

Community participation strategy

Phase 1 workplan

March 2015-April 2016

1: Improving our information about local communities			
Action	Detail	Start date	End date
Develop a new, comprehensive database of voluntary and community sector organisations to a) help us identify the services and support offered across the Borough and b) inform long-term decisions about how to support the sector.	We have commissioned Groundwork London, one of our two new Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO) providers, to develop a database of information about the Borough's voluntary and community sector (VCS), for use by residents, VCS groups, Council officers and Members.	January 2015	November 2015
Improve our existing online directories to help residents access up-to-date information about support for their specific needs, improving their access to services and reducing the need for them to contact the Council directly.	Residents – for example, parents seeking childcare – will need to access quality-checked, verified information about both private and third sector providers through the Council's online directories. We will use the information collected through the LIO database to develop and improve these resources.	March 2015	December 2015
Support the VCS, including smaller and less formal groups, to access information about their local areas, make people more aware of their services and become more sustainable.	Drawing on the findings about the needs of small, 'under-the-radar' groups from our pilot project in Golders Green, we will test out lighter-touch ways to help these groups work together and roll them out across the borough so that they can advertise their services, find out what else is going on locally, network and collaborate without the need to commit to a formal database.	March 2015	March 2016

2: Making more use of current community capacity			
Action	Detail	Start date	End date
Empower local people to become more active, involved and engaged, including through volunteering, in order to build their personal skills and capacity and that of the organisations for which they volunteer.	<p>We have commissioned Groundwork, as one of our LIO partners, to increase the number and range of opportunities for local people to become active, involved and engaged, including through volunteering.</p> <p>The Council has the opportunity to lead by example and ensure its own workforce can tap into this resource. We will work with our LIO partner to explore an employer-supported volunteering model for Council staff who wish to volunteer.</p>	May 2015	November 2015
Support local businesses to contribute to the Borough through corporate social responsibility (CSR), to make sure they can direct their resources at the areas where these are most needed.	We will work with Barnet's business community through our business networks, with our second LIO partner CommUNITY Barnet, and with other strategic partners to develop and coordinate the Borough's CSR capacity so that it supports local communities as effectively as possible, including support for their employees who wish to volunteer.	April 2015	January 2016
Create better support for people who currently volunteer in Council services, to make sure people who are willing to give up their time to help the Council are supported in return.	Some volunteers already work in Council services, but there is not a consistent approach to volunteer recruitment or support across the organisation. We will work with Groundwork to review and improve our internal volunteer infrastructure.	February 2015	January 2016
3: Using our purchasing power			
Action	Detail	Start date	End date
Improve access to information about tendering opportunities and Barnet procurement – and how this is	We will review the implementation of the Council's new procurement portal and undertake a targeted campaign to increase the number of VCS groups registered with it.	April 2015	November 2015

communicated to the VCS – to make sure that this is not a barrier to VCS organisations wishing to bid for Barnet services.	We will develop a communications campaign to ensure the sector is aware of upcoming significant tender opportunities, and provide an accessible information store, linked to the common data used across the Council, to give VCS groups the capacity to evidence their impact.		
Provide training and development for VCS organisations to increase the numbers able to bid for LBB contracts – and other funding sources.	<p>We will work with CommUNITY Barnet to develop a training programme to help VCS organisations develop their ability to bid for contracts, promoting their understanding of public sector procurement and of established forms of VCS capacity-building, including partnerships, consortia, and their benefits.</p> <p>We will investigate the feasibility of a targeted procurement coaching service and/or peer mentoring programme for organisations interested in specific bid opportunities.</p>	May 2015	February 2016
Further streamline Barnet's procurement processes to remove any barriers for the VCS, and set appropriate policies where relevant.	We will build on work undertaken to make Barnet's procurement friendlier to small and medium enterprises, investigating whether any specific policy development is needed for VCS organisations (for example, reviewing the amount of information required for contract monitoring). We will review our social value policy, and explore more structured engagement with the VCS when thinking about how we will go to market in the future.	May 2015	February 2016
4: Exploring the benefits of working locally			
Action	Detail	Start date	End date
Continue to develop the pilot project in Dollis Valley to test whether we can realise the benefits proposed from this model of community delivery.	We propose working with the community to firm up their current proposals and develop a business case for commissioning the services identified (youth provision, mentoring into work, repairs and maintenance; befriending schemes, community meals) from	February 2015	April 2016 (with potential to

	the community, coordinating with local regeneration strategies.		continue)
Roll out the community mapping toolkit developed through the Dollis Valley pilot elsewhere in the Borough, to identify further opportunities for community-led service delivery.	We will use the community mapping toolkit which worked successfully in Dollis Valley in, initially, two more Barnet communities to identify the relevant stakeholders, assets, resources and opportunities to take this model forward.	April 2015	March 2016
5: Building relationships between the voluntary and community sector and the Council			
Action	Detail	Start date	End date
Set up a Borough-wide VCS representative forum, to make sure voluntary and community groups have a place to engage at a strategic level about issues which affect the entire sector.	We have commissioned CommUNITY Barnet, as our LIO partner, to ensure the sector is represented early on in the decision-making process; there is an opportunity to explore the development of a generic VCS forum through which local groups can engage with the Council, in addition to the forums it supports which focus on specific issues.	March 2015	November 2015 (and ongoing)
Build VCS organisations' networks within the Council, to improve the relationships between organisations and promote better understanding between the sectors.	<p>We will establish a pool of relationship managers from across the Council, to advocate for the sector and to develop a relationship of shared understanding and trust between the VCS and the Council.</p> <p>We will set up a series of 'Meet the commissioner' events for the VCS, and explore a similar programme of events for Members to meet local organisations.</p> <p>We will include an introduction to the local VCS as part of our formal induction programme for new officers.</p>	June 2015	January 2016 and ongoing
Maintain an up-to-date directory of the Council's engagement mechanisms, to	We will maintain our internal directory of the Council's current formal and informal community engagement routes and use this	December 2014	Ongoing

reduce duplicate contacts and encourage join-up between different service areas when working with particular communities.	<p>as a tool to coordinate engagement.</p> <p>We will work with Ward Members to explore how the Council is currently engaging in their area and identify and address any gaps.</p>		
6: Using our resources and levers			
Action	Detail	Start date	End date
Coordinate grants and funding to make them easier for communities to access, and use them to shape VCS capacity in areas of need.	We will use our developing evidence base on VCS capacity to build on existing work to coordinate different grant processes and target our resources towards areas where we need the VCS to grow.	March 2015	Ongoing
Make sure the Council's community assets are used to their full potential to support community activity.	<p>We will develop the Council's Community Asset Strategy to ensure that our asset portfolio is used, where appropriate, to support VCS groups to grow more independent and able to take on more responsibility, and that we are making the best possible assets available for local communities to use.</p> <p>We will work with DCLG to bring in the resources available under their new community assets support programme to help Barnet's communities take on the ownership or management of assets where this would help us deliver Council outcomes.</p>	November 2014	September 2015
Investigate the case for a strengthened community transport offer.	We will explore whether further development of community transport provision in the Borough would be of significant help in overcoming barriers for residents wanting to access community services.	May 2015	October 2015