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Appendix 1 – Study Consultees

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by the BE Group, on behalf of the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership (LSEP) and Leicestershire County Council.
- 1.2 In March 2004 the BE Group was commissioned to provide advice to the client partners regarding the future deployment of resources to 'Access Centre' development within Leicestershire's seven district council areas. In support of this aim the study has addressed three key objectives:
- To map the current provision of both Access Centres and County Council/District Council/Voluntary Sector service access points, including the locations and range of services offered and to map this in a GIS database.
 - To identify gaps in current provision, potential sites for investment and to determine whether any of the service access points have the potential for expansion to an Access Centre function.
 - To provide prioritised recommendations regarding future investment of resources by the LSEP and County Council in Access Centre provision, and also identify where other partners might fill gaps in the provision.

Background

- 1.3 Emda, as the region's development agency, has embraced the concept of 'Access Centres' as being potential contributors to sustainable communities and economic development.
- 1.4 In their 'Urban Action Plan for the East Midlands' (April 2001), Emda acknowledge the lack of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and IT amongst adults and the need to provide a comprehensive network of 'Access Centres' working with local authorities, the learning community and local partnerships.
- 1.5 As the sub-regional strategic partnership for Leicester and Leicestershire, LSEP's economic strategy reflects both the top-down regional priorities and bottom-up key local priorities for the area. Consequently the Access Centre programme is included

in the LSEP's approved strategy as a key component of the Sustainable Communities theme – equally appropriate to urban and rural communities.

- 1.6 As a basis for this study, the BE Group and client representatives have taken Emda's definition of the core and additional services to be provided by Access Centres. These are reproduced in Table 1.

Table 1 – Access Centre Definition, Emda

Core Services	Additional Services
▪ Numeracy / Literacy Training	▪ Credit Unions
▪ Access to IT Training	▪ Welfare/Benefits Advice
▪ Access to Childcare Facilities	▪ Health Education
▪ Job / Career Guidance	▪ Capacity Building for Volunteers
▪ Structured outreach provision-including FE	▪ Job Vacancy information
▪ Structured progress routes (basic/foundation level courses)	▪ Legal Advice
▪ Virtual access for remote areas	▪ Signposting to other services

- 1.7 However, it is recognised that the term 'Access Centre' may mean different things to different people. Consequently, there may already be, within the County, projects which have originated from local initiatives which have synergy with the Access Centre concept, or which could be expanded to fulfil such a function.
- 1.8 In this respect, the County Council's established network of Service Shops (some in partnership with District Councils) was highlighted for consideration. The eight Service Shops may have the potential to be expanded to Access Centre status and function – or may already fulfil such a role.
- 1.9 The study research has also had regard to the fact that some of the district authorities are addressing the concept of one-stop-shops for advice and support – or are promoting existing facilities within their areas.

Study Methodology

- 1.10 The Study has involved a mix of desk and primary research, covering three stages of work. Each stage of work has included a number of tasks, some of which have been interrelated, rather than being independent pieces of work.

1.11 The three stages are summarised as follows:

- **Stage One ~ Assembly**

Project start up meeting with the client representatives to agree the programme; key contacts data; identify known relevant background documents; agree the fields required for the Microsoft Access and GIS databases.

Collation and review of appropriate background documents, including material published on related web sites.

- **Stage Two ~ Fieldwork**

Consultation programme, through telephone contacts and face-to-face meetings with County Council and District Councils' officers, to gather information on existing and/or emerging provision of facilities to determine their suitability, or otherwise, as potential Access Centres.

A similar consultation programme conducted amongst sub-regional, regional and national agencies and organisations to discuss their existing or potential engagement in Access Centre provision within Leicestershire.

In conjunction with the consultation programme, inspections of a number of the facilities.

- **Stage Three ~ Report Production**

Utilising GIS software, the spatial distribution of current 'Access Centres', 'One-Stop-Shops' and service access points to be mapped.

The production of a fully searchable Access database, detailing all identified facilities, their locations, contact details and services provided.

Production of a report containing the study findings and recommendations on the scale and priorities for future resource investment.

1.12 As the study progressed it became apparent that the numbers of existing or emerging facilities were substantially greater than anticipated by the client representatives. The BE Group therefore found it necessary to adjust the available resources to devote more time to research into these facilities, and less to the planned investigation of precedent schemes outside Leicestershire, originally proposed as part of the study. This also impacted on the study timescale, with the client representatives approving an extension to late July.

Report Content

1.13 The remaining chapters of this report provide the following:

- Chapter 2: details of the consultations with the County Council and its various departmental or funding led services provision.
- Chapter 3: contains commentary on the LSEP's received Expressions of Interest for funding support to deliver Access Centre facilities.
- Chapter 4: reports on discussions and findings relating to the seven district authorities.
- Chapter 5: sets out the feedback and opportunities arising from consultations with the area's Further Education providers.
- Chapter 6: relates to the dialogue held with the Primary Care Trusts operating within the County.
- Chapter 7: incorporates the outcome of discussions and contact with other appropriate service delivery organisations, such as Business Link, Learndirect, and Leicestershire Rural Partnership.
- Chapter 8: contains the report's conclusions.
- Chapter 9: details the recommendations.

1.14 The GIS mapping and Access database are provided separately in electronic format.

2.0 LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

County Council Area Socio-Economic Summary

- 2.1 Leicestershire's population is very diverse, ethnically, economically and educationally. Overall it is declining in numbers, and ageing. Employment is generally high, but wage levels are below the national average, suggesting a bias towards low skilled employment. Unemployment rates across the seven districts vary between 1.0% (Melton) and 2.1% (Oadby & Wigston). The adult population is well qualified at levels 3 and above, but there are still substantial numbers of people lacking any qualifications. The low level of attainment amongst under 16's translates to low achievement on entry post compulsory education and training.
- 2.2 The County Council has put in place a programme of provision of local access to County Council Services. In some instances, this is provided in conjunction with district council services. The provision is made through a series of Service Shops and Help Points.
- 2.3 There are ten Service Shops distributed across the seven districts. Service Shops are defined as facilities where the majority of enquiries can be resolved without referral, by trained front desk personnel, for most public services. They provide high levels of ICT support. Service Shop locations are seen as all the County's market towns and main rural centres, or commercial locations visited by the public in large numbers.
- 2.4 Through the County Library facilities, there are twenty Help Points. These are facilities where the majority of simple enquiries for advice and information can be resolved without referral. This includes mobile services, outreach workers, surgeries or expert advice sessions delivered by public/private service providers. To date Help Points have been directed at centres with in excess of 5,000 population.
- 2.5 The County Council has completed analysis of the current provision against the County's population centres, as a basis for the identification of settlements where provision should be enhanced. The following principles, geared to settlement size bands, have influenced conclusions regarding the new provision investment programme:

- The minimum service level for settlements in excess of 10,000 population should be a Service Shop – and ideally one that delivers jointly County and District Council services.
- The minimum service level for settlements in the 3,000 – 10,000 population size should be a Help Point, with delivery being promoted via local libraries.

2.6 As a consequence, the County Council’s analysis has concluded that the five locations of Burbage, Shepshed, Oadby, Syston and Birstall should have Service Shops, with a further fifteen smaller settlements earmarked for Help Points. The relative proximity of Syston and Birstall (and Thurmaston) is seen as providing an option for piloting a combined Service Shop for the two communities. Table 2 indicates the proposed Service Shops and Help Points by district and settlement locations. None are proposed for Melton Borough.

Table 2 – Proposed Service Shops/Help Points (Leicestershire County Council)

District	Service Shop	Help Point
Blaby		Narborough (2)
		Leicester Forest East (3)
		Glen Parva (4)
		Enderby (5)
		Whetstone (6)
		Kirby Muxloe (7)
		Stoney Stanton (10)
		Cosby (11)
Charnwood	Shepshed (2)	East Goscote (15)
	Syston (4)	
	Birstall (5)	
Harborough		Kibworth Beauchamp (8)
Hinckley & Bosworth	Burbage (1)	Ratby (9)
		Desford (13)
		Newbold Verdon (14)
North West Leicestershire		Kegworth (12)
Oadby & Wigston	Oadby (3)	South Wigston (1)

NB: Numbers in brackets indicate priority order according to population size without addition of an access to services weighting.

- 2.7 The analysis has relevance to the County's BABS (Better Access to Better Services Initiative) programme. The programme covers all the Service Shops, which are seen as separate from Access Centres. Unfortunately, no data exists on customer service usage. Whilst a branding review has been completed, there is still work to be done in considering the locations, appearance and service level agreements with district authorities.
- 2.8 Of relevance to this Access Centre study is that part of the Service Shop purpose is a business service function. This is, we understand, presumed to be a delivery with JobCentre Plus – although as yet there have been no relevant discussions.
- 2.9 Nevertheless, it is apparent Service Shops represent joint working between the County and district local authorities, whilst Access Centres touch the wider community services' activities.
- 2.10 Consultations amongst a number of County Council departmental representatives have identified other initiatives linked to new or enhanced facilities for service provision.

County Council Property Services

- 2.11 Following a service driven asset review over the last three years, an area-based review is now to be undertaken. This will initially address Charnwood, Melton, Oadby and Wigston. Current projects of direct or indirect relevance to the Access Centre study are:

Melton

- 2.12 The County has its Registrars, Social Services and Highways Offices co-located, with Probation Services in another building in Melton. Melton Borough Council are keen to see the County's services linked with its Service Shop in the borough council offices. The options for the County Council are to incorporate some functions within the existing borough council offices; a new build extension to those offices; a separate consolidated County Council service complex on adjoining borough council owned land.
- 2.13 This latter option could also facilitate space for the Primary Care Trust – and could consider other services, such as an Access Centre – but it would need an early

decision to facilitate the space planning. However the out of town centre location mitigates against its attraction as an Access Centre opportunity.

Lutterworth

- 2.14 Whilst Lutterworth Grammar School is taking an adjacent building to Wycliffe House (the community and voluntary sectors' one stop shop) for a community ICT facility (to be operated by Lutterworth Grammar School), consideration is also being given to a new library, joint service shop, Post Office and IT suites. There is the potential to accommodate an Access Centre facility within Lutterworth town centre.

Barwell

- 2.15 The County Council plans to re-invest £1.7 million from a recent property sale, in Barwell. A community consultation programme has been carried out via a questionnaire survey to each household regarding the need for a community resource centre. This identified demand for youth activities; a youth meeting place and access to the police. Service providers were consulted and interest in co-located facilities was confirmed by the Library Service; Connexions; Youth & Community Education; PCT; VISTA; Police and William Bradford Community College.
- 2.16 As yet no suitable location has been found for the centre although three possibilities are under consideration.

Citizens Advice Bureaus

- 2.17 The County's Community Services are responsible for CAB provision. Each district, with the exception of Oadby & Wigston, has County Council supported provision. Oadby & Wigston is excluded as the CAB function is delivered within the borough by 'Helping Hands', which is not a National Association of Citizens Advice Bureau accredited organisation. Such accreditation is a pre-requisite for County Council support.
- 2.18 The Market Harborough CAB was, at the time of our research, relocating from inadequate premises in St Mary's' Road to a modern office building on the High Street. Surplus upper floor space in the new building will be sub-let, probably to a commercial organisation, although there may be longer-term scope to become a multi-agency facility.

- 2.19 Hinckley & Bosworth CAB shares the Registrars office at Mount Road. The CAB wish to relocate to alternative space in Hinckley. In view of the function relevance to Access Centre services, connection needs to be made between this current CAB requirement and the Access Centre opportunities identified in Hinckley – and commented upon later in this report.
- 2.20 From our consultations it is understood that the CAB service does not currently engage with the county's BABS (Better Access to Better Services Initiative) programme, which is piloting future investment around enhancement of service shops and libraries.

Library Service

- 2.21 As mentioned above the County's libraries are being considered as a solution to delivering enhanced multi-agency facilities, Fleckney Library, in Harborough, is the first associated with the BABS programme.
- 2.22 Opened in 2003, it includes ICT, Health, Police, District Council Services representation and a library, all located within a former school building.
- 2.23 Within the next two years there will be a comprehensive review of the mobile library service. At present the basis of the service with limited stoppage time at locations prevents co-located service operations. It would seem logical, when examining the future structure of the mobile library service, to consider whether there is scope, or opportunity, to incorporate Access Centre functions.

Lifelong Learning, Youth & Community Education

- 2.24 Historically the County Council has had over fifty community designated schools providing additional services. As a result there are a number of community colleges and primary schools that have received extra funds and staffing to provide Access Centre elements, such as adult education; numeracy; literacy; ICT (some are Learndirect centres); childcare and progression routes. In reality the primary schools are providing minimal levels of services. There is desire to develop new services, for example by connecting with PCTs, but a reducing Community Plus budget is likely to impact on this progress – and possibly even on the retention of existing functions.

- 2.25 The DfES are providing funds to roll out an 'Extended Schools' programme in Leicestershire. Already Hinckley & Bosworth is looking to promote Groby Community College as an exemplar for developing community access to schools facilities. The North West Leicestershire Community Plan has, as one objective, support for King Edward VII School, Coalville as an Extended School. The Charnwood Community Cohesion Pathfinder Group is also looking at Extended Schools; developing social capacity and linking this to extended schools.
- 2.26 In this respect there is a keen desire to see the Extended Schools programme playing a part in Access Centre provision in at least one location within Leicestershire.

Regeneration Unit

- 2.27 The County Council's Regeneration Unit is actively involved in assisting the survival of Donisthorpe Miners Welfare – one of Emda's original Access Centre pilots. Following financial problems emanating from previous management operations, the County is assisting with rebuilding of the deliverable functions and a new advisory management group. However there remains an issue of revenue funding, which threatens the Centre's sustainability.

3.0 LEICESTER SHIRE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Economic Regeneration Strategy

3.1 The LSEP has produced the Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Regeneration Strategy for the period 2003-2012. We note the Strategy contains under the theme of 'Sustainable Communities' a number of relevant references to the context of this study.

3.2 The strategy states that the area will develop more sustainable, equitable and socially inclusive communities and that the focus of this will include:

- *'Working with Emda and other agencies in promoting local access centres which can deliver a mix of services to communities.'*
- *'Tackling social inclusion in our more deprived geographical communities and communities of interest by providing practical support for local economic renewal which helps to raise household incomes, offers new education and job opportunities and encourages greater local pride and involvement in community activities.'*
- *'build the capability of communities to help them become more sustainable by working closely with the voluntary and community sectors.'*

3.3 The regional outputs declared make reference to a number of additional community facilities, including Access Centres.

Expressions of Interest for Funding Support

3.4 As background information and context for this study, the LSEP provided copies of eight expressions of interest they have received for funding support. These were perceived to be proposals pertinent to Access Centre delivery or provision within the County. Table 3 summarises these eight proposals.

Table 3 – Project Expressions of Interest, LSEP Received

Applicant	Project Title	Outline Description
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	New Beginnings	Foyer project, South Wigston to link homelessness and employment. To include IT training suite and commercial training kitchen.
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	Lost and Found Creative Spaces	Redevelopment of buildings within Druid Quarter, Hinckley for cultural and creative industries use, including incubator space.
Bagworth Community Centre Project Management Group	Bagworth Community Centre	Develop new, purpose-built community centre facility adjacent to the existing Bagworth village hall. Proposal is to deliver an Access Centre, run by community company limited by guarantee.
Blaby CVS (on behalf of Blaby LSP)	Local Needs Analysis to Develop Blaby District Access Centre	Feasibility study for the development of an Access Centre in the Braunstone town area. Study to consider three site options within Braunstone Civic Centre or Thorpe Astley.
Leicestershire County Council	Access Centres Programme	Develop a series of Access Centres in Leicestershire, building upon current local needs assessments for Shepshed, Coalville, Thorpe Astley, Lutterworth and Barwell.
Charnwood Strategic Partnership (on behalf of Charnwood Community Cohesion Pathfinder project)	Loughborough Bangladeshi Community Training & Advice Project	To address key concerns about training provision and access to information and advice services for Bangladeshi community in Loughborough.
Ibstock Miners Welfare	Ibstock Miners Welfare Community Scheme	New purpose-built community centre facility as part of a wider regeneration programme for the existing Miners Welfare complex in Ibstock. New facility would deliver a new Community Access Centre.

- 3.5 Five of the eight proposals, if implemented, would deliver Access Centre (or partial Access Centre facilities). Another relates to commissioning a study to determine the feasibility of creating an Access Centre. Together these six represent a broad geographic spread of proposed provision within the County. They also represent a cross section of delivery routes and organisations.
- 3.6 Two of the eight projects have, it would appear, little reference to the Access Centre study. The Druid Quarter, Hinckley proposal relates to an industry sector specific initiative that is very much a property-based approach to establishing a cluster of creative industry businesses. It does not purport to be an Access Centre. The Loughborough Bangladeshi Community Training and Advice project is clearly about

addressing the needs of a specific ethnic minority. Furthermore it appears to be a revenue driven project targeting particular sections of the community. It is not a generic project that would create Access Centre facilities for the wider community.

- 3.7 None of the projects have progressed. The LSEP wished to consider the findings of this study before deciding which of the projects to progress.

4.0 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

4.1 In this chapter we provide commentary on the discussions and research findings associated with each of the seven district local authority areas.

Blaby

4.2 Blaby District Council is involved in existing or emerging provision of services at several locations.

- Joint Service shop with the County Council at Forge Corner, Blaby. This is a shop front in the village centre. Plans have been announced to base a new Blaby CAB there.
- Joint Service Shop designation to be achieved at County Hall, Glenfield, with a revamp of the existing Service Shop operated by the County Council.
- Braunstone Civic Centre is one of the initial BABSIs in the county. It is also viewed as one of the options for the provision of a Blaby District Access Centre. This reflects the existing range of service provision, available and expandable accommodation, and local need.

4.3 The District Council is concentrating upon getting its existing facilities and services provision right before they seek to draw in other partners. In particular they see a gap in provision in the southern part of the district. The small scale of individual settlements means that, subject to public consultation, services provision may be delivered in Hinckley as this is geographically closer and also seen as a more popular destination for the residents.

4.4 The District Council's Corporate Plan includes the objectives of implementing better ways of engaging with local communities and increasing, year on year, the number of services delivered through quality, cost effective partnerships. Critical activities include providing more accessible and convenient ways of dealing with the Council. This is picked up by the Local Strategic Partnership in its support for the creation of an Access Centre in the Braunstone/ Thorpe Astley area of Blaby and the bid for LSEP funds for a feasibility study, made by Blaby CVS, referred to in Chapter 3.

4.5 Some services providers consider there is a lack of provision in the Thorpe Astley area. It is a large housing area with virtually no community facilities. The PCT has

proposals for a health centre; Blaby CVS see potential to combine services with the PCT project.

Charnwood

- 4.6 The Borough Council's offices in Loughborough contain a Joint County Council and Borough Council Service Shop, the first to be established in the County. Discussions with the Council's Senior Change Manager have confirmed the Council is re-considering its approach to customer services and is moving towards a one-stop shop facility at its offices. Once this is established, it is intended to examine how such facilities could be rolled out into the outlying areas of the Borough. At present contact is delivered through the Help Points and Infolinx that have been installed in all but one of the libraries.
- 4.7 The Borough Council acknowledge that an Access Centre would be an asset in the southern part of the district, in Syston, Birstall or Thurmaston – because of the lack of existing services provision. The Council consider Syston to be the preference, as it serves the widest hinterland.
- 4.8 The perceived need for this part of Charnwood is also recognised by the County Council, who see Syston and Birstall as a priority investment location and the opportunity to pilot a Joint Service Shop for the two settlements (reference Chapter 2).

Harborough

- 4.9 Harborough District Council is a partner in two Joint Service Shops. One, opened in April 2004, is located at the Council offices in Market Harborough. Previously, in addition to Council service provision, Health Advice was offered. However the experience was that there was no interest in this service, because residents are not willing to go to Council offices for this kind of service. A Joint Service Shop is also provided in Lutterworth town centre.
- 4.10 The eastern part of the district has little or no service provision. A pilot "Your Guide" programme was initiated with the Post Office, but the latter has now withdrawn funding. This is of concern to the District Council as although there is a high level of affluence, some wards are amongst the most deprived in England, in terms of access to services.

- 4.11 South Leicestershire CVS operate two facilities in the District. As with the local authority, these are based in Market Harborough and Lutterworth. Both facilities delivered elements of an Access Centre. The more significant is Wycliffe House in Lutterworth, which is styled as a one stop shop for the community and voluntary sectors.
- 4.12 Wycliffe House has nine co-located organisations providing community and voluntary sector services, including the CVS; CAB; VillageLink minibus service, Carers Support; Community Computer Centre.

Hinckley & Bosworth

- 4.13 The Borough Council is currently involved in the following services provision.
- Hinckley Council Offices Joint Access Centre, which delivers County and Borough Council services as well as Pensions Service activity. It is also a County Council BABS pilot, a re-branded service shop with services extended to include free school meals; street lighting; potholes and abandoned vehicles.
 - A pilot programme of customer services outreach workers at three libraries (Markfield, Groby, Market Bosworth) and Sheepy Magna Church (together with the Post Office). These essentially are limited time opening opportunities, to provide input to Borough and County Council Services; basic form filling for Housing Benefits and the Pensions Service. The PCT is involved and is exploring links with other partners. Although two of the four centres have only been operational for three months the Borough Council is keen to ensure the sustainability of the programme is not impaired due to low levels of usage.
- 4.14 The Borough Council has also made an unsuccessful bid to the LSEP for funding support for an Access Centre to be located in Hinckley's Druid Quarter. The Council provided evidence of this bid, although it is not one of the Expressions of Interest identified in Chapter 3.
- 4.15 The proposal plans a new building as part of the regeneration of the Druid Quarter, which would fulfil the functions of an Assess Centre. The proposal emanates from

the Druid Quarter Regeneration Strategy and Masterplan jointly funded by the Borough Council and Emda. One of the key projects identified in the strategy is the development of a landmark mixed use building which could be used as an Access Centre.

- 4.16 Elsewhere within the Borough the Council, together with the Hinckley and Bosworth PCT and County Council Education Service, is looking to commission an Extended Schools research project. The primary purpose is to respond to the introduction, under the Education Act, of the extended schools concept which sees education establishments as the hub of the local community, offering a range of local services within eight broad themes. The themes match with Access Centres in terms of childcare; lifelong learning, health and social care, ICT; study support.
- 4.17 The intended pilot extended school within the Borough, is Groby Community College. The Borough Council believes this is an opportunity to deliver another Access Centre.

Melton

- 4.18 Melton Borough Council has consolidated a number of functions into a service shop at the Council offices in Melton. As yet this is solely delivering Borough Council services, although the County are committed to the inclusion of their services. In addition the Borough Council is exploring the introduction of other services such as Pensions Service; Post Office (in conjunction with the Council's Cashier's Office); CAB.
- 4.19 As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Borough and County Councils are exploring the development of vacant Borough Council land adjoining the Council offices for consolidated County Council functions.
- 4.20 Also within Melton, Melton CVS wish to develop a town centre based one stop shop comprising volunteering opportunities; community groups and health information. This is not seen as deliverable at their current location, which is shared with the Volunteer Bureau. However this project is still very much at the aspirational stage as funding resources are too limited. The CVS have considered participation in The Samworth Centre, a new community facility adjoining, and associated with, St Marys

Church. The physical location is considered to have some limitations, but the narrow faith link was seen as a deterrent because of the broader base of the CVS' patrons.

North West Leicestershire

- 4.21 North West Leicestershire District Council operate a Joint Service Shop at the Council offices in Coalville. Trialled extended opening hours proved uneconomic in terms of the level of usage, and have been abandoned.
- 4.22 Reflecting the injection of European and UK funding programmes that followed the demise of the area's mining industry, North West Leicestershire is considered to be well provided for in terms of community access to services and facilities. The SRB5 programme, Improving Access to Services in Rural Areas, covered North West Leicestershire. The programme included the development of a one stop shop network which introduced five facilities- Ibstock Community Shop; Measham Community Office; Moira Replan; Castle Donington Volunteer Bureau; Marleine Reid Centre, Coalville. Whilst all continue to exist their service provision varies. Ibstock Community Shop is cited as being closest to the Emda Access Centre concept, with its success reflecting the identification of local needs rather than provision made on an assumed need basis.
- 4.23 The CentrePoint project has evolved in Greenhill, in order to:
- Develop a more socially inclusive and sustainable community
 - Provide vocational training needs
 - Contribute to sustainable economic development within the District's most deprived ward.
- 4.24 Proposed for the brownfield site of the former Greenhill Community Church, the concept is akin to an Access Centre in that it would deliver:
- Venue for service providers to interact with residents
 - Allows greater voluntary capacity building
 - Crèche, with courses aimed at OFSTED childcare facilities
 - Educational venue (Stephenson College)
 - Service provider access points
 - Commercial kitchen as a food and drink industry training facility

- Relocated current community projects
- Café, crèche and catering to be social enterprises

4.25 The proposal is a response to the lack of both community facilities and a business base in Greenhill. The plans address the outcome of local needs analysis. As referred to in Chapter 3, the CentrePoint Trust has submitted an Expression of Interest to the LSEP for funding support to create this Access Centre.

Oadby & Wigston

4.26 The Borough Council is a funding partner of the Helping Hands charitable organisation which operates from “high street” locations in Oadby and South Wigston. Helping Hands has developed from an advice organisation into a multifunctional problem-solving centre, in addition to its advice and signposting functions. The logical next step would be to deliver on-site training but it is not considered that either of the current facilities have the capacity to accommodate this.

4.27 There is a proposal by Tesco to build a new supermarket in South Wigston. Tesco have negotiated a Section 106 Agreement which will deliver a significant financial contribution to the local community. The view of the Borough Council is that this could be used to help fund Helping Hands, either as capital towards alternative premises, or as an ongoing revenue resource (although the Council are committed to providing revenue support).

4.28 Also in South Wigston is the Foyer project, one of the Expressions of Interest received by the LSEP. A Borough Council owned site has been identified, plans prepared and Housing Association Support secured. South Leicestershire College is interested in the training suite usage and opportunities.

4.29 In addition South Wigston is also home to the Kings Centre, one of the initial Emda backed Access Centre pilots. This is largely an autonomous, church owned facility, with emphasis on youth facilities and community meeting space.

4.30 Guthlaxton Community College in Wigston operates a LIFT (Loads of Information For Teenagers) project, which is a drop in centre for young people. Its’ appeal is to disaffected youth and people not plugged into the education system.

- 4.31 The three communities of Oadby, Wigston, and South Wigston are regarded by their residents as distinct and separate, and there is a strong belief in using facilities within their own communities rather than travelling elsewhere.

5.0 FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

5.1 At the onset of the study we wrote to each of the six Further Education Colleges delivering services within Leicestershire, to establish whether there might be scope for involvement in existing or new centres, in the context of the Access Centres concept. In this Chapter we set out the appropriate findings of our consultations with these colleges.

South Leicestershire College

5.2 From the two main sites in Wigston and Market Harborough, SLC interact with both the public and businesses who use the college facilities for IT; online learning; advice and guidance on careers; training courses. At Market Harborough business advice is also provided. The College wants to increase its FE and basic ICT provision at Market Harborough. The college building, which is located on an out of town industrial estate, also lacks childcare provision and on-site catering provision something they wish to address. Neither site is labelled as an Access Centre.

5.3 SLC are presently considering a new build of their Wigston campus. This would have the scope to co-locate other services, for integrated provision for youth and adults.

5.4 Utilising Government Office East Midlands and Lottery Funds, under the UKOnline programme, the college has been implementing a Village Access Points (VAP) project. The concept is to distribute laptops/ personal computers into rural communities. To date seven of the planned twelve outlets have been secured. This is a separate initiative to Leicestershire Rural Partnership's PAP (Public Access Point) programme and the two organisations have mutually agreed to operate in separate geographic areas. Funding for the VAP programme exists for another year. The programme has encountered difficulties in that the concept is the loan of equipment and the rural Parish Councils are unwilling to take responsibility for insurance and looking after the equipment.

Stephenson College

5.5 The college runs courses in many outreach facilities in North West Leicestershire, including the following locations where delivery is in conjunction with other service providers:

- Moira Replan
- Ibstock Community Shop
- Appleby Magna Online
- Agar Nook Community Centre, Coalville
- Ascot House, Ashby
- Donisthorpe Miners Welfare

5.6 Of these Donisthorpe is, as already mentioned, an Emda funded Access Centre. Agar Nook is a Community Association run resource, which includes Youth Club, childcare, hire-out facilities, JobCentre Plus and Social Services Surgeries. The College has also been identified, as a potential user of the CentrePoint project at Greenhill, should this secure funding.

Loughborough College

5.7 The most relevant of the college's outreach facilities is Netsp@ce in Loughborough town centre. It is a UKOnline funded centre with cybercafé; ICT training; basic skills for adults and is an information point for the college's main campus. Basic skills provision is expanding, as the building now has SuperJANET datalinks.

5.8 Netsp@ce is open for longer hours than the main campus, especially Saturdays, and for this reason the College have considered moving other services there. It is considered there is opportunity to develop facilities for other service providers and their involvement could help provide revenue to enable funding of extra staff for longer opening hours. It has the potential to grow to an Access Centre.

North Warwickshire & Hinckley College

5.9 Although the college straddles two local authority and Regional Development Agency areas, it has a significant presence in Hinckley, pertinent to this study.

5.10 In addition to the main post 16 years old campus, the College operates the Hinckley Adult Centre. Although not styled as such, this is effectively an Access Centre. The Adult Centre comprises or delivers:

- Learndirect (IT; part time courses; full time access to Higher Education)
- PCT funded Expert Patients programme
- ESF financed projects for learning ambassadors programme and women returners

- Basic skills/ ESOL courses
- Voluntary Action Hinckley & Bosworth
- 30 place nursery
- Job and Career guidance
- Health education
- Community development foundation course

5.11 The strengths of the Centre are its adult environment and associated facilities and the career progression routes it delivers. The college is keen to add in, and could accommodate, business incubator space. This would clearly fit with the Access Centre concept and Emda's latest thinking. In Nuneaton the college runs a Learn and Earn project- the Learning and Information Technology Centre- in the heart of the town centre. It has links to Connexions; JobCentre Plus; CAB; CVS and is funded by the LSC's Information Advice and Guidance fund. This experience would be brought to the Hinckley site.

Brooksby Melton College

5.12 The College has a current initiative "Melton Partnership Works" that is applicable to the Access Centre concept. In partnership with Mencap, and Melton CVS, the college has researched and developed the concept of a state of the art facility to improve opportunities for people with learning difficulties and disabilities. The project is also endorsed by the County Social Services; Melton District Council; Melton Volunteer Bureau.

5.13 The proposal would be to deliver this facility in Melton, either as a partial rebuild of the College's Asfordby Road site in the town centre or at another location within the town. An application has been made to Welland SSP for funding to develop the business plan. The County Social Services have also offered funds towards this stage of work. With the College able to deliver the revenue funding this project is unusual in that the issue is about capital expenditure requirements.

Leicester College

- 5.14 Discussion with the College confirmed an interest in involvement in Access Centre provision. However the thrust of the College's strategic development is linked to Leicester City, rather than the shire districts.

6.0 PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS

6.1 With the importance being placed upon health and welfare support as one of the Access Centre services, approaches were made to six Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) located within Leicestershire. Two subsequently stated they exclusively dealt with the Leicester City area. Of the other four, two PCTs engaged in detailed discussions, which have identified potential for involvement in Access Centre provision.

Charnwood & North West Leicestershire PCT

6.2 The PCT believe there may be Access Centre opportunities associated with the new large housing developments where one-hectare areas are set aside for social/ community use. The PCT is normally earmarked half of these areas for health purposes.

6.3 In this respect the PCT is already putting together an outline business case for a new health complex at Hallam Fields on the outskirts of Birstall. The land is still privately owned and the housing scheme has yet to commence. Nevertheless the PCT believe there is sufficient need now in the area. This could connect with the County Council's intentions to improve Service Shop provision in the Birstall/ Syston area.

Hinckley & Bosworth PCT

6.4 The PCT have proposals for a project in Bagworth- this is independent of the Bagworth Community Centre initiative referred to in Chapter 3. Bagworth has been identified as a priority ward, as the Public Health data scores the highest in terms of need.

6.5 The project is in accord with the Department of Health's Growth Money programme. The PCT is looking to develop a new or converted building that will house a partnership that contributes to health and could include any organisation with a community remit.

6.6 A bid has been made under the Personal Medical Services Fifth Wave Pilots, to improve health care access and enhance chronic disease management. This pilot aims to meet the needs of patients who currently have difficulty accessing health care- for example the young, the elderly and travellers- either because the services are not conveniently situated or because conventional forms of access do not meet the requirements and needs of this group.

- 6.7 The failure to find suitable premises over a period of some months means the PCT is now willing to consider delivery via a wider partnership- such as an Access Centre initiative.

7.0 MISCELLANEOUS ORGANISATIONS

Learndirect

- 7.1 The Leicestershire Hub provides Learndirect courses, currently through 36 centres in the County. The providers include FE and community colleges; not for profit organisations; primary schools and private training groups.
- 7.2 The venues are in accessible town/village centre locations. Most are open in the evenings and at weekends, as well as during the day. Many offer, or are near to, crèche facilities.
- 7.3 Learndirect provides courses in ICT, business and foundation programmes. As such the delivery of these services is in accord with the core elements of an Access Centre.
- 7.4 From our consultations we are aware that from August 2004 the Leicestershire Hub will be re-classifying all its venues. This is expected to see some venues closed, and others added in to fill geographic gaps in service delivery.
- 7.5 Consequently there may be an opportunity associated with the restructuring of Learndirect venues within the County to integrate with Access Centre facilities.

Welland SSP

- 7.6 As both Melton and Harborough Districts also lie within the Welland SSP area, the organisation was contacted to discuss Access Centre provision. At present there is no defined strategy for future delivery, although it is accepted Access Centres are a part of the rural market towns geography.
- 7.7 Welland highlighted The Samworth Centre (Melton) and Wycliffe House (Lutterworth) as examples of existing facilities that might be considered as Access Centres. With regard to the former facility it was noted Emda had made a sizeable capital contribution to the project.
- 7.8 Welland also confirmed they were considering, and are likely to authorise, a project support application for funding of the next stage feasibility study for the Melton Partnership Works proposal, referred to in Chapter 5. The multi agency engagement

and wide range of services proposed accord with the expectations of an Access Centre.

Leicestershire Rural Partnership

- 7.9 Through “Leicestershirevillages.com” the Rural Partnership has created a network of electronic one stop shops, delivering at least some services through a ‘virtual medium’. This has involved the creation of some 120 public access points, a similar, but more substantial programme operating separately to South Leicestershire College’s Village Access Point initiative.
- 7.10 In providing Public Access Points, the Rural Partnership requires the local communities to assume responsibility for managing the facility, and for day to day operations. Increasingly this is being achieved through inclusion as an activity and action within the Parish Plans and Village Appraisals.
- 7.11 The Rural Partnership has also been involved in a two year funding pilot for rural Post Offices, where the postmasters are paid to provide space and the Partnership funds the equipment, space rental, telephone line and call costs. They see scope to improve the sustainability of these facilities through drawing in other services, such as library service ordering; repeat medical prescriptions. An unsuccessful Investor Save Bid has been made to secure more funds, so the issue of funding post April 2005 is overshadowing this initiative.
- 7.12 It is noted that many of the rural Post Offices have unused former sorting rooms, which could be adapted to be the base for a mobile Access Centre service- providing confidential meeting space.

Leicestershire Voluntary and Community Foundation

- 7.13 The V&CF has been established for around eighteen months, and is building up a Capital Endowment Fund for Leicestershire, which will lead to reinvestment in the community through grants. The Foundation also develops and runs training programmes (capacity building) for people who want work in the community and voluntary sectors.
- 7.14 The Foundation does not see itself establishing any further permanent presence beyond its current accommodation, but is very receptive to the idea of the involvement in a mobile Access Centre initiative.

Business Link Leicestershire

- 7.15 Business Link Leicestershire is piloting a national programme of brokerage activity, rather than being solution providers themselves. As there will be less face to face contact (and more call centre activity), Business Link have concluded there is no need to sustain dedicated sub regional offices- and will be closing its five facilities serving the shire districts.
- 7.16 As a consequence Business Link are interested in the Access Centre programme, where they could capitalise on delivering advice on a short term basis. This would also fit with their increased emphasis on pre-start and start up businesses, which means they want to link with routes which tackle self employment. In connection with this responsibility they are involved in a twelve months pilot, part funded by the LSEP, with colleges and other suitable venues to address rural diversification; deprived areas and the school leavers sectors. This programme could be linked to Access Centres.
- 7.17 Business Link are also committed to establishing a total of 50 business-to-business networks within Leicestershire. Some already exist. The networks will be wide-ranging, spanning geographic, industry, ethnic, and women-in-business sectors. Business Link sees opportunity in basing at least some of these networks from Access Centres.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

Access Centre Concept

- 8.1 The rationale for this study is the planned delivery of support to a programme of Access Centre provision within Leicestershire. Such provision reflects the LSEP's approved strategy of Access Centres being a key component of the sustainable communities theme for the sub region, equally appropriate to urban and rural communities.
- 8.2 The Access Centre concept as originally envisaged by Emda is a variation on the theme of one stop shops. Recent studies have shown that the clustering of services into a one stop shop has much to commend it, in that it:
- Provides professional support
 - Can create synergy between the differing professionals offering support
 - Can be flexible in the way the services are offered
 - Offers physical convenience and social contact, valuable to the more vulnerable members of society
 - Provides economies of scale
- 8.3 Broadly one stop shops fall into two main categories. The local authority model is usually a top down approach to enable the authority to deliver services in a way that responds to the central government agenda of improved delivery of services. This model therefore becomes a portal to a range of local government information and services, and assists customer contact with individual departments.
- 8.4 The second category relates to where regeneration programmes exist and the one stop shop concept is introduced as part of a wider community based initiative. It is established in response to the needs of the location. As such it has a number of advantages.
- Often community owned, and therefore is a self help solution
 - Addresses a lack of local outlets for information
 - Provides a base for local organisations and service providers
 - Provides a low cost solution for small and voluntary groups.
- 8.5 Clearly there are other variations, for example, as is evidenced in Leicestershire, by linking with existing facilities within the community such as libraries.

- 8.6 Location criteria for one stop shops are identified as:
- In a town centre, or where there are other anchor attractions that draw people to the location
 - The building must be accessible to all users
 - Greater use may be encouraged through proximity to a readily available public transport network
 - adequate car parking nearby
 - A visible ground floor 'shop window' or display area, as well as appropriate signage, are important so that people are aware of the service and its function

8.7 Current Emda thinking promotes greater emphasis on economic development beyond business advice to provide incubator and managed desk space, which provides shelter for businesses in their initial and formative stages. This includes supporting or creating social enterprise business opportunities. The Genesis Business Enterprise Centre in Alfreton, is identified by Emda as a best practice example of the current thinking, where as part of its commitment to social regeneration the Centre provides a diverse range of business start-up accommodation and support programmes to grow businesses, create jobs and generate wealth in the community.

Study Purpose

8.8 The purpose of this study has been the mapping of existing provision of facilities delivering some or all of the elements of an Access Centre, and consultation with individual service providers regarding their emerging or possible future delivery plans, of relevance to the Access Centre concept.

8.9 What we have not done is to engage with the public, to determine evidence that individuals are having problems accessing services. From the demand side only some of the projects have produced evidence that the concept is financially justified and sustainable. Most existing facilities have addressed perceived local need, rather than being the product of consultations that have established need. However there are, amongst the emerging proposals we have identified, good examples of researched need justifying proposed investment.

8.10 In conjunction with our desk research we have had sight of the "Review of Emda Supported Access Centres- Phase Two" report, produced by Flying Giraffe Limited in

December 2002. The report was part of a staged process of evaluation of Emda's pilot supported Access Centres.

8.11 Amongst the conclusions of the report we highlight the following;

- Needs analysis had played some part in service design, but was not a universal feature, and seldom involved primary research.
- Emda needed to agree its policy towards future funding, in particular whether to press for a top-down model or accept a bottom-up approach on services to be provided.
- Whilst an Access Centre may provide a range of services, the interpretation of what this constitutes varies from place to place- so quality and volume comparators are not valid.
- Success must be measured through customers, not just numbers and footfall, but from their satisfaction with services. Monitoring systems for customer usage should be in place at the start, and wherever possible should help Access Centres recognise "distance travelled" by individuals.
- Those centres designed to service the needs of a community, but with an obvious religious bias, do not attract as wide a range an audience as might be wished by Emda.
- Capital funding injected must be supported by robust revenue streams, or the buildings and services offered will be severely restricted. A capital funding injection approach alone cannot be guaranteed to provide value for money.

8.12 Our investigations have found that the emerging projects we have identified are now largely needs driven, responding to the results of primary research. The varied origins and lead partners for these projects justify, in our opinion, emphasis being given to a bottom-up approach on services- reflecting local conditions- rather than a top-down model template that might be inappropriate or undeliverable.

Existing Provision

8.13 The County has two acknowledged Access Centres, both of which are Emda funded pilots- Donisthorpe Miners Welfare and The Kings Centre, South Wigston. Our research has identified over 200 facilities within the seven shire districts, delivering some of the core or additional services expected of Access Centres.

8.14 There are, delivering these facilities, a number of parallel independent initiatives. For example we have mapped details of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership's

programme of Public Access Points. As mentioned earlier in our report PAPs have been rolled out to deliver access to broadband technology. There is a body of opinion that the PAP programme is flawed in that access to electronic services is most beneficial where there is teaching support for the users. The people being targeted as PAP users need help, rather than being competent ICT users. Providing remote facilities is viewed as not being proven in either value or sustainability.

8.15 By contrast the County Council's Public Information Access Points (PIAPs) aim to deliver better access to public services. They therefore have a narrower focus than PAPs.

8.16 The County Council has built an electronic database in respect of information for, and about, the community. "Infolinx" has been established as the medium. It has been confirmed to us that this could cope with details of Access Centre facilities and, if introduced, a 'mobile' Access Centre service.

8.17 In total 231 existing facilities have been identified where services are provided, appropriate to one or more elements of the Access Centre defined functions. Table 4 summaries the provision on a district by district basis, broken down under ten categories of types of location.

Table 4 – Services Provision Outlets, Leicestershire Shire Districts

Outlet Type	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley/ Bosworth	Melton	NW Leics	Oadby/ Wigston	Total
School/Community Centre	9	14	11	7	8	17	4	70
Library	12	13	8	9	3	7	3	55
Parish/ Village Hall	2	5	3	2	2	1	0	15
Youth Club/Centre	0	2	1	0	1	3	0	7
Business Centre	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Community/FE College	3	8	3	7	3	5	3	32
Council Offices	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	10
Post Office	1	2	1	1	1	2	0	8
CAB/CVS	1	1	3	2	1	2	3	10
Miscellaneous	3	2	2	2	4	6	2	21
TOTAL	34	48	34	31	24	47	13	231

8.18 We have combined schools and community centres into a single category as many of the latter are located in association with primary or secondary education establishments. Only in North West Leicestershire are there existing business centres facilities delivering the support services associated with Access Centres. No

doubt there are serviced offices/managed workspace developments in existence within some of the seven districts, which might have scope for drawing in the range of Access Centre support services, but their identification has not been an aspect of this study.

8.19 Analysis of the locations represented by these facilities, indicates the following:

Blaby

- Widespread distribution, with thirteen settlements served.
- Blaby and Braunstone each have seven facilities – 40 percent of the district's total.

Charnwood

- The largest number of identified facilities of all the districts. These are dispersed amongst seventeen communities.
- Over one third of the facilities are in Loughborough.
- Ten percent are in Sileby.
- Syston/Birstall/Thurmaston, perceived to be in need of investment in services, actually has nine facilities.

Harborough

- Fourteen settlements have some form of service.
- As might be expected, the two main population centres of Market Harborough and Lutterworth are well represented. Market Harborough has thirty percent of the district's facilities, with Lutterworth another eighteen percent.

Hinckley & Bosworth

- The district has relatively even distribution amongst the seventeen settlements represented. Only Hinckley has more than two facilities.
- Reflecting Hinckley's role as the district's main centre, the town has one third of the facilities identified.

Melton

- Eleven settlements have been identified as having some form of service facilities.
- Melton Mowbray has just over 40 percent of the facilities.

North West Leicestershire

- Twenty-two settlements have facilities, although half are in just four locations – Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donington, Coalville and Ibstock.
- Coalville, as the district's administrative centre, represents just under a quarter of the facilities.

Oadby & Wigston

- The compact nature of the district is reflected by the concentration in, and almost equal distribution between settlements, in Oadby, South Wigston and Wigston Magna.

Access Centre Opportunities

- 8.20 We detail specific Access Centre opportunities in the Recommendations (Chapter 9). However from our research and consultations we have identified that there are alternative methods of delivery of Access Centres. These include PCT, Youth Service, community and voluntary sector led initiatives.
- 8.21 In addition, the 2002 Education Act introduces the extended schools concept which sees education establishments as the hub of the local community offering a range of local services under eight broad themes:
- Childcare
 - Lifelong learning
 - Health and social care
 - Parental support
 - Parental involvement
 - ICT
 - Study support
 - Sports and arts
- 8.22 The majority of these themes are synergetic with the core services of an Access Centre. Consequently Extended Schools provide one potential avenue for delivery of Access Centres within the County.
- 8.23 There is genuine value, endorsed by many of the study consultees, in considering a mobile format that serves rural communities and specialist community sectors. In this respect, as an example, there is a BABS project led by the County Council, in partnership with the Countryside Agency and Coalfields Regeneration Trust, regarding mobile childcare provision. This will pump prime the creation of permanent childcare provision in rural Leicestershire, as well as the hard to reach communities living in rural locations.

Influences in Investment

8.24 From our investigations we highlight a number of factors or issues that should be taken into account in considering investment in Access Centre provision within Leicestershire.

- Access Centres will be sustainable provided they deliver activities that generate funding streams- or if there is a committed revenue support source, such as a local authority or PCT. Any proposal for LSEP/ County Council capital support must include demonstration of anticipated revenue streams. Where there are pressures on capital and revenue funding support opportunities, then emphasis should be driven towards those projects that seek to be as inclusive of all sectors of the local community. The combination of both capital injection and revenue streams, on a sustainable basis, must be a prerequisite of engagement by the LSEP and County Council in Access Centres' delivery. Furthermore effective monitoring systems should also be a prerequisite for funding support, so that output evidence is available.
- There is no value in considering investment in the small villages that characterise much of the east and south of the county, as there will be insufficient populations to sustain the investment. The concept of a 'mobile' Access Centre is appropriate for these rural locations.
- Conflicting staffing security arrangements between elements of Access Centre services provision may be an operational challenge to effective delivery. Some service providers require their staff to have secure workspace (for personal safety reasons) rather than open environments.
- What is important is that the priority for investment should be about people and services provision, not buildings. The latter on their own are of little value. It is also important to ensure the avoidance of the promotion and perception of Access Centres being stigmatised as facilities applicable only to disadvantaged groups. It is a conclusion of our research that there is a challenge of marketing the Access Centre brand to the public, to educate them on what they might expect.
- For Access Centres to be effective in their electronic information accessibility it is essential broadband provision is available. We note British Telecom have announced that all but three of the County's telephone exchanges will be broadband compliant by Summer 2005 and that the LSEP has funded a programme to improve access to broadband in rural areas.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The following are our recommended prime, immediate targets for Access Centre provision within the shire districts. Whilst some regard has been given to geographic distribution, greater emphasis has been given to the current status of the projects and to the range of key drivers/stakeholders involved. They demonstrate there is no one, replicable, template for Access Centres. Rather, there are varied avenues which can deliver Access Centres, involving a range of lead partner organisations.

Melton

9.2 Brooksby Melton College led 'Melton Partnership Works' proposal for their Asfordby Road site in central Melton.

9.3 Strengths

- Strength of partnership, involving Mencap; County Council Social Services; Melton CVS; Melton Volunteer Bureau; Melton Borough Council, and resolves the spatial needs for some
- Integration of those with learning difficulties
- Identifiable location
- Needs only capital support – sustainable revenue stream in place

9.4 Threats

- Emda already funded £200,000 of £1.5 million 'The Samworth Centre' in Melton
- Detailed business plan and due diligence still to be commissioned (6 months work)- although Welland SSP considering, with Social Services, funding of this work.

Bagworth

9.5 Opportunity to combine two proposals to deliver an Access Centre, namely Hinckley & Bosworth PCT 'Fifth Wave Pilot' programme for Personal Medical Services facility in Bagworth, together with Bagworth Community Centre Project Group proposal for a new Community Centre.

9.6 Strengths

- Both projects are responding to identified need, rather than being opportunistic

- Together they would deliver all Access Centre services
- Community Centre project has earmarked site, PCT not committed to a specific location.
- Substantial funding from NHS source.

9.7 Threats

- Site may not be big enough to accommodate the combined requirements
- Potential partners may not be able/willing to work together
- PCT revenue funding earmarked, but no similar guarantee from Community Centre project

Barwell

9.8 County Council proposal to create a new Access Centre facility.

9.9 Strengths

- Identified need and support of other service providers
- Substantial capital funds available

9.10 Threats

- Site location not yet resolved
- Revenue funding to be determined

South Wigston

9.11 Foyer Project proposed in response to a recognised skills gap amongst local employers, aimed at a mix of young people and homeless family groups.

9.12 Strengths

- Identified partnership members of Oadby & Wigston Borough Council; Leicester Housing Association; Connexions; Fern Training & Development; Social Services; Helping Hands Community Trust; Wigston and South Leicestershire Colleges; Church of England.
- Borough Council donating site, plus £250,000 contribution from Tesco S106 Agreement.
- Fits into South Wigston Regeneration Masterplan.

9.13 Threats

- None

Hinckley

9.14 North Warwickshire & Hinckley College's Adult Learning Centre, London Road, Hinckley already delivers most of the functions associated with an Access Centre. The College wishes to expand into economic development, through the creation of business incubator space within the Centre. There may be opportunity to draw in Hinckley CVS and CAB, both of which are understood to want to move to new facilities.

9.15 Strengths

- Existing, well used facility delivering core and additional Access Centre services
- College has experience of operating an Access Centre facility in Nuneaton
- College is able to provide revenue stream
- Location accessible and well-known within town
- Proposed scheme adds in economic outputs
- Enlarged proposal will deliver all elements of Emda current thinking for Access Centres

9.16 Threats

- Whilst the building can accommodate business incubator space, it is not known whether CAB and CVS needs can be met – or whether either or both organisations would wish to locate there.
- Pressure from other agencies for Access Centre provision in Hinckley to be located in the Druid Quarter.

Loughborough

9.17 There is an opportunity to invest in the expansion of Loughborough College's Netsp@ce facility, Baxtergate, Loughborough. This is a town centre based outreach facility. The inclusion of additional services (and involvement of other agencies) could deliver extra staff and longer opening hours to provide an Access Centre in the town centre.

9.18 Strengths

- Town centre, easily accessible facility
- Neutral venue, does not distinguish between ethnic groups
- Opens longer hours (and days) than the college campus

- Already delivers number of core services of an Access Centre

9.19 **Threats**

- There may be spatial limitations which restrict the inclusion of additional services/activities
- Lack of revenue funding prevents expansion beyond the current functions
- Other agencies may wish to promote alternative opportunities in Loughborough

Donisthorpe Miners Welfare

9.20 This is one of Emda's initial Access Centre pilot projects. On site functions being rebuilt; new advisory management group established; revenue funding issue being addressed following financial problems.

9.21 It is understood Emda directly, rather than through the LSEP, are addressing the revenue shortfall which has to be overcome if the development is to be sustainable.

CentrePoint, Greenhill

9.22 The CentrePoint Trust has been created, and a detailed proposal produced (including building designs) for the redevelopment of Charnborough Road Baptist Church to create a new community resource building which will serve as an Access Centre for one of the County's most deprived wards.

9.23 **Strengths**

- Comprehensive consultation programme has identified interest from 25 public, voluntary and community sector organisations to use the facility.
- County Council Early Years have in principle agreed to help fund the crèche and childcare facilities.
- Strong local community support, with potential to generate a number of new social enterprises – aligns to Emda current thinking on Access Centres.
- Building design would deliver best practice example of sustainable development.
- Addresses recognised socio-economic deprivation .
- Holistic solution to needs analysis, including relocations from inadequate facilities and thus the reduction in the number of similar function buildings in the area.

9.24 **Threats**

- Baptist Church wants to retain freehold interest in the site, which might impact on funding
- Although there is confidence about revenue funding, there are, as yet, no capital contributions.
- High capital cost proposal

9.25 In addition we have identified a number of further opportunities or proposals that may be considered as possible Access Centre projects. These are summarised on a borough-by-borough basis.

Blaby

- Proposal led by Blaby CVS to deliver an Access Centre in the Braunstone Town area. At this stage the proposal is to commission a feasibility study to determine the preferred location and determine viability. It is apparent there are conflicting opinions regarding the location – either at Braunstone Civic Centre (to strengthen existing facilities and the Centre’s functions) or Thorpe Astley (housing area with no service provision but where the PCT has programme for health centre).

Charnwood

- Charnwood & NW Leicestershire PCT is preparing an outline business case for a new health centre at Hallam Fields, Birstall. The site is part of a ‘Social/Community’ land allocation within a new housing development. Charnwood Borough Council sees Birstall as an appropriate location for an Access Centre. Leicestershire County Council has also identified the Birstall/Syston area for a future Services Shop facility.
- County Council have an outline proposal for a Bangladeshi Community Training & Advice Project in Loughborough, which would be managed by the Charnwood Cohesion Pathfinder Management Team.

Harborough

- County Council proposal for the library site, which would provide a wide variety of primarily public sector services close to Lutterworth town centre. There is no intention to duplicate the Wycliffe House voluntary sector provision although there may be a satellite service operation.

- South Leicestershire College wishes to expand and enhance facilities at Innovation House, Welland Business Park, Market Harborough. There are no existing proposals but the College is interested in exploring the possibility of its' expansion to become an Access Centre.

Hinckley & Bosworth

- Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council have previously submitted an unsuccessful bid to the LSEP for an Access Centre which would be built on Council land within the Druid Quarter, Hinckley. The proposal is a response to the Druid Quarter Regeneration Strategy, which identified as a key project the development of a landmark mixed use building that could be used as an Access Centre.
- Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, the PCT and County Council Education are seeking to progress a feasibility study regarding Groby Community College as an Extended Schools Programme pilot for the Borough. It has been suggested the pilot could incorporate an Access Centre.

Melton

- Brooksby Melton College have plans for a new 'Women into Rural Enterprise' support and advice centre on the Brooksby campus. This could be expanded to create a rural Access Centre facility.
- Wyomdham Community Centre fulfils a number of Access Centre functions. There might be opportunity to expand the facility to become an Access Centre as part of a strategy to meet the needs of Melton Borough.

North West Leicestershire

- Ibstock Miners Welfare are leading a proposal for a new purpose built Community Centre as part of a wider regeneration programme for the existing extensive Miners Welfare facilities. The proposal is to create an Access Centre.

Oadby & Wigston

- South Leicestershire College are considering a new build campus in Wigston. The College believes there is scope for the co-location of other services in order to deliver integrated provision for both youth and adults.

- Helping Hands operate one of their two outlets in South Wigston. Their services are constrained by the existing accommodation. The Tesco proposal in South Wigston might lead to the closure of a smaller supermarket, and that building might offer the larger space needed by Helping Hands. Tesco S106 Agreement monies could be used as a financial contribution.

Mobile Access Centre

- 9.26 In view of the large rural, dispersed and small settlement pattern of a number of the district council areas, we have tested the concept of a mobile access centre provision amongst key service providers.
- 9.27 In principle the concept has been universally well received, although practicality of delivery may be challenging. Because of the weight of support we consider the concept deserves more detailed investigation.
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APPENDIX 1 – STUDY CONSULTTEES

Name	Organisation	Meeting	Telecon	Correspondence
Malcolm Flaherty	Blaby CVS		✓	
Julie Hutchinson	Blaby District Council	✓		
Annie White	Brooksby Melton College	✓		✓
Yvonne Kelly	Brooksby Melton College	✓		
Danielle Gillett	Business Link Leicestershire	✓		
Keith Turner	Charnwood & North West Leicestershire PCT	✓		
Steve Phipps	Charnwood Borough Council	✓		
Mick Fitzgerald	Charnwood Borough Council	✓		
Jenny Hand	Connexions		✓	
Carolyn Clifton	East Leicester PCT		✓	✓
Sarah Davies	Emda		✓	
Peter Rowbotham	Harborough District Council	✓		
Brenda Moore	Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	✓		
Mandip Rai	Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	✓		
Bill Cullen	Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	✓		✓
Ann Walsh	Hinckley & Bosworth PCT		✓	✓
Rob McMahan	Leicester City West PCT		✓	✓
Peter Jones	Leicester College	✓		✓
Lesley Hagger	Leicestershire County Council Lifelong Learning	✓		
Chris Bagley	Leicestershire County Council Regeneration	✓		
Rachael E J Stone	Leicestershire County Council Chief Executive's	✓		
Sean Beeby Smith	Leicestershire County Council Chief Executive's	✓	✓	✓
Nicole Rickard	Leicestershire County Council Chief Executive's	✓		
Paul Love	Leicestershire County Council Community Services	✓		
Alan Tuppen	Leicestershire County Council Economic Development	✓		
Donato Piccinno	Leicestershire County Council ICT Services	✓		
John Liddell	Leicestershire County Council Property Services	✓		
Sue Houlton	Leicestershire County Council Youth & Community Education	✓		
Brigid Joyce	Leicestershire County Council Youth & Community Education	✓		
Bryony Leonard	Leicestershire Learndirect Hub		✓	✓
Tony Gutteridge	Leicestershire Learndirect Hub		✓	
Jeremy Prescott	Leicestershire Rural Community Council		✓	
Ray Smith	Leicestershire Rural Partnership	✓		

Name	Organisation	Meeting	Telecon	Correspondence
Nicola Dalby	Leicestershire Voluntary & Community Foundation		✓	
Kim Thorogood	Loughborough College	✓		✓
Caroline Boucher	LSEP	✓	✓	✓
Gill Smitherman	LSEP	✓	✓	✓
Keith Aubrey	Melton Borough Council	✓		
Kathleen McKinley	Melton CVS		✓	
Louise Proctor	Melton Rutland & Harborough PCT		✓	✓
Rosemary Shaller	North Warwickshire & Hinckley College	✓		
Barry Hendry	North Warwickshire & Hinckley College	✓		
Martin Gage	North West Leicestershire CVS		✓	✓
Phil Ellis	North West Leicestershire District Council	✓		
Nicola White	North West Leicestershire District Council	✓		
Goff Lewis	North West Leicestershire District Council	✓		
Lynn Gill	North West Leicestershire District Council	✓		
Phil Clarke	North West Leicestershire District Council	✓		
Neville Stork	North West Leicestershire District Council	✓	✓	✓
Ruth Hyde	Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	✓		
Lowell Williams	South Leicestershire College		✓	✓
Gordon Riddell	South Leicestershire College		✓	✓
Amanda Henderson	South Leicestershire CVS		✓	✓
Lizzie Keenan	South Leicestershire CVS		✓	✓
Julie Wood	South Leicestershire PCT		✓	✓
David Rathe	Stephenson College		✓	✓
Jane Foster	Stephenson College		✓	✓
Judy Handford	Voluntary Action Hinckley & Bosworth		✓	✓
Trevor McHugh	Welland SSP	✓	✓	
Jacki Shorley	Welland SSP	✓		✓

N.B. Telephone contact also made with each of the identified facilities to confirm address details and services provision.