



July 2008

PHASE 3 FINAL EVALUATION OF BUILDING FUTURES EAST TRAINING CENTRE

Final report prepared by

CLES Consulting

Presented to

Building Futures East Limited

CONTENTS	PAGE NO.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
1 INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 The brief	5
1.2 Methodology	6
1.2.1 Desk review	6
1.2.2 Interviews with key stakeholders	6
1.2.3 Focus group of trainees	6
1.2.4 Interviews with members of staff	6
1.3 The local context	6
1.3.1 Employment	8
1.3.2 Skills	9
1.4 The policy context	10
1.4.1 Worklessness agenda	10
1.4.2 Skills agenda	12
1.4.3 Local regeneration agenda	12
1.5 Summary	13
2 BUILDING FUTURES EAST	14
2.1 Background	14
2.2 The programme	14
2.3 Development Trust status	15
2.4 Aims and objectives	15
2.5 Funding	16
2.6 Management	16
2.7 Staff	17
2.8 Summary	17
3 FINDINGS	18
3.1 Introduction	18
3.2 Model	18
3.2.1 Evolution of the approach	18
3.2.2 New interventions	19
3.2.3 Expanding the offer	20
3.2.4 Strategic fit	20
3.3 Management	21
3.3.1 The Board	21
3.3.2 Staff	21
3.4 Marketing	22
3.5 Networking	22
3.6 Impact on the community	22
3.7 Impact on trainees	23
3.8 Added value	25
3.9 Progress towards sustainability	25
3.10 Summary	25
4 CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	26
4.1 Practical	26
4.2 Strategic	27
4.3 Final considerations	27
FIGURES	
1 Newcastle wards	7
2 IMD 2007 – Overall analysis	7
3 IMD 2007 – Employment deprivation	8
4 IMD 2007 – Education and skills deprivation	10
TABLES	
1 DWP benefit claimants by type of benefit claimed (May 2007)	9
2 BFE committed funding	16
3 Board of Trustees	17
APPENDICES	
1 Consultees	
2 Trainees' focus group proforma	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings from the final phase of the evaluation of Building Futures East (BFE) in Newcastle. CLES Consulting has been commissioned to carry out an independent external evaluation of BFE from its early days in 2007 until May 2008, the end of the European Social Fund (ESF) financial contribution. This is a rolling evaluation whereby progress over time has been measured. The work is therefore divided into three main phases:

- ❑ Phase 1: Initial evaluation – February to April 2007;
- ❑ Phase 2: Interim evaluation – November 2007 to February 2008;
- ❑ Phase 3: Final evaluation – March to May 2008.

This report presents the findings of the final evaluation of BFE, bringing together the learning from the entire evaluation process and suggests recommendations for future development.

Methodology

The evaluation methodology is summarised below:

- ❑ review of relevant secondary information pertaining to the BFE programme and the wider Newcastle regeneration area;
- ❑ interviews with key stakeholders;
- ❑ consultation with trainees;
- ❑ interviews with members of staff.

The context

Worklessness and skills shortage are significant challenges for Newcastle, particularly the East End of the City. BFE is borne out of this context, addressing the issues affecting the East of the City and targeting high levels of education and skills deprivation, particularly among young people. As the Government has developed numerous policies tackling worklessness and skills shortage, BFE is responding to the most current policy agenda.

The organisation

BFE is an independent, local organisation established to provide a route to employment for residents of the East End area of Newcastle. The organisation has devised a model to tackle the low skills base in the most deprived areas of the City, where people lack aspiration and opportunities. BFE's model is based on the direct involvement of local employers. The aim is to raise their awareness about the local skills base and tailor course provision to required needs, thus linking local employment opportunities to local residents.

The findings

BFE has grown significantly since its inception in 2006 and is now a full member of the Development Trust Association (DTA). The Board has increased its membership and the number of staff has also increased to reflect the expansion of activities.

Model

Since its inception, BFE has demonstrated the success of its model – a good example of a Development Trust responding to the needs of the local community and linking them to the requirements of local employers. BFE has reviewed all its systems and procedures in order to improve quality, has gained full Development Trust status, and is in the process of becoming a charity. As well as delivering training, BFE is exploring other areas of intervention, having recently developed two distinct projects.

Square 1 is a work based mentoring project aimed at engaging teenagers to work with local employers for six months. BFE is acting as the host organisation and employs the Co-ordinator who matches young people with local opportunities. BFE is also employing two Community Connectors, outreach/community workers informing the local community of the services offered by BFE and Newcastle Futures.

Expanding the offer

BFE is planning to expand the services offered to the local community by offering supported housing for local young people and developing an onsite canteen providing healthy food, enabling the organisation to expand the number of courses offered to include nutrition and food hygiene.

Management

The consultation highlighted the importance of professional and expert management in developing the organisation.

Marketing and networking

BFE has successfully promoted its services both at a local level and strategically with partners. A promotional DVD has also been produced by a local community firm that will be used both as a prospectus for students and advertising material for funders. BFE has successfully strengthened the relationship with Newcastle College and Newcastle Futures as well as developing new partnerships with the University of Northumbria.

Added value

Our consultation highlighted that BFE adds value to the service provided by enabling a process of networking between different initiatives, contributing to generating funding and supporting the delivery of other activities.

Impact on the community

BFE's aim is to make the local community a better place through improving the skills base, liaising with employers and providing local industries with a place to train future employees.

Impact on trainees

BFE activities have a direct impact on the trainees and enable them to gain new skills and increase their confidence and satisfaction levels. Participating on the course also improves their employability and willingness to work, thus stimulating their motivation to either work or continue education.

Progress towards sustainability

Sustainability is a challenge, particularly in the current climate where maintaining the interest and buy in of employers can be difficult. Nevertheless, BFE has established positive links with organisations such as the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Indeed, the LSC has shown an interest in co-operating with BFE to assist in achieving some of their targets. Moreover, BFE has also approached Business Link North East in order to discuss the availability of funding for small business incubator spaces. The organisation has numerous business ideas and proposes to expand its offer to cater further to the needs of the local community and provide services that contribute to generating income.

Recommendations

Drawing from the findings of our evaluation, we have identified a number of practical and strategic recommendations:

Practical recommendations
• Formalise arrangements between Board members, their roles, responsibilities and accountability
• As part of the Business Plan, formalise the management structures and clearly organise the internal governance
• Establish an internal evaluation system
• Dedicate the first year of the Business Plan to consolidation
Strategic recommendations
• Enhance the relationship with the local authority
• Link with the environmental agenda for the City
• Link with the wider healthy living agenda

Final considerations

Our evaluation has highlighted the following elements that make BFE unique and successful:

- ❑ dedicated and committed staff and management;
- ❑ community based;
- ❑ having employers on the Board and involved at different levels;
- ❑ flexibility of shaping the training on offer to the requirements of the labour market.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from the final phase of the evaluation of Building Futures East (BFE) in Newcastle. CLES Consulting has been commissioned to carry out an independent external evaluation of BFE from early in 2007 until May 2008, the end of the European Social Fund (ESF) financial contribution. This is a rolling evaluation whereby progress over time is measured, and has included re-visiting key players and beneficiaries at different stages until May 2008. The work is therefore divided into three main phases:

- ❑ Phase 1: Initial evaluation – February to April 2007;
- ❑ Phase 2: Interim evaluation – November 2007 to February 2008;
- ❑ Phase 3: Final evaluation – March to May 2008.

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to:

- ❑ run alongside the programme and advise in real time on achievement and pitfalls of the work;
- ❑ advise on the performance management processes and the development of a management system able to capture and monitor the relevant information;
- ❑ explore a development case for the programme;
- ❑ explore the potential development for new relationships with schools and other initiatives.

The findings from the evaluation will feed into the business planning process and help shape future developments. The structure of this report follows the same format as the initial evaluation, following the development of BFE, and outlines the current impact.

This report presents the findings of the final evaluation of BFE, bringing together the learning from the whole evaluation process and suggesting recommendations for future development.

1.1 The brief

BFE is focused on providing training and helping people into jobs through an innovative approach to development, design and delivery that includes co-operation between employers, agencies and organisations at all stages. The programme primarily targets the East Neighbourhood Renewal Area of Newcastle and courses are run from a training centre in the industrial heart of the East End of Newcastle, the Riverside, located by the quayside in a 35,000m² building with office space and an ICT room. The training centre opened in June 2006 offering four core modules, namely:

- 1) equivalent NVQ Levels 1 and 2 in Construction Industry;
- 2) health and safety training;
- 3) personal development programmes;
- 4) Construction Skills and Certificate Scheme (CSCS).

BFE is currently financed through a combination of funds, including East End Partnership, European Social Fund and Jobcentre Plus. BFE also generates income through local schools. BFE aims to become a fully working Development Trust, developing a number of strands to generate income and ensure sustainability through expanding their activities. This could include renting out the available space in the building and developing further courses. Since its early days, BFE has strategically focused on three main activities:

- 1) formation of the Development Trust;
- 2) formalisation of partnerships;
- 3) 5 year Business Plan.

The evaluation will inform the business planning process and help shape future developments. It is also important that the evaluation highlights the contribution of the programme to the wider regeneration agenda of the City, with a particular focus on the worklessness, well being and government agenda for 14-19 years, as well as the Modern Homes Standard within the Places and People Strategy for which Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) are responsible.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology we have chosen to conduct the evaluation is summarised below. We have adopted the same approach for each phase of the evaluation.

1.2.1 Desk review

The desk review has examined a wide range of background materials relevant to the programme, including reviewing the relevant information and documentation pertaining to the BFE programme and the wider regeneration context in Newcastle. In order to produce a profile of the area, we have consulted national data sources held in NOMIS¹ and analysed data on working age benefit uptake, economic activity and inactivity.

1.2.2 Interviews with key stakeholders

As part of the final evaluation we have conducted semi-structured, face-to-face and telephone interviews with a number of key players, some of whom we had interviewed in Phase 1 and others who have recently been involved with the programme. A full list of consultees is included in Appendix 1.

1.2.3 Focus groups of trainees

As part of the evaluation, we conducted four focus groups with BFE trainees. Nine individuals were interviewed in total and all were male. The vast majority spoke English as their first language, with one person originally from Croatia. Ages ranged from 16 to 56, representing the diverse age ranges which BFE caters for. In order to guarantee consistency between the different phases of the evaluation, we used the same questionnaire to guide the conversation with the groups (a copy of the proforma can be found at Appendix 2).

1.2.4 Interviews with members of staff

As part of the final evaluation of BFE we carried out face-to-face interviews with seven members of staff, including the Chief Executive (a full list of staff interviewed and their roles can be found in Appendix 1).

1.3 The local context

This section of the report looks at the socio-economic circumstances of the area primarily covered by BFE in the East End of the City². This comprises the wards of Byker, Walker and the neighbourhood areas of Daisy Hill (in Walkergate) and Shieldfield (in Ouseburn). Figure 1 shows all the wards in Newcastle and helps identify the BFE target area.

¹ Nomis is a web-based database of labour market statistics. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/home/about.asp>

² There are also students from other areas of need in the city e.g. Benwell, Fawdon, and NewbigginHall

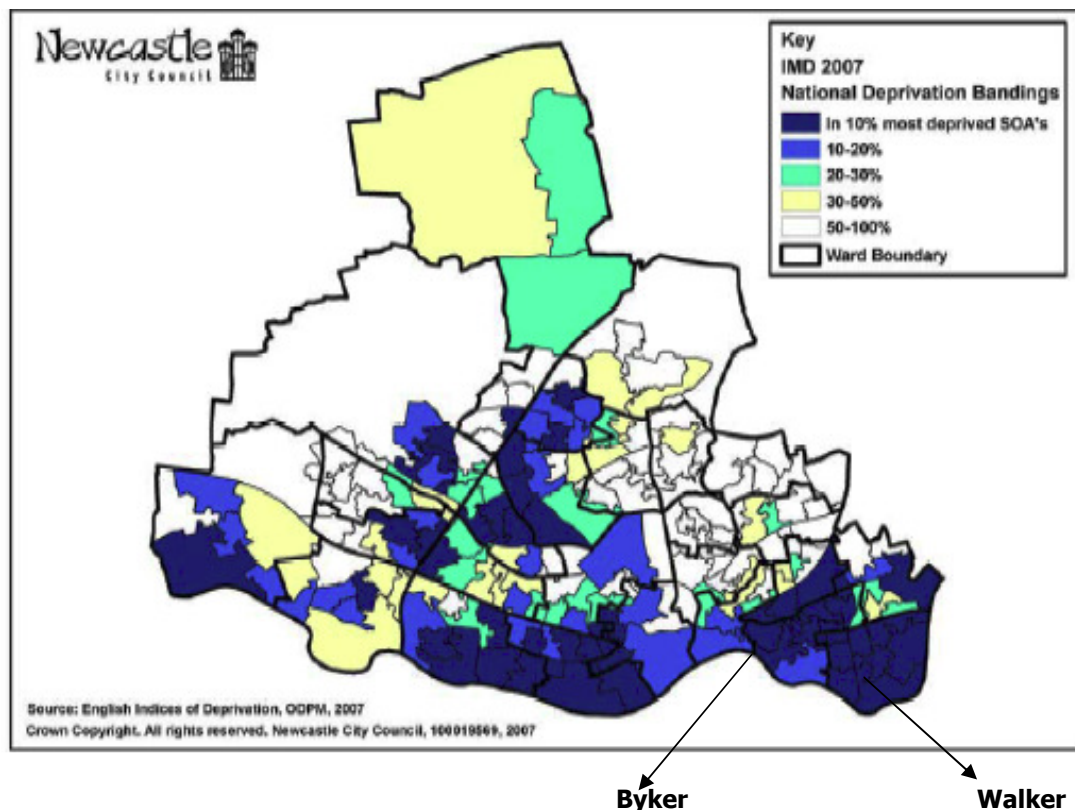
Figure 1: Newcastle wards



Crown Copyright (C) 2006. Newcastle U.C. License Number LAU/6244

According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007, in Newcastle 43 out of 173 lower level Super Output Areas (SOAs) are in the 10% most deprived in England. The East and West of the City are historically the most deprived. Figure 2 shows the overall analysis.

Figure 2: IMD 2007 – Overall analysis



The areas with the highest levels of deprivation are those with more SOAs falling within the 10% and 10-20% range.

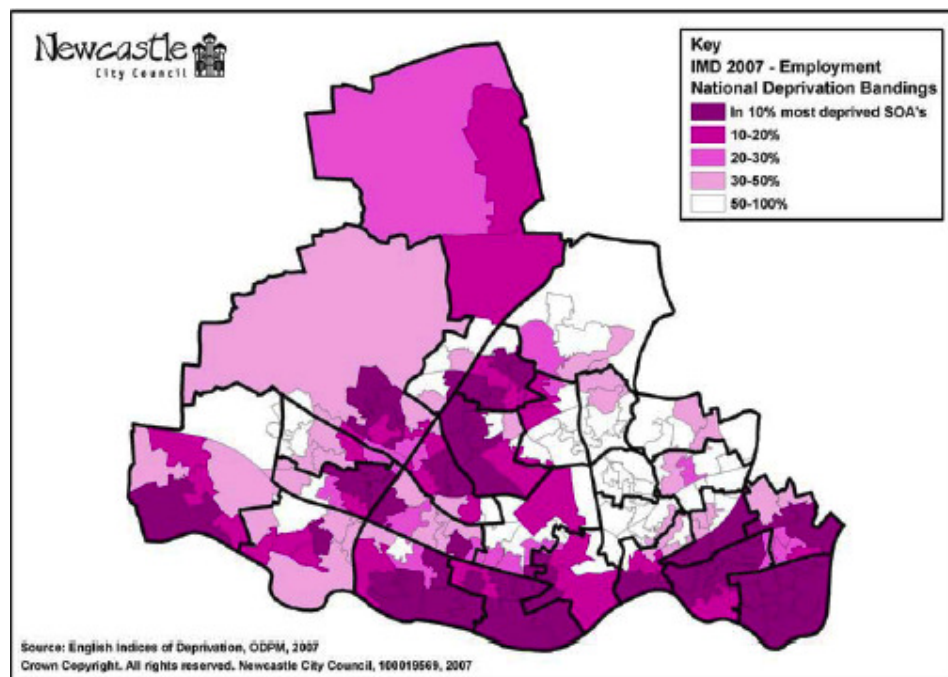
1.3.1 Employment

Job density is the number of jobs per resident of working age (females: 16-59; males: 16-64)³. Whilst data on job density shows that Newcastle has around one job per every resident of working age with a value of 1.15, this compares to 0.75 in the region and 0.84 in England. Worklessness remains a significant issue for the City. The IMD 2007 states there are 50 (out of 173) SOAs in the 10% most deprived. The employment domain of the IMD is calculated using the following indicators:

- ❑ unemployment claimant count;
- ❑ Severe Disablement Allowance;
- ❑ Incapacity Benefit (IB) claimants;
- ❑ 18-24 year olds in the New Deal not in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA);
- ❑ 25 year olds and over in the New Deal not in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA);
- ❑ lone parents aged 18 and over in the New Deal.

Figure 3 shows the concentration of employment deprivation in the East and West of the City.

Figure 3: IMD 2007 – Employment deprivation



The analysis of recent (April 2008) data on JSA shows that Walker⁴ has a significantly high proportion of claimants (8.5%) compared to the rest of the City (3.2%) and Great Britain (2.2%).

There is a high proportion of 18 to 24 years old claiming JSA in Walker (32.6%), significantly higher than the value for the City (31.9%) and Great Britain (30.3%). Also, the proportion of 25 to 49 years old claiming JSA in Walker is 56.5%, 3.5% higher than the figure for the City (53%).

In 2007, the proportion of total claimants (all Department of Work and Pension benefits) was 42.3% in Walker, compared to 18.1% in Newcastle and 14.2% in Great Britain. Table 1 shows the breakdown of claimants by type of benefit.

³ Source: NOMIS <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/Default.asp>

⁴ Walker was chosen as the statistical representative of the East End. All the data are derived by NOMIS

Table 1: DWP benefit claimants by type of benefit claimed (May 2007)

	Walker (numbers)	Walker (%)	Newcastle upon Tyne (%)	Great Britain (%)
Total claimants	1,915	42.3	18.1	14.2
JSA	395	8.7	3.2	2.2
IB	920	20.3	9.4	7.2
Lone parents	325	7.2	2.6	2.1
Carers	120	2.6	1.2	1.0
Others on income related benefits	85	1.9	0.7	0.5
Disabled	60	1.3	0.8	0.9
Bereaved	10	0.2	0.2	0.3

The highest proportions of claimants are IB claimants and lone parents. Indeed, in Walker, the proportion of IB claimants is 10.9% higher than the rest of the City, whilst the proportion of lone parents is 7.2% of the working age population compared to 2.6% in Newcastle and 2.1% in Great Britain. The data shows a gap between availability of jobs and the worklessness rate, suggesting that jobs are not taken by local people from deprived areas of the City.

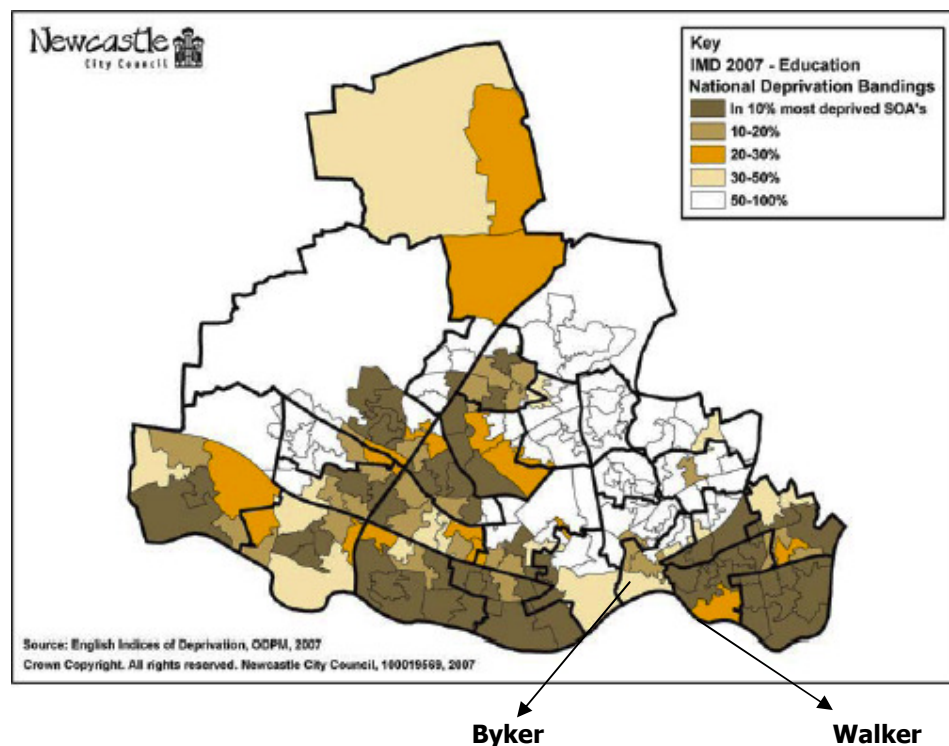
1.3.2 Skills

Job density is relatively healthy in Newcastle, but the proportion of people of working age who are out of work is significantly higher than the figures for the City and the rest of the country.

Lack of skills is therefore to be considered as an important issue that needs to be tackled to overcome the gap. The IMD 2007 calculates the level of education and skills deprivation by using a combination of the following indicators:

- ❑ average points score of pupils at Key Stage 2 (end of primary);
- ❑ average points score of pupils at Key Stage 3;
- ❑ average points score of pupils at Key Stage 4 (GCSE/GNVQ);
- ❑ proportion of young people not staying on in school or non-advanced further education 16+;
- ❑ secondary school absence rate;
- ❑ proportion of those aged under 21 not entering Higher Education;
- ❑ proportion of working age adults (aged 25-54) in the area with no or low qualifications.

The patterns of education and skills deprivation are similar to the results of other IMD domains, with the majority of SOAs in the 10% most deprived found mainly around the East and West of the City.

Figure 4: IMD 2007 – Education and skills deprivation

1.4 The policy context

The policy context in which BFE has developed and is currently operating within, focuses on the main themes of worklessness, skills and local regeneration. This section presents an overview of the political agendas affecting BFE and influencing its development.

1.4.1 Worklessness agenda

The Government aims to raise employment to around 80%, linking sustainable employment to welfare reforms. A recent CLES Bulletin (number 57) on the *Rights and Responsibilities: Recent Changes in Employment Policies* highlights a number of important themes underlined in recent government policies:

- ❑ relationship between Jobcentre Plus and benefit claimants needs to be based on rights and responsibilities. In this relationship, benefit claimants have the right to access suitable, personalised and effective advice and support from Jobcentre services, whilst they also have the responsibility to move into employment and/or training as soon as possible;
- ❑ recognition of the important role that employers play in facilitating the move back into employment for many individuals;
- ❑ importance of partnership approaches towards tackling local employment issues and seeing employment as a key element for tackling wider issues around neighbourhood renewal.

Transforming Britain's labour market – 10 years of the New Deal (2008) is one of the most recent documents to come from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) setting out the background of the New Deal initiative and designing its future.

The aim is to have a system that focuses on unlocking *'the skills and talents of every individual'*. Thus, the emphasis of the New Deal will be on raising the employability of individuals by helping them gain the skills to allow them to move into employment and, once they are in work, ensuring they have access to relevant in-work training.

As such, allowing them to progress within their careers. It is hoped that this will occur through partnership working between the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Ready for Work, skilled for work, unlocking Britain's talent, published in January 2008, outlines the ways in which the UK can rise to the challenge of reaching an 80% employment rate, with a particular emphasis on the role of employers, and the importance of partnership working between employers and the Government. The document sets out a number of key ways in which employers can help nurture a skilled workforce in the UK:

- ❑ **employer-led reform and renewal** – the employment and skills infrastructure must be better tailored to the needs of individual business sectors. In order to achieve this *'the Government is reforming and empowering Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) – the employer-led, independent organisations, covering each of the major sectors of the UK economy'*⁵;
- ❑ **demand-led recruitment and skills support** – it is important to ensure that *'employers can recruit the people they need, and to continue to move people into work. We must work harder to identify and tackle the skills needs of benefit claimants'*. Crucially, this means a better integration of employment skills and services. Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs) play an important role in achieving this. An LEP is a *'collaboration between the Government and business to tackle the increasing recruitment and skills challenges of our labour market and economy'*;
- ❑ **the enhanced apprenticeship programme** – apprenticeship programmes offer participants, and in particular young people, the opportunity to combine theoretical and applied knowledge, technical ability and broader employability skills. In order to ensure their success, apprenticeship programmes will include⁶ continued high levels of government funding and a range of up-to-date, simplified and relevant apprenticeship frameworks;
- ❑ **working with employers in their communities** – the Government is committed to helping employers respond to local conditions by *'allowing greater local flexibility, so that delivery can match local needs, backed by greater targeted funding to help areas with the greatest issues; and involving employers in the development of plans for the future economic development of their area and giving them influence over the delivery of the employment and skills services at the local level'*. There are a number of local initiatives where the Government are keen to have more involvement from local employers, including:
 - **Local Strategic Partnerships** – a partnership between the different parts of the public sector, private businesses and third sector, which attempts to deliver services more effectively;
 - **Sustainable Community Strategy** – a document that sets out the current economic, social and environmental position of a local area. Produced by the Local Strategic Partnership, a Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the key thematic priorities that shape local authority and partner activities;
 - **Multi Area Agreements** – based on the Local Area Agreement concept, which seeks to enable local authorities and their partners to collaborate priorities and funding on issues that cross authority boundaries;
 - **Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF)** – the WNF follows the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) and incorporates the Department for Work and Pension's Deprived Area Fund (DAF), and is set to invest £1.5b over a three year period (2008-2011). This initiative emphasises the need to take a holistic approach to tackle worklessness by combining efforts at a national, regional, sub-regional and local level through Local Area Agreements (LAA) and Multi Area Agreements (MAA). In Newcastle, the WNF focuses on employability and enterprising communities.

⁵ <http://www.jobcentrepplus.gov.uk/JCP/Employers/lep/index.html>

⁶ http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/ready_to_work.pdf

1.4.2 Skills agenda

Skills are crucial to the worklessness agenda and employability issues. The Government's emphasis on skills has been particularly apparent since the publication of the *Leitch Review of Skills*⁷ in December 2006, in which the Government commissioned Sandy Leitch to undertake an independent review of the UK's long term skills needs.

The key theme to emerge from recent policy is a move beyond simply finding employment to longer term career progression and continued learning, which is part of the Government's wider strategy to nurture skills. According to the *Leitch Review*, unless the UK can develop reforms to schools, colleges and universities, making its skills base one of its strengths, UK businesses will find it increasingly difficult to compete in the global market.

A new adult advancement and careers service is to be introduced, initially trialled over the next two years and then fully introduced from 2010-11. This will see Learndirect and Nextstep advisory services combining within a new organisation, working in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and a range of statutory and voluntary advice services to deliver a seamless customer service. This service highlights a new commitment to the provision of a long term and sustained advice service. Getting the client into employment is not the end, but rather the first step in developing their skills and career prospects.

1.4.3 Local regeneration agenda

Recently, the drive to consider environmental issues, climate change and renewable energy has become more pressing. The *Stern Review*⁸ highlights the economic benefit of intervening early in tackling climate change, as indeed the cost of not doing anything will be higher than the benefits of strong, early intervention. Whilst the *Stern Review* takes an international perspective, the message is that early intervention has to happen at a local level, thus in this section we will touch upon this issue when looking at the local regeneration context.

Economic development and climate change⁹

Newcastle City Council has an Energy Strategy, an internal energy efficiency programme devised to work with a range of partners to reduce both fuel poverty and cut carbon emissions in the wider community. The Council has also acknowledged that climate change is happening and in 2008 it published the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for the Council. The development of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Sustainable Community Strategy is also heavily related to Newcastle's role in mitigating the effects of climate change by addressing proximity and density of future physical development in the City, linking this to transport plans and a reduction in the reliance on the private car, and also improving the sustainability of homes built in the City.

Newcastle is a Science City¹⁰ and, through this, is strongly pursuing the development of new and renewable energy technologies as business and enterprise opportunities for the City, and as a way of tackling the effects of climate change. In the North East, this economic opportunity is a central part of the Regional Development Agency's approach to tackling the economic as well as environmental effects of climate change.

Walker Riverside Regeneration

Newcastle City Council adopted the Walker Riverside Area Action Plan (WRAAP) on 4 April 2007 as a local development document within the City's Local Development Framework. The document was developed after a six week consultation period that gave people and organisations the opportunity to comment on the three options given to the development of Walker Riverside. The Area Action Plan focuses on the delivery of a number of activities, including:

⁷ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/6/4/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf

⁸ Stern, Nicholas (2006), *The Economics of Climate Change*, HM Treasury, London

⁹ Bradford, Victoria (2008), *Economic Development and Climate Change*, CLES Rapid Research

¹⁰ Newcastle Science City: <http://www.newcastlesciencecity.com/?&pageid=2>

- ❑ energy efficiency and renewable energy generation improvements to all new homes;
- ❑ development of a new community resource centre;
- ❑ new primary schools in the East and West of the area;
- ❑ improved leisure facilities;
- ❑ development of a new neighbourhood centre (Community Focus on Walker Road);
- ❑ green corridors and environmental improvements.

The three main options identified¹¹ for the redevelopment of the industrial area include:

- 1) **progressive management** – current practice and further promotion of the area as a base for the offshore marine sector. Also develop new training facilities for Newcastle College;
- 2) **offshore technopole** – building on the current marine offshore industries but making the area a centre of innovation at international level. The development strategy under this option is to be developed with the rest of the region. The training centre idea is expanded as part of this option to include managed workspaces, research units and marketing and meeting facilities. The training centre will also be linked to a new and renewable energy centre;
- 3) **technology and industrial park** – this option aims to diversify activity in the industrial area whilst also maximising local job opportunities. The main businesses will be marine and shipping but the creation of an environmental industrial quarter will also be included.

The consultation successfully identified the need for improvements to the appearance, functioning and accessibility of the industrial area. Although it was thought that more work was required to draw up detailed options and proposals for the future industries of the area, this work is to be undertaken with local stakeholders and funding partners. Newcastle Council has agreed to support the development and growth of local businesses and social enterprises using funds allocated for economic development purposes.

1.5 Summary

Worklessness and skills shortage are significant challenges for Newcastle, particularly Walker. BFE is borne out of this context, addressing the issues affecting the East of the City and targeting high levels of education and skills deprivation, particularly among young people. As the Government has developed numerous policies tackling worklessness and skills shortage, BFE is responding to the most current policy agenda.

¹¹ The options for the industrial area were developed by consultant Colin Buchanan and partners Ltd through consultation with businesses (2005)

2 BUILDING FUTURES EAST

2.1 Background

Building Futures East is borne out the regeneration activities delivered in the East End of the City. The East End Partnership was a local regeneration partnership originally set up in 1995 to regenerate Byker, Walker, Monkchester and part of Walkergate in the East End of Newcastle. The Partnership included equal representation from the community and voluntary sector, private sector and the local authority. The Partnership worked towards a common goal of regenerating the local area by ensuring that money was spent wisely, made a real impact and that initiatives funded fit the needs of the East End community.

The East End Partnership succession strategy included two main aspects, reflecting the needs and demands of the local community:

- 1) **education, work and training** – the development of training opportunities for local people, enabling access to job opportunities;
- 2) **East End Community Alliance** – development of an independent structure for the voluntary and community sector in the East End.

BFE was created as a response to the identified need to provide work and training in the local community.

2.2 The programme

BFE is an independent, local organisation established to provide a route to employment to residents of the East End area of Newcastle. The organisation has devised a model to tackle the low skills base in the most deprived areas of the City where people lack aspiration and opportunities.

BFE's model is based on the direct involvement of local employers. The aim is to raise their awareness about the local skills base and tailor course provision to required needs, thus linking local employment opportunities to local residents.

BFE also works with local secondary schools delivering vocational skills opportunities and is a member of the consortium developing and delivering the Construction and the Built Environment Vocational Diploma. The organisation offers opportunities openly to the public and targets specific vulnerable groups within the area, such as young people identified as NEET and single parents.

The training opportunities offered by BFE include:

- ❑ Building Craft Occupations (pre-Foundation) Award;
- ❑ Foundation Construction Award – equivalent to NVQ Level 1;
- ❑ Intermediate Craft Award – equivalent to NVQ Level 2;
- ❑ Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS);
- ❑ Key Skills Programme Level 1-3;
- ❑ ICT training;
- ❑ Square 1 – 6 month vocational skills and mentoring programme targeting disaffected young people and those at risk of offending.

The organisation is also offering evening classes in joinery, plastering, bricklaying, painting and decorating.

2.3 Development Trust status

In March 2008, BFE was formally granted full membership to the Development Trust Association (DTA). The process of becoming a Development Trust (DT) lasted a year and the organisation went through an assessment called the health check. The organisation then went through a one year probationary period, during which it was classified as an emerging Development Trust.

The Development Trust Association (DTA) has 150 organisations across the UK, mainly community-based organisations endorsing community enterprise in order to remain sustainable. These are involved in three main areas of regeneration:

- 1) economic;
- 2) social;
- 3) environmental.

There are 39 Development Trusts in the North East varying in size and focus. Development Trusts tend to be companies limited by guarantee and charities with one or more trading arms. Their characteristic is that community control really means these organisations do what is needed in the area. DTA provides support to the start ups and then when they become full members.

All DTA staff are fully accredited business advisors, but their way of providing support is also on the basis of a learning network – examples from elsewhere and peer-to-peer learning and support.

There are three main areas of work for DTA:

- 1) **organisational health checks** – the basic version which is set as a baseline for organisations wishing to become DTA members. Then the follow up of the basic health check for organisations that are continuing to develop the process of becoming a DT and looking for further opportunities in their areas. These are the aspirations of the organisation;
- 2) **business support and development** – DTA has a pot of funding available to provide support to develop business opportunities, formerly called the Enterprise Accelerator, providing funding for viable business ideas. This has now developed into a different version, which includes a diagnostic and funding to help develop the DTA. The DTA represents its organisations into the wider social enterprise movement, is part of Inspire and other organisations, and on the Board of Directors of NESEP. The areas of focus within this are community renewable energy and recycling. The DTA is also working towards a consortium development, which aims to get the DTs working together to deliver public sector contracts;
- 3) **developing assets (property)** – this focuses on the Government asset transfer from local authority to third sector organisations and contributes to working towards sustainability for these organisations, as there are income possibilities related to the ownership of buildings. DTA helps organisations develop in this process, looking at viability.

The DTA membership health check covers the following areas, to see if the organisation is:

- engaged in economic, social and environmental regeneration of a defined area;
- independent, self-sufficient or aiming for self-sufficiency and not-for-private profit;
- community based, owned and managed;
- actively involved in partnership between the community, voluntary, private and public sectors;
- an indicator of good practice.

2.4 Aims and objectives

The objective of BFE is to provide, through consortium and partnership arrangements, a direct route to employment for communities in the East End of the City that correspond to the agreed skills and capacity needs of employers. The key strategic objectives of BFE are:

- ❑ to support and assist individuals to gain a level of stability and order in their lives that enable them to consider their aspirations and actively make choices to raise those aspirations;
- ❑ to support residents through the development of effective pathways from unemployment into training and onto sustainable employment;
- ❑ promote skills development, lifelong learning, inclusive work practices and retention of those suffering discrimination in the labour market through training and support;
- ❑ empower individuals to participate more fully in the labour market and determine and fulfil their learning and employment objectives;
- ❑ develop and improve basic skills amongst unemployed and vulnerable workers, as well as providing support post-placement and training;
- ❑ help the unemployed access, retain and progress in employment by testing and developing a transferable model of intermediary support;
- ❑ raise awareness among employers, developers and sub-contractors of the value of developing a more skilled local workforce;
- ❑ strive to improve links between employers, training agencies and other non-governmental organisations to address more effective barriers in the labour market.

2.5 Funding

BFE falls into Priority 3 of the European Social Fund for Newcastle. The match funding was a combination of City Council and East End Partnership resources part funded by Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Jobcentre Plus through a one off payment to kick-start the programme. The breakdown of funding is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: BFE committed funding

Funding profile	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
ESF	£101,052	£122,564	£26,375
East End Partnership	£100,000	£200,000	
NRF		£149,086	
JCP	£50,000		
Schools income		£35,000	£70,000
Total	£251,052	£506,650	£96,375

In addition to the above, BFE has developed working partnerships with other organisations and has been able to access sources of income. Indeed, in order to be successful with the DTA application, an organisation has to have at least 10% income generated in one year (BFE had more than 10%).

In 2008, BFE successfully levered in around £68,388.80 (with continuation in 2009) of DAF in order to be the host organisation for the Square 1 project – based on a Scottish model, this project provides employment and mentoring opportunities to disaffected young people. BFE will work alongside other partners in the East End to deliver this scheme.

2.6 Management

As regards the arrangements for programme management, there is a Board of Directors made up of Trustees listed in Table 3. The everyday management of the programme is led by a team based in the office of the BFE building in Walker Riverside, comprising the Chief Executive, Programme Manager, Training Co-ordinator and Administrative and Finance Officers.

Table 3: Board of Trustees

Patron: Lord Burlison		
Trustee	Position	Organisation
Alasdair MacDonald	Managing director	Duco Ltd
Vincent Robinson OBE	Retired	Former Northern Regional Director, DWP
Fr. Michael Conaty MBE	Chairman	St. Anthony of Padua Community Association
Bruce Shepherd	Director	Shepherd Offshore Services Ltd
John Stokel-Walker	Councillor	Newcastle City Council, Walker Ward
Chris Muir	UK Finance Director	Northgate Plc
Barry Miller	Managing Director	Bellway Homes (North East) Plc
Dr Paul Chan	Senior Lecturer	Construction Management, University of Northumbria

2.7 Staff

The expansion of activities has led to an increase in members of staff. All vocational skills tutors' posts are filled and a Training Co-ordinator has been appointed to manage the vocational skills programme.

Following the development of the Square 1 scheme (further detail in Section 3), a Co-ordinator has been appointed. There are also two Community Connectors in post, one each for the East and West of the City. BFE has developed a joint venture with Newcastle Futures following the success of the East End Community Connector. This post entails engaging with local residents and informing them of the services offered by Newcastle Futures and BFE.

2.8 Summary

BFE has grown significantly since its inception in 2007 and is now a full member of the DTA, with more than 10% income generated in one year. The Board has increased membership and the number of staff has also increased to reflect the expansion of activities.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Introduction

Building on the Phase 1 and 2 evaluations, this section of the report presents the findings of the final evaluation of BFE, which took place between February 2007 and May 2008. CLES Consulting has been following the development of the organisation during this time and produced evaluative reports based on consultation with key stakeholders, trainees and the analysis of secondary data. This section presents the areas in which BFE has expanded, contributed towards and made a difference.

3.2 Model

BFE is a good example of a Development Trust responding to the needs of the local community and linking them to the requirements of local employers. The success of the BFE model lies:

- ❑ in the capacity of linking local needs to the requirements of local employers;
- ❑ in successfully demonstrating the support and involvement of employers, guaranteeing buy in and the expertise needed to drive the organisation, thus supporting effective delivery;
- ❑ in employers bringing understanding of what is required and the courses provided enabling local people to gain the skills to access local jobs, thus benefiting from the opportunities created by wider regeneration initiatives;
- ❑ in being rooted in the East End of the City and the expertise and knowledge of the team, bringing a variety of partners together from local community, private sector and statutory bodies.

'The aim of BFE has remained the same: building a community, a real community where people acknowledge the worth of themselves and others within.'

3.2.1 Evolution of the approach

Status

Since its inception in 2006, BFE has grown significantly. All our consultees have praised the speed at which the organisation has set itself up and started delivering. The DTA worked closely with BFE for a year and, from becoming an emerging Trust, BFE has succeeded in becoming a full member.

This is a significant milestone in the development of the organisation, providing BFE with a network of other organisations to share experiences and access support. The benefits include advice, support to staff, networking, consultant time and small grants available to develop projects on the basis of peer support. Being a DT also contributes to the process of becoming sustainable and for the organisation to move away from grant dependency by establishing itself as a trading organisation.

At the end of December 2007, BFE submitted an application to the Charities Commission and, at the time of writing this report, this process was still ongoing. Charity status brings in taxation benefits that will contribute to BFE's development.

'Totally amazed from what they have achieved. They worked very hard to get where they are now but it is fabulous what they have done in such a short time.'

'BFE has been successful in starting easily and quickly, from not being there to being operational in such a short time is a real achievement.'

Quality assurance

During the past year, BFE has reviewed all its systems and procedures in order to improve their quality. Every course has been standardised in order to introduce consistency in delivery. The Training Co-ordinator is using her expertise to introduce a systematic approach of reviewing and monitoring individual development (e.g. trainees are individually reviewed in order to monitor how far they have travelled).

The North East Regional Co-ordinator of the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA)¹² has been offered free accommodation in the BFE building. QIA is working with the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and the Secondary National Strategy to develop and commission development programmes for teachers and trainers to support the 14-19 curriculum reforms, including the new Diplomas and functional skills. The presence of the QIA regional agent on site contributes to improving the process of accreditation, although the organisation is looking at broader accreditation linked to programme development.

3.2.2 New interventions

As well as delivering training, BFE has started exploring other areas of intervention.

Square 1

This model was first developed in Scotland in mid-2000 by Working Rite CIC, an Edinburgh based social enterprise. It is a work based mentoring project aimed at involving teenagers (16 to 18 years old) to work for local employers for six months. Young people are matched with the right employer according to their requirements and needs.

Generally, Working Rite CIC sets up projects nationwide using this method, but differently from other examples. BFE has been very independent and proactive, thus requiring minimal support by Working Rite CIC. The BFE Square 1 model became operational in February 2008 and focused on young people from the DAF area. Young people are recruited through youth centres, Connexions and other referrals. The Square 1 Co-ordinator identifies local employers and matches them with the young people. BFE acts as the host organisation (in Scotland, this is generally a housing association as it can rely on a number of local trade men for support and placements). The young person is paid a weekly allowance, which is partly provided by the employer, with the remainder provided by the host organisation. In Newcastle, the funding comes partly from BFE (£55) and the employer (£37).

The Scottish model is known to be very successful with a *'70% plus success rate in progressing youngsters into full-time employment and apprenticeships'*. It is early days to comment on the development of the BFE Square 1 achievements, although an example of good practice is provided by the experience of a young, local girl currently employed under the Square 1 scheme in BFE.

Example of good practice

Gemma is a local girl who saw an advertisement in the local resource centre about Square 1 and got in contact with the Co-ordinator. She is now doing work experience with BFE and is determined to stay. She likes the job but most of all the people she works with. She is learning a lot, not just about skills but also about people.

Community Connectors

Community Connectors is a joint venture between Newcastle Futures and BFE. Their role is to engage with potential service users and inform them of the services offered by Newcastle Futures and BFE, a form of outreach work that aims to link people to opportunities. There are two Community Connectors covering the East and West of the City. BFE developed the idea and its success was well received by Newcastle Futures who then asked BFE to replicate the model in the West of the City.

¹² The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) has been set up to monitor the activities delivered by the Further Education sector

Community Connectors encourage cross organisation working by signposting individuals to services available. A databank of information on all the activities delivered by Newcastle Futures and other agencies is also in production.

3.2.3 Expanding the offer

BFE is also looking at expanding the offer available to the local community in a number of ways.

Supported housing

BFE is looking at the provision of supported housing for young people in need. BFE is willing to manage a site located within Walker (a potential site has already been identified). Part of the tenancy agreement would be training within BFE and two additional hours of basic skills training onsite. This initiative fits the Your Homes in Newcastle (YHN) policy on providing training for homeless young people and the Walker Riverside agenda.

Canteen

The CLES interim evaluation suggested BFE should provide a canteen for trainees. BFE has engaged with potential providers and received a gift from AMEC comprising a two floor portacabin with a full catering kitchen. This will be located outside the main building of BFE and, as well as providing facilities for trainees, it will be used to expand the provision of courses (e.g. nutrition and food hygiene) and develop into a catering site.

Improvement to the building and development of further activities

The refurbishment and improvements to the building in which BFE is based have always run alongside the development of the organisation. It is also DTA policy to focus on asset development. More recently, a three stage development plan has been devised, including:

- ❑ **Stage 1** – development of an ICT room on the ground floor of the building. This is completed and equipped for students to use;
- ❑ **Stage 2** – development of a ground floor lobby to access the ICT room. An improved space used as a main reception to the building;
- ❑ **Stage 3** – transformation of the first floor of the building, previously used to deliver the painting and decorating course, into six small business start-up units, in response to the interest some local businesses have expressed in the availability of space.

The building represents a significant opportunity to generate income, renting space out at affordable prices to community groups as well as local businesses. As mentioned above, conferencing could also be assisted by onsite catering provided by the development of the canteen and its functions.

3.2.4 Strategic fit

As found from previous evaluations, BFE is strategically embedded within the most current policy context at national, regional and local levels.

The organisation tackles worklessness and skills shortage. It fits with the local authority strategy on worklessness and provides support to the more 'difficult' clients, those furthest away from the labour market.

'BFE is about reducing inequalities and improving opportunities.'

BFE focuses on empowering the local unemployed and linking them with opportunities – local people benefiting from local jobs created by the wider regeneration process.

At the local level, the organisation is rooted in the regeneration area of the East End. BFE is also crucially located at the heart of the Walker Riverside industrial site, thus an important position as a potential training provider for the new industries and development along the river. Discussions are underway as regards the future development of Walker Riverside.

Swan – a major offshore business – is now being dismantled and discussions on the re-development of the site are centring around wind technology and renewable energy. Questions on skills provision and appropriate training are therefore paramount.

BFE is well positioned as regards the provision of appropriate skills to support the development of renewable energy industries along Walker Riverside, as well as the energy efficiency in the construction industry, which is also crucial for the Standards Modern Homes Strategy. For Newcastle City Council, ensuring high quality, sustainable construction will be key to improving the fabric of local communities and enhancing people's sense of place. The Council has developed a sustainable construction supplementary planning document as part of the City's statutory Local Development Framework.

3.3 Management

All consultees highlighted the importance that the strong and prepared management has played in the development of the organisation. The management is experienced, knowledgeable and completely committed to the improvement of BFE and the East End. This is reflected in the ethos of the organisation and its modus operandi that is flexible, informal and effective to obtain the buy in and support of big players in order to link local people to local opportunities. The comment below reflects the general considerations:

'The success of the organisation has a lot to do with the leadership, its enthusiasm and willingness to learn and develop further.'

3.3.1 The Board

Our consultation has highlighted a general agreement over the expertise of the members of the Board, a dynamic and proactive group supportive of the management team and serving the community.

After a year of development, the Board is now in the position to start thinking more strategically about its structure and composition. There are currently seven members but provision for twelve. There is also no female presence, which needs to be addressed, as well as a lack of representation from the small business sector (there has been a deliberate choice to consider additional members). There is now synergy but the Board is in a position to be mindful of the gender split.

There is currently a working group comprising three main members of the Board. This is responsible for the day-to-day executive decisions and communicates to the virtual network used to update members.

During the first year of development, the structure and operation of the Board has been working satisfactorily and it is useful that the Business Plan includes some consideration on formalising the organisational structure.

3.3.2 Staff

BFE is a stimulating environment for the staff and the contact with trainees and schools make it more interesting. The consultation highlighted high satisfaction levels with their position, workload and management. Indeed, the management is considered approachable and there is a great sense of respect as communication flows regularly and staff members are made to feel part of the whole BFE experience.

'The future seems very rosy: lots of ideas, good partnership, potential and everyone involved wants BFE to be successful.'

3.4 Marketing

One of the recommendations suggested in previous evaluations highlighted the need for more marketing and advertisement of the organisation. BFE has successfully promoted its services both at a local and strategic level with partners. Locally, Community Connectors has contributed to create demand and it is understood that BFE is now widely recognised within the community.

There is also a promotional DVD in production, a five minute film on BFE to be used as a prospectus for students and as advertising material for potential and new funders. The video production – using a community film company – will be premiered at the official launch event in July 2008. Finally, the DTA membership brings benefits as regards wider advertisement, including a recent national press release that stimulated interest from other organisations (e.g. West Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Trust).

At a strategic level, although the awareness and recognition of BFE has significantly increased, more can be done to ensure BFE is recognised as a relevant stakeholder.

3.5 Networking

Previous evaluations have identified the need for BFE to strengthen the relationship with organisations such as Newcastle Futures, Newcastle College and wider regeneration activities.

During this year, BFE has successfully networked with all of the above and has consolidated its relationships with a number of organisations. The working relationship with Newcastle Futures is going well and the partnership recognises the value of BFE and its potential. There is also a joint venture between the two organisations in sharing Community Connectors. Regular meetings are held as regards the DAF Forum and an increase in understanding of how the organisations work.

The relationship formed with Newcastle College is also growing and developing in strength, reflected in the joint planning meetings the two organisations are currently having. The consortium approach is now working well and is a positive approach. There is now a greater understanding of the partnership and the organisations involved.

There is also ongoing work and networking with the University of Northumbria:

- ❑ contact with new Board member, Dr Paul Chan;
- ❑ the University has a course in Construction Management and, as part of this course, BFE has agreed to provide support for first year students to use the BFE space to develop their skills in exchange for university provision of internal accreditation support;
- ❑ BFE has been chosen as a case study for an academic project looking at skills and capacity issues in different sectors.

The organisation is liaising with a number of different stakeholders and contributing actively to raise its profile regionally and nationally. It is also embedded in its local community with the BFE Chief Executive being a Director/Trustee of the East End Community Alliance.

3.6 Impact on the community

BFE contributes to regenerating the community by providing local young people with skills, aspirations and employment, stimulating the economy and the well being of the wider community. BFE is about making the local community a better place through improving the skills base, liaising with employers and providing the local industrial area – located by the Tyne River in the industrial heart of Newcastle – with a place to learn and train local employees.

In quantitative terms, in 2007/08 BFE trained and provided 225 individuals with qualifications, with 43 residents from the target area having accessed employment.

The local community is engaged with BFE and the organisation is a good example of how to involve young people. At entry level, these trainees are not very interested; however, BFE manages to keep them involved.

'The place seems to have a good reputation amongst the school kids who are on the course. They seem to be learning something here that they wouldn't be at school.'

3.7 Impact on trainees

This section of the report presents the findings of four focus groups, which were held with trainees in April 2008. Nine individuals were interviewed in total and all were male. The vast majority spoke English as their first language, with one person originally from Croatia. Ages ranged from 16 to 56, representing the diverse age ranges which BFE caters for.

As has been the case with the previous two surveys that have been undertaken as part of the evaluation, the majority of respondents heard about the course by word of mouth. Everyone was from the local area and reached the centre either by bus or on foot.

Where possible, feedback with trainees has been compared with the reflections provided through the focus groups.

Motivations

Reasons for wanting to undertake training included learning new skills to assist people in finding employment and building on or updating skills already held in the building trade.

Some individuals faced wider issues than a lack of skills in the construction industry:

'I'm a keen DIYer anyway but wanted another skill. I'm looking after my wife at the moment and I'm her carer, but I want to move towards work eventually.'

Other people recognised that although they may have had some pre-existing skills in construction, they needed to update their qualifications:

'I used to do some building work and wanted to get into joinery. I went round a couple of building sites to try and get a job but they said I needed a BCO card, so I started to come here two days a week.'

Gaining new skills

Since BFE began in 2006, 604 students have undertaken training at the centre. The type of training that this figure incorporates includes Building Craft Occupations (BCO), trainees from schools, adults attending night classes and other types of bespoke training. During 2007/08, figures available to date at the time of writing include 225 individuals obtaining qualifications, 43 people gaining employment as a direct result of undertaking courses and 12 people going onto work placements. The number of teaching hours completed is 76,453.

Further analysis has focused on disaggregating these totals into:

- ❑ school students who are continuing in education and therefore not directly looking for employment;
- ❑ night school students who, for the most part, are developing skills out of interest rather than employment aspiration;
- ❑ students who require a long term relationship with BFE in order to progress and are therefore 'current'.

The final result highlighted 176 completions through the open access route:

- 71 qualifications (40%);
- 48 jobs (27%);
- 33 other positive outcomes – further education (19%).

Everyone interviewed were learning specific construction skills, such as bricklaying, painting, plastering or joinery. In addition to learning these skills, several respondents noticed improvements in their levels of self-confidence:

'My confidence levels have really gone up since starting the course, as I have learnt more new skills, I've felt more confident within myself.'

Several individuals were also taking the opportunity to improve their basic skills levels. Those individuals working on English and maths at BFE can do so over a longer period of time than other shorter employability related courses, as training can last for six months to a year. The impact of this learning ahead of construction skills development will have the consequence of increasing levels of confidence and improving employability prospects. As one individual noted:

'I've been improving my English and maths since I've been here – I've just sat a mock GCSE maths test. I've been having tutored support in English for the past six weeks and have done a mock GCSE English test. I would say my writing's improved a lot – I know how to write letters to people and what to put in application forms now.'

When asked what the most challenging aspect of the course was in terms of learning, individuals did not focus on elements they were finding too difficult to grasp or learn. Instead, they felt there was a positive learning environment at BFE. If they had found aspects of the course challenging this was quickly overcome as:

*'Another member of the team will help you out until you get it right.'
'Everyone gets stuck in if you need a hand.'*

About the course

As the previous consultations with trainees have found, individuals were pleased with the quality of teaching at BFE and the quality of learning:

'This is a nice and friendly environment in which to learn, the staff are very helpful and let you take things at your own pace.'

For the younger trainees, the opportunity to be treated as adults rather than schoolchildren was seen as a positive element of the way in which they were taught. Older trainees noted the benefits which trainees still at school were achieving:

'The place seems to have a good reputation amongst the school kids who are on the course, and they seem to be learning something here that they wouldn't be at school.'

Other comments relating to the general approach to learning and development included:

'We are taught in a professional environment by professionals – we are all willing to put that little bit more into our work because the teachers put a lot into the work as well.'

The only negative comments referred to the lack of a canteen at the centre which meant people had to travel some distance at lunch if they wanted to buy food, and restrictions on how many hours per week some of the trainees were able to put in (due to the possibility of losing benefit entitlements) – some trainees were not able to study for more than a couple of days per week. This was felt to be important in enabling individuals to progress as quickly as possible and, ultimately, to be able to move into employment more rapidly.

Future Plans

Reflecting on previous research, trainees felt they wanted to go onto an apprenticeship or into employment at the end of the course. There was a feeling that the training they were receiving was providing them with the right skills to look for a job. People were prepared to travel to find work, with one respondent considering moving to London to find work associated with building for the Olympic Games. However, most people were influenced by the physical regeneration which is currently taking place in Newcastle and were prepared to look for work locally:

'I'm hoping to go into employment in plastering and work locally as I will need to keep looking after my wife, I'll start at the bottom of a company and work my way up.'

Other people were hoping to go onto achieve more qualifications before starting their own business:

'In the long term, I would like to do a qualification in business studies then I might be able to run my own business in landscaping or doing small building jobs.'

3.8 Added value

The consultation highlighted that organisations like BFE add value to the service they provide as they enable a process of networking between different initiatives, which generate funding and support the delivery of other activities.

There is also an element of value for money in investing in organisations such as BFE, as prevention by training will save costs in terms of the range of benefit claims (e.g. income support, incapacity benefit and housing benefit) in the future.

Whilst BFE has set up an internal monitoring system in order to evidence the distance travelled by the trainees, more can be done to highlight the added value they offer. This will enable the organisation to demonstrate its value added and the contribution it makes in helping young people at the fringes of the labour market.

3.9 Progress towards sustainability

Sustainability is a challenge, particularly in the current climate, where maintaining the interest and buy in of employers is arduous. BFE has nevertheless established positive links with organisations, such as the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Indeed, the LSC has shown an interest in co-operating with BFE and jointly pooling funding in order to obtain help in achieving some of their targets. Moreover, BFE has also approached Business Link North East in order to discuss the availability of funding for small business incubator spaces.

The organisation has numerous business ideas and proposes to expand its offer to cater further to the needs of the local community to provide services that contribute to generating income.

3.10 Summary

This section has presented the main findings of the final evaluation of BFE. Since its set up, the organisation has developed significantly, marketing its activities, expanding its offer and establishing itself as an important partner in the delivery of activities to tackle worklessness in Newcastle.

4 CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents some of the practical and strategic considerations that our evaluation has identified as important for BFE's development.

4.1 Practical

From a practical perspective, BFE should consider the following points:

Formalising arrangements

It is now an important time for BFE in the process of developing a business plan and agreeing the organisation's way forward. It is therefore crucial that clarity of roles and responsibility is ensured. Discussions on the structure of the Board, its composition and remit should therefore take place and the outcomes formalised. Having ensured the synergy between Board members is maintained and members are happy with the level of responsibility and accountability required by their role, then it is necessary to formalise the relationship and develop a plan of meetings and reporting that strengthens and supports their strategic role. This formalisation is required to set the basis of a lasting relationship and creating accountability.

Governance

It is now the time to think about the management structures and the internal governance of the organisation. In our view, the structures should include a strategic board that is the Board in its entirety. Then – as it has already happened on specific issues – a working group/executive board should also be established, in order to respond quickly to different demands and supporting the management in dealing with specific issues more systematically.

Establish an internal evaluation system

It is increasingly important for third sector organisations to develop a strong evidence base, in order to measure their impact more effectively. BFE should therefore establish a system to collect and analyse information pertaining to their impact. This internal evaluation system, coupled with an internal system of performance assessment, will provide the relevant material to be used for annual reviews. The performance assessment could be divided between:

- financial reviews;
- project management review;
- beneficiary feedback – end of course feedback forms to collect views and opinions from the trainees but also peer review and regular meetings with staff to ensure quality and satisfaction is monitored.

Consolidation

It is important for BFE to consolidate the organisation and dedicate the first year of their Business Plan to establishing its name and credentials. Whilst the organisation is addressing the issues relating to accreditation and quality assurance, there is always room for improvement. This is important as regards growing the confidence of partners, maintaining a good set of delivery and excellent points. It is therefore crucial for BFE to consider a one year consolidation period within their five year Business Plan.

4.2 Strategic

At a strategic level, BFE is well positioned to explore the development of links with a variety of organisations. There are a few points worth exploring further.

Relationship with the local authority

It is important for BFE to be recognised as a strategic partner by the local authority, in view of the role BFE could have in both contributing to the Newcastle Employment Action Plan and in having a role within the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which is currently under review.

As regards the contribution to the Newcastle Employment Action Plan, BFE clearly targets both of the local authority's two main economic goals of economic growth and productivity and reducing inequalities.

BFE is about reducing inequalities and improving opportunities, as well as supporting the growth in sectors that have high productivity, by providing the right skills to local people. An example of this is the support BFE could provide to the development of the offshore marine industry (e.g. DUCO/Shepherd in Walker Riverside) by providing opportunities for training people with a low skills base to work in those industries.

As regards the LSP, this is currently under review and there is scope for BFE to play a more active role. The DTA has responded to the consultation by Communities and Local Government (CLG) on *Principles of representation: A framework for effective third sector participation in Local Strategic Partnerships*. The points put forward to the CLG were that community anchor organisations have a valuable part to play in engaging with LSPs, particularly given CLG's intention to invest in community anchors as set out in its third sector strategy.

Links with the environmental agenda

BFE is well placed to bring forward a local environmental agenda within a housing and construction context, introducing concepts of energy efficiency and renewable energy in housing, training and influencing young people. Thus, BFE should endorse environmentalism and promote responsible construction training.

Links with the healthy living agenda

Plans have already been developed as regards a canteen and catering courses within the organisation. BFE should also promote healthy living among its trainees and students. There is indeed potential for BFE to become a flagship in this area, promoting healthy food and nutrition as well as local sourcing of produce.

4.3 Final considerations

During the first year of its public existence, BFE has proved to be a strong player. BFE is a dynamic organisation that provides valuable services to the local community, adopting an innovative model of intervention. As with every DT, BFE is different and unique as it responds to the needs in its community – it identified a gap in the market and is intervening to change it.

Indeed, BFE is delivering what the local community had identified as a priority – training provision. In addition to this, BFE is also pulling together a variety of partners from different sectors, including the private sector.

Having followed the development of the organisation up to this stage, we recognise that the elements making BFE unique and successful are:

- ❑ dedicated and committed staff and management;
- ❑ community based;
- ❑ employers on the Board and involved at different levels;
- ❑ flexibility of shaping the training offer to the requirements of the labour market.

The development and implementation phase for BFE has proven successful in delivering, despite funding challenges and changes in the staff structure. It is important that the organisation now focuses on consolidating the offer and looks at strengthening what has been achieved thus far. The organisation is approaching the business planning phase and it is important that ambition meets the need for consolidation in order to progress further at a high standard.

APPENDIX 1

Consultees

**PHASE 3 FINAL EVALUATION OF BUILDING FUTURES EAST TRAINING CENTRE
APPENDIX 1: CONSULTEES**

Stakeholders

Name	Designation
Gillian Hewitson	Chief Executive of Newcastle Futures
Father Michael Conaty MBE	Chairman of St Anthony of Padua C.A (Board)
Debbie Lamb	North East Regional Manager, Development Trust Association
Rob Hamilton	Head of Economic Development & Urban Policy, Newcastle City Council
Dr Paul Chan	University of Northumbria (Board)
Robert Moehler	Phd Student
Gail Bland	Regional Development Officer, Development Trust Association
Sandy Campbell	Working Rite – Square 1 model
Barry Miller	Managing Director, Bellway Homes (North East)
Vincent Robinson OBE	Former Regional Director, DWP
John Shipley	Leader, Newcastle City Council
Peter Aviston	Walker Riverside Project Director – Places for People
Kevin Mossam	Director of 5K's Electrical and Plumbing
Tim O'Grady	Diploma Development Co-ordinator, Children's Services Directorate, Newcastle City Council
Alasdair MacDonald	Managing Director, DUCO Ltd
Alison Washbourne	Delivery Manager, Working Links
Kevin Smith	Deputy Head Teacher, Heaton Manor School
Ernie Milne	Assistant Head Teacher, St. Mary's Catholic Comprehensive
Kenny More	Manager, Employment Learning & Skills, Neighbourhood Services Directorate, Newcastle City Council
Liz Scott	Principal Officer for Skills & Worklessness, Newcastle City Council
Claire Prospert	Regional & European Programmes Team, Regeneration Directorate, Newcastle City Council
Seth Pearson	Policy Co-ordination Manager, Chief Directorate's Office, Newcastle City Council
John Miller	Head of Sustainable Development, Newcastle City Council
Lee Brumby	Head Teacher, Benfield Sports College
Mike Collier	Deputy Head Teacher, Walker Technology College
Barbara Gates	Assistant NRF Co-ordinator, Newcastle City Council

Building Futures East staff

Name	Designation
Anthony Woods-Waters	Chief Executive of Building Futures East
Tammy Armstrong	Administrative Assistant
David Vasey	Information Officer
Vivienne Lee	Training Co-ordinator
Mick McCrindle	Square 1 Co-ordinator
Gemma McGarry	Trainee Square 1
Tony Nichol	Community Connector – West End

APPENDIX 2

Trainees' focus group proforma



BUILDING FUTURE EAST NEWCASTLE

Pro forma for trainees' focus group

1. How did you hear about this course? (Please tick all that apply)

Local paper	<input type="checkbox"/>
Word of mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>
JCP	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connexions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	

2. Why did you register with this course? (Please tick one)

I wanted to get a qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had to	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nothing better to do	<input type="checkbox"/>
I liked the sound of the course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	

3. How do you rate the course? (Please tick one)

Very good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Average	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bad	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very bad	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Is the course meeting your expectations? (Please tick one)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. If yes, how? (Please tick all that apply)

Providing me with the right skills to look for a job	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing me with the skills required by the type of job I want to do	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving me a better chance of being employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making you feel good about myself	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. What are the most interesting/ best bits about the course?

7. Why?

8. What are you finding the most challenging?

9. Is there anything you think needs to change/ improve?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. If yes, what?

11. What do you think the course has helped you achieve so far? (Please tick all that apply)

Improved my education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Given me new skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made me more reliable/ punctual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made me more employable	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Do you think the experience has contributed to your development as a person?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. And professionally?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Why?

15. What will you do after this course?

16. What are your plans for the future?

A little about you

17. Name:

18. Address:

.....

19. Postcode:.....

20. Tel. No.

21. Email Address:.....

22. Age:.....

23. Gender (please tick): Male Female

24. What is your first language?

25. Which ethnic group do you belong to? (Please tick one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: British | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Pakistani |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White: Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: white | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: other Asian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed: white and black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: Caribbean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed: white and black African | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: African |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed: white and Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: other black |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed: other mixed | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese or other ethnic group: Chinese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese or other ethnic group: other ethnic group |

26. Do you have any disabilities? yes no

If yes, please describe:.....

27. Do you work? yes no

28. Do you have any educational qualifications? (Please specify)

29. How do you travel to the centre? (Please tick one)

Car	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bike	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walk	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	

30. Do you prefer to have locally provided training? yes no

If yes, why?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION