

The Voluntary and Community Sector in Brighton and Hove

Key Messages

Community Works – October 2018

Brighton and Hove is known for the vibrancy of its voluntary and community sector (VCS) and how this contributes to the life of the city. Community Works seeks to ensure that this contribution can last long in to the future and has created these Key Messages to articulate how the VCS adds value by drawing in external funds, developing best practice, influencing policy and investing locally to complement statutory provision.

Recommendations are included to show how, by working in partnership, the sector can be supported to flourish and continue its work. We hope these recommendations and key messages will resonate and be used as the starting point for discussion with politicians in preparation for local elections in May 2019.

Recommendations:

1. Commit to support local providers and recognise track record, acknowledging best practice and the potential for adding value by investing in home-grown talent.
2. Recognise the critical role small groups play in fostering well-being, protecting the environment and strengthening communities by continuing to protect grants for small organisations.
3. Support principles behind the [City Collaboration Framework](#) by embedding collaboration, partnership and co-production in all stages of commissioning processes.
4. Recognise the unique strength that a vibrant local sector brings by investing in support services to the VCS.
5. Commit to partnership working with the VCS to improve the way we capture views, concerns and impact and to ensure that this insight informs local policy, strategy and investment in the City.

Key Messages:

Working towards a culture of meaningful collaboration and strong partnerships

The VCS does this by pooling knowledge and resources to deliver services and support that seek to build personal, environmental and community resilience:

1. **Strength: Supporting people throughout their lives**

We deliver early interventions and essential support for people that help prevent or reduce crises and foster a good quality of life.

2. **Collaborative commissioning: Designing the best outcomes for our City**

We foster a culture of collaboration between sectors and communities to develop commissioning processes which have people and the environment at their heart.

3. Adding Value: Optimising resources

We bring local knowledge, understanding, skills, connections and best practice to ensure services respond to need, complementing statutory provision, by designing them with the people that use them. We add value via cross sector collaborations and working in partnership.

4. Engagement: Placing social action at the heart of wellbeing and the environment

We build trust, relationships, skills and creativity. We encourage wellbeing and support the development of social networks and activities that facilitate strong communities.

5. Representation: Investing time, knowledge and skills

We contribute to the development of policies and strategies, locally and nationally, to ensure the voices from the widest range of people and communities are heard.

6. Contribution: Generating resources

We produce creative solutions by attracting investment, in-kind resources, generating income and bidding for funds.

7. Volunteering: Championing the role and value of volunteers in our society

We broker, support and develop volunteers and volunteering, and promote the social capital they generate.

Background

These messages were drawn together by Community Works' staff and Representatives Council during June and July 2018 to describe the work and contribution of the sector in Brighton and Hove. A final draft was consulted on with Community Works members requesting feedback and priorities via an online survey. This document represents the final version of those messages and recommendations.

The UK Civil Society Almanac 2018 (<https://data.ncvo.org.uk/>) reports that nationally:

- The voluntary sector contributed £15.3bn in 2015/16, representing around 0.8% of total GDP.
- The contribution of the voluntary sector has increased since 2014/15 and is now similar to the GDP of Estonia.
- The sector employs approximately 880,000 people in June 2017, also an increase from 2016.
- The value of formal volunteering was estimated at £22.6bn in 2015.

Community Works is now undertaking Taking Account 4, with the objective of producing a social and economic audit of the sector in Brighton and Hove in December 2018 to further demonstrate the impact of the work of the sector locally.

We hope that you will find these messages useful to you in your own discussions with colleagues from the voluntary and community sector, statutory sector and with local Councillors.