

Community Development  
Foundation

# Corporate Plan 2008–2009

CDF is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by Communities and Local Government and a registered charity, number 306130.



strengthening  
communities  
for 40 years

# Executive Summary

I am pleased to present CDF's corporate plan for 2008 – 09. This marks the review and development of our strategic priorities since the production of our first corporate plan in 2006 and subsequent move to our new sponsor department, Communities and Local Government, later that year.

Across the political spectrum, at all levels of government, there is an increasing appetite for finding ways to empower communities and encourage local action, so that neighbourhoods flourish and communities and citizens have the opportunities that they need to prosper.

CDF has a vision of **'an inclusive and just society'** and our mission is to **'empower people to influence decisions that affect their lives'**. We continue to work towards our three strategic aims: **engaged, cohesive and strong communities** and all of these both reflect and support Communities and Local Government's own strategic priorities.

We have championed community development for over 40 years. It is an exciting period for our organisation as the need for community development manifests throughout the empowerment agenda. The empowerment of citizens is, therefore, the golden thread running through our work.

To help determine our strategic priorities, we asked ourselves the question: **'Empowered citizens and communities – how will we get there?'**

We identified seven key delivery components necessary to navigate the complex route to empowerment:

- Policy and guidance, to map the way
- Research, so we can judge how far we have travelled
- Learning, to provide direction
- Culture change, to energise the journey
- Knowledge, so we can tackle different situations and communicate our experiences to others
- Investment, so we are well-equipped to meet the scale of the challenge
- Partnership and collaboration, for a multi-skilled team

We know our destination, but need flexibility to go off-road (not off-course) to deal with new challenges as they arise; headline activity is outlined on page 7, with work on the horizon also indicated.

CDF's cross-cutting aim is to increase awareness of the community development occupation as a fundamental lever to achieving empowerment. We will improve understanding within public bodies of the differences between, and complementary nature of, expert community development workers and those needing to adopt community development approaches into their own specialism or profession.

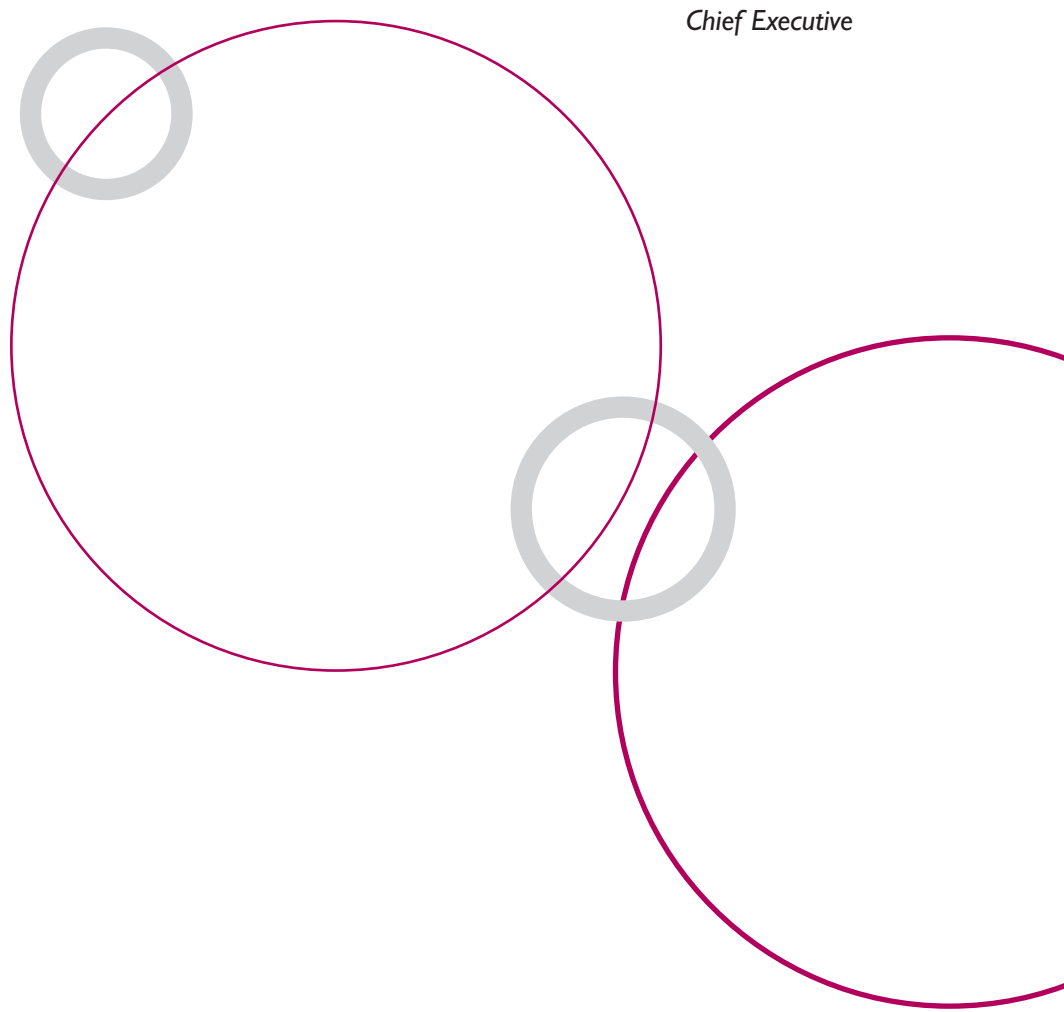
We have a vision for CDF as an organisation too – one that is respected, credible and viable. To achieve this we have been reviewing our internal operations so we can meet growing demand for CDF's knowledge and expertise. This corporate plan is a catalyst for realigning our resources.

We will focus these resources on four business areas: providing policy advice, research, programmes, and products. We will ensure that the development, delivery, analysis and information required for these services is based on credible practice-based evidence. Whilst as a Non Departmental Public Body our key stakeholder is Government, we will work closely with networks and organisations from across all sectors to ensure breadth, depth and quality in our activities.

As a result we will provide our sponsor unit in Communities and Local Government and other key stakeholders with an enhanced ability to analyse, test and evaluate its policy development and implementation, helping to extend empowerment reach and impact across the UK.



Alison Seabrooke  
Chief Executive



# Recent achievements

## Engaged Communities

- Contributed to the development and implementation of the Local Government White Paper
- Instrumental in shaping National Indicator 4: ‘% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality’, now selected by over 80 Local Authorities in England
- Contributed to the statutory guidance for Duty to Involve
- Contributed to the Department of Health LINks guidance
- Established and delivered the first year of the *National Empowerment Partnership* with cross-sector consortia in every English region
- The *Come Outside!* model was adopted as a key environmental inclusion target by the Welsh Assembly Government

## Cohesive Communities

- Helped develop and programme managed central government’s first £14m faiths funding programme, the *Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund*, providing grants and support to 923 groups over two years
- Helped develop and programme managed *Connecting Communities Plus*, providing £3m in grants to 314 BME groups over three years
- Evaluated these two grant programmes and used this information to inform the Commission for Integration and Cohesion’s report ‘Our Shared Future’, single identity group funding guidance, as well as our new Faiths in Action grant programme
- Hosted a national conference ‘Integration – if not now, when?’ in 2007

## Stronger Communities and Community Sector

- Facilitated and managed *Every Action Counts*, drawing together 20 national community sector membership organisations, reaching into thousands of community organisations, to improve sustainable development at local level
- Brought together key community development organisations and practitioners to agree for the first time the strategic challenges, opportunities and priorities for community development, leading to the seminal publication *Community Development Challenge*
- Embedded the end of the six-year, £58m *Neighbourhood Support Fund* into Local Area Agreement funding, to mainstream community work with young people not in education, employment or training
- Published a suite of *publications, reports, briefing papers and toolkits*, some in collaboration with national partners, and implemented training on a range of topics for the community development sector

# The Continuing Need for Community Development

The dynamism of 21st century Britain brings benefits as well as challenges, many of which community development approaches can help tackle. The philosophical argument for applying community development techniques – engagement, participation, consultation, involvement, partnership working, conflict resolution – has been largely won.

The professional practice assists people to act together on a local or other common basis to overcome disadvantage and improve the conditions of their lives. Community development can be a powerful influence for modernisation of government and public services. It is integral to the success of regeneration activity. It works particularly through local groups and networks which form the community sector, the largest part of the voluntary and community sector. It also works within local public authorities and with others to assist engagement with, and understanding of, communities.

## Partnering with the public sector

All political parties generally accept that regeneration and development has to be done with and through communities. However, the implementation issue is still only addressed at the margins.

There are clear messages from central government that local public sector relationships with, and services for, communities need to undergo a change in culture and approach. However, the reality on the ground does not reflect this. Large scale community engagement strategies are a relatively new requirement of local public bodies; there is often an assumption by government that the skills, knowledge, competencies and culture required for this new way of working are already widely available within the public realm *and* among individual community members. Research shows that this is not the case within both formal, and informal democratic settings. Many front-line workers, representatives, leaders, managers and practitioners are unsure of, or lack confidence in, applying community development approaches. Where they are adopted, they tend to be isolated and un-strategic.

In addition, established community development workers have growing expectations placed upon them to show the value of their work and to be able to respond quickly to changes in local circumstances. This is against a background of limited, short-term resources, lack of support, visibility and strategy.

## The whole is greater than the sum of the parts

CDF has 40 years experience of working in the field of community development and empowerment, so we know that government policy and statutory instruments are only half of what is necessary to achieve empowered communities; local champions and practitioners are the other. They cannot be organised from the centre, or through its representative bodies. There is, therefore, a requirement to ensure that the groundswell of local empowerment experts and champions is acknowledged, nurtured and grown. This is additionally important as we know, too, that the route that leads to cohesive and strong

communities is guided by inclusive and empowering practice. We will undertake activity to demonstrate and strengthen these links.

As a UK-wide organisation, CDF is able to draw on the expertise and different community development approaches in each of the four nations. Our Scottish office, Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) has, for example, developed particular expertise in the health arena. SCDC has developed as an enterprise in response to the Scottish political scenery and priorities. As such, Trustees agreed it appropriate and beneficial to its continuing growth that it move towards independent status, from April 2009.

CDF also maintains a presence in Wales and we are developing relationships with the Welsh Assembly Government and community development organisations there. We are keen to further develop our relationships in Northern Ireland too, as we believe there is untapped expertise in working with communities, particularly around conflict resolution, on which we can draw. We also have an overview of community development policy and practice in Europe and internationally and need to consider the strategic relevance of work at this level to our work in the UK.

We recognise the need for an evolving approach, in relation to CDF's newer role as a primarily English agency. However, we are strongly committed to maintaining and strengthening dialogue, collaboration and knowledge transfer across the UK nations as it is the sum of all of these parts – these different dimensions – which place CDF in a unique position.

## **CDF's unique role**

In this plan we have outlined areas of work which will help to develop the skills, knowledge, capacity and culture required within tiers of government, in communities and community development workers. We will draw on our 40 year repository of knowledge and analysis to underpin a contemporary approach – testing models, research and evaluation – to provide the 'science' to back up empowerment action.

Occupying a unique strategic vantage point, with a view both of policy and practice, CDF is well placed to act as a conduit for intelligence to CLG. We undertake a regular active/reflective role, stepping in and standing back so that we can provide government with a two-way knowledge transfer function, translating different perspectives of life in our communities. We know that a mutually dependent relationship exists between government and communities and we will continue to:

- **Develop public sector relationships**, such as LGA, IDeA and Audit Commission, in order to stimulate and support new approaches to empowerment activity within the sector.
- **Work in partnership with national third sector and community development organisations** as the connectors with communities and practitioners to identify examples of effective practice and where targeted support is required.
- **Bridge government departments and social policy areas** to champion community development and empowerment approaches, reinforce Communities and Local Government messages and help identify opportunities for complementary and collaborative activity.

# Measuring Success

CDF rigorously evaluates its grant-giving, projects and programme activities, through tailor-made research, designed and conducted in-house. We also seek views of staff and stakeholders on their experience of our services. In 2009 we will consider how to systemise this throughout the organisation, drawing on measurement and progress models we already use. This will ensure we continue to draw out learning that is accessible and useful for practitioners and policy makers and enable CDF to develop further as a learning organisation. Our aim is to reflect accurately on our work and present information in easily digested formats.

***“Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.” Albert Einstein***

We know that disempowerment and low democratic involvement can arise from a lack of trust or successful engagement between citizens and the public sector. Trust has to be earned, engagement has to be meaningful, and sometimes this can be a long process, often beyond the term of a government. In the most challenging situations, or where disadvantage is long ingrained, there are simply no quick fixes. We need to measure progress appropriate to the approach; some progress can be measured numerically, but passing the empowerment baton between those working with communities is also dependent on good ‘storytelling’ – the creative and innovative stories that inspire replication as part of the longer-term process. There are powerful narratives and data held by many national organisations from every sector; we will consider how to collect and condense these to create clear messages which will help to stimulate and energise empowerment action.

## **Working with partners for engaged, cohesive and strong communities** (including horizon activity 2009 – 2011)

**Policy and guidance:** applying CDF’s knowledge of communities to develop successful policy

Produce and disseminate independent guidance on the extended Duty to Involve, to support successful implementation by local public bodies from Spring 2009. We will also work with the Audit Commission to ensure better understanding of qualitative assessments of Empowerment approaches by local authorities.

Contribute to implementation of the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy through management and co-ordination of the National Empowerment Partnership (NEP) and links to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships through the 9 regional NEP consortia.

Contribute to the achievement of the target set for National Indicator 4 (NI4) within Public Service Agreement 21, through support for the NI4 Delivery Group, co-ordinating

**Policy and guidance:**  
applying CDF's knowledge  
of communities to develop  
successful policy  
(continued)

Communities and Local Government's (CLG) empowerment improvement delivery programme.

Support the implementation of the *Empowerment White Paper*, including undertaking the management of programmes, where appropriate and by agreement.

Develop messages which communicate the difference between professional and expert community development workers and those expected to apply generic community development skills within their own profession, clarifying the need for the former to support the latter in implementing public policy.

Work with CLG and other key partners on developing recommendations from the Councillors Commission.

Contribute to PSA21 policy development in other Government Departments, working with officials in Office of the Third Sector, Department of Health, Department for Children, Families and Schools, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Home Office to help CLG identify activity relevant to empowerment and cohesion.

Report learning and innovations from empowerment and cohesion models in other UK nations and the EU and support CLG to promote an amendment to a Council of Europe 'Charter of Local Self Government' (1998) to encourage local authorities across Europe to strengthen citizen participation.

Deliver a national conference: Empowerment, sharing policy and practice in autumn 2008 – key speaker Hazel Blears, MP.

Communicate links between empowerment and cohesion to inform policy development through evidence from activity by front-line practitioners.

Work with the Scottish Government and CoSLA on the community empowerment action plan with a particular emphasis on promoting good practice in community capacity building, and establishing appropriate policy at local government level.

Contribute to the scoping exercise to develop Wales-wide community development policy and strategy commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government. Develop a policy matrix/ toolkit to map out current and proposed policy in Wales and the implications for the community development sector.

**Policy and guidance:** applying CDF's knowledge of communities to develop successful policy (continued)

Refresh the National Strategic Framework for Community Development in Wales, providing evidence on how it helps cross-sectoral policy delivery.

**Research:** gathering and disseminating evidence on empowerment and cohesion

Undertake research on national indicator usage with local authorities, National Empowerment Partnership regional consortia and others, to understand how they relate to work with communities and how work on other indicators influence the empowerment indicator.

Work with CLG researchers to add the community and practitioner perspective to measurement of empowerment indicators.

Conduct a series of short surveys and studies into using indicators within local authorities.

Gather and disseminate evidence of successful community empowerment good practice from the Network of Empowering Authorities to inspire local authorities to adopt good practice approaches.

Conduct a series of focus groups with practitioners in local authorities and record a series of interviews with agencies and national organisations to add their perspectives on the resourcing, opportunities and barriers to empowerment.

Develop Welsh case studies to provide evidence about what happens when community development approaches are not used and to provide further evidence of the relationship between wellbeing, social capital and community development practice.

Gather evidence and learning from the Come Outside! model to inform and deliver the Welsh Assembly Government's environmental inclusion policy.

Provide research evidence on community development workers, through an England-wide survey to update CDF's 2004 research.

Assess and measure the impact, approaches and resourcing issues of community development work in six upper tier local authorities.

**Research:** gathering and disseminating evidence on empowerment and cohesion (continued)

Work with CDX to develop guidance on community development evaluation to enable practitioners to effectively measure the impact of community development work, drawing on the ABCD model (Achieving Better Community Development).

Build a practical evaluation model to provide evidence for measuring change in cohesion.

Assess community development activity impact on cohesion through work with cross-sector practitioner networks and inform policy-makers of the results.

**Learning:** providing support to improve practice and policy implementation

Gather and disseminate evidence of successful community empowerment good practice from the Network of Empowering Authorities to inspire local authorities to adopt good practice approaches.

Work with key partners to develop a portfolio of training, support and products targeted at local government front-line workers and managers implementing the empowerment and cohesion agendas. Map key policy areas and target audiences.

Distil key social policy concepts, methods and approaches to clarify the meaning of empowerment and engagement in relation to cohesion and identity and disseminate key messages to policy-makers.

Support community development workers and other professions needing to adopt participatory approaches, to implement the Duty to Involve in their work.

Support good practice in community engagement in community planning and other environments, drawing on the National Standards for Community Engagement and VOiCE (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement).

Maintain the information and learning exchange networks in community-led health and helped to embed similar activity across all Community Health Partnerships in Scotland.

Provide mentoring and capacity building support to community organisations across Scotland.

Draw on ABCD (Achieving Better Community Development) and LEAP (Learning, Evaluation and Planning) to develop a training package for use by those working with communities, within a Welsh policy environment.

**Learning:** providing support to improve practice and policy implementation

**Culture change:** embedding community approaches in local authorities



**Knowledge:** generation, dissemination and communication

Enable front-line community practitioners to better articulate and embed community development in local policies and strategy, relating this to the National Occupational Standards for Community Development.

Support local authorities' implementation of the extended Duty to Involve, helping to embed qualitative empowerment approaches through:

- developing and supporting a peer mentoring scheme in the Network of Empowering Authorities.
- encouraging champions of change through work with front-line practitioners, managers and leaders.
- providing training products to Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships to enable elected members to better represent and engage with their local communities.
- work with 10 Equalable project partners to challenge barriers to equality and empowerment in local authorities.

Work with One Voice Wales to improve community engagement practice at town and community council level.

Develop an event in 2009 to raise awareness amongst front-line public sector workers of the benefit of community development to achieve effective community engagement.

Influence higher education and School of Government courses in public administration to introduce and embed case studies in materials and modules on community development, engagement and empowerment in courses.

Produce a portfolio of evidence-based knowledge of effective community practice on PSA 21 through innovative pilot projects, National Empowerment Partnership consortia evidence and practitioner networks.

Develop and maintain robust systems for learning from practice, through evaluations of funding programmes (Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, Connecting Communities Plus, Grassroots Grants, Every Action Counts, Faiths in Action), to identify models of: engagement; local conflict management solutions used by groups working on preventing violent extremism; behaviour change.

Identify the challenges of new migration patterns for empowerment practice and policy in local authorities through

**Knowledge:** generation, dissemination and communication (continued)

comparative work with professionals supporting new migrant communities, both in the UK and EU.

Distil new knowledge about what practice and policy can do to harness positive cohesion effects of white English identities and mitigate against negative tensions and conflicts.

Carry out a scoping exercise on models and concepts of co-production to find out how empowerment and co-production cut across different policy areas. Produce local-level policy maps and policy 'co-production' pointers to support local authorities to progress NI4.

Explore and disseminate potential levers for behaviour change leading to community and citizen empowerment, through research into the development of community-led movements in the fields of climate change and sustainable communities, safe and cohesive neighbourhoods, and community spaces.

Provide training and support in outcome-focused practice, drawing on new research and the effective use of established frameworks, in particular LEAP (Learning, Evaluation and Planning).

Develop ICT based applications for planning and evaluating community development in practice.

Apply an integrated approach within CDF, across government departments and between sectors, to communicate and disseminate our evidence-based knowledge of working to achieve engaged, cohesive and strong communities through:

- briefing papers, publications and policy analyses.
- briefing seminars and events for government departments.
- dissemination events for Government Offices on the community and voluntary sector's role in cohesion.

Develop communications and public affairs strategies collaboratively with Government to disseminate good practice messages to key audiences using engaged, cohesive and strong communities as the reference point.

**Investment:** nurturing active, cohesive and empowered communities

Develop and manage community-focused grant programmes sponsored by government departments and other funding bodies and help to spread use of community-focused approaches in the design and delivery of these programmes.

Ensure integration of robust research and evaluation methodologies into all grant management programmes to extract learning to inform future policy development and practice improvement.

Develop a commissioning and programme management arm of CDF to support policy implementation and practice improvement.

Create a project development facility to develop work emerging from policy thinking into a pilot or programme.

Undertake networking projects with established and new partners, for disseminating lessons and shared experience.

Facilitate round tables between government departments to promote models of arms-length grant management with community impact and consider joint programme and pilot project opportunities.

**Partnership and collaboration**

Draw upon learning of partnership and consortia working especially in relation to Every Action Counts, the National Empowerment Partnership and Community Development Challenge, to offer guidance on advanced collaborative working.

Collaborate with key community development organisations and practitioners to progress the recommendations within the Community Development Challenge report.

In partnership with Community Development Cymru, civil servants and public authorities, research and identify what kind of expert community development body (bodies) is/are needed by the Welsh government and community development sector.



# Organisational Development

CDF is on an organisational journey, reviewing our internal and external services, refreshing the way we work and realigning our resources to enable us to respond better to the challenges and opportunities for communities and community development.

In 2005 we commissioned a detailed review of our internal and external services, taking forward recommendations from CDF's last quinquennial review. In 2006 we produced our first corporate plan, which helped to crystallise our vision, mission, values, aims and objectives, clarify our role as an NDPB and clearly set out our direction. In 2007 and 2008 we undertook staff and stakeholder surveys, considering how best to continue work across the four nations in the face of devolution. We are putting into action the review outcomes. We also agreed the values that define our aspirations and guide our organisational behaviour. At CDF we:

- are committed to service quality and excellence.
- are committed to the principles of community development.
- are empowered and accountable.
- actively share knowledge and skills.
- ensure equality and promote diversity.
- practice corporate social responsibility.

In Autumn 2007 we began to use the term 'organisational development' to describe this activity. Not only do we want to ensure that we are positioned to improve outcomes for communities, we also wish to ensure that CDF is the employer of choice for those who want to be part of exciting and rewarding work. We will continue to support the organisational development of our Scottish office, SCDC, moving towards its establishment as an independent organisation responding to the community development agenda in Scotland. We want mechanisms to share and exchange learning sustained across the four UK nations and Europe.

Our outward-facing work is captured in the previous section. The following are headlines of internal business objectives.

## Communications and Public Affairs

- We will expand our communications activities, to focus increasingly on public affairs, raising CDF's profile and influence to achieve our strategic aims.
- We will develop our internal communications to aid organisational learning and transferring knowledge.
- We will carry out an internal review of our marketing and publications/products facilities to ensure they are best placed to enhance CDF's developing role.

## Finance

- We will continue to make year-on-year improvements to our financial systems and controls to ensure value-for-money and good asset management.
- We will provide staff with the support they need for effective budgeting and financial management.
- We will ensure reporting mechanisms are regular, reliable and robust to aid financial planning and strategic investment, and to manage risk.
- We will carry out an external review of our internal capacity to manage finance, to ensure it is well-placed to support CDF's changing business profile.

## Human Resources

- We will develop a range of human resources services that attract high quality staff and help to support and manage performance.
- We will continue with our systematic review of policies and procedures, to ensure that they support and enable a responsive internal service and help staff to perform their roles within a modern CDF.
- We will focus on how we work together, to ensure fluid, responsive, supportive and collaborative styles are developed across the organisation.

## Information Communication Technology

- We will continue to develop our ICT capabilities, both those related to hardware and software, but also staff skills to enable them to maximise technology to their and CDF's advantage.
- We will ensure that we are equipped to support and equitably manage ICT capabilities remotely, including homeworking.
- We will continue to ensure our data is managed effectively, safely and compliantly.

## Facilities

- We will continue to ensure that our premises and equipment are safe and enable a healthy working environment.
- We will ensure that staff are treated equitably regardless of their geographical location and are provided with the necessary support which reflects different working styles or demands.
- We will continue to ensure that our capital responsibilities are maintained, cost effective, environmentally and ethically sustainable.

# Contact Us

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