

CHANGEUP PROGRAMME

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLANS

COLLATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

REPORT FOR CAPACITY BUILDERS

SECTION 1: AIMS, SUMMARY AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS

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Third Sector Strategy and Governance

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## **CHANGEUP PROGRAMME**

### **Collation and analysis of Infrastructure Investment Plans**

#### **Report for Capacity Builders**

### **Section 1: AIMS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## AIMS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Aims of the study

In Spring 2006, Capacity Builders, on taking over the ChangeUp programme from the Home Office, commissioned the Good Foundations Consultancy **to collate data and analyse what had been funded and achieved through ChangeUp to date**, including:

- a review (by a team of analysts) of all infrastructure investment plans – local, sub-regional, and regional – in a consistent framework, particularly eliciting what the planning consortia were identifying as key themes/activities/gaps in provision;
- a commentary on the variety of approaches to ChangeUp funding across the regions the mechanisms set up to deliver ChangeUp ie consortia (temperature check);
- a series of structured regional interviews.

It was also hoped to be able to:

- identify examples of innovative projects/activity funded through ChangeUp which could be written up as case studies at a later stage;
- comment on the effectiveness of different types of infrastructure that has been generated through ChangeUp (temperature check).

The work was to be done by 31 July 2006, with an interim oral report to the Capacity Builders Board on 22 June. On receiving the interim report, the Board asked for the full report to be brought forward to its next meeting on 13 July, and for recommendations to be made in the light of the findings. The timetable set limits on what could be achieved, so the report makes recommendations as to the future approach to collating examples and measuring the effectiveness of infrastructure, together with those on other issues.

The report is being published in a spirit of transparency, so as to place the analysis in the public domain. But **there are several qualifications which readers should note**:

1. The analysis is based on new infrastructure investment plans which were produced in most areas and regions to a deadline of 31 March. A few plans were being developed to later deadlines, so older or draft plans for these areas were used instead (except for the urban parts of the West Midlands, for which plans were unavailable within the timetable). The omissions are not seen as not affecting the general conclusions.
2. Complete financial information about what has been funded through ChangeUp was not fully available, but the collation is currently being finished. The best feasible summary of ChangeUp budget allocations is in Appendix 2 (in Section 4).
3. The analysis (conducted mainly in May and June 2006) is not a full evaluation or audit of the ChangeUp programme, nor a full survey of all capacity building work being done regionally and locally. Nor does it cover the Hubs (which have since been reviewed separately) and other national capacity building work, although it does survey perceptions of the Hubs as they appeared to local consortia in the early part of 2006. The Hubs' work has been growing and developing during the year.
4. The recommendations are not Capacity Builders' policy, but are currently (from September 2006) being considered by Capacity Builders' Policy Committee, which will make recommendations to its Board.

## Summary

1. ChangeUp has made good progress considering it is a 10-year programme and that barely two years have passed since the ministerial launch announcement in July 2004 – the plans on which this report was based being nearly all prepared in, or running to, March 2006 at the latest.
2. The programme's achievements include funding more than 700 capacity building projects, and more than 800 projects and plans combined.
3. Infrastructure investment plans have been drawn up for every part of England (creating well over 100 plans), a process which has in many areas brought about genuinely new dialogue within the local sector, the first-ever assessment of local need, and the first serious involvement of statutory authorities.
4. There have been many projects reflecting the hub themes, with support projects in the volunteering and ICT fields being particularly widespread, though the work of the hubs themselves has not yet (ie, in the period covered by the plans) made itself strongly felt in local areas.
5. Other support needs (eg for social enterprise support, advice on bidding for statutory sector procurement, and finding affordable premises) have been expressed in the planning processes.
6. There has been widespread development of BME infrastructure, both in towns and cities with large BME populations and in rural areas where BME populations are widely dispersed, though there are ongoing challenges to find appropriate infrastructure in different circumstances.
7. There are many examples of pioneering projects and good practice in infrastructure planning, but these are largely undocumented.
8. There are also several regionally and locally commissioned evaluations in train.
9. The first two years have been fraught with short-term difficulties about payments and the need for consortia to secure funds before financial year-ends; there have also been difficulties because the timetables for the Defra programme for rural infrastructure and the main ACU programme were not fully aligned; the timetabling difficulties were a serious distraction from the strategic nature of the ChangeUp programme, which should now be reasserted.
10. The devolved administration to regions has given the programme good vantage points in most regions; but it has led to inconsistent administration and guidance, and differences in broad approach to infrastructure development (beyond those which could be justified by genuine regional differences), and has made horizontal learning between similar areas more difficult.
11. The sub-regional level of planning is showing itself to be sensible, but there is a need for more work on the best way (and the most appropriate 'tier') of organising and developing VCS infrastructure in the contexts of population levels and demography and of VCS size and scope.
12. It is too early to assess the outlook for sustainability of developments, but dialogue needs to start or continue with other funders and national bodies.
13. There is a need for confidence building, developing planning skills, and judging when consortia genuinely need external help and support.

## **Recommendations**

### **Making plans in future**

1. In future rounds of planning, there is a need for consistent nationally-developed guidance and a plan template showing the ground that plans are expected to cover, who should be involved, and how to design proposals that are viable at likely funding levels; such a template should be backed by training and consultancy in plan-writing.
2. Good practice in planning should be shared by making use of good examples of plans and their authors.
3. Consortia should continue to seek involvement of local authorities, Primary Care Trusts, and other active local funders and foundations; and Infrastructure Investment Plans should be aligned wherever possible with Local Area Agreements.
4. Consortia should be encouraged to review their representativeness, so as to include active but hitherto uninvolved sub-sectors, eg arts and sports organisations.
5. Consortia should be encouraged to review local client and population needs and to try to address gaps in VCS provision rather than simply respond to the expressed support needs of already active VCOs.
6. Judgements need to be made about when consortia genuinely need external help and support, eg consultancy, skill development, fund management.

### **Learning**

7. Capacity Builders should develop a means for consortia to share products rather than reinvent them, eg course templates and design, quality standards, toolkits.
8. A ‘horizontal learning’ method should be developed to pick up examples of replicable success of similar types of capacity building initiative in areas of similar demography irrespective of region.

### **Documentation**

9. Capacity Builders should create a central database of CB-supported projects: numbers, sizes, characteristics, funding levels, area demographics – for promotional, research, and audit purposes.
10. Capacity Builders should develop a system of reporting from consortia and regions which is proportionate to amounts of funding provided and operates at sensible intervals.
11. Capacity Builders should keep a central record of evaluations and their results.
12. A process should be developed for writing up ‘case study’ examples of consortia and project for promotional and dissemination purposes – using a journalistic approach, with photographs etc.

### **Responding to needs identified in plans**

13. Consortia’s positive embracing of the Hub themes alongside their poor connection with the Hubs (including the mismatch between detailed needs and what some of the hubs offer) should be made known to the Hubs review.
14. Capacity Builders should review how to develop – perhaps by working with appropriate national voluntary organisations – a response on ‘non-Hub’ support issues emerging from several consortia, eg social enterprise, affordable premises, public sector procurement, involving and working with local authorities, human

resources / employment function, diversity issues including (but not limited to) work with BME, faith-based, and rural organisations.

### Mapping

15. Capacity Builders should involve itself in ‘mapping’ studies of the VCS and should commission mapping of existing infrastructure provision across England (including organisation numbers and types, income, staffing levels, funding sources) in relation to official data on population numbers and demography and to VCS size and scope.
16. Capacity Builders should develop, through mapping and evaluation, standard and target levels of infrastructure provision in similar types of area, an informed assessment of what type of infrastructure is likely to work best in responding to different needs, and a view of which tier (regional, sub-regional, district) infrastructure is best developed at, so as to avoid spreading funds too thinly and achieve critical mass with service levels and client numbers.
17. It should direct part of its resources to address under-provision and areas of weakness.

### Evaluation

18. Capacity Builders should develop, at this early stage of the ChangeUp programme, a means of assessing the programme’s overall outcomes against its strategic objectives.
19. Particular capacity building themes should be selected for possible evaluation from a national perspective.
20. Capacity Builders should develop through evaluation a perspective on the relative effectiveness in different circumstances of generic and specialist infrastructure (both ‘themed’ and ‘client-group-based’) so as to judge which best serves the needs of the general VCS and of marginalised groups.
21. An evaluation template for consortia, projects and regional plans, should be developed, so as to provide means of assessing (appropriately to the levels of funding) their effectiveness against standard criteria.
22. The successes in developing BME infrastructure and in BME groups’ use of generic infrastructure should be evaluated, so as to draw more lessons about what works best in different circumstances, with different ranges of BME groups, and in rural and urban areas.

### Strategy issues

23. Capacity Builders should continue to develop ‘confidence building’ aspects of its work, so as to encourage consortia to move away from ‘short-termism’ in their planning, and to develop their work on the basis that planning ahead is worthwhile and will lead to resources and stability.
24. To improve the prospects of sustainable funding and partnership working, dialogue should be extended with statutory funders, foundations, Lottery distributors, and representative bodies such as the Local Government Association.
25. Capacity Builders should work with other organisations to develop income generation skills and programmes appropriate to infrastructure organisations.
26. Capacity Builders should discuss with central government ways of enhancing the long-term success of the programme, by developing funding streams and investment frameworks that match its 10-year aims.