



**The Way Ahead
Change Plan
2017-2019**

<http://thewayahead.london/>

Members of the Way Ahead Systems Change Group

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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)

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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. INTRODUCTION

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 2016-17, 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 examining how Way Ahead approaches could be used 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 Way Ahead Change Plan

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

- Commitments made by stakeholders during 2016-17
- Recommendations made by the Task and Finish Theme Group reports which operated from November 2016-March 2017.
- Discussions of the Systems Change Group at regular meetings and an away day in April 2017.
- Two large stakeholder engagement events in November 2016 and June 2017.

We have attempted to make the Change Plan simple and action focused, building on the original Way Ahead Vision, 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:

- ASSETS & RESOURCES
- INSIGHT
- WORKING TOGETHER
- 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.

What next

To continue to drive forward making the Way Ahead vision a reality, the Systems Change Group will continue to meet for 24 months. Membership will be refreshed in September 2017 to ensure that there is ownership and engagement from across all stakeholder groups, with representation from equalities groups to ensure the equalities impact framework for The Way Ahead lives through the work we do.

During the lifetime of this Change Plan, the Systems Change Group will regularly seek wider engagement through networks, events and online forums.

2. THE CHANGE PLAN

ASSETS & RESOURCES

WAY AHEAD VISION

The Way Ahead Vision (April 2016) is built on foundations that include: that **empowering communities should be at the heart of civil society**, that **a shared understanding of need should co-produced**, with communities driving this process, and that civil society support provides a **“triage and connect” function** to diagnose the issues faced by frontline volunteers, groups and organisations and match them to the right support. Two Task Group reports on **Co-production** and **Triage and Connect** set out recommendations for action.

NOW

- The process of developing the Way Ahead vision and this Change Plan has opened up a new narrative about **the value of civil society in London**, a recognition of the role of volunteers and frontline groups in civil society, and how this contributes to better solutions for Londoners.
- The Way Ahead Systems Change Group is **adopting the principles proposed by the Equalities Group** (see Appendix A) to ensure that our work is accessible, inclusive, responds to the needs of Londoners and contributes to tackling inequalities.
- **#OurWayAhead** is an emerging network involving volunteers, civil society support organisations and grassroots organisations, aiming to build voice, agency and grassroots infrastructure and contribute to a wider movement that is democratic, sustainable and supportive of each other. The Systems change group and change plan need to connect to this network and work with them.
- A number of Local Authorities are seeking to apply the Way Ahead to emerging strategies for civil society building on experiences of co-production.

SOON

- **Embedding a shared approach to and understanding of 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 to 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.
- **Improving support available to frontline civil society** – the new 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, whilst recognising that one size does not fit all. Face to face support and local relationships are essential for volunteers and groups and can be underpinned by appropriate and standardized online diagnostic (“triage”) tools which will be piloted for use by a range of support providers.

LATER

- **Demonstrate the value of a system that supports grass roots groups to co-design and co-deliver strategies with public institutions.** The GLA and NHS London will seek to identifying where, when, & how co-production can be applied and share the learning generated.

INSIGHT

WAY AHEAD VISION

A key element of the Way Ahead Vision is that civil society support, independent funders and the public sector should share data gleaned through co-producing a shared understanding of need, and information on policy developments and best practice, and that the GLA should support with the collation, analysis and provision of data on civil society and communities' needs. The Task Group report on **Data-Sharing** sets out detailed proposals for how this could be delivered.

NOW

- London Councils, City Bridge Trust, and the Healthy London Partnership are all carrying out **data analysis exercises** to understand better how civil society organisations and support across London at all levels are funded, to inform future commissioning plans. This builds on research undertaken by LVSC, GLV and other specialist support organisations, and will be extended to cover equalities organisations – both support and frontline. We are seeking to make all of this data available, and considering how it can be best kept updated.
- The CVS Directors Network 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.
- 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.

SOON

- The London Hub will include a stream of work on real time intelligence, and have a **dedicated 'Intelligence Co-ordinator'**. 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.

LATER

- 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.
- 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.

WORKING TOGETHER

THE WAY AHEAD VISION

The Way Ahead report identifies that civil society has a vital role to play in campaigning and influencing that the GLA, elected representatives, London Councils and independent funders should bring civil society into strategic planning and decision making about the future of London. The Task Group Report on **Campaigning and Influence** offers a framework for action.

NOW

- GLV and LVSC 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. Engagement and involvement with the development of this first version of the **GLA's Civil Society Strategy** will take place in the autumn.
- London Councils will 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, alongside which CVS Directors will model **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 support the collective voice of communities and smaller organisations. This builds on existing examples of effective **working together locally**, and will be further championed through the Way Ahead.

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 London Hub is committed to taking a leadership role in catalysing campaigning and voice work, **mediating conversations between citizens, the public sector and civil society**. The GLA will publish a schedule of consultations and strategies, enabling civil society to **coalesce around key areas for engagement**. CVS Directors, *with input from local elected representatives*, 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.

INVESTMENT/MONEY PLUS

WAY AHEAD VISION

The Way Ahead report states that 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. The Task Group Report on **Consistent Commissioning and Funding** sets out how this can be achieved.

NOW

- **London-wide investment in civil society support** – the data analysis 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**, with first grants active from April 2018, and will act as an exemplar of the Way Ahead funding approach to civil society support. Cornerstone Fund partners will also identify how other existing funds that support co-production, data sharing, voice and campaigning can be most effectively aligned.
- Building on their research into existing practice, London Councils are developing and testing a set of **shared principles for commissioning civil society support**.
- 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**.

IMPACT

WAY AHEAD VISION

The Way Ahead report (April 2016) identified that the end goal of redesigning the system of civil society support must be improved outcomes for Londoners. The diagram below shows the outcomes that can be expected.



The Way Ahead report set out a detailed Theory of Change showing the activities that will deliver the desired outcomes. This is shown at Appendix B.

SOON

- The new London Hub will establish a **measurement framework** for its work **based on the Way Ahead theory of change**. This will be used to measure the Hub's own impact, and the learning from this will be shared to help shape a common reporting framework that can be used across all civil society support organisations.

LATER

- Drawing on the data generated about civil society and about outcomes for Londoners (see section on INSIGHT), stakeholders will be able to demonstrate **the connection between a thriving civil society and better outcomes for Londoners**. Outcomes may include reduced inequalities, increased resilience, better mental health, greater sense of belonging, better ability to seize opportunities. This may also result in savings to public budgets.

3. NEXT STEPS

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. We will review and refresh the membership of this group, including representatives from:

- Frontline civil society: volunteers, grassroots groups and local organisations
- 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

Each of the Systems Change Group members undertakes to champion the Way Ahead within its own stakeholder constituency, ensure there is active communication through its own networks, and support its stakeholders to make progress as set out in this Change Plan.

The Systems Change Group and all stakeholders involved in driving forward the Change Plan need and work hard to engage and involve, listen and explain, ensuring the new system is as transparent and easy to navigate as possible.

It is our intention to put in place an evaluation and learning strategy, including equalities impact assessment, which will help all parts of the system to reflect and learn, and will provide lessons to share beyond London.

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.

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Appendix A: EQUALITIES PRINCIPLES FRAMEWORK (June v2)

- 1. Principle: The Way Ahead (TWA) commits to ensure all involvement and representation in its work reflects London's diverse communities including excluded / discriminated against communities.**

Indicators include: Effective and evidenced engagement of a diverse mix of equalities & excluded community organisations involved across all TWA work

- 2. Principle: TWA work is accessible and inclusive and enables excluded / discriminated against communities and our organisations to actively take part in TWA.**

Indicators include:

- a) Clear protocols about translation of TWA information into accessible formats & community languages and evidence of use
- b) Communication support including British Sign Language Interpreters will be available on request
- c) Childcare costs met
- d) Financially support given to excluded community organisations run by volunteers to take part in TWA
- e) TWA uses alternative types of engagement such as unconferences, WhatsApp etc to engage with underrepresented groups including particularly young people.
- f) Inclusion of the above costs are budgeted for in TWA expenditure budgets.

- 3. Principle: TWA work must be needs led, reflecting the priorities of our communities and championing the value our communities bring to London.**

Indicators include:

- a) TWA has in-depth understanding of the needs and issues of London's communities, including excluded and discriminated against communities and can show how this knowledge and data is used to shape and prioritise its work
- b) Tackling inequality is embedded in all TWA work and processes both formally and informally and can be evidenced through use of Equality impact questions at the beginning and end of any TWA process, use of a simple EIA tool; evaluation of TWA work to assess impact on inequalities
- c) The value and knowledge of our communities is captured, evidenced & used by TWA in its work

d) Data and evidence of the value our communities and our organisations bring to London is captured and shared.

4. Principle: Nothing About Us Without Us – TWA will co-produce its work with stakeholders including actively supporting the involvement of excluded / discriminated communities and our organisations

Indicators include:

- a) diverse and representative mix of organisations involved in TWA;
- b) TWA pro-actively reaches out to engage communities and a variety of different ways of engaging have taken place
- c) Excluded communities / discriminated communities and our organisations are actively resourced to take part in TWA co-production work

Appendix B: WAY AHEAD THEORY OF CHANGE

