

ChangeUp/Defra Infrastructure
Programme – South East

**Information,
Communication
Technology (ICT)
Programme**

Paper presented to the Regional
Consortium for discussion and
decision on 15th July 2005

Paper prepared by RAISE on behalf of the ICT Sub group

CONTENT

Section	Page
1. Purpose of Paper	3
2. Background	3
3. Lead Organisations profiles	5
3.1 SCIP	
3.2 Harbourside Social Enterprises	
3.3 Southampton Voluntary Services	
3.4 Rural Net/ <u>net:gain</u>	
4. Hub and Spoke Development Model	9
5. Cross Subsidy Development Model	11
6. CVS Led Development Model	14
7. <u>net:gain</u> Development Model	15
8. What Success Would Look Like?	20
8.1 Hub and Spoke Model	
8.2 Cross Subsidy Model	
8.3 CVS Led Model	
8.4 net:gain Model	
8.5 Regional success	
9. Geographical coverage	24
9.1 Hub and Spoke Model	
9.2 Cross Subsidy Model	
9.3 CVS Led Model	
9.4 net:gain Model	
10. Barriers to Success	26
10.1 Hub and Spokes Model	
10.2 Cross Subsidy Model	
10.3 CVS Led Model	
10.4 net:gain Model	
11. Funding Profile - model specific	29
12. Evaluation of the programme	30
13. Summary	31
14. Recommendations	31
Appendices	
1. Community Council Berkshire (CCB)/E-mpirical Additional Support programme	
2. Financial Breakdown – Hub and Spokes	
3. Financial Breakdown – Cross Subsidy	
4. Financial Breakdown – CVS Led	
5. Financial Breakdown – CCB/E-mpirical	

ChangeUp/Defra Regional Infrastructure Programme ICT Regional Programme

This paper describes the proposed programme of activity for the regional ICT programme for ChangeUp. It has been prepared by RAISE, supported by the ICT Sub Group for consideration at the Regional Consortium meeting on 15th July 2005.

This is a long paper which reflects both the complexity of the ICT issues that exist and the level of work that has gone into developing the regional programme. We ask that Regional Consortium members take the time to read it in full to aid discussion and decision at the Regional Consortium meeting.

1. Purpose:

- (i) to present proposed development models for the ICT programme to the Regional Consortium (RC) for consideration and to highlight key issues and barriers to success
- (ii) to agree that the ICT programme can run until September 2006 providing that funds are fully committed by end of March 2006
- (iii) to ask the RC to agree the development models for the programme to enable work to commence

2. Background

2.1 As part of the South East ChangeUp programme funds have been ring fenced for a programme of activity to begin to address the needs of both voluntary/community sector infrastructure and frontline organisations in the area of ICT.

2.2 During the Early Spend work voluntary/community organisations (VCO's) demonstrated that there was significant evidence to support the need for ChangeUp funds to be invested into tackling the multiple needs that the VCS were experiencing, when attempting to utilise ICT in the workplace.

The Early Spend work had already established that the needs of the VCS were across four key areas as follows;

- 1. Hardware
- 2. Software
- 3. Technical support
- 4. Training

Further information can be seen in the report, 'A Review of Voluntary/Community Sector Infrastructure in the South East'.

2.3 The Regional Consortium asked RAISE to convene an ICT sub-group to consider the most appropriate way of establishing the ICT Programme which would encourage sustainability and maximise impact. The membership included representation from: VCS infrastructure organisations; VCS frontline organization; GOSE; SEEDA; two Early Spend projects; existing ICT support

providers from the private sector; existing ICT support provider from VCS; Representative from net:gain (National Project). The sub group met for the first time on 28th February and then again on 25th May.

2.4 Papers from these meeting show the wide ranging discussions which took place prior to it being agreed that three different models should go forward in the region. The models were discussed in more detail and finalized at a meeting on 27th June. The development models are as follows;

- (i) Hub and spoke
- (ii) Cross Subsidy/Social Enterprise
- (iii) CVS Led/direct employment
- (iv) net:gain (UK On-line Centres) part of a national project

The meetings have also involved discussions regarding fund managing the programme and there was an additional fund management meeting on 5th July, hosted by GOSE. The organisations leading the proposed models also wish to fund manage the projects. A separate fund manager is required for the evaluation of the programme.

2.5 The organisations leading the proposed development models were asked to supply information for this paper under particular headings. All of this information has been pulled together to form one paper. The 4 lead organisations who will fund manage are;

- (i) SCIP- Hub and spoke
- (ii) Harbourside Social Enterprises - Cross Subsidy/Social Enterprise
- (iii) Southampton Voluntary Services - CVS Led/direct employment
- (iv) Rural Net - net:gain (UK On-line Centres) part of a national project

2.6 It should be noted that this has been a very difficult programme to develop for a number of reasons;

- The issues facing the VCS are multiple but the time for delivery and funds available limited
- The National ICT Hub has stalled and therefore our initial idea of waiting to run a complimentary programme was not successful as the ICT National Hub has still not begun its activity
- There have been a range of interested parties from the VCS, private sector and social enterprise and therefore there has been a considerably wide range in views as to the best way forward. Even after the final sub group meeting there has been further discussion between some members of the group resulting in a 4th development model (CVS Led/Direct Employment) being added. There are some considerable advantages to the 4th model being added as whilst we are confident that the net:gain model will be approved by Ministers soon the 4th model does allow us some flexibility should this not be the case.

- The sub group have been concerned about whether a social enterprise model led by the private sector can meet the needs of small VCO's and the 4th model offers the opportunity to test this against a backdrop of an existing successful initiative. It also offers the opportunity to look at an existing CVS led service and test if this can be developed into more sustainable service through the development of social enterprise.

3. Information regarding lead organisations

3.1 SCIP Hub & Spoke model

Founded in 1996, SCIP works with staff and volunteers from voluntary and community organisations, helping them to use the internet and computers more effectively. We do this through:

Training

SCIP provides a range of training courses which help people take control of technology. These are practical courses, tailored to meet the needs of voluntary and community organisations and taught in small groups by qualified trainers with experience of working the community sector.

Courses include:

- Internet skills – searching, email, mail merge
- Fundraising and the internet
- Dealing with PC Nasties [spam, viruses, etc]
- Web design
- Producing community newsletters
- Digital video for community activists.

SCIP has its own training room in its offices in Brighton but also has a suite of laptops which it uses to run courses in community centres and other locations.

IT Support

SCIP provides a range of affordable IT support services to not-for-profit organisations. These include the design and installation of computer systems, network maintenance and regular visits to help with troubleshooting and problem-solving.

SCIP also runs a variety of individual projects, working with various partners from across the community. Current examples include:

www.p2b.net

SCIP led the development of a new search engine for Brighton & Hove, working with a partnership that included Brighton & Hove City Council, Brighton & Hove Primary Care Trust, both local universities and the Argus newspaper.

www.cna.org.uk

SCIP is a partner with the University of Brighton in the Community Network Analysis Project. This is a major research project seeking to

understand whether and how ICT can be used to strengthen networks in the community.

Brighton & Hove Web Awards

SCIP has run an annual Awards ceremony since 1999, recognising the best websites from the local business, education and community sectors. The awards include online voting and are supported by the local newspaper.

3.2 Harbourside Social Enterprises – Cross Subsidy Model

Introduction

Harbourside Social Enterprises Ltd (HSE), through its wholly owned subsidiary, The Really Helpful IT Company Ltd. (RHIT), looks to offer quality ICT support to the voluntary and community sector at an affordable rate.

The board of HSE represents interests of this sector through a Consortium comprising of:

- The 4 local councils for community and voluntary services,
- Churches and multi-faith representation,
- Portsmouth Housing Association,

In addition, a local privately owned business development company, BD&M Group Ltd, has supported the research and formation of this enterprise.

Vision

HSE intends, within a period of 3 years from establishment (Q3/Q4-2004), for The Really Helpful IT Company Ltd to become recognised in the region as a first class provider of (ICT) services.

RHIT aims to achieve this by offering the same services to the public and private sector at the appropriate (and competitive) market rate. The surplus generated after the first three years of trading will be reinvested into the organisation and used to subsidise the contracts with the voluntary and community sector, being self sustaining by end of year three.

Focus

RHIT strategic focus will centre on:

- Providing a broad range of affordable, high quality ICT support and installation services for the community and voluntary sector,
- Broadening the client base into the private and public sector,
- Striking up partnerships with complimentary organisations/companies to support the delivery of a broad range of services.

- Supporting economic development through providing ICT services as a contribution to the renaissance and regeneration of Portsmouth and S.E.Hampshire and its promotion as a region of excellence for enterprise, innovation and wealth creation.

Stakeholder Input

The success of the RHIT, delivery of its strategic objectives and adherence to its founding ethos is heavily dependant upon the involvement and commitment of the stakeholders (represented by the Board).

This will be achieved through: -

- HSE and principle stakeholders are shareholders in RHIT,
- Working with the stakeholders to promote RHIT to the voluntary and community sectors,
- Retain accountability to the stakeholders through the constitution underpinning the governance of both HSE and RHIT.

Funding/Income

A strategic objective of HSE for RHIT is to replace c 100% of external grants for Year-4 of operation, thereafter to progressively fund growth and development organically over years 5 to 7.

Our principle forms of income are expected to be:

- Private sector project & consultancy work,
- Public sector project & consultancy work,
- Reselling opportunities across all sectors,
- Value added services to all sectors.

3.3 Southampton Voluntary Services (SVS) – CVS Led

SVS is a well established CVS which has been in existence serving the needs of local community and voluntary sector organisations for over 30 years. Over this time we have developed and are currently a charitable company limited by guarantee employing over 50 people, some in providing direct services and some in voluntary sector support

The voluntary sector support is funded from a range of sources including local grants, and contracts; ESF through partnership; ODPM; GOSE. We are currently the lead body for the Community Empowerment fund and for the local Change Up work. As a result of this experience managing a range of funding, and of our direct service provision we are experienced in project management including fund management, development and evaluation

Last year linked to our liP re-accreditations we developed a three year forward plan for the organisation, and within this we identified the need to work with

others in the city to develop support for social enterprise and to consider charging for some of our services in line with the developing social enterprise and sustainability culture.

We currently have three Infrastructure support services which have funding which will end in this financial year, one being ICT support, and we are keen to secure ongoing support for this work. (ICT, HR and Community accountancy).

The ICT support has been funded since April 2004 through a partnership with City Council within their ESF 6 funding to develop a local Integrated Employment Strategy. This was supported based on the recognition that VCS groups would be disadvantaged in accessing the associated website if they did not have capacity to utilise ICT. Over this period we have had 431 contacts with VCS groups on a range of issues including training, purchasing, technical support, and user support. This has included support to 102 groups

3.4 net:gain – Uk Online Centres

net:gain is a partnership project between ruralnet uk, Ufi, Funding Matters, and the Foyer Federation.

The lead organisation, ruralnet uk, is a charity and successful social enterprise, which has provided advice and support to UK online centres since 2000 through the innovative DirectSupport programme, and has assisted the development of the wider VCS (both rural and urban) for fourteen years, specialising in partnership working, project management and innovative use of ICT.

ruralnet uk's experience encompasses project management; rural community and economic development; project planning and sustainability strategies; funding; and supporting stakeholders and partnerships. It has twice been recognised in the WM e-commerce Awards (2002, 2004), and for sustainable ICT in the in the national e-wellbeing Awards (2002). Since 2000, ruralnet's annual conference has been seen as leading on innovation and networking and attracts ministerial attendance. Ruralnet uk seeks practical ways to provide strategic ICT expertise and share ICT experience and services, as evidenced by its extension of the ruralnet online service to over 20 other networks, rural and urban, who may brand it as their own.

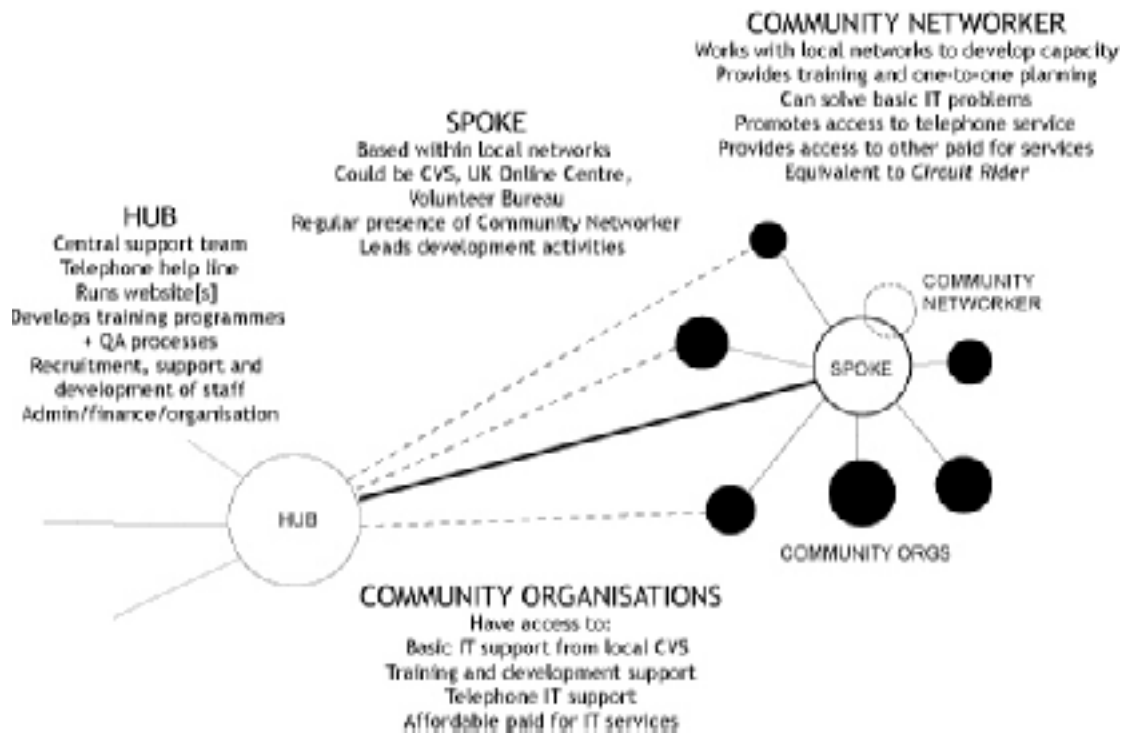
Ufi is the largest government-supported e-learning network in the world and manages the network of more than 7000 **learnirect** and UK online centres.

Funding Matters has a history of working with all three partners, and with the VCS in general, specialising in ICT funding advice.

The Foyer Federation supports the largest VCS-based national network of UK online centres.

4. Hub & Spoke Model Described

4.1 Overview



The hub and spoke model provides sector-led ICT support, with overall co-ordination and management at a sub-regional level combined with delivery based within local organisations. The basic features of this model have been developed by SCIP over several years and were tested in a pilot project in Lewes last year, with further developments in conjunction with a network in Hastings.

The model is based around the role of the Community Networker, a person who provides a combination of community development and technical support skills [broadly equivalent to the Circuit Rider role being developed elsewhere]. The Community Networker is employed by the Hub [ie SCIP] but is based within in an appropriate host organisations, such as a Council for Voluntary Services [CVS] or a community-based UK Online Centre.

The local connection ensures that ICT support services can be integrated with other support services provided within local networks, which provides an important way of engaging with local voluntary and community organisations.

The connection with the hub provides a means of supporting the specialist staff in the local networks, as well as offering better continuity of service as it is not dependant on one organisation's ICT specialist but a team.

Specifically, this demonstration project would provide a Community Networker's service through the Councils for Voluntary Service in East and West Sussex, and a similar service from the Volunteer Bureau in Maidstone for areas of Kent.

4.2 A Sub-regional hub

ICT is a specialist area where the technologies and skills required to take advantage of the technologies change rapidly. There are also a number of ICT services which will be needed by community and voluntary organisations from time to time which are better provided centrally to achieve a critical mass of skills and effectiveness.

The hub would provide:

- Co-ordination of locally based ICT services through a team of Community Networkers
- A support network for workers who might otherwise be isolated
- Telephone and e-mail helpdesk
- Website-based resources
- Co-ordination of ICT training and workforce development with other infrastructure organisations
- Co-ordination of volunteer-based ICT support with other infrastructure organisations
- Links to nationally provided services and networks including the national ICT hub: (on- and offline information on good practice, suppliers etc.; shared purchasing and reseller facilities)
- Administrative, HR and finance services
- ICT development support for organisations
- ICT installation services and advice about tendering for such services
- Web-site and shared information systems design and support
- Advocacy to funders about the full-costs of ICT and advice and preparing accurately costed funding applications
- Monitoring and evaluation to analyse need and plan provision on an ongoing basis.

4.3 Locally based Support

A particular need of the sector is for local on-site support to community and voluntary organisations. This model provides each area with access to a Community Networker, available on a regular basis in a local office, such as a

Council for Voluntary Service, Volunteer Bureau, community-based UK Online Centre or similar. The role of the Community Networker encompasses:

- Leading ICT development in the area and delivering ICT planning advice to local organisations.
- Providing ICT training, including how to develop an ICT plan.
- Delivering hands-on technical support to local organisations.
- Working with the LIOs to identify funding for ongoing support for smaller organisations.
- Developing the market for paid-for technical support with larger organisations.
- Brokering technical support from volunteers and maintaining a list of good, local support agencies, based on user feedback.
- Referring organisations groups to other service providers.
- Receiving support from and working alongside the sub-regional network of Community Networkers.
- Accessing centralised technical support helpline, training, support and shared information systems.
- Working closely with the key infrastructure services to ensure ongoing delivery and support.

4.4 Operational Arrangements

The needs and capacities of organisations are different, and therefore the support arrangements need to be responsive to local circumstances. This demonstration model will test how the Community Networker can be shared between a number of LIOs and whether they should be:

- based in a district LIO and employed by them,
- based in a district LIO and employed by the hub

The model would also look at any existing support networks, and whether these can be made more effective by linking to the hub.

5. Cross Subsidy Social Enterprise Model Described - 'The Really Helpful IT Company' (RHIT)

5.1 Justification of need

Through member organisations of our stakeholders and market research conducted in 2004, we have seen a real need for professional ICT support and advice. But the sector has historically not been in a position to be able to afford high quality advice and support, without other front line support suffering.

Many VCS organisations have a number of common features in relation to ICT which we will seek to address:

- Inherited second hand, out of date equipment
- Lack of understanding of what ICT is available and what can be achieved through its proper use
- Lack of any support and maintenance for equipment they have
- Where support is available it is carried out by volunteers or friends
- Lack of high quality affordable training
- Lack of the appropriate skills and knowledge to carry out appropriate needs assessment required for new ICT needs
- No one point of contact for ICT problems i.e. a community helpdesk facility

5.2 Principle Aims

a) To provide a high quality, local IT support services and training

- Annual customer perception survey, satisfaction rate 75%
- Feedback from customers upon completion of work
- Increase in customers by 25% per annum
- Focus our work within Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport and Fareham (over 80% of customers from those areas)
- Broaden our scope to the adjoining rural and urban areas of East Hampshire, Southampton and possibly Winchester.

b) To build capacity, capability and competence in the area of ICT within the voluntary and community sector

- Provision of a help desk facility (500 calls in year 1, increasing by 25% per annum)
- Needs analysis and installation of new up to date ICT systems (3 projects in year 1, increasing to 5 in year 2)
- 20 voluntary sector organisations signing up to a support contract in year 1, rising to 50 by year 3)

c) To promote ICT skills and employment opportunities to the sector

- Provide trainee work placements within voluntary and community organisations to develop skills in house (4 trainees in year 2 onwards)
- Provision of open training sessions
- Provision of be-spoke training sessions

d) To target resource to those organisations where the greatest impact can be achieved

- Undertake needs assessments, and prioritise where the greatest impact would be achieved

- Develop a means of measuring the impact the work has had on the organisations ability to deliver services more effectively and efficiently

e) To develop a self funding, sustainable service

- Be self funding by the end of year 3
- Deliver the services to the private and statutory sectors at market rates

f) To work in partnership to strengthen the local voluntary and community sector infrastructure

- Become a partner organisations wish to work with
- Increased number of annual organisation contacts (by 10% per annum)

5.3 Support Services Profile

Summary

The ethos behind the support service is to provide a suite of traditional ICT support services to Voluntary, SME (Private) and Public sector organisations that are:

- Exemplary in their quality,
- Offer the same level of support whether the client is paying £250 per day or £500 per day,
- Contributory to the organisation's revenue,
- Suited to the needs of the sector,
- Staffed by two helpdesk engineers and two support engineers,
- Constantly evolving to keep in line with new technologies.

We also want to introduce new support offerings made possible by the advancement of operating systems, the Internet and supporting technologies.

Scope

The technologies for which we will offer direct support include:

- Microsoft Operating systems,
- Microsoft Office applications,
- Database systems
- Peripheral equipment,
- Computers and Laptops,
- Internet connectivity
- Networks

Services

Support will be delivered through the following service offerings:

- Telephone Support Helpdesk,
- Telephone based support on a per incident basis,
- On-Site Technical Support,
- Remote Technical Support,
- Health-check and systems audit.

Geography

Through Change up we aim to offer the package of services in two urban areas and one rural, this will allow us to test and evaluate how the model applies and works in different settings and the cost implications involved.

- Portsmouth, Gosport, Havant and Fareham (SE Hampshire)
- Southampton
- East Hampshire or Chichester

Client base profile

The source of support contracts in terms of numbers of contracts are expected to be as follows:

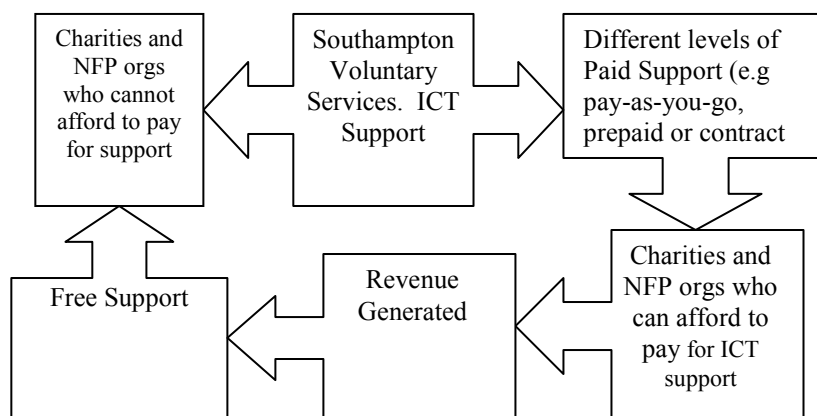
- 40% Voluntary Sector organisations
- 40% Private Sector (SME Clients)
- 20% Public Sector

6. CVS Led Model Described

Our model at the moment is simply a system funded to provide free ICT support to the voluntary sector. This model has worked well up till now but the demand for the service is overwhelming its ability and efficiency in supply. For the project to continue the model has to change to one that can at least partially sustain itself. (Fig 1). In the model the revenue generated from paid support will help subsidise the poorer groups. This would mean developing from where we are into a social enterprise and piloting the model of CVS employment of an ICT specialist whilst providing value for money.

This model is hoping to ensure that the volume of support available to small groups is maximised. Support will be offered from within the sector thus ensuring that there is high level of awareness of concerns of groups and that provision of ICT is enmeshed into other support. It will be delivered in a person centred way so that the groups and individuals themselves develop skills and understanding for their long term development.

Fig 1. Proposed Social Enterprise Model



Aware that the model of social enterprise will create competition, we need to focus on providing good value for money and matching or providing a better service than that provided in the area by the private sector. We would need to promote the added value in the post being based within the voluntary sector and therefore having a good understanding of the range of issues facing the groups and impacting on their decision making. There would also be good links developed with other workers within SVS so that for instance when our Community Accountant works with a group on setting up accounts the IT specialist can work with them on relevant IT issues.

A viable funding structure would need to be developed to support this work, recognising that we would still expect only to work with the small to middle sized groups

We will continue to provide the current content of our service which include

- One-to-one training
- Signposting to formal training
- Telephone, email and on-site support
- Network and Microsoft application support
- Support for any other software application
- Web and Database support
- Training Needs Analysis
- System Installation, Testing, Troubleshooting and Post implementation
- Software review and maintenance
- Hardware installation and troubleshooting

- ICT Strategy and Planning
- ICT Trustee Training
- Information of web accessibility
- Information of ICT purchasing
- General ICT guidance

We would also further develop and strengthen our volunteer register, as one way of maximising the benefit to groups. We currently have started working with two volunteers who bring added value to the work, as well as offering them additional experience. Linked to this we would further develop our system of record keeping so that information is available to anyone working with the group, and to the group themselves

In developing this model we would expect to work with Business Link Wessex for support with Social Enterprise, and SCIP for sharing of ideas and support around ICT

7. net:gain Model Described

7.1 Aim

The aim of net:gain is to enable Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) to develop a practical understanding of the use of ICT, appropriate to their own needs and to those of the communities they serve. net:gain will **stimulate demand for ICT** in the sector, by **engaging, informing, and educating** its leaders and managers. net:gain centres will form a strong and flexible infrastructure with national coverage. They will relate to VCOs as trusted peers, specialist in the strategic use of ICT, and will work in partnership with other providers, programmes and stakeholders, to provide high-quality local delivery.

7.2 Context

The case for investment in the ICT infrastructure of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is already well-proven. Market intelligence research and desk research, conducted as a strand of net:gain's feasibility study, carried out under the Early Spend programme, confirmed:

- Poor awareness of the range of options for covering ICT costs, and how to go about planning for this.
- A willingness, regardless of organisation size, to engage in strategic planning for ICT.
- A tendency in the sector to prefer trusted intermediaries: e.g. local, informal, peer support, face-to-face help.
- The need for a flexible service that can fill gaps, signpost and adapt to different needs.

- The need to demonstrate high added-value in any service offered, to ensure a willingness in the VCO market to dedicate time and money to the process.

It is evident from this and existing research that VCOs require much more than technical ICT support. Instead VCOs need to develop their own understanding of ICT; they need to recognise the role that ICT can play in improving the services that they deliver to clients and supporters. Trustees need to recognise ICT as being strategically important and reflect this in business objectives. Managers need to focus on the impact ICT has on business processes, the information needs of their organisation and the skills that staff need to acquire to use ICT applications more effectively.

7.3 The net:gain service

The net:gain service will be delivered through a programme of workshops and ongoing support for Chief Executives, Trustees and other senior staff within VCOs. During the workshops, participants will be guided through the process of ICT planning, including a **skills assessment** of their staff and volunteers and an **information audit** of their organisation and clients. We envisage a two stage 'check and plan' process. The aim is to provide tools and techniques to enable delegates to compile their own **ICT Action Check List**, followed by a simple and clear **Strategy**, to identify how their needs can be met through:

- Better application of ICT to their management and processes
- Better management of information
- Improved internal and external communication
- Hardware and software purchases
- Internet connectivity
- Appropriate training for staff and volunteers, and
- Reviewing arrangements for ICT maintenance and technical support.

Embedded in this process, peer-to-peer exchange of experience, peer support, and active signposting to local, regional and national opportunities will be of paramount importance.

Following the first workshop, giving each delegate their Action Check List, ongoing support will be available to help participants develop their ICT plan within the workplace. The aim is to provide a long-term support and development relationship between the net:gain centre, other local ICT service providers, and local VCOs.

The net:gain programme offers much more than simply a training course on ICT planning. VCO participants will sign-up to 12 months' membership which will include:

- Check and plan workshops
- Telephone and email support
- Access to Experts Online, an online question and answer service providing guidance on Funding, ICT, Business Planning, Employment Issues, Charity Law, Community Engagement and other specialist topics.
- Local membership benefits, provided by participating net:gain centres
- Access to ICT training, including **learnirect** provision
- Active signposting to other support services

The net:gain service has been successfully trialled in two locations, demonstrating the suitability of the content, the willingness of VCOs to participate and the value of ICT planning in improving VCO service delivery.

7.4 The net:gain delivery model

Based on the experience of the trial, a national net:gain service has been designed, which:

- Builds upon existing investment in ICT infrastructure, by selecting centres from the network of VCS-based UK online centres. All are established VCOs, based in the heart of communities, many already providing ICT support to other organisations.
- Provides centrally co-ordinated, national coverage with local delivery, close to the point of need.
- Uses existing proven materials and best practice, including the benefits of peer support, drawing these into a coherent, quality assured programme.
- Uses the infrastructure offered by the UK online centre network, including the support available through UK online Regional Managers, to work in partnership with the national ICT Hub and other local, regional and national ICT initiatives.

7.5 Sustainability

From a financial perspective, the net:gain programme is designed as a social franchise, where centres are able to tailor the service that they offer according to local needs and resources. Some of the national funding would be used to subsidise membership for participating VCS organisations (particularly the smaller ones). A greater level of subsidy is available in the first year to encourage take-up. Annual membership prices are shown below:

Size of organisation	net:gain membership	
	Year 1	Year 2
<i>Very small</i> - up to £10K turnover	£40	£75
<i>Small to medium</i> - up to £100K turnover	£150	£300

<i>Large - over £100K turnover</i>	£350	£480
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Membership income would enable centres to cover staff costs in delivering and supporting the programme and to provide participants with access to Experts Online and local membership benefits. No subsidy from national funding would be available beyond year 2, but income from participants (at Year 2 prices) would be sufficient to meet the costs of centres continuing to deliver the programme.

8. What success would look like?

8.1 Hub and Spokes Model

- That the surveyed needs are the actual needs
- That delivery mechanisms are robust and appropriate
- That staff with appropriate skills can be recruited
- Whether outreach workers be employed by local infrastructure organisations and supported by the hub, or employed by the hub and seconded to the local infrastructure organisation or a mixture of both.
- That a service can be delivered that is sustainable – which may include some element of cross subsidy
- That successful ICT development work can be done under this model
- That the model fits in with services of the local infrastructure organisations and those reorganised services under IDP process.
- That a preferred geographic spread of spokes from the hub can be determined and the number of hubs in the SE can be projected
- That the costs of travelling within rural locations can be established
- That sector ownership of ICT support can be achieved
- Understanding and quantifying how much ICT support is required and how many organisations [of different types] can one worker support
- The amount of volunteer and pro-bono support could be expected and managed
- Identifying whether volunteers need to be managed or just brokered and what costs are associated with sustaining this operation
- How private sector services could be brokered and managed, giving outcomes that will offer clarity of approach to the private sector.
- Development of a sustainable model of ICT support and the opportunity to evaluate what works best and where.
- Engagement of existing provision and shared learning
- Demonstration of the potential links with e-government and e-learning
- A regional coherence to develop, illustrating joined-up working between the VCS and the public sector eg local authorities
- Customer satisfaction and take up of services
- Measurement of softer outcomes to include some evidence of development
- Better evidence of understanding need at a senior level; this may include links to the Workforce Development Hub
- Better understanding of real need and what motivates action and engagement
- A strategic overview regionally through the Infrastructure Development Plans in terms of infrastructure needs of services and ICT services to the wider VCS.
- Increase in the take up of the National Hub services and other services such as those provided by the London Advice Services Alliance (LASA)

8.2 Cross subsidy/social enterprise model

A sustainable model of ICT support

- A self sustaining ICT business after 3 years
- Providing support through 6 umbrella voluntary organisations
- Directly high quality structured support to at least 50 voluntary and community support
- Partner with RAISE to evaluate what works best and where

Engagement of existing provision and shared learning

- In Southampton and either Chichester or East Hampshire to work with and build on existing support structures where appropriate
- To share learning and experience with Net gain and the hub and spoke models

Demonstration of the potential links with e-government and e-learning

- Partnering with LA's in promoting and supporting their e-learning and e-governance programmes
- Improving and promoting local ICT infrastructure and support agencies are able to take advantage of e-learning opportunities.

Customer satisfaction and take up of services

- Annual customer perception survey, satisfaction rate 75%
- Feedback from customers upon completion of work
- Increase in customers by 25% per annum
- Achieving 40% of our support contracts with the voluntary and community sector

Measurement of softer outcomes and evidence of development

- Carryout case studies of voluntary organisations we've supported and how they see they have developed

Better understanding of real need

- Through contracting with the VCS we will be able to directly ascertain what the real ICT needs are
- Partnering with the local CVS's will be how we can discover what motivates actual engagement.

Outcomes that will offer clarity of approach to the private sector

- Through contracting with the private sector we will be able to directly ascertain what approach works with them
- Partnering with the private sector business to resale services on to the VCS will enable us to see what motivates actual engagement.

8.3 CVS Led Model

- A decrease in the digital divide between the voluntary sector and the private sector, this will be measurable by continued record of contact with groups.
- Increased awareness of ICT within the voluntary sector, evidenced by websites, emails and new contacts.
- Increased appropriate ICT coaching within the voluntary sector, this would be measured by how many contacts we have with the groups.
- Extension of the current customer satisfaction, measurable through survey forms.
- Clarity of the process of development of a social enterprise within a CVS.
- Increased sustainability of ICT support to small VCS through income generation.
- Records of increase in activity by groups towards achieving their goals as a result of ICT support received.
- Measurable response time developed.
- Develop links to other city IT projects, Regional and National Networks and organisations.
- Clarity of ICT needs within local infrastructure development plan

8.4 net:gain Model

Project outputs

The net:gain delivery model is scalable according to the level of national funding, the readiness at regional level for ICT capacity building initiatives, and at local level the presence of existing service provision. The proposed outputs of the net:gain project in the South East are:

- Recruitment and development of **10** net:gain centres
- Once operational, each centre delivering on average **10** programmes per year, each with **10** participants
- Participation in the net:gain programme by **750** VCOs in the first year.

Based on the action research undertaken during the Early Spent pilot project, it is anticipated that:

- **90%** of participants will complete an Action Check List towards their organisation's ICT strategy
- **55%** of participants will complete their ICT strategy (or 'check and plan' process)
- **60%** of participants will take up local membership support services in the centre

- **25%** will enrol on **learndirect** or other training services.

These will be measured through initial and follow-up data, collected at centre level via a real-time web-entry facility.

Outcomes and impact

- Signposting to further support (outside the centre) e.g. the ICT Hub and other regional and local projects
- Greater understanding of, and confidence in, planning for ICT
- Greater understanding of relevant business processes and how these might be enabled through ICT
- Improved awareness of ICT costs and how these might be met
- More informed procurement of ICT products and services
- Improved sharing of experience with peers

These outcomes will be tracked by responses to a qualitative questionnaire, based on sampling, and by case studies.

Qualitative success measures used to assess impact, measured through follow-up survey of VCOs, will include:

- What kind of new ICT applications have been planned following the programme?
- What new ICT applications have been implemented?
- Has the programme led to improved ICT costing strategies?
- Has the programme enabled the VCO to draw on a broader range of revenue sources for ICT?
- How has the programme affected ways of working with support partnerships?
- How has the programme impacted on VCO marketing?

8.5 What success would look like regionally

By the end of the programme we are looking for the following outcomes;

- Ideally an evidence base for the 4 development models that include;
 - experience of development of model
 - appropriateness of each model for geographic location, size and type of organisation
 - customer satisfaction levels,

- cost of developing model (full cost recovery)
 - degree of sustainability of model
 - degree to which the models are interchangeable within a locality
- Through the evaluation we will seek to make recommendations as to the future provision of ICT support within the South East.
 - The organisations involved in the development models will have had capacity building opportunities and as a result may be able to broaden their service delivery to other areas
 - We will have a greater understanding of where there are further development needs in the Region and how we may address them
 - We will have developed a network of interested VCO's who can act as a reference group.
 - We will have linked to the work of the ICT hub and be able to maximise their activity in the south East
 - We will have promoted ICT planning as a key organisational need in the VCS
 - We will have greater evidence base for developing links between the VCS and E-learning and E- Government.

9. Geographical coverage of Development Models

9.1 Hub & Spoke model

SCIP's hub and spoke model would provide services in East and West Sussex and Kent. It has already been established that there is keen support for this model from the East and West Sussex Consortia. Community Networkers would be based in a number of Local Infrastructure Organisations for the equivalent of a number of days each week e.g. 1- 2 days a week in each, and cover a rural area from there. They would spend the equivalent of one day a week in the central hub, assisting with the helpdesk and meeting with the other Community Networkers. The telephone helpline would enable organisations to have support when the Community Networker is not present. Our experience shows that each Community Networker can support between 20 and 30 organisations, and the hub model also allows other staff with specific skills to work in different areas according to need.

9.2 Cross Subsidy model

The business plan reflects our work in Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport and Fareham (SE Hampshire). Through Change Up we aim to broaden the services offered to another urban and rural area. due to the late changes to include a CVS led model it is likely that we will offer the demonstration model on the Isle of Wight, which is both urban and rural. This offers us the opportunity to test the model fully in an area of deprivation in the region. The Isle of Wight will be a

challenge and we are currently discussing this option with The Isle of Wight Rural Community Council.

The main office will be based in SE Hampshire, probably Portsmouth, with a local presence in the other urban area and the rural area. These technical workers will service the local contracts within the voluntary, statutory and private sectors by providing on site support. They will be supported by the whole range of staff and services at the main office, covering help desk, installation, consultancy and additional technical support.

A principle aim of the RHIT Co. will be to establish enough private business to sustain the voluntary sector support in these areas post Change Up.

Through evaluation we will be able to establish the additional cost of working in other areas and the ability to generate enough business to make the cross subsidy model successful, and the nature of the business that transpires to be appropriate in different geographical areas.

9.3 CVS Led Model

Currently SVS infrastructure support is focused on the Southampton LA area, but we have on occasions worked with surrounding CVS on activities such as training, and staff support.

As this pilot has a limited timeframe our preference would be to focus on just the Southampton area. This is based on the experience of developing the previous ICT project which to my surprise took longer than other new services to get the sector engaged, (possibly because it was an unexpected area of support). If we were to try to develop this in an additional geographical area, we would have to both develop the awareness of the advantages of ICT and the project as well as the Social Enterprise aspect. If we concentrated on Southampton, it would give us a better opportunity to focus on the Social Enterprise which is the area of delivery which needs testing.

However if required in order to fit in with regional plans we would consider working in the surrounding areas, New Forest or Eastleigh if the CVS were agreeable.

9.4 net:gain Model

Selection of net:gain centres would follow discussion with the Sub Group, CVSs and other key stakeholders, to ensure the programme complements other regional and local ChangeUp initiatives in ICT. Individual centre facilities and capacity would also affect the choice - some UK online centres will be able to run the programme themselves, while others may only provide the venue and use external (preferably local) mentors to deliver the service.

9.5 Additional Support Model for net:gain

As part of the discussions in the Sub Group it was identified more latterly that the net:gain model whilst offering a wide ranging service is weak on offering the technical support required by some VCO's. A programme of delivery (see **Appendix 1**) has been developed by Community Council Berkshire and e-mpirical Ltd which addresses this shortfall.

The net:gain programme will be fully funded by the Active Community Unit (subject to ministerial approval) but will require ChangeUp funds for marketing and evaluation in order to be part of the regional programme. The net:gain model can run without the Additional Support Model but if funds were available it would offer both an interesting and useful dimension to our programme.

10. Barriers to Success/Risk Factors

10.1 Hub & Spoke Model

Risk	Action/reduction in risk
Suitable staff cannot be recruited	SCIP has experience of recruiting staff for such roles
Suitable hosts(spokes) cannot be found	SCIP has had discussions with potential hosts
Suitable clients cannot be recruited	Work SCIP, and the national ICT hub, have done has indicated a there is a demand- it might take time to move people from adhoc arrangements.
The demand is too uneven for the Community Networker to follow a set pattern	The hub model allows staff to be redeployed
Travel costs are too large a proportion of chargeable time to be recoverable	The model will test this, particularly for rural areas
The central helpdesk is able to deal with less queries than expected	SCIP has piloted a version of the helpdesk and the model will test this
The marketing does not generate and interest for paid-for IT services	The model is based on SCIP's experience and research done for the national ICT hub which indicates a demand this model can satisfy

10.2 Cross Subsidy Model

RISK	Action/Reduction in Risk
Lack of take up from the voluntary sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of services by the CVS's to the VCS Credibility of company within the sector as it's owned by the sector

RISK	Action/Reduction in Risk
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion through the sector by word of mouth
Oversubscription from the voluntary sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful management of business • Ensuring we have adequate levels of private business contracts and staffing to support the VCS
Lack of take up from private sector (area specific)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate marketing • Networking using existing contacts • Taking advantage of sector opportunities
Failure to secure working partnerships in the new urban and rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with known agencies and contacts • Building and working with existing provision where appropriate • Working with current partners and using their influence
Failure to recruit staff that will be able to work within the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring staff understand the business ethos of the RHIT Co. • Ensuring staff understand the cultural differences of the sector
VC Organisations unable to pay for services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our market research demonstrates that 75% VCO's are prepared to pay for a quality and consistent service at an affordable price. • Marketing the attributes and cost of the contracts to the sector, to enable them to build the support costs into future funding applications. • Working with the local CVS to establish and appropriate pricing model for VCO's with no budget for ICT support

10.2 CVS Led Model

RISK	Action/Reduction in Risk
Lack of experience of running a social enterprise and short timescale might cause an initial delay in its embryonic stage.	
Some groups may shy away from the support if they believe they have to buy into it.	Need to utilize clever marketing and use of local networks
Presently there is only one ICT development worker on site and there is the risk attached to being a lone worker – such as maternity and sickness absence or leaving the post.	We managed to sustain the work by providing maternity cover in an instance when this was required
Offering a charged service paralleling private firms, there is the risk that some groups having the notion that service from the private sector might be more efficient.	We would need to promote an understanding of the benefits we would bring through our links within the voluntary sector.00 Evaluating this would be one of main purposes of the pilot
There would be a need to build an understanding of sector issues.	Evidenced experience of recruiting and managing a team of ICT volunteers would enable increased service provision to groups.

10.4 net:gain Model

RISK	Action/Reduction in Risk
Programme is not approved by ministers in a time frame that links to the regional ChangeUp programme	
Not enough Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) engage in the net:gain programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run increased number of promotional events (contingency budget available) • Use established relationship with other VCS intermediaries to promote programme.
VCOs do not want to pay for net:gain membership.	<p><u>Short term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased subsidy available in year 1 to encourage take up. • funding support for VCOs is built into the project through offering VCOs access to a funding expert. <p><u>Medium/long term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work of ICT Hub is designed to make VCS funders more aware of ICT costs.
Unable to find sufficient numbers of UK online centres willing/able to deliver the net:gain programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading centres to be invited to join advisory group • National project includes events to share good practice amongst centres. • Ufi regional manager to assist in centre

	recruitment. • LSC funding available to support centre capacity building,
Not enough Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) engage in the net:gain programme for centres to justify employing a dedicated member of staff to deliver workshops.	Centres to work together and pool resources to employ member of staff with cross-centre responsibility.

11. Funding profiles

11.1 Hub and Spoke Model

(See Appendix 2 for full budget details)

The model has been costed on the basis of six phases of which the set up phases of the hub and spokes run in parallel. It provides for the provision of a service of Community Networkers which provide a service through all the Councils for Voluntary Service in East and West Sussex, and a service around Maidstone Volunteer Bureau in Kent. It assumes that for the first six months of delivery of support, the Community Networker will be developing ICT planning with organisations, running training programmes and beginning to generate the demand for paid-for Technical Support. Therefore the second six months will show the build up of income from this work.

11.2 Cross Subsidy Model

(See Appendix 3)

11.3 CVS Led Model

(See Appendix 4)

The funding profiles were agreed at an early stage of this process. Since then there has been an agreement to include four models rather than just three.

Our costings are based on the current ICT input of three days per week plus an additional two days for further development of the volunteering aspect and the Social Enterprise element. The figures are based on a full years work assuming agreed extension by GOSE of spend past the end of financial year.

11.4 net:gain model

The net:gain model is almost fully costed as part of a National Project, However in order for it to be part of the regional programme we need to allow some funds for marketing in line with the regional programme and evaluation. These funds should be held back on 15th July 2005 if the Regional consortium wish to proceed with the net:gain Development Model.

It has been identified earlier that there is an additional support proposal for the net:gain model from Community council Berkshire/Empirical (see Appendix 1) The breakdown of funds for this additional programme that would only be considered in line with the net:gain model can be seen in Appendix 5

11.5 Summary of total costs

Activity	Amount requested £	Comments
Hub and Spoke Model	195, 000	
Cross Subsidy Model	195, 000 (Approx)	
CVS Led Model	41,448 (45)	
net:gain model	10,000 (marketing)	Subject to ministerial approval
CCB/Empirical	90,000	Optional added value based upon net:gain proceeding
Evaluation	40,000 – 80 days @ £500 per day	
Fund Management of Evaluation	4,000	
Total	£575, 448	This includes CCB/Empirical and contribution to net:gain
Total without CCB/Empirical	£485, 448	

The costs include fund management and marketing costs with the exception of the net:gain model as identified.

12. Evaluation of Programme

Funds have been set aside to evaluate the whole of the ICT programme. The aim is to commission an independent consultant who will run the evaluation in parallel and produce a comprehensive written evaluation with recommendations at the end of the programme.

The evaluation will look at each development model and define the pro's and cons as follows

- Appropriateness for size and type of VCS
- Ability to offer support across hardware, software, technical support and training
- Cost of delivering each model (full cost recovery)
- Sustainability of each model
- Recommendations for the Region

80 days of work at £500 per day have been costed into the budget for this purpose and RAISE has a range of consultants who could be approached to undertake this work. The ICT sub Group have been very keen that the evaluation should be independent and not led by any one of the development models.

The milestones for the evaluation will be written into the contracts with each of the development model leads.

13. Summary

The Regional Consortium need to discuss this paper and come to some decisions. We are hopeful that by 15th July when we meet that we will know the outcome of the net:gain project but if the ministers have not made a decision then the Regional Consortium will need to consider holding back some funds with an end date set. Should the net:gain project be approved then the Regional Consortium will need to consider the value of the additional programme from E-mpirical/CCB.

14. Recommendations

- A. The Regional consortium discuss this paper in full
- B. They agree the 4 development models
- C. They agree the level of investment
- D. They decide on the way forward for the CCB/E-mpirical model
- E. They suggest other areas of focus for netgain should it be successful
- F. They agree the approach to fund management
- G. They agree for the extended timeframe for the ICT programme
- H. They agree to devolve the writing of the evaluation specification to the members of the RC who are on the ICT sub group

Catherine Johnstone/Kathryn Shephard
RAISE
13th July 2005