

BEXLEY CHANGEUP

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2008 – 2014

Produced by BVSC in conjunction with the
Bexley ChangeUp Steering Group



CONSORTIA DEVELOPMENT FUND

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2008-2014

[MAXIMUM OF 12 SIDES A4]

Consortia Name:

Geographical area:

Lead Body:

Contact Details:

Consortia Name: Bexley ChangeUp Steering Group

Area of Benefit: London Borough of Bexley

Lead Body: Bexley Voluntary Service Council

Contact Details: Janet Smith
Chief Executive
Bexley Voluntary Service Council
8 Brampton Road
Bexleyheath
Kent DA7 4EY

Tel: 020 8304 0911

E-mail: jsmith@bvsc.co.uk

Consortium Vision / Mission Statement:

The Steering Group's vision for infrastructure provision by 2014 is that:

“the needs of local voluntary and community groups will be met by high quality support, available locally, or where appropriate regionally, accessible to all, truly reflecting and promoting diversity and which is sustainably funded.”

Consortium Objectives:

The Consortium's aims are to:

- Promote collaboration in the development of infrastructure support in the borough of Bexley
- Support the development of the Bexley Infrastructure ChangeUp Plan and related plans and strategies
- Promote increased access to infrastructure support

The Consortiums key objectives are to:

- increase awareness of Infrastructure Support in Bexley
- improve the co-ordination of infrastructure services by ensuring gaps are met, sharing knowledge and avoiding duplication
- ensure high quality infrastructure support is available to all local groups by delivering the services and support as outlined in the ChangeUp Business Plan and maintain current services that are valued by local groups
- ensure that infrastructure staff are trained to possess a high level of knowledge and skills
- enable front line staff and volunteers to receive high quality training to be able to offer high quality support to front-line groups
- ensure groups have the information and tools necessary to meet their development needs
- enable Groups to network together so that they can receive mutual support, develop partnerships and be informed on local and national initiatives
- promote the sector to key partners highlighting the value for money that the sector provides
- promote Changeup as a gateway to the groups in the borough for partners to consult and engage the voluntary sector on issues that affect them.
- develop relationships with key partners in Bexley to facilitate partnership working and seek a greater understanding of the sector
- ensure key partners and funders are aware of the support needs of groups in Bexley

In particular the Steering Group will:

1. Assist with the development and implementation of the Bexley's ChangeUp Plans
2. Ensure engagement within ChangeUp by the voluntary and community sector is as broad and comprehensive as possible
3. Make recommendations for priorities for action
4. Review the impact of work initiated by the Steering Group
5. Make recommendations for commissioning projects or research
6. Monitor commissioned projects and research
7. Monitor Bexley's ChangeUp Plans to help the lead body (BVSC) ensure milestones are met
8. Revise the Plans as necessary during the lifetime of the programme
9. Evaluate and review the programme

What are the key changes that the Consortium aims to make over the next 6 years?

By 2014 the Steering Group aims to have:

1. Improved the awareness of support available locally by co-ordinating marketing initiatives
2. Improved the co-ordination of infrastructure services by ensuring gaps are met, sharing knowledge and avoiding duplication
3. Delivered the services and support as outlined in the ChangeUp Business Plan ensuring that services are accessible to all
4. Maintained the current support that is valued by local groups
5. Ensured infrastructure staff are trained to possess a high level of knowledge and skills
6. Promoted the sector to key partners highlighting the value for money it offers
7. Promoted ChangeUp as a gateway to the groups in the borough and highlighted its successes

8. Developed relationships with other key partners to facilitate partnership working
9. Made key partners and funders aware of the support needs of groups in Bexley

Please state why you feel these aims are the right ones: (please reference any research, consultation or other data you feel is relevant)

1. Improved awareness of support available

In July 2005 two ChangeUp consultation events were held, one for frontline voluntary and community groups which over 40 groups attended and a second for infrastructure staff only. From the first event it emerged that groups lacked awareness of the range of support services offered by infrastructure organisations. Some groups requested services that were already available and so infrastructure organisations became aware that they needed to market their services more effectively. This has become an ongoing priority for the Steering Group.

Between 2005 and 2007 the Steering Group developed a range of marketing initiatives including:

- New leaflets for all infrastructure organisations
- New or updated websites for all infrastructure organisations with links to each other
- New exhibition material to publicise support at various conferences and events
- A new section on infrastructure support in BVSC's Community Help Directory
- Joint equipment for hire list
- Training to develop marketing strategies

In 2006 with funding from ChangeUp, Bexley Council for Racial Equality (BCRE) undertook a project to contact all BME groups, assess their support needs and link them to sources of help available. Individual infrastructure groups have also included marketing as a priority in their individual plans and strategies.

Despite these initiatives two ChangeUp events held in November 2007, attended by 61 representatives from local groups and partner organisations, showed that groups were still not fully aware of the range of services available. This was particularly true of groups who were affiliated to one infrastructure group but are unaware of the services of another. Many groups not affiliated to BVSC were unaware of the Voluntary Forum.

In the Business Plan the Steering Group intends to continue raising awareness of services but also to promote the Voluntary Forum as the key networking vehicle for all the groups in the borough not only BVSC's members, thereby offering an opportunity for all groups to meet together.

Reference:

2005 & 2007 Bexley ChangeUp Events

Bexley Council for Racial Equality Mapping and Report on the needs of ethnic minority groups in Bexley (2005)

BVSC Marketing Strategy (2006-8)

2. Improved co-ordination of infrastructure services by ensuring gaps are met, sharing knowledge and avoiding duplication.

The 2005 events also highlighted the importance of communication between infrastructure organisations and avoiding duplication. Both Bexley Care Trust and Bexley Council are experiencing tight financial situations and are identifying savings. Lottery and Trust funding is becoming more competitive and the Big Lottery's BASIS programme is now to be commissioned through ChangeUp partnerships. It is therefore becoming more important that local infrastructure agencies work together when developing new services and responding to unmet need and ensure that much needed resources are not wasted on duplicated services. Sharing resources such as training and equipment will also enable value for money to be achieved.

Reference:

Bexley Toolkit Assessment (Aug 2007)

2005 & 2007 Bexley ChangeUp events

Big Lottery BASIS Consultation (2007)

3. Delivered the services and support as outlined in the ChangeUp Business Plan ensuring services are accessible to all.

The 2005 and 2007 events highlighted the needs of local groups. The priorities from the 2005 events were detailed in Bexley's 2005 10 Year Infrastructure Development Plan and most of these have now been achieved. Those remaining that are still relevant, together with the new priorities from the 2007 events are detailed in the new 2008–11 Business Plan and will inform the Steering Groups' work programme over the next three years.

Reference:

East London ChangeUp Research Developing IT for VCOs in East London (ELN Oct 2006)

East London ChangeUp Research Open to Options: Developing HR & Legal Support (ELN Dec 06)

Bexley 10 Year Infrastructure Plan (2005)

2005 & 2007 Bexley ChangeUp events

4. Maintained the current support that is valued by local groups

The 2007 events highlighted services that Groups found valuable and that worked well. These included:

BVSC:

- Community Help Directory
- Advice and support with grant applications
- Good quality advice
- BVS Newsletter
- CRB and other Factsheets produced in response to last ChangeUp consultation
- Training/capacity building
- Community Accountancy
- Funder Finder
- Funding and support for Investors in People
- HR Support, training and consultancy
- Website development
- Printing services
- Networking and forums, including the Voluntary Forum

BCVYO:

- information including BCVYO's Newsletter
- Uniformed groups grant process
- Infrastructure support to uniformed groups

Bexley Volunteer Centre:

- Supported Volunteering Project
- Improved services for volunteering/groups
- Volunteer Drop-In and Outreach services

General:

- Maintain and encourage diversity of voluntary sector providers
- Manage spirit of sector amidst competition
- Useful to have infrastructure groups reading large documents and giving briefings
- Equipment

Individual infrastructure groups will work to retain these valuable services and the Steering Group will work together and with East London ChangeUp where joint approaches will assist services to be retained.

Reference: Bexley ChangeUp Events 2005 & 2007
Bexley ChangeUp 10 Year Infrastructure Plan 2005
BVSC Strategic Plan 2005-8 and Draft Strategic Plan 2008-11

5. Infrastructure staff are trained to possess a high level of knowledge and skills

ChangeUp funding has enabled BVSC and BCRE to run a number of courses

aimed at developing the knowledge and skills of staff within infrastructure organisations. These courses were also offered to Bexley Council and Bexley Care Trust staff who play a role in supporting groups. Topics have included Employment Law and Developing Marketing Strategies. Infrastructure staff have also benefited from courses on sustainable funding and commissioning processes which were organised for all voluntary sector staff and trustees. The Steering Group intends to continue to ensure that staff are trained to meet the new challenges that present themselves including issues such as commissioning which is being introduced by Bexley Council, and developing sustainable funding strategies which look at other ways for organisations to fund their work such as legacies and social enterprise.

Reference:

2005 & 2007 Bexley ChangeUp Events

BVSC Training Plan 2006 -8

Developing a World Class Third Sector Workforce in East London (TGPL Nov 2006)

Bexley Council Funding Strategy for the Voluntary Sector (October 2007)

Commissioning and Procurement: Fit for Purpose? A Conference Report (ELN May 06)

6. Promoted the sector to key partners highlighting the value for money it offers

As Bexley Council moves to commissioning arrangements to purchase services from the Voluntary Sector, and funding becomes scarcer, it is becoming increasingly important that statutory funders are aware of the value for money that Bexley's Voluntary Sector provides. A 2006 survey of 20 staffed groups in Bexley showed that they received £1.7million in Council funding but also secured £4million from other funders and generated an additional £4 million from sources such as successful benefit claims they had assisted with. The Steering Group will promote the benefits of commissioning services from local groups which can bring the borough added value.

Reference:

Bexley Council Funding Strategy for the Voluntary Sector (October 2007)

Bexley Council Change Programme (November 2007)

BVSC Survey of 20 Council Funded Groups Showing Added Value (Sept 2006)

Commissioning and Procurement: Fit for Purpose? A Conference Report (ELN May 06)

7. Promoted ChangeUp as a gateway to the groups in the borough and highlighted its successes

By bringing infrastructure organisations together the Steering Group is in contact with over 800 voluntary and community groups in the borough. Information can now reach all of these groups by being cascaded down through the newsletters and websites of each infrastructure group. All infrastructure groups on the Steering Group have developed websites which are now linked

together as well as to the websites of Bexley Council and Bexley Care Trust to form a network of advice and support.

The ChangeUp Steering Group is now in the position to provide partners and funders with a gateway to many of the groups in the borough so that information can be passed to the voluntary sector and their views sought. Bexley Council has just begun the development of its Engagement Strategy and ChangeUp will need play a key role in this.

Reference: Bexley ChangeUp Mapping of Local Groups (2005, updated August 2007)

Bexley Council for Racial Equality Mapping and Report (Bexley ChangeUp 2005)

Mapping and Needs Analysis of Uniformed and Youth Sports Groups (Bexley ChangeUp 2005)

Respond Community Matters Report on Youth Engagement in the Voluntary Sector (Bexley ChangeUp 2005)

8. Developed relationships with other key partners to facilitate partnership working

As partnership working and consortium approaches are being encouraged by funders and government initiatives it will be important to develop relationships with other key partners such as the fire brigade, police and housing associations. The Steering Group will make contact with these potential partners to facilitate joint working.

Reference: Bexley Toolkit Assessment (Aug 07)

9. Ensured key partners and funders are aware of the support needs of groups in Bexley

In order to fund the priorities set out in the ChangeUp Business Plan it will be important that funders are aware of the support needs of the groups in Bexley. Key local funders Bexley Council and Bexley Care Trust have been invited to all the consultation events and will continue to have seats on the ChangeUp Steering Group. The East London ChangeUp Partnership will also be kept informed of Bexley's needs to inform their plans. The ChangeUp Plans will also inform consultations organised by national funders such as the Big Lottery and London Councils when they are developing their priorities for funding. Key funders will be invited to Bexley to meet local groups.

Reference: BVSC successful BASIS application for Small Groups Project (Nov 2007)

A Strategy for Building a World Class Third Sector in London Thames Gateway (TGLP Nov 06)

East London ChangeUp Development Strategy and Business Plan Consultation (2007)

What are the main implications of this Infrastructure Development Strategy for the consortium (e.g. finance, staff, volunteers, geography, skills and knowledge)?

Finance

Bexley Care Trust and Bexley Council are both facing tight financial situations and are identifying savings. Bexley Council has just launched its Draft Funding Strategy for the Voluntary Sector. This proposes new commissioning arrangements and as yet it is not known how this will affect infrastructure support in the borough although it appears unlikely that any new funding will be forthcoming. The Lottery and other major trusts are receiving high numbers of applications and funding processes are now extremely competitive.

Since 2005 the Steering Group has delivered the priorities of the Consortium by using existing staff and resources, ChangeUp funding and accessing funding from other sources. The new Business Plan will continue to utilise existing staff and resources but will also require new funding from both ChangeUp and external funders.

Staffing

To date priorities have been delivered by Steering Group members, paying existing staff additional hours, using consultants or employing new staff. These methods will continue however as the workload has increased, the Steering Group is now considering employing a part time ChangeUp Worker to take forward its agenda over the next three years.

Volunteering

Volunteer recruitment is vital to this Strategy and so the role of the Volunteer Centre (Bexley) is an important one. If organisations are to be sustainable they need both volunteers and trustees. There are many very dedicated trustees in Bexley who have served organisations for a long time but the recruitment of younger volunteers to ensure the longer term sustainability of organisations has been harder to achieve. The Business Plan includes a project to begin to address this. Both the Outreach and Drop-In services are part of the Centre and these have proved successful in attracting new volunteers. The Drop-In enables volunteers to search the Do-it website which lists many of the volunteer vacancies available. As a result potential volunteers can consider the full range of opportunities and by doing this make a more informed choice as to the volunteering role they would like to take up. This has resulted in more potential volunteers becoming active volunteers which is helping local groups to meet their volunteering needs.

The introduction of individual budgets for older people and people with a

disability in Bexley as part of Bexley Council's Change Programme could have an affect on volunteering as some groups will need to operate in a competitive market environment and charge clients for services. The Steering Group will need to monitor the effect of the Programme on volunteering and take any implications into account when this Strategy and the Business Plan are reviewed.

Geography

Bexley is part of the East London Sub-Region. Changes in boundaries being proposed by the London Mayor could affect the composition of the groupings of the sub- regions with Bexley becoming part of a new South East Sub-Region. Although Bexley would welcome a Network which is geographically closer, on-going sub-regional projects would need to be considered and reorganised.

Local statutory agencies are changing where and how they organise their services. New Clusters have recently been set up for Police services and the Council's children's services. Bexley Care Trust's current consultation ' A Picture of Health' advocates more services being provided in the community instead of hospital settings. These changes will provide new challenges for local groups who deliver services.

Thamesmead in the north of the borough is divided between the boroughs of Bexley and Greenwich. Trust Thamesmead which operates in Thamesmead across both boroughs, is represented on Bexley's Steering Group and will be able to assist the Steering Group to support groups in Thamesmead. It will also be important to make links with Greenwich ChangeUp and its new Council for Voluntary Service.

Skills and knowledge

A wide range of skills and knowledge is available amongst Steering Group members however specialist workers will be engaged to deliver specific training courses or projects in the Business Plan such as HR and IT support.

Providing the local voluntary sector with the skills to participate in the new commissioning processes will be essential to enable local groups to bid for services being commissioned by Bexley Council and other funders such as London Councils who have moved to a commissioning process. Infrastructure staff will also need the skills to assist groups with these processes. In the current funding climate knowledge of other sources of funding will be essential if local groups are to continue to be sustainable.

Please outline the roles of key people/organisations in delivering the Infrastructure Development Strategy:

BVSC will be responsible for convening the Steering Group, providing administrative support and acting as accountable body for ChangeUp funding.

All members of the Steering Group will :

- deliver the objectives of this Development Strategy
- ensure engagement within ChangeUp by the voluntary and community sector is as broad and comprehensive as possible
- review the impact of work and make recommendations for priorities for action
- make recommendations for commissioning projects or research
- monitor commissioned projects and research
- monitor the Development Strategy and Business Plan to help the lead body (BVSC) ensure milestones are met
- revise the Strategy as necessary during the lifetime of the programme

Individual leads for specific projects in the Business Plan are outlined below.

Project	Lead Agency
1. Raise Awareness of Infrastructure Support	All Steering Group members
2. Provide a range of training to meet the identified support needs of groups	BVSC Development Team
3. Secure funding to continue providing Accountancy Support	BVSC with ASSET Consortium
4. Ensure Groups are able to access front line training for their staff	BVSC / BCRE
5. Produce a range of factsheets on topics of interest to the voluntary sector and keep current fact sheets updated	BVSC
6. Work with East London ChangeUp to develop IT support	BVSC with East London ChangeUp
7. Provide opportunities for groups to meet together , share information, form partnerships and find out about local initiatives	All Steering Group members
8. Assist with the recruitment of trustees for local groups	BVSC Volunteer Centre
9. Retain a Volunteering Drop-In and Outreach Service	BVSC Volunteer Centre

What are the timescales, key steps, and process for reviewing the Infrastructure Development Strategy?

The Steering Group will continue to meet regularly. Meetings will not be less than quarterly per year but additional meetings will be scheduled as required.

Each year the Steering Group will organise an event for groups to update their needs and receive feedback on the projects being delivered. Following the event the Steering Group will review the Development Strategy. The Business Plan will be reviewed quarterly to ensure projects are being developed and milestones are being met and feedback from the annual event will also be considered as part of this.

The progress of the Council's Funding Strategy and Change Programme will be reported at each meeting as this will have a significant impact both in the short term on prioritising the Business Plan projects such as training and support, but also in the longer term should there be significant changes to the make up of the voluntary sector in Bexley or any impact on volunteering.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Name of Consortium: Bexley

Lead body signature:

Date signed: 19th December 2007

Date signed off by Consortium: 18th December 2007

ANNEX

Consortium membership and Terms of Reference: Please send as an email attachment if possible. Alternatively, please send as hard copy in the post to Capacitybuilders, 77 Paradise Circus, Birmingham, B1 2DT