

# The Way Ahead

## Our Commitments

### London CVS Directors' network March 2017

"I can't understand why people are frightened of new ideas. I'm  
frightened of the old ones."

(John Cage)



At a Connect Hackney participatory budgeting event – choosing which projects for  
people aged 50+ should receive a share of Big Lottery Funding

## 1. Introduction and Context

- London CVS Directors welcome the opportunity to input their thinking and experience into the Way Ahead programme. To inform our analysis, and in addition to extensive consultation within our network's constituencies covering the whole of London, we have consulted and researched information widely, including with national agencies and beyond London. (see [Appendix 2](#)).
- We commissioned this report, because we recognised that there is a need to crystallise our own experiences, and reflect that as a network and as a community of infrastructure we are committed to rising to both the current challenges faced by civil society, and the visions of and solutions for the future that the Way Ahead represents. The Way Ahead is at once both an emblem of and ambitious vision for change. We know that we do not have all the answers, but we know that we have some of the right questions.
- The Way Ahead report correctly recognised that the needs of Londoners should be the starting point of any community action. The challenge facing all of us now is collectively to support and strengthen local communities and enable them to be proactive and resilient at a time of increasing need and inequality.
- Local infrastructure is particularly well-situated to bring local people together and enable a shared agenda with which to engage with statutory partners. We are integral to the Way Ahead because of our existing reach into marginalised and disadvantaged communities including BAMER individuals and groups, our desire whenever possible to find co-produced and collaborative solutions, and to support civil society voices to be heard.
- We provide the 'commonplace' but nonetheless essential practical support in areas such as premises and back office facilities, income generation, structure, governance, staffing, volunteer management, access to training, and ongoing organisational development that civil action needs. If infrastructure organisations were not here we would most certainly need to invent them, particularly for the embryonic and small locally-based organisations we predominantly support.
- Alongside our statutory and private sector partners; voluntary sector agencies and their infrastructure support bodies, recognise how important it is to strengthen those parts of our local communities most affected by austerity and inequality. Building community resilience, facilitating social action and enabling local people to do more for themselves is at the very heart of what many voluntary organisations do already. It is especially close to the heart of much of the work of local infrastructure organisations as they work with their community partners to co-design services, bring communities of interest together and broker effective social action.
- The world of civic society in London is wonderfully complicated, with many different small agencies meeting the needs of different communities and communities of interest. In this context, CVSs along with other anchor organisations, are ideally placed to act as "brokers" and "facilitators" in the conversations needed in relation to both service design and service delivery.

- Civil society has not perhaps faced such significant challenges and change since the 1834 Poor Law Act. The pressure on the sector is currently immense and forecast to rise as further budget reductions bite. There is an assumption that civil society can pick up much of the figurative and financial deficit, and in this context the case for civil society infrastructure as an enabler of social action has arguably never been stronger.
- We have therefore formulated a number of commitments that local infrastructure can make, grouped under the 5 Themes of the Way Ahead, and to which the London CVS Directors' network can significantly contribute in the next 12 months. However before moving onto these commitments, we think it important to set out some particularly key contextual observations.

## 2. Key Observations

2.1 **Structure and Quality** – This is a crucial point: current local voluntary sector infrastructure reflects current geopolitical structures, and most specifically UK local government divisions. Almost without exception, CVSs and Volunteer Centres throughout the UK match County, Unitary Authority and Borough boundaries. This is the *de facto* level for local co-ordination of both social services, and also the dominant level for co-terminus co-ordination of health services (e.g. CCGs). With fewer resources, and a requirement to represent and influence local policy, it is no surprise that infrastructure organisations have historically mirrored and remain dependent on these same geopolitical boundaries.

Similarly, geopolitical relationships also determine the ‘quality’ of infrastructure, where hearsay aside, **there is an almost entirely unambiguous correlation between appropriate funding for and statutory engagement with, and the commensurate quality of local infrastructure support.** At a simple level then, change the geopolitical footprints and approaches, and the structure and quality of commissioned infrastructure will follow.

For example, if there were systemic changes to sub-regional co-ordination and funding mechanisms in London, this would lead to more co-ordinated sub-regional action (and potential economies of scale). It’s a somewhat simple equation, local infrastructure often cannot work outside their resident boroughs because funders predominantly do not support this. Similarly provide the modicum levels of earmarked funding for new hyper-local co-production methodologies, as the Pragmatic Co-Production Theme group suggests, and citizens supported by infrastructure will be facilitated to engage much more readily and effectively.

2.2 **Digital and social ecology (networked) solutions** – Digital development is inexorable, and brings so many benefits, as does an enhanced (and more scientific) understanding of how citizens operate together, and engage with and effect change within societies, partly through operating with different identities in multiple networks. Digital developments certainly facilitate the sharing of both basic and complex data and information, and can enable the flourishing of virtual and physical spaces and networks.

However, they also present some challenges in relation to social interaction, and if relied on too heavily can at best be impersonal, and at worst be a cause of both social isolation and social insulation (including memes of unhealthy confirmation bias). More prosaically for example, there is growing evidence of a correlation between purely online volunteer recruitment portals and poor volunteer experiences. In addition even digital networks do not operate in a 2 dimensional vacuum, as the recent [DCMS report](#)<sup>1</sup> noted, social action requires continued investment, particularly if it is to be something more than temporary iterations of desire and current thinking unconnected with government structures.

Digital progress presents an extraordinary untapped potential for improvements in health and social care. The seven strands of the [UK’s Digital Strategy](#) directly present numerous opportunities for civil society to support the government’s digital aspirations.

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Culture Media and Sport & New Economic Foundation – Enabling Social Action - 2017

But the digital world also creates its own demand for systemic and behavioural response and change. In this sense we all continue to learn how to manage it and use it most effectively. How for example do those new to fundraising identify the correct methodology and software from a bewildering and often competing array of funding platforms? We must also be mindful of technology's limitations and combine the appropriate digital technology with a fundamental human requirement for the face-to-face interaction needed to interpret it. The most disadvantaged, who otherwise struggle to negotiate existing structures and barriers, (and often also digital technology) demand live contact, and **this is arguably the stand out feature and benefit of working with the voluntary sector as a whole.**

**2.3 Duplication of resources** - Any organisation working in infrastructure must accept responsibility for and a duty to avoid and reduce unnecessary duplication (with its implication of 'resources being wasted').

Duplication is however an easy indictment to make, whilst complicated to define and understand. For example, the extent to which support providers already signpost to existing organisations rather than simply encourage creations of new replicating entities is sometimes little appreciated.

This is however guide rather than gate-keeper. Avoiding duplication needs to be balanced with nurturing rather than stifling the main motivations for social action, and needs to reflect that there is a natural desire for local communities to define themselves in their own ways, rather than being shoehorned into existing activities and institutions. The underlying thought process is often, to paraphrase *Wilde*, "Be yourself, everyone else is taken". This mirrors much social development (and indeed human consumption - of which another obvious illustration is the popularity of many of the same national retail brands on every high street).

Historically under previous administrations, there was a government-initiated policy, and specific funding set aside via the [Change Up](#) programme to encourage and support both new and existing charities to consider public delivery, bid for contracts and become 'market ready'. This led, and to some extent still does lead to a growth in the total number of organisations, and a competitive overlap between growing organisations working in the same fields. In other words duplication was the unintended consequence of a benignly-intended funding regime.

Similarly in relation to duplication of resources, there is an oft-repeated question why there are so many diagnostic tools, policies, templates etc. The incorrect assumption here is that it is possible to define absolute resources requiring no local tailoring or improvement over time. In fact some argue that the current position is a victory of the locally-developed over the nationally-dictated. The question of precisely which of these resources should be held at national, regional and local level can also be blurred by territorial interests and has never been closely defined. Resource development and holding to some extent also mirrors the *realpolitik* of attempting to meet diverse funders' interests, and particularly to attract what are predominantly competitive resources to a specific locale.

However, our combined resource challenge remains to minimize the duplication, sort the chaff from the grain, and provide unambiguous information reservoirs available to all, at a level and language different audiences can absorb.

One good example of such a solution is the [NOVA Assist](#) online diagnostic tool which offers **two levels** of facilitated diagnostic depending on the sophistication of the audience.

We also note that there already exists a significant body of high-quality information, data, reports, templates, and good practice guidelines in relation to promoting civil society and delivering effective infrastructure support. These are held at every level of formal infrastructure, but also in specialist research bodies including the [Institute for Voluntary Action Research](#), and by several large funders including [Joseph Roundtree Foundation](#).

Local infrastructure is 'locally-based' certainly, but it is not 'parochial'. We are tied in and engaged with a wide range of national best-practice resources. We therefore believe that achieving less duplication in relation to standardized resources is almost certainly best achieved in close partnership with **nationally-held** rather than regional resources (see [KnowHow NonProfit](#) by NCVO); with local infrastructure providing signposting, local interpretation & explanation, AND the human contact so vital to engaging Londoners, often for the first time, in civil society.

**2.4 Valuing what is already successful** - We do note a degree of iconoclasm prevalent in some of the initial thinking of the Way Ahead. This is perhaps inevitable when resources are extremely scarce and a range of broader stakeholders are under similar pressures to those experienced at frequent intervals within major sub-sectors of the voluntary sector whose comparative popularity sometimes wanes, e.g. HIV, carers. However and simply put, we do need to value and keep what is already working successfully. The neglect of social care in general is one example where the law of unintended consequences applies, particularly in relation to the adverse effect on hospital beds and urgent care targets.

The CVS movement in the UK has undergone significant change and transformation in the last 5 years. There are many examples of innovative practice in relation to partnerships, enterprise and diversity of operations, and infrastructure around the UK has proven itself highly adaptable (see e.g. the social enterprise activities of organisations such as [Voluntary Action Norfolk](#), [Community Action Isle of Wight](#)).

NAVCA's Chief Officers Report for 2016 showed a large number of NAVCA members involved in social prescribing (58 per cent), the Better Care Fund (39 per cent), asset transfers (39 per cent), local business giving (24 per cent), and Neighbourhood Planning (30 per cent). This at a time when funding for infrastructure has never been poorer. The Way Ahead has also certainly helped to further galvanise the CVS movement in London. We have recognised as a group of CEOs that we need to more closely define what we do and our relative impact. To avoid wasting resources, we have also learned it is better for civil society, and a more effective use of scant resources to prioritise civil society and infrastructure collaboration over competition. The Way Ahead has already stimulated significant joint working including amongst ourselves and we continue to explore joint funding bids to attract more investment into the Capital.

However, we also note from our broad consultations, a variable understanding of civil society, its history and its infrastructure - particularly awareness of what has worked and what has not worked...and importantly why.

This includes significant learning and innovation from outside London, and no doubt a significant number of examples of learning and good practice will be generated by the Way Ahead's Thematic Working Groups.

Whilst history is for reference not for reverence, we do need to be mindful that while austerity is a fact, the approach to austerity remains a choice, and that we need to evidence both the rationale for change, and closely examine any posited solutions. It must not be change for change's sake. It remains important to sustain 'the work that does work', particularly when the cost of that support is significantly lower than that which is delivered by commercial or statutory providers.

In simple terms, whilst London may consider spending £175 million on a new Garden bridge, it seems disproportionately frustrating that we cannot find the £3-4 million needed, perhaps a modicum level of £150K+ per Borough, to support the core of organisations which remain the first port of call for almost all those wishing to contribute to civil society. Particularly when it is that very same civil society that is expected to pick up significant parts of the demand arising from austerity choices, and that local infrastructure organisations are the only local incarnation of agencies specifically focused and constitutionally required to build and support that capacity.

We therefore sincerely request that both the Cornerstone Fund and Local Authorities give further consideration to the contributions that infrastructure organisations do and can continue to make in so many diverse areas including social action, social care and wellbeing, co-production, public health and Sustainability and Transformation Plans, supporting civil society voice and providing and disseminating data and information.



### 3. Our commitments

For the Way Ahead to have tangible long-term impact it must lead to meaningful changes, we must deal “with what lies clearly at hand”, which is a civil society often struggling to respond to the demands made on it by austerity. Here are our commitments:

**3.1 Triage & Connect** – Local infrastructure organisations have significant and profound expertise in this area, it is our *raison d’être*. Our business model is essentially public and charitable trust funding, supplemented by partnership project delivery and social enterprise, providing free support to civil society at the point of delivery. In contrast, we do recognise there are a range of alternative providers operating under different business models and structures, but a key issue which must be addressed in any discussion about support, is to ensure the **consistency** and **quality** of that support, however it is generated or charged for.

It is also important to recognise that triage, as in diagnosis, is just one part of the equation: available and accessible support agencies need to exist to refer organisations on to after the triage. Particularly for small groups with limited time and finances, triage, support and training must be local, otherwise individuals are unlikely to access it. In addition, local connectivity also relies on local relationships and connections, sometimes new links are made, but they are also often nurtured and built up over significant time periods.

**Our broad commitment is to work more flexibly in locales with a wider range of new partners, specialists and professionals to vary and improve the offers available to civil society stakeholders.**

**Our specific commitment is to QUALITY: to help define the minimum qualitative standards for civil society support. (See Appendix 1). Externally assessed Quality standards should apply at whatever level it is provided, and whomsoever provides it.**

**We also offer to identify and recommend an appropriate and standardized online digital diagnostic (“triage”) tool for use by a range of London support providers, where it complements face-to-face and live work.**

**Case study: Making Connections** - By identifying the interests, assets and priorities of the target groups in three wards, the Croydon Social Recovery project was intended to inform the Council and statutory partners in their re-prioritisation and realignment of services, and to review and further develop community networks. Using the unique ABCD Approach, CVA Croydon identified 77 local ‘connectors’ who were responsible for initiating 77 community projects, 60 of whom received match funding. Invaluable long-term connections have been made with over 240 neighbourhood-based clubs and associations in the three areas of the project.

**3.2 Data Sharing** – Local borough-wide support organisations have a deep understanding of their local community sectors, their structure, politics, issues, and leaders. Each borough possesses unique factors influencing the development of local services and civil society, and which should be better reflected in assessments of need and the allocation of funding. Decisions are often made on outdated knowledge and incorrect assumptions. London is in constant flux, and demographic change is a constant, and so for example, the **outer** London boroughs now experience needs and challenges more commonly associated with the **inner** London boroughs 10-20 years ago.

The data which local infrastructure organisations have access to is complementary to other local and Pan-London demographic and needs-based data which others are probably better placed to collect and analyse; including broader thematic needs for example homelessness, to which local infrastructure can nonetheless contribute in both data and evidence collection. We therefore consider that the GLA and local authorities could perhaps take responsibility for monitoring population changes, whilst local support providers could input local **qualitative and experiential evidence** in relation to the effect of those changes on London's civil society.

A key question however is how we use any data generated: particularly that this needs to be effectively interpreted and disseminated at a Borough level in a language that our local communities understand and can use, for example to help them understand their local needs in a broader context, learn from what others around London and the UK are doing, and use the evidence to access inward investment to meet those local needs.

**Our broad commitment is to commit to working collaboratively with the GLA, local authorities, London Funders and a London Hub to formulate, collect, map and disseminate the unique local data we have access to, particularly in relation to local voluntary sector structure, workforce, politics, context, key issues, leaders and activities, and ensure that these are provided within a mutually agreed data reporting framework formulated with the GLA.**

**Our specific commitment is to be responsible for interpreting, simplifying, and disseminating publicly-available civil society data in a language and context which local individuals and organisations can understand and use.**

**Case study: Linking Data and Need** - From information retrieved and analysed from its database, and gathered via meetings with member organisations, Greenwich Action for Voluntary Services identified 'social isolation' as a key issue for local communities. It was highlighted by the voluntary sector representative on the then local H&WB Strategic Partnership and subsequently chosen as a priority for the borough's local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; with the specific outcome of creating a Social Isolation Strategy Group (SISG). The SISG includes 6 local voluntary organisations, and representatives from public health, housing, leisure, and Adults and Older People's Services. The SISG is focused on intelligence gathering, and itself commissioned research to identify areas/gaps in service provision and develop and support actions to reduce social isolation. The group is working together to develop a model/pathway for individuals which links into a mechanism of social prescribing.

**3.3 Consistent Commissioning** – Infrastructure organisations have long-standing skills in early identification of inequalities, and orchestrating effective interventions in for example health, wellbeing and social care, through co-ordinating borough-wide partnerships and collaborations.

A challenging question is how to address some of the more intransigent health and social issues: these often require cross-borough and regional responses and this is an area where both local infrastructure and a potential London Hub can significantly contribute.

There are already many examples where support organisations are leading delivery partnerships of community organisations: and we are and continue to offer ourselves as a toolbox that commissioners can and do make use of in every stage of the commissioning cycle.

London CVSs are also already engaged as speakers on the national training programme for commissioners, the [Commissioning Academy](#). Some of the key features of this training are that it brings both commissioners and providers into the same room, promotes whole-systems thinking, explores tendering to the voluntary and community sector, and considers joint commissioning across organisational boundaries.

According to the Local Government Association's recent [New Opportunities and Sustainable Change report](#), "*VCSE infrastructure organisations, which provide overall coordination, championing training and commissioning support, make a huge contribution to positive working relationships and ultimately to health and wellbeing outcomes*". The report highlights that well-run local infrastructure organisations are important for enabling the VCSE sector to contribute to strategic engagement through the HWB, JSNAs and key local strategies. It cites the example of Tower Hamlets CVS which employs a health lead, supported through CCG funding, who acts as a link and represents the sector on the HWB and other key strategic groups, and increases the understanding of the voluntary sector within statutory organisations.

The report also references [research by NAVCA](#) showing that there is a strong relationship between the level of targeted infrastructure support and the ambition and confidence of VCSE organisations to take on new commissioning opportunities.

**Our broad commitment, in partnership with local government, is to lead local responses, and contribute to the further development of regional responses in thematic areas such as social prescription, intransigent unemployment, homelessness and crime; building effective local (and contributing to sub-regional and regional) collaborations to develop solutions for difficult and larger social and health challenges requiring a broader and collective response.**

**Our specific commitments are to input as a network into the new GLA procurement strategy, and to continue to work and negotiate with local authorities to refine inclusive barrier-free commissioning methodologies, particularly to ensure all appropriate sections of local civil society, large and small, can participate in problem solving, service design and public service delivery.**

**Case study: Influencing Commissioning policy and practice** - Following a recommendation by the recent [Redbridge Fairness Commission](#), in which Redbridge CVS played a key role, Redbridge Council is currently working in partnership with voluntary organisations and people with disabilities to co-produce a "Disability Charter" for commissioners which, it is anticipated, will be adopted by all local public sector commissioners. <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/about-the-council/fairness-commission/>

**3.4 Voice & Campaigning** – There can be an understandable misunderstanding that CVSs only support ‘organisations’ and not ‘individuals’. This is incorrect. Local infrastructure is ALL about working with individuals, whether they be within formalized groups or new social activists wanting to volunteer, take action or develop something new. Constitutionally we remain obligated to work with all and any individuals and organisations working at grass roots, to improve the lives of the most disadvantaged Londoners.

Consequently most of our work is with the embryonic, small or small/medium enterprises that most need our help with getting their voices heard. The context of local campaigning is complex and requires good relationships and links with a range of stakeholders and decision makers including elected officials, diverse and often changing council staff, NHS, CCG & GP and Healthwatch agencies, the police force, and in more recent times with social enterprises and local businesses.

Given the diversity in which we all operate, it is a given that local infrastructure cannot and does not represent everyone in civil society. We also recognise that smaller community anchor-type organisations have sometimes been ill-served in this regard (as well as in access to resources).

It is also true that facilitating voice is contextual and an inexact science, and that on occasion we all fail our communities in this respect. But there is significant evidence that we do identify and support individuals and communities to voice their thoughts and concerns, and there are many examples where communities have and continue to be trained, empowered and convened to play their part in influencing for and effecting positive changes on their lives.

**Our broad commitment is to model better community leadership in facilitating engagement by citizens. We will redouble our efforts to gather and convene diverse and authentic voices to influence statutory structures; provide the training and skills necessary to undertake this effectively, and when necessary provide the “occasional collective” voice of communities and smaller organisations in speaking truth to power in places where individuals alone cannot sometimes go.**

**Our specific commitment is to produce and share a Guide to Influencing and Campaigning for Local Change for those Londoners wishing to take social action.**

**In addition, in partnership with Locality, we will also more closely support the anchor organisations in our Boroughs to ensure that more flexible hyper-local support for local campaigns and influencing for change activities is available, and that their voices are heard.**

**Case study: Amplifying Voice** - In 2014, RBKC Council announced, following a survey that took place in the summer of 2014 with parents, that they were intending to tender out the council's after-school play service. This caused a local public furore, with parents claiming that a survey which took place in the summer holiday when many families were away was unfair and not representative. The relationship deteriorated when parents learnt that play workers from within the council could potentially lose their jobs, as many of them were held in such high esteem by parents. The council approached Kensington and Chelsea Social Council (KCSC) to act as a bridge between the parents and the council by setting up and running a Parent Reference Group. The Parent Reference Group now helps local parents to influence how services are commissioned locally, crucially with parents engaged in evaluating which providers are chosen to deliver services.

**3.5 Pragmatic Co-production** – We support the Co-production Working Group’s principle that *‘Co-production is not consultation but a way of realizing the assets that local people and communities have in delivering solutions to London and the nation’s problems’*.

We also support the call for a systematic change to embed coproduction in service design and delivery, and a commitment to valuing what communities working together can do and achieve, over assumptions about what may be best for them. The general level of co-production is poor. Why? This is most often due to a lack of understanding of the value of co-production, and because available resources have often discounted such an approach.

In addition, we need to recognise that true co-production requires sharing power. Fundamentally, resources need to be made available to enable citizens to engage with the same information and resources available to those who currently wield that power.

Working closely with motivated individuals and neighbourhoods to support them to identify, design and sometimes deliver solutions is a working reality for local infrastructure organisations. This is often centred on building the **confidence** and know-how of individuals and small groups to believe that they can effect change. There are also many iterations where CVSs and Volunteer Centres facilitate communities to take action, and many successful organisations first steps were supported by infrastructure support.

As we have noted, some intractable problems however require innovation and new broader theme-based partnerships to address endemic problems. For example addressing the high incidence of BAMER unemployment requires a recognition that Job Centres are often difficult and unwelcoming places for much of this community, and that approaches which work more directly with and support ethnic organisations, refugee and migrant communities to identify and develop suitable pathways to employment will be more effective.

This is for example also the approach successfully developed within the HIV sector using hyper-local community outlets such as hairdressers, nailbars and ethnic cafes to distribute condoms (and was itself based on an approach originally imported from the Asian sub-continent).

**Our broad commitment is to being part of a step change and movement to ensure that where people wish to take part in civil society, the engagements reflect good co-production principles. We commit to modelling and promoting systemic and behavioural change, in line with the subsidiarity principle that services should be both designed and delivered at the most local and personal level possible.**

**Our specific commitment is to support the proposal for and offer support with the orchestration of a co-production summit, and to share our specific resources and experience, including through peer to peer learning, with those developing guidance and practical toolkits supporting co-production.**

**Case study: Residents setting priorities** - In the last two years, Merton CVS has supported hyper-local community action within the Phipps Bridge Estate, one of the most deprived in the borough. Adopting a co-production approach, residents have been enabled to discuss, identify and agree their priorities for estate development. Community development work was undertaken with the residents, a Community Centre on the estate and other VCS organisations to implement an agreed development programme in line with their priorities. As part of this, leadership training was provided for a cohort of 11 people on the estate who were then given a grant budget and support to sustain this local initiative. The project was funded by Merton Council and Circle Housing.

**3.6 London Hub** - A wide range of public institutions already operate on a regional basis: e.g. GLA, emergency services, NHS. Indeed we note that there are already sub-regional iterations in both the public sector and civil society (e.g. the [North East London Strategic Alliance](#), [Superhighways](#)); which also recognise the need for and benefits of collaborative action on a broader playing field. The unique nature of London, being the size of a small country, similarly indicates both a need and an opportunity to create an effective London Hub to support regional civil society interests, and to contribute to regional infrastructure planning.

For reasons already stated above, we do not believe that a London Hub would be operating at an appropriate level to provide triage (which should always be local), nor should it ever be seen as the sole or even main representative of civil society voice for London.

However, we believe a London Hub could successfully focus on a number of key and closely defined areas:

- To attract inwards investment to London at a scale only appropriate at regional level, see the recent [ESF programme](#) led by LVSC
- To be commissioned to collect ad hoc regional civil society data which cannot be collected through other data channels.
- To produce policy inputs to regional and national government in relation to London civil society's interests, and advocate on behalf of civil society funding for London
- To provide an additional focus, and orchestrate collaborative action amongst local communities, funders and support providers, in geographical areas of London where civil society is weak or weaker.
- In partnership with a range of stakeholders including local support providers, to be an enabler of Pan-London partnerships between the different sectors: public, private and civil society.
- To encourage and support sub-regional work, for example responses to (what are effectively sub-regional) NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

**Case study: Cross-borough delivery mechanisms** - Barking and Dagenham CVS, Redbridge CVS and colleagues from the voluntary sector in Havering (where there is currently no CVS or equivalent) are in discussions to establish a cross-borough "Special Purpose Vehicle" to enable voluntary organisations to bid for contracts that may be tendered by the Accountable Care System that is currently being discussed as part of the Integrated Care work in our three boroughs. The CCGs and Local Authorities are closely engaged and keen to work with on this – to ensure that the widest range of local providers can be supported to engage in any new tri-borough arrangements.

**3.7 Working with Business Interests** - In relation to engaging the private sector, we know that London as a whole has not yet been successful in persuading business to understand the benefits of working closely with, and to play its full and natural role in civil society, as a provider of solutions to many of the social issues faced by Londoners.

There are reasons for this, not least the diverse nature of different local areas, for example where individual boroughs have a very low iteration of large businesses or HQs, (e.g. Lewisham, Greenwich and several outer-London boroughs). However, [Time and Talents](#) for example at One Westminster CVS is an excellent and successful iteration of what can be achieved at Borough level when the planning, opportunities and circumstances are right:

**Case study: What successful CSR looks like** - Time and Talents managed by One Westminster CVS is London's longest running Corporate Social Responsibility engagement programme. It is managed by One Westminster as an in-house social enterprise and companies pay an annual fee to join the scheme. Employee volunteers, including from PwC and HMRC, provide a range of services including training, mentoring, workshops or acting as trustees, and engage directly with local people and charity staff, ensuring their work has the highest possible impact. It works with more than 100 charities, schools, care facilities, parks and other community-focused groups. Its first-hand knowledge and strong ties with local voluntary organisations and businesses gives it a distinctive insight into community need, allowing employer partners to develop unique, long-standing partnerships with third-sector organisations.

## Appendix 1 – What makes for good infrastructure support?

We have already begun the work of defining what makes for good infrastructure support. Based on our research, we have delineated here what we consider to be best practice principles, and some embryonic quality standards, along with some considerations for statutory agencies and charitable funders. This work will continue in the next period.

### A1.1 Best practice principles:

- We will always champion approaches which recognise the fundamental value of human interaction and maximize the opportunities for live and face-to-face support.
- Digital technologies and networks provide tremendous opportunities to improve society, and appropriate innovations in how we work should always be explored and supported
- The most effective support for social action and civil society relies on collaborative co-produced approaches, and good relationships between key stakeholders from a range of sectors: civil society, public and commercial
- Within this, individuals and groups must crucially be supported to understand the different ways they can organize themselves, how to overcome barriers, be aware of the different partners they can work with, and be encouraged to operate effectively, efficiently and without unnecessary duplication
- Support for civil society at any level requires modicum standards to guarantee the quality of services offered to individuals and voluntary organisations, and these standards should ideally be externally assessed and audited

There are a range of existing good-quality standards applicable to supporting civil society. We have drawn here from such standards as the NAVCA quality standards 2013, the SKild framework and the NCVO VIP framework to suggest a starting point for further discussion of the standards which all those supporting civil society should be aspiring to:

### A1.2 Appropriate quality standards:

**Standard 1: Knowledge** - The organisation supports the early identification, data analysis, and reporting of needs and changes in the local community, and shares knowledge of existing best practice and information sources

**Standard 2: Influence & Empowerment** - The organisation supports individuals and local community groups to engage with civil society, take action, challenge inequality, and influence local policy and plans that have an impact on their lives and communities

**Standard 3: Collaboration and Co-production** - The organisation facilitates effective communication, networking and collaboration amongst individuals and community groups, across the civil society sector and with the public and private sectors; and facilitates co-produced solutions and thematically-led improvements in service provision to meet individual and collective needs.

**Standard 4: Leadership & Resourcing** - The organisation models good community leadership, whilst supporting individuals and community groups to access appropriate support, and develop the resources and infrastructure needed to take action and fulfil their mission

The following recommendations are drawn partly from and build on Locality's [Keep it Local Five-step guide](#) for Councillors and Commissioners which we support.

#### A1.3 Suggested actions for Local Government, NHS and statutory agencies:

- Statutory agencies should commit to building community capacity for self-help, with proactive and positive commissioning strategies which explicitly aim to support local individuals and organisations to take positive actions.
- Involve local people in service development through co-design, where the expertise of the professional combines with the experience of the user to create more effective services.
- Take a more transparent and flexible place-based approach, and utilise the full range of their local assets for the benefits of the whole community.
- Apply minimum standards of social commissioning in line with the principles of the Social Value Act, best commissioning practice and the National Audit Offices' [Commissioning Toolkit](#).  
(This should include ensuring that the use of aggregated contracts does not exclude smaller organisations from delivery, and that tender specifications and requirements are more closely commensurate with the level of funding.)
- We suggest that given the demands being placed on civil society, the case for civil society infrastructure supporters as an enabler of social action has arguably never been stronger and local authorities should re-commit to a modicum level of funding for local civil society infrastructure

#### A1.4 Suggested actions for Charitable Funders:

- Funding Awards should be made in line with best practice in grantmaking including guidelines from the [Association of Charitable Foundations](#), the [Directory of Social Change](#) and the new Government Grants standards
- Grant making trusts should consider carefully the balance between wanting to nurture innovation and the immediate and pressing need for support for existing voluntary sector activity in the light of continuing austerity, leaving Europe and the devolution agenda. Piloting and testing new approaches and ideas is necessary and rewarding, but continuing to prioritise the broad spread of civil society that is already delivering tangible benefits and proven to work has much wider and immediate impact.
- Grant making trusts should learn from the Funding Plus models adopted by several funders including the BIG Lottery [Capacity Building](#), the Lloyds Bank Foundation [Enhance programme](#), the CAF [Resilience grant and professional support programme](#), and City Bridge Trust's [draft Funding Strategy](#) to ensure wider recognition of the value of supporting the core organisational development of funded organisations
- We suggest that given the demands being placed on civil society, the case for civil society infrastructure supporters as an enabler of social action has arguably never been stronger, and would welcome a reconsideration by charitable funders of their potential support for providers of support for civil society within their funding mix.

## Appendix 2 - Consultations Undertaken

We would like to sincerely thank the following stakeholders who provided their time, experience and knowledge:

<b>Charitable Funders:</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Sara Cooney, Jude Stevens, & Emma Tregear – Grants Managers Emma Hutchins – Policy & Communications Officer Fabian Ffrench (CEO), Mike Scott, and Kiran Ramchandani Russell Drew (CEO) and Andrew Jermei-Boys Abigail Ryan (Funding & Relationship Manager London & Ramona Herdman (Head of Policy and Learning) Sufina Ahmad – Head of Strategic Review Olivia Dix - Interim Principal Grants Officer David Warner – Director Geraldine Blake – Interim Projects Director Erik Mesel – Grants and Public policy Manager	<i>Lloyds Bank Foundation</i> <i>Association of Charitable Foundations</i> <i>United Kingdom Community Foundations</i> <i>London Community Foundation</i> <i>BIG Lottery Fund</i> “ “ “ <i>City Bridge Trust</i> <i>City Bridge Trust</i> <i>London Funders</i> <i>London Funders</i> <i>John Lyon's Charity</i>
<b>National Infrastructure Bodies:</b>	
Vicky Browning – CEO Barney Mynott – Head of Public Affairs Lev Pedro – Public Services Senior Officer Phil Tulba – Head of Services South Kunle Olulode – Director Sharon Long – Programme Manager	<i>ACEVO</i> <i>NAVCA</i> <i>NCVO</i> <i>Locality</i> <i>Voice for Change England</i> <i>Children England</i>
<b>Regional and Local Authorities:</b>	
Christine Mosedale – Commissioning Manager Genevieve George – Commissioning Manager Alice Wilcock – Team London Andy Matheson – Senior Commissioning Officer, LB Southwark Simon Courage - Head of Grants and Community Services Feria Henry – Priority Manager	<i>LB Haringey</i> <i>LB Brent</i> <i>GLA</i> <i>LBGO Forum</i> <i>London Councils</i> <i>London Councils</i>
<b>Regional and Sub-regional Infrastructure Organisations:</b>	
Lisa Redding – CEO Matt Scott - Policy & Project Manager Sector Support James Banks – CEO Kate White – Superhighways Manager	<i>LVSC</i> <i>LVSC</i> <i>GLV</i> <i>SLCVSP</i>
<b>Commentators and Consultants:</b>	
Steve Wyler – LVSC & GLV - WA implementation David Wilcox – Social reporter/activist – Media Blends John Griffiths – Rocket Scientist	<i>Steve Wyler Consultancy</i> <i>Media Blends</i> <i>Rocket Science</i>
<b>Anchor organisations:</b>	
Catherine Pearson – CEO - Lambeth Healthwatch Jackie Rosenberg – Deputy CEO – Paddington Development Trust	<i>Healthwatch Lambeth</i> <i>Paddington Development Trust</i>
<b>Local Infrastructure Organisations Interviewed:</b>	
Michelle Martin – CEO - VC Greenwich, Jake Ferguson – CEO – Hackney CVS, Tessa Awe – CEO - CVS Brent, Naomi Goldberg – CEO – Greenwich Action for voluntary Service, Ross Diamond – CEO – Redbridge CVS, Conrad Hollingsworth – CEO – Lambeth Voluntary Action Council, Karen Chillman – Head of Volunteering – Croydon Voluntary Action, Erika Jenkins – Barking and Dagenham CVS, Tony Nickson – CEO - Voluntary Action Lewisham, Colin Maclean – CEO – Community Links Bromley, Sakthi Suriyaprakasam – CEO - Bexley Voluntary Service Council, Antony Bewick-Smith CEO – Ealing CVS, Alison Navarro – CEO – Sutton CVS	
<b>Local Infrastructure Organisations – other LCVSDn working group members:</b>	
Khadiru Mahdi – CEO – Merton CVS, Guljabeen.rahman – Voluntary Action Islington, Paul Leslie – HAVCO Haringey Ian Lawry - Sobus; Kirsty Cornell – Tower Hamlets CVS; Andy Roper – Ealing CVS; Steve Phaire – CV Alive; Sangita Zaline – Voluntary Action Waltham Forest; Tina Champion - Life-times Wandsworth; Rachel Wright – Voluntary Action Harrow; Julie Pal – Community Barnet; P.Jeffery – Enfield Voluntary Action; Rob Burton – Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services; Angela Spence – Kensington & Chelsea Social Council; S.Hensby – Voluntary Action Camden; Don Shenker – Richmond CVS; Hilary Garner – Kingston Voluntary Action; Paul Leslie – Voluntary Action Waltham Forest	

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