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Evaluation of the Effectiveness and Development Potential of the East Brighton Seniors Community Project

**Undertaken on behalf of CDHA
November to December 2003**

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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Management:

That CDHA continue to actively manage the Seniors Community Project

That any strategic plan for the project takes into account the need for an organisational structure, and recording systems, that avoid inappropriate reliance on the availability, skills, knowledge and dedication of one project worker

1.2 Development:

That the Management Committee (with appropriate support from CDHA and EB4U) produce a three year strategy for the Seniors Community Project, which identifies key developments based on the opportunities identified, cross referenced with what is known about the project's strengths

That CDHA and EB4U (and other future funders) recognise the distinct nature of home visits to vulnerable older people as a support rather than a community development function and fund and staff any such delivery accordingly

That the Management Committee, CDHA and EB4U work to raise the profile of the Seniors Community Project locally and city wide:

- working through the elected members structure and relevant local planning fora
- utilising the expertise of the EB4U Media and Communications Team

1.3 Funding:

That EB4U and other potential funders recognise the significant achievements and positive impact of the Seniors Community Project in East Brighton

That EB4U consider the provision of an additional two years funding for the Seniors Community Project to allow CDHA to ensure a stable transition to a mixed funding base

That future EB4U funding is subject to an agreed fundraising strategy being implemented by CDHA to widen the resource base of the Seniors Community Project, in line with the Management Committee's strategic goals

That for funding of the project to extend its geographical base, other – city wide and statutory - funding sources are considered

That for funding of the project to develop new educational activities, the Learning and Skills Council and, related, Lifelong Learning funding bodies are considered

That for other new developments, non statutory funding sources are considered

That CDHA ensure that funding applications make best use of existing research highlighting the positive social and health impacts of community activities and action by and for older people

1.4 Partners:

That the project develops its contacts and mutual referral systems with key service delivery partners targeting older people (the Carers Centre, Age Concern and others) in order to maximise positive impact on residents lives

1.5 Targets:

That the output targets relating to home visits to older people are reviewed by CDHA and EB4U as to its appropriateness to the aims, objectives and outcome targets of the Seniors Community Project

That CDHA and EB4U consider the following as more appropriate outcome targets for the project as it stands to work to:

- numbers of older residents involved in planning or delivering activities
- numbers of older residents participating in community activities through the project
- numbers of older residents participating in physical activities for the first time through the project
- numbers of older residents sustaining their involvement in either the physical or social activities for a medium to long term (to be defined) period

That outcome targets are reviewed periodically as the project develops, to ensure that they remain appropriate

2. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE SENIORS COMMUNITY PROJECT

The project was started in October 2001 and is funded until September 2004 by East Brighton for You (EB4U).

The project is based in the Winterbourne Centre in East Brighton and has one full time Community Development Worker and one half time administrator. It is managed overall by CDHA.

The aims and objectives of the project are outlined in its promotional material as follows:

Aim

- To improve the quality of life of older people in the EB4U area through the creation and integration of community based facilities

Objectives

- To find out what older people want to improve the quality of their lives
- To facilitate and organise a range of activities
- To seek to use older people as a resource
- To locate vulnerable older people
- To work with other organisations involved with older people

The wide range of activities facilitated or supported through the project includes:

- Lunch clubs
- Exercise groups
- Trips and social activities
- Tai Chi classes
- Swimming groups
- Bereavement support
- Cyberseniors Computer Club

It promotes its activities through a variety of methods including regular high profile "forum" meetings, newsletters, leaflets, word of mouth and home visits by the Community Development Worker.

The project has grown rapidly in membership and exceeded all targets for participation by older people in activities and involvement in their planning and delivery.

3. AIMS AND SPECIFIC FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

3.1 Aims of the Evaluation:

- To assess the impact of the CDHA Seniors Community Project in East Brighton and the reasons for this
- To assess the extent to which the project has met, or is meeting, its aims and objectives and targets as outlined in the EB4U agreement
- To make recommendations for the future funding, management and development of the project, including future targets, partners and exit strategy if appropriate

3.2 Specific questions to be addressed by the evaluation:

- Has the project improved the quality of life for people over 55, and if so, to what extent
- Has the project improved social integration opportunities for people over 55 in East Brighton, and if so, to what extent?
- What are the key lessons learnt from the first phase of the project and of these which are transferable within and outside of CDHA?
- What are the options for increasing numbers participating
- How well is the project perceived to be performing in terms of:
 - Value for money?
 - Effectiveness of staff?
 - Outcomes (predicted and “spin off”)?
 - Outputs (predicted and “spin off”)?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the project?

4. METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION

- 4.1 Key written information on the project was reviewed, including:
- the original funding application
 - monitoring returns
 - the most recent user feedback survey
- 4.2 The external evaluator produced evaluation tools based on the agreed aims of the evaluation and the specific questions to be answered. These were:
- Focus group questions for active members (attached as appendix 2)
 - Interview questions for face to face consultation with the management committee; the relevant CDHA manager; the Community Development Worker (attached as appendix 3)
 - Basic questions for one to one informal consultation with members of the Good Timers (attached as appendix 4)
 - Telephone interview questions for the representative of the funding body: EB4U (attached as appendix 5)
- 4.3 The external evaluator met with the following to gain qualitative feedback regarding the project from their diverse perspectives:
- Seniors Community Project Management Committee
 - CDHA Regeneration Co-ordinator responsible for the Seniors Community Project
 - The Seniors Community Project Development Worker
 - A focus group of active members of the Seniors Community Project, randomly selected by the evaluator
 - Randomly selected members of the Good Timers group, established and supported by the Seniors Community Project
- In addition, a telephone interview was conducted with one management committee member who could not attend the consultation meeting.
- 4.4 A full list of those consulted with as part of the evaluation is attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.5 A telephone interview was undertaken with a key representative of the funding body (EB4U).
- 4.6 The findings of the above were then analysed through a SWOT analysis and cross referenced with the specific questions to be answered.
- 4.7 This was then used to inform this report, including its conclusions and recommendations for action.

5. CONCLUSIONS OF THE EVALUATION

5.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the Seniors Community Project

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent Community Devnt Worker with strong community development skills and personal commitment • Strong reputation, including with funding body • Clearly meets local funding priorities through the EB4U Health Strategy • Unique provision in area • Strong culture of resident involvement in planning, coordination and management of the project • Strong emphasis on user consultation re need • High levels of ownership of members • High levels of satisfaction of members providing feedback • Numbers involved in community activities significantly exceed targets • High positive impact and excellent and sustained outcomes reported by members • Range of activity addresses both physical and mental health, at both preventative and reactive levels • Evidence of individuals increasing level of activity once established as members • Management systems appear to enable project to function successfully overall 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently relies on one, time limited funding source only • Lacks long term strategy • Marketing: has not been good at highlighting its own significant achievements, impact and value to date • Partnership working with, and mutual referrals between, complementary agencies could be improved • Project has consistently underachieved against the target to visit vulnerable older people in their homes, yet this target has been neither addressed or challenged (although it has been reduced) • Administrative support has historically been unreliable • Danger of over reliance on one worker and their personal commitment • Danger of project staff being over stretched by increasing demands
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB4U communications team could assist the project in gaining further local recognition including positive media coverage • Expansion of the existing project delivery to a wider geographical area (perhaps city wide) • Expansion of the range of delivery of the project to include a befriending scheme for housebound and vulnerable older people • Development of peer or community education initiatives • Development of work to address mental health issues for older people • Potential for formal links with the planned geographical multi agency teams • Potential for project integration into Healthy Living Centre activities which are based on a community development model • Potential for continued funding by EB4U as part of a mixed resource base, including as match funding for non statutory applications • Is clearly indicated as part of the EB4U strategy for next 3 years • Development of Management Committee to take more of strategic management function 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EB4U funding is almost certainly time limited • EB4U unlikely to continue as sole source of funding • Rising activity costs require additional resources • Wide range of possible opportunities means that over expansion is possibility unless growth is carefully and actively managed by CDHA and the Community Devnt Worker

5.2 Project Staffing and Cost Effectiveness

The project is perceived by all stakeholders consulted to be highly cost effective. Although it is well resourced, the high numbers participating and the majority of members involved in more than one activity make the unit cost lower than many comparable projects where numbers participating are not as high.

All stakeholders agree that the current Community Development Worker for Older People is highly effective and a major asset to the project. She is clearly an experienced community development worker with high levels of skill, motivation and enthusiasm. The new administrator also receives praise from members and the management committee for her professional yet accessible approach.

5.3 The impact of the CDHA Seniors Community Project in East Brighton

It is clear that the project has an excellent impact of the physical and mental well being of older people who are participating. All who were consulted reported examples of how their personal well being had improved as a result of becoming involved.

Furthermore, the numbers involved are very high – significantly and consistently over targets. From this it can be concluded that the positive impact overall on older people in East Brighton is high.

It is clear that the project has had a significant positive impact on the social integration of older people in East Brighton, both for those participating at a basic level and for those who are more involved. Self reporting by those involved is a clear indication of this, as are the findings from the project's own user feedback survey.

It was not possible within this evaluation to quantitatively identify the extent of quality of life improvement but the quotations in FINDINGS below are a testimonial to the consistent and often life changing positive impact on members consulted by random selection.

The representative of EB4U interviewed confirmed that she was pleased with the project impact in the area. A stronger emphasis on impact (i.e. outcomes) rather than outputs is planned for future commissioning and monitoring by EB4U, and this can only enable the project to demonstrate more clearly its significant achievements.

5.4 The extent to which the project has met, or is meeting, its aims and objectives and targets as outlined in the EB4U agreement

The EB4U agreement does not specify aims and objectives for the project, which were formalised at a later date by the project worker with a member of the Management Committee and are outlined above on page 5: SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE SENIORS COMMUNITY PROJECT. These are, however, fully consistent with the expectations implicit in the EB4U agreement.

The objective of finding out what older people want to improve the quality of their lives appears to be very well met, with all those consulted providing unsolicited examples of meaningful consultation and action taken to address identified needs.

The objective of providing a range of activities is also clearly well met. Activities cover mentally and physically stimulating activity, and all address social isolation. Because activities are provided to address identified needs the range is in theory as broad as members or potential members want it to be. The project appears to be truly responsive to member's views and wishes and the main restriction on the range of activities appears to be worker time and activity funding.

The objective of using older people as a resource in the community is exceptionally well met. Members are encouraged and supported to become involved in the planning, management and delivery of activities at a level which is appropriate to their situation and needs. This type of empowerment objective requires a skilled approach to identifying and addressing the educational, motivational, confidence and skills related needs of members in order to support them in taking on a management or co-ordination role. It is an area where many similar projects fail. This is clearly a particular skill of the Community Development Worker for Older People and a major achievement of the project, which should be highlighted and celebrated by CDHA and EB4U, and which should be noted by potential funders.

The objective of locating vulnerable older people is partially met, in that:

- On the one hand, at current rates, approximately 30 people per year in this category receive home visits by the Community Development Worker for Older People
- On the other hand this number does not meet output targets in the funding agreement and has consistently underachieved against these targets

Whilst this objective is a valid one, it is important that it is seen for what it is: an objective in place to meet the overall aim of the project. In other words, it is a means to an end and there is a question as to what extent attaching high figure targets to this objective is appropriate. The conclusion of the evaluation is that, as the project targets stand, this objective is not well met, but perhaps the target in question should be revised.

This does not mean that the objective of identifying vulnerable older people, with the clear purpose of engaging them in the project should not remain, but that more realistic figures are attached to any related targets.

CDHA and EB4U should also consider that home visiting may require more support skills than community development skills and may in the future be better provided within a distinct home support element of the project (e.g. befriending scheme).

The objective of working with other organisations appears also to have been partially met. The Community Development Worker for Older People clearly has good links with other local community development projects, but many members consulted did not know the existence of local services that may be useful to them e.g. the Carers Centre for Brighton and Hove; various schemes and services delivered by Age Concern Brighton. It is recommended that this is an area of education that members may gain benefit from, whether immediately or in the future. Improved knowledge of relevant services as a result of involvement in the project is also a significant outcome and should be highlighted in funding applications and monitoring reports.

6. FINDINGS OF THE CONSULTATION

6.1 Desk Review of Project Documentation:

6.1.1 Funding Application and Monitoring Returns

The original funding application and subsequent monitoring returns were collated and analysed to provide an overall picture of the extent to which targets were being met.

The main output target that was consistently not fully met was that of home visits, including those to vulnerable older people. By the third year of the project, targets for home visits specifically to vulnerable older people were being exceeded (following downward revision).

Numbers of residents contacted who go onto participate in a community activity have been consistently on or over target since the second quarter of the project. As the project has gone on, this target has been exceeded to an increasing extent. By the third year of operation this target was exceeded by six times, and continues to exponentially increase.

Numbers of members who go on to be volunteers or involved in the management of the project has also exceeded targets.

Numbers of community activities developed as a result of identified local need has also consistently exceeded targets since the second quarter.

Numbers of residents attending training or education as part of their involvement in the project consistently exceeded targets.

Targets for community surveys and other user consultation initiatives have been met since the second quarter of the first year.

Numbers of other community organisations with which links have been made have exceeded targets overall.

6.1.2 Community Forum Survey September 2003

The questionnaire (attached as Appendix 6) was completed by 64 residents of East Brighton who attended the Forum.

Of these 52 (81%) said that they had attended activities supported by the Seniors Community Project.

50 out of 52 that had attended activities said that they had enjoyed them. 1 person said that they had not, and 1 did not reply to the question.

56 out of 64 respondents said that they had made new friends as a result of taking part in the project activities and 49 said that they felt more a part of the community since attending.

59 out of 64 respondents felt that there was more happening for older people in East Brighton since the start of the Seniors Community Project.

60 out of 64 said that they felt more informed about what was going on in East Brighton since the start of the Seniors Community Project.

Ideas for activities for older people in East Brighton were wide ranging and included:

- More coffee mornings and lunch clubs
- Dance classes and groups
- More social events and trips
- Men's group
- Physical exercise, walking clubs etc.
- Task sharing group

15 people said that they would be interested in starting a new group with support and 8 said that they would be interested in joining the management committee.

6.2 Consultation with Members

Nine members were chosen randomly for consultation, from those attending a Good Timers social event. All but one of them attended at least one other Seniors Community Project activity group.

There was universal agreement amongst those consulted that the Seniors Community Project was highly valuable and had had a positive impact on their own lives and others that they knew.

They all felt that the activity plans and programmes for Good Timers were full and varied and met a variety of needs. They felt that the outings were enjoyable and provided an opportunity for those who otherwise would not get out, to do so.

They all referred, directly or indirectly, to physical and mental health benefits from involvement in the activities:

- *"I look forward to it. It gets me out of the house and gets me talking to people. It is the one time in the week I get to be sociable."*
- *"It's very good. Everyone enjoys it and people who are caring for someone else get a break. This is very important for them to relax and make friends of their own."*
- *"It is a good break from caring. I have a talk and a laugh here and get support. It is marvellous, really excellent. I don't know what kind of state I would be in if this wasn't here."*

- *“It gets me out of the house and gives me something to look forward to. I have an anxiety problem and do not like to leave my house but coming here makes me do it. It is very good for me – otherwise I would not go out so regularly and wouldn’t be so active, with all the walking that I do on trips.”*
- *“I joined this year and have been on six outings. I was very suspicious of it at first but I am really glad that I have joined. It is fantastic - I couldn’t fault it and it has made a big difference to my life and my socialising with people.”*

None of the members could think of any weaknesses of the project or areas where it could improve. They were universally full of praise for the more active members who volunteered to co-ordinate and run the activities:

- *“the volunteers work very hard. They are very good and they are all older people themselves you know – they are just the same as us.”*
- *“the organisation is really good. All the volunteers work really hard for us.”*

6.3 Consultation with Member Volunteers

A group of six member volunteers were consulted (see appendix 1). These six had come forward in response to an invitation sent out by the Community Development Worker for Older People to a sample randomly selected by the external evaluators on the basis of their database record numbers. In this way, the sample was selected in a way that protected the personal information of members and also as far as possible ensured a random selection of contributors.

Between them, they volunteered on the following project activities, either delivering or managing them (or both):

- Cyber Seniors Computer Group
- Lunch Club
- Seniors Leisure Group
- Good Timers Group
- Swimming

Overall, all the group agreed that the Seniors Community Project played a valuable role in improving life for older people in East Brighton. They felt that there had been *“nothing before”* but that now there were real opportunities for older people to be part of activities that were delivered by and for older people, and to become as involved in running these as they wanted to be.

They felt strongly that the project is having a positive impact on individual’s lives and health and gave examples of cases where people where people’s physical and mental health has *“turned around”* since their involvement in the activities.

“you would not believe the difference in his mental state. He goes without his wheelchair now because other members have encouraged him to

start walking and he feels now like he belongs – he is much happier in himself and is part of the group now.”

The carer of the person referred to above agreed:

“you have got to know us to know the difference it has made to both our lives. You can’t imagine otherwise. Our lives are completely turned around and we are both more healthy and more happy for it. The hospital said that he would never come out of his wheelchair and he was sitting at home depressed and down, but now he is walking and driving, and his mental attitude is completely different”

One person in the group stated that she lived in sheltered housing and that she had rarely got out before her involvement with the project. She felt that this was the same for many in similar situations.

They felt that the main strength of the project lay in the way that the Community Development Worker for Older People worked. Specifically, they stated that:

- The Community Development Worker for Older People has instigated new projects based on consultation with local older people and has also supported the few projects that were already existing
- The Community Development Worker for Older People has encouraged people to get involved and take responsibility for the activities whilst providing them with adequate support.

They stated that there was very little activity available for older people in East Brighton prior to the project and there is now a wide range of community provision, and attributed this to the skills and methods of the Community Development Worker for Older People.

The volunteers represented in the group demonstrated a clear vision of the purpose and impact of the project. They appeared to be responsive to identified needs and challenges and gave many examples in the course of the group, of issues that had been raised and how these had been swiftly and effectively addressed.

They identified the following as weaknesses, past or current, of the project:

- That administrative support in the past had been weak but was now good
- Despite volunteer and management committee members taking on an increasingly more active role, one full time community development post and a half time administrator is insufficient to keep the project running and developing and leads to overload of the Community Development Worker for Older People

There were some external factors or elements of service provided by other projects that they felt could be improved. These were:

- The reliability of the minibus provision utilised by the project

- The need for the minibus to return for the “school runs” means that day trips are too short and rushed for older people who “*need to take more time*”
- The difficulty of encouraging people from Moulsecoomb to become involved, thought to be linked to the overall lack of community facilities

With regard to opportunities for development they agreed that there was a need for a befriending scheme but suggested caution, in that such a scheme would require:

- Strong drive from CDHA with regard to establishing funding and adequate worker time to develop it
- Absolute clarity about boundaries and careful training of volunteers in this
- Systems for police checks and references that worked smoothly and oiled the running of it
- Clear indications that there was adequate commitment from older people to volunteer on it

6.4 Consultation with Management Committee

There were six members of the Management Committee in attendance at the consultation meeting (see Appendix 1). An additional member was interviewed by telephone on a separate occasion.

Overall, the members of the Management Committee agreed that the project was highly successful and had achieved a tremendous amount.

Specifically, numbers involved were high (far exceeding targets) and the range of activities people were involved in were wide.

“there is something for everyone if people look”

Their perception was that many older people began their involvement with a more sedentary activity (e.g. a lunch club) but moved on to participate in more physical activity (e.g. exercise classes, trips).

They all agreed that the key to the success of the project to date has been the skills, enthusiasm and dedication of the Community Development Worker for Older People.

To some extent that project has been a victim of its own success, with the Community Development Worker for Older People often overstretched.

There were many examples of the positive health and social impact of being involved in the project and the management committee. These included:

- Having positive life goals: *“something to keep me going; something to look forward to”*

- *“it has given me a sense of what I have achieved and what I can do in the future. I am not just an elderly person – I am someone who can do good in the community.”*
- A sense of political purpose: *“it has made me see that old people have been very neglected and it is important to get them integrated into the community. We are a valuable asset to the community.”*
- Recognising the need for good communication
- Learning to be tolerant of others views and behaviour
- Learning how to deal with people and motivate them
- The development of community and project organisation skills

The main strengths of the project were identified as:

- The excellent work of the Community Development Worker for Older People, who enables the management committee to *“draw on its strengths”*
- The initiative and responsibility increasingly being taken by activity volunteers who are now co-ordinating between each other to avoid clashes in activity timetabling
- The ongoing emphasis on user consultation and identification of need
- The social benefits of involvement at all levels of the project

Particular challenges faced by the project (rather than internal weaknesses) were identified as:

- The need to challenge the apathy of some older people and continually increase every individual’s level of involvement
- The need to address the social barriers that appear to exist between those living in Moulsecoombsecombe and those living in Whitehawk

Weaknesses of the project were identified as:

- That the project is sometimes in danger of being a victim of its own success (for example, a wider range and higher number of activities to meet demand is not accompanied by an increase in activity funding)

The committee representatives saw the main opportunities for development as:

- *“more of what we are already doing because we know it works”*
- *“the same as what we are doing but across other parts of Brighton”*
- *“to carry on finding out what people need and meeting their needs”*
- Possibly a befriending scheme, but this would need to be in the longer term and adequately resourced

The main threat to the project identified by the management committee was that of funding ceasing, without CDHA identifying alternative sources. The other was the possibility that the Community Development Worker for Older People could leave and that the structure is not currently robust enough to sustain a vacancy in this post.

Overall, they felt that the overall management of the project by CDHA worked, and that management and communication had improved with the establishment of the new Regeneration Co-ordinator at CDHA. Key areas for improvement in how CDHA managed the project, based largely on historical experience (but worth noting) were:

- That CDHA should provide more timely and detailed information about issues that impacted on the project
- That in the event of a vacancy in the Regeneration Co-ordinators position, it is essential that CDHA identify a competent replacement and that they attend management committee meetings regularly

6.5 Consultation with Community Development Worker for Older People

The current role of the Community Development Worker for Older People is to undertake the day to day delivery of the project and to lead on its day to day operational management. This includes managing a half time administrative post.

The overall view of the Community Development Worker for Older People is that the project has been very successful. It is an innovative project because it is not focussed on direct service delivery but on developing community action by older people.

She sees clearly that older people are involved in the community activities in much greater numbers than the project targets and a large proportion are involved in decision making and delivery of activities. This perception is completely supported by the monitoring statistics.

Her feeling is that the project is clearly meeting a need in the East Brighton area.

The Community Development Worker for Older People feels that the main strengths of the project include:

- That it is working towards meeting identified community need
- That it is relatively well resourced for its current activities, with the administrative support being invaluable
- That older people are actively involved in decision making about the project overall, and each individual activity

She felt that the main weaknesses of the project were as follows:

- Numbers participating, whilst high overall, could be increased on some activities
- Numbers of home visits are consistently low against targets
- Having one Community Development Worker for Older People limits development and leads to an over reliance on one person. There are no opportunities for peer review and unnecessary pressure on the Community Development Worker for Older People.

- There is a feeling within the Seniors Community Project that EB4U do not fully recognise the value of the project and its essential place within the overall strategy. There is a lack of mechanisms to feed in successes. *“The project is doing really well but no-one knows about it.”*

She felt that the following were key opportunities for development:

- Befriending scheme, perhaps linked to education in some way (“learn and teach” community education model)
- Identifying and addressing the mental health needs of older people, above and beyond reducing social isolation e.g. addressing depression and anxiety
- Scheme to help people stay in their own homes by brokering between an identified need and the practical help required e.g. someone to replace a light bulb; change a washer; take curtains up and down for washing
- To identify and address the educational needs of older people, in the broadest sense (this might include keeping up with technological advances being used in day to day life e.g. introduction of PIN numbers for shop purchases)
- Further integration of exercises to encourage mobility into all groups and activities
- To gain access to more housebound older people: identify their needs and work towards addressing them
- Further development of the confidence of the Management Committee to challenge and take a strategic view of the project’s future

She felt that the main threat against the project was the lack of certainty about funding for the project beyond December 2004 with a very short timescale to develop and implement fundraising strategy.

She felt that management by CDHA had been adequate overall, but vacancies and changes in the Regeneration Co-ordinator’s post had led to difficulties and isolation on her part. She felt that the current new Regeneration Co-ordinator had been supportive and looked forward to CDHA “driving” new developments and fundraising activity from now on.

6.6 Consultation with CDHA Regeneration Co-ordinator

The holder of this post is relatively new and has come into post with both experience in, and commitment to, community development work. It seems from discussion with the Regeneration Co-ordinator that his involvement will be more than what appears to have been very much a “holding” function of CDHA in the past, and will be the “driving” force hoped for by the Community Development Worker for Older People and the Management Committee.

Whilst his experience of the project is time limited, he appears to have gained an insight quickly into the main issues facing the project.

In his view of the strengths of the project include:

- The excellent work of the Community Development Worker for Older People
- The large numbers of older people involved which far exceed targets
- The involvement of older residents on the management committee for the overall project and planning committees for activities

In his view the weaknesses of the project were:

- It currently lacks a long term strategy
- It currently lacks long term resources
- It currently relies on one source of funding, which is in itself time limited

He felt that the main threat facing the project was that the funding is time limited and is unlikely to be increased, or even sustained at the same level in the longer term.

He felt that the key opportunities for the project were to extend the current delivery of the project city wide and to identify other potential opportunities for different work, building on the evaluation findings.

6.7 Consultation with the Funding Representative (EB4U)

The representative of EB4U interviewed is responsible for commissioning projects that contribute to the EB4U health strategy. The strategy aims to improve the physical and mental health of people in the EB4U area. It seeks to achieve this by commissioning projects that have an emphasis on encouraging people to increase their levels of physical activity and improve their level of social integration through access to groups, classes and projects.

Overall the funding representative stated that EB4U were very impressed with the Seniors Community Project and saw it as a key part of their health commissioning strategy.

The funding representative stated that the numbers of older residents involved in community activity through the Seniors Community Project was very high and that she was keen to see the project validated further by an increased emphasis on outcome rather than output monitoring. The emphasis on outputs to date is seen as having been a weakness in the approach by EB4U to commissioning such innovative development projects and this is being actively addressed by the funding representative.

Useful outcome measurements for the future monitoring of the project should include:

- Numbers of older residents involved in planning or delivering community activities
- Numbers of older residents participating in community activities through the project
- Numbers of older residents participating in physical activities for the first time through the project

- Numbers of older residents sustaining their involvement in either physical or social activities through the project, for a medium to long term period

Clearly, as the project develops, outcome measurements should be constantly reviewed to ensure that the project is monitored effectively, and that the range of outcomes that the project achieves is properly highlighted.

Qualitative information should also be collated: testimonies and quotes from members, carers and relatives are a powerful voice for the impact of the project on people's everyday lives and physical/emotional/mental health.

Structures for the gathering and processing of all such monitoring information should be carefully thought through in order to compromise as little as possible the time of the Community Development Worker for Older People and thereby protect the delivery of the commissioned work.

It would be useful for the project Regeneration Co-ordinator to stay informed about existing research which is using new and sustained involvement in physical activity and social activity as proxy indicators for improvements in physical and mental health. Highlighting key points from this type of research will be invaluable in marketing the project to new funding sources, particularly where there is an emphasis on evidence based commissioning.

The funding representative stated that the Green Gym in East Brighton has already done some investigation in this area and may be a useful contact.

The project is viewed positively by EB4U and its continuation has been written into their strategy for the next three years. It is viewed as playing an essential role, which is not duplicated by other projects in the EB4U area, in helping to meet the health strategy targets. It was felt to be very important, however, that the project seek to widen its funding base in the next two years as it is inappropriate and unrealistic for EB4U to remain the sole funding source.

The representative had no particular view about the management of the project by CDHA, apart from that it appeared to be well supported and the worker professional in her input to the work and to inter agency meetings and planning groups.

There was recognition that EB4U projects that are working well may have received less attention from the funding body than those with which there are difficulties. It was re-emphasised, however, that the Seniors Community Project was highly valued within EB4U. The communications team of EB4U could support the Seniors Community Project in getting more recognition of its achievements, particularly through local media coverage, which may also help with raising money from other sources.

In the view of the funding representative, possible opportunities for development are:

- Expanding the existing service city wide

- Formal links with the planned geographically based multi agency teams
- Integration with the EB4U Healthy Living Centre which is working on health issues through a community development model
- Befriending service (although EB4U is unlikely to be able to support this financially)
- Better links with other services to streamline access for older people (e.g. the Carers Network through the EB4U funded Carers Development Worker, employed by the Carers Centre)

Any future funding application to EB4U should indicate clearly:

- Lessons learned from experience and monitoring/evaluation to date
- The forward direction of the project through an explicit strategy owned by all internal stakeholders and taking into account local priorities

**LIST OF CONTACTS FOR CONSULTATION
IN THE EVALUATION OF EAST BRIGHTON SENIORS COMMUNITY
PROJECT**

Members

Michael	Male	60 years plus
Basil	Male	60 years plus
George	Male	60 years plus
Betty	Female	60 years plus
Ruth	Female	60 years plus
Joyce	Female	60 years plus
Maureen	Female	60 years plus
Jean	Female	60 years plus
Pat	Female	60 years plus

Volunteer Members Representatives

Rene	Female	60 years plus
Wynne	Female	60 years plus
Kath	Female	60 years plus
Marion	Female	60 years plus
Lilian	Female	60 years plus
Dot	Female	60 years plus

Management Committee Representatives

Iris Bell (Chair)

Cllr Francis Tonks

Pat Toner

Carole King

Barry Smith

Eric Williams

Professor Peter Lloyd (by telephone)

**Bee Pooley, Community Development Worker, East Brighton Seniors
Community Project, CDHA**

Bill Lucas, Regeneration Co-ordinator, CDHA Housing Association

Hilary Powlson, Health Strategy Manager, EB4U

Focus Group Questions for Active Members

Evaluation of the East Brighton Seniors Community Project, CDHA

Date of Interview:

- 1. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent, how would you score the project for its achievements in East Brighton?**
 - 1a. What are your reasons behind the score you have given?**
- 2. Apart from issues raised in the above question, what would you say are the main strengths of the project?**
 - 2a. What are these views based on?**
- 3. Apart from issues raised in the first question, what would you say are the areas where the project could improve?**
 - 3a. What makes you think this?**
- 4. What are the main lessons that you have learned from the project so far about how it should be run?**
- 5. How would you like to see the project develop in the future in terms of the following:**
 - 5a. What service it provides and how it provides it?**
 - 5b. How the project can increase the numbers of people getting involved?**
- 6. What do you see as the main opportunities for the projects development?**
 - 6a. In relation to the priorities identified above?**
 - 6b. Other opportunities**
- 7. Apart from issues raised in the first question, what would you say are the main threats to the project's future development?**
- 8. Any other comments, clarifications etc.**

**Focus Group Guide Questions for
Management Committee, Community Development Worker and
Regeneration Co-ordinator**

Evaluation of the East Brighton Seniors Community Project, CDHA

Date of Interview:

- 1. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent, how would you score the project for its achievements in East Brighton?**
 - 1a. What are your reasons behind the score you have given?**
- 2. Apart from issues raised in the above question, what would you say are the main strengths of the project?**
 - 2a. What are these views based on?**
- 3. Apart from issues raised in the first question, what would you say are the areas where the project could improve?**
 - 3a. What makes you think this?**
- 4. What are the main lessons that you have learned from the project so far about how it should be run?**
- 5. How would you like to see the project develop in the future in terms of the following:**
 - 5a. What service it provides and how it provides it?**
 - 5b. How the project can increase the numbers of people getting involved?**
 - 5c. How the project might be funded in future**
 - 5d. How the project should be managed?**
- 6. What do you see as the main opportunities for the projects development?**
 - 6a. In relation to the priorities identified above?**
 - 6b. Other opportunities**
- 7. Apart from issues raised in the first question, what would you say are the main threats to the project's future development?**
- 8. Any other comments, clarifications etc.**

**Basic questions for one to one informal consultation
with members of the Good Timers Group**

Are you involved in any other groups or activities besides Good Timers?

What are they?

What do you like about being involved in Good Timers?

Are there any things you don't like about being involved in Good Timers?

What are they?

What do you think the Seniors Community Project (or Good Timers) does well?

What do you think it could improve on?

Have you got any ideas for other things that Seniors Community Project could do?

What are they?

Is there anything that worries you about what might happen to the Seniors Community Project?

What is it/are they?

1. Overall, what is your impression of the Seniors Community Project
 - 1a. What are your reasons for this?
2. Apart from issues raised in the above question, what would you say are the main strengths of the project?
 - 2a. What are these views based on?
3. Apart from issues raised in the first question, what would you say are the areas where the project could improve?
 - 3a. What makes you think this?
4. Do you have any views on the appropriateness of the EB4U targets for the project? What are they?
5. How would you like to see the project develop in the future in terms of the following:
 - 5a. What service it provides and how it provides it?
 - 5b. How the project can increase the numbers of people getting involved?
 - 5c. How the project might be funded in future
 - 5d. How the project should be managed?
6. Apart from issues raised in the first question, what would you say are the main threats to the project's future development?
7. Any other comments, clarifications etc.