



# ChangeUp *east*

The East of England  
Voluntary and Community Sector  
Infrastructure Strategy,  
Investment and  
Implementation Plan

The Regional Infrastructure Advisory Group  
October 2004 – March 2006

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## OVERVIEW

This document has been compiled by a statutory and voluntary and community sector multi-agency Regional Advisory Group. It provides a steer on a significant investment by government into voluntary and community sector (VCS) infrastructure support agencies across the region. Primarily it is guidance to regional and county VCS consortia who have been identified as best placed to deliver the aspirations of ChangeUp in the region.

It is also a reference and an additional incentive for investors from the public sector at both regional and sub regional levels who are working with the VCS across a variety of services.

The national Capacity Building Infrastructure Strategy (ChangeUp) published in June 2004 forms the rationale and basis for the commissioning of work across the region through the East of England VCS Infrastructure Regional Advisory Group. ChangeUp is underpinned by Home Office investment of £80 million over £2003/4 – 2005/6. Investment will catalyse the modernisation of infrastructure provision to improve its sustainability, quality and reach in line with the high level objectives set out in the framework. Having already invested £8 million in developing the framework and in the early spend programme, £72 million remains to support implementation – made up of £66 million revenue, and £16 million capital – to be invested by March 2006.

There are four main spending programmes with a national allocation of £72 million distributed as follows: Embedding Quality and Improving Reach £33 million including £9 million for improving ICT support; Modernising Infrastructure £29 million; Building capacity in key service delivery areas £5 million. An additional £5 million will support investment in management and evaluation. Investment will be made at national, regional and sub-regional (county) levels, with the bulk of investment going through the regions to support sub-regional and local initiatives benefiting frontline organisations.

ChangeUp's high-level aim is that, by 2014, the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations will be met by infrastructure support that is available nationwide, structured for maximum efficiency, offering excellent provision that is accessible to all, while reflecting and promoting diversity, and is sustainably funded. (Infrastructure functions are taken to be: Development; Information; Advice and

Assistance; Advocacy/Representation; Partnership Building/Brokerage; Policy Development and Research).

As ChangeUp outcomes are to be achieved by 2014 and investment will not continue beyond March 2006, investment will be focused on catalysing a step change in support available to frontline organisations for the longer term. In the main, this will not be achieved by spreading the investment thinly and funding the core functions of existing infrastructure.

Investment for both ChangeUp and DEFRA's programme will therefore be focused on strategic planning, reconfiguration, improving quality and reach, and plugging gaps where there is clear evidence of need and sustainability. The direction of travel will be towards a 'baseline' of provision in all geographic areas, targeting areas and groups where need has been identified and building on success.

Government Office East is co-ordinating ChangeUp alongside DEFRA's infrastructure investment as one programme.

## EAST OF ENGLAND VCS INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY, INVESTMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The priorities set out in the regional plan are largely based on county plans commissioned as part of an early investment programme since April 2004. Subject to meeting expectations and criteria set out by the Advisory Group, the six county and a regional consortia will be the key mechanism for driving activities at their respective levels. Through adopting a strategic function, they are best placed to take a long-term view on the role of the sector across a county or the region

The plan also incorporates other relevant research and information from across the region. The plan seeks an interface with the national aspects of ChangeUp and seeks to make meaningful links to both county and regional public sector policy developments (e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships, Community Strategies, EEDA's Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Assembly's Integrated Regional Strategy).

The public sector in the region has a critical role, and their funding of the VCS should be long term, strategic and focused on clear objectives agreed with infrastructure bodies. Funders are best placed to plan and fund services that meet needs at their level of activity. It is vital that the regional investment does not displace funding or fill gaps with no thought to sustainability. It cannot replace, and care is required not to displace, existing funding of core support services.

## VISION

The strategy seeks to provide a sense of direction, responsive to sector aspirations, over the next 10 years. It echoes the national framework (ChangeUp):

The East of England VCS infrastructure Plan will support the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations in the region through strategically focused county and regional infrastructure consortia and their members.

Investment in these structures will initiate and support sustainably funded, effective and efficient generic and specialist services that are accountable to their membership, reflect the diversity of the sector and accessible to all.

## OBJECTIVES

The Regional Infrastructure Advisory Group seeks to ensure that Home Office and DEFRA investment in the region is effectively and efficiently allocated by March 2006.

Objectives are underpinned by the following high level objectives on:

- a highly skilled workforce
- performance improvement
- more effective use of ICT
- strengthened governance
- improved volunteer support,
- more diverse and effective income generation within the voluntary and community sector (VCS)
- ensure infrastructure support for frontline VCS groups serving rural areas better meet the needs of users and to improved the quality of life for socially excluded groups and individuals within rural areas.

In line with locally identified needs, activities will be concentrated across the following themes.

- Modernising VCS Infrastructure
- Embedding Quality and Improving Reach
- Improving ICT support
- Building capacity in key service delivery areas
- Management and evaluation.

Investment will contribute to:

- the achievement of Home Office Public Service Agreement 8 'to increase voluntary and community sector activity, including increasing community participation, by 5% by 2006';
- the achievement of the element of DEFRA's Public Service Agreement 4 that aims to reduce the gap in productivity between the least well-performing quartile of rural areas and the English median by 2008, and improve the accessibility of services for people in rural areas.

Specifically, investment will support the achievement of ChangeUp's high level outcomes, i.e. to develop:

- a highly skilled workforce, performance improvement, more effective use of ICT, strengthened governance, improved volunteer support, and more diverse and effective income generation within the VCS;
- support for frontline organisations that is available region wide, structured for maximum efficiency, offering excellent provision that is accessible to all, while reflecting and promoting diversity, and is sustainably funded;
- support to improve the quality of life of the socially excluded in rural areas.

## PRINCIPLES

The following principles apply to the programme.

- Investment should build on and strengthen what exists rather than creating new organisations.
- Proposals and schemes across the programmes should demonstrate how they contribute to achieving the improved provision of support and assistance to frontline organisations to enable them to shape and deliver public services and to engage communities in improving quality of life.
- Funds cannot replace, or should not displace, funding or the responsibilities of other funders, particularly in regard to generic local infrastructure. Wherever possible, investment should have a multiplying effect – providing leverage for additional funding and resources.
- The needs of marginalised communities and organisations, including the black and minority ethnic (BME) and faith sectors, the community sector, rural organisations and social enterprises should be mainstreamed, or provided for, at every stage of investment.
- Investment will build on that already made through Home Office and DEFRA early spend programmes, making use of existing consortia, project outcomes and learning.
- Investment will not overlap with *Futurebuilders*, but will focus on second-tier activity to support frontline organisations.
- The emphasis will be on commissioning through inviting expressions of interest or proposals based on needs and justified through sub-regional and regional plans.

## INVESTMENT

The Government Office in the region will co-ordinate investment to ensure it meets ChangeUp's objectives and helps achieve its outcomes. Government Office will directly commission some initiatives while also sub contracting the majority of the fund management.

To ensure compliance with the Compact code of good practice on funding, probity and transparency, Government Office will develop robust investment guidance for fund managers. Fund managers will be required to implement and report on agreed principles and good practice, operating across spending programmes, along with evidence of who is participating in planning and receiving funds. Government Office (East) will require fund managers to invest for the benefit of diverse frontline organisations – supporting initiatives that best meet their needs.

Commissioning will, in the main, take place through inviting proposals or expressions of interest. These will build on early spend and partnership initiatives already being developed.

Both schemes are being co-ordinated as one programme by the Government Office in the East of England.

Priority will be given to proposals and schemes that demonstrate the following<sup>1</sup>.

- **Needs led:** linking activities to clear evidence of need.
- **Accountability:** demonstrating that the proposal and then the project has been developed by consulting appropriate frontline organisations, other infrastructure providers, funders/potential funders and other relevant stakeholders and that it has support; schemes that enable infrastructure to become more accountable and more responsive to their stakeholders; schemes that assist frontline organisations to be more accountable and user focused.

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<sup>1</sup> DEFRA has already guaranteed to award £60,000 to each county consortium whose proposals for rural areas meet this criteria (which, although slightly reworded, remain the same in essence as defined in DEFRA Guidance to Consortia dated January 2004).

- **Collaboration:** facilitating and promoting collaborative relationships between the VCS, Government and other key stakeholders. VCOs will need to demonstrate that they are willing and able to work in partnership to deliver agreed outcomes.
- **Outcome focused:** based on achieving demonstrable and measurable outcomes; helping to promote and develop outcome-focused planning and reporting within infrastructure and frontline organisations.
- **Sustainability:** schemes that have thought through their longer-term sustainability and can demonstrate how this can be achieved; schemes that will help achieve economies of scale and efficiency savings – allowing a greater focus on service delivery; schemes that have the support of other funders or are likely to lever in additional funding; schemes that include an element of earned income or that are about developing the ability of infrastructure to income generate; schemes that help create sustainable infrastructure organisations through skills and asset development.
- **Subsidiarity:** activities that are delivered as close to the point of need as is economically viable and that is consistent with achieving quality.
- **Equality and Diversity:** schemes involving and benefiting the diversity of individuals, communities and organisations in England and reflecting different needs in different areas of the country and walks of life; schemes addressing inequalities in current provision and targeting the needs of small and marginalised groups.
- **Excellence:** schemes that encourage and develop excellence in delivery of infrastructure and capacity building support; schemes that support frontline organisations to strive for excellence and build their skills base.
- **Efficiency:** schemes that encourage and enable greater efficiency in infrastructure and that build the capacity of frontline organisations to be more efficient in their work and dealings with Government.
- **Learning:** schemes that are willing to share learning and contribute to evaluation.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The following general eligibility criteria are relevant across all the investment programmes.

- Funded schemes must be providing infrastructure/second-tier support and development services (Development; Information; Advice and Assistance; Advocacy/Representation; Partnership Building/Brokerage; Policy Development and Research) to frontline organisations, their workers and trustees (i.e. schemes for the provision of direct services to members of the public are not eligible).
- Applicants, including fund managers, must be constituted bodies that are: charities, voluntary or community organisations, social enterprises or community interest companies and therefore must:
  - (i) be clearly constituted for public or community benefit
  - (ii) not be able to dispose of their assets for private gain
  - (iii) have some non-executive (unpaid) members on their board/management committee (i.e. unpaid for their role on the committee, but could still be employees).
- Applicants are encouraged to work in partnership, but there must be one lead applicant and fund-holder.
- The lead applicant must normally have been in existence for at least 2 years and have at least 1 full year's set of accounts or, in the case of start-up, must be able to demonstrate that key personnel involved have significant prior experience.
- Scheme outcomes must be in the East of England.
- Investment will only be made for those activities prioritised within regional and county consortia plans. Work will be commissioned, where supported with clear evidence of need and prioritised within consortia plans and that sit within the regional priorities. The extent of the collective benefit from the proposed priorities, the potential to provide for the leverage of other funds and the overall strategic impact will be given particular attention.

## EAST OF ENGLAND PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

The voluntary and community sector in the East of England is diverse, vibrant and active. There are currently in excess of 30,000 'not for profit' organisations in the region, of which almost 15,000 are registered as charities with the Charity Commissioners. This number is growing year on year and this reflected in reports that the sector is one of the fastest growing employment sectors in Europe.

It is currently estimated that the sector in the region contributes 2% of GDP to the region: has a paid workforce of more than 1% of the population; a formal volunteer workforce of around 27% and an informal volunteer workforce of approximately 37%. The Active Citizenship survey, 2003, shows that the VCS workforce is increasing in capacity and activity and this trend is likely to continue. The sector's work bridges all age groups, all communities and includes a range of activities from advice and service provision, through sporting activities and cultural activity, to environmental action.

Research has highlighted that VCOs increasingly are providing a number of public services. The East of England is an area of growing social capital with a wide net of voluntary and community groups providing a myriad of services and support through its paid and volunteer workforce.

The overall trends show that the sector is:

- seeking new and innovative ways of raising funds and increasingly competing with other sectors;
- entering into more contractual agreements with public agencies, rather than relying on 'grant aid';
- expanding, both in terms of activities provided and in ways in which they are provided to meet changing demands;
- continually increasing the skills of its paid and unpaid workforce through on- and off- job development.

The role of, and the demands on, infrastructure support agencies has grown significantly in a short period of time. They are critical in terms of the information and advice they can provide and the assistance they can give through advocacy, partnership building, policy development and research. The investment available to the region will seek to further the capacity of second-tier agencies to consolidate and extend the reach and quality of their

services. From initial plans submitted by the emerging county consortia, the following summary outlines the challenges facing the second-tier agencies.

### **Challenges**

Modernising  
infrastructure

- To ensure the services provided are accessible and accountable to all frontline agencies, both in terms of location and interest.
- To extend services, and their quality, to a significant proportion of frontline organisations currently not accessing the support of infrastructure agencies.
- To increase information to frontline organisations.
- To analyse and interpret information relevant to the frontline organisations.
- To represent frontline agencies adequately and appropriately.
- To secure core resources to respond to the challenge to be 'fit for purpose'.
- To engage in, and benefit from, the emerging strategic VCS infrastructure consortia plans.
- To develop the plans and have the capacity to ensure the needs and interests of a diverse range of communities of interest are met.

Embedding  
quality

- To develop regional and sub-regional strategies on the thematic areas of Workforce Development, Financial Sustainability, Community Development, Volunteering and ICT.
- To implement the strategies on the above.
- To develop plans and have the capacity to ensure a significant increase in the quality and performance of infrastructure agencies.
- To develop the ways and means to share best practice across infrastructure agencies.

Work will be commissioned, where supported with clear evidence of need and prioritised within consortia plans and that sit within the regional priorities. The extent of the collective benefit from the proposed priorities, the potential to provide for the leverage of other funds and the overall strategic impact will be looked in particular.

## **SUMMARY OF REGIONAL PRIORITIES**

Further details follow on pages 16-27

### **Priority Area 1: Modernising VCS Infrastructure**

- Enhance the current capacity of the infrastructure bodies in the six counties to deliver a basic comprehensive service.
- Further the relationships between generic and specialist infrastructure provision that enables equitable access to services across counties and the region particularly where targeted at marginalised groups.
- Support long term-investments from public sector agencies and other funders to secure the sustainability of activities beyond March 2006.
- Augment effective ways of delivering support functions including the potential for greater collaborative working, including the opportunities for sharing facilities, support costs and integration.

### **Priority Area 2: Embedding Quality and Improving Reach**

- Support the development of strategies and the subsequent delivery of activities across the following themes: workforce development; social enterprise support services; community development and volunteer support services.
- Further plans that ensure accountability to users and extend the reach of services to current non-users.
- Further the VCS engagement in sub-regional multi-sector strategic developments and regional strategies.

### **Priority Area 3: Improving ICT support**

- Support the development of strategies and the subsequent delivery of ICT activities.

### **Priority Area 4: Building capacity in key service delivery areas**

- Engage purchasers of services in key service delivery areas.

## Priority Area 5: Management and Evaluation

- Ensure formal structures are in place at a county and regional level to administer, coordinate, commission and, where appropriate, deliver activities that further the objectives associated with the regional investment in VCS infrastructure.
- Provide for the appropriate benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation of all related activities.

### THE FOCUS OF INVESTMENT

- Investment will be focused on strategic planning, reconfiguration and merging existing services that improve quality and reach, and address gaps.
- Proposals for investment in organisations or posts will only be supported where the benefits are clearly sustainable beyond March 2006.
- Activities might therefore be best delivered through secondments or extending partnership development within existing posts and back filling the roles affected.
- The investment seeks to fund catalytic change and activities creating greatest impact within the tight timetable available and within the priorities set out in the regional plan.
- Investment will only be made for those activities prioritised within regional and county consortia plans.
- Work will be commissioned, where supported with clear evidence of need and that sit within the regional priorities.
- The extent of the collective benefit from the proposed priorities, the potential to provide for the leverage of other funds and the overall strategic impact will be given particular attention.

## PRIORITY AREA 1

### MODERNISING VCS INFRASTRUCTURE

#### Aim

Infrastructure services are configured to better meet the needs of frontline organisations, are co-ordinated, delivered efficiently, and are more sustainable.

#### Priorities

##### 1. Creation of regional and county infrastructure development plans

*This is a prerequisite for further investment.*

Through its early spend programme, the Regional Advisory Group has funded county-wide consortia of infrastructure bodies to plan for strengthening support for voluntary and community organisations, community capacity and volunteering. Plans should work as a key instrument to pull in the commitment of funders.

Building on work already begun investment will continue to support stakeholders to come together sub-regionally and regionally to:

- review capacity building needs and available support for frontline voluntary and community organisations in urban and rural areas;
- agree action to better meet the needs of frontline organisations so that they can be more involved in planning and delivering public services and meeting the needs of communities, especially ensuring the needs of diverse and excluded communities and organisations are met;
- plan for meeting gaps, overcoming weaknesses, improving reach, agreeing the level at which support is most appropriately delivered and clarifying responsibilities;
- identify means of improving sustainability and income regeneration; and
- cement relationships and develop protocols for joint working, building on existing work – for example, setting out ways in which generalist and specialist providers might work better together.

Evidence will be required that diverse frontline organisations have a voice in the planning of infrastructure to meet their needs. This can be through being part of the partnership to develop the plan (although scope will of necessity be limited) and broader partnership working and consultation.

It is recognised that the capacity building needs of frontline organisations have been the subject of a national consultation on infrastructure and that the key support needs identified by ChangeUp will be relevant to all areas. Needs analysis should be focused on the specific make-up of the sector in a particular area, its potential for growth or change, and the current state of capacity building support and infrastructure. Partnerships should make use of existing knowledge, information and data.

The voluntary and community sector will lead in developing the plans. Partnerships or consortia will appoint a VCO to receive and administer finances, to act as the accountable body, and to report on progress. However, plans must be developed in genuine partnership between a representative range of VCOs and with public sector and other relevant stakeholders. Plans should work as a key instrument to involve and pull in the commitment of a range of investors in support services for the VCS.

Investment can continue to support the planning process:

- secretariat
- venue hire and refreshments
- partnership working costs including travel and other expenses incurred
- facilitation and brokerage
- consultation including reaching excluded and marginalised groups
- rural proofing
- writing strategies and plans

Activities have already begun and structures are in place to begin detailing the recommendations from planning to date. Proposals seeking approval with a view to accessing additional investment should detail:

- the fund-holder, their suitability and capability to fulfil this role – including stakeholder support;
- who will be involved in the partnership to develop the plan;

- terms of reference for the partnership – process for partnership working including accountability mechanisms and how diversity will be achieved;
- process for broader partnership working and consultation with stakeholders – detail of who these stakeholders will be;
- The process for rural proofing and any additional work to identify needs and issues in rural areas;
- expected outcomes;
- broad scope of work;
- project management arrangements;
- costs and timetable.

It is also expected that all plans will detail:

- evidence of the needs of diverse frontline organisations (plans must demonstrate involvement of a wide spectrum of users of infrastructure services in determining needs);
- assessment of current provision, investment, and the degree to which needs of organisations are being met (the process of developing the plan should identify what already exists, what works well and how this could be built upon and replicated, what needs changing and putting in place);
- analysis of key challenges, 5–10 year vision, priorities and actions for the future;
- objectives and actions to specifically meet the needs of small and neighbourhood organisations, BME organisations, faith organisations and other organisations working with excluded and marginalised groups, social enterprises and organisations engaged or wanting to be engaged in enterprise activity;
- how independent and accountable structures to represent and advocate for communities, both geographical and communities of interest, will be developed and sustained (this should be underpinned by the broad aim of strengthening community cohesion);
- consideration of the support needs of volunteer-involving organisations and the role of volunteering infrastructure in supporting those needs as well as enabling and promoting volunteering;

- mechanisms for joint working between the different agencies delivering capacity building services and activities including generic and specialist infrastructure, urban and rural delivery (where relevant), and local, sub-regional, regional and national infrastructure (plans should consider how support services are best delivered across a range of providers and how they might work better together; they might also consider how frontline organisations can help each other and how this might be effectively brokered);
- evidence that partners have explored the most effective and efficient ways of delivering support functions (the potential for merger and greater collaborative working including protocols and service level agreements, opportunities for sharing facilities and support costs, etc);
- how actions will be measured in terms of outputs and outcomes;
- milestones;
- accountability mechanism (how frontline organisations, public sector bodies and other key funders and stakeholders have been and will continue to be engaged in the process);
- an investment plan;
- how sustainability will be secured beyond March 2006;
- how the plan will be monitored and evaluated (the plan should be a live document with a built in review mechanism);
- how lessons learned will be disseminated.

Plans need to have considered setting and agreeing objectives for infrastructure and an appropriate mechanism for measuring and monitoring performance.

County consortia will be requested to work closely with the Regional Consortium and to determine what support is best and most feasibly delivered at this level and how it can be developed and supported. This is likely to include the 'housing' of specialists or advisers in key support areas for frontline organisations, to be shared across localities,

as well as the development of partnerships or networks of regional and sub-regional infrastructure in key support areas.

Plans will vary depending on geography, demography and the state of existing infrastructure. The regional investment programme aims to catalyse change in the way infrastructure services are delivered and structured. In particular, it seeks to encourage increased reach, effectiveness and sustainability as close to the point of need as is economically viable and in ways that secure the ownership and commitment of a diverse range of investors.

Plans should reflect and take account of:

- local action planning processes such as parish plans in rural areas and neighbourhood action plans in urban areas and the requirement for local authorities to develop Community Strategies;
- existing, new and emerging local partnership arrangements for strategy development, service planning, commissioning and delivery – such as in the field of services for children, young people and families (local authorities are expected to have established a Children’s Trust, involving the VCS, by 2006);
- local Compacts;
- the needs of citizens and small community groups, and consider what steps need to be taken to ensure that support is available at neighbourhood or parish level, as set out in more detail in the Home Office report *Building Civil Renewal: Review Findings* and, when it is published later this year, the Review's final report. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are the most likely partnership mechanism to take this work forward, potentially through a sub-group or working group.

County consortia should ideally comprise representatives from:

- All local VCS infrastructure including volunteering infrastructure, some frontline organisations including BME and faith organisations and other organisations working with excluded and marginalised groups, community, residents’ and tenants’ groups, those in unitary authorities and rural organisations

plus an advisory structure with involvement from:

- the social enterprise sector
- Local Strategic Partnerships

- Local Authorities
- Primary Care Trusts
- Learning and Skills Council
- other local public sector agencies and partnerships regarded as appropriate in the county.

This list is not exhaustive, and representation will vary depending on local circumstances.

Plans may also be shared with the national hubs of expertise so that they can understand needs and developments on the ground and integrate these into their planning and delivery.

Regional Infrastructure Development Plans should set out what needs developing and changing to make regional infrastructure more effective, efficient and accessible, better able to represent and meet the needs of frontline organisations within the region. Plans should be informed by county plans and other relevant information including learning from early spend development and exemplar projects. Regional plans will need to meet the criteria set out above in relation to county plans.

A VCS Regional Consortium should comprise representatives from:

- regional VCS infrastructure organisations
- a representative from each of the six county consortia.
- an advisory structure with involvement from public sector agencies and partnerships regarded as appropriate at a regional level.

## **2. Specialist advisers**

- Advisers in the key support areas identified by ChangeUp, housed at a regional or sub-regional level and able to support local infrastructure and frontline organisations.
- Support for national hubs to support, professionally develop and co-ordinate advisers.

### **3. Strengthening diversity and tackling social exclusion**

Projects that target interventions to meet the specific needs of excluded and marginalised groups and communities – such as developing leadership, income generation or social enterprise skills.

### **4. Promoting collaboration and partnership at all levels**

- Projects at all geographic levels increasing co-ordination, co-operation, strategic working and collaboration between infrastructure organisations to improve efficiency, effectiveness and reach. To include increasing collaboration between generic and specialist infrastructure and between VCS infrastructure and other providers of capacity building to the VCS.
- Projects that increase the effectiveness of the Regional Voluntary Sector Networks and strengthen partnership working across the Networks and between the Networks and regional branches of national organisations.
- At regional, county and particularly at local level, the movement towards the development of physical or virtual hubs of provision – co-location and sharing of back office facilities, ICT/web portals, and services. Specialist infrastructure including infrastructure working with marginalised groups should be integral to the development of hubs – providing an opportunity for closer partnership working and shared learning.
- ‘Pushing up’ specialist functions (e.g. performance improvement advisors or volunteering promotions officers) to county level to be shared across localities.
- Development of county partnerships or networks of local agencies in key support areas.
- Supporting integration of organisations.
- Projects linking national, regional and local infrastructure to reduce duplication and improve support to frontline organisations.

### **5. Addressing gaps**

Where there are significant gaps in core and volunteering infrastructure provision and where there is evidence of sustainability.

### **6. Development or strengthening of practical centralised support services**

Projects that put in place, or further develop, support services and facilities available to frontline organisations such as payroll, meeting, training and office space, ICT and

media resources. Projects will need to demonstrate future sustainability, including through the ability to earn income.

### **7. Promoting recognition of and increasing access to infrastructure**

Projects that increase access to infrastructure, particularly by those organisations such as BME, faith, rural and community organisations not currently getting equal access to support. Projects could improve and develop signposting between support services and organisations, use of ICT, marketing, promotion and branding.

### **8. Developing excellence**

The ACU is funding the National Umbrellas Forum through NCVO to develop a performance improvement framework of guidelines, tools, outcome measures and (if found feasible and valuable) national standards for core infrastructure functions and services. Once the framework is in place in late 2005, funds will be available to support and embed performance improvement in infrastructure organisations.

In advance of the framework's completion, projects will be supported that:

- promote and share good practice between infrastructure organisations, including successful infrastructure agencies supporting provision of infrastructure in weaker areas;
- promote skills development and benchmarking among infrastructure providers, including projects to strengthen accountability, representation, and user involvement;
- help deliver ChangeUp's recommendation of a commonly branded local volunteering infrastructure linked to the achievement of quality standards available from the end of 2005.

### **9. Strengthening equality and diversity**

Projects that support generalist infrastructure to be more diverse. Projects that strengthen infrastructure supporting excluded and marginalised groups and communities to:

- better advocate for and meet the needs of those groups and communities
- work with generalist infrastructure to ensure that capacity building support reaches and is appropriate to diverse and excluded groups.

## **10. Building sustainability**

Projects that improve the financial stability and sustainability of infrastructure through building income generation skills and asset development.

## **PRIORITY AREA 2**

### **EMBEDDING QUALITY AND IMPROVING REACH**

#### **Aim**

Frontline organisations have better access to high-quality support in the key areas of organisational need identified in ChangeUp.

#### **Performance improvement** including:

- access to, and use of, diagnostic tools to assess strengths and weaknesses and plan effectively;
- support for/skills development in/benchmarking and measuring and demonstrating outcomes.

#### **Workforce development** including:

- HR practice and diagnosis of skills needs;
- development of management, leadership, team working, and planning skills;
- use of competencies and standards including national occupational standards.

#### **Governance** including:

- increased access to specialist information and advice for trustees, including in the areas of employment and the law;
- development of trustee and board member networks including for chairs and treasurers.

#### **Volunteer recruitment and management** including:

- developing paid and voluntary managers of volunteers.

#### **ICT**

- Priorities/types of projects to be informed by the ICT Strategy (due late October 2004).

**Financing activities** including:

- income generation, diversification and sustainability;
- procurement;
- fundraising including good practice;
- asset management, trading and enterprise.

**Initiatives to improve affordable face-to-face support**

- Projects that support the growth of low cost face-to-face advice and support to frontline organisations, particularly groups that have not had equitable access to support or are unable to pay for services. Support could be for initiatives such as ICT circuit riders, action learning networks, peer learning, mentoring, coaching and brokering of *pro bono* support.
- Projects that strengthen a clearing house/brokering/matching function including within generalist VCS infrastructure.

**Initiatives that test out, and deliver, new or more effective ways of providing support to diverse frontline organisations**

Projects at all geographical levels that pilot, develop or put in place support services and capacity building in the identified key areas of need – to improve reach, effectiveness and accountability, and to plug gaps where there is clear evidence of need and likelihood of sustainability.

**PRIORITY AREA 3**

**IMPROVING ICT SUPPORT**

Priorities/types of projects to be informed by the ICT Strategy (due late October 2004).

**PRIORITY AREA 4**

**BUILDING CAPACITY IN KEY SERVICE DELIVERY AREAS**

**Aim**

Increased engagement of the voluntary and community sector in geographical areas of deprivation and priority public service areas:

- older peoples' health and social care services;
- correctional services;
- ethnic minority employment;
- homeless hostel provision;
- parenting support services.

## **Priorities**

Development of specialist infrastructure and targeted capacity building support in priority areas. Work will be co-ordinated by relevant Government departments and Government Offices to:

- review current support for capacity building and specialist infrastructure
- identify where the VCS has the potential to do more in the delivery of priority public services in deprived areas at a regional, sub-regional and local level, and target capacity building support to those areas – including through encouraging and supporting benchmarking and performance improvement;
- where useful, build the capacity of mainstream infrastructure to support organisations working in these fields;
- Strengthen the relationships across ChangeUp objectives and
  - Local Area Agreements (LAAs) in the pilot areas of the region (Suffolk and Peterborough) and currently focussed on three key themes: children and young people; safer and stronger communities; and health and older people)
  - Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs)
  - and the work of Local Strategic Partnerships and their related community strategies.
- Negotiate clear targets and outcomes with authorities and their partners for these areas
- Strengthen diverse sector involvement in service delivery, focusing on excluded and under-represented groups through identifying needs, removing barriers, and targeting support.

ACU will work with departments and GOs to develop this strand – a flexible approach is needed to address specific needs, priorities and issues in each priority area.

National and regional government will work together to deliver a joined-up approach to building VCS capacity at a national, regional, sub-regional and local level in the identified

priority service areas. They should ensure that partnership working with diverse VCS and other stakeholders takes place.

Consideration will be given to sustainability – particularly the mainstreaming of initiatives and support for specialist infrastructure within Government departments beyond March 2006.

## **PRIORITY AREA 5**

### **MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION**

#### **Aim**

To ensure probity, transparency and effective use of the investment available

#### **Priorities**

Ensure formal structures are in place at a county and regional level to administer, coordinate, commission and, where appropriate, deliver activities that further the objectives associated with the regional investment in VCS infrastructure.

Provide for the appropriate benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation of all related activities.

## BUDGET ALLOCATION

### Overall Spending Allocations

Programme allocations at regional level and below are indicative - regions have flexibility to prioritise strands of investment according to need.

Theme	Delivered Nationally	Delivered Regionally	Delivered Sub-regionally & Locally	TOTAL
<b>A: Embedding Quality, Improving Reach</b>	New initiatives £3m	New initiatives £15.1m		<b>£32.1m</b>
	<i>(approx £4.5m)</i>	ICT support £9m	<i>(approx £4.5m)</i>	
	National hubs £5m			
<b>B: Modernising infrastructure</b>	Infrastructure National Partnership £0.5m	Regional Infrastructure Development Planning £0.9m	Local and sub-regional Infrastructure Development Planning £2m	<b>£29.9m</b>
	Reconfiguration £3.5m	Reconfiguration £3m	Reconfiguration £18.5m	
	Performance Improvement in infrastructure £1.5m			
<b>Public service priorities</b>	Targeted programmes through Government departments (working with Government Offices) £4m			<b>£5m</b>
	Larger organisations supporting small £1m			
<b>Fund management, pre-investment support &amp; Evaluation</b>	Evaluation £1m  Fund Management £1m	Fund management, administration and VCS participation £3m		<b>£5m</b>
<b>Total</b>				<b>£72m</b>

**The overall allocation for the East of England equals:**

	ACU: ChangeUp programmes (k)	<i>of which capital (k)</i>	<i>of which admin (k)</i>	DEFRA Infrastructu re investment (k)	DEFRA Infrastructu re delivery (k)	<i>Total Allocatio n (k)</i>
East	<b>4,473</b>	<b>1,251</b>	<b>0.289</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>46.8</b>	<b>5,157</b>

All funds must be spent by GOs and/or their fund managers by the end of March 2006.

The capital/revenue split of is approximately 25%/75%. £1.25 million of ChangeUp investment in the region is capital. Guidance on capital expenditure will be provided. A public commitment has been made to spend around £430,000 on ICT support for the sector in the region.

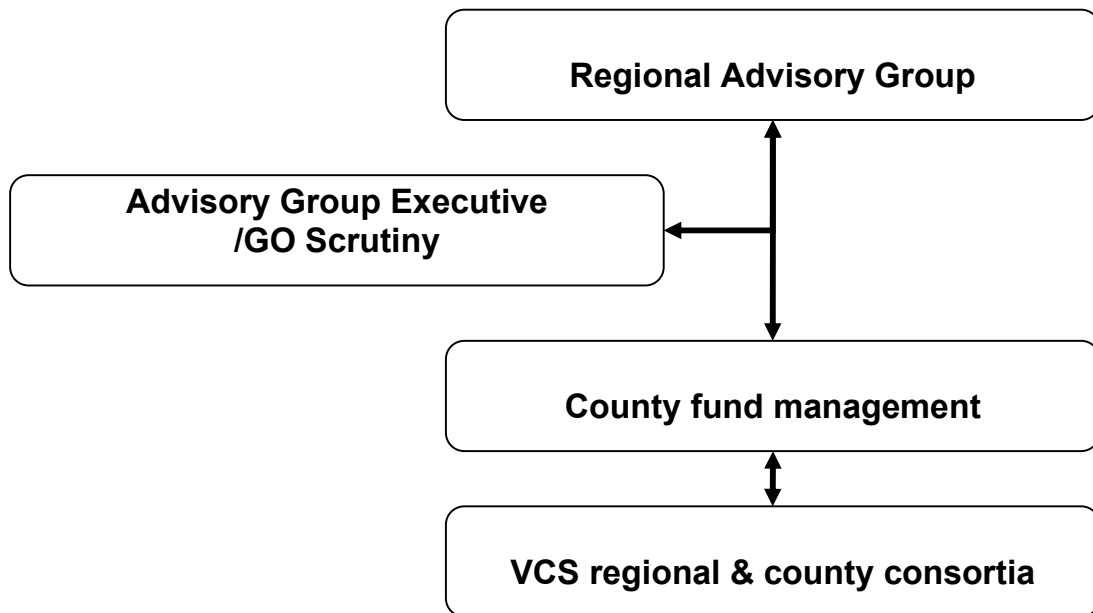
60% of the ChangeUp investment has been allocated equally across the 6 county consortia and the one regional consortium. This gives a notional allocation of £358.600 each. As well as this, each county has an allocation of £60,000 from DEFRA funding equating to a minimum total of £418.600 over the period to March 2006.

The remaining 40% of funding to be allocated depending on plans and/or evidence of particular need/considerations. The Regional Advisory Group is working to a timescale of March/April 2005 for final decisions on remaining funding to be completed.

No funds will be released until the Regional Advisory Group has agreed the finalised costed plans.

An additional £104K under-spend plus any additional monies not spent as part of the Early Spend projects is also available.

## REGIONAL DELIVERY STRUCTURES



Organisation Partnership	Roles / responsibilities
<b>Government Office East</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinate overall implementation of the programme in the region, including a partnership mechanism for the sector and other relevant stakeholders to be active in setting regional priorities and decision-making.</li> <li>• Retain ultimate responsibility for ensuring that ACU and DEFRA funds are being released for appropriate use.</li> <li>• Work with DEFRA and ACU, as required, to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, and ensure the collection of self evaluation returns from funded projects</li> <li>• Make quarterly reports to ACU/DEFRA on finances and progress</li> <li>• Analyse reports and, where funding directly, self evaluation forms in order to provide ACU and DEFRA with evaluation reports and monitoring data</li> </ul>

<b>Regional advisory group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set framework for the delivery of the programme</li> <li>• Advise and steer the investment programme</li> <li>• Arbitrate where necessary</li> <li>• Assess and agree Regional and County Plans.</li> <li>• Encourage the engagement of other funders in the programme.</li> <li>• Set up mechanisms for the allocation of regional budgets.</li> <li>• Build on the outcomes from ACU and DEFRA Early Spend Programmes.</li> <li>• Identify good practice and lessons learnt in the region;</li> <li>• Promote good practice and lessons learnt;</li> <li>• Promote a culture of self evaluation;</li> <li>• Collect reports from fund managers to deadline;</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Advisory Group Executive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund management for regional activity</li> <li>• Support Regional Consortia to lead on regional infrastructure development plans.</li> <li>• Carry out executive duties as required</li> </ul>
<b>County fund management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall fund management</li> <li>• Provide change management advice and support to county consortia including facilitating networking between consortia.</li> <li>• Monitor the delivery of agreed outcomes and outputs for projects in the region.</li> </ul>
<b>VCS Regional consortium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and set regional priorities and implement regional plan.</li> </ul>
<b>VCS County Consortia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set county priorities and implement county plans</li> </ul>

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE REGIONAL ADVISORY GROUP

Membership consists of the Government Office for the East of England (Home Office and DEFRA), the secretariat of the Regional Assembly, East of England Development Agency, Funders Forum, Social Enterprise East of England, Learning and Skills Council, and representatives of each of the county and regional consortia.

## FUND MANAGEMENT, SCRUTINY AND ACCOUNTING

GO East will subcontract the management of funds. It will perform a scrutiny role and investment of funds should have regard to the following:

- **Probity** : The investment is public money and the ACU and DEFRA will need to demonstrate that decisions are made in a manner that is impartial and robust. Distribution arrangements will need to be independent and not captured by any particular organisation or group of organisations.
- **Transparency**: This investment is a high-profile aspect of government policy on the voluntary and community sector. It is important, therefore, that fund distribution operates in a transparent way, and that decision-making processes are suitable for public scrutiny and challenge.
- **Compact compliance**: The arrangements will need to be compliant with the Compact and, in particular, the requirements set out in its Funding Code.
- **Accessibility**: In making decisions about how funds will be spent, fund managers will need to demonstrate the steps it has taken to ensure that opportunities reach all the relevant potential providers.
- **Efficiency**: The costs of distributing funds and holding recipients to account for delivering the desired results should be within the usual range for grant-making organisations. In the main projects should be commissioned. Experience has shown that bidding rounds waste scarce resources from both the sector and government as well as creating unmanageable expectations from the sector.

The executive group will provide a scrutiny function. This group will pay particular attention to probity issues, ensuring decisions are impartial and robust.

The Regional Advisory Group through the executive group will contract direct with the regional consortium for the development and implementation of the regional plan. These are the priorities set for delivering infrastructure support functions at a regional level. The Regional Advisory Group and its executive group will retain all the fund management functions for this contract.

The Regional Advisory Group will contract with a VCS partnership body or single VCS organisation to carry out the following fund management functions in respect of contracts with the county consortia. It is expected that the fund management role will have a positive impact on Capacity Building for the sector and this is one of the key factors in contracting the work out. The fund manager will also provide advice including support to county consortia to further develop and move towards implementation of plans as appropriate, negotiating and monitoring delivery of agreed outcomes and outputs, preparation of financial reporting to GO/RAG, manage process of offering, payment and reporting on grants, and 'critical friend'/contract management.

In the interim GO-East will perform this role to ensure momentum and implementation are not adversely affected.

## THE COMMISSIONING PROCESS

### **Applications and commissioning**

Programme funds will be allocated through 'commissioning' (i.e. not full open bidding). Regional and county plans will provide the basis for the commissioning. This will be through a mix of:

- inviting expressions of interest against criteria and guidance;
- building on Early Spend initiatives and working with stakeholders to identify priorities and agree actions - using wider consultation as need be.

### **Appraising expressions of interests**

GO East and fund managers with whom they contract will make final investment decisions in line with agreed cross-programme criteria and individual programme criteria and guidance.

The advisory group will meet on a quarterly basis and approval for investment will be made within the schedule of meetings.

A limited set of baseline data is required regarding all proposals received to assist in programme evaluation, appraisal and monitoring reports.

A transparent system will be established for appraising investments. This will include a formal appraisal for each proposal received as well as presenting each investment application to an assessment panel. It will be possible for an auditor to track that due consideration has been given to relevant factors before offering or rejecting a proposal.

### **Offering investments**

All offers should clearly state:

- the recipient of the investment;
- the purpose of the investment;
- the outputs (the offer must make clear which outputs are to be coded against which programme, and the total amount within the grant that is being allocated from each programme);
- the final claim date;
- the GO or fund manager contact for oversight of the investment.

Investments will be offered based on the template based on the Home Office's standard terms and conditions.

Fund managers and GO East may add in any additional conditions that they feel appropriate. However, any extra conditions will be in proportion to the size of investment, and not too onerous on the recipient to fulfil or on the fund manager to check compliance.

Payments will be generally be made quarterly, in advance, on receipt of evidence of need.

## TIMEFRAME

Key outcomes	Who	Target dates
Invite fund management expressions of interest	GO East	October 04
Commissioning process initiated	GO East / Advisory group	By end of Nov 04
Dissemination of early spend projects	Advisory group	End of Nov 04
Submission of county and regional plans	County and regional consortia	End of Nov 04
Establish regional consortium	Regional VCS organisations	End of Nov 04
Contract fund management	GO East / Advisory group	December 2004
Extended advisory board	GO East / Advisory group	December 2004
Fund management in place	GO East / Advisory group	Jan '05
Consortium reporting in place	Fund managers	March 05
Set criteria for remaining 40% allocation	GO East / Advisory group	By end of March 05
Quarterly advisory group meetings	Advisory group	Dec 04 / Feb 05 / April 05 / July 05 / Oct 05 / Jan 06
Impact assessment in place	GO East / Advisory group	June 05

## COHESION WITH OTHER FUNDING PROGRAMMES

There is clearly an imperative to ensure the investment from ChangeUp is coordinated where feasible and appropriate with other funding streams. In particular the investment needs to be seen as opportunity to position the sector activities in a way that more effectively levers mainstream funds beyond March 2006.

Funders Forum is an active member of the Regional Advisory Group and will seek over the coming months to provide advice and information on the correlation between funding streams. It seeks to:

*“To promote and develop good practice, and foster co-operation between funders i.e. organisations that provide funding for projects and communities, working for the benefit of people in the East of England.”*

*Its objectives include:*

- To support the development of a comprehensive database of funders in the region
- To create opportunities for members to network and exchange experience across a broad range of activities e.g. open information exchange session at each Forum meeting.
- To create opportunities for members to maximise resources through partnership and co-operation e.g. circulation of project applications for match funding or pooling of bids.
- To contribute to the development of strategies and opportunities for targeting money more effectively e.g. through themed sessions raising awareness on issues such as funding cold spots and social inclusion.
- To exchange, develop and promote good funding practices e.g. development of shared outcome measures, evaluation criteria and diversity monitoring requirements.
- To inform members about issues of relevance to funders in the voluntary and not-for-profit sectors in the region
- To act as a conduit for external information of interest to funders e.g. through briefings to members
- To liaise with voluntary sector infrastructure organisations and networks

- To champion the allocation of national funds into the region.

Membership of the forum consists of the following categories of regional organisations:

***National, regional and local charitable trusts***

for example Lloyds TSB Foundation, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, the Bedford Charity and the Hertfordshire and Essex Community Foundations.

***Regional lottery distributors*** – such as the Big Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Sport England, Awards for All and the Arts Council East.

***Regional and non-departmental government agencies*** – all the key regional government agencies are members of the forum. This includes: EEDA, GO East, the Legal Services Commission, the Countryside Agency and EERA.

***The voluntary sector*** – including COVER, The Princes Trust and MENTER.

The forum has a web page, hosted on COVER's website [www.cover-east.org/funding](http://www.cover-east.org/funding), giving details of the funding programmes provided by regional funders to the voluntary and community sector in the East of England

Further information and advice will be disseminated once fund management structures are in place.

**Notes:**

## **For further details contact**

Sue Lowe

Community Development Team, Government Office East

SLowe.GO-East@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

01223 372599

Clare Witcombe

Community Development Team, Government Office East

CWITCOMBE.GO-East@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

01223 372606