

## **APPG for London: Civil Society Strategy Consultation Response**

Drawing upon its relationships with London government, the APPG for London submitted the following response to the Government's Civil Society Strategy Consultation.

The Government defines civil society as:

*'All those outside of the public sector, who share the mission of building a stronger society and improving lives, regardless of traditional sector boundaries such as charity or private and for profit or not.'*<sup>1</sup>

The consultation asks for views on the current strengths and weaknesses of the sector, and where it should be headed in the future. It also seeks ideas for government action which take into account the 'financial and legislative challenges and pressures [the Government] continues to face'.<sup>2</sup> Responses will inform a Civil Society Strategy which will be published in August 2018.

### **1. Reflecting on your own experience or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, how are partnerships across sectors improving outcomes or realising new potential?**

The APPG for London notes that London government has always had a strong relationship with civil society. Each complements each other to serve the needs of residents, and local government has had a key role in funding the voluntary sector through grants and commissioning.

In recent years, the financial climate for both local government and civil society has become more difficult. This has demanded a shift in approach; indeed, it has become more important than ever that each complements rather than replicates the work of each other, and that both work to build upon the existing strengths of communities.

One key piece of thought leadership in this area is *The Way Ahead - Civil Society at the Heart of London*, published in April 2016.<sup>3</sup> It focuses on the following key themes:

- The changing role of the state, voluntary and community sector (VCS) and funders of VCS;
- The need to support communities to co-produce shared solutions drawing on the strengths of the community (geographical or otherwise);
- The need to provide strategic leadership and the role of pan-London resourcing (with the potential to bring together sources of funding in a London pool to fund the provision of support to the VCS);

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<sup>3</sup> [https://1vfva1igmeah9lhs11aj1e1d-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SME574LondonFundersReport\\_ForWeb.pdf](https://1vfva1igmeah9lhs11aj1e1d-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SME574LondonFundersReport_ForWeb.pdf)

- That the VCS should be supported to create consistent quality services and manage the risks associated with their increased role in delivering outcomes.

London government has been working with civil society and private funders to provide the strategic leadership that *The Way Ahead* identified as necessary.

Over the last year, the London Hub has been established in order to: create stronger, more resilient communities; ensure opportunities and services to meet the needs of Londoners; enable Londoners able to influence policies at local, regional and national level, which reflect local need; and achieve improved outcomes for Londoners. Membership is wide-ranging, with representatives of government, private funders and civil society from across the capital playing their part. Key functions include:

- Data and intelligence: the GLA has set up a Datastore Redesign Group which is looking to add new sources of information relevant to London’s civil society onto their London Datastore. It is envisaged that the Hub will work closely with the GLA to identify and facilitate the feeding of data from civil society to the datastore. The plan is that borough information of the kind collected in the borough survey may also be included in this data;
- Networking: developing local, borough and London wide systems of support and peer support mechanisms and building communities of practice, to help fellow community organisations going through transition or other difficulties;
- Voice and Influence: providing a platform for the collective voice for the sector.

Meanwhile, individual London boroughs have been working closely with the VCS at the local level, to progress towards shared goals, and co-commissioning services.

#### **London Borough of Camden: Camden Community Impacts**

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’ 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 residents.
- Build resilience in Camden’s 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

#### **London Borough of Bromley: Community Interest Company**

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

## **2. Are there any [additional] factors that would enable more impactful partnerships across sectors?**

As outlined above, *The Way Ahead* report set out some of the necessary changes required to achieve more impactful partnership between sectors. This does not just mean civil society and the public sector working together more effectively. The APPG for London believes that there is also a need for civil society to do more to build up the assets that exist within communities.

*'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 ... 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.'*<sup>4</sup>

This will, in part, require self-directed changes within civil society, but local authorities also have ways in which they can directly influence the third sector.

Commissioners identify needs in their community, design services and determine the best providers, all within limited resources. They therefore have a crucial role to play. And although there are numerous experienced commissioners across London local government effectively commissioning and procuring service, there has not always been a common understanding about what 'best practice' looks like, at least with regards to civil society-friendly commissioning and procurement.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://1vfva1igmeah9lhs11aj1e1d-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SME574LondonFundersReport\\_ForWeb.pdf](https://1vfva1igmeah9lhs11aj1e1d-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SME574LondonFundersReport_ForWeb.pdf)

Borough officers, with the support of London Councils, have therefore been developing Principles for Good Commissioning. These are:

- Keep it Local – being people and 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

The APPG for London notes that another way in which local government can have an impact is via supply chains. The Social Value Act has encouraged public sector organisations to become more effective around how they use their supply chains to maximise value for the community. But an issue that is currently particular frustration for London local government is that is that they have significant involvement with small third sector organisations through their supply chains, but they are unable to transfer much of their apprenticeship levy money to those organisations.

Utilising the Apprenticeship Levy, the government should therefore increase the 10 percent limit that levy-paying employers can direct of their funds to non-levy paying employers. This cap is too low at 10 per cent and ineffective due to limiting transfers from a borough to only one employer.

If this were done, local government could target skills development across a number of suppliers and smaller organisations would greatly benefit the capability and resilience of these organisations. A borough would be able to target improvements in skills such as management and accountancy across a number of smaller partners, improving their ability to work with the community whilst maximising the potential of the levy.

**3. Reflecting on your own experience or examples in the UK or abroad, how have local people, businesses, voluntary and community organisations, and decision makers worked together successfully to break down barriers in our communities and build a common sense of shared identity, belonging and purpose**

The APPG for London notes that London local government has been at the forefront in this agenda: working with their communities to identify barriers to social integration and innovating to overcome

those problems. Some of these were set out in *Promoting Successful Social Integration in London*.<sup>5</sup> Just a couple of examples are highlighted below.

### London Borough of Hackney: Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men<sup>6</sup>

Hackney Council, Hackney CVS (HCVS) and local partner agencies have been working with young people and parents to launch an ambitious programme to improve outcomes for young black men. This responds to the fact that young black men tend to fare worse than their peers in many ways, from poorer educational results to higher offending rates. This has been a problem for many years and there have been many responses from public bodies and from the community, but they have not had the impact needed. Rather than tackle individual problems, the new programme involves local people, the voluntary and community sector and the statutory sector in shaping and delivering solutions, with young people at the heart of this.

The work is championed by Cllr Bramble, Deputy Mayor and lead Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, and steered by a multi-agency partnership that was set up in January 2015. The programme seeks to improve life chances for future generations of young men as well as co-ordinating support and opportunities for those who are 18- 25 now. There are many black boys, young black men and black families that are succeeding in Hackney and it is vitally important that this work does not stereotype or problematize black men or the black community; the focus of this programme is on harnessing the potential of successful young black men, increasing their visibility as well as tackling inequalities where they do exist. The programme sets some clear ambitions to reduce disproportionality over the next 10 years. In November 2015 partners agreed a Theory of Change setting out the assumptions for why outcomes for young black men were disproportionately worse than the wider population. Partners also identified a series of actions to consider. Since November 2015, a number of working groups were been set up to further consider evidence and finalise a set of actions which are now in place, under the following workstreams:

#### Improving Life Chances for Black Boys

- Role of schools
- Trust between parents and the statutory sector
- Family health and wellbeing

#### Empowering the community

- Community leadership
- Improving outcomes for young black men
- Young men at risk and community safety
- Mental health
- Regeneration and opportunity

#### Culture and Identity

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/leadership-devolution-and-democracy/social-integration/promoting-successful-social>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/leadership-devolution-and-democracy/social-integration/promoting-successful-social>

- Valuing heritage and celebrating success
- Behaviour, lifestyles, culture and identity

#### Headline summary of key achievements

- A programme led by head teachers has been established to address inequalities in exclusions, behaviour and achievement – recognising the impact that the individual actions of a school can have on the wider community.
- All members of the partnership have agreed to participate in a challenging programme of culture change.
- The local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have set up a Reach and Resilience Programme as part of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service to address specific community issues and community solutions, focusing in year one on black communities.
- East London Foundation Trust are co-delivering workshops with HCVS with young black men to test different ways of supporting mental wellbeing based on a strengths based approach.
- Public Health have committed to run Mental Health First Aid training targeted at frontline workers to help your black men receive earlier help.
- HCVS has continued to run a holistic personalised programme aimed at getting 18-24 year old black men into work, with 40 per cent of young black men gaining employment.
- HCVS have continued to engage young people as inspirational leaders and developed a cohort of community organisations committed to the programme, particularly in relation to YBM parental engagement and support.

This is a wide ranging programme involving a range of partners. It is overseen by the Policy and Partnerships team at the council who undertake ongoing planning and programme management, underpinned by six weekly meetings with key officers and the Cabinet lead and six monthly partnership meetings. University of East London were engaged to offer critical challenge to partners whilst they were developing the theory of change in 2015. Their feedback directly influenced the final theory of change. They have also developed an evaluation framework which will be used to assess robustness of design and impact.

#### London Borough of Lewisham: Community Leadership and Empowerment and Syrian Refugee Resettlement<sup>7</sup>

One aim of Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020 is to have citizens who are 'Empowered and Responsible'. This means that people are actively involved in their local area and contributing to supportive communities, with opportunities for volunteerism and philanthropy to

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/leadership-devolution-and-democracy/social-integration/promoting-successful-social>

empower citizens to be involved in their local area and responsive to the needs of those who live there. The two government refugee resettlement schemes – the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme (SVPR) and the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme (VCR) - were used as a way to promote volunteering and the activity of voluntary and community organisations. The resettlement of the refugee families also championed diversity and the contributions of different communities.

As a result of the council's proactive approach, the council's corporate policy of developing opportunities for the active participation and engagement of people in the life of the community ('Community Leadership and Empowerment') has been strengthened. The arrival of families has inspired volunteerism and philanthropy in various community groups and individuals ranging from donation of goods and furniture, through to intensive ESOL lessons, and invitations to community choirs and offers of music lessons.

### **Challenges**

#### **1. Housing**

In order to resettle families, appropriate housing was required. Lewisham already had a considerable waiting list for social housing, and a severe shortage of suitable self-contained available properties at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate on the private rented sector marketplace .

#### **2. Language**

English language acquisition would also prove a priority, and although various ESOL classes run by community groups and Adult Learning Lewisham existed in the borough, the potential of accessing these were limited by physical mobility issues of some of the vulnerable persons resettled.

#### **3. Additional support**

The SVPR and VCR programmes both include specific financial restrictions and guidelines. Government guidelines clearly lay out that Home Office funding provided may not be used on 'luxury' goods for the families, these include televisions and computers which might otherwise help with English language acquisition.

### **Solutions**

#### **1. Housing**

A communications plan was devised to encourage local Lewisham residents to rent out properties to refugee families that would otherwise be unavailable on the private rented sector. This included an event co-hosted by the Lewisham branch of Citizens UK, which included participation from a local school who had been learning about migration.

#### **2. Language**

The Lewisham branch of Citizens UK have been in regular contact with both Lewisham Council and



the charity SHP (Single Homeless Project) caseworkers in order to help provide support with language acquisition. After discussion with the council, they held a pre-arrival fundraising drive and set up a 'welcome committee' including ESOL tutors.

### **3. Additional support**

The Council sought advice from other local authorities participating in the scheme. Many had tried to directly coordinate donations and ended up with many unsuitable items and limited storage space.

To this end, in order to encourage and monitor donation of goods and services, the specification used in the Lewisham tender to commission caseworkers specifically included wording on this. Weight was given to 'Partnership Working and Community Involvement' and those applying for the tender were asked to describe how they would work closely with local services, including Local Authority teams and third sector organisations, to deliver the service specified.

The wording explicitly stated: *'There are likely to be range of external interested parties, including individual members of the public, who may wish to volunteer, donate or in some way provide support or resources. Outline how you will use this support to add value to the service delivered for service users. Please draw reference on your previous experience in developing these partnerships.'*

## **Outcomes**

### **1. Housing**

All families have been resettled in properties offered at the Local Housing Allowance rate, with the majority of the families resettled in community-offered properties. One large property was offered by the Diocese of Southwark that was able to hold two families i.e. grandparents, as well as their parents and children. A property of this size would have been very difficult to find in the private rented sector.

Another unexpected advantage of community-offered properties has been that landlords have been willing to provide goods free of charge that the Council is unable to due to funding restrictions: one private landlord gave the family a laptop for example, another liaised with the family via commissioned caseworkers (from the charity SHP) for the first few weeks after their arrival to find out whether they needed anything to help them settle in and buying small items that they might like, from extra seating to a fruit bowl. These 'community landlords' have helped with integration aside from mere practicalities. One landlord has been helping the family with the garden, teaching them about English vegetation and climate, and another has introduced them to the neighbours including those with children of a similar age.

### **2. Language**

The Lewisham branch of Citizens UK have funded an ESOL tutor who visits several families – especially those with ill or elderly members – to provide ESOL classes directly in their homes, 'bridging' their immediate need for fast language acquisition until they are able to access alternative provision. This has been especially useful for elderly residents who have been reluctant or physically

unable to join ESOL classes.

An unexpected outcome of this has been that one of these families had a secondary-aged child who did not settle into school-life well, constantly asking the teacher to phone home, etc. As a result, the school agreed to have the Citizens UK tutor join the student for a few weeks' sessions at school in order to help him access the curriculum and act as a means of integration support. The Council was able to cover the cost for these hours from the Educational funding provided by the Home Office directly, and the process was far quicker and more convenient than seeking additional help might have been otherwise. Since the student had already built a relationship of trust with the tutor, his nervous behaviour in school quickly improved as a result.

### 3. Additional support

Since Lewisham Council had specifically asked the service provider SHP to outline how they agreed to work with the community, they themselves proactively did research on local community groups who worked with refugee groups and migrant communities, and reached out to them to find out how they might be able to work together to support the integration of the resettled refugee families, drawing up lists of existing local classes and workshops which they were able to signpost families to, for example women's groups. The support provider also set up a specific email account to handle all enquiries and offers of help from the community, and the Council was able to signpost potential volunteers directly to them. This has worked very well and SHP have coordinated donations of furniture in accordance with the families' needs.

With encouragement from a local councillor, 10 local Halal restaurants also agreed to offer the families a free 'welcome' meal, and the SHP caseworkers were able to liaise with the restaurant owners to make sure these offers were taken up. SHP also used these meals as a way for resettled families to come together in a safe and informal space and meet other. One such restaurant, run by a Syrian chef, was featured in local press.

The GLA's approach to social integration includes a focus upon building common ground through shared experiences.<sup>8</sup>

*'Real social integration is about how people connect with others. This ranges from bonds with close family and friends, to everyday interactions in neighbourhoods and workplaces. In a busy urban environment, it can be difficult for people to find time to meet others from different backgrounds. It would be unrealistic to expect everyone to do so. Likewise, it is not the Mayor's role to tell Londoners who to be friends with. Instead, the Mayor will focus on creating an environment where Londoners find it easy and beneficial to have positive and regular contact with those around them. This includes experiences which bring different groups of Londoners together. Through this, Londoners will develop strong, meaningful relationships as well as shared identities.'*

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final\\_social\\_integration\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final_social_integration_strategy.pdf)

*'The Mayor will therefore support communities to run activities and projects that can be taken up across the city. He will work with partners to help create the right conditions for people from different backgrounds to come together and have positive interactions. In doing so, the Mayor hopes others will follow suit, considering how to promote and support social integration in all they do.'*

For instance: the Mayor is launching the London family to build commonalty and friendships across divides around the shared experience of being a new parent.

#### Greater London Authority (GLA): The London Family Fund<sup>9</sup>

The London Family Fund will support innovative projects that help diverse families build relationships, extend their social networks and act together. It will promote shared experiences for families and prevent lonely experiences of parenthood.

The fund will:

- Support projects working with hundreds of London's families to increase social integration;
- Generate major changes for these families including: more diverse social networks, less parental isolation, reduced loneliness and improved child wellbeing outcomes;
- Share and promote best practice in the family services and early years sectors.

The Mayor will look for projects that are diverse and bottom-up. City Hall will co-design the criteria for the fund with parents and carers, drawing on their experiences and ideas. Evidence and consultation suggests there is scope to encourage a range of innovations across the city. This will allow the Mayor to support families and providers best placed but under-resourced to tackle specific social integration issues in their areas.

Bids will be encouraged from parents, local community groups, early years providers, family services and others who want to promote greater social integration among parents and families.

#### **4. Reflecting on your own experience or examples you are aware of in the UK or abroad, how have local public services successfully responded to the needs of communities?**

Local government is responsible for a whole range of vital services for people and businesses in their local areas. Among these functions are social care, schools, housing and planning and waste collection, licensing, business support, registrar services and pest control. In addition to carrying out these duties, and creating democratic accountability via elected councillors, that APPG for London notes that some councils have developed additional approaches to ensure their work responds as effectively as possible to the needs of communities.

Certain initiatives aim to build an in-depth understanding of specific problems, and deliver a more intelligent response. For instance, effective domestic abuse services will often entail: developing co-

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final\\_social\\_integration\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final_social_integration_strategy.pdf)

ordinated community responses through multi-agency approaches (including VCS and other sectors); engaging with VCS partners on strategic and operational level; entering into projects with GPs and other agents of the state; and co-locating specialist independent domestic violence advisors in council services such as Children Social Care, Housing to embed specialist support and expertise for front-line staff.

#### London Borough of Southwark: Domestic Abuse Strategy 2015-20<sup>10</sup>

In the past, sporadic and uncoordinated commissioning by separate council departments in Southwark had meant that there were varying domestic abuse services within the borough which were not fully integrated and used differing service standards. There was no clear picture of the range of provision and no shared agreement of the desired outcomes Southwark wanted its commissioned services to deliver. Services also focused exclusively on managing risk of harm.

Traditional commissioning models had often focused on providers' compliance with procedures, activity and completion of inputs. The focus was usually on provider activity i.e. how many clients were seen, how many assessed, how many workshops held etc.; however, this did not guarantee that desired outcomes for the service users were achieved or provide a real sense of how the service had a positive impact on the lives of the service users.

Borough officers undertook a consultation exercise with survivors, practitioners and colleagues in different departments to clarify what outcomes they wanted DA services in Southwark to deliver. This exercise identified a need to look beyond managing risk in order to truly help survivors of DA and change the cultural norms, myths, perceptions and behaviours which perpetuate it.

Taking an outcomes-focused and collaborative approach allowed providers to be innovative in their bids, and create a real and sustainable change in attitudes at a community level. This work was supported by the domestic abuse charity Solace.

The end result is the most comprehensive and innovative domestic abuse service offer that Southwark Council has ever had. And there are a number of separate, complementary projects working with and alongside Southwark's domestic abuse service. This includes domestic abuse awareness training for people in the community. This training will help people recognise members of their community experiencing or perpetrating abuse, give the right advice and signpost to specialist services for those who disclose experiencing or perpetrating abuse and challenge cultural norms in their communities which may condone abusive behaviours.

Other approaches seek to build up assets and cooperative practices within the community which can be drawn upon on an ongoing basis.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/crime-and-public-protection/sexual-and-domestic-violence-including-vawg/case-studie-5>

### London Borough of Newham: Community Neighbourhoods<sup>11</sup>

Community Neighbourhoods are at the centre of Newham’s approach to building an active and connected community, where people from all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging and stewardship for their neighbourhood, turn to each other for support, and come together to bring about changes and improvements in their local area.

The council has created eight Community Neighbourhoods. Lead Councillors in each neighbourhood play an important role, providing local leadership to shape and deliver local priorities. The council’s 10 libraries and eight community centres are also run through this model with a dedicated team of officers in each neighbourhood. By taking on an enabling and facilitating role, the neighbourhood teams are pioneering a new way of getting people active, building networks, engaging with partners and community groups, and harnessing the power of the community.

Key activities include:

- **Community events:** the neighbourhood teams run, host, and support residents to develop events and initiatives in their neighbourhood – with over 500 events on average now held every week. Getting people involved in local groups, clubs and projects helps them meet new people and build a real community spirit.
- **Volunteering:** Newham’s Community Builders initiative is recruiting and training local volunteers as community ambassadors, engaging directly with their local neighbourhood by facilitating events, starting initiatives and advocating for their local community. A key aim of the initiative is to promote people’s participation and inclusion in their community by building trust, resourcefulness, respect and connectedness. In 2016/17 there were more than 1000 active volunteers.
- **Community activity:** encouraging people to take responsibility and get involved in improving their local area. With leadership from local councillors, activities have ranged from hosting community clean up days to fundraising events for Syrian refugees, where people from all backgrounds come together to make a difference in their area.

#### 5. Are there any [additional] changes that would enable local public services to respond further to the needs of communities?

Despite the resilience of local government in a challenging financial context, the APPG for London believes that ongoing cuts to funding are having a negative impact upon both council-run services and their VCS sector partners’ ability to meet to the need of local communities. Local government has faced a disproportionate level of austerity compared to other parts of the public sector. The final 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed real term cuts to the Settlement Funding

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/leadership-devolution-and-democracy/social-integration/promoting-successful-social>

Assessment (SFA) of 12% over the next two years, on top of a cumulative cut to core funding of 57% in real terms between 2010-11 and 2017-18. Over the decade to 2019-20, core funding from central government will have fallen by 63% in real terms.

The impact of this upon frontline services creates a particularly challenging environment for prevention and early intervention work. It is expected that funding for such work will fall by 70% in the decade 2010-2020. This undermines both local government and civil society's capacity to respond positively to the needs of communities, stores up problems for the future, and means that local government and civil society become increasingly reactive to crises as they emerge.