

# A Fair Deal

Creating an environment for a Thriving Third Sector  
in the East of England 2009/2014



# RISE

Regional InfraStructure East



April 2009

## **Introduction**

### **Context**

The East of England Public Sector is underfunded and, as a consequence, the Third Sector in the East of England is underfunded compared with the other English regions. Central government funds, national lottery funds and trust funds all direct money away from the region to areas perceived nationally to be of greater need.

Although the East of England region has 10% of the UK population, it receives only 7% of EHRC, Equalities and Human Rights Commission funding and 5.9% of Big Lottery Funding. The National Health Service, NHS, in the East of England, is underfunded on a per capita basis and the Regional Development Agency, EEDA, is the least funded RDA in the country on a per capita basis. In terms of the New Deal for Communities and the Neighbourhood Renewal Funds, the East of England has the lowest number and the lowest level of funding. In terms of the collection of local taxes and business rates, and the return in terms of grants from central government to local government, the East of England is one of three net contributing regions to central government and thence to other regions.

### **The case for change**

The East of England population is growing, and is expected to reach 6.4m by 2020; it is getting older – 50% of the population will be over 50 by the early 2020s; it is becoming frailer – 23% of the population at the 2001 census had life-limiting diseases, illnesses or conditions; it is becoming singler – in the 2001 census 38% of the adult population led single lives; and it is becoming more diverse, through internal and external migration.

The East of England does have low crime rates, high employment rates and long life expectancy, compared with other regions, but it also has low skills levels and 1m people in poverty – some 18% of the population. The people in poverty in the region often experience multiple deprivations based on place, age, ethnicity, disability or learning disability, rurality, gender, health or mental health, or responsibilities as carers, all of which constrain access to work and services. For instance, a longer life, without quality of life and well-being, may be a curse rather than a blessing if health and care services wanted or needed are rationed or not available locally.

So, the East of England, in terms of both the Public and Third Sectors, has a case for a bigger and fairer share of national investment to tackle the multiple deprivations in the region and promote social, economic and community inclusion.

**Purpose**

The primary purpose of this document is to highlight the main development issues facing the Third Sector in the East of England over the next decade in terms of creating a thriving sector. Another purpose is to raise the profile of the Third Sector in the East of England: nationally, regionally and locally, as a sector that can deliver positive community, social and economic outcomes through volunteering, through tackling social and economic isolation and exclusion and can facilitate community, social, economic and environmental participation in ways that promote well-being and improve the quality of life for all the peoples and communities of the region.

**Audience**

This document is aimed at national, regional and local decision makers in the Public, Private and Third Sectors. It is intended to provide a Third Sector perspective on the range of issues we have to tackle together with other stakeholders and funders. Together we want to have that thriving Third Sector that promotes community, social, economic and environmental inclusion and tackles deprivation and exclusion in communities of place and interest across the region.

## Executive Summary

The Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) regional consortia lead bodies group: Regional Infrastructure Support East (RISE) and the East Regional Infrastructure Network (ERIN) identified the following regional challenges that would have to be met to create an environment for a thriving Third Sector in the East of England over the next decade. RISE commissioned detailed reports on each of the following topics and the full documents are available on partner websites.

- **Funding:** Third Sector perspectives on available funding sources, models and issues in the region.
  - **Key findings:** the region's Third Sector is underfunded; there is no one definitive source on data for regional funding; Third Sector funding is inconsistent, short term and uncertain; many Third Sector organisations are under funding pressure; competition for funding is dividing rather than unifying sector interests; funding advice support for Third Sector organisations is patchy and variable in quality.
  - **Messages:** the needs are for more consistent funding; for better funding advice; for collation of data on Third Sector funding in the region; and for the region to have a fairer share of national resources, Public, Private and Voluntary.
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- **Growth:** Third Sector perspectives on the regional Growth agenda issues in the region.
  - **Key findings:** Growth plans for the region will put pressure on existing communities and create new communities in identified key centres; social infrastructure in these areas is as important as physical infrastructure; community capacity building is needed to create 'sustainable communities'.
  - **Messages:** Build social and community infrastructure through community facilities; support community development work; support new community groups to come into being; grant fund community activity; provide learning and skills development opportunities at community level; and support volunteering activity. Clearly define, and make provision for, social infrastructure in regional spatial plans and Local Development Frameworks, in particular Core Strategies, Development Briefs and Planning Obligations.
- **Rurality:** Third Sector perspectives on rurality issues in the region.
  - **Key findings:** The region is rural in character; communities are dispersed and remote from services and facilities, making market towns vital service hubs. Climate change and fuel poverty will have greater impact. Rural communities are ageing faster than the general population and are prone to hidden deprivation, exacerbated by urban bias of government funding. Small Third Sector organisations play a leading role in filling the community, social and economic gaps in rural services.

- **Messages:** VCS rural organisations and rural infrastructure bodies provide vital roles in rural community representation to achieve an equitable share of development programmes, influence policy, rural proofing and advocacy. Training would benefit rural VCS organisations in terms of organisation, business planning and management of community assets (playing fields, village halls, community centres) and use of ICT. Sustained provision of rural community development with an outreach approach to community planning; accessible advice, support and signposting services.
- **Equality/Diversity/ Inclusion:** Third Sector perspectives on regional diversity and inclusion issues.
  - **Key findings: BME:** 67% of BME population live in the 88 most deprived wards. BME community groups suffer lack of capacity because of underinvestment; BME groups are poorly represented in local partnerships; the move to mainstreaming and a single equalities body dilutes the BME voice; the region has the highest numbers of Gypsies and Travellers and high levels of non-UK migrant workers.
  - **Young People:** A third of young people in the UK live in poverty, the worst among developed countries (Unicef 2007); funding for community-based youth services is patchy with little resource going into youth led organisations; representation of Young people on Children's Trusts is tokenistic.
  - **Disability:** people with disabilities and mental health problems are less likely to be in employment and earn less; transport and housing provision is poor; disabled 16 year olds are twice as likely to be NEETS.
  - **LGBT:** 1 in 5 LGB people has been the victim of homophobic crime; 65% of young LGB have experienced bullying; 40% of young LGB people self harm, or have attempted suicide; only 97 charities for LGBT in UK; 43% of LGBT groups have an annual income of less than £10k; there is little information and support for transgender people.
  - **Older People:** 25% of pensioner households in the region are in poverty; 65% of people over 50 believe employers to be ageist; 75% of older people believe their views are ignored or portrayed negatively in the media; some benefits end after 65; many older people experience limited mobility, social isolation, poor transport, poor health and care services; the region has one of the lowest employment rates for the 50+ age group.

- **Faiths:** 75% of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus have experienced unfair treatment at work; legislation only protects the 9 largest faiths; there needs to be greater recognition of the contribution and potential of faith groups as Third Sector partners.
  - **Gender:** poverty and unemployment, and low pension entitlement, is more likely to affect women than men; 45% of women have experienced some form of domestic violence; women are under-represented in positions of power, political, social and economic; women's groups are under-represented on local partnerships and are underfunded; gender mainstreaming may wipe away women's support networks with nothing in their place; there is a lack of recognition of men's issues.
  - **Messages:** improve the links and co-ordination between equalities organisations and Third Sector infrastructure and the Public Sector in national, regional and local terms; support equalities groups in terms of representation, capacity building, training, volunteering, fundraising and funding; collect evidence of the needs of disadvantaged groups in the community; support pathways to community, economic and social inclusion; a better understanding is required of the need for specific, distinct measures to deal with the inequalities affecting each strand.
- **Governance:** Third Sector governance and leadership challenges across the region.
    - **Key findings:** infrastructure support for Third Sector organisations' trustees is weak across the East of England; there is a need for concerted Governance training so that organisations can face the challenges and opportunities of increasing demand for services in a growing region; Third Sector organisations favour local, vocal and face-to-face support; Third Sector boards under-represent women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and young people; rurality increases the money/ time costs of being a trustee in the East of England; Boards have skills gaps in leadership, support and management; funders need to recognise/support the roles that trustees play.
    - **Messages:** the region needs to build an alliance of infrastructure organisations promoting good governance through Good Practice guides, standards development and training, 'Investors in Governance', and disseminating tools that help trustees in assessment, monitoring, evaluation and outcomes.
  - **ICT:** Third Sector ICT issues across the region.
    - **Key findings:** The Third Sector in the region has fallen behind the rest of the country in terms of capital investment in ICT infrastructure (hardware and software); in terms of trained and qualified staff using IT applications; in collaboration in the deployment of new ICT technologies to deliver fast and remote services and communications that save people time and money; there is a digital divide in terms of limited and poorer quality broadband services and access to digital media and training in rural areas in the East of England region.
    - **Messages:** Create six sub-regional circuit rider ICT support projects across the region; create a region-wide Third Sector ICT help desk; provide training for Third Sector staff in IT use; support Third Sector IT accessibility champions across the region; encourage investment in quality broadband in rural areas, maintain and develop Third Sector ICT regional network links nationally and locally.

- **Recruitment and Retention:** Third Sector recruitment and retention issues in the region.
  - o **Key findings:** 60% of Third Sector organisations in survey in the region reported difficulties in recruitment/ retention of trustees, employees and volunteers. The reasons included: lack of specialist skills; salary inadequacies; insufficient experience; lack of candidates; short-term contracts; higher public/ private sector salaries; rural locations; lack of training opportunities/ career paths within small organisations; insufficient resources to develop and support trustees and volunteers.
  - o **Messages:** Third Sector infrastructure bodies could form partnerships to foster career path progression and retain skills within the sector; develop with the i10 universities in the region an undergraduate and graduate placement and recruitment programme; investigate the viability of reinstating COVER's regional Third Sector employment gateway; develop a region- wide HR support service for the Third Sector in the region; input skills needs to the new Skills Third Sector body Sector Qualification strategy; link Third Sector jobs via evaluation to comparable jobs/pay in the Public Sector; develop a campaign via infrastructure bodies across the region to promote working in the Third Sector.
  
- **Skills:** Third Sector Skills and Workforce Development issues in the region.

**Key findings:** the Leitch report sets out ambitious regional targets for increased levels of adult literacy, numeracy and IT, which will require all sectors, including the Third Sector, to undertake large-scale skills development (only St Albans in the region currently meets the targets). LAA planning and delivery of services including 'a thriving Third Sector' will require significant investment in Third Sector Workforce Development (WFD). The abolition of the LSC in 2010 will mean that Train to Gain (T2G) will be the main vehicle by which the Third Sector can fund WFD in future. Commissioning of public services via

- tendering and the requirement for Third Sector organizations to have qualified staff will increase demand for professional development across the region especially in Leadership, Management, Training, IAG, administration, Fundraising, Marketing and Care. The new National Apprenticeship Scheme offers the Third Sector opportunities to increase and upgrade the new entrant workforce coming into the Sector.
- **Messages:** the Third Sector needs to engage regionally and locally with the shapers and funders of Skills: EEDA, the LSC and successor bodies – the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) for adult funding, The Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) for 14-19 funding, the National Apprenticeship Scheme (NAS) for apprenticeships, Nextsteps – the Adult Advancement (IAG) Agency and the Sector Skills Councils, including the new ‘Skills- Third sector’. There is a need to engage regionally and locally with the Skills funding programmes, mainstream and ESF, notably T2G, Skills for Life (SfL) for language, literacy, Numeracy and ICT, NAS, SSCs and developing Sector Qualification Strategies relevant to the Third Sector workforce in the region. There is a need to Skill up Volunteers and build Third Sector capacity to recruit and manage volunteers through LAA National Indicators 6 and 7: promoting Volunteering and creating a thriving Third Sector.
- **Partnership working:** Third Sector perspectives on region- wide partnership issues and models in the region.
  - **Key findings:** Commissioning because of the size, scale and scope of the contracts on offer will mean that partnerships or sub-contracting will be the only ways that SME Third Sector organisations will be able to stay in service delivery of publically funded services at regional, sub-regional and local level. Rationalisation and modernisation pressures through the downturn in the economy, the squeeze on public sector finances, the diminishing returns on savings and investments, create an economic case for Third Sector partnerships, mergers and rationalisations of services. In financial terms the good times are over. Hard times are here or just around the corner; there is increased demand for partnership at regional and local level in terms of LSPs, Duty to Involve, LAA National Indicator 7 ‘Thriving Third Sector’ requirements, Compacts; joint working with Health, Skills, Economic Development and other Public Agencies.
  - **Messages:** promote the NCVO, Collaborative Working Unit model for Third Sector partnership development as a ‘fair to all parties’ vehicle to facilitate joint working and a low cost way to avoid some of the legal, financial pitfalls of working together. Use Compacts and Local Area Agreements, LSPs and Children’s Trust partnership frameworks to ensure full VCS engagement at local and regional levels.

### **The Contributing Partners**

Under the wing of the regional VCS Infrastructure network of local consortia, RISE and the regional consortium, ERIN, the following partners contributed to the document: NHCVS; VCAB; RAE; MENTER; SAVO; COVER; SEP; iTRUST; HCF. Capacity Builders provided funding and support for the work to be completed.

### **Next Steps**

In 2009/10 the VCS Consortia Lead Bodies Group, known as RISE, Regional Infrastructure East, will turn this analysis of what is required to create a regional environment for a thriving Third Sector into an action plan that will pull together the capacity and resources of VCS and Public Sector partners, regional and local, to turn possibilities into reality.





## **The Contributing Partners**

the following partners contributed to the document: North Herts Council for Voluntary Service (NHCVS); Voluntary and Community Action in Bedfordshire (VCAB); Rural Action East (RAE), Minority Ethnic Network Eastern Region (MENTER), Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations (SAVO); the Community and Voluntary Forum Eastern Region (COVER); the Social Enterprise People (SEP); Eastern Region VCS ICT champion (iTRUST), Herts Community Foundation (HCF).

Capacity Builders provided funding and support for the work to be completed.