



Hertfordshire CVS Impact report

*A snapshot of the work and impact of the
Hertfordshire CVS Group*

MAY 2011

Contents

Foreword.....	2
Introduction	3
Hertfordshire CVS Group (HCVS)	3
Role of a CVS	4
How has the Hertfordshire CVS Group been fulfilling this role?	5
Herts CVS in numbers	6
Specialisms: A closer look	8
CVS for Broxbourne and East Hertfordshire	8
Community Action Dacorum.....	9
Hertsmere CVS	10
North Hertfordshire CVS.....	11
Stevenage CVS.....	12
St Albans CVS	13
Three Rivers CVS	14
Watford CVS.....	15
Welwyn Hatfield CVS	16
Herts CVS in pictures.....	17

Foreword and acknowledgements

The Hertfordshire CVS Group aims to promote and support voluntary action by connecting and developing individuals, groups and organisations. We also seek to influence decision makers to ensure the voices of the most needy and vulnerable in Hertfordshire are heard. This report gives a flavour of what we have achieved in the last 12 months and demonstrates how we provide affordable, quality services that meet the needs of the voluntary sector and strategic partners across all three sectors.

In the current financial climate we are under great pressure to re-invent ourselves, provide even better value for money, whilst maintaining high quality standards. On a day-to-day basis we are actively campaigning at every level, trying to protect or minimise the risk of cuts to front line services.

It is no longer good enough to go quietly about our business of delivering great services to over 3,000 voluntary and community organisations across all districts of Hertfordshire; we need to get better at promoting the impact of our achievements if we are to get the message across that the CVS has the widest reach, the biggest audience and gives the best return on investment.

Our services are vulnerable to cuts and we seek your help to ensure investment in the Hertfordshire CVS Group is adequate to realise the *Big Society* in Hertfordshire. Without a local CVS many groups and individuals would be forced to turn to more expensive public sector sources of help or at worst simply fold.

We are recognised for our innovation and flexibility. Alongside plans to work more closely together and with other charities in joint commissioning and shared physical resources, we are also exploring how we can break down traditional boundaries between public, private and voluntary sectors to develop services that meet the needs of the local communities.

My thanks to all who work so hard to keep the CVS ship afloat. We achieve the impossible through the efforts of our staff, volunteers and trustees. We are indebted to the financial contribution of Hertfordshire County Council, many district and borough councils and supporters from across all sectors.

Please contact me if you have any ideas for improvements to our service or ways we could be working more closely together over the coming year.



Laura Cronshaw

Chair
Hertfordshire CVS Group

Introduction

Hertfordshire CVS Group (HCVS)



CVS for Broxbourne and East Hertfordshire



Community Action Dacorum



Community Action Hertsmere



North Herts CVS



St Albans CVS



Stevenage CVS



Three Rivers CVS



Watford CVS



Welwyn Hatfield CVS

Role of a CVS

The three main functions of infrastructure organisations (including CVSs) are¹:

- To **connect** individuals, groups and organisations
- To **develop** the work and capacity of these individuals, groups and organisations
- To **influence** decision-makers.

The National Association of Voluntary and Community Agencies (NAVCA), has created a [Quality Standard](#)² to help infrastructure organisations achieve excellence in the provision of their services.

The diagram below illustrates the role of infrastructure in each area:



Source: NCVO 'Value of Infrastructure' Programme

¹ NCVO ['Value of Infrastructure' Programme](#)

² NAVCA [Quality Award](#)

How has the Hertfordshire CVS Group been fulfilling this role?

Hertfordshire CVS Group (the network of 9 independent CVS agencies in Hertfordshire) plays this role through its member CVSs. Despite the patchy and unequal funding, capacity and services across the districts, the group works in close collaboration for greater efficiency and to provide a minimum standard of infrastructure services to all districts³.

In addition to the core offer, each individual CVS has strengths and specialisms which provide added value to the countywide infrastructure offer. HCVS provides support and services to the Public Sector, the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and, to a lesser extent, the Private Sector.

Examples of the CVSs at work:

Develop

- **Need:** Voluntary opportunities for local youth in St Albans.
- **CVS intervention:** Creation of the Dragons Apprentice, a project that brings young people, local business and voluntary organisations together for mutual benefit.
- **Result:** Capacity building of the sector; increased youth volunteering; and a contribution to local Big Society efforts.

Connect

- **Need:** LSP engagement with the community in Watford.
- **CVS intervention:** Proposal for new sub-group to oversee local strategies for VCS, equalities, cohesion and engagement.
- **Result:** Creation of Watford Together for strategic liaison between the statutory sector and VCS.

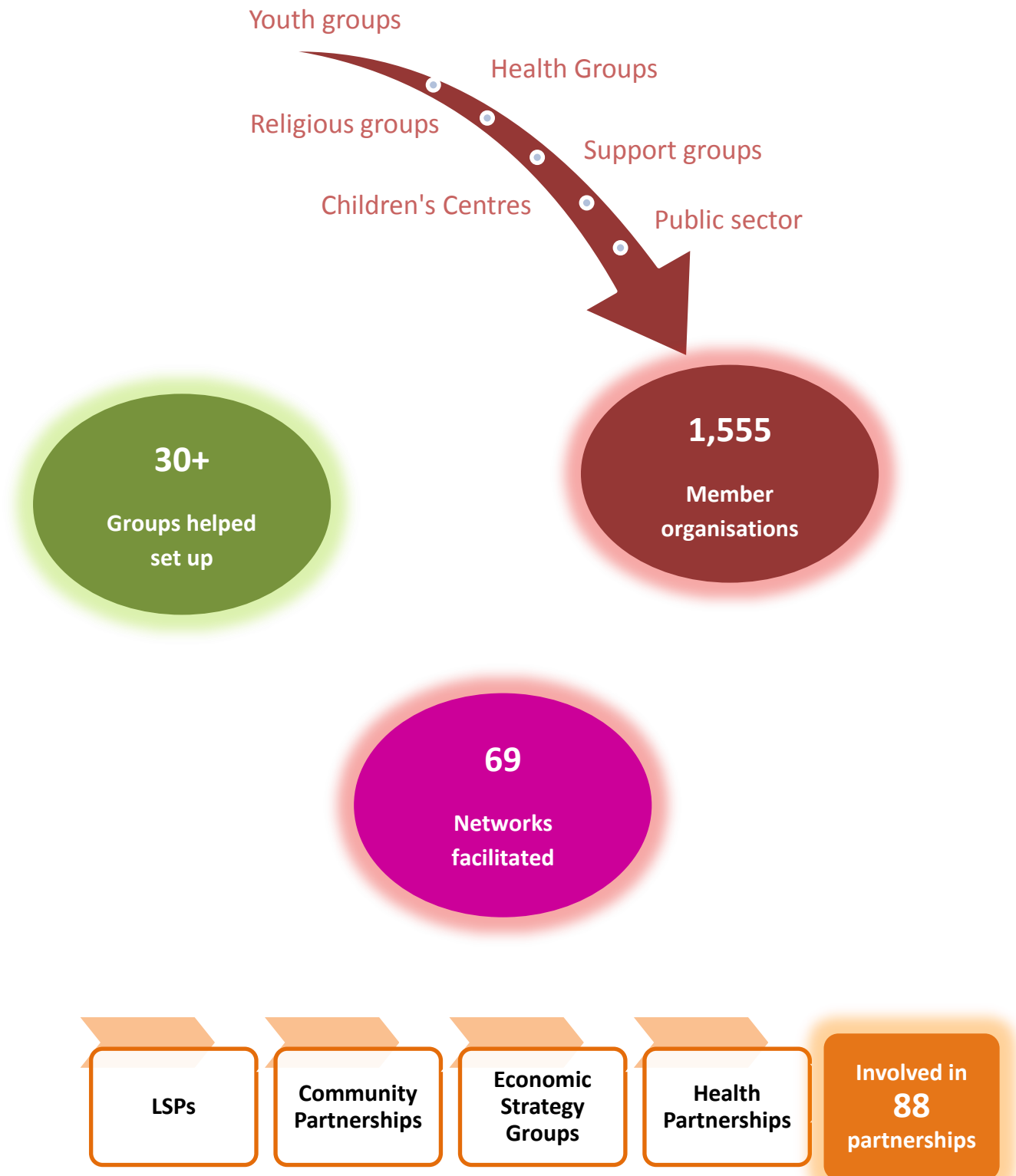
Influence

- **Need:** VCS Strategy for Welwyn Hatfield.
- **CVS intervention:** Led the collaborative process of the drafting, consultation and finalising of a VCS strategy.
- **Result:** A district VCS Strategy and a greater understanding of the role and importance of the VCS.

³ Herts CVS Group Strategic Plan 2008 - 2012

Herts CVS in numbers

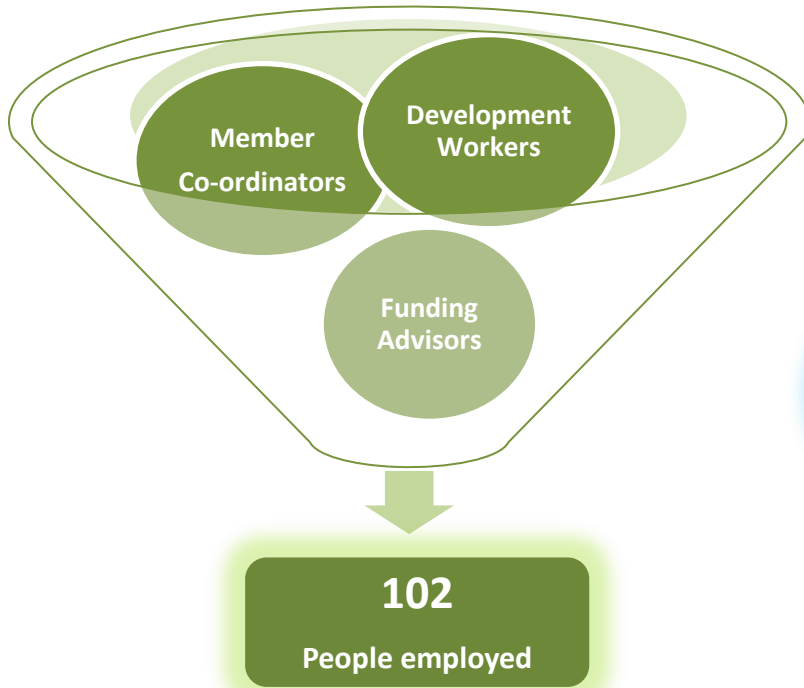
For the 12 months to 31st December 2010





In contact with
3,000+
Organisations

Helped members raise
£1m +
Worth of funding

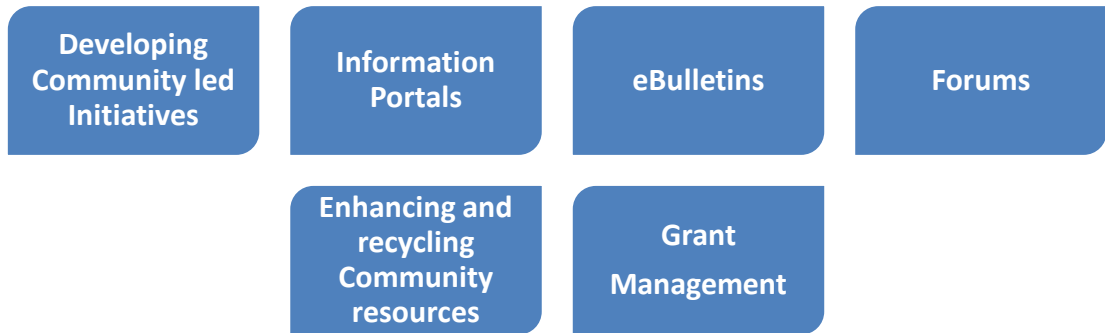


274
Volunteers

Specialisms: A closer look

CVS for Broxbourne and East Hertfordshire

Strengths



Having the help of the CVS has been invaluable for the work we do with our residents. The CVS has really helped us to expand the range of support and advice we offer.

Peter Walkinshaw, Broxbourne Housing Association

I am impressed with the CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts, particularly by the wide range of initiatives and effective support they deliver within the communities they serve. Their role will become increasingly important as we all try to deliver services with significantly reduced resources. I am sure the CVS is well placed to make the new Government's Big Society a reality in Herts.

Councillor Jane Pitman, Hertfordshire County Council

Did you know?

CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts:

- Produces 16 eBulletins per annum, reaching over 1,000 recipients.
- Has set up and commissioned several grant pots in partnership with the local Council.
- Saw over 200 people going through its training courses in 2010.
- Was represented at more than 50 partnership meetings in 2010.
- Has experience of setting up a Residents' Association.

Community Action Dacorum

Strengths



I owe a lot to you. ... It started with advice from your office and that is when I did the constitution etc and the first jobs I got were from a list you gave me. I deeply appreciate [your help] and I hope I will get the opportunity to show my gratitude.

Diana, Masai Cultural Arts

We are delighted to be doing business with Herts Interpreting and Translation Service. We have gained a service which combines high quality at lower costs together with a number of other added benefits.

Doug Hook, Herts Probation

Community Action Dacorum at work

CAD:

- Is the lead partner (with responsibility for delivery, staff and premises) for Dacorum Horizons, a one-stop adult learning shop. The project ran 360 taster sessions in 2010 and has assisted 4,500 since its inception in 2009.
- Manages a Corporate Social Responsibility project working in collaboration with local businesses and charities.
- Runs an Interpreting Service.
- Runs a Shopmobility project.
- Works in collaboration with CVSBEH on the Migration Impact Fund project.

Hertsmere CVS

Strengths

Community Learning, Training & Development

Small Groups Development

Publicity and Design

Community Engagement & Development

Building [the] capacity of [sporting and cultural] VCS organisations is essential to ensure that there are opportunities for people to take part in sport and cultural activities. We have an excellent working relationship with CAH that allows us to try to meet the needs of those diverse organisations in an effective way.

Ed Sandham, Hertsmere Borough Council

As partners on the Local Strategic Partnership, CAH has been able to raise awareness of the importance of working with the VCS and forged a positive working relationship based on mutual trust and understanding with the local authority and other partners. We are able to easily exchange information, share resources and work collaboratively on very successful projects.

Rebecca Dunsmore, Hertsmere Borough Council

Did you know?

Community Action Hertsmere:

- Provides a consultancy service. Clients include Aldwyck Housing Association.
- Runs a Community Shop which provides outreach services to local agencies such as the CAB.
- Provides a CRB processing service.
- Is the liaison between the local authority and the local VCS.
- Has managed and developed a vast range of children, young people and family projects.
- Was one of the 'Take Part' pathfinder projects and has now been asked to deliver this service across the Borough.

North Hertfordshire CVS

Strengths



Thank you so much for all the help you gave us when we applied for funding. The funding received has made such a difference to us. Our patients and volunteers are delighted and it will allow us to be a bit more ambitious over the next few months!

Hitchin Stroke Group

North Hertfordshire CVS provides a useful link between local community and voluntary groups and decision-makers in the Council. They are valuable partners as we seek to improve everyone's quality of life throughout the district.

Policy & Scrutiny Manager, North Herts District Council

Did you know?

North Herts CVS:

- Provides CRB checks in various areas around the county.
- Runs a Time Banking service.
- Is contributing to Community Strategy priorities by delivering on a project (in collaboration with the local council) to enhance the public's understanding of the local authority and democracy.
- Manages the community grant pot on behalf of the Local Strategic Partnership.
- Is the accountable body for the Herts Community Assembly, the membership body for Hertfordshire's VCS.

Stevenage CVS

Strengths



CVS has provided invaluable support to me as a Council Officer and together we have supported new organisations through their early development stages. We have also supported more established groups who were facing problems.

Colleen Murphy, Stevenage Borough Council

Having someone to talk to in depth about the various avenues a charity can take in terms of growing and grant applications [makes a difference]. I think it is essential I really value the service.

Jasmin Gupta, Cancer Hair Care

Stevenage CVS at work

Stevenage CVS:

- Has conducted a number of surveys and consultancy work for external clients.
- Has experience of providing payroll services.
- Led a working group that presented a paper and case studies to the Practice Based Commissioning Group in response to poor links between GP practices and the VCS.
- Is one of the four CVSs that host and support a Small Groups Development Worker.
- Represents the Herts CVS Group and the wider VCS on Hertfordshire Forward, the county LSP.

St Albans CVS

Strengths



We have been successful with our Leicester application and have been awarded the full £5000 that we applied for. This was the application you smartened up for us, so many many thanks. What would we do without you!

**Salpi Gulbeckian Special Olympics
St Albans**

St Albans District Council (SADC) confirms its support for the sector and CVS at existing levels as well as working with officers to identify transition and new funding to support the CVS in its work with charities and community groups at risk from cuts.

SADC Officer

St Albans CVS at a glance

Examples of past and current work:

- Building Better Boards: A project which recruits potential Trustees for local charities from the business community.
- Dragons' Apprentice: A three-way partnership between young people, local businesses and the voluntary sector.
- Trinity Community Project did not have their Health Contract renewed. In response, St Albans CVS worked with the group around planning for a changing business model, re-modelling the service, recruiting new volunteers, and seeking alternative funding sources.
- The in-house Volunteer Centre has contributed to the college-commissioned Executive Forum; presenting on courses for unemployed executives as well as at University of Hertfordshire retirement seminars.

Three Rivers CVS

Strengths

Project Management

Finance and Funding Advice

Website Skills

Trustee Support

CVS staff are very helpful to someone like me who needs a lot of guidance, and the fact that the CVS staff actually came out and promoted the service outside normal working hours was certainly going above and beyond the call of duty.

Paul Blackwell, Rickmansworth Sports Club

The CVS have worked closely with the Local Strategic Partnership to develop volunteering opportunities targeted at people who are unemployed. This has developed effective partnership working with Job Centre Plus, providing much needed volunteer placements in community settings in areas of deprivation within the District. The CVS have been flexible and responsive to the priorities of the LSP and community.

Andy Stovold Partnerships Officer, TRDC

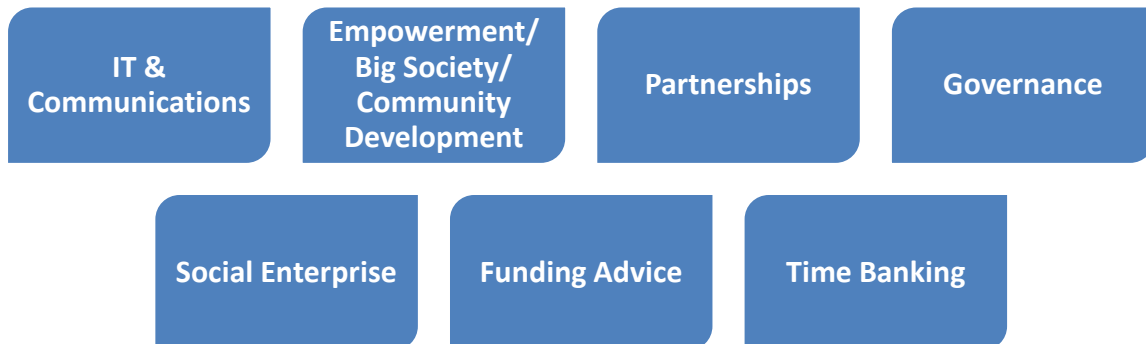
Did you know?

Three Rivers CVS:

- Runs a joint training programme with Watford CVS.
- Has an in-house Volunteer Centre.
- Manages the Three Rivers Voluntary Sector Training Service.
- Manages the local Trustee Network.
- In collaboration with youth volunteering body Vinvolved, ran 'Rags to Riches' a one off project that engaged youth in the recycling and turning unwanted, used clothes into trendy fashion items. Proceeds of the fashion show were donated to charity.

Watford CVS

Strengths



CVS has a good track record, especially helping smaller organisations, producing ideas, getting people involved, being proactive, inclusive, multi-cultural and multi-faceted, quick to respond to changes, a quality service, friendly, a great bunch committed to us.

Member organisation

We see Watford CVS at the centre of a web influencing policy and delivering solutions ... if Watford CVS wasn't there, we'd have to invent it!

Funder

Watford CVS at work

- Watford CVS manages Holywell Community Centre on behalf of the local Council.
- When it became clear that the overall level of statutory funding would decline, Watford CVS approached Watford Borough Council to request short-term additional resources to help groups adjust to the new environment. WBC recognised the need, and a Resilience Officer started work in May 2011.
- Watford CVS runs a joint training programme and joint bookkeeper appointment with Three Rivers CVS. There is a possibility that the joint working will extend to IT.
- Watford CVS represented the VCS on the countywide Cohesion Strategy group which was responsible for producing the Herts Cohesion Strategy.

Welwyn Hatfield CVS

Strengths



CVS has been a tremendous advantage and of great benefit to Kingdom Light Centre. They put us through areas where we had no clue and were very supportive and encouraging. It is good to know you are always there when help is needed.

Femi, Kingdom of Light

I have been involved in a number of projects involving the community in Hatfield. Working in partnership with the CVS on these projects has always been a good experience. All the staff are keen, hardworking, but not lacking a sense of fun in what they do. Without them the projects would have been less successful.

Geoff Collins , Aldwyck Housing Association

Welwyn Hatfield CVS at a glance

- WHCVS were the lead partners in the drafting and finalising of the Welwyn Hatfield Voluntary Sector Strategy.
- WHCVS provides Equality and Diversity Training and has experience of hosting a countywide Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Partnership.
- The CVS has, in the past, provided volunteers to assist with community clean up work.
- WHCVS is currently exploring opportunities for shared back office services.

Herts CVS in pictures



Training



Transport scheme



Networking



Awards



Community sign-posting



Conferences



Youth Projects



Volunteering



Exhibitions



Meeting room hire



Library



Forums

With thanks to the nine CVSs that constitute the Hertfordshire CVS Group:



Report prepared by Ethel Bangwayo

Hertfordshire CVS Group

May 2011

