



co-operative thinking
fuelling a lasting culture
of social enterprise

Brighton and Hove Social Enterprise Strategy
Better for people, planet *and* profit

August 2008



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Brighton and Hove Social Enterprise Strategy | commissioned by Brighton and Hove City Council
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Credits:

Research, Feasibility Consultancy and Wiki Development | Oliver Maxwell

Communications Consultancy, Concept and Design | Simon Bottrell at 7creative



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Foreword

Putting Brighton and Hove at the forefront of social enterprise in the UK

Brighton and Hove has a national reputation for creative thinking and groundbreaking initiatives. In October 2007 we were acknowledged as the UK's most sustainable city in Forum for the Future's Sustainable Cities Index, ranking top of the country's 20 largest cities according to three criteria – our 'environmental impact', 'quality of life' and 'future proofing'.

Social enterprise, with its ability to contribute to economic prosperity alongside broader social and environmental benefits, has a vital part to play in enhancing this reputation. A citywide strategy to support its growth would illustrate the City Council's long term commitment to developing social enterprise – in line with a central Council corporate objective to protect the environment whilst growing the economy – putting Brighton and Hove at the forefront of social enterprise initiatives in the UK.

We already have a solid foundation of social enterprise on which to build, with 2007 research¹ suggesting that there are over 110 social enterprises in the city, with a collective turnover of about £21 million. They currently employ around 1,260 people and use over 3,000 volunteers a year. Around 33% of organisations in the city support employment or training for groups at risk of labour market disadvantage, and 52% employ a

staff member from these groups, whilst nearly 30% have a core environmental purpose.

These established social enterprises are already having an important impact which can be built upon and supported towards long-term viability – better for people, planet and profit.

With people from many walks of life now actively looking for practical ways to improve their social and environmental impact, the challenge would appear to be how to harness the energy around this wave of awareness. With a vehicle such as social enterprise, which so ideally fits these aspirations, all that may be needed is a considered sense of direction and focus: a strategy to realise the potential and build a lasting culture of social enterprise.

Social Enterprise: a route to sustainable economic prosperity whilst meeting social needs and protecting the environment. We can see enormous potential in this sector and believe that Brighton and Hove has an opportunity to create a groundbreaking model to inspire others, locally, nationally and internationally.

Brighton and Hove Social Enterprise
Strategy Steering Group June 2008

Executive Summary

A strategy to create a lasting culture of social enterprise in our city

Social Enterprise is in ascendance at the start of the 21st century, attracting widespread interest and support whilst redefining the way that we think about business – with its positive impact on our communities, our fragile environment and significant contribution to the economy.

This document outlines a Social Enterprise Strategy for the City of Brighton and Hove, designed to increase the levels of support needed to create a larger and more robust community of social enterprises. This will both improve the quality of and access to existing support and enable new support needs to be identified and provided.

The central proposition is the formation of a facilitated membership network which brings together social enterprise, private, public, community and voluntary sectors. The network will promote co-operative thinking, a collaborative, mutually beneficial approach to working together, which will fuel a lasting culture of social enterprise.

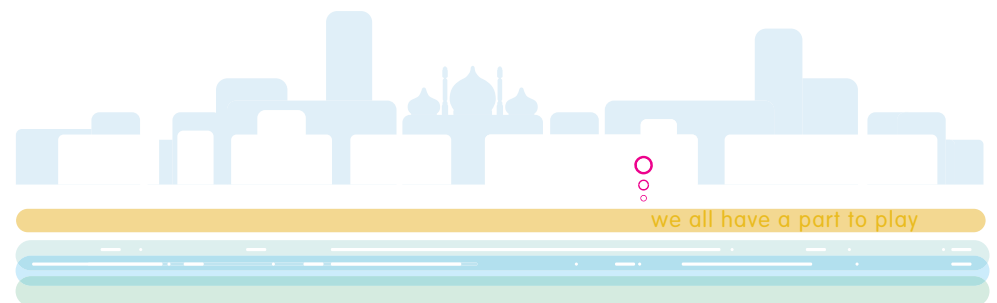
A social enterprise in its own right, staffed by trained partnership planners and guided by an independent Social Enterprise Steering Group, this Network Organisation would be at the heart of the strategy – which also includes the establishment of a Brighton & Hove Social Enterprise Centre to provide a focal point for the membership network along with training and business development facilities and incubation space to accommodate start up enterprises.

Initial studies show that over a 5 year period in-kind investment could be provided to the city with a value in excess of £3.2 million, whilst Network membership can generate an annual cash surplus to support innovative social entrepreneurial projects.

Whilst these short term objectives form the basis of a business plan, longer term cross-sector commitment over subsequent years, and indeed decades, will fuel the growth of a lasting culture of social enterprise – better for people, planet and profit.

The impacts of this strategy and emerging culture will benefit everyone in Brighton and Hove, and directly contribute to other strategic initiatives citywide.

We hope you can find a way to contribute into the future.



Social Enterprise: a next generation business model

Better for people, planet and profit

Social enterprises are driven by a desire to change society for the better, using the strength of sustainable business to meet social need and regenerate communities whilst considering environmental impact – creating a positive legacy for future generations.

Common forms of social enterprise include credit unions, community co-ops, housing associations, and development trusts. Their scale can range from multi-million pound service providers to small community businesses – but all are united by an aim to benefit society through trading.

Social Enterprises work in many areas, with nationally renowned examples including Jamie Oliver's Fifteen restaurants, the Big Issue magazine, the Eden Project, the Co-operative Bank, Divine Chocolate and Cafédirect. Smaller local examples include Brighton and Hove Wood Recycling Project, PR company Green Rocket and Care Co-ops .

Rather than being established solely to maximise shareholder value, social enterprises work to a 'double' and sometimes 'triple bottom line'. So their success must be measured not just in terms of financial profitability and market efficiency, but also in terms of their social and environmental impact – people, planet and profit.

The bigger picture: increasing momentum

Nationally, interest in social enterprise and its impact is increasing and it contributes to the vision¹ of a fairer, more just society favoured by both Government and the Opposition Parties:

- by meeting social needs, using business success to address social or environmental challenges such as regeneration and climate change
- by encouraging ethical markets, raising the bar for corporate responsibility
- by improving public services, by shaping service design, pioneering new approaches and delivering services
- by improving levels of enterprise, showing that ethical commitment and business success can be combined.

In the South East, SEEDA² sees social enterprise as being key to the future of sustainable development. The region has prioritised the growth, support and improved visibility of the Social Enterprise sector, providing a strong context for Brighton and Hove to stand out.



Closer to home: contributing to the long-term, sustainable economic prosperity of our city

In Brighton and Hove, social enterprise has the potential to hit many of the city's economic, social and environmental targets for future development including increasing entrepreneurship and resource efficiency, creating jobs (especially for those who are at risk of labour market disadvantage), promoting health and wellbeing, strengthening communities, and improving inclusivity.³

With a more considerate approach to doing business, key environmental impacts can include cutting energy use, reducing water consumption, an increase in local and responsible purchasing, better waste management and improved green spaces.

Catching the wave of awareness

There is massive potential for social enterprise in the current climate, with a marked increase of public awareness in social, environmental and ethical issues, echoed by an upturn in central government, local authority and private business initiatives that are in tune with public demand.

Effective social enterprises are an ideal vehicle through which to channel this collective sense of social responsibility.

A truly innovative and accessible strategy can capture the energy around this wave of social awareness, harnessing it into supportive social enterprise activity by focussing the skills and energy of private sector business owners and their staff, public sector organisations and community and voluntary groups around shared social goals.

Finally – whilst a localised social enterprise strategy is both more manageable and locally accountable in terms of its impacts – there is much to be gained from sharing the knowledge gained from such an innovative initiative and learning from others, both nationally and internationally. National networks already exist around service areas such as health and care, and public leaders behind a similar scheme in Denmark have shown great interest in the Brighton and Hove Social Enterprise Strategy – illustrating that the principles of social enterprise have a global context in the 21st century.



Recent government data suggests that there are more than 55,000 social enterprises in the UK with a combined turnover of £27bn. Social enterprises account for 5% of all businesses with employees, and contribute £8.4billion per year to the UK economy.

Source: Social Enterprise Coalition
www.socialenterprise.org.uk



3. *Creating the city of opportunities – a sustainable community strategy*. Brighton and Hove 2020 Community Partnership, 2007

What are the specific characteristics, needs and challenges facing social enterprise?

Trading for a clear social or environmental purpose, social enterprises are unique in that they combine the characteristics of private sector efficiency and public/third sector ethos. These core characteristics help define the strength of the business model, but it is also important to understand the needs of social enterprises that set them apart from more conventional business.

A 2007 social enterprise mapping exercise in Brighton and Hove (involving 67 organisations) provided detailed data highlighting that key support needs were:

- procurement and contracting (51%)
- partnership development (44%)
- social impact assessment (43%)

Some individual responses from this research [shown right] indicate that social enterprise development needs are a mix of:

- (i) conventional business support to increase commercial viability
- (ii) mentoring, guidance and connections to ensure that they authentically fulfil their legal obligations in a social context – i.e. in relation to accountability, accessibility, diversity etc – and are transparent about these behaviours to encourage a greater understanding of Social Enterprise.

So, whilst social enterprises face all of the normal challenges of business survival and commercial growth in a competitive marketplace, they also need to overcome hurdles related to their ethical commitments – crucial to them being perceived as both viable and authentic. A strategy to create more robust social enterprises must accommodate both strands of support, with a view to increasing the number of more effective social enterprises in Brighton and Hove – in turn generating an increase in economic, social and environmental impacts.

“ We need support in the fundamentals of running a non-profit social enterprise, which involve basic issues such as affordable premises. ”

“ We would need one to one support, mentoring and appropriate training on the transition from charity to trading and managing the double bottom line. ”

“ With the predicted increase in interest for social enterprises and subsequent growth - we need support for managing change and advice on how Social Enterprises can grow without over stretching themselves. ”

“ It is often difficult to make the connection needed to form (these) important networks and partnerships. ”

“ We would benefit from an experienced social enterprise mentor to help us develop and deliver our Business Plan. ”

“ I would like to know the most effective way to lobby local and national government to change their procurement practices to favour Social Enterprises ”

“ We need legal, financial, employment and marketing / public relations support. ”

Source: Social Enterprise in Brighton and Hove – A profile of the sector with implications for future support and development. BCP 2007

better business + authentic values = greater impact

“ We should be getting less hung up on the semantics and focus more on ensuring that social enterprises are creating real social value ”

Nigel Kershaw, Big Issue Invest



Source: Director Magazine, June 2008
www.director.co.uk

“ We know that social enterprises deliver services that add value by bringing about social and environmental outcomes. We want to facilitate new opportunities for social enterprises to contract with local authorities and bring added benefits to their local community. ”

Sabina Khan, Director of Research,
Social Enterprise London

socialenterprise.london

Source: www.sel.org.uk

So what makes an effective social enterprise?

Research by Brighton and Hove Business Community Partnership has identified six characteristics of an effective social enterprise – benchmarks against which it can measure its positive impacts in relation to people, planet and profit.

These form the basis of six central areas of focus which link through to the Strategic Priorities outlined on page 14.

They also help identify the qualities which attract and inspire supportive activity from other sectors, and can act as the cornerstones of understanding for audiences new to the concept of social enterprise.

1 | Community interest

An authentic social enterprise has a clear social or environmental purpose

2 | Trading

A viable social enterprise draws income from trading

3 | Co-operative thinking

A smart social enterprise works in partnership with others

4 | Entrepreneurial

A dynamic social enterprise is enterprise-orientated

5 | Profits re-invested

A transparent social enterprise re-invests its profits to meet its social objectives

6 | Local

An accountable social enterprise works locally, contributing to the local economy and its impacts can be measured within its own community

eg: Sussex Emmaus



Sussex Emmaus offers a self-supporting residential community with the aim of helping homeless people to help themselves. 40 formerly homeless men and women live and work in the community. Trading activity centres on the collection and sale of good quality second hand goods, a cafe and a garden centre. All Emmaus' services fully involve the residents, raising skills and confidence to support their integration with the broader community. www.emmausbrighton.co.uk

eg: Green Rocket



Green Rocket C.I.C. was set up to help businesses with an authentic green focus to prosper and grow. The venture operates as a professional agency with a standard fee structure for larger businesses and discounted day rates and special packages for small companies, social enterprises and charities. After its first year Green Rocket has generated enough profit to commit to funding two environmental projects; the Green Pages and Future Business. www.greenrocketgroup.com

eg: Nourish



Nourish C.I.C. provides training and volunteering for people with mental health problems. It runs a community farm, a café and provides outside catering services. Nourish has benefited from over 14 different in-kind partnerships; including volunteer teams from businesses to work on the farm, accountants and marketing experts helping with business plans and suppliers offering free training and publicity. www.nourishcic.co.uk

eg: The Big Lemon



Social Entrepreneur Tom Druitt set up the Big Lemon C.I.C. to offer fast, cheap, friendly bus services where they are needed by the community. The company works with local communities to meet their transport needs and help reduce car use and environmental impact. Adopting new ideas to attract the engagement of a loyal customer base the Big Lemon runs a members' club, blog, a facebook group and runs regular events and parties. www.thebiglemon.com

eg: Wood Recycling Project



Recently celebrating its 10th anniversary the Wood Recycling Project diverts wood from landfill by collecting wood waste from building projects, sorting and selling it at the Wood Store. The company is fully self-financing and all profits are re-invested to meet their objectives, or offered as grants or loans for new environmental projects. www.woodrecycling.org.uk

eg: Business Community Partnership



The Business Community Partnership specialises in linking local charities and social enterprises with private sector companies for mutually rewarding and useful co-operative projects. The organisation supports local business development and capacity building in the city's vibrant voluntary and community sector, runs projects to influence changes in procurement practices and has generated over £3 Million of in-kind business investment to the community in Brighton and Hove. www.bhbcp.org.uk

Capturing the city's spirit of creativity, innovation and co-operative thinking

Bringing these factors together is the aim of this strategy, unlocking the resource potential that exists citywide, and finding ways to make it work more effectively to support both the quality, growth and increased number of social enterprises in Brighton and Hove. The strategy's success depends on the accessibility of its offer and recommendations to innovators and entrepreneurs; whether they sit in homes or work-places.

Above all, this is a strategy for innovation – its long term impact will be decided by how it stimulates and fosters future innovations.

Many social enterprises lack an easy route to the business world or may need to build both confidence and contacts in this environment. Businesses and public sector employees often have exactly the same apprehensions about working with the third sector. Facilitating fruitful relationships between these organisations is key to a lasting culture of social enterprise.

Co-operative thinking is the key to success

Establishing these relationships means not only working with social enterprises, but also working to ensure the participation and engagement of the other stakeholder sectors. For all these parties clarifying the collective challenge is critical: understanding the benefits of riding the wave of social awareness, who to approach and how individuals with specific needs can approach one another as potential partners. Identifying mutual needs, seeking to exploit opportunities together and achieving mutual benefit will require an open and collaborative approach – co-operative thinking.

Co-operative thinking runs through this strategy as a way of energising the city's social enterprise culture. This unique characteristic, facilitated citywide to kickstart a framework of supportive activity, offers the opportunity to put Brighton and Hove at the forefront of social enterprise support in the UK.

“ One of the biggest benefits of social enterprises is that they challenge the market to come up with environmentally or socially friendly alternatives. As traditional businesses increase their social involvement, that encourages social enterprises to raise the bar even higher. “The continuing development of social enterprise will be a battle between big business and entrepreneurs... If big business invests in research and development for this, it will benefit society and the environment enormously. ”

Reed Paget, Founder and Managing Director of social enterprise Belu Water



Source: Director Magazine, June 2008
www.director.co.uk



“ Working in partnership is the nature of our organisation. It not only promotes the good work we do but also builds beneficial relationships. The success of our organisation can, in no small part, be attributed to our partners, whether it is offering direct support or merely just talking about our organisation in the wider network circles of their peers. ”

Who can buy that kind of publicity? ”

Charlie Turner, Chief Executive, Nourish

Brighton and Hove Social Enterprise Strategy



Social Enterprises, by ethos, have the potential to help tackle the social and environmental challenges we see around us. Many mainstream businesses are now actively engaging with some of these issues but by considering these impacts as part of their core business, social enterprise is unique. As a society we have an opportunity to be a part of improving these impacts by developing their capacity.

Our vision is that everyone in Brighton and Hove can contribute to the goal of a lasting culture of social enterprise – whether you are an individual or community with an entrepreneurial idea or an organisation that wants to support social enterprise.

Local expertise and problem solving can generate social enterprise activity that meets the specific needs of neighbourhoods and communities of interest. This thinking can also result in activity which tackles national or global issues.


People across the spectrum from socially-minded private sector businesses, to public sector organisations, entrepreneurial charities and community and voluntary groups, can help solve the social or environmental problems around them through the vehicle of social enterprise.

A city where connections between social entrepreneurs and the people who can bring local expertise and support to their growth is a city that has begun to create a lasting culture of social enterprise, fuelled from within the community.

The core focus of the strategy is to create a network environment within which these connections are made and sustained in order to support the increased growth and subsequent impacts of social enterprise in Brighton and Hove.

Strategic Vision:

A citywide culture which supports the growth of social enterprise – better for people, planet and profit



Strategic Priorities:

The six strategic priorities of this strategy are linked directly to the six characteristics which identify effective social enterprise. Strengthening performance in each of these areas is central to improving the impact of social enterprises whilst creating a lasting citywide culture around them.

Strategic Priority 1

Understand impact and opportunities

Improve understanding of social enterprise and its impact on people, planet and profit. Improve the quality of research to identify start up opportunities and measure triple bottom line impacts.

Strategic Priority 2

Increase viability

Improve access to training and skills development to build the capacity of existing and start-up social enterprises. These include business skills training, peer support, skills development, better information on funding and finance, and support on public service contracting.

Strategic Priority 3

Encourage co-operative thinking

Introduce more considered partnership planning and networking opportunities to increase the number of effective, need-driven partnerships between social enterprises and private/public sector organisations.

Strategic Priority 4

Inspire entrepreneurial innovation

Celebrate local achievements and inspire a new generation of social entrepreneurs through awards schemes, education programmes and media exposure.

Promote Brighton and Hove's social enterprise growth, share learning and inspire other cities.

Strategic Priority 5

Improve transparency

Support the adoption of credible business structures, including appropriate, transparent legal and management structures for social enterprises to verify accountability to their social purpose and business ethos.

Increase the availability and training of trustees and directors from diverse backgrounds.

Strategic Priority 6

Maximise local economic impact

Increase local opportunities for procurement contracts and partnerships.

Co-ordinate activity with other strategies at local, national and international levels.

Brighton and Hove Social Enterprise Strategy

Strategic Goal:

To improve the social, economic and environmental impact of social enterprises, by creating a cross-sector network of support

The Brighton and Hove Social Enterprise Strategy will be delivered through a facilitated Social Enterprise Network, supported by a Steering Group and ultimately the development of a Social Enterprise Centre.

Together they can fulfil complimentary roles to enable all agencies and partners to deliver the support that social enterprises need to grow, within a framework established by the six Strategic Priorities.

The strategy in practice

BRIGHTON AND HOVE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK

The role of the Network is central to the delivery of the strategy. It will encourage co-operative thinking and facilitate the lasting cross-sector partnerships that will fuel a citywide culture of social enterprise, ensuring needs are met on both sides.

The Network will run within a sustainable social enterprise with Network Facilitators who are responsible for recruiting members from all sectors and helping to build supportive relationships. They will also work closely with social enterprises to strengthen performance within the area of each Strategic Priority.

BRIGHTON AND HOVE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE STEERING GROUP

The Steering Group's key role is to oversee the implementation of the strategy and ensure that all elements of strategic activity are meeting appropriate social, environmental and economic targets.

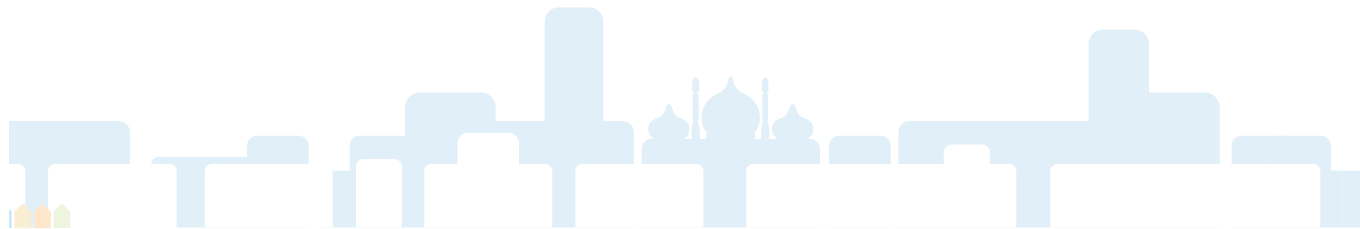
It will support the development of the city's social enterprise network and the culture that grows around it. The Steering Group will co-ordinate with other strategies, promote the network's achievements and share learning with other cities.

The Steering Group will be made up of representatives from local social enterprises and a variety of Network members from all sectors.

BRIGHTON AND HOVE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CENTRE

The Centre provides a focal point for the membership network, and a base from which to host networking events.

It will provide an environment for support agencies to provide training and business development for social enterprises of all sizes, and incubation space to accommodate start-ups.



Understand impact and opportunities

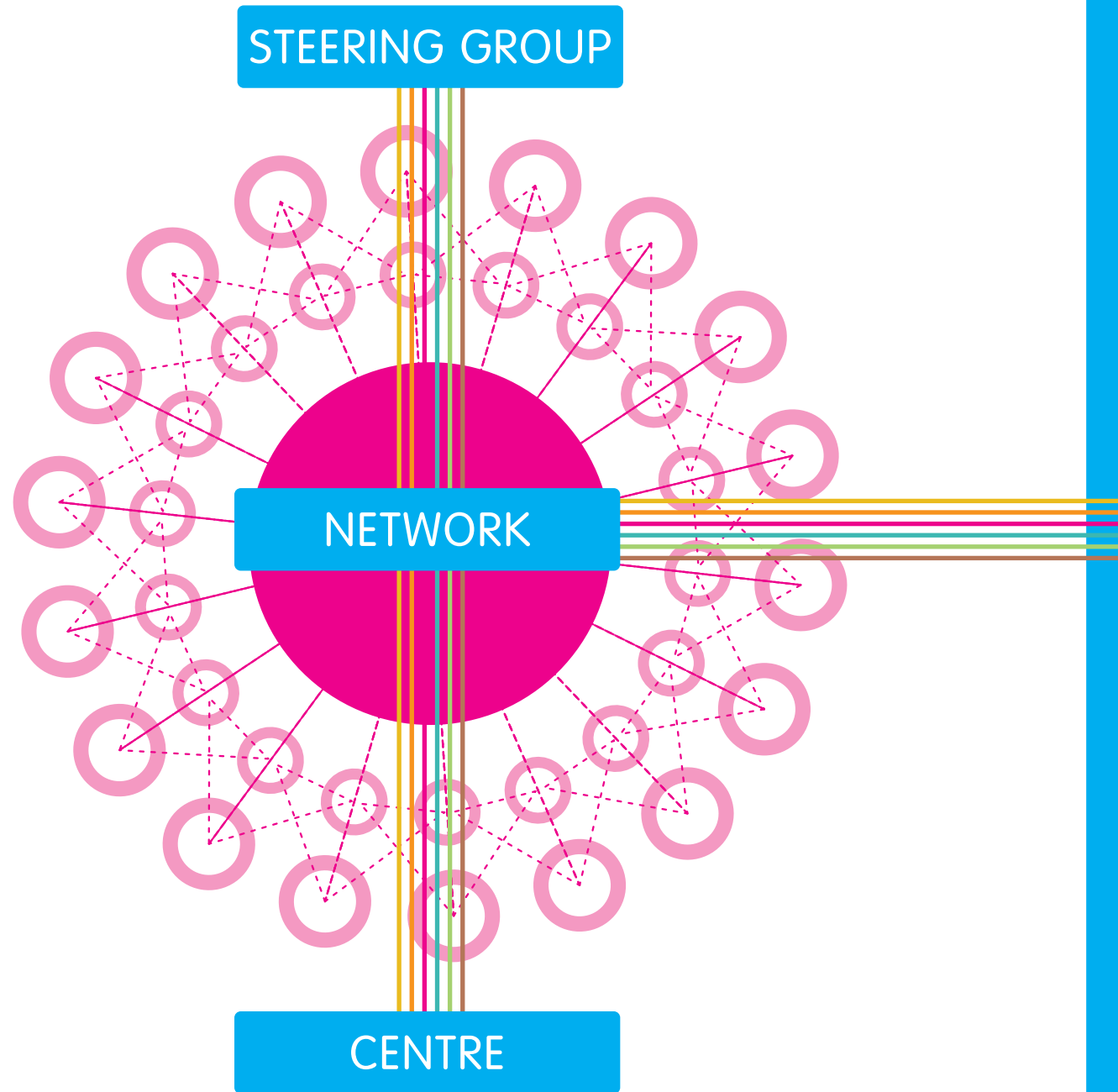
Increase viability

Encourage co-operative thinking

Inspire entrepreneurial innovation

Improve transparency

Maximise local economic impact



Sunita's story

A fictional case study to show how co-operative thinking can bring Network Members together within a culture of social enterprise

Sunita runs a Post Office in East Brighton which is scheduled for closure. Local residents are upset and Sunita knows she can do something about it if she's given the chance. She'd like to run her Post Office as a social enterprise, but needs support to transform the business.

Angus puts Sunita in touch with a communications consultant who lives just around the corner who helps develop a campaign plan to save the Post office and get the support of the city council.

Angus also introduces her to Business Link (who help her develop her business plan) and other local community groups.



Tom, Dick and Harriet

- Simon's staff, who are keen to get involved and work on something new together

1. Angus

Network Facilitator

- encourages co-operative thinking and builds supportive relationships around Sunita's social enterprise idea
- ensures that partners supporting Sunita have a tangible benefit from the relationship

5. Simon

Director of a local communications consultancy

- keen to support a socially relevant project, knowing it will also be good for staff morale and company profile as well as benefiting the community he lives in

2. Sunita

A start-up social entrepreneur with an idea that needs support, she called Angus for advice

3. Francis

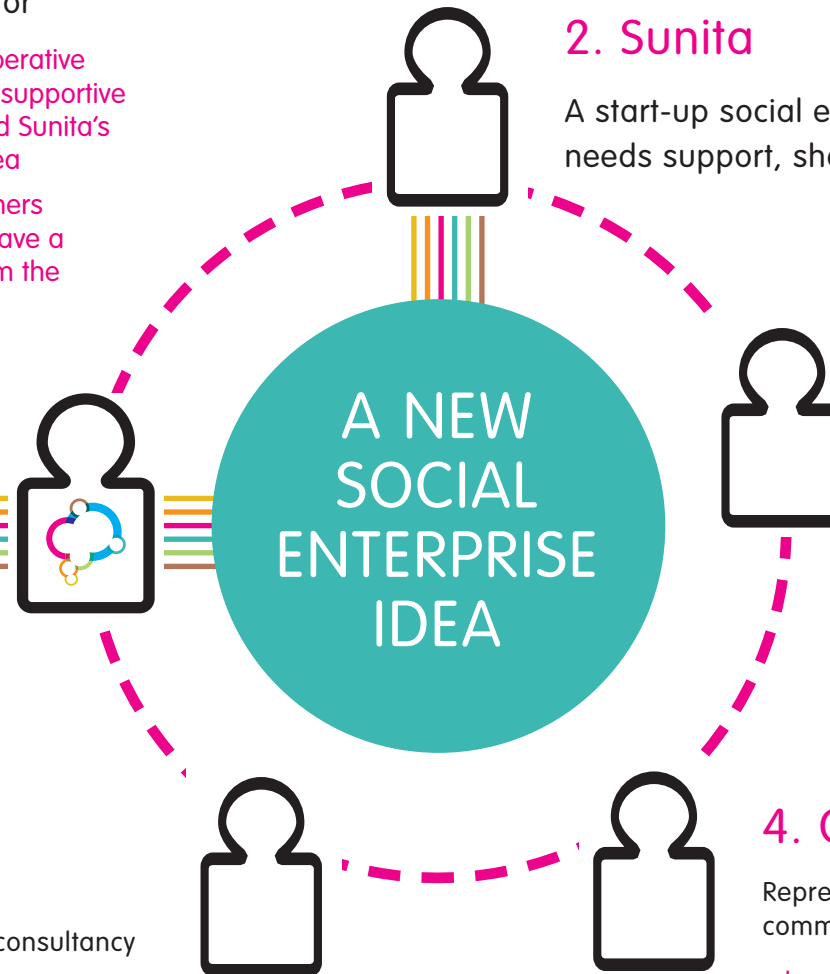
Business Development Adviser from Business Link and a member of the Social Enterprise Steering Group

- offers business development advice to build a more robust, sustainable business

4. Gail

Representative from a local community group

- keen to promote Sunita's idea, knowing how mutual endorsement of each others' work will encourage local support and strengthen a sense of community



What the strategy can deliver:

A vision of what can be delivered under each Strategic Priority, offering potential partners an insight into where they might engage and outlining just some of the anticipated outcomes of the strategy:

Strategic Priority 1

Understand impact and opportunities

A regular research exercise to track the growth, current impact and potential of social enterprises and social enterprise activity in the city. Co-operation with research institutions and an increasing number of major stakeholders will increasingly align existing and start up social enterprise activity with gaps in social provision in the city.

Potential partners

University of Brighton, Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF), Business Community Partnership (BCP), Environmental Protection UK, Economic Partnership, Ecosys Environmental Consultants

Indicators of achievement

150 social enterprises identified within Brighton and Hove mapping database (increase of 82)

20 social enterprises undertaking environmental audits on an annual basis

Strategic Priority 2

Increase viability

A range of training and skills development options for social enterprises will be delivered across multiple support agencies. Support will be sensitive to the varying needs of organisations approaching social enterprise from the public, private and voluntary sectors – emphasising both business planning and partnership planning so that new and existing organisations can easily approach viability from different directions.

Potential partners

Business Link, ProfitNet, Working Together Project, BCP, Chamber of Commerce, Black and Minority Ethnic Communities Partnership, Economic Partnership, Impetus

Indicators of achievement

25 start up social enterprises trained in business planning skills every year by 2014

20 social enterprises per year engaged in ProfitNet programme

Refresh of mapping exercise 2014 shows 25% decrease in need for business planning skills, procurement support, partnership planning and impact assessment due to effective training/support programmes implemented through strategy

Strategic Priority 3

Encourage co-operative thinking

A Social Enterprise Network will offer brokerage of support to and from the social enterprise sector, training in partnership planning, more cross-sector networking opportunities and a structure for generating new markets and promoting cooperative success

Potential partners

BCP, ProfitNet, Chamber of Commerce, Brighton and Hove City Council, CVSF, Sussex Wildlife Trust

Indicators of achievement

500 organisations including 200 social enterprises, 50 community and voluntary sector organisations, 40 public sector departments and 210 businesses engaged in the social enterprise network by 2014

Business community invests £100,000 in-kind support to social enterprise per year by 2014

Strategic Priority 4

Inspire entrepreneurial innovation

An increased number of local social enterprises will be winning national and regional award schemes. New, local schemes will be introduced to celebrate and promote brave and effective new ideas. Regional, national and international networks will generate new thinking and applications locally

Potential partners

Economic Partnership, Brighton and Hove Business Awards, Sussex Business Awards, Social Enterprise South East, Education Business Partnership, Children and Young People's Trust

Indicators of achievement

Increased profile for social enterprises and Brighton and Hove through success in prestigious awards schemes such as SEEDA's Entrepreneur of the year.

Increased number of social entrepreneurs involved in school enterprise programmes

Strategic Priority 5

Improve transparency

More social enterprises will adopt appropriate legal forms, such as the Community Interest Company (CIC). More trustees and directors will be engaged from public and private sectors. More service users and beneficiaries will participate in social enterprise management boards and decision-making

Potential partners

Impetus, Business Link, BCP

Indicators of achievement

25% of social enterprises completing mapping exercise indicate compliance with quality assurance mechanisms in governance and service user representation

Strategic Priority 6

Maximise local economic impact

Public sector officers will be better informed as to the benefits and potential of procuring services from social enterprises. An increased number of social enterprises will be in a position to forge new contacts and win contracts from both public and private sector. Social enterprise will be represented in more public and private sector strategies. This will result in more money staying locally, enhancing the city's economy. Cross sector partnerships will leverage income from national and international streams into the city

Potential partners

Brighton and Hove City Council, Primary Care Trust, Universities, BCP, Environmental Protection UK, CVSF, Impetus, Working Together Project

Indicators of achievement

800 annual work placements in social enterprises made available to boost employment and skills levels in the city by 2014

Employment in Social Enterprise sector increased by 32% by 2014

5 successful case studies of significant procurement relationships between local social enterprises and public bodies per year by 2014

Sunita's story: 5 years on

Conclusion to fictional case study

Sunita's Post Office, now a well established and profitable social enterprise, is a great success. It meets the needs of local residents and business which would have been greatly missed if she had not saved it from closure.

Local residents now see it as more of a community hub, as Sunita has worked with Simon and Gail to create a popular café meeting place, using local produce and now pays staff to run it full time with volunteer support, aided by the city council.

Francis at Business Link frequently refers to the business as a great success story for social enterprise, and has nominated Sunita for a national award.



Tom, Dick and Harriet

- Simon's staff have really enjoyed the experience, they have learnt new skills and remain happy in their jobs

1. Angus

Network Facilitator

- less directly involved as time passes, as Sunita grows in confidence and manages her own business partnerships
- pleased to see the business scores well in all 6 areas of development, year on year



2. Sunita

Classifying herself as a 'successful social entrepreneur' she has now become a Network ambassador, spreading the word about how working with Angus and partners has benefited her business, and encouraging others to become social entrepreneurs

3. Francis

Business Development Adviser from Business Link and a member of the Social Enterprise Steering Group

- offers ongoing business development advice to further strengthen the business and support new ideas



4. Gail

Representative from a local community group

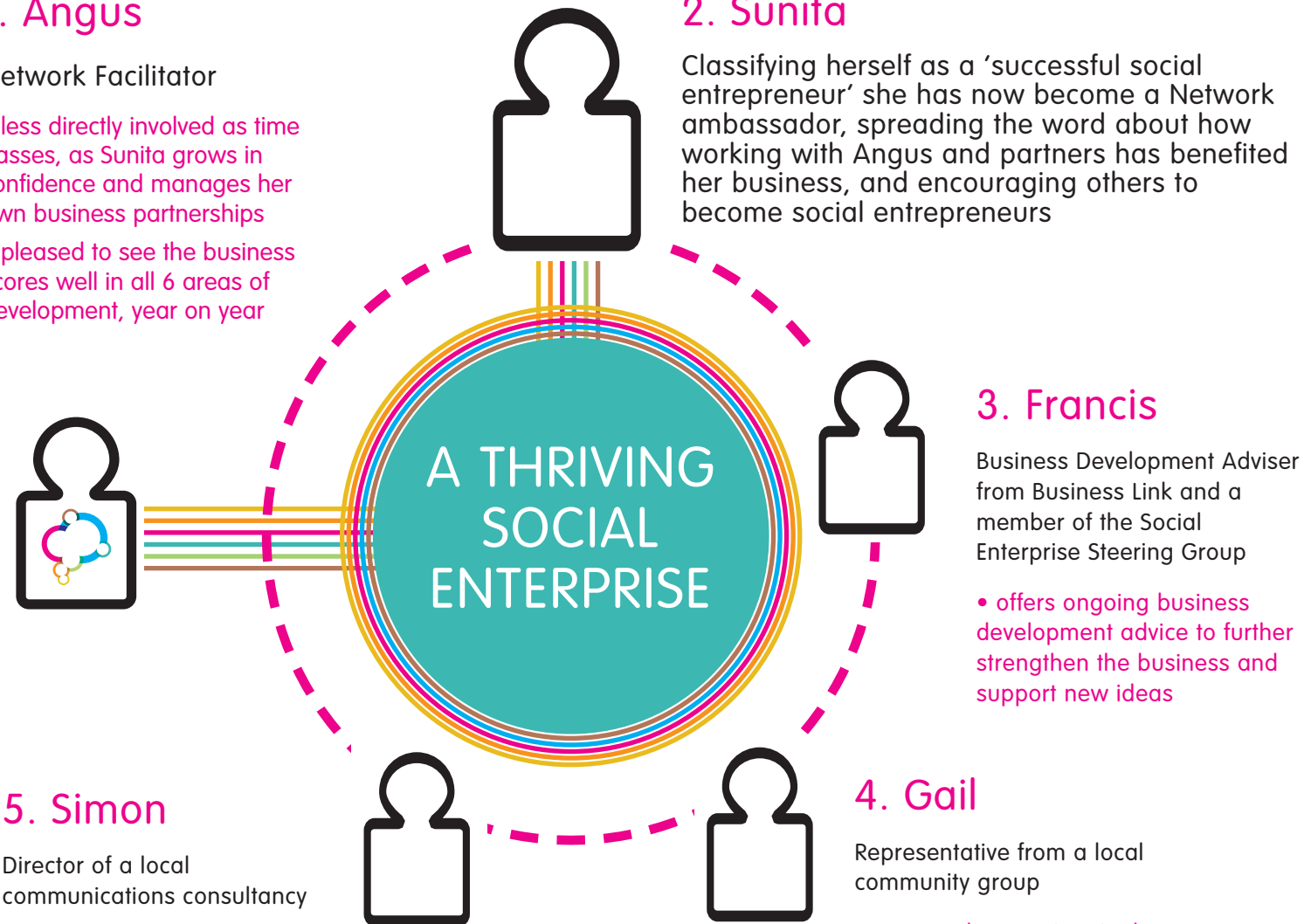
- now works part time in the Post Office Café, and has local volunteer support and a great platform to promote local community activity



5. Simon

Director of a local communications consultancy

- still involved in supporting Sunita and now promotes local creative talent through an exhibition space in the café
- his staff all work one day a month as volunteers and use the café as an informal meeting place with clients



Next steps

- Secure Council approval for the strategy [September 2008](#)
- Present strategy to Local Strategic Partnership [December 2008](#)
- Complete process of joining European Urban Network of Social Enterprise [October 2008](#)
- Recruit members to Steering Group [February 2009](#)
- Confirm lead partners within action plan [April 2009](#)
- Costed and timetabled actions and targets to implement the strategy [June 2009](#)
- Regular reviews on progress and development of new activity within the action plan

Action Plan

A defining characteristic of this strategy is that it needs to energise the involvement of many different partners across varied sectors in the city. The challenge now is to finalise an action plan which will carry through implementation of the strategy. This will need to input from key support organisations, strategic bodies and social entrepreneurs themselves in driving delivery and developing new initiatives to achieve advances in the strategic priority areas. A priority of the action plan will be to undertake a thorough Equalities Impact Assessment to ensure that it fully engages with and maximises benefits to excluded and minority groups and neighbourhoods.

Funding opportunities

BCP is also currently working with regional partners, consulting with the other third sector organisations and building a social enterprise network to develop funding proposals that can support social enterprise activity in the city. When successful this funding bid will be used to drive forward the implementation of the strategy.

European network membership

Brighton and Hove is applying to be the only UK partner of a new European 'Urban Network of Social Enterprises'. Should this be successful, it will contribute significantly to involving the necessary partners in the implementation of the Brighton and Hove Social Enterprise Strategy. A key requirement for the European Network is the development of a local steering group. In the initial stages this group can fulfil the role of the Steering Group for the Brighton and Hove Social Enterprise Strategy, and oversee the delivery and further development of the action plan. At an exploratory information meeting in August 2008, there was great enthusiasm for this project from a diverse range of social enterprises and other third sector partners.



Background

This strategy grew out of Routes to Social Enterprise, a collaboration between the Business Community Partnership and the University of Brighton which began in 2005. This included a research exercise in 2007, which pointed to the potential impact of the sector on the city. As a result, this strategy was commissioned by Brighton and Hove City Council.

Maintaining an open engagement with a broad range of stakeholders was critical from the start, so a steering group was formed with representatives from public, private and third sector bodies. Members of this group have endorsed the approach to date and provided input to the background and feasibility studies that will support its delivery.

The research and stakeholders consulted so far are therefore only a beginning. New ideas and initiatives are also invited to find a route to viability through this strategy and to create learning links with other social enterprise initiatives, both national and internationally.

Part of the development of the strategy involved a wiki webspace which hosts all the information and background on the strategy and outlines strategic priorities in detail. A strategic summary document and invitation to contribute was circulated to openly promote the wiki to stakeholders citywide as part of the consultation process. The wiki has been used to gather opinions and perspectives which are posted online and encourage conversations around strategic thinking to date.

Visit www.socialenterprisestrategy.wetpaint.com

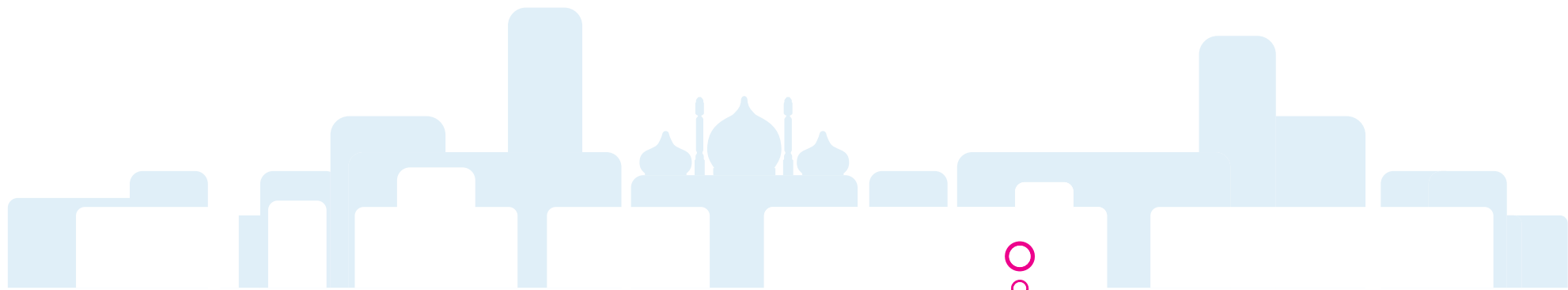
For more information on the research and development of this strategy please contact Thea Allison at the Business Community Partnership on 01273 770075 or email thea.allison@bhbcpc.org.uk

Steering Group Members

Dave Ahlquist	SE2 Partnership
Thea Allison	Business Community Partnership
Adam Bates	Brighton and Hove City Council
Eleanor Bell	Economic Partnership
Jan Jackson	Business Link
John Routledge	Brighton and Hove City Council
Phil Thompson	Business Link
Andrew Toal	University of Brighton
Charlie Turner	Care Co-ops



Brighton and Hove Social Enterprise Strategy
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we all have a part to play