



Growing Community Assets Evaluation (Scotland)

Big Lottery Fund

Blake Stevenson's proposal

Original

November 2007

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Contents

Section	Page
Introductory Note	1
Summary of the Evaluation and Method Statement (Q2)	3
1 Methods (Q5, Q12)	11
2 Context (Q1, Q3)	27
3 Implementation and Resource Plan (Q4, Q7, Q9)	41
4 Project Management and Key Performance Indicators (Q10)	49
5 Communication, Management, Reporting and Outputs (Q10)	51
6 Price, Charges and Payment Profile (Q10, Q13)	54
7 Conflict of Interest and Added Value (Q13)	55
8 Contract Transfer and Exit Strategy (Q10)	61
Appendices:	
Appendix 1:	Baseline Template
Appendix 2:	Guiding Principles of the Project Log (Example)
Appendix 3:	Blake Stevenson Ltd – Strengths and Capacities
Appendix 4:	Experience and Skills of the Blake Stevenson and UHI Team
Appendix 5:	CVs of the Study Team
Appendix 6:	Quality Control, Professional Standards and Research Ethics
Appendix 7:	Blake Stevenson Ltd Contract Management Procedure
Appendix 8:	Risk Assessment and Contingency Planning
Appendix 9:	Equal Opportunities Policy
Appendix 10:	Health and Safety Policy
Appendix 11:	Professional Indemnity
Appendix 12:	Blake Stevenson Ltd: Standard Terms and Conditions

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Introductory Note

The Big Lottery Fund has requested that we cross-refer the sections of our proposal that relate to each question set out below. We have provided reference in the table of questions below and within the body of the document.

1.	Demonstrate a clear understanding of the Big Lottery Fund and the GCA investment area Chapter 2 (Pages 24-37)	Weighting = 4
2.	Demonstrate a clear understanding of the aims, objectives and main concerns of the Evaluation Summary (Pages 1-8)	Weighting = 5
3.	Demonstrate your awareness of the policy context in which GCA operates, and of related issues including community involvement, community ownership, rural/urban contexts and sustainable development Chapter 2 (Pages 29-37)	Weighting = 4
4.	Demonstrate your capacity and ability to undertake the Evaluation on a Scotland-wide basis Chapter 3 (Page 38)	Weighting = 3
5.	Demonstrate your proposed design and methods are well-developed, appropriate and meet the aims and objectives of the Evaluation Chapter 1 (Pages 9-23), Appendix 1, Appendix 2	Weighting = 5
6.	Demonstrate your experience of undertaking longer-term evaluations and the use of indicators to measure social and other impacts over time Appendix 3, Appendix 4, Appendix 5	Weighting = 4
7.	Demonstrate a clear and realistic project plan, showing the tasks for each stage of the Evaluation and the roles and responsibilities of each member of the team Summary (Page 7), Chapter 3 (Pages 38–44) Chapter 6	Weighting = 3
8.	Demonstrate that your team members have the full range of research and technical skills and experience required by the Evaluation Chapter 3 (Pages 41–44) Appendix 3, Appendix 4, Appendix 5	Weighting = 4

9.	Demonstrate your capacity and availability to carry out the Evaluation within the timescale, or, if working in partnership, each organisation has the capacity to fulfil its role and the roles of each partner are clear Chapter 3 (Pages 38-46)	Weighting = 4
10.	Demonstrate effective arrangements for project management, team support, quality assurance and delivery of Evaluation outputs Chapter 4, Chapter 5, Chapter 8 (Page 57) Appendix 6, Appendix 7, Appendix 8	Weighting = 3
11.	Demonstrate a well-considered plan for dissemination of the Evaluation findings Chapter 1, (Pages 21–22) Chapter 7	Weighting = 3
12.	Demonstrate distinctive elements or a creative approach in your proposal or otherwise add value to the delivery of the Evaluation Chapter 1 (Pages 9-23) Chapter 7 (Page 56) Appendix 1, Appendix 2	Weighting = 4
13.	Demonstrate your overall charges offer good value and costs are appropriately distributed between different elements of the contract Chapter 6 (Pages 52-55)	Weighting = 4
14.	Demonstrate your record of producing high quality research reports to support policy and practice development Appendix 3, Appendix 4, Appendix 5	Weighting = 4

Summary of the Evaluation and Method Statement (Q2)

1. The Big Lottery Fund wishes to appoint contractors to evaluate its Growing Community Assets (GCA) investment area in Scotland. The aims of the evaluation are to:
 - assess the impact of the GCA investment area;
 - identify the key factors that support successful community ownership;
 - evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery contract.
2. The evaluation will fall in to three stages:
 - **Stage 1** is from November 2007 to March 2009. During this Stage the contractor will:
 - establish baseline social, economic, environmental and population indicators and collect data on projects;
 - identify the key factors in the process of communities identifying an issue, acquiring, developing and managing an asset;
 - evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery contract.
 - The objectives of **Stage 2** of the evaluation are to:
 - measure the progress against the baseline indicators gathered in Stage 1;
 - assess the social, economic and environmental impacts of funded projects;
 - analyse the process of communities establishing and maintaining community ownership;
 - continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery contract and views of stakeholders.
 - In **Stage 3** the contractors will:
 - measure and analyse progress against the baseline indicators;
 - analyse the issues involved in developing sustainable community ownership;
 - assess the social, economic and environmental impacts of funded projects.

3. In addition to the specific objectives under each stage, the evaluation will:
 - assess the effectiveness of the asset-based approach in rural and urban settings;
 - assess the sustainability of activities funded through GCA and the sustainability of the benefits;
 - analyse and plot the process that projects go through from identifying the asset through to acquisition, development, ownership (or other arrangements) and managing it;
 - identify the key factors that support successful community ownership;
 - assess the benefits of contracting out the delivery of GCA.
4. Blake Stevenson Ltd, a leading research and consultancy company established in 1992, in association with the members of the University of the Highlands and Islands' (UHI) Policyweb Unit, is delighted to submit a proposal for this important work. The move to asset ownership in Scotland's urban and rural communities is one that we welcome and that we have been involved with over many years.
5. The Blake Stevenson and UHI Policyweb team is committed to taking a participatory approach throughout the evaluation by working closely and responsively with the GCA funded projects, BIG staff, the Big Lottery Fund Scotland Committee and the consortium led by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. We will also involve service/asset beneficiaries in the evaluation.
6. We are currently providing self-evaluation support to projects in Scotland funded through Investing in Communities including Growing Community Assets. We would welcome the opportunity to extend our work with these projects to evaluate their impact and that of the programme. To date, we been approached for self-evaluation support by 12 GCA funded projects whose activities range from developing a social enterprise centre in Midlothian to developing a community facility in Argyll, bringing a ferry into community ownership in Skye and creating a playpark and wildlife garden in Ballachullish.
7. The activities and work we are doing as part of the self-evaluation support will add value to the evaluation of GCA. It will allow us to work with projects in the most efficient way, making it easier and less onerous on the projects to participate in the evaluation. Some of the support we offer through our self-evaluation support contract will directly support projects to effectively participate in this evaluation so adding value.

8. Blake Stevenson's team will provide a thorough, rigorous evaluation that captures the range of social, environmental and economic impacts of the GCA fund. We will:
 - provide social, environmental and economic impact assessment of projects and the programme to assess the effectiveness of the asset-based approach to community development;
 - assess the sustainability of the activities and the benefits funded through GCA. This will look at the sustainability of the funded projects beyond the funding period as well as the sustainability of the impacts on project beneficiaries;
 - analyse the process that projects go through to acquire and develop assets, identify the key factors that contribute to successful community ownership and the factors that hinder it. We will identify key points where additional support might be needed, transition points and points of weaknesses where projects are most likely to fail;
 - throughout the evaluation period we will map and analyse the changing political and policy context of community ownership in Scotland and the UK, drawing out the effect that these changes will have on GCA funded projects, for example on sustainability;
 - assess the benefits and costs of contracting out the delivery of GCA to the consortium led by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. We will identify the benefits and recommend any adjustments that should be made.
9. We know that monitoring and evaluation can be daunting for projects and that it is important that the evaluation does not divert resources away from project delivery. To address this we will adhere to the following principles of good evaluation:
 - we will develop a robust baseline tailored to individual projects;
 - it will be outcome focused;
 - information gathering will not be over onerous for projects;
 - we will build on rather than duplicate existing monitoring requirements and data sources;
 - it will be rigorous;
 - the outcomes will be measurable;

- we will capture qualitative, intangible impacts as well as opphard, quantitative ones;
- we will build the capacity and skills within projects;
- the approach will be consistent across projects and throughout the evaluation period;
- the evaluation will be concerned with learning what works in successful community ownership and identifying areas for future development.

10. The **evaluation methods** will comprise:

- preparing the baseline and assessing the impacts;
 - developing and completing a baseline template for each project;
 - gathering and analysing annual monitoring data against the baseline indicators using existing data sources and bespoke tools;
- in-depth, qualitative case studies with a sample of 15 projects;
- consultation with stakeholders including BIG staff, the BLF Scotland Committee and the HIE Consortium to inform the study and assist us in assessing the effectiveness of the delivery contract;
- desk based and qualitiative research through our networks to map the political and policy context;
- learning events;
- careful dissemination of the findings to a range of audiences, through direct methods (web-based tools and the annual learning events) and indirect methods (using other networks' dissemination routes such as e-bulletins and seminars).

11. The **tools** we will use are:

- a project baseline, monitoring and evaluation template;
- a database to gather and analyse on-going monitoing information;
- bespoke tools to gather information against indicators;

- project logs to track the process of community ownership;
 - a dedicated section on the Blake Stevenson website with direct links to the self-evaluation website;
 - interview schedules to guide the qualitative interviews.
12. The Methods Matrix on the following page shows how each method will contribute to the evaluation's objectives.

Blake Stevenson Ltd: Methods Matrix

Method	Evaluation Objective							
	Assess social, economic and environmental impacts	Assess effectiveness of asset-based approach	Assess sustainability and factors contributing to or hindering it	Analyse process of community ownership and support needs	Assess benefits of contracting out delivery of GCA	Map the policy and political context	Recommendations	Dissemination of findings
Preparation of baseline	✓	✓					✓	
Gather monitoring data	✓	✓					✓	
Case studies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Stakeholder consultation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Learning Events		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Desk research networking				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Dissemination plan								✓
Analysis and report writing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

13. An overview of the three Stages and methods is shown below.

Overview of Stages and Methods

Overview of Stages and Methods	Preparation of baseline	Assessing Impacts	Case studies and updates	Stakeholder consultation	Desk research and networks	Learning Events	Feedback and dissemination
Stage One November 2007 – March 2009	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2	✓
Stage Two 2009 – 2011		✓	✓	✓	✓	1	✓
Stage Three (estimate) 2011 – 2012/3		✓	✓	✓	✓	1	✓

14. Our proposal is set out as follows:

- Chapter 1: Methods
- Chapter 2 : Context
- Chapter 3: Implementation and Resource Plan
- Chapter 4: Project Management and Key Performance Indicators
- Chapter 5: Communication, Management Reporting and Outputs
- Chapter 6 : Price, Charges and Payment Profile
- Chapter 7: Conflict of Interest and Added Value
- Chapter 8: Contract Transfer and Exit Strategy

1 Methods (Q5, Q12)

- 1.1 This chapter provides the detail of the methods we will use to undertake the evaluation. Our analysis will be integrated to address the study objectives, so for example, we will assess the impact through gathering data against the baseline but also through qualitative interviews with consortium staff, projects' staff and BIG staff.
- 1.2 This chapter covers the following:
- Preparing the baseline and assessing the impacts
 - In-depth case studies
 - Stakeholder consultations
 - Desk research and networking
 - Learning Events
 - Feedback and dissemination

Preparing the Baseline and Assessing the Impacts

Preparation

- 1.3 GCA operates a rolling programme of funding awards and we believe that an information or development day at the start of the evaluation would not be the most useful approach.
- 1.4 We already contact every project that is funded through GCA to offer self-evaluation support (which they are not compelled to use). As part of the evaluation contract we will contact all of the GCA projects by telephone to introduce ourselves, explain the reasons for the evaluation, describe the process, our input, the input that is expected of them, what support they can expect, the feedback they will receive and how the findings will be used. We will of course answer any questions that they have at this Stage or at any future Stage in the process.
- 1.5 We will then send them a pack of information that we will prepare which will introduce the team (including photographs of the members), provide written information and guidance along with our contact details. We are experts at preparing information like this and find that it helps the evaluation process to run more smoothly. We have used a similar approach to inform projects about the self-evaluation support that we offer.

- 1.6 We will make sure that this work is complemented by the self-evaluation support we are providing whilst keeping the two areas of work with the projects distinct.

Developing the Baseline

- 1.7 Blake Stevenson will carry out a project-by-project assessment of impact. To prepare the baseline for each project, we will develop a diagnostic tool in the form of a detailed template that will reflect the type of asset, the expected impacts and the population that it is intended to impact on.
- 1.8 We will develop a pro forma template that we will tailor to each individual project. Some indicators will be standard across all, or a majority of projects whilst others will be more specific to particular types of assets. Some will have more of a focus on specific types of impacts depending on whether the asset has a social, environmental or economic focus. As an example, many of the indicators that are appropriate for a managed workspace would be meaningless for a community wood.
- 1.9 The template will be comprehensive, straightforward and easy to use. It will set out each social, economic and environmental indicator to be included in the baseline and that we will track progress against. It will identify the data sources for each indicator for example Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland, Census data, the police, local authority data, the Department of Work and Pensions and so forth. It will include indicators that will be gathered using bespoke tools designed and used by the Blake Stevenson team and the projects themselves.
- 1.10 The template will be flexible so it can be tailored to each project and be useable for tangible assets and intangible assets. It will include hard, quantitative data and will also capture soft, qualitative impacts. This approach will give consistency of data year on year, within projects, for categories of projects and across all of the projects to give an evaluation of the impacts of the programme overall.
- 1.11 The template will gather population data for the area and population expected to benefit from the asset. For example:
- age structure;
 - household composition;
 - gender;
 - migration;
 - ethnicity;

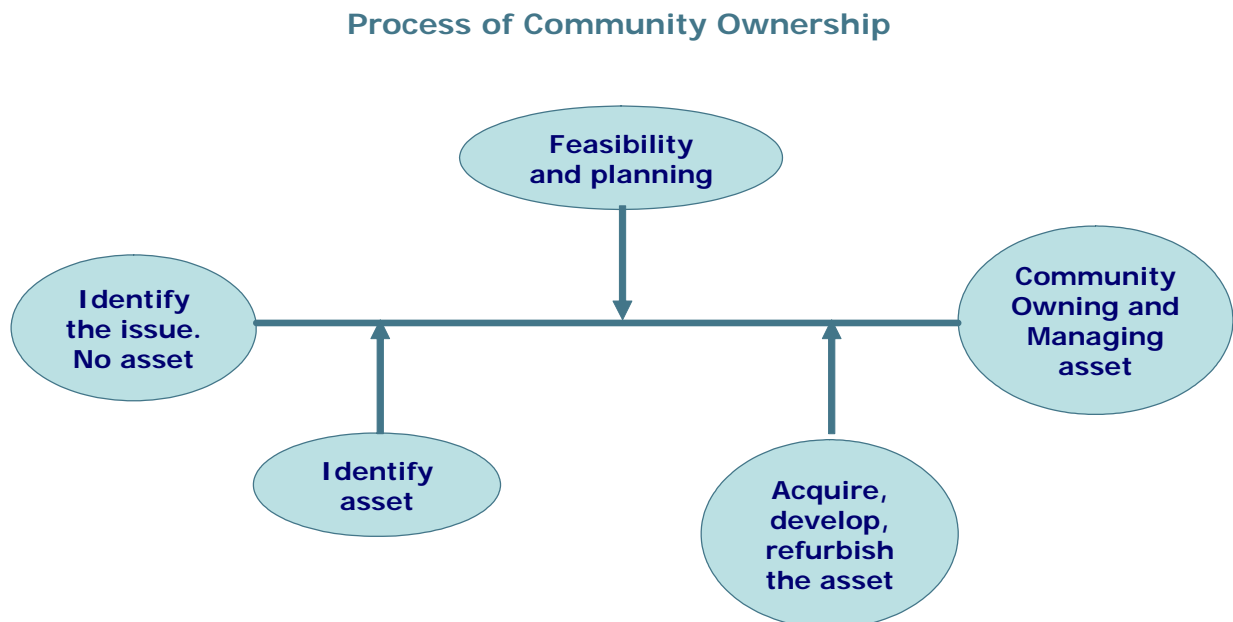
- economic activity;
- education, skills and training;
- disadvantage indicators.

1.12 The table in Appendix 1 is an example of what the template might look like and some of the indicators that could be included. We will make the template clear, attractive and user friendly. We will provide a draft template to BIG and to the HIE consortium to comment on before we finalise and start using it with projects. Examples of some of the indicators are:

<i>Social</i>
Quality of Life Strengthening social networks Neighbourhood as a place to live Community participation and engagement Inclusion of hard to reach groups Community facilities and amenities Outlook and confidence of residents Capacity building activities Improved living standards Sense of ownership New, improved housing Improved access to services
<i>Economic</i>
Additional employment New volunteering opportunities New businesses Training opportunities Income generated Return on investment Number of visitors Funding levered in
<i>Environmental</i>
Energy efficiency Contribution to reducing, reusing, recycling waste Landscape and environmental improvements Halt or reversal of decline of a built or natural asset Protection of heritage Promotion of environmental issues Sustainable transport Materials used to build the asset Energy source and consumption

- 1.13 This list is by no means exhaustive, it provides a flavour of the indicators we would incorporate. The key will be to use only relevant indicators and not to over complicate the process.
- 1.14 Developing a community asset is a staged process that can take a considerable length of time. The nature of the GCA funding means that the projects that will be included in the evaluation will be at different Stages on the continuum, which starts at there being no asset to there being an asset that is owned and managed by the community. This is illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1



- 1.15 The indicators on the baseline template will take account of the Stage that each project is at on this continuum at the start of its funding period. We understand that the first tranche of funding was awarded in October 2006 and so for some projects some of the baseline data may be retrospective.

Populating the Baseline

- 1.16 We will take a staged approach to populating the baseline template with data.
- 1.17 We will request each project's GCA application from BIG and insert the relevant data into the template. At this Stage we will review the project information and tailor the pro forma template to fit with the project's intended and potential impacts.

- 1.18 We will telephone the named contact in each project to follow up on the information that we will have sent out at the preparatory stage. We will explain that we are inserting data onto the template for their project to assist them to complete it. We will ask if they are willing to provide any other data that they hold, have gathered for other funding applications, have in their business plan (if they have one), monitoring data and so forth. We will use the data that they provide to further populate the template.
- 1.19 Once we have inserted the data we have gathered from project applications and business plans, we will send the draft baseline template to the projects identifying for them the gaps in the baseline data. We will work with them to address the gaps by suggesting ways and sources for finding the data. We will provide on-going telephone and e-mail support to do this and will carry out research of our own to complete the baseline.
- 1.20 We will identify where data is not available through existing sources and explain the primary research that will be required to collect it. This is most likely to be for social impacts for example quality of life, community confidence, sense of ownership and enhanced community capacity - though not exclusively so.
- 1.21 We will develop and provide tools, training and support to enable projects to gather details of the positive impacts on beneficiaries and members for example user feedback surveys, group discussion schedules and individual interview schedules. This is an approach we have used to good effect in similar evaluations for example our work for Comic Relief to evaluate the projects in its Elder Abuse programme and in our evaluation of the "Outside In" pilot for the Foyer Federation. It is the most efficient use of the budget and adds value by transferring skills so building social capital in the area.
- 1.22 Projects using these tools will record the findings on a pro forma that we will provide and then submit those to us for input in to the database and analysis.

Gathering Data to Assess the Impact

- 1.23 Having established the baseline we will gather data to compare against it at yearly intervals tying in with the timing of the submission of monitoring data to BIG. Some of this data gathering will fall in to Stage 1 of the evaluation and it will be on-going throughout Stages 2 and 3.
- 1.24 We will develop a database to collate, store and analyse all of the project data. We will provide electronic files to each project to enable them to directly input the data. They will then send the completed file to us and we will check it, identify any gaps or issues with the data and once it is complete, copy it across on to the

database. Each project will be identifiable on the database as a separate case.

- 1.25 We will provide telephone support to complete the data collection and assist in addressing the gaps. We will take account of the fact that some of the data sources will not be updated annually and on the original baseline, we will indicate the frequency of collection.
- 1.26 Each consultant will be allocated a case load of projects so that individual projects have a named contact that they can speak to throughout the evaluation. This gives continuity for the projects, it helps to build a relationship which will add quality to the work and it means that our consultants will have a thorough understanding of the projects they are working with.
- 1.27 At the end of each monitoring period, we will review the indicators for each project to make sure that they are still relevant for the next monitoring period.
- 1.28 We will gather data from project beneficiaries in three ways:
 - by providing bespoke tools to gather information along with support and guidance on how to use the tools, collate the data and feed it back to us to be incorporated into the evaluation;
 - by reviewing any user feedback data that the projects already collect or have collected;
 - by carrying out a survey of “members” of the projects to gather quantitative and qualitative data.
- 1.29 We will be able to provide advice on this process through the self-evaluation support we are providing to projects in the Investing in Communities portfolio.

Impact Data Analysis

- 1.30 By entering the data onto a database we will be able to analyse the quantitative data for each project to track progress against anticipated outcomes. Analysing less tangible, softer impacts will be crucial to the study and so we will include qualitative fields in the database that will enable us to collate, review and analyse qualitative impacts on areas, assets and on people.
- 1.31 The database will allow us to analyse the data in a number of ways that will give very important evidence based learning to inform future policy and developments. We will analyse it by:
 - each individual project;

- aggregated for the programme as a whole;

and carry out themed analysis, for example:

- rural and urban areas;
- tangible and intangible assets;
- types of project and activity;
- size of asset;
- location.

Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment

- 1.32 Blake Stevenson Ltd has developed a tool to carry out a rapid equalities impact assessment. It has been developed to be used by projects and organisations and covers the six equalities strands - age, race, gender, sexuality, disability and religion. It is straightforward, quick and easy to use, giving an at a glance assessment of how the project or activity will impact on different groups in the population.
- 1.33 As part of the evaluation we will provide this tool to all of the GCA funded projects along with guidance on how to use it. This will allow us to provide evidence on how the projects are addressing issues of equalities and tackling inequalities.

In-depth Case Studies

- 1.34 We will research and prepare up to 15 in-depth case studies of GCA funded projects. We will select the sample of projects against a set of criteria agreed with BIG which will include rural and urban projects, activities, GCA funding stream secured, type of asset, scale of project, location, Stage in the process and so forth. This will result in a sample that reflects the range of GCA projects. We will agree the selected sample of projects with BIG.
- 1.35 The case studies will inform:
- the social, economic and environmental impact assessment;
 - the analysis of the process that projects go through;
 - the identification of key factors contributing to successful community ownership;
 - the sustainability of activities and impacts;

- the assesment of contracting out the delivery of GCA.
- 1.36 The aim of the case studies is to add to the learning of what works in the asset-based approach to community development.
- 1.37 In Stage 1 we will carry out project visits with the case study participants during which we will interview the project manager or development officer and a director or committee member from the community. We will tour the facility and observe it in operation (where the project is at that Stage).
- 1.38 Prior to the visit, we will gather and review background details of the project including a project description, the original application, support provided by the HIE consortium and other relevant information that is available. We will review what was included in the original application about sustainability beyond the funding period.
- 1.39 At the interviews we will use a semi-structured interview schedule that will explore the following issues:
- the background, context and history of the project and the asset it has or is developing;
 - how the original idea was developed;
 - how the community was engaged in the project idea and development;
 - a description of the activities funded by GCA, its aims and objectives and its intended beneficiaries;
 - the current and anticipated benefits produced by the project;
 - the structure and governance;
 - the timeline and key Stages of the work to date;
 - the issues and challenges, how have they been overcome and how could they be overcome;
 - views on the the support that has been provide through GCA and other routes;
 - the benefits and strenegths of the support and how they have contributed to the successes;
 - any gaps or weaknesses, including support that would have been useful but wasn't available;

- funding from other sources already accessed and for what;
 - sustainability issues – do they have a sustainability plan, other funding levered in, funding strategy, current or planned income generating activities, exit strategy beyond the GCA funding period.
- 1.40 When conducting evaluation research and consultancy with projects, one of our key aims is to help them focus on sustainability and long-term outcomes. We have worked with a wide range of organisations to develop exit/continuation strategies. For example, as part of our evaluation of four social inclusion partnerships (SIPs), we made recommendations for the transition of the SIPs into community planning partnership processes. With other organisations, our work has involved the development of funding strategies, providing advice and information about social enterprise and/or offering recommendations as to how the project should develop in order to attract funding from a broader range of funding bodies.
- 1.41 At the interview we will give the projects a Project Log tool to track and reflect on their progress through the rest of Stage 1 and into Stages 2 and 3 of the evaluation. The Log will be reflective so it ask them to record information and critical events at regular intervals including:
- achievements since we last contacted them;
 - progress and how it compares to anticipated progress;
 - key activities, events and actions taken;
 - any changes to the project and its objectives;
 - any issues faced and how they were overcome;
 - support received and its usefulness.
- 1.42 It will ask them what has gone well, what has not gone so well and why that is. It will be simple, short and succinct.
- 1.43 An example what the Log might look like is included in Appendix 2.
- 1.44 The projects will send this log to their consultant contact every six months and we will follow it up with a telephone interview to tease out more detail, confirm the information provided and explore any issues or points requiring clarification.
- 1.45 We will analyse the findings of these case studies and feed that in to the overall analysis for the evaluation.

- 1.46 We will write up each project as a case study – aiming to draw from them the key lessons learnt through their experiences. The case studies will be short, factual and informative. Having drafted it, we will agree the content with the project before publication. In the final report we will draw on the case studies to illustrate findings and will include the full case studies in a separate appendix. This is a similar approach to the one we used to draw out key lessons for out of school care for disadvantaged children in Europe which drew out the lessons from 18 international case studies.

Stakeholder Consultation

- 1.47 We believe that it is crucial to the work that stakeholders are consulted as part of the study process. We propose consulting with members of the HIE consortium, BIG staff and members of the BLF Scotland Committee. We will interview members of the consortium, including the staff directly involved in providing support to applicants.
- 1.48 We will interview them at a group meeting towards the start of Stage 1 to introduce our team and the work that we will be doing to evaluate GCA. We will give them each a pack of the information we will be providing to projects including the baseline template. In the discussion with the consortium we will cover the following themes:
- their roles in supporting applicants and what this means in practice;
 - the process leading to community ownership of an asset;
 - their views on the support that they can provide and how it meets the support needs of applicants at the various Stages of the process;
 - the mix of funded activities and how that influences the support needs and progress of projects;
 - any issues around rural/urban, tangible/intangible assets;
 - their views on the expected social, economic and environmental impacts of the GCA programme;
 - communication with projects and with BIG;
 - factors that will lead to sustainable community ownership;
 - factors that will hinder its success;

- the next Stages in the evaluation, in particular, preparing the baseline and how we aim to work with them in the learning events.
- 1.49 We will meet with the staff again in Stage 2 and then Stage 3 of the evaluation to track progress, identify emerging issues, changes in ways of working or other factors that we need to take account of. We will develop the interview schedule as appropriate for the follow up consultation.
- 1.50 We will interview relevant BIG staff to cover similar issues as those to be covered with the consortium, although we will also discuss:
- any further background information about GCA and the objectives for it;
 - the rationale for contracting out GCA delivery;
 - details of the decision making processes.
- 1.51 We will carry out follow up interviews with BIG staff in Stages 2 and 3.
- 1.52 We believe that it is important to involve the BLF Scotland Committee in the work and propose interviewing the Chair at three stages. In the first interview we will provide details of the evaluation approach we are taking. We will cover issues around the aims and objectives of GCA, the delivery mechanisms, communication, strengths in the approach, any weaknesses and the future direction of GCA.
- 1.53 We would be happy to make this a group discussion if the Committee preferred that all of the members should be involved. We would coincide our meeting with a pre-arranged Committee meeting.
- 1.54 At the second interview we will discuss our progress, the changing policy context and update the information from the Committee in terms of the progress of GCA, any changes or issues and so forth.
- 1.55 If agreed, at the final meeting, we will present our draft findings, discuss them with the Committee and seek their feedback and input as to whether our findings chime with their own understanding and experiences. We will also discuss with the Committee our recommendations for a dissemination strategy.
- 1.56 This stakeholder consultation will inform all of the aspects of the evaluation.

Desk Research and Networking

- 1.57 The desk research and drawing on our own knowledge, contacts and networks will run throughout the work. As described above, the desk research about the projects will inform the work with them, the assessment of their impacts and the sustainability of activities. It will also feed in to the in-depth case study work.
- 1.58 We will carry out research throughout the evaluation to map and analyse the political and policy context and highlight the impacts that any changes will have on GCA funded projects. This includes reviewing emerging policies, papers, strategies and local and national developments, in Scotland the UK and internationally. In particular our associates at UHI Policyweb will continue to monitor and feed in their ongoing work on asset-based community development. This work will inform the recommendations we make in the evaluation.
- 1.59 We participate in a wide range of relevant networks, committees and research sources, for example Philomena de Lima is a consultant to the Rural Action Research Programme which has a group specifically focusing on assets. We will use our contacts and involvement in these networks to inform the evaluation and help shape it as it progresses. Examples of the networks and sources that the Blake Stevenson and UHI Policyweb team will draw from include:
- the BIG HIE Consortium members;
 - Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum (SURF);
 - The Scottish Government;
 - Communities Scotland and the Scottish Centre for Regeneration;
 - Scottish Community Development Centre;
 - Development Trust Association Scotland;
 - Cross Party Group for Rural Policy;
 - Scottish Community Renewables Network;
 - Community Business Scotland Network;
 - Community Enterprise and Social Enterprise Links;
 - Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition;
 - Social Investment Scotland;

- Social Economy Enterprise Development;
 - Community Development Foundation;
 - Rural Policy Review Group; and
 - The Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 1.60 We will also gather information from BIG or the BLF Scotland Committee that would be useful and is available to us for this part of the study. We will discuss and identify policy changes in the interviews with these stakeholders.
- 1.61 We will provide regular updates on the policy and political context as part of our on-going reporting procedures.
- 1.62 To contribute to the assessment of the effectiveness of contracting out the delivery of GCA, we will review the contract arrangements, the roles and functions provided by the consortium, the deployment and management of staff, the processes involved, the communication between BIG and the consortium and the costs of the contract. We expect this information to be provided by BIG and the consortium through written documents and interviews.

Learning Events

- 1.63 In Stage 1 we will have two learning events, one in March 2008 and one in March 2009. Our approach to the facilitation of such events is to ensure that they are participative, productive and enjoyable. We will invite all GCA projects to the events, BIG staff and staff from the HIE consortium. The aim being for us to feed back on the evaluation progress and findings to date, to give projects an opportunity to network and share experiences and to have specific opportunities for learning. The events will consist of:
- a one hour individual surgery with each project in which our consultants will cover their baseline, monitoring against the baseline, gaps and issues, a summary of their progress to date in acquiring, developing or managing the asset. We will answer any questions that they have and will gather qualitative information at these surgeries;
 - celebration of successes and achievements using case studies and presentations by projects;
 - themed workshops around specific issues, for example discovering new assets, developing sources of revenue, sustainability, social entrepreneurship and so forth.

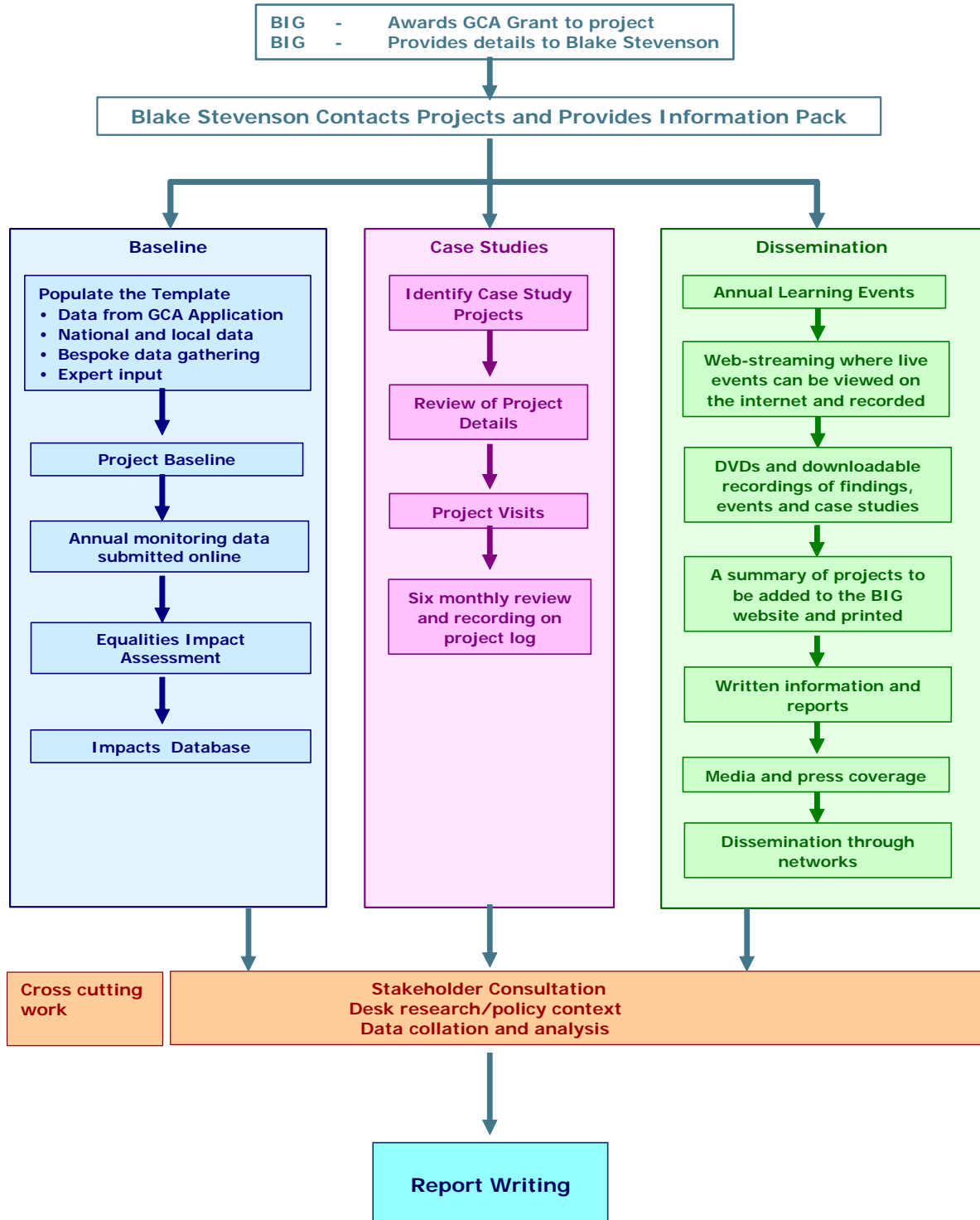
- 1.64 The first event will have a session with all participants on collecting user feedback as part of our work to collect information from beneficiaries.
- 1.65 The first event will be in a rural area in the Highlands and Islands and the second will be in an urban area in Central Scotland. We will aim to co-ordinate these learning events with other events where the projects come together for example as part of the self-evaluation work or other BIG event.
- 1.66 We will have a third learning event during Stage 2 which will follow the same format as in Stage 1.
- 1.67 In Stage 3, towards the end of the process we will organise an event that will bring projects, BIG staff and the consortium together. We will present the findings of the study relating to: impacts, the process that projects go through, their support requirements, what works in asset-based community development, and set this within the political and policy environment at that time.
- 1.68 We will facilitate workshop sessions to discuss and receive feedback on the findings and recommendations to confirm our analysis reflects the experience of projects.
- 1.69 At the event there will be facilitated discussion about the next steps for GCA funded activities.

Feedback and Dissemination

- 1.70 We are committed to providing feedback to a range of audiences, for example policymakers, funders, practitioners, projects, communities and other interested parties. In addition to the Learning Events, following each Stage of the work, we will prepare a dissemination plan which will recommend appropriate ways to disseminate the findings through direct and indirect routes:
 - web-streaming where live events can be viewed on the internet and recorded;
 - DVDs and downloadable recordings of findings, events and case studies;
 - a summary of projects to be added to the BIG website and also, to be printed in hard copy;
 - written information and materials including inserts into relevant newsletters, factsheets and BIG publications;
 - a GCA bulletin;

- dissemination through existing networks, for example asking SURF to run one of their Open Forum meetings on the findings (where we will act as speakers) or asking Senscot to include a link to the evaluation findings on its e-bulletin; we have found this to be a very effective method of dissemination as it reaches many more people through sources they trust;
 - appropriate media and press coverage.
- 1.71 The flowchart on the following page illustrates the methods we will use to carry out the evaluation over the three Stages.

Evaluation of Growing Community Assets



2 Context (Q1, Q3)

Investing in Communities Portfolio

- 2.1 The Big Lottery Fund announced its new funding framework for 2006 to 2009 in Scotland in its investment plan *Investing in Communities: Our Manifesto* (The Big Lottery Fund in Scotland, 2006). This document sets its commitment to acting in a different way as a funder which involves:
- adopting an investor approach and developing the skills and expertise of its staff in relation to this new approach;
 - adopting an outcomes approach to achieve long term change in Scotland. This means placing evaluation and learning at the heart of projects and in the way they think and behave;
 - reducing the bureaucracy that is involved in applying for and achieving funding by creating a single point of entry for all of the funding and a single funding package;
 - developing a shared responsibility with organisations for achieving outcomes and working alongside them to reach the milestones along the way; and
 - putting more resources into providing help, advice and guidance for organisations before they apply for funding and during the lifetime of projects.
- 2.2 Investing in Communities comprises four investment areas which will help BIG to achieve identified outcomes for Scotland. These four areas are:
- Growing Community Assets
 - Dynamic, Inclusive Communities
 - Life Transitions
 - Supporting 21st Century Life.
- 2.3 The Big Lottery Fund Scotland National Committee has eight members' reviews applications and makes awards through a range of BIG programmes, including the GCA investment area of Investing in Communities. The Committee is also responsible for strategy, policy, planning and management of programmes in Scotland.

Growing Community Assets

- 2.4 Growing Community Assets is an open, demand led application process with funding being approved every two months. It is delivered by a consortium of organisations led by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. We understand that the membership of the consortium includes Scottish Enterprise, Community Enterprise in Strathclyde (CEIS), Forth Sector, Social Investment Scotland and the Highlands and Islands Community Energy Company. The consortium provides a specialist team that works across Scotland that provides support and advice at the different Stages of asset-based projects applying for GCA funding. The type of support that is provided includes:
- how to become formally constituted and the appropriate model for the community, the asset and the aspirations;
 - the GCA application process and details of the support available through GCA;
 - advice, contacts and guidance in the technical aspects of acquiring or developing an asset;
 - how to develop an asset, for example business options.
- 2.5 The consortium also provides on-going advice and guidance for the continued management and development of community assets.
- 2.6 Growing Community Assets replaced the Scottish Land Fund which focused on community assets in rural areas. Through GCA, BIG has broadened this out to include urban areas which is an innovative approach and one that we welcome. Through the evaluation, we will be able to identify similarities and any differences between rural and urban areas. It is likely that in the first Stages of GCA there will be more applications from rural areas where there is a longer tradition of the community owning assets although we know that community ownership is not exclusively a rural phenomena. At the time of writing the proposal, ten of the 32 funded projects were in urban areas. We have worked on developing community assets in urban areas as well as rural. We carried out a feasibility study to set up a community composting enterprise in Falkirk, and we took an asset-based approach to community development in Newcastle as part of our work to develop a strategy to revitalise a disadvantaged area of the city. We worked in Glenrothes in Fife to develop proposals for an integrated family centre including exploring the option and advising on the process that would be required for it to be a community owned and managed asset.
- 2.7 This evaluation is of the Growing Community Assets through which BIG will invest £50 million to enable communities to acquire assets (such as land, buildings and equipment) that will help them to

become stronger and more sustainable. It is hoped that people will enjoy and use these assets and that they will help create more community income and employment. Projects funded under this theme are required to meet at least one of the following outcomes:

- Communities are more able to grasp opportunities, and are more enterprising and self reliant by investing in proposals that:
 - enable communities to become stronger by generating social and financial benefits from their assets;
 - help communities generate independent income streams through their assets, and enable them to develop plans to re-invest this in the community;
 - support and enable communities to develop business strengths for example by entering into production or trading or charging for services, products or workspace;
 - increase employment, earnings and the conditions that support business growth in the local area.
- Communities are stronger, with shared aspirations and the ability to achieve these together by investing in proposals that:
 - enable people in communities to become more involved in deciding how local assets (and any services delivered from them) are developed, used and managed;
 - make communities stronger by enabling them to develop shared ambitions for their area, and a shared understanding of how it wants to achieve those aspirations;
 - help people acquire the skills, knowledge, contacts and confidence, in other words, social capital, as well as the physical and financial resources to achieve those ambitions.
- Communities have services and amenities that meet people's needs better and are more accessible by funding proposals that:
 - help make community services and amenities more financially viable and stable, for example by developing their potential to generate income from

different sources, or by reducing the costs associated with managing or running the asset;

- enable local people to provide financially sustainable opportunities, services or amenities that are important or needed in the community. Communities can use their assets to do this in different ways: some services might be operated from an asset, others might be purchased by the community with income generated by the asset;
 - provide opportunities, services or amenities that are specifically designed to meet the needs and circumstances of people, in a financially sustainable way. This might mean local people in general or it might mean particular groups within communities. Such groups might include unemployed people, lone parents, carers, older people, women or minority ethnic groups. Communities do not always have to deliver these services themselves, for example they can contract this out to others;
 - provide services and amenities that are more accessible. Communities might use or develop their asset to provide services, amenities or opportunities that are easier to get to, in a better location or safer and more enjoyable.
- People have more skills, knowledge and confidence and opportunities to use these for the benefit of their community by investing in proposals that:
 - use an asset to create opportunities that increase and build the range of skills, knowledge, contacts and confidence of individuals in the community;
 - provide opportunities to use these skills through employment or volunteering. An example is where local people may be employed to deliver aspects of the project and they could also volunteer as members of the management committee or a steering group;
 - provide a source of demonstration and inspiration for local people and other communities, for example a learning-led network for asset-based community development.

- Communities have a more positive impact on the local and global environment by investing in proposals that:
 - enable communities to directly influence how natural resources are produced, utilised or sustained;
 - enable communities to have a positive impact on the amount of waste that is produced, recycled or reused;
 - help reduce the impact of fossil-fuel powered transport;
 - improve the amenity value of the local environment;
 - provide a healthier environment for users through selection of building materials and heating and ventilation systems.

2.8 GCA funds three types of activity:

- It funds the purchase, improvement or development of assets. This includes acquiring land with an end purpose for example to build affordable housing, to create new buildings for community use, to preserve or establish woodlands and greenspaces, to provide allotments, footpaths, preserve or improve river banks, nature reserves and cycleways.
- It also includes acquiring or developing buildings for example shops, workspaces, meeting places, community cafes and so forth. Particularly welcome are multi-purpose buildings that deliver key services and have income generating potential.
- It will fund more proposals to acquire equipment, knowledge and skills, for example equipment to harness renewable energy, recycling equipment and sustainable motorised transport.

2.9 It can also fund intangible assets by supporting projects that develop local knowledge and skills on community ownership and building social capital.

- It will pay for technical assistance at the various Stages of community ownership for example project design and planning, surveys, financial planning, legal work and risk assessments.
- It will pay for the employment of development staff and activities that help groups to acquire the skills that they need to develop or manage an asset.

- 2.10 Funding intangible assets is a very interesting and innovative approach and the evaluation must capture the tangible and less tangible impacts and outcomes of this element and identify the specific learning points from developing intangible assets. Whilst not exclusively so, the outcomes here are more likely to be weighted towards social indicators, for example enhanced community capacity, strengthened social networks and greater understanding between generations.
- 2.11 Our analysis of the GCA funded activities to date shows that the majority of applications have been for funding to build, refurbish or purchase a tangible asset with a small number of awards for capacity building and feasibility studies. There has been one award to help develop social enterprise opportunities made to McSpence Workspace Ltd.
- 2.12 We know that to date there have been many fewer proposals submitted for developing intangible assets and we understand that none have been funded so far. There is on-going work to support and develop more applications for intangible assets. We will be happy to contribute to this as part of the evaluation contract by raising awareness and feeding in any emerging findings relating to this in Stage 1 of the evaluation. However, investment in both tangible and intangible assets and have both important tangible as well as less tangible outcomes which enhance community sustainability, and it is important to measure these for all kinds of investment. For example, investment in land ownership can release community innovative ideas and energy, help to build capacity, and give institutional power, as well as building social capital (community engagement, enhanced democratic process, internal and external networks).

Scottish Policy Context

- 2.13 The institutional and political context in Scotland has differed markedly from that of other countries in the UK since the devolution referendum in 1997. The Scotland Act of 1998 established the statutory basis of devolution, and the Scottish Executive was established after the first elections to the Scottish Parliament in 1999. The Scottish Executive, recently renamed the Scottish Government, has responsibility for a number of devolved policy areas, including health, education, justice, rural affairs and transport, while the UK Government retains responsibility for reserved matters such as foreign affairs, social security and immigration.
- 2.14 The establishment of the Scottish Parliament has changed the political context in Scotland. Until the recent election, the Parliament was led by a coalition of the Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish Liberal Democrat Party but following since May it has been led by the Scottish Nationalist Party. This relatively new

administration has set out some clear commitments to review current public sector structures and organisations, for example Communities Scotland will no longer exist and there have been announcements of major changes within Scottish Enterprise.

- 2.15 The Scottish Executive published its Scottish sustainable development strategy “Choosing Our Future” in December 2005. It is built around:
 - the well-being of Scotland’s people;
 - Scotland’s thriving communities;
 - Scotland natural heritage and resources; and
 - Scotland’s global contribution.
- 2.16 In the field of regeneration and community empowerment, the SNP is focused on de-centralised policy solutions for example giving community councils more control with some direct funding to spend on their local priorities. There is also a proposal to allow local people to co-manage a proportion of public spending and services, and to consider ways to transfer under-used public assets into community ownership without the need for ministerial approval.
- 2.17 The Scottish proportional electoral system, the Single Transferable Vote (STV), has created a new dynamic in Scottish politics and ensured that smaller parties, such as the Scottish Green Party, can achieve greater representation and influence than elsewhere in the UK. The role of committees and backbenchers in drafting legislation, and the high number of consultations and petitions, has meant that there is greater and wider input on public policy in Scotland.
- 2.18 The effects of devolution have inevitably led to the creation of policies that are uniquely Scottish and differ from those in the rest of the UK. The highest profile departures from Westminster policy in Scotland have been the abolition of up-front tuition fees for students, the introduction of free long-term care, and the introduction of the proportional voting system. Devolved Executive powers on health and education have also led to a divergence of policy and institutions from Westminster on these issues, while the Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) established a distinctive Scottish context for public services and community planning. This trend is set to continue with the SNP-led administration.
- 2.19 Overall, the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and Government has changed the way that Scotland is governed, and has set up institutional and political systems that differ from the rest of the UK. Devolution has enabled Scotland to set its own agenda in important policy areas, such as health and education, and implement institutional changes to carry out policy. Our

experience of working with public sector organisations in Scotland has enabled us to gain an in-depth understanding and working knowledge of the Scottish context.

Asset-Based Community Development

- 2.20 This section provides some context for community ownership in Scotland as a background to the study.

The Scottish Land Fund

- 2.21 When the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) was set up in 2001, it represented a major new source of funding for asset-based community development in Scotland.

- 2.22 The SLF aimed to:

- improve opportunities and reduce disadvantage both for communities and individuals in rural areas;
- encourage community involvement and participation in land ownership and management;
- enhance the environmental diversity and quality of rural Scotland;
- facilitate positive use of the land reform legislation on communities' right to buy; and
- diversify the pattern of land ownership in rural Scotland.

- 2.23 Previously, there had been only a small number of major community land purchases in Scotland, for example on the Isle of Eigg and in Knoydart. These purchases took place with the aim of addressing the lack of investment and co-operation from private landlords which had restricted community development and led to a deterioration in infrastructure and quality of life for local residents. However, there was a lack of funding available to support community ownership of land and land assets, and major fundraising efforts were required to achieve such early examples of community ownership.

- 2.24 Supported by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, which came into force in 2004 and provided a legislative basis for the right of communities to register an interest in and then buy land following indication from a landowner that he/she wishes to sell registered land, the SLF acted as a new vehicle to support community ownership of land and land assets. By the time of its closure in April 2006, the SLF had contributed to a significant increase in

community ownership in Scotland by investing £13.9 million through 251 grants to 188 community groups across Scotland (although more than half of the entire SLF's value is accounted for by the five biggest investments).

- 2.25 An evaluation of the Scottish Land Fund confirmed that community ownership of land and land assets is a model that can work in Scotland. The remainder of this section draws largely on this evaluation and other sources to discuss the rationale and benefits of community ownership of assets, its associated issues and some examples of urban and rural asset-based community development.

Rationale for Asset-Based Community Development

- 2.26 The argument for asset-based community development is justified by the rationale that community ownership of land and land assets can have a positive impact on social and economic conditions by, for example, potentially increasing population and employment opportunities. Some of the social and economic benefits of asset-based community development are described below.
- Asset-based community development is in contrast to community development that is controlled by public agencies, where initiatives are offered to or imposed on communities. Under asset-based community development, communities are empowered to participate in the formulation and implementation of their own solutions and plans for development.
 - Strong and supportive social networks and increased community participation and empowerment can attract increased opportunities for new enterprise and employment opportunities, thereby attracting new people to live and work in the area, and reducing population flow out of the area. Therefore, the development of a strong social infrastructure underpins efforts to improve a community's economic conditions.
 - Strong social networks can also encourage social interaction for people, such as the elderly and disabled, who might otherwise be socially isolated.
 - The skills base of the community can be enhanced through new enterprises and employment opportunities. Further, individuals engaged in community ownership projects can develop softer skills such as negotiating, managing meetings and delegating, as well as harder skills such as public speaking, book-keeping and project monitoring. This

capacity building contributes to the skills base of the community as a whole.

- Many SLF projects have strong links with local schools, with the aim of involving children in the project and encouraging them to take pride and ownership in the area.
- Asset-based community development can contribute to the development of improved local infrastructure, such as refurbishment of local housing stock, and improved access to facilities (particularly among projects related to community ownership of buildings) thereby improving the quality of life of local residents.
- Community land purchases can provide security of tenure for residents, removing fear of eviction and allowing improvements and investment to be made.
- Successful community ownership represents a long term investment, as the value of land is likely to rise over time, thereby providing a valuable asset for years to come.

2.27 Further, environmental benefits can result from community ownership of land and land assets as ownership appears to naturally encourage a sense of stewardship. Many SLF projects involve environmental improvements as part of land or property development. For example, there have been improvements to woodlands, wildlife diversity work has been undertaken and many projects are considering energy generation projects such as wind turbines and bio-fuels to reduce energy costs for the community and to generate new income by selling energy into the grid.

Issues Surrounding Asset-Based Community Development

2.28 While the rationale for asset-based community development is strong, there are some issues that must be considered, for example:

- The success of individual projects depends on the quality of their management. Effective management through, for example, the development of a structured plan for acquisition and use of assets, and the imagination to come up with and take forward new ideas contributes to the success of community ownership projects.
- A lack of support for community ownership among residents and/or stakeholders may hinder asset-based community development. Involving residents in early decisions related

to community ownership projects is important to secure long-term community support.

- Community acquisition of land and land assets represents the beginning of a process, not the end. How communities *use* their assets, rather than the fact that they own them, is the most important issue.
- There may be a lull between the period leading up to the acquisition of assets and the beginning of planning for the use of these assets. While this lull may be natural and unavoidable, care should be taken that momentum is not lost.
- Community ownership is not a universal solution – in some communities a management agreement, thereby avoiding the responsibilities of ownership, may be a more appropriate approach. For example, the Dunnet Forestry Trust manages the site as a community forest for its owner, Scottish Natural Heritage.
- The pace of progress planned should be suited to the characteristics of each project. For example, it may be more appropriate to take long-term projects forward in a slow, sensitive way rather than aiming for rapid progress, particularly where a ‘light touch’ approach may be required (for example on environmental-related projects).
- Projects must also be realistic about what can be achieved and trade-offs between scale, speed and what can be achieved might need to be considered.
- Projects must be flexible and resourceful to adapt to problems such as damage or delays caused by extreme weather conditions, staffing problems and legal delays.
- Sustainability – the ability of projects to maintain their activities without on-going public funding is a key issue. To reduce their reliance on public funds, many projects develop the capability to generate their own income through, for example, energy or tourism-related projects.

Rural Asset-Based Community Development

- 2.29 98% of Scotland’s land area, and 20% of its population is classified as ‘rural Scotland’.
- 2.30 Socio-economic trends experienced in rural areas of Scotland are in many cases very different to those experienced in urban areas.

Some key recent demographic trends in rural Scotland are listed below.

- The population density of rural Scotland is 16 inhabitants per square kilometre, compared to 65 per square kilometre in Scotland as a whole.
- There is evidence to suggest that young people are moving away from rural areas. In 2001, the population of 15-24 year olds in rural Scotland was 3% lower than the rest of Scotland. This means that the proportion of older, economically inactive people in rural areas is growing.
- Unemployment is lower in rural areas than in Scotland as a whole (in 2005, 3% compared to 6%), and self-employment is more common in rural areas than others.
- There has been diversification away from the 'primary' rural industries of agriculture, forestry, fishing and energy towards other sectors such as service industries including recreation and tourism.
- While there is evidence to suggest a greater quality of life in rural areas (73% of people living in remote rural areas rated their neighbourhood as very good, compared with 49% of those in the rest of Scotland), deprivation does exist in rural areas, often 'hidden' in relatively affluent areas.

2.31 Therefore, rural Scotland faces some distinct challenges for community development when compared with urban areas. Caution is required when considering the needs of rural Scotland, however, as it is important to remember that there is some diversity of experience among rural areas in Scotland caused by, for example, varying degrees of remoteness.

2.32 The Scottish Land Fund, which focused solely on rural communities, funded a range of projects disparate in scale and activities. One of the most well known and successful examples of asset-based community development in Scotland in recent years is on the Isle of Gigha, where community land ownership has had the following impacts:

- major investment in housing stock, including refurbishments to a high environmental standard;
- improved community engagement;
- community management of the hotel;

- growing population – from 98 to over 150 – with high growth of younger working age people;
- support for new businesses and employment opportunities;
- increase of full time equivalent jobs from 50 to 77 and virtually no unemployment;
- purchase and operation of three wind turbines, which has generated direct income and contributes to sustainability of projects;
- renewed optimism and confidence resulting from land ownership.

Urban Asset-Based Community Development

- 2.33 Community development in urban areas faces the challenge of relatively high levels of deprivation, higher unemployment and greater health problems in some areas when compared with other urban areas and rural locales.
- 2.34 While the SLF focused on rural areas, through GCA, the Big Lottery Fund has broadened its focus to give urban communities the opportunity to bring urban assets under community ownership and control. While it is likely that in the first Stages of GCA there will be more applications from rural areas where there is a longer tradition of the community owning assets, we know that community ownership is not exclusively a rural phenomenon.
- 2.35 For example, in 2003 the largest housing stock transfer in Europe took place, where ownership was transferred from local government to local communities. A study by the University of Glasgow¹ found that while the transfer has enhanced local control in the decision-making process, it has not delivered the intended levels of involvement, largely due to tensions between the partners involved.
- 2.36 Another example of community ownership in an urban area is the Out of the Blue project in Leith, which has been awarded Big Lottery Fund funding to restore and refurbish a historically and architecturally significant drill hall as a community asset, providing workspace for individuals and groups, educational spaces, a crèche and café.
- 2.37 Furthermore, the same organisation is working to assert greater community control of a neglected local park, and to encourage

¹ McKee, Kim (2007). *Community Ownership in Glasgow*, European Journal of Housing Policy, Vol 7, Issue 3, p319-336.

community engagement, involvement and enthusiasm in the regeneration of the park.

- 2.38 Community ownership, therefore, is just as relevant and important in urban areas as it is in rural areas.
- 2.39 There are differences, as identified above, in the socio-economic context within which rural and urban asset-based community development projects operate. These are likely to have an impact on the intended outcomes of the project and the way in which the project is implemented.
- 2.40 The sense of community spirit is traditionally greater in rural areas, despite their smaller population size when compared with urban areas. Therefore, community participation and enthusiasm for an asset-based community development project may be more difficult to engender in an apathetic urban population experiencing high levels of deprivation than in a rural area, but the resulting impact where it succeeds may be higher.
- 2.41 In addition, the type of asset owned by the community is likely to vary depending on the project's urban or rural location. For example, a rural project is more likely to acquire woodland or green space, while an urban project is likely to have a greater number of existing buildings available for purchase.
- 2.42 Asset-based community development projects, therefore, have the potential to bring about substantial benefits for communities. However, there are a number of issues that must be considered when planning and delivering a project, and care must be taken to tailor the project to the needs, characteristics and situation of the area within which the community is based.

3 Implementation and Resource Plan (Q4, Q7, Q9)

- 3.1 Blake Stevenson has a core team available for the delivery of the three Stages of the evaluation in the timeframes required by BIG. In order to ensure that the evaluation is carried out to the very highest standard Blake Stevenson will work in conjunction with UHI Millennium Institute PolicyWeb to deliver this contract.
- 3.2 Blake Stevenson is a leading consultancy firm in social and economic development. Established in 1992 we have a permanent staff of 18 and a bank of a further 15 specialist associates. We are experts in evaluation and have extensive experience of carrying out work related to community assets.
- 3.3 UHI PolicyWeb is part of the UHI Millennium Institute. Based in Inverness, it was established in 2004 as a social science-based centre for carrying out and organising research, consultancy, think-tanks, dissemination and collaborative activities in remote and rural communities.
- 3.4 PolicyWeb is a partner in the QUCAN Rural Research Network (Queens Belfast, UHI, Cornell, Aberdeen and Newcastle) and in the ICRPS (international rural policy studies research and post-graduate teaching and research partnership -Aberdeen, Leuven KN, Corvinus, AU Barcelona, Missouri-Columbia, Guelph, Quebec at Rimousky, Brandon Universities).
- 3.5 UHI currently participates in the annual summer school teaching and the development of Masters and PhD level on-line modules. These modules include one on evaluation methods and techniques, and another on local development which focuses on the 'assets approach'.
- 3.6 Blake Stevenson's main base is in Edinburgh and UHI has bases across the Highlands and Islands. Blake Stevenson works across Scotland, for example, delivering our self-evaluation support contract the BIG. We are therefore well placed to cover the whole of Scotland in the evaluation.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.7 Blake Stevenson Ltd will maintain full control of the management of the contract and will be responsible for liaising with the Big Lottery and ensuring that we deliver all aspects of the contract to a high standard and on time.

- 3.8 We have selected a team comprising employees of each of our organisations to deliver this contract who have expertise directly relevant to the work, and who have many years' experience of conducting evaluations and working in the field of community assets.
- 3.9 The team will be headed by **Pamela Reid, a Director of Blake Stevenson Ltd** with many years of experience of overseeing and conducting evaluations on a range of issues. Pamela will have overall responsibility for managing the study and making sure that the outputs meet the needs and aspirations of the Big Lottery Fund.
- 3.10 Pamela will be supported by the following staff:
- Personal information has been redacted
- 3.11 Some members of the team will have day-to-day involvement in supporting the projects, whilst others will provide expertise on a needs basis. Individual roles and responsibilities are outlined below.
- 3.12 In addition to overseeing the work and team, Pamela will conduct a selection of stakeholder interviews, and input to the Learning Events and reports.
- 3.13 Marian will oversee the development of the research tools, provide support to a number of projects, undertake a selection of stakeholder interviews, have responsibility for designing the content of the learning events, and input to the development of the interim and final reports.
- 3.14 Ian, William, Jenny, and Artur will have a key role to play in establishing baselines for each of the projects, measuring progress against the baseline as it is collected, and analysing this data throughout the evaluation. They will also conduct the case study work with projects, and support them to develop their project logs. Each of them will have responsibility for a caseload of projects. This will enable team members to develop in-depth knowledge about the group of projects they work with and provide tailored support, rather than generic support being offered across the team. It will

also mean that projects have a named contact to approach for support as required.

3.15 William will be responsible for the design and management of the database and the website.

3.16 Philomena, John and Tony will provide expertise in relation to mapping the policy and political context. They will also input to the development of some of the evaluation tools including the project baseline template, and will input to the learning events and reports. They may also undertake a selection of some of the stakeholder interviews as required. More specifically, UHI PolicyWeb staff will contribute to:

- the assessment of the economic, social and environmental impacts;
- the analysis of the process that projects go through from initially identifying the asset through to acquisition, ownership or other arrangements and management of the asset;
- identifying the key factors that lead to successful community ownership;
- identifying key risks or weaknesses that hinder success;
- an assessment of the benefits of contracting out the delivery of GCA.

3.17 Two further members of Blake Stevenson's staff will be involved as required:

- Glenys Watt, Director
- Jennifer Lambert, Senior Consultant

Glenys and Jennifer lead our work on the self-evaluation support for Investing in Communities projects in Scotland. They will provide internal liaison and will attend the Learning Events to provide a cross-reference point plus additional facilitation.

3.18 The experience and skills that the Blake Stevenson and UHI Team will bring to the contract are described in Appendices 3 and 4 and CVs are set out in Appendix 5. A key strength that Blake Stevenson will bring to this contract is our ability to adapt flexibly to customer requirements as the project evolves. We will be happy to negotiate adjusting the relative contributions of team members according to the emphasis the client wishes to place on different

service elements, and the strengths and experience of team members in delivering the elements required.

- 3.19 We will update our work plan on a quarterly basis, using intelligence we have collected and analysed regarding demands for services and responding to BIG's preferences for the delayed application or reallocation of budgets.
- 3.20 Should any of the employees of Blake Stevenson or UHI become unavailable for the project due to illness, moves or other unforeseen events, we will notify BIG immediately and agree appropriate arrangements for replacing them or reallocating their work to other team members. Our team is sufficiently large to be able to cover these eventualities and prevent any disruption to the services and anticipated outcomes included in this proposal.
- 3.21 We are currently not aware of any external factors that will prevent our Team being mobilised ready to deliver the contract.
- 3.22 The estimated time allocations of the project team members over the course of the project are provided further on in this Chapter.
- 3.23 An overview of each of the core team member's experience is provided below.

Personal information has been removed

3.24 The tables on the following pages set out the tasks and days allocated to the members of our team.

Stage 1

Task	Team Member									
	PR	MC	JE	IC	WM	JB	PdL	AF	AS	GW
Preparation of tools and resources (information pack, baseline template, database, monitoring tools, project log and interviews)	3.0	5.0	10.0	5.0	6.0	2.0				
Research and support to prepare the baseline including bespoke tools	4.0	4.0	21.0	21.0	20.0	3.0	2.0			
Gather monitoring data			7.0	7.0	6.0					
Input and analysis of data	1.0				14.0					
Desk Research and Networks (monitoring reports, projects, delivery contract and policy context)	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	2.0		2.0		
Case studies (initial research, project visit and tracking)		1.0	5.0	4.0	5.0				5.0	
Stakeholder Consultation	2.0	3.0				1.0				
Learning Events, including preparation, organisation, facilitation and surgeries	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0		2.0				2.0
Meetings and Liaison with BIG	4.0	3.0								
Monthly reports to BIG		7.0								
Analysis and report writing	3.0	8.0	4.0	3.0		2.0				
Total	22.0	36.0	52.0	45.0	52.0	12.0	2.0	2.0	5.0	2.0

Stage 2

Task	Team Member									
	PR	MC	JE	IC	WM	JB	PdL	AF	AS	GW
Gather monitoring data			10.0	10.0	8.0					
Input and analysis of data		1.0			14.0					
Desk Research and Networks (monitoring reports, projects, delivery contract and policy context)	1.0	2.0	4.0			2.0		1.0		
Case studies		1.0	5.0	4.0	5.0				5.0	
Stakeholder Consultation	2.0	3.0				1.0				
Learning Event	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0		2.0				2.0
Meetings and Liaison with BIG	4.0	4.5								
Monthly reports to BIG		7.0								
Analysis and report writing	2.0	8.0	5.0	5.0		2.0				
Total	12.0	29.5	26.0	21.0	27.0	7.0		1.0	5.0	2.0

Stage 3

Task	Team Member									
	PR	MC	JE	IC	WM	JB	PdL	AF	AS	GW
Gather monitoring data			5.0	5.0	4.0					
Input and analysis of data		1.0			9.0					
Desk Research and Networks (monitoring reports, projects, delivery contract and policy context)	2.0	2.0	5.0			2.0		1.0		
Case studies (update, and tracking)		2.0	4.0		4.0				5.0	
Stakeholder Consultation	2.0	3.0				1.0				
Learning Event	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.0		1.0				1.0
Meetings and Liaison with BIG	2.0	2.0								
Monthly reports to BIG		4.0								
Analysis and report writing	4.0	9.0	5.0	5.0		2.0				
Total	11.5	24.5	20.0	11.0	17.0	6.0		1.0	5.0	1.0

4 Project Management and Key Performance Indicators (Q10)

- 4.1 Blake Stevenson has very well established processes and procedures to ensure that all of our projects are delivered on time, within budget and to high quality standards. We are familiar with, and will adhere to the standards required by BIG and are working to those under our existing contract to provide self-evaluation support.
- 4.2 We always endeavour to exceed client expectations, and have had consistently received extremely positive feedback from our clients. Our processes and procedures are provided in Appendices 6 and 7.
- 4.3 We confirm that the Bidder and all personnel involved in the Blake Stevenson Team, who will contribute to the performance of the Services, will observe the policy and codes of practice including conduct set down by BIG.
- 4.4 We will discuss and agree with BIG the Key Performance Indicators we would apply to our work on this contract, in addition to the quality standards that we already apply across all our work. We suggest that they might include:
- the timely delivery of each of the service elements specified in the Methods Statement;
 - high quality delivery of the specified service elements; using feedback mechanisms at the learning events through questionnaires to project representatives and other participants;
 - accessibility and availability of team members as required by BIG and the consortium;
 - accessibility and support to projects participating in the study provide on a flexible basis to meet their needs;
 - the timely delivery of high quality reports to BIG in compliance with those we have specified under 'Communications and Management Reporting';
 - attendance and contribution at relevant meetings;
 - effective and speedy communication with the client of any issues arising that may impact upon service delivery;

- immediate notification to THE FUND of any complaints we receive and how we propose appropriate action to handle these.
- 4.5 As a company we are incentivised by feedback from our clients and all our stakeholders, so we will ensure that we will establish regular opportunities to receive feedback and flexibly adapt our services as appropriate.
- 4.6 Blake Stevenson will draw up some specific Milestones in conjunction with BIG on award of the contract. These will reflect the final balance of the service elements. These Milestones will include delivery of specific activities and outcomes and will state the target date for each of these. Where services will be driven by the flow of grant awards and projects coming on stream, provisional target dates will be set then reviewed regularly.
- 4.7 Appendix 8 describes Blake Stevenson's risk assessment and contingency planning procedures. In this contract we anticipate that the risks will primarily relate to:
- ensuring that there are appropriate personnel in place to meet the peaks in service demand – we have put in place a sufficiently large and flexible team to meet such peaks, even if there are unforeseen illnesses or moves within the overall team;
 - potential technical problems with our database – we have backup systems for this;
 - failure of projects to participate and submit monitoring information. We will make the content and the process as user friendly and straightforward as possible. We will complete some sections of the baseline and the monitoring ourselves and provide support where necessary for the projects to complete their elements;
 - quality assurance where projects are using bespoke tools. We will provide very clear guidance and training on the use of the bespoke tools and the tools will be straightforward and easy to apply.
- 4.8 Blake Stevenson will be happy to prepare a comprehensive risk register on award of the contract, to be discussed and agreed with BIG.

5 Communication, Management, Reporting and Outputs (Q10)

- 5.1 Our approach is always to work collaboratively with our clients so that we can take an iterative approach to developing the methods and carrying out the study. We always keep clients fully informed of progress and keep them aware of any emerging issues. The communication and reporting requirements of this study are very similar to the approach we are using for the self-evaluation support contract so we are comfortable with them.
- 5.2 At the start of each Stage (1, 2 and 3) we will have **an inception meeting** with BIG to agree the final plans for the forthcoming phase of the evaluation, exchange information and details and for us to provide details of the information that we require from BIG. We will prepare a short inception report following each inception meeting.
- 5.3 Throughout the work we will provide **monthly progress reports** in an agreed format. We anticipate that the reports will set out the key performance indicators agreed for the work, milestones reached, any not reached, reasons for that, emerging issues and the next steps.
- 5.4 We welcome the opportunity to have **quarterly management meetings** during the active phases of the work acknowledging that within the entire contract period, there will be some periods with no activity. At the meetings we expect that we will report on progress, gain advice from BIG (and potentially consortium members) and have the opportunity to discuss any issues and take joint decisions where appropriate.
- 5.5 We will be very happy to attend **Evaluation Steering Group (ESG) meetings** to present preliminary and final findings and receive feedback on these. We understand that the ESG will comprise BIG staff, members of the GCA consortium and relevant representatives from external organisations.
- 5.6 During each Stage we will provide an **interim report** which will set out emerging findings, examples of good practice that we have identified during the course of the work, the key lessons learnt, discussion of key issues and recommendations as appropriate.
- 5.7 At the end of each Stage we will produce **a final report** which will report on the methods and approaches we used, the analysis of the political and policy context, the quantitative and qualitative analysis, the key findings and their implications for GCA and funded activities, lessons learnt, recommendations and the next Stages of

the evaluation. The final reports of each Stage will each build on the previous final report. We will incorporate a short resume of the previous report and findings so that the story of the evaluation and of GCA builds up as the evaluation progresses.

- 5.8 Each report will include **case study examples of good or innovative practice**. We will build on and add to these case studies over time, bringing in new projects as case studies in later reports and providing updated information on the earlier cases studies to illustrate the process involved in acquiring, developing and managing a community asset.
- 5.9 There will of course be differences in the content and emphasis of each report reflecting the different focus of each Stage and the knowledge we build as we progress through the stages. We will agree the structure and content of the reports with BIG and/or the ESG.
- 5.10 In addition to the above, we anticipate that the report of Stage 1 will set out the **details of the baseline**, the selection of indicators and the tools used to gather the data. For projects funded earlier in the life of GCA, there will be an analysis of the monitoring data submitted against the baseline. This means that we can begin to track the impacts of the programme.
- 5.11 The report of Stage 2 will primarily focus on measuring progress against the baseline indicators for the project and the programme overall. It will analyse them by a number of themes as discussed in Chapter 1 for example:
 - rural and urban areas;
 - tangible and intangible assets;
 - types of project and activity;
 - size of asset; and
 - location.
- 5.12 We will identify the “fit” and contribution of the outcomes to the BIG GCA objectives and present this in a table to give an at-a-glance picture of the impacts of the programme against its intended impacts.
- 5.13 It will build on the findings of Stage 1 about the process and support needs of projects and the contracting out of the delivery of GCA.

5.14 The report of Stage 3 will be the final evaluation report which will draw on all of the work carried out over the evaluation period. It will:

- profile the spend of GCA and the activities and projects funded;
- provide a comprehensive evaluation of the social, environmental and economic impacts of GCA funded activities drawing out similarities and differences between different types of assets, locations, size, activity and so forth;
- identify the factors contributing to the success of community ownership and factors hindering the success;
- provide a map of routes and processes from identification to acquisition and management of community assets using illustrative case study examples;
- describe the political and policy context, including the funding environment at that time and comment on how it has changed during the evaluation period;
- review and comment on issues around the sustainability of community owned assets and make recommendations for enhancing sustainability;
- provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the delivery contract based on the review of the contract of the specification, the consultation with projects and the consultation with stakeholders; and
- provide recommendations for the future development of asset-based community development in Scotland.

6 Price, Charges and Payment Profile (Q10, Q13)

Information in this section has been concealed under Section 43 Commercial Interests

Information in this section has been concealed under Section 43 Commercial Interests

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7 Conflict of Interest and Added Value (Q13)

- 7.1 Blake Stevenson employees and our UHI associates provide services for a wide range of voluntary and statutory agencies across Scotland, and some are Chairs or Board Members of voluntary organisations. This should not present a conflict of interest with regard to the Services being provided in this contract. However, we will alert the Lottery to any overlaps between these organisations and those that will be receiving GCA grants. We will ensure that all projects receive equal access to support to participate in the evaluation and provide feedback on findings.
- 7.2 Blake Stevenson is currently contracted with BIG to provide self-evaluation support to projects funded through the Investing in Communities Stream and so we are already providing support to GCA projects. We do not believe that this represents a conflict of interest. The support we offer through the self-evaluation support contract will be distinct from the support projects are offered through this contract, but will complement this evaluation by enhancing their ability to participate in the evaluation.
- 7.3 We will alert BIG should this situation change.

8 Contract Transfer and Exit Strategy (Q10)

- 8.1 We understand that in the first instance, the contract will be awarded to carry out Stage 1 of the evaluation. Stages 2 and 3 may be awarded on the successful completion of the first stage.
- 8.2 Prior to the termination or expiry of the Contract, we will draw up an exit strategy to be agreed with BIG. This will involve us undertaking the following:
- schedule a series of meetings with BIG and any other contractor to pass over any relevant information, documentation, reports and other materials (written or electronic) that are required to enable BIG or other contractors to take forward the evaluation. All of our written materials will be presented in an accessible form;
 - meet with BIG's or other contractor's staff to transfer any skills that they require in relation to the technical aspects of the evaluation, for example the database; and
 - ensure that the projects are made aware of Blake Stevenson's exit strategy and direct them to BIG or other contractor.

This is an example of what the baseline template might look like and some of the indicators that we might use. The Template would be tailored to each project to reflect its activities. The example is intended only as an illustration and would be amended as appropriate.

Project Baseline (Q5, Q12)

Project Name: _____

Project Contact: _____

Contact details: **Tel:** _____ **Email:** _____

Indicator	Source	Frequency of data collection	Team member with expertise
<i>Social</i>		Start, mid-point and end of project (for all social indicators)	
Quality of life	Local study*		JB
Quality of neighbourhood as a place to live/satisfaction with area	Local study		JB
Fear of crime	Police data, community wardens studies		PR
Issues of concern in the area e.g. vandalism, appearance, cleanliness, antisocial behaviour, substance misuse	Police data, community wardens studies, local studies		PR
Community facilities and amenities	Local studies/mappings, local survey		PR
Significant local inequalities	Community Plan, local authority studies, survey work		PdL/JB/PR
Strength of social networks	Local data		JB
Community participation and engagement	Local data, local Community Engagement strategies		JB/PR
Capacity building activities	Local data, CVS studies		JB/PR
Improved/new housing	Project data		JB/PR
Community confidence	Local data		PdL/JB
Membership of project	Project data	Annual	PR

Indicator	Source	Frequency of data collection	Team member with expertise
<i>Economic</i>			
New jobs created, as direct and indirect result of the project	Project specific data **	Annual	PR
New volunteering opportunities	Project specific data	Annual	PR
New businesses in area	Project specific data, Scottish Enterprise-Small Business Gateway	Annual	PR
Number of visitors	Project specific data	Annual	PR
Income generated by project	Project specific data	Annual	PR
Return on investment	Project specific data	Annual	PR
Social return on investment ***	Project specific data	Annual	PR
Additional funding in the area	Project specific data	Annual	PR/JB
<i>Environmental</i>			
Energy efficiency: consumption of electricity, gas, household oil, coal etc.	Project specific data	Annual	MC/JB
Approach to reducing, reusing, recycling waste	Project specific data	Start, mid-point, end	MC/JB
Landscaping and environmental improvements	Project specific data	Start, end	MC/JB
Protection of heritage	Project specific data	Start, end	MC/JB
Reversal of decline of a built or natural asset	Project data	Start, end	MC/JB
Wildlife diversity	Local survey	Start, end	MC/JB
Use and production of renewable energy	Project specific data	Start, mid-point, end	MC/JB
Promotion of environmental issues	Project specific data	Start, end	MC/JB
Sense of stewardship	Project specific data	Start, mid-point, end	JB/PR
Type and source of building materials	Project specific data	End	MC
Sustainable transport: awareness of distances travelled and use of sustainable alternatives	Project specific data	End	JB

Indicator	Source	Frequency of data collection	Team member with expertise
<i>Population profile</i>			
Age profile	General Register Office for Scotland, Census	Start, end	MC
Household composition	Census, Scottish Household Survey		MC
Gender profile	General Register Office for Scotland, Census		MC
Migration	General Register Office for Scotland (estimates from NHS Central Register, Community Health Index, International Passenger Survey)	Start, end	MC
Ethnicity	Scottish Household Survey	Start, end	MC
Disadvantage	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, Carstairs Index	Start, end	MC
Economic activity/employment	Office of National Statistics, DWP	Start, mid-point, end	PR
Education skills and training	Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics	Start, mid-point, end	PR
Notes: * A local survey would be needed to gather this data for the area specific to the project ** Project specific data will be collected as part of the ongoing operation of the project *** Social return on investment is estimated by comparing the net present value of the investment with the net present value of the benefits			

Appendix 2

The Project Log (Q5, Q12)

Guiding Principles

- **it should be easy to complete** – we will write the questions in a logical order that will be easy for the respondent to follow and complete. We will provide guidelines on completing it and a clear explanation of why we are gathering the information and what it will be used for;
- **it should not be too onerous on the research participant** – we will suggest that the log be completed every three months (quarterly) to make the process less onerous for the respondent;
- **it should be participatory and flexible** – respondents will be able to submit copies by post or electronically (by email using either a Word document or a web-based survey tool such as 'Survey Monkey');
- **it should encourage high returns** –we will set a (reasonable) deadline for return, and call projects to remind them to return it to us before the agreed date;
- **it should gather all necessary information yet not be excessively long** – we will pilot the log with two projects;
- **it should be reflective as well as simply reporting events and activities** – we will follow it up with a phone discussion;
- **it should be written using Plain English principles** – we will write the log in a clear and accessible way;
- **it should be easy to analyse and draw meaningful data from.**

Project: _____

Activity: _____

Name of Contact: _____

Period of Log: From: _____ To: _____

Please record:	
• Key Achievements	What steps were taken to achieve them
• What progress has been made in the period?	How does this compare to the progress you had expected?
• Please record key activities, events and actions?	How have these contributed to the work?
• Please record any changes to the project or its objectives	
• What have been the issues and challenges?	How have these been overcome?
• What support has the project received? Who provided the support?	How useful was the support?

Please record:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What support would have been useful but was not available? 	What support would be useful in the next period?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What progress do you expect to make in the next six months? 	What will the issues and challenges be?

Appendix 3

Blake Stevenson Ltd – Strengths and Capacities (Q6, Q8, Q12)

This section provides an at-a-glance summary of our key experience and capabilities in relation to the GCA evaluation.

Blake Stevenson and our associates, UHI PolicyWeb have provided very similar services to those outlined in the tender document, in rural and urban areas across the UK. We have extensive experience of:

- carrying out one-off and longitudinal evaluations of programmes and projects;
- developing social, environmental and economic indicators to assess impacts;
- planning and providing community capacity building support;
- working with communities to identify their needs and aspirations and the opportunities to develop amenities and services to meet the needs of local people and contribute to the social, economic and environmental health of the area;
- advising on the asset-based approach to community development;
- providing technical assistance and support to communities to research the feasibility of developing new community assets or take existing assets into community ownership;
- providing support to identify and apply for funding for community assets;
- facilitating seminars, workshops, learning events and surgeries;
- providing support, advice and guidance; and
- producing high quality reports and disseminating findings.

Clients for this work include:

- the Scottish Government (formerly the Scottish Executive)

- local authorities (for example Dundee, Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Fife, Edinburgh, West Lothian, Aberdeen, North Lanarkshire, East Lothian and Angus)
- NHS Health Scotland
- Communities Scotland
- the Foyer Federation
- The Improvement Partnership (North East England)
- Action on Smoking and Health Scotland (ASH)
- Scottish Enterprise
- Comic Relief
- Reaction (a community development company in Northumberland)
- Social Inclusion Partnerships

Longitudinal Evaluations and Developing Indicators

We have carried out a range of longitudinal evaluations and for each we have developed a set of indicators to assess the impacts. We are expert at capturing the impacts that can be quantified and also, the softer, qualitative impacts which are vital to this evaluation. Examples of our work includes:

- longitudinal monitoring and evaluation of Angus Council's integrated assessment policy for housing and housing support. This includes tracking outcomes for 20 clients presenting as homeless and developing case studies. We are developing the monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impacts over time;
- evaluation of the reaction programme in Northumberland which is the trading name of Rural Enterprise Action, a Community Interest Company. We are developing a rigorous basis for understanding the nature of the enterprise process and the impact of its activities on individuals over time. We are exploring different approaches to community based business and enterprise development in the region;

- three year Evaluation of the Elder Abuse Open Grants Programme for Comic Relief including providing self-evaluation support to all of the funded projects;
- longitudinal evaluation over three years on the impact of the Improvement Partnership (IP) for North East Local Government to evaluate the impact of IP work streams on individual participants, institutions and the region as a whole.
- a 20 year evaluative review of the regeneration process in the Broom Estate in Leven, Fife. The review tracked the process in the estate and compared it to regional and national policies over the 20 year period and drew out the lessons learned from it.

We know that it can be difficult for projects to assess their own environmental impact both in the development stage and once the project is up and running. In response, we have developed a tool to help projects to carry out an environmental impact assessment which is designed to be used by small community based projects as well as larger scale ones. It can be used to assess the impact of community assets on the built and natural environments. It takes a pragmatic approach and provides guidance on assessing the environmental impact with specific indicators covering: energy; waste; travel; and the overall impact on the natural and built physical environments.

Technical Support and Capacity Building

It is important that community assets are sustainable over time which means they must be well researched and planned from the beginning. The process of identifying the asset or opportunity, carrying out the feasibility and financial planning, developing the ownership and management structures and then taking over and running the asset are crucial. We have been involved in this process on a number of occasions, working for local authorities and with established and new community groups.

We have worked extensively to examine the feasibility of developing community assets and putting plans and structures in place to help communities buy or develop and then manage a diverse range of assets, some very large and some quite small. This has often been part of our work to develop integrated social, economic and environmental regeneration strategies in rural and urban areas for clients such as the Corrom Trust, the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit and a wide range of local authorities. Examples include converting schools to become workspaces, refurbishing a disused pannier market owned by the community, developing new

and existing community transport services, developing community owned business centres, establishing a community café, a countryside shop and a community office, working with the community to identify new uses for a Community Orchard and examining the feasibility of a community owned family centre and the capacity building required for the community to manage it.

We have a thorough understanding of the need for support. For example, we were commissioned to investigate the scale of social enterprise activity in Dumfries and Galloway and to establish the support needs and the levels of support available. We mapped social enterprises, audited support and analysed the types of community groups and social enterprises the support organisations were involved with and the range of services on offer.

In addition to the experience and knowledge that Blake Stevenson itself brings to the evaluation, we will collaborate with The University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) Millennium Institute PolicyWeb which brings a wealth of expertise in community development, community assets and evaluation work. In doing this, we have put together a specialist team with a proven track record in carrying out evaluations across the UK and of working with communities and on issues that affect them. The team understands the asset-based approach to community development where community members are included as active agents as opposed to passive recipients.

Facilitating seminars, workshops, learning events and surgeries

We have organised and facilitated information seminars, workshops or surgeries as part of the following contracts:

- for the Big Lottery Fund to provide self-evaluation support to projects funded through the Investing In Communities investment stream;
- for NHS Health Scotland, the Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland: consultancy to support the integrated planning and delivery for health improvement, improving life circumstances and tackling health inequalities across three selected Community Planning Partnerships areas. This involves a series of workshop events and a national event;
- Scottish Enterprise Fife: management of a programme of support for 66 Third Sector organisations in Fife 1999-2004;

- for the Scottish Executive: ongoing support to all of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnerships in Scotland, 2005-2008;
- for Scottish Enterprise National: providing the Support Unit for the duration of the New Futures Fund, 1999-2005;
- for Edinburgh District Council: delivery of a series of seminars on Women's Economic Development;
- for NHS Health Scotland: national consultation event, followed by focus groups with caterers across Scotland, to re-develop the Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme; and
- for West Lothian Council and Fife Council: development of the Working for Families Fund project proposals for West Lothian Council and Fife Council. Both projects involved a consultation event with stakeholder workshops to determine the priorities that each Council should be focusing on.

Sub Head a Central Point of Contact Providing Support, Advice and Guidance

In this contract we will provide on-going telephone and e-mail support to projects. This is a key component of our self-evaluation support contract with BIG. Other examples of where we have provided this service include:

- for the Scottish Guidance Group: supported Adult Guidance Networks across Scotland and encouraged peer support amongst guidance workers in the statutory and voluntary sectors (this involved the development of an intranet, bulletins and publications);
- for Scottish Enterprise National: providing the Support Unit for the duration of the New Futures Fund, 1999-2005;
- for Scottish Enterprise Fife: management of a programme of support for the Third Sector in Fife (1999-2004);
- for the Scottish Executive: ongoing support to all of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnerships in Scotland, 2005-2008.

We have also undertaken the following:

- for Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Advice and Information Network: we developed and managed a website for organisations providing money and legal advice across the city.

Produce, publish and disseminate independent reports

The vast majority of Blake Stevenson's contracts require us to produce independent written reports, many of which are available in the public domain. Our report writing style is clear and straightforward and we have a long-standing reputation for presenting findings clearly and offering practical recommendations.

We are very experienced in producing reports and materials targeted at different audiences including service users, operational staff and strategic decision makers. All of our written materials are proof read internally or by an external professional proof reader.

Examples of our reports that are currently available online include:

- for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Out of School Care for Children Living in disadvantaged areas

(<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef07520.htm>)

- for the big step: Accommodation and Support Needs of Vulnerable Young People in Glasgow

(<http://www.thebigstep.org.uk/Reports/Default.asp>)

- for NHS Health Scotland: Research into Young Single Homeless People's Health and use of Health Promotion Activities

(<http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/sedentaryyouth.pdf>)

- for NHS Health Scotland: Future of the Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme

(<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/browse/423/0.aspx>)

Appendix 4

Blake Stevenson Ltd: Relevant Experience

Evaluation of the Growing Community Assets Fund requires two areas of skills and expertise: carrying out rigorous evaluations; and community development, in particular asset-based community development where communities have ownership of assets and are actively involved in service delivery. The team has a proven track record of successfully working in both of these areas. Examples of our experience are provided below.

Community Assets, Community Development and Regeneration

Feasibility study into integrated day centre for homeless people in Dunfermline

Client: Frontline Fife

We have been commissioned to undertake a feasibility study into the establishment of a day service facility/one stop shop in the Dunfermline area for people facing homelessness. The remit is to:

- work with stakeholders to identify and quantify local need;
- consult with service users who do not use the pilot projects to include their views;
- explore possible options for securing capital costs;
- undertake the essential technical (architectural, structural engineering and quantity surveying) inspection and report of identified suitable buildings;
- provide a detailed cost to purchase and refurbish older premises or explore a “purpose build” model; and
- estimate the potential income streams for the initiative.

Community Conference in the Douglas Valley

Client: South Lanarkshire Council

We developed the programme for a community conference in the Douglas Valley, Lanarkshire. Our work included facilitating the event, liaising with the planning group to organise all aspects of the conference, including publicity; training community members to lead workshops; and facilitating a recall conference at which agencies presented their responses and proposed action for the future. This led to the formal establishment of the Douglas Valley Regeneration Initiative.

Market Feasibility Study for Community Orchard in Alloa

Client: Community Orchard Project

We conducted a feasibility study for the Community Orchard - a community-based project established to redevelop a walled garden in Alloa for the local community. The study included identifying a mix of activities to be undertaken by the Community Orchard, assessing their sustainability and recommending sources of funding to support the preferred activities. As part of this we examined good practice examples of community assets in rural and urban settings.

Benarty Regeneration Action Group (BRAG) Fife

Client: Benarty Regeneration Action Group (BRAG) Fife

We worked with BRAG to help it to negotiate resources for its own development and for the conversion of a local school into workspace, a resource centre and a hub for community initiatives.

Historical Review and Evaluation of The Engine Shed

Client: Garvald Community Enterprises Ltd

We carried out an evaluation and historical review of The Engine Shed, an Edinburgh-based social economy organisation which offers people with learning disabilities a work and training environment. We provided recommendations for the future direction of The Engine Shed.

Project Management and Support to the Voluntary Sector in Fife

Client: Scottish Enterprise Fife

Following a study to demonstrate the range and scope of the "Third Sector" in Fife, Blake Stevenson was commissioned to manage a programme of support to the Third Sector.

Our support was wide ranging and comprised three main elements:

- a series of workshops/seminars focusing on issues identified by the third sector organisations themselves as ones on which they required support;
- the establishment of a peer network and the facilitation of the network, including the provision of lunch-time seminars with guest speakers;
- the undertaking of a diagnostic interview followed by intensive assistance to pursue Investors in People for those organisations keen to pursue this route.

Economic Regeneration Strategy for the Island of Mull

Clients: Argyll and Bute District Council; Argyll and the Islands Enterprise; Scottish Homes; The Corrom Trust

Through community consultation, we prepared the economic aspects of the integrated regeneration strategy for the island of Mull. This included facilitation of six community meetings looking at opportunities for community ownership.

Community Consultation - Cairngorms area

Client: The Cairngorms Working Party, The Scottish Office

Staff of Blake Stevenson Ltd were commissioned by the Cairngorms Working Party to carry out a community consultation programme with local communities in and around the 1,500 square mile area of the Cairngorms. The objective of setting up the Working Party was to produce a management plan for the long term future of the area, which would enhance the natural heritage, the social and economic wellbeing of the area and the quality of life of the people on a sustainable basis. Contact was made with relevant individuals and a total of 12 community meetings were held to discuss the remit of the Working Party and record the views of those involved in the area. The resulting Public Consultation Paper was published with a further opportunity being offered to interested parties and individuals to have their views heard before the Final Report to the then Secretary of State.

Regeneration Strategy for South Benwell, Newcastle

Client: Newcastle City Council and Newcastle City Challenge

We researched and developed a comprehensive and innovative strategy produced with high community involvement. We assessed the gaps in community services and amenities and recommended ways of addressing those gaps including through the asset-based approach to community development.

Regeneration Studies

Client: Civic Trust Regeneration Unit (CTRU)

Blake Stevenson Ltd was commissioned by the CTRU to carry out regeneration studies for a number of towns and villages. In each, we carried out extensive community consultation to develop an integrated economic, social and environmental strategy. As part of this, we helped to create Community Development Trusts and the strategies we developed took an asset-based approach to community development through

community ownership of services, amenities and enterprises. Examples of the community assets in each are:

Saltburn-by-the-Sea in East Cleveland – a community office in a disused building and a community owned café for use by local people and tourists.

High and Low Bentham in North Yorkshire – refurbishing a building to develop a community owned business centre, creating an arts and crafts workshop and a community transport service.

Eye in Suffolk – developing a disused garage into workspaces for small businesses and establishing a community owned shop.

Torrington in Devon - restoration of the Victorian Pannier Market as a community asset.

In addition to the regeneration work we have carried out for the CTRU, we were commissioned to evaluate the CTRU's rural economic regeneration process, which led to the establishment of the Colne Valley Trust.

Development and Implementation of a Model of Integrated Service Delivery to Children and Families

Client: North Lanarkshire Partnership

We developed a model for fully integrated services for a children and family centre in Airdrie. The study involved working at strategic level to examine and develop a model for integrated service delivery. This included mapping how services would be developed and preparing an action plan to guide the process. We also worked at operational level with managers and staff at the family centre to assist them to manage the process of integration and move towards implementation of the model. We identified their support needs and provided tailored training support. Our final report outlined the process and highlighted good practice and lessons learned to allow implementation of the model elsewhere in North Lanarkshire.

Community Consultation and Action Plan for Glenrothes Family Centre

Client: Fife Council

Blake Stevenson was commissioned by the Glenrothes Local Children's Services Group to undertake a feasibility study into the establishment of a Family Centre in Glenrothes. We consulted with stakeholders and the community on the design and location of the family centre, evaluated options for the management of the centre, including developing it as a community asset, identified the services that were needed by the

community and should be in the centre. We developed a support plan to build the capacity of the local community to own and manage the centre.

Feasibility Study for a Community Composting Enterprise

Client: Falkirk Council

We conducted a feasibility study to examine setting up a community composting enterprise for a composting training and demonstration project.

Social Economy Development

Client: Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire

We carried out an environmental analysis of social enterprises in West Dunbartonshire, researched new forms and opportunities for social enterprise activity in the area, assessed the support mechanisms, barriers and opportunities for development and researched best practice on support from other areas. The final product was a baseline directory of the social economy in the area and recommendations about practical tasks that SE Dunbartonshire and its partners could undertake to promote the sector. We made recommendations for new community assets in the area.

UHI PolicyWeb Relevant Community Development and Community Asset Experience

Organised and facilitated workshops on 'The Assets Approach' for professionals working in local government and agencies in the Highlands and Islands.

UK Contribution to EU Research Project on Rural Poverty, EU funded (Country Expert and Member of the Scientific Committee in relation to the project)

Research for the OECD publication on the 'New Rural Paradigm' and for subsequent follow up conferences and reports which have much relevance for the 'Assets Approach'

Ongoing Consultant for 'Building Inclusive Communities' - Rural Action Research Programme, Carnegie UK Trust

Scottish Land Fund Committee, participating in decisions on financial help for community buy-outs.

Evaluations

Blake Stevenson has vast experience over many years of providing evaluation support to organisations in the public sector. Our key areas of work have included:

- developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks;
- assessing the appropriateness of aims, objectives and outcomes for projects and programmes;
- conducting external evaluations, both one-off and longitudinal; and
- providing self-evaluation support to projects.

Examples of our evaluation and research in the voluntary, community and public sectors are given below.

Self-Evaluation Support for Projects

Client: The Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery has contracted Blake Stevenson Ltd to provide self-evaluation support to up to 1,000 projects funded through its Investing in Communities programme. Blake Stevenson is offering tailored support through workshops, a telephone helpline, a website and the establishment of peer support networks. As part of this we are providing support to projects funded through the Growing Community Assets investment area, for example the community purchase of the Easdale Folk Museum, the Skye Ferry Filling Station, Banking on Neilston and the Scotstoun Community Centre

Evaluation of the reaction Programme

Client: Rural Enterprise Action, reaction

Blake Stevenson is currently evaluating the reaction programme in Northumberland which is the trading name of Rural Enterprise Action, a Community Interest Company. We are developing a rigorous basis for understanding the nature of the enterprise process and the impact of its activities on individuals over time.

We are exploring different approaches to community based business and enterprise development in the region by examining the activities in the Northumberland area and investigating the approach and success of community based practice elsewhere in the UK and further afield.

Evaluation of the Elder Abuse Open Grants Programme

Client: Comic Relief

Blake Stevenson is currently working for Comic Relief to evaluate the Elder Abuse Open Grants Programme, over a three year period. It involves the evaluation of the overall programme and providing self-evaluation support to the sixteen funded projects.

Longitudinal Evaluation of the Work of the Improvement Partnership (North East England)

Client: The Improvement Partnership (North East England)

Blake Stevenson has been commissioned to conduct a longitudinal evaluation over three years on the impact of the Improvement Partnership (IP) for North East Local Government. Twenty-five local authorities, four Fire and Rescue services and the key regional government agencies are participating in the IP, which is funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. We are assessing the overall effectiveness of the regional partnership approach, and evaluating the impact of IP work streams on individual participants, institutions and the region as a whole.

Evaluation of Arts-in-Health Programmes

Client: Hearts and Minds

Hearts and Minds is an arts-in-health organisation which delivers performing arts programmes for children, the elderly and their families who are in hospital or hospice care, to enhance their quality of life. Blake Stevenson Ltd was commissioned to conduct an impact evaluation of its two main arts-in-health programmes.

Evaluation of a Twenty Year Regeneration Process in the Broom Estate in Leven

Client: Fife Council

Blake Stevenson undertook a 20 year evaluative review of the regeneration process in the Broom Estate in Leven, Fife. The review tracked the process in the estate and compared it to regional and national policies over the 20 year period and drew out the lessons learned from it.

Longitudinal Monitoring and Evaluation of the Implementation of the New Integrated Assessment Policy for Housing and Housing Support

Client: Angus Council

We are working with Angus Council to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy over a 12 month period. We will provide a baseline analysis of current assessment processes and housing support in terms of their efficiency, consistency and effectiveness in preventing homelessness, and enabling vulnerable people to sustain their house and independent living. We will identify good practice and areas requiring further development.

Evaluation of 62 Social Inclusion Projects in North Glasgow

Client: North Glasgow Partnership

We evaluated 62 projects funded through the North Glasgow SIP Fund and the Integrated Resources Fund. We conducted an impact review and health check for each project and examined future sustainability and capacity. Our final report drew out comparisons and cross-cutting issues.

Final Evaluation of the Glasgow BNSF Pathfinder

Client: Glasgow City Council

We evaluated Glasgow City Council's Pathfinder Programme, which was funded through the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund aimed at improving services for people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland. In Glasgow it focused on disadvantaged children and young people. Our work included extensive interviews with stakeholders; a comprehensive questionnaire survey of households with children and young people; focus groups with children and young people; a value for money assessment; and developing project/service pro-formas. The study also included developing case studies on projects which encouraged young people into the arts and increased access to culture and leisure services. We assessed progress and determined the effectiveness of the intervention. Our final report informed a national review of the BNSF programme.

Evaluating the Dundee Community Safety Wardens Initiative

Client: Dundee City Council

Over an 18-month period, we evaluated the Community Wardens Initiative through interviews with staff and stakeholders, focus groups, desk research and community surveys to assess their attitudes and perceptions of the initiative and its impact. We used an action-research approach to ensure that our findings informed the development of the

initiative. As part of the work, we developed a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Evaluation of BSSAC Initiatives in Renfrewshire

Client: Renfrewshire Council

Blake Stevenson Ltd was commissioned to evaluate Renfrewshire Council's Building Strong, Safe, Attractive Communities initiatives, which includes their:

- Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme;
- Anti-social Investigations Team and Mediation Service;
- a Nuisance Helpline; and
- an Acceptable Behaviour Contract Unit.

We used desk-based research, interviews with stakeholders and staff and a wide-ranging community engagement exercise. The outcome of the research was a report which clearly identified the impact of the initiatives on the lives of people affected by anti-social behaviour and poor quality environments. It also identified good practice and issues and difficulties with the processes of the initiatives, set out an assessment of value for money and made recommendations on the way forward for the area.

Evaluation of West Dunbartonshire's Community Warden Scheme

Client: West Dunbartonshire Council

Blake Stevenson Ltd was commissioned to evaluate West Dunbartonshire Council's Community Warden Scheme. Our methods included: desk-based research, interviews with stakeholders, observational work and focus groups with Wardens and a community engagement exercise. The evaluation also included a comprehensive value for money assessment. Our report set out a series of practical recommendations as to how the scheme could increase its impact on the lives of people affected by anti-social behaviour and on poor quality environments.

Evaluation of Outside In Pilot in Scotland

Client: The Foyer Federation in Scotland in partnership with three frontline agencies - the Aberdeen Foyer, Edinburgh Cyrenians and Glasgow Simon Community

The Foyer Federation in Scotland in partnership with three frontline agencies - the Aberdeen Foyer, Edinburgh Cyrenians and Glasgow Simon Community – has commissioned Blake Stevenson Ltd to undertake a three-year evaluation of an innovative pilot project called Outside In which aims to re-engage homeless people in learning and move them towards education, training and employment.

We have two key roles:

- to build capacity within the host organisations to support them to collect their own data;
- to undertake regular data reviews and report and disseminate findings.

Evaluation of the Better Neighbourhood Service Fund in Renfrewshire

Client: Renfrewshire Council

We evaluated the Better Neighbourhood Services Funded Pathfinder project for Renfrewshire Council. Entitled 'Learning Neighbourhoods', the Pathfinder approach encourages lifelong learning in four of the most deprived areas of Renfrewshire. Activities included family literacy support involving a 'parents as educators' scheme, work in community schools to reduce exclusions, a learning and leisure activities for young people, and an innovative digital inclusion strand involving the installation and associated training of 300 computers in people's homes. Our evaluation assessed the impact of the Pathfinder, its value for money and sustainability.

Other examples include:

Contract	Client
Evaluation of the Buddy Project	Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Scotland
Evaluation of Fife Learning Information Services	Scottish Enterprise Fife
Evaluation of over 100 Social Inclusion Partnership Funded Projects	North Glasgow Partnership, Greater Easterhouse Partnership, Greater Pollok Partnership and North Lanarkshire Partnership
Final Evaluation of the Glasgow BNSF Pathfinder	Glasgow City Council
Interim Evaluation of the Working for Families Fund	West Lothian Council
Evaluation and Assessment of Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnerships in Scotland	Scottish Executive
Evaluation of the Xplore Social Inclusion Partnership in Dundee	Xplore and Communities Scotland
Evaluation of Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance (GARA) Social Inclusion Partnership	Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance and Communities Scotland
Evaluation of Moray Youthstart Social Inclusion Partnership	Moray Youth Start and Communities Scotland

Contract	Client
Evaluation of the South Edinburgh Social Inclusion Partnership	City of Edinburgh Council and Communities Scotland
Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Process	Levern Valley Partnership
Interim Evaluation of Working for Families	The City of Edinburgh Council
Evaluation of the Young People's Health Advisory Group	NHS Education for Scotland and Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People
Evaluation of the Greater Easterhouse Money Advice Project	Scottish Executive
Assessment of Performance	Scottish Executive
Monitoring Reports and Evaluation of Action Plans for New Futures	
Successor Funding	
Evaluations of three Community Safety Wardens Initiatives	Dundee City Council, Renfrewshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council
Evaluation of Outside In Pilot in Scotland	The Foyer Federation, Aberdeen Foyer, Edinburgh Cyrenians and Glasgow Simon Community
Evaluation of HealthyLiving	NHS Health Scotland
Neighbourhood Shops Project	
Evaluation of the Better Neighbourhood Service Fund	Renfrewshire Council
'Learning Neighbourhoods'	

Relevant UHI PolicyWeb evaluation experience includes:

External evaluation – HUG - Work with Young People and Mental Health

External evaluation – Young Carers – Skye and Lochalsh Young Carers Project

External Evaluation – Connecting Communities, Highland Community Care Forum

External evaluation – HUG Self Harm Seminars, Highland Community Care Forum Funding originates from Scottish Government)

External evaluation – HUG Communication Project, Highland Community Care Forum (Funding originates from Scottish Government)

Evaluating the role of drama in changing young peoples' attitudes to mental health, Highland Community Care Forum

Evaluation of Western Isles Skye and Locals LEADER II (WIE)

Research and Evaluation for Highland Social Inclusion Partnership in relation to rural young people. Collaboration with University of Stirling

Ex post Evaluation of the EU LEADER 1 Programme (CEMAC/EC)

Evaluation of the Highlands and Islands Telecommunications Initiative (HIE)

Three year evaluation of the Teleservice Centres Pilot Project in the Highlands and Islands

Appendix 5

Personal information has been redacted

Personal information has been redacted

Appendix 6

Quality Control, Professional Standards, and Research Ethics (Q10)

Quality Control Measures

Quality matters have an extremely high priority within Blake Stevenson. All members of staff have responsibility for the quality of service provision within a set quality framework. This is available to clients on request.

We have client satisfaction measures whereby, in addition to ongoing consultation with clients to ensure that they find the quality of our work acceptable, we always review with clients at the end of a piece of work their level of satisfaction with our work for them.

Continuous quality improvement at Blake Stevenson is achieved through a process of internal staff debriefing and feedback at the end of each contract, allied to feedback from clients. The outcomes from these exercises are fed into ongoing systems and performance improvement and these improvements are then applied across all contracts.

Once a draft final report has been commented on and any amendments made, the final version is proof read either internally or by a professional, external proof reader.

Professional Standards

Our professional standards are assured by membership of relevant professional bodies including chartered membership of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, (CIPD), the Institute of Directors (IOD), the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), SERA (Scottish Education Research Association) and Fellowship of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA).

We are members of the Equal Opportunities Commission Equality Network, a network of employers committed to equal opportunities practice.

We carry full professional indemnity insurance and we are registered under the Data Protection Act (1984). We abide by the guidelines of the UK Evaluation Society (UKES).

All our staff have been Disclosure Scotland checked.

All our staff are trained in Plain English

Research Ethics

Blake Stevenson Ltd has a strong commitment to ethical research. As detailed below we abide by various codes of ethics relevant to our profession.

In addition we strive to ensure that the research process is open and transparent to all participants and that our consultants are available to answer any follow up questions or address any issues raised by the research with those who have participated.

As a company, we have a firm commitment to 'action research' which involves an open research process in which emerging findings are fed back to the steering group.

Blake Stevenson Ltd is a member of the Social Research Association (SRA) and abides by the published code of ethics.

We abide by the ethical standards and code of practice of SABRE, the Scottish Association of Black Researchers.

Blake Stevenson abide by the following guidelines published by the Market Research Society:

- Qualitative Research Guidelines
- Quantitative Research Guidelines
- The Responsibilities of Interviewers
- Guidelines for working among Children and Young People

All the above guidelines and codes of ethics cover issues of enabling research participation, informed consent, maintaining confidentiality and protecting the interests of research participants.

Blake Stevenson has specific guidelines for its field researchers on health and safety matters. These can be made available to the client on request.

Blake Stevenson researchers have been ethically approved for research purposes by a number of NHS Boards.

Appendix 7

Blake Stevenson Contract Management Procedure (Q10)

Blake Stevenson Ltd was established in its present structure to allow for the management of a number of projects simultaneously and to take account of fluctuations in work flow.

We work with a small core of 14 permanent full-time consultancy staff, each of whom works on a limited number of projects at any one time, and we have a large group of associate staff, each of whom has specific professional expertise, who work on a contract by contract basis. These associate consultants are managed by a core member of staff. This structure enables us to respond flexibly to fluctuations in contracts and to bring in extra expertise as and when needed.

The overall direction and management of the company is the responsibility of the three Directors, with input from staff through staff meetings. Within that structure, we operate a management and work style which is based on trust and mutual respect. We encourage individuals to work in a self-directed and responsible way within a team structure.

All projects are undertaken on a team basis with a team leader. Once a work-plan is agreed and roles allocated individuals are expected to take forward the agreed actions within that project. Team members support each other where necessary to ensure that all the agreed tasks are completed. Regular staff meetings are held where projects are discussed and teams negotiated allowing deadlines to be reviewed and resources located during busy periods.

Throughout the course of individual projects we undertake regular and formally scheduled progress meetings and reports, to a timetable to be agreed, and we envisage being in regular close contact with the client at all Stages of the work across all service areas, through telephone, face to face, and written communication.

The Project Manager is usually the liaison for the overall operation of the project. One of our consultants who specialises in communications will be the contact for day to day operational matters.

It is in the nature of our work that we anticipate and resolve problems so that the client, whilst kept fully informed of developments, is not troubled unnecessarily by areas of difficulty. However, we are aware that there are occasions when matters arise which we cannot solve and should it arise that the Project Manager is unable to resolve a particular problem she will contact the person for such an eventuality and discuss with him or her how to address the matter in hand.

Appendix 8

Risk Assessment and Contingency Planning (Q10)

We have quality control procedures in place within Blake Stevenson to anticipate and, we hope, avert risk situations.

We have 14 permanent consultancy staff and a range of associate staff. We have general contingency arrangements to cover for staff in the case of staff illness or other absence so that the contract will be completed.

We have systematic data storage backup procedures and processes. For example, project data storage will not be reliant on a standalone staff computer, but is backed up on a shared server with appropriate security mechanisms. All systems are backed up on a daily basis.

Should an unforeseen event occur which is out with our control, we will discuss this with the client and agree a recovery plan with them.

Blake Stevenson Ltd has been in existence for almost fifteen years. In the history of the company we have never failed to complete a contract, nor has any client ever withheld payment to us.

Appendix 9

Equal Opportunities

General

The Company is committed to the practice and promotion of equal opportunity in the employment of its employees and the provision of its services. Employment in this context refers to recruitment, selection, training and promotion of employee (see separate section).

The Company will treat all employees and clients/external contacts fairly and considerately and will not discriminate, either directly (where a person is treated less favourably) or indirectly (where a requirement or condition which cannot be justified is applied equally to all groups but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group), against such individuals on the grounds of:

- Gender;
- Age;
- Race;
- Colour;
- Nationality;
- Ethnic origin;
- Religion or belief;
- Disability;
- Sexual orientation;
- Being or not being a member of a trade union.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 set out the legal requirements for employers and the Company complies with these requirements.

The provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 not only make it unlawful to discriminate against disabled individuals without justifiable reason but also require employers to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace or working arrangements. The Company complies with these requirements.

The Equal Opportunities policy will be monitored periodically by the Company to judge its effectiveness and if changes are required then the Company will implement them. The Director of Human Resources is ultimately responsible for the operation of the policy.

Positive Action

The Company appreciates the important distinction between positive action and positive discrimination.

Positive action is where action is taken to assist members of a particular group to gain employment or promotion, for example, by providing training.

Positive discrimination is where members of a particular group are given preference over others for no other reason than their belonging to that group. Both the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 do not permit positive discrimination.

However, under both Acts if at any time in the previous 12 months there were no persons of a particular gender or racial group doing particular work within the Company then it is lawful for the Company to provide access to training or to encourage and help members of the under-represented group to undertake such work.

Appendix 10

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Blake Stevenson Limited

Our statement of general policy is:

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities;
- to consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety;
- to provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- to ensure safe handling and use of substances;
- to provide information, instruction and supervision for employees;
- to ensure all employees are competent to carry out their tasks and to give them adequate training;
- to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health;
- to maintain safe and healthy working conditions; and
- to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

Signed (Employer):

Date:

Review date:

Responsibilities

- Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of the Directors of Blake Stevenson Limited.
- Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Resources Manager.
- To ensure health and safety standards are maintained/improved the following people have responsibility in the following areas:
 - First Aid – Lindsay Wilson.
- All employees are required to:
 - co-operate with the Directors and Resources Manager on health and safety matters;
 - not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety;
 - take reasonable care of their own health and safety; and
 - report all health and safety concerns to the Resources Manager.

Health and safety risks arising from our work activities

- Risk assessments will be undertaken by the Resources Manager.
- The findings of the risk assessments will be reported to the Directors.
- Action required to remove/control risks will be approved by the Directors.
- The Resources Manager will be responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented.
- The Directors will check that the implemented actions have removed/reduced the risks.
- Assessments will be reviewed every six months or when work activity changes, whichever is soonest.

Consultation with employees

- Consultation with employees is provided by individual direct contact every six months.

Safe plant and equipment

- The Resources Manager will be responsible for identifying all plant/equipment needing maintenance.
- The Resources Manager will be responsible for ensuring effective maintenance procedures are drawn up.
- The Directors will be responsible for ensuring that all identified maintenance is implemented.
- Any problems found with plant/equipment should be reported to the Resources Manager.
- The Resources Manager will check that new plant and equipment meets health and safety standards before it is purchased.

Safe handling and use of substances

- The Resources Manager will be responsible for identifying all substances which need a COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessment.
- The Resources Manager will be responsible for undertaking COSHH assessments.
- The Directors will be responsible for ensuring that all actions identified in the assessments are implemented.
- The Resources Manager will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant employees are informed about the COSHH assessments.
- The Resources Manager will check that new substances can be used safely before they are purchased.
- Assessments will be reviewed every six months or whenever work activity changes, whichever is soonest.

Information, instruction and supervision

- The Health and Safety Law poster is displayed in the Admin Office.

- Health and safety advice is available from the Resources Manager.
- Supervision of young workers will be arranged/undertaken/monitored by the Resources Manager.
- The Resources Manager is responsible for ensuring that our employees, working at locations under the control of other employers, are given relevant health and safety information.

Competency for tasks and training

- Health and safety induction training will be provided for all employees by the Resources Manager.
- Job specific health and safety training will be provided by the Resources Manager.
- No specific jobs requiring special health and safety training have been identified.
- Health and safety training records are kept by the Resources Manager.
- Health and safety training will be identified, arranged and monitored by the Resources Manager.

Accidents, first aid and work-related ill health

- No jobs have been identified which necessitate health surveillance.
- If this changes then health surveillance will be arranged by the Resources Manager, who will keep appropriate records.
- The First Aid box is kept on the Kitchen window.
- The appointed First Aiders are Lindsay Wilson and Dorothy Ross.
- There is a First Aid box in the boot of the pool car.
- There are two First Aid posters (in the Kitchen and Upstairs Hall) and two First Aid Manuals in the Admin Office.
- All accidents and cases of work-related ill health must be recorded in the Accident Book.
- The Accident Book is kept in the First Aid box.

- The Resources Manager is responsible for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority.

Monitoring

- To check our working conditions, and ensure our safe working practices are being followed, we will review them every six months.
- The Resources Manager is responsible for investigating accidents.
- The Resources Manager is responsible for investigating work-related causes of sickness absences.
- The Resources Manager is responsible for acting on investigation findings to prevent a recurrence.

Emergency procedures – fire and evacuation

- The Resources Manager is responsible for ensuring the Fire Risk assessment is undertaken and implemented.
- Escape routes are checked by the Resources Manager every Monday morning.
- Fire extinguishers are maintained and checked by United Fire Alarms every six months.
- Emergency lighting systems are maintained and checked by United Fire Alarms every six months.
- The fire alarm is tested by Suzanne Perry (Administrative Assistant) every Monday.
- Emergency evacuation is tested every six months.

Appendix 11

Professional Indemnity



Blake Stevenson Ltd
1 Melville Park
Edinburgh
EH28 8PJ

Broker Ref: BLAK03PI01

5th December 2006

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sirs,

Professional Indemnity Insurance – Policy Number HUPI6 1175381

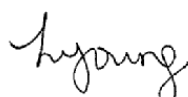
We confirm that we have arranged Insurance for the above named Client, as detailed below:-

Professional Indemnity

Insurers:	Hiscox
Policy No:	HUPI6 1175381
Renewal Date:	11 th February 2007
Limit Of Indemnity:	£500,000 each and every claim

We confirm that the above Insurances are subject to terms, conditions and exceptions of the Insurers' standard policy forms, which include, inter alia, a Principals Clause.

Yours sincerely



Heidi Young – Corporate Team 2
Towergate Risk Services Milton Keynes
Direct Dial: 01908 258382 Email: heidi.young@towergate.co.uk

Towergate Risk Solutions Milton Keynes

Chesterton House, 352 Avebury Boulevard, Central Milton Keynes MK9 2JH

Tel: 0870 905 0668 Fax: 0870 905 0669 www.towergaterisksolutions.co.uk

Towergate Risk Solutions and Towergate Risk Solutions Milton Keynes are trading names of Towergate Underwriting Group Limited

Registered in England No: 4043759 Registered Address: Towergate House, 2 County Gate, Stacey's Street, Maidstone Kent ME14 1ST

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority



Appendix 12

Terms and Conditions

VALIDITY

The attached document will remain valid for a period of two months from the date of its submission.

AGREEMENT

Any submission made by Blake Stevenson shall not constitute a legally binding contract until acceptance has been given by both parties.

STAFF

If any of the staff named within the document are unable to work on the contract, Blake Stevenson Ltd will notify the client before any substitution takes place. Substitution of staff will not normally take place except where Blake Stevenson Ltd considers it to be unavoidable.

COPYRIGHT

Material produced in any proposal to a client shall be the copyright of Blake Stevenson Ltd and shall not be disclosed to any third party without the prior approval of Blake Stevenson Ltd. Material produced by Blake Stevenson Ltd and its staff and agents, sub-contractors and associates during the course of the work and submitted to the client will become the property of the client, once fully paid for, and clients may disclose the material produced for it to third parties without hindrance by Blake Stevenson Ltd. Such disclosure should not however be made without first informing Blake Stevenson Ltd. No rights of sole use of the techniques employed or of the sources contacted in carrying out the work will pass to the client.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All documents and information received by Blake Stevenson Ltd and its staff and agents, sub-contractors and associates during or in connection with the performance of its work shall be held in confidence. Such documents and information shall not be disclosed by Blake Stevenson Ltd, its staff or agents to any other person without the permission of the client unless a duty to disclose to that person is imposed under statute or by court order.

ASSIGNMENT

Blake Stevenson Ltd will not without the consent in writing of the client, sublet, assign or transfer the contract or any part, share or interest in it.

LIABILITY

All information, analysis and recommendations made for clients by Blake Stevenson Ltd and its staff and agents, sub-contractors and associates are made in good faith and represent Blake Stevenson's best professional judgement on the basis of the information available to it during the course of the assignment. However, since the achievement of recommendations, targets and objectives depend to an extent on factors outside Blake Stevenson's control, no statement made by Blake Stevenson Ltd may be deemed in any circumstances to be a representation, undertaking or warranty, and Blake Stevenson Ltd cannot accept liability should such statements prove inaccurate or based on incorrect premises.

When an employee of Blake Stevenson Ltd and its staff and agents, sub-contractors and associates is required to act executively on behalf of a client, Blake Stevenson cannot accept liability or responsibility for his or her acts or omissions. The client will in such circumstances indemnify Blake Stevenson against all costs, claims, charges and expenses for which Blake Stevenson may become liable by reasons of the facts or omissions of the employee during this period.

Blake Stevenson will not be responsible for any loss or delay in fulfilling an assignment incurred as a result of any factor beyond the control of the company.

VARIATION

During the course of an assignment no variation to the terms of reference will be acted upon unless they are communicated in writing and are accepted by Blake Stevenson. Employees have no authority to negotiate any variations without the written consent of a director of the company.

DISPUTES

In the event of there being any dispute between a client and Blake Stevenson arising out of a contract, an independent arbitrator of standing will be chosen by agreement and his/her decision will be final. If the parties cannot agree on an arbitrator, then one shall be appointed in accordance with the provision of the Arbitrations Act, 1950.

INVOICES AND PAYMENT

Unless agreed otherwise, 40% of the total agreed payment will be payable upon commencement, 30% upon the completion of field work (or at some other agreed interim stage), and 30% upon delivery of the final report. Payment is due within 30 days of the submission of invoices.

REPORTS

Unless agreed otherwise three copies of the report will be submitted to the client.

SUB-CONTRACTOR

Where Blake Stevenson is carrying out work as a subcontractor, (that is, contracted to another organisation which, in turn, is contracted to a client), the terms and conditions described above shall still apply with the main contractor organisation being the client. In these circumstances, however, the sections headed Copyright and Confidentiality shall be varied and the conditions described in the following paragraph shall apply in addition thereto.

Where any material produced by Blake Stevenson is submitted to a main contractor rather than directly to a client, the main contractor shall:

- ♦ only have licence to use the material prepared by Blake Stevenson for the purposes connected with the preparation of its reports, etc., for its client. It shall have no licence to use the material prepared by Blake Stevenson for any other purpose except with the proper written approval of Blake Stevenson;
- ♦ clearly designate those parts of any material presented to its clients which have been prepared by Blake Stevenson as being so prepared;
- ♦ not modify the material prepared by Blake Stevenson Ltd, except with the prior consent of Blake Stevenson.