



# **THE WAY AHEAD**

## **Civil Society at the Heart of London**

### **Executive Summary**

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

**The full report is available at [tinyurl.com/RevOfCivSocSuppt](http://tinyurl.com/RevOfCivSocSuppt)**

## Definitions

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

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

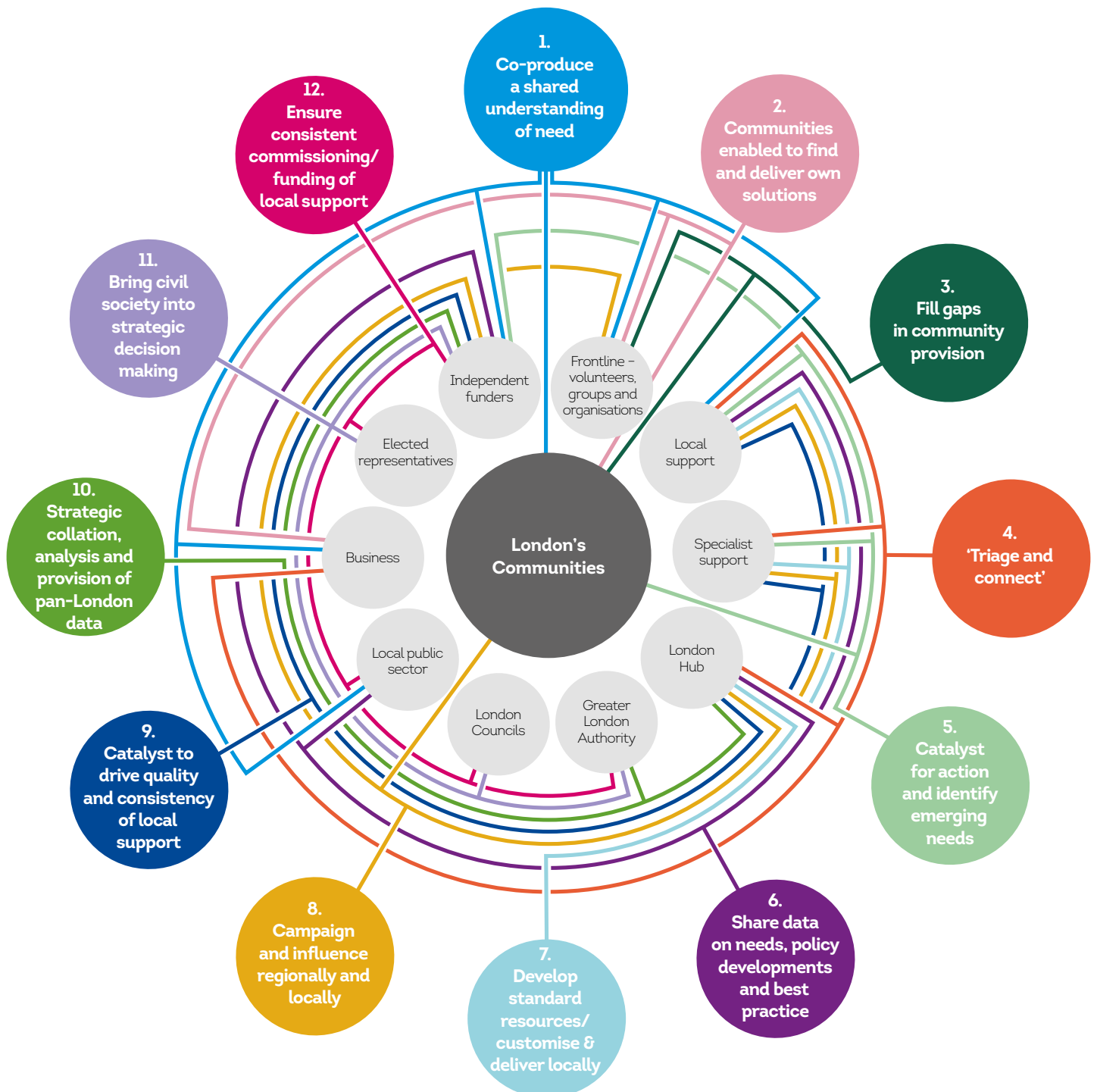
*“Co-production is where Londoners work with those in power, and each other, in a way in which all voices are heard equally in developing a shared understanding of need and in crafting solutions to make London a better place.”*
- This report uses the term “local public sector” to encompass local authorities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

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Key proposals

### Proposed vision and system

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



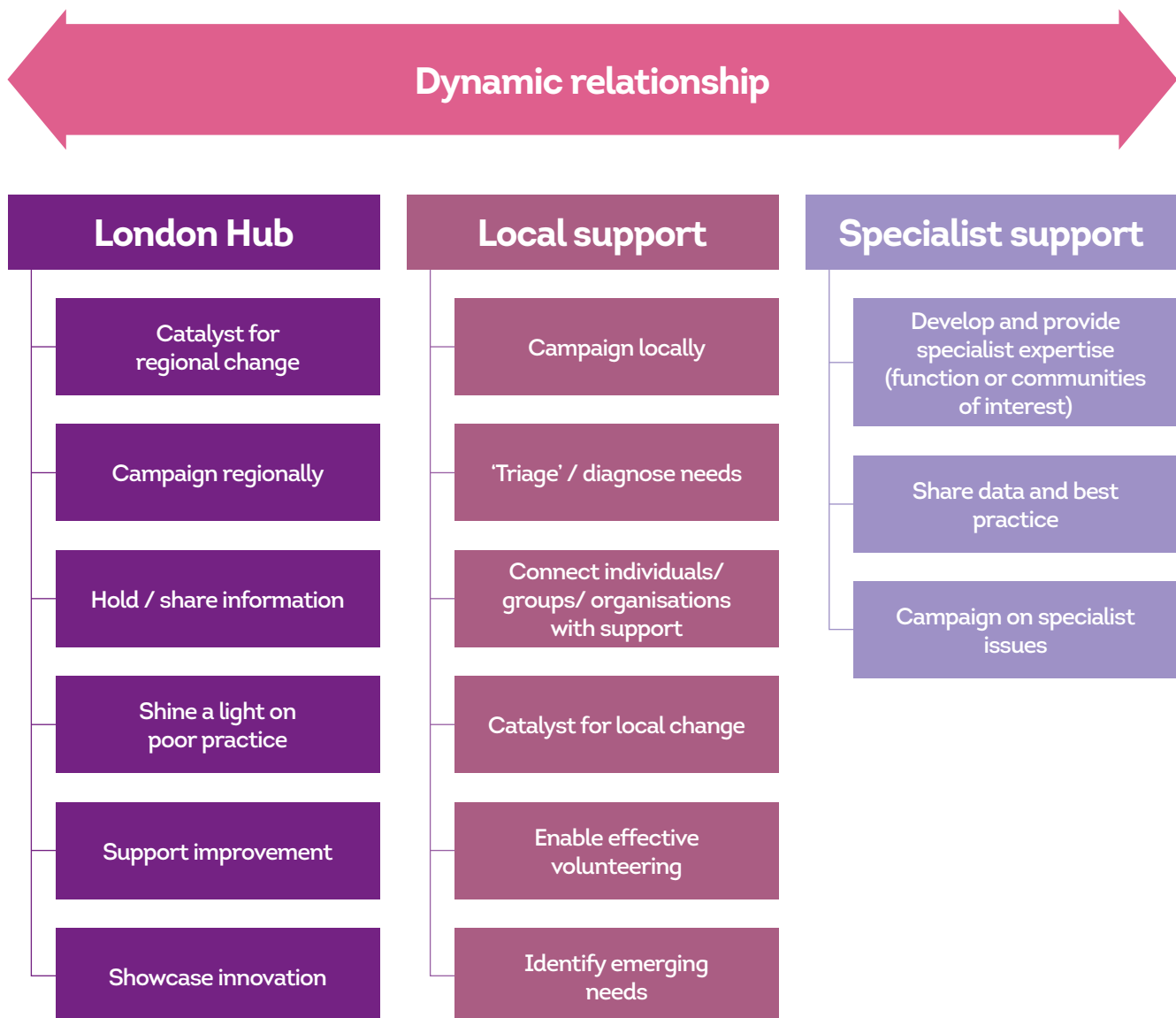
## Key proposals

### Proposed vision and system

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

- 1** A shared understanding of need should be co-produced, with communities driving this process, and with the involvement of a range of other players.
- 2** Communities should be enabled to find and deliver their own solutions where possible.
- 3** Frontline volunteers, groups and organisations' role would be to fill gaps in provision which communities can't or don't want to provide for themselves.
- 4** Civil society support would provide a "triage and connect" function to diagnose the issues faced by frontline volunteers, groups and organisations and match them to the right support. Support could be from a range of sources within and beyond civil society.
- 5** Communities, civil society support and funders should act as catalysts for action and also identify emerging needs.
- 6** Civil society support, independent funders and the local public sector should share data gleaned through co-producing a shared understanding of need, and information on policy developments and best practice.
- 7** A London Hub, working with specialist support, should develop standardized resources where possible, which can be customized and delivered locally. The London Hub could be made up of a network of organisations or be a formally constituted body.
- 8** Frontline volunteers, groups and organisations, civil society support and independent funders should campaign and influence locally and regionally.
- 9** Civil society support and independent funders should act as catalysts to drive improvements in quality, based on peer support and challenge.
- 10** The GLA should collate, analyse and provide data on civil society and communities' needs.
- 11** The GLA, elected representatives, London Councils and independent funders should bring civil society into strategic planning and decision making about the future of London.
- 12** London Councils, the GLA, elected representatives, independent funders and the local public sector should work together to ensure consistent commissioning and funding of civil society support.

From this proposed system, a clear set of roles emerge for the London Hub, local support and specialist support. Most importantly there needs to be an active relationship between all segments of civil society support, for example through sharing data, best practice, policy developments and intelligence.



## Bases of proposed vision and system

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

### Foundations for change

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

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

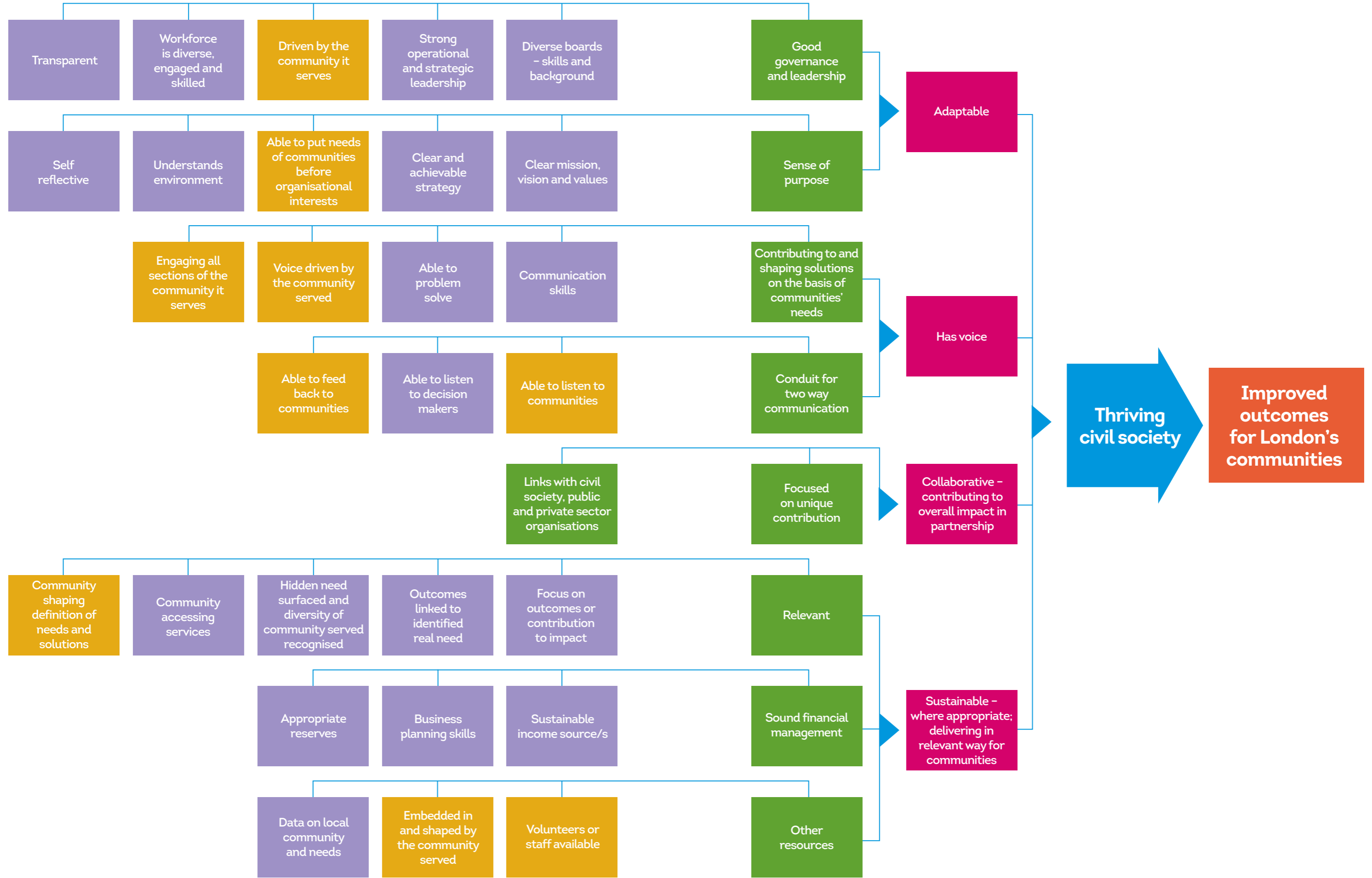
### Theory of change

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

The Review Team developed a detailed theory of change in the diagram overleaf.

- The pink boxes represent features required of civil society as a whole
- The green boxes represent outcomes at an individual organisational level required for a thriving civil society
- The purple boxes represent the components required to achieve each organisational level outcome
- The yellow boxes show how communities are involved







The theory of change is built on the belief that the involvement of communities will lead to better outcomes, not only for communities themselves, but also for civil society. This is described in the diagram below.



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



The Review Team also made a series of assumptions about the context in which civil society is working. These assumptions are described in the diagram below.



## Principles

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

- 1 Pragmatic co-production, in which communities have an equal voice in developing a shared understanding of need and in crafting solutions, with an open recognition of the relevant constraints

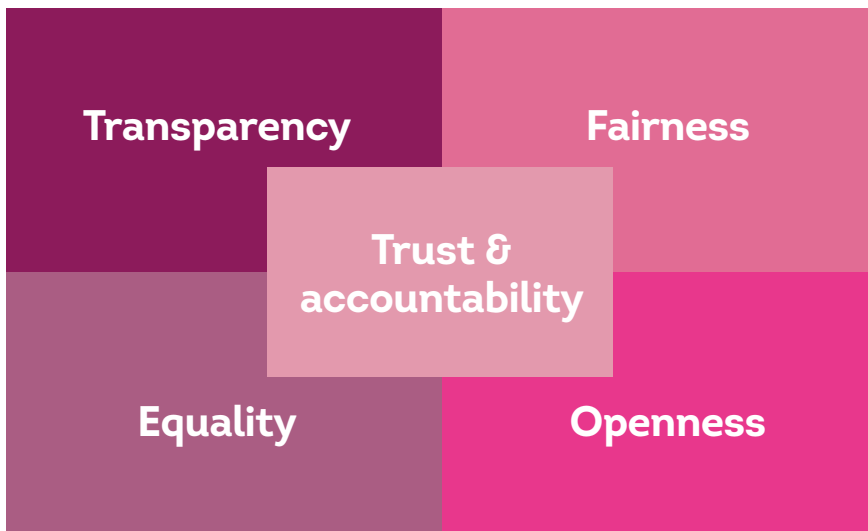


- 2 Building community strength and self-reliance should be the aim of civil society, with frontline volunteers, groups and organisations filling gaps that communities can't or don't want to fill themselves



**3** The following values should underpin civil society: transparency, fairness, equality, openness, trust and accountability

**4** The Review's theory of change should underpin the new vision and system for civil society



## Context for this report

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

## Recommendations

### **Making the transition to the proposed system**

Given the scale of change proposed, the Review Team recognises that there will need to be a gradual process of transition to the recommended vision and system. The following is a summary of the key recommendations related to transitioning to the new system, and who we believe should take the lead in initiating action. Details are available in Chapter 8 of the full report.

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

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

### Immediate steps

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

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

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

## Reference Group

**Sufina Ahmad**, Big Lottery Fund

**James Banks**, Greater London Volunteering

**Geraldine Blake**, Community Links

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

**Jenny Field**, City Bridge Trust

**Andy Gregg**, Race on the Agenda

**John Griffiths**, Rocket Science

**Carolyn Housman**, Heart of the City

**Sharon Long**, Children England and  
Partnership for Young London

**Andy Matheson**, London Borough of Southwark

**Eithne Rynne**, London Voluntary Service Council

**David Warner**, London Funders

## Project Team

**Srabani Sen OBE**, Programme Director

**Hilary Emery**, Research Expert

**Brian Lamb OBE**, Campaigning Expert

**Benet Middleton**, Impact Expert

**Huw Morris**, Researcher

**Laura Willoughby MBE**, London Expert

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



# The Way Ahead Civil Society at the Heart of London Executive Summary

April 2016



## GREATER LONDON VOLUNTEERING

Srabani Sen OBE & Associates



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

