Critical Factors in the Success of One Stop Shops as a Model of Service Delivery within Rural Locations

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Acknowledgements

The Research team is grateful to the various OSS projects, and especially to those committee members, partners, staff and ‘clients’ who gave up their valuable time to be interviewed by us. We are also grateful to those from the OSS projects used as case studies for spending time reviewing our use and interpretation of the interview transcripts and other materials made available to us. Catherine Pye (on Sanday in the Orkney Islands) transcribed the majority of the interviews for us, and did an excellent job once again.

This was a thoroughly interesting project to undertake, covering as it did a wide range of often very different projects in rural communities across Scotland. Often these projects were dealing with the hardest social problems currently faced in richer countries of the world – poverty, debt, drug and alcohol dependence, (un)healthy living, disaffected youth, the elderly, and problems of service provision in remoter rural areas. The interviews contain some ‘eye opening’ statements that shed light on the crucial importance of the work that is being done on the ground by OSS. We are therefore very grateful to the Scottish Executive for choosing our team to undertake the work, and for guiding us at various meetings between the different stages of the research.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

1. UHI Millennium Institute was commissioned by the Scottish Executive in 2004 to undertake a study of Critical Factors in the Success of One Stop Shops as a Model of Service Delivery. This report discusses the findings of this research.

2. One stop shops (OSSs) have been identified as a solution to the problems associated with rural service provision. The key is ‘bringing services together under one roof’; both for providers to share costs and to make it easier for people to access a range of services in one place.

3. This research sought to explore the experience of both providing and using one stop shops in rural Scotland, including the advantages and disadvantages and challenges and opportunities from both perspectives. Crucially it also examined the factors associated with the sustainability of one stop shops.

Method

4. This research included qualitative interviews with partners, managers, staff and users of ten case study one stop shops across rural Scotland. A total of 64 interviews were carried out.

5. The case studies were selected to cover a range of different types of one stop shop and to reflect different rural contexts. They included a Community School, a Community Company involved in provision of several different services, a Community Hall, an adult IT education centre within a second Community School, a partnership between various public agencies and services such as police, health and social work and housing; and projects providing one-door access to youth, the elderly, and severely disadvantaged groups.

Findings

6. Interviews with the ‘client group’ for the one-stop shops were included in this study so that an assessment could be made of whether they were serving the needs of the population concerned, as opposed to the providers of services only, particularly in respect of the centralisation and rationalisation of services.

7. In the event, a major finding of the research was that one-stop shops had not so far been used to rationalise or centralise existing services (although in some cases this may ultimately happen, as for example with the replacement of mobile libraries with facilities in community schools).

8. Rather, one stop shops have mainly been used to extend the range of services on offer to rural communities, and improve their quality. In several cases entirely new services were offered which could not – or would not – have been provided in any other way. This indeed is the second major finding, and one that is important when considering policy development in this area.
9. Factors favouring the emergence and sustainability of one stop shops include:
- community need, motivation (desire) and involvement in all stages;
- adequate capital and revenue support for ‘public good’ activities and public service provision in OSS;
- careful attention to design and location;
- community-owned and run facilities, where possible.

10. Funding support needs to be flexible if it is to be responsive to different community needs and decisions. It must also provide longer term funding than is currently the norm; three-year project funding is wasteful of volunteer and staff effort, hinders staff recruitment, and fails to recognise the time needed to establish trust between partners, staff, and communities or target groups. However, it is important that funders lay down criteria for support that deal with important issues such as OSS constitutions, democratic governance, inclusion, environmental protection, responsible pricing of services, and staff recruitment and training. Good models have been developed for community projects in recent years, for example by the Scottish Land Fund.

11. One stop shops commonly face a range of problems with the initiation, start-up, and running phases of the project. These include:
- relatively large capital funding needs in relation to the size of the population;
- short term nature of non-capital funding;
- top down initiatives to take advantage of funding opportunities;
- problems with certain types of partnership where, for example, different partners or different client groups are more powerful or carry greater weight;
- reconciling the needs of different users;
- difficulties in maintaining enthusiasm and time commitments among volunteers.

12. There is considerable scope for ‘peer-group learning’ among OSSs at inception, planning, and running stages. A lack of contact between specialised OSSs was identified, for example those targeting young people in rural areas. This needs to be stimulated.

Policy recommendations

13. A number of key policy recommendations follow from the findings and analysis summarised above. These are:

- One stop shops can be very effective in improving service provision, and so public policy should be supportive. However, one stop shops are a means of generating and maintaining community involvement in improving the range and quality of services and achieving greater integration on the ground rather than a means of reducing public expenditure in rural areas or centralising public services and this should be recognised;

- One stop shops should not be regarded as a ‘quick-fix’ for the problems of rural service provision; they need careful analysis of the needs to be met, sound design and planning which involves potential users as well as the
providers, and provision for future expansion.

- Public policy could support the development of community run one stop shops by providing the kind of support provided by the Community Land Unit of Highlands and Islands Enterprise for community land buy-outs. This support could include support for visits to existing community-based one stop shops in other areas, support for feasibility studies and legal advice on constitutions for instance;

- Public funding for community-led one stop shops needs to address both capital costs and longer-term funding needs. It must be flexible enough to meet community needs and support their decisions – one size does not fit all, either in terms of the form that one stop shops take, or in the nature of the community or partnership that is promoting them;

- Public capital funding schemes should avoid over-prescription, leading to one stop shop proposals that are essentially top-down and ‘funding-led’, and should encourage significant community and agency involvement during the planning and design stages;

- Public funding for revenue needs of one stop shops must move from the current situation of one stop shop-dependency on short term funding for delivery of core local services, to serving long term needs;

- Policy to encourage Community Schools, while admirable in principle, fails to recognise some very real problems and issues with this model. The policy needs to be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary group that can also consider community and other user and provider viewpoints from a wider perspective.

- Community-led one stop shops need to consider their pricing and costing strategies carefully and where appropriate, with a view to improving sustainability;

- One stop shops dealing with particular client groups, e.g. small communities, young people, and older people, can benefit greatly by arrangements for visits during the inception and planning stages, and on-going networking with regular meetings between staff and directors etc. This will facilitate peer-group learning and exchange of experience.
CHAPTER ONE  INTRODUCTION

1.1  UHI Millennium Institute (UHI) was commissioned by the Scottish Executive to explore the critical factors in the success of one stop shops as one of the models of service delivery in rural areas. A literature review identified possible case studies and this is the report on the research undertaken on these case studies.

1.2  The difficulties of providing accessible quality services in rural areas are well known (see for example OECD (1991)). Pickering’s (2003) report for the Scottish Executive suggests that one of the major problems for rural areas is the fact that it may be economically unsustainable to provide services to small remote communities due to the lack of scale-effects and high unit cost of provision. Travel costs, in time and money, can be economically prohibitive not only for service providers but also for users. To add to these general problems of rural service provision and access, Scotland faces the difficulties of low population density, and difficult topography.

1.3  The literature review also identified evidence of a trend of declining provision of rural services in Scotland, exacerbated by privatisation and reorganisation both of which have stressed functional efficiency as a main goal. The problems were particularly severe in the remoter rural areas, and for less-mobile and other disadvantaged groups of the population.

1.4  These problems have been recognised by both the UK government and the Scottish Executive. In 1995 the then Government published a White Paper Rural Scotland. People, Prosperity and Partnership (Scottish Office 1995), followed shortly thereafter by the establishment of the Scottish National Rural Partnership (SNRP). The SNRP subsequently published several key documents in relation to rural service provision, including a report Services in Rural Scotland, published in 2000 (SNRP 2000).

1.5  Of the many kinds of solution mooted and indeed adopted to cope with this problem of rural service provision, one-stop shops (OSSs) have emerged in a variety of forms and contexts. Thus within the sample of cases that we examined, the one common element was the sharing of a building or office space, and connected facilities by a range of service providers. For instance, the buildings may be leased, owned by a public agency, owned by local government, or community owned. They may be run by a single department, a range of departments in the same organisation, a partnership of different agencies, or a community organisation (commonly a company limited by guarantee). The services provided include pre-and after school care, nursery, primary schooling, secondary schooling, further and higher education and training, community education, counselling, small business premises, village hall facilities, entertainment, sports and fitness, access to volunteers, youth activities, library, access to computers, email and web, care of elderly, health services (surgery, nursing, dentist), post office, credit unions, access and outreach, bar, restaurant, tea-room, weddings, transport, to name but a selection.

1.6  Perhaps the most generalised definition of one stop shops is:

“Staffed, accessible premises that provide a range of public, statutory, private and voluntary sector services to the local community” (Countryside Agency,
The key is ‘bringing services together under one roof’; both to share costs (of heating, maintenance, construction, management etc) and to make it easier for people to access a range of services in one place. However, in many of the cases we looked at, services were being provided in an area for the first time using this model, thus enhancing the range and often the quality of services accessible to rural communities. Thus, for example, Ardnamurchan Community School (The Sunart Centre) is providing a whole range of services that were formerly only available at long distance, at considerable cost and inconvenience, and in the larger towns adjacent to the area. Similarly, Coigach Hall in Achiltibuie has also gone far beyond the traditional notions of services available in and through a ‘village hall’. At the same time, Pultneytown People’s Project is tackling some of the most challenging social issues anywhere in the richer countries.

Partnership and community involvement in service provision have been stressed by the SNRP and in the Ministerial pronouncements on Community Planning in Scotland. The objectives are to better identify needs, to ensure a common strategy vision, to practice ‘joined up thinking and government’ on the ground, and to improve service delivery and relevance. Most of our cases involved some degree of partnership and community involvement, although some were essentially top-down initiatives, while others were clearly ‘grass roots’ initiatives, with many lying somewhere in between these extremes.

In reviewing the literature, we identified the advantages of one stop shops as:

- Making life easier for customers/ clients
- Enabling services to continue to be provided locally
- Enabling services to be tailored to local needs
- Providing public services more efficiently
- Reducing costs, including joint provision of services, either through the shared use of staff, buildings or vehicles
- Providing professional support;
- Creating synergy and sharing of good practice between the different professionals offering support
- A platform for more ‘joined-up’ and co-ordinated service provision
- Flexibility in the way services are offered
- Offering physical convenience and social contact – especially valuable to the more vulnerable members of society
- Providing economies of scale
- Taking advantage of new funding sources, especially those linked with the Lottery.

In our cases it is perhaps fair to say that, in practice, cost-saving for providers did not appear to be high on the agenda. The emphasis was more in improving local services, whether this relates to remoter and more sparsely populated rural communities, such as Achiltibuie or Ardnamurchan, or to services for severely deprived rural communities in small towns, such as Pultneytown in Wick. Several had been able to raise significant capital sums for new buildings and services. However, a
key issue was often sustainability in the medium and long term where new services were provided using grant schemes that were limited to three to five years duration, and/or on the basis of high levels of volunteer engagement. We return to these issues in greater depth in the analysis of the case study material.
CHAPTER TWO  METHOD

2.1 Ten case studies were selected to cover a wide range of different types of ‘one stop shop’ as well as to reflect different rural contexts in Scotland. See Table 2.1 below. More detail on each of these case studies is supplied in the following chapter.

Table 2.1 The case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ONE STOP SHOP</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Acharacle Community Company</td>
<td>Acharacle, Lochaber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ardnamurchan Community School</td>
<td>Strontian, Lochaber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Coigach Community Hall</td>
<td>Achilitbuie, Wester Ross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dalmellington Area Centre,</td>
<td>Dalmellington, Ayr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gairloch Community Learning Partnership</td>
<td>Gairloch, Wester Ross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Loganlea One-Stop-Shop</td>
<td>Loganlea, Dumfries &amp; Galloway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Kemnay Youth Cafe</td>
<td>Kemnay, Aberdeenshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mearns Healthy Living Network</td>
<td>Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Pultneytown Peoples Project</td>
<td>Pultneytown, Wick, Caithness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Voluntary Action Lewis</td>
<td>Stornoway, Lewis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews

2.2 Interviews were arranged with partners, managers, staff and ‘users’ or ‘clients’ of the one-stop-shops in order to gather different views and perspectives on the issues.

2.3 The agreed interview method and approach was to use a personally administered ‘schedule’ allowing relatively open interviews of a qualitative nature, and thus avoiding the dangers of pre-determined questions and issues. The interviews were taped and transcribed for subsequent qualitative analysis. The latter involved scanning of the transcripts for key themes relating to the schedule, identification of other issues not covered by the schedule, and quotations relating to these themes and issues. It also involved identifying themes and issues in common across several case studies, as well as those that were particular to a specific case study or context.

2.4 At the time of the interview, the interviewer also noted down the issues arising in summary form. This method provided mainly qualitative information, this being the kind of information needed to improve detailed knowledge of the functioning, financing, and experience of OSS in different contexts.

2.5 The main issues to be explored with managers, partners and staff of the OSSs included:

- The nature and extent of service provision: focus of the OSS and the types of services it provides; the OSS target (client) group (population), and its
geographical scope

• Factors underlying the origin and development of the OSS
• Difficulties encountered in (a) establishing and (b) running the OSS
• Advantages and disadvantages to users and providers
• Factors which encourage or inhibit the OSS and the widening of services offered, population targeted or geographical scope
• Details of funding sources accessed for the OSS and its development, with documentation, amounts, descriptions, purpose, and comments on application procedures
• The on-going funding needs after the project was started and how these are met; the ways in which funding is shared between the partners, and the logic of any cost-sharing agreement or formula
• Details of costs/expenses incurred or saved as a result of setting up a successful one stop shop (and/or of inaction on the whole project or constituent parts).
• Factors contributing to the successful establishment of the OSS (or constraining its establishment or success as relevant)
• The meaning of ‘success’ in this context
• The extent to which the OSS has been successful in (a) making services available to rural communities and (b) in improving the viability of such services. What evidence is available on these points?
• Whether further support is needed from the Scottish Executive, local authorities, voluntary organisations, other agencies or commercial organisations to enable further development of the OSS as a model of service delivery
• Details of any monitoring/evaluation of client use and opinions on the range, level and quality of services offered

2.6 In stage 1 of the research we identified a lack of monitoring and evaluation, and it was decided also to interview the client group of the OSS. The purpose was to provide information on the use by customers and customer opinions on the services. A separate schedule was therefore needed for this group. The schedule covered the following issues:

• Awareness of the existence of a one-stop shop
• Frequency of use and types of services that are used
• The ways in which the clients access services provided by the OSS, and their views on accessibility (time, cost), and quality
• The difference the OSS has made to their lives, for instance, savings in money and/or time, better and/or more frequent availability of service
• Deficiencies, if any, in OSS services

2.7 A total of 64 interviews undertaken and these are detailed below in Table 2.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Site</th>
<th>Interviews Carried Out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Acharacle</td>
<td>9 interviews: 2 directors, 1 ex-director, Initiative at Edge co-ordinator, Information Technology manager, 3 users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ardnamurchan Community School</td>
<td>9 interviews: 2 staff, 1 manager, 2 partners, 2 parents, 2 prospective parents (Kilchoan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Coigach Community Hall</td>
<td>8 interviews: 1 chairman, 1 former chairman, 2 partners, the former treasurer, and 3 users one of whom is a committee member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dalmellington Area Centre</td>
<td>5 interviews: 1 manager, 2 staff, 2 users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gairloch Community Learning Centre</td>
<td>7 interviews: 3 partners, 1 part-time staff member, 1 manager, 2 users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Kemnay Youth Cafe</td>
<td>2 interviews: with one staff, one youth worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Loganlea</td>
<td>5 interviews: 1 community worker, 2 staff, 2 users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mearns Healthy Living Network</td>
<td>3 interviews: 1 partner and 2 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Pultneytown Peoples Project</td>
<td>12 interviews: 3 staff, 2 board members, 2 partners, 5 users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Voluntary Action Lewis</td>
<td>4 interviews: 2 staff and 2 users</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER THREE  THE CASE STUDIES

3.1 What follows is a short description of the case studies included in this research.

Acharacle Community Company

3.2 Acharacle Community Company (ACC) was established in order to acquire Acharacle Post Office following retirement of the previous owner and fears of its sale for other purposes. The property comprises a post office and shop, tearoom, office shared between the Initiative at the Edge\(^1\) officer and a part-time IT training project, an as yet unused garage and a private dwelling house. ACC have also recently acquired a forest pavilion (known as the ‘forest school’) close to Salen from the Forestry Commission. The post office/shop and tea-room are both leased to, and operated by, private operators whilst Lochaber Housing Association has been provided with a twenty year let for the dwelling house. In this way, the local post office has been secured, an all-year round tea-room has been opened, and some much needed low cost housing for key workers has been provided. Five full time equivalent jobs have also been secured and three part time jobs in servicing the tearoom are available seasonally. Funding was raised from the local community, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Community Land Unit, the Scottish Land Fund, Communities Scotland and the Local Enterprise Company. The local funds were raised \textit{via} the local monthly paper, which has assiduously accrued funds over many years for just such an emergency community action.

Ardnamurchan Community School (Àrainn Shuaineirt/ Sunart Centre)

3.3 Ardnamurchan Community School (ACC) at Strontian was the result of seventeen years campaigning by the local community and its Councillor for a secondary school to serve the remote and scattered peninsulas (Ardnamurchan and Morvern). Before it was opened in 2002, secondary pupils had to attend Lochaber High School in Fort William, Mallaig High School or Tobermory High School on Mull, usually involving weekly boarding in hostels, very long bus journeys or ferry journeys. Moreover, Gaelic and English have equal status in Ardsgoil Aird nam Murchan, the Gaelic name for the school.

3.4 The building cost of £7 million was funded as a Public Private Partnership Project (in fact, one school in a £17 million four-school Public Private Partnership programme undertaken by The Highland Council which has now embarked on a £120m second education Public Private Partnership) and handed over to Highland Council in August 2002. A variety of other bodies have supported the initiative including the Scottish Executive, Sport Scotland, the Scottish Arts Council, the EU

\(^1\) Initiative at the Edge is a partnership programme encouraging and supporting a community-led, multi-agency approach to achieving a sustainable future for selected areas designated as the most economically and socially fragile in the Highlands and Islands. The partners include, amongst others, the Scottish Executive, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, local councils and health boards and Communities Scotland. More information can be found at: \texttt{http://www.initiative-at-the-edge.org.uk/home.htm}
and local agencies such as the University of the Highlands Islands Millennium Institute and Lochaber Enterprise.

3.5 The Headteacher of the secondary school, line manages the building and everyone employed in it, with one or two notable exceptions. The exceptions are the community staff who are line managed by the Highland Council’s Community Manager based in Fort William, the Outreach staff member from Lochaber College of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and the nursery staff (managed by the local Primary School Head). The community staff includes a full-time Centre Development Co-ordinator who deals with uses of school facilities by the general public and specific groups such as the youth group.

3.6 Apart from catering for secondary school pupils, it is felt that the new ACS has encouraged young families to stay in – and move to – the area. In addition the project has boosted the local economy, with new jobs created and increased numbers of visitors to the area. The school opened with 38 pupils and now has 99.

3.7 The school is designed to meet the needs of the entire community. It comprises the most modern IT facilities, a fully equipped sports centre, an all-weather pitch, an arts venue with a state-of-the-art theatre, a library and a canteen. There is a development co-ordinator who is responsible for developing the social and community use of the school; attracting national and international musicians and artists to the school. The Lochaber College Rural Learning Centre has an outreach officer posted at the school where courses are now being provided in such things as computing science, business administration, rural development, cultural studies, environmental and heritage studies and access to Gaelic.

3.8 Àrainn Shuaineirt (Sunart Centre) is the name chosen by the local community for the complex that includes Ardnamurchan High School and all the additional community facilities. The centre is managed by the Àrainn Shuaineirt Management Committee with representation from each of the five Community Council areas within the school catchment area. This committee advises The Highland Council on how it would like the centre run, and also develops initiatives of its own based on the centre’s activities.

3.9 Activities at the centre include:

- A year-round programme of the performing and visual arts including educational and outreach opportunities
- Letting of the facilities for conferencing, meetings and workshops, and even weddings, and of the school hostel which will provide extra income to create new developments in the centre
- Access by the community and commercial users to a wide range of sporting and fitness facilities
- Lifelong learning opportunities
- Out of school holiday care and crèche facilities for 0-14 year olds (operating on an ad hoc basis)
- Nursery facilities
- Ardnamurchan library with access to computers, email, etc
Coigach Community Hall

3.10 There has been a community hall in Achiltibuie for several decades but previously this was an ageing wooden building with a single hall, small kitchen and toilets. The library and doctor’s surgery both operated from this building but it was unlikely that this arrangement would have been able to continue due to the poor facilities – the GP surgery was held in the kitchen and patient confidentiality was only maintained by the nurse playing the radio in the hall which doubled as the waiting room. The hall was limited in size and poorly heated which therefore restricted its uses.

3.11 In 1996/1997 the community were finally in a position to start developing ideas and securing funding for a new hall. The Coigach Community Hall (CCH) took roughly 3 years to secure the funding, agree the site and develop the building. It has a number of innovative aspects that while perhaps increasing the specification and cost has resulted in a building that is easy to operate and maintain and which is fit for purpose. This includes multi-use spaces, good storage, a hall designed with good acoustics, multi-purpose furniture which can be used as tables or staging and under floor heating linked to the door entry system.

3.12 Services offered at or through the CCH include normal village hall activities, entertainment (see also design issues, and focus on acoustics), sports facilities, medical facilities (full time nursing staff, and visiting doctor once a week), library, playgroup, community learning centre and internet/email access (People’s Network, exhibition centre- annual art exhibition). Space is also offered for private events e.g. weddings.

3.13 Regular users of the facilities include the Playgroup/ School Nursery, the Primary School for physical education sessions and the Lunch Club, which is operated by Lochbroom House in Ullapool every second Monday. The sports/recreation facilities are very heavily used and this is likely to increase once the all-weather sports pitch, which is currently in development, comes in to being. The hall is the centre of many social and community functions including weddings and funerals. The vast majority – if not all – of the community have therefore used the facilities at one time or another. The hall is also heavily used by visitors to the area.

3.14 The Ullapool GP runs a Surgery on a Wednesday which runs without appointments – summary files on every patient in the district is brought to the surgery and some limited access to files can be provided through an internet connection. The Highland Council operates the library on a Wednesday also, with a day and an evening session. The library is one of the most heavily used in Ross-shire and has the second greatest lending rates for children’s books in the region. This enables visitors to the surgery also to access the library facilities. The hall becomes a hub of community activity on Wednesdays.

Dalmellington Area Centre

3.15 The Dalmellington Area Centre (DAC) was initiated by the local Council and provides residents of the Doon Valley (population around 3,000) with easy access to a comprehensive range of public services. The DAC brings together under one roof a
range of previously scattered public services and activities including: Doctors Surgery, Ambulance, Dentist, the Registrar's office, the East Ayrshire District Office, Police, Community Education, Drug and Alcohol Awareness. The facility also incorporates a range of industrial units and a business technology and training centre to local businesses and individuals.

**Gairloch Community Learning Centre**

3.16 Gairloch Community Learning Centre (GCLC) is a virtual facility based in Gairloch High School. It has no specific facilities of its own but utilises the school and other community facilities. The project is operated by The Highland Council and brings together a number of existing council services targeting adult education specifically in Information Technology. The project is for 3 years and is funded through the New Opportunities Fund. The majority of the courses are delivered through Gairloch High School but the community served extends from Aultbea to Kinlochewe with occasional attendance from participants out with this area.

3.17 A broad range of IT courses are provided by the GCLC, some of which are tailored to particular groups such as farmers/crofters and the over 50’s in order to attract all sectors of the community. In addition one-to-one tuition is offered. Courses are run at the evenings and at weekends in order to fit in with the availability of the school facilities.

3.18 The project was developed by The Highland Council Community Education and Education Services who brought together similar (but different) projects in Brora, Fortrose and Gairloch. These projects each develop the community learning facilities within the Community Schools. While there was a certain amount of consultation with the local library, local community education staff and school the project was developed centrally by senior education department staff.

**Kemnay Youth Café**

3.19 Kemnay Youth Café (KYC) was opened in 2004, and aims to provide a venue for a range of youth services and activities in Kemnay village. Located in the old police house (the other half of which remains the local police station) the Café and related activities are managed by a series of committees, the majority being the youth who take part. Interestingly, the youth themselves requested that the venue was developed outwith the (community) school premises where the lead organisation Kemnay Community Learning Centre is based. The Community Learning Centre provides core staff to assist the KYC, including youth workers. KCLC also provides links to community learning activities, the drugs project (which includes self-referral and referral from GP’s, Social Work, and other services), and Family Support, among others.

3.20 Grampian Police have made the building available, and support was also raised from Kemnay Community Council, Kemnay Church, Kemnay Network Development Group, Aberdeenshire Council, Community Safety Partnership, the Alcohol Drugs and HIV Forum, International Paper and the Garioch Area Committee in addition to that from individuals and through on-going fund-raising activities of the young people themselves.
**Loganlea One Stop Shop**

3.21 This one stop shop is owned by Loganlea Miners' Welfare Charitable Society, a registered charity that has over 40 years experience offering community based response to need in this rural, formerly mining, community with a population of around 1300. The Society set out to redevelop the Miners' Welfare into a truly multi-functional community facility, open to all, with the ability to change to meet the diverse needs of this former mining community through the Loganlea One Stop Shop (LOSS) Project. The project is undertaken in association with the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO).

3.22 The main priorities of the LOSS are to:

- Make the OSS the focal point of the village
- Act as a catalyst for sustainable development of this ex-industrial community
- Improve facilities for local people in response to need
- Make the building safe, attractive, and more appropriate for its use
- Extend access to the building, both in terms of users and time
- Bring local community services under one roof

3.23 The stand-alone building houses outreach services from coalfield-specific social workers and the local Citizens Advice Bureau; providing a computer for community use; a collection point for the credit union, games room and fitness suite, youth facilities, a bar (it is the only licensed social/ function facility in the village) and development of day-care provision for older people. A food co-operative was planned, but has not yet come to fruition.

**Mearns Healthy Living Network**

3.24 The Mearns Area Project (MAP) received a five-year grant in 2002 from the New Opportunities Fund to establish a Healthy Living Network for older people in the Mearns area. MAP is itself an initiative of Aberdeenshire Council (Community Education) and local interests in partnership with representatives from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. The Mearns Healthy Living Network (HLN) is one of nearly 50 such Health Living Centres in Scotland and nearly 400 throughout the UK.

3.25 The MHLN builds on existing services as well as developing new services and activities. The following are regarded as project priorities:

- Information on services/events/activities in the area
- Transport issues
- Shopping service
- Diet advice
- Volunteering opportunities and training
- Exercise classes
- Educational activities
- Social activities
- Handy person scheme
• Pet care scheme
• Buddying scheme
• Older people’s network

3.26 Mearns Healthy Living Network recently undertook its own Social Audit which was peer reviewed and given a positive bill of health, although suggestions were made about reviewing some services and delivery mechanisms.

*Pultneytown People’s Project*

3.27 Pultneytown is one of the most severely deprived areas in Scotland with problems of unemployment, debt and drug abuse. The schools have consistently poor ratings on standardised tests.

3.28 The Pultneytown People’s Project (PPP) is a community-based initiative which leads the social development and economic growth of the Pultney area of Wick in Caithness. The initiative, which has 14 staff, has a number of different projects that it operates and services that it provides aimed at improving the lives of people who live in the area. It is currently housed in a community facility comprising what was formerly a four-room flat in an area of social housing in Pultneytown. The PPP’s strategic aims are:

- To ensure that Pultneytown becomes a better and cleaner environment to live in
- To encourage and support educational courses to assist the unemployed gain employment
- Work with agencies to encourage employment in Wick
- Work with agencies to ensure the established play parks are safe and maintained
- Develop funding and establish a community centre for the whole community
- Work with agencies to support facilities for the youth in the area
- Work with agencies to tackle social inclusion and deprivation in particular within 5-12 years

3.29 The initiative runs a couple of key projects described below.

3.30 The Homelink Project was set up to ensure that housing support was available to young people between the ages of 16 and 25 living in Caithness who have their own tenancies. Some referrals are also made through Criminal Justice and also through the Mental Health team. There are 6/7 support workers who provide 150 hours of direct support to this client group every week. Support with budgeting, life skills such as cooking, time management, training and personal development is provided to over 40 clients. This is mostly provided in the client’s own home but some joint sessions are held in the community house and a number of users are now undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. The Homelink support workers were all recruited from the local area and were selected partly on their ability to understand through personal experience the problems encountered by the client group. The majority of the workers are now undertaking social science courses through the Open University. Linked to this project PPP collect and distribute second hand furniture and other goods to help young people when they set up home.
3.31 The Morning and After School Club project is run through the South School in Wick. It runs five days a week both before and after school hours and the club is registered with the Care commission and the After School Federation. A holiday club is also run as part of this project. There are over 100 children registered as users with the club. Breakasts and a healthy snack after school are provided as part of the service. There are 4 members of staff who work on the project.

3.32 In addition Pultneytown People’s Project operate a Ladies Club for the over 50’s twice a week and community events (e.g. fun days and bonfire night) and trips (bus trips to Inverness and other attractions such as Shin Falls). Training events have been run in conjunction with North Highland College, including IT courses, Team Leading qualifications etc. Other organisations such as Careers Scotland and the local MSP use the office for meeting clients. In addition support is provided to any local resident who requires support with debt and benefit checks and assist with form filling, this is becoming a regular demand on time.

3.33 The Highland Council has recently appointed a Community Warden who will have a role in improving the general environment of the Pultneytown area. This post will use the community house as a base and work with Pultneytown People’s Project in identifying environmental improvements.

**Voluntary Action Lewis**

3.34 Voluntary Action Lewis (VAL) evolved from the former Lewis Council of Social Service. It exists to support the voluntary sector and to promote voluntary action of all types on the Isle of Lewis. The nature of the region means that many social and care activities can only exist through self-help and voluntary organisations, but the small population and geography means that specialist groups are often quite isolated and low-key in their activities.

3.35 VAL has office space and drop-in premises in Stornoway that are used by local voluntary groups all over the island, and offers a wide range of support for the voluntary sector, including funding advice, community development assistance, and relevant skills training. The office base has a range of available facilities and resources including office technology, (from envelopes and flipcharts to boardroom and videoconference facilities), and staff. The organisation attempts to provide links and partnership for voluntary groups covering a very wide range of activities from transport, housing, gardening, and social inclusion projects to more widespread practical support for scattered local societies and groups. VAL has extended its web-based activities in recent years, and provides IT support services for other voluntary groups that cannot manage their own email or web pages. Training in IT skills is also available, as well as other forms of community involvement.

3.36 Voluntary Action Lewis aims to provide a one-door support service for all kinds of voluntary organisations and activities in Lewis, and to enable these organisations to make relevant contacts with similar interests in other areas of the country.
CHAPTER FOUR      KEY THEMES ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH

In this Chapter we turn to the core issues that we were asked to investigate, and draw evidence from a detailed analysis of the case studies that helps to illuminate those issues. This detailed analysis can be found in Appendix 1.

Issues of initiation, conception, design, location and layout

4.1 Although rarely as clear-cut as this suggests, four cases were largely initiated by local people through community organisations or other local projects; three were initiated by local people in strong partnership with local authority representatives or agencies; three were essentially ‘top down’, being largely initiated by local authorities or agencies with limited community involvement. In at least one case (Ardnamurchan Community School) the role of the local Councillor over many years was probably crucial. Nevertheless, the evidence even from the more ‘bottom up’ initiatives is that some local opposition to any such proposals is inevitable. This opposition may be about proposed location or siting, because ‘incomers’ are at the core of the initiative, because of denial of the problems that the one stop shop seeks to solve, or for some other reason. It can come from the local community as well as from public bodies and major funding agencies. In the case of funding agencies, facilities serving relatively small communities in remote places (such as Coigach) face difficult questions of ‘value-for-money’ which are not easy to address.

4.2 When it comes to buildings that are to be used by very different groups of people, at different times of the day, and for very different purposes, as most OSS are, issues of design and layout are extremely important. The close and effective relationship between the community, architect and builder in the case of Coigach Community Hall was favourably commented on, and we did not receive any critical comments. However, this was not the case in the Ardnamurchan Community School, nor at Loganlea. In Ardnamurchan, the fact that this was funded by the public-private partnership scheme led to constraints on opening and closing times, while practices and regulations around mixing school and community users at the same time or in the same space, and around health and safety issues constrained community uses. With one exception, the shared waiting room for medical and non-medical users, Dalmellington Centre also received good comments on design. In the case of the Kemnay Youth Café, the gift of a two-storey house has created some problems in running the project that were not anticipated. However, in this case also, young people were closely involved in the design and refurbishment.

4.3 In Coigach, design issues were prominent – clearly much careful though was given to this by the local community, and they hired a good architect and builder. Because of strong local music traditions, we also noted a strong focus on acoustics during the design process. A particularly impressive feature at Goigach was the card system allowing users to be tracked automatically.

4.4 Both Pultneytown Peoples Project and Loganlea faced problems or constraints caused by using existing buildings that were not designed for their present purposes. Pultneytown Peoples project are currently fund raising for a new purpose designed building, and Loganlea has undertaken a recent refurbishment.
4.5 As we have observed, some one stop shops were initiated and developed by the local community (Coigach, Loganlea, Pultneytown Peoples Project) while some others were ‘top-down’ and imposed on the community sometimes with little consultation and community involvement, perhaps because of a funding opportunity (Gairloch Community Learning Centre, Dalmellington, Mearns Healthy Living Network). In yet others more of a partnership approach emerged early, with at least significant local consultation and input (Ardnamurchan Community School, Kemnay Youth Cafe, Voluntary Action Lewis). One also notes that in the case of community schools, problems have arisen in getting buy-in by other local service providers, such as doctors and nurses, and that in all such cases the school and its client group take precedence over other members of the community both in terms of access and in terms of management – the school (and the head teacher) is in charge. In the case of ‘top-down’ initiatives, trust took some time to be established in the local communities after the project was started. The five-year core funding for Mearns Healthy Living Network allowed a longer period to build trust of communities, clients and partners, and had recruitment and retention advantages.

**Services provided by the one stop shop**

4.6 An impressive range of no less than 38 different services is provided within our case studies. These are categorised as follows (the number of cases providing the service listed is given in brackets, where these are provided by more than one case):

- **Education and Child Care**: secondary school, nursery school and/or playgroup (2); mothers and toddlers group, morning and after school club (2); community education activities (4); further and higher education (3); community learning; computer & IT training (5).
- **Information and Advice**: drugs, alcohol and AIDS awareness and counselling (3); library (2); information on local services, events and activities; computer & internet access (4).
- **Health and Care of the Elderly**: health centre, surgery, nursing centre, ambulance, dentist (4); social activities for older people; day care for elderly; handy person scheme for older people; older people’s network; shopping schemes for the elderly, fitness centre.
- **Other care and support services**: social work support; drug users and rehabilitation (2); support for voluntary sector, including drop-in centre and IT support; key worker housing; housing support with life skills, time management and other training.
- **Cultural and Recreational Activities and Services**: youth club activities (3); ladies club; theatre and performance facilities (2); sports and fitness facilities and activities (4); tearoom, catering, bar (5); village hall activities; exhibition centre; space for private weddings & functions (2).
- **Other Local Services**: pet care scheme; credit union; environmental improvement; office space; post office and shop; local authority district office; police office; small workshops.

4.7 With only one exception, each OSS offers a range of these services, thus typically being multifunctional centres.
**Problems in operation and management**

4.8 Many of the problems here arise because of very different administrative cultures and/or structures pertaining to different providers sharing the same facility. The classic is the ‘community school’, where the problem is essentially solved so far by the education authority taking charge of the building and usually strongly leading any management group through the school head. However, issues also arise where the health services are using community facilities.

4.9 Sometimes these issues are related to legislation and/or established practices (e.g. those dealing with safety in schools, school hours, health and safety, or food hygiene, and Public-Private financed buildings), sometimes they relate to design of buildings or access, and sometimes they relate to sensitivities of users (e.g. people visiting doctors not wanting this to be known in the community, or by their families). The cases show that for these reasons it is usually hard to integrate different public, private and community services in one building, and easier to deal only with public services, or alternatively with community services, or services focused on a particular segment of the population such as the elderly. However, the case of Coigach in particular shows that such problems can sometimes be overcome, to the benefit of the local community.

4.10 Particular problems highlighted in the case studies include:

- Gaps between school and evening youth activities (Ardnamurchan Community School)
- Management of multi-age and status users and uses (Ardnamurchan Community School)
- Problems of availability of reasonable cost staff housing (Ardnamurchan Community School)
- Pressures on staff to provide a variety of after-school services (Ardnamurchan Community School)
- Problems for providers (Coigach Community Hall)
- Who is in control of the building (Gairloch Community Learning Centre)
- Management issues raised by a shared facility (Gairloch Community Learning Centre)
- Accessing buildings with multi-purposes – reliance on janitors and security firms (Gairloch Community Learning Centre and Ardnamurchan Community School)
- Opening hours determined by external agents (Dalmellington)
- Dealing with disruptive youth (Kemnay Youth Cafe)
- Satisfying the different transport (and space) needs of different users of a community mini-bus (Mearns Healthy Living Network)

**Financial issues and sustainability**

*Sources of capital and revenue funding, and application processes*

4.11 Rural communities that are scattered, sometimes socially divided, and having small populations may have a considerable task to convince large scale and usually urban-based funders of their credibility, and/or value for money. This was certainly
the case in Coigach and with Pultneytown Peoples Project. The role of volunteers with both energy and fund-raising expertise is usually crucial. Application processes, forms, etc can be tortuous, and timely and expert help (e.g. from such as the Community Land Unit of Highland and Islands Enterprise or from the local Council or New Opportunities Fund) can be critical. Moreover, some projects suffered from cash flow problems because of payment delays by funders (Pultneytown Peoples Project), although others were able to cope because they had their own funds in the bank (Coigach Community Hall). In the case of Kemnay Youth Cafe the tortuous process of applying for the ‘Wider Access Fund’ was noted – this involves an intermediary body in that case Langstane Housing to sponsor the application.

4.12 Community Schools are now funded by the Public Private Partnership scheme, which imposes constraints of design, opening hours, access and management on non-school users and uses. Penal charges can apply when events extend beyond normal opening hours.

4.13 Revenue funding is a common problem – in some cases complex management is undertaken by volunteers, but this is reckoned to be unsustainable in the longer run. Thus Coigach Community Hall is considering means of hiring a manager at least on a half-time basis. In almost all cases, one stop shops are accessing short-term (commonly 3-year) funding schemes to support at least some activities, without any certainty of subsequent funding. However, Mearns Healthy Living Network had received five year funding, and respondents noted the benefits of this in terms of staff recruitment and time to build trust between partners and with client groups. In one case at least, the whole one stop shop project was clearly ‘funding led’ – an opportunistic official in the local council spotted an opportunity and exploited it.

4.14 Community led initiatives have displayed a number of difficulties in securing funding due to the mistrust of funding agencies – despite the fact that months if not years of research has gone into a bid for funding.

Projects led by sources of capital funding

4.15 Of the case studies analysed, only one could be said to have been truly ‘funding led’ in the sense that a funding stream appeared from a major body which led directly to an application and subsequent funding. This was Gairloch Community Learning Centre, which was established under a New Opportunities Fund funding scheme as part of a bid for several similar learning centres, and was thus established in a top-down way, and with very little local consultation or other involvement. In this case the highly specific nature of the funding restricted its use to provision of computer classes, which was not necessarily what people want or need (for local employment). Mearns Healthy Living Network did respond to a specific New Opportunities Fund funding stream for ‘healthy living centres’ but they had already identified the issue and client group as a priority under the aegis of the parent body. However, once established, many one stop shops take advantage of the plethora of short term funding streams, often one to three years in duration, in a more or less targeted and strategic way. Most, indeed are using such short-term funding to support core long term work or staff, which leaves them vulnerable.
**Short-term nature of much revenue funding**

4.16 The problem of short-term funding for what are evidently functions or services needed in the long term is endemic, especially in one stop shops that are community initiated and run. This is a critical issue, for example, with Pultneytown Peoples Project. Even in one stop shops that are almost wholly publicly funded, such as the Ardnamurchan Community School, a key post – the Centre Manager – is on short term and insecure funding.

**Charging systems and philosophy**

4.17 One of the most interesting charging schemes was the Coigach Community Hall. It operated by keeping prices cheap but ensuring high numbers of users as a result. Thus the Hall was still able to make a profit and users were happy with the low fees they had to pay to use the facility.

4.18 It would seem that this might be a better philosophy than charging nothing at all, which is the philosophy of many of the grant led initiatives, which unsurprisingly are wholly dependent on future streams of public funding to survive (e.g. Gairloch Community Learning Centre). However, it has to be recognised that this is not the solution for all kinds of one stop shops, especially those dealing with public information or other public services of a ‘public good’ nature and provided without charge elsewhere. In such cases, short term funding streams should more properly be transformed into longer term budgetary commitments.

**Cost-sharing and budget constraints**

4.19 Cost Sharing and Budget Constraints exist in most one stop shops in one form or another (Ardnamurchan Community School, Kemnay Youth Cafe, Mearns Healthy Living Network and others), and are part of one stop shop ‘life’.

**Sustainability**

4.20 Sustainability for all the projects is heavily dependent upon finance and/or substantial volunteers support which is often difficult to sustain. It could be argued that short-term funding does little to help these communities progress. The lack of availability of long term funding means that it is very difficult to have a long-term development plan or strategy. Nor are long-term strategies helped by financial aspects which are not transparent to the manager of projects – an issue in the more top-down one stop shops such as Gairloch Community Learning Centre. Both Coigach Community Hall and Loganlea have developed sources of internal revenue which help long term sustainability as well as independence.

**Constraints on development of services and activities**

4.21 Key constraints facing several of our case studies concerned reliance on short-term funding, inadequate premises that were not designed for the purpose, reliance on volunteers and shortages of volunteers and especially those willing to serve on committees, or, what amounts to the same thing, heavy reliance on a few individuals.
4.22 The nature of the original funding can prevent the flexibility needed to respond to changing needs in the community, or the need for progression among learners (e.g. Gairloch Community Learning Centre). In the case of Gairloch Community Learning Centre it was felt that the establishment of a ‘users’ group’ might be helpful in this respect.

4.23 Several case studies were constrained by legislation or practice or lack of people in the locality holding relevant qualifications to maintain or offer services (e.g. health and safety, childcare, or hygiene). In one case, the decision of one arm of government dealing with transport grants had cut-across the aims of the community school funded by another arm of government.

4.24 The case studies have in most cases extended the range of services available to the community, or prevented services from closing (Acharacle Community Company, Coigach Community Hall, Loganlea) rather than rationalised them or reduced costs for providers (Gairloch Community Learning Centre, Ardnamurchan Community School). They have also been a means of ‘joining up’ specialised services that fail to meet cross-cutting needs (e.g. Pultneytown Peoples Project, Mearns Healthy Living Network). However, in one case fears were expressed that a new community library facility would lead to potential future displacement of some Mobile Services (Ardnamurchan Community School).

4.25 Some case studies lack the time and other resources to work with groups such as young people (secondary school age and just beyond) to develop new services and activities to meet their needs (e.g. PPP).

**Advantages of one stop shops**

4.26 Users mainly refer to the advantages of local access; provision of new facilities and services; better quality services; greater user-friendliness; greater flexibility; proximity to other services; savings in time, travel or expense; social inclusion; and improved community confidence and influence over service provision. Table 4.1 below provides an overview of these main advantages.

4.27 Providers also stressed better quality services; local delivery; social inclusion; and user-friendliness. However, they also emphasised the importance of synergy with other partners and providers including scope for collaborative working. In one case also, cost-effectiveness was raised. Finally, the one stop shop was seen as providing a focus for community activity in general.

4.28 For the most part then, the advantages to both providers and users mainly refer to improvement of services, and better coordination and cooperation between services and service providers. They do not seem to be generally seen as cost-saving structures. However, advantages are often quite specific to cases and contexts, and care should be taken when generalising.

**Disadvantages of one stop shops**

4.29 One stop shops also have some disadvantages to users and/or providers, as outlined in Table 4.2 below, although these are also quite specific to cases and
4.30 Users most often mentioned the issues of central location – a one stop shop has to be located somewhere, and in sparsely populated yet scattered communities this location is bound to be more convenient to some than to others. They also stressed the difficulties of access to the services, most often in the two cases where schools were providing services to the whole community and where there are also special problems relating to the ‘risk society’. Again in relation to schools, it is clear that not all people are comfortable receiving a wide range of services within schools. Finally, some people are concerned about the lack of privacy (especially in relation to visits to a doctor or nurse) where common waiting rooms exist (although this did not seem to be a problem at Coigach).

4.31 Providers also recognised issues of lack of compatibility between school and community uses and users, and with shared space (or lack of dedicated space). In the case of a few service providers in community facilitates (typically medical services), there were problems from lack of broadband access which meant that the necessary records in the home surgery could not be realistically accessed. For Doctors, with more and more records in computerised form, and more and more dependence on IT in general, this seems to be a growing problem. Problems with staff recruitment and retention were also raised, although these problems are not, perhaps specific to one stop shops – short-term funding and problems of high cost of rural housing and house sites being the main issues.
Table 4.1: Advantages of one stop shops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages of One Stop Shops</th>
<th>To Users</th>
<th>To Providers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local access</strong></td>
<td>(library facilities; computers and internet; doctor’s surgery; training, further and higher education; access to training and other opportunities not normally available; local delivery of services/courses)</td>
<td><strong>Local delivery of services</strong> (facility enabling local service delivery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New facilities or services</strong></td>
<td>(sports and recreational facilities, internet, entertainment, education &amp; training)</td>
<td><strong>Synergy with other services/providers</strong> (synergy; collaborative working; easier referrals; improved links between providers and users – fewer problems with tenancies, rent arrears etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greater flexibility</strong></td>
<td>(drop-in arrangements to surgery; flexible support to meet clients’ needs.)</td>
<td><strong>Enables higher quality services to be provided</strong> (dedicated space providing a confidential and comfortable doctors surgery; dedicated space enabling static library, can also provide library events; Good environment; improved services to community; improved success of community service and have minimised re-offending; school has benefited from obtaining new training accreditation software)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>More user-friendly</strong></td>
<td>(user-friendly interface with public services and bureaucracy; friendly accessible support with finances, budgeting, domestic issues)</td>
<td><strong>More cost-effective</strong> (cost-effectiveness; better use of space and facilities, bringing the community further into the school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher quality facilities/services</strong></td>
<td>(space for community functions; better pre-school provision; easier access – under one roof; better access to information; small groups in training enabling more dedicated support)</td>
<td><strong>Social inclusion</strong> (disabled access; access to previously inaccessible user groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proximity to other facilities/services</strong></td>
<td>(close to school providing synergy &amp; extended facilities; training delivered in a location close to other community facilities)</td>
<td><strong>More user-friendly</strong> (user-friendly space)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social inclusion</strong></td>
<td>(IT courses free to users therefore allows access to all, including low income user groups; free or very low cost services, essential for low income target groups)</td>
<td><strong>Provides a focus for community activity</strong> (focus for community activity in an area previously underserved)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Savings in time, cost, travel</strong></td>
<td>(saved weekly boarding and/or long travel times for secondary school children; time-saving)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved community confidence and influence</strong></td>
<td>(improved local confidence; direct user input to the development of services and activities)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.2: Disadvantages of one stop shops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages of One Stop Shops</th>
<th>To Users</th>
<th>To Providers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centralised location is good for some, bad for others</strong> (all facilities in one place, means same people always have to travel; possible displacement of mobile services (library); little outreach work, limited transport from other areas)</td>
<td></td>
<td>School and community use not always compatible (library would ideally have more dedicated space; centre manager on a short-term contract; school use dominates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access is sometimes restricted</strong> (opening and closing times too rigid; No access to community members who are not school children in school hours; youth currently have a 2 hour+ gap between end of school and beginning of youth evening events; no toilet facilities linked to library during school hours; no child care provision)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ICT in remote communities is not fast enough (full access to GP electronic records not possible thus limiting service provided; no appointments system means inability to prepare background data and organise time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schools are not always comfortable places for non-school activities</strong> (being based in a school may put some people off; limited space means that some users feel like they are imposing on staff when they drop in; youth deliberately chose their café outside the school)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff recruitment can be a problem (short-term funding; difficulty of staff accommodation due to shortage of housing and house sites at affordable prices in rural areas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common facilities can lead to lack of privacy</strong> (sharing waiting room with surgery; lack of privacy in waiting room; lack of seating in waiting room;)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Common space can mean no dedicated space (no dedicated space can be a limitation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disadvantages can continue</strong> (Homelink clients can become dependent on their support workers)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Contact with clients may diminish (can mean less direct contact with clients – possibility of becoming slightly removed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Success and its measurement, monitoring and evaluation

4.32 The sector is marked by a general lack of monitoring and evaluation, mainly because everyone involved is under too much pressure delivering services and raising revenue funding. There are however some good examples of how to make monitoring easier (Coigach Community Hall’s use of electronic cards which provide access and record use of the various services and facilities being one). Those project with New Opportunities Fund funding or similar are generally required to monitor use and users.

### Further support needed for one stop shops

4.33 In terms of further support needed, the main issues arising relate to (a) the need for more stable and secure revenue funding, especially in community run one stop shops, and (b) the need for more documentation and access to good practice in such things as design of buildings, management of different user needs, fund raising, and coping with regulations. Regulations should be more sensitive to the needs and situation of one stop shops relying heavily on volunteers, and to the realities of rural
life.

Other issues

4.34 Other issues arising from the case studies are:

- Some one stop shops target particular groups and not the community as a whole, e.g. children, young people, ‘disadvantaged’ people, older people.
- External bodies (Public-Private Partnership, Councils) control part or all of the functioning of the one stop shop.
- Some one stop shops experience difficulties getting – and retaining – professional staff, for a range of different reasons including the short-term nature of much one stop shop funding and the problems of rural house prices.

Overall assessments

4.35 Despite a number of difficulties, one stop shops are generally a success. However, they are not commonly a way of saving money and can be expensive to set up and maintain. Rather they have improved access to services, or improved the quality or range of service provision – sometimes both at once. In other cases, they have prevented the loss of local services such as doctor’s surgeries. Customers (‘clients’) and providers (partners and staff) generally view them positively, although they should not be seen as the answer to all problems of rural service delivery, especially in areas with remote and scattered populations.

4.36 It could be argued, however, that the most successful of the one-stop shops are those that are community initiated, led, planned and run, or at least where the community has been fully involved in the planning and design of the OSS. The local community knows best what it needs, and where and how these needs can be best met. On the other hand, the Dalmellington case illustrates that bringing public services together under one roof in an accessible and convenient building can have very positive outcomes for local people.

4.37 These and other issues are explored in greater depth in the concluding Chapter.
Conclusions

5.1 The evidence is that a rather broad range of different types of one stop shop have proven themselves to be useful means of improving both the delivery and the co-ordination of services in a wide range of rural contexts.

5.2 What follows is a summary of the critical factors associated with establishing and sustaining one stop shops.

5.3 The conditions under which useful one-stop-shops can emerge and flourish include:
   - Community desire for service provision of this kind in their area
   - Strong community involvement in the pre-establishment, establishment and operational phases
   - Support in cash, kind, and for use of facilities from the relevant central and local government departments and agencies
   - Careful attention to design and siting of buildings
   - Where possible, community owned and run facilities that have on-going revenue streams, which provide core revenue for running costs including maintenance and improvements, as well as revenue towards other community activities and projects

5.4 The kind of support from government and other funders that can best facilitate sustainable one-stop-shops has the following characteristics:
   - Responsive to community needs and supportive of community decision-making
   - Long term rather than short term support including capital cost funding if needed and revenue support if the one-stop-shop is serving on-going needs that are served by public services or serving disadvantaged communities
   - Providing a just, equitable and democratic framework for community run one stop shop, for example, a company limited by guarantee with arrangements for the election of directors

5.5 Central government must also be more ‘joined up’ in considering how its funding programmes, services, regulations and sectoral departments and agencies impact on local communities, and on one stop shop projects. For example, the Community School in Ardnamurchan suffers because parents in Kilchoan are able to send their children to Tobermory school in the ferry supported by a three-year transport grant. Similar issues arise about regulations that can adversely affect service provision, especially where volunteers are involved (as noted in the case of food hygiene regulations in at least one case). Encouragement of liaison between local authorities and community-run one stop shops needs to be strengthened.

5.6 Key problem areas with start-ups include:
   - Opposition from segments of the community
5.7 Key problems in running one-stop shops include:

- Difficulties in maintaining enthusiasm and time commitments among volunteers – particularly if the one-stop shop is a success and management becomes a major issue
- Apathy among members of the community where an one-stop shop settles into a routine
- Staffing where funding is short-term
- Housing for staff in remote areas
- Legislation that hampers recruitment of volunteers and other staff
- Legislation that restricts activities within the one-stop shop, particularly in relation to catering and health & safety
- Reconciling the needs of different users, especially in the situation of the use of community schools
- Public-private partnership arrangements which limit access times to buildings
- Securing an appropriate mix of activities/services that are complementary rather than conflicting in their purpose
- Where partners are very unequal in terms of access to capital or revenue funding, then views of well resourced partners can prevail over those with fewer resources

5.8 Other issues include:

- There are actual or potential disadvantages as well as advantages to one-stop shops. One is that some people can be worse off in cases where services are centralised in a one-stop-shop. For example, the creation of a library facility in a one-stop-shop may mean the ultimate loss of a mobile library service. Although a better service may result for those able to access the one-stop-shop, for those without cars or access to transport, who are housebound, or remotely located, this may mean a loss of access to any library service. Since such groups will generally lack material resources or be otherwise disadvantaged, the consequences may be an increase in disadvantage
- There is scope for more interaction and peer group learning between one stop
shops. For example, it seems that there is no interaction or even knowledge of one stop shops aimed at youth in rural areas.

Policy recommendations

5.9. A number of key policy recommendations follow from the findings and analysis summarised above. These are:

- One stop shops can be very effective in improving service provision, and so public policy should be supportive. However, one stop shops are a means of generating and maintaining community involvement in improving the range and quality of services and achieving greater integration on the ground rather than a means of reducing public expenditure in rural areas or centralising public services and this should be recognised;

- One stop shops should not be regarded as a ‘quick-fix’ for the problems of rural service provision; they need careful analysis of the needs to be met, sound design and planning which involves potential users as well as the providers, and provision for future expansion.

- Public policy could support the development of community run one stop shops by providing the kind of support provided by the Community Land Unit of Highlands and Islands Enterprise for community land buy-outs. This support could include support for visits to existing community-based one stop shops in other areas, support for feasibility studies and legal advice on constitutions for instance;

- Public funding for community-led one stop shops needs to address both capital costs and longer-term funding needs. It must be flexible enough to meet community needs and support their decisions – one size does not fit all, either in terms of the form that one stop shops take, or in the nature of the community or partnership that is promoting them;

- Public capital funding schemes should avoid over-prescription, leading to one stop shop proposals that are essentially top-down and ‘funding-led’, and should encourage significant community and agency involvement during the planning and design stages;

- Public funding for revenue needs of one stop shops must move from the current situation of one stop shop-dependency on short term funding for delivery of core local services, to serving long term needs;

- Policy to encourage Community Schools, while admirable in principle, fails to recognise some very real problems and issues with this model. The policy needs to be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary group that can also consider community and other user and provider viewpoints from a wider perspective.

- Community-led one stop shops need to consider their pricing and costing strategies carefully and where appropriate, with a view to improving sustainability;
One stop shops dealing with particular client groups, e.g. small communities, young people, and older people, can benefit greatly by arrangements for visits during the inception and planning stages, and on-going networking with regular meetings between staff and directors etc. This will facilitate peer-group learning and exchange of experience.
REFERENCES


Critical Factors in the Success of One Stop Shops as a Model of Service Delivery within Rural Locations

2007