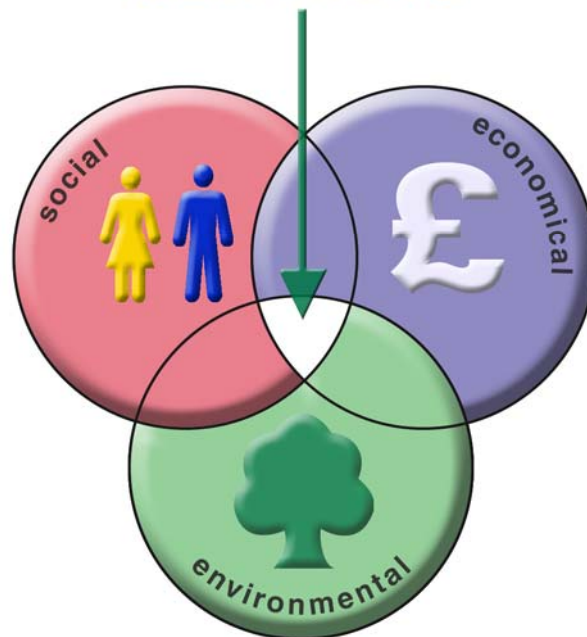


**Council for Ethnic Minority Communities (CEMC),  
Northamptonshire  
&  
Sustain Consultancy Ltd**

**Researching the Impact of the Investment Improvement  
Plan Northamptonshire**

**Experts in delivering  
sustainable  
solutions**



**NVCO Approved Consultancy 2007/08**

**Sharon Muldoon, June 2007**

### **Acknowledgement and Thanks**

On behalf of the project sponsors, Council for Ethnic Minority Communities (CEMC) Northamptonshire, Sustain would like to thank the following organisations and individuals who have given valuable time in supporting this research.

- **Big Lottery Fund**
- **Council for Ethnic Minority Communities (CEMC)**
- **Corby Volunteer Centre**
- **Daventry Volunteer Centre**
- **Engage East Midlands**
- **Groundworks North Northamptonshire**
- **Lloyds TSB Foundation, East Midlands**
- **NCompass**
- **Nene Valley Community Action**
- **Northamptonshire County Council**
- **Northamptonshire Community Foundation**
- **Northampton Volunteer Centre**
- **Voluntary Action Leicester**
- **South Northants Volunteer Bureau**

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this research has been to establish the impact of the £986,281 ChangeUp spend in Northamptonshire. Sustain worked alongside the County and Local infrastructure organisations reviewing the 15 projects which were commissioned to support the development of infrastructure services and the subsequent support structures offered to front line voluntary and community sector organisations (Third Sector). These projects were commissioned following the development of Northamptonshire's Investment Improvement Plan (IIP). Sustain has found that:

- Every LIO now has a business plan in place
- Around **342** frontline voluntary or community organisations have directly or indirectly benefited from ChangeUp project activity (Guidestar data shows that there are c2,215 registered charities in Northamptonshire (does not include community groups which are not registered)
- LIO's have benefitted from both capital spend projects (largely around ICT) and revenue based projects
- Baselines have been established in relation to
  - ICT needs
  - LIO models for service delivery
  - Performance Management Systems
  - Workforce Development needs
  - Full Cost Recovery strategies
  - Policy and Representation processes
  - Volunteering structures
  - Rural needs
  - Funding requirements/support
- Progress has been made in relation to partnership and collaborative learning within the infrastructure group within the County.

The recommendations made for this report are:

- 1) That the infrastructure group discuss how it can **quantifiably measure the impact of ChangeUp projects from a 3<sup>rd</sup> sector perspective**. Each LIO is due to conduct a satisfaction questionnaire during 2007, it is recommended that this process is agreed across the infrastructure group. This should provide some baseline information as to whether 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations believe that services and support mechanisms have improved.
- 2) There are a number of projects with outcomes which affect the wider Consortium group and its future business planning needs. It is essential that the organisations that hosted these specialist projects become **'Champions' in these areas and help to share their learning across the wider infrastructure group**. It is important that this happens in a structured sense so not to lose the learning and its relevance. These projects are based around the performance areas: ICT (CEMC), Database (NVC), Performance Management (NCompass), Full Cost Recovery (NCompass), LIO Model (NVC), Workforce Development (Converge), Rural Needs (ENVA) and Social Enterprise (NCDA).
- 3) **Baseline Data** – the Consortium needs to understand the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector in order to continually meet its needs. It is recommended that LIOs discuss how they currently capture the profile of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector in their localities and their needs and

wants. If this is carried out consistently across the County this should both determine shared development needs and the progress made in relation to service delivery and outcomes. Overtime this collaborative working would reduce the need to allocate consultant spend in *quantifiably* determining these needs.

- 4) **Funding** – It is clear from the small research carried out that Northamptonshire 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations need support in obtaining funding. It is recommended that this is discussed and made a strategic target for development within the business plans for each LIO. There is support for LIOs through regional and local funders and this should be explored in a co-ordinated fashion within the infrastructure groups. Additionally LIOs must find a common way of tracking increased funding achieved following interventions or support from a LIOs.
- 5) **Skills Development** – the ChangeUp projects provided an opportunity for LIO organisations to both develop their staff and benefit from the support of consultants in specialist areas. In addition Converge's skills project looked to identify the needs of the wider 3<sup>rd</sup> sector. It is recommended that the Consortium focuses on both how they can develop their own skill base and those of the wider needs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector are taking the lead from Converge's work to date.
- 6) **Business Planning** – clear progress has been made in relation to next steps, actions and outcomes regarding the business plan for infrastructure agencies in Northamptonshire. The visioning work has resulted in a Partnership Plan. This now needs to be focused upon with clear leadership with organisations having accountability and an understanding of their role in its onward development.
- 7) **Monitoring and Evaluation** – it is recommended that the business plan has clear quantifiable goals that can be accurately measured and recorded at both a qualitative and quantitative level. Key areas could be gathered around: Income to sector (grant funded/traded), Performance Management systems in place, Training accessed/offered, Organisations supported, Regional/local policy/representation, Volunteers recruited and finally the mapping of sectors in which organisations are delivering. It is recommended that the infrastructure group review the national guidelines from NAVCA regarding Area Profiles.

## 1.0 Introduction to the Project

In January Sustain Consultancy Ltd was asked to create a research brief by the Council for Ethnic Minority Communities (CEMC) in order to undertake an evaluation of the recent programme of work developed through ChangeUp monies during 2005/06. Through this initiative 15 projects were delivered with a total budget of £986,281.

CEMC had worked with Sustain previously during various ChangeUp projects and commissioned Sustain on the basis of its knowledge of the local voluntary and community sector (3<sup>rd</sup> sector) within Northamptonshire and its wider experience of working within the ongoing capacity building agenda within the sector.

The project objectives were to:-

- Identify the global amount of investment given to Northamptonshire through ChangeUp.
- Map the individual projects and investments, the leads, reach and methods adopted.
- What step changes have actually been achieved, or will be achieved as a result of the investment?
- Where have the quality of services been improved or mechanism developed/put in place to get the processes started?
- What does the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector think about the changeup process and how has it affected them and their services?
- Map the additional funding drawn down during the life of changeup and who the stakeholders were/are
- Develop a forward plan to take key recommendations forward out of the individual reports

This piece of research will assist in helping the Infrastructure organisations focus their efforts on ensuring ongoing work against each project area.

ChangeUp projects were established to achieve a 10 year vision that by 2014 solid infrastructure systems would be in place providing first class support for front line voluntary and community organisations. Following a cross cutting review by HM Treasury called "The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery in 2002" recognised that there were gaps in the provision of support services to front line services.

There is an £80m investment fund set aside within the Home Office to provide support in developing the infrastructure in which to support 3<sup>rd</sup> sector agencies, it is from this fund that

ChangeUp projects were funded. In addition the following areas have been identified for improvement:

- Performance Improvement
- Workforce Development & Leadership
- ICT
- Governance
- Financing 3<sup>rd</sup> sector activity

### Who is Sustain Consultancy?

SUSTAIN Consultancy has specific knowledge and experience of working with the public sector and the voluntary and community sector on:

- area profiles and mapping studies
- social inclusion research
- consultation
- citizen and stakeholder engagement
- partnership working
- business planning
- performance management and improvement
- project management
- change management
- improving customer/client services
- sustainable development via robust funding strategies

### Who is CEMC?

CEMC are a specialist 'Countywide Infrastructure Organisation (CIO)' that supports Black and Minority Ethnic VCS organisations within Northamptonshire. It delivers business support functions such as business planning, writing constitutions, advice signposting, funding advice and bid writing services to these front line organisations helping to grow and develop their capacity and innovation and improve the services they offer to BME communities. CEMC is also involved in regional developments which support the regional activities of BME communities.

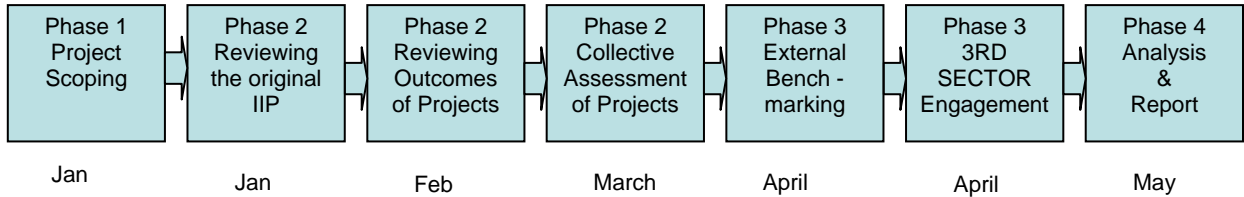
## 2.0 Research Methodology

Following two consultation meetings with CEMC the following research methodology was employed:

1. To review the original IIP plan and discuss the processes used to create this plan with the plan's Authors (See Appendix 1 for Interview Structure).
2. To review each of the 15 projects commissioned during the ChangeUp spend using a structured interview format to assess the impact and outcomes of these projects. Projects were reviewed individually with a further collective comparison undertaken to identify emerging issues and trends. The key goals identified in the original IIP were used as the assessment criteria. (Appendix 2).
3. To review the distribution of ChangeUp spend within Northamptonshire.
4. To review the processes, attendance and outcomes of the ChangeUp Consortia; identifying areas of best practice, issues and areas for future development.
5. To benchmark the progress made within Northamptonshire against other county within the East Midlands (Leicestershire) to identify areas of commonality and learning for future capacity building work. A structured questionnaire was used which was signed off by CEMC (Appendix 3).
6. To benchmark the level of external funds made within Northamptonshire over a 3 year period (Lloyds TSB, Big Lottery Fund and Community Foundation, Northamptonshire), identifying any external trends or changes with regards to external funding.
7. To assess the level of awareness within 3<sup>rd</sup> sector frontline agencies regarding ChangeUp developments in the County.

8. To analyse all of the above identifying areas of best practice and improvement for the future development of Infrastructure Planning within Northamptonshire.

With regards to the overall timeline of the project the following diagram illustrates the sequencing of the project.



### Project Management

Throughout the duration of the project Sustain had regular updates and project management meetings with the Project Manager at CEMC.

### 3.0 Creation of the Original Northamptonshire Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP)

#### General Approach

The creation of the original Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) within Northamptonshire occurred during a time where there were many changes taking place within the infrastructure groups due to the re-tendering of Countywide infrastructure services.

The IIP was co-ordinated by a lead bodies group which consisted of the following organisations: Northamptonshire Co-operative Development Agency (NCDA), Clubs for Young People Northamptonshire (CYPN), Northamptonshire Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Alliance (NLGBA). The main author for the IIP was Dr Ian McCormick who was the President of NLGBA. Ian was supported by a number of individuals from within the lead body.

Retrospective analysis of the plan shows that whilst the timelines for preparing, agreeing and submitting the plan were incredibly tight a structured approach was co-ordinated in order to both **evidence** the needs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector in Northamptonshire of its infrastructure agencies and to **obtain** consensus and buy-in to the plan.

Research was commissioned to engage with frontline voluntary and community groups to determine exactly what their support needs were. This research resulted in a Matters of Fact Report\* which detailed the gaps and needs of the 3RD sector in Northamptonshire. In addition to this field based research various desk based reviews took place within the Lead Bodies reviewing existing research and information of the local 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and reviewing national information e.g. Active Communities Unit for guidance and insight into funding areas. It is understood that around £105,000 was spent on commissioning and co-ordinating this research.

Following the Matters of Fact report, the lead bodies in conjunction with the wider infrastructure bodies in Northamptonshire (by now a Consortium) worked together to contribute towards and finally, to sign off the IIP. It was agreed that information and findings from the Matter of Fact report would be used to organise key improvement projects.

The IIP made the following findings:

- Northamptonshire has a weak infrastructure that has affected the ability of many VCO's to develop and be in a position to deliver quality services
- Limited local infrastructure support - a countywide CVS with local volunteer bureaux that are primarily funded for volunteer activity
- Poor levels of funding accessed by VCO's
- Growth outlined for Milton Keynes South Midlands will have a significant impact on local infrastructure and people

\*Matters of Fact Report held within NCompass

Based on these findings a structured business plan was created focusing upon key areas for improvement with regards to infrastructure support for the local 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, these were identified as

- Organisational Development
- Partnership Building/Brokerage
- Technical Support (Governance)
- Income Generation
- HR & Personnel
- Policy & Research
- Advocacy & Representation
- ICT

In addition to managing the wider infrastructure consortium, the Lead Body worked closely with all local authorities and wider stakeholders to ensure that there was buy-in to the plan and support for the wider development of infrastructure within the County.

Once funds were confirmed for Northamptonshire NCompass (by this time NCompass was established and had become the Countywide Infrastructure body) worked with the Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs) to ensure that there was consistency in style and alignment with the original goals of the Infrastructure Improvement Plan.

### Barriers and Challenges

A key difficulty in the creation of the plan was the shifting time frames of Government Office East Midlands (GOEM). This meant that often decisions were hurried in order to meet the allocated deadlines.

Areas of spend had been determined by GOEM and as such the IIP projects suggested within it needed to be able to match against these priority areas of allocated spend.

When GOEM finally informed the Consortium of its funding allocation it was £0.5m light from the original plan, there had to be therefore a re-work on the allocation of projects and funds within it. Again the timeline for this was extremely tight. This allocation also meant that for some groups projects were unable to happen which had an impact on wider motivation and momentum for a short period of time.

### Key Findings

**Table 1: Key Findings from Original Investment Improvement Plan**

Area	Comment
Local Environment & Context	<p>The IIP activity happened during a time where roles and responsibilities within the infrastructure groups within Northamptonshire were shifting and changing. This meant that Northamptonshire did not have a structured base from which to start and had to deal with this additional factor. This was largely due to the countywide re-tendering of the countywide infrastructure service).</p> <p>It took time for new relationships to be cemented and formed and further to create a trusted working environment.</p>

Pressure of External Deadlines / Short fall in Funds	It is clear that the truncated time lines for submissions and tenders meant that in some areas assumptions had to be made and 'worked through' later. The shortfall in allocated funds from GOEM meant that additional work had to be carried out to devise a way forward and this meant that there were some 'winners and losers' within the allocated spend.
Retrospective Matching to Funding Streams	Whilst making every best effort to second guess funding streams, additional work had to be carried out to revise projects and areas for attention.
Stakeholder Management	Concerted efforts were made by the lead bodies to align local authorities <i>and</i> to gather financial support for local infrastructure organisations.

#### 4.0 Introducing the ChangeUp Projects

The following table provides details on those projects funded by the ChangeUp process.

##### Table 2: Commissioned ChangeUp Projects and Funded Amounts

In total £986,281 was allocated to Northamptonshire with, £100,675 being spent on Capital Projects and £885,605 on revenue based projects. The table below shows the breakdown of projects.

Project	Host Organisation	Cost of Project
Consortium Office	NCompass	£50,000
Testing LIO Delivery	Northampton Volunteering Centre	£76,362
Rural Extension & Community Help	East Northants Voluntary Action	£67,450
Social Enterprise Awareness	Northamptonshire Community Development Agency	£14,755
BME Capacity and Networking Development	CEMC	£78,511
Bringing ICT for LIOs into 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	CEMC	£100,803
Building Income Sustainability	NCompass	£17,600
Parish Church Co-ordinator	East Northants Voluntary Action	£20,069
Building Capacity & Quality in Volunteering Infrastructure	NCompass	£64,645
Collective Capacity Building Bid	Corby Daventry East Northants Northampton Wellingborough Kettering South Northants NCompass	£281,086
Delivering Sustainable	NCompass	£35,000

Improvement to the 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector through Performance Management and Quality Assurance Principles		
ICT Capital Improvement for 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector Northamptonshire	CEMC	£88,000
Visioning for Infrastructure	NCompass	£40,000
The Learning Consortium – Converge	Endeavour Training	£37,000

*Additional early project not reviewed – NCVYS - £15,000.00*

Source Northamptonshire Community Foundation (2007)

## Key Findings

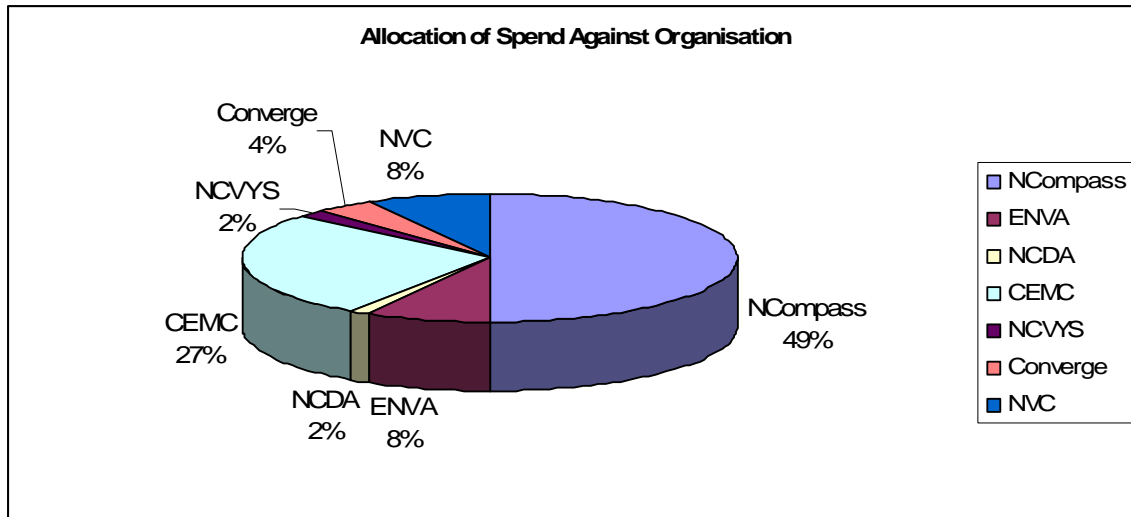
**Table 3: Key Findings of Commissioned Projects**

Project Area	Outcomes Linked to IIP
Consortium Office – NCompass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Partnership working</b></li> <li>❖ Unified Approach</li> <li>❖ Co-ordination and Collaboration</li> </ul>
Testing LIO Delivery - NVC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Collaboration in working and learning</li> <li>❖ <b>Testing of Optimum structures for LIO</b> service delivery areas</li> </ul>
Rural Extension & Community Help – ENVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Active Citizenship</b></li> <li>❖ Raising Awareness of current structures</li> <li>❖ Improving LIO delivery in rural areas</li> <li>❖ Developing partnership within 3RD SECTOR groups across the sector</li> <li>❖ Insight and learning into the needs of rural communities</li> </ul>
Social Enterprise Awareness – NCDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Supporting the development of enterprising activities <b>to support income generating (traded) projects</b> for 3RD SECTOR organisations</li> </ul>
BME Capacity & Networking Development - CEMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>BME focus</b></li> <li>❖ Identifying specific areas of need for BME groups within Northants</li> <li>❖ <b>Development of an ‘optimum’ structure</b> for the onward delivery of support structures for this group</li> <li>❖ <b>Learning and sharing</b> across the wider LIO group.</li> </ul>
Bringing ICT for LIOs - CEMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>ICT development</b></li> <li>❖ Sharing of ideas and best practice</li> <li>❖ <b>Technical support</b></li> <li>❖ Website development</li> <li>❖ Strategic research and policy formation</li> </ul>
Building Income Sustainability – NCompass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Template for onward use for the <b>introduction of Full Cost Recovery</b></li> <li>❖ Template to support the onward <b>sustainable development</b> of frontline and infrastructure LIOs</li> </ul>

Parish Church Co-ordinator – ENVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Encourage the involvement of Church activists</li> <li>❖ <b>Active citizenship</b> through greater involvement in community planning</li> <li>❖ <b>Development and support of community structures</b></li> </ul>
Building Capacity & Quality in Volunteering Infrastructure – NCompass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Promoting <b>quality standards</b> throughout the volunteering structures in the County</li> <li>❖ Overall <b>strengthening of volunteering infrastructure</b></li> </ul>
Collective Capacity Building Bid – all LIOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Various projects supported at each LIO to create <b>development and improvement</b> opportunities designed to meet the individual needs of each LIO</li> <li>❖ Elements of both capital and revenue spend</li> </ul>
Performance Management and Quality Assurance Principles – NCompass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Template created as a LIO toolkit for supporting front line agencies wishing to implement <b>performance management standards/systems</b></li> <li>❖ Collective assessment of quality standards within LIO bodies</li> <li>❖ Recommendations for improvement, <b>collaboration and support</b> working across the county to share and <b>support front line groups.</b></li> </ul>
ICT Capital Improvement Scheme – CEMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ A capital spend project for <b>ICT</b> hardware and software for frontline 3<sup>rd</sup> sector groups.</li> <li>❖ Supporting previous ICT developments through earlier ChangeUp spend.</li> </ul>
Visioning for Infrastructure – NCompass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Partnership/Strategic Planning</b></li> <li>❖ Focused development time as a Consortium</li> <li>❖ Development of engagement structures and priorities for <b>infrastructure development</b></li> </ul>
Converge – The Learning Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Develop <b>workforce development strategy</b></li> <li>❖ Develop <b>training and finance</b> function for the County</li> <li>❖ Develop relationships with LSC</li> </ul>

**Graph 1: Spend in Northamptonshire by Organisation**

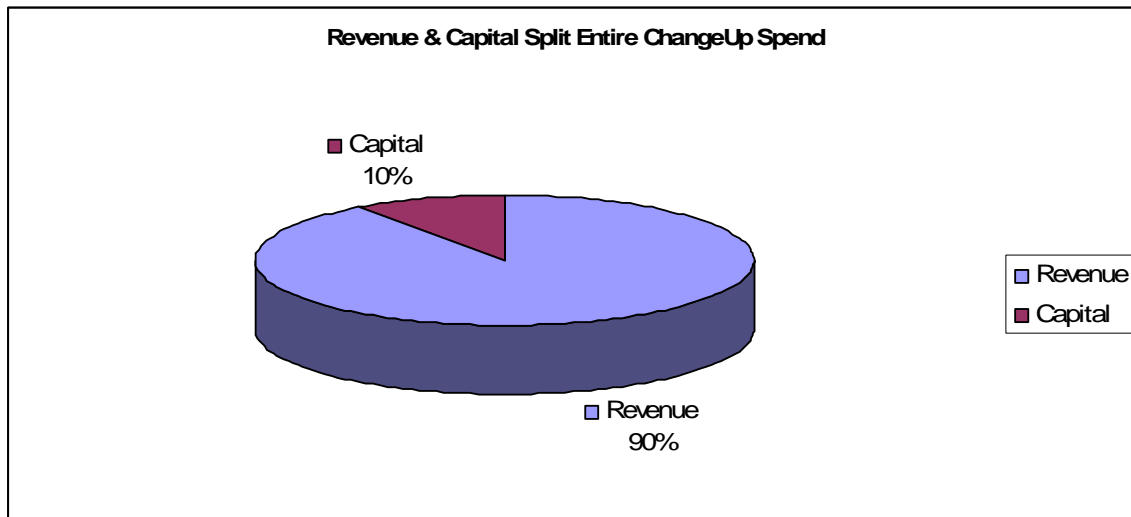
The following chart shows the allocation of spend was distributed within the 7 organisations:



Please note that one of NCompass’s projects (£281,086 was distributed further: Capacity Building Project with only £32,500 remaining within NCompass).

**Graph 2: Collective Overview of Distribution of Spend**

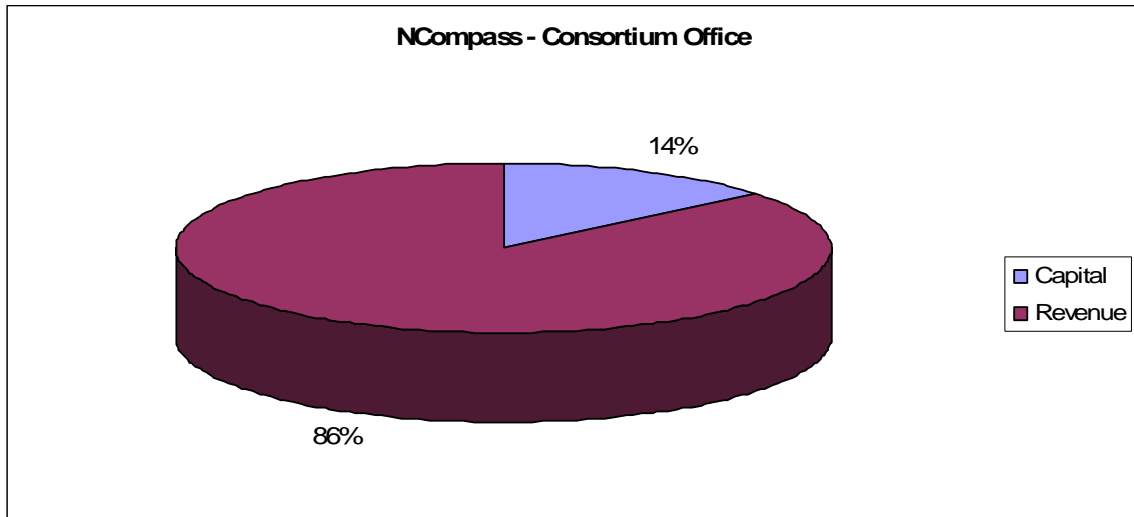
A total of £986,281 was allocated within Northamptonshire. The following graph shows the allocation between capital and revenue projects.



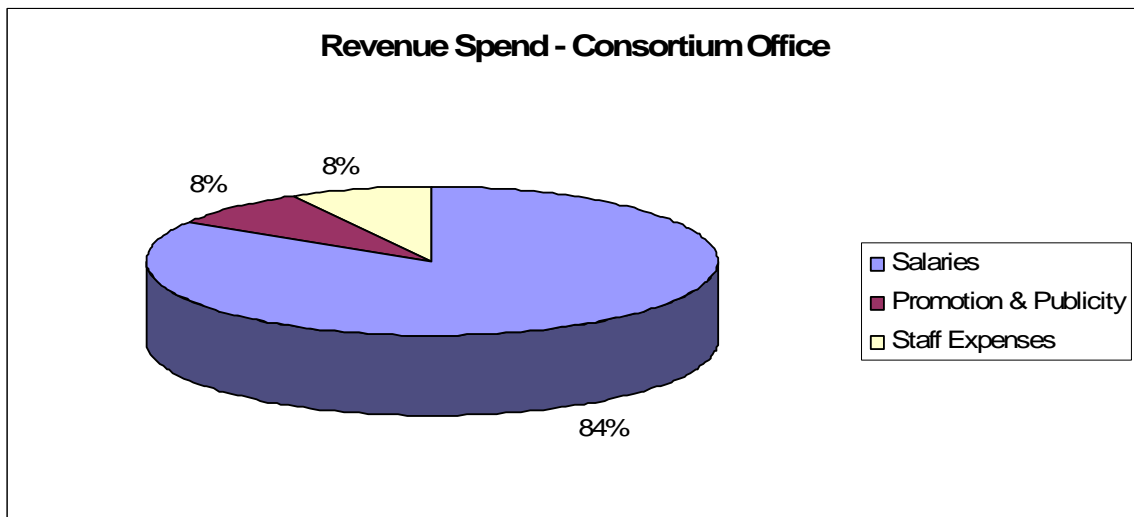
**Graph 3: Overview of Spend by Project**

**Project One: Consortium Office/NCompass**

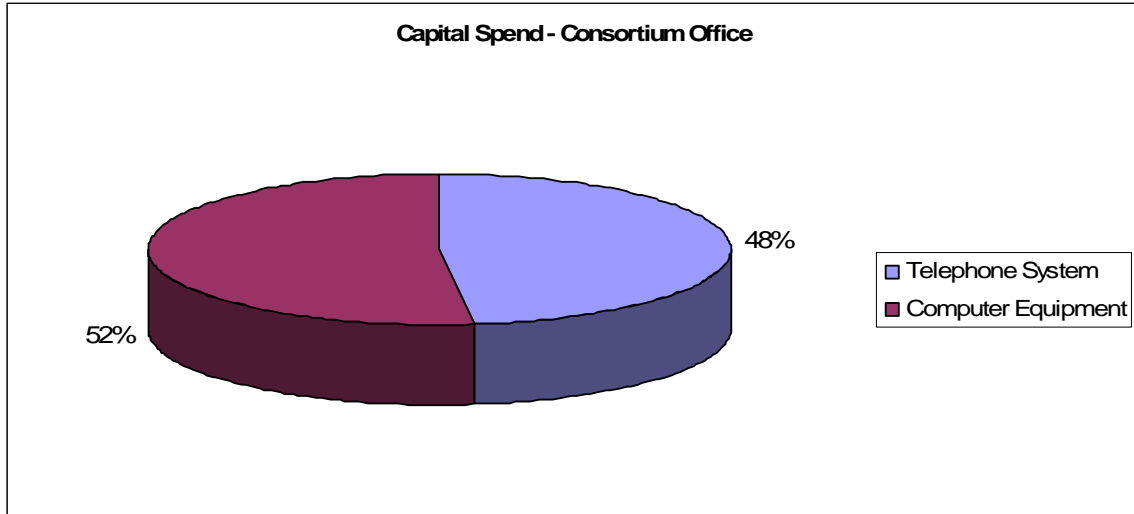
The following charts evidence the spend profile for the Consortium Office activity. The first chart shows the capital and revenue split.



The following chart illustrates the allocation of revenue spend.

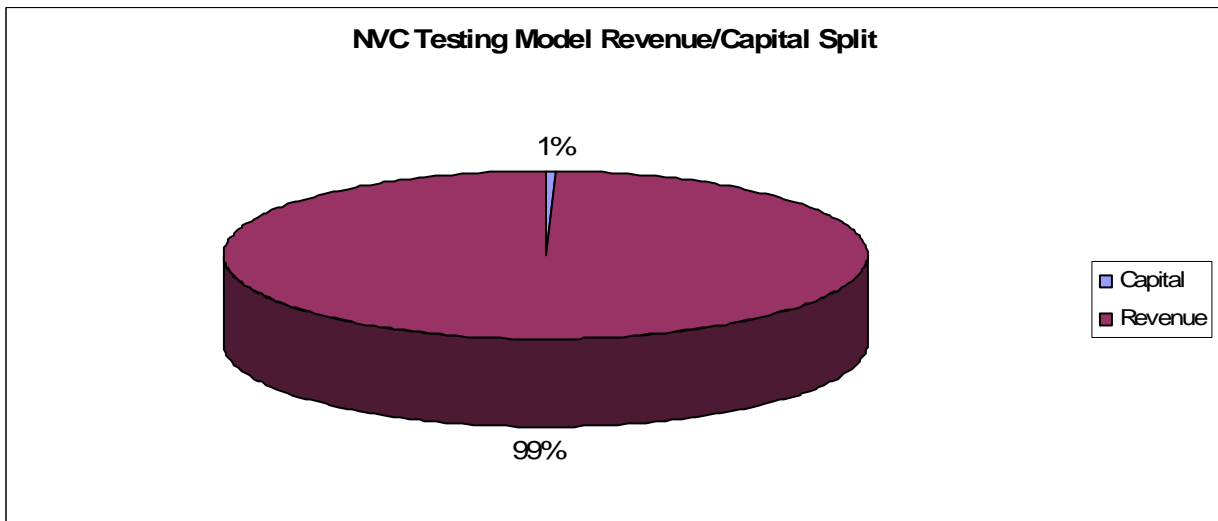


The final chart shows the onward allocation of capital spend.

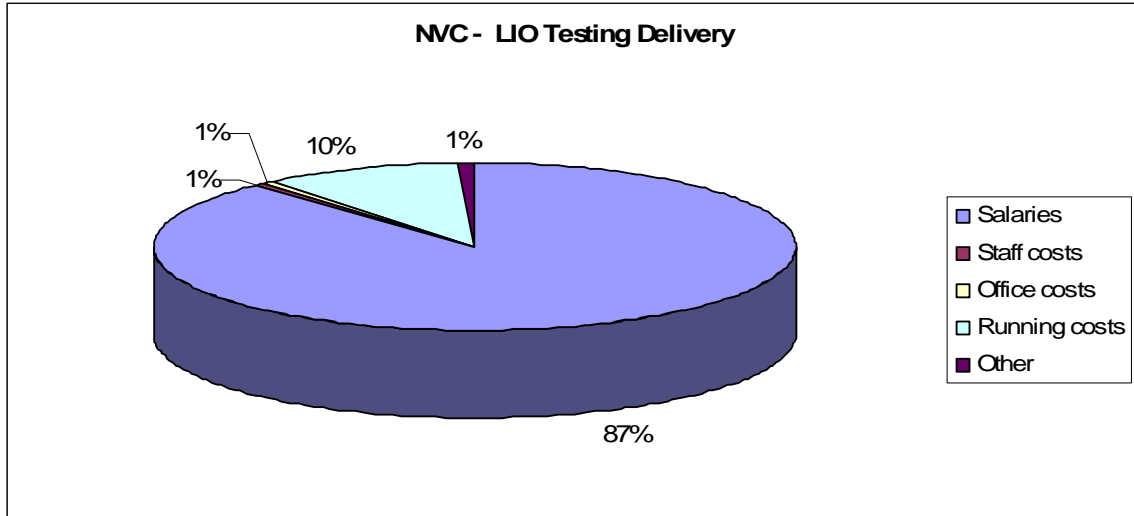


**Project Two: Testing LIO Delivery – NVC**

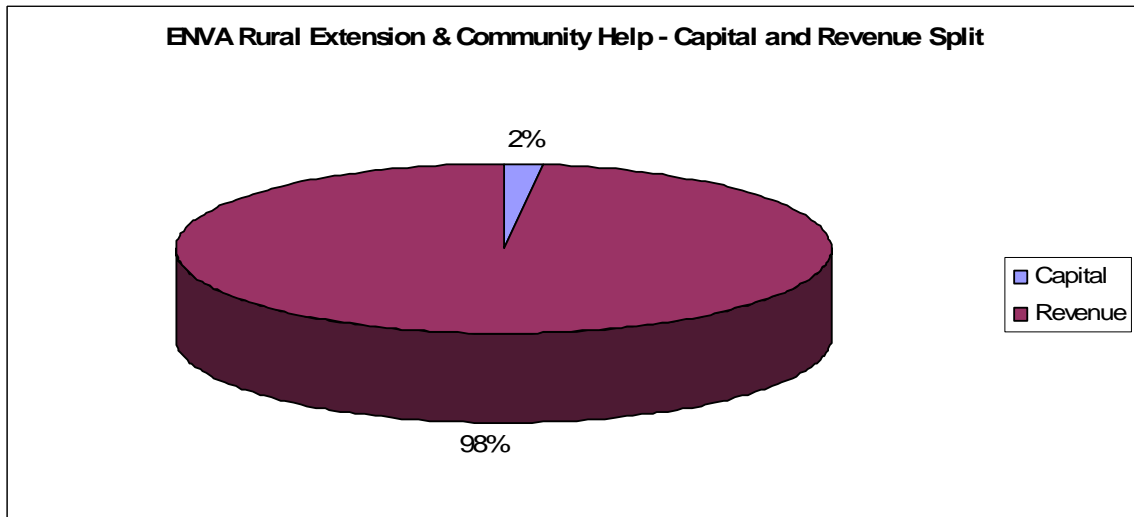
The following charts provide details on the allocation of spend for this project.



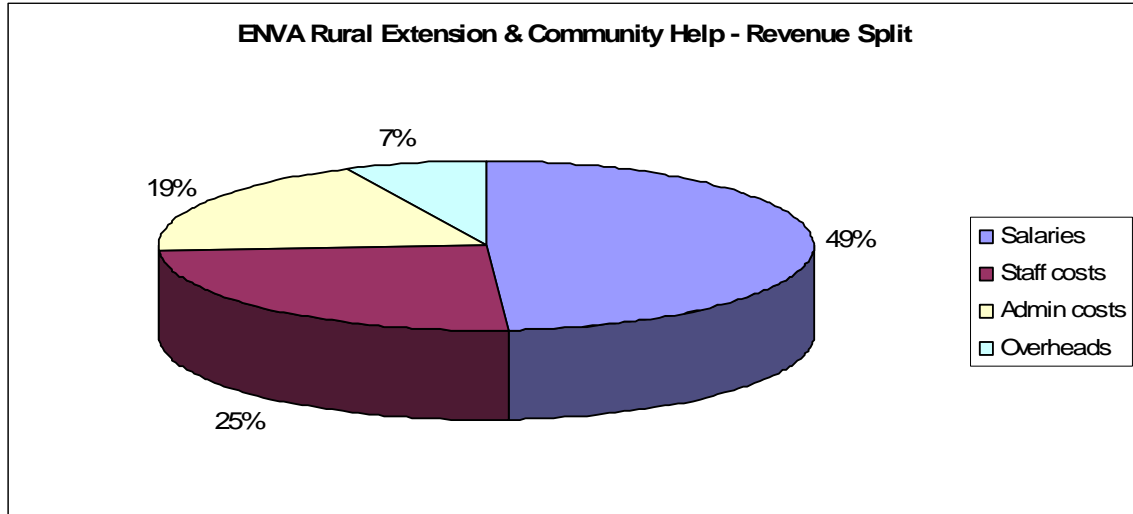
The allocation of revenue was as follows:



**Project Three: ENVA – Rural Extension & Community Help**

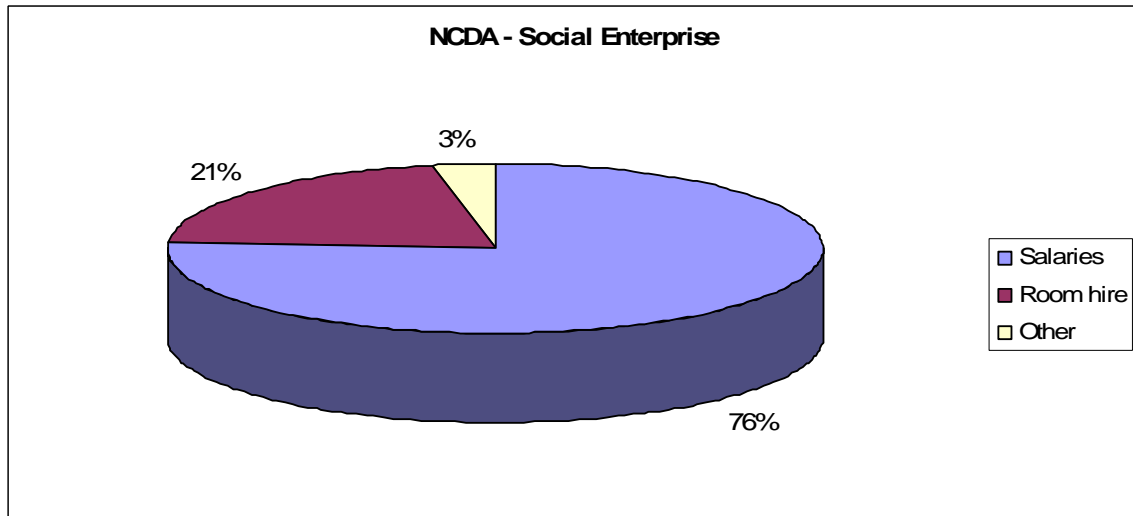


The following chart illustrates the allocation of revenue spend.



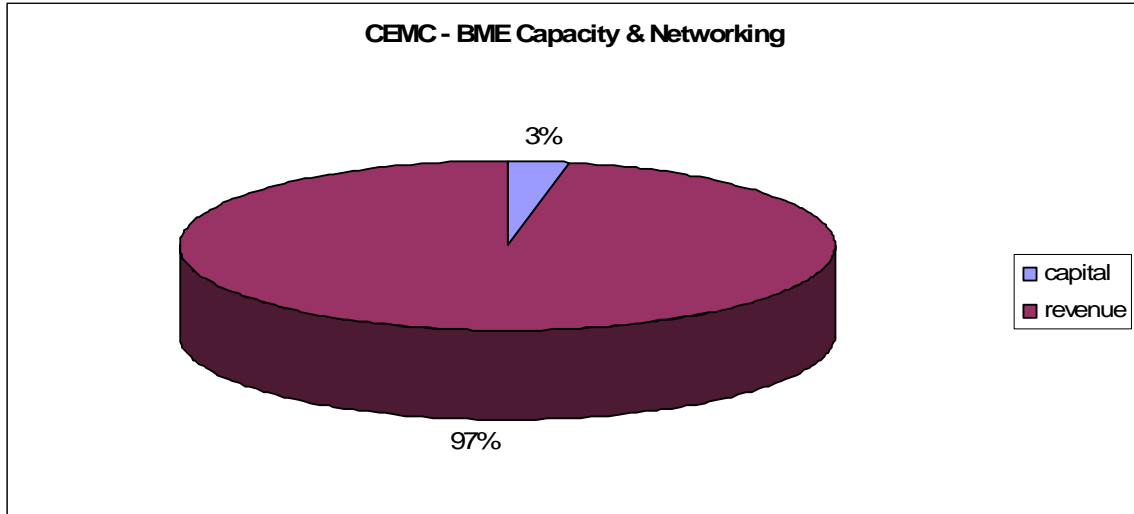
**Project Four: NCD A – Social Enterprise Awareness**

This project did not have any capital spend. The revenue allocation was split as follows:

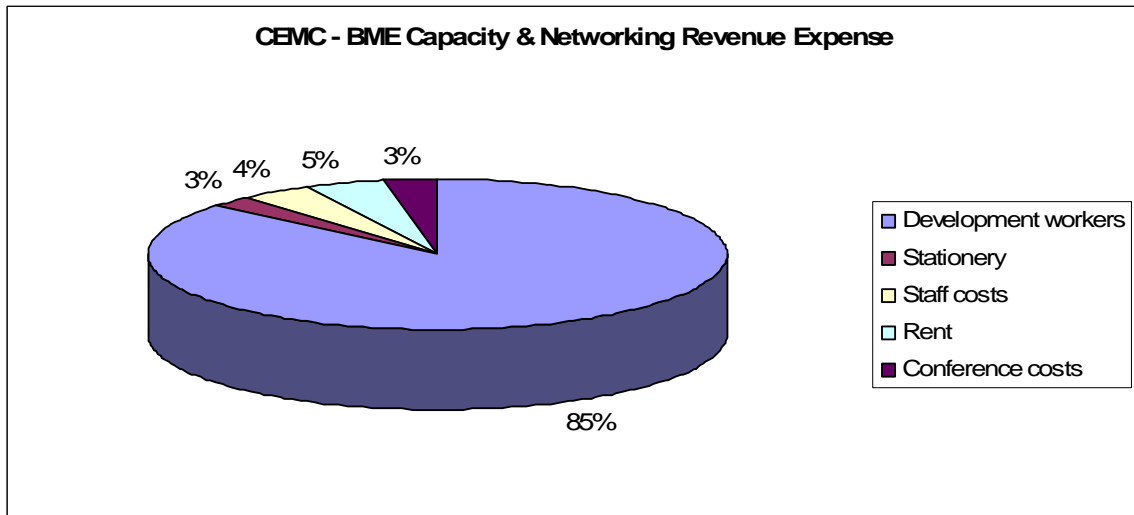


**Project Five: CEMC – Capacity and Networking Development**

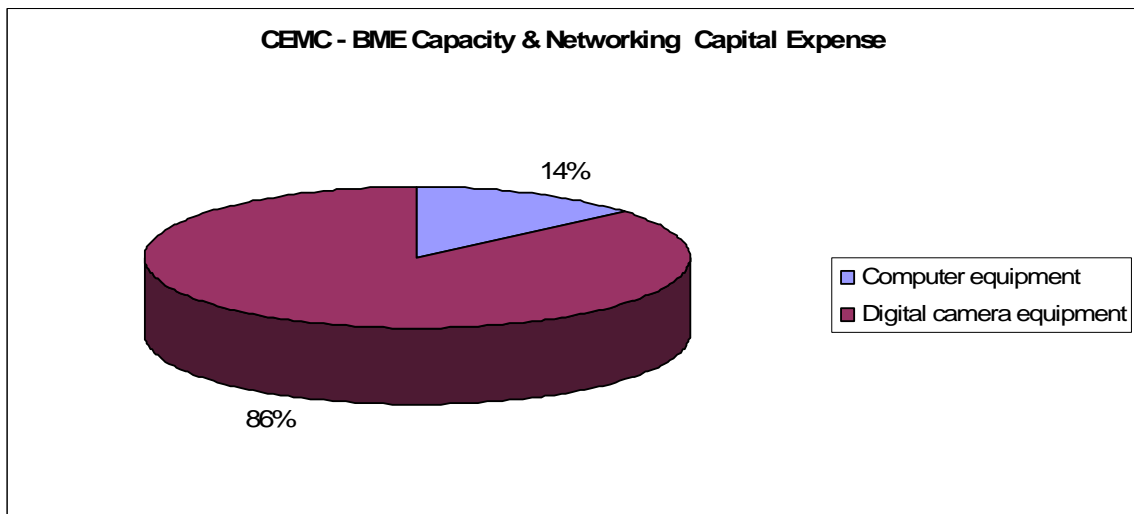
The revenue and capital split for the project was as follows:



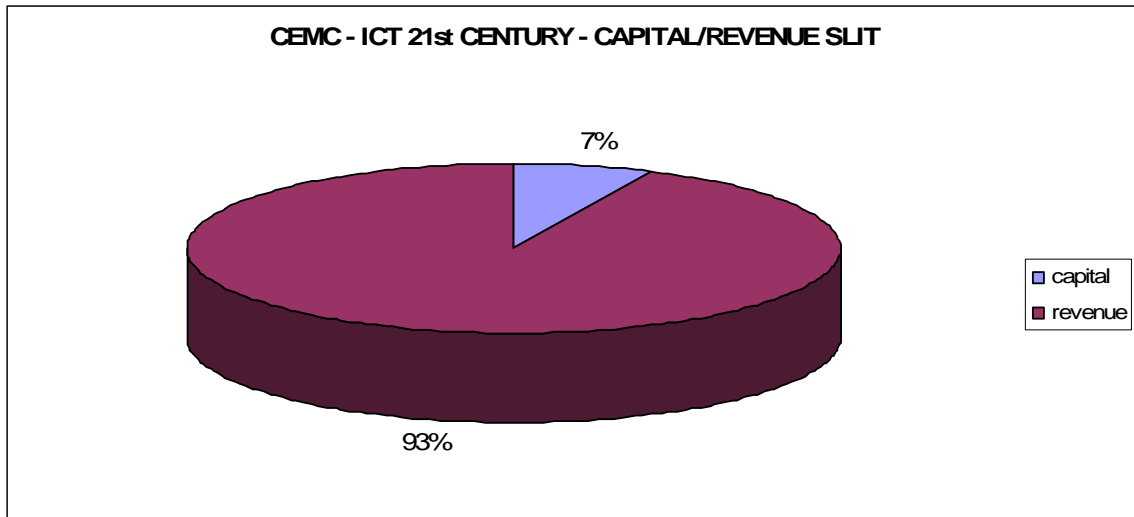
Analysis shows that revenue spend was allocated within the following areas.



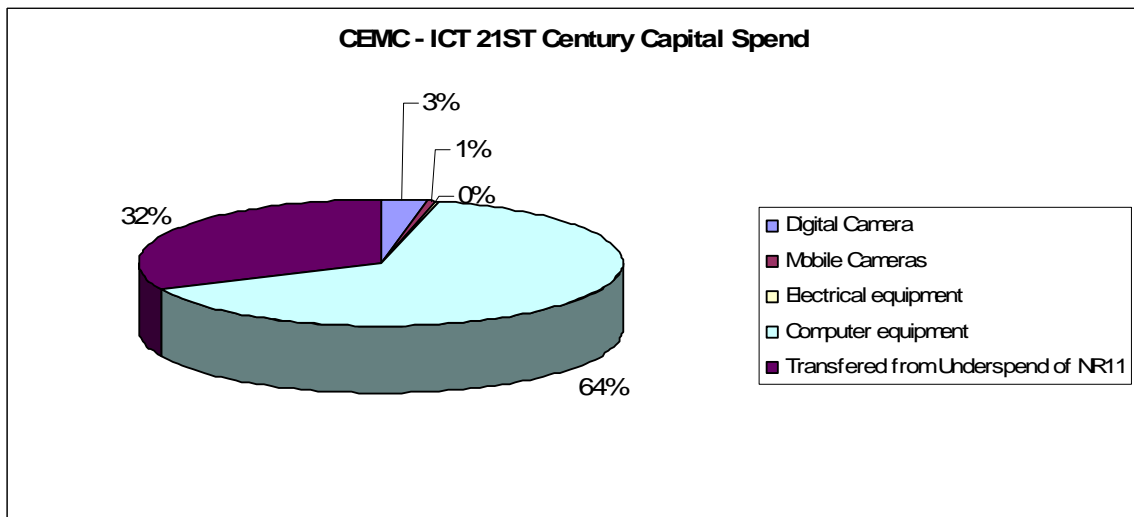
Finally, the allocation of capital spend is illustrated below.



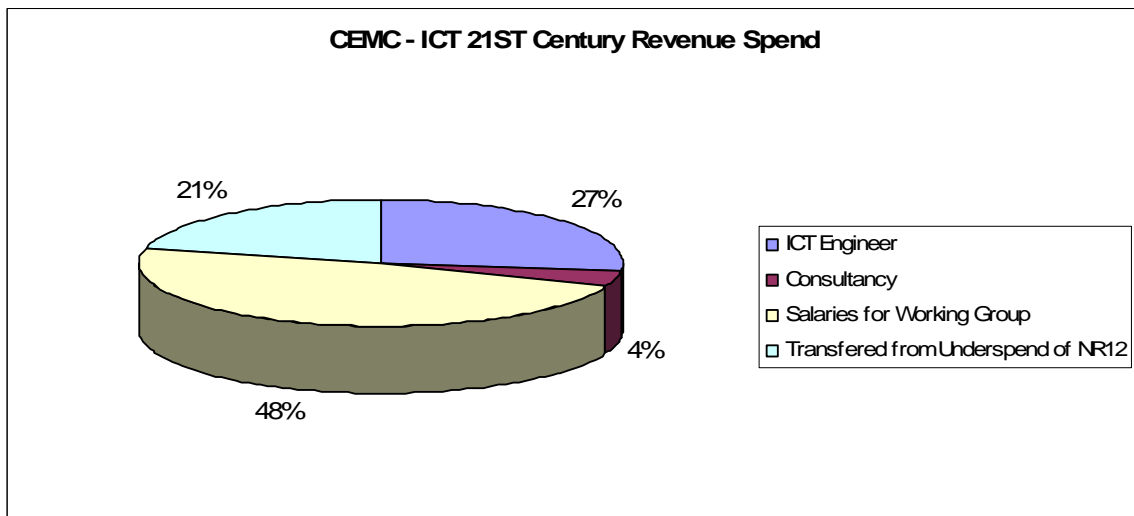
**Project Six: CEMC – Bringing ICT for LIOs into 21<sup>st</sup> Century**



The allocation of capital is illustrated on the chart below.

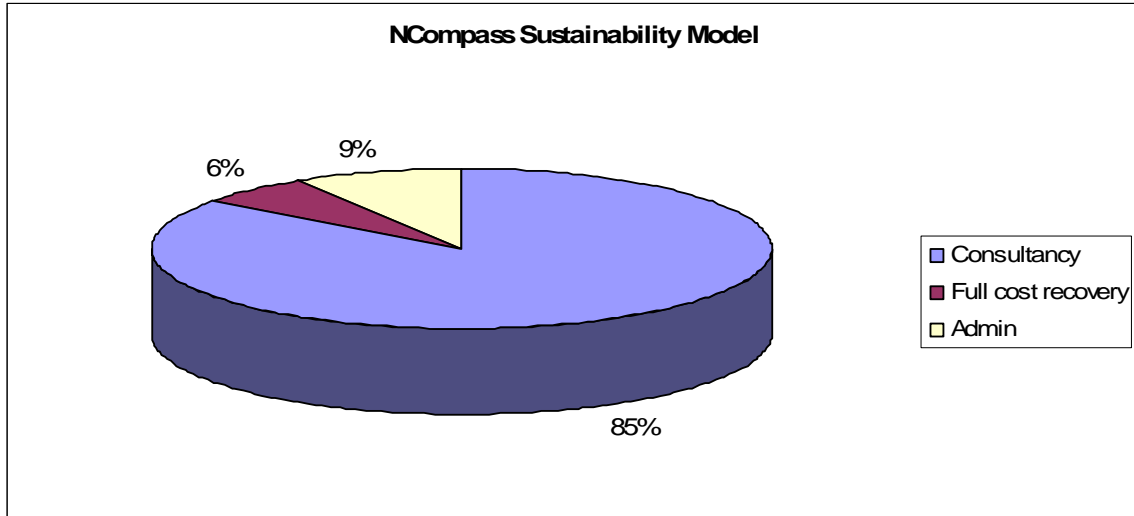


And finally, the details of revenue spend.

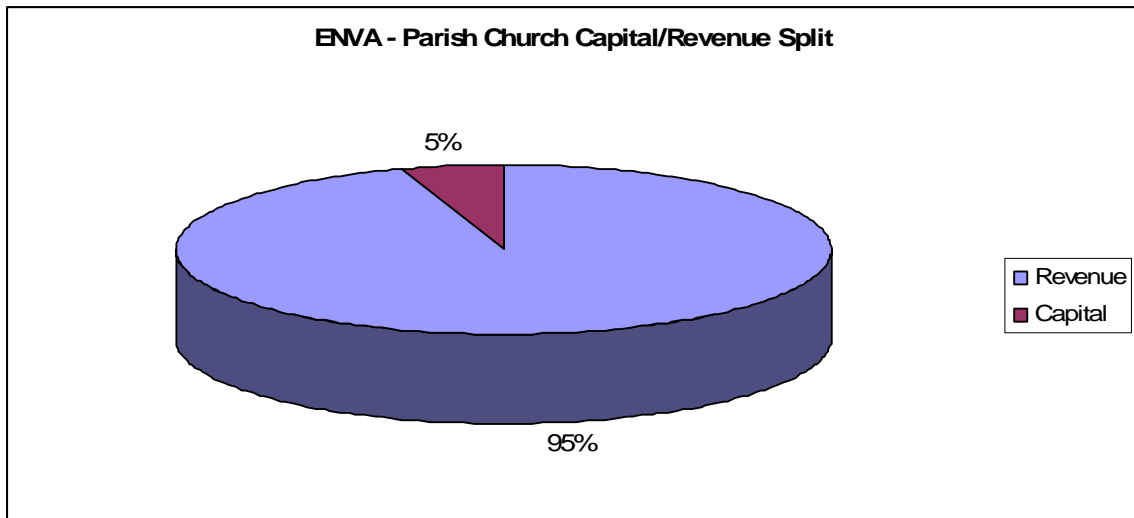


**Project Seven: NCompass - Building Income Sustainability**

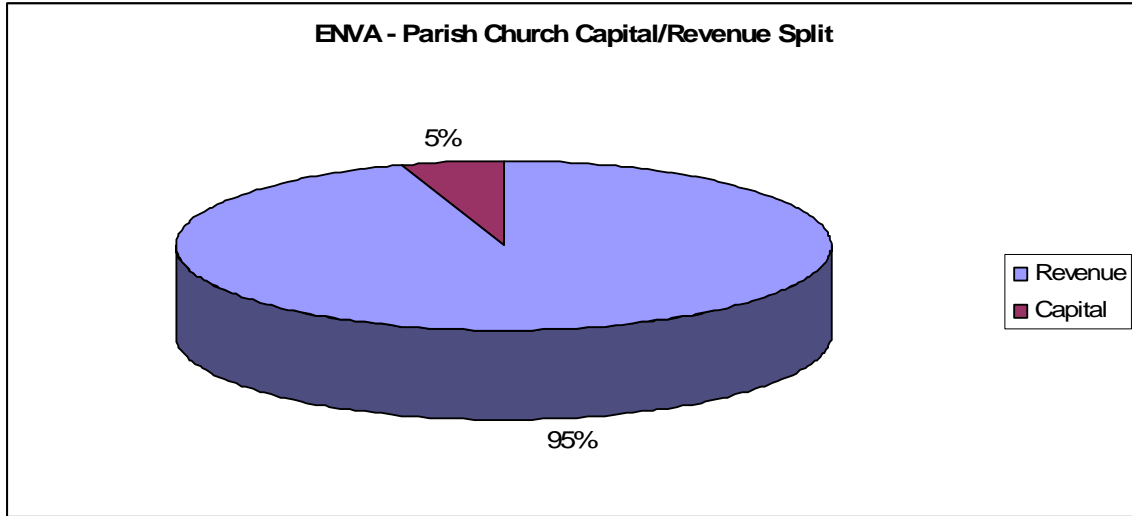
There was no capital spend for this project. Revenue was allocated within the following areas:



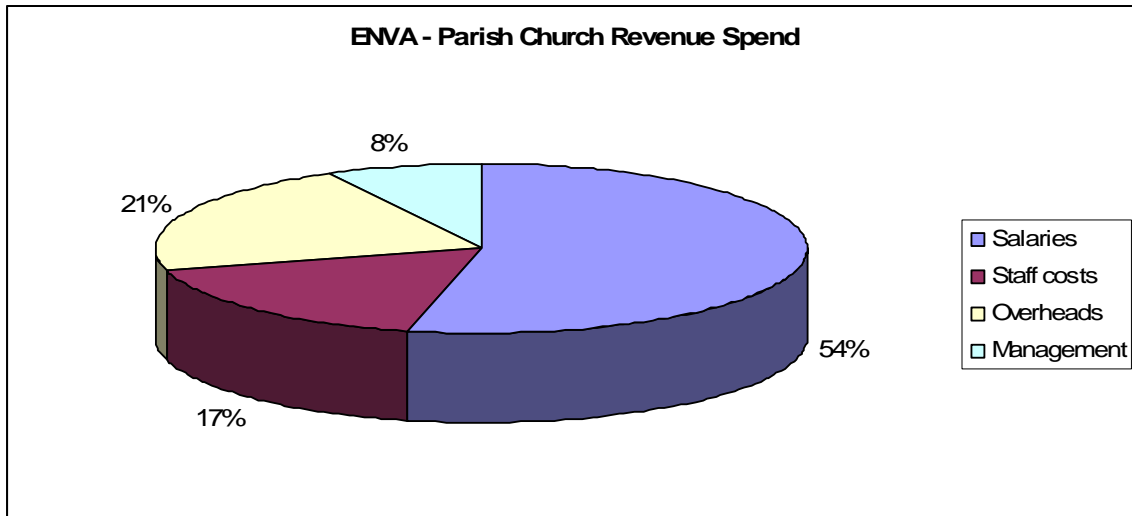
**Project Eight: ENVA - Parish Church Co-ordinator**



Capital spend was allocated as follows:

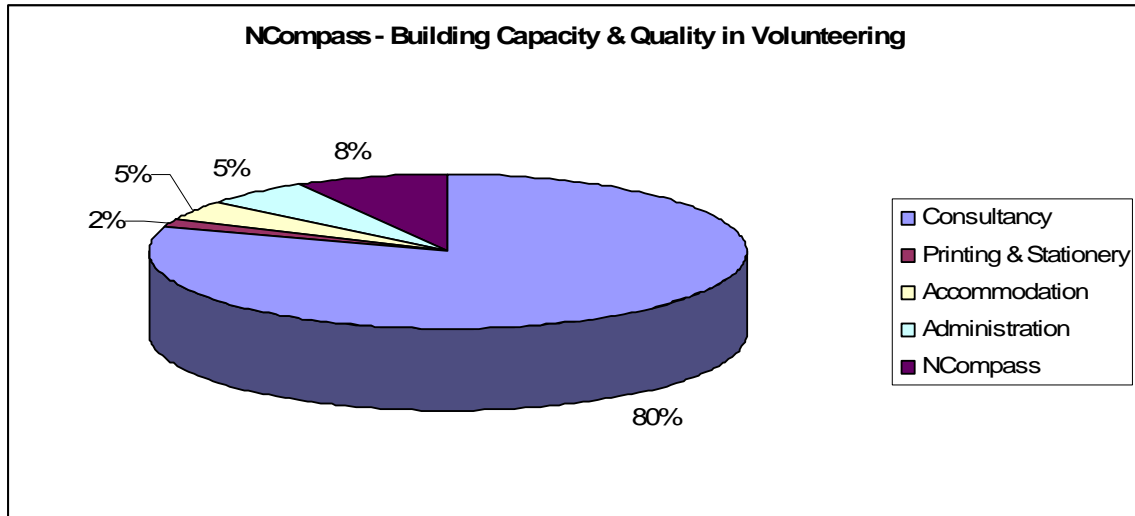


Revenue spend was allocated as follows:



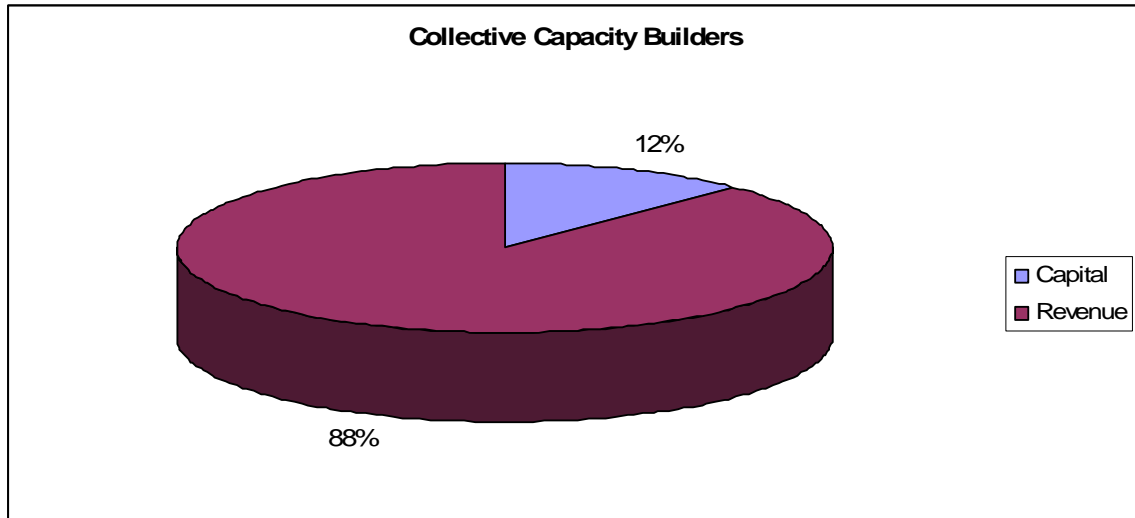
**Project Nine: NCompass – Building Capacity & Quality in Volunteering Infrastructure**

Again there was no capital spend for this project. The following chart shows the allocation of spend for this project.

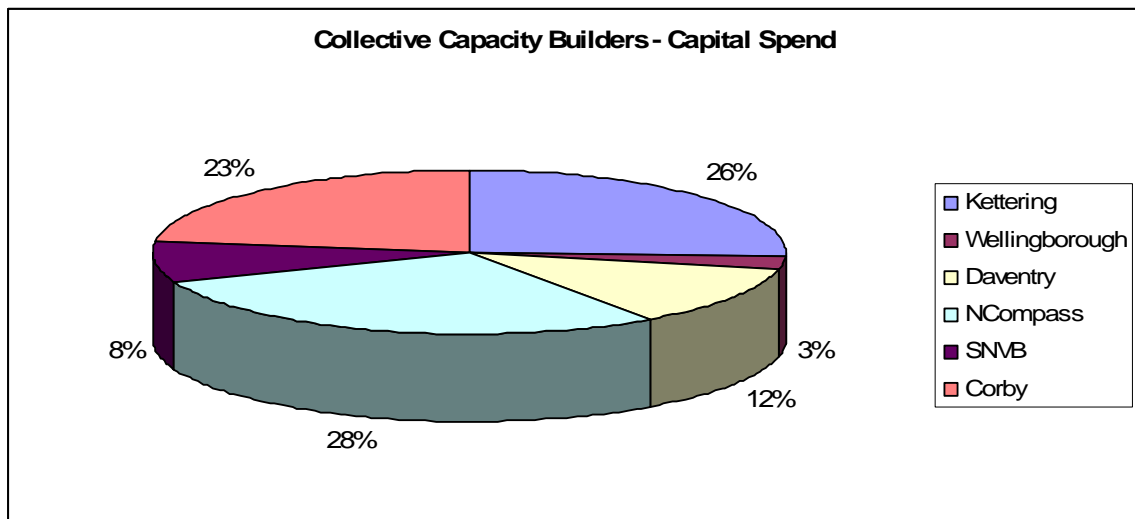


**Project Ten: All - Collective Capacity Building Bid**

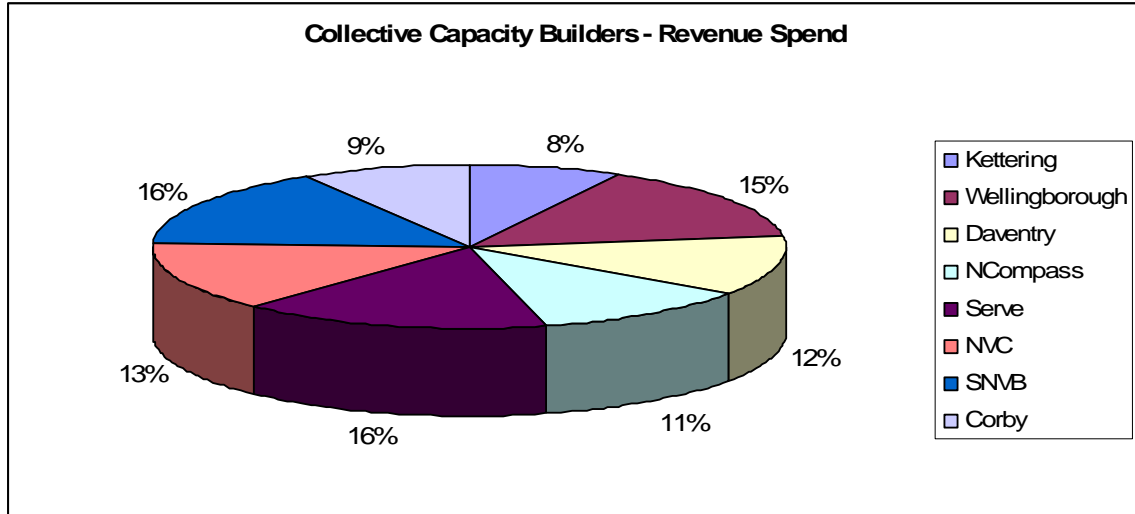
The following shows the allocation of capital and revenue spend.



The allocation of capital spend was split between the following organisations.

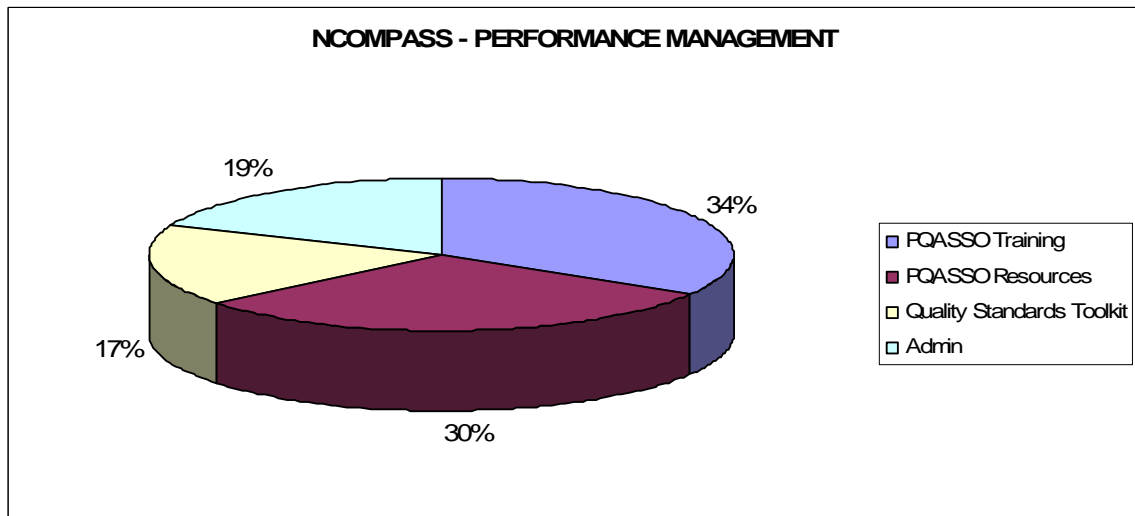


Finally, the allocation of revenue spend was as follows:

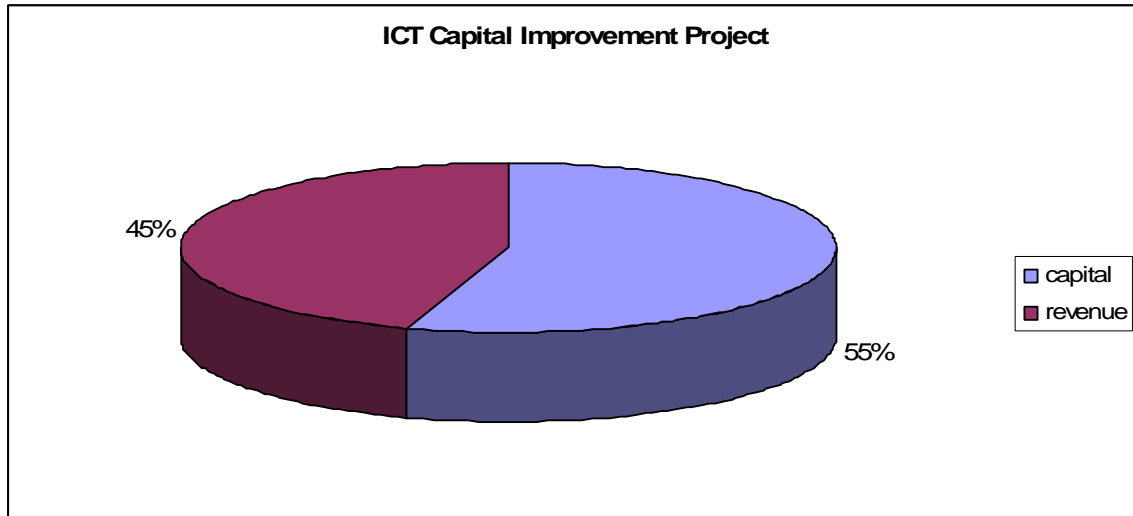


**Project Eleven: NCompass – Delivering Sustainable Improvement through Performance Management**

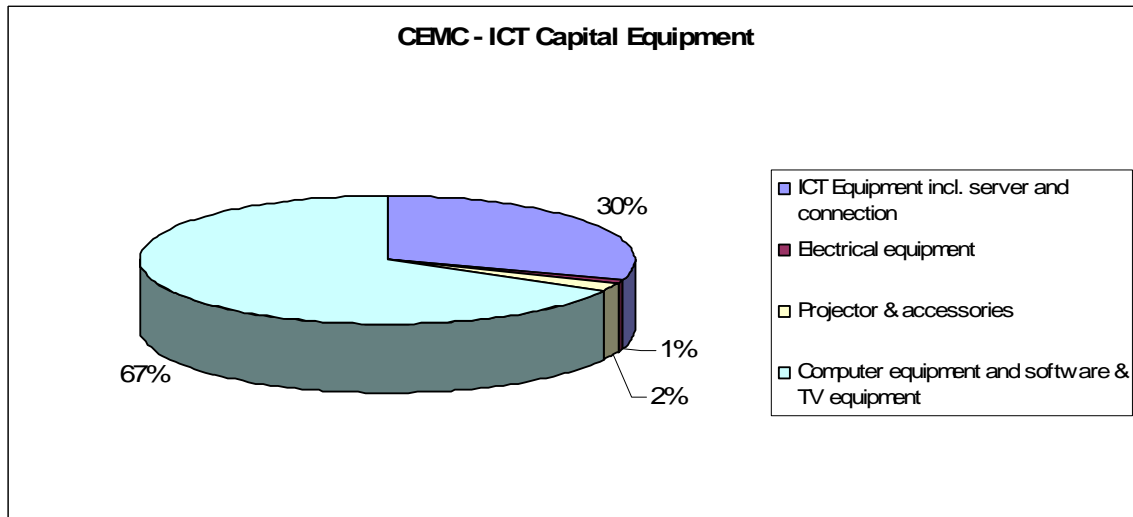
Once again, there was no capital spend for this project.



**Project Twelve: CEMC – ICT Capital Improvement**

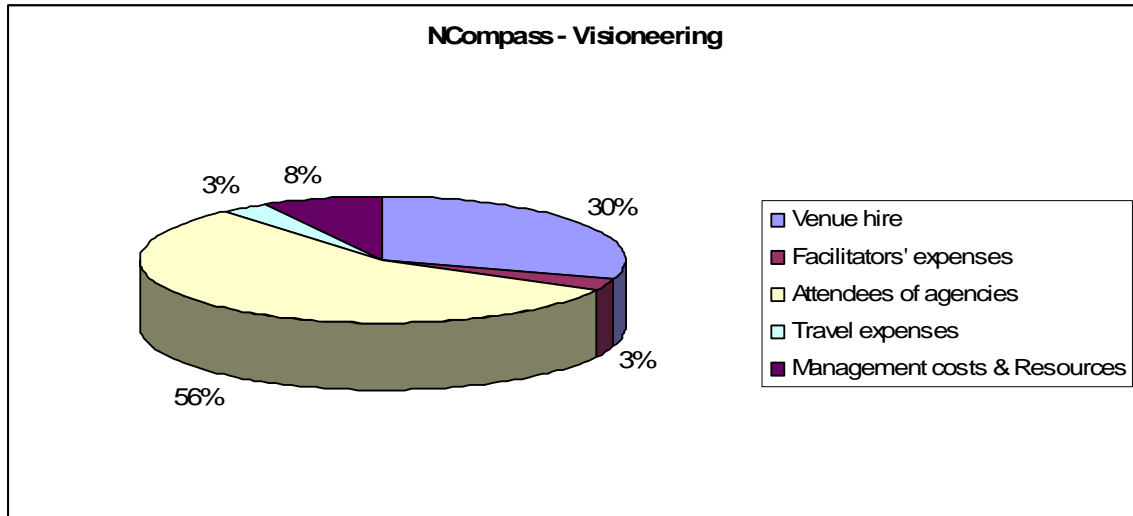


All the revenue spend was allocated to internal salaries, the allocation of the capital spend is as follows:



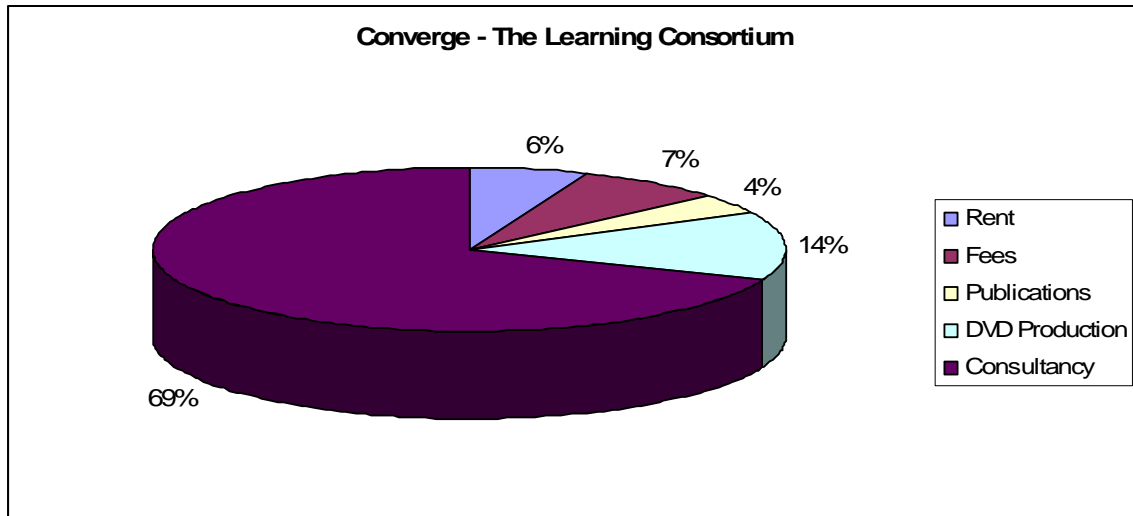
**Project Thirteen: NCompass – Visioneering for Infrastructure**

There was no capital spend for this project, the following chart illustrates the allocation of revenue spend.



**Project Fourteen: Converge – The Learning Consortium**

Again there was no capital spend for this project.



**Key Findings**

**Table 4: Analysis of ChangeUp Expenditure**

Area	Comment
Match of projects against original IIP	Given the time constraints and issues discussed earlier regarding the development of the IIP and its onward projects, there does appear to be a strong correlation between the projects chosen and the goals of the original IIP.
Analysis on Spend – key points	The majority of spend was allocated to Revenue Projects. Spend was distributed across all LIO parties with NCompass managing the largest amount (although some of this spend was further allocated e.g. collective capacity builders bid).

	Where capital spend occurred this was directly related to the project or the development needs of the organisation hosting the project. The more established LIO's needed less capital spend, and this is reflected in the allocation of the figures.
Analysis on Spend	There appears to be a balance between the use of (or recruitment of) staff members to undertake projects and consultants. This balance seems to depend upon the nature and of the project. Where projects could be developed internally, this appears to have happened.
Analysis on Spend	Processes of full cost recovery appear to be utilised, with many of the projects allocating a percentage of their fixed costs.  There does appear to be some inconsistencies across projects in relation to the allocation of fixed costs, this should be reviewed to ensure that a standard process is adopted across the infrastructure groups (this could utilise the FCR model developed by NCompass).

## 5.0 Assessing the Impact of ChangeUp Projects

Sustain visited all the organisations which had project managed various ChangeUp projects using a structured interview template (Appendix 2). The interview structure was designed to understand how individually and collectively the ChangeUp projects had contributed towards changes in service provision within the Northamptonshire Infrastructure. Based on the original IIP Sustain assessed the following:

- Organisational Development
- Partnership/Brokerage
- Technical Support
- Income Generation
- HR & Personnel
- Policy & Research
- Advocacy & Representation
- Communications
- ICT
- Barriers regarding the ChangeUp processes
- Solutions to Barriers
- Generic Overview – Key Successes
  
- Monitoring and Evaluation – Business Planning
- Monitoring and Evaluation – Front Line Impact
- Monitoring and Evaluation – Development of Infrastructure Hubs
- Monitoring and Evaluation – Working Relationships Across the Consortia
- Monitoring and Evaluation – Representation and Advocacy

### **Area One: Organisational Development**

Individually and collectively there is plenty of evidence to suggest that all LIOs and the Countywide Infrastructure agency have developed their organisational capacity due to ChangeUp spend. This can be specifically evidenced by:

- GOEM stating that the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector infrastructure organisations have moved “from weak to good” (source Consortium Minutes)
- Collective Capacity building projects supporting individual development needs of LIOs, allowing for a unique tailored approach in each District/Borough
- Sharing of best practice and learning across the Consortium through the nature of shared partnership projects
- ICT strategy / capital projects (CEMC)
- Rural community development work across 52 villages(ENVA)
- Skills and training gaps mapped (Converge and Corby VB)
- LIO testing model project (NVC)
- Performance Management Standards/Volunteering Standards (NVC/NCompass)
- Development of internal structures and systems within NCompass e.g. learning and research policy area.
- Creation of Forums for some areas and further development of existing ones across the County.
- Consistent and solid attendance to Consortium meetings by most members.

In addition to this internal organisational development based on the information provided to Sustain, Sustain believes **around 342** frontline organisations were directly or indirectly involved in projects created via ChangeUp monies.

### **Issues for Consideration**

Whilst it is clear that much has been achieved during the life of the ChangeUp projects regarding organisational development, many of the organisations have stated that they are now experiencing issues around the ongoing resource needed to deliver the breadth of services required by front line groups.

Sustain would encourage that information and outcomes from the individual projects are shared across the LIO groups. Whilst this might seem like an additional action, the danger of not doing could mean that valuable learning could be lost. It is suggested that this is achieved by each project owner taking along outcomes from their projects to a planned Consortium session to share.

Regarding future development needs, it is recommended that common needs are mapped across the groups to ensure that any future available spend can be co-ordinated and maximised.

### **Area Two: Partnership & Brokerage**

The ChangeUp projects are able to evidence the following developments:

- Many examples of sharing and learning across the infrastructure groups
- Comments regarding “improved relationships and a recognition of common ground”
- A developed Partnership Plan detailing key objectives and actions for future infrastructure developments (Visioneering work)

- Cross fertilization of ideas within LIO/Infrastructure groups e.g. LIO testing the Model project
- Templates for future work across the infrastructure group which can be used within the infrastructure group and with frontline agencies (NCompass Full Cost Recovery and Performance Management work)
- Increased involvement in external structures e.g. LSP's, LAA development work at both a Countywide level and District level (Corby)
- Partnership working between LIOs and frontline groups e.g. NCDA project, CEMC BME and ICT project
- Development of Optimum Volunteering infrastructure
- Evidence of stakeholder management and engagement of key policy and service developments within the County.

### **Issues for Consideration**

There are some common areas to all LIOs regarding partnership opportunities. For example, Sustain believes that there may be some synergies in sharing communication platforms to ease the burden across the LIO groups. In addition there are some common service delivery areas which could provide opportunities for sharing developments and work.

It is recognised however, that each LIO is operating at a District level and therefore has their own agenda or work plan, issues and structures in place. The suggested review of common needs should not disrupt local structures but assist in reducing a duplication of effort.

The Consortium could seek to identify Champions in certain areas to help make the most out of individual knowledge and expertise. These could be focused on the key development areas of the future partnership plan.

The Consortium must be aware of its natural sensitivities and challenges within the group, for example the recent competitive tendering environment can create barriers. The group must seek to accept this and find a way of working that acknowledges this tension but still allows for progress.

### **Area Three: Technical Support**

There has been a general increase in support offered and an element of recruitment, training and development of the staffs involved in supporting frontline organisations through the ChangeUp projects.

Most infrastructure bodies reported an increase in internal training and development opportunities through the ChangeUp project work. In addition there were some specific areas where expertise and knowledge was developed:

- BME Capacity & Network Development (CEMC)
- ICT for 21<sup>st</sup> Century (CEMC)
- LIO Testing Model (NVC & partners)
- Converge – Skills and Training strategy
- Rural Championing/Community Development (ENVA)
- Volunteering Infrastructure (NCompass & partners)

#### **Area Four: Income Generation**

The IIP highlighted the importance of sustainability as being central to growing a healthy vibrant 3<sup>rd</sup> sector in Northamptonshire. There were some specific projects which focused on either income generation or sustainable funding these were:

- NCDA – Social Enterprise project – this supported 15 organisations in developing an approach for attracting and sustaining different avenues of income
- NCompass – Full Cost Recovery Template and support

In addition to this the following has been achieved

- NCompass has realised £60,000 through traded income activities
- NCompass LAA project £24,000
- CEMC realised £200,000 LSC contract in partnership with another organisation (BOOST Training Ltd)
- Corby Volunteer Bureau realised £188,000 over a 3 year period (Reaching Communities grant)
- South Northants Volunteer Bureau received a £110,000 grant from Reaching Communities grants and £25,000 support for implementing Volunteering England Quality Accreditation
- Daventry Volunteering Centre - £20k from Daventry District Council and an Awards of All Project £3k
- ENVA £5,000 for Faithwork
- NVCA £120,000 over 3.5 years through Reaching Communities Grants

#### **Issues for Consideration**

It is important that the Consortium is able to track over time the increased income contribution that LIO staff interventions can have when working with front line organisations and additional funds realised within their infrastructure groups. This can not be evidenced currently. It is suggested that LIOs discuss a common tracking method of capturing increase in income of agencies where there has been an involvement by a LIO.

It is too early to truly understand what the collective lift in income will be as it will take time for the benefits of the work undertaken to settle and take effect. Thought however, must be given to ensure that all infrastructure agencies are consistently monitoring this to ensure that this can be properly tracked and recorded over time. It is recommended that a standard template is developed and used so that a collective countywide picture can be developed over time.

Each LIO should both have and use the Full Cost Recovery template to help organisations understand their cost base. This is particularly relevant given the move towards a commissioning based culture for service provision with the sector.

N.B. The County Council invests £410,000 per annum in supporting Voluntary and Community sector infrastructure activity and c£3.2m in wider voluntary and community sector spend.

#### **Area Five: HR & Personnel**

It is clear that from the information supplied to Sustain that many of the LIOs have been able to develop their staff through ChangeUp projects. This has happened formally

through structured training programmes, the implementation of performance management systems (Volunteering England Accreditation) and via informal learning through individual projects.

Some organisations were able to introduce new posts for the duration of their projects (CEMC and ENVA) and for others development has happened through the up-skilling or the introduction of development worker posts for existing staff. This up-skilling has meant that a more strategic focus can be taken in certain areas (Corby).

NCompass have been able to recruit to their organisation and develop staff within its new structures.

In addition to the above there has been the ongoing informal development through the sharing of ideas and structures within the LIO groups at the various partnership meetings.

### **Issues for Consideration**

Based on the information given to Sustain, it is suggested that this area must not be overlooked. Many LIOs with Northamptonshire operate on small staff figures and find themselves exposed should unplanned absence or resignations occur.

It is recommended that this is discussed within the context of both individual LIO business plans alongside the wider County infrastructure plan. This will help to determine the skill set and knowledge base required. This discussion should develop co-ordinated plans across the infrastructure population to ensure that this staff population can be developed and retained. There is the opportunity for structured informal and formal learning within the LIO group offering efficiency of scale regarding funding for training.

NVC's work of modelling the optimum LIO structure and Converge's skills development TNA work should help to develop this conversation for both front line and infrastructure agencies.

### **Area Six: Policy & Research**

This area shows many examples of change. Some of this development coincided with the appointment of NCompass as the new countywide infrastructure agency. However, the following has been evidenced:

- NCompass have set up and delivered
  - Bulletins on Government Policy
  - Equality and Diversity products
  - An equality toolkit
  - Research on LAA and Compact Developments
- Rural Project mapped the needs of older people (ENVA)
- CEMC's BME project identified needs and gaps and worked to build capacity in terms of both delivery and support methods
- CEMC's ICT project identified the needs of ICT within the Sector
- Converge developed a Training Needs Analysis for the Sector (workforce)
- Kettering – undertook a feasibility study for a 3<sup>rd</sup> sector hub
- Daventry – delivered funding research for 62 groups

### **Issues for Consideration**

Due to the timeline of the project Sustain has not been able to explore how widely the above developments have been shared across the county. For example the work of the Rural Project through ENVA may have relevance to South Northants – has this learning been forwarded and discussed across the County?

Again the TNA work of Converge needs to be explored. How does this skills/workforce development work link into the developing business plan for future infrastructure developments? It is recommended that this is discussed at the next appropriate meeting to ensure that the maximum can be gleaned from this research.

### **Area Seven: Advocacy & Representation**

ChangeUp monies appear to have enabled a focus on the ability of LIOs to engage with local engagement structures. This is particularly the case for the smaller sized LIOs which have suffered with their ability to engage due to their relatively limited resources.

Each LIO now has a Forum in place to ensure that effective advocacy and representation can take place. There appears to be growing representation on other structures for engagement within their locality, examples given were Homeless Forums, Compact Group and Local Area Agreement Task Force (LAA). Many organisations seem to be engaged with their local LSP's with some having a longer history of engagement than others.

From a regional perspective both CEMC and NCompass are engaged with regional structures to ensure that Northants is adequately represented.

### **Issues and Consideration**

Time and resource is a big issue for many LIOs along with the sheer number of potential meetings they could attend. Most now have their Forums working and regional engagement and representation happens through NCompass and CEMC in their respective areas.

Within this area some mentioned that representation structures was still an area of work-in-progress and that this needs to be continually reviewed and tested to ensure that the most appropriate structures are identified and utilised. It was further commented that this must continue to be open and inclusive and one that is evidenced by clear representation and engagement processes.

The challenge for some LIOs now is to continue the progress made now that there is a reduction in available resources (both financially and people). It is recommended that this is reviewed collectively from time to time to ensure that all areas are covered *and* to ensure that there is a consistent approach when wishing to solicit or represent views of the sector. It is suggested that this could be co-ordinated through Consortium or partnership meeting structures, perhaps as a standard quarterly agenda item.

### **Area Eight: Communication**

There was plenty evidence regarding the Consortium's ability to communicate! A review of Consortium minutes showed that:

Total Number of Meetings December 2004 – December 2006: **27**

Average number of Representative attendance: **9.5**

**Percentage of Attendance for LIOs:**

- NLGBA/NCompass: 93%
- CEMC: 85%
- DVC: 74%
- ENVA: 67%
- NVC: 63%
- NCDA: 52%
- SNVB: 37%
- KVN: 19%
- Converge: 15%

In addition to these structured meetings there is consistent evidence of strong communication platforms to the wider 3rd sector. These include:

- E-alerts (NCompass)
- Newsletter (All)
- Website
- Forums (All)
- Community Champions Network (NVCA)

It was generally felt that communication had improved across the infrastructure group. Some of this in part was due to their Visioneering work which took place during the summer and the outcomes of NCC's tendering process for infrastructure organisations, a general settling down period.

Individually and collectively the group view was that communication had improved along with the ability to trust and engage in open dialogue regarding future developments.

**Issues for Consideration**

Sustain is concerned that there is the potential for duplication of effort regarding communication to the wider frontline groups. Whilst Sustain recognises that it is important for local infrastructure agencies to have their own identity and methods of communicating, it is recommended that the ability to share both channels and content for communication could be explored e.g. a shared website or Newsletter with space for local news. This sharing may be one way of freeing up resource within the LIOs.

It is important that the groups continue to debate and discuss openly the challenges facing infrastructure groups both at an operational and strategic level. Clear goals have been set and the Consortium need to evidence their progress against these goals illustrating clear accountability and responsibility for action. At the same time infrastructure groups do not want to go to meetings for meetings sake; they need to be value and action or outcome driven.

The group could look to set requirements for attendance which are both practical and realistic. This would help to ensure that there was an even representation of key bodies over time.

### Area Nine: ICT

There were a number of specific projects which supported the development of ICT within the infrastructure bodies these were:

- ❖ The development of a ICT suite in Irthlingborough (ENVA Rural Project)
- ❖ The development of laptop connections for Volunteers (ENVA Rural Project)
- ❖ CEMC – ICT 21<sup>st</sup> Century, identifying the needs and future requirements for service provision in this area and a suggested framework around 3 key groups
- ❖ CEMC – Capital Improvement scheme
- ❖ ICT training course for KVN staff plus capital equipment purchase
- ❖ Corby – Broadband link and ICT suite for service users
- ❖ NCompass ICT infrastructure investment

### Issues for Consideration

It appears that ChangeUp monies have facilitated ICT projects and therefore brought around improvements regarding the ability of these groups to support frontline organisations and activities. In addition a comprehensive review of the ICT requirements of the sector has taken place which needs to be 'owned' across the county with a supporting plan for taking this learning forward and developing support services and the use and application of ICT within the frontline agencies. The work carried out by CEMC should be used as a beacon to drive further changes within frontline groups.

It may be that this area offers the opportunity for further collaboration and development of support services delivered through LIOs. It is recommended that this is further explored.

### Area Ten: Overview of ChangeUp Project

In closing Sustain asked for general 'free' comments about the ChangeUp project and process, first identifying what barriers had been encountered and then asking the approach taken to overcome these barriers.

Barriers	Resolution to Barriers
Initial relationships within LIO group at the beginning.	Working together and trusting views. Allowing for differences of opinions.  Outcomes focused/building relationships.  Improved communication structures.  Good practice shared.
Projects starting late due to funding.	Managing a truncated timeline.
Not enough time to plan properly at the off set!	Just got on with it – but more time would have taken the pressure off and allowed for structured thought before action!
Information not always cascaded down in enough time –reactive measures.	Planning for short timescales.  Sometimes too much information – needed to be streamlined, improved as time went

	on through the projects.
Convincing villages of viability of project (Rural Project)	Partnership working, building trust and solid relationships (Rural Project).
Managing workloads	Management of workload Staff has increased their skills through training and project work creating new capacity/skill sets. Increased resource (NCompass through attainment of Countywide infrastructure contract).
ST funding/Timespan of project	Need sustainable funding over a period of time to really make a difference! Not stop /start. Only scratched the surface of what is really required. Some organisations used their reserves to get projects started which is not acceptable/ideal.
Process issues of accessing money	This had the potential to impact on the project outcomes. Some organisations used their existing reserves to get the projects started.
IIP plan became out of date	Needs updating ready for future improvements.  Need to be forward looking now so to continually develop the collaborative work of LIOs. This needs to build on the existing partnership work.  CEMC review document to support the next steps regarding business planning for the infrastructure groups.

Finally Sustain reviewed the outcomes of ChangeUp projects in relation to Monitoring and Evaluating improvements in service delivery. Most LIOs are yet to issue their satisfaction questionnaires and as such there is limited quantitative and qualitative data from front line organisations to evidence an improvement or shift in the perception of the services offered since the ChangeUp projects. However a number of solid results can be evidenced from within LIOs.

#### Area Eleven: Monitoring and Evaluation Outcomes

- **Each LIO now has a business plan** in place or are working on the final detail of their business plan. Many LIOs have been able to attain Quality Assurance accreditation as part of the ChangeUp process.
- **342** frontline organisations were involved in or benefited from services created through the development of ChangeUp projects.
- **Solid partnership** structures are in place with a detailed partnership plan that focuses on the collective goals of infrastructure agencies within the County with

- qualitative comments around the general improvement in relationships between these bodies.
- **Every LIO has stated that they will hold satisfaction questionnaires** during 2007 and this will begin to measure the impact of improved services and outcomes.
  - There are some **specific research outcomes** which can be used across the infrastructure population to support frontline organisations across the County of Northamptonshire, these are
    - Rural research
    - ICT research/strategic development
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> sector front line toolkits (Full Cost Recovery and Performance Management)
    - BME support and wider capacity needs
    - Skills/Workforce TNA's (Converge & internal LIO developments)
  - Evidence of greater **structured involvement in 3<sup>rd</sup> sector engagement and policy activity** at a local level albeit for some this is still in its early stages. (LAA, LSP and regional representation).
  - Every organisation visited acknowledged that there had been **an improvement in collaboration and partnership work** through the facilitation of ChangeUp projects.
  - All infrastructure agencies stated that they had increased their service offerings and had been able to offer more **but** at this stage qualitative evidence was not available.

### Issues for Consideration

In many ways it is too early to comprehensively measure and quantify the impact of the ChangeUp spend. Sustain would like to make the following recommendations

- **Baseline data** – the Consortium needs to identify and agree to a common way of recording and measuring their interventions and outcomes. This will help to build a county wide picture of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and their support needs. This would cover both countywide infrastructure needs and local infrastructure needs.
- **Data Management** – the Consortium need to agree a plan for assessing and evaluating outcomes so that meaningful analysis can be drawn from the data held within individual LIOs.
- The above will help to strengthen and map the needs of frontline 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and identify areas of synergy for shared development activities across the infrastructure bodies.
- Throughout the structured interviews there were concerns around the next steps of moving future developments forward to ensure that infrastructure agencies are properly equipped and resourced to further develop their services. There is much evidence of collaborative working through the ChangeUp projects but the onward challenge to this group is to ensure that this continues as much as it practically possible as a matter of 'Business As Usual'.

## 6.0 External Benchmarking

### 6.1 External Funders

Sustain wished to understand whether there had been any change in the external funding environment which was recognised by the original IIP as a weakness. Sustain in conjunction with CEMC identified 3 major funders within/to Northamptonshire. Sustain

asked these funders to review the amount funded by their grant making organisations in Northamptonshire over a 3 year period. The following table shows the outcomes of this review.

**Table 5: Funding Realised in Northamptonshire**

Area	Comment
Lloyds TSB Foundation	<p>In 2004 <b>15%</b> of money within the East Midlands region was allocated to projects within Northamptonshire.</p> <p>During this time period Lloyds TSB have increased the grant from £1.3m in 2004 to £1.5m in 2006.</p> <p>In 2006 <b>13%</b> of money within the East Midlands region was allocated to projects within Northamptonshire. Over the last two years grants to Northants have reduced, the regional profile is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Derbyshire 20% of 2006 allocation</li> <li>- Leicestershire 14% “ “</li> <li>- Nottinghamshire 27% “ “</li> <li>- Lincolnshire 22%</li> </ul> <p>In 2004 42 applications were received from Northamptonshire, this compares to the 2006 figures of 32 applications received. 22 of the grants were successful in 2006.</p> <p>Across the region the average grant in 2004 was for £5,700. In 2006 this had grown to £6,700.</p> <p><b>Total Investment made in 2006 - £148,443 this compares to the investment in 2004 of £172,921.</b></p>

**General Comments/Observations:**

This review shows that there appears to be a drop in application numbers and in investment made. When comparing the relative performance of applications from organisations in Northamptonshire against the other counties the following was suggested by Lloyds TSB as potential development areas to support the onward attainment of grants:

- a better co-ordinated use of support available from Lloyds TSB
- a general focus on the ability to evidence the need (business case), other areas have improved their ability to demonstrate the need for the funding
- the provision of training for frontline organisations on how to fill out applications and get the basics right
- good practice in use of funding surgeries within the region which could be adopted

- Lloyds TSB are happy to share information and support onward development plans

Area	Comment
Northamptonshire Community Foundation	<p>In 2003/04 a total of £427,189 was distributed to 120 groups across Northamptonshire.</p> <p>In 2004/05 a total of £433,884 was distributed to 124 groups across Northamptonshire.</p> <p>In 2005/06 a total of £434,562 was distributed to 110 groups across Northamptonshire.</p>

**General Comments/Observations:**

The following comments support the profile of funding for Northamptonshire Community Foundation:

- the volume of awards are relatively stable over the three year period identified
- the processes within the Community Foundation is to provide support and coaching for those organisations applying for funds and therefore a more individual approach takes place than perhaps of other grant making organisations/

Area	Comment
Big Lottery Fund (does not include Awards for All)	<p>In 2003/4 33 applications were received from Northamptonshire with a 58% success rate. Funding worth £2,026,353 was made.</p> <p>In 2004/05 32 applications were received with a 22% success rate. Funding worth £434,505 was made.</p> <p>2005/06 29 applications were received with a 62% success rate. Funding worth £1,448,719 was made.</p> <p>2006/07 66 applications were received with a <b>14%</b> success rate within Northamptonshire. Funding worth £1,443,714 was made.</p> <p>The success rate regionally is <b>c.20%</b> (this is due to over subscription rather than the quality of the grants.)</p>

General Comments:

- Last year saw the biggest rise in applications but with a considerably reduced success rate, the increase is believed to be due to the transitioning to the Big Lottery Fund
- Highest year for funding was in 2003/4 but the last two years have been relatively stable in relation to investments made.
- The Big Lottery fund stated that it was working closely LIOs in Northamptonshire to help support future applications and activity.

- The Big Lottery fund has seen a change in service provision but links that to the changes within the NCC structures as well as ChangeUp provision.

### Key Findings and Narrative

The profile of the activity of three funders within/to Northamptonshire is a picture that is worthy of further analysis. In relative terms it would appear that frontline agencies need support in detailing the evidence and business case for funding within Northamptonshire. This is coupled with a basic level of support in filling out applications and establishing the evidence of a business case.

It is clear however, that the funders within this review are keen to support and enable Northamptonshire's frontline agencies in attaining funding for their projects. Both Lloyds TSB and Big Lottery Fund are keen to work in a structured way with the LIOs to help support this process. In addition, they are keen to explore and share best practice outside of Northamptonshire within the East Midlands region. Their request however is to ensure that this happens in a structured manner which is time efficient for everyone involved.

Sustain recommends that the LIO groups share current practice and develop a contact management strategy for building relationships with key funders and further developing the skills within the wider 3<sup>rd</sup> sector with regards to realising successful funding applications. The Consortium may wish to set some individual and collective targets as a future goal.

### 6.2 Programme of Activity for Leicestershire ChangeUp programme

Sustain visited Voluntary Action Leicester (VAL), VAL is the lead agency for the ChangeUp platform of work in Leicestershire. Sustain created a structured questionnaire for this meeting (Appendix 4), to ensure that all areas of the ChangeUp programme were benchmarked and discussed. The following table highlights the findings from this benchmarking exercise.

**Table 6: Key Findings from Benchmarking Leicestershire Consortium**

Area	Comment
Allocation of Spend	<p>Leicestershire received £976,454 in Change Up funding. Within this £652,009 (67%) was spent on revenue projects and £324,445 (33%) on capital spend.</p> <p>Spend was allocated across 14 organisations within Leicestershire.</p> <p>Much like Northants Leicestershire commissioned initial research to determine the specific areas of attention or activity for ChangeUp projects, resulting in an IIP. This work then lead to 6 capital projects and 15 revenue projects.</p> <p>Again like Northants, Leicestershire found funding parameters tight and at times this impacted upon their outcomes. Similar comments to Northants were</p>

	<p>made in that the gestation period for ChangeUp was too long. When spend came down action had to happen quickly! It would have been beneficial to have a shorter gestation time and a longer implementation phase.</p> <p>Leicestershire are currently reviewing progress made and developing a new business plan for the infrastructure community within Leicestershire. In addition other external pressures outside of Capacity Builders programme are pushing for a review of infrastructure services (LCC).</p>
<p>Capital Projects</p>	<p>Much of the capital spend was allocation to improve or modernise the facilities of existing premises utilised by infrastructure bodies.</p> <p>There were two specific projects one focused on improving multimedia – to access and create a new trading stream for VAL and another focused on ICT within Leicestershire.</p>
<p>Revenue Projects</p>	<p>Money was allocated to co-ordinate and manage Consortium Office activity as per Northamptonshire.</p> <p>One project focused on the specific development needs of the BME communities across Leicestershire.</p> <p>Other projects looked at: rationalising and merging within infrastructure structures, community development activity (urban and rural), promoting funding advice, volunteering initiatives and skills directory.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Lots of change!</p> <p>Streamlining of infrastructure contracts and data management requirements from LCC (NAVCA standards).</p> <p>Rationalisation of infrastructure bodies reduced from 8 Council for Voluntary Services and 18 Volunteer Centres – now 8 infrastructure bodies and 1 Volunteering Centre (not entirely all down to ChangeUp).</p> <p>Becoming more engaged with the Commissioning Agenda.</p> <p>Organisations were left to work on their own projects and feedback to the wider Consortium at regular meetings.</p>

### General Comments

- A different profile emerges regarding the allocation of capital and revenue spend with Northants 90%/10% (revenue/capital) and Leicestershire 67%/33% (revenue/capital). The Leicestershire Consortium focused on a greater capital split to develop existing service infrastructure.
- each Consortium allocated spend to manage and co-ordinate Consortium activity
- both Leicestershire and Northamptonshire had projects which focused specifically on the needs of BME groups this *leads to an opportunity to share findings across the two groups*
- some of the projects were of a feasibility study nature and will not necessarily 'move onto' a next phase
- evidence of rationalisation within the infrastructure group (albeit this is not necessarily directly related to ChangeUp i.e. other external pressures). This mirrors the rationalisation seen within Northamptonshire which occurred as through the recent NCC infrastructure tendering exercise.
- some of the capital projects were designed to support income generation and modernisation of facilities either premises or ICT.

### 6.3 Engage East Midlands

Finally Sustain met with Engage East Midlands to discuss with them the impact of ChangeUp across the region. Sustain explored common trends and emerging issues for infrastructure development.

Sustain discussed the process and projects commissioned within Northamptonshire and the issues identified by the ChangeUp projects. Engage offered that the following had been found regionally

- ❖ The overall timeline had created issues elsewhere: the common view being that it was too long in gestation and when it did 'arrive' much pressure was placed on infrastructure bodies to delivering their bit within tight timelines
- ❖ Nationally and regionally there are very few quantifiable measures to aggregate the impact of ChangeUp and that this will become an area for future development
- ❖ Consortiums had "formed, stormed and normed" throughout the region
- ❖ ChangeUp projects for some areas became a catalyst for rationalisation and merges within infrastructure bodies.
- ❖ Nationally and regionally there is a relatively low level awareness of what ChangeUp is about within frontline agencies. This may have occurred in that that there has been a lack of recognition of the time it takes to build consortia, trust, common purpose etc and equally this is harder to maintain once funding ends.
- ❖ There is evidence that Local Authorities elsewhere are beginning to review infrastructure requirements(much like the changes that happened within Northants during the ChangeUp process).

This perspective illustrates that some of the issues found within Northamptonshire are common and can be found in other areas. It also points to ensuring that certain areas are reviewed now e.g. the ability to create quantitative and qualitative data regarding the impact of projects. If this was achieved, this would allow for Northamptonshire to lead the way and showcase how to execute this.

## 7.0 Third Sector Engagement and Awareness

Finally the last piece of research activity was designed to assess the level of awareness and involvement with the ChangeUp agenda in Northamptonshire. It is important to note that ChangeUp spend was primarily focused upon creating capacity within infrastructure bodies and not to support projects directly associated to frontline service provision. A copy of the questionnaire used can be found in Appendix 3.

### **How aware are your local frontline VCS of the ChangeUp/Capacity Builders agenda?**

- ❖ Those with strong networks are aware, others who focus on their local issues will not be aware (due to its perceived relevance)
- ❖ Not very – they are more concerned with their own service delivery – it is hard for them to see the benefit or relevance
- ❖ In a limited sense – some know that there was a large amount of money which went to a few organisations. VCS Forums will continue to share developments,
- ❖ In general, most frontline organisations have a vague understanding of Change Up/Capacity builders, although feel that it has nothing to do with them.

### **Did you communicate ChangeUp projects/activities to the front line?**

- ❖ Yes – we tried to link it to service developments but attention was focused elsewhere e.g. demise of CVS confused the issue
- ❖ Yes the benefits were promoted through our Newsletter
- ❖ Yes through all the normal mechanisms
- ❖ Yes, at VCS forum meetings

### **Have you delivered a change in service offerings/support to the VCS through ChangeUp work?**

- ❖ Yes we can now provide a host of services: laptop, projectors, laminators and copying services.
- ❖ No there has been no change in services.
- ❖ Most of our changes driven by NCC contract. We have increased our capacity through ChangeUp, we have improved our ICT and the mapping exercise helped us to build our database and work with our local 3rd sector groups
- ❖ ChangeUp has strengthened our position and ability to deliver – but at the same time we are continually improving service provision so it is difficult to apportion the benefits uniquely to ChangeUp.
- ❖ As a result of ChangeUp funding we now have a development worker and a fully functional ICT suite. We can now provide support and ICT training to organisations.

### **Do you think it is important for frontline VCS to be kept informed of future developments regarding Capacity Builders?**

- ❖ Yes – we use our Newsletter
- ❖ Yes – email but limited information
- ❖ Yes if it will directly impact them! All communication methods used.
- ❖ Yes, the frontline orgs need to be informed in order to form opinions.

### **Additional Comments:**

- ❖ Do people need to know about ChangeUp or whether they need to be aware of the benefits?
- ❖ Some level of awareness is important – but it needs to be pitched right!
- ❖ Some sort of joint communication/publicity campaign might be of use but it still seems too early to do this?
- ❖ The Change Up process was not handled particularly well last year. By the time funding was available to draw down we were almost five months into the project.

## 8.0 Conclusion

This review has found that there has been a structured approach to the development of the projects commissioned from the original IIP. It is evidenced that projects were allocated across the infrastructure groups and that these looked to develop internal support mechanisms, the wider development of policy within the sector and practical tools that can be utilised across the county.

Many of the barriers encountered during the implementation process were both unique to the timing of the original IIP. This is in relation to the developments within the countywide infrastructure contracts and the timing and funding requirements of the wider ChangeUp process. There is learning to be found here and it is recommended that the impact of the funders request is communicated to ensure that there is greater understanding of the need for infrastructure agencies to have sufficient time to respond in a structured fashion.

It is clear that infrastructure organisations have benefited from capital spend to equip their organisations internally and this in turn has supported the needs of the wider 3<sup>rd</sup> sector within the County. Revenue projects have begun the process of identifying future goals and requirements within the county across the capacity builders agenda.

There are a number of projects which must be shared at a detail level across the infrastructure group to ensure that timely learning can take place and that the findings and outcomes of these projects are utilised to the maximum.

With regards to the quantitative evaluation of the impact of ChangeUp there is currently little evidence. Every LIO is due to carry out an external satisfaction survey this year and this will establish whether the services offered are believed to have improved.

## 9.0 Recommendations

Sustain would like to make the following recommendations

- 8) That the infrastructure group discuss how it can **quantifiably measure the impact of ChangeUp projects from a 3<sup>rd</sup> sector perspective**. Each LIO is due to conduct a satisfaction questionnaire during 2007, it is recommended that this process is agreed across the infrastructure group. This should provide some baseline information as to whether 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations believe that services and support mechanisms have improved.
- 9) There are a number of projects with outcomes which affect the wider Consortium group and its future business planning needs. It is essential that the organisations that hosted these specialist projects become **'Champions' in these areas and help to share their learning across the wider infrastructure group**. It is important that this happens in a structured sense so not to lose the learning and its relevance. These projects are based around the performance areas: ICT

(CEMC), Database (NVC), Performance Management (NCompass), Full Cost Recovery (NCompass), LIO Model (NVC), Workforce Development (Converge), Rural Needs (ENVA) and Social Enterprise (NCDA).

- 10) **Baseline Data** – the Consortium needs to understand the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector in order to continually meet its needs. It is recommended that LIOs discuss how they currently capture the profile of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector in their localities and their needs and wants. If this is carried out consistently across the County this should both determine shared development needs and the progress made in relation to service delivery and outcomes. Overtime this would reduce the need to allocate consultant spend in quantifiably determining these needs.
- 11) **Funding** – It is clear from the small research carried out that Northamptonshire 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations need support in obtaining funding. It is recommended that this is discussed and made a strategic target for development within the business plans for each LIO. There is support for LIOs through regional and local funders and this should be explored in a co-ordinated fashion within the infrastructure groups.
- 12) **Skills Development** – the ChangeUp projects provided an opportunity for LIO organisations to both develop their staff and benefit from the support of consultants in specialist areas. In addition Converge’s skills project looked to identify the needs of the wider sector . It is recommended that the Consortium focuses on both how they can develop their own skill base and those of the wider needs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector are taking the lead from Converge’s work to date.
- 13) **Business Planning** – clear progress has been made in relation to next steps, actions and outcomes regarding the business plan for infrastructure agencies in Northamptonshire. The visioning work has resulted in a Partnership Plan. This now needs to be focused upon with clear leadership and organisations have accountability and understand their role in its onward development.
- 14) **Monitoring and Evaluation** – it is recommended that the business plan has clear quantifiable goals that can be accurately measured and recorded at both a qualitative and quantitative level. Key areas could be gathered around: Income to sector (grant funded/traded), Performance Management systems in place, Training accessed/offered, Organisations supported, Regional/local policy/representation, Volunteers recruited, Mapping of sectors in which organisations are delivering. It is recommended that the infrastructure group review the national guidelines from NAVCA regarding Area Profiles.

## **Appendices**

- 1.0 Structured Questionnaire for IIP review**
- 2.0 Structured Questionnaire for Individual Projects**
- 3.0 Structured Questionnaire for VAL**