



DEVELOPMENT IN
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

CASE STUDIES

WORKING WITH
DEVELOPMENT IN
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Business Support
Sustainability
Consultancy
Social Value
Asset Transfer



How we're helping social enterprises make a difference in the real world

OUR CLIENTS



“ The final development plan showed that by year three **we would create nine full time jobs.**”



“ The **business plan** captured where the organisation was and where it should be going.”

Our mission is simple:
do **good business** and
create **social value**

As a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee, 100% of our profit is reinvested into achieving this purpose and helping our customers to succeed.

Development in Social Enterprise provides bespoke business support and consultancy services for social enterprises, voluntary sector and charity clients including front line organisations, infrastructure bodies, consortia partnerships and housing associations.

We help them to solve business problems, manage change, develop trading capability, increase sustainability and enable them to survive and thrive in a challenging and dynamic environment.

Here you'll find examples of some of the organisations and partnerships we've worked with and how our advice, training and consultancy services have delivered tangible outcomes.

OUR IMPACT

“ We clicked with DISE immediately. **Our ideas were explored in detail**, uncovering potential problems, recommending smarter ways to maximise income whilst reducing our environmental impact.”

4



The BEST Network

6



GMCVO

8



Affinity Sutton

10



The Digbeth Trust

12



Castle Vale Pool Partnership

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Focusing on the bigger picture can be a struggle in any business. When the market is moving rapidly, it's even harder to keep up and find the time for forward planning.

Employment and training contracting specialist, The BEST Network, asked us to assess future market potential and their place within it all.

“The business plan captured where the organisation was and where it should be going. It asked pertinent questions and offered an independent perspective that we trust and value.”

Ray Walker, chief executive, BEST Network

The BEST Network

Since launching in 2009, The BEST Network has delivered large contracts totalling £7m, reaching over 10,000 unemployed people in Birmingham. "The requirement for a new strategic framework had been identified but there simply wasn't the capacity to work on it internally," says Ray Walker, chief executive.

With funds from the BIG Assist infrastructure support programme, BEST engaged Development in Social Enterprise (DISE) to undertake a review of its governance structure and work with members and the executive team to inform strategic decision-making. Putting in place a robust business plan – often required by contracting authorities – was also a key priority.

"Development in Social Enterprise approached the work through a series of facilitated workshops involving internal and external stakeholders and quickly demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of our market, our member base and the funding environment which gave us great confidence in the end product.

"The business plan captured where the organisation was and where it should be going. It asked pertinent questions and offered an independent perspective that we trust and value.

"We are now elevating our profile and engaging in far more strategic conversations with funders and implementing key recommendations made by Development in Social Enterprise such as expanding our membership beyond Birmingham and exploring new markets such as health and social care."

The BEST Network has since used the business plan as a working document – updating and revising it in response to market changes.

"The business and the market doesn't stand still, but the groundwork to bring our thinking up to date and provide us with a solid base from which to move forward has been really valuable."

Mission

To undertake activities that make an impact on the most disadvantaged through employment and training pathways delivered by member organisations.

Services

A consortium of over 80 charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises forming a supply chain to deliver training, learning and employability programmes in local communities.

Business challenge

Development of a business plan for strategic decision-making and to attract high value contracts.

Established

2009

Legal structure

Company limited by guarantee.

www.thebestnetwork.org.uk

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“DISE understands our sector and what we are trying to achieve. The whole experience has been very valuable and we can **highly recommend** their services to organisations looking for **professional social enterprise expertise.**”

Jon-man Cheung, GMCVO databases manager

GMCVO Databases provides bespoke Client Relationship Management (CRM) solutions for charities, voluntary organisations and small businesses, helping them to work smarter.

Development in Social Enterprise (DISE) began working with GMCVO Databases in 2014 when they approached us to look at their business growth strategy.

GMCVO Databases was born when its parent charity (Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation) identified the need to better manage its own data and struggled to find a suitable and affordable IT solution. They came across open source CRM software designed specifically for the voluntary sector – CiviCRM.

GMCVO

Using CiviCRM, GMCVO was able to design and build its own database and soon discovered there were other not for profit organisations looking for tailor made solutions. Within two years the demand for CRM services made it necessary to incorporate 'GMCVO Databases' as a social enterprise subsidiary of GMCVO – one of few CiviCRM specialists in the country.

"We wanted the benefit of external expertise from consultants who would enable us to understand how best to grow the business and attract higher value contracts," says Alex Whinnom, chief executive of GMCVO.

A business and marketing plan had already been prepared which was reviewed as part of the brief.

"DISE were very thorough and held a series of meetings with our management team followed by detailed analysis of our core offer, customer base, pricing strategy, financial performance and projections. We also received an in-depth report on the market for our services looking at market size, competitors, how to reach our ideal

customers and where the opportunities lie. It was a sizable piece of work and so incredibly useful that we are planning to work with DISE again to help us appraise other GMCVO businesses."

DISE worked very closely with Jon-man Cheung, GMCVO databases manager throughout the project: "Having an independent perspective on our plans has not only improved our understanding of the business and our market, it has also increased our confidence and confirmed that we have been moving in the right direction.

"We are now in the process of implementing recommendations which we hope will enable GMCVO Databases to take off over the next couple of years.

"DISE understand our sector and what we are trying to achieve. The whole experience has been very valuable and we can highly recommend their services to organisations looking for professional social enterprise expertise."

Mission

To provide outstanding CRM services to enable clients to work smarter and increase capacity.

Services

CRM systems (design and build), consultancy, support and training, website integration.

Business challenge

To assess and recommend models for business growth.

Established

Trading since 2009 and incorporated 2013.

Legal structure

Limited company wholly owned by GMCVO, a registered charity.

www.gmcvodbases.org.uk

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Affinity Sutton is one of the largest independent providers of affordable housing in England with over 160,000 residents living in 57,000 properties across 122 local authorities, from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to Plymouth.

Within their Alum Rock residential community, Affinity Sutton had a void workshop that they wished to utilise for the benefit of residents, local community, and the wider social housing tenants across the Birmingham area.

A group of interested stakeholders were brought together to explore the potential for establishing Birmingham Reuse and Social Housing (BRASH) – an initiative focusing on furniture reuse and recycling, and uniquely, engaging with a number of social housing providers as part of their voids process.

“The final development plan showed that by year three **BRASH** would create nine full time jobs.”

Affinity Sutton

Development in Social Enterprise (DISE) and Social Enterprise West Midlands were appointed to refresh an earlier feasibility study exploring these options and work with interested parties to progress the idea which aimed to provide affordable furnishing options for vulnerable and financially excluded individuals and families moving into social housing, create training and employment opportunities locally, and reduce void clearance costs for social housing providers.

The study was informed by visits to existing reuse and recycling enterprises to uncover the challenges, success factors and gather organisational and logistical knowledge.

Wider consultation served to quantify the demand for the proposed service. Housing providers identified their current arrangements for recycling of goods, number of void properties managed, purchase of furniture starter packs and interest in the partnership opportunity.

Findings were presented to the BRASH stakeholder group which enabled an open dialogue as to the best way forward in terms of achieving stated objectives, financial viability, partnership development, appropriate service model and

likely route to market. An 'information to market' document was also issued to those who had participated in the consultation research, inviting expressions of interest for the proposed service which led to new conversations with a wide range of commercial and social enterprise partners.

This approach taken by DISE and Social Enterprise West Midlands has enabled the 'right conversations with the right people' to take place and Affinity Sutton is now in discussions with a range of Birmingham-wide organisations to carry BRASH forward.

The final development plan showed that by year three BRASH would create nine full time jobs with void service delivery savings of around £27,000 in year one and £83,000 per annum in subsequent years. An estimated 900 families would benefit from low cost furniture solutions by year three. Furthermore, partner housing organisations could reduce void furniture to landfill by 30% over three years.

Mission

To reduce poverty particularly for social housing tenants.

Services

Affordable re-used furniture for social housing tenants. Training, volunteer opportunities and employment for local residents.

Business challenge

Feasibility study, partner engagement and business planning.

Established

1994

www.affinitysutton.com

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“DISE was the obvious choice for us as they understand our sector, our city, and have **the expertise and ability** to constructively challenge our thinking and communicate effectively with everyone.”

Guy Kibbler, operations manager,
The Digbeth Trust

Chasing new market opportunities in the absence of an underpinning strategy to guide and focus efforts is a risky approach – one that our client, The Digbeth Trust, was keen to circumvent.

“There was a feeling inside and outside the organisation that we were all things to all people and we couldn’t succeed that way.

The Digbeth Trust

"We were anxious not lose opportunities but found ourselves being pulled in all sorts of directions, diluting what we are good at," says Guy Kibbler, operations manager of The Digbeth Trust.

The Digbeth Trust had successfully applied to the BIG Assist programme and chose to redeem their vouchers with Development in Social Enterprise (DISE) to produce a three year business plan.

"DISE was the obvious choice for us as they understand our sector, our city, and have the expertise and ability to constructively challenge our thinking and communicate effectively with everyone.

"They worked in a collaborative way with our people which led to a shared vision for the way forward – one that everyone could buy into.

"The business planning process both confirmed and better defined our niche – working with small groups and individuals in the areas of supporting social entrepreneurs and social

enterprises, and consortia development work, particularly around older people's services.

"It was very useful to have an external perspective on the situation and an experienced business consultant with the strategic head space to look objectively at the future, which can be difficult when you're busy with day to day operations."

Confident on the way forward, The Digbeth Trust has since approached DISE for follow-up support to implement the new business plan.

Guy Kibbler adds, "The next step is to develop new consortia development structures and identify bidding opportunities. Many tenders and contracts are framed in a way that exclude smaller groups but we have the skills and track record to help them access contracts they are best placed to deliver.

"With DISE on board we're heading in the right direction."

Mission

To support the development of a diverse, influential, effective, independent, mutually supportive and sustainable voluntary and community sector across the West Midlands.

Services

Social enterprise development; consortia development; accountable body (bidding, contracting, monitoring) for health related services and older people's services.

Business challenge

Focusing on markets with the greatest potential, utilising core strengths and competences.

Established

1986

Legal structure

Charity and Company Ltd by Guarantee.
Trading subsidiary Community Pathways CIC.

digbethtrust.org.uk
communitypathways.org.uk

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Castle Pool, a public swimming pool in East Birmingham, had been under threat of closure for five years due to financial pressures at Birmingham City Council.

During this time the Castle Pool Users Group, a community led group, including Boldmere and Kingsbury swimming clubs, successfully campaigned to keep the pool open despite mounting council cuts.

When the council made the pool available for community asset transfer in January 2014,

“DISE consulted partners throughout the whole process and liaised with council directorates, legal services and accountants to **develop a strong business proposal.**”

Judy Tullett, trustee, Castle Pool
Community Partnership

Castle Pool

Castle Pool Users Group registered its interest and engaged the services of Development in Social Enterprise (DISE) to develop a business plan to test the viability of asset transfer.

“We had worked with DISE on the asset transfer of Castle Vale Library which was successfully brought into community ownership, so when the opportunity to bid for Castle Pool presented itself, we had no hesitation in approaching DISE to support us,” says Judy Tullett, a trustee of Castle Pool Community Partnership.

Building on structural surveys and feasibility work previously undertaken by the Castle Vale Neighbourhood Group, DISE focused on how the facilities could be better utilised for community sports and recreational activities whilst generating income to achieve financial sustainability.

“To secure community buy-in and make it stack up financially, DISE helped us explore new operating models, options for staffing, legal structures and governance and suggested we seek specialist advice on insurance and other aquatic requirements.

“A detailed market analysis of the area and the types of activities that would appeal

to residents who don’t currently use the centre proved very useful in shaping our thinking. DISE consulted partners throughout the whole process and liaised with council directorates, legal services and accountants to develop a strong business proposal.”

The legal formalities to conclude the asset transfer took place in January 2015. Castle Pool is now managed by Castle Pool Community Partnership under a long term lease of 25 years.

“We are the proud owners of a lovely pool which is regularly used by swimming clubs and 19 primary schools, providing us with a steady income.

“There’s a large room overlooking the pool with enormous potential for non-water activities such as fitness classes and family parties. The centre will be run by volunteers and sessional staff but we also hope to offer apprenticeships and many other new pathways for people to get involved in community sports.

“This is the first time a swimming pool in Birmingham has undergone asset transfer; it’s a very exciting time for us all,” says Judy.

Mission

A thriving community run and managed leisure facility for all ages and abilities.

Services

Public swimming; community swim programme; amateur sport; fitness classes; recreation.

Business challenge

To develop the business case for community asset transfer of Castle Pool.

Established

2014

Legal structure

Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

OUR CLIENTS

We have lots more case studies to demonstrate our work helping social enterprises to thrive. Visit: www.disecic.org/case-studies

Development in Social Enterprise offers high quality and value for money services for new and established organisations that need fresh and independent eyes on their businesses and future opportunities. Our business advisers are SFEDI (Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative) qualified and have significant experience of working in and supporting the civil society sector.

We are a Social Enterprise Mark holder and were shortlisted for the Trailblazing Newcomer Award by the RBS SE100 Index which demonstrates and recognises Development in Social Enterprise as one of the top performing social enterprises in the country in terms of our social and economic impact.

We are proud to have worked with:

- GMCVO (Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation)
- BVSC (Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council)
- The Digbeth Trust, Birmingham
- Nova Wakefield District
- The BEST Network, Birmingham
- Birmingham Shopmobility
- The Mighty Creatives, Leicester
- hvoss (Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Service)



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- Solihull Council
- Telford & Wrekin Council
- Renewal Christian Centre, Solihull
- Disability Resource Centre, Birmingham
- Three Trees Community Centre, Chelmsley Wood
- pers, Batley
- Worcester Volunteer Centre
- Affinity Sutton, Birmingham
- Castle Vale Tenants and Residents Alliance
- Support Staffordshire
- Brighton & Hove Community Works
- Enrych, Warwickshire



“ DISE has been consistently **professional, positive, and sensitive to the needs of our organisation** as it faces a challenging future. We have been given the tools to enable us to get to grips with a number of major issues, and look forward to implementing them.”

pers, Batley

“ With **DISE** on board we're heading in **the right direction.**”

OUR VALUES

Like our clients, Development in Social Enterprise is a values-driven organisation. Our values are at the heart of everything we do. We aim to:

- Act professionally with integrity and maintain confidentiality
- Ensure our customers get value for money
- Transfer skills and knowledge for lasting impact
- Be transparent and open in everything we do
- Create social value.

We are proud to be a Social Enterprise Mark holder and practice the values and approach to business that we advocate.

» EXPERT AND
PROFESSIONAL
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BUSINESS ADVICE,
CONSULTANCY
AND TRAINING

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DEVELOPMENT IN
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»FAST FORWARD YOUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

**Expert and professional social enterprise
business advice, consultancy and training.**

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