

Key Principles for Partnership Working

1. Commitment to Accessibility and Equalities

- 1.1. **Considering the needs of seldom-heard groups.** This should be an integral part of planning public service provision at every stage and across all work areas.
- 1.2. **Sufficient timescales for involving and consulting the sector.** The Community Engagement Framework and Compact suggest a minimum of 3 months to consult with the sector and local communities/residents. Include consideration for key religious dates and school holidays, for example.
- 1.3. **Digital Inclusion:** Remember that not everybody has access to the internet, a phone, printer or computer.

2. Intelligent Planning of Resources

- 2.1. **A mixed economy of grants (including micro-grants) and commissioned contracts.** More than one approach is needed for the diversity of work happening in the sector. Proportionality of processes for applying and reporting, a flexible approach, and protected pots enable access for smaller groups and space for groups to deliver and be creative.
- 2.2. **Decisions about public sector resource allocation to be based on evidence of impact and outcomes.** We encourage building on existing assets in communities rather than a top-down approach. Budget reductions should be based on priorities, impact and value for money. In-house services should not be protected at the expense of those provided externally. Commissioning processes should incorporate appropriate weighting for social value and sufficient resource for developing partnerships.
- 2.3. **Sufficient resources allocated for engaging with the sector and its service users.** Attending meetings and events, responding to requests for information, and consulting with service users can be time consuming; it is important to consider how this will be paid for.

3. Cross-sector Awareness

- 3.1. **Recognition of the strengths and diversity of the sector.** The sector has a lot to offer: expertise, closeness to communities, local knowledge, ability to engage with less often heard communities, the ability to innovate and cost-effectiveness. The sector is also very diverse, and this is part of its strength.
- 3.2. **Recognition of the true cost of managing volunteers effectively.** Recruiting, training and supporting volunteers requires investment. Proper management for volunteers harnesses the greatest benefits, both for the communities they give their time to, and for the volunteers themselves - especially those who may stand to benefit the most from participating in volunteering.

3.3. **A move away from perceptions of communities as in need of help.** Communities have strengths and assets; we ask the public sector take the time to understand and support/link with existing work.

4. Effective Communication

4.1. **Clear mechanisms for communication.** Improved two way dialogue with public services (directly, as well as via sector reps) benefits cross-sector relationships and opportunities to join up work.

Feedback on progress is important so that people know what difference their input has made.

4.2. **Shared language and definitions.** Simplified language, avoiding jargon and defining key terms all help with identifying shared aims and clearer working relationships.

4.3. **Following through on commitments.** Where a commitment has been made by public services, our members tell us that they would like to see this commitment continue. For example with citywide strategies (recent examples include the One Planet Living Strategy sustainability action plan 2013, Age Friendly City Initiative, and the 2015-2020 Housing Strategy), and the Local Compact agreed in 2009.