

Members of the Way Ahead Systems Change Group

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Vicki Mirfin, Heart of the City

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Chairs of the Task and Finish Groups who joined the Systems Change Group from December 2016 to June 2017.

Jake Ferguson, Hackney CVS (Pragmatic co-production)

Karen Chillman, Croydon Voluntary Action (Triage and Connect)

Kate White, Superhighways and Lea Gorgulu Webb, Networked Planet (Data sharing)

Alison Navarro, Sutton CVS (Voice and Campaigning)

Phillip Tulba and Elly Townsend, Locality (Consistent Commissioning and Funding)

All of the reports produced by the Task and Finish Groups along with other related reports commissioned on the Way Ahead are publically available at www.thewayahead.london

1. OVERVIEW

About the opportunity

We know that social action by volunteers and the wider voluntary and community sector makes a life changing difference to Londoners, with an estimated 120,000 civil society organisations and over 3 million volunteers already active in the capital. London also has a Deputy Mayor with an explicit brief on social integration and community engagement, the prospect of further devolution to and within the region, and an appetite to be the foremost global city for philanthropy. To date, we have not had the cross sector strategy and structures we need to join up these amazing resources and opportunities. This is about to change.

About the development of the Way Ahead

We started this journey with three beliefs: first, that London needs a vibrant civil society to prosper; second, that in order to achieve a strong and vibrant civil society, just as any other sector in London, civil society needs access to good quality support on business, technical and development issues, as well as a voice within the ongoing debate about London, its governance and the issues it faces; and third that the significant challenges faced by the existing models of support are also opportunities to re-design how that support is provided to civil society in London.

About the Way Ahead Vision

The *Way Ahead* report proposing a new vision for support for civil society in London was launched in April 2016. The Way Ahead vision puts London's communities at the heart of the way we all work. From co-producing an understanding of need and how to tackle it with our communities, through to better sharing of intelligence and data, and making sure that civil society's voice is heard in decision-making at a strategic level, there are recommendations for all stakeholders about how we can better support the frontline – recommendations for local, specialist and regional support providers, for local and regional public sector bodies, for funders and for business. It is only by drawing on the knowledge and resources of all that we can truly harness the potential of London's civil society for all in our communities.

About our work this year

During 2016, the implications of the Way Ahead vision have been explored by most of the stakeholder groups identified in the vision: for example, it is a standing item on the agenda of the Borough Grants Officers meetings, the London Voluntary Sector Forum, the CVS Directors Network, and the GLV network events for Volunteer Centres. Both LVSC and the CVS Directors commissioned reports to better understand the opportunities, and London Councils and London Funders both appointed additional resource to drive Way Ahead thinking through their members. The GLA is embedding Way Ahead approaches across the development of some of their statutory strategies and City Bridge Trust committed to two new funds, the Bridge Fund and the Cornerstone Fund to underpin civil society support. Five Task and Finish Groups were established to dive deep into key themes: Co-production; Data Management & Sharing; Triage and Connecting; Consistent Commissioning and Funding; Voice and Campaigning, and then a sixth group to ensure that equalities are embedded across all of our plans.

About the Draft Way Ahead Change Plan

All of the activity over the last year has formed the basis of the **Draft Way Ahead Change Plan** which has been drawn from and double checked against:

- Commitments made by stakeholders during 2016
- Recommendations made by the Task and Finish Theme Group reports
- Discussions of the Systems Change Group at meetings and an away day

We have attempted to make the draft Change Plan simple, action focused, located with the changes that have already taken place, and linked to other initiatives in the wider environment.

The Change Plan is presented under the five 'focuses' that link to and further develop the themes of the Way Ahead vision:

- LEADERSHIP
- INSIGHT
- ASSETS & RESOURCES
- INVESTMENT / MONEY PLUS
- IMPACT

The Change Plan also uses a NOW/SOON/LATER framework in which:

- NOW = underway already or committed to
- SOON = within this financial year
- LATER = 2018 onwards.

The feedback we are seeking from you

We will share the draft Change Plan at the stakeholder event on 22nd June, test the bits that we know and seek support from stakeholders to fill in the bits that we don't.

Stakeholders are asked to:

- Identify if there are key aspects missing
- Strengthen where possible and add commitments, intelligence, links and possible funding or other resources
- Agree whether the scale of both systems and behaviour change is ambitious enough

What next

An updated and strengthened Way Ahead Change Plan will be published and shared as soon as possible after the Stakeholder Engagement event on 22nd June. This will be made available through stakeholder networks and on www.thewayahead.london

To continue to drive forward making the Way Ahead vision a reality, the Systems Change Group will continue to meet for 18-24 months. Membership will be refreshed to ensure that there is ownership and engagement from across all stakeholder groups. During this time we will also regularly seek wider engagement through networks, events and online forums.

2. THE CHANGE PLAN

LEADERSHIP

NOW

- LVSC and GLV are working together to establish **the London Hub** from Sept 2017 – a regional and strategic civil society support body that delivers a small number of key functions centrally and co-ordinates, aligns and enables the delivery of wider functions through local, regional, and specialist partner organisations. The London Hub will support the engagement and voice of civil society networks in.....
- new architecture being designed by the GLA by which it can strategically engage communities in the co-design of policy interventions and investment programmes. Formal consultation on the **GLA's Civil Society Strategy** will take place in the autumn.
- London Councils has established a new post to support the **strategic engagement by Local Authorities in the Way Ahead** and will ensure insights, intelligence and influence are connected both from and to Local Authorities.
- CVS Directors have committed to **model better community leadership** in facilitating engagement by citizens, redoubling efforts to gather and convene diverse and authentic voices to influence statutory structures; to provide the training and skills necessary to undertake this effectively, and to provide the collective voice of communities and smaller organisations in speaking truth to power.

SOON

- The London Hub, together with local and specialist support organisations will build a **London-wide campaigning forum/network** to support and strengthen the voice of civil society at both local and regional level. The GLA is committed to taking a leadership role in catalysing campaigning and voice work, mediating conversations between citizens, the public sector and civil society. CVS Directors will produce a Guide to Influencing and Campaigning for Local Change for Londoners wishing to take action.

LATER

- Consider how the Way Ahead system can be **celebrated and promoted** by embedding themes into existing activities e.g. co-production being celebrated in civil society awards, social value commissioning in local authority awards.
- Consider how **new models of leadership** can be developed across sectors that prioritise 'systemic' rather than 'organisational' leadership, building on work underway in the NHS and in the London Workforce Development Board.

LINKS TO

- The new London Economic Action Partnership (which replaces the LEP) is an interesting model through which the GLA engages sector interests in policy and investment. A link between this and structures for civil society engagement could prove valuable.

INSIGHT

NOW

- London Councils, City Bridge Trust, and the Healthy London Partnership are all carrying out **mapping exercises** to understand better how civil society organisations and support across London at all levels are funded, in order to inform future commissioning plans. This builds on mapping undertaken by LVSC, GLV and other specialist support organisations. We are seeking to make all of this data available publically, and considering how it can be best kept updated.
- The London Hub will include a stream of work on real time intelligence, and have a **dedicated 'Intelligence Co-ordinator'**.
- The GLA Intelligence Unit is seeking to add new sources and products relevant to London's Civil Society on the **London Data Store** and to capturing and using new sources of data (bottom up) from London's communities. The CVS Directors are committed 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.
- London Councils are committed to gathering and sharing intelligence on local issues, approaches, concerns, gaps and needs, how the boroughs are engaging with civil society, and to becoming a **central resource of information** on London's civil society infrastructure.

SOON

- The London Hub, local and specialist support to work together to grow **data literacy programmes** for civil society, identifying and promoting existing resources and online learning opportunities together with funding and support for data collection.
- Consider a **'State of London' annual event** to explore key issues facing Londoners and enable a collective response. The Way Ahead will establish a task and finish group to check the concept, identify what already exists that could be enhanced, and develop new formats if appropriate.

LATER

- Support **engagement between civil society and academics** - London Hub and local and specialist support to support links between civil society groups and London universities to develop collaborative data projects.

LINKS TO

- Nesta pan-London data projects
- The GLA's [City Data Challenge series](#)
- The [London Conference](#)
- [London Datastore](#)

ASSETS & RESOURCES

NOW

- Recognising **the value and role of frontline and volunteer-led civil society** – the process of developing the Way Ahead vision and this Change Plan has enabled a new narrative about the value of civil society in London and how it can contribute to better solutions for Londoners. This narrative is underpinned by the continuing need to find new ways of meeting needs, and the community led responses to a series of recent events.
- Recognising the **central role of equalities**, adopting the principles proposed by the Equalities Group to ensure that our work is accessible, inclusive, responds to the needs of Londoners and contributes to tackling inequalities.

SOON

- **Improving support available to frontline civil society organisations** – the London Hub, local and specialist support organisations will define the minimum qualitative standards for civil society support. Externally assessed Quality standards should apply at whatever level it is provided, and whoever provides it. In addition, we will identify and recommend appropriate and standardized online digital diagnostic (“triage”) tools for use by a range of London support providers, where it complements face-to-face work.
- **Embed co-production across all stakeholders**, establishing an annual cycle of co-production training, seminars and workshops and a peer to peer learning network/online community of ‘co-producers’, drawing on networks that already exist. We will seek or develop a toolkit for organisations looking to undertake a co-production approach which includes a self-evaluation tool (particularly for local authorities/public bodies), and put in place an annual review of co-production in London about what works.

LATER

- **Demonstrate the value of a system that supports grass roots organisations to co-design and co-deliver strategies with public institutions.** The GLA to identify where, when, & how co-production can be applied (designing grants, procurement, strategy), identifying metrics and making them stick.

LINKS TO

- nef co-production network

INVESTMENT/MONEY PLUS

NOW

- **London-wide investment in civil society support** – the mapping exercises being carried out are seeking to understand where funding is needed and where cold spots exist. This will be complemented by an assessment by the London Hub and CVS directors of regional and local needs. Together, these underpin the recognition of the need to appropriately fund effective regional, local and specialist support for civil society.
- City Bridge Trust are building a **pooled Cornerstone Fund**, which will be active from April 2018, and will act as an exemplar of the Way Ahead funding approach to civil society support. CBT will also identified how other existing funds that support co-production, data sharing, voice and campaigning can be most effectively aligned.
- The GLA will remodel their investment case to take **greater account of social value**, trialling this approach through one GLA commissioning stream.
- Funders are **making public data on funding of civil society** in London – both public and independent funders are using 360 Giving to share their data, making transparent who is funding what, and enabling better decision making.
- London Funders are promoting **effective collaboration between funders from all sectors and civil society** in terms of agreeing shared priorities at a regional level and local level.

SOON

- Create the best ‘civil society friendly’ funding and commissioning framework for London, establishing **‘good practice standards’** for London. Commissioners and funders will consider how they align ‘funding plus’ models and consider shared due diligence to reduce requirements on local groups.

LATER

- Local support organisations to work with local authorities to help refine **locally inclusive barrier-free commissioning methodologies**.

LINKS TO

- City Bridge Trust’s new strategy which is anchored by its commitment to tackling inequalities and bridging divides in London
- Investment in a new Head of Strategic Philanthropy at City of London Corporation to join up a number of initiatives
- Health Commissioning and London Social Prescribing Fund
- New Local Government research (with London Funders) on how independent funders and local authorities can work more strategically together.

3. NEXT STEPS

In section 1, we identified a fifth theme of IMPACT. The Way Ahead vision set out clearly that the end point of rethinking how we work together is to deliver better outcomes for Londoners. We need to find ways of evaluating whether the changes that we are making across all sectors deliver the improved outcomes we want to see. This is a challenging proposition, and one that we want to tackle over the coming 18-24 months. We will seek guidance at the stakeholder conference about how to do this.

The Way Ahead has been enabled by London Funders, London Voluntary Service Council and Greater London Volunteering, but it is owned by many stakeholder groups, who are represented on the Systems Change Group. After the stakeholder event, we will review and refresh the membership of this group, including representatives from:

- Frontline civil society: volunteers, groups and organisation
- Local support organisations for both community groups and volunteers
- Specialist support organisations, including those representing functions, people, equalities and new technologies
- The London Hub
- Independent funders
- Public authorities including the Greater London Authority, London NHS, London Councils, Local Councils and Local CCGs – seeking engagement from both officers and elected representatives
- Businesses both small and large

The Systems Change Group and all stakeholders involved in driving forward the Change Plan need to ensure active communication with our constituencies, and work hard through our own and each other's networks to engage, involve and explain, ensuring the new system is as transparent and easy to navigate as possible.

Call to action

Delivering the Way Ahead requires both structural and behavioural change in all of our sectors. We will need to test ourselves, and hold ourselves to account for our progress or lack of it. We will need to ensure our sectors and organisations don't slip back to 'default' settings, seeking to maintain control over our own empires. But the prize is significant – a London in which Londoners feel they have a voice in the decisions that are made about the kind of city we live in, in which all of us are seen as assets with ideas and resources to bring that can help make our city a better place to be, and in which the energy, knowledge and passion of those who choose to work together for change is made use of, valued and celebrated for the difference it makes.

www.thewayahead.london