
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

1. Introduction

1.1 *emda's* Annual Public Meeting was attended by approximately 120 stakeholders plus journalists from the Nottingham Evening Post, Leicester Mercury and Business East Midlands. Positive coverage of the event has since appeared on the newspapers' websites and in print.

1.2 On 23 September Paul Deighton, Chief Executive of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, visited the region to see progress on our 2012 activity. He unveiled a series of stunning images depicting local athletes in some of our most iconic tourism destinations. These images are on show in the arrivals area of East Midlands Airport and will be used in other locations across the region. The day also included a meeting at Leicester-based Corgi (part of the Hornby group) who will be manufacturing a series of London 2012 souvenir models. Paul also met several of the projects that have been successful in achieving the London 2012 'Inspired by' mark for their work and he also visited the Love Sport exhibition at the New Walk Museum in Leicester.

2. Raising Productivity

2.1 Employment, Learning and Skills

2.1.1 On 30 September a brand new state of the art vocational training facility was officially opened at **Caunton Engineering** in Moorgreen, Nottinghamshire by the Company's Managing Director, Simon Bingham and Andrew Morgan. Caunton received a grant of £156k through *emda's* Catapulting Kids Further! project to develop a dedicated multi-purpose classroom and simulated production line, enabling the company to train students from nearby schools as they work to achieve the new 14 -19 national diploma in engineering. Catapulting Kids provides capital investment to businesses schools and colleges with the aim of expanding or initiating employer engagement with schools and colleges in RES priority sectors and forms part of the Agency's £9m Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) programme, which aims to reverse the decline in the number of young people studying these subjects.

2.1.2 The region's activities to support new graduates to find employment were showcased to senior policy leads from the **Office of Graduate Opportunities (OGO)**, which was established this summer to deal with the surge of unemployed graduates. During a visit to Lincolnshire *emda* discussed existing graduate programmes and sought to ensure that regional developments to support graduates, such as our establishment of a career service network across Higher Education Institutions, influence the Government's emerging graduate internship policy in the current economic climate. Following the visit the OGO has decided to visit all RDAs as part of a full regional engagement exercise. (See also 2.2.1)

2.1.3 **Acas**, with *emda* funding of £237k, is providing tailored support and workplace focused advice, helping participating organisations achieve improvements to their culture, management, employee engagement strategy and business performance. An event on 23 September brought together the ten participating businesses in this groundbreaking project. The event helped them prepare for the implementation of their action plans in their workplaces and delegates heard from David MacLeod, author of the Government's employee engagement review, Warren Glover of Lindum Construction (Lincoln), one of only two East Midlands organisations on the Sunday Times '100 Best Companies to Work For' and Professor John Purcell the strategic adviser to Acas, a specialist on the link between employee involvement and organisational performance.

2.2 Enterprise and Business Support

Enterprise

2.2.1 The **Enterprise Inc** project, based at De Montfort University, has been running for fifteen months. East Midlands Incubation Network (EMIN) co-ordinates this successful partnership between all the region's universities, supported by *emda*, to generate new business start ups by undergraduates allied with business advice from EMIN and partners. Undergraduates are supported to start businesses in their final year whilst still in full time education, following which they can receive further help from the Business Link Start-up Service. To date 186 applicants have been accepted onto the programme and already 43 have started trading whilst still at university. Applicants who are not selected for Enterprise Inc are referred to other appropriate routes to employment e.g. National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship Flying Start and the Office for Graduate Opportunities Internship programme.

2.2.2 The latest **Business Champions** welcome and networking session took place on 12 October, focusing on employer engagement. At the event several Champions signed up to support Unleashing Enterprise activity with local schools. Further to discussion at the September Board meeting an Invitation to Apply for Grant Funding (IAGF) to deliver the Business Champions project from April 2010 has now been issued via an open and competitive process and details are available on the *emda* website.

Business Support

2.2.3 Since April 2009 Business Link has delivered 7,852 **Business Health Checks** bringing the total since Health Checks commenced in October 2008 to over 12,900. Since April 56,500 businesses have received assistance from the Business Link service against an annual target of 68,000. Of which over 2,300 have received help at an intensive level, against an annual target of 5,000. More than 2,500 jobs have been created in the region against an annual target of 4,100 and almost 12,300 individuals assisted with pre-business start-up support against an annual target of 15,000. The type of businesses showing the highest figures for receiving intensive assistance are reported in the following sectors; Real Estate Renting & Business Activities, Manufacturing, Wholesale and Retail Trade & Repair, and Construction.

2.2.4 At the end of quarter two, the **Integrated Brokerage** element of the Business Link Service, formerly delivered as part of the Learning and Skills Council's Train to Gain programme, has supported more than 2,200 businesses to improve their performance and identified over 14,000 individuals who could potentially benefit from Train to Gain funded learning opportunities against an annual target of 21,000. Skills related referrals to learning and development opportunities have increased steadily from 571 in April to 767 in September, with a total of 3,676 referrals overall.

2.2.5 The first **Mentoring for All** programme, which recruited 607 clients during the period November 2007 to March 2009, has to date helped 900 businesses to improve their performance and 797 people to develop their skills. Demand for the current Mentoring for All extension programme remains high, so based upon the recent evaluation of mentoring activity in the region, a further business mentoring programme has been developed to support 1,350 businesses during the period April 2010 to March 2014. An OJEU tendering process has identified a preferred delivery partner with whom contract negotiations will commence shortly; and an application for £1.16m ERDF Funding has been endorsed by *emda's* Board Resources Group to supplement the *emda* funding of £4m for this project.

2.2.6 The *emda* funded '**Improving Your Resource Efficiency**' (IYRE) East Midlands Programme, which started in May 2009, is now well underway. To date, 66 companies have been referred to the programme, with 24 site visits completed. The site visits are undertaken by expert contractors with specialisms in water efficiency; energy efficiency and renewable technologies; waste and hazardous waste; and clean design. Feedback from the site visits has been extremely positive, with over £270k worth of savings already being identified for companies, with associated environmental benefits. The programme runs for three years and has recently had ERDF match funding approved. The programme will support 85 companies in 2009/10 and is well on track to meet this target. A total of 400 companies will be supported through the three-year programme.

2.2.7 At the end of September, I spoke at a Lloyds TSB Local Heroes dinner at Belvoir Castle about the business opportunities presented by the **2012 Games**. During the same month, over 70 companies attended workshop sessions designed to help them publish their profiles on the CompeteFor business matching service. The region's rate of published businesses is now at 51% - the second best in the UK – and 13 companies in the region have won contracts via this route.

Manufacturing

2.2.8 Good progress is being made in the organisation of the first **Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS)** National Congress in Newcastle upon Tyne on 26 November. The event will be a focus for the identification and sharing of best practice; policy communication and debate; and partnership building between Government Departments, RDAs, MAS practitioners, and wider delivery partners, such as the Nuclear Industries Association, Industry Forum Network and the Manufacturing Skills Alliance.

Business Investment

2.2.9 Since my last report, **Grant for Research and Development (GRD)** payments totalling £2m, representing 42% of the annual budget have been made. These payments represent Single Programme expenditure of £1.45m and ERDF expenditure of £550k.

2.2.10 A further seven companies have been awarded grants totalling £1.37m, under the **Grant for Business Investment (GBI)** scheme. Three of these seven grants have also been awarded with the support of ERDF funding. ERDF funding of £1.4m was endorsed by BRG on 16 April for the three years from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2013. Commitments of £1.3m have already been made against this funding. So far this financial year, payments totalling £1.8m have been made to 32 companies under the GBI scheme, representing 57% of the scheme's annual budget against a target of 40% by 30 September 2009. These payments have created and safeguarded 199 jobs, generated £13.5m of private sector leverage and developed 10,297 sq. m. of employment floorspace.

2.2.11 **EnterpriseLoans East Midlands (ELEM)** awards loans to businesses and individuals with a viable business proposition that cannot raise finance from traditional sources. To date, ELEM has awarded 54 loans totalling £766k and created 100 jobs. 25 of these loans were to ethnic minority owned or managed businesses, 16 to female owned or managed businesses. An application for ERDF funding of £1m was endorsed by *emda's* Board Resources Group on 20 October. This will ensure the continued focus of the fund on the region's more deprived areas and disadvantaged groups, as well as helping the on-going sustainability of ELEM itself.

2.2.12 *emda* has managed four 'Action Plans' under the **2000-2006 ERDF Objective 2 Programme** since July 2002. These Action Plans comprised of the following measures

- Technological Development and Business Innovation;
- Financing Business Growth and;
- Anticipating Change, planning for growth, developing new and existing markets.

A total of 66 projects were supported under the four Action Plans. The final project payments were made in December 2008 and since that time we have worked closely with Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) to manage the programme closure process. All Action Plan reports, claims and audits have now been submitted to GOEM by the programme closure deadline of 30 September 2009.

2.2.13 Overall *emda* achieved 98.6% of its financial targets with expenditure across the 66 projects totalling £61.5m, including £21.8m of ERDF. Single Programme of £6.35m provided match funding to 20 of these ERDF projects. Over the four Action Plans, 5,124 SMEs were assisted, 3,738 of which received a minimum of 30 hours or £2,000 worth of business support, and 1,386 received financial assistance in the form of grants or loans. Of the 5,124 assisted, 1,807 were also new start SMEs. In addition, 3,685 jobs were created and 5,072 jobs safeguarded.

International

2.2.14 Since the start of April 2009 we have had 10 confirmed **inward investment** successes, creating or safeguarding 1,451 jobs (against annual targets of 35 and 2,800 respectively). The successes since my last report include:

- On 7 October we officially announced that Taiwanese LCD television manufacturer Kenmark are setting up a new factory in Corby, creating up to 500 jobs over the next three years. The announcement was made in conjunction with UKTI and Northamptonshire Enterprise Ltd and attracted a significant amount of press interest both regionally and nationally. The new 150,000 sq ft facility will house four production lines along with plastic injection moulding facilities, and will become one of the major TV manufacturing units in Western Europe when fully operational.
- Chinese confectionery company Sweetrip Sichuan Food have established their European HQ in Leicester and will create 5 new jobs over the next 3 years. The East Midlands China Business Bureau worked closely with UKTI in Chongqing as well as Prospect Leicestershire to help secure this investment.
- Swedish company LED Lighting have established their UK Headquarters in Nottingham, creating 20 new knowledge-based jobs over 3 years. Invest in Nottingham and UKTI in Sweden worked closely with the company, helping them find suitable premises. The company said it was drawn to Nottingham because of its long tradition of science and technology and the potential to forge links with universities.

2.2.15 Other **international activities** to note:

- We sponsored Prof Saffa Riffat, Director of the Institute of Sustainable Energy Technology at the University of Nottingham, as a key speaker at the Sustainable Construction conference at the University of Aachen at the beginning of September. Our German agents also attended a related matchmaking event and presented to an audience of around 30 people, half of whom were Chinese from the Shanxi province. This introduction to the East Midlands may result in a future visit by the Chinese delegation.
- In partnership with UKTI Sweden we attended Cleantech Ventures which gave us the opportunity to get in front of 25 Scandinavian companies seeking investment and market expansion. The event generated three leads with one company visiting the region in November.
- We presented to UKTI London/overseas officers on the Digital Media Landscape in the East Midlands in order to increase their understanding of our strengths in this sector. The increased profile has already resulted in two new related enquiries from Brazil.
- The Chairman and I had a useful meeting with the UK Ambassador-Designate to China, Sebastian Wood, at *emda* on 30 September; he takes up his post in January 2010.

Tourism

2.2.16 Tricia Pedlar attended the **Badminton International** between England and Japan at Loughborough University in October. The event was supported by *emda* in recognition

of the University and region's relationship with the Japanese Olympic Committee and the opportunities that this brings to the region in the run up to 2012.

2.2.17 One of the Agency's significant arts investments in the region will come to fruition on 13 November with the official opening of **Nottingham Contemporary**. Its first exhibition (running from 14 November-24 January 2010) will include over 60 works by David Hockney, which will enhance the profile of the region in relation to our cultural "offer". Nottingham Contemporary comprises the biggest single gallery space in the East Midlands and also has performance and education areas and a café bar.

2.2.18 Research into the **economic impact of the visitor economy** shows that the East Midlands experienced marginal growth in 2008 to remain around the £5.9 billion mark, with spend by overnight visitors falling slightly and day visitors increasing from £3.54 billion to £3.61 billion.

2.2.19 On 8 October the **East Midlands Tourism Enjoy England Excellence Awards** were hosted at the Athena in Leicester. Almost 300 people attend the event to see 16 awards presented to businesses from across the region, covering every area of the visitor economy including attractions, accommodation, accessibility, sustainability and food and drink. Many of the finalists will now have the opportunity to go forward to the national final which takes place next April.

2.2.20 *emda* awarded £178k to Cobbs Bush Farm in Northamptonshire for the development of **Thrupp Wharf Marina**. With farmland adjacent to the Grand Union Canal, the funding enabled the farm to diversify and create another income with the construction of a 60 berth inland marina. The Marina opened for business on 1 October and has already secured 41 long term bookings.

2.3 Innovation

2.3.1 The second **Lord Stafford Awards** for the East Midlands were held in Lincoln on 10 September, with PY Gerbeaux the guest speaker. It built on the success of last year's inaugural event, with 36 entries compared to 30 last year. The iNets played a significant role in encouraging entries. The awards and winners were as follows:

- *Innovation in Development*: Nottingham Scientific Ltd, in conjunction with DeMontfort University, for developing a new satellite receiver capable of picking up global signals;
- *Innovation for Sustainability*: Hill Holt Wood in collaboration with Lincoln University for its thriving business, which has created 28 jobs and developed a new learning model for young people not in mainstream education;
- *Innovation Achieved*: Promethean Particles, in collaboration with Nottingham University it beat off competition from US and Japanese scientists to create a new reactor that controls nanoparticles in water and has increased sales to £1.5m, boosting its workforce to ten highly skilled staff.

2.3.2 At their September meeting the region's science & innovation council, East Midlands Innovation, discussed the development of the **Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS)**, in the light of an evaluation of the strategy to date by GHK and feedback from

stakeholders. Emerging conclusions with stakeholders have been tested and a first draft of the second RIS will be presented to the Council on 6 November. The strategy will be presented to the Board for approval in December. In parallel, the iNet lead partners have submitted applications for continued funding after March 2010. The evaluation included a strong recommendation that the iNets should continue.

2.3.3 Peter Maycock has taken up post as Director of the **Food & Drink iNet**. Peter has many years of senior management experience in the food industry including blue chip companies such as RHM. He also took a bakery company from start up to more than £100m turnover.

2.3.4 **Innovation in the Engineering and Food Sectors** is a 3-year, £0.6m project that pre-dated the iNet. Its aim is to help regional engineering companies diversify into food and drink process engineering, and so stimulate innovation in food and drink manufacturing. With 6 months to go it has already exceeded its target for engaging companies, having worked with 234 compared to a target of 150. The potential order book for East Midlands' engineering companies now stands at more than £4m as a direct result of the project and orders of £1.7m have already been achieved.

2.3.5 The innovations of companies supported by the **Healthcare and Bioscience iNet** will be showcased at an international exhibition, Medica 2009, a four-day event to be held in Düsseldorf in November. It is expected to attract 140,000 visitors. Northampton's Medi-Microbe; Dialog Devices of Loughborough; Omnia CS from Nottingham; Ansvia, based at Loughborough University; and MediSkills Models of Northampton will be exhibiting.

2.3.6 A research collaboration between Nottingham University, Nottingham Trent and Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, funded by a Higher Education Collaboration Fund (HECF) grant from the iNet, has levered in £0.6m from the **Medical Research Council**. The research consortium has developed a novel test, the Nottingham Prognostic Index Plus, for predicting clinical outcome and response to therapeutic treatment in patients with breast cancer. The work of the team featured in the regional TV news and local media.

2.3.7 The **Sustainable Construction iNet** selected five projects for Higher Education Collaboration Fund grants during September, involving seven of the region's universities. In addition, two successful breakfast briefings were held in Leicester and Derby, focusing on renewable technologies and retrofit solutions, attracting 41 business delegates.

2.3.8 *emda's* Innovation Team (supported by the East Midlands European Office) undertook a visit to Brussels in early October as part of the **Committee of the Region's Open Days event** (an annual four day event to showcase economic development success stories from across the European Union). The aim of the visit was to build relations with the European Commission and profile the East Midlands Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS) and the iNets. The Innovation Team made a presentation at a joint workshop with 5 EU regions on the approach to delivering the RIS and profiled the healthcare/bioscience iNet. The Team also met with Peter Droel, EC Head of Unit for Innovation Policy, where the EC outlined its policy plans for the next seven years and

opportunities for joint working. Alongside meetings with major companies Motorola and Cisco, the East Midlands European Office will be supporting the team in exploring an inward delegation to the region by the European Commission's Research Directorate to profile flagship R&D projects in the New Year.

3. Ensuring Sustainability

3.1 Transport and Logistics

3.1.1 Over the past month a number of separate but related work streams have gathered momentum around the rail agenda. Lord Adonis replied to Bryan Jackson and Cllr Parsons in September regarding **electrification of the Midland Main Line**. His letter declined a meeting, but indicated that he and his officials were aware of the strength of the case for the Midland Main Line and are looking at the scheme in detail. This suggests that an announcement is likely in the next few months. In the meantime, regional partners, led by *emda* and the East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) and supported by a number of politicians, are ensuring a clear and consistent set of messages are given about the importance of the project from across and beyond the region.

3.1.2 At the national level there is an ongoing debate about the potential future role of new and upgraded rail lines in realising economic and environmental aspirations. This includes a debate about the possible role and impact of new **High Speed Rail** (HSR) routes. The Government has set up a company 'High Speed 2' to explore the case for a new HSR route from London to Birmingham, but there is also a wider debate about the potential for a wider HSR network connecting London to the regions and Scotland. *emda* has been involved in the national partnership, taking on some technical work related to HSR, working with an independent organisation called Greengauge21. They recently published their report 'Fast Forward', which explains the potential impact HSR could have on all regions; and demonstrates the case for the consideration of two north-south HSR lines out of London, including one in the Eastern half of England which could serve the East Midlands. In response to a national call for evidence to inform this ongoing debate, *emda* has commissioned an economic impact assessment of enhanced rail connectivity focused on the Three Cities area, which will report later this month. This will assess the potential impacts of both an electrified Midland Main Line, as well as a new HSR route and will complement a similar exercise recently undertaken in Yorkshire.

3.2 Energy and Resources

3.2.1 In September Lord Mandelson announced that he was commissioning a review of the construction industry to ensure it was 'fit for purpose' for delivering a low carbon future. The review will assess the strengths of and opportunities for the UK construction industry in a low carbon economy and consider how the UK can be a world leader in this sector. This review will be led by the Chief Construction Adviser and will be undertaken by a mix of industry experts and those with wider business experience. The Chief Construction Adviser is expected to be appointed in November following the recruitment process and Keith Clarke, CEO of Atkins and CIC Chairman has agreed to chair in the

interim. *emda* has been asked to lead the RDA input into this review and will be meeting with the review team shortly to agree how this work should be taken forward. It is expected that the review will be completed by March 2010.

3.3 Environmental Protection

3.3.1 An £800k contract has been awarded through the National Coalfields Programme for the restoration of the stockheads at **Pleasley Colliery**. The restoration will complement the adjacent country park and enhance its tourism offer whilst fulfilling *emda*'s health and safety obligations as owners of the site. Work commenced on 26 October and once completed the site will be transferred to the Land Development Trust.

3.3.2 **Northampton Marina** is one element of a wider vision to revitalise Becket's Park, a traditional park along the bank of the River Nene that forms a green gateway into the centre of Northampton. *emda* funding of £205k has contributed to the costs of developing the Marina to act as a catalyst for the implementation of the Becket's Park Masterplan, which will contribute to the town's overall offer. The proposed Marina and associated facilities will be operational by 2011.

3.4 Land and Development

3.4.1 Two **toolkits**, based on research carried out on behalf of *emda*, have recently been launched: a transport Interchange toolkit (the development of connectivity between different modes of public or private transport) and a Green Infrastructure toolkit (the development of attractive areas within the built environment). Both provide information and guidance to help potential investors capture the important economic benefits of their investment. They offer an essential reference source for local authorities, sub-regional partners and businesses, explaining the rationale for investment, assisting with application and approval of funds and offering an implementation, evaluation and assessment framework to help with decision making.

3.4.2 Two Property Award ceremonies in October recognised *emda* projects. At the **East Midlands Property Awards** Corby Railway Station won the prestigious award for Regeneration Project of the Year. *emda* funding and expertise was instrumental in bringing the latter project forward to reintroduce passenger rail services to Corby. At the East Midlands Centre for Constructing the Built Environment's **Constructing Excellence Awards** the Roundhouse in Derby collected both the 'Project of the Year' and 'Heritage Project of the Year'. This iconic Grade II listed building received £4.5m of *emda* funding to bring it back into beneficial use for Derby College.

3.4.3 An agreement was signed on 7 October for *emda* to gap fund Bolsterstone LLP £1.7m for the demolition of existing buildings at the **Cathedral Road** site and the construction of a five storey office building to Grade A standard. This project supports a principal objective of the Derby Cityscape masterplan to promote the development of new offices in the city centre, where there has been no significant development for around 15 years. Work will commence in November and will finish by March 2011.

3.4.4 Following the completion of funding and development agreements and the granting of planning consent work on the building of the **Corby Enterprise Centre** is now due to commence on 2 November. The Centre will provide start up, office and workshop accommodation for new businesses, encouraging the formation, retention and growth of small businesses, especially in the knowledge and technology based sectors. This project is extremely important for Corby as no similar accommodation has been developed by the private sector. *emda* has invested £7.6m in the project.

4. Achieving Equality

4.1 On 13-14 October, **the Action for Market Towns National Annual Convention** took place at PERA, Melton Mowbray. *emda* was one of the sponsors of the event, which attracted around 200 representatives from towns across the country, including local authority and voluntary sector organisations involved in developing and supporting projects to boost the economic and social vitality of towns. Geoff Stevens spoke at the opening about *emda's* support for market towns, including the BIDs (business improvement districts) Academy and the launch of the recent toolkit to measure the economic impact of events and festivals. Delegates made tours and site visits around Melton, which included a number of *emda*-supported projects. Our recent research on 'secondary centres' (see below) was presented on day two of the conference, with *emda* also co-hosting two workshops on linkages between the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and market town regeneration.

4.2 Lincoln University has recently concluded its '**Secondary Centres of Economic Activity**' research project for *emda*. This looked at smaller urban centres, such as market towns, and explored their differing roles in the region's economy. A summary will be published by Department of Communities and Local Government in November as part of their Spatial Analysis Unit's new monthly journal. This work has also attracted the attention of DEFRA, who have asked the project team from Lincoln to work with Birkbeck College on a national project to define different types of rural service centres and market towns.

4.3 On 12-13 October Lene Naesager, the Deputy Head of Cabinet under the EU Agriculture and **Rural Development Commissioner** conducted a two-day visit to Leicestershire organised by the Leicestershire Rural Partnership. *emda* helped to plan the visit, which included visits to three projects. Discussions centred on the future direction of European rural policy and delivery of the current RDPE Programme. *emda* was represented throughout the visit by Emma Corbett or Richard Tulloch.

4.4 *emda* has provided a grant of £892k towards the cost of converting two redundant grade 2 listed buildings on the Welbeck Estate near Worksop to accommodate the **School of Artisan Food**, which has recently opened. The school will run accredited courses for students and businesses in the production of artisan food, a term used to describe food produced by non-industrialised methods where raw materials are sourced locally. The school has already attracted international interest from the US and in Europe; and overseas students have already booked onto the courses. *emda's*

investment has levered in additional private investment to provide a bakery, micro brewery and cheese making facility. The development has also stimulated further speculative investment into the refurbishment of a nearby building to provide office and workspace accommodation.

4.5 Northamptonshire Enterprise Ltd and Northamptonshire County Council have worked with the University of Northampton to establish a social enterprise temporary employment agency in the County, which is based on a successful model tried and tested in other parts of the country. The **Jobshop** will provide a brokerage service for hard to reach client groups to get them into employment, and develop higher level skills for those in temporary employment or help the newly redundant to improve their chances of securing employment. It aims to help 100 people to get a job and 90 adults to achieve vocational skills equivalent to level 3 or above.

4.6 Originally a Welland Partnership project, **Creating a Vibrant Third Sector** is being delivered by Rutland County Council through a dedicated new post of Third Sector Support Officer. The project promotes the development of social enterprises by helping the Third Sector win opportunities to deliver services to the local community and to help them influence local decision making through effective involvement in Local Area Agreements.