



THE WAY AHEAD
**Civil Society at the
Heart of London**





THE WAY AHEAD

Civil Society at the Heart of London

***The Way Ahead: Civil Society at the Heart of London* is the final report of the Review of the Future of Civil Society Support in London. The Review was commissioned by London Funders, working closely with Greater London Volunteering and the London Voluntary Service Council. These three organisations formed the Project Steering Group for the Review. The Review was carried out by Srabani Sen OBE & Associates. The Review was funded by City of London Corporation's Charity, City Bridge Trust and London Funders.**

The recommendations contained in this report were co-produced between Srabani Sen & Associates and the Reference Group for the Review, and tested with CVS directors, volunteer centre managers, funders and frontline organisations.

Reference Group

Sufina Ahmad, Big Lottery Fund

James Banks, Greater London Volunteering

Geraldine Blake, Community Links

Amanda Coyle (Sarah Mulley, alternate),
Greater London Authority

Jenny Field, City Bridge Trust

Andy Gregg, Race on the Agenda

John Griffiths, Rocket Science

Carolyn Housman, Heart of the City

Sharon Long, Children England and
Partnership for Young London

Andy Matheson, London Borough of Southwark

Eithne Rynne, London Voluntary Service Council

David Warner, London Funders

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project Team

Srabani Sen OBE, Programme Director

Hilary Emery, Research Expert

Brian Lamb OBE, Campaigning Expert

Benet Middleton, Impact Expert

Huw Morris, Researcher

Laura Willoughby MBE, London Expert

Project support was provided by Rebecca Green, Camilla Pallensen and Geraldine Tovey of London Funders. Meeting space was provided by London Funders, LVSC, City of London Corporation, the Cripplegate Foundation and Trust for London.

Thank you

The Project Steering Group would like to thank all those that have contributed to this Review. We would particularly like to thank the Reference Group, whose active advice and scrutiny was invaluable in Stage 1, the research phase of the Review, and without whose participation in the development of the recommendations, this report would not have been possible. We would also like to thank the team at Srabani Sen OBE & Associates for their tireless work in conducting this Review. Most importantly we would like to thank all those who gave of their time to contribute knowledge and evidence to this Review, and to test its recommendations.

© London Funders

London Funders is happy for this report to be quoted as long as the report and its publishers are acknowledged.

Published April 2016

- 02 Acknowledgements**
- 05 Foreword**
- 06 Executive Summary**
- 13 Introduction**
Explains the background to the Review and key terms used
- 16 Key points from *The Change Ahead***
Reprises the findings from report *The Change Ahead*, published in December 2015
- 21 The wider context for change**
Highlights some of the wider context for change and key points from other reviews that have informed this Review's thinking
- 26 The foundations for change**
Sets out 10 foundations of change that the Review developed to shape its vision and recommendations
- 34 The theory of change**
Introduces the theory of change that the Review developed to describe a thriving civil society that achieves the best outcomes for Londoners
- 41 Four principles underpinning the proposed vision and system**
Sets out four principles that should underpin systems-change in civil society
- 48 The proposed vision and system**
Describes the proposed vision and new system
- 64 Recommendations: Transition to the new system**
Recommends how different key players would need to support transition to the proposed system
- 69 Recommendations: Immediate steps**
Details immediate steps to move towards the proposed vision and system

CONTENTS

Civil society in London is facing acute uncertainty, challenge and change. Cuts in public sector funding, challenges to its reputation and the trust with which it is held, growing demand and complexity in the needs of service users – all these factors are driving us to evolve, adapt and innovate. As commissioners of this Review of the Future of Civil Society Support in London, we believe that organisations and individuals that support civil society need to evolve, adapt and innovate as well. The focus of all our efforts has to be on seeking to achieve the best outcomes for Londoners.

Issues facing London are critically important at this time. By 2030 London's population is projected to grow to 10 million, presenting challenges around ageing, housing, health services, education and poverty. In grappling with these challenges, and with shrinking resources, London's local authorities are not only rationalising resources, but changing the way they work, with many looking at sharing services, or at commissioning across borough boundaries. All these factors have profound implications for civil society.

Many support organisations are embracing the need to change in light of these factors, and are developing new ways of supporting civil society. Others are struggling to adapt and are looking for help and support on their journey of change. Funders and commissioners are equally aware of the need for change and are also at different points in their journeys towards re-crafting how they work with civil society and each other.

The environment we are all working in is dynamic; even as this Review was being undertaken, significant changes to the funding available for support organisations in London were being decided. The decision by London Councils to stop funding pan-London support from April 2017 (ending 30 years of boroughs collectively recognising the importance of this work) is disappointing. We are, however, encouraged that London Councils remains

committed to working with City Bridge Trust (and others) on the implementation of this Review.

Through this Review, we offer a way forward. We set out a vision for the future of civil society, with clear roles for all players, be they providers of support, frontline organisations, independent funders, public sector commissioners or businesses. We believe that the scale of change in the environment is such that systems-wide reform in civil society is essential. This belief led us to develop a compelling vision for civil society and its support. This report doesn't answer the question that many readers will have of "what does this mean for my organisation's future?" There are no easy answers to that question. What this report does is provide a vision for the future, a framework for change and the beginnings of a process by which that change can be made. This is how we believe the question for individual organisations can be answered.

We plan to keep the Review alive through the formation of a group to work with others to implement its recommendations. This is described further in Chapter 8.

Finally, it is our strong belief that civil society in London needs to own its own future. This Review is based on that belief. By offering a clear vision in this report, we propose what that future should look like. We look forward to working with the sector, and all those involved in it, over the next few years to make this vision a reality, and to ensure that civil society has the right support to deliver the best for Londoners.

James Banks, Chief Executive,
Greater London Volunteering

David Warner, Director, London Funders

Eithne Rynne, Chief Executive,
London Voluntary Service Council

FOREWORD

The Way Ahead: Civil Society at the Heart of London is the final report of the Review of the Future of Civil Society Support in London. It follows on from The Change Ahead, published in December 2015, which set out research and analysis carried out in stage 1 of the Review.

Definitions

- The Review Team developed the following definition of civil society:

“Civil society is where people take action to improve their own lives or the lives of others and act where government or the private sector don’t. Civil society is driven by the values of fairness and equality, and enables people to feel valued and to belong. It includes formal organisations such as voluntary and community organisations, informal groups of people who join together for a common purpose and individuals who take action to make their community a better place to live.”
- Civil society encompasses individuals, informal groups and formally constituted organisations that take action to improve communities’ lives.
- The report uses the term “civil society support” to describe what is commonly called “infrastructure”, partly because the term can be more easily understood outside of the sector and partly to reflect the fact that a range of support is available beyond that of traditional infrastructure organisations.
- This report uses the term “communities” to denote both communities of interest and geographically based communities.
- The following definition of co-production was developed:

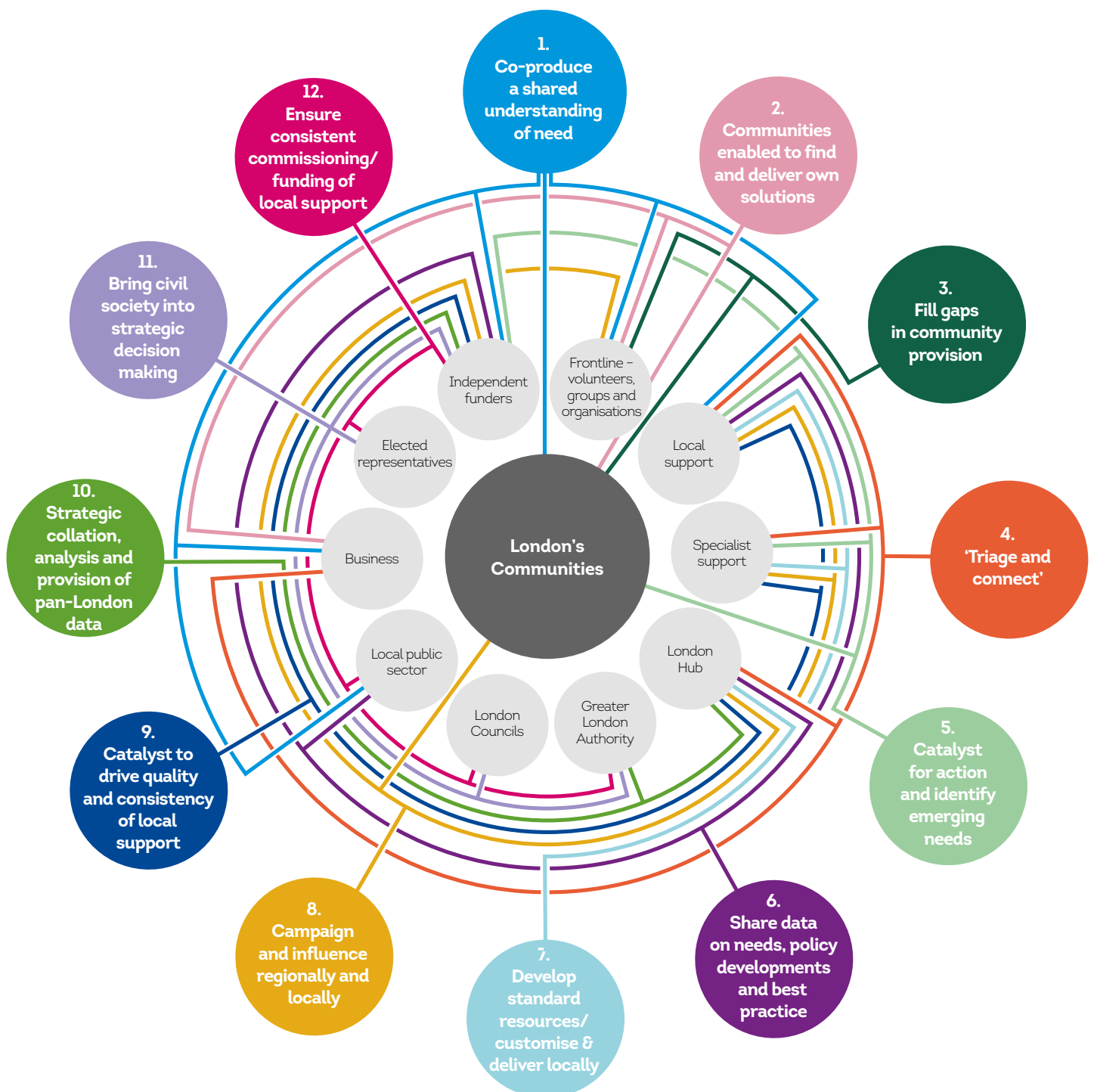
“Co-production is where Londoners work with those in power, and each other, in a way in which all voices are heard equally in developing a shared understanding of need and in crafting solutions to make London a better place.”
- This report uses the term “local public sector” to encompass local authorities and health.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key proposals

Proposed vision and system

This report proposes a new vision and system, described in full in Chapter 7, for civil society and how it should be supported in future.



The twelve core aspects of the proposed vision and system are:

- 1** A shared understanding of need should be co-produced, with communities driving this process, and with the involvement of a range of other players.
- 2** Communities should be enabled to find and deliver their own solutions where possible.
- 3** Frontline volunteers, groups and organisations' role would be to fill gaps in provision which communities can't or don't want to provide for themselves.
- 4** Civil society support would provide a "triage and connect" function to diagnose the issues faced by frontline volunteers, groups and organisations and match them to the right support. Support could be from a range of sources within and beyond civil society.
- 5** Communities, civil society support and funders should act as catalysts for action and also identify emerging needs.
- 6** Civil society support, independent funders and the local public sector should share data gleaned through co-producing a shared understanding of need, and information on policy developments and best practice.

7 A London Hub, working with specialist support, should develop standardized resources where possible, which can be customized and delivered locally. The London Hub could be made up of a network of organisations or be a formally constituted body.

8 Frontline volunteers, groups and organisations, civil society support and independent funders should campaign and influence locally and regionally.

9 Civil society support and independent funders should act as catalysts to drive improvements in quality, based on peer support and challenge.

10 The GLA should collate, analyse and provide data on civil society and communities' needs.

11 The GLA, elected representatives, London Councils and independent funders should bring civil society into strategic planning and decision making about the future of London.

12 London Councils, the GLA, elected representatives, independent funders and the local public sector should work together to ensure consistent commissioning and funding of civil society support.

Bases of proposed vision and system

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 explain the thinking that led to the proposed vision and system.

Foundations for change

The Review Team developed ten foundations (set out in Chapter 4) upon which it built its vision and recommendations for the future:

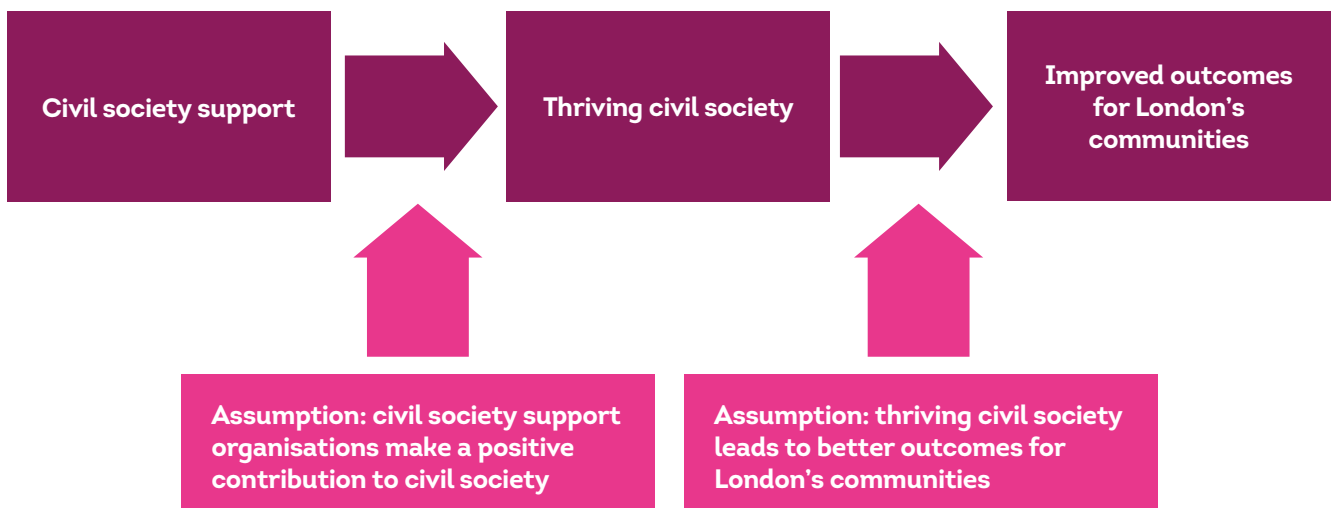
- 1** Empowering communities should be at the heart of civil society
- 2** Civil society should be at the heart of London
- 3** Focus of debate and reform should widen from "civil society organisations" to "civil society" to encompass the full breadth of those working to deliver better outcomes for Londoners
- 4** Challenge and accountability should be built into the new system
- 5** Support organisations should enable civil society to find its own solutions
- 6** Funders need to adapt
- 7** More flexible and "thought through" approaches to volunteering are needed
- 8** Effective leadership and governance of civil society is needed
- 9** Civil society has a vital role in campaigning and influencing decision makers
- 10** Civil society needs to adopt the right culture

Theory of change

Our recommendations are built on a theory of change, set out in Chapter 5. The top level outcomes from this theory of change are summarised in the diagram below.



The top level assumptions underpinning the theory of change are summarised in the diagram below.



Context for this report

Principles

Four principles underpin the proposed vision and system for civil society, as explained in Chapter 6. In summary they are:

- 1** Pragmatic co-production, in which communities have an equal voice in developing a shared understanding of need and in crafting solutions, with an open recognition of the relevant constraints
- 2** Building community strength and self-reliance should be the aim of civil society, with frontline volunteers, groups and organisations filling gaps that communities can't or don't want to fill themselves
- 3** The following values should underpin civil society: transparency, fairness, equality, openness, trust and accountability
- 4** The Review's theory of change should underpin the new vision and system for civil society

- The Review's emerging findings report *The Change Ahead* described the rapidly and dramatically changing world in which civil society operates. The Review Team believes that organisations and individuals that support civil society need to adapt, evolve and innovate at a systems-wide level to address these changes, so that the best outcomes can be achieved for Londoners.
- *The Change Ahead* was based on an extensive literature review and primary research.
- This report adds to *The Change Ahead* and in Chapter 3 highlights a number of recent reviews and reports that have called for fundamental change. This Review's recommendations have been developed within a context of a wider movement towards far-reaching change.
- A number of players need to work together and collaborate to achieve better outcomes for London's communities. These players include individuals, groups and organisations from civil society, the public sector, funders, businesses and communities themselves.

Recommendations

Making the transition to the proposed system

Given the scale of change proposed, the Review Team recognises that there will need to be a gradual process of transition to the recommended vision and system. The following is a summary of the key recommendations related to transitioning to the new system, and who we believe should take the lead in initiating action.

- Establish a Systems Change Group to facilitate change (Reference Group for the Review)
- Promote the Review and its recommendations in ways which are tailored to specific groups of key players who can make change happen (Systems Change Group)
- Investigate ways to fund transition to the proposed system, and to ensure civil society support is funded (London Councils, independent funders, providers of statutory funding and London Funders)
- Investigate how to adapt the commissioning of civil society support to ensure the consistency proposed in our recommendations (London Councils, commissioners of public services and London Funders)
- Engage businesses with this Review (Heart of the City)

- Prototype the proposed system in selected areas to develop the practical detail and an evidence base to encourage universal roll out of the proposed system, including the development of a London Hub (Communities, independent funders, support organisations, frontline volunteers, groups and organisations, commissioners and local public sector in selected areas, supported by the Systems Change Group)
- Create an Effectiveness Network, drawing from trustees of support organisations, to develop and promote peer support and to drive improvement and consistency in the quality of support organisations' work (LVSC and GLV)
- Actively investigate how to adopt the proposed system (all key players)
- Develop an active role for the GLA (GLA)
- Develop an online platform, forums and mechanisms to share up-to-date and emerging thinking on the future of civil society (Systems Change Group)

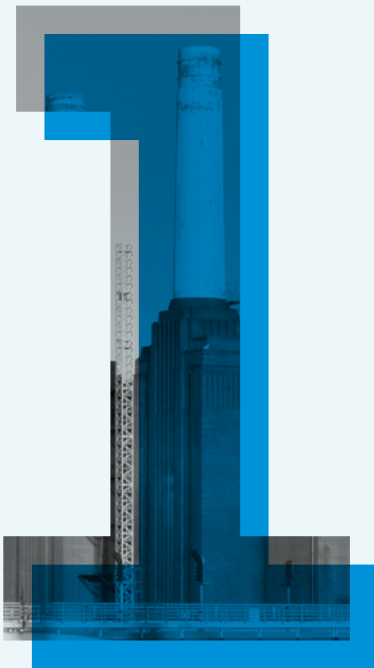
Immediate steps

We are keen to develop momentum around our recommendations. The following is a summary of the immediate steps required to kick start the process of transition.

	Immediate steps	By whom	Begin by
1	Establish Systems Change Group to stimulate adoption of the recommendations from this Review and to track progress	Reference Group for the Review	April 2016
2	Develop a communications plan to disseminate and engage all key players, to promote dialogue and understanding about the Review and its recommendations	Systems Change Group	April 2016
3	Bring together support organisations to consider the recommendations from this Review and how to move forward	LVSC and GLV	May 2016
4	Develop an implementation plan	Systems Change Group	May 2016
5	Develop a glossary of terms from the Review	LVSC and GLV	May 2016
6	Bring together commissioning leads within London Boroughs to consider the recommendations from this Review and how to move forward	London Funders and London Councils	June 2016
7	Bring together independent funders to consider the recommendations from this Review and how to move forward	London Funders	June 2016
8	Consider and issue a statement in response to the recommendations from this Review	Independent funders (facilitated by London Funders)	June 2016

	Immediate steps	By whom	Begin by
9	Seek a meeting with the Mayor to discuss the proposed role of the GLA in relation to data and to bringing civil society into strategic planning and decision making for London	Systems Change Group	June 2016
10	Bring together interested players to discuss how to move forward with the London Hub	Systems Change Group	July 2016
11	Begin discussions on establishing an Effectiveness Network	LVSC and GLV	July 2016
12	Bring together businesses and business brokerage services to consider the recommendations from this Review and how to move forward	Heart of the City, London Employer Supported Volunteering Network	September 2016
13	Independent funders, commissioners, local public sector and civil society support organisations to develop a shared understanding of “pragmatic co-production”	Facilitated by London Funders, LVSC and GLV	September 2016
14	Identify areas to prototype the system set out in the recommendations, actively considering cross borough approaches	London Councils, Systems Change Group	September 2016
15	Begin prototyping in selected areas	Communities, local public sector, independent funders, civil society support and frontline volunteers, groups and organisations in selected areas, supported by the Systems Change Group	November 2016
16	Review and report on progress	Systems Change Group	November 2016

Chapter



Purpose of this report

This report builds on the emerging findings of the Review of the Future of Civil Society Support, contained in *The Change Ahead*, published in December 2015. It sets out recommendations, developed with the Reference Group. These recommendations propose a vision for civil society, based on which clear roles and functions have been developed for civil society support.

The report outlines:

- A new vision for civil society and the foundations on which it has been built
- Within this vision, a system of civil society support
- A theory of change which underpins our recommendations on the system of civil society support
- Recommendations on what will be required to transition to this new system, including consideration of funding
- The immediate steps that key players could take to achieve this vision

Throughout the report we refer to the “Review Team”. By this we mean the Reference Group and Srabani Sen OBE & Associates, who worked in collaboration to produce this report and its recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Objectives of the Review

The Review was commissioned within a context of continued reductions in funding for civil society and its support providers, and London Councils' review of its support of capacity building within London's civil society. The objectives of the Review as agreed at the start of the project are set out below.

Overall objective

- To understand how civil society in the capital can best be supported in order to optimise its positive impact on Londoners

Specific objectives

- 1** To know how support should be provided in London for the future to meet the needs of frontline organisations
- 2** To make the best use of resources available

As the Review developed, we expanded objective 1 to include individuals and informal groups as well as "frontline organisations".

Scope of the Review

The central question this Review seeks to answer is, given constrained resources and a rapidly changing environment, how can civil society be supported to deliver the best outcomes for Londoners? In starting to answer this question it became apparent that it was first necessary to understand civil society in London, its challenges, opportunities and how it should evolve. This led the Review to develop a vision for civil society in London, based on which recommendations about how it could be supported have been formulated. This report sets out that vision for civil society and recommendations about the role of organisations and individuals who provide support to it.

Process of developing recommendations

Following the publication of the emerging findings report *The Change Ahead*, a set of foundations were developed to underpin recommendations for change. These are set out in Chapter 4.

The Review Team also developed a theory of change which is described in Chapter 5. This theory of change sets out the steps towards achieving a thriving civil society and the assumptions that sit behind them. This theory of change shaped thinking about our recommendations.

The Review Team then devised four principles which we felt should run through its vision for civil society and should shape the role of civil society support. These are set out in Chapter 6.

The recommendations were tested with CVS directors, volunteer centre managers, funders and frontline organisations.

Definition of “civil society”

A number of players will need to work together in delivering better outcomes for London’s communities, including individuals and organisations from civil society, the public sector, business and communities themselves. But what is “civil society”? How should it be defined and described?

Through the Review the following definition of civil society was developed:

“Civil society is where people take action to improve their own lives or the lives of others and act where government or the private sector don’t. Civil society is driven by the values of fairness and equality, and enables people to feel valued and to belong. It includes formal organisations such as voluntary and community organisations, informal groups of people who join together for a common purpose and individuals who take action to make their community a better place to live.”

This definition underpins thinking on the proposed vision and recommendations.

Definition of “civil society support”

We have very deliberately chosen to use the phrase “civil society support” to describe those organisations that are commonly called “infrastructure” bodies. This is because firstly, the term “infrastructure”, to anyone outside of the sector, means physical infrastructure such as roads, bridges and drains. Secondly, we wanted to recognise that many frontline organisations and communities receive support from a wide range of institutions and individuals in addition to traditional “infrastructure” bodies. The Review believes the term “civil society support” better reflects this, and would have more meaning to everyone with whom civil society needs and wants to engage.

Definition of “communities”

This report uses the term “communities” throughout. The Review Team defines “communities” as both communities of interest and geographically based communities.

Chapter



Introduction

Stage 1 of the Review involved conducting research to develop a shared understanding of the landscape, challenges and opportunities upon which recommendations could be developed. This chapter sets out the core elements of that research, which were presented in the report *The Change Ahead*.

The full report *The Change Ahead* is available from London Funders' website at <http://londonfunders.org.uk/what-we-do/london-funders-projects/review-londons-civil-society-support>

KEY POINTS FROM THE CHANGE AHEAD

Methodology

The Change Ahead is based on:

- An extensive literature review covering more than 80 reports
- Ten focus groups with frontline civil society organisations, local and specialist support organisations and London Borough Grants Officers
- An online survey of frontline organisations
- Twenty-one 1:1 interviews with a range of people including funders, business sector representatives, equalities groups, frontline civil society organisations and civil society support organisations
- Analysis of email submissions of evidence

The themes from each strand of research reinforced each other, building a clear picture of civil society and civil society support in London.

About London's communities

London's communities are changing rapidly. Demand is growing, and civil society organisations report the increasingly complex needs of those turning to them for support. However, within the literature reviewed there was little discussion about how these needs should shape civil society or civil society support. Data about needs is hard to access and variable in quality. Needs data is not systematically updated.

About civil society

There are a myriad of places where data about the size, nature, structure, contribution, impact and value of civil society in London reside. Some of this data, such as that within the NCVO Almanac, is very useful, however, some is out of date. There is no single place where that data is mapped against the needs of London's communities. No data was found correlating the size of the civil society sector in each area of London with the capacity of its support organisations. Civil society is not included in strategic planning or decision making for London, despite the sector's significant contribution to the capital.

About civil society support

Despite the numerous reports and reviews carried out in recent years, there is still no shared understanding of the role and functions of civil society support. Previous reviews and reports set out long lists of recommended functions for civil society support. However, they do not take into account the resources available to carry out these functions, or the constraints that funding structures impose on support organisations in developing their own priorities based on their understanding of need.

Civil society support is inconsistently funded and structured across London, which compounds the variability of what is offered and the quality of services. Some local support organisations are forging new futures for themselves. Others are struggling to do so. Pressure on funding is constraining support organisations' ability to adapt. There are a plethora of specialist civil society support organisations. There is no agreed role for regional civil society support.

Frontline organisations report being members of several different civil society support bodies, suggesting that what they need is not easily available from one source. Frontline organisations seek and receive support from a wide range of sources beyond traditional civil society support organisations. These sources include skilled volunteers, peers, consultants, businesses offering pro bono support, professional suppliers such as accountancy and audit firms, think tanks whose reports are referred to for policy knowledge, universities, local authorities and other funders.

Support needed by civil society

The following support needs were commonly reported by both frontline organisations and local support organisations:

- Raising income
- Developing partnerships and collaborations
- Demonstrating impact
- Support with business functions such as HR, IT, social media, website development, legal advice and negotiating cheaper services such as insurance
- Intelligence about new initiatives and best practice
- Support with influencing and campaigning, and with intelligence about the policy environment

When asked what support they have looked for but struggled to find, many frontline organisations named things that civil society support organisations provide, though whether this was because they were not aware of these services or because these services were not of the right quality or "level" was not clear. Frontline and civil society support organisations continue to struggle with measuring impact, partly driven by the fact that they often report to multiple funders, each of which has different ways and expectations of measuring impact.

Volunteers and volunteering

There are multiple routes to formal volunteering and no accessible route map for those searching for opportunities. The contribution of informal volunteering goes largely unrecognised. Data about volunteering numbers is extensive, but data was difficult to find which would enable a deeper understanding of who volunteers in which geographical and “sector” areas. Volunteers range from the well qualified to those seeking opportunities to develop their skills to create a route to work. Frontline organisations whose business models are based on employing staff are turning to volunteers to address capacity issues, but there is little evidence of how these organisations are adapting their business model accordingly.

Businesses can see volunteering as a key route to contributing to civil society, but report that civil society organisations can lack the skills or capacity to engage effectively with corporate volunteering opportunities. Civil society organisations, in turn, report that businesses can lack the skills and knowledge to engage effectively and appropriately with civil society.

Influencing decision makers

Support organisations reported challenges with being heard by decision makers. The language civil society uses can be opaque to those outside the sector. Issues of legitimacy can also hamper influencing and campaigning efforts. For example, some support organisations have struggled to demonstrate clear connections with local communities, or to show how they hear from them.

Efforts to campaign and influence have been hampered by factors such as the Lobbying Act 2014.

The role of funders

The large scale reduction in public funding has significant implications for independent funders as well as providers of statutory funding. Local authority finances face further upheaval with, for example, impending changes to the business rate system.

However, no evidence was found of a strategic, pan-London approach to public sector funding cuts. Funders were found generally to be interested in funding innovative projects rather than tried and tested ways of working, and civil society reported that few funders were willing to resource core costs.

Several reports call for funders to collaborate and work more strategically together, but there is little exploration of the barriers to working in such a way.

Through the research civil society support organisations called for a number of changes in the way funders work, including developing shared, consistent and simpler approaches to evaluation, sharing evaluation data to inform the sector and a willingness to take risks.

There is no exploration in the literature of the extent to which funders themselves have a clear understanding of outcomes and impact methodology. Funders do not consistently publish data about the outcomes and impact of their investments in civil society.

What's missing from the debate?

The following were some of the issues where either gaps were found in the debate to date, or where issues were not dealt with in depth in the literature reviewed.

- The governance and leadership of civil society support organisations, including the role of trustees in driving improvements
- The voice of volunteers in the debate about the future of civil society
- How the (changing) needs of London's communities link with, or should reshape, the work of frontline and support organisations in civil society
- Data on how frontline organisations map against London communities' needs, and the implications for how civil society support should be configured
- Planning for, and the impact of, further devolution in London
- Insight about those organisations or groups that don't use civil society support services and why
- The need to bring the private, public and civil society sectors together to deliver better outcomes for Londoners

Chapter



Introduction

This is a period of unprecedented change in the relationship between the state and the citizen. The state is shrinking and the structures of governance and government are changing. London is changing too, and the needs of Londoners grow ever more complex.

In this chapter we highlight some of these wider issues, and some of the emerging responses, to provide additional context to the thinking that led to this report and the Review's recommendations.

THE WIDER CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

London

At time of writing this report, London is about to elect a new Mayor. Across the capital there is a growing recognition that London and Londoners face massive challenges that require all who care about the Capital to work together to try to tackle.

This Review was commissioned at the same time as a number of other London-wide reviews were being carried out. Of particular relevance are the London Fairness Commission and the London Communities Commission.

In its recently published final report (March 2016) the London Fairness Commission makes a number of specific recommendations about how to make the Capital fairer. These include:

- Calling for the start of a “new philanthropic age”. The Commission “believes that the time is ripe for London’s wealthiest residents and businesses to come together in an exemplary social philanthropic effort.”
- Calling for the Mayor of London to be responsible for the fairness of London. This should be made transparent by developing and publishing an annual ‘London Fairness Index’, which could be used to monitor progress.

The London Communities Commission, in its *Recommendations for Action by the Mayor of London 2016* (January 2016), talks about the central importance of London’s communities, particularly in times of austerity, working with civil society, public services and business to take action on priorities defined by local communities. It recommends the formation of Joint Action Boards in areas in most need.

In the run-up to the Mayoral and Assembly elections in May 2016, a number of London bodies are also calling for the new Mayor and the Greater London Authority (GLA) to have a more strategic relationship with civil society. For example, London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC) has called for the co-production of a strategy for the civil society sector, and the Centre for London has argued for the equivalent for civil society of a London Enterprise Panel (which brings together representatives of large and small business groups, universities, economists and infrastructure experts to advise the Mayor on economic issues). This would be “a body that would connect London government to London’s many trusts, foundations, charities and neighbourhood groups.”

Communities and localism

London will also be the focus of greater devolution. The Comprehensive Spending Review published in November 2015 talked about a “devolution revolution”, setting expectations that local government will be more “self sufficient”, with local people having greater control over decisions that affect local communities. As well as devolution to London, there may well be further devolution to a sub-regional or to a locality level. This drive to bring decision making closer to communities, whilst not without its challenges, also offers opportunities which have been considered in forming this Review’s recommendations, as there are potential implications for the future of local and regional civil society support.

Progress is being made on greater devolution of health in London. Two agreements were signed in December 2015: *The London Health and Care Collaboration Agreement*, a commitment to transform health and wellbeing outcomes and services; and the *London Health Devolution Agreement*, a commitment by government and national bodies to work with London to explore structural issues such as workforce planning and how to align capital programmes. A number of new ways of working across London’s large and complex health economy are currently being piloted, with the longer term aim of further devolution of London’s health and care.

Systems change

The need for decision makers to collaborate with communities is a theme that runs through a number of recent reports and initiatives beyond London too. The interim report of the *Joint Review of Investment in Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations in Health and Social Care Sector* from the Department of Health (March 2015) talks of the need for health services and systems to collaborate with families and communities, as well as using social action to focus on outcomes that matter to people.

Community Capital: The Value of Connected Communities from the RSA (October 2015) is based on work with communities in seven locations and talks of the value of people being embedded in local networks of social support to reduce isolation and increase wellbeing. Where people feel connected, the RSA found that there was “better understanding, mobilisation and growth of community capital”. However, the report acknowledged the challenges for civil society organisations in engaging in this approach because of the pressures on their capacity.

A number of recent initiatives and reports are recommending and driving a systems change approach to delivering better outcomes for communities.

The Welsh Government has developed legislation to engender systems change. Its *Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* will make public bodies think about the long term, work better with communities and each other, focus on prevention and take a more joined up approach. The Act is aimed at tackling issues ranging from climate change, poverty and health inequalities to jobs and growth.

A national programme called the *Integrated Care and Support Pioneer Programme* is driving new approaches to improving people's health, wellbeing and experience of care. These systems-wide approaches are being developed “at scale and pace” and are being piloted in 14 areas across England. Three of the pioneer sites are in London.

Behaving like a system from Collaborate and Lankelly Chase (November 2015) identifies nine pre-conditions for systems change:

- Beneficiary impact over organisational focus
- Citizen centred, from concept to delivery
- Issues are acknowledged as systemic
- Grounded in place but open to new approaches
- Trusted partners: understand and adapt to each others' values
- Strengths based: utilising the assets of people and place
- Distributed leadership: enabling, convening, fluid, no egos
- Resilient and risk embracing: safe to fail, able to bounce back and learn
- Able to let go: act as a platform for innovation

Remaking the state: a call to action, is a report from the Better Services Commission established by ACEVO (November 2015). It articulates the importance of civil society's role in working with citizens to articulate what improvement looks like, and finding a way whereby the state and "civic action" can "meet" to ensure that people are supported appropriately. It calls for changes in procurement, empowering local civil society organisations to bid for contracts to work with vulnerable and excluded communities.

The importance of values has featured in some of the debate on charities stemming from news stories about actual and perceived failings in the way the sector fundraises and how organisations are run. A recent editorial in the *Observer* (February 2016) argued that values are what distinguish civil society from the private sector and should be built upon to drive the culture of civil society organisations. It proposes that instilling the right culture would be more effective than further regulation.

Other reports and reviews have called on the sector to clearly define itself. *Is the charity sector fit for purpose?* from the Clore Leadership Programme (March 2016) argues that the core role of civil society should be to advocate for social justice. It goes on to say that civil society needs to re-educate the public about what it does, and also needs to redefine its relationship with government.

The Change Ahead highlighted the importance of data, and in this report we recommend that the GLA take responsibility for data collection, analysis and provision. This point is echoed in a recent blog from NESTA called *Mayor, whatever you want to do, data can help you do it better* (March 2016), which highlights the challenges faced by London boroughs on data. It recommends the establishment of a London Office of Data Analytics. The Review Team argues that data is equally important for civil society, if it is to fulfil its potential in enabling better outcomes for London's communities.

Funding

According to *Running on Fumes: London Council Services in Austerity from the Wilson Centre for London* (November 2015), London boroughs are anticipating 44% cuts by 2019/2020, with wide variations across different boroughs. The impact on civil society is presented starkly in NCVO's *Financial Sustainability Review* (June 2015) which projects a shortfall in sector funding of £4.6bn by 2018/2019. It highlights the fact that many organisations have either reached or are approaching a "capacity crunch" due to successive cuts in back office and management capacity, such that their ability to engage with funding has been impaired.

Systems change: a guide to what it is and how to do it from NPC (June 2015) calls on funders to work more systematically on solving social problems and recommends partnering with others in order to "scale up". It also proposes funders share learning and "encourage systems by paying attention to infrastructure and the connections between organisations".

A new funding ecology – a blueprint for action, from Collaborate (December 2015), talks of the importance of funders as "guardians of self identified change from issue to outcome, and more as partners within a well-functioning ecosystem of support for others." It talks about the importance of developing a shared understanding of needs, the contribution of different stakeholders and outcomes.

Voice and independence

From the *Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014* (the Lobbying Act) through to the recent decision from the Cabinet Office to require the insertion of a clause in future contracts prohibiting government funding being used to support activity intended to influence parliament, government or political parties, the voice and independence of civil society is being challenged.

Conclusion

Emerging thinking about the future of civil society and London is developing constantly and quickly. This chapter provides a brief snapshot of some of the thinking that is currently available, to give a flavour of emerging ideas. To enable this debate to continue, this Review Team proposes the creation of a single source of up to date information about the latest thinking on how civil society could move forward (see Chapter 8). This resource could inform all those that are involved in the sector and encourage the sharing of ideas and innovation.

Chapter

Introduction



The Change Ahead set out the evidence from the research phase of this Review, but how can this evidence be used to shape recommendations?

In order to form a clear vision for civil society and to develop its recommendations, the Review Team defined ten “foundations of change”. This chapter describes these foundations.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF CHANGE

Foundation 1: Empowering communities should be at the heart of civil society

Central to this Review is the belief that communities are capable of understanding the issues they face. Communities are in the best place to find solutions to their issues, sometimes with support such as that provided by the Local Trust's England wide Big Local programme. Big Local works in 150 communities. Residents are enabled to come together and decide how to spend £1m of funding to improve their local area. Enabling communities to take control of their own lives wherever possible is central to the recommendations of this Review, and echoes the conclusions of other reviews referred to in Chapter 3.

Fundamental to this approach is communities' ability to define their own needs and priorities, and for this to be respected by those around them, whether the state, civil society or those that provide funding.

Clearly the desire to make a difference to communities is what drives civil society. However, some organisations can find themselves disconnected from the true needs and aspirations of those they seek to serve, because, for example:

- Independent funders and providers of statutory funding can have a different understanding of communities' needs
- Some organisations lack effective ways to hear from communities, particularly from quieter voices
- Much of the current system is geared towards creating and sustaining organisations, rather than enabling communities to identify and meet their own needs as far as is possible
- Accurate, up to date data on communities' needs can be hard to find

One of the basic foundations of change must be to ensure communities are driving the development of a shared understanding of their needs amongst civil society, funders, the public sector and decision makers.

Also, much of the current system through which communities are supported is based on a static description and understanding of need, whereas the actual needs of communities in London is changing at an ever increasing pace. We don't currently have a way to keep abreast of the pace of societal and community change in London. Any new vision for civil society should develop a system for understanding and responding to these changes.

Foundation 2: Civil society should be at the heart of London

London's civil society matters, and is central to the success of the Capital. From committed individuals to informal groups and formal organisations, civil society regularly provides quality support to some of London's most vulnerable communities, despite constrained resources. Yet civil society and its support bodies are too often viewed by decision makers as add-ons to London's landscape: easy to cut and easy to ignore.

Civil society is one of London's key strengths and should be valued and acknowledged as such. It sees what funders and decision makers often don't see. Its ability to innovate, to work effectively in partnership and to bring a different perspective about how to use limited resources most effectively is invaluable. Civil society therefore should and could be part of wider strategic planning and decisions about what is best for London.

Civil society, in turn, needs to get better at communicating its value to strategic debates. It needs to rethink its approach to influencing and making the case for the value it brings. A good example of this is the work of CVS Brent featured in Chapter 7. Civil Society has to come together to agree common goals and messages for supporting London's communities, and subordinate the furtherance of individual organisations. However, this is not enough.

Foundation 3: Focus should widen from “civil society organisations” to “civil society”

Decision makers need actively to bring the civil society sector into strategic planning and decision making for London. The power imbalance means that it is as important for decision makers actively to reach out to and to involve civil society, as it is for civil society to make the case for being included in strategic discussions. Proactive leadership in the public and private sector is needed, along with a better understanding of civil society. It is only through all sectors working together in a clear and planned way that the full potential of London and Londoners can be realised.

Formally constituted organisations are an integral part of civil society, however, civil society itself is much broader than that. We believe that civil society is a continuum ranging from individuals taking action to improve their communities, groups of individuals coming together to act collectively and formally constituted organisations that campaign and deliver services. This view is what led us to develop our definition of civil society as set out in Chapter 1.

The Review Team argues that the new vision of civil society should embrace this full continuum, and it is on this basis that the proposed new system set out in Chapter 7 has been crafted.

Foundation 4: Challenge and accountability should be built into the system

The recent spate of negative news stories about civil society organisations, for example in relation to fundraising practices, has been steadily chipping away at the reputation of the sector. Its ability to counter these attacks is hampered by the fact that, as a sector, it cannot adequately demonstrate how it takes responsibility for improving itself. Whilst numerous tools and products exist across a range of topics to support organisations that wish to improve their performance, there are no proactive, effective mechanisms from within the sector to identify poor performance and drive improvement.

Whilst the Review Team is not calling for greater formal regulation, we are proposing that one of the foundations on which the future of civil society is built should be that the sector visibly takes control of supporting organisations to be better run, and if necessary, where efforts to improve performance have been unsuccessful, to weed out ineffective and badly run organisations.

Foundation 5: Support organisations should enable civil society to find its own solutions

Governance should be at the heart of driving scrutiny and challenge at an organisational level. More systematic and active support of trustees to deliver this role effectively is needed, with peer support at its centre, so that trustees are actively enabled to embrace good practice and challenge poor performance within the organisations they lead.

A system which enables the sector to challenge itself to improve could also become part of the narrative of a mature, responsible sector with which others can do business.

Central to the Review Team's thinking is the need to move to a model of support which is about enabling civil society to find their own solutions to the issues and problems they face. We believe that who provides support matters less than that it is of high quality and easy to access for those that need it. Widening discussion to talking about civil society support rather than just support organisations would enable the sector to think differently about how to develop and deliver effective support. It would also enable the role of support organisations to be more clearly defined within the wider range of support available.

The proposed role of support organisations is defined in more detail in Chapter 7. In summary, this Review proposes that support organisations act as a catalyst for civil society, to help organisations and individuals arrive at their own solutions. The three most significant reasons for this are:

- Within a context of reduced funding there is a need to streamline the core functions of what civil society support organisations do
- To ensure there is a consistent offer of support across London
- The need to make the most of the various sources of support and advice for civil society beyond traditional "infrastructure" organisations

Foundation 6: Funders need to adapt

Civil society and their support organisations do not operate in isolation. Funders are a vital part of the civil society "ecosystem".

For this system to work at its best, the Review Team believes that funders should work as equal partners with communities, civil society and others.

Some ways in which funders could work more effectively are:

- Be more transparent about what they have achieved with the funding they have invested. This would bring two benefits:
 - Funders could provide leadership by modelling openness and doing what they ask of those they fund, namely demonstrate impact
 - Invaluable data could be shared about what has and has not worked, and the reasons why, to enable civil society to learn and develop

- Work with civil society, fellow funders and communities to develop shared understanding of need. Individual funders could use this shared understanding to make decisions about what to fund and why. This shared approach has the potential to increase the impact of every pound spent, and could inform the development of common systems for measuring success across funders. In working this way, funders are encouraged to be aware of the power differential that exists between them and those they fund, and how this might shape how they work with others.
- Rethink how funding is provided so there is greater flexibility in how funding can be applied once secured. This is particularly important for longer term grants and contracts, so that organisations are not locked into delivering services that lose their currency as needs change. Clearly funders need to be involved in deciding how their funding might be applied differently once awarded.
- Developing a deeper relationship with those they fund would help to provide funders with the assurance they need that funds are being well spent, and would be more valuable in the long run than the current monitoring systems which can be heavy on bureaucracy but light on insight.

NOTE: The term “funder” is used as a shorthand for the variety of institutions that invest resources into London’s civil society (including financial, in-kind or other forms of resource).

Foundation 7: More flexible and “thought through” approaches to volunteering are needed

In some ways London and the UK are ahead of the game in relation to volunteering, both in terms of the rates of volunteering and the types of opportunity on offer. However, a more sophisticated understanding of volunteering and the changing nature of volunteers is needed.

Key players such as policy makers, government and business need also to understand that volunteering costs money, and is not a simplistic solution to the challenges facing the public purse.

As civil society organisations’ resources shrink, some are turning to volunteers to address gaps in capacity. These organisations need to be supported to adapt their business model to work with volunteers to enable a mutually beneficial relationship.

Foundation 8: Effective leadership and governance of civil society is needed

In relation to corporate volunteering there needs to be a power shift so that businesses see civil society organisations as equal partners. Brokerage services will have a key role to play in redefining this power relationship. Businesses have much to learn from civil society organisations, just as civil society organisations can learn from businesses. An understanding of this fact on both sides will go a long way to redressing the current power imbalance. A more mutual relationship, where both sides understand and learn from each other would lead to better outcomes for all parties.

In redefining the relationship between businesses and civil society, there needs to be a recognition of the cost to civil society organisations in providing volunteering opportunities to business, costs which need to be covered. There are clear benefits to business in supporting their employees to volunteer, such as staff motivation and retention, improved staff skills and enhanced brand value. Therefore business will need to think carefully about how it covers the costs incurred by civil society organisations in achieving these business benefits.

At this time of volatility and change, strong, visible leadership is vital at all levels of civil society, from individuals and informal groups, to local organisations and those at a strategic, pan-London level. By strong we mean:

- Organisations should be consistently transparent and accountable, for example, in how they make decisions, the impact of services, what and how they hear from services users, how this information is used, and how they work in partnership with others
- Boards should be skills and knowledge based entities; they should include knowledge of strategic and organisational issues, plus understanding of the community being served, including the diversity of need and views within communities
- Boards and leadership teams of formal organisations and informal groups should be self aware, actively addressing weaknesses, building on strengths and being open to challenge to improve
- The needs of the communities served should take precedence over the needs of informal groups or organisations, even if this might mean merger or closure
- Individuals who carry out leadership roles whether within formal organisations or at a grass roots level should be supported to develop appropriate skills and knowledge

Mechanisms are needed to ensure that where such governance and leadership is missing, support is available to aid improvement.

It is important that those in governance positions have the time, skills and commitment to drive individual organisations, and thus the sector, forward. Where such leadership is not present, ways are needed to shine a light on deficiencies to enable and encourage change.

Part of the leadership shift is the need to end territorialism between civil society organisations and their representative bodies and move towards a culture of greater collaboration and mutual support. What matters is London's communities and how they can work with civil society organisations to achieve the best for themselves.

Leadership is not just about formal organisations. Leadership can be vested in informal groupings and individuals who are committed to make a difference. This understanding should underpin civil society support organisations in creating flexible ways to encourage and engender effective leadership at all levels, and create a culture where civil society can thrive.

Foundation 9: Civil society has a vital role in campaigning and influencing decision makers

If some of the most taxing issues facing communities are to be addressed, civil society will also have to collaborate in providing leadership, working with leaders from other sectors, such as health and housing. The concept of “dispersed leadership” is becoming an increasingly important aspect of thinking about the future, with examples such as the *Integrated Care and Support Pioneer Programme* described in Chapter 3.

One of the most crucial roles that civil society plays is that of speaking truth to power. This is a critical part of what makes civil society valuable and valued. How civil society enables community voices, including those that are rarely heard, to come to the fore will be crucial to its future success in influencing and campaigning. This is particularly so, given recent moves to limit civil society organisations’ campaigning role, such as the *Lobbying Act 2014* and the proposed introduction of clauses in public sector contracts limiting campaigning. Basing influencing and campaigning work on the voices of communities will reinforce the legitimacy of civil society in influencing those in power.

The environment in which decision makers work, particularly local decision makers, has changed dramatically. Austerity, the recasting of the role of the state and rapidly changing communities in London have forced public authorities to make tough decisions about priorities. Public authorities are struggling to find solutions that address community needs with diminishing resources. This context brings with it challenges for those seeking to influence public authorities. However, it also brings opportunities.

Civil society, at its best, is good at developing creative solutions to complex problems, particularly when it works closely with communities to do so. Civil society is well positioned to understand how to prevent problems faced by communities from deepening, and to gather evidence of solutions that work well. If civil society can consistently adopt a more open style which recognises the challenges faced by those in power, and step up beside decision makers, bringing communities with them, it can have substantial influence by working collaboratively to solve London’s problems. To do this, civil society must win the trust of, and develop positive relationships with decision makers. Listening to decision makers and seeking to share their dilemmas is as crucial as presenting cogent arguments for a particular position. Some civil society organisations are already skilled at this way of working, and it will be important that the sector builds on this approach and adopts it more consistently. Whilst success is not guaranteed by this approach, it stands a much greater chance than simply “demanding” action.

Foundation 10: Civil society needs to adopt the right culture

As a sector, civil society needs to be much better at coming together to agree core messages and provide a united front. If the sector is rooted in and driven by what communities say, as set out in Foundation 1, this will be far easier to achieve. There are sections of civil society that do this well, but others where securing organisational profile and “air time” with decision makers can take precedence. This style of “competitive campaigning” is understandable, given the level of competition in which civil society organisations now have to engage in order to sustain themselves. Nevertheless it is decidedly unhelpful. The interests and views of communities should be paramount in driving the campaigning and influencing work of civil society organisations.

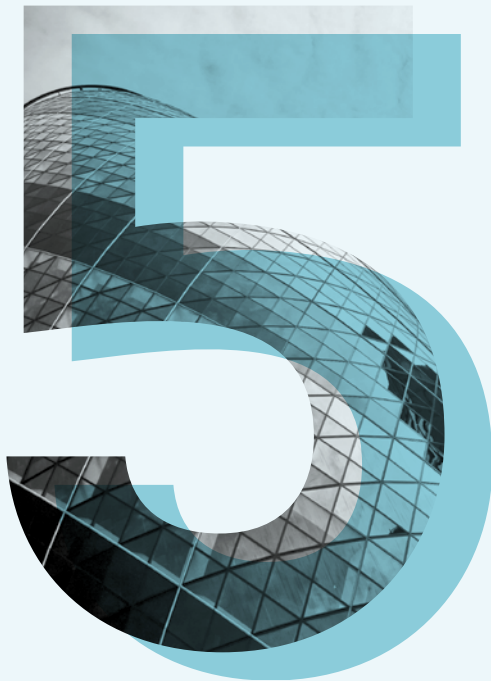
Skill is a key issue. Developing consistent and sophisticated skills in influencing and campaigning will be even more important as the environment continues to change and become ever more complex. Civil society support organisations have a key role in modelling and sharing these skills with the sector.

Finally, it is vital that the civil society sector speaks in language that is understood by those outside the sector. It seems obvious that to be able to influence, it is important to be understood. Yet much of the civil society sector and its support organisations persist in using language around which there is no common understanding, even amongst the sector itself, let alone amongst those it seeks to influence. The term “voice” for example, was shown through the primary research in Stage 1 of the Review to have different meanings for different people.

Much of the civil society sector has felt embattled in recent years because of many of the factors set out in Chapter 2. The Review Team believes that a consistent and positive culture across the whole range of those involved in civil society would enable the sector to move forward more effectively in these challenging times, although we do not underestimate the difficulties of achieving this culture consistently across the sector. We believe this culture change should apply to funders, civil society organisations, support organisations, businesses and public authorities. Some of the key elements of this culture should be:

- Being open, both in terms of transparency and also in terms of listening to other views and players interested in achieving better outcomes for London’s communities
- Being outward looking and seeking to understand as well as influence
- Accepting challenge in order to improve, and being accountable
- Being prepared to change
- Being actively driven by what communities say and putting communities’ needs above all else
- Collaborating within and beyond the civil society sector in order to deliver for communities
- Sharing knowledge, data and expertise and being committed to evidence informed practice

Chapter



Introduction

The underlying assumption of this Review is that a thriving civil society will lead to better outcomes for Londoners. But what does a thriving civil society look like?

The Review sought to answer this question by developing a “theory of change” setting out the steps to achieving a thriving civil society. This theory of change underpinned the development of recommendations.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Background to developing the Review's theory of change

Assumptions

In developing the theory of change, the Review Team sought to:

- Bring greater clarity and definition to the overall vision, aims and impact being sought
- Develop an initial map of the "outcome chain" that leads to that overall impact
- Provide a framework for the recommendations

The diagrams below set out the assumptions underpinning the Review's theory of change.

Diagram 5.1: Top level assumptions underpinning the theory of change

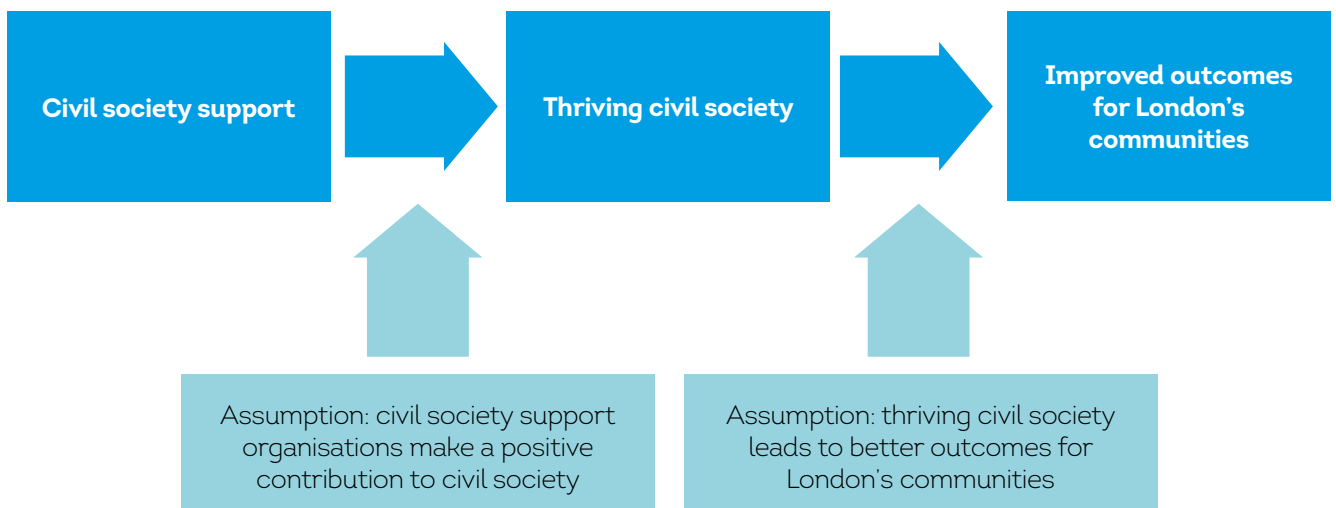


Diagram 5.2: Assumptions about the context of civil society



Identifying outcomes

Marked throughout the research phase of this Review was the lack of consensus on both what civil society is trying to achieve, (in other words its overall impact), and therefore what civil society support needs to look like to help achieve this. Clarity of overall impact and outcomes is needed to make the funding case for civil society and to define and prioritise what civil society support should focus on.

The top level outcomes developed by this Review are summarised in the diagram below.

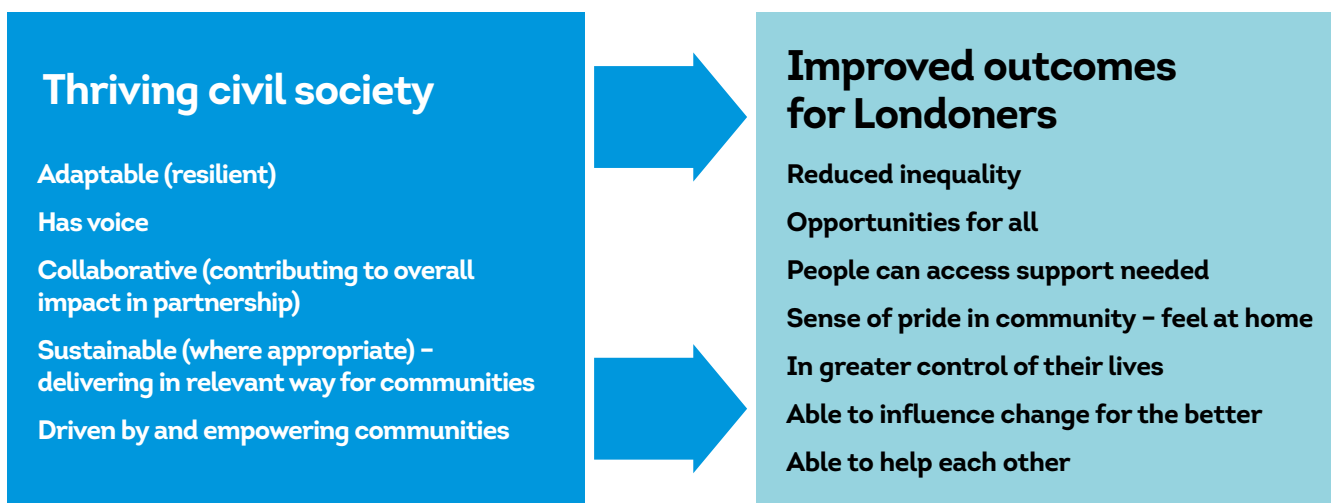
A draft map of the steps towards achieving the top level outcomes is presented in diagram 5.4 overleaf. Diagram 5.4 sets out the Review's theory of change. This in turn underpinned how we thought about the way in which civil society support needs to be organised and focused.

- The pink boxes represent the features required of civil society as a whole.
- The green boxes identify the organisational level features required. These are the outcomes at individual organisational level which the Review Team identifies as requirements for a thriving civil society. These outcomes in turn should help shape what support is required to ensure a thriving civil society.

- The purple boxes highlight the components required to achieve each organisational level outcome (in the green boxes).
- The yellow boxes show how the community are involved in relation to each organisational level outcome.

While securing income can be one of the biggest challenges facing civil society, the Review believes that organisations' survival for survival's sake should not be an outcome in itself. Sustainability is only important while an organisation (formal or informal) is delivering for communities and is best placed to do so.

Diagram 5.3: Top level outcomes



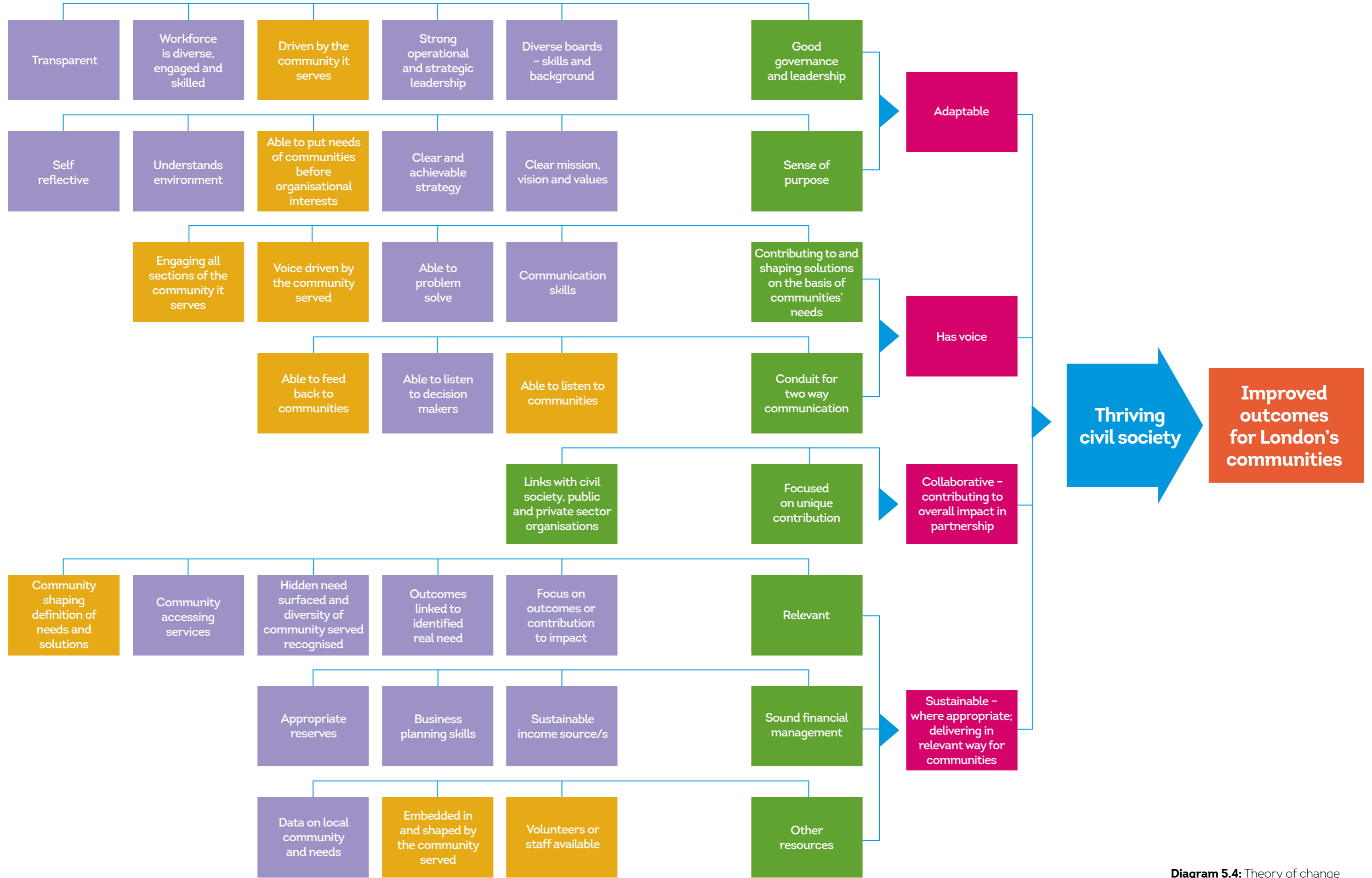


Diagram 5.4: Theory of change

Co-production: enabling Londoners to be at the heart of civil society

Looking across the elements of a thriving civil society as they are set out in the theory of change, community engagement and direct involvement in shaping civil society emerge in different ways and are

described in the yellow boxes in the diagram above. This is explored further in Chapter 6 where we explain the Review's proposals on pragmatic co-production.

Diagram 5.5: The value of co-production within the theory of change



Chapter



Introduction

Based on evidence presented in *The Change Ahead* (See Chapter 2), the foundations of change (see Chapter 4) and the theory of change (see Chapter 5), the Review Team agreed a set of principles that should underpin a new vision and system for civil society and civil society support. This chapter describes those principles.

FOUR PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE PROPOSED VISION AND SYSTEM

About these principles

As stated earlier in this report, the Review Team proposes that the scale of the challenge facing civil society is such that systems-wide change is needed. The recommendations of this Review, including the principles below, are aimed, therefore, at all players in the system. (The proposed vision and system are set out in Chapter 7.)

Principle 1: Pragmatic co-production

The Review Team contends that pragmatic co-production should exist at every level of civil society, enabling London's communities to drive the definition of a shared understanding of need, and enabling them to craft solutions, working with others where necessary.

A briefing paper on the concept of pragmatic co-production developed as part of this Review is published on London Funders' website. This section summarises the briefing paper.

The Review Team developed the following top level definition of co-production:

"Co-production is where Londoners work with those in power, and each other, in a way in which all voices are heard equally in developing a shared understanding of need and in crafting solutions to make London a better place."

To be clear, effective co-production goes well beyond consultation. We contend that pragmatic co-production should cover a continuum of activity as set out in the diagram below. Pragmatic co-production approaches can also be invaluable in strengthening individuals and communities through, for example, the design of mentoring approaches.

Diagram 6.1: Continuum of pragmatic co-production



By “pragmatic” co-production we mean honest conversations should be held between communities, funders and civil society about the constraints on what is possible and the tensions between differing viewpoints. The effectiveness of this approach has already been proven in sectors such as children’s disability, where co-production has become central to how services are shaped within the overall context of finite resources. Co-production is enshrined as a requirement in the *Children and Families Act 2014*. An example of this is Essex County Council’s approach to developing its “local offer” of services for disabled children and their families.

By proposing pragmatic co-production as a core principle, we are building on an increasing recognition of the importance of community involvement, as set out in reports such as the interim report of the *Joint Review of Investment in Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations in Health and Social Care Sector* from the Department of Health (March 2015) and *Community Capital: The Value of Connected Communities* from the RSA (October 2015), both of which were highlighted in Chapter 3. Some funders have begun to embrace co-production, such as the John Lyon’s Trust.

The Review Team recognises that pragmatic co-production needs funding, but argues that up-front investment in this approach will enable the targeting of limited statutory and independent funding in ways that are much more likely to address needs whilst making the most of available resources. We believe therefore that investment is worth making. Other advantages of pragmatic co-production include enabling funders to work more strategically, and target resources not only in relation to their own priorities, but also in relation to other funders’ priorities. It would also enable funders to align their evaluation methods. It would enable efficiencies for civil society too, by ensuring a consistent framework upon which to develop funding bids.

Not all people in any given community will want or be able to take an active part in co-production, and the choice of individuals in communities to take part or not should be respected. However, we argue that there should always be a presumption that pragmatic co-production is the starting point.

Co-production: a commissioner’s experience

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to publish a “local offer”, with information about services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Essex County Council ensured parents were involved in developing its local offer; all decisions were made collaboratively. Parents with disabled children wanted the local offer to be available online. The website went live in September 2014. Essex set up a Local Offer Monitoring and Evaluation Group which included representatives of the parent carer forum, schools, health, social care and voluntary sector colleagues. To ensure that the local offer continued to be co-produced, Essex commissioned the local parent carer forum, called FACE, to facilitate focus groups to seek feedback about the website’s design, usability, content and information. FACE provides quarterly feedback reports to the Local Offer Monitoring and Evaluation Group. FACE has also been commissioned to recruit a group of at least 10 parents from each “quadrant” of Essex to work with the Essex County Council Local Offer Web Editorial Group. Essex has commissioned a local charity called SNAP to work with families to make sure the local offer continues to be fit for purpose. In one year, Essex doubled the number of daily hits on the website from 150 to 300 and the number of pages of information listed from 770 in September 2015 to over 1,900 in March 2016.

From pragmatic co-production emerges a clear role for civil society support as a catalyst to enable it to happen, and to support more vulnerable communities to articulate their views, working with frontline volunteers, groups and organisations. We also propose that support organisations should co-produce an understanding of the needs of those that turn to them for support, and co-design solutions that will empower these individuals, groups and organisations to become more self-reliant.

Funder approach and ambition on co-production

Concerned by the effect of public sector spending cuts on children and young people, the John Lyon's Charity instigated the establishment of Young People Foundations. Young People Foundations are bringing together a wide range of organisations including community groups, children and young people's organisations, local authorities, housing associations, local Scouts groups and faith based organisations. The aim is for these organisations to work together with funders to identify and address children and young people's needs in local areas. The Young People Foundations will help strengthen local organisations, and provide vehicles for them to join together to bid for contracts, and to share resources such as buildings. The Young People Foundations also offer funders the opportunity to collaborate effectively within an area. In January 2016 three Young People Foundations were established in Barnet, Brent and Harrow. Four further Foundations are being planned in other areas of London. The detail of how each Young People Foundation will work will be developed and determined locally. "We wanted to create a strong local partnership that would be able to bring together all sectors working with children and young people in an area," said Erik Mesel of the John Lyon's Charity. "The focus has always been on co-production and about bringing different groups together to work for a common goal."

Principle 2: Building community strength and self-reliance

The Review Team proposes that civil society consistently adopt a way of working that builds on the strengths of communities, starting from the position of what communities can do, rather than what they can't. Principle 2 assumes communities should be in control of their own lives, and this assumption should drive the way civil society works. Based on this, we propose that:

- The role of civil society becomes to enable communities to find their own solutions and bring their own "assets" into play. These assets could include intangible resources such as time, skills and networks, and tangible resources such as buildings.
- The role of frontline volunteers, groups and organisations becomes to develop communities' confidence and support them to capitalise on their own strengths. Frontline organisations would only proactively provide services to fill gaps which communities can't or don't want to fill themselves.

- The support “offer” focuses on enabling this to happen, and supporting frontline organisations to develop the relevant skills, systems and culture.
- Civil society support would work in “strengths” based ways, enabling individuals, groups and frontline organisations to build on their strengths and to find their own solutions.
- Funders would need to adapt how they fund to embrace this approach, and move away from the current “deficit” based model.

Recent public policy in a range of areas has placed increasing emphasis on communities serving themselves, and Principle 2 echoes this trend. However, we are wary of using the often used term “resilience”, as it has increasingly become synonymous with “funding cuts”. Principle 2 is not about withdrawing support from vulnerable communities. It is about recognising and actively building on the strengths of communities, providing support to enable greater self reliance, and offering services where these are needed.

In adopting Principle 2, it is important to recognise that communities mean more than just “people in need”. A wide range of players are part of a community, such as volunteers and community based businesses, each of whom has assets they can contribute. Bringing together these assets will better enable communities to deal with the many challenges they face as state resources diminish. Bringing these elements of the community together should be a key role for civil society support.

Diagram 6.2: Building community strength and self-reliance

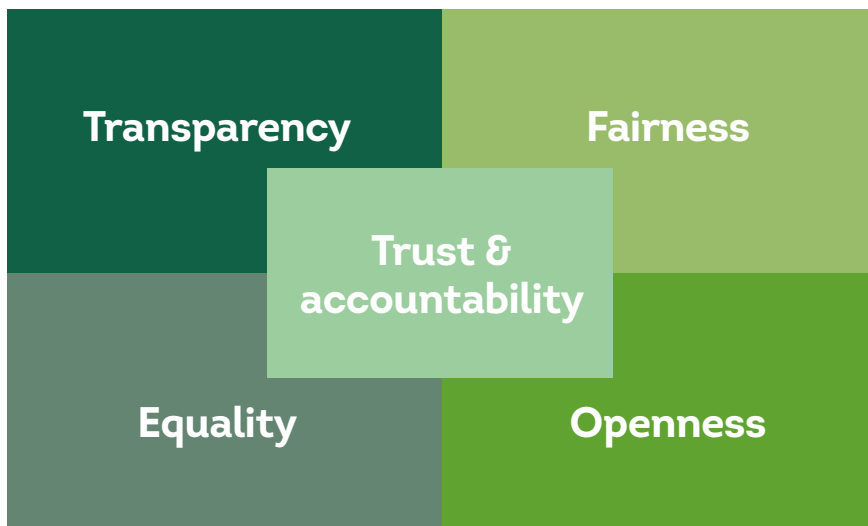


Principle 3: Values

The Review Team proposes that a set of core values should drive all players in civil society, including statutory and independent funders, frontline volunteers, groups and organisations and civil society support. It will be crucial that these values are truly lived and visibly implemented. We also recommend that these values should guide those who partner with civil society, such as businesses and public sector agencies, to deliver better outcomes for London's communities.

- **Transparency:** as resources diminish, it will be even more important to be clear about how and why decisions are arrived at; this value is closely linked with fairness
- **Fairness:** actual and perceived fairness will need to permeate the system of civil society proposed in Chapter 7; this is particularly important in increasingly cash-strapped times
- **Openness:** in moving towards more universal pragmatic co-production, funders, as well as civil society, will need to demonstrate openness, embracing a more collaborative way of achieving more for communities, sharing knowledge and data and being willing to accept and understand other perspectives
- **Equality:** the system described in Chapter 7 is based on a drive to address inequality and it is important that equality is a value that permeates the sector at all levels
- **Trust and accountability:** these should be at the heart of the values driving civil society; funders, commissioners, civil society support and frontline volunteers, groups and organisations will have to be clearer about the difference they make, able to hold themselves to account for this difference and demonstrate that they have made the best use of scarce resources; relationships of trust will be essential if we are to move forward in a productive way

Diagram 6.3: Values that should drive civil society



Principle 4: Theory of change

Principle 4 is that the theory of change (described in Chapter 5) should underpin the new vision and system for civil society.

One element of the theory of change is that civil society organisations that are delivering for communities should be sustained and sustainable. An imaginative example of how a support organisation has taken control of ensuring its own sustainability is the work of Volunteer Centre Greenwich in setting up a social enterprise.

Building sustainability to deliver core mission

In 2012 Volunteer Centre Greenwich began work in earnest to diversify its income. In diversifying, it prioritised earned income, mainly from training and consultancy. In 2012, Volunteer Centre Greenwich earned £8K through training and consultancy; within less than four years this has grown to more than £70K. Volunteer Centre Greenwich has now decided to set up a separate social enterprise. This will be wholly owned by the Centre and will encompass not only its training and consultancy work, but also an idea that brings together volunteers with an imaginative service for tourists to the area. At time of writing this report, the plans are at an early stage, and therefore too commercially sensitive to describe, but details will soon be made public. With

pro bono legal support, articles of association for the new social enterprise are being developed. Volunteer Centre Greenwich has secured its lead partner, Visit Greenwich, which will market the new tourism service and give the social enterprise a presence in the Tourist Information Centre. The initiative has generated excitement and support from local authority officials and elected representatives. Michelle Martin, Chief Executive of Volunteer Centre Greenwich said: "The social enterprise will not only ensure a growing source of income for us, it will enable us to strengthen our core work of promoting volunteering and securing opportunities for local people. It showcases us as experts in volunteering, and provides us with great potential for growing our work into the future."

Chapter

Introduction

This chapter sets out a new vision and system for civil society, as the basis of proposing a clear role for civil society support.



THE PROPOSED VISION AND SYSTEM

About the proposed vision and system of civil society

In considering the evidence of change from *The Change Ahead*, (see Chapter 2) the Review Team felt that it was critical to develop a clear and ambitious vision for civil society, using this as the basis for defining how it could best be supported.

We recognise that this vision and system will not be achieved in one move and that all players have a role to play in facilitating this change. Chapter 8 recommends what will be needed to enable the transition to take place. Chapter 9 sets out the immediate steps that key players could take to begin to bring the proposed vision and system into place.

The core players in the proposed civil society system

The list below sets out the core players in London's civil society:

- Communities
- Independent funders
- The GLA
- London Councils
- Frontline: volunteers, groups and organisations
- Local support
- Specialist support
- A London Hub
- Local public sector
- Business
- Elected representatives

The London Hub would provide support at a pan-London level. Its functions are explored below. The structure of the London Hub has not been determined by the Review. It could be a formal organisation or a virtual network with different organisations delivering different functions. This would be for the support sector to debate and develop.

Local support could range from a single individual acting at a hyper local level, through to borough based organisations, or bodies working across borough boundaries. The shape of the local support should be driven by how communities themselves are configured. The functions of local support are explored further below.

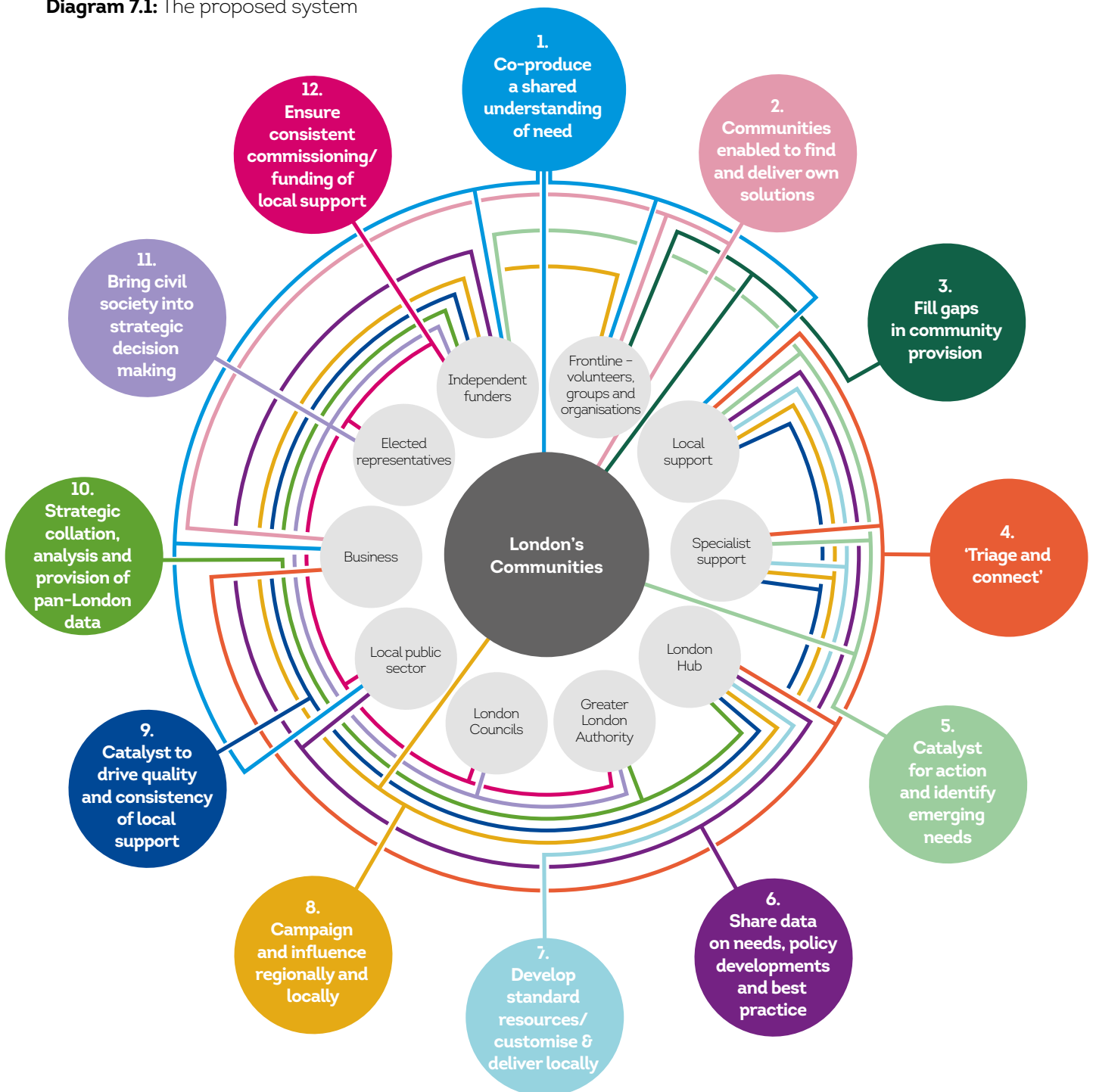
The proposed system

This section describes the system that the Review Team is proposing.

Diagram 7.1 and text overleaf describes the processes involved in the outer circle of the diagram and the key players involved in the inner circle. The lines connect key players with each process to show who is driving that process.

Whilst others may be involved in delivering aspects of the system, for ease of reference, the diagram below highlights only those players who are actively driving a particular process.

Diagram 7.1: The proposed system



1 Co-producing a shared understanding of need

Who drives this process: Communities, frontline (volunteers, groups and organisations), local support, local public sector, independent funders, business

The starting point for addressing communities' needs is to develop a shared understanding of that need. Communities should drive this process wherever possible, with the support of the frontline and also of local support.

In involving funders, it could be that groups of funders supporting a particular community all engage in co-producing a shared understanding of need; or it could be that a lead funder is identified who will share needs data generated this way with others working with particular communities.

The local public sector and business, such as local chambers of commerce, have invaluable data, expertise and perspectives to contribute in developing a shared understanding of need.

2 Communities enabled to find and deliver solutions

Who drives this process: Communities, frontline (volunteers, groups and organisations) and business

Once needs have been identified, we propose that the frontline should act as catalysts in working with communities to recognise their own strengths and assets, and to find and deliver their own solutions.

Adopting this approach brings a number of benefits:

- Significant outcomes could be achieved potentially with relatively modest funding
- The solutions arrived at are more likely to be sustainable
- It builds the confidence of communities
- Where services are needed beyond that which the community can or wants to provide, it enables funding and resources from statutory sources and independent funders, as well as the contribution of business and of volunteers to be targeted more strategically

3 Fill gaps in community provision

Who drives this process: Communities, frontline (volunteers, groups and organisations)

We propose the frontline develop and deliver services only where communities are unable to do so themselves. This provides a clearer mechanism for the frontline to prioritise its activities and to measure the impact of its work.

Clearly, skilled volunteers may well be part of local communities too, so there is a degree of overlap between communities and the frontline as described here.

4 Triage and connect

Who drives this process: Local support, specialist support, London Hub, business

The Review Team recommends that empowerment should be at the heart of how local, regional and specialist support work with volunteers, community groups and formally constituted frontline organisations. In order to deliver this, this Review is proposing a "triage and connect" approach.

By "triage" we mean:

- Diagnosing the issues and problems with which frontline volunteers, groups and organisations "present", to enable a holistic understanding of and prioritisation of these needs
- Identifying the strengths and ambitions of volunteers, groups and organisations which can be built upon

By "connect" we mean

- Providing access to sources of support, whether these sources be from the civil society sector, business sector, consultants, peers or specialist volunteers
- Providing opportunities and ideas to enable frontline volunteers, groups and organisations to develop and flourish
- Brokering connections with or signposting frontline volunteers, groups and organisations to the right form of support for them, so that they can devise their own solutions

This triage and connect approach has the potential more closely to deliver the bespoke service that many frontline volunteers, groups and organisations crave.

It also makes a virtue of the multiple sources of support that are available within and beyond the civil society sector itself. It is an approach that some support organisations, for example Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets, already provide.

Business has an active role to play as a driver of the “connect” element of triage and connect. They have a lot to offer in terms of skills, knowledge and resources. We encourage business to reach out more actively to civil society to make these available.

5 Catalyst for action and identify emerging needs

Who drives this process: Communities, local support, specialist support, independent funders

The Review Team recommends that the role of local and specialist support includes acting as catalysts for enabling the system to function well by:

- Driving pragmatic co-production in developing a shared understanding of need
- Supporting the frontline to enable communities to identify their own solutions
- Where public sector or civil society provision is required, ensuring that communities are fully involved in shaping services

- Shining a light on emerging and evolving needs, and actively campaigning to ensure these needs are recognised by decision makers
- Being a catalyst for encouraging people to become active in their own communities (for example, through volunteering, giving money or providing pro bono support or resources through their businesses)

Independent funders also have an important role as catalysts for action and in identifying emerging needs. Through their work they can support and encourage those they fund to adopt the approach recommended in this Review and also identify emerging needs.

6 Share data on needs, policy developments and best practice

Who drives this process: Local support, specialist support, London Hub, local public sector, independent funders

The proposed system involves a dynamic flow of information to enable all players to work in the most effective way. If the proposals in this Review are adopted and pragmatic co-production increasingly becomes the means by which an understanding of needs is developed, the picture of need will constantly evolve. This picture will need to be understood by all those involved with a particular community, hence the importance of sharing data on needs regularly and consistently.

Triage and connect in action

Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets supports not-for-profit volunteer involving organisations. The Centre’s registration process enables it to find out more about each organisation before referring prospective volunteers. Registration includes an initial site visit or in-depth phone call to conduct a health check. This is, in effect, a “triage” service, which allows Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets to assess what issues an organisation needs to address to involve volunteers safely and successfully. This process also allows the Volunteer Centre to begin to develop an ongoing relationship with each organisation it registers. Through its triage work, the Volunteer Centre identifies the developmental support, information and advice an organisation needs to enable it to attain a good standard of practice. The Volunteer Centre then offers information on best practice, runs training for volunteer managers, and provides 1:1 consultancy as needed. The Volunteer Centre can also “connect” organisations to other sources of support, such as the local CVS, specialist sources of support like the Health and Safety Executive, or pro bono advice from private companies. Catherine Bavage of Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets said: “The benefits of this approach are that when volunteers join an organisation they should be reassured that they will have a positive experience, and that the organisation is able to recognise and work on areas of policy and practice which need to be improved.”

The role of specialist support is explored in more detail below. By specialist, this Review refers to both functional specialists (e.g. specialists in property, IT etc) and policy specialists (e.g. children and young people, equalities groups etc). Specialist support will be crucial, not just in relation to understanding the needs of particular communities of interest, but also in spreading awareness and insight into policy developments and in enabling the take up of best practice across functional and policy specialisms.

7 Develop standard resources/ customise and deliver locally

Who drives this process: Local support, specialist support, London Hub

To reduce duplication and prevent wasted effort, we recommend that standard resources are created where possible by the London Hub, or specialist support as relevant. These standard resources would then be delivered, with any necessary customisation, by local support.

This approach would enable:

- Effective use of funding and time, enabling the co-ordinated production of standard resources
- Consistent quality of resources across London
- Local or community factors to be taken into account by local support in customising standard resources
- Local delivery, close to the community

Standardised resources could be those that are not provided by national organisations, or which have a particular regional or specialist dimension not taken into account in products produced nationally. Where products and services are developed at a national level, the London Hub could, with the permission of national organisations, “regionalise” products as necessary.

8 Campaign and influence locally and regionally

Who drives this process: Communities, local support, specialist support, frontline (volunteers, groups and organisations), London Hub, independent funders

The challenges presented by factors such as the impact of the *Lobbying Act* coupled with reduced capacity within civil society organisations has made campaigning and influencing work more complex. This makes co-produced needs data even more important as an effective basis for developing core messages. Rooting messages in what communities say matter to them will enable consistent, co-ordinated and compelling campaigning and influencing both locally and regionally.

The needs data provided by local and specialist support, will enable the London Hub to spot trends and issues on which to base campaigning and influencing at a regional level and reinforce campaigning and influencing locally.

Redefining relationships with the local authority and health

CVS Brent’s approach to developing relationships of influence with its local authority and health is based on three core elements. Firstly the CVS ensures it delivers high quality outcomes and outputs in any grants and contracts it wins, and operates in a business-like manner in all its dealings with the public sector. It embraces the need to be accountable and to demonstrate the difference it makes. This builds trust with the local authority and with health, and shows that the CVS is a credible organisation. Secondly the CVS articulates clearly the added value and contribution that it and civil society organisations in the borough bring to helping the local authority and health achieve its goals. This added value includes reaching a wider group of residents, being cost-effective and offering high quality. A regular and clear articulation of this added value has helped to cement relationships between civil society organisations and local public sector bodies. Thirdly, the CVS adopts a mindset of confidence. “We never allow ourselves to be seen as a tick-box”, says Tessa Awe, Chief Executive of CVS Brent. “For example we only attend meetings where we are confident about what we are bringing to the table. We ask if our presence is going to make a difference. If the answer is no, we don’t go.” Results include the encouragement by the local authority and health of civil society involvement in bidding for contracts, and that the London Borough of Brent has ring-fenced grants for the civil society sector in the borough.

Independent funders are drivers because they fund research based on which campaigning can take place, and they also have an important role to fund campaigning.

9 Catalyst to drive improvement in quality and consistency of local support

Who drives this process: Local support, specialist support, London Hub, independent funders

Evidence presented in *The Change Ahead* showed that the quality of support can vary greatly.

This Review is not recommending greater regulation, however it is recommending that civil society support is enabled to take responsibility for challenging poor quality amongst its own ranks. The Review recognises that improvement in quality is the responsibility of all those involved in civil society. However, the Review Team believes that, as a starting point, the London Hub has a clear role in stimulating this activity with local support by holding a mirror up to the sector, and supporting improvement in quality and consistency. Peer support and challenge should be at the heart of how the London Hub fulfils this function. Specialist support and independent funders are also drivers of this work through the specialist knowledge they bring of evolving practice, and through their monitoring and evaluation systems.

See Addressing Governance, Leadership and improvement below.

10 Strategic collation, analysis and provision of pan-London data on civil society and communities

Who drives this process: Greater London Authority, London Hub, independent funders

The GLA currently plays an important role for other sectors in collating data, analysing it and making it accessible. Civil society is a large and important contributor to London, and as such the GLA should extend its data role to encompass civil society.

As co-produced needs data is developed, it could be pulled together by the GLA. Over time, this data would provide a clearer and shared understanding of need as it evolves across London, which is accepted by funders, civil society and communities themselves, and could be incorporated into strategic planning at local and regional levels.

Data about the sector itself is also important for planning, for example on the size, location and nature of civil society in different areas of London as it correlates to communities' needs; the nature of volunteers, including where they volunteer, and to what issues and communities they contribute.

The London Hub and independent funders will be a source of key data and should be involved in shaping how the GLA analyses and provides data to ensure it is accessible and meaningful.

11 Bring civil society into strategic decision making

Who drives this process: Greater London Authority, London Councils, elected representatives, independent funders

Civil society makes an enormous contribution to London, and therefore we propose that it should be brought into wider, strategic planning and decision making for the capital. Its close connection to London's communities coupled with its flair for developing creative solutions to challenging issues makes it an invaluable ally in taking London forward.

12 Ensure consistent commissioning/ funding of local support

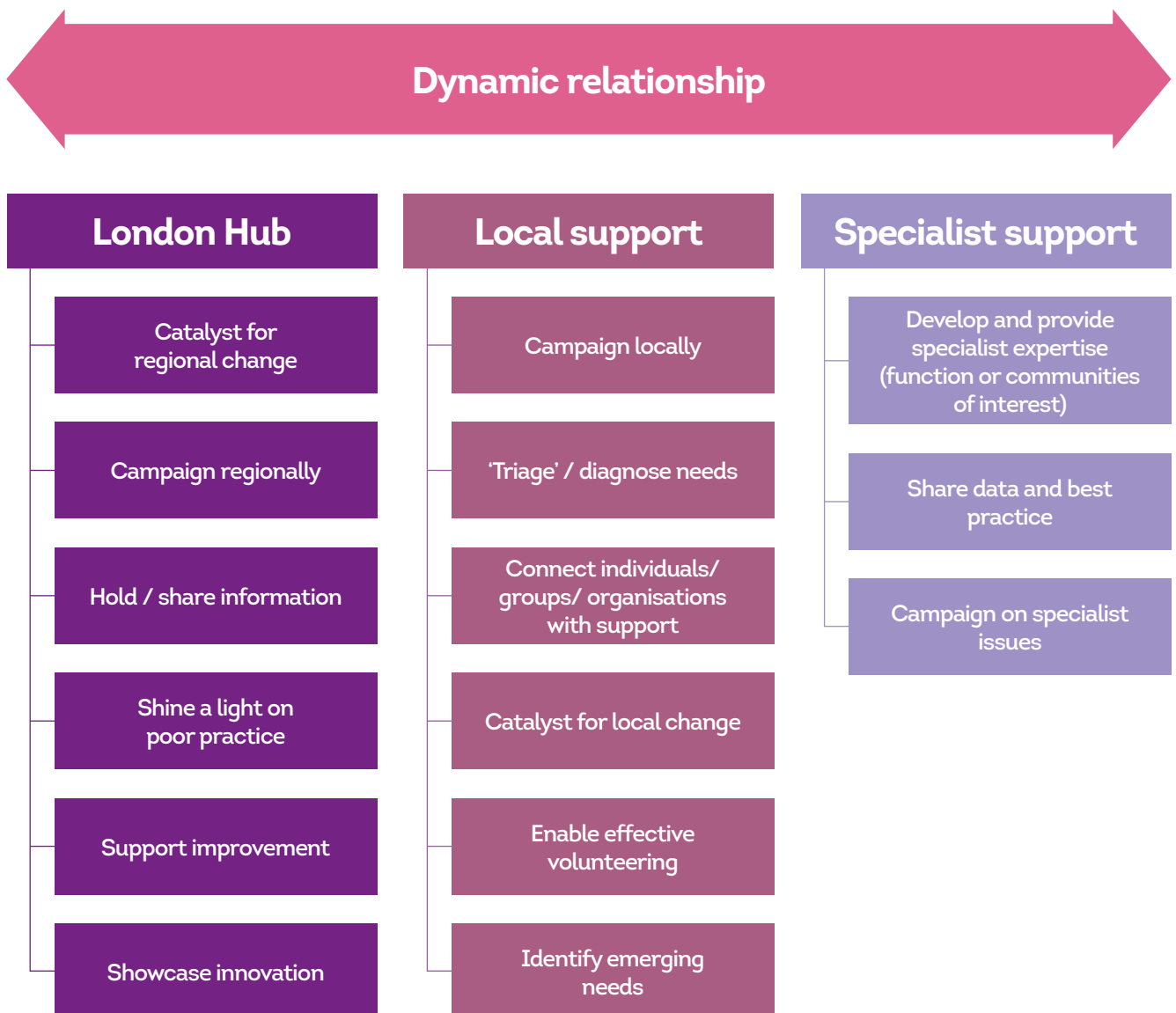
Who drives this process: London Councils, Greater London Authority, local public sector, elected representatives, independent funders

For local support to provide a consistent offer across London, consistent local commissioning is required. We recommend that London Councils work with local authorities to establish this consistency.

Summarising the role and functions of civil society support

From the system outlined above, clear roles and functions emerge for local, specialist and London-wide civil society support. These are summarised in the diagram below.

Diagram 7.2: The role and functions of civil society support



The role of specialist civil society support

These functions will need to be funded. The proposed system provides a clear focus for how funding could be used and the benefits of that funding. The proposed system also ensures less duplication and more consistency of what is funded and delivered locally and regionally.

In an era of such significant change civil society as a whole has to transform. However this transformation will not happen by itself. Support, as described in the proposed system, can enable this transformation to happen thereby increasing the chances of Londoners' needs being met. This makes the funding of civil society support vital.

Specialist civil society support clearly needs to be part of any new system. Its proposed role is described in diagrams 7.1 and 7.2.

Policy based specialist organisations have a central role in providing knowledge and a campaigning voice. Policy and function based specialist organisations also provide invaluable advice on issues likely to be beyond the scope of generic support organisations. This advice is particularly important at a time when the public sector is increasingly losing these specialisms due to spending cuts.

This Review recommends that the London Hub develop active links with a full range of specialist organisations so that:

- Where needed the London Hub can carry out a triage and connect role, actively matching frontline volunteers, groups and organisations, particularly those working at a regional level, to sources of specialist support and advice

- A two-way flow of information on needs and best practice between the London Hub and specialist support can be used to:

- Enable improvement in sector practice
- Identify issues of importance to London
- Develop and co-ordinate key messages
- Campaign and influence in a co-ordinated way

- The London Hub can provide a forum for debate to bring together specialisms to share intelligence, learn from each other and provide high quality thought leadership to the sector

London's communities and their needs continue to evolve, as do other trends in London, for example in relation to housing, employment and the shrinking of statutory services. Further work is needed to identify the key issues that will be facing London's communities to inform the future development of the necessary specialist support.

Addressing governance, leadership and improvement

Boards and leadership teams have the core responsibility for ensuring high quality within organisations and for addressing any areas for improvement. The Review Team therefore proposes that the drive for improving the consistency of civil society support should come from its governance and leadership teams.

We recommend:

- Each local support organisation is encouraged to identify an "Effectiveness Champion" from within its Board of Trustees
- These Effectiveness Champions would be supported by the London Hub to drive improvements and greater consistency of quality within local support organisations through resources, training and networking opportunities. It will be important for these Effectiveness Champions to be given the opportunity to acquire skills to implement this learning within their organisations
- Effectiveness Champions are brought together in an Effectiveness Network, hosted and facilitated by the London Hub
- Through the Effectiveness Network, the London Hub would co-produce tools and resources to enable champions to bring consistent challenge, scrutiny and solutions to their own organisations

Working with peers within the Effectiveness Network would enable trustees to develop a greater sense of awareness of what "good" looks like, and about where their own organisations might need to improve. The Effectiveness Network would provide a place where trustees with concerns about their organisations can seek peer support.

The advantages of this approach are that it:

- Creates the opportunity for challenge and change from within organisations and the sector
- Enables peers to be the catalysts of change for each others' organisations
- Provides a momentum and a mechanism for continuous improvement
- Provides a safe space for trustees with concerns
- Builds capacity and capability within the sector

Peer support and challenge should be at the heart of driving improvement in the sector.

Measuring outcomes

The theory of change presented in Chapter 5 provides a starting point for developing a framework to measure the effectiveness of support organisations in generating a thriving civil society.

The diversity of London's communities does not enable the Review Team to propose specific measures in relation to how their needs are being met. However, we make the following observations:

- Outcomes measures should be set at the point at which solutions are co-produced with communities. It may be that some of these measures are "soft" in that they measure communities' ability to cope with the challenges they face, for example in relation to housing and employment.
- Hard data around strategic issues such as housing and employment should be considered in setting parameters for pragmatic co-production (see Principle 1 in Chapter 6), and therefore influence how measures are set.
- The development of outcomes measures based on pragmatic co-production should be led and piloted by independent funders and those local authority and health commissioners which are involved. Communities should be closely involved in this process. Piloting would enable an evidence base to be built up for this approach.

Addressing volunteering

Successful work has been carried out in other fields, such as the Project Oracle Children & Youth Evidence Hub which has developed “Standards of Evidence” as the basis of project evaluation. It is worth considering what can be learnt from this initiative and applied to civil society, to provide evidence of what works in delivering better outcomes for London’s communities.

The Review Team believes that one of the key advantages of the vision and system outlined above is that it removes the artificial distinction between volunteers and formal civil society. At every level of the proposed system, Londoners will be participating in shaping the future of London. Volunteering is intrinsic to developing community strength and self reliance, and is a key community asset.

Volunteers themselves are part of the community and will have their own needs and challenges. In the proposed system local support would have a clear role in nurturing volunteers, connecting them with opportunities that meet their needs, or enabling them to create their own opportunities.

See diagram 5.5 in Chapter 5.

Addressing inequalities

The system proposed by this Review is based on addressing inequalities. Placing pragmatic co-production and community strength at the heart of the proposed system, we seek to put marginalised groups front and centre of what drives civil society and its support organisations.

- If pragmatic co-production is effectively adopted, it will bring a greater range of people into the tent to define need and develop solutions. It will also ensure that a range of voices underpin civil society’s influencing and campaigning work.
- There could be a specific remit for support organisations to ensure that equalities issues are being addressed at every stage of the pragmatic co-production continuum described in Principle 1 (see Chapter 6).
- Consideration of equalities issues could form a core element in devising standardised products.
- The “triage” element of the triage and connect function of support organisations could contain core questions on equalities.

The role of local authorities and health

The impact of austerity and the scale of the challenge facing the public sector mean that local authorities and health commissioners are having to look for new solutions to address communities' needs.

If civil society is to make the biggest possible contribution in these difficult times, the culture of local authorities and health commissioners will need to shift from the current top down approach to working in a more genuinely collaborative way. This Review does not underestimate the difficulty of achieving this culture shift. However, the depth of funding cuts provides an opportunity and an incentive for elected representatives, commissioners and officials to engage with civil society in a more equal way.

Funding the system

Funding the proposed system is vital.

It is extremely disappointing that London Councils has recently taken the decision to end a 30 year commitment to collective borough funding and support for pan-London specialist support for communities in need. However we also welcome the fact that London Councils is keen to work with City Bridge Trust (and others) on implementing the recommendations from this Review, and hope that this will help support the transition to the new system.

In terms of commissioning local support, we recommend that London Funders, the London Hub, the GLA and London Councils, work together to influence how local authority and health commissioners commission civil society support so that it aligns with the recommendations from this Review.

If the system is adopted, one of the immediate issues to address will be how to transition to the new system. Transition funding will need to include not only funding for innovation, but also funding to cover the costs of moving to the new system, such as the costs of reconfiguring current organisations if this is found to be necessary, plus the costs of collecting evidence of the impact and effectiveness of the system. Larger funders are called upon to collaborate to develop a transition fund to support the move to the new system.

Addressing the role of business

By comparison to the business sector, the relationship between the public sector and civil society is more advanced in that relationships and ways of working have been developed, tested, challenged and established. The relationship between civil society and business is less evolved, and has often not been on the basis of equality. Some sections of business have often been competitors for contracts rather than collaborators for social good. However, businesses have made positive contributions through partnering on volunteering or through the work of their Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes. Initiatives like BeyondMe demonstrate the enthusiasm that exists amongst business employees to contribute to civil society. Businesses also provide money and resources, and there is a significant opportunity to develop their contribution given that London hosts a number of global enterprises, and is also home to a diverse range of businesses including SMEs and start-ups.

The Review comes at a time when the relationship between business and civil society is evolving. The London Hub will have an important role in the continued development of this relationship. Further work is needed to fully consider the contribution of business to the proposed system.

The importance of digital

In the meantime, the Review Team would make the following points:

- There is a growing consensus that business has a role to play in supporting civil society, and the private sector has begun to take up this role as evidenced by the recent growth in business brokerage services.
- Businesses are also members of the community. Their expertise would be a valuable contribution to discussions about co-production.
- Civil society support organisations have a key role in brokering the involvement of business in co-production. This is a fundamental element of ensuring a thriving civil society, so business should not discount this involvement even if the impact achieved is not as visible as other forms of involvement.
- Business already takes part in the “connect” element of triage and connect, as described above, by providing skilled volunteers and pro bono services. However more could be done to ensure:
 - Support is better co-ordinated and distributed across frontline organisations
 - Voluntary contributions are truly responding to the needs of communities
 - Provision is in line with the principles of this review
- Business capacity and ability to engage effectively with civil society needs to be further developed.

In devising the details of how the system should work in practice, it will be important to think flexibly. Digital solutions have an important role to play in promoting efficiency, enabling civil society to work at scale and widening its reach. The work of organisations like Reach Volunteering provides useful insight into how support organisations can increase the scale and impact of their work, using digital approaches.

Using digital solutions to increase scale and impact

Reach Volunteering has used digital and online approaches to increase the scale of skills based volunteering and the impact of such volunteering on civil society organisations. For example, the launch of its online platform has enabled Reach Volunteering to support a 50% increase in activity since its launch in Summer 2015 without needing to grow its service team. Another example is its partnership with LinkedIn. Prior to the launch of LinkedIn's new volunteering service, Reach Volunteering worked with them to trial an approach to finding skilled volunteers by adapting the existing jobs function on LinkedIn to bring volunteering opportunities to the attention of those who had not previously come forward. The partnership continued after LinkedIn launched its volunteering service, and is enabling Reach Volunteering to make the most of LinkedIn's several million

members in the UK to extend its volunteering offer. The initiative has attracted the attention of potential volunteers whom Reach Volunteering previously had been unable to target. For example Oxfam were recently looking to recruit Health and Safety Auditors in Aberdeen, an initiative for which Reach Volunteering would have previously struggled to find suitable volunteers. Via LinkedIn it was able to identify scores of potential volunteers. Currently 150 skilled volunteers a month join Reach through LinkedIn. When Reach's own digital platform came online in summer 2015, this was synched with LinkedIn to streamline operations. Reach Volunteering's Chief Executive Janet Thorne said: “This has been an invaluable initiative that has enabled us to scale up our work in a way which was not previously possible. We have been able to achieve so much more and reach so much further.”

A movement for systems change

The Review is not alone in proposing system-wide change. At a national level, initiatives like the *Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* and the *Integrated Care and Support Pioneer Programme* are driving new approaches to entire systems reform. Civil society support organisations, like Community Southwark, are also acting as catalysts for systems change locally.

Instigating system change locally

Civil society organisations have faced substantial cuts in funding from statutory sources. In working to address the impact of cuts on civil society organisations locally, Community Southwark began to realise that change was needed across the whole system supporting local communities, of which civil society organisations are an important part. Community Southwark instigated the establishment of the Southwark and Lambeth Early Action Commission to look at how the system to support vulnerable communities needs to change to ensure early action and prevention. The Commission brought together Clinical Commissioning Groups and both local authorities, with Community Southwark acting as the catalyst for discussion and NEF providing the secretariat and research function. Chaired by the Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MP, the Commission also set up an independent advisory group

to test the ideas generated by the Commission. Three central conclusions of the Commission's report *Local early action: how to make it happen* were the importance of: understanding how to prepare the ground for and make the most of community assets; incentivising commissioners to prioritise prevention to reduce reliance on services; joining up different elements of the system. "This work has been very influential," said Gordon McCullough of Community Southwark. "Civil society is now a core part of the CCG's Five Year Forward View, and they have set up an Early Action Group that includes the CCG, civil society and Southwark Council; Southwark Council's civil society strategy is being largely informed by the Early Action Commission; and Community Southwark is in active talks with a local funder on developing asset based models to improve the wellbeing of local residents."

Chapter



Introduction

This chapter describes what will need to take place in order for the principles and system proposed in this Review to be adopted. It also suggests who should lead and initiate action.

RECOMMENDATIONS: TRANSITION TO THE NEW SYSTEM

Systems change group

The Reference Group for this Review has been an invaluable source of knowledge, scrutiny and challenge, and has co-produced the recommendations presented in this report.

The Reference Group will now establish a Systems Change Group to support the take up of the recommendations from the Review. This time limited group will support and enable transition to the proposed system and will regularly review progress. Its membership should include representatives from:

- London Funders
- LVSC
- GLV
- Local support organisations
- Specialist support organisations
- Independent funders
- London Councils
- GLA
- LA commissioners
- Health commissioners
- Frontline organisations

The role of this Systems Change Group would be to:

- Stimulate take up of the recommendations through, for example, developing guidance and support to enable key players to adopt the proposals
- Track and report against progress
- React and respond to challenges and changes in the environment as transition to the proposed system unfolds

Promoting the Review

To ensure that the Review and its recommendations are understood and taken forward it will be important for them to be actively promoted and discussed with each individual group of players who can make change happen.

The Systems Change Group will:

- Identify and prioritise the key players who could contribute to driving forward the recommendations from this Review. Key players would include independent funders and providers of statutory funding, local and specialist support, businesses and frontline organisations
- Devise a plan of tailored communications for each group of key players
- Actively engage in dialogue with these groups to spread awareness, understanding and commitment to the recommendations from this Review

Secure funding to transition to, and implement, the proposed principles and system

Change will be difficult to achieve without funding. Not only does the proposed system need funding, resources will be required to support civil society to transition to that system.

We encourage independent funders, providers of statutory funding and London Funders to:

- Investigate ways to fund transition to the proposed system, and to ensure that as part of this, civil society support is funded into the future
- Consider developing a strategic regional fund for civil society support in London

We encourage London Councils, statutory commissioners and London Funders to:

- Investigate how to adapt commissioning of civil society support to move towards the proposed system

We encourage local authority commissioners to:

- Work with their local civil society support organisations to consider how to commission effective civil society support, along the lines of the proposed principles and system
- Actively work with their local civil society support organisations to plan what will be required to transition to this new system

We encourage London Councils to:

- Consider how it can collaborate with other funders to ensure civil society support is funded

Adopting the proposals from the Review

For the proposed system to be effectively adopted, all key players need to engage with the proposals and actively plan how to move them forward.

We encourage LVSC and GLV to:

- Work with local and specialist support to take forward the Review

We encourage support and frontline organisations to:

- Engage with and take forward the principles of this Review within their own organisations and to work with others to take forward the system

We encourage London Funders to:

- Work with independent funders and providers of statutory funding to take forward the Review
- Encourage independent funders to step forward and become early adopters of these recommendations
- Encourage independent funders to consider working with organisations currently in receipt of grants, on how they could be supported to move towards the system and principles set out in this Review

We encourage Heart of the City to:

- Work with businesses to take forward the Review

We encourage London Councils to:

- Bring London Boroughs together to consider how to move forward with these recommendations

The Healthy London Partnership brings together health commissioners from across London to deliver improvements to health in the capital. We encourage the Healthy London Partnership to:

- Consider how to engage with the recommendations of this Review in developing relationships with civil society to deliver improvements to the health of London's communities.

Prototype the proposed system

To develop the detail of how the principles and system could be implemented, we recommend prototyping them in selected areas. This prototyping will also enable an evidence base to be created which could inform subsequent roll out of the principles and system more widely.

The Systems Change Group will:

- Identify areas in which prototyping could take place
- Approach key players within these areas to explore their willingness to prototype the principles and system
- Approach funders to resource the prototype projects
- Discuss how to move forward in establishing a London Hub
- Involve local and specialist support in developing the detail of how the London Hub will operate

The Review encourages support and frontline organisations to:

- Come forward to take part in prototyping the proposed system

Create an Effectiveness Network

As stated above, the Review Team proposes the establishment of an Effectiveness Network. Drawing membership from trustees of support organisations, the Effectiveness Network would develop and promote peer support to drive improvement and consistency in the quality of local support organisations' work.

Pending the establishment of a London Hub, we encourage LVSC and GLV to:

- Begin discussions with local support organisations to develop thinking further about the Effectiveness Network
- Begin to take the first steps towards establishing the Effectiveness Network

We encourage independent funders to:

- Consider how to incentivise engagement in the Effectiveness Network by, for example, making it a condition of grants that support organisations they fund nominate a trustee to join the Network

Developing the role of the GLA

This Review has identified a key role for the GLA in producing and sharing city-wide data and analysis. The GLA also has the potential to play a more substantive role in London's civil society support in the future.

We encourage the GLA, and the new Mayor to:

- Explore how best to build on the GLA's existing expertise and capacity with respect to data and analysis, in order to bring together data from civil society and communities
- Work with others to consider how existing initiatives such as Team London might provide the foundation for the GLA to contribute more effectively to civil society support across London
- Develop proposals to engage civil society more effectively with London-wide planning and decision-making
- Work with London Funders to consider how to apply the learning from Project Oracle to the civil society sector

Responding to uncertainty and change

New ideas and thinking about the future of civil society are emerging constantly.

The Systems Change Group will:

- Develop an online platform, forums and other mechanisms to share up to date and emerging thinking on the future of civil society to enable civil society to learn about and adopt new ideas

Chapter



Introduction

The Review Team is aware that the scale of the proposed recommendations is significant, will take time to achieve and require systematic and managed implementation. This chapter sets out the steps that should be taken over the next six months, to move towards the implementation of the Review's recommendations.

The Reference Group has proposed which organisations should take the initial lead on each of the first steps set out in the grid overleaf.

RECOMMENDATIONS: IMMEDIATE STEPS

Immediate steps grid

	Immediate steps	By whom	Begin by
1	Establish Systems Change Group to stimulate adoption of the recommendations from this Review and to track progress	Reference Group for the Review	April 2016
2	Develop a communications plan to disseminate and engage all key players, to promote dialogue and understanding about the Review and its recommendations	Systems Change Group	April 2016
3	Bring together support organisations to consider the recommendations from this Review and how to move forward	LVSC and GLV	May 2016
4	Develop an implementation plan	Systems Change Group	May 2016
5	Develop a glossary of terms from the Review	LVSC and GLV	May 2016
6	Bring together commissioning leads within London Boroughs to consider the recommendations from this Review and how to move forward	London Funders and London Councils	June 2016
7	Bring together independent funders to consider the recommendations from this Review and how to move forward	London Funders	June 2016
8	Consider and issue a statement in response to the recommendations from this Review	Independent funders (facilitated by London Funders)	June 2016
9	Seek a meeting with the Mayor to discuss the proposed role of the GLA in relation to data and to bringing civil society into strategic planning and decision making for London	Systems Change Group	June 2016
10	Bring together interested players to discuss how to move forward with the London Hub	Systems Change Group	July 2016

	Immediate steps	By whom	Begin by
11	Begin discussions on establishing an Effectiveness Network	LVSC and GLV	July 2016
12	Bring together businesses and business brokerage services to consider the recommendations from this Review and how to move forward	Heart of the City, London Employer Supported Volunteering Network	September 2016
13	Independent funders, commissioners, local public sector and civil society support organisations to develop a shared understanding of “pragmatic co-production”	Facilitated by London Funders, LVSC and GLV	September 2016
14	Identify areas to prototype the system set out in the recommendations, actively considering cross borough approaches	London Councils, Systems Change Group	September 2016
15	Begin prototyping in selected areas	Communities, local public sector, independent funders, civil society support and frontline volunteers, groups and organisations in selected areas, supported by the Systems Change Group	November 2016
16	Review and report on progress	Systems Change Group	November 2016

The Way Ahead Civil Society at the Heart of London

April 2016



GREATER LONDON VOLUNTEERING

Srabani Sen OBE & Associates



Funded by the City of London
Corporation's charity, City Bridge Trust

