

Regeneration News

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Welcome to the Nov 2009 edition of Regeneration News - we hope you'll find it both interesting and informative.

First up is an interview with Richard Webb, the new Executive Director leading the Communities Portfolio at Sheffield City Council. OFFER caught up with Richard to find out what the Communities Portfolio is all about, what the priorities are, and how he sees the future given the big reduction in public sector finance.

Next, a feature on networks. In these difficult economic times the need for our sector to be 'in the know' about such things as policy, strategy, commissioning, funding streams etc. to help spot new opportunities is becoming increasingly important. Yet, how do VCF organisations do this whilst balancing the needs of the day job? Well, one answer lies in getting involved in networks. We're featuring 8 different VCF sector networks across a range of themes and areas of interests, so you're aware of what's on offer and how you can get involved.

Building on the being 'in the know' theme, our Sheffield First Partnership page lets you know about:

- How you can input your views via your Sheffield First VCF sector reps
- How you can find out what issues SF VCF sector reps have influenced

Then a look at Sheffield City Council's proposals to Central Government under the new 'Sustainable Communities Act' - along with our take on potential opportunities for our sector [should the proposals be accepted].

All this rounded off with our usual 'newsbites' page, keeping you up to date on the latest snippets of useful information!

If you have any comments about Regen News please share them with us! We're always happy to receive feedback - be that good or not so good.

Tel: 0114 253 6730 Email: suef@offer.org.uk

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OFFER:-

Developing the voice of the VCF sector for Sheffield

Supporting individuals to understand how to be influential

Networking by helping groups get involved in decision making

A date for your diary - OFFER's AGM

Date: Tuesday 17th November, 4.30 to 6.30pm

Venue: St Mary's Church, Bramall Lane, S2 4QZ

An AGM like no other.. points make prizes in our 'how to influence in Sheffield' game show..

To book your place T: 0114 253 6730 E: info@offer.org.uk

A catch up with Richard Webb

OFFER recently caught up with Richard Webb, the new Executive Director of Sheffield City Councils Communities Portfolio to check out; what this new portfolio is about, his impressions of the VCF sector in Sheffield, and his take on Partnership working in the current financial climate.....

Q. So Richard, tell us a bit about the new Communities Portfolio and how it differs from the previous Neighbourhoods and Community Care Directorate?

The new Communities Portfolio is all about 'people' – individuals, families, communities and their quality of life. My three main themes are:

- Supporting families and communities to be successful.
- Making Sheffield a great place to grow old.
- Supporting people to have 'choice and voice' about their lives, their services and what's happening in their Communities.

Q. Can you tell us about your experience of working with the VCF Sector and your impressions of the sector in Sheffield?

I've got a background of working in Local Government and the NHS, and as such have worked with VCF organisations for many years

In terms of the sector in Sheffield, being new to the City I'm in the process of meeting with as many people as possible including VCF organisations. My first impressions are; that there is a lot going, there are good ideas, and lots of enthusiasm, and there are some big issues about funding and sustainability.

Q. Given the big reduction in public sector finance, how do you see your Portfolio working with the Sector?

Given the current economic climate, coupled with the local VCF review, it feels like we're at a bit of a turning point with a number of issues to be worked through for example how the sector is involved with Community Assemblies, how money is allocated and what's delivered for that money,

and how we enable and value the involvement of the VCF sector.

There is no magic answer - however we are all 'in this together' and the way forward involves:

- Being clear about what money is available
- Being clear of what the priorities are
- Having honest conversations about what we can and should deliver for the money available and not make promises we can't keep

Q. What will your priorities be? Given the Portfolio covers so many areas of work, how will you make sense of these?

The over-riding priorities are about individuals and communities having more control over their lives and ensuring the delivery of good quality services with the money available. Within that we'll be looking at how to alleviate the impact of the recession to help make peoples' lives easier; community safety; how to make the changes around adult social care work best for people; and how the Council supports Communities to help themselves.

Q. What should VCF sector people come to you for, as opposed to a different officer or Portfolio?

I hope that as people get to know me, they will find me to be willing to listen; open to new ideas; visible, and realistic about what can be delivered. However, Communities Portfolio is about more than one person - I would encourage VCF colleagues to work closely with all of us in the Portfolio and the wider Council.

Q. Sheffield has a reputation for being a place that's made LSP working work. What's your



initial impression of how it looks here?

Partnership working has always been part of the day job for me.

There are some very good examples of partnership in Sheffield. Equally, when things are good, that's the time to question, challenge and be self-critical. We can always do better. In particular I am mindful of E M Forster's quote "Only connect" - I think we can do more to join up public services and connect with the people we serve.

Q. Are you connected with any of the Sheffield First Partnership Boards and what's your commitment to supporting Partnership working in these times of budget cuts?

My main Sheffield First focus is 'Health and Wellbeing' and 'Stronger and Sustainable Communities Partnerships and the City Executive Board.

Partnerships are not an end in themselves they're a way of achieving better outcomes – so the framework and relationships have to be right. We may need to be a bit bolder about sharing resources, and this is much more likely to happen if partners trust each other

I think that in cash strapped times the need for strong, effective Partnerships becomes yet more relevant and important.

Networks - a great way to stay 'in the know!

Networks... provide an effective way for our sector to share information with each other and the outside world, and provide a channel for collective voice and influence... here's a few networks OFFER are aware of and how you can get involved...

Sheffield Community Economic Network [SCEN]

SCEN's Mission:

Is to maximise the ability of Sheffield's VCF sector to unlock the potential of Communities to contribute to the economic transformation of the City

Who can join and what are the benefits of membership?

Any VCF sector organisation with expertise to help the network achieve its mission, objectives and activities is invited to join.

There's a lot going on around the economic agenda at the moment and involvement with SCEN is a good way for our sector to stay in the know about opportunities and developments.

Members receive monthly e-bulletins with news on current developments and opportunities, and are invited to attend monthly SCEN meetings. These are often attended by Council officers to keep us informed of economically focussed initiatives and opportunities. Recent attendees include Joe Horobin, Neighbourhood Renewal & Partnership; Kevin Bennett from the LEGI team and Eve Waite, Lifelong Learning and Skills.

Current SCEN activities / discussions include:

The Future Jobs Fund - one of the government's responses to the recession, aimed at 18 – 24 year olds [extends to adults in unemployment hotspots]. It gives opportunities to organisations to create 6 month jobs which will benefit the community and offer training and job-experience to the clients [who need to be at least 10 months unemployed]. Sheffield City Council

has won a contract covering South Yorkshire.

Through SCEN, 3rd Sector organisations in Sheffield agreed to provide more than 400 jobs, many of which are being managed by ZEST on behalf of the PROSPER Consortium. See below right for ZEST's contact details. Others relating to Green Jobs and Social Enterprise will be managed by Sheffield Groundwork Trust.

Sheffield Employability Programme

- is an investment by Yorkshire Forward [using Single Pot and ERDF funding] to help and support the city's employers to recruit, train and retain staff, particularly people who struggle to get into, or remain in work because of various barriers. The aim is to reduce the churn of people who fall out of employment and return to the benefits system.

The Programme is managed by Sheffield City Council. Two 3rd sector consortia, North East Sheffield Partnership and the Prosper Consortium responded to the opportunity, [which if successful may in turn provide opportunities for smaller organisations who wouldn't want to bid alone but have something to offer]. Through SCEN 3rd Sector organisations have been able to make contact with these consortia, register their specific expertise and stay up-to-date with the timetables and processes for making bids.

The Sheffield Enterprise Programme

- a Local Enterprise Growth Initiative programme, also financed through Single Pot and ERDF funding, will support our sector to develop the capacity to build supply-chains for public sector programmes. Through SCEN the



sector will be able to stay abreast of the requirements of this [although little information is available yet on what opportunities this might bring for VCF sector organisations].

Other SCEN discussions have focussed on the **DWP Flexible New Deal** Programme aimed at the longer-term unemployed. Prosper Consortium is having discussions about opportunities to deliver soft-skills courses, and will bring this back to SCEN.

From 2010 there will be a new **ESF Programme for Skills and Employability**, and SCEN will provide a forum to discuss issues and opportunities around this.

Last but not least, discussions are happening about how the Network relates to the Sheffield First Partnership. The feeling is the Strong Economy Board should be asked to recognise formal links with SCEN - this will be followed up in future meetings so watch this space.

For more information contact:

Mike Hodson at OFFER
T: 0114 253 6730
E: mike@offer.org.uk
Or why not visit the SCEN section of our website:
www.offer.org.uk

ZEST Contact Details:
E: Janet.Skirrow@zestcommunity.co.uk

Networks - a Great Way for Our Sector to Stay in the Know!

Networking faith communities across the city...



Sheffield Faiths Forum exists to increase the ability of faith groups to have an effective, co-ordinated and recognised means of achieving voice and influence in decision making within the city and to help ensure that the vast skills and experience of local faith communities are valued and utilised.

The Forum supports a network of around 400 faith groups, faith related agencies and faith based community projects to engage in the wider life of the city. It has also developed formal links with statutory, voluntary and community partners and the Local Strategic Partnership, (The Sheffield First Partnership).

The Forum aims to:

- Help increase faith group involvement in the regeneration of the city.

- Support co-ordinated activities from grassroots to Faith Leaders that increase community cohesion and improve community relations.
- Increase understanding between Sheffield's communities and citizens.
- Promote the positive contribution of faith communities to the life of the city.
- Enable Sheffield's faith communities to have clear, open and transparent links with the regional faiths forum and the Sheffield First Partnership.

Current network activity includes influencing the Preventing Violent Extremism [PVE] Strategy for the City.

To find out more about Sheffield Faiths Forum and the principles that underpin its work and practice, visit the Faiths Forum website:

www.sheffieldfaithsforum.org.uk

For more information contact:

Dave Sutton-Jones,
Faith Network Development Officer
T: 0114 253 6730 E: davesj@offer.org.uk

The Sheffield BME Network



Individually we are strong- together we are invincible

The VISION:

'A thriving and healthy Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary, Community and Faith sector in Sheffield for the 21st Century!'

The aim of this independent Network is to have an inclusive, effective and accountable BME network for the Voluntary, Community & Faith sector across the city. The network will robustly scrutinise decision making, lobby, campaign and champion the interests and aspirations of its members. It will inform and contribute to strategic decision making in the City that will ensure increased voice, empowerment and influence for the BME, VCF sector generally.

Membership is open to:

- Volunteers or employees from the BME Voluntary, Community, Faith sector.
- BME individuals Volunteers or employees from VCF sector projects that work with BME communities
- Employees of statutory agencies who have a specific remit to support the ability of the BME VCF sector to network.

In particular people with positions to influence for the BME VCF sector, e.g. BME representatives across the Sheffield First Family, BME members of Community Forums are actively encouraged to join.

Being a member will give BME groups the platform to actively represent their communities and organisations needs and voices at a strategic level.

If you are interested in becoming a member or have any queries please e-mail the Company Secretary:

Miss Abtisam Mohamed
E: amohammed@ycasheffield.co.uk

Low Carbon Network

This OFFER supported network aims to bring together VCF sector organisations with an interest in city-wide carbon reduction.

One of the key issues for our sector is how to demonstrate our contribution, and a piece of work on behalf of OFFER revealed just some of the contribution the VCF sector makes to Sheffield's ambition to be a low carbon city. Some of the ways our sector does this is by addressing its own energy use, encouraging services users to reduce carbon, and influencing decision makers.

The Network met in April to look at where the expertise of VCF organisations in addressing

climate change can be shared, recognised and utilised.

Current Network activity includes influencing the City Council's Low Carbon Strategy so the potential for our sector to contribute can be realised.

Hopefully this input may influence statutory sector commissioning decisions.

The Network is flexible in how it interacts and communicates with organisations and can accommodate different levels of involvement – for example you may just wish to receive information, you may want to attend the occasional event of particular interest to your organisation and that's fine... its about making it work for you and keeping you in the know!

For more information contact:
Natalie Hunt at OFFER
E: natalie@offer.org.uk
T: 0114 253 6730



Health Partnership Network



This network brings together VCF organisations with an interest in the health and wellbeing of people in Sheffield and enables their involvement in planning, designing and delivering health and social care services in Sheffield.

The network provides a channel for sharing local and national information of interest including new policies and consultations. Three events are held per year covering a range of topics, past ones have included; the personalisation agenda, health inequalities, older people's services and service user involvement. The network also provides a way for members to make their views known to their Sheffield First VCF rep to take forward to the Health and WellBeing board on their behalf.

There are a number of specialist partnership networks within the Health Partnership Network for people and organisations interested in services for specific groups including ones focussing on - older people, children and young people, people with mental health problems, people with learning disabilities, and supported housing. Most of these meet bi-monthly to discuss areas of common concern with public sector officers. The Health Partnership is supported by the Planning and Partnership Team at Voluntary Action Sheffield.

For more information contact: Jasmine Warwick T: 0114 253 6647 E: j.warwick@vas.org.uk

Sheffield LINK – and how we can help VCF groups



Sheffield LINK (Local Involvement Network) gives everyone in Sheffield the chance to influence how health and social care services are planned and delivered in our city. We find out what people like and dislike and then work with those who plan and run the services to improve them.

LINKs were set up by the Government in 2008 to help improve these services by giving local people a stronger voice. To help us fulfil this role, we have legal powers to:

- Visit services to see how they are being run
- Request information from service providers who must respond within 20 days
- Make recommendations to service providers

- Refer our findings to 'Overview and Scrutiny Committee' – a watchdog of elected councillors that has the power to ensure change happens.

We run events to gather views on specific topics and have a number of Action Groups looking into particular issues, including access to GPs and person-centred care. We are also starting to work with existing organisations to help them make use of our powers.

If your group is campaigning on a health or social care topic, we may be able to help.

For more information: Please see www.sheffieldlink.org.uk or contact us on 0114 253 6690 or info@sheffieldlink.org.uk.

New.....Disability Network for Sheffield

This new network, aims to 'increase the influence of Disabled People by bringing together Disabled People and their organisations to share knowledge and expertise'.

The consultation process for this new Network took place over the course of Dec 08 to Oct 09. It has involved a series of 3 events attended by a wide audience of disability groups, individuals, and other parties with an interest in disability issues, and a lot of hard work from a smaller group of reps from Sheffield VCF disability organisations.

People first decided whether a disability network for Sheffield was a good idea, and that being a 'yes', then finding the 'right' network model that would work best for Sheffield.

The Network, hosted by Inclusive Living Sheffield is open to representatives from VCF disability organisations, individuals [from the age of 12 upwards] with an impairment, carers of disabled people and statutory / private partners who have an interest in furthering the Network's aims. The Network's constitution offers different categories of membership to help achieve the balance between inclusivity, and ensuring user-led VCF sector disability organisations operating in Sheffield are firmly in the driving seat!

The Network will be officially launched at an Annual General Meeting on the 11 January 2010.

To join the Network or find out more please contact OFFER who are managing the Network's database:

T: 0114 253 6730 E: info@offer.org.uk

Children and Young People's Network



The Children and Young People's Partnership Network is a network of voluntary, community and faith organisations working with children and young people in Sheffield. Activities and benefits of membership include:

- Links with the Sheffield First 0-19+ Partnership Board
- The opportunity to take part in consultations and decision making forums
- Capacity building opportunities via training
- Attending events - where you get the opportunity to share experiences and network with other VCF organisations
- Receive regular mailings of relevant information on policy, practice and funding

The Health Partnership is supported by the Planning and Partnership Team at Voluntary Action Sheffield.

For more information contact: T: 0114 2536614

Sheffield First Partnership News



Find out what's happening across the Sheffield First Partnership Boards by signing up to OFFER's monthly SF ebulletin.

This gives you a summary of issues affecting the voluntary, community and faith sector dealt with by the relevant Boards.

If there are issues you would like to influence, you can contact the relevant Liaison Officers who support the VCF reps on those Boards.

To sign up Email:

suef@offer.org.uk and add the words 'SF bulletin in the title bar.

You will need to give a valid email address.

Representatives' News & Forthcoming SF Meetings

November 2009

- 11th - Sheffield First P'ship Board
- 12th - SF Health and Well Being Board
- 25th - SF Environment Board

December 2009

- 3rd - SF Safer and Sustainable Communities Board
- 9th - Sheffield First P'ship Board
- 16th - SF Strong Economy Board

January 2009

- 7th - SF Children and Young People 0-19+ Board
- 13th - Sheffield First P'ship Board
- 27th - SF Environment Board

How to utilise VCF representatives

The role of the VCF representatives is to represent the views of, and contribute the expertise of our sector; so if your organisation has a view/s, here's how to take it forward:

If you know which Thematic Board your view fits with, either contact the relevant VCF reps directly or get in touch with that Board's Liaison Officer – a full contact list can be found at www.offer.org.uk/content.php. Alternatively give OFFER as ring on 0114 253 6730.

And / or why not come along to OFFER/VAS network meetings? Both OFFER and VAS help facilitate various networks... again either check out the events page of OFFER's website or ring OFFER on 0114 253 6730 to find out more.

SF VCF Representation Guide

OFFER often get asked questions about VCF representation on the Sheffield First Partnership, so we've produced a short guide.

It includes a series of 'frequently asked questions' about SF VCF representation, along with how reps are recruited and supported.

If you'd like a copy either
E: suef@offer.org.uk or T: 0114 253 6730

It's also available to download at www.offer.org.uk/resources/documents/VKYWY496.pdf

For more information on any of the above, or if you want to see our sector's reps in action, join their discussions before the Board meetings and then observe the main meeting; **contact Sue Faxon at OFFER on 0114 253 6730 or email suef@offer.org.uk.**

OFFER, and the whole VCF sector through OFFER, would like to thank all those who serve on Sheffield First Partnership boards and raise issues on behalf of us all.

City Strategy

Discussions around how to develop the next City Strategy [the current one ends in 2010] are starting to take place. Watch this space for further news, or why not sign up to our SF e-bulletin [see above] to keep up to date on how this is going forward.

The Sustainable Communities Act

The Sustainable Communities Act [2007] enables Councils [after taking advice from local Community partners] to put forward proposals needing Government action and agreement, that will help local Communities be more sustainable and offer better quality of life.

In July this year, after a process of jointly working up ideas with a panel of Community representatives selected by the Council, 4 proposals were submitted to the Local Government Association for consideration. The proposals were fully agreed and ratified by the Community reps on the panel, many of whom are part of local Sheffield VCF sector organisations. The proposals are:

- The creation of a skills trust for Sheffield
- Maximising vacant land for food production or green space
- Giving Sheffield City Council control of the Post Office Network for Sheffield
- Allowing asylum seekers the right to take up employment

Might this create opportunities for Third Sector Organisations?

If Government agrees any / all of these proposals, there may well be opportunities for our sector... these along with a few more details about the proposals are outlined below.

1. The creation of a skills trust for Sheffield

PROPOSAL: To set up an Adult Learning, Skills and Employment Trust for Sheffield with greater powers to identify and commission the skills and learning courses needed for Sheffield and its citizens.

WHY? Responsibility for procuring learning, skills and employment activity currently lies with national agencies. Whilst Local Authorities and LSP's have acquired a greater range of responsibilities and target for skills and employment through the Local Area Agreements, these have not been matched by an increase in the influence they have over procuring agencies. This change would enable a more flexible and innovative response to reflect local needs and challenges.

Potential opportunities for Third Sector Organisations:

- *Greater opportunity to channel voice and influence through the Sheffield First VCF reps.*

...When will a decision be known?

It's anticipated the Local Government Association will shortlist their ideas by December 2009, but at present there is no clear date for when a final decision will be made. We'll keep you posted through the OFFER website and other channels, such as VCF networks just as soon as we hear any news.

- *Potential opportunities for third sector learning providers to be commissioned to deliver services locally.*

2. Vacant Land

PROPOSAL: To introduce statutory legislation giving Sheffield City Council a right to enter into temporary leases with owners of vacant brownfield land.

WHY? To allow the land to be used for positive purposes, such as food production or greenspace.

Potential opportunities for Third Sector Organisations:

- *To lease the land for project activity [although organisations would need to bear in mind the arrangement might be temporary if development plans for the land were realised].*
- *To provide training and support to local people.*
- *To link with other local Community initiatives.*

3. Post Offices

PROPOSAL: To give Sheffield City Council control of the Post Office Network for Sheffield.

WHY: This proposal is set against the backdrop of post office closures, the results of which can negatively impact on social and financial inclusion in communities.

Potential opportunities for Third Sector Organisations:

- *The proposal makes reference to establishing third party operator deals – Community organisations could capitalise on these.*
- *Key opportunity for Community Organisations wanting to manage buildings/facilities.*

4. Asylum Seekers

PROPOSAL: To allow asylum seekers permission to take up employment.

WHY? So Sheffield can capitalise on the skills of asylum seekers and contribute to the City's economy and for asylum seekers to lift themselves out of poverty and support themselves and their families.

Potential opportunities for Third Sector Organisations:

- *Opportunity to promote community cohesion – locality based Community organisations are ideally placed to promote the positive changes this could bring and contribute to the Community cohesion agenda.*

Full text of the proposals along with the information about the membership of the Community Panel can be viewed at: www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/sheffield-sustainable-communities-debate/sustainable-communities-act

News Bites

'Listening Matters' and 'How Your Area Works'

'Listening Matters' and 'How Your Area Works' make up OFFER's Community Engagement Programme aimed at helping people get the most out of the opportunities created by the Community Assemblies.

In terms of Listening Matters - OFFER are working with the Re:Generate Trust, who both developed, and are delivering Listening Matters in each of the Community Assembly Areas. Listening Matters is a system that uses active listening to identify local issues and determine community action that will make a difference.

Listening Matters training has already taken place in some Assembly Areas. Comments from Sheffield folks who've attended include:

'Inspiring and thought provoking' - 'Met some good people doing good things' - I found it to be a powerful tool that could help transform high Green and the surrounding area.'

Listening Matters is for anyone who wants to make a difference in their Community be they existing/potential Community activists or paid workers.

Future dates for Listening Matters are outlined below. If you can't make the dates in your area, or you live in the North, East or North East Areas and didn't manage to make the earlier events, don't worry its fine to come along to a different area. Equally it's fine to come to the first day in one area and the follow up in another, whatever works for you!

To book a place either: T: 0114 253 6730

E: suef@offer.org.uk or book online at our 'events' page:

www.offer.org.uk

Community Assembly Area	Initial Day 9.30 to 3pm	Half day follow-up am
Central	Wed 21 Oct	Wed 11 Nov
South East	Tues 10 Nov	Tues 24 Nov
South	Thurs 12 Nov	Mon 7 Dec
South West	Wed 25 Nov	Tues 8 Dec

How Your Area Works

'How Your Area Works' is a practical and informal learning programme delivered **in** local Communities **for** local Communities.

It builds on the success of the 'How Your City Works' and 'How Your Neighbourhood Works' programmes OFFER has been developing and delivering in Sheffield over the past few years. Both these have consistently produced excellent feedback from participants and statutory sector partners who have helped to deliver them.

The How Your Area Works programme helps local people to be 'in the know' about: a

- *Local decisions... who makes them and how are they made*
- *How to shape decisions that affect the future of your area*
- *Opportunities created by the new Community Assemblies*

• Who is working for change in your area

The programme involves people attending 4 half day sessions at a local venue [lunch is provided]. Guest speakers from the Council and other agencies are invited along so people can meet them and hear first-hand how services and decision making processes work .

OFFER's approach to developing 'How Your Area Works' in Communities is to work with local Community Organisations, and other Partners as it's important that their local knowledge is fed into into the process.

The 'How Your Area Works' programme will be happening in a number of areas starting off with one in Arbourthorne/ Norfolk Park in November; others are in the pipeline!

To find out more contact Natalie at OFFER:

T: 0114 2536730 E: natalie@offer.org.uk or visit our website: www.offer.org.uk

Last but not leastintroducing Jennie Beard

We would like to welcome Jennie Beard to our staff team at OFFER. Jennie will be working as the new Local Faith Network Worker within Sheffield's neighbourhoods, supporting faith groups to work together with local partners and to become more effectively involved in decision-making across the City.

To contact Jennie T: 0114 2536730 or E: jennie@offer.org.uk

Regeneration News is published regularly and circulated to organisations in the VCF sector in Sheffield.

If your organisation does not receive RN, please email, or phone us to be placed on the mailing list.

E: suef@offer.org.uk T: 0114 2536730

If your organisation is not a member of OFFER, you can ask to for a membership form which is also available on our website:

www.offer.org.uk

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Faith Network Development Officer:
Dave Sutton-Jones



Network Development Officer:
Mike Hodson



BME Network Development Officer:
Shazia Rehman



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