

**CHANGEUP  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND  
PETERBOROUGH**

**ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY  
BUILDING PROJECT**

**FINAL REPORT**

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# CHANGE UP CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH

## ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## ChangeUp Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

1.1 The ChangeUp programme in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has been developed by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Consortium (CVSIC). CVSIC, which represents all the main voluntary sector infrastructure organisations in the area, has agreed a suite of projects designed to contribute to the national ChangeUp programme's high level objectives in:

- Workforce development
- Performance improvement
- More effective use of ICT
- Strengthened governance
- Improved volunteer support
- More diverse and effective income generation

And to address regional priorities of:

- Modernising VCS infrastructure
- Embedding quality and improving reach
- Improving ICT support
- Building capacity in key service delivery areas
- Management and evaluation

1.2 These projects are referred to in more detail later in this report as the conclusions from them have relevance to this piece of work.

## The Organisational Capacity Building Project

1.3 The purpose of this project is to ensure that quality-assured infrastructure and volunteering services are available equitably to frontline VCS organisations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In particular the project brief specifies that the following matters should be addressed:

- The most effective structure for the delivery by Cambridgeshire ACRE, CVS and Volunteer Bureaux/Centres of generic infrastructure services, including rationalisation and sharing of facilities and back office services, taking into account city/rural differences;
- The allocation of generic infrastructure functions within this structure to optimise the delivery of the full range of services to a consistent standard – PQASSO Level 2 – to meet the changing needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough;
- To identify current services and levels of funding (distinguishing between project, core and overhead funding) and future funding e.g. Investing in Communities, to ensure sustainability of service delivery;
- To clarify the roles and functions of Cambridgeshire ACRE and the other organisations to avoid duplication of services and funding;
- To integrate this work with proposals being made for specialist infrastructure services (e.g. BME, disability, children and young people, Care Network) and volunteering services.

1.4 The overall intention is to produce a strategy for the delivery of infrastructure services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough which will:

- Recommend an appropriate structure for the delivery of infrastructure services that will encourage funders to increase investment in infrastructure;
- Increase the capacity to support frontline organisations in traditional functions such as funding, management, training, provision of information and advice consistently throughout the area and to agreed standards;
- Increase capacity to ensure the sector is effectively represented on key meetings/groups/partnerships with a strong voice and that representatives have the support of their colleagues;
- Suggest sources of new funding to support increased capacity;
- Improve links between providers of generic and specialist infrastructure services;
- Remove unnecessary duplication of services between infrastructure providers.

## Methodology

1.5 A Steering Group was established to bring together trustees and managers representing Cambridgeshire ACRE, CVS and Volunteer Bureaux, and the specialist infrastructure providers working in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

1.6 Two independent consultants – Sean Baine and Andy Benson – were appointed to undertake the project. We have reviewed existing documentation at local, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough level, regional and national levels and have carried out individual interviews with trustees and managers of Consortium member organisations and with officer representatives from Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council and each of the District Councils.

1.7 A draft report was considered by the Project Steering Group established by CVSIC and was circulated to all organisations seen by the consultants for individual comment. The draft report was also discussed at a CVSIC Away Day.

1.8 In their report the consultants were asked to test at least four model structures against the existing structure and to make a recommendation for the most appropriate structure to meet the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations, and to deliver the full range of services across the area to the required standard. In the draft report we outlined a number of possible models highlighting what we believed to be their strengths and weaknesses. These models are outlined in Appendix One. In this report we give our views on our preferred structures.

## Principles of working

1.9 Before starting our series of meetings we outlined a number of principles that we felt should govern our work and any recommendations that we might make. These principles were:

- The *delivery* (as opposed to the *management*) of generic infrastructure services should, where possible, be available at a district level and, for some services, even more locally e.g. in market towns.
- However there may be some services that are more efficiently provided at county/unitary authority (or even regional) level.

- All frontline organisations, wherever situated in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, should have equal access to infrastructure services that are of a consistent standard.
- Generic and specialist infrastructure services should be well informed about each other, should have clearly defined roles and should aim to work closely together.
- Any management structure for generic infrastructure services which goes beyond the district level should allow for representation from all areas being served.
- Any proposed structure for generic infrastructure services should make the best use of existing financial resources, should be sustainable over a number of years and should offer the best opportunities for attracting additional resources.

1.10 We circulated these principles to all CVSIC members for comment. We only received back one comment which was from the Chief Officer of Fenland CVS. He wished us to emphasise the need for local accountability and ownership in addition to local delivery. He also suggested that generic and specialist infrastructure services should not be regarded as fulfilling two separate functions and that there should not always be an assumption that all specialist advice will be delivered by specialist organisations. We were happy to accept both these points and have taken them on board in our recommendations.

## Structure of the report

1.11 The rest of this report is divided into four sections as follows:

- ***Infrastructure bodies – and the context in which they operate.*** In this section we briefly outline our understanding of the role and functions of infrastructure bodies before describing the national, regional and county/unitary contexts that bear on the VCS generally and on infrastructure bodies specifically.
- ***The Cambridgeshire/Peterborough picture with regard to generalist infrastructure organisations, volunteering and specialist infrastructure organisations.*** In this section we describe the current position with respect to infrastructure organisations and support within the area, drawing on the work of other ChangeUp-funded research work, where appropriate and available.
- ***Looking to the future in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough*** – in this section we bring together our own conclusions about the provision of infrastructure services and considerations affecting possible changes in arrangement.
- ***Conclusions and Recommendations*** - in this section we draw general conclusions and detail the changes which we believe should be considered to strengthen the provision of infrastructure support in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

## 2. INFRASTRUCTURE BODIES – AND THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THEY OPERATE

### The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

2.1 Voluntary and community sector organisations play an important role in the life of this country in bringing people together around a wide range of issues, in providing direct services and in encouraging and promoting active citizenship. In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough there are over 2,000 registered charities<sup>1</sup> and in addition to these registered charities there will be many smaller community groups that are not registered but which are providing valuable local services.

2.2 The National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) laid out its view of the role of the VCS in a document before the last election:<sup>2</sup>

*“Voluntary and community activity is an essential part of an active and vibrant civil society, contributing to the social, cultural, political and economic life of the country in a variety of ways, for example by:*

- *bringing people together and enabling them to participate in the life of the community;*
- *giving voice to their concerns and enabling their voices to be heard;*
- *promoting more responsive public services, whether by providing services directly or by advocating on behalf of service users, individually and collectively; and*
- *contributing to the social economy and to economic development.”*

2.3 NCVO also argues strongly that the VCS has to take its future into its own hands:

*“NCVO believes that in many cases our sector’s problem has been that we have accepted the role of junior partner when in fact we should have been more prepared to make our case more strongly. We have a tendency to undervalue ourselves, and particularly our value to government. If we genuinely believe that we should have a voice on the biggest issues facing our society then we need to have the courage of our convictions. We need to break through the boundaries and barriers that others place around us. It is for us in the sector to make those decisions about the circumstances in which we want to work with others and the ways in which we want to negotiate our relationships.”<sup>3</sup>*

### The government view

2.4 The government has taken a number of initiatives that has demonstrated its support for the VCS and its belief that the sector should grow in strength and influence e.g. Compact Plus, Home Office civil renewal strategies, Futurebuilders, the Charities Bill and the Russell Commission report on youth volunteering.

2.5 The latest initiative came in the 2006 Budget announcement. This said that “HM Treasury will undertake a review into the future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration. The review, overseen by a cross-departmental ministerial group, will take a cross-cutting approach to the long-term priorities for the sector, in the context of

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<sup>1</sup> Figures from chart in Clear vision: Clear thinking Consultation Document COVER September 2005 p14

<sup>2</sup> Independence, diversity, voice A manifesto for voluntary action NCVO February 2005

<sup>3</sup> NCVO’s vision for the future NCVO

the future challenges that our society now faces. In its first phase, the review will be informed by the largest consultation ever undertaken with the third sector, seeking views from a wide range of organisations. It will be launched at a conference in May and then taken to every region by the ministerial group. The results will feed into the Comprehensive Spending Review with initial conclusions available at the time of the Pre-Budget Report.”<sup>4</sup>

2.6 The COVER report on the future development of the voluntary sector in the East of England – Clear vision: Clear thinking<sup>5</sup> identifies a number of key themes in government support for the VCS:

- *Increased VCS delivery of public services* – the government believes that the contracting out of public services promotes both cost effectiveness and the responsiveness of services to individual needs. It recognises the added value that the VCS can bring to public sector delivery.
- *Volunteering and active citizenship* – the government considers that communities are best placed to identify their own problems and to develop feasible solutions. It recognises that volunteering is a vitally important ingredient of a strong accountable VCS.
- *Improving the relationship between the VCS and the statutory sector.*
- *Encouraging social enterprise* which recognises the role that the VCS can play in public service delivery, acknowledging that if the sector is to continue to grow it needs to generate more of its own income in a way which is sustainable.
- *Regeneration* – the government recognises the important role that the VCS can play in urban and rural regeneration.
- *Promoting VCS efficiency and effectiveness.*
- *Encouraging charitable giving.*

2.7 Of these, the first – increased, possibly mainstream, VCS delivery of public services – is arguably the most significant and politically controversial as it raises fundamental issues about the very role and function of the sector, in relation to the role of the State. There are other issues too which concern the ideas, the principles, the practice, the social and political roles around which the sector is shaped. In this report we refer to this arena as the *ideology* of the voluntary and community sector.

2.8 Outside of the ideological implications, it is clear that this government agenda, in its entirety, has very significant operational and developmental implications for the VCS operating at all levels - regionally, county-wide, district and neighbourhood.

2.9 The government agenda, and its direction of travel, is predicated on VCS involvement in these policy debates and reconfigurations, and active participation in an ever-increasing range of partnerships – nearly all Government documents proposing new partnership arrangements recommend VCS representation. This puts pressure on VCS organisations - both those concerned with delivering services and those who do not, since few have the resources for meaningful strategic involvement.

2.10 It is part of the government agenda to encourage the development of strong infrastructure support services. The main vehicle for doing this has been the ChangeUp programme and the establishment of the Capacity Builders Agency with a budget of £70,000,000 over 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

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<sup>4</sup> Budget Report 2006 HM Treasury

<sup>5</sup> COVER March 2006

## The role of infrastructure bodies

2.11 VCS infrastructure bodies have a crucial role to play in helping the VCS to meet the challenges outlined in the previous section and at all three levels – ideological, operational/developmental and representational.

2.12 In relation to the first of these – *ideological* - infrastructure organisations have a leadership and enabling role in framing and promoting the debate on the future of the sector. For example, to what extent will a growing role in service provision distort the historic advantages of voluntary sector activity? How will the sector retain its independence to comment, criticise and take action? What impact will competition between agencies have on the potential for collaborative working? Will voluntary agencies retain their ability to reach and represent local people and users of services? Will local people want to be spoken for in this way? Will an increased service provision role discriminate against small local organisations - who may wish to stay local or have problems with contract and performance management regimes? These issues need to be understood and debated at all levels of VCS activity and the structures should exist to allow sector perspectives to be identified and pursued.

2.13 With regard to *operational and service development*, infrastructure agencies have a growing and important role. Those VCS organisations which embrace a commissioned service-delivery role will need to orientate themselves to working in a 'business' environment and will be looking for support services to help them in this. Smaller, locally-based, community organisations who do not want to be a part of, or who are excluded from, this process will continue to have very significant support needs. In this, there is a danger of 'de-coupling' a professional, usually funded, 'voluntary' sector from a lay, usually unfunded 'community' sector. And there will be many VCS agencies and groups who are caught in the middle of this division. This could have a profound impact on the profile of the sector and a negative effect on its potential to help achieve an integrated approach to the meeting of community needs.

2.14 The *representational* role of infrastructure organisations concerns VCS sector development, and community development more broadly, alongside the need to influence statutory and private plans and policies that impact on communities. Infrastructure bodies, being membership-based and rooted in community and voluntary activity, are in a good position to co-ordinate and service consultation, opinion and position-forming amongst their constituencies and to promote these interests with decision makers and others as appropriate. This is highly complex and largely unexplored territory. Issues and problems include:

- *Scope* - what are the core areas of interest? What are the margins or outer limits of the VCS?
- *Information management* - there is such a lot of it;
- *Structure and governance* - who identifies and agrees what is wanted or needed; how are these views represented (the mandate) and to whom; how is accountability extracted from representatives?
- *Resourcing* - how is the whole thing to be paid for and by whom?
- *Impact* – how can you know whether you are making any difference?
- *Consultation fatigue* – given the scale and frequency of top-down initiatives, where does the stamina come from to 'keep on keeping on'?

2.15 In reconfiguring infrastructure services it is tempting to think only in terms of the support service functions (e.g. funding and finance, promoting volunteering, management and

governance practice) for these are tangible and familiar activities for which there is a demand. However, the opportunity that reconfiguration also offers is a chance to consider what arrangements would best spark vigorous debate about community life and form effective devices for its expression and representation.

## Regional developments

2.16 We have already made reference to the COVER report which offers a regional perspective on VCS activity in the East of England. The report provides a list of recommendations for future action by infrastructure bodies in the Eastern Region under the six priority headings agreed by the government of: governance; financing; workforce development; volunteering; ICT and performance improvement (these are the six areas in which national hubs of expertise have also been established through the ChangeUp programme. The work of these hubs will be relevant to the development of infrastructure provision at local level.) The COVER report recommendations are given in Appendix One to this report. This is a substantial agenda for infrastructure bodies to have to tackle.

2.17 This regional approach to VCS development also takes place sectorally e.g. the Rural Community Councils and Councils for Voluntary Youth Services have regional co-ordinating bodies which input into regional developments and policy, as do the CVS within the region. There is also a need regionally to relate to bodies such as the East of England Regional Assembly, the Government Office for the East of England and the East of England Development Agency. All of this makes further demands on the time and resources of the existing VCS infrastructure bodies.

## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – a fast growing area

2.18 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are fast growing areas with growth predicted to continue. The population of Cambridgeshire is forecast to grow from 552,400 in 2001 to 679,900 in 2021 – nearly a 25% growth rate<sup>6</sup>. While there is growth predicted in every district the rate of growth is uneven as can be seen in the table below:

	2001	2021	% increase
<b>Cambridge City</b>	110,000	146,400	33
<b>East Cambs</b>	70,900	82,800	17
<b>Fenland</b>	83,700	103,200	23
<b>Huntingdonshire</b>	157,200	169,700	8
<b>South Cambs</b>	130,600	177,900	36
<b>Cambridgeshire</b>	552,400	679,900	23

2.19 Much of this population growth is expected to be in market towns and in the creation of new villages, such as Northstowe (this development presenting particular challenges in the development of community institutions and public service delivery). It is also worth noting that County Council research suggests that 52% of the county's population lives in rural areas. This has important implications for the delivery of public services, including the cost of such delivery.

2.20 In Peterborough, the City is aiming for at least 21,200 new homes in the same period which will take the population from the current figure of 159,000 to over 200,000.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group 2003 forecasts

<sup>7</sup> Information supplied by Liz Wade, Head of Economic and Community Regeneration, Peterborough City Council

2.21 In general terms the area is a prosperous one with average weekly gross earnings above the national average except in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire which have a lower wage economy, including many low paid agricultural and migrant workers. There are also pockets of deprivation, particularly in some of the market towns such as Huntingdon and St Neots and to the north and east of Cambridge City.

2.22 The geography of the area is important with Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough being part of the M11/A1(M) corridor linked by the A14 while the northern parts of East Cambridgeshire and Fenland are part of a wider Fenland area that stretches into Norfolk and Lincolnshire. However the southern parts of East Cambridgeshire tend to look towards Newmarket or Cambridge. Peterborough has its own distinctive identity as the only unitary authority in the area. This is reflected in the separate Greater Peterborough Partnership which also covers Fenland while the Greater Cambridge Partnership covers Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City.

2.23 The increases in population will mean an increased need for VCS services and, consequently, an increased need for infrastructure services. In looking at how infrastructure services might be delivered it will be important to take into account the natural geography of the area.

## **Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements and the Voluntary Sector Compact**

2.24 Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) have been developed to bring together key statutory, private and VCS partners to ensure that local services are delivered in partnership – they provide an opportunity to define and deliver local priorities across an area rather than work being confined to separate agencies. There are LSPs in Peterborough and each of the Districts in Cambridgeshire.

2.25 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has produced a consultation paper on the future of LSPs.<sup>8</sup> This proposes that LSPs should:

- Be the partnership of partnerships in an area, providing the strategic co-ordination within the area and linking with other plans and bodies established at the regional, sub-regional and local level.
- Ensure a Sustainable Community Strategy is produced that sets the vision and priorities for the area agreed by all parties, including local citizens and businesses, and built on a solid evidence base.
- Develop and drive the effective delivery of their Local Area Agreements (see below).
- Agree an action plan for achieving the Sustainable Community Strategies priorities, including the LAA outcomes.

2.26 Consideration is being given to imposing a statutory obligation on statutory authorities to participate in LSPs and it is expected that they will become more of an executive body with powers to ensure that agreed proposals are carried through. There could also be a duty on local authorities to involve the business, voluntary and community sectors. If these more powerful LSPs come into existence it will be vitally important for VCS bodies to be represented and to be able to play an active and proactive part. VCS representation will

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<sup>8</sup> Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future. A consultation paper. ODP. December 2005

need to be transparent and representational arrangements will need to be properly resourced.

2.27 Local Area Agreements (LAA) are agreements between local partnerships and the government about the delivery of intended outcomes attached to agreed funding packages. In two tier areas, such as Cambridgeshire, the LAA is being agreed at the county level but it has to take into account priorities identified by District local authorities and LSPs in their Community Strategies. Each of the District LSPs is being asked to sign off the Cambridgeshire wide LAA. In their turn district level LSPs have to reflect LAA outcomes in their own action plans.

2.28 The Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement for 2006-2009 has within it a Statement of Community Involvement. This states that work will centre on communities and the support needed at the organisational and individual level to develop community empowerment by joining up current initiatives relating to community planning and community development, community cohesion, neighbourhood management, parish plan development, parish council development, village hall service, compact development, volunteering support services, VCS infrastructure support and VCS training. It also says that “the involvement of the voluntary and community sectors in the ongoing design and delivery of the LAA is essential. All LAA partners recognise and support the role of the voluntary sector in service delivery and user involvement.”<sup>9</sup>

2.29 The report outlines a “balanced triangle” approach involving:

- Governance – local people playing key roles in local democracy; stronger community engagement through LSPs and other Community Planning models.
- Social capital – improving levels of community participation in local governance and increasing people’s confidence and feeling of belonging and sense of place.
- Service delivery – barriers reduced so that the VCS can play a role in service delivery and public services that are closely linked to public need.

2.30 There is recognition in the document that there needs to be a further development of VCS structures if the VCS is to take on its role of programme delivery, policy dissemination and strategic representation. To achieve this, the following are proposed:

- The establishment of a new overarching Cambridgeshire Voluntary Sector Forum led by Cambridgeshire ACRE made up of both voluntary sector and public sector partners which will set the strategic direction.
- The coordinating of work programmes and funding streams to ensure cost-effective achievement of strategic outcomes and targets.
- Better arrangements for joining up the community sector work with the wider voluntary sector, local authorities and LSPs.

2.31 It should be noted that while the document proposes a Cambridgeshire Voluntary Sector Forum, the form of such a Forum, its functions and ways of working, have not yet been agreed in the wider voluntary sector or by CVSIC. Neither has any funding been agreed for providing support to a Forum.

2.32 The report acknowledges the important part played by CVSIC and the many initiatives started using ChangeUp funding. It makes reference to this piece of work i.e. the

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<sup>9</sup> Cambridgeshire’s Local Area Agreement Working together to achieve better outcomes 2006-2009 p8

Organisational Capacity Building Project, as making recommendations about the future shape of infrastructure services.

2.33 The Cambridgeshire LAA – and the different LSPs - offer great opportunities and challenges for the VCS to be recognised and to be involved in future discussions and decisions. However many of these aspirations have been stated before and past experience has shown resource and other difficulties for the VCS to take advantage of opportunities presented. There will need to be further work and discussion with statutory partners to make a reality of genuine partnership working. This could build on some of the work that has already been done to develop a Voluntary Sector Compact although this work needs to be strengthened and deepened.

## **Local government**

### ***Local government reorganisation***

2.34 A key factor in the coming years will be the likely reorganisation of local government. By the summer the government has promised a White Paper on the future shape of local government. Speeches by the responsible minister, David Milliband, have given some indication of what might be in the White Paper. He has put particular emphasis on neighbourhood governance. “We’re talking about devolution, not just to the town hall – that’s important, more flexibility at local government level – but also more devolution from the town hall or the county hall down to streets and neighbourhoods.”<sup>10</sup> He also said – “we need to ask if the best relationship is between the county and the districts or between one or more unitary authorities and local neighbourhoods.”<sup>11</sup>

2.35 One strong possibility, therefore, is that the White Paper will propose a three tier system of regions, unitary authorities and neighbourhoods although it is not expected that there would be any standard pattern for neighbourhoods – rather there would be enabling powers for neighbourhoods (or villages or market towns) that wished to take on certain powers. And it may also be the case that it will be left to counties and districts to decide in their own areas about whether they should move to a unitary system.

2.36 The implications for Cambridgeshire are significant (it is assumed that Peterborough would remain as a unitary although with a population of less than 200,000 it might fall below a recommended size for unitary authorities and would therefore have to look to merge with another authority). Possible models are an all Cambridgeshire unitary or three unitaries – Huntingdonshire, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and Fenland and East Cambridgeshire (although southern parts of East Cambridgeshire might fit better with a Cambridge centred unitary). Again, a recommended minimum size for a unitary could have important implications for which model is finally agreed.

2.37 Whatever is decided it will be important for the VCS infrastructure bodies to align themselves with any revised local government structures. In a sense these possible developments (and those with PCTs – see below) throw a shadow over this report and the possibility of judging between different infrastructure options. There may be a case for holding off from deciding any any radical changes in the infrastructure framework at least until the White Paper is produced. At the same time, there is also a case for pressing on, in an attempt to identify and agree a robust, yet adaptable, structure able to deal with future changes. This is a central dilemma for infrastructure development in the area at this point in time.

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in the Guardian 25.01.2006

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in the Guardian 25.01.2006

## **Children's and Adult Services**

2.38 A major reorganisation is already taking place under the Every Child Matters agenda with a range of services for young people being brought under one umbrella Children's Trust e.g. education services, child protection, youth services, Connexions. Cambridgeshire Children and Young Person's Strategic Partnership is organising around three areas (Huntingdonshire, South Cambs/Cambridge and East Cambs/Fenland) sub-divided into 'localities'. ChangeUp and Children's Fund money is being used to support VCS involvement in these changes and in the delivery of services. This will continue to have an important influence on how the VCS sector evolves in this area of interest.

2.39 A consequence of this reorganisation has been the creation of a new Adult Services Department which will continue to develop closer relationships with health services in delivering services for older people, people with mental health problems, disabled people, people with substance abuse problems and people with learning difficulties. Here also the VCS will have to be connected into these new arrangements, particularly in the likely expansion of contracting.

## **Primary Care Trusts (PCTs)**

2.40 There are currently 6 PCTs in Cambridgeshire/Peterborough:

- Cambridge City Primary Care Trust
- South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust  
(Working together as Cambridge Primary Care Trusts)
- East Cambridgeshire and Fenland Primary Care Trust
- Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust
- North Peterborough Primary Care Trust
- South Peterborough Primary Care Trust  
(Working together as Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership)

2.41 The government has argued the case for stronger Primary Care Trusts and has agreed that the number of PCTs should be reduced. They have put forward two proposals for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.<sup>12</sup> One proposal allows for one PCT for all of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough while the second proposal would give two PCTs – one for Cambridgeshire and one for Peterborough. The closing date for the consultation was 22 March 2006.

2.42 Whatever the outcome of the consultation the VCS will have to be able to agree structures that allow it to relate to the new PCT structures and to be in a position to both influence the work of the new authority or authorities and to deliver services on their behalf.

## **EEDA and Investing in Communities**

2.43 Investing in Communities (IiC) is the 10 year regional social inclusion programme of the East of England Development Agency (EEDA). The programme is being delivered through Sub-Regional Economic Partnerships – the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) which

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<sup>12</sup> Consultation on new Primary Care Trusts arrangements in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority.

covers Cambridge City, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire and the Greater Peterborough Partnership which covers Peterborough and Fenland.

### ***Investing in Greater Cambridge Communities***

2.44 A Business Plan was produced in December 2005 by EEDA and the Greater Cambridge Partnership. The vision that has been adopted is *“to ensure that the most deprived communities can achieve their full potential and therefore contribute to and benefit from sustainable growth in Greater Cambridge.”* The key themes are:

- Raising aspirations and motivating skills progression for employability
- Encouraging the enterprise environment
- Enabling partnership and community asset development
- Empowering communities

2.45 Under 'enabling partnership and community asset development' two proposed interventions are:

- Supporting community led projects in disadvantaged areas that promote community involvement in improved learning and employment
- Supporting the development of a strategic role for market towns

Under 'empowering communities' one proposed intervention is:

- Enhancing Voluntary and Community Sector investment which addresses needs of those seeking education, training or employment in parallel to “ChangeUp” by providing support to enable them to meet quality thresholds and use ICT to ensure greater front-line capability.

2.46 An important development with respect to rural strategy has been the devolving of Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) socio-economic funding to Regional Development Agencies. EEDA's approach has been to integrate this funding within the four main objectives with an expectation that rural issues will be prioritised where ever appropriate. This will be assisted by the Cambridgeshire Rural Forum which will develop a Rural Strategy. Investing in Communities is providing funding for a three year support and strategy post to carry out this work. In addition to the money coming through EEDA and Investing in Communities there is also direct funding from Defra through the Rural Social and Community Programme. This will provide £254,000 a year for 2006-2008 to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. (Further reference is made to this programme in the next section describing the current infrastructure arrangements in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.)

2.47 Within the Plan there are a number of proposals that directly affect the VCS e.g.

- Develop a Social Inclusion programme to add value to ChangeUp/Capacity Builders
- Build the capacity of voluntary organisations who remove barriers to lack of confidence, education, training and employment
- Target capacity building with key groups e.g. disabled people, BME groups, Travellers, Migrant Workers and the Over 45s
- Work with faith groups to develop a sub-regional Faith Forum promoting their active involvement in tackling social exclusion
- Establishing a network of community development practitioners to offer advice to disadvantaged communities

- Building enterprise activity in the heart of communities to drive regeneration, to promote local work opportunities, build the economic viability of communities, grow confidence and promote community cohesion

2.48 In addition there is a strong emphasis on supporting social enterprise, including the provision of substantial funds to the Social Enterprise People (Cambridge Cooperative Development Agency) to provide an advice and guidance infrastructure for social enterprise.

2.49 The Business Plan recognises the role of the VCS in the creation of economic and enterprise initiatives and, in particular, in working with marginalised and deprived communities. While the Plan will not provide funds for infrastructure organisations as such, it will provide support to VCS organisations that contribute towards meeting its objectives and here there will be an important role for infrastructure bodies to provide information to VCOs and to enable them to build their capacity in order to be able to deliver projects and programmes that meet these objectives.

### ***Greater Peterborough Partnership***

2.50 The Greater Peterborough Economic Development Partnership has produced a draft Investing in Communities Business Plan for 2005-2008. The partnership established a Regeneration Group to direct the programme – Peterborough CVS, Fenland CVS and Peterborough REC are represented on this group.

2.51 Rural infrastructure development in Peterborough is being taken forward through a new Rural Sub-Group of the Greater Peterborough Partnership. This initiative is being funded from the Rural Social and Community Programme and supported by Cambridgeshire ACRE.

2.52 While community empowerment and community support are identified as key strategic interventions the draft business plan does not develop any specific proposals nor does it identify any specific roles for the VCS or for VCS infrastructure organisations.

## **Conclusions**

2.53 This brief review of the wider context indicates the changes that are taking place in ideas about what the VCS comprises and what its future role should be in our society. These changes present opportunities – indeed imperatives - for VCOs and infrastructure organisations to engage with one another, and with statutory sector interests, including through partnership arrangements. For the VCS this can present difficulties – especially over capacity, competence and communication. New structures within the VCS are needed to manage this process. The issues involved are of considerable social importance and, if the sector is to thrive in this environment, they have to be addressed, even though the gains may not always be immediate or obvious.

2.54 We have outlined some of the developments affecting the VCS. There are others we have not discussed e.g. the possible merger of police authorities and the development of neighbourhood policing agendas. However we can be certain that the world is never going to stand still. The structures for engagement will need to recognise the scale of the task and continually shifting foci, and allow the capacity and flexibility to join with the new debates as they emerge.

2.55 At the same time, the bread-and-butter of the infrastructure agencies will remain the provision of core support services to existing VCOs and to newly emerging organisations.

The scale and profile of these support services will need to span a wide range of VCS agencies with very different interests and aspirations.

2.56 In the next section we look at the existing provision of infrastructure services within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and examine the potential to meet these challenges.

## **3. INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATIONS IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH**

3.1 In this section we describe the current situation with respect to infrastructure organisations in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We do this under three headings – Cambridgeshire ACRE and CVS; Volunteer Centres and Bureaux; and specialist infrastructure organisations. For each group we provide brief descriptions of their work, their funding, quality standards and key issues. Appendix Two provides a summary of funding for 2005/2006 for all the infrastructure organisations.

3.2 We had hoped that our thinking on the services provided by the infrastructure organisations would be informed by the work being undertaken on the Matrix, funded through ChangeUp. This work is looking in detail at the services provided by infrastructure organisations and in particular at what level of generalism or specialism each service is provided. However the work has not been completed by the time this final report had to be written. We comment on the potential usefulness of this work, and its possible implications for the future structure of infrastructure organisations in our final section.

3.3 At the end of this section we also look at the other current ChangeUp-funded projects in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough..

### **Cambridgeshire ACRE and the CVS**

#### ***Cambridgeshire ACRE (CACRE)***

3.4 Cambridgeshire ACRE is the Rural Community Council for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It works across this area and also in West Norfolk. It focuses on the need to create effective sustainable communities in rural areas and the promotion and development of effective rural services. CACRE sees its role as an enabling organisation working in partnership with other agencies. It is affiliated to ACRE, the national network of 38 RCCs in England and is also a member of the regional association, Rural Action East.

3.5 Responsibility for CACRE rests with its Board of Trustees and committees. Management is delegated to the staff team led by the Chief Executive. CACRE has the following staffing:

- Chief Executive supported by an Executive Support Officer who manages the organisation and concentrates on strategic work and partnerships.
- Deputy Chief Executive supported by the Executive Support Officer, a Finance Manager and Finance Assistant. The Deputy CE is responsible for operational management, including human resources, the Local Network Fund, PPI and the magazine.
- Community Development Manager who manages:
  - Parish Plans Officer, Parish Plans Assistant and Parish Plans Co-ordinator (Fenland)
  - Food Initiatives Co-ordinator and Healthy Eating Co-ordinator
  - Community Development Worker, Chatteris
  - Rural Transport Partnership Officer and Support Officer
  - Rural Housing Enabler
- Community Training and Development Manager who manages:
  - 2 Information Officers (both part-time, one of whom concentrates on Villages Halls and the other on funding) and Receptionist/Administrative Assistant
  - Community Development Co-ordinator (Littleport)
  - A team of freelance trainers

- LEADER+ Programme Manager and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
- Patient & Public Involvement (PPI) Manager, 3 PPI Forum Co-ordinators, PPI Development Officer, Community Engagement Officer, and 3 PPI Forum Support Officers
- Local Network Fund Co-ordinator and Development Officer
- Magazine Editor
- CVSIC Infrastructure Manager (to be redesignated ChangeUp Programme Manager)
- Greater Cambridge Rural Strategy Development Officer on loan from County Council

3.6 This staffing structure will be changing from the beginning of April 2006. 6 posts will be deleted – Rural Transport Partnership Officer and Support Officer; Parish Plans Officer and Parish Plans Assistant; Community Development Worker, Chatteris and Food Initiatives Co-ordinator. There will be new posts - 4 Community Development Workers and an Administrative Support Worker (funded by the Defra Rural Social and Community Programme for 2 years) whose work will be focussed on South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Huntingdonshire; and a Performance Improvement Co-ordinator. It is also hoped to refinance the Food Initiatives Co-ordinator.

3.7 The key areas of work for Cambridgeshire ACRE from April 2006 will therefore be:

- Continuing to work on developing strategic responses to rural issues and to being involved in a number of county wide and district partnerships, including providing the lead for the Rural Forum and the development of a rural strategy for the area;
- Community development work in each of the rural districts, which will start with parish planning work and support local community-led action (including work with market town partnerships);
- Training programmes, mainly around two modular courses on Community Development in Context (which is also being rolled out across the region) and Voluntary Sector Management – these are accredited training at Levels 2 or 3. Work has started on a Level 4 course in community development;
- Information provision with a particular emphasis on village halls and funding.
- Community development work in Littleport;
- Developing opportunities for rural affordable housing;
- Work in Fenland around parish plans (funded by Fenland Links) and healthy eating (funded by Sure Start);
- Management of the LEADER+ programme;
- Management of the Rural Social and Community Programme for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough;
- Management of the Local Network Fund;
- Supporting 9 Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forums;
- Management of the ChangeUp programme.

3.8 Cambridgeshire ACRE is involved in a wide variety of partnerships – the Chief Executive chairs the East Cambridgeshire LSP and is a Board member of Fenland LSP. In South Cambridgeshire the Chair is on the Board of the LSP and the Community Development Manager on the Steering Group. CACRE is not formally involved in the Huntingdonshire and Peterborough LSPs, but supports the delivery of their programmes. CACRE is also represented on the LAA Board and on the LAA Reference Group. The Chief Executive sits on the liC sub group of the Greater Cambridge Partnership. CACRE leads on the Rural Forum and the development of a rural strategy for the area. CACRE is also linked to regional activities, for example through the CE's membership of the COVER Board and East of England Regional Assembly and through membership of Rural Action East.

3.9 Funding for core work comes from Defra (£84,000), Cambridgeshire County Council (£43,000), District Councils (£21,000), training income (£25,000) and membership subscriptions (£6,000). Projects are funded through a wide variety of funding sources and contribute management costs to the core staffing – as does the administration of the LEADER+, Local Network Fund and ChangeUp programmes.

3.10 Cambridgeshire ACRE has Investors in People accreditation and has met PQASSO standards at Level 1, Level 2 (95%) and Level 3 (87%) – they are expecting to meet the full Level 3 standard in 2006/2007. Rural Community Councils use a peer review process for PQASSO. There are also separate national ACRE standards for RCCs.

3.11 Cambridgeshire ACRE has developed rapidly over the last five years on the basis of relatively secure core grant funding of nearly £180,000 per annum (though this may not remain secure and has not kept pace with costs and inflation), development of project based work and the administration of grant funds. The organisation has been successful in attracting both UK and EU funding. It has thus reached a size which allows it to support an internal infrastructure that can bid for funding for, and then manage, a considerable number of projects and funds. It is also able to act as a major player on strategic partnerships. It does this partially as representative of rural interests but also, often by default, as a representative of the voluntary and community sector generally. It is by far the largest infrastructure body in the area with a turnover, including grant funds, of approaching £2,000,000 per annum.

3.12 In the past Cambridgeshire ACRE was registered as a CVS but decided to de-register some years ago to avoid possible confusion with the other CVS in the area.

### **Cambridge CVS**

3.13 Cambridge CVS has been reassessing its situation after the previous Chief Executive left and an Interim Chief Executive was employed. The CVS has now agreed to employ a 3 day a week Strategic Director and a 5 day a week Operational Manager. An appointment has been made to the Strategic Director post and the Operational Manager post will be advertised shortly.

3.14 CCVS has the following staff and projects:

- Finance Manager who also provides a payroll service for 20 organisations and Quick Books training;
- Two administrative workers, both on 16 hours a week. One assists with the payroll service and is also responsible for the Carers Contingency Fund which gives individual grants to carers. The second post does communications work – managing the website, database and newsletter;
- Development and Training Officer, 30 hours a week, who provides support to groups on a one to one basis and advice on funding;
- Hosting the Voices project local worker engaging VCS organisations in the Every Child Matters agenda;
- Servicing 4 PPI Forums with 5 staff;
- Workforce Development Officer until June 2006 funded through ChangeUp.

3.15 Cambridge CVS has a place on the local LSP and on the Social Inclusion Group of the Community Safety Partnership. The appointment of a Strategic Director will mean much more involvement in strategic thinking and partnerships in the future.

3.16 Core funding comes from the City Council (£32,000), the County (£25,000) and the PCT (£20,000). The total core budget is approximately £120,000 and the difference is made up of members' fees, sales of publications, hire of a minibus, mailouts, payroll service and management charges on the projects.

3.17 Cambridge CVS has no quality accreditation.

3.18 Cambridge CVS has been through a major period of change and repositioning. It has designed its new staff structure to enable it to develop strategic work alongside the delivery of services and projects to VCS organisations. Its core funding is relatively secure and this should provide a basis for future development.

3.19 A key issue for Cambridge CVS is its relationship to South Cambridgeshire and this is dealt with in the next section.

### ***South Cambridgeshire***

3.20 South Cambridgeshire does not have its own CVS. In 2004 Cambridge CVS undertook a mapping and research project using ChangeUp early spend money. Key findings from that work<sup>13</sup> were:

“

- South Cambs is served by a large number of organisations based in Cambridge City but there are a growing number of local groups based in South Cambs itself who have been turning to Cambridge CVS for support and who have the potential to develop and contribute more effectively to local initiatives.
- In the past there has been poor engagement between South Cambs District Council and the voluntary sector and there has been little involvement of VCS organisations in South Cambs partnerships and initiatives.
- South Cambs is not an easy or coherent shape to work with. The City forms a natural central meeting point. South Cambs residents are able to benefit from a wide range of services provided by the City and this has extended to the voluntary sector where South Cambs has been able to rely on support provided by City organisations.
- South Cambs is a high growth area and has begun to address community based facilities and activities in a serious way, and recognises the importance of engaging a wide range of voluntary and community groups in that task. However, as well as being an area supporting urban growth, it retains many very rural characteristics and a lot of voluntary sector activity supports small local communities where some people are still vulnerable, isolated and untouched by City life. “

3.21 In the mapping work carried out 653 groups were identified as serving South Cambs.

3.22 A South Cambs Voluntary Sector Forum was established in January 2004 with over 50 members at the time of writing the report – mostly health and social care organisations. It is being supported by the District Council, the PCT and Cambridge CVS.

3.23 Cambridge CVS has changed its memorandum and articles of association and is now working as a CVS in both Cambridge and South Cambs and is likely to consider applying to the Big Lottery for funding for a South Cambs development worker post.

3.24 It seems unlikely that funding will be made available for a separate South Cambs CVS, even if considered desirable. Therefore Cambridge CVS needs to be supported in its

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<sup>13</sup> South Cambs Mapping Report, undated

intention to be a CVS for both Cambridge and South Cambs. It would be expected that such a change should be reflected not just in a change in its constitution and in its service provision but also in membership of its trustee body and its business plan. It may also wish to consider the best office location for a CVS serving both communities.

### ***East Cambridgeshire CVS***

3.25 East Cambs CVS was established in 2004 with District Council and PCT support. However the Chief Officer is only employed for 20 hours a week and the CVS has decided to prioritise strategic working over direct work with local VCOs. Support to organisations is provided on a request basis e.g. work is being carried out with the local sports trusts. There is an agreement with CACRE that the CVS will refer organisations where necessary and they will supply information and support to local groups and, although East Cambs has not referred groups to CACRE, it is likely that the CACRE service in Littleport has been used by local groups as it is physically based in East Cambs.

3.26 ChangeUp money has been used for a development worker for 6 months who is working on a training needs analysis and the development of a training programme. This fund has also financed the purchase of books to create a resource centre and 'Grantfinder' to provide funding advice.

3.27 East Cambs CVS hosts one of the BME Development Workers funded through ChangeUp. The Voices worker based at Fenland CVS also covers East Cambs.

3.28 The CVS is represented on the LSP and will be involved with the development of Forums which will provide a conduit to the LSP e.g. the Children and Young People's Forum which has already been established and the Health and Social Well Being Forum which will have had its first meeting in February 2006.

3.29 Funding is £4,000 from the County Council, £10,200 from the District Council (with an additional £5,000 agreed for 2006/2007 and a further £5,000 in 2007/2008) and £5,700 from the PCT. There is ChangeUp funding for the development worker.

3.30 The CVS is looking to achieve PQASSO Level 1 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 and Level 2 a year later.

3.31 East Cambs CVS recognises that it is not viable in the long term with its present levels of funding. It does not think it likely that there will be significant increases from its statutory funders although the District Council is agreeing some increases over the next two years. The CVS is therefore considering its future – one option is a merger with another organisation and it has considered a merger with the local Volunteer Centre. If it was to consider a merger with another CVS the possible candidates are Fenland CVS and Cambridge City CVS. We will consider these options further in the final section of this report. Another option would be an application to the Big Lottery Fund for core funding. The CVS has indicated that it is keeping its options open pending publication of this report.

### ***Fenland CVS***

3.32 Fenland CVS was formed in 2001 with the PCT leading the process. Following work by a Development Officer a Chief Officer started in 2003. Their staffing now consists of:

- Chief Officer;
- Information Officer – part time – (Full Time from May 2006);
- Administrative Assistant – part time (from May 2006);

- Sure Start Development Worker – part time;
- Voices worker hosted (part time covering both Fenland and East Cambs).

3.33 The CVS undertakes the following activities:

- Advice and information; meetings; guidance;
- Funding Advice using Funderfinder software;
- Training programme which is free with sessions delivered in different parts of the district
- Events e.g. Funding Fair;
- Running, in conjunction with Fenland Volunteer Centre, the Volunteer Organisers Forum
- Lending library and equipment;
- Bi-monthly newsletter;
- E-mail network;
- Annual directory of members (121);
- Meeting room for hire;
- Access to a range of advice, information and factsheets website;
- Free internet access via the resource centre.

3.34 In the last full year 270 individuals from over 100 different organisations utilised services. Figures for the current year suggest an increase of at least 25% on these figures.

3.35 Outcomes monitoring is still being developed but is said to demonstrate positive results.

3.36 The CVS is represented on the LSP – the Fenland Strategic Partnership Board – and on partnerships such as Fenland Links, LEADER+ Board, Fens Rural Pathfinder, Fenland Diversity Partnership and the Regeneration Sub Group of the Greater Peterborough Economic Partnership. It runs consultation events and through the Voices project is servicing the Children and Young People’s Forum – it would like to develop further forums possibly on Health, Older People and Carers, and Quality Issues.

3.37 There has been substantial funding from the Big Lottery and a three year extension has been agreed from 2006/2007 to 2008/2009 for £236,000 over the three years. The CVS also receives £5,000 from the District Council and £4,000 from the County Council (2005/6 figures) as well as project money from Sure Start and from the hosted Voices worker. The CVS has also earned income for undertaking specific one off project work. Total funding in 2006/2007 is estimated at £127,000. The CVS strategy is to develop a number of projects with their own funding as the long term strategy towards sustainable funding.

3.38 They have signed off PQASSO at Level 2.

3.39 Fenland CVS has developed a positive identity in the area and believes that for the foreseeable future the best way to deliver services to local groups is through a locally managed and accountable organisation. The organisation has been able to develop with the help of lottery funding (60% of total income projected for 2006/7) and this will remain a major source of funding for the next three years. The need is recognised to develop additional funding streams, particularly post 2009. While Fenland CVS is undoubtedly in a better position to attract additional funding it may still struggle after 2009 to replace the lottery funding, particularly if statutory funding does not increase.

### ***Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations***

3.40 The Forum was set up 13 years ago. Staffing consists of:

- Director;
- Development Worker carrying out one to one support work with VCOs, training and provision of information;
- Partnership Development Worker;
- Voices project worker funded through Children's Fund;
- 2 administrative staff.

3.41 The administrative staff helped to administer the Primrose Centre where the Forum was based and which housed several other VCOs. However the Forum will shortly be moving to new purpose built premises which house a local community centre and also other VCOs – the Forum will be responsible for its running.

3.42 More generally the Forum provides information and advice to VCOs, access to training, newsletters, books and video loan and low-cost stationery.

3.43 The Forum is represented on the LSP at Board and Executive Committee levels.

3.44 Funding is £32,000 from the District Council, £8,000 from the County Council and £7,000 from the PCT. In addition there is a £7,000 premises grant that comes through what was the Social Services Department. The Partnership Development Worker is being funded by the District Council with contributions from the PCT and the County Council.

3.45 The Forum is currently working through PQASSO.

3.46 The Hunts Forum is a well established CVS with secure support from its funders. It provides core CVS functions and, through its Partnership Development Worker, will be able to play a more strategic role on behalf of VCOs within the district.

### ***Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service***

3.47 Clearly the position in Peterborough is different from Cambridgeshire because the City Council is a unitary authority. The CVS has been established for 26 years and has 560 members. It has the following staff/projects:

- General Secretary;
- Assistant General Secretary (who is also the Volunteer Centre Co-ordinator);
- Training Officer;
- Carers Project (5 workers);
- Shopmobility worker;
- Direct Payments Scheme (2 workers);
- Patient Participation and Liaison Project;
- Cambridgeshire Global Grants worker;
- Centre Administrator and Reception Co-ordinator.

3.48 The CVS provides CVS core services to local groups – information, advice and support; Funder Finder; salary and book-keeping services; meeting room hire; practical services such as photocopying and word processing and a membership directory. Accredited training is offered through the Open College Network and there are extensive day and half day training programmes – tailor made training is also available for groups.

3.49 As well as the core CVS services there are a range of projects e.g. Carers Project, Shopmobility and Direct Payments Project. PCVS owns its building which is used by a wide

variety of groups.

3.50 PCVS has created a Voluntary Sector Forum for VCOs to be able to come together to support each other and present a common voice in policy debates. As an extension of the Forum it is intended to establish a number of sub groups of organisations working in the same field on the model of the already established Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum.

3.51 PCVS is represented on the Local Strategic Partnership and on the Regeneration Sub Group of the Greater Peterborough Economic Partnership.

3.52 Funding for core CVS services comes from Peterborough City Council (£35,930) and self generated income of £105,538 (book keeping, pay roll, room rents). There is also currently a grant of £25,200 from the Community Regeneration Fund but this ends in March 2006. Project funding is £34,000 for Shopmobility, £127,000 for the Carers Centre and £37,000 for the Direct Payments Scheme. The total budget is approximately £400,000 a year – there are concerns that there may have to be reductions in staffing in 2006/2007.

3.53 PCVS has completed PQASSO at Level 3 and is updating the information on an annual basis.

3.54 While Peterborough CVS has a stable amount of core funding its project funding has been declining which has meant both a reduction in projects and in contributions to core funding. The fact that Peterborough is a unitary authority has meant that there has been some separateness from the VCS in Cambridgeshire, which the ChangeUp process has not managed to resolve.

### ***Key issues for CACRE and the CVS***

3.55 CACRE is a strong and expanding county wide organisation that has taken much of the lead in strategic thinking about the VCS, particularly in Cambridgeshire, that goes beyond its purely rural remit. There are CVS in all of the districts and Peterborough apart from South Cambs. Funding for the CVS in Cambridge City, Huntingdon and Peterborough is relatively secure (although increased funding would allow them to offer a wider range of services). There is inadequate funding for the East Cambs CVS and it is not clear how sustainable funding will be developed for Fenland CVS after lottery funding ends in 2009. The immediate priorities must be to secure the future funding for a CVS service in East Cambs and to provide a CVS service in South Cambs.

3.56 Cambridgeshire County provides £81,000 a year core funding to CACRE and CVS. The grants are currently provided on a three year SLA basis subject to a review half way through the three year period – which will be in the summer of 2006. At this point in time the CVS need to be in a position to make out the case to the county for continuation funding for CVS services at the existing or a greater level.

3.57 Peterborough City provides a core grant of £36,000 and the Cambridgeshire Districts varying amounts to CACRE and their CVS - £21,000 to CACRE, £36,000 from Cambridge City Council, £32,000 from Huntingdonshire DC, £10,400 from East Cambs DC and £5,000 from Fenland DC.

3.58 PCTs provide varying levels of support - £20,000 to Cambridge CVS, £7,000 to Hunts Forum and £5,700 to East Cambs CVS. When PCT reorganisation is agreed there will need to be a case made out to the new PCT for continuing support to all CVS at a similar level.

3.59 Apart from CACRE there has been a struggle to engage with strategic issues, particularly at county level, and everywhere the resources are lacking to create and maintain a systematic structure for representational work (though the proposed Cambridgeshire Voluntary Sector Forum, if it is accepted by the infrastructure organisations as a useful vehicle, can be seen as a start). The new Strategic Director at Cambridge CVS should provide a welcome additional resource for strategic planning and thinking.

3.60 There needs to be consideration of the respective roles of Cambridgeshire ACRE and the CVS in Cambridgeshire in order to provide greater understanding for the VCS sector generally and to ensure that there is no overlap or duplication of services. Two important issues here are the extent to which infrastructure organisations;

- promote the integration of ‘voluntary’ agencies and ‘community’ groups; and
- maintain useful or meaningful distinctions between rural and non-rural matters.

3.61 A view needs to be taken on the value of developing or adopting quality standards for CACRE and the CVS in principle. If it is decided that there is merit in adopting the same framework across infrastructure organisations, a further decision is needed on the framework that suits the situation best. In the main, organisations have so far used PQASSO, a self accrediting framework (though consideration is being given to making this an externally validated accreditation system). However a view also needs to be taken on national CVS standards and on PERFORM, a self assessment tool being developed for organisations providing infrastructure services in the VCS.<sup>14</sup>

3.62 We will return to these issues in sections 4 and 5.

## **Volunteer Centres and Bureaux**

3.63 Although different organisations use the title volunteer bureau and volunteer centre we will be using the generic title of volunteer centre.

### ***The centres***

3.64 There are nine volunteer centres in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. There are single centres in Peterborough (where the centre is part of the CVS), Fenland, East Cambs (Ely and District) and Cambridge City. There are four centres in Huntingdonshire at Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots and Ramsey. These four centres are independent charities but they are also part of the Huntingdonshire Federation of Volunteer Bureaux. The Federation makes a common grant application to the County and District Councils, receives the grant and employs the centre managers who are then responsible to their own management committees. In addition the Federation employs a part time Youth Volunteering post. Finally the southern part of South Cambs is served by the Royston Volunteer Centre whose main area of activity is in Hertfordshire.

3.65 The following table uses figures from Gill Robinson’s research (see para 3.73 below) to show the number of enquiries, interviews and placed volunteers for each centre for the latest year available:

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<sup>14</sup> Perform. An Outcomes Approach for Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Organisations A discussion document ChangeUp and COGS November 2005 and Perform Revised Tool November 2005

	<b>Enquiries</b>	<b>Volunteers interviewed</b>	<b>Volunteers placed</b>
<b>Cambridge</b>	1298	206	144*
<b>Ely and District</b>	780	100-150	83-124
<b>Fenland</b>	180	169	150
<b>Huntingdon</b>	60	37	41
<b>Peterborough</b>	720	251	Not available
<b>Ramsey/Warboys</b>	Not available	81	72
<b>Royston</b>	98	26	15
<b>St Ives</b>	60	55-60	55-60
<b>St Neots</b>	50	24	26

\* This figure relates to those individuals placed directly following interview; placement is facilitated for a higher proportion of the 1298 enquiries by referring people directly to opportunity providers.

3.66 As well as core volunteer centre functions six centres run social car schemes (Ely and District, Fenland (ends March 2006), Huntingdon, Ramsey/Warboys and District, St Ives and St Neots) and two centres run gardening schemes (Ely and Huntingdon). The four Huntingdonshire centres jointly run a holiday scheme. The Huntingdon centre runs a lunch club and the Royston centre a Timebank project.

### ***Funding***

3.67 The county council provides £65,000 of funding to the centres - £23,000 to Cambridge City, £16,000 to Fenland, £14,000 to Huntingdonshire, £10,000 to Ely and District and £2,000 to Royston VC. It is not clear on what basis the split of funding has been agreed. As with the CVS the volunteer centres are on 3 year SLAs which will be reviewed in the summer of 2006.

3.68 District funding is variable with:

- £31,000 coming from Cambridge City Council for the Cambridge VC;
- £32,500 from Huntingdonshire District Council for the four centres in the district;
- £15,000 from Peterborough City Council for Peterborough VC;
- £1,200 from East Cambs District Council for Ely and District VC;
- £2,000 for the Cambridge VC and £800 for the Royston VC from South Cambs District Council;
- No grant from Fenland District Council for Fenland VC .

3.69 Additional money has been received from Volunteering England Action Fund (Year of the Volunteer grants) for Cambridge, Ely and Fenland Centres and the Peterborough Centre has received funding from Global Grants, TSB and the Lottery.

3.70 Core funding for the nine centres from the County and the districts/unitary authority amounts to £147,500 i.e. an average of less than £20,000 each. Consequently many of the centres are minimally staffed and often staff are on low salaries.

### ***Quality standards***

3.71 Six centres are accredited with Volunteering England:

- Cambridge (due to reaccredit April 2007);
- Ely and District (due to reaccredit April 2006);

- Fenland (due to reaccredit April 2006);
- Peterborough (due to reaccredit April 2007);
- Ramsey and Warboys (due to reaccredit April 2008);
- Royston (due to reaccredit October 2005);
- Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots centres are not accredited.

We have been told that re-accreditation will be to tougher standards than the standards currently in place.

3.72 The Peterborough centre has undertaken PQASSO Level 3 as part of the CVS and the Royston centre has undertaken PQASSO Level 1.

### ***Volunteering research***

3.73 Gill Robinson, an independent consultant, was commissioned by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Volunteer Bureaux and Centres to carry out research into volunteering (a ChangeUp project). As part of her research she:

- collected data to produce a detailed profile of each local volunteer development agency;
- mapped the actual activity of each Volunteer Bureau/Centre in relation to each of the six core functions as defined by Volunteering England;
- engaged with individual members of the public to establish current levels of awareness of the “volunteering brand” and satisfaction with local volunteering infrastructure;
- established some baseline data on current volunteer management policies and practices within volunteer involving organisations.

3.74 She then went on to make recommendations as to how the support and development needs of volunteer involving organisations can best be provided by Volunteer Bureaux and Centres in order to facilitate good volunteer recruitment, induction and retention.

3.75 The Executive Summary to the report is attached as Appendix Three.

3.76 Key issues and recommendations from the research, using the Volunteering England six core functions, are (our summary):

- *Brokerage i.e. specialist volunteering infrastructure organisations have a clear understanding of the role, range and remit of voluntary and community activity locally, countywide and nationally.*

(Centres do not have the time and resources to fully research and assimilate the information available about countywide and national organisations and in some cases do not see that this information is needed to feed into local best practice. “This gives rise to a somewhat parochial attitude.” There is a need for a common system of record keeping with a mechanism for regular updating.)

- *Marketing volunteering i.e. the specialist volunteering infrastructure organisations aim to stimulate interest in voluntary and community activity.*

(The degree of engagement is to a great extent determined by resources. While a reasonable job is being done in this area there is still much room for improvement. There is little capacity in the centres for taking any activity stimulated through to implementation. The responsibility for development of interest is regarded as a CVS function. The art of selling the “volunteering brand” has to be learned. Centres lack professional marketing skills -

there is no common marketing strategy to provide a cohesive approach to recruitment and few systems in place to monitor outcomes. More collaborative working should be considered to raise the profile of centres as well as that of volunteering. A comprehensive programme of awareness of the uses of ICT within volunteering promotion, marketing and management is a major priority along with training in the use of IT and IT management.)

- *Development of volunteering opportunities i.e. the specialist volunteering infrastructure organisations take a strategic approach to the development of volunteering opportunities.*

(There needs to be far more research undertaken and findings made available to the centres. Equally there needs to be more training around strategic planning, and around access, diversity and equality issues, available to staff and trustees. Centres “need to look beyond their own borders and recognise that they are part of a rather larger piece and that some of the responsibility for how the world views volunteering lies with them.”<sup>15</sup> This would include closer partnerships within the sector, and the development of cross-sector partnerships.)

- *Development of good practice i.e. in working with volunteers in all volunteer-involving organisations.*

(This is an area in which centres appear to perform well although systems for monitoring and evaluation are absent and this is an area for priority development. Centres also need to take on a much more proactive role in promoting good volunteer management practice within small VCOs and to build up close relationships with these organisations in order to assess their development needs. Development of training and resources should also be explored.)

- *Policy response and campaigning.*

(Volunteering is one of the LAA targets and as such volunteering should be a priority area for LSPs’ community strategies and for the LSPs to invest in. Time must be found for engagement with the LSPs. However there is little involvement of centres in leading or participating in campaigns on issues affecting volunteers and volunteering, in the creation of a volunteer literate and volunteer friendly climate or in contributing to national thinking on volunteering. Centres should advocate and represent the common agenda in their area of representation using their knowledge to reflect sector need and ambition in the delivery of their services.)

- *Strategic development of volunteering in partnership with other agencies and groups.*

(Increased collaborative working needs to be undertaken to increase awareness of volunteering needs and existing practices and there must be a system for capturing this collective intelligence. Centres need to consider and work towards:

- Providing a better experience for volunteers and those organisations using volunteers;
- Using resources and skills to full potential;
- Increasing the professionalism of volunteering;
- Complementing existing services and adding value;
- Impact assessment).

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<sup>15</sup> The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Volunteer Elisha Evans and Joe Saxton November 2005

## **Key issues**

3.77 There are nine volunteer centres in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough none of which is adequately funded and some of which are employing staff on very low salaries. Some of the centres deal with low numbers of enquiries – and some of the centres may have become more involved in running projects, such as social car schemes, than in developing overall policies and good practice.

3.78 According to Gill Robinson's research there is a general lack of strategic thinking and practice in a number of areas relating to Volunteering England's six key functions. She argues that greater emphasis needs to be put on developing all of the six functions, on improved monitoring and evaluation and on increased involvement in debates concerning volunteering. Only one of the centres is part of an organisation with a broader remit (Peterborough CVS). It seems to us unlikely that these objectives can be achieved with the existing number of (often) small volunteer centres acting alone, and without more opportunities for joint strategic thinking and development. One of the key issues that will have to be addressed is how these wider issues might be dealt with in the absence of increased resources.

3.79 Notwithstanding the above points, we would not want to detract from the good and committed work that will be taking place within centres.

3.80 We will return to these issues in sections 4 and 5.

## **The specialist infrastructure bodies**

3.81 There are a number of specialist infrastructure bodies that are members of CVSIC and in the following paragraphs we look at each of them, identifying their core work, their funding and their relationship with the generalist infrastructure bodies.

### **Care Network**

3.82 Care Network offers volunteering opportunities to older people through establishing good neighbour schemes in small rural communities and then providing them with on going support. They are also involved in service delivery and intend to extend their Welcome Home from Hospital Project to cover the county.

3.83 There are 11 part time staff working in South Cambs, East Cambs, Huntingdon and Fenland districts, plus Welcome Home from Hospital in Cambridge City using a variety of funding – county council, two lottery grants, two district councils (East Cambs and South Cambs), Healthy Living Centre and PCT. However very little of the finance is core or long term.

3.84 There are positive relationships with the CVS in East Cambs (where the Care Network worker is in the same building), Huntingdonshire, Fenland and Cambridge. Office sharing with the Volunteer Bureau in East Cambs has helped to find volunteers.

3.85 The service provided through Care Network is a popular one and it is expanding away from its South Cambridgeshire base. However dependence on short term contracts has led to uncertainty about the future and the ability to sustain core and strategic functions.

## ***Disability organisations***

3.86 There are three disability organisations – DISH in Huntingdonshire, Directions Plus in South Cambs, East Cambs, Cambridge and Fenland and DIAL in Peterborough. Only Directions Plus and DIAL are part of the Consortium although DIAL does not attend meetings. The core of the work of all three organisations is the provision of advice and information and welfare benefits support to disabled people and carers. In addition DIAL has a contract with the City to take on social work cases and Directions Plus runs two planning vetting schemes.

3.87 Directions Plus supports forums of disabled people in Cambridge and in East Cambs and would like to start a number of further forums based on market towns or clusters of villages. There is no grouping of disabled people or organisations in Peterborough.

3.88 Directions Plus receives £90,000 a year from the county and £14,000 from the districts for its advice line and welfare benefits services. It also receives £6,000 for its two planning vetting schemes. DIAL receives £90,000 a year in two contracts from the City.

3.89 The three disability organisations have started to meet together on a regular basis and are developing joint projects using ChangeUp money. There are connections with CVS and volunteer centres but they are not consistent and strong across the whole area.

3.90 The disability organisations are largely funded to provide specific services leaving few resources to develop as a voice of disabled people or to develop strategic thinking around the issue of disability. A case needs to be made for funding for the more strategic work.

## ***Young Lives (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Council for Voluntary Youth Services)***

3.91 Young Lives covers both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. An amalgamation is taking place between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Council for Voluntary Youth Services and the Association of Cambridgeshire Youth Clubs to create the new organisation – Young Lives. This organisation will continue support to voluntary youth organisations but will also extend its brief to the Every Child Matters agenda.

3.92 Young Lives has four main projects each with a full time worker:

- 2 year contract with Connexions for capacity building which delivers core services such as information and training;
- Leader Plus funded project on youth work opportunities in Fenland. A full time post for 3 years;
- Comic Relief funded project initially in Huntingdonshire but expanding outwards – getting young people engaged with parish councils and local democracy. Half way through three year project;
- Voices – County Development Worker funded by ChangeUp with three workers funded by Children’s Fund based in Cambridge CVS, Hunts Forum and Fenland CVS (for Fenland and East Cams). Line management for the three workers is with the CVS. Their brief is to involve voluntary sector organisations in the Every Child Matters agenda.

3.93 In Peterborough Young Lives is working with Peterborough Voluntary Sector Forum for Children and Families – a partnership agreement with a part time paid chair and a full time worker.

3.94 When the new organisation is fully established the new staffing structure will be Head of Finance, Facilities and Funding; Head of VCS Support; Head of Training and Head of Young People's Programmes.

3.95 The total budget of the new organisation in the first year will be in the region of £225,000 with funding from Connexions of £60,000 (to be transferred to the County and Peterborough City when Connexions is reorganised), LEADER+, Comic Relief and the Children's Fund.

3.96 The new organisation – Young Lives – is likely to be an important player in the area of services for children and young people. Through the Voices project it has developed relationships with the CVS in Cambridgeshire although these could still be developed further. There have been poor relationships with the volunteer centres in the past but these need to improve, with discussions around youth volunteering and the implementation of the Russell Commission report – these discussions have started.

### ***Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum(CECF) and Peterborough Racial Equality Council (PREC)***

3.97 CECF is based in Cambridge but also has funding to work in Fenland and East Cambs. It has a Director, a Caseworker, 2 lottery funded ethnic minority capacity building workers and a rural worker supported through ChangeUp until the end of June 2006. They are supported by a finance worker and an administrative worker. The caseworker deals with discrimination issues. The organisation reviews organisations' equal opportunities policies and carries out proactive work on the Race Relations Amendment Act. It also has a mentoring project.

3.98 CECF has a strong presence in Cambridge City. Core funding is £50,000 from Cambridge City Council and this is now being used to create five study circles for children and youth, community cohesion and policing, social enterprise, environment and education and the arts. These will be made up of individuals nominated by BME groups and other stakeholders and may develop into focus groups in the future. CECF has applied for three year funding to the CRE.

3.99 There are differing relationships with CACRE and the CVS – the relationship is strong with CACRE, Cambridge CVS and with East Cambs CVS where the ChangeUp funded rural worker is based, but less strong with Fenland CVS and Hunts Forum.

3.100 PREC has two core staff – the Director and a worker delivering projects. Projects have included a BME Positive Images programme funded by the Home Office Active Communities Programme which ended in March 2006; a Big Lottery funded capacity building worker (one of whose tasks is to build a team of 10 volunteers to run the REC office) for three years; the ChangeUp funded rural development worker and training around capacity building funded by the ChangeUp Development Bank.

3.101 Core funding has been £35,000 from the CRE and £39,500 from the City Council. However the CRE is changing the basis for its funding and now wishes to fund projects with agreed outcomes. PREC has applied for funding for three projects – advice and advocacy on immigration matters; research into migrant communities in the city and work in one part of the city where there are community tensions. PREC's concern is that, without additional staff, any agreed projects will have to be delivered by the Director, taking away from his strategic work.

3.102 There are a number of established minority communities in the area – Indian, Chinese, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Vietnamese, Italian, Polish, African-Caribbean, African and Portuguese in Cambridge and Cambridgeshire, and Pakistani (the largest), Italian, Indian, Afro-Caribbean and Chinese in Peterborough. In Peterborough there are also traveller and gypsy communities. However none of these communities is very large and often there is not a critical mass of people able to come together and influence policy makers. More recently there have arrived many European migrants and asylum seekers. This can lead to community tensions and work around the needs of ethnic minority groups and community cohesion is likely to grow in importance. The work of the two ChangeUp funded rural workers will be presented at a conference in June, which will provide an opportunity to agree the future direction of work in this area.

### ***The Social Enterprise People – Cambridge Co-operative Development Agency***

3.103 CCDA was established in 1982 to promote co-operative enterprises. In 2005 it decided to embrace social enterprise and re-branded itself as the Social Enterprise People. Its activities do not have a geographical restriction, but it focuses on Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. They have had funding for a capacity needs analysis of the social enterprise sector in Cambridgeshire from the Greater Cambridge Partnership and EEDA – Social Enterprise in Cambridgeshire: Needs and Priorities. This argues for more dedicated social enterprise support services; a dedicated network development officer; a skills bank; greater marketing of the concept of social enterprise; improved access to funding; a printed Cambridgeshire social enterprise guide and flagship co-location/incubation projects.

3.104 CCDA is contracted to Business Link to provide advice on social enterprise and will receive substantial funding from the Investing in Communities programme in Cambridgeshire for next year. ChangeUp funding has been used to support a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Social Enterprise Network, investigations into why the voluntary sector is resistant to trading, and the offer of a diagnostic tool to infrastructure organisations. They are also developing a Knowledge Bank with Pro-Help (a national network of over 1,000 professional firms who give their time and expertise free to VCOs – they have groups in Cambridge and Peterborough) offering solutions to organisations which want to start to trade.

3.105 They have a good relationship with CACRE and good links with Cambridge CVS and East Cambs CVS. They are starting relationships with Hunts Forum and Fenland CVS, based around the diagnostic tool and have had an initial meeting with Peterborough CVS. There are some connections with Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum, Directions Plus and the Care Network.

### ***Cambridge Independent Advice Centre***

3.106 CIAC has premises in Cambridge and Huntingdon and is developing a number of projects – it has an ICT project based in Ely and is piloting work with migrant workers and with offenders and their families across the region.

3.107 CIAC leads on ICT work for the Consortium and has ChangeUp funding for a Circuit Rider project which has been piloted with 15 organisations. The evidence from the pilot is that the need is for helping organisations with developing ICT strategies rather than trouble shooting. They hope to develop the project into a sustainable social enterprise that could include, for example, both circuit riders and procurement. There may also be benefits from taking a regional approach.

## ***Key issues***

3.108 The specialist infrastructure organisations are all at different stages of development and have varying relationships with the generalist infrastructure bodies. Of the specialist organisations Young Lives and the Social Enterprise People are best placed to have a strong core and to develop strategic thinking. Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum may also be in the same position with regard to work in Cambridge City. However other specialist bodies are mainly project funded e.g. the disability organisations, Care Network, Peterborough Racial Equality Council (as CRE funding criteria change) and Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum outside Cambridge City. These may struggle to find the resources to develop strategic-level work and adequate structures for representational work.

3.109 However the impression that we have received from our interviews is that ChangeUp, and ChangeUp funding, has led to increased dialogue between the specialist infrastructure bodies, CACRE and the CVS, examples being the Voices project with workers based at Young Lives and three CVS, the Circuit Rider project and the social enterprise work. However there has been less dialogue with the volunteer centres. What limits these discussions is mainly a lack of resources i.e. resources to find the time to attend meetings and resources to develop strategic thinking and practice.

3.110 We will further address this issue of the lack of strategic resources in sections 4 and 5.

## **ChangeUp funded projects**

3.111 ChangeUp has funded a number of projects, some of which we have referred to already. A number of these projects are still in progress and have not produced definite outcomes or proposals for the future. Nevertheless we have felt it important to list these projects together with known progress because the final outcomes of the projects may have implications for the future configuration of infrastructure organisations in the area.

### ***Black and Minority Ethnic Communities***

3.112 This project is exploring the needs of BME groups, families and individuals in rural areas. There are two part time BME Development Officers workers employed until June 2006 – one managed from Peterborough and one managed from Cambridge. They are producing a report for a conference in June which will make proposals for future work.

### ***Disability Issues***

3.113 Development work is being done between six organisations with part-time staff extending their hours. This builds on local knowledge and expertise.

3.114 The expected outcomes are:

- web pages for organisations with no ICT;
- training and other disability related help e.g. access advice;
- referrals of disability organisations to CVS etc. for their specialisms;
- some ideas about quality standards that all disability organisations are able to use;
- a report on future infrastructure needs.

### ***Matrix Development***

3.115 This work has been referred to above and will be completed by the end of June.

### ***Volunteering***

3.116 This research has been referred to in the section above on volunteer centres.

### ***Social and Community Enterprise***

3.117 This work has been referred to in the section above on the Social Enterprise People.

### ***Children and Young People***

3.118 ChangeUp has supported two projects – firstly, the amalgamation of CCVYS and the Association of Cambridgeshire Youth Clubs to create Young Lives. Secondly, supporting the initial employment of a County Development Officer working with three Area Development Workers (latter funded through the Children’s Fund) to encourage VCS engagement in Cambridgeshire’s ‘Improving the Well Being of Children and Young People’. All four workers will be supported through the Children’s Fund in 2006/2007.

### ***ICT***

3.119 The Circuit Riders Project has worked with 15 organisations in its pilot phase and is now preparing a ICT strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough which should be completed by the end of June.

### ***Performance improvement/Workforce Development***

3.120 Two proposals are being developed from this project. The first is a toolkit for development workers to use when advising groups which may be issued on CD Rom. However there will be an issue of ownership of the final product and its updating and this function will need to be located within the infrastructure framework for the area. A second area of work is around training across the county and recommendations concerning training and accreditation will also need to be sustained within future frameworks.

### ***Funding and Financial Sustainability***

3.121 There are no conclusions from this work as yet. There is a proposal for a “showcase event” in April to sell the work of the Consortium and its members to funders. Diagnostic work has started with three organisations on charging for services. There will be a survey of organisations with reference to procurement.

### ***Cambridgeshire Trustee Network***

3.122 This network is being developed through building up a database of trustees and then offering them support and training. It also aims to help with the recruitment of trustees. It initially worked in Cambridge City and East Cambs but has now expanded to take in Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough. It will develop a trustee resource pack which will be widely available. The aim is to establish one Cambridgeshire/Peterborough trustee network. If the network is established then there will be a need to find on going support for it within the infrastructure network.

## ***Representation***

3.123 A sub group was established to consider the development of best practice with regard to representation but has only met once and not yet come to any conclusions or recommendations.

## ***Communications***

3.124 The Consortium has supported the development of a Consortium website and is running a number of events to showcase the work of the Consortium and to seek the views of front line organisations.

## ***Key issues***

3.125 These projects are still in the process of being developed. A number of them will have implications for the future infrastructure network which need to ensure that useful and successful projects and approaches can be continued and built upon.

## 4. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH

### The puzzles and parameters of second tier working

4.1 The situation facing infrastructure bodies in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is complex. Any reconfiguration of current arrangements will need to take account of:

- views about what will be in the VCS in future (for example, where do large national voluntary agencies providing local services fit into the picture?), together with an eye to future developments, opportunities and threats for the sector;
- views about the proper role and function of infrastructure organisations;
- views about optimal geographical or population-based services, relationships and arrangements (local, District-wide, County-wide, rural and non-rural);
- historic patterns of organisational existence and activity – which organisations exist where and to do what with whom;
- previous experience of joint working and the strength or otherwise of the relationships that have grown from this;
- an eye to future developments in relation to other relevant institutions and services (such as changes to local government structure);
- the views of funding organisations on these matters;
- the transaction costs of change.

4.2 Given this, it is unlikely that one obvious solution will emerge i.e. a single effective way of restructuring arrangements that can satisfy a range of objectives which are difficult to align and which may, in some respects, be in conflict with one another. In this section, we try to set out these themes and what we might conclude in principle about a way forward.

4.3 Current and prospective developments nationally (especially those driven by the Government) make it more likely that a split will emerge between 'voluntary' (read 'professional service providing') and 'community' (read 'community action and development'). In this, it is likely that the new 'voluntary' sector will come off best, given the agenda and the historic starting points. Our view is that this split should be resisted. The important role of community organisations needs to be recognised - organisations run by volunteers, primarily working at a very local level, are at the core of community activity. It is important that their particular support needs are identified and met. This is more likely to happen if the remit of infrastructure organisations continues to include responsibility for both voluntary and community sectors.

4.4 With respect to the roles of infrastructure bodies, we outlined these in Section 2 above. Any proposals for the configuration of infrastructure organisations have to address the two key dimensions of infrastructure work:

- the capacity and ability to provide effective support services to frontline groups and agencies with respect both to operational and development issues (including their opportunities to network with each other);
- the capacity and ability to engage with relevant ideological issues, think and act strategically, exert a positive influence on public and private sector bodies and maintain transparent and accountable structures for the exercise of these functions.

4.5 These two dimensions should not be regarded as separate or dissonant but as two sides of the same coin, each adding value and power to the other. Wherever possible, therefore,

infrastructure organisations should have the interest and the capacity to undertake both roles.

4.6 With respect to the support services function, ICT and the internet provide new opportunities for the remote delivery of information, advice and support. However, there remains a need for face-to-face service delivery through access to local resource centres and staff or through support workers coming out to organisations. This means that some services have to be based physically at a geographical or population level that makes service delivery efficient, coherent and accessible. What is sensible here will depend on the areas and the issues involved and services can, of course, be controlled more centrally but delivered more locally. However, we believe that the optimal position from which to plan infrastructure services would be an area and population represented by the range of District Councils. These are big enough to achieve economies of scale and maintain a 'big picture' of provision, small enough to maintain local relationships, continuity and local intelligence. Using local authority boundaries also simplifies, to some extent, statutory/VCS dealings. Government proposals for local government changes are unlikely to change the situation in Cambridgeshire radically, unless it is decided to create one county-wide authority.

4.7 Strategic, political and representational work also needs to take place at a multitude of levels. However, in the main, opportunities for influence and change will be maximised by a capacity to relate to groupings and themes established by statutory sector agencies, since this is where the decisions get made. This is, of course, itself a moving target. However, the key agencies are the local authorities, the PCT(s), and relevant regional bodies (virtual and actual), such as those described in section 3 of this report. The VCS infrastructure agencies should try to cover this ground *between them*, i.e. working in active collaboration between the organisations involved and their VCO constituencies. Therefore being successful here (i.e. actually having an effect on policy and practice) depends less on which infrastructure organisations exist and more on how well they work together. This will only happen if the right processes and structures are put into place and their servicing and co-ordination properly resourced.

4.8 It should be said that getting these arrangements right and working properly may actually be beyond the ken of humankind! Certainly, we would be interested to hear of any areas of the country where the VCS collectively could be said to be appropriately involved in decisions affecting its future, adequately represented by people who know what the sector wants, who argue effectively for it and then report back. However, the job to be done is very important and if it does not fall to the infrastructure organisations, whose job is it? We think that more thinking and further collaborative work on this issue is needed.

4.9 The historic and incremental growth of the VCS infrastructure in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has led to a current profile of organisations and coverage that is not consistent. If one started with a blank piece of paper one would be unlikely to create the pattern of provision that now exists. The case for some sorting out and rationalisation looks strong. However, these are all independent, autonomous organisations, which will only change if they want to. Moving from the current position to something more effective and more sustainable will depend on the issues, the quality of the negotiations and the relationships involved, as well as the views of funders. Change of this sort also creates transaction costs.

4.10 Changes in the world immediately outside of the VCS will have a powerful effect on what is both desirable and possible inside the VCS. These changes are discussed elsewhere in the report. However, we feel it appropriate to stress one situation in particular – the prospect of further local statutory sector reorganisation.

4.11 It is already known that the PCTs in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are going to be reorganised – the only choice being offered is between one PCT that covers the whole of the area and two PCTs – one for Cambridgeshire and one for Peterborough. The position with regard to local government is still a matter for conjecture with a White Paper to be produced in the summer – however it has been suggested that this may well propose a three tier system of regions, unitary authorities and neighbourhoods, although in the first instance much of this may be voluntary and left to the different local authorities in each area. In our view it is important that the VCS infrastructure bodies have boundaries that are co-terminus with local authority boundaries. This does not necessarily mean on a one to one basis as for some organisations it may be argued that they can best operate at the level of more than one local authority. But ‘coterminosity’ does best allow for infrastructure bodies to fulfil functions such as relating to statutory partners, partnership involvement and influencing policy thinking and development.

4.12 The indications are that local government reorganisation is coming and may well involve significant changes. We do not believe that this should be used to stop any changes to the current infrastructure arrangements (indeed we would argue that it is imperative that certain changes are set in train as soon as possible). At the same time, we would argue that any proposed changes should not compromise the capacity to respond to future reorganisation. For example, one of the options put to us was one in which CVS and/or Volunteer Centres reorganise into one Cambridgeshire wide organisation. Our argument against this is that it would make it difficult to respond to a three unitary scenario without further significant organisational changes.

4.13 If local government reorganisation does take place over the next 2-3 years then it will be vitally important that the generalist infrastructure organisations are in a position to argue their case with the shadow authorities and to ensure that the needs of the VCS in general and of infrastructure organisations in particular, are incorporated into plans for the new authorities and the new LSPs that are likely to mirror them.

## **National VCS views on provision of infrastructure services**

### ***Infrastructure services generally***

4.14 NCVO has produced a paper on voluntary and community sector infrastructure<sup>16</sup> which was followed up by a second paper contrasting the NCVO approach with the Home Office Active Community Unit approach.<sup>17</sup> In these papers some key ideas and approaches were outlined, including:

- The full range of infrastructure support should be available at three tiers of government locally, regionally and nationally (in most cases the local area will be the district or unitary authority, however in some areas local circumstances, preference or geography may make a local group covering two or more districts or a county more appropriate);
- VCS organisations need to adopt a policy of subsidiarity; that each tier will only undertake roles and functions appropriate to their tier and to their constituency or membership;
- Infrastructure organisations should themselves work more in collaboration and/or

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<sup>16</sup> Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure: A model for the future NCVO September 2003

<sup>17</sup> Strengthening Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure: Two Approaches Summary and Comparison Document NCVO October 2003

partnership;

- At each tier there should be access to specialist infrastructure support and advice. This specialist support may be provided through a dedicated specialist worker or a network or forum set up by the generic body or by the consortium or by an independent organisation forming part of the consortium or partnership;
- Core funding for local infrastructure should be developed by the local authority, but including other local statutory partners. The local authority should be required to set out in its community strategy what the agreed infrastructure needs are and what financial support statutory partners will provide.

4.15 The NCVO view would appear to be that, where possible, generalist infrastructure services should be provided at a district level, but there should also be access to specialist infrastructure services – although there may be cases where other arrangements are justified.

### ***Volunteering infrastructure services***

4.16 Volunteering England has produced a Strategy for Volunteering Infrastructure in England.<sup>18</sup> This argues that there need to be volunteering infrastructure services at national, regional and local levels but it also states “research shows that there are currently an unsustainable number of local volunteer development agencies and declining provision in rural areas. Fewer organisations employing more staff are needed to deliver services and achieve more effective local penetration.” It wants to see a common consumer brand for the local volunteering infrastructure and resourced development plans in all counties and unitary authority areas.

4.17 The strategy outlines the functions of volunteering infrastructure organisations at national, regional and local levels under the six core functions of brokerage, marketing, good practice development, developing volunteering opportunities, policy response and campaigning and strategic development of volunteering. These are the functions under which Gill Robinson reviewed the operations of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough volunteer centres and bureaux.

4.18 The strategy also comments on the situation where volunteer centres are hosted by other bodies. “Volunteering England believes that there is no single best option in relation to the delivery of local volunteering infrastructure functions through either an independent or integrated agency – whatever works best works best.”

4.19 The emphasis in the Volunteering England document is on the development of county wide volunteering strategies and a reduction in number of volunteering infrastructure organisations.

## **Key issues for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough second tier agencies**

4.20 Here we identify the key issues for the generalist providers, the volunteer centres, and

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<sup>18</sup> Building on Success: Strategy for Volunteering Infrastructure in England 2004-2014 Chris Penberthy and Andy Forster Volunteering England 2004 and First annual report from the England Volunteering Development Council September 2005

the specialist providers. We then discuss funding issues and the question of quality standards.

### ***CACRE and the CVS***

4.21 In our sections on CACRE and the CVS we said that there needed to be a consideration of the respective roles of Cambridgeshire ACRE and the CVS. Clearly CACRE's work centres on rural life and rural issues - we can see this reflected strategically in the support provided to the Rural Forum and in the position that it holds on the Cambridgeshire LAA representing rural interests. It is also reflected in a number of programmes and projects – developing rural affordable housing, support to village halls, work on parish plans, healthy eating and management of the LEADER+ programme. However there are also programmes and projects that are not specifically rural e.g. management of the Local Network Fund, supporting the PPI Forums, the training programme and leading on the ChangeUp programme. This is not to say that it is inappropriate for CACRE to run these programmes and projects for they will all have significant rural dimensions – it is just that they are not solely rural.

4.22 The majority of CACRE's community capacity building work is carried out at a local level in rural locations e.g. work on parish plans and on village halls. There have also been two local community development workers in Littleport and Chatteris. A significant new development will be the four community developments workers who will be district-focused and funded through the Defra Rural Social and Community Programme. The majority of their work is likely to be with the 'community' rather than the 'voluntary' sector in rural settings.

4.23 The CVS focus tends to be different and centred on the more traditional voluntary sector offering support to new and established organisations providing services to different sections of the community – typical would be health and social care organisations. The distinction we are drawing here between 'community' and 'voluntary' is not a hard and fast one and it will often be the case that community organisations will need the sort of organisational support that CVS provide and that, in other cases, CVS could get involved in local community work in rural areas that is generally thought of as CACRE work. However we believe that the distinction has validity – CACRE is generally seen as the main provider of support to communities in rural areas, while CVS provide organisational and other support to voluntary organisations, often with more of a city or town focus. In addition CACRE will develop resources to tackle particular rural issues that will only be viable at a county wide level and will provide a specifically rural input into county and sub regional policy making.

4.24 The main point we would want to emphasise with respect to the division of functions, work and responsibilities between CACRE and CVS is that the key to the development of effective services lies in negotiation built on close joint working relationships and the appropriate application of the 'subsidiarity' principle, rather than guidelines intended to prevent turf wars. There is more than enough work to justify the joint resources of CACRE and CVS together and these resources will be most effectively deployed through discussion and co-operation.

### ***Developing the CVS Network***

4.25 We are aware that in some areas RCCs are registered as CVS and provide CVS-type functions e.g. in Surrey and Hampshire – and that CACRE used to be registered as a CVS. There is only one district in Cambridgeshire where this might readily be considered as an option – East Cambridgeshire - as Huntingdonshire and Fenland have their own CVS that

are consolidated and value their independence. The East Cambs CVS is not able to provide a full range of functions because of its limited funding (and already has an agreement with CACRE about providing support to groups in the area) However, simply to give CACRE status as a CVS in this area does not solve the problem without additional resources becoming available. And there are also other options in the area.

4.26 In East Cambs there are two other possible avenues to explore. Firstly, to apply for Big Lottery and/or ChangeUp funding for a three year period to establish the CVS on the same basis as in Fenland and to position it to make the case for sustainable funding from any new local government structures. Secondly, to merge with another organisation, the candidates being the local Volunteer Centre, Cambridge CVS and Fenland CVS. Discussions did take place with Fenland CVS but came to nothing. In addition much of East Cambs looks to Cambridge rather than to Fenland for services.

4.27 In South Cambs, where there has been no CVS, Cambridge CVS is extending its remit The CVS has already changed its constitution to allow it to do this and may consider a funding application to the Big Lottery, or to ChangeUp, for the costs of a development worker for the area. However, as we stated above, this expansion of remit should be reflected in the membership of the CVS trustee body, in the business plan and perhaps in a move to premises that will allow easy access from both the City and South Cambs.

4.28 Finally, consideration needs to be given to how the generalist infrastructure organisations can increase their strategic and representational capacity. This will be important to get the most out of the PCT reorganisation, the Cambridgeshire LAA and the Greater Cambridge Partnership Investing in Communities Programme as well as helping the organisations to respond positively to any local government organisation. Developing this capacity must include thinking through the structures that are needed for communication, election, mandate and accountability to the wider VCS. One way of doing this may be through the proposed Cambridgeshire Voluntary Sector Forum, should it be agreed to go ahead. Voluntary Sector Forums also exist or are being developed in Peterborough and South Cambs and other CVS should consider if they would be a useful instrument for involving the wider VCS in their areas.

4.29 There is a lack of VCS staff dedicated to strategic work. The appointment of a Strategic Director to Cambridge CVS will help in this regard but there is still a need for more resources to lead and co-ordinate the changes needed. A VCS Strategy Development Officer placed in one of the generalist infrastructure organisations, but with an area-wide brief, could be a useful addition to capacity in this area.

### ***Volunteer centres***

4.30 A number of key issues were identified earlier in this report:

- a relatively large number of under funded centres with staff on low salaries;
- some centres have low numbers of enquiries;
- a general lack of strategic thinking and practice in a number of areas relating to Volunteering England's six key functions;
- the need for greater emphasis on developing all the six functions, on improved monitoring and evaluation and on increased involvement in debates concerning volunteering.

4.31 We have also seen that Volunteering England wants to see fewer organisations employing more staff in order to deliver more effective services and to achieve more effective local penetration. It wants to see a common consumer brand for the local

volunteering infrastructure and resourced development plans in all counties and unitary authority areas.

4.32 One option would be to rationalise the centres with agreed service by single agencies in each district. This would mean bringing together the four bureaux in Huntingdonshire (which have particularly low rates of enquiries and placed volunteers) into one agency – Huntingdonshire Volunteering or the Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre. This would demand the dissolution of the four individual bureaux and the Huntingdon Federation, at the same time creating a new organisation, with a new constitution. Delivery could still be through the four outlets in Huntingdon, Ramsey and Warboys, St Ives and St Neots. An additional resource would be needed to support a district wide co-ordinator for at least a two year period.

4.33 With respect to South Cambs the Cambridge Centre could more clearly recognise that it serves the majority of the area and could seek funding to enable it to deliver services in South Cambs.

4.34 A second option would be for bureaux/centres to consider if there are advantages in combining with their local CVS. The main advantages could be larger organisations with only one trustee board and some economies of scale, together with increased opportunities for integrated service delivery and enhanced abilities to act strategically.

4.35 Whatever happens at the district level there is also a need to develop strategic and representational aspects at the Cambridgeshire/Peterborough level. This is in line with the position of Volunteering England, and with the recommendations of Gill Robinson's report. There are examples in two neighbouring counties – Suffolk and Hertfordshire – of the creation of county wide federations. Each centre retains its own legal identity but receives the support of a development worker who then looks to improve standards in all centres, to encourage joint working and to develop common Volunteering England branding. This latter requires that all centres have Volunteering England accreditation. A federation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would be able to raise standards and develop common work and branding – and be able to relate to the different strategic debates e.g. the development of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LAAs. There would be a need for dedicated resources for the federation in the form of a Volunteering Development Worker.

4.36 An alternative to the above would be the creation of a completely new single volunteering body for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, managing the delivery of locally-based volunteering services whilst maintaining a centralised co-ordination function. This would reduce organisational costs by reducing the number of trustee bodies and could lead to further economies of scale and a better use of resources. However it could reduce sensitivity to local needs

### ***Specialist infrastructure organisations***

4.37 In our section on the specialist infrastructure organisations we identified weaknesses with funding for strategic work in the areas of BME groups and community cohesion, disability organisations and the Care Network. In the first two of these areas there is ChangeUp funded work being undertaken to identify directions for future work, particularly around the needs of BME communities and groups in rural areas and the needs of the three disability organisations to work together to develop joint work and strategic thinking. The conclusions from these pieces of work will need to be considered in the next round of ChangeUp funding or through looking to statutory, Big Lottery or trust funding. With Care Network there is a need for business planning and the making of a case, primarily to the Health Service and County Adult Services Department, for funding for development work.

4.38 The dialogue that has commenced between the generalist and the specialist infrastructure organisations needs to be developed and could result in higher levels of practical joint working. While there has to be acceptance of the need for the specialist organisations to provide a voice for their constituencies and to offer specialist advice, each of the generalist organisations also has to take on responsibility for developing a positive response to these issues within their own organisations, using the expertise of the specialists to help them.

### **Funding**

4.39 The funding profile for infrastructure organisations in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is outlined in Appendix Two. The key features that emerge from this profile are:

- The large size of CACRE (relative to other infrastructure bodies in the area) with a turnover of nearly £2,000,000 (or £1,000,000 if the grant programmes are taken out);
- County Council support of £73,000 to CACRE and CVS with a lack of clarity as to why individual bodies get what they do;
- Variable district/unitary support to CACRE and CVS with East Cambs CVS and Fenland CVS receiving the least, although the East Cambs CVS grant will be increasing over the next two years;
- County support of £66,000 to volunteer centres with, again, a lack of clarity about why individual bodies get what they do;
- Variable district/unitary support to volunteer centres with Fenland and Ely and District centres doing very badly;
- Very little county or district/unitary support for specialist infrastructure bodies apart from Cambridge and Peterborough's support for CECF and PREC;
- Reasonable core funding for two specialist organisations – Young Lives and the Social Enterprise People – but the other specialist organisations relying on project funding from a variety of sources.

4.40 There is a Cambridgeshire Funders Group which brings together the County Council, the District Councils and the Primary Care Trusts. While there is no common view amongst funders about how they would like to see infrastructure support delivered across the county there is a new willingness in the group to become engaged in the discussion about the future. To this end a meeting has been arranged between funders group members and CVSIC members to discuss both this report and Gill Robinson's report on volunteering.

4.41 A strategy for improving financial support for infrastructure organisations could include the following:

- Agreement by CVSIC to priorities for additional funding, which could include (but not in any priority order):
  - Support for East Cambs CVS
  - Support for Cambridge CVS to work in South Cambs
  - Development support for Huntingdonshire, Fenland, East Cambs and Peterborough volunteer centres
  - CVSIC Strategic worker
  - Volunteering strategic development worker (Hunts or county-based);
- Reflecting these priorities in the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 CVSIC plans and submissions to Capacity Builders;
- Discussions with Cambridgeshire Funders Group about support to infrastructure bodies;

- Discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council about their support to infrastructure bodies as part of their review of their 3 year SLAs with CACRE, CVS and volunteer centres;
- Discussions with the new PCT arrangements about the levels of their support for infrastructure bodies;
- Discussions with districts/unitaries about their levels of support;
- Working through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LAA partnerships and the EEDA Investing in Communities programmes to make the case for additional support to infrastructure organisations;
- Support to prioritised groups in making bids to the Big Lottery BASIS programme for building and sustaining infrastructure services which will be accepting bids from 1 April to 30 June 2006 and making its first awards in November 2006. There will be two further annual awards programmes;
- Support, particularly to the specialist infrastructure organisations, on business planning using, where appropriate, a social enterprise model.

4.42 From the above, it can be seen that there is no simple or single solution to the question of funding for infrastructure bodies. Rather it is a matter of being clear about the value of these bodies, having an agreed development plan and making out a convincing case to a number of funding sources for financial support.

4.43 In addition, infrastructure bodies have to consider if there are ways in which they cut down on costs e.g. by sharing back office services. A list of possible functions that could be shared is given in an NCVO paper:<sup>19</sup>

- Fundraising and other public facing functions;
- Purchasing;
- Premises/administration;
- Human resources, recruitment and staff development;
- IT;
- Finance services;
- Payroll services.

4.44 Some initiatives have already started in this area e.g. CIAC who are leading on the CVSIC ICT strategy are looking at procurement with respect to ICT equipment and services and the CVSIC Funding and Financial Sustainability Group intend to look at procurement more generally. CACRE, Hunts Forum, Cambridge CVS and Peterborough CVS all offer payroll services. And local CVS offices have been used for hosting ChangeUp projects e.g. the Voices workers and the BME rural development officers.

4.45 Given the necessity to deliver services at a local level we do not see any great potential for infrastructure organisations to cut down on costs through sharing premises – in the main they have to be available locally and accessible to local people. The only gains might come from the county wide organisations exploring the possibilities of joint premises – however there is no point in doing this until the future of local government in the area becomes clear. Of greater importance is to build on local initiatives where infrastructure organisations have premises that they share with other organisations – this already happens with all the CVS.

4.46 Given the relatively small budgets of the majority of the infrastructure organisations there may not be much to gain from a consideration of the sharing of back office functions

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<sup>19</sup> Model – sharing back office services NCVO microsite September 2005

between themselves. As with premises the gains may come from looking at the wider VCS sector and reviewing their needs for such services.

### **Quality standards**

4.47 The brief for our work made the assumption that all organisations should work towards PQASSO Level Two as a common framework. However there are a number of other quality standards being used or being developed. We provide a note on these in Appendix Four.

4.48 The Consortium will need to form a view about the application and usefulness of the various quality frameworks in improving services, and keep the various developments under review. In doing so we would recommend that it bears in mind:

- Any internally controlled quality system e.g. the current PQASSO system, is only useful if organisations use it as a genuine exercise to help them to think about how they are currently functioning - it should not be seen as any guarantee that good quality services are being offered;
- Any quality system that has some form of external validation e.g. peer review or the Volunteer England accreditation is more robust than one that does not have such validation;
- The most useful developments around quality systems will concentrate on the measurement of outcomes e.g. to what extent do the users of infrastructure services derive benefit from them?

# 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Principles of operation

5.1 In the first section above we outlined the principles that we felt should govern our recommendations. These were as follows:

- The *delivery* (as opposed to the *management*) of generic infrastructure services should, where possible, be available at a district level and, for some services, even more locally e.g. in market towns.
- However there may be some services that are more efficiently provided at county/unitary authority (or even regional) level.
- All frontline organisations, wherever situated in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, should have equal access to infrastructure services that are of a consistent standard.
- Generic and specialist infrastructure services should be well informed about each other, should have clearly defined roles and should aim to work closely together.
- Any management structure for generic infrastructure services which goes beyond the district level should allow for representation from all areas being served.
- Any proposed structure for generic infrastructure services should make the best use of existing financial resources, should be sustainable over a number of years and should offer the best opportunities for attracting additional resources.

5.2 In the light of our discussions with the infrastructure bodies and the development of our own thinking we want to add to and develop these principles in certain ways - this we do in the following paragraphs.

### ***The need to have sensible boundaries***

5.3 Generalist infrastructure services should be delivered by organisations large enough to be sustainable but small enough to be responsive to local needs. There should also be some correspondence to tiers of local government to allow for effective dialogue and the development of productive partnerships. Taking these two points together argues for basic generalist services to be delivered at the District level in Cambridgeshire and at the Unitary level in Peterborough. There is a sufficient mass of work in each District and in Peterborough to justify generalist provision at this level.

### ***The need for integration at the second tier***

5.4 At this district level there should be as much integration as possible between generalist infrastructure bodies and in the ways in which they work. This has three principal dimensions:

- **CVS and Volunteer Centres** - CVS and Volunteer Centres have much in common in the issues that concern them and in the services they provide - often to the same organisations. An argument used to justify separate volunteering provision has been that it did not get the proper prioritisation when hosted by another body. However we do not believe that this has to be the case - particularly when volunteering now has a national and regional profile. A further issue has been that Volunteer Centres may have a wider remit than CVS e.g. to promote volunteering in the statutory and private sectors but, again, being part of one organisation should not inhibit this. And where Volunteer Centres have added separate services and activities (shared car schemes for example), again, such developments would be more easily approached as part of a larger

organisation with a broader remit. In addition, where both CVS and Volunteer Centre are struggling to survive, one stronger organisation will be in a better position to meet new challenges. In Peterborough the Volunteer Centre is already part of the CVS and in East Cambs discussions have started about possible merger. Overall we believe that there are positive advantages to CVS and Volunteer Centres coming together and we believe that such a move should be considered in each District;

- **Voluntary and community sectors** - integration should also be safeguarded as between the voluntary and community sectors. Both - the voluntary and the community - are important to the health of civil society and both need to be supported. The pursuit of Government plans presents the danger of de-coupling these two sectors, which would act to the detriment of 'whole community' perspectives and probably diminish further support to the community sector. Second tier activity is more likely to serve this broad range of needs if it is integrated;
- **Integration of functions** - the three functions of infrastructure organisations (provision of practical support, leading ideological debate, sector representation) should not be fragmented. These functions should nurture each other - practical work with front line organisations informs policy debates and provides legitimisation to those representing the sector. At the same time, the results of policy work need to be fed back to front line organisations.

### ***Working beyond the District***

5.5 Not everything can be developed at a district level. There are, at least, two areas of activity that justify working at a level larger than the district:

- **Provision of specialist infrastructure support** – a District population will not always be large enough to support specialist provision - examples would include race and community cohesion; social enterprise; some rural matters (e.g. transport, affordable housing) or disability issues. Here there is a strong case for developing services at a level wider than the District. Nevertheless, the issues involved should not be seen as the exclusive domain of county or sub regional infrastructure bodies. There should be good connections and joint work on issues with District-based generalist bodies who also have responsibility in these areas. For example, the existence of a county wide body dealing with rural or disability issues should not mean that local CVS and Volunteer Bureaux need not engage with such issues. Opportunities for close joint working should be actively explored e.g. where specialist or county-wide bodies are able to employ locally-based staff (e.g. CACRE Community Development Workers, or locally-based Care Network officers) these should be co-located with the District-based generalist infrastructure bodies, thus providing a local hub for front line organisations. Such joint arrangements can add value and encourage constructive dialogue between the different agencies at the District level.

With respect to the delivery of certain specific support services the work of the Matrix project will provide detailed information on which organisational support services each infrastructure body provides and, more importantly, where there are gaps. This could lead to a development of centres of excellence to fill these gaps.

- **Policy debate and representation** - certain policy debates and activity take place at a wider level - county (e.g. relating to children and young people, adult services, rural issues), sub regional level (e.g. the economic development partnerships) or regional. The VCS and the infrastructure bodies have to create appropriate arrangements enabling them to come together to play a significant role at these levels.

## **A blank sheet of paper**

5.6 If we were starting from scratch with the famous blank piece of paper what sort of structures would these principles of operation lead us to design?

5.7 We would see the core of infrastructure support being developed and delivered at District level, through single, integrated, generalist, infrastructure organisations, taking responsibility for all core infrastructure functions, including support to front line organisations, volunteering development and support, representational and policy work. Such a configuration would provide sufficient demand and workload to justify the organisational form, and efficient opportunities to build partnerships with local government. Core funding would come from the District Council and from the PCT and the County Council (as long as these retain responsibility for aspects of local service provision).

5.8 At the broader geographical level, these generalist District-based bodies would combine, - through federation, or through the creation of new organisations at county, sub regional or regional level. This would create the capacity to tackle – with the specialist agencies – issues that demand a county-wide or (sub) regional response. Work at these levels would span both the delivery of support services and the manner in which policy representation was to be achieved and resourced.

5.9 We believe that it is possible to move some considerable way towards the situation that we see as optimal, if the agencies concerned are willing to contemplate change and negotiate with the needs of the sector as a whole in mind. At the same time, we recognise that some changes may be impossible to agree between the organisations concerned. And there is still the problem of local government reorganisation which may provide a different District or Unitary structure to relate to. In this situation, incremental movement may be the only way forward.

## **Recommendations**

5.10 The first set of recommendations relates to how the District generalist infrastructure bodies and arrangements can be strengthened. They are:

- A. Maintain the current combined CVS/Volunteer Centre arrangement in Peterborough.
- B. Support the merger of East Cambs CVS and Ely and District Volunteer Centre in order to create a stronger and more integrated organisation.
- C. In three Districts, ask the CVS and Volunteer Centres to consider merger - the Huntingdon Volunteer Centres and the Hunts Forum; Fenland CVS and Fenland Volunteer Centre; Cambridge CVS and Cambridge Volunteer Centre.
- D. Give support to Cambridge CVS in developing infrastructure services in South Cambs, through a dedicated South Cambs Development Worker (accepting that there is not likely to be adequate funding for a separate CVS in South Cambs in the foreseeable future).
- E. Ask Cambridge CVS to review its operations to ensure that it is able properly to support work in South Cambs e.g. its name, trustee board membership, scope of strategic plan and office location.

- F. Support East Cambs CVS to secure development funding for three years to enable it to deliver a basic CVS set of functions.
- G. Should the above recommendation concerning a merger between the Hunts Forum and the Huntingdon Volunteer Centres not be accepted, ask the four Volunteer Centres in Huntingdon and the Huntingdon Federation of Volunteer Centres to come together into one new organisation - Huntingdon Volunteering.
- H. Support the development of local hubs in each District housing, where appropriate, district CVS and Volunteer Centre staff, CACRE Community Development Workers, ethnic minority rural development officers, Care Network staff and Voices workers.
- I. In all districts, consider how best to bring into existence improved arrangements for the development of representative structures, enabling the VCS to develop maximum impact on relevant public policy.

5.11 The second set of recommendations concerns those areas of work that need to be developed beyond the District level. They are:

- J. Maintain the Consortium as the vehicle for bringing together all infrastructure organisations working within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and continue to promote the active involvement of the specialist infrastructure organisations in these arrangements.
- K. Agree a broad division of functions between CACRE and CVS as outlined in paras 4.21 to 4.24 above, while accepting that the key to working together is good communication rather than rigid lines of demarcation.
- L. Support the work of CACRE in providing specialist rural expertise and resources at the Cambridgeshire/Peterborough level and in using its resources and influence in a strategic role. This should be aimed at strengthening district based activity and maximising sub-regional and regional influence. To support this position CACRE could consider how the generalist district based infrastructure bodies might be represented on its board of trustees.
- M. Give higher priority to the work of the Representation Sub Group in the creation of improved arrangements for the development of representative structures, for involvement in relevant public policy work at county, sub-regional and regional levels.
- N. Agree to create a post of VCS Strategy Development Officer to support the above developments.
- O. Agree to create a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Volunteering Federation with a Volunteering Development Officer to provide specialist support to this sub-sector.
- P. Agree a future strategic approach to disability work following report on ChangeUp project.
- Q. Agree a future strategic approach to ICT work following report on ChangeUp project.
- R. Agree a future strategic approach to rural work with ethnic minorities following report on ChangeUp project.
- S. Support business plan development by Care Network.

- T. Consider the need for development of centres of excellence in organisational support after the Matrix project reports.
- U. Support further work on the development of a Compact that the VCS and all statutory bodies can support.
- V. Consider how best to build confidence amongst infrastructure organisations about the quality of respective services and activities (including the use of quality frameworks, where appropriate).
- X. Consider how to develop an evaluation framework to assess the impact and success of organisational changes implemented.
- Y. Enter into discussions with the Cambridgeshire Funders Forum, Capacity Builders and Big Lottery Regional Office about funding these recommendations.

5.12 We believe that the implementation of these recommendations will allow for strong district based generalist infrastructure organisations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough together with strengthened strategic working at all levels – district, county, unitary, sub regional and regional levels. This will put the infrastructure organisations in a better position to argue for expansion of infrastructure services in the light of further population growth in the area. In addition such arrangements will not compromise any future responses that may need to be made to meet local government reorganisation. Indeed, we believe that, because of these changes, the VCS and its infrastructure bodies will be in a much stronger position to respond positively to proposed changes and be able to ensure that the needs and voice of the VCS is fully recognised in all future public policy debates in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

# APPENDIX ONE

## Recommendations for VCS infrastructure organisations from the COVER report **Clear vision: Clear thinking**

### Governance

- Research the advice, information and support available to VCOs in the region on governance and how provision might best be developed in the future.
- Specific attention should be paid to recruitment and an initiative developed to help VCOs recruit and retain trustees with the right skills and experience, and from diverse communities.
- Specific attention should also be given to the development of trustee networks offering peer support.
- Promote information on good practice in governance e.g. The Code of Governance, in a way that meets the needs of different types and sizes of VCOs.
- Offer services to organisations in their start up phase. Governance support in the early stages can make a big difference to the success or failure of an organisation.
- Ensure training in aspects of governance is available throughout the region for trustees, staff and other stakeholders.

### Financing

- Build on existing material to develop more comprehensive information about levels and types of funding available, from loan finance to grants, support services and training which can help VCOs secure and manage funding. Note that small community groups will have different information and support needs from bigger VCOs.
- Connect to the Finance National Hub, and coordinate best practice information and resources in the region/local area around funding and investment policy, advice and guidance.
- Information about tender opportunities, advice and guidance, ideally in a standardised format for all local authority contracts, to be made available on a centralised VCS website.
- Develop training to prepare organisations for tendering and contracting.
- Provide practical support and leadership to Local Strategic Partnerships, including joint work on procurement issues, as well as promoting partnership working across the economic and community development and procurement departments of local authorities.
- Compile a digest of joint working and partnership toolkits. Partnership development was a key recommendation of the EEDA report *Beyond Grants*; and joint working i.e. sharing facilities and resources, can reduce costs.
- Secure funding to re-establish the Business in the Community Partners in Leadership with Community Enterprise programme, since appropriate pro bono assistance can help VCOs develop income generating ventures.
- Gather and promote case studies of successful regional social enterprises to highlight the benefits of social enterprise activity to the VCS.
- Raise awareness among VCS stakeholders of the scope, potential and possible limitations of social enterprise activity in the VCS.
- Sign-up to implementing the new National Occupational Standards in social enterprise and offer a programme of accredited training in social enterprise development.

- Ensure support for VCOs involved in social enterprise is offered in the context of other VCS support e.g. integrate this support with other CVS services.

### **Workforce development**

- Promote the sector as a place to work, including generating more opportunities for relevant work experience in the VCS and highlighting potential career pathways.
- Ensure workforce development needs of the VCS are given consideration in development of Local Area Agreements and Community Plans.
- Promote and facilitate the development of career pathways within the sector, so that existing staff and new entrants can plan their futures.
- Promote recognition of key transferable skills that those from outside the VCS can bring to it.
- Develop and disseminate good practice in employment and recruitment to the sector.
- Ensure the sector has access to affordable, appropriate and timely employment / human resource management advice.
- Develop systematic ways of spreading good practice in all aspects of workforce development between county, regional, and national levels.
- Promote the use of appropriate quality frameworks/systems in relation to all aspects of VCS workforce development, taking into account the varying needs within the VCS.
- Ensure a wide range of affordable training is on offer to meet the needs of VCOs, including community based organisations and those with no paid staff.
- Identify and implement ways of increasing the provision and take up by VCOs of generic training in management, leadership and ICT skills.
- Compile listings of appropriate accredited training and train the trainer courses and promote VCS take-up of these.
- Explore models of accreditation for VCS training which do not result in loss of uniquely successful nature of existing training.
- Explore the role of sector in the formation of the National Occupational Standards. These are being promoted by the new Workforce Development Hub and by the Sector Skills Development Agency.
- Support the development of training consortia where this could add value in meeting either the VCS's own workforce development needs or VCS service delivery to other individuals and organisations.
- Develop and promote more equal partnership working in training and ensure that the role of the VCS is recognised and rewarded. This is especially important when working with traditional training providers.
- Develop and promote models of full cost recovery in relation to training. This includes work to calculate the cost of supporting disadvantaged clients into training.
- Explore and promote new modes of delivery e.g. how to use new technology to ensure training can be more widely accessible.
- Develop and promote mechanisms to enable more VCS organisations to sell training to generate an income whilst furthering their mission.
- Develop communication channels within the VCS and with other bodies to build on the VCS's ability to reach large numbers of individuals who other organisations classify as hard to reach. This could be promoted carefully and charged for where necessary, as a means of supporting government objectives – but it is essential that this is carried out without losing the trust that the sector has with its clients, and without becoming the mouthpiece of government.

- Promote and offer training to ensure that staff in the VCS have literacy, language and numeracy skills to carry out their roles and access to advice and training in the Skills for Life area where appropriate.

## **Volunteering**

- Ensure coverage in the region is addressed so that a sustainable volunteer brokering service is available in all local areas.
- Promote the benefits of volunteering and promote volunteering opportunities, as well as related schemes and incentives available.
- Identify and promote good practice in involving volunteers, overcoming barriers to involvement and case studies demonstrating innovative ways of involving volunteers.
- Promote appropriate ways of accrediting the volunteering experience and the benefits this might bring.

## **ICT**

- Ensure VCOs have access to training in how to use ICT to benefit their work – this should address the needs of a wide range of organisations, including those working with people with disabilities and those without paid staff.
- Ensure VCOs have access to appropriate training in a wide range of specific ICT skills at affordable cost.
- Promote ways the VCS can help people cross the digital divide and the benefits of this e.g. promote the range of information available on the internet.
- Ensure VCOs have access to information about sources of funding for ICT related expenditure e.g. training, database development, hardware
- Consider offering a low cost, easily accessible ICT support service to the VCS as a social enterprise.
- Promote the benefits of ICT to VCOs by highlighting real examples of how it has been used effectively e.g. video/voice conferencing to save time travelling to meetings.
- Promote good practice in making websites accessible/appropriate for particular sections of the community e.g. people with disabilities.
- Ensure that good practice and learning from the ICT National Hub is disseminated appropriately, in particular encouraging better use of existing ICT.

## **Performance Improvement**

- Examine the advice, information and support available to VCOs in the region on performance improvement and how provision might best be developed in the future.
- Develop peer to peer support schemes.
- Promote and develop pro bono support schemes.
- Promote information on performance improvement e.g. that developed by the Performance Improvement Hub in a way which meets the needs of the wide range of different types and sizes of VCOs.
- Offer diagnosis services and support through the performance improvement process – this is regarded as key to helping organisations work through the options and successfully implement improvement programmes.
- Ensure training in different performance improvement tools and approaches is available throughout the region for trustees, staff and other stakeholders.

## APPENDIX TWO

### Funding 2005/2006

	County Council core	District/ Unitary Council core	PCT Core	Other – comments
<b>Cambridgeshire ACRE</b>	42,000	21,000		District/unitary funding made up of 3,000 from East Cambs DC; 12,000 from South Cambs DC (to be reduced to 8,000 in 06/07) and 6,000 from Peterborough (reduced to 0 in 2006/2007). 84,000 from DEFRA. Other core funding of 54,000 includes 24,000 training income and 6,000 from membership. Projects funded through Leader+; DEFRA Social and Community Programme; Countryside Agency/EEDA; Districts and Housing Associations; PCTs; Fenland Links Neighbourhood Project; Health Trusts (for PPI Forums). Turnover of nearly 2,000,000 but this includes over 1,000,000 of grant funds including ChangeUp funds.
<b>Fenland CVS</b>	4,000	5,000	Charged per day	Big Lottery funding 2003-2006 – extended for three years - 236,000 over three years. Also hosts Voices worker funded by Children's Fund and employs Sure Start Development Worker. Budget for 2006/2007 is 112,000.
<b>East Cambs CVS</b>	4,000	10,200	5,700	ChangeUp funding development worker for 6 months. Income from office costs for Infrastructure Manager and BME Development Officer and LEADER+ grant for organising Funders Forum.
<b>Hunts Forum</b>	8,000	32,000	7,000	7,000 premises grant from Social Services. Hosts Voices worker funded by Children's Fund.
<b>Cambridge CVS</b>	25,000	35,786	20,000	32,286 from Cambridge City and 3,500 from South Cambs. Core budget of 120,000. Also hosts Voices worker funded from Children's Fund; workforce development officer funded by ChangeUp; services 4 PPI forums.

<b>Peterborough CVS</b>		35,930		Also 2 year funding from City Community Regeneration Fund of 25,200 p.a. which ends March 2006. Total budget 400,000 – mainly projects/contracts.
<b>Cambridge VC</b>	23,120	32,804		30,804 from Cambridge City and £2,000 from South Cambs.
<b>Hunts Federation of Volunteer Bureaux</b>	14,308	32,500		Supports VB in Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots and Ramsey – each bureau covers own premises and running costs. Additional funding from District for 15 hours a week youth volunteering post.
<b>Ely VC</b>	10,220	1,200		Funding for Development Worker from Year of the Volunteer Action Fund – also used to extend Manager and IT/admin hours – ends March 2006. Total budget – 53,000 – includes gardening project.
<b>Peterborough VC</b>		14,815		Have had money from Global Grants, Lloyds TSB, Lottery.
<b>Royston VB</b>	2,000	800	Rent for office	Funding mostly from Herts.
<b>Fenland VB</b>	16,000			Funding for Volunteer Development Worker from Year of the Volunteer grants. Ends March 2006. Turnover approx 25,000.
<b>Cambridge Ethnic CF</b>		50,000		Rural worker funded through ChangeUp. 2 ethnic minority groups capacity building workers funded through lottery. Caseworker part funded by county – 2,000 and part by city.
<b>Peterborough REC</b>		39,500		35,000 from CRE. Project funding from Home Office Active Communities programme, Big Lottery and ChangeUp.
<b>Cambridgeshire CVYS</b>	6,000			2 year capacity building contract with Connexions – 60,000 a year. Leader Plus project in Fenland. Comic Relief funded project in Hunts but expanding. Voices – County Development Worker funded by Childrens Fund and ChangeUp. Funded by Cambs County Council.
<b>Cambridge CDA</b>				Contracted to Business Link to advise on social enterprise. ChangeUp funding for projects.
<b>Care Network</b>	5,700	3,500	7,500	District money from South Cambs. Lottery funding in Fenland and Huntingdonshire. Total budget of 150,000.
<b>Directions Plus</b>				Advice line and welfare benefits service - 90,000 from County and 10,000 from districts made up of 3,000 from South Cambs and 7,000 from Fenland. 3,900 from Cambridge City for welfare benefits and a one off 9,000 for services. 6,000 for 2 planning vetting schemes.

<b>DIAL Peterborough</b>					(9,000 from South Cams DC for employment pilot in 06/07.) 90,000 p.a. in two contracts for disability advice and social work support
<b>Cambridge IAC</b>					Main funding is from Legal Services Commission - 205,000, Cambridge City Council - 121,000, Big Lottery - 72,000, Department of Work and Pensions - 25,000 and Rural Payments Agency - 14,000. Total income of 468,000. (All figures for 2004/2005)

## APPENDIX THREE

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – volunteering research commissioned on behalf of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Volunteer Bureaux and Centres

All Volunteer Bureaux and Centres, whose remit is volunteering recruitment and promotion, should be encouraged to engage wholeheartedly in a process of change and embrace a volunteering model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century whilst securing the legacy of the good work currently taking place across the county.

#### Context

The six local district authorities of the county of Cambridgeshire are served by nine local volunteer development agencies, variously entitled Volunteer Bureaux or Volunteer Centres.

- Volunteer Centre Cambridge and District\*
- Volunteer Centre Ely\*
- Volunteer Centre Fenland\*
- Huntingdon Volunteer Bureau#
- Ramsey/Warboys Volunteer Bureau\* #
- St Ives Volunteer Bureau#
- St Neots Volunteer Bureau#
- Volunteer Centre Royston\*
- Volunteer Centre Peterborough\*

Six Volunteer Centres have achieved Volunteering England Quality Standards Accreditation\* and have signed up to the Volunteering England branding. Royston is currently due for re-accreditation with the others due 2006 - 2008

Four Volunteer Bureaux operate under the 'umbrella' of the Hunts Federation of Volunteer Bureaux#

#### THE SIX CORE FUNCTIONS

**Brokerage:** the specialist volunteering infrastructure organisations have a clear understanding of the role, range and remit of voluntary and community activity locally, countywide and nationally

The barriers to a wider understanding of the role range and remit of voluntary and community activity locally, countywide and nationally are the time needed to research, read and assimilate county and national information combined, in some cases, with an inability to see that acquiring this knowledge is necessary to feed into local best practice. This gives rise to a somewhat parochial attitude

**Marketing volunteering:** the specialist volunteering infrastructure organisations aim to stimulate interest in voluntary and community activity.

The degree of engagement is to a great extent determined by the resources of the individual organisations. While a reasonable job is being done in this area, benchmarked against best practice there is still much room for improvement. However whilst the stimulation of voluntary and community activity may be considered a core function, there is little capacity in the Volunteer Bureaux and Centres for taking the activity stimulated through to implementation. The responsibility for development of interest is regarded as a CVS function

**Development of volunteering opportunities:** the specialist volunteering infrastructure organisations take a strategic approach to the development of volunteering opportunities.

There needs to be far more research undertaken and findings made available to the Cambridgeshire Volunteer Bureaux and Centres. Equally there needs to be more training around strategic planning available to staff and volunteer management committees and Trustees.

**Development of good practice:** in working with volunteers to all volunteer-involving organisations

This is an area where Volunteer Bureaux and Centres appear to perform well although systems for monitoring and evaluation of the function are absent and this is an area for priority development.

**Policy response and campaigning:** Volunteering is one of the Local Area Agreement targets and as such volunteering should be a priority area for LSP's community strategies and for the LSPs to invest in. Time must therefore be found at least for engagement with LSPs to ensure that volunteering stays in the forefront of planning at a local level

**Strategic development of volunteering:** in partnership with other agencies and groups Increased collaborative working needs to be undertaken to increase awareness of volunteering needs and existing practices but there must be a system for capturing this collective intelligence

## **THE VOLUNTEERING "BRAND" – PUBLIC PERCEPTION**

Scoping the level of awareness of the volunteering "brand" with individual members of the public (722), both those having used the Volunteer Bureaux and Centres and those not

- Of those questioned some 5.75% had made their initial enquiries about volunteering at Volunteer Bureaux or Centres
- Of the remainder, 21% knew where their local Volunteer Bureau or Centre was located and 35% were aware of the purpose/function of a Volunteer Bureau/Centre
- Some 79% of people took for granted the fact that they could volunteer but 62% did not know how to access that volunteering
- Some 71% required information about the range of volunteering opportunities available to volunteers

- Commitment of time to volunteering was the factor that most exercised peoples' minds with 79% making it the priority information they would need
- Only 12.5% felt that they might need support from inside or outside the organisation if they were not satisfied with their volunteering task
- Nearly half of those taking part in the survey required information as to the payment of expenses incurred in volunteering.
- Only 11% needed to know if their state benefits would be affected
- Of the 35% of people who felt they would need to know what references should be provided, all seemed to understand the necessity for Criminal Records Bureau checks where appropriate
- People expected that "on the job" training would be provided but 39% specifically mentioned that other training for personal skills development would be of interest to them
- It was felt by the majority (89%) that the optimum way to access all the above information was by talking to someone "face to face."
- The telephone was seen as a second best option (49%)
- Reading printed information wherever it was accessed, was viewed as an initial step but not a satisfactory way of having questions answered
- "Virtual" information found little favour at an average of 15%
- Only 26% were prepared to travel inside their district to access volunteering
- Access to the services of a Volunteer Bureau/Centre was preferred by the majority of respondents (92%) as being available on weekdays
- 10% opted for a "late night shopping approach" once a week
- 18% cited Saturday mornings as an addition
- Very few (2.5%) favoured Sunday opening
- Only 9% required 'virtual' opening hours

### **Volunteer involving organisations – the interface with Volunteer Bureaux and Centres**

- Brokerage was flagged up as the core function that volunteer involving organisations felt was most useful to them but volunteer involving organisations can and do recruit many volunteers themselves. They do not necessarily view Volunteer Bureaux and Centres as essential for recruitment or even as 'added value' in some cases
- Marketing volunteering involves marketing a product and marketing is not one of the skills that Volunteer Bureaux and Centres traditionally possess in abundance. The art of selling the volunteering brand has to be learned and this is a priority area for learning.
- Most volunteer involving organisations interviewed have tried, tested and effective recruitment procedures and best practice induction, training and support with all the correct policies and procedures in place, often guided by their national bodies. Some smaller voluntary and community sector groups did not have this help available. This could well be supplied by Volunteer Centres and Bureaux but close relationships first need to be developed in order to explore these needs thoroughly and to provide relevant assistance. Volunteer Bureaux and Centres need to take on a much more proactive role in promoting good volunteer management practice within smaller voluntary and community organisations.

- Bureaux and Centres should know everything about their “business” - the profiles of the communities in which they work, where the gaps in service provision are and exactly what is invested in the work that is being done. Little research has been done locally and what has been done is not up-to-date. Neither is national or international research ever compared to localities.
- Bureaux and Centres should advocate and represent the common agenda in their area of representation, using their knowledge to reflect sector need and ambition in the delivery of their services. This common agenda might include representing their constituency at County and Local Strategic Partnership level, liaising with and managing relationships with the statutory and private sector countywide, ensuring the entrenchment of the Compact way of working as a baseline for partnerships, being the custodian and advocate of a cohesive volunteering voice and offering leadership to volunteering-using organisations
- There are few robust monitoring and evaluating systems underpinning the work of Cambridgeshire Volunteer Bureaux and Centres. It is not possible therefore to achieve an accurate county picture of volunteering enabled by Volunteer Bureaux and Centres and to measure impact on the community

# APPENDIX FOUR

## QUALITY STANDARDS

1. It is important to distinguish between frameworks for quality standards (which encourage reflection and review within an organisation) and quality assurance systems (which purport to guarantee good quality services). The extent to which either do, in reality, result in better quality services to, or outcomes for, users (in this case front-line VCS organisations) is an open question.

2. The three quality systems currently in use within the area are PQASSO (quality standards framework), Investors in People, and the Volunteering England quality accreditation system (both quality assurance systems). PQASSO is being used by CACRE, East Cambs CVS, Fenland CVS, Hunts Forum, Peterborough CVS and Volunteer Centre and Ramsey, Warboys and District Volunteer Centre. CACRE has Investors in People Accreditation. Six volunteer centres have Volunteering England accreditation – Cambridge, Ely and District, Fenland, Peterborough, Ramsey and Warboys and Royston.

3. PQASSO is a self-assessment tool which divides the work of the organisation into twelve quality areas with each area having three levels of achievement. In each area there is suggested evidence about how achievements can be demonstrated. Charities Evaluation Service, which developed PQASSO, is considering adding an externally assessed recognition element, using peer reviewers from within the VCS. This peer review process is being piloted. This would take PQASSO closer to a quality assurance system.

4. For CVS the National Association of CVS has undertaken a pilot project on *Performance Improvement Standards for Local Infrastructure Projects*.<sup>20</sup> This has set six performance improvement standards and for each of the standards there is an impact statement, a series of outcomes, a set of minimum outputs and some suggested additional outputs. The standards are:

- Development, Support and Liaison
  - *Standard 1:* the local infrastructure organisation pro-actively identifies local needs and facilitates improvement in service provision to meet these needs
  - *Standard 2:* Local organisations are better equipped to function effectively and deliver quality services to their users or members, or constituents as a result of the local infrastructure organisation's activity

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<sup>20</sup> Performance Improvement Standards for Local Infrastructure Organisations Pilot Project Terry Wolf and Kath Gordon, Learning Works, NACVS, March 2005

- *Standard 3:* The local infrastructure organisation facilitates effective communication or networking and collaboration amongst local voluntary and community groups
- Representation and Strategic Partnership Work
  - *Standard 4:* The local infrastructure organisation enables the diverse views of the local voluntary and community sector to be represented to external bodies, facilitating effective two-way communication
  - *Standard 5:* The local infrastructure organisation facilitates the development and monitoring of structures which promote effective working relationships between the voluntary and community sector and statutory or other outside bodies
  - *Standard 6:* The local infrastructure organisation enhances the voluntary and community sector's role as an integral part of local planning and policy

5. Further discussions are now taking place on developing the standards and on their status – should they be a performance improvement tool with a developmental aim or should they be a quality assurance system supposedly guaranteeing the effectiveness of delivery to user and potential user organisations?

6. For *Volunteer Centres* there is the *Volunteering England Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation*.<sup>21</sup> This provides standards under the six core functions of volunteering infrastructure that Gill Robinson used in her report – brokerage; marketing; good practice development; developing volunteering opportunities; policy response and campaigning and strategic development of volunteering. For each function there are a number of indicators and possible evidence bases. The recently adopted and improved standards include a commitment to undertaking PQASSO at Level One. This is a formal accreditation process with Volunteering England as the awarding body. As part of the accreditation process Volunteering England also offers an annual support meeting with a Regional Volunteering Development Officer for each accredited centre and centres committing to engagement with the accreditation process. The right to use national Volunteer Centre branding is dependent on receiving accreditation.

7. The ChangeUp programme nationally has been used to fund development of PERFORM which is for all infrastructure organisations including specialist organisations.<sup>22</sup> PERFORM is primarily a self assessment tool which should be seen as complementary to quality assurance models and standards. It uses an outcomes approach i.e. looking at the changes and benefits that happen as a result of services and activities. Outcomes are organised under four high level headings relating to VCOs which the infrastructure organisations support:

- VCOs are skilled, knowledgeable and well run

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<sup>21</sup> Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation Assessment Information Volunteering England 15<sup>th</sup> March 2005

<sup>22</sup> Perform. An Outcomes Approach for Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Organisations A discussion document ChangeUp and COGS November 2005 and Perform Revised Tool November 2005

- VCOs network and collaborate
- VCOs reflect and promote diversity and equality
- VCOs influence policies and programmes

8. PERFORM outlines a process for infrastructure bodies to follow:

- Identifying and involving stakeholders
- Forming steering group
- Reviewing context
- Identifying intended outcomes
- Identifying outcome indicators
- Identifying organisational aims and objectives
- Plan activities
- Bring together in Infrastructure Strategy
- Annual work plans
- Gather and record information and evidence
- Annual performance assessments
- Evaluation and strategy review

9. A consultation process on PERFORM started in November 2005.

10. ACRE has produced a Good Practice Quality Standard for rural community councils.<sup>23</sup> This is organised under nine standards:

- Business planning
- User-centred service
- Trustees and Board
- Managing activities
- Financial management
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Managing and supporting staff
- Training and skills development
- Networks and partnerships

11. There are three levels for each set of standards with Level 2 being deemed equivalent of PQASSO Level Three. The way on which the standards are constructed and evidence sought is similar to PQASSO. However ACRE has also developed a process of peer review.

12. It should be noted that the NACVS standards, Volunteering England accreditation standards and the PERFORM process all look, to some extent, at outcomes i.e. what is expected of infrastructure organisations in their work with VCOs, or in promoting volunteering, and what results are achieved. They do not look at what has been called the organisational health of organisations i.e. areas such as governance, financial management and internal communications. These areas are covered by PQASSO and the ACRE Standards.

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<sup>23</sup> ACRE Good Practice Quality Standard: 2nd Edition ACRE 2004

13. Whilst the Volunteering England standards and accreditation system are established and seem to widely accepted by volunteer centres, the NACVS standards for local infrastructure bodies and the PERFORM approach, for all infrastructure bodies, are still being developed. PQASSO is a well established framework in use within the sector, but has more of a focus on inputs and organisational systems.

# APPENDIX FIVE

## ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS FOR CHANGE

1. In the draft report, drawing on material from the whole of the report, and in order to stimulate feedback, we offered the following possible scenarios for change with a summary of their strengths and weaknesses.

### ***Do nothing***

2. In this scenario things remain much as they are with some clarification of roles of CACRE, CVS' and specialist organisations, and with acknowledgement of the expansion of Cambridge CVS into South Cambs.

- ***Strengths:***
  - No disturbance of existing arrangements and no changes for staff to have to cope with;
  - No time spent on considering and implementing changes;
  - Clearer understanding of roles of different infrastructure organisations;
  - CVS coverage in South Cambs
  
- ***Weaknesses:***
  - East Cambs CVS stays weak.
  - No preparation for local government reorganisation.
  - Still a lack of strategic capacity.
  - Volunteer centres in Huntingdonshire remain small.
  - Lack of strategic thinking in volunteering.
  - Lack of strategic resource in disability organisations, BME groups and Care Network.

### ***Minimal – medium change***

3. In this option a number of individual proposals to strengthen the infrastructure sector could be agreed:

- East Cambs CVS applies to Big Lottery/ChangeUp for three year development funding or CACRE takes on CVS functions in East Cambs;
- East Cambs CVS merges with the Volunteer Centre;
- Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centres/Bureaux combine into one new organisation – Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre;
- CECF and PREC, with Consortium, agree future work on BME communities in rural areas;
- ChangeUp funds business plan development for Care Network.
  
- ***Strengths:***
  - Strengthens CVS structure across Cambridgeshire.

- Strengthens Volunteer Centre structure in Huntingdonshire.
  - Strengthens work with BME communities in rural areas.
  - Strengthens Care Network.
- *Weaknesses:*
    - Lack of resources to implement CVS proposals.
    - Huntingdonshire volunteer centres may not agree to proposals.
    - Still a lack of strategic capacity including lack of resources to relate to local government reorganisation, LAAs and liC.
    - Lack of strategic thinking in volunteering.
    - Lack of strategic resource in disability organisations.

### ***Developing strategic capacity and coverage***

4. In addition to the proposals in the minimal change scenario, the capacity for strategic thinking and activity could be developed by:

- Employing a VCS Strategy Development Officer to enable the building of more effective representational arrangements across the area and co-ordinating VCS responses to changes in statutory sector structures, policies and programmes;
  - Creating a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Volunteering Federation supported by a Volunteering Development Worker;
  - Each volunteer centre considering if it should merge with its local CVS;
  - Agreeing a strategic approach to disability issues across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough;
  - Developing outcomes-focussed quality standards for all infrastructure organisations.
- *Strengths*
    - Begins to address the deficit of strategic capacity within infrastructure organisations generally;
    - Develops a reference group for all volunteer centres, increases levels of joint working between centres and creates joint branding for centres.
    - Improves strategic capacity in disability organisations;
    - Improves service quality in infrastructure organisations through use of appropriate quality tools and materials.
- *Weaknesses:*
    - Lack of resources to implement proposals.
    - Not all volunteer centre trustee boards accept need for change.
    - Not all organisations will accept this approach to quality issues.

### ***Radical change***

5. There are a number of possible radical changes that could be put forward:

- CACRE, all CVS' and all volunteer centres in Cambridgeshire combine into one agency.

- CACRE is dissolved and its functions decentralised to CVS'; a new county-wide co-ordination unit brings the CVS' together as appropriate;
- All CVS' and all volunteer centres in Cambridgeshire combine into one agency.
- All CVS' in Cambridgeshire combine into one CVS;
- All volunteer centres in Cambridgeshire combine into one new agency – Cambridgeshire Volunteering.
- East Cambs and Fenland CVS' or East Cambs and Cambridge CVS' merge.
- CACRE takes on CVS functions in Huntingdon, Fenland, East Cambs and South Cambs and CVS' dissolve.
  
- *Strengths:*
  - There are fewer and stronger infrastructure agencies;
  - Infrastructure agencies are more easily able to address strategic issues;
  - Infrastructure agencies cut down on overhead costs and on number of trustee bodies;
  - Rural v non-rural confusions are sorted out in some options;
  - Support needs of the voluntary and community sectors are approached in a more integrated way.
  
- *Weaknesses:*
  - Radical change that not all trustee bodies are likely to accept.
  - Time spent in carrying through the changes.
  - Takes decisions before the future shape of local government is known.
  - Danger of centralised management that does not take account of local circumstances.