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Evaluation of London ChangeUp processes

A report for the
London Regional ChangeUp Consortium

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1 Purpose

This report evaluates the processes used to manage the Regional ChangeUp programme and makes recommendations to improve them. In particular it considers the committee and sub-group structure, responsibilities of key partners and funding arrangements. It should be noted that it is an evaluation of the processes used to manage the ChangeUp programme and oversee the distribution of funds and development of plans and not of the programme itself.

Success is defined as whether the process enabled the ChangeUp programme to be managed and delivered effectively.

The scope of this report does not include an evaluation of local processes, only of the commissioning and guidance on the development of local Infrastructure Development Plans.

A costed evaluation framework for ChangeUp activity is included as a stand-alone appendix (see page 25).

2 Introduction

ChangeUp aims to ensure that:

“by 2014 the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) will be met by support which is available nationwide, structured for maximum efficiency, offering excellent provision accessible to all, truly reflecting and promoting diversity, and sustainably funded”

At regional level Government Office for London (GOL) convened a cross-sectoral London Regional Consortium (LRC) to draft a London Infrastructure Development Plan (LIDP) and oversee the whole ChangeUp process.

Local plans were drawn up through the establishment of local consortia, led by the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) or its equivalent body. The plans were quality checked by the LRC.

3 Methodology

An initial review was carried out of documents relating to the regional ChangeUp process. These included minutes of LRC meetings, key documents relating to LIDP development and allocation of funding,

assessment criteria, terms of reference, monitoring forms, LIDP drafts and agreements between partners.

Interviews were conducted with Association of London Government (ALG), London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC), GOL and a selection of members of the LRC. The chairs of the LRC sub-groups participated in a focus group. See page 23 for a full list of interviewees.

The purpose of these interviews was to gain insight into the role of the interviewees within the process and to obtain their views on:

- the success, strengths and weaknesses of the process
- the co-ordination and fit between local, regional and national levels
- how the process might be improved in the future

4 General comment

The timescale for delivery of the ChangeUp programme has been very short, resulting in planning and project delivery running in parallel, with little time available to develop processes, rules and systems.

The programme distributed £6.2m and oversaw the development of 33 local, five sub-regional and one regional plan between the summer of 2004 and June 2006. This report should be read in that context.

5 Summary of the success of the ChangeUp processes

Ideally, processes for administering the programme would have been in place before the programme was up and running. However, plans were being drafted and funding distributed before any processes were agreed. As a result, processes were developed as the need for particular rules, systems or procedures became apparent.

At the end of the first phase of the programme, the majority of systems and processes are in place or are being put into place. The LRC, its sub-groups and the key workers involved have demonstrated an ability to learn and to adapt processes as necessary.

The commitment of key partners, sub-group chairs and CVSs to making ChangeUp work is unquestionable.

6 Summary of recommendations

- Pull together all processes that are still relevant into one document and review them regularly
- Regularly review the terms of reference of LRC and sub-groups
- GOL should continue to have a key role and to chair the LRC
- Produce and review role descriptions and induction packs for LRC members
- Ensure consistent, written reporting by sub-groups to LRC
- Continue to fund a paid secretariat for each sub-group
- Introduce a written agreement between each LRC or sub-group member, covering attendance at meetings and written reporting
- New relationships that have been formed should be used to bring about positive change
- The role of each key partner, including Capacitybuilders, should be described clearly in writing
- Continue to fund a secretariat (LVSC from September 2006) to support the programme, with a written agreement about the level and type of service it will provide and reporting requirements
- Infrastructure Development Plans should be reviewed regularly
- Co-ordinate local, sub-regional and regional activity and identify potential shared tasks and good practice between local plans
- Executive summaries for local, sub-regional and regional plans should be incorporated into a single publicly available document
- The LRC should continue to have an input into funding in London, with mechanisms in place to ensure this happens
- Publish a brief guide to ChangeUp and its structures, including terms of reference and key documents, and publish regular briefings on the LVSC website
- LRC to meet with CVSs at least twice a year
- Continue to ensure that Equalities are properly considered within the ChangeUp agenda

7 Detailed findings

7.1 Structures used for managing ChangeUp activity

Government Offices were given responsibility for co-ordinating ChangeUp investment with guidance that Regional Consortia should lead on producing Infrastructure Development Plans¹. The LRC was established in August 2004 to develop the LIDP, commission Local Infrastructure Plans and manage ChangeUp investment in London.

7.1.1 London Regional Consortium

The formation of the LRC was fairly ad hoc. Home Office ChangeUp guidance states that:

“planning partnerships should comprise of representatives from:

- *Generalist and BME Regional Voluntary Sector Networks*
- *Government Office in the Region*
- *Cross section of regional voluntary and community sector infrastructure and frontline organisations*
- *Regional volunteering infrastructure*
- *Regional Social Enterprise Network*
- *Regional Development Agency*
- *Regional Centre of Excellence*
- *Regional Funders Forum*
- *Regional officers from the Learning and Skills Council, Arts Council and Sports Council*
- *Each of the sub-regional consortia within the Region*
- *Regional business representatives”*

It goes on to say that representation will vary depending on regional circumstances.

An initial group of 16, pulled together by GOL in August 2004, discussed terms of reference and membership of the LRC.

The LRC's objectives for 2004-6 were:

- To develop a Regional Infrastructure Development Plan which takes account of regional strategic developments

¹ ChangeUp Investment Criteria and Guidance, Home Office Active Community Unit August 2004

- To develop proposals for drawing up the Plan which must include evidence of input from a diverse range of frontline VCOs
- To commission Local Infrastructure Development Plans which reflect and take account of community planning processes
- To lead on the development of a Regional Investment Plan which is in line with the Regional Development Plan and matches the aims and objectives of ChangeUp

A further nine organisations were invited in order to ensure that all areas of interest were represented on the LRC. In May 2005 membership was revisited but it was difficult to determine a process for involving new members without revisiting the terms of reference. There was sufficient interest in the ChangeUp programme to make recruitment to the LRC relatively easy. However, there was concern from some of those interviewed that their organisation would be expected to commit funding in return for membership.

Given the tight timescales this was an expedient means of putting together the LRC. It could be argued that it was an effective way of ensuring representation as set out in the Home Office guidelines. However, this process relied almost entirely on existing LRC members' knowledge of relevant organisations.

Alternative methods could have included an election process. Time prevented this from being a viable option and it would not necessarily have resulted in a representative consortium with the right skills and knowledge.

Another alternative would have been an application process using a role description and checklist of skills, knowledge and specialist areas. Mailing lists and websites could then have been used to invite applications. This would have provided greater clarity for both applicants and the LRC and decisions would have been more transparent. It might also have resulted in relatively unknown organisations becoming involved, although they may not have had the breadth of understanding of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in London to have participated effectively. In any case, ChangeUp timescales allowed little opportunity for this method of recruitment - or for LRC members to bring themselves up-to-speed with recruitment options.

The LRC consisted almost entirely of regional bodies, so there was a limited local perspective. For some functions this was appropriate as much of the LRC work focused on the region as a whole. However, this did cause tension with CVSs, which felt that decisions and accountability for local funding were being made by regional bodies with limited understanding of what was needed at a local level.

There was no formal induction process for new LRC members and whilst existing members made themselves available and were extremely helpful, a formal induction process may have enabled new members to bring themselves up-to-date more quickly.

Some members were unclear about their role, for example about whether they were there to represent their interest group or the wider voluntary sector.

Some interviewees believed a consortium large enough to be fully representative was unwieldy, slow in terms of decision-making and lacking in focus on specific tasks. At the September 2004 meeting it was agreed that sub-groups would be established to take forward specific areas of work.

It has recently been agreed that the LRC will become a strategic management group that takes an overview of activity and ratifies sub-group decisions.

The current LRC members are:

London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC) – Elizabeth Balgobin
Race on the Agenda (ROTA) – Dinah Cox
CVS representatives – one sub-regional and one local
Association for London Government (ALG) – Ian Redding
GOL – Lisa Greensill and Florence Davies
London Development Agency (LDA) – Amanda Little
London Funders – Sara Llewellyn
Learning and Skills Council (LSC) – Edwin Addis
Strategic Health Authority – Jane Winters
The Big Lottery Fund – Debbie Pippard
Sub-group representatives

7.1.2 General style of meetings

As with all newly formed partnerships, there was inevitably a bedding down process. Interviewees described some of the meetings as containing 'lively debates' with some tensions, particularly when funding allocations were discussed. However, interviewees felt that all members had a chance to air their views. There was a good balance between allowing for debating different perspectives and coming to consensus within the necessary timescales. There was unanimous agreement by those interviewed that the role of GOL - in particular the chairing of the LRC and LIDP sub-group - was key to the success of the LRC.

Meetings were run business style which is standard practice for most groups of this nature. One interviewee commented that the LRC may have benefited from a workshop or facilitated brainstorming to produce more creative thinking.

7.1.3 Sub-groups

In November 2004, seven LRC sub-groups were established, making a total of eight including the LIDP sub-group (see next section):

- LIDP
- Community development including volunteering and governance
- Equalities
- Workforce development and performance improvement
- ICT
- Social enterprise, private sector and finance
- Funders
- Priority service areas

The sub-groups broadly followed the ChangeUp topics and had generic terms of reference. Their role is:

“to establish what activities need developing and changing within the infrastructure for the sub-groups’ specialist area of activity to help inform the drafting of the London, Regional and Local Infrastructure Development Plans, with the overall aim of enabling London’s infrastructure to provide a better service to frontline organisations”

The sub-groups’ objectives are:

- 1 To establish a process for identifying and filling gaps in infrastructure covering the sub-group’s specialist area of activity, which will enable frontline organisations to have better access to high quality support in the key areas of organisational need as outlined in ChangeUp.
- 2 To develop ideas for filling gaps that take account of local needs audits and that fit in with ChangeUp aims and objectives and its ethos of inclusiveness to ensure delivery is equal and appropriate.
- 3 To put forward ideas/considerations to the LRC for discussion and approval to help inform the drafting of the Regional, Sub-Regional and Local Infrastructure Development Plans.

Members of the LRC were required to sit on at least one sub-group. The sub-groups invited representation from technical and specialist organisations and relevant communities of interest. An LRC member organisation acted as secretariat for each sub-group, organising

meetings and reporting back to GOL and the LRC, for which a fee of £1,000 was paid.

Initially the sub-groups were left to develop their own working approach and remit. This resulted in a high degree of ownership but also a lack of consistency, particularly around funding proposals. This was resolved by further guidance from the LRC in June 2005.

All interviewees agreed that the success of the sub-groups was heavily dependent on the chairs and their understanding of ChangeUp and the role of the sub-groups. The commitment of those chairs has been highlighted by those interviewed as a key strength.

In some cases, lack of a clear remit has meant that the sub-groups did not fulfil their role as originally intended. In particular, the Social Enterprise Sub-Group did not consider wider income generation and finance issues.

Because the sub-groups worked differently it is difficult to compare them. However, in general sub-groups were successful in identifying needs and ways of filling gaps. By 25 February 2005 all groups except Social Enterprise, Private Sector and Finance had met at least once. Of those that had met, all had identified need and had agreed what to focus on except for the Workforce Development and Performance Improvement Group as the lead body for the group had changed. By the May meeting reports on gaps and solutions and/or pieces of work had been established for all groups except the Social Enterprise Group which was not available to present a report. By June all groups were meeting regularly.

At the August 2005 meeting proposals for funding from the sub-groups were put forward:

- Equalities group – five proposals
- Community Development – four proposals
- Funders groups – no proposals (this group was concentrating on how funders worked together in relation to the ChangeUp agenda)
- Priority Service Areas – four proposals
- Social Enterprise – one proposal
- Workforce Development – one proposal

Feedback was given and the LIPD was charged with considering feedback and drawing up a final list of proposals to be taken forward.

Though the LIPD made the final decisions proposals were developed in an iterative way so that 98% of proposals put forward were eventually supported.

Reports from sub groups were made verbally which meant those Chairs of sub-groups that were unable to attend LRC meetings (and later LIDP), would be unable to give a report, be less well informed, and in turn unable to inform the sub-group. Both the LRC and sub-groups would have benefited from written rather than verbal reports. A standard format would have made it easier to track and compare the progress of each sub-group.

Alternatively a requirement that Chairs attend both LRC and LIPD should have been written into a formal secretariat agreement.

Sub-groups appear to have been less successful in taking a long-term view to inform the drafting of Infrastructure Development Plans, particularly at a local and sub-regional level. It is clear from the minutes and the interviews that Community Development and the Equalities sub group had a process to feed in to review the local plans. However it is less clear if other sub-groups had such processes. One interviewee stated that local plans could and should have had more support. Interviewees also felt the Local infrastructure has felt a bit divorced from the Regional Consortium.

Participation at both LRC and sub-group level meant that a considerable time commitment was necessary. Though most sub-group Chairs felt their time had been well spent the level of success for some was dependent on the starting point of the sub-group, existing relationships and a good understanding of the wider VCS.

As an example, the level of understanding about Social Enterprise within the VCS, and the exclusion of Social Enterprise within many local plans was felt to be a barrier to having a clear direction for Social Enterprise at a regional level. Some interviewees also felt there was also a lack of understanding about VCS by the Social Enterprise sub-group.

As another example the ICT had a budget pre-determined by the Home Office and, according a clearly definable remit. ICT support is a need which has been identified at local level for some time with many CVSs or other infrastructure organisation having, or wanting, ICT support workers. The needs of the VCS are therefore more easily understood.

The sub-groups have now been revised. A list of sub-groups and application for membership is available from LVSC or GOL

7.1.4 London Infrastructure Development Plan Sub-Group

The LIDP Sub-Group, chaired by the ChangeUp Co-ordinator, was established in September 2004. Its original purpose was:

“to resolve any disagreements or disputes...to discuss funding models and regional criteria, all for circulation to and consideration by the larger Consortium.”

The group took on an executive role and rapidly expanded to include the sub-group chairs. As with many elements of the ChangeUp programme, the role of this group evolved until it could be described by GOL as:

“to support LVSC in drafting of the London Infrastructure Development Plan, develop strategic proposals on the running of the London ChangeUp programme and undertake final decision-making process for regional projects coming forward both from sub-groups and on an ad hoc basis.”

The group's role, though referred to in minutes of meetings, is not clearly stipulated anywhere else. For example, the above quotations from the September meetings come from two separate sections, Any Other Business and Budgets. It was difficult to locate references to the LIPD Sub-Group and its role and would be particularly difficult for those new to the LRC or sub-groups. One sub-group chair indicated that she had not realised that funding proposals would be considered by the LIPD Sub-Group.

7.1.5 Issues for members

The time commitment required for the structure to function, particularly from lead agencies and sub-group Chairs was onerous: bi-monthly LRC meetings and as frequently as monthly sub-group meetings. Although none of those interviewed felt that the time was not well spent, apologies were submitted on a number of occasions. It has been difficult to analyse precisely the percentage non-attendance as the number of members has varied. However, non-attendance averaged 27%. Higher attendance rates could be achieved through holding fewer meetings and a requirement for sub-group chairs to prioritise LRC/LIPD Sub-Group meetings as part of the secretariat agreement.

Many interviewees stated that both the process and the members would have benefited from a role description for members on LRC and sub-groups. A role description for sub-group members is now in place.

7.2 Key partners - roles and responsibility

Three key partners, GOL, LVSC, and ALG managed the ChangeUp process.

7.2.1 GOL

GOL was responsible for ensuring that the ChangeUp programme was delivered. GOL's vision was that as much as possible of the programme would be put in the hands of the VCS. GOL continued to chair the LRC at the request of the VCS groups on the LRC. All the VCS interviewees were clear that the independence of GOL, and chairing of the LRC by the head of its Voluntary Sector Team, were critical factors in the success of the process and programme.

7.2.2 LVSC

LVSC was responsible for liaison with local groups, GOL and ALG, project managing the LIDP, co-ordinating local plans and chairing the LIDP Sub-Group. LVSC appointed a ChangeUp Co-ordinator to undertake this work. Some concerns were expressed about LVSC taking on this role. The organisation was undergoing significant changes and there had been an uneasy relationship with CVSs. However, in hindsight those interviewed believed that this was the best decision.

7.2.3 ALG

ALG was responsible for managing the funds, following up the monitoring process and working with CVSs to develop local consortia and promote ChangeUp to local authorities. To undertake these functions ALG appointed a ChangeUp Policy and Grants Officer. Interviewees said this post had been welcomed by the CVSs and that it *"clarified how the programme activity fitted together and the understanding of ChangeUp through the visit to CVSs"*.

This support may have had a bigger impact had the development of the local partnership role been built into the ChangeUp Co-ordinator post from the outset, rather than being introduced later in a different post. This would have improved relations between the regional and local levels, enabled smoother communication and resulted in an increased understanding of the bigger ChangeUp picture.

7.2.4 Virtual team

Co-ordination between the three key partners was successful and was described by one interviewee as a *"supportive virtual team...Queries were either answered or re-directed quickly even when addressed to the wrong team member."*

A written brief on the roles of the respective organisations would have given a clearer picture from the outset and resulted in less uncertainty about where to direct queries.

7.3 Plan development

Work on the LIDP was led by the ChangeUp Co-ordinator through the LIPD Sub-Group. Work on local plans was led by the CVS in each borough through a local consortium.

7.3.1 London Infrastructure Development Plan

The development of the LIDP was inclusive and transparent. The consultation process was clear, there were several opportunities to consult and separate events were held by request. For example, the ChangeUp Co-ordinator attended a sub-regional event organised by South London Council for Voluntary Service Partnership.

Early drafts were circulated to sub-groups and posted on the LVSC website (formerly Action Link) for comment.

The November draft contained details of the consultation events, a consultation timetable, details of where to obtain copies of the draft and an offer to run consultation workshops at local events.

A list of consultation questions was provided to prompt responses. Although care needs to be taken when using this approach, the consultation made it clear that respondents should not be restricted by the questions.

In the main, those interviewed felt that the LIDP reflected their views. Changes from the draft to the final copy were made, presumably as a result of consultation. The process did suffer from consultation fatigue. Some interviewees stated they had not contributed as much as they could have. It was felt by a couple of interviewees that the LIDP did not fully address the question of which activities are best undertaken locally, sub-regionally and regionally. This is perhaps inevitable given that there will be a variety of perspectives but the LIDP could have required further work to be done to tease these issues out.

7.3.2 Local Plan Development

Following a discussion by the LRC it was agreed that local CVSs or their equivalent would be best placed to develop local Infrastructure Development Plans. The main alternative considered was that Local Strategic Partnerships would be asked to develop the plans but it was felt

that ownership by the VCS would be better achieved if the work was led by a voluntary infrastructure organisation.

Some CVSs came on board with the ChangeUp agenda earlier than others and their understanding of ChangeUp varied. If the ChangeUp Co-ordinator post had been full-time, meetings with CVS chief executives to fully explain the process would have been achievable. Whilst this would have been time-consuming, a relationship would have been forged between the local and regional structures from the outset. The roles of the LRC and key partners would have been more clearly understood and, as the CVS interviewed said, there is no substitute for initial face-to-face contact.

Most of the concerns regarding communication expressed by CVSs centred on the direction and guidance given to the CVSs responsible for local ChangeUp activity.

The channels of communication were unclear initially; before the LVSC ChangeUp Co-ordinator was appointed, the CVS representative on the LRC acted as the conduit between the LRC and the local CVSs. At one stage both the CVS representative and the ChangeUp Co-ordinator were providing information which led to mixed messages being delivered.

CVSs differed in how much instruction they wanted, some wanting further direction and others demanding less. This could have been alleviated by a distinction between requirements and guidance so that those who wanted more clarity could refer to the guidance whilst those that wanted freedom and flexibility could be sure they were meeting the minimum requirements.

The process and timetable for producing local plans was revised over time and although revisions were intended to assist in the production of plans, this did cause confusion. For example, the initial deadline for the production of plans was February 2005. This was extended to September which was thought to be more realistic. This resulted in extra work to produce draft plans/proposals in order to release funds.

Guidance and other documentation for CVSs were often sent out late. For example, the Final Proposals Assessment Process paper, which contained information on the final contents and assessment criteria, was not sent out until 15 September for a 30 September deadline. On the other hand some very useful documents such as the contents checklist were sent out too early. This resulted in some CVSs failing to take these on board.

The speed at which CVSs started to form consortia and draft plans varied considerably. Some started thinking about the process very early and putting consortia together in late 2004, whilst others did very little until

funding for the plans had been agreed in writing. This inevitably affected how receptive they were to changing guidance, as some plans were already well developed.

Initial feedback on the draft local plans was given by the ChangeUp Co-ordinator in writing but could have been more constructive had there been an event with a two-way process. This would have provided opportunities for CVSs to feed in to the work of the LRC and sub-groups as well as for the LRC/sub-groups to discuss local plans. Such an event could also have been used to determine where local, sub-regional or regional delivery was most appropriate.

Interviewees believed differences between boroughs, for example the strength of the local CVS or its relationships with other infrastructure organisations and the statutory sector, inevitably affected the development of local plans. However, nearly all plans were completed on time and there were no significant delays.

7.3.3 Links between the plans and processes at local and regional level

There were no formal mechanisms for co-ordination between the local plans or between local, sub-regional and regional plans. To an extent this was achieved between local and sub-regional plans as the same organisations were involved in both.

The lack of co-ordination may have resulted in duplication of tasks across different boroughs rather than a sharing of resources and good practice.

Now that the plans have been produced there is an opportunity to bring CVSs/consortia together to discuss common activity and opportunities for sharing good practice, particularly if a task is relatively straightforward. For example, if one borough is producing protocols for referral between infrastructure agencies these could be useful to other boroughs.

The links between the LRC sub-groups and CVSs should be developed. Specialist regional sub-groups have asked CVSs to ensure that specialist groups and communities of interest are included on local consortia. In practice this has been difficult to achieve as the significance of ChangeUp has not always been well understood by specialist organisations. Interviewees reported that some specialist agencies encouraged local groups to become involved but the process has been ad hoc.

7.4 Funding

7.4.1 Capital spend

As speed was of the essence, Tank Consulting were contacted in January 2005 to evaluate expressions of interest for capital funding from the ChangeUp programme. Organisations were sent a specification by GOL and were assessed to ensure their eligibility. A mapping process was undertaken to establish the breadth of organisations and beneficiaries that would be supported through the funding. Organisations were then selected to submit further information for consideration.

7.4.2 Regional project proposals

Once the LRC sub-groups had been formed, they were invited to submit proposals for regional projects to the LRC. Generally this was successful although each sub-group created its own process for working up and submitting proposals. It was not made clear to members that proposals should be submitted through the sub-groups and this led to some VCOs submitting bids directly to the LRC and then being bounced back to sub-groups. Processes for submitting proposals and dealing with conflicts were produced later but it would have been better had these been available from the outset.

Although the LIDP Sub-Group was given responsibility for making decisions on regional funding, guidance and feedback were given to the other sub-groups at LRC meetings. Proposals stemmed from clearly identified need, resulting in around 98% receiving funding.

7.4.3 Conflicts of interest

There were potential difficulties in allocating funds because many of those making decisions were recipients of funding. For the LRC and sub-groups to be workable, organisations that are able to apply for funding are likely to be on the LRC/sub-groups because of their expertise.

The LRC had a process for declaring interests in its terms of reference. This is referred but not set out explicitly in the terms of reference for sub-groups.

It is not clear how sub-groups commissioned work for a particular project once a proposal had been agreed.

7.4.4 Staggered payments and contingency funds for local ChangeUp activity

Local funding was made in four tranches: an initial £10,000, two payments of approximately £21,328 each and a contingency fund of £18,282. Although decisions about funding allocation were made fairly early, the second tranche was subject to the first tranche having been spent and it was unclear whether and when the contingency fund would be available.

Several interviewees stated that earlier, better communicated decisions regarding the total amount of funding available might have led to differences in the way in which the funds were spent. Some project proposals were developed to fit in with staggered funding.

The process for claiming contingency funds was particularly unclear, resulting in some local plans including the contingency claim in their project proposals whilst other CVSs put in separate proposals later. This resulted in extra time having to be spent on submitting additional proposals for contingency funds.

The timescales for spend were also unclear (although this was largely outside of the control of the LRC). Initial guidance stated that funds had to be spent before the end of March 2006. In practice, projects were able to carry funds over until the end of June 2006.

7.4.4 Process for making payments to CVSs

There was some delay in initial payments. However, once the Policy and Grants Officer was in post, payments were made promptly. ALG was chosen to administer the payments because of its experience of making grants to CVSs. A variety of different payments were being made to CVSs for projects, triggered by the submission of key documents. A minor change in the system to include reference codes when payments were made would have had a big impact for CVSs.

7.4.5 Different funding streams

There were various funding streams within the programme which caused confusion. Capital Spend was administered by GOL and was confused initially with Early Spend which was distributed before the LRC came into being. Revenue funding for local development was administered by ALG so at local level different pots of money had two different administering bodies and processes.

7.5 General issues

7.5.1 General communication

Minutes of LRC meetings were available on the LVSC website, resulting in a level of transparency which many other consortia and partnerships do not adopt. However, for those not involved in a meeting, minutes can be difficult to follow. It would have been helpful to make reference in the minutes to all papers circulated at meetings, and to prepare more detailed minutes. For example, the minutes state that sub-groups were established but do not list them. Therefore it would have been difficult for those visiting the website to fully understand the activities of the LRC.

An alternative method of communication would be regular briefing sheets after each meeting to report on:

- The work of the sub-groups
- ChangeUp investment
- Development of local and regional plans
- Key decisions made by the LRC

In theory, links to all plans are available on the LVSC website. In practice, the process of locating local plans is more difficult. In some cases a circular search leads from the LVSC website to a local website and back to LVSC. This could have been easily solved had the hyperlink taken the searcher directly to the ChangeUp plan rather than to the home page.

7.5.2 Formality

Terms of reference, clearer reporting lines, protocols for decision-making and more written direction from the LRC to sub-groups would have made individuals much clearer about the work of LRC and sub-groups and their own roles within the process.

Inevitably a lack of clarity leads to accusations of bureaucracy. However, too much direction can lead to lack of ownership and restrict creativity. In this case more direction, although not necessarily openly welcomed, could have assisted the process. Much of this has now been put in place.

7.5.3 Wider impact

One of the by-products of ChangeUp has been the forging of new relationships at regional level between local VCOs, the statutory sector and funders. All those interviewed felt this would have a positive benefit

in its own right. Interviewees felt the VCS, in particular the sub-group chairs, have gained credibility and influence and that CVSs are better understood at regional level.

7.5.4 Involving local organisations in the decision-making process

The LRC had overall responsibility for ChangeUp development and investment but was made up almost entirely of regional bodies. This caused some resentment at local level as a hierarchy was created with decision-making power mainly resting with regional organisations. However, wide representation from local organisations would not necessarily have been appropriate as it would have increased the size of an already large LRC and overburdened stretched CVSs.

A mechanism to ensure that local organisations were involved in key decisions could have been introduced, alleviating the local/regional tensions referred to by interviewees. For example, a separate sub-group could have been set up, comprising representatives from local organisations across London together with LVSC, GOL and ALG.

Another method could have been opening some LRC meetings to local representatives, particularly when key funding decisions were being made.

There was more of a two-way process during development of the Infrastructure Development Plans. Early drafts of the local plans were commented on at regional level and the LIDP was commented on at local level.

7.5.5 Equalities

There was a good relationship between the Equalities Sub-Group and LRC. The LRC supported the Sub-Group well, had good representation from communities of interest and took equalities on board from the beginning.

The Equalities Sub-Group undertook to read through all the Infrastructure Development Plans to ensure the inclusion of equalities. It was felt by interviewees that many plans had a very narrow interpretation of equalities, focussing mainly on ethnicity. Some interviewees believed this was because the national guidelines make specific reference to BME issues. Earlier guidance would have been more constructive than feedback at a later stage.

Interviewees cited the Equalities Sub-Group as being one of the most successful, in spite of some tensions around which proposals to fund.

Chairs of other sub-groups did not feel that having a separate sub-group resulted in equalities not being considered by theirs. The need for both a separate sub-group and mainstreaming of equalities was emphasised in the minutes of the February 2006 meeting of the LRC:

"Equalities must be mainstreamed throughout all sub-groups as well as having a distinct sub-group of its own, which will continue to play a scrutiny role for the programme."

8 Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Critical success factors and key weaknesses

Critical to the success of the process and delivery of the programme was the commitment of all those involved, including the key partners, chairs, LRC members and, at a local level, the CVSs. Particular mention should be made of GOL, whose skill in chairing and overseeing the process was highlighted by all those interviewed.

The key weakness of the process lay in the fact that many systems, rules and procedures evolved over time, rather than being defined from the outset. Even though bureaucracy has a bad name it can be a good thing. More formal written rules and procedures, a well-defined chain of communication and systems may have seemed bureaucratic and been initially time consuming but would have assisted in the long run.

The timescale of the ChangeUp programme was cited as a key weakness. This was outside the control of the LRC so has not been dealt with in this report. However, it should be noted that many of the identified weaknesses in the process might not have arisen had the programme not had such a tight timescale.

8.1.1 Recommendation

All processes which have been developed and which are still relevant should be pulled together, reviewed and incorporated into one document.

8.2 Structures

LRC

After some initial bedding down the LRC was successful, primarily because of the commitment of individuals. However, role descriptions would have ensured members were clear about their responsibilities, an induction pack would have helped new members catch up with the work

and processes should have been in place from the beginning, rather than evolving.

The LRC was somewhat removed from local organisations and there was limited understanding between the local and regional level.

8.2.1 Recommendations

- *The updated terms of reference should be regularly reviewed*
- *GOL should continue to have a key role and to Chair the LRC*
- *An induction pack should be produced for LRC members with a process for up-dating it*
- *Role descriptions should be produced for all LRC members*
- *There should be a mechanism for ensuring local participation*

Sub-groups

The process benefited greatly from having a paid secretariat. Both the LRC and sub-groups would have benefited from clearly defined remits.

Processes and procedures in place from the outset - particularly for submitting funding proposals - would have provided clarity for all sub-group members, as well as making the sub-groups more consistent. Written reporting mechanisms would have made it easier for LRC members to keep up-to-date with their work and provided a mechanism for communicating the work to a wider audience.

Membership by application would have been a more transparent process of recruiting to the sub-groups. Sub-groups have been revised and process, role descriptions and a recruitment procedure have been introduced by the LRC. A membership application pack which contains a complete list of sub-groups is available from LVSC.

8.2.2 Recommendations

- *Introduce a consistent, written reporting from sub-groups to LRC*
- *Continue to fund a paid secretariat for each sub-group*
- *Draw up written agreements between each sub-group member and the secretariat which covers attendance at meetings and written reporting*

- ***Ensure that new relationships that have been formed are used to bring about positive change***

8.3 Key partners

Partners worked effectively together but the process would have benefited at local level from more clarity about the role of each key post-holder.

Visits to CVSs were welcomed and helped to clarify the process and understanding of ChangeUp.

The process benefited from having paid support.

8.3.1 Recommendations

- ***Provide a written briefing sheet to describe clearly the role of each key partner, including Capacity Builders***
- ***Continue to have a paid secretariat (LVSC from September 2006) to support the programme together with a written agreement***

8.4 Plan Development and links between the plans

The LIDP was developed in full consultation with both regional and local bodies. Local and sub-regional plans had some input from the LRC and sub-groups through feedback from early drafts. Local plans were developed largely on time and there was input from LRC and the sub-groups.

8.4.1 Recommendations

- ***Review the plans regularly***
- ***Join up local, sub-regional and regional activity***
- ***Identify potential areas of shared tasks and good practice in local plans***
- ***Combine the executive summaries of local, sub-regional and regional plans in a single, publicly available document***

8.5 Funding

A written mechanism for developing proposals and claiming funding from the outset, with one partner holding responsibility for all funding, would have been beneficial. A process for dealing with conflicts of interest should also have been in place from the outset. Funding for CVSs should have been agreed upfront and clearly communicated.

Capacitybuilders is now responsible for delivering ChangeUp and distributing funds and has recently launched a Consortia Projects Programme. Further funding is welcomed but it is important to ensure there is an overview of activity and funding in London is coordinated.

8.5.1 Recommendations

- ***Publish on LVSC website a summary of all ChangeUp spend***
- ***The LRC should continue to have an input into funding in London, with mechanisms in place to obtain this input***

8.6 General issues

Communication is difficult to get right and is always a source of criticism. The process would have benefited from briefings instead of (or as well as) minutes posted on the website, clearer communication between the ChangeUp Co-ordinator and CVSs and written reports from sub-groups to the LRC.

More face-to-face communication between local and regional consortia would have provided opportunities for two-way communication and increased understanding of local and regional issues.

Equalities issues were taken on board by the LRC and its sub-groups and included in local plans. However, there was a narrow definition of equalities in many of these plans.

8.6.1 Recommendations

- ***Publish a brief guide to ChangeUp and its structures including terms of reference and key documents, or with references made to larger documents where appropriate***
- ***Publish regular short briefings on the LVSC website***
- ***LRC to meet with CVSs at least twice a year***
- ***Continue to ensure that Equalities is properly considered within the ChangeUp agenda***

List of interviewees

Key Partner	Name	Role
Government Office for London	Lisa Greensill	Head of Voluntary and Community Sector Team
Association of Local Government LVSC	Jill Walsh ChangeUp John Routledge	Policy and Grants Officer ChangeUp Coordinator

Interviewees and focus groups

South London CVS Partnership	Jaqui Finn	Partnership Coordinator
Sutton CVS	Sue Robson	Chief Executive
Big Lottery Fund	Debbie Pippard	Head of London Region
London Civic Forum	Kate Monkhouse	Director
Women's Resource Centre	Vivienne Hayes	Director
BAASC (British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres)	Carole Macqueen	London Development Officer
Dinah Cox	ROTA	Chief Executive
Andy Gregg	LASA	Chief Executive
Alison Ogden-Newton	Social Enterprise London	Chief Executive
Elizabeth Balgobin	LVSC	Chief Executive

Evaluation framework

This framework is intended as a template for the evaluation of future projects developed within the ChangeUp programme. The framework is structured as follows.

- 1 There are three levels. The framework recognises that evaluation must be proportionate to the size of the project. It therefore offers an approach based on three bands – projects worth £10k or less (level 1); those worth £10–75k (level 2); those over £75k (level 3).
- 2 There are six sections, covering an evaluation of the project process: a ChangeUp evaluation, a summative evaluation, an impact evaluation, a learning evaluation and an evaluation of the process from the funder's perspective. This latter - an evaluation of the programme (how did this proposal come to our attention; what criteria did we use to assess it; how did we decide how much money to give it?) - is the responsibility of the funder.
- 3 Each section contains a description of what is to be evaluated and suggestions about how to do it. A concluding section gives an indication of the time this might take.

The general approach

Self evaluation should be sufficient for projects at level 1 and 2. For more complex projects within level 3, there may be more to be learnt by appointing an external evaluator, whether that is a consultant or someone from within an organisation involved with the project but who has not themselves been directly associated with it. All evaluations should result in a written report; this may be quite short for level 1 projects. For level 2 and 3 projects, a representative of the funder and the project manager should meet to discuss the report in draft. The report can be structured around the evaluation questions which follow. Evaluation needs to be built into the project from the outset, both in terms of the questions it should address, the methods it will use and the resources it will take.

The evaluation itself requires a process. Once funding has been allocated and a timetable set for the project, the body managing the project should be asked by the funding body to:

- a) Name the evaluator – for projects lasting more than a few months, it will be sufficient to name the post rather than the individual. If an external evaluation is to be commissioned, the individual/s responsible for commissioning and managing the commission should be named
- b) Indicate the timetable for evaluation
- c) Identify who will be involved

Section one: process evaluation – the project

The process evaluation looks at how the decision was reached to undertake the project in question, how need was assessed, how objectives and outcomes were set, what consultation was undertaken, how the project was managed and monitored.

Evaluation question	Possible approach		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
How was the decision made to undertake this project?	Project manager/evaluator to write down how the decision was made.	Project manager/evaluator to seek corroborative evidence – eg papers to trustee meetings, minutes of staff meetings etc.	Evaluator to establish the organisational process for making a decision of this size. What risk analysis undertaken? Role of trustees? Criteria for making the decision? Likely to involve interviews with senior staff and trustees

Evaluation question	Possible approach		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
What evidence was there of need for the project?	Evaluator to list reasons project was considered necessary – might include comparative evidence from other similar projects, need to meet quality standards, anecdotal evidence from existing clients etc.	Evaluator to seek “harder” evidence, eg evidence that monitoring information, survey information etc had been used as the foundation of the proposal.	Evidence of feasibility research, robust quantitative and qualitative evidence and evidence of how that material was used to shape the proposal.
How were the objectives and targets set?	Project manager/proposer to describe process.	What evidence of testing?	Evaluator to seek documentary evidence of the process.
What other parties/stakeholders were consulted? How did this consultation shape the project proposal?	Project manager to list any formal or informal consultation including with potential users.	Provide evidence of any kind of a process – were there specific questions, which were consulted on? Was the proposal consulted on and is there evidence of changes as a result.	Evaluator to investigate the mechanisms used to identify stakeholders and to consult them. How effective were they? How collaborative. Interviews will be necessary with a range of stakeholders.
How was the project managed? Who monitored it and in what way?	Project manager to describe responsibilities and accountabilities.	Were job descriptions amended or new posts created? How involved were the trustees? Are there formal monitoring reports?	Evaluator to identify how project fitted into organisational structure and the impact of its location within the organisation on its activities and performance.

Section two: ChangeUp evaluation

This section looks at how the projects fit with the ChangeUp programme.

Evaluation question	Possible approach Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Which elements of the changeup strategy does the project fit with	Description of link	Evidence of understanding of local/regional ChangeUp objectives and how the project takes them forward	Evaluator to interview senior staff to identify how project linked to local or regional strategy including how it links with other projects within the appropriate streams
How do the outputs and impacts of the project contribute to ChangeUp objectives	Evidence that project manager understands this connection	Monitoring information to measure this	Evaluator to look for evidence that potential output links with changeup have been identified and are monitored and mapped
What links has the project made with other initiatives relevant to these objectives	Evaluation to list links and the effect of those links	Some evidence of the real nature of those links to be produced eg minutes of meetings	Interviews with other project managers to establish the strategic nature of these links
What impact will the project make to the long-term aim of ChangeUp	Evaluation to describe the long-term impact	Some evidence that there will be a long-term impact	Evaluator to assess the long-term impact of the project

Section three: summative evaluation

This looks at how effectively the available resources were used to achieve the stated objectives.

Evaluation question	Possible approach		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Did the project meet its targets?	Assessment by project manager, supported by any monitoring information.	Assessment by project manager, supported by any monitoring information.	Evaluator to seek evidence of quality as well as quantity. Interviews with senior staff, trustees and users.
Were the actions proposed appropriate?	Assessment by project manager.	Evidence of any review of activities. Investigation of reasons for any changes.	Interviews with users and project staff to discover their view on the appropriateness of actions and on avenues for them to feed in their views.
What factors facilitated the project or made it more difficult?	Assessment of environmental, political, organisational issues.	Evidence of how these were reported and tackled.	Interviews with project staff, senior staff and managers to identify factors, impact and response.
How was value added?	List any specific factors – other services/facilities to which it was linked, use of volunteers, publicity, access to target groups etc.	Any evidence of specific efforts made to add value?	Evaluator to investigate extent to which this was a concern of project staff and managers.

Section four: impact assessment

This section is concerned with what difference the project made and to whom.

Evaluation question	Possible approach		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Did the project reach the target user groups?	Assessment by project manager.	Evidence from monitoring reports.	Interviews with project staff and any partner organisations.
What benefits did the project bring to its users?	Assessment by project manager.	Any evidence from users.	Interviews with users.
What difference has that made to them?	Assessment by project manager.	Assessment with corroborative evidence.	Any evidence from follow up or tacking?
Any unexpected benefits?	Assessment by project manager.	Evidence that organisation has more formally captured these.	Evidence that organisation has mechanisms to build on these.

Section five: learning evaluation

Evaluation question	Possible approach Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
What skills/knowledge has the organisation gained from this project	Assessment by senior staff. trustees	As level 1	Evidence that training requirements and knowledge dissemination built into project design.
What would it do differently next time	As above	As level 1	Evidence of the organisation recognising learning points as it went along and amending the project accordingly. Any evidence of the organisation building that knowledge into its ongoing processes
Has the project informed other aspects of the organisation's work	As above	As level 1	Evaluator to investigate extent to which project staff/ senior management shared lessons learned or skills gained with others internally or externally and the extent to which this knowledge has affected other activity eg review of policies and procedures.

Section six: process review – funder

Evaluation question	Possible approach		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
How did we find out about this project?	Evidence of a process for seeking projects which presented a reasonable range of options from a wide spectrum of sources.	As Level 1	As level 1
How did it fit with our funding criteria?	Evidence of written criteria agreed by the relevant body and against which a rigorous assessment has been made.	As Level 1	As Level 1
How did it fit with our overall strategy?	Evidence of assessment that the expected outputs fit with the overall outputs identified in the strategy.	As Level 1	As Level 1
How did we know it was at the right financial level?	Evidence of an assessment of the realism of the costings and of the value for money.	As Level 1	As Level 1

Costs

The following table indicates the amount of time which each section might be expected to take.

Section	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Project process	2 hours	2 hours	1 day
Summative	2 hours	0.5 day	2 days
Impact	2 hours	0.5 day	2 days
Learning	1 hour	2 hours	1 day
Report	2 hours	0.5 day	1 day

We have developed the costs in time rather than money, as internal costs are calculated in different ways and consultancy costs vary considerably. However, you might want to cost internal time at around £50.00 per hour and expect to pay anything from £400 per day upwards for an external consultant.

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