest from MP Michael Fabricant. During the lifetime of the project membership of the Trust grew from 150 to **1,500**. From being a local body, the Trust has national interest, with members throughout the UK.

7.9 Lessons Learned

Projects and partners were asked what they felt were the most important challenges from delivering their projects and using ERDF grant. Without exception, all commented on the bureaucracy involved in managing ERDF funding and many felt at some point, they questioned whether the difficulties were outweighing the benefits.

Delivering projects in tightly constrained geographical areas such as Objective Two clearly causes project complexities and extra burden of in-depth monitoring for all projects. It is clear that such complexities risk over-whelming smaller voluntary organisations. From the Package management viewpoint, control over projects in the Package was minimal due to projects directly contracting with GOWM, therefore no influence or obligation to Cannock District Council, in terms of reporting spend / results.

The Hatherton Canals Regeneration Project experienced difficulties with an ‘outside, but not serving issue’, when ineligible match funding relating to Lichfield Canal Aqueduct was identified after grant approval. Following lengthy discussion and negotiation with GOWM the issues were fortunately satisfactorily resolved.

The Opportunities in Employment project also experienced difficulties at early application stage, mainly due to uncertainties around measure suitability and negotiating bid profiles requiring re-submission which resulted in reduced delivery time and grant received. Delayed claims of up to six months caused an administrative and cash flow burden that only a stronger voluntary organisation can cope with. The Project Manager said of this project:

“The project was a delight to deliver and excellent people relationships were built. The fore-runner of something that was so good and also delivered hard results that could be measured. EU funding is ideal to support this type of activity, but it needs to be less onerous on the small voluntary organisations.”

Public sector / local authorities could assist more by removing some of the administrative burden from the delivering organisation, in terms of administration, monitoring, contract negotiations and coping with changing rules and goal posts – all of which dampen the spirits of enthusiastic organisations who just want to do their job. Tenacity is certainly required. An alternative is that the partnership (LPG / SSP) takes on the accountable body status. A co-financing approach could work well’.

It is felt that more could be done to help smaller organisations engage in and stay involved in the delivery of major regeneration Packages, especially European funded programmes, in terms of alleviating risk to the projects themselves. If not supported well by the partners, the risks to a project from delays in receipt of grants, or the threat of losing grant arising from issues such as changing goal-posts, misunderstandings around eligible criteria that had previously been agreed, can be catastrophic to a small voluntary organisation that is working for the good of its community.

One project suggested an important lesson for them was in finding innovative ways of achieving grant defrayal to overcome problem of short deadlines for extended project work. An understanding of the bureaucracy and processes which may not happen as fast as expected when dealing with Government Offices is also important.

There is a need to build in ‘slippage’ in terms of time, when developing applications, Business Plans, and gaining statutory planning consents for regeneration works can take much longer than planned. The need to be flexible and able to respond quickly to good news such as the possibility of additional funding is balanced with the need to re-examine issues such as match funding throughout the life of the project.

Such examples, illustrates that where voluntary organisations are delivering activities that support local area strategic plans of public bodies, such as local authorities and the Environment Agency, it is clear that support is welcomed to help relieve the administrative impacts and financial strains placed upon voluntary organisations, which are working hard to help achieve the desired outcome.

7.10 Management and Administration

The Local Partners Group can be satisfied they have played a significant role in ensuring the Package delivered its objectives. For example, overall spend has been completed to within **95%** of profile (as at March 07). Apart from two early withdrawals, projects in the Package should be viewed as being successful in achieving their original aims and objectives, delivering activities as planned and in some cases exceeding their outputs targets. All projects appear to have reached their intended target beneficiaries.

The following is an overview of questionnaire analysis of Project Managers and partner agency members' responses to research questionnaires (see Appendices B and C). Responses are varied due to the unavailability of key staff; a number of whom have moved on since closure of individual projects and a number of questions not being relevant to individual projects.

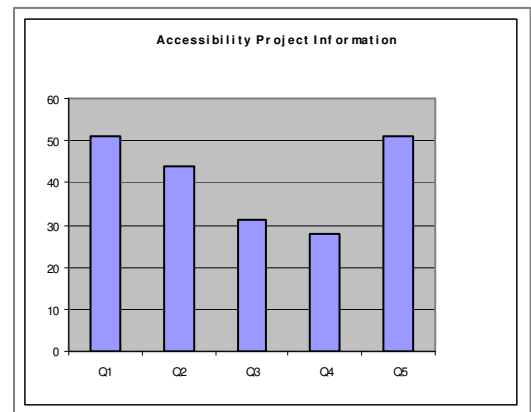
7.11 Package Coordination

Package Management Support – as will be noted within Figure 1, all projects are positive in the support received from the Package Management Team. Projects commented on advice and information received, which included training in understanding and managing European Funding (West Midlands European Network) and understanding horizontal themes (G & H Associates).

Projects have commented favourably on the support of the Package Coordinator in contract negotiations. The Package Coordinator has acted as an intermediary where necessary helping to resolve contractual negotiations and has effectively brought together individual projects to achieve overall Package delivery, collating information and producing informative reports for GOWM, LPG, and Staffordshire European Partnership. A platform for projects to showcase their successes was also provided via the bi-annual newsletter 'Accessibility – Euro Package Update'.

Figure 1 (100% Response)

- Q1. How well have projects original aims been met?
- Q2. How effective is the Project Management team?
- Q3. How did you find the application and appraisal process?
- Q4. How did you find the claims process?
- Q5. How effective has marketing been in terms of raising awareness among project beneficiaries and members of the targeted community?



Project Management and Delivery – all projects have delivered in accordance with their original aims and objectives, with only minor changes to activity outcomes or spend profiles. A number were extended and received increased funding. Pristine Plus and Local BIC Incubators projects were extended for a further two years with additional funding to deliver in transitional Objective Two areas.

Chasewater Visitor Centre and canals projects in particular were affected by the European Programmes Mid-Term Review, which resulted in change or clarification of outputs relating to their projects and also presented difficulties with requirements to capture visitors in sufficient manner to meet the changed criteria.

Some projects were affected by delays in receiving approval for contract deviations in terms of changing outputs and spend targets, or changes in project ownership and management issues (District Centre Management Novation Agreement) which necessitated legal consultation. Delayed responses to GOWM requests for information further compounded delays in gaining approvals.

Those projects which were put onto the new TESA system (GOWM web-based claims administration process) also experienced some delays.

All projects appear to have been effectively managed, monitored and evaluated in accordance with EU regulations.

During the course of the evaluation, a few observations are worth noting. These are observations from project assessment, based on information provided, and are not intended to be criticisms of project management by any organisation or individual.

In terms of regulation for European funding, we found that it was sometimes difficult to separate elements of the Package area project activity, spend and results, when compared with overall project or organisations' core activity.

For example, Local BIC Incubators and Pristine Plus Projects are Staffordshire wide projects with approx 10% of the contract values expected to be attributed to the Cannock Accessibility area. These projects are delivering complementary services, which appear to have achieved excellent results with minimal spend.

However, since applicant was not required from the outset to breakdown project spend and related outputs for each project with core and transitional splits relating to the Package area, detailed information was not available to the Package Coordinator.

The British Business Parks tended to treat both their ERDF projects (Norton Canes Image and Southern Staffordshire Business Park) as one project, although they hold two separate contracts and submit separate reports and claims for each thus creating additional administrative effort.

It is worth reminding projects that in the event of European audit, the trail must be transparent, with additionality and separateness to core or other project activity clearly demonstrated.

7.12 Application, Appraisal and Monitoring

All projects were contracted directly with GOWM and therefore submitted own claims directly, however many projects commented on the support received in terms of the intermediary role that the Package Coordinator provided with GOWM; especially in respect of contractual negotiations which were in some cases very protracted and complicated

7.13 GOWM Support

It is clear that GOWM has supported the Package overall and in particular individual projects, to help overcome difficulties faced. Project Managers have been assisted, with expertise and in-depth understanding of issues such as complexities surrounding legal issues linked to land ownership. Projects have also benefited from increased funding and project extensions.

However, throughout the evaluation a number of partners and Project Managers have suggested that GOWM support could have been stronger and more helpful, suggesting for example that communications could have been enhanced. One partner commented that GOWM seemed to take first a *'heavy handed approach'* and then a *'lighter approach, once negotiations commenced'*.

Despite busy diaries, it is apparent that Government Office staff have attended a number of LPG meetings, even though this was not within their general remit. Their lack of regular attendance has been noted by individual partners as possibly contributing to delays in arriving at solutions for some of the more complex project negotiations. Conversely, it has been noted that such a forum may not be appropriate for in-depth and possibly confidential discussions on complex project issues.

As highlighted above, projects applied for funds and contracted directly with GOWM, nevertheless, we felt it would be useful as part of this review to obtain the projects views on the application process and also the claims process. Twelve projects were asked to rate each question, where 1 was low and 5 was high. Out of 10 responses, the average score regarding the application process is **3.1**. The average score for the claims process is **2.8**.

Several projects within the Package have received Article 4 Monitoring visits by GOWM:

- Norton Canes – An Image for the Future - main findings related to defrayal issues.
- Southern Staffordshire Business Park Initiative - main findings related to apportionment of core and transitional costs.
- Canals – Contributing to a Better Brownhills - no issues.
- Opportunities in Employment - received a Project Closure Monitor with GOWM / Package Coordinator, which noted confusion with allocating private / public funding sources, requiring a significant change to contract even though the project had completed delivery by that stage.

Several projects have also received Article 10 Audit visits by GOWM Financial Accountability and Compliance Team (FACT):

- Implementation Support Project 2004 - main findings related to ineligible costs included in retrospective expenditure in first ERDF Claim.
- Hatherton Canals Regeneration - main findings related to an outside but not serving issue which was rectified by an earlier start date in order to capture all match funding in the core area element of the project in order to maintain the original grant amount.
- Local BIC Incubators and Pristine Plus projects have both received audits with no major issues, and Pristine Plus was commended on their audit trails.

The Package Coordinator has clearly been very supportive of projects and assisted Project Managers to understand and amend systems and processes, which would help to address issues arising from the Article 4 / 10 visits.

All Package reports and findings produced for LPG / GOWM / SEP are based on the information provided by the projects, however the Package Coordinator has no remit or control over the frequency and accuracy of projects information, in particular with regards to collating spend and outputs.

NB. It has been outside the scope of this evaluation to examine project records in detail and our findings are based on information provided by CCDC and projects. It should be noted that the majority of projects have been completed two years or more and most project records have been archived at the time of this review.

7.14 Addressing Horizontal Themes

Most of the projects felt they had addressed the horizontal themes adequately. The Package team provided a training workshop in 2004 facilitated by G & H Associates, during which projects were assisted in developing individual Action Plans which helped to identify activities that met the key issues under each of the horizontal themes required for EU and the sources of evidence they might use to demonstrate that achievement.

It is unclear how much use the projects have made of their Action Plan that was produced as a result of their training. It would have been useful if projects had submitted updates and progress with their Action Plans included as part of their reporting procedures to LPG.

The purpose of the horizontal themes is to ensure that projects embed the process of sustainability, innovation and equal opportunity across all their activities. In the majority of cases, each project clearly contributed more towards one main theme each and this is evident in the evaluation questions relating to each theme. For instance Local BIC Incubators and Pristine Plus projects contributed mostly to the innovation outputs, whereas the two Canals and Chasewater Projects contributed towards the sustainability theme due to the environmental nature of their work.

All projects should have been able to demonstrate equal opportunities yet only three projects contributed towards this theme, only one fully responded.

As will be noted within figures 2 and 3, projects were asked to rate how successfully their projects had impacted on the three main horizontal themes of sustainability, equal opportunities and innovation.

The main key issues for each theme were listed and projects were asked to rate against each, where 1 was low and 5 was high. The overall scores for each theme are as follows:

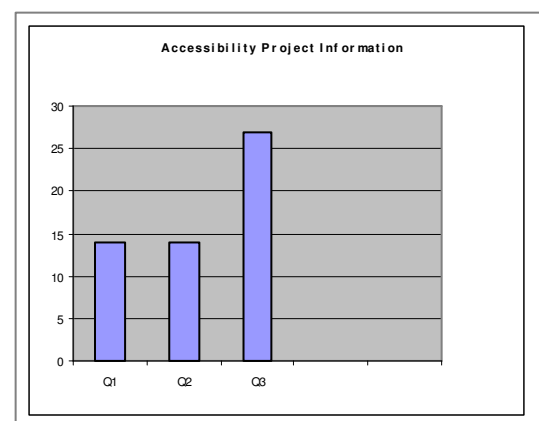
7.15 Horizontal Theme (Sustainability)

Q1. Safeguarding air, soil and water quality?

Q2. Protecting landscape and wildlife

Q3. Positive urban environment, noise and waste management?

Figure 2 (57% response)



7.16 Horizontal Theme (Equal Opportunities)

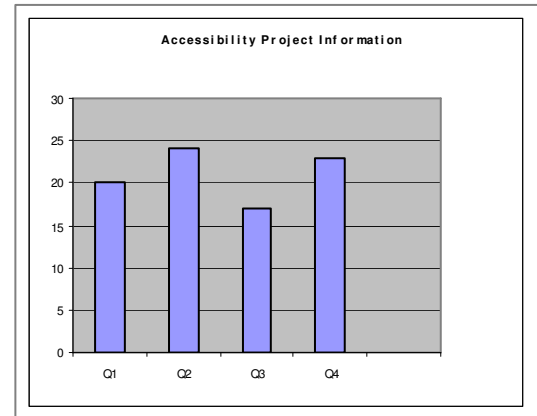
Low response - unreliable

7.17 Horizontal Theme (Innovation)

Figure 3 (50% response)

Figure 3 outlines responses to the following issues.

- Q1.** Exploiting and improving regional capability
- Q2.** Catalysing collaboration / innovation / activity via business networks
- Q3.** Increasing investment in research, design, development, new capital equipment and skills training
- Q4.** Enhancing innovation, culture and spreading best practice



7.18 Summary

Sustainability – 8 respondents rated themselves against the three key issues under this theme and the average score is **6.87**.

Equal Opportunities – only 3 respondents rated themselves against the four key issues under this theme and the average score was **10.66**.

Innovation – 7 respondents rated themselves against the four key issues under this theme and the average score is **12**.

7.19 Marketing and Promotion

The Implementation Support project has produced bi-annual newsletters 'Accessibility – EuroPackage Update', which has featured case studies of most projects, as well as providing information on the positive impact of ERDF structural funds on the area together with other local regeneration news. Each newsletter is posted on the projects own Website www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/euroPackage.

In addition, regular information and project updates are provided at the Staffordshire European Partnership (Sub Regional Group) meetings and also included on the SEP website www.staffseuroboost.info. Such activity has clearly contributed towards effective promotion of activities and results for all the projects within the Package.

There is evidence of projects marketing activities, utilising local media and newsletters, leaflets, websites, local events and annual festivals and beneficiaries were made aware of the use of European funds.

The required European plaques and logos were visible at the projects visited although some projects were reminded that the signs needed to be in a prominent place near the building refurbished and of appropriate proportions in accordance with EU rules.

Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Trust – promoted their project to a national stage, such as the National Boat Show and within national journals / specialist publications. Trust members regularly attend local and regional events, supported by high quality displays supported by photographs and videos. A plaque featuring the EU logo has been permanently attached to the Cappers Lane Bridge and is featured on over **30,000** handouts and other publications.

The 'David Suchet' appeal has received national recognition for the Trust. In addition they attracted the support of local MP Michael Fabricant (MP), who prompted a debate in the House of Commons on Wednesday 25 April 2007.

Our survey asked projects for their views on the effectiveness of marketing and promotion for their projects, rating appropriately where 1 is low and 5 is high. All 12 projects responded and the average score is **4.25**.

7.20 Partnership Working

One of the most successful features of this Package has been the sustained partnerships approach and clear commitment to developing stronger working relationships within Staffordshire. This is a common thread throughout the Package activity.

The LPG has met regularly and shared information, helping to resolve situations with projects, and managing the financial and monitoring aspects of the Package very closely to make the most of EU money achieving **95%** spend profiles. The Accessibility website and EuroPackage newsletters have provided a platform for projects and partners to promote their activities.

Projects and partners were asked to rate the effectiveness of partnership working where 1 was low and 5 was high.

All the local authorities gave top scores for fostering partnerships and **50%** of projects gave the partnership top scores of **5** for the LPG providing support and promotion to projects. Of the 10 projects that responded to this question the average scores are **4.4**.

In addition to LPG, a number of other new partnerships have also resulted from the Package:

- British Business Parks Business Forums
- Chadsmoor & Broomhill Neighbourhood Partnerships
- Chase Business Crime Initiative

Through effective partnership approaches and exchange of information the Package has underpinned significant opportunities for the development of the visitor economy. The Hatherton Canals Regeneration Project should receive due recognition for achievement, due to the diligent and professional approach of its volunteer management team which helped increase investors confidence.

7.21 Challenges and Barriers to Project Delivery

Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust have shown themselves to be an effective volunteer group, overturning a Government decision on including canal crossings of the M6 Toll and commanding all the necessary funding to achieve that in the short time available.

A significant challenge was linked to Government Office bureaucracy and delays in decision making. As highlighted, the private sector works to tight timescales and delays in for example ordering materials and structures risked delivery of the Project. The Project Manager stated, ‘ *Government Office have no ‘competitors’ and as such do not seem to have any incentive to move faster than a snails’ pace at times*’.

NB. Government Office has since revised terms of guidance to planning authorities, paying due regard to preserving waterway routes. This is now evident in the way local authorities ask to work with the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Trust where new situations arise.

Match Funding - was consistently noted by most projects as the main barrier to delivery since the lack of suitable match was restricting much of their activity and therefore reducing the overall impact and benefit.

It has been commented that a more creative partnership approach may have helped to identify additional match funds. More use could have been made of 'In Kind' funding sources.

7.22 Views of Partner Agency Members

The following graphs highlight useful opinions of Package partners: Nigel Senior, Staffordshire County Council, Glenn Watson, Cannock Chase District Council, Maxine Turley, Walsall MBC and Tom Blackmore, GOWM, in their responses to questionnaire analysis and interviews relating to the impacts of the Package.

Figure 4 relates to the overall performance of the Package as a whole.
Individual scores of 1 being low and scores of 5 being high.

Figure 4

Q1. Economic Impacts

Q2. Strengthen competitiveness

Q3. Create new jobs / diversification

Q4. Increase visitors / stimulate tourism

Q5. Environmental Impacts

Q6. Improve access to employment

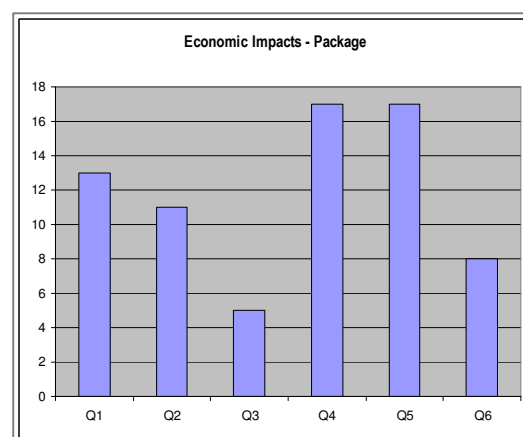
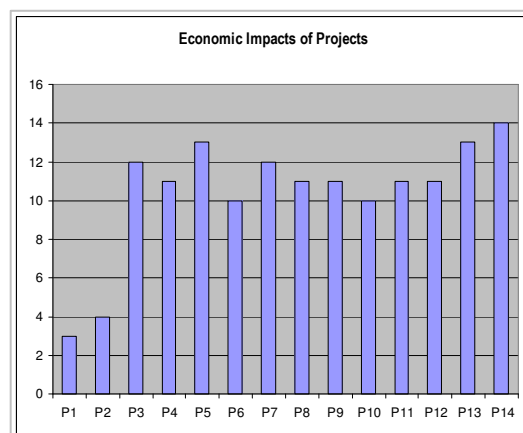


Figure 5 relates to the economic impacts of individual projects.
Individual scores of 1 being low and scores of 5 being high.

Figure 5

Key:

1. New Opportunities for Growth
2. Rugeley/Cannock SME Support
3. Local BIC Incubators
4. Pristine Plus
5. Chasewater Visitor Hub
6. Burntwood: A Place to Invest
7. Hatherton Canal Regeneration
8. Norton Canes – An Image for the Future
9. District Centre Regeneration (Brownhills)
10. District Centre Management Initiative
11. Implementation Support Project
12. Southern Staffordshire Business Park Initiative
13. Canals Contributing to a Better Brownhills
14. Opportunities in Employment



8.0 Cannock Chase District Baseline and Updated Socio-Economic Context 2007

8.1 Introduction

As highlighted within the EKOS mid-term evaluation, the modest size of the Package means that it is not feasible to directly attribute outputs and impacts from the Package with improvements in the wider socio-economic position in the area. The latest available data does however indicate the Package has been delivered in a context of broadly positive economic conditions and we are confident that Package investment will have added to and extended this process. The following is an overview of socio-economic performance for the Cannock area.

8.2 Baseline and Updated Socio-Economic Context

The latest socio-economic data indicates that the area's performance has improved significantly in most areas since production of data provided within the Strategic Package document and by the EKOS mid-term evaluation

8.3 Business Growth

- **Business Stocks** - VAT Registered companies in Cannock Chase District rose from 2130 in 1994 to **2770** in 2005.
- **Business Registrations** in Cannock Chase District rose from 245 in 1994 to **295** in 2005 which is **10.6%** compared with 9.4% in the West Midlands and 9.7% Great Britain.
- **Business De-registrations** in Cannock Chase District dropped from 215 in 1994 to **190** in 2005, which is **6.9%** compared with 8.1% in West Midlands and 8.3% Great Britain.

8.4 Employment Trends

As table 9 highlights, employee jobs in Cannock Chase District have increased during the period 1995 to 2005. A slight drop has been recorded since 2003.

Table 9

Employee Jobs for Cannock Chase District	1995	2003	2005
Full Time	20,167	22,500	21,100
Part Time	10,117	12,400	11,300
Total	30,273	34,900	32,400

Source: CCDC

For the period during January to December 2006, the employment rate for people of working age in Cannock Chase District was 46,700 (78.4%), compared within Staffordshire 384,400 (78%), West Midlands 2,333,400 (72.9%) and Great Britain 26,407,100 (74.3%). Unemployment is significantly highest in the wards of **Cannock East** (177) and **Cannock North** (174) at 4.1%, followed by **Cannock South** (166) at 3.9% and **Cannock West** (78) at 2.0%.

8.5 Youth Unemployment

Most worryingly, the proportion of youth unemployment in Cannock Chase has risen to **36.8%** from just under 28% as reported within the EKOS mid-term evaluation report.

8.6 Skills

Levels of qualification and skill for Cannock Chase District are highlighted within table 10.

Table 10

	Cannock Chase (numbers)	Cannock Chase (%)	West Midlands (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 and above	11,500	19.3	23.9	27.4
NVQ3 and above	20,300	34.0	41.1	45.3
NVQ2 and above	28,800	48.3	60.5	63.8
NVQ1 and above	41,700	69.9	74.8	77.7
Other qualifications	5,100	8.5	7.7	8.5
No qualifications	12,800	21.5	17.5	13.8

Source: CCDC

8.7 Key Industrial Groups (Annual Business Inquiry 2004)

Manufacturing is no longer the highest employer as previously reported

Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants provides: 10,500 jobs (**31%**)

Public Admin, Education and Health 7,300 (**22%**)

Manufacturing 6,100 jobs (**18%**)

Banking, Finance and Insurance 4,400 (**13%**)

Table 11

Industry	2004	
	Number	percent
1 & 2: Agriculture and fishing (SIC A,B) and Energy and water (SIC C,E)	100	0.3
3 : Manufacturing (SIC D)	6,100	18.1
4 : Construction (SIC F)	2,300	6.8
5 : Distribution, hotels and restaurants (SIC G,H)	10,500	31.2
6 : Transport and communications (SIC I)	1,700	5.0
7 : Banking, finance and insurance, etc (SIC J,K)	4,400	13.1
8 : Public administration, education & health (SIC L,M,N)	7,300	21.7
9 : Other services (SIC O,P,Q)	1,300	3.9
Total	33,700	100.0

Source: CCDC

8.8 Tourism

Tourism related employment in Cannock Chase District has increased from 1965 in 1995 to **3000** in 2005 which is **9.4%**, compared with 7.5% in the West Midlands and 8.1% in Great Britain. The most marked increase during the period of 2003-2005 is therefore reflective of the increased tourism industry in the District over that period.

8.9 Inward Investment

Table 12 highlights patterns for inward investment in Cannock Chase District during the last five years.

Table 12

Period	New Companies to Cannock	Total Established Jobs	Total Space Taken Sq' m	Total Average Wage Rates £
2003	2	165	15,700	3,176,560
2004	8	504	58,002	9,770,815
2005	6	184	3151	3,665,142
2006	2	18	530	370,451
2007	13	155	5,289	3,306,128

Source: InStaffs

9.0 Exit / Succession Strategy

9.1 Introduction

With the majority of the projects ended, and funding for the Implementation Support project support team due to end **March 2008**, the LPG is understandably keen to ensure an exit strategy that takes into account each of the projects and the Accessibility Package as a whole.

Having closely researched projects and the Accessibility Package, it is our view that the term '**succession strategy**' is more appropriate than 'exit strategy', as it will on the whole not be appropriate to 'draw a line' under a number of the projects, or as will be noted, the role of the LPG. This is demonstrated by the following 'spin off' projects:

E-Business Solutions - approved for support under the current Objective Two, Priority One (lead applicant Tamworth College). A new E-Bus is being brought into the area to provide SME employees and local residents with training, support and advice through a range of e-learning and ICT solutions. Cannock College no longer has the provision of its own ICT Bus and this project in partnership with British Business Parks, Lichfield and Tamworth colleges will facilitate delivery within the Package target area.

Exploring a new partnership that will encompass and support the District Centre Management Initiative, Chase Business Crime Initiative and potentially Shop Mobility schemes.

9.2 The Way Forward for Projects

It is our view that each of the projects have / will have individual requirements in terms of their succession beyond ERDF funding, which is summarised within table 13.

Table 13

Ref	Project	Comments
1	New Opportunities for Growth in Burton and Cannock	Withdrawn Project
2	Rugeley/Cannock SME Support Project	Withdrawn project
3	Local BIC Incubators	Now delivering in other Staffs areas using SCC/RZ. Likely source for Cannock LA/SCC/Business Link. Working towards UKBI status. New Business Link Innovation Strand offers potential CCDC to consider resources available to retain a Cannock focus in future.
4	Pristine Plus	Linkages with BIC. Business Link / Local Authority funding support required to continue targeted support.
5	Chasewater Visitor Hub	Capital funding required to develop further. Income Generation opportunities to explore (Contracts & Museum). Business Plan needs reviewing to ensure fit with LA/LAA and Tourism strategies.
6	Burntwood: A Place to Invest	Project completed March 2004. Continuity linkages with British Business Parks and BID.
7	Hatherton Canals Regeneration	Capital funding required to develop further. LA/British Waterways / Environ' Agency negotiations to ensure fit with strategic plans to enable future support. Business Plan needs review.
8	Norton Canes – An Image for the Future	Continued activity will be supported through Business Improvement District process.
9	District Centre Regeneration (Brownhills area)	Links with the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust. LA to maintain as part of Regeneration Framework Strategies.
10	District Centre Management Initiative	New Partnership will continue under new Company currently being established – Project Chase.
11	Implementation Support Project	Funding ends March 2008. Package Support completed.
12	Southern Staffordshire Business Park Initiative	New Business Improvement District underway will provide continuity once finally approved. Spin-off project developed - "E-Bus" in partnership with Tamworth College
13	Canals – Contributing to a Better Brownhills	Activities to be rolled out. Links with Lichfield and Hatherton Restoration Trust / LAs to be developed. Canoe Centre management by Brownhills Community Association. Future funding potential in Sport England /Lottery. Plans to make Project 'self sufficient' within 1 year.
14	Opportunities in Employment	Activity in Chadsmoor & Broomhill has reduced since Dec 04 when funding ended. CCDC supporting scaled down activities also encompassing Bevan Lee area. LSC/Objective 3/ Business Link may provide future potential. Strong links with Block 4 LAA. Also currently delivering training in the CED Wards through the Green Dream project, funded by the Staffordshire Priority 3 Action Plan.

It is noted that Projects 5, 7, 13 and 14 will require considerable future funding and continued partnership / multi-agency support, similar to that provided by the LPG.

9.3 Funding Opportunities

It has not proved feasible to develop a funding plan for individual projects as part of this review, due to the array of sources is vast and generally specific to individual requirements.

It is recommended that individual projects seeking funding to continue activities should revisit their business plans and incorporate an individual action plan for future bidding.

Suggested sources for the voluntary sector led projects include:

- National Lottery Programmes
- Capacity Builders
- Change-Up
- Future Builders
- Environmental Agency
- European Funding
- DEFRA – has various funding rounds periodically under themes - public access to the Countryside, environmentally sensitive areas.
- The England Rural Development Programme - has just finalised new development plans. They have funding opportunities periodically available under land based Schemes, for projects that conserve or improve the environment - suitable for voluntary and community organisations.
- Natural England - land purchase grants scheme
- British Waterways – Inland Marinas Investment Fund
- The West Midlands Social Enterprise Network has launched Illuminate Social Enterprise, marketing grants programme that will provide grants to partnerships, networks and consortia with ideas to promote social enterprise in order to tap into the significant unrealised potential of the sector in the West Midlands. Approximately 20 – 25 small grant awards will be made, each in the Region of £3,000 to £5,000.

DEFRA and the Environment Agency are the main sources for projects which improve and enhance the local environment. Staffordshire County Council administers a small fund in conjunction with DEFRA known as the Staffordshire ALSF – Aggregates Levy Grant Scheme which supports communities in aggregates areas. Current Government policy favours waterways as a catalyst for regeneration which can influence major funding through such sources as The Waterways Trust

European Funding

The LPG will need to continue to be involved with the **Staffordshire European Partnership** in order to keep abreast and make the most of the new European Funding Programmes, and wherever possible support projects to explore potential partnerships at home and abroad with European projects that are seeking partners.

The role of the Staffordshire European Partnership Group (SEP) is to facilitate and encourage a flow of European Funding that can be accessed for the purposes of enabling additional regeneration actions to be pursued in the sub-region, to priorities needs and opportunities in that respect and to coordinate an integrated and effective approach to project development across the wide range of partners involved.

The SEP has recently produced a **Staffordshire CV and Action Plan**, which begins to set out the new strategic proposals for the County to help maximize the new European Funding Programmes. Further information available on the SEP website: www.staffs-euroboost.info.

EU Structural Funds 2007-2013

The Regional Competitiveness & Employment Programme is the new EU Structural Funding for 2007-2013. The Programme has now been approved by the EU Commission and will be managed by Advantage West Midlands. At the time of this report, the final programme documents and funding allocations for the region is in the process of being finalised. The total allocation for the programme and therefore the region is considerably less than previous structural funds, however, there is a new priority, which includes a small capacity building type fund to assist projects explore transnational activity. The first calls for funding are expected to be in the late autumn. This programme area has been aligned to AWM arc of opportunity and the five regeneration zones, including the Black Country and parts of South Staffordshire area.

EU Non Structural and Transnational Funds

It is clear that the rest of Staffordshire will need to look further than the usual ERDF funds for additional support. In the past Staffordshire has not made the most of the non-structural Funds previously available, such as Equal, Interreg, Leonardo, Culture.

There is now significantly more EU funding and therefore more opportunities through transnational working than previously, including project activity which encourages sharing of information and best practice with the European State Countries, therefore projects with transnational elements and partners are likely to be essential to access EU funding in future.

There are several non-structural EU Funding programmes which have potential to provide a funding source to support continued or follow-on activities from this Package, especially for spatial, innovative projects and/or those that encourage new transport links and improvements. Depending on the source, the intervention rate for non-structural funds can vary and be as much as 75%.

ESF Objective 3 Co-Financing Funds

In terms of ESF Objective 3, this is a national co-financing programme which will be administered by the Regional Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus agencies. Under the current EU programme, some local authorities also have co-financing status, (Birmingham, Walsall and Wolverhampton). However, under the new EU Programme 2007-2013 it is expected that a collaborative local authority / LSC single joint ESF plan for the region will also be agreed, which will enable all local authorities to play a role in Co-Financed Funding.

It is a commitment by all partners to make best use of the Regions resources and align ESF with City Strategy developments and other relevant funds so that the Region's funds are more holistically deployed. This will hopefully allow more localised targeted provision for education and training projects and enable more voluntary and community sector organisations to be involved with and access ESF than previously.

This is likely to be the main source of funds to support activities which will enhance the education and training aspects of the Accessibility Package vision that has so far not been addressed. It will therefore be strategically important that local authorities who wish to have an influencing role wherever possible should become engaged in the current planning negotiations with the Regional LSC and AWM.

LSC Mainstream Funding and Business Link

LSC mainstream funding and Business Link funds are the main sources for funding entrepreneurship skills. Previously there has been little support for the softer/aspirational raising skills which are required in order to first engage harder to reach client groups.

The new regional Business Link model recognises this need and is providing support through its pre-start activity in order to help engagement with the hard to reach clients.

There are clear links between Primary Care Trust strategies and developing employment strategies in terms of addressing the impact of unemployment on health etc, but generally limited funding allocations to support such activity.

A collaborative approach with local colleges, business support agencies and the voluntary and community sector could address the themes under **the Regional Health & Wellbeing Strategy – ‘Choosing Health for the West Midlands’** - which recognises that key regional decisions made by planning and housing bodies directly affect the health of the population. This may facilitate funding potential to support continued activity in this Package.

Advantage West Midlands is the Regional Development Agency (RDA) for the West Midlands whose role is to lead the economic development of the West Midlands. They have an annual budget of more than £300 million to invest in the economic development of the West Midlands.

9.4 The Way Forward for the LPG

It was noticeable during a focus group of members of the LPG that ‘successes’ of the Package were listed as follows:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ○ Partnerships (new / existing / long term / public private) | ○ Visible change | ○ Developed SME capacity |
| ○ Cross border working / Avoiding ‘turf wars’ | ○ Environmental enhancements | ○ Confidence building in business community |
| ○ Sharing best practice | ○ Encourage related investment | ○ Developed SME capacity |
| ○ Sharing knowledge | ○ Business engagement in public funding | ○ capacity building - general |
| ○ Joint thinking | ○ Business together with community public sector | ○ quality of life focus |
| ○ Sharing experience with other projects | ○ Bringing together business community sectors | ○ Infrastructure development |
| ○ Synergy | | ○ Publicity |
| ○ Innovative thinking | | ○ Raised awareness |
| ○ Commitment of Local Partners Group | | ○ Raises profile of Cannock – increased footfall |

Comment – whilst the support provided by the Implementation Support project support team is without question valued by all parties linked to the Package, it has become clear that the LPG itself has become a useful and valued entity; which has played a significant ‘self-help’ function and has developed an ‘influencing role’ in ensuring the success of individual projects and the Package as a whole.

For example, it is apparent that in addition to valuing access to funding opportunities and project support, voluntary sector groups such as the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust, have a great deal to offer public and private sectors and strategic bodies in terms of expertise and experience associated with canals / transport legal issues, planning, policies and procedures.

9.5 LPG Linkage

It was felt important to explore the ‘will’ of the Group to take lessons learnt and structures forward. In response to a question aimed at exploring the ‘way forward / future strategies’, the focus group responded as follows:

- LAA economic development link with sustainable development - important role for LPG
- Balanced representation of LPGs to feed LAA and other key strategies
- AWM as purse holders
- Can look hopeless for volunteers
- Collaborative approach fits AWM, EU and others
- Work in partnership with Chambers of Commerce and Councils
- SCIO – representative of Voluntary Sector?
- Is CVS representative of Voluntary Sector?
- Use Package as good example when securing future funding
- Build rapport with AWM Partnerships Manager
- Planning sympathy by policies
- Cannock DC to send out bi-annual updates on activities in area to LPG members
- Two way information flow with CCDC
- Package website continuing?
- Influencing group lends weight
- Assistance / meetings website)
- Groups as ‘Friends of Cannock Council’
- Continue Local Partners Group for sharing information, help and support

One of the main challenges for CCDC is in maintaining the momentum and interest of LPG partners, finding an interesting offer for partners together with the right mix of funding opportunities.

CCDC will need to keep the partners engaged with LPG and maintain private sector input by taking a broad view of opportunities available in order to ensure effective solutions to the huge regeneration issues which remain, such as addressing worklessness agenda. They will need to agree “ownership”, for example in maintenance of the website and secretariat to LPG.

Another challenge is to consider ways of better engaging the voluntary sector whilst ensuring sufficient levels of support available to encourage their participation. As can be seen with the two voluntary sector organisations currently involved, the term '*voluntary but not amateur*', has true meaning having brought real commitment, dedication and real results quickly evident. Volunteer time is an excellent creative source of match which is too often overlooked.

As will be noted, the LPG partners must ensure the voluntary sector organisations that are able to contribute to the economic wealth of the area, are engaged and actively participating in the development and delivery of Local Area Agreements (especially Block 4). Links will need to be ensured through SCIO, the Staffordshire Consortium of Infrastructure Organisations.

9.6 Sustainable Communities / Local Area Agreements

The main aim of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) is to deliver **sustainable communities** through better outcomes for local people. The Government's intention is for delivery of LAAs to be mainstreamed. New statutory LAAs from April 2008 which will include:

- 35 (+ 18 DfES) targets which local authorities will deliver through partnership or alone. In two tier areas, the LAA will need to reflect district and county priorities as well as neighbourhood specific issues. These targets will be negotiated between central government and the Local Authorities and monitored nationally. LAAs will be the only framework for monitoring performance against targets.
- Other local priorities translated into targets which are not monitored nationally.
- Both nationally agreed and local targets which will be covered by the duty upon partners to co-operate in delivery.
- New statutory duty to consult and involve stakeholders as well as the voluntary and community sector in developing Sustainable Community Strategy and the LAA.
- A LAA single pot for mandatory pooled budgets – four service blocks, rather than five (culture to be included in Block 4).
- Members to play key roles on LSPs with an opportunity for them to agree the Chair.

9.7 Staffordshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

The main aim of the Staffordshire LSP (LAA) is to deliver sustainable Staffordshire communities through better outcomes for local people. It is informed by the County and District Community Strategies and is a key delivery mechanism for local priorities. At its core, is the delivery of 'seamless public services', which are developed according to the needs of local people, rather than individual organisational boundaries.

Vision Statement: *'Improving the quality of life for all Staffordshire's communities by making Staffordshire a safer, cleaner and more sustainable place for all to live, learn, work and invest in'.*

9.8 Funding Opportunities (LAA)

Table 14 provides a useful insight to 'pooled funding in the Staffordshire LAA for 2007 / 08.

Table 14

Funding Stream	Current Recipient of Funding	(£)
Children's Services Grant	County Council	2,087,000
School Travel Advisers	County Council	115,000
Key Stage 3 Behaviour and Attendance	County Council	183,300
Key Stage 3 Central Co-ordination	County Council	412,073
School Development Grant	County Council	1,070,165
Primary Strategy Central Co-ordination	County Council	383,365
Positive Activities for Young People	County Council	200,571
Building Safer Communities (Capital)	CDRPs	285,664
Building Safer Communities (Revenue)	CDRPs	772,348
Drug Strategy Partnership Grant	DAAT	100,224
Anti Social Behaviour Grant	CDRPs	200,000
Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder (including Neighbourhood Element)	Neighbourhood Management Partnerships	869,000
Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant Revenue	County and District/Borough Councils	846, 203
Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant Capital	County and District/Borough Councils	846, 203
Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund	County Council	196,000

Source: Staffordshire LSP

9.9 Cannock Chase District Council Local Priorities

Local priorities are currently listed under five 'blocks':

1. **Children and Young People**
2. **Safer and Stronger Communities**
3. **Healthier Communities and Older People**
4. **Economic Development and Enterprise**
5. **Sustainable Development**

9.10 Block 4 – Economic Development and Enterprise

Within Block 4, a number of outcomes are listed:

1. Increase the levels of new business formations and survival
2. Increase the proportion of the High Value Added economy in Staffordshire
3. Improve skill levels, especially to support growth in high value added businesses
4. Develop vibrant sustainable town centers, market towns and surrounding rural villages
5. Ensure that those in the most deprived communities and the most deprived groups within the labour market, can access the economic opportunities created in Staffordshire

9.11 Cannock Chase District Council Sustainable Communities Strategy

We are grateful to the Cannock LSP Manager for an insight into the timetable for developing Cannock Chase District Council's **Sustainable Community Strategy**, highlighted within table 15.

Table 15

Milestones (2007 / 08)	Action
July	Data gathering and profiling. Tasking of Theme Groups to write content.
August	Audit and validation of consultations, identifying gaps and planning
September	Produce early draft. Hold partner events and commence consultations
October	Approval of draft by LSP. Draft out for consultation
November	Consideration of CSR and LAA priorities.
December	Draft to LSP Board for final approval
January	Publish and launch Sustainable Community Strategy to 2020

Source: Cannock Chase District Council LSP

9.12 Significant Regional Strategies / Partnerships

AWM Regional Economy Strategy – Developing Advantage 2004 - 2010

Provides a framework for the economic development and regeneration of the West Midlands and will guide the actions of organisations that can contribute to the region's future prosperity. The developing strategy has a number of key objectives:

- **Developing a Diverse and Dynamic Business Base** (enterprise, manufacturing, innovation, environment, visitor economy).
- **Promoting a Learning and Skilful Region** (raising basic and higher levels skills and creating a regional skills partnership).
- **Creating the Conditions for Growth** (transport, development, housing, ICT) and regenerate communities (economic inclusion, demography).

Resources are focussed on Business Clusters, High Technology Corridors and 5 Regeneration Zone areas, which are North Black Country and South Staffordshire, South Black Country and West Birmingham (arc of opportunity), Coventry and Nuneaton, North Staffordshire, East Birmingham and North Solihull.

Areas have been identified because they have highest levels of:

- Higher than average unemployment and worklessness
- The most significant job losses in manufacturing
- Significant areas of Brownfield land, under used sites and buildings
- The concentration of communities at risk of social exclusion

Southern Staffordshire Partnership

The Southern Staffordshire Partnership is an economic regeneration partnership comprising:

- The District and Borough Councils of Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, South Staffordshire, Stafford and Tamworth
- Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council, Staffordshire University
- Burton College, Tamworth and Lichfield College, Cannock Chase College
- Southern Staffordshire Chamber Of Commerce and Industry, Stafford Chamber of Commerce
- Business Enterprise Support Ltd
- Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Services
- Pirelli, Reeves Green, Busy Bees Ltd, Foseco

Regional strategic partners are Advantage West Midlands, Business Link West Midlands and Government Office West Midlands.

The Partnership takes a leading role in advocating the needs of Southern Staffordshire to the key strategic bodies such as Advantage West Midlands and Government Office for the West Midlands. It is currently seeking to influence:

- Regional Spatial Strategy
- West Midlands Economic Strategy
- Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region
- Staffordshire Local Area Agreement

Southern Staffordshire Chamber of Trade and Industry

Mission Statement:

- Professional representation on behalf of members at local, regional and national government level.
- Deliver a professional quality range of services to members.
- Deliver marketing opportunities with a vibrant membership database.
- Provide updated information on government legislation affecting business including Employment Law, Health & Safety and the Environment.
- Improving the IT skills within membership to enable businesses to trade effectively within both domestic and world-wide markets.
- Utilise the purchasing power of a viable large membership organisation.

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Consortium of Infrastructure Organisations (SCIO)

Central to the success of the Staffordshire LAA is the active involvement of the Voluntary and Community Sector in both developing and delivering the LAA.

To date the sector's involvement has been primarily through SCIO, set up to implement Change Up across Staffordshire and has been the main route for voluntary organisations to become engaged with LAA activity. SCIO has been represented on the Project Board and in each of the Block Groups.

9.13 Accessibility Package Linkage to Wider Strategies

Whilst it may be appropriate for individual projects to explore bespoke funding opportunities, it appears logical that the way forward for the LPG is to link into existing and developing regional and local strategies / partnerships – in particular the locally based **Sustainable Community Strategies**. This is based on a number of observations:

- Funding will continue to be scarce and will be linked to LAAs.
- Local priorities will be linked to economic development and enterprise (Block 4) – an area closely associated with 'Accessibility' objectives.
- The LPG has the potential to 'add value' to the role of LSPs / LAAs (and other partnerships), in terms of skills, experience, diversity of organisations (in particular locally based, **active** voluntary sector organisations), expertise and local connections and knowledge.
- The timing is right for the LPG to play a positive role in the development of Sustainable Community strategies.
- 'Good practice' has been demonstrated in the support provided by Cannock Chase District Council, which has been instrumental in the success of the Package and 'trusting' and valued relationships have developed between all parties - a '**win win**' situation.

10.0 Recommendations

1. A 'Master Plan', linked to the Chasewater Visitor Hub, the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Regeneration Project and the wider canal network is required to maintain the momentum and potential of these projects. Local authorities, Government Office for the West Midlands, agencies such as British Waterways and private sector organisations should consider continuing to support these projects, actively participating and supporting the development and delivery of the Master Plan.
2. In respect of the Accessibility Package, the succession strategy appears to lie within the sustainability of the LPG.
3. There are opportunities to link the role of the LPG within the role of LSPs and the development of LAAs, linked to the delivery of **Sustainable Community Strategies**.

It is most likely to be through the **LAA Block 4 Economic Development and Enterprise** route that the LPG will identify the means to continue to build on the successes of the Accessibility Package and also to support those original aspirations which were not fully addressed within the Package.

LPG partners should actively engage in the LAA process with a view to continuing the aims of the Package in this respect. In this way LPG partners will continue to drive forward the vision and aims of the Accessibility Package well into the next regeneration era.

4. How this is achieved should be decided by members of the LPG, who have already indicated their understanding of the role of LAAs and linkage with the development of the Package. We do however make the following recommendations:
 - a. The vision of the Package should not be lost in any transition – i.e. 'Enhancing **ACCESSIBILITY** to jobs, training, supporting tourism and leisure opportunities for all businesses and individuals in the Package area'. This has been the 'glue' that has held together such a diverse and driven group of people.

- b. Objectives of the LPG should be directly linked to Local Area Agreements – in particular **Block Four - Economic Development and Enterprise**.
- c. The LPG should continue to provide practical on-going support for its members – in particular voluntary sector representatives.
- d. The LPG should continue to receive direct support from an agency with the resources, expertise and will to enable it to achieve its objectives. It is suggested that Cannock Chase District Council is well placed to deliver such support.

11.0 Conclusions

Package objectives have been broadly achieved and those associated should be congratulated for their inputs.

The LPG can be satisfied they have played a significant role in ensuring the Package delivered its final objectives, demonstrated by overall spend of **£3.3m** ERDF / ESF Grant completed to within **95%** of profile, bringing a leverage of **£3.5m** public funds and **£1m** private funds resulting in an overall Package value of over **£8m**.

Our evaluation found clear evidence of **economic impact**. The Accessibility Package overall can clearly demonstrate **high value returns** against the ERDF investment in terms of the large scale environmental improvements that have been effected for considerably small amounts of funding support.

The impact of the Accessibility Package to the target area is clear, in terms of improving access to canals, improving surrounding environment and towpath access by construction and improvement of bridges. Business parks now display clear signage with improvements to security for local industrial units.

The overall impact on the private sector is higher than expected; however the direct impact on beneficiaries in terms of improving access to jobs, education and training is not as the original vision, due to earlier anticipated projects not coming to fruition.

The Package overall has resulted in creating **148** new jobs, generating **£830,000** in new and safeguarded sales, **392** businesses assisted and Grant aid of over **£230,000** awarded to **52** businesses. In terms of Innovation support, **43** companies received advice and assistance with **5** companies supported with technical innovation / product development expertise. **15** visitor attractions have been upgraded / created and **10.6 ha** land improved. **98** local people have received advice and guidance, with **18** obtaining NVQ2 equivalent qualifications.

Our evaluation identified several areas of **good practice**, the most successful feature of this Package being the **sustained partnerships** approach and clear commitment to developing stronger working relationships within Staffordshire. This is a common thread throughout the Package activity.

In terms of Package management support, projects have highly commended the advice and information received, which included training in understanding and managing European Funding (West Midlands European Network) and understanding the horizontal themes (G & H Associates).

The **Package Coordinator** has acted as an intermediary where necessary helping to resolve complex contractual issues, effectively bringing together individual projects to achieve overall Package delivery, also providing a platform to showcase successes to a wider audience via the bi-annual newsletter 'Accessibility – EuroPackage Update'.

It is clear that GOWM has also supported the Package and the projects within it, to help overcome any difficulties faced, assisting projects to understand implications and complexities surrounding legal issues such as land ownership and planning issues. Projects have also benefited from increased funding along with project extensions.

Our evaluation also highlighted **lessons learned** particularly when involving smaller or voluntary organisations in European funded projects. Without exception, all projects commented on the bureaucracy involved in managing ERDF funding.

Delivering projects in tightly constrained geographical areas such as Objective Two cause's project complexities and extra burden of excessive monitoring for all projects and this can over-whelm smaller or voluntary organisations.

More could be done in the future to help voluntary sector organisations engage and maintain involvement in the delivery of major regeneration Packages, particularly in terms of helping to alleviate risk to the organisations themselves. Without the support of partners the risks to a project from delays in receipt of grants, for whatever reason, places such financial strain that could be catastrophic to a small or voluntary organisation that is working for the good of its community.

It would appear that project applicants are not always fully aware of the complexities of European funding before they become engaged. It is clearly not GOWM which set the rules, but the DCLG via the European Commission. The mutual understanding of the constraints of all parties involved is paramount to the successful delivery of European projects.

Most projects have now been completed for a year or more hence these projects are already well into implementing their individual succession plans.

For some projects, the end of the ERDF funded delivery signified an ending to the focused delivery of services on the Package Area. Organisations involved have diverted their activities and services to other areas within their own core services.

Other projects have instigated income generation plans which are helping to sustain the activities, as in the case of the new Business Improvement Districts.

Other projects are actively seeking further external funding to support their continued activities. These include the Chasewater Visitor Hub and the Hatherton Canals project. There are opportunities to consider private sector investment opportunities to complement and support local and Regional regeneration strategies.

Wider Impact Consultancy concludes that the Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills 'Accessibility' Objective 2 Strategic Development Package has been a success and resulted in economic benefit to the CCBB area. Apart from two early withdrawals, all projects have successfully achieved their original aims and objectives, delivering activities as planned and in some cases exceeding outputs targets. All projects appear to have reached their intended target beneficiaries, and have complied with EU Guidance principals, in terms of publicity and other regulations; with many projects satisfactorily clearing Article 4 and 10 audit visits.

Appendix A

1. New Opportunities for Growth in Burton and Cannock Priority One Measures 1.1, 1.8 and 1.14

Applicant Business Link Staffordshire**Start Date** Sept 2002**End Date** Dec 2007**Aims & Objectives**

To provide grants of up to 50% project cost up to £4000 max for marketing consultancy and also ICT strategy/ web development support by private specialist consultants.

Contracted Financial Package

Source	Public	Private	Voluntary	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Actual Project Cost	Intv' Rate %
Total	152,720	1,012,919		600,814	874	2989	29.3%

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Business Assisted	217	58	99		99
Bus Assist – Financial	31	17			
New Business Start -Ups					
New Business Supported					
Result					
New Jobs	129	29	18		18
Safeguarded Jobs					
New Sales	£4680k	£1780k	£760k		£760k
Safeguarded Sales					
Businesses Improved	171	42			
Private Sector Leverage					
New Business Survivals					

Project Activities Project underperformed and withdrawn with limited spend in June 2004. Problems were encountered with recruiting eligible businesses from the target area given the limited amount of assistance available. In addition the focus for Business Link moved to delivering regional activities within a local context and moved away from grants support towards loans and investment support.

Impact & Results Significant loss of spend and outputs to the Package. Two Business Link Projects were withdrawn resulting in approx 15% reduction of the Package, money was lost to the area, and companies were not supported as anticipated.

However, since the MTE Review in 2005, if the latest reported statistics are correct then the longer term impact of this project over a short time is more positive than previously thought.

Lessons Learned The outputs and results recorded are taken from info provide to CCDC and appear to have increased from the position reported by the MTE Review in 2005 which reported no business assists and no new jobs. Updates are provided to the Package Team from GOWM but it is not clear how the latest claims have been substantiated. It is essential to continue to monitor and track results after a project has ended in order to asses longer term impact of the activity.

2. Rugeley / Cannock SME Support Project Priority One Measures 1.1 and 1.8

Applicant Business Link Staffordshire**Start Date** June 2002**End Date** Dec 2005**Aims & Objectives**

Provide Capital grants for SME's based within the funded wards. Sign-posting service to agencies and initiatives to solve businesses' problems. Organise business clubs and encourage links between business and education.

Financial Package

Source	Public	Private	Voluntary	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Actual Project Cost	Intv' Rate %
Total	91,507	1,529,998		361,511	80,423	46,012	

Contracted Outputs and Results

Outputs	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Business Assisted	41	59	53		53
Bus Assist - Innovation	9	16			
Bus Assist - Environmental	5	7			
Results					
New Jobs	33	50	48		48
New Jobs – Innovation	4	10			
New Jobs – Environmental	2	4			
Businesses Improved	31	51			
Bus' Improved –Innovation	6	12			
Bus' Improved-Environmental	3	5			

Project Activities Established Business Club and regular newsletters for businesses.

Project underperformed with limited spend at June 2004 due to difficulties recruiting eligible businesses from target area and limited assistance available. Business Link focus changed towards delivering regional activity in a local context and using loans rather than grants. The project was withdrawn in 2005 but monitoring continued as agreed with GOWM with reports to LPG.

Impact & Results Significant loss to the Package of reduced spend, outputs and results. Two Business Link Projects were withdrawn resulting in approx 15% reduction of the Package, money was lost to the area, and companies were not supported as anticipated.

However, since the MTE Review in 2005, if the latest reported statistics are correct then the longer term impact of this project over a short time is more positive than previously thought.

Lessons Learned The outputs and results recorded are taken from information provided by CCDC and appear to have increased from the position reported by the MTE Review in 2005, which reported only five business assists and two new jobs. Updates are provided to the Package Team from GOWM but it is not clear how the latest claims have been substantiated. This highlights the benefits of continuing to monitor and track results after a project has ended in order to assess longer term impact of the activity.

3. Local BIC Incubators Priority One Measure 1.1

Applicant Staffordshire & Black Country BIC

Start Date 2002

End Date 2008

Aims & Objectives

A Staffordshire wide project to help address the area's low business start up rates in Staffordshire by build on the established network of entrepreneurs who are developing business start up projects in targeted sectors. Provides small seed-corn grant assistance for development of clients' business start up projects to reach viable stage for venture funding. 10% of project activities targeted to the Cannock Accessibility Package area.

Financial Package 10% spend in Cannock

Source	Public	Private	Voluntary	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Actual Project Cost	Intv' Rate %
Total					£3,238	£9,523	

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Business Assisted	60	7	1		8
ICT & RIS Projects					
New Business Start-Ups					
New Business Supported					
Result					
New Jobs	58	6	2		2
Safeguarded Jobs	47	5			
New Sales					
Safeguarded Sales					
Businesses Improved	20	4	1		1
Private Sector Leverage					
New Business Survivals					
Grants Awarded					4

Project Activities Open days and evenings held to raise awareness and encourage members of the local community to come forward with ideas for potential businesses. 2-hour innovation workshops provided plus in-depth business advice.

Direct marketing by mail shots, exhibitions and website. Quarterly Monitoring reports to GOWM. Original contract completed in December 2004. An extension to project duration was allowed for delivery in transitional areas only as a direct result of the overall success and impact on SME's.

Impact & Results Linking with Pristine Plus project, **43** companies in target area received advice and support to encourage technical innovation, new product prototypes. One Company awarded grant of **£6000**.

Total grants awarded Local BIC Incubators and Pristine Plus projects combined totalled **£14,494**. **£8325** was finally drawn down.

Lessons Learned Now working towards DKBI Status, encouraging entry and exit within 2 years. This encourages growth and enables new start-ups to move in. The project aims to have closer support with incubatees on a quarterly basis rather than on request.

Increased match funding would enable more services and stronger impact to SME's in Cannock, if local authorities want to improve standards of business in their areas they must support them. A good example to follow is the Moorlands District Council which provides its own Business Development Grants using Local authority own resources, so start-ups, companies moving into area and existing SMEs automatically receive some support.

4. Pristine Plus Priority One Measure 1.1

Applicant Staffordshire & Black Country BIC**Start Date** 2002**End Date** 2008**Aims & Objectives**

A Staffordshire wide project to increase the viability of SME's in Staffs by stimulating new product development, diversification and innovation. Up to **£6000** grant to SMEs for assisted placement/consultancy to bring knowledge, skills or develop new products. 10% of project activities targeted to the Cannock Accessibility Package Area

Financial Package 10% spend in Cannock

Source	Public	Private	Voluntary	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Actual Project Cost	Intv' Rate %
Total					£32,002	£113,994	

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Business Assisted	93	16	1	1	2
ICT & RIS Projects					
New Business Start-Ups					
New Business Supported					
Result					
New Jobs	136	57	8	10	18
Safeguarded Jobs	18	13	0	4	4
New Sales					
Safeguarded Sales					
Businesses Improved	18	10	1	1	2
Private Sector Leverage					
New Business Survivals					
Grants Awarded					3

Project Activities Grants offered to help fund the cost of individual placements or consultancy for participating SMEs Workshops provided include the Innovation Self assessment workshop (obligatory before applying for grant – subjects included, 'How innovative is your business?'; new product development; new product marketing; funding for innovation; intellectual property; and ideas generation.

Cannock SMEs supported to attend DTI Event hosted by Pristine Plus / Local BIC Incubator's 'Living Innovation' Satellite Broadcast Direct marketing by mail shots, exhibitions, website.

Quarterly Monitoring reports to GOWM. Original contract completed in December 2004. An extension to project duration was allowed for delivery as a direct result of the success and impact on SMEs.

Impact & Results Linking with BIC Project, **43** companies in target area received advice and support to encourage technical innovation, new product prototypes. **5** attended workshops. **2** companies awarded grants of **£6000** each. Total awarded **£12,000**. **£6,169** finally drawn down.

Case Studies Megatech Ltd, Huntington; Aldridge Piling, Cannock

Good Practice Development of a methodology that facilitates business self-assessment analysis on innovation. Workshops and self-assessment criteria using a checklist of eight key headings that disaggregates into forty sub-headings. Main categories used: new product ideas, product development, process innovation, technology and know-how, market focus, leadership, allocating resources and measuring performance. Small grants encourage client investment. Supportive assessment panel and technical advice ensures success.

The Pristine Plus holistic approach is deemed as good practice by AWM and won an award for 1:1 Best for Business Awards.

This project was congratulated during the GOWM Audit in February 2004, for its exemplary practice in the audit trails for expenditure and outputs.

Lessons Learned Increased match funding would enable more services & stronger impact to SME's.

5. Chasewater Visitor Hub Priority Two Measure 2.1

Applicant Lichfield District Council**Start Date** June 2000**End Date** December 2007**Aims & Objectives**

A key project within the Package and the anchor for other projects in the tourism development theme. Aims to develop the tourism economy in the Package area through the promotion of environmentally sensitive tourism based upon the preservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural assets of Chasewater Country Park.

Achieved by capital works to develop existing and introduce new attractions and enhancement to the Park. Construction of a Railway Heritage Centre. Raising awareness and image through improved signage, access and visitor information.

Financial Package

	Core	Transitional	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Profiled Project Cost	Actual Project Cost	Intv' Rate %
Capital		602,652	602,652		1,668,713		
Revenue		12,149	12,149		33,640		
Total		614,801	614,801	815,679	1,702,353	1,966,866	48
Matched		Profiled	Actual	Source			
Public		1,053,912	1,083,208	Highways/English Heritage/Lottery/West Midlands Arts			
Vol		33,640	33,640	Chasewater Railway Centre			
ERDF		614,801	815,679				

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Attractions Upgraded		2		2	2
Attractions Created		2		2	2
HA derelict Land Improved		7		7	7
Environ Enhancements		2			
Trees Planted		62			
Nature Trail km		1.2			
Result					
New Sales		£2867k			
New Overnight Visitors		1187			
New Jobs		122			
New Day Visitors		157k			

Project Activities Footpath improvements, including a link to M6 Toll service area at Norton Canes. Provided improved signage, development of entrance points, boundary enhancements and improved the visitor information facilities. Enhanced car parking facilities and created a nature trail with improved foot paths.

Construction of the Railway Heritage Centre now houses and brings back into use, several rolling stocks of steam and diesel locomotives and historic carriages in need of refurbishment. Some of these date back to 1875. The Centre makes their own machine tools using recycled tools and materials, bringing back into use traditional tool-making skills. The Museum (working towards accreditation) has an impressive collection of railway memorabilia.

Impact & Results Around 1995 the general area was described as a 'slag heap'. Now the Visitor Centre is an attractive place to visit. Its overall income levels have increased by **200%**. The train track has been extended around the lake and creates further potential links with the canals networks.

Toll land acquisitions have netted the project **£1m** 'clean money' for internal investment.

Sustainability The Visitor Centre uses energy generated by Solar Panels. The Railway Heritage Museum and station is exploring innovative aspects of sustainability, including using the railway track to test tram/trains for use on West Midlands transport network.

Good Practice Achieving acceptable use of volunteer's time and labour as matched contribution costs for approx 55% of project costs. Project staff also supported the Hatherton canals project bid writing and negotiations with Government Office.

Lessons Learned How to deal with Government Office and changing goal posts re funding allocations; increased funding is welcomed but this must be balanced with the need to build the capacity of local people involved in projects to have the patience and tenacity to keep responding to information requests. Be prepared to establish measurable tracking systems to record visitor counts. Chasewater Park has several free entrance points and therefore is almost impossible to accurately record visitors. On GOWM advice now record only Railway Heritage Centre Users, which is measurable but will not give full picture of visitors to the whole Country Park.

6. Burntwood – A Place to Invest Priority Two Measure 2.1

Applicant Lichfield District Council**Start Date** January 2001**End Date** March 2004**Aims & Objectives**

To improve the current industrial infrastructure within Chasetown and enable existing companies to become more competitive, encouraging competitiveness and investment in Chasetown from new companies. Enhancement of the industrial environment and improving the areas identity and reduce crime in the area.

Financial Package

	Core	Trans	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Profiled Project Cost	Actual Project Cost	Intv Rate %
Capital		53,785	53,785	48,109	130,000	136,278	35
Revenue							
Total		53,785	53,785	48,109	130,000	136,278	
Matched		Profiled	Actual	Source:			
Public		59,541					
Private		40,000					
ERDF		53,785					

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Business Assisted					
HA Land Serviced		1	1		1
Environmental Enhancement		5	5		5
New Business Supported					
Result					
New Jobs		15			
Safeguarded Jobs		20			
New Sales					
Safeguarded Sales					
Businesses Improved					
Private Sector Leverage		£70k			
New Business Survivals					

Project Activities Consolidated four disparate but similarly named industrial estates into one Business Park with colour coded zoned areas and large entrance signs depicting the four zoned areas. Improved lighting and road layouts re access to the sites. Improved signage, security and safety measures for the businesses.

Established the Business forum in conjunction with the Southern Staffordshire Business Park Project.

Good Practice Linked well with Southern Staffordshire Business Park project to compliment improvements in services to businesses on the industrial estates.

Lessons Learned Gaining statutory planning consent for regeneration works can take longer than planned.

7. Hatherton Canals Regeneration Priority Two Measure 2.1

Applicant Lichfield & Hatherton Canals **Start Date** April 2000 **End Date** December 2006
Restoration Trust

Aims & Objectives

To bring about the full restoration of Hatherton Canal as a through navigation connecting under-used and under-developed waterways of northern part of West Midlands waterways conurbation in Staffordshire in order to enhance social regeneration along 50 miles of waterway corridor. Thus creating conditions for employment growth, new tourism opportunities and environmental enhancements in the target area.

Financial Package

	Core	Trans	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Profiled Project Cost	Actual Project Cost	Intv Rate %
Total Capital	779,580		779,579	779,530	1,612,353	1,612,252	
Matched	Profiled	Actual	Source:				
Public	652,125		Highways Agency				
Private	50,650		Own In Kind £19541/ (Manifold Trust)				
Voluntary	130,000		David Suchet Appeal (NHRT)				

Contracted outputs and results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Actual Core	Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Businesses Assisted	7	7			
Attractions Created	1	1	1		1
Attractions Upgraded	1	1	1		1
Environmental Enhancement	4	1	2	2	4
Horizontal					
New Cycle Way Created	10km	11km			
New Foot Pathways	8km	11km			
Reclamation Amenity	10km	11km			
Results					
New Jobs	8	8			
Safeguarded Jobs					
New Sales	£200k	£200k			

Increase in Day Visitors	54k	8k			
Increase in Overnight Visitors	153k	2k			
Project Specific Outputs					
Recovery Derelict Land		1	1		1
Managed Water Supply		1			
Operational Waterway		1			
Use of Culvert Sections		1	1		1
New Canal Bridge		1	1		1
Wildlife Trust Conservation		1			
Wetland Area Created		1			

Project Activities Produced comprehensive professional studies and reports to fully define the total project, consisting of a detailed route definition and engineering report including water supply and hydrology, an economic benefit study, and an environmental assessment.

Construction of navigable culverts across the two most critical crossings of the canal by the M6 Toll and associated roads and a bridge at Cappers Lane. Acquired key sections of land in private ownership to secure the route for future use and development.

The Project is receiving national publicity and promotion through events such as the National Boat Show and within national journals and specialist publications. Trust members regularly attend local and regional events, supported by high quality presentation, exhibition boards and displays, quality photographs and videos. A plaque featuring the EU logo has been permanently attached to the Cappers Lane Bridge and is featured on over **30,000** handouts and other publications.

The Trust also launched the 'David Suchet Appeal', which has received national recognition and raised over **£400k** nationally. The Trust has received a great deal of support and interest from Michael Fabricant (MP), who prompted a debate in the House of Commons, Wednesday 25 April 2007.

Impact & Results This project has developed the potential of a previously neglected asset. Opened up new and sustainable transport links between urban and rural areas of need and opportunity. Promoted environmentally sustainable tourism based on the preservation and enhancement of natural land and cultural assets. Re-used derelict and under used land for sustainable economic use.

Good Practice The creation of a skilled, talented, credible influential and efficient group of volunteers who have gained a great deal of expertise in their field. So much so private, public sector and voluntary organisations regularly contact them for advice and support tackling complex legal and legislative issues.

Giving a truly professional approach at all times they have a reputation for providing an efficient free service which public sector organisations could learn from. The preparation and completion of the application for EU funds is also exemplary being extremely well written and presented and should be a model of good practice which GOWM and local authorities seek to encourage and replicate from applicants

Lessons Learned Patience and tenacity in dealing with legislative requirements and bureaucracy, together with changing systems such as TESA. Capacity building of individuals concerned in projects to deal with complex issues, and requests for information regarding monitoring and tracking.

8. Norton Canes – An Image for the Future Priority Two Measure 2.1

Applicant British Business Parks**Start Date** April 2003**End Date** March 2006**Aims & Objectives**

Provide a Package of environmental and security improvements to Norton Canes industrial area. Activity formed part and is linked to the SSBPI activity.

Contracted Financial Package

	Core	Trans	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Profiled Project Cost	Actual Project Cost	Intv Rate %
2.1 Capital	121,957		121,957		378,828		
2.8 Revenue	10,633		10,633		33,030		
Total	132,590		132,590	125,761	411,858	390,645	37
Matched	Profile	Actual	Source				
Public	33,030	33,030	CCDC & AWM				
Private	246,238	246,238	Norton Canes Industrial Estate Businesses				
ERDF	132,590	125,761					

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	Total Claimed in Package
Ha Brownfield Land Improved	2.35		2.35		2.35
M2 New Premises Provided	1393.5		1393.5		1393.5
M2 Premises Refurbished	600		600		600
Business Assisted	55		45		45
Facilities Upgraded	33				
SME Receiving Financial Support	33				
Security Improvements	15				
Environmental Enhancement	4		5		5
Bus' Assisted-Environmentally	4				
Bus Assisted - Innovation	6		6		6
Disadvantaged Entering Employment EO	7				
Results					
New Jobs	40		40		40
Safeguarded Jobs					

New Sales	0		750k		750k
Safeguarded Sales	0		220k		220k
Horizontal Results					
Innovative Business Network			1		1
Intro Sustainable Processes	4				
Develop environ working group	1				
Jobs created – Equal Opportunities	6				

Project Activities Retrospective approval April 2003 to August 2004, provided capital improvement works to help address issues on the Business Park.

Projects included signage, landscaping and resurfacing to unit frontages and car parks, provided CCTV security, fencing and barriers, rumble strips, improved lighting.

Norton Canes is one of the Image Business Partnerships industrial estates in Cannock and is now part of the new Business Improvement District.

Norton Canes companies also showcased their products and services at the Staffs in Business Show in October 2004, a new event set up to encourage business inter-trading. The following three months generated over **38** new customers and **207** new enquiries.

Impact & Results See associated figures for SSBPI

Case Studies Norton Bathrooms

Good Practice Establishing a Business Improvement District enables businesses to contribute, through a levy collected by LA, to help prioritise and deliver identified services for the business park. By keeping business 'real', a small organisation is helping GOWM achieve targets and meeting needs of business community, where other business support agencies are falling short.

Lessons Learned Delays with EU Grant caused serious cash flow issues for small organisation. Also environmental linkages with SBEN to support SMEs did not happen.

9. District Centre Regeneration – (Brownhills area) Priority Two Measure 2.1

Applicant Walsall Metropolitan Borough
Council

Start Date April 2000

End Date March 2008

Aims & Objectives

Enhance accessibility and image of Brownhills District Centre, leading to increased community and business confidence and stimulating further inward or indigenous investment. Raise the profile of the centre through the architectural restoration of significant buildings. Replacement of the existing footbridge across the Wryley and Essington Canal Brownhills to provide a fully accessible facility that acts as a focal point to the canal based regeneration recently completed in the District Centre, and provides improved access to Brownhills town centre especially for those with restricted mobility.

Financial Package

	Core	Trans	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Profiled Project Cost	Actual Project Cost	Intv Rate %
Capital	369,274		369,274	231,266	738,548	579,175	
Revenue							
Total							
Matched	Profiled	Actual	Source:				
Public	369,274	369,274	SRB2 – LEAP; District Centres Local Transport Plan				
Private							
ERDF	369,274	231,266					

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Business Assisted					
Environmental Enhancement		1		1	
New Business Start-ups					
New Business Supported					

Project Activities Project originally submitted to improve key footpath links within Brownhills District Centre. Scheme developments soon showed that repaving of Pier Street may be compromised by wider regeneration

opportunities in the area. As a result GOWM agreed that funding could be utilised to support the replacement of an existing footbridge.

Pier Street Footbridge is owned by Walsall MBC and provides a key pedestrian route to Brownhills District Centre from the canal towpath routes with well-used and defined paths through Clayhanger Common from housing beyond. Extensive improvements to the related section of the canal have taken place.

Linkages with another Package project **Canals - Contributing to a Better Brownhills**, enabled towpath improvements, development of Silver Street Basin, Canoe Centre, a public art project and improvements to Hollanders Bridge.

Local groups, key stakeholders including British Waterways have been involved in planning, design and construction of the bridge, plus a community arts sculpture feature of a wheel on the Canal towpath, as an urban statement in an ecological sensitive surrounding. **100** residents viewed it being erected. Received positive press reports and publicity in community newsletters etc ensure awareness raised of project activity.

As part of the integration of the canal network and to further increase its role in the wider regeneration of Brownhills, the replacement of the Pier Street footbridge has been seen as a key strategic project to increase accessibility to both the canal network and to the District Centre.

Impact & Results Significant increase in access to both canal network and district centre.

Good Practice The use of British Waterways team contractor enabled the authority to, at short notice; make use of ERDF funding which may have been lost.

Lessons Learned The ecological sensitive nature of the bridge location (cuts through a local nature reserve which is a SINC and a SLINC), lead to extensive negotiations regarding ecological mitigation, planning approval and construction. The bridge design was amended and compromised on a number of occasions. The bridge was even held up for ecological surveys including a newt survey. Extend pre-planning application consultations.

10. District Centre Management Initiative

Priority Two Measure 2.2

Applicant Southern Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry **Start Date** April 2003 **End Date** December 2007

Aims & Objectives

Provide a dedicated mechanism to support the physical investment in Chase District Centres, facilitate new investment, provide a co-ordinated approach to provision of a variety of activities to attract visitors and support local businesses.

Financial Package

	Core	Trans	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Profiled Project Cost	Actual Project Cost	Intv Rate %
Capital							
Revenue	65,000	195,000	250,832	177,446	627,500	444,389	39.9
Total							
Matched	Profiled	Actual	Source:				
Public	145,891	132,000	Cannock Chase Council				
Private	151,891	116,789	Applicant Own funds				
Voluntary	93,352	127,879	Various				

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Business Assisted	15	45		40	40
Public Transport Inve'	1	1			
Tourism Marketing Campaign	1	1			
New Business Supported					
Result					
Inc Day Visitors	1000	3000		3000	3000
New Jobs					
Safeguarded Jobs					
New Sales					
Safeguarded Sales					

Project Activities: The project aimed to create safe and secure centres by reducing crime and the fear of crime through identifying areas of criminal activity and agreeing ways to combat such; raising the profile of current and new prevention activities. It has encouraged the development and promotion of attractions, facilities and events to build on local assets. It has facilitated environmental improvements to help foster 'civic pride'. It has promoted a wide range of activities and improved the range and quality of centre facilities for all sections of the community.

Various activities and events included a Christmas Ice Rink in 2005 to attract visitors to the town centre over the busy Christmas period. A temporary Ice Rink was set up in Cannock town centre, attracting sponsorship from **44** local businesses through advertising which contributed towards the costs of the event. This attraction increased visitors to the town centre and also raised awareness of the new Ice Rink due to open in Cannock District.

Another innovative event was the Green Dream event – an environmental awareness project which entailed a 'Big Brother' style house setting up in the town centre, in which 5 volunteers (local residents) were encouraged to live for a week using eco-friendly methods. The event encompassed raising awareness of other environmentally related initiatives through information stalls, also encouraging businesses to develop "green plans".

New partnerships have been developed between public and private sector which has enabled dissemination of information to stakeholders through the use of traditional and new technology including a dedicated web-site.

Innovative Good Practice Chase Business Crime Initiative was established in October 2006 and now has **55** members. This initiative links with local community radio station (MRS Communications) produced a membership handbook and established a telephone helpline against crime, winning a Safer Business Award from Action Against Business Crime. ACIS Database of Active Crime intelligence exists.

Impact & Results Local business community and town centre retailers are benefiting from crime reduction and prevention partnerships that did not exist previously, also improving communication and interaction between the businesses in a more cohesive manner.

Lessons Learned In the early years this project was administered by a joint management arrangement with various contract changes due to slippage of timescales etc arising from management changes within lead applicant (South Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce) and joint delivery agencies. This split management caused complications with no overall vision, cohesion or co-ordinated approach and the project became disjointed. Slippage requests were approved, and reduced project costs to £231,277 in February 2005 and an extension to December 2007 has been granted to ensure using allocated resources.

Due in part to the earlier difficulties, a Novation Request was made to GOWM during 2006, to transfer the accountable body status to Cannock Chase District Council. However due to the protracted process and CCDC legal assessments this has now been abandoned. The project will remain with the applicant in order to ensure the project delivers and achieves outputs by the revised target date.

11. Implementation Support Project

Priority Measure 2.2

Applicant Cannock Chase District Council **Start Date** April 2000 **End Date** March 2008

Aims & Objectives

The aim is to provide capacity building, advice and support services necessary to ensure that Projects contained within the Objective Two Accessibility Package are delivered with maximum impact. Also to promote the Package, facilitate process and be central in the management and dissemination of knowledge and information to the partners and the projects.

Financial Package

	Core	Trans	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Profiled Project Cost	Actual Project Cost	Intv Rate %
Capital							
Revenue	278,011		278,011	178,187	557,111	357,074	49%
Total							
Matched	Profiled	Actual	Source:				
Public		67,000	Section 106				
Private		212,100	CCDC				
ERDF		278,011					

Contracted Outputs and Results

No EU Outputs required however project specific outputs have been claimed – 5 newsletters produced and 1 job created. (Profiled 2).

Project Activities This is a retrospective project (2000 to 2003), which was supported initially by seconded staff. Two new posts of **Economic Development Officer** (Europe) and **Economic Development Support Officer** were appointed by April 2003 on fixed term contracts. The EDSO post holder left by the end of 2004 and was not replaced. The project has developed management information systems to enable efficient monitoring for **12** live projects within the Package. The project received an Article 10 audit visit in 2004, which highlighted substantial over claimed grant which has since been offset through subsequent claims.

The EDO (Europe) post holder acting as Package Coordinator has provided extensive capacity building support, advice and dissemination of information to projects, offering projects an intermediary role to negotiate complex issues with GOWM as well as supporting with monitoring visits and attending GOWM Article 4 visits.

Activities include design and production of bi-annual 'Accessibility EuroPackage Update' Newsletter and the development and maintenance of the Accessibility website, which provides a platform for projects to share good practice and achievements.

www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/euroPackage

Two main training events, hosted and supported by CCDC for projects took place during 2004/05 – 'Understanding European Funding' facilitated by West Midlands European Network, helped projects to understand what it means to be involved in running European Funded projects, covering eligible activity, record-keeping, managing spend and outputs. 'Managing Horizontal Themes' was facilitated by G & H Associates. This was a two part session covering all the horizontal themes and assisted projects to develop an action plan to identify how they would address and monitor the horizontal themes outputs.

The Package Coordinator has provided Secretariat to the Local Partners Group which oversees the strategic management of the Package, with regular meetings held at various project venues to encourage Project Managers attendance also promoting their activity amongst the partnership members.

Good Practice The Package Coordinator role is also currently supporting GOWM as it undertakes its final audit stages of the EU Programme by supporting visits to projects delivering within the West Midland Region. Particular note has been made of the Coordinators intermediary role between applicant's and the sponsor.

Impact & Results Capacity of project managers has been developed and supported thus ensuring the projects ability to deliver their projects on time and to target. This is evident by the **95%** profiled spend of the Package to date.

Lessons Learned The lack of accountable body status has hampered the recording and evidence collecting elements of this project. Therefore reports to Local Partners Group and GOWM on projects progress and results are largely dependant on the projects willingness to send updated information to the Implementation Support project support team.

However, whilst some may view this as placing even more administrative burden on the projects, it is generally the perception that this approach has ensured that projects have reported on their progress accurately and on time to GOWM. All projects are directly contracted with GOWM and submit their own claims and reports together with back-up evidence as required by GOWM and at times there was confusion between the role of this project and GOWM.

12. Southern Staffordshire Business Parks Initiative

Priority Measures 2.1 and 2.8

Applicant Southern Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry **Start Date** April 2003 **End Date** March 2007

Aims & Objectives

Provide a Package of environmental and security improvements to older industrial estates in the Burntwood and Cannock Chase areas suffering from serious crime and vandalism incidents to business premises that are in a poor environmental state and lacking in competitiveness. Re-design three separate industrial parks of Chasetown, Chasewater Heath and Chase Terrace into a zoned Industrial Estate.

Contracted Financial Package Both Core and Transitional

	Core	Trans	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Profiled Project Cost	Actual Project Cost	Intv Rate %
2.1 Capital	53,468	53,468	106,936		141,750		
2.8 Revenue	102,399	102,399	204,798		271,472		
Total	169,919	344,790	311,734	310,846	826,444	825,824	37%
Matched	Profiled	Actual	Source:				
2.1 Public 2.8 Public	29,144 55,816	29,144 55,815	Local Authorities (Lichfield/CCDC)				
2.1 Private 2.8 Private	59,138 113,257	59,138 113,257	British Business Parks				
2.1 ERDF 2.8 ERDF	53,468 102,399	53,468 102,398					

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Business Assisted	75	75	132		132
Bus Assist - Environmentally			4		4
Groups Established	6	6			4
SME's Sign Posted for Support	35	35			
Bus Assist - Innovation			6		6
Environmental Enhancements			6		6
Disadvantaged Entering Employment			4		4
Business – Financially Supported			21		45
Result					

New Jobs	10	10	16		30
Safeguarded Jobs	75	75	200		
New Sales					
Safeguarded Sales					
Private Sector Leverage			750k		
Horizontal Results					
Develop Working Group			2		2
Intro' Sustainable Process			2		2

Project Activities Following retrospective approval April 2003 to August 2004, recruited a dedicated **Business Park Coordinator** to provide a liaison / troubleshooting role for local business to help address issues on the business parks.

Provided grants to assist companies with signage, landscaping and resurfacing to unit frontages and car parks, provided CCTV security, fencing and barriers, rumble strips, improved lighting. Supported design and erection of new estate signage including colour-coded zoned areas.

Organised **Staffordshire in Business Show** during October 2004 to encourage inter-trading across the Package areas. **20** companies gained one or more new clients as a result. **41** companies in total show cased their products and services at the Staffordshire in Business Show in October 2004. The following three months generated over **38** new customers and **207** new enquiries.

Developed Cannock Chase Image Business Partnerships activity setting up a Limited by Guarantee Company in 2004. Regular company consultation took place with over **300** businesses, through newsletters and one to one meetings. Image Business Partnerships has now been successful with its ballot as a Business Improvement District.

Developed Burntwood Business Forum setting up a Limited by Guarantee Company in 2006 and new partnerships and produced monthly newsletter for over **100** companies. The Forum has conducted questionnaire surveys with 60 - 80% response rates. A recent economy survey during 2006 / 2007 produced following results:

Table 2006 / 2007 Economic Survey Outcomes – Employment Rates

Zone	Employees	
	Full Time	Part Time
1	183	46
2	167	10
3	104	9
4	162	5

Types of Businesses

- Manufacturing **16**
- Distribution **17**
- Commercial / Public services **12**
- **8** Companies had been based on the site for more than 21 years
- **10** for less than 2 years
- **30** companies expected their turnover to increase in the next two years
- **24** companies expected staffing levels to increase.

Further Outcomes

- Business Watch Scheme established in partnership with Local Police and Local Authority Community Wardens, with over **80** members providing intelligence on crime on the estates Established new company to progress towards development of second BID in the Package area.

Impact and Results Through the Southern Staffordshire Business Park Initiative and Norton Canes projects, grant aid of over **£230,000** has been awarded to **45** businesses. This has secured over **£750,000** of private sector investment and has triggered additional inward investment. As a result, over **30** jobs have been created and a further **200** jobs safeguarded.

Case Studies Filon Products Ltd; Electro-test Services Ltd

Good Practice Establishing a Business Improvement District enables ring-fenced cash for the businesses themselves to manage their own destiny. By keeping business “real” a small organisation is helping GOWM achieve targets and meeting needs of business community, where other business support agencies are falling short.

Lessons Learned Delays with EU Grant caused serious cash flow issues for a small organisation. Also environmental linkages with SBEN to support SMEs did not happen.

13. Canals – Contributing to a Better Brownhills

Priority Two Measure 2.1

Applicant British Waterways**Start Date** January 2003**End Date** March 2006**Aims & Objectives**

To bring back into use the canal network in the Brownhills area to provide access by waterway for leisure and business use. To increase visitor numbers to the canal and surrounding area; and to improve the quality of visits to the canal for both local people and visitors to the area.

Financial Package

	Core	Trans	Profiled ERDF Grant	Actual ERDF Grant	Profiled Project Cost	Actual Project Cost	Intv Rate %
Capital	1,438,382		503,433				
Revenue	60,000		21,000				
Total	1,498,382		524,433	522,874	1,713,674	1,768,545	
Matched	Profiled	Actual	Source:				
Public	973,949		British Waterways; Sport England; Big Lottery Active England				
Private							
Voluntary							

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
Business Assisted					
Ha derelict Land Improved	0.25		0,25		0.25
Facilities Created	1		1		1
Facilities/Attractions Upgraded	4		8		8
Environmental Enhancement	5		1		1
Capacity Building Environ'	2				
Project Supporting Innovation	11				
Sq' m New premises provided	30		30		30
Sq' m Premises Refurbished	30		30		30
Results					
Increased Day Visitors	60k				
Increased Overnight Visitors	980				

Gross Visitors	66k		66k		66k
Towpath Improved Km	4.85				
Visitor Moorings Installed	6				
Canal Bridge Repaired	3				
Canal Basin Re-established	1				
Access Points Created	8				
Community Arts Project	1				
Jobs Created			1		

Project Activities Improvement works that have been carried out include the construction of Brownhills Canoe and Outdoor Centre which encourages young people to take up water activities on the canals building personal self-esteem, confidence and interaction with others.

The project also involves volunteers from Brownhills Community Association with the operation and management of the Brownhills Canoe and Outdoor Centre, organising canoeing activities for groups and individuals, which helps develop communication and team building skills. Also encourages volunteering opportunities for local residents. The project appointed a part time **Community Development Coordinator**, to oversee, promote and manage the Centre funded by Sport England. A community arts project entailed supporting the design and development of an arts sculpture features along the towpath.

Other improvements include cycle routes, access to Public Rights of Way, establishing mooring points, restoration / replacement work to existing bridges / creating art features / towpaths.

The complete works programme entailed undertaking professional surveys and analysis of the visitors to the area. Now have comprehensive visitor count information that can assist with monitoring, although this project is not claiming outcomes of contacts with target beneficiary groups since the results are the towpath surveys conducted.

This project and the Canoe Centre have been actively promoted through local press and canal users' newsletters and British Canoe Union local representatives. Also attending the Brownhills Annual Canal Festival where leaflets and flyers were distributed promoting the Brownhills Canoe and Outdoor Centre.

Impact & Results The Project has created much improved access for people using the canal routes for commuting to work, school, and for leisure. The Brownhills Canoe and Outdoor centre has provided an excellent resource for local people and visitors and the British Waterways facilities encourage canal tourism in the Brownhills and North Black Country area.

The works have made a substantial improvement to the tourism value of Brownhills and the North Black Country. The results of which will become evident in the future.

Good Practice Pedestrian Counter devices have been fixed to the canal towpath which will help assess increased usage and footfall. This will also be helpful in monitoring for EU purposes.

Lessons Learned It is very important to engage and inform the local community during works of this nature and ensure their involvement and support. Securing planning permission in protected areas can be problematic and took longer to gain statutory planning consents, due to environmental constraints for regeneration works than was expected. Vandalism during the construction phase also played its part.

14. Opportunities in Employment

Priority Three Measures 3.2 and 3.4

Applicant Business Enterprise Support **Start Date** June 2003 **End Date** December 2004

Aims & Objectives

To raise aspirations and help disadvantaged unemployed residents living in Broomhill and Chadsmoor wards of Cannock into employment by getting them job ready and helping to remove barriers from welfare to work. Research the barriers to employment and educate employers to develop family friendly policies when reducing new employees.

Contracted Financial Package

	Core	Trans	Profiled ERDF/ ESF	Actual ERDF / ESF	Profiled Project Cost	Actual Project Cost	Intv Rate %
Capital	526						
Revenue	24504						
Total	24542		68,856	38,103	149,622	85,274	
Matched	Profiled	Actual	Source:				
Public	31,480		Own Funds				
Private							
Voluntary							

Contracted Outputs and Results

Output	O/All Targets Core	O/All Targets Trans	Cannock Actual Core	Cannock Actual Trans	TOTAL Claimed in Package
3.2					
Business Start ups	2		2		2
Jobs Created	3		3		3
New Sales	70k		70k		70k
CED into Employment	2		12		2
Community Projects	22				2
No of Volunteers and Trainee Participants	7				7
3.4					
Jobless Trained	19				19
Employed People Trained	3				3

CED res in Employment	10				10
NVQ2 or above	18				18
Part NVQ	4				4
No. Female Beneficiaries	18				18
No. Receiving Advice and Guidance	98		100		98
Capacity Building Initiatives	1				
Community Business start-up	1				
No of CED residents participate			117		

Project Activities This project suffered a delayed start before commencing mainly due to uncertainty of suitable measure fit for 3.2 or 3.4. Eventually the project became multi-measure but misunderstanding and miscommunication caused some long delays in starting resulting in loss of grant. The posts of Project Coordinator, Job Readiness Advisor and a part-time Administrator were funded through ERDF/ESF to work with the target beneficiary groups. A proportion of Business Managers time was part funded to line manage key staff.

The training included a variety of confidence building workshops, basic food hygiene, first aid, manual handling, CLAIT, NVQ2 in Office Admin, Jobs Board and Special Needs Code of Practice. Linkages made with other Service Providers e.g. Colleges, IT Outreach bus and Job Centre Plus Bus. The project also organised a jobs and training event.

The project worked with the very hard to reach CED residents in the target area of Chadsmoor & Broomhill, predominantly white, but suffering multiple disadvantages. Referrals received from Sure Start, Social Services, domestic violence agencies etc. Clients benefited from attitudinal changes gaining in confidence and networking, encouraging participation in the training that they would otherwise not have confidence to consider, including NVQ Business Admin Level 2. One woman set up her own taxi-business following participation in this project.

Regular flyers and newsletters were produced and leaflet drops in community to raise awareness of the project linked to attendance at CVS exhibitions and other events. Featured in 'Accessibility' newsletter, Staffordshire SRG 'Euroboost', and spotlighted in the GOWM 'ESF News'.

Since the project completed an Article 4 visit has been received, raising an issue regarding match-funds, identifying BES funds as public rather than private match. A significant change request has been submitted albeit the project has completed.

Good Practice Relationship building is important. Developing partnership and networks with effective referral processes created are well used two years beyond life of project. Experiences from delivering this project have already been transferred to a new project on Bevan Lee Estate (outside Package area) including training up the new Neighbourhood Worker for that estate

Impact & Results This Project had a high impact on the area for very low value. Much more could have been done if project duration had been extended.

One spin off is that as a result of the Steering Group set up for this Project, a brand new partnership developed through linkage from the two wards, including Police, Fire, Neighbourhood Wardens, Connexions, Jobcentre Plus, Training Providers and CVS. This forum is still operational.

Another spin-off is that as a result of this service, Cannock Council is now supporting similar activity in the Bevan Lee area of Cannock.

Existing staff working on this Project have been redeployed to other areas of Staffordshire / West Midlands and other BES activities. However the Project Administrator post was lost to BES as a result of loss of funds.

Lessons Learned 'To think very hard before getting involved with EU funding'. Managing the EU processes and dealing with the bureaucracy is very onerous and time consuming for a small company which can result in delays with agreeing funding issues. Multi-measure bids bring additional complexities. Once issues were sorted, the appraisal process was reasonable. However the delays meant that Project grant was lost. It is unfortunate the Project was not granted extension to deliver and use all the allocated resources.

Voluntary organisations need support from others to deal with the bureaucracy and cash flow management (6 months payment delays experienced).

Appendix B

Wider Impact Consultancy Limited

'Accessibility' ERDF Objective 2 Package Exit Strategy 2007

Project Questionnaire

Wider Impact Consultancy Limited is pleased to have been appointed by the Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills Local Partners Group to develop an Exit Strategy as part of the final review for the Package. The Strategy will focus on the successes and lessons learned value for money and good practice. It will assess economic, social and physical impact, management and delivery of the programme, review performance and identify ways forward for future implementation and funding of projects within the Package.

Edwin Lewis and **Liz Minshall** of Wider Impact Consultancy are conducting research of each project within the Package, and the following questions will form part of this. It would help us if you would please take some time out of your busy schedules to respond as fully as possible.

It would be extremely helpful if you would **email** your reply by **Monday 9 July** to Edwin Lewis at the email address shown at the end of the questionnaire. This survey is likely to be followed up with a one to one interview, focus group, or telephone call.

Should you require any clarification or assistance please do not hesitate to contact either Edwin or Liz. Details are at the end of the questionnaire.

In anticipation, we thank you for your support and we look forward to hearing from you.

Date:	
Project Name:	
Organisation:	
Address:	
Contact Name:	
Position:	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

1. What is your role and involvement in the project?

2. What do you understand are the main aims and objectives of the project?

3. As far as you know, have these changed or varied from what was originally planned?

4. In your view, how well have the projects original aims been met?

Please score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not successful and 5 is very successful

(Indicate preferred score in **bold**)

1 2 3 4 5

5. What do you see are the main successes of the project and why?
6. What points of good practice have resulted from this project, which could be passed on to others?
7. What lessons have been learned from this project, which could be passed on to others?

In terms of Package management and support

8. How supportive and effective is the “Accessibility” Package Management Support Team?

Please score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very supportive and 5 is very supportive

1 2 3 4 5

9. How do you find the application and appraisal process?

Please score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very satisfactory and 5 is very satisfactory

1 2 3 4 5

10. How do you find the Claims Process?

Please score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very satisfactory and 5 is very satisfactory

1 2 3 4 5

In terms of project management and delivery

11. Have there been any changes in terms of activity, outcomes or spend profiles?
12. What was the impact of this change to the project? Was a significant change notified to GOWM?
13. Who are the project target beneficiaries? What proportion is from ethnic minority communities?
14. Do you think the project is reaching and benefiting the people it intended?
15. What evidence do you have to show this?

16. What records do you keep to ensure beneficiary target group eligibility and EU compliance?

17. How does the project promote and market its activity? (Give evidence of activity; marketing strategy; promoting EU funds)

18. How effective has this marketing been in terms of raising awareness among project beneficiaries and members of the target community?

Please score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not effective and 5 is very effective

1

2

3

4

5

19. How do you evaluate the project activity? Give evidence

20. How well do you think the Project's performance is monitored?

21. How well do you think the project has ensured "additionality" – this is activities/results delivered as a result of the ERDF funding that is separate and additional to those that would have happened anyway.

22. Do you think the Package, and the projects, have shown value for money? Give evidence

23. What are the main challenges/barriers faced in delivering this project?

24. Could more have been done - are there measures you have now identified that may address these issues in future?

25. Does the project generate any income?

26. Does the project involve use of volunteers? What is their role?

27. Have you encountered any problems with using volunteers?

28. Does the project employ direct staff? If so, what is their role?

29. What will happen to direct staff employed when the current project ERDF funds ceases?

In terms of addressing Horizontal Themes:

European Funded Projects are required to address the Horizontal themes of Sustainability, Equal Opportunities and Innovation, throughout their project activities.

30. How do you feel the project has addressed the horizontal themes as identified within your original application and contract? Have you achieved the target outputs in relation to this?

31. Which of the following Themes and Key Issues do you feel this project has addressed or had any impact on any of the following.

Aim of Horizontal Theme	Key Issues	Rating where 1 is very low and 5 is very high	Brief Comment or explain how addressed
1. Developing a Sustainable Environment aims to ensure that projects mitigate and minimise the most significant negative environmental impacts and proactively influence wider environmental impacts by helping bring about positive changes.	1. Safeguarding of air soil and water quality	1 2 3 4 5	
	2. Protecting landscape and wildlife	1 2 3 4 5	
	3. Positive urban environment, noise and waste management	1 2 3 4 5	
2. Equality of Opportunity aims to ensure that projects redress the current imbalances in the labour market by reducing inequalities and promoting equality, and also affect further positive change through the Objective 2 Programmes and its impact upon the region.	1. Under or over-representation of disadvantaged groups in vulnerable, 'growing' or new industries	1 2 3 4 5	
	2. Over representation in low-paid, low-skilled and part-time jobs or under-representation at higher and intermediate levels	1 2 3 4 5	
	3. Lower activity rates and poor 'employability' resulting from low basic key skills	1 2 3 4 5	
	4. Overcoming barriers or improving access employment, training opportunities and services provision	1 2 3 4 5	

3. Encouraging a Culture of Innovation aims to restore the competitive advantage of the West Midlands Objective 2 area by promoting and developing an innovation culture and new ways of working, develop new markets, improve effectiveness in traditional and new businesses in high added-value sectors.	1. Exploiting and improving regional capability, review and evaluation of sectors	1	2	3	4	5	
	2. Catalysing collaborative innovation activity via business networks	1	2	3	4	5	
	3. Increasing investment in research, design and development, new capital equipment, and skills training	1	2	3	4	5	
	4. Enhancing innovation culture and spreading best practice	1	2	3	4	5	

Finally, in terms of long-term project sustainability

32. How effectively does your project communicate and share ideas with other projects within the Accessibility Package? Could more be done to promote more joint thinking/working between projects?

33. What do you feel are the most important lessons learned from this project and what, if anything, would you have done differently?

34. What do you feel has been the main economic impact of this project on the target area and the main regeneration programme, e.g. in terms of creating employment and business growth, increasing tourism or another economic impact?

35. Do you feel there are clear links with current programmes/government funding / Local Area Agreements etc? Provide details.

36. Do you feel there are future/potential links with future programmes/government funding/Local Area Agreements etc? Provide details.

37. Do you think this project should continue beyond 2008? After the current ERDF funding ends how do you think this project/activities will be sustained in the future?

38. Have you identified/are you developing a succession strategy and future funding sources?

Any further comments?

Appendix C

WIDER IMPACT CONSULTANCY LIMITED

'Accessibility' ERDF Objective 2 Package Exit Strategy 2007

Partners Questionnaire

Wider Impact Limited is pleased to have been appointed by the Cannock Chase, Burntwood and Brownhills Local Partners Group to develop an Exit Strategy as part of the final review for the Package. The Strategy will focus on the successes and lessons learned value for money and good practice. It will assess economic, social and physical impact, management and delivery of the programme, review performance and identify ways forward for future implementation and funding of projects within the Package.

Edwin Lewis and **Liz Minshall** of Wider Impact Consultancy are conducting research of the Package and each project within it, and the following questions will form part of this. It would help us if you would please take some time out of your busy schedules to respond as fully as possible.

It would be extremely helpful if you would **email** your reply by **Monday 9 July** to Edwin Lewis at the email address shown at the end of the questionnaire. This survey is likely to be followed up with a one to one interview, focus group, or telephone call.

Should you require any clarification or assistance please do not hesitate to contact either Edwin or Liz. Details are at the end of the questionnaire.

In anticipation, we thank you for your support and we look forward to hearing from you.

Date:	
Partner Name:	
Position:	
Organisation:	
Address:	
Telephone :	
Email address:	

1. What has been the role and degree of involvement of your organisation within the “Accessibility” Package?

In terms of the Package itself

2. (a) How would you describe the overall impact of the “Accessibility” Package?

(b) How would you rate the economic impact of the Package on the Objective 2 areas?

Please score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is a very weak impact and 5 is very strong impact.
(Indicate preferred score in **bold**)

1 2 3 4 5

3. In your view, has the “Accessibility” Package met its original objectives stated below?

Please rate the following where 1 is a very unsuccessful/low and 5 is a very successful/high

Strengthen competitiveness and encourage innovation	1	2	3	4	5
Safeguard jobs, create new jobs, and encourage diversification in employment	1	2	3	4	5

Increase visitors to the area by promoting the town centre and stimulating tourism	1	2	3	4	5
Improve physical appearance through environmental enhancement	1	2	3	4	5
Improve access to employment opportunities and deter crime	1	2	3	4	5

4. What would you say have been the main achievements/success stories?

5. Please provide any views on the evidence of success

6. What would you say have been the main areas for improvement or further development?

7. How do you think the Accessibility Package will help to address any remaining challenges?

8. In your view, who have been the main beneficiaries of the Package?

9. How effectively does the "Accessibility" Package team promote its achievements?

Please score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is a not effective and 5 is very effective

1 2 3 4 5

10. How well do you think the Package, and the projects within it, have been promoted?
E.g. to potential project leads, project beneficiaries, users, stakeholders and the general public.
Could more have been done?

11. How inclusive do you think the Package of projects has been in addressing the needs of the wider community? Give evidence of inclusiveness.

In terms of the management of the Package

12. In your view, how effectively has the Package been managed?

Please score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is a not effective and 5 is very effective

1 2 3 4 5

13. Please identify any issues you have encountered or are aware of with regards to management / administration.

14. How well do you think the performance of the Package, and projects within, has been monitored as part of the Package management? Give details

15. How well do you think the Package, and projects within it ensure “additionality” – this is activities/results delivered as a result of the ERDF funding that is separate and additional to those that would have happened anyway

16. Do you think the Package, and the projects, have shown value for money? Give evidence

17. Do you feel that the LPG/Steering Group has operated effectively?

18. Are there areas that could have been improved?

19. Do you feel the Appraisal process was effective when appraising Package and projects within it?

20. How could this have been improved?

In terms of projects within the Package

21. How would you rate the overall economic impact of the individual projects?

Please score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is a very weak impact and 5 is very strong impact. If you have no knowledge of a particular project please leave it blank.

Pristine Plus	1	2	3	4	5	
Local BIC Incubators	1	2	3	4	5	
Rugeley/Cannock SME Support Project	1	2	3	4	5	
New Opportunities for Growth in Burton & Cannock Chase	1	2	3	4	5	
Chasewater Visitor Hub	1	2	3	4	5	
Burntwood: A Place to Invest	1	2	3	4	5	
Hatherton Canals Regeneration	1	2	3	4	5	
Norton Canes - An Image for the Future	1	2	3	4	5	
District Centre Regeneration (Brownhills area)		1	2	3	4	5
District Centre Management Initiative	1	2	3	4	5	
Implementation Support Project (Package Management)	1	2	3	4	5	
Southern Staffordshire Business Park Initiative	1	2	3	4	5	
Opportunities in Employment	1	2	3	4	5	
Canals-Contributing to a Better Brownhills	1	2	3	4	5	

22. Can you think of any particular examples of good practice that can be learned from the “Accessibility” Package, and/or the projects within it?

23. Do you think there is an appropriate range and the right balance of projects within the “Accessibility” Package?

Finally, in terms of Sustainability

24. Do you feel there are clear links with current programmes/government funding- give details?

25. Do you feel there are future/potential links with future programmes/government funding, - give details?

26. In your view, how effectively has the Package fostered partnership working between local organisations?

Please score on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is a not effective and 5 is very effective

1

2

3

4

5

27. Are you aware of any succession plans in place for sustaining the impact of the Package and/or any of the project activities within the Package, beyond 2008 when ERDF funding ends?

28. To what extent is your organisation preparing to include, or plan for the continuation of, any project activities currently supported or developed through the Package to enable sustaining such activities beyond March 2008?

29. Are you aware of or have you identified any other funding sources which could support such continuation strategies?

30. Are you willing to explore and be involved in developing a continuation strategy for the Package, or the activities currently supported by the Package?

Any further comments?

...measurable results
to help avoid expensive mistakes.

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