

Places for Change in the East of England

In April 2008 the Department for Communities & Local government announced details of the local authorities to receive Places for Change funding over the next three years. In total the government spent £70m on 70 projects selected across the country of which six are located in the East of England.

This briefing provides a brief overview of how this money is to be spent near you.

What is Places for Change?

In 2005 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) pledged £90m towards the capital improvement of hostels across England. The Hostels Capital Improvement Programme (HCIP) benefited some 150 projects nationwide and sought to promote independence, build routes back to training/employment and help providers develop their capacity to deliver an excellent service.

In 2008 the government pledged a further £70m over three years and welcomed bids from local authorities interested in redeveloping hostels and day centres. Applicants under this second round of funding (called Places for Change) were asked to show how their plans:

- replaced dormitories, shared rooms and transforming institutional hostels
- provided small, specialist provision to meet an identified need
- transformed nightshelters into short stay assessment centres
- moved service users into appropriate training and sustainable employment, linked in with local employers
- uncovered and tackled un-addressed health needs in partnership with local health services
- included social enterprise or links to social enterprise

Applications were submitted by local authorities in partnership with a voluntary sector organisation. Successful partnerships highlighted how their scheme reduced rough sleeping in their local area.

Local focus

Local authorities in the East of England submitted almost 30 separate bids under Places for Change with six being successful.

The six successful projects are:

Wintercomfort (Cambridge City Council)

£100,000

A historic day centre in the centre of Cambridge, Wintercomfort has between 60-70 visitors a day. It hopes the Places for Change funding will renovate a workshop and allow them to establish a social enterprise where their clients will create willow weaving products, arts & crafts to sell to the general public, as well as provide opportunities for future paid employment.

Jimmy's Night Shelter (Cambridge City Council) £3,000,000

The only direct access night shelter in Cambridge, Jimmy's currently sleeps 31 in five dormitory style rooms with very little natural light. The new funding will completely redevelop the service into a 20 bed short stay assessment centre, where each resident will benefit from en suite facilities, a flexible training space and day centre provision.



The Ferry Project (Fenland District Council) £700,000

An independent charity, The Ferry Project has recently partnered with Luminus Housing who manage the council stock previously owned by Fenland District Council. £700,000 will go towards a new hostel provision for homeless young people aged 16-20 and replace dormitory provision currently operated by the project elsewhere in Wisbech.



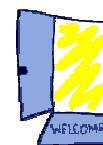
Noah Enterprises (Luton Borough Council) £2,500,000

Already operating a number of successful social enterprises in the city, Noah plan to build "The Ark", a new training and resource centre in the middle of Luton. The new scheme will house the existing furniture/white good recycling scheme, provide 18 self contained residential units for chronically excluded tenants in partnership with Aldwyck Housing Association and space for training and employment advice.



Open Door (St Albans & District) £525, 000

Open Door is a direct access night shelter open to 500 people a year and able to sleep 16 in 3 shared rooms. The funding will allow for the development of new ensuite accommodation, an IT training room an space for a specialist nurse.



Watford New Hope Trust (Watford New Hope Trust) £12, 400

Funding will be used to reconfigure an existing flat into four additional spaces for their night shelter. Scheme will assist with a "community detox" programme for drink and drug users.



Homeless Link's role

Under the Places for Change agenda the DCLG fund Homeless Link to appoint nine regional manager, one for each of the government regions. These regional managers exist to support the partnerships in receipt of funding and share learning from those projects in receipt of Hostel Capital Improvement Programme.

In funding Places for Change there is a recognition from central government that this is what CLG wants to see of hostel and day centre provision, without necessarily having the funding to make this available for everyone. Part the role of the regional manager is thus share the experience of successful schemes and provide support and advice to organisations continuing under their plans or thinking of building innovative partnerships with local employers and training providers.

The regional manager for the East of England is Chris Cornell, he can be contacted on 0779 970 6563 or via email at chris.cornell@homelesslink.org.uk.

