

## THE DIGBETH TRUST LTD

### PLATFORM PROJECT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to the Platform project, a partnership project funded by the Big Lottery Fund with 9 partners which aims to increase access by small VCS organisations across Birmingham as a whole to infrastructure support by building on the platform of their existing strengths and capacity.

The lead partner and accountable body is The Digbeth Trust, a registered charity that has been capacity building small voluntary and community organisations in Birmingham and the West Midlands since 1986.

The other partners are:

- Birmingham New Communities Network (BNCN) – a coalition of over 60 migrant and refugee community organisations in Birmingham, which promotes new approaches to integration, social inclusion and cohesion.
- Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS) – a women's empowerment organisation - through Knowledge information and opportunity WAITS touches the lives of women changing their future by enabling them to overcome barriers so that they are able to make change individually or collectively for themselves, their families or their communities.
- Disability Support Group (DSG) – a small business run by Disabled People for Disabled People
- Birmingham Association of Neighbourhood Forums (BANF) – the organisation that represents and supports active citizens involved in 70 Neighbourhood Forums across Birmingham who work together to improve the quality of life of people in their neighbourhoods
- Community Network for Birmingham (CN4B) – the umbrella body aiming to bring together and promote community networks in Birmingham.
- Centre for Community Research (CfCR) – supports the development of research capacity in organisations and communities by development of training, mentoring and ongoing support for groups and individuals interested in becoming 'community researchers'.
- The Chamberlain Forum (CF) – neighbourhood think-and-do-tank based in Birmingham which helps communities and public services work together to make better neighbourhoods.
- The Guide Neighbourhoods (GN) – a good practice network of Birmingham's 3 Guide Neighbourhoods

The Digbeth Trust Board of trustees are all members of the Trust and they employ a staff team to carry out the Trust's aims and objectives. **Encouraging partnership is one of the Trust's strategic aims and it is currently working in another partnership with 2 other organisations, 1 of which is statutory.**

The background to the project is the research undertaken by Birmingham ChangeUp Consortium in 2006/07 when 549 Birmingham groups were surveyed for their infrastructure needs. It was found that a range of capacity building needs existed for small VCOs, including specialist support needs (such as development of research and needs assessment skills) and it is these that the **Platform** project seeks to

address. Platform will specifically address the Birmingham ChangeUp Strategy objective of supporting the effective delivery of infrastructure support that reduces inequality and is more reflective of the diversity of Birmingham communities.

The strategic context for the partnership is that small VCOs working with marginalised communities (of place and interest) have particular difficulty accessing basic infrastructure support in Birmingham – and this difficulty is greater when it comes to being able to access specialist support. Platform will address this by bringing together 9 organisations which work with specific communities to offer this specialist support.

The project will be delivered by engaging individuals to undertake development work from 6 of the 9 partner agencies, and by offering beneficiaries training, networking and access to specialist consultancy support.

The resources for this project include the Development Workers and support from existing staff and volunteers including management committee members in partner agencies.

The costs for activities are funded by the grant from the Big Lottery Fund and some overheads and in-kind support from some of the partners.

The financial implications of the project are set out including all sources of income.

The partnership's marketing and communications strategy posits using our existing networks and communication routes, including how we will seek to influence policy and procedures in other organisations.

There will be comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of the project as it progresses with quarterly reports to be made to the Digbeth Trust, and an annual evaluation to be carried out. This will include the involvement of beneficiaries

We have evaluated the risks involved in the project and have made contingency plans.

We have supplied the funder with supporting information including the Digbeth Trust's financial policy.

We have given details of the staff posts we will employ/engage to undertake development work in the most appropriate manner ensuring best value for the funding and the maximisation of output delivery.