

### **Examples of Borough Approaches to Civil Society Commissioning:**

The Leadership in the Third Sector Sub Committee sought examples of a range of commissioning approaches across London Through the Borough Grants Officer Sub group, the full Borough Grants Officer forum and the bulletin sent by the EI team, borough officers were asked to submit examples of approaches their borough took regarding:

- a) work with their local CVS/volunteer centre or other infrastructure group that illustrates how your borough is supporting civil society organisations to thrive, be sustainable and/or is collaborating with (co-production) and empowering communities.
- b) commissioning – where this is being made more consistent/ collaborative across your borough, sub-region or departmentally.

From the responses summarised below, it can be seen that there is no one approach that can fit all boroughs. Approaches are influenced by local need, available budget, demographics etc. It appears that at the heart of each borough's approach there are commonalities such as being locally focussed, community engagement, working in partnership/ having a collaborative approach, which echoes much of the asks of *The Way Ahead*. It demonstrates the will of boroughs to co-design services with local communities and organisations where possible.

London Borough of Bromley
<p>This borough commissions a range of primary intervention services from the third sector. Bromley third sector partners have created a Community Interest Company (CIC) for the council to contract with. The CIC is made up of the key strategic partners in the borough. The borough's contract will be with the CIC and they will distribute the funding accordingly.</p> <p>The CIC is realigning to support the most vulnerable people in Bromley in a wide range of areas such as carers support services, support for elderly frail residents, services for adults with physical disabilities and with learning disabilities, employment and education support and also a single point of access (typically done by Citizens Advice Bureau) which would signpost people to support, welfare benefits advice, debt management.</p> <p>The key outcomes for this work are to support people going through the integrated care networks – those presenting with the most complex needs but not yet eligible for social care and can be supported to remain well and as independent as possible. The borough felt it was more cost effective to commission one organisation but recognised that their residents rarely require support from just one organisation, so felt it was important to bring together how these services were accessed.</p> <p>This has been a joint procurement process with LB Bromley and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) with funding from both organisations and the Bromley Community Fund. Like many other London Boroughs, Bromley is moving away from traditional grant funding to procure outcomes for residents.</p> <p>Bromley has also set aside a 15 percent innovation fund which the CIC will use to support the development of smaller third sector organisations, and target more special third sector resources where it is most needed.</p>

Bromley used a dialogue process to commission and did approximately one year of engagement beforehand to get the various agencies on board with what they wanted to achieve. The specification was structured in such a way that whoever won the bid needed to have local knowledge or work with local partners. The council has also set aside significant resources to support the CIC in its development.

### **London Borough of Sutton**

Sutton is shifting its commissioning to have a more thematic outcomes based focus in order to manage better the savings we are required to make. They will still be using their Developmental Assets approach, which was produced by their voluntary sector Compact. The Council continues to support the voluntary sector not just through its commissioning process, but also through a large Infrastructure Support and Capacity Building fund which is currently being retendered.

*The Sutton Plan* is a new model of public services for the benefit of residents, galvanised by the aim of “constructing coherent, place-based services built around residents’ needs, rather than institutional loyalties”. The plan is the result of the bringing together of the council, public sector partners, businesses and the voluntary sector.

The plan has five principles:

1. Think Sutton first – prioritise the needs of the borough rather than any single organisation throughout our work as a partnership
2. Work across sectors – we will build and maintain partnerships across all the borough sectors working together toward achieving their shared vision and objectives
3. Get involved early – tackle the causes of problems, not merely react to their symptoms. We will look beyond traditional services for ways to tackle the root causes of social problems and disaffection.
4. Build stronger self-sufficient communities – to help communities work together and in partnership with other local organisations.
5. Provide coordinated, seamless services - reduce service duplication and enable as much care and health support as possible to take place at home and in the community

The intention is that the work will be shaped, governed and delivered in partnership so that local organisations and people understand what The Sutton Plan means for them and their work.

The plan prioritised these initiatives over the next year:

1. Tackling domestic violence and abuse.
2. Early help to young families at risk of disadvantage – bringing together midwives, health workers, children’s centres, social workers and the voluntary centres to create a single point service.
3. Support for older people – requires a step-change in our health and social care integration efforts.
4. Making Sutton a more attractive place to live and work for all age groups – to address the loss to the local economy of the 20-40 year old age cohort, this is work to promote investment in the borough’s growth and development.

In addition, Sutton has Citizen Commissioners, volunteers who are involved in all stages of their commissioning decisions. They were involved in the commissioning of Age UK Sutton as the lead partner on their supporting older people work. There are also Young Commissioners, aged 12-18 representing the voice of young residents, they have been

involved in the Sutton Fairness Commission which examines issues of diversity and equality in the borough. Both groups were involved in the commissioning process for the information and advice service.

### **London Borough of Camden**

Camden Community Impacts, launched in April 2017, is a cornerstone of the council's VCS strategy; it aims to support partnership working with the VCS to help address ingrained issues and provide an opportunity to engage with partners about how to deliver local priorities. It also aims to invest in preventative and "upstream"<sup>1</sup> activity carried out by the VCS. Approximately £800k will be available per annum for four years 2017-2021.

The programme seeks to support a close partnership and co-design approach between the Council and the VCS. This will enable two of the three objectives agreed by their cabinet to be realised:

- Increase the opportunities for VCS expertise and knowledge to inform the design and delivery of preventative support so that we can improve outcomes for our residents.
- Build resilience in our communities by collaborating to make the most of the added social value which VCS brings attracting new funding into the borough.

Camden Community Impacts aligns with the Council's ambition to tackle ingrained social problems that public sector organisations struggle to overcome, known as The Camden Plan. This plan is clear that partnerships have to work differently and more collaboratively in the future. Camden recognises a new strategic relationship with the VCS is vital and they wish to use Camden Community Impacts to:

- Identify and prioritise social ingrained problems
- Address inequalities
- Learn from the benefits of a collective impact approach
- Help to develop and work towards systems change.
- Take a preventative and upstream approach through co-produced VCS activity

Workshops and 1-2-1 meetings have been held with a mix of council officers, VCS (large and national, small and local), commissioners and the relevant portfolio holders to discuss different ideas for collaborative and preventative activities, how they could organise as a partnership to deliver activities, including pros and cons of existing approaches, and what resources already exist in Camden that could be utilised and what additional resources would be needed to deliver effective activities.

Through co-design the borough partnership team is currently working with the VCS in partnership across areas linked to the following key principles:

- Learn from new ways of working – to test new approaches in light of national austerity and budget cuts.
- Lead through partnership and co-design – to increase capacity and sustainability in the VCS
- Tackling ingrained social issues
- A preventative and upstream approach to help the local community before crisis points are reached
- Bringing a closer connections to communities
- Highlighting the value of Camden's VCS

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<sup>1</sup> Policy approaches that affect large populations through regulations, increased access or economic incentives.

### **London Borough of Southwark**

The London Borough of Southwark developed a new voluntary sector strategy in 2016, its key objectives are:

- Improving outcomes for residents that reduces and prevents future demand on high cost, high demand services.
- Sustaining and building strong, cohesive communities where no one group or community is left behind.

The strategy recommended that a new cross-sector strategic approach to commissioning was put in place by the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) working together with the VCS who are responsible for the implementation of the framework.

A cross sector group met to identify ways in which commissioning could be improved. They produced a new framework which sets out the overall vision for what commissioning could achieve. The future model of commissioning would be outcomes focussed, without a reliance on a detailed specification of what services are to be delivered. Part of the framework is illustrated below:

**To build and sustain strong, cohesive communities where no one group or community is left behind.**

<b>Safer communities</b>	<b>Healthier communities</b>	<b>Engaged communities</b>	<b>Greener communities</b>	<b>Vibrant communities</b>
Residents have an improved understanding of their rights and responsibilities resulting in greater community ownership	Residents have improved access to community services	Residents are given more opportunities to provide feedback that improves services	Residents are more able and willing to access community spaces especially local green spaces	More young people feel ready to engage with their education
Residents feel safer where they live, work or socialise and know where to get support	Residents and their families and carers are fully involved in planning their care and feel services are provided in a holistic way	Residents have increased opportunities and support to volunteer	Residents and organisations are more able to look after designated green spaces	More young people feel ready for work, to train or able to start and grow their own business

This outcomes framework will act as a single commissioning plan for the council and CCG providing a framework “where impact can be measured by the contribution made by the VCS to establish and sustain strong and flourishing communities”. To deliver this approach of commissioning for outcomes, commissioners will work with local people and providers “to maximise the value from public money across the social environmental and economic bottom line”.

Southwark Council produces a voluntary sector funding database annually to detail the voluntary, community and faith organisations that receive funding to provide a range of services. This information has been formatted to the 360 Giving standard and is checked against the Commissioning Forward Plan to create a complete picture of council spend on the VCS.

Recognising the contribution made by the VCS not just as a service provider but as a strategic partner is essential to taking a whole systems approach to commissioning. The aim of co-producing services as part of the commissioning cycle is to maximise the sharing of knowledge and the opportunities offered by effective partnerships. This means that there will be less emphasis on the more target driven quantitative approach to delivering outcomes which is a feature of a client / provider split.<sup>2</sup> The Outcomes Framework is reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and to review any gaps and make amendments.

#### **Infrastructure/ civil society support:**

Southwark commissions Community Southwark to be the umbrella organisation for the VCS in the borough. This organisation acts as the voice for the sector and provides support services, including support for volunteering and social action. Within the council, there is recognition at senior political and officer level of the value of an infrastructure/ umbrella body and provides core funding in the form of a contract and service specification.

Community Southwark’s ultimate mission is to support the VCS to be better placed to deliver outcomes and impact for communities. The organisation is clearly based in the community:

- providing effective leadership, good governance, adequate resources, maintaining the trust of the VCS, evidencing impact, and providing effective interface and engagement structure between VCS and communities and public bodies.
- contributing to delivery of key shared objectives - supporting delivery of statutory functions by public bodies – e.g. safeguarding.
- Contributing to local economy in capacity building the VCS as an employer and provider of pathways to work and volunteering opportunities.

### **London Borough of Lambeth**

<sup>2</sup> New commissioning Model and Common Outcomes Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector , LB Southwark, 31 October 2017.

<http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s71623/Report%20New%20Commissioning%20Model%20and%20Common%20Outcomes%20Framework%20for%20the%20Voluntary%20and%20Community%20Sector.pdf>

Sustainable procurement practice at Lambeth is guided by their Responsible Procurement Policy. This requires procurement officers to consider the economic, environmental and social aspects of the purchases they make and the contracts they place. As with all local authorities, Lambeth's procurement and commissioning officers must follow the Social Value Act and take it into account when undertaking procurement or commissioning projects. Lambeth has a policy of requiring all contractors pay the London Living Wage or Living Wage and providing employment opportunities for Lambeth young people as a priority.

Consultation will be particularly relevant when considering procurements for services which are delivered directly to citizens. The voluntary and community sector, along with other providers and interested groups, should be engaged from the earliest stage to help shape policies, programmes and services.

LB Lambeth is currently in the early stages of drafting a new VCS strategy that sets out a framework for the relationship between the local public sector and the VCS, after consultation with local organisations and groups in 2017. This borough does not currently fund or commission a CVS in the borough however, they are drafting a specification for VCS support.

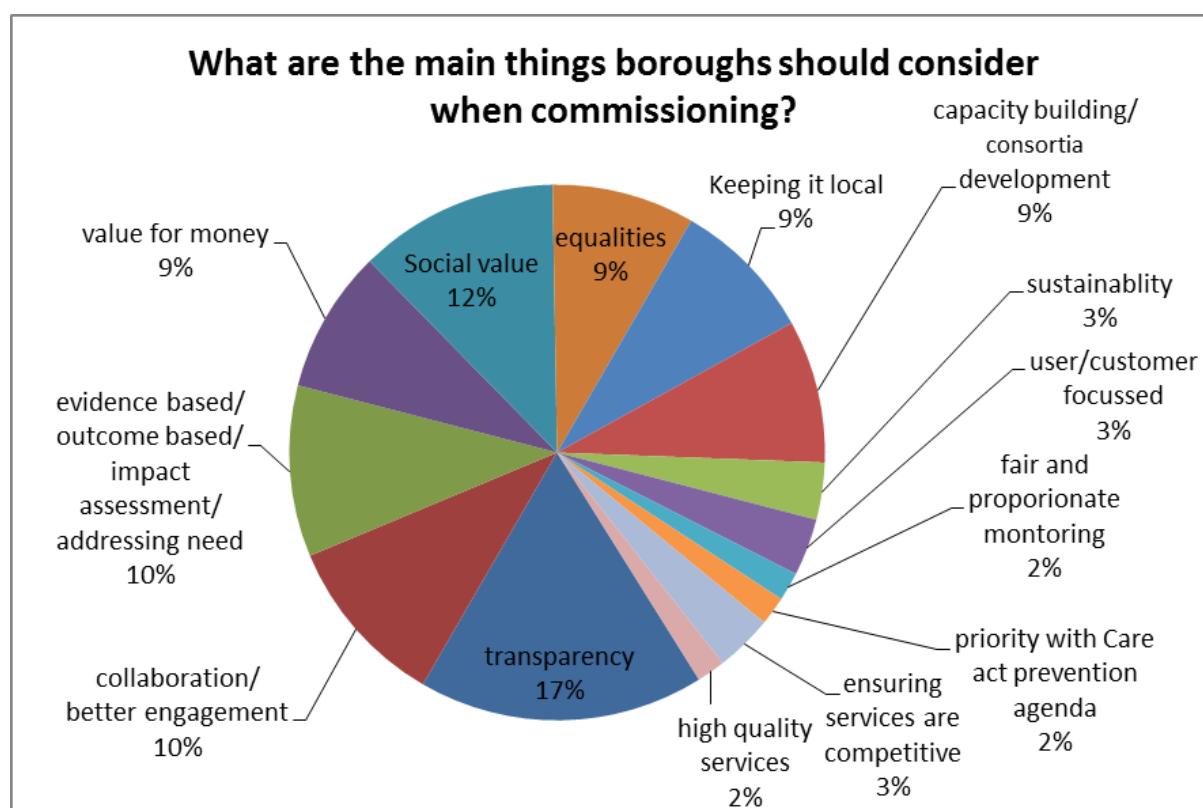
Lambeth has established an initiative 'Lambeth Funders Forum', chaired by London Funders, which periodically brings together most of the trusts and charities that are based in and/or have invested in Lambeth's community and voluntary sector projects and programmes. This is having a positive impact on how common priorities and areas of funding and investment can be better coordinated and targeted to achieve better outcomes.

These examples align with and tangibly reflect the key principles of this LTS work, as endorsed by this sub-committee and approved by the Grants Committee in November 2017:

- Robust outcomes and impact for residents will be the key focus of infrastructure support (In line with the London Councils Grants Programme)
- New arrangements will: a) strengthen infrastructure support across London; b) recognise borough identities and needs; c) be informed by local intelligence-led funding strategies
  - London local government representation (members), through membership of appropriate groups, will support and inform the governance of the Cornerstone Fund and the London Hub, providing a strong local voice and democratic legitimacy
  - The planning and development of infrastructure support will ensure that new arrangements are financially sustainable and do not become a potential cost to boroughs in the medium and long-term
  - New arrangements, in particular services delivered from the London Hub, will provide greater efficiencies and will complement and add value to local community-based services.

## **Principles for Good Commissioning**

The survey of boroughs on third sector infrastructure carried out in 2017 asked borough grants officers what they thought a set of common principles for good commissioning should include. The summary of their answers can be seen here:



In addition, borough officers also commented on the report by *The Way Ahead's* Task and Finish Group on *Consistent Commissioning and Funding*, one of their recommendations being that “a best practice standard for civil society friendly commissioning and procurement should be adopted and promoted”.

The following proposed Principles for Good Commissioning have been developed from these pieces of work, examples from borough officers of principles and practice in their own boroughs demonstrate some commonality in approach:

- Keep it Local – being people and/or place focussed, mapping and developing relationships with local organisations
- Being outcomes focussed/evidence based
- Social Value – to look beyond the price of the individual contract and look at the collective benefit to the wider community
- Value for money
- Building capacity
- Collaborative approach/ developing consortia
- Transparency

While it is recognised that many boroughs have their own principles of good commissioning, it was felt that these overarching principles could be endorsed by boroughs as an overall aspiration. These principles are also consistent with the National Audit Office's Principles of Good Commissioning.

At the LTS sub-committee meeting, Members wanted to draw out the following principles in addition:

- Local should not just mean locality, and should also mean communities for example, the LGBT community.
- The principles should include a focus on the quality of services.

The principle should have a service user focus.