

Glascote Heath
Employability Project

Evaluation

February 2009

“what if. . .?”



**Glascote Heath
Employability Project**

Evaluation

February 2009

Consultant's Statement

Wider Impact Consultancy is pleased to submit a positive report in relation to the overall delivery of this innovative and exciting project that has met the requirements of the principal funder (ERDF).

The project has been conceived by the **Bancroft Community Association** and delivered by the Association from the Bancroft Community Centre, Tamworth Staffordshire.

The project is innovative because of the manner in which it has been delivered within a local neighbourhood and represents 'value for money' that we doubt a main stream supplier of such training and client support could hope to meet.

This is without doubt one of the best examples of 'good practice' we have been privileged to evaluate in recent years.

It is therefore important that local and national stakeholders and funders take note of this important and innovative project and organisations such as the Bancroft Community Association, and ensure they continue to receive the resources to continue such excellent and worthwhile work.

Edwin Lewis, Wider Impact Consultancy Limited
February 2009

© **Wider Impact Consultancy, February 2009**

**Glascote Heath
Employability Project**

Evaluation

February 2009



*The Future of '**Community**' Based Learning*

Report Commissioned by
Bancroft Community Association

Delivered by
Wider Impact Consultancy
www.widerimpact.com

Contents

Sections	Description	Page
1.0	Executive Summary	1
1.1	Introduction	2
1.2	Project Funding	2
1.3	Project Aims	2
1.4	Project Delivery	2
1.5	Summary of Findings	2
1.6	Recommendations	3
1.7	Conclusions	4
2.0	Acknowledgements	6
3.0	Terms of Reference	7
4.0	Methodology	8
5.0	About the Area	9
5.1	Introduction	9
5.2	Geographical Area	9
5.3	Background	9
6.0	About the Project	13
6.1	Introduction	13
6.2	Background to the Project	13
6.3	Project Aims	14
6.4	Project Delivery	14
6.5	Project Outputs	14
6.6	Project Funding	15

7.0	Research Findings	16
7.1	Introduction	16
7.2	Outputs	16
7.3	Observations	17
7.4	Qualitative Research	17
7.5	Client Surveys	17
7.6	Observations	18
7.7	Client Case Studies	18
7.8	Value for Money	20
7.9	Partner Agency Involvement	20
7.10	Bancroft Community Association	21
7.11	Links to Glascote Heath Locality Plan	22
7.11	Summary	22
8.0	Best Practice / Lessons Learnt	24
8.1	Introduction	24
8.2	Best Practice	24
8.3	Lessons Learnt	25
9.0	Summary of Findings	27
9.1	Summary of Findings	27
10.0	Recommendations	28
10.1	Introduction	28
11.0	Conclusions	29
	Appendix A – Client Questionnaire	31

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Wider Impact Consultancy has been invited by the Bancroft Community Association to independently evaluate the **Glascote Heath Employability project**. The project has been delivered from a Community Centre on the Bancroft estate, Tamworth, Staffordshire.



As will be noted from this photograph, the Bancroft Community Centre is an impressive local resource and is a credit to members of the Bancroft Community Association, who have spent many years raising funds, to ensure that local people have access to first class resources such as IT facilities and a community café.

The main aims of the Association are to improve the lives of residents of the Glascote Heath area by providing free services, which focus on:

- Improving educational achievements
- Enhancing employment prospects
- Providing the opportunity to increase creativity skills
- Improving family and community relationships through personal development
- Encouraging volunteering to enhance services and the participation of residents.

The project came about as a result of community demands for locally delivered training and support and as realisation that the Centre needed to offer more to the 200+ long-term unemployed adults living in the area. A local survey identified that local people were looking to the Centre to deliver services such as job clubs and training to improve skills and improve employability

This was coupled with a particular opportunity to deliver IT training and forklift courses, to meet demand in relation to employment opportunities; associated with the area being home to some of the largest distribution warehouses in the Country such as UPS, TNT and Aldi.

1.2 Project Funding

Total funding for this project is **£32,117.00**, of which 49.6% is made up of ERDF funding (**£15,937.00**).

1.3 Project Aims

The overall aims of the project include supporting up to **4** local CED residents into employment and up to **8** local residents to gain NVQ level 1 vocational qualifications. To achieve this, the project utilises a simple formula in relation to supporting clients:

- Increase confidence
- Build self-esteem
- Enhance employment prospects

1.4 Project Delivery

As highlighted above, the project has been operating from the Community Centre, for just **10 months**, from March 2008 to December 2008, where project aims have been achieved through the delivery of individually tailored Basic Skills and IT training programmes.

When clients reach a level of progress / achievement, they are offered the opportunity to enrol on an external 5 day forklift training course, with the A1 Training Group to gain competence in Reach Truck and Counterbalance Systems, gaining a nationally recognised qualification.

On completion of the programme, clients are offered guidance and support with job searches, CV writing and the completion of job application forms, to assist them into employment.

1.5 Summary of Findings

We are extremely impressed with project achievements, which include broadly meeting, and in two significant cases, exceeding the quantitative requirements of the principal funder (ERDF). Whilst there is a small shortfall in the number of volunteer and trainee placements, it is significant that **5** residents have gained employment as a direct result of this project, and **9** residents have gained FLT qualifications.

In financial terms, based on total funding for this project, this project has proved '**value for money**'. For example, it has cost just **£6,435.00** to support each of the five CED clients / residents into employment. In relation to the ERDF financial investment, it has cost just **£3,187.00** to support each of the five clients / residents into employment.

We are also impressed with qualitative outcomes, as the project has made a positive impact on client's lives. This is expected, as apart from clients achieving employment, self-esteem and confidence has without doubt risen.

Wider Impacts will include:

- A more stable local community, as those who may have been involved in anti-social behaviour are meaningfully employed / occupied and more likely to positively engage within their local community
- Improvements to the local economy as clients such as Brian, John and Clive spend their earnings on locally sourced consumables
- Enhanced confidence, capacity and capability of the Bancroft Community Association, as members hopefully build on such success and take on even larger, more ambitious projects and initiatives

1.6 Recommendations

Based on our research, we are pleased to make the following recommendations concerning the delivery of this project and potential replication.

1. All those involved in the conception and delivery of this project should be commended.
2. Particular mention is made of **Sam Dodds** (IT Learner Support Worker), who has displayed high levels of understanding, energy and dedication, aimed at supporting clients into training and / or employment.

3. Efforts should be made to secure the long-term employment of Sam Dodds (currently retained on a short-term contract).
4. Copies of this report should be forwarded to key local stakeholders, in particular those responsible for delivering the Glascote Heath Locality Plan.
5. Consideration should be given to funding / delivering similar projects from the Bancroft Community Centre.
6. Such projects should continue to be delivered by the Bancroft Community Association, supported by key local stakeholders.
7. Consideration should be given to direct financial investment / partnership support from local employers into such projects.
8. The project demonstrates 'good practice' and consideration should be given to 'celebrating the successes' of this project in the local media and at a multi-agency event at the Bancroft Community Centre.

1.7 Conclusions

Wider Impact Consultancy is pleased to produce an extremely positive report on a project that is achieving aims and has without doubt delivered 'value for money'.

We are most impressed that local people (the Bancroft Community Association) have collaborated with local partner agency members such as the William Sutton Housing Association to create and continue to develop a first class training resource within a **local community**.

Without doubt, Bancroft Community Association members:

- Know what they are doing
- Have the energy, skills and experience to deliver such projects
- Achieve what they set out to deliver
- Deliver 'value for money'
- Have the resources required to deliver such projects
- Have the potential and ambition to deliver 'more of the same'

As a **locally based** organisation they understand the needs and requirements of **local** people and have the means, resources and will to meet such needs.

As highlighted in this report, it would be useful if this project could be treated as a 'pilot' that has proved worthy of future investment, either by similar grant funding, and / or in collaboration / partnership with local employers.

This would be a wise move, as there is compelling evidence that this project has played a role in tackling issues highlighted within the Glascote Heath Locality Plan (see section 5.3):

Unemployment statistics for August 2007 show that there were 1,095 claimants for the Glascote Heath area, which constitutes nearly 16% for the whole population of Tamworth. Of these, 135 were unemployed, 555 sick and / or disabled, 185 lone parents and 215 on other benefits.

There is a common belief among community and partnership organisations that there is a need to engage with more people to break this trend and improve people's aspirations.

In conclusion, it would be a travesty if lessons are not learnt from this project at local, regional and national levels.

There seems little doubt that there is an on-going and fruitful future for neighbourhood based initiatives such as the Glascote Heath Employability Project and we trust we have supplied such evidence in this report.

We are delighted to commend the project and thank those who contributed to this report.

2.0 Acknowledgements

Wider Impact Consultancy would like to thank the following for their time and effort in making this report possible:

Project clients –names have been changed in this report, to ensure anonymity

Mark Bruckshaw, Area Housing Manager, William Sutton Housing

Sam Dodds, IT Learner Support Worker

Kate Warlow-Hughes, Chair of the Bancroft Community Association

Contributions have included data, information, time and most importantly honest feedback on the impact of the production of this report.

3.0 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of this independent evaluation, which has been commissioned by Bancroft Community Association are to establish if:

1. The project has met the requirements of the principal funder (ERDF).
2. The project has proved 'value for money'.
3. The project has achieved project aims.
4. The project has met the requirements of clients.
5. The Bancroft Community Association is worthy of future funding to support the development and delivery of similar projects in the future.
6. There is evidence of 'good practice', which could be replicated in other areas of the United Kingdom and beyond.

4.0 Methodology

The brief has been delivered in three sections:

1. Secondary (Desk) research:

Access to project information and data kindly provided by the IT Learner Support Worker (Sam Dodds).

Access to the Glascote Heath Locality Plan, Tamworth Borough Council, November 2008.

2. Primary research, which includes:

- Face to face interviews with:
 - **Mark Bruckshaw**, Area Housing Manager, William Sutton Housing
 - **Sam Dodds**, IT Learner Support Worker
 - **Kate Warlow-Hughes**, Chair of the Bancroft Community Association
- Face to face 'case study interviews with **3** project clients
- Completion of a structured questionnaire by **10** project clients
- Visits to the area
- Observations of project delivery
- Shadowing IT Learner Support Worker (Sam Dodds)

3. Submission of this final report drawing together the findings of the above two sections.

5.0 About the Area

5.1 Introduction

We are grateful for access to the Glascote Heath Locality Plan, Tamworth Borough Council, November 2008, from which the majority of information for this section of our report has been extracted.

5.2 Geographical Area

The below map broadly outlines the geographical area in which the project is located.

Geographical Area



5.3 Background

Glascote Heath and most of the surrounding housing developments were originally constructed to assist the Birmingham conurbation with its pressures on available land to provide social housing schemes.

Tamworth Borough Council's intake of Birmingham Overspill began as early as 1959 and the first tenants of Glascote Heath housing estate moved into their new homes in 1970. Historically, the local economics were dominated by primary industries such as coal mining and clay abstraction for over 150 years. During the 1960s traditional employment was changing, marked with the closure of North Warwick Colliery in 1965 (an amalgamation of local collieries) and the end of production for Gibbs and Canning clay pit and terracotta works in 1968. Additionally, there was a shift in goods transportation from rail to road, compounded by the Rationalisation of Railways Act in 1963.

The increased emphasis on road transport has had a profound effect on the local area which is ideally located for goods distribution in the Heart of England. Economic activity has now significantly changed and is dominated by Logistical Services and Light Industries benefiting from improved transport links such as the M42 (completed in 1985).

As with many purpose built housing schemes constructed in the late 60s and early 70s, aspects of design became outdated. With more private ownership of motor vehicles there has been increasing pressure on space for parking. Other design features have become hotspots for vandalism and antisocial behaviour. More recently, inequalities were identified compared with some areas of Tamworth and Glascote Heath was considered in need of regeneration.

In 1997, Tamworth Borough Council (TBC) was the lead organisation in the formation of the Glascote Heath Partnership. The partnership successfully bid for funding from the Government's Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and was awarded £1.38million in 1999, towards a total funding package of £3million. The SRB programme was a Government led strategy devised to enhance the quality of life of local people in areas of need by reducing the gap between deprived and other areas, and between different groups. The funding for Glascote Heath was provided to support the delivery of a five-year regeneration programme with three key themes: -

- Education, Training and Employment
- Community Development, Capacity Building and Support
- Crime and Community Safety

An independent evaluation of the initiative concluded that the SRB programme had made a demonstrable difference to Glascote Heath, both in terms of its physical fabric, as well as people's life opportunities. However, the reversal of deep-rooted issues of multiple deprivation, such as those that exist in Glascote Heath, will take many years to be achieved.

It is commonly recognised by community and partnership organisations that there are problems associated with engagement in this area. This has been reinforced by the fact that Glascote Heath has been the centre of a number of projects during 1999 to 2004 under the SRB programme and it is evident that some local residents and once active people are subject to what can be described as "regeneration fatigue".

It could also be argued that some types of service provision in the area are "overprovided", with duplication and even competition occurring between providers. Other facilities appear to be "underprovided" and considering the levels of anti-social behaviour and the concerns of local people with "groups of youths with nothing to do" clearly this issue needs to be resolved. Glascote Ward has also been identified as a "geographical hot spot" for young people Not in Education Employment or Training (NEETS).

Tamworth as a whole has a growing population and at the time of applying for funding for the project, was ranked 110th out of 374 districts on the indices of deprivation. It is ranked 3rd most deprived in Staffordshire.

Glascote Heath has been identified as an Objective 2 Priority 3 area and has an IMD score of **32.2**; the highest score in the Tamworth district and is included in the most deprived **20%** SOAs in England (source: Office of National Statistics 2005). Glascote Heath has a high benefit claim rate

compared to the rest of Tamworth and one LSOA has the 2nd highest total claim rate of all LSOAs in Staffordshire.

Unemployment statistics for August 2007 show that there were 1,095 claimants for the Glascote Heath area, which constitutes nearly 16% for the whole population of Tamworth. Of these, 135 were unemployed, 555 sick and / or disabled, 185 lone parents and 215 on other benefits.

There is a common belief among community and partnership organisations that there is a need to engage with more people to break this trend and improve people's aspirations.

Despite its problems, there is evidence of a strong "sense of community" amongst some people from the Glascote Matters Survey. It is clear that many people like living in the area and comment on their friendly neighbours.

There have also been many positive initiatives put together by local residents to improve the area and there are several active groups. Notably, the Bancroft Community Association which set up the Bancroft Community Centre over 10 years ago, providing a wide range of opportunities for local people is an outstanding credit to the achievement of resident volunteers.

6.0 About the Project

6.1 Introduction

The **Bancroft Community Association** is a registered charity working in the Glascote Heath area of Tamworth. Founded in 1997 the Association offers a variety of services to the local community, which includes a Community Centre, containing a dedicated IT suite. A number of educational courses and recruitment activities for people of all ages and abilities are delivered from the Community Centre.

The Association is delivered by 6 Trustees and a management committee, which is comprised of the six Trustees and five others, all of whom are local residents and volunteers. There are two paid staff based at the Community Centre:

- An **IT Learner Support Worker**, (Sam Dodds) who delivers Basic Skills and IT courses;
- A **Cook** who runs the Community Centre café and Healthy Eating programme

The main aims of the Association are to improve the lives of residents of the Glascote Heath area by providing free services, which focus on:

- Improving educational achievements
- Enhancing employment prospects
- Providing the opportunity to increase creativity skills
- Improving family and community relationships through personal development
- Encouraging volunteering to enhance services and the participation of residents.

6.2 Background to the Project

The project came about as a result of community demands for locally delivered training and support and a realisation that the Centre needed to offer more to the 200+ long-term unemployed adults living in the area. A local survey identified that local people were looking to the Centre to deliver services such as job clubs and training to improve skills and improve employability

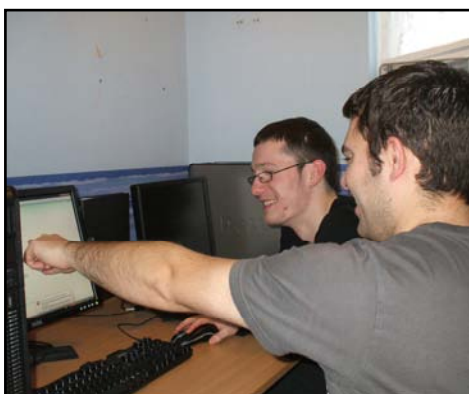
This was coupled with a particular opportunity to deliver IT training and forklift courses, to meet demand in relation to employment opportunities; associated with the area being home to some of the largest distribution warehouses in the Country such as UPS, TNT and Aldi.

6.3 Project Aims

Aims of the project are clear:

- Increase confidence
- Build self-esteem
- Enhance employment prospects

6.4 Project Delivery



Delivered over a period of just **10 months** (10 March 08 to 31 December 08), project aims are achieved through the delivery of individually tailored Basic Skills and IT training programme at the Community Centre.

When clients reach a level of progress / achievement, they are offered the opportunity to enrol on an external 5 day forklift training course, with the A1 Training Group to gain competence in Reach Truck and Counterbalance Systems, gaining a nationally recognised qualification.

On completion of the programme, clients are offered guidance and support with job searches, CV writing and the completion of job application forms, to assist them into employment.

6.5 Project Outputs

Table 1 provides an overview of project outputs agreed with the principle funder (ERDF).

Table 1 Project Outputs Agreed with the Principal Funder

Result Code	Description	Target
R2	Full Time Jobs Safeguarded	2
R3	New Sales	14800
R47	Volunteer & Trainee Participants	34
R17	CED Residents into Employment	4
PSR1	Beneficiaries gaining NVQ Level 1- part Vocational Qualification	8

6.6 Project Funding

Table 2 provides an overview of project funding / funding providers, who include:

- William Sutton Housing Association
- Staffordshire County Council – ‘Closing the Gap’
- Yapp Charitable Trust
- Bancroft Community Association
- ERDF (Principle funder)

Table 2 Project Funding

Funding Sources	£
William Sutton Housing Association	3,000
Staffordshire County Council – ‘Closing the Gap’	5000
Yapp Charitable Trust	2,500
Bancroft Community Association / In Kind Contribution	5,740
ERDF Revenue Eligible Grant (49% of total funding)	15,937
Total	32,177

7.0 Research Findings

7.1 Introduction

We are extremely impressed with project achievements, which include broadly meeting and, in two significant cases, exceeding the quantitative requirements of the principal funder (ERDF). Whilst we will be highlighting such statistical data, as will be noted, we have also carried out qualitative research, such as one to one interviews and case studies, which aim to demonstrate outcomes linked to the effect the project has had on people's lives.

7.2 Outputs

Table 3 highlights outputs achieved by the project, linked to the outputs agreed with the principal funder.

Table 3 Project Outputs Agreed with the Principal Funder

Result Code	Description	Actual
R2	Full Time Jobs Safeguarded	1
R3	New Sales	£4440.00
R47	Volunteer & Trainee Participants	27
R17	CED Residents into Employment	5
PSR1	Beneficiaries gaining NVQ Level 1- part Vocational Qualification	9

Notes

1. Outputs have been 'signed off' with the principal funder
2. R2 - One full time post safeguarded – the IT Learner Support Worker.
3. R3 - New sales has been re-adjusted to include the salary of the IT Learner Support Worker
4. R17 - Employment includes:
 - o Forklift truck driver for a Sainsbury's distribution warehouse
 - o Forklift truck driver for a local manufacturing company
 - o Warehouse operative for Buckingham foods
 - o Warehousing operative for a food processing company
 - o Assembly line operative for Buckingham foods
5. PSR1 - Relates to FLT qualifications, which are licences in driving Counterbalance and Reach Forklift Trucks provided by RTITB the professional body (similar to DVLA) for licensing FLT drivers.

7.3 Observations

Whilst there is a small shortfall in the number of volunteer and trainee placements, it is significant that **5** residents have gained employment as a direct result of this project, and **9** residents have gained FLT qualifications.

7.4 Qualitative Research

We have taken opportunity to survey **10** clients utilising a structured questionnaire (Appendix A) and interviewed **3** clients on a one to one, case study basis.

7.5 Client Surveys

The following is a summary of client responses to the questionnaire.

- 100% reside in the local area
- Average age 22.9 years
- 50% male / 50% female
- 8 achieved GCSE level education prior to attending the project
- 2 had no qualifications prior to attending the project
- **70%** passed / achieved the forklift truck qualification
- 3 achieved an accredited Word / IT qualification
- 50% attended the course to enhance their employment prospects
- 2 attended due to it being *free and local to where they lived*
- 80% were unemployed prior to joining the project
- 2 were employed / or had a job offer prior to joining the project
- 3 achieved employment as a direct result of attending the project
- 1 client has gone onto further training since attending the project

Project Satisfaction Ratings

Table 4 highlights mean averages to survey questions:

Table 4 Survey Responses

Question	Mean Average Response
<i>My self- esteem has risen</i>	3.7
<i>My knowledge of computers / IT has improved</i>	2.6
<i>My chances of getting a job have improved</i>	4.2
<i>The training was useful and relevant to me</i>	4.2
<i>I would recommend the training to others</i>	4.7

7.6 Observations

Based on the information highlighted at 6.2 above (Background to the Project), it is significant the project has clearly addressed 'need', in that all clients are local, the average age is 22.9 years and 80% were unemployed prior to attending. It is also significant that generally satisfaction rates are quite high (see table 4).

7.7 Client Case Studies

Wider Impact Consultancy was delighted to meet with clients, who have provided frank and perceptive views about the project. Names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

Case Study 1 Brian

Brian is 20 years old and local to the area. He left school with a very respectful 9 A to C GCSE qualifications and went onto College. After College, he took up employment as a labourer in a building firm for 2 years, which he lost due to a contract ending. He remained unemployed for 4 months, which really upset him and he, '*Hated doing nothing and was determined to find work*'.

As he points out, '*I cannot live properly on £41.00 benefits and hated not paying full board to my parents. I just cannot sit about doing nothing and was always on websites looking for work. Nothing was going to stop me finding work, although it is hard to find around here, so I knew I needed help*'.

As a 'local lad', he heard about the project being run in his local Community Centre and quickly enrolled. He passed the forklift courses on offer and within 2 weeks found employment as forklift truck driver in a local distribution centre. He now earns up to £260.00 per week.

He has no doubts the project helped him find work, *'It is local, free and is just what local employers are looking for. Sam (IT Learner Support Worker) was spot on and in addition to delivering part of the programme, helped me find details of jobs and vacancies. He helped me with application forms and built up my confidence prior to the interview. There should be more of this for others looking for work and I would without doubt recommend it to others.*

I have a job, nice clothes and my self-confidence is really high!

Case Study 2 John

John is 19 years old and is local to the area. He left school with no significant qualifications. He achieved NVQ Level 1 Catering and NVQ Level 2 Hot & Cold Pastry Preparation. Apart from time working for an agency, he was unemployed for around 2 years. His average benefits were £45.00 pw.

As he says, *'I hated not working, particularly as I could not give my mum proper board. I was bored and did everything I could do to get a job'.*

He has done voluntary work, which has helped prove to employers that he is committed and can demonstrate good time keeping. He spotted the project when he visited the Community Centre. *'It was just right for me. It topped up my skills. It gave me a confidence boost and Sam helped me locate vacancies and apply for jobs'.*

John is now employed full time at a food processing company and is waiting to take the forklift truck driving course. *'I am now earning up to £250.00 per week and I have brought myself a scooter so I can get to work and have just brought a lap top, so I can become better on computers. I plan to take driving lessons, so I can share my dad's car. I am feeling so good now. I pay my mum proper board and help my dad out sometimes as he is out of work at the moment. I have no worries, no debt and a good job. I feel free and good and would without doubt recommend the course at the Community Centre to others. It is just what is needed and Gordon Brown should make sure they go on for a long time'.*

Case Study 3 Clive

Clive is 19 years old and is local to the area. He left school with 5 GCSEs, leaving to work self-employed for 2 years in partnership with his Grandfather, as a Landscape Gardener. This ended due to a lack of contracts / work and he became unemployed receiving £45.00 pw benefits.

This went on for 3 months until he saw the project advertised at the Community Centre. He says, 'It was a turning point for me. It was free and local and it was just what I needed. Sam was so helpful and even dropped me off and picked me up when I went to do the forklift truck training. I completed the course and after 3 months or so, with Sam's help filling in application forms and CV writing, I got a job in the fill room at Buckingham Foods. I now earn up to £300.00 per week and there will be an opportunity to become a forklift truck driver. This project is just what is needed and there should be more of them. Everyone has been so helpful and is able to refer you to others when you need more help'

7.8 Value for Money

In financial terms, based on total funding for this project, it has cost just **£6,435.00** to support each of five CED residents into employment.

In relation to the ERDF financial investment, it has cost just **£3,187.00** to support each of the five residents into employment.

7.9 Partner Agency Involvement

We are grateful to **Mark Bruckshaw**, Area Housing Manager, William Sutton Housing, who took time to meet and outline why his organisation is so supportive of the project and the Bancroft Community Association.

He explains, *'It's about working in partnership and supporting **local** people deliver **local** solutions. Whilst Glascote Heath is an area of deprivation, we have no problem in filling properties on the Bancroft Estate where the Community Centre is based. Because of such effective community involvement and resultant community spirit, incidences of anti-social behaviour are low compared to other areas and residents seem very happy to live here.'*

We provide the Community Centre at a pepper corn rent to the Association and there are no plans to change this. We were delighted to part fund the project and have no doubts of its success. It is about delivering such projects within the community, so people can receive local support, without the requirement to travel to unfamiliar areas.



We are currently supporting the Bancroft Community Association in upgrading and refurbishing the Community Centre, which will ensure even more of the same. By working locally we are all able to quickly identify needs, fill gaps that others cannot fill and deliver what is needed and valued by local people.

Photo: Mark Bruckshaw (far right) and members of the Bancroft Community Association (centre), Sam Dodds (far left), client and site Architect.

7.10 Bancroft Community Association

Kate Warlow-Hughes, Chair of the Bancroft Community Association and founder member has no doubts why the project has been so successful.

'It is because we are delivering what local people need to get a job. We live here and have noticed that there are so many distribution centres that require people with IT skills and forklift truck driving skills in particular.

There is no doubt that Sam Dodds (IT Learner Support Worker) has played a significant role, as he has the skills and attributes that clients require. It is not just about putting on courses, it is about building up trust and understanding and having the patience to sit with someone and help them search for jobs, write CVs and complete job applications.

Key to it all is having a local facility. A lot of people are reluctant to move off this estate and do not initially have the confidence to attend courses across town and in Colleges. They value peer support and working with people they know and trust.



Kate points out that it has not been easy to get where they are now, *'At the beginning when we were forming the Association, no-one wanted to listen to us and getting funding was almost impossible. But we did not give up and have learnt the skills required to submit funding submissions and sit on various multi-agency groups. We are now aiming to secure the IT Learner Support Worker post and build on the success of the project'*.

Photo: IT Facilities at the Bancroft Community Centre

7.11 Links to Glascote Heath Locality Plan

There is compelling evidence that this project has played a role in tackling issues highlighted within the Glascote Heath Locality Plan (see section **5.3**):

Unemployment statistics for August 2007 show that there were 1,095 claimants for the Glascote Heath area, which constitutes nearly 16% for the whole population of Tamworth. Of these, 135 were unemployed, 555 sick a disabled. 185 lone parents and 215 on other benefits.

There is a common belief among community and partnership organisations that there is a need to engage with more people to break this trend and improve people's aspirations.

7.11 Summary

It is clear the project has broadly met the outputs required by the principal funder. Indeed requirements in terms of CED residents employed and gaining qualifications have been exceeded. Overall project aims have without doubt been achieved.

We are also impressed with qualitative outcomes, as the project has made a positive impact on client's lives. This is expected, as apart from clients achieving employment, self-esteem and confidence has without doubt risen.

As case studies highlight:

- *'He [Sam Dodds] helped me with application forms and build up my confidence prior to the interview'*
- *'I have a job, nice clothes and my self-confidence is really high!'*
- *'I feel free and good'*

Wider Impacts will include:

- A more stable local community, as those who may have been involved in anti-social behaviour are meaningfully employed / occupied and more likely to positively engage within their local community
- Improvements to the local economy as clients such as Brain, John and Clive spend their earnings on locally sourced consumables
- Enhanced confidence, capacity and capability of the Bancroft Community Association, as members hopefully build on such success and taken on even larger, more ambitious projects and initiatives

8.0 Best Practice / Lessons Learnt

8.1 Introduction

We have been interested to learn why this project has been a success in terms of quantitative requirements and qualitative impacts. We have therefore taken time to gain such understanding and what lessons can be learnt that may advise and inform others looking to fund / support and deliver similar initiatives.

8.2 Best Practice

It is clear that the success of this project is as a result of:

- Being **locally based**, delivered from a neighbourhood based Community Centre - in a 'fun' and 'safe' learning environment
- Being delivered by a **local community** (Bancroft Community Association), who have clearly established local '**need**' and most significantly local '**opportunity**'
- **Matching what local employers require** – local people trained in areas such as basic skills (numeracy and literacy), IT and forklift truck driving
- **Free training**, which includes the forklift truck courses
- **Tailored, individual support**, aimed to meet the aims and requirements of **individuals** rather than a generic 'catch all' course
- Being delivered by a **dedicated** and **committed** IT Learner Support Worker (Sam Dodds)

Most significantly, it seems that details of the project have been spread by 'word of mouth' in the local area. There is evidence that members of the community have been looking out for each other; for example, letting friends and family know about a resource (the project) and the fact it can help individuals at a time of particular need and concern / worry.

There is strong evidence that the project has been valued by clients (see **table 4**), with the vast majority of former clients recommending the project to others and suggesting that the project continues for others to take advantage of (see case studies at **7.7**).

It is significant that such findings mirror similar research we have carried out in other areas of the United Kingdom. For example:

- **Youth Works project**, in Wildmill, Bridgend South Wales (Wider Impact Consultancy 2006)
- **Learning & Employment for Parents / Carers**, in Tyldesley, Shakerley, Wigan (Wider Impact Consultancy 2008)

Copies of our evaluation of both projects can be found on the news pages at www.widerimpact.com

8.3 Lessons Learnt

We have not found a compelling case to change anything about the project. All those we interviewed and surveyed have delivered positive feedback. Based on identified 'good practice', we take note of the following:

1. Organisations such as Housing Associations, local authorities and other key stakeholders are well placed to provide funding, 'in kind' resources, information / data, advice and experience to locally based organisations such as the Bancroft Community Association.
2. There is value in 'delegating' local people to research, develop and deliver projects / initiatives that are aimed at supporting local people in areas such as:
 - a. Increasing confidence
 - b. Building self-esteem
 - c. Enhancing employment prospects

3. There is no doubt that such projects / initiatives work well when delivered in a local environment and from a resourced community based resource such as a Community Centre.
4. It is important that support is tailored, to meet the needs and requirements of individuals.
5. Support should be flexible and adaptable and delivered by people who are committed, dedicated and understand how individuals are feeling at any particular moment in time during their 'journey' towards employment, or meeting personal objectives.
6. We are concerned that the project has ended, with no evidence of continuation. Such initiatives are often dependent on such short-term, 'one off' funding, and fail to build on what has worked and what can work in the future.
7. It would be useful if this project could be treated as 'pilot' that has proved worthy of future investment, either by similar grant funding, and / or in collaboration / partnership with local employers.
8. We feel that the Bancroft Community Association have the potential to play a significant role to play in the delivery of the Glascote Heath Locality Plan (see [5.1](#)), and should be treated as contributing stakeholders and potential delivery agent.

9.0 Summary of Findings

9.1 Summary of Findings

Linked to commission terms of reference:

1. The project has broadly met the requirements of the principal funder and has exceeded requirements in some areas.
2. The project has without doubt proved 'value for money'.
3. The project has achieved project aims.
4. The project has met the requirements of clients.
5. The Bancroft Community Association are worthy of future funding to support the development and delivery of similar projects in the future.
6. There is evidence of 'good practice', which could be replicated in other areas of the United Kingdom and beyond.

10.0 Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

Based on our research, we are pleased to make the following recommendations concerning the delivery of this project and potential replication.

1. All those involved in the conception and delivery of this project should be commended.
2. Particular mention is made of **Sam Dodds** (IT Learner Support Worker), who has displayed high levels of understanding, energy and dedication, aimed at supporting clients into training and / or employment.
3. Efforts should be made to secure the long-term employment of Sam Dodds (currently retained on a short-term contract).
4. Copies of this report should be forwarded to key local stakeholders, in particular those responsible for delivering the Glascote Heath Locality Plan.
5. Consideration should be given to funding / delivering similar projects from the Bancroft Community Centre.
6. Such projects should continue to be delivered by the Bancroft Community Association, supported by key local stakeholders.
7. Consideration should be given to direct financial investment / partnership support from local employers into such projects.
8. The project demonstrates 'good practice' and consideration should be given to 'celebrating the successes' of this project in the local media and at a multi-agency event at the Bancroft Community Centre.

11.0 Conclusions

Wider Impact Consultancy is pleased to produce an extremely positive report on a project that is achieving aims and has without doubt delivered 'value for money'.

We are most impressed that local people (the Bancroft Community Association) have collaborated with local partner agency members such as the William Sutton Housing Association to create and continue to develop a first class training resource within a **local community**.

Not satisfied with such a remarkable achievement, members have carried out an impressive needs / opportunity analysis and obtained additional resources to successfully deliver an innovative project that has resulted in local people enhancing their skills and achieving employment in local industries.

This is without doubt one of the best examples of 'good practice' we have been privileged to evaluate in recent years.

It is therefore important that local and national stakeholders and funders take note of this important and innovative project and organisations such as the Bancroft Community Association, and ensure they continue to receive the resources to continue such excellent and worthwhile work. Without doubt, Bancroft Community Association members:

- Know what they are doing
- Have the energy, skills and experience to deliver such projects
- Achieve what they set out to deliver
- Deliver 'value for money'
- Have the resources required to deliver such projects
- Have the potential and ambition to deliver 'more of the same'

As a locally based organisation they understand the needs and requirements of **local** people and have the means, resources and will to meet such needs.

As highlighted in this report, it would be useful if this project could be treated as 'pilot' that has proved worthy of future investment, either by similar grant funding, and / or in collaboration / partnership with local employers.

This would be a wise move, as there is compelling evidence that this project has played a role in tackling issues highlighted within the Glascote Heath Locality Plan (see section 5.3):

Unemployment statistics for August 2007 show that there were 1,095 claimants for the Glascote Heath area, which constitutes nearly 16% for the whole population of Tamworth. Of these, 135 were unemployed, 555 sick a disabled. 185 lone parents and 215 on other benefits.

There is a common belief among community and partnership organisations that there is a need to engage with more people to break this trend and improve people's aspirations.

In conclusion, it would be a travesty if lessons are not learnt from this project at local, regional and national levels.

There seems little doubt that there is an on-going and fruitful future for neighbourhood based initiatives such as the Glascote Heath Employability Project and we trust we have supplied such evidence in this report.

We are delighted to commend the project and thank those who contributed to this report.

Appendix A



Thank you for taking the time to complete this short questionnaire, which will be used as part of an evaluation of the training and support you have received at the Bancroft Community Association Community Centre.

In anticipation, thank you for your support. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this survey.

Personal Information	
Name
Post Code
Contact Telephone Number
Gender	Male / Female
Age
Qualifications / Certificates held <u>prior</u> to receiving training at the Bancroft Community Association	
Qualifications / Certificates held <u>after</u> receiving training at the Bancroft Community Association	

Question 1

Why did you take up training at the Bancroft Community Association?

Question 3

Have you got a job or job offer since attending the training?

Yes / No

Question 4

Have you taken up further training since attending this training opportunity?

Yes / No

Question 5

How would you rate the following since attending the training? (1 is low – 5 is high)

My self esteem has risen 1 2 3 4 5

My knowledge of computers / IT has improved 1 2 3 4 5

My chances of getting a job have improved 1 2 3 4 5

The training was useful and relevant to me 1 2 3 4 5

I would recommend the training to others 1 2 3 4 5

Anything else you wish to add (please continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary)

For further information about this survey, can be obtained from Edwin Lewis, Wider Impact Consultancy on 0845 165 0491, or email edwin@widerimpact.com

...measurable results
to help avoid expensive mistakes.

widerimpact
Innovators in Regeneration & Community Well Being

Widerimpact Consultancy

Unit 103
Staffordshire University
Business Village Stoke
72 Leek Road
Stoke On Trent
ST4 2AR

0845 165 0491

www.widerimpact.com