



London Voluntary Service Council

Response to:

**Mayor for London
A City for all Londoners**

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INTRODUCTION TO LONDON VOLUNTARY SERVICE COUNCIL

London Voluntary Sector Council (LVSC) is the collaborative leader of London's voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. Since we were founded in 1910 LVSC has championed the VCSE sector and enabled a co-ordinated voice to influence policy makers. We support London's 120,000 voluntary and community organisations that provide a range of services and support to London's diverse communities and empower the lives of Londoners.

The VCSE sector in London ranges from large multinationals like Oxfam to entirely volunteer run play schemes - in fact it is estimated that 80% of this activity is carried out by volunteers in non-registered organisations, working at the grassroots in the heart of their communities. It employs over 250,000 people and contributes some £19 billion to London's economy.

Our Vision is of communities being at the centre of a fair and prosperous London.

Our Mission is to champion and partner London's communities through building the capability, sustainability and impact of the VCSE sector.

We do this through **Building, Connecting and Leading**:

Building the capacity of London's VCSE sector to deliver enhanced social value

Connecting the VCSE sector by growing the information ecology

Leading, sharing and influencing through a distinctive and definitive voice

We focus our work on networking - Safer Future Communities Network, the Employment and Skills Network, our Health network – and London for All capacity building networks on a wide range of topics through including how to build relationships with the private sector. We work to ensure that the voice of the sector in London is heard by policy makers and funders alike.

Safer Future Communities Network

- The Safer Future Communities (SFC) network has over 500 members and affiliates. The network now has 3 functioning subgroups: Victims' Services Alliance, London Gangs and Serious Youth Violence Network and the VCS Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Expert Reference Group. A fourth one, the Reducing Reoffending Group is being set up and will have its first meeting in January 2017. The network also provides opportunities for building knowledge and capacity on key Criminal Justice Service issues impacting on service users.
- The SFC network sits on the Mayor's Reducing Reoffending Board and the Female Offender Strategy Board, as well as the VAWG Strategy Board. Regular e-bulletins and updates have supported the work through the year, and this is an important source of resource and information to support the members of the network in their work. The network is currently involved in the development of the Police and Crime Plan for 2016 – 2020.

Employment and Skills Network

- Open to all voluntary and community sector organisations with an interest in London employment and skills policy issues.
- Members of the LESPN receive monthly e-bulletins, invitations to events and training that allow them to meet policy makers and other employment and skills providers (including those from the private sector).
- The Network supports the VCS Assist 2.0 programme, which supports voluntary and community sector organisations in London to successfully access the European Social Fund and deliver ESF projects.

Health Network

- We provide a monthly health e-bulletin to find out about the Department of Health's recent updates on health and social care policy in London.
- Although not currently funded by the GLA, LVSC has worked very closely with the Health Inequalities team in the past. This included brokerage of wider VCS engagement on the HI strategy and the planning of several events at City Hall.

London for All capacity building networks

- The Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) directors Network, consisting of CEOs of local CVS, representing the leaders of London's main infrastructure network, with a combined membership and reach of tens of thousands of local groups and longstanding public and private sector partnership working.
- The London Voluntary Sector Forum, consisting of Pan London VCS groups traditionally funded by London Councils, featuring the leaders of specialist organisations whose work spans all service themes, from the advice sector to Women's rights.
- The Community Development Network London, is one of only a very few regional networks, which brings together over 300 local workers and activists with a focus on place based strategy.
- The Comm/University Third Sector Research Forum, made up of academics and community practitioners and students – the forum has worked closely on employability, blended learning and student-led research.
- The Community Business Forum, consisting of partners in the private sector seeking to deepen the brokerage of traditional philanthropy and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility).
- Membership and Communications Officer Network: a grouping which collaborates on the sharing of protocols for sharing news and data with VCS groups across London.
- Health Inequality and Communities Forum: a steering group of VCS health practitioners leading on issues of voice, volunteering and advocacy.
- Digital Entrepreneurs Network: a peer network which has developed a framework for digital inclusion, mapping with an overall objective of raising digital capability across the VCS.

LVSC's CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO 'A CITY FOR ALL LONDONERS'

In summary, our recommendations in support of this strategy are:

1. A recasting of the London Plan to ensure wider engagement with both Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector.
2. A co-produced VCSE strategy on working with the VCSE as informed by the LVSC manifesto <http://www.lvsc.org.uk/lvsc-manifesto-2016.aspx>
3. The co-production of an annual audit of the economic contribution made by London's CSOs and VCSE.
4. A strategic review of London's community assets with recommendations for further ways of capitalising the VCSE sector including proactive measures for publicising local registers of community assets alongside strategies for managing risk regarding community ownership.
5. We would like the GLA to work with VCSE groups who have successfully engaged with local developers to oversee section 106 and similar agreements and provide further support for similar collaboration.
6. Support from the GLA to enable coordination of a London Economic Partnership (LEP) for the VCSE sector would generate a clear structure and means to advance strategic goals.
7. Ensure VCSE groups are supported to play an active role on the Homes for Londoners Board.
8. Ensure the proposed GLA Equality Framework covers housing strategies and engages BAME and Refugee and Asylum Seeker communities.
9. That the Mayor set up a Housing Equality Advisory Group consisting of VCSE organisations that develop and deliver equality action plans.
10. Ensure the Skills for London Taskforce is supported to provide a city-wide approach to skills which actively engages the VCSE sector including via the Employment & Skills Third Sector Providers Network.
11. As part of the GLA's new equality framework, map the skills gap and commission programmes to tackle the economic inequalities in the capital, by creating a pipeline of skilled London workers to make the most of the opportunities in London's growth sectors.
12. Work with VCSE organisations to ensure quality provision of extra-curriculum activities both within schools and in the local area, that provide all school pupils with the key skills need to enter the workplace, such as a STEM career.
13. To join LVSC in campaigning against the cuts to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes in London's colleges.
14. Ensure that part of the post-18 curriculum offer includes apprenticeship opportunities that lead to sustained employment. This should include ensuring that the levy paid by London's employers is ring-fenced to the capital.
15. For the Mayor to tackle inequalities in the workplace, including paying the London Living Wage and conducting a gender pay audit.
16. For the Mayor to support the development of community land trusts and other means of transferring assets into community ownership.

17. To subsidise Oyster and contactless payment card methods for people on benefits.
18. To combat anti social business practice including the targeting by betting shops in the poorest areas of our city including city-wide exclusion zones for fixed betting terminals.
19. To ensure that the Mayor as Chair of the London Health Board to “bring together health care providers, commissioners and Local Authorities” ensures inclusion of health care and social care providers from London’s voluntary, community sector and social enterprise sector (VCSE)
20. For the Mayor to add more detail on social care provision and funding, following on from Manifesto commitments pertaining to health and about how “leadership on the ground” will be operationalised.
21. For the Mayor to set key indicators to help measure how neighbourhood policing is being inclusive in terms of effective community engagement and involvement.
22. For the Mayor to provide more clarity on how the rise in sexual violence will be tackled, particularly regarding VAWG (violence against women and girls) issues including support for existing and new refuges and secure accommodation, including provision through the VCSE sector.
23. For the Mayor to ensure an acceptable balance between enforcement and prevention, keeping in perspective that serious youth crime adversely affects both victims and perpetrators.

PART ONE: ACCOMODATING GROWTH

- We welcome the Mayor's strategic approach to the rapid change our city faces. In the aftermath of the Brexit vote promoting London as an open city and the proactive measures to combat the rise in hate crime has demonstrated strong and inspirational leadership. However, the intent to 'accommodate growth' falls short of the kind of sustainable and transformational change we would like to see.
- Rather than seeking to arbitrate, oversee and negotiate the needs of developers with local communities with a primary focus on housing, environment and employment as envisaged by the London Plan we feel their needs to be a more explicit and practical focus on the estimated 120,000 equality and civil society organisations in London as real drivers of change. At present the GLA has no joined up or coherent means of engaging with London's voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) groups, who are themselves the primary means of engaging with grassroots communities with direct experience of equality and ensuring the inclusion of those with protected characteristics.
- The London Plan is a vast document that needs to be recalibrated to engage with these two areas – civil society organisations (CSO's) and equality issues. The sheer size of the plan makes it almost impossible for most groups to comprehend let alone engage with. The default position has been that engagement consists with a small number of activist groups who have a passion for planning. This is not the same thing as engaging with wider CSOs or VCSE groups or with groups with equality / protected characteristics. This position needs to change and this process can begin with a broader section of CSOs and VCSE co-producing an engagement strategy. We believe a specific strategy for working with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector is long overdue as advocated in our 2016 manifesto <http://www.lvsc.org.uk/lvsc-manifesto-2016.aspx>
- The VCSE sector in London contributes thousands of jobs to the London economy and it is time for the GLA to draw on the talents of the wider CSO and VCSE sector. Team London has played a vital role in the promotion of volunteering and it is now time to engage more broadly with the VCSE sector.

In summary, we would like the GLA to take forward the following measures:

1. A recasting of the London Plan to ensure wider engagement.
2. A coproduced VCSE strategy.
3. The coproduction of an annual audit of the economic contribution made by London's CSOs and VCSE.
4. A strategic review of London's community assets with recommendations for further ways of capitalising the VCSE sector including proactive measures for publicising local registers of community assets alongside strategies for managing risk about community ownership.
5. We would like the GLA to work with VCSE groups who have successfully engaged with local developers to oversee section 106 and similar agreements and provide further support for similar collaboration.
6. The GLA to coordinate a London Economic Partnership (LEP) for the VCSE sector, that would generate a clear structure and means to advance strategic goals.

PART TWO: HOUSING

- LVSC is well-linked with organisations, many of them small and rooted in local communities, who work day-to-day to support people who find themselves homeless. The VCSE sector has a huge wealth of experience and evidence of working with those who find themselves homeless and living in poor housing conditions for reasons which include unemployment or low-income, mental health, drug and alcohol issues and being involved in the criminal justice system. It is important that the Mayor harnesses this wealth of knowledge in seeking concrete evidence of some of the underlying issues of homelessness and poor housing as part of taking a leadership role to enhance his influence on London boroughs and other related agencies.
- Our network of organisations work very closely with Londoners who are employed on low wages and struggle with the high rents in the city whilst not being able to get on the property ladder due to lack of available affordable homes. The Mayor's commitment to set up a 'Homes for Londoners Board' is welcomed. However, London VCSE organisations with relevant expertise need to be included on this Board. LVSC can be a key conduit for these organisations in building trust and confidence with the communities that are directly affected by poor housing and homelessness. We are regularly in dialogue with influential stakeholders in the sector with specialisms in housing and homelessness, such as Shelter and St. Mungo's, who continue to advocate for homeless and badly housed people in London.
- LVSC is calling for the Mayor to ensure that his proposed GLA Equality Framework covers the planned housing strategies and objectives for London. Inequality in housing is a major barrier for many communities, particularly those from the BAME and the Refugee and Asylum seeker communities. A significant worry for these communities is the challenges they face in the private rented sector, for example, potential exploitation by Landlords who can now ask for immigration status before granting tenancies. This in turn results in increased homelessness among these groups in London. If London is truly going to be 'a city for all', then there needs to be practical steps taken to mitigate the negative impact current housing policies are having on these marginalised communities.
- LVSC believes the Equality Framework should help in monitoring the equality and exclusion impacts, with a focus on reducing entrenched inequalities, including those faced by disabled people, people with mental health issues, ex-offenders and women escaping from domestic and sexual violence. LVSC therefore calls for increased focus on equality and fairness in ensuring that strategies around affordable housing and reduction in homelessness make a positive difference in the lives of vulnerable Londoners in the long-term.
- Finally, LVSC believes the Mayor should establish a Housing Equality Advisory Group consisting of VCSE organisations and other agencies in the private and statutory sector to work together in supporting the work on the GLA Equality Framework, with the aim of ensuring that positive equality action plans are delivered. LVSC can engage with key partners in the VCSE sector to work with City Hall on this. The Mayor states that 'building enough housing is an important part of economic development'. To achieve this, LVSC is clear that economic and social inequality that contributes to homelessness and lack of access to affordable housing needs to be tackled robustly.

PART THREE: ECONOMY

We welcome the Mayor's call for London's economy to work for everyone with all Londoners having an opportunity to benefit equally from its success.

LVSC believes that this vision can be taken with the following actions:

- The establishment of a 'Skills for London' Taskforce as set out in the Mayor's election manifesto is, we feel, critical to developing a city-wide, strategic approach to skills, identifying gaps in provision and ensuring that currently disparate programmes and funding streams, across the public, private and voluntary sectors, work in concert. We are ready to work with the Deputy Mayor for Regeneration, Planning and Skills and his team, to ensure the London VCSE sector is involved at the start of its establishment and through our London-wide Employment and Skills Third Sector Providers Network we can help in developing your strategic approach.
- As part of the GLA's new equality framework, map the skills gap and commission programmes to tackle the economic inequalities in the capital, by creating a pipeline of skilled London workers to make the most of the opportunities in London's growth sectors. We feel there is an important opportunity to consult with VCSE organisations in London, through LVSC's Employment and Skills Network, in identifying the skills gaps in the capital, as well as highlighting with the Deputy Mayor and his team, the key role the VCSE has in providing support to those who are the hardest to reach.
- We share the Mayor's vision that every child in London should have the best possible chances for health, happiness and success, by using his leadership role in bringing together the organisations that shape our young people's education. We feel the VCSE sector has a critical role in supporting this vision, by delivering the training and support to those who are the hardest to reach, in having the skills needed to enter the future job market. For instance, VCSE organisations provide extra-curricular activities both within schools and in the local area, that provide all school pupils with the key skills need to enter the workplace, including STEM careers.
- The same applies to post-16 further education, where we can help ensure that FE provision meets the needs of London's economy and is of the high quality that Londoners deserve. This can only be achieved if VCSE providers are enabled to feed into the local area review process of highlighting where the key skills needs are needed to meet the needs of the London economy. The same approach can be applied to adult skills, where we welcome the announcement by the Government in the autumn statement, on the devolution of the Adult Education Budget to London from 2019-20. Finally, as stated by the Mayor in his election manifesto, LVSC also opposes the cuts to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes in London's colleges. This could be an ideal opportunity for a joint campaign between LVSC and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills to lobby on, highlighting the experiences of VCSE organisations that work with English for Speakers of Other Languages, through our Employment and Skills Network.
- Part of the post-18 curriculum offer should include apprenticeship opportunities that lead to sustained employment at the end. We support the call from the Mayor in his public pronouncements on creating thousands of new, high-quality apprenticeships by commissioning places using the levy paid by business to government. Through the Employment and Skills Network, LVSC would be able to host information and networking events that support VCSE organisations who want to deliver apprenticeships through the new levy funding system.
- In his election manifesto, the Mayor committed to establishing a construction academy scheme, with the housebuilding industry, to close the gap between his ambitious housing targets and the need for more skilled construction workers in London. LVSC has a close working relationship with Housing Associations in London, through membership of the Love London Working Strategic Group, which is an ESF funded programme to support London tenants into employment. Our Employment and Skills Network would be able to host joint events with Housing providers and VCSE organisations, in

supporting those who are the hardest to reach, in having the skills for a career in the construction industry.

- Finally, we support the Mayor's call on employers to tackle inequalities in the workplace, such as paying the London Living Wage and conducting a gender pay audit. LVSC is able, through our Employment and Skills Network, to be part of those discussions, which will form the proposals that are submitted to his Economic Fairness Team.

PART FOUR: ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC SPACE

The comments made under the first sector (accommodating growth) should be considered in the context of this section, noting the growing demands on environment, transport and public space. In addition to the recommendations made there, we would also invite the Mayor and GLA to consider the following suggested actions:

- Explicit support, as part of a wider coproduced VCSE strategy, to support the development of community land trusts and other means of transferring assets into community ownership.
- An outreach and community development strategy as part of a wider VCSE strategy to ensure a greater level of engagement with CSO and VCSE groups, notably in support of the work of Conservation and Amenity Societies and local activist networks including the Just Space Network
- An equalities review and audit of all EIAs where they exist or might be required with regard to these three areas (environment, transport, public space) followed by regular task and finish group meetings with VCSE equality specialist groups as identified in the 3rd 'ask' of the LVSC 2016 London Manifesto <http://www.lvsc.org.uk/lvsc-manifesto-2016.aspx>
- To work with city farms, community led gardens and local food cooperatives as part of a wider strategy of support and engagement for the VCSE sector.
- To subsidise Oyster and contactless payment card methods for people on benefits.
- To combat anti social business practice including the targeting by betting shops in the poorest areas of our city including city-wide exclusion zones for fixed betting terminals.
- To exclude fast food outlets within 400 metres of a school as part of the London Plan and establish clean air zones near London's schools.

PART FIVE: A CITY FOR ALL LONDONERS

- First, we very much welcome the Mayor's commitment to health and the fact it runs through all the mayoral policies. In his manifesto Sadiq Khan has said that he would be the first Mayor to "provide real leadership for London's NHS" and provide "strategic planning and coordination as that is needed." LVSC is very much encouraged by plans to improve transport, housing, higher pay, delivering healthy streets, improving air quality and tackle mental health. There is no doubt in our mind that these plans and policies, if fully implemented will lead to health improvements and a reduction in health inequalities amongst many Londoners.
- LVSC recognises that the NHS is not directly under the Mayor's control. Therefore, we are delighted that the Mayor envisages a clear leadership role as Mayor, e.g. as Chair of the London Health Board to "bring together health care providers, commissioners and Local Authorities". What is less clear is if this includes health care and social care providers from London's voluntary, community sector and social enterprise sector (VCSE). The VCSE in London provide a range of health and care related services and support to London's diverse communities. These include homeless, disabled, minority ethnic refugee and other social excluded people. VCSE providers can make a huge contribution that will enable the Mayor make London the most equal and healthy city in Europe. We would also like the Mayor to spell out if and how he will strategically engage with the wider VCSE sector as well as patient bodies including Healthwatch. Many VCSE organisations empower the lives of Londoners through campaigning and advocacy. These important roles could support the Mayor in his endeavours to direct more health resources and powers from central government for London.
- Whilst recognising that the consultation document cannot go into great detail by listing all potential partners, it could make a reference to the importance of collaborative working with academia (e.g. [UCH Institute of Health Equity](#)) and the [London Academic Health Science networks](#) in order to improve health and care and help bring about economic growth in London.
- In Improving London's Health, the Mayor recognises that social care services are underfunded which means that "many Londoners don't receive early support to provide avoidable hospital admissions". There is however little about social care provision and funding in the consultation document. The manifesto refers also to championing of the "the needs for additional funding to plug the social care gap and joining up of services to reduce unnecessary hospital admissions". We would also like to see more detail in the consultation document following his manifesto statement to promote "leadership on the ground to shift from reactive care to prevention, early intervention and care closer to home". We cannot overstate the importance of collaborating strategically with the VCSE to improve the health and care Londoners that they receive and should receive in the future.
- LVSC welcomes the Mayor's comments about the need to address "the risk of fragmentation in a system of over 5000 providers of NHS services". Once more, we would like the Mayor to show if and how he will engage with the VCS to help ensure better and more efficient integrated care. The Mayor could also make reference to the new 5 London [Sustainable Transformation Plans](#) and how he could work with them to tackle the risk fragmentation and promote integrated health and care for all Londoners.

Health devolution

- Sadiq Khan also promises to make the case for further devolved powers. However, in the consultation document there is little mention of health devolution per se. It is mainly discussed in the context of transport, devolution of fiscal powers as opposed to what impact health and care devolution may have on the health and wellbeing of Londoners. Finally, we strongly feel that the Mayor will be much better placed to make a strong argument about the frayed and poor state of London's health and care services if he collaborates and co-produces with London's diverse and vibrant VCSE. VCSE strategic engagement needs to be embedded in all the Mayoral policies and strategies.

SAFE AND SECURE LONDON

- LVSC welcomes the Mayor's commitment to working with all criminal justice agencies in 'delivering better outcomes for victims'. It is, however, important to engage productively and consistently with the VCSE sector in its work on this key outcome in his plans. Over the last three years, LVSC has developed a strong relationship with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) in its work in developing and implementing policies and strategies in tackling and reducing crime and ensuring efficient police service in London through LVSC's Safer Future Communities (SFC) project. The SFC is a network of over 500 organisations and affiliates who primarily work with and serve people who are involved in the criminal justice system i.e. offenders, ex-offenders and victims. These agencies are rooted in the community, working side-by-side with some of the most excluded people in London. LVSC feels the important role they play in the community in terms of their work and support they provide needs to be given the long-overdue credit and recognition it deserves. The VCSE sector plays a critical role in providing positive pathways for ex-offenders to engage more productively with society. They also create avenues for victims to have a stronger voice. Organisations such as [Spark Inside](#), [Redthread](#) and [TellMAMA](#) carry out creative and inclusive initiatives that contribute to a safer city for all.
- The Mayor's focus on neighbourhood policing is a good thing for London, and has the potential to be an effective tool for holding the Metropolitan Police Service to account for their actions in their service to the community. LVSC is therefore calling for the Mayor to set key indicators to help measure how neighbourhood policing is being inclusive in terms of effective community engagement and involvement. The police, as a criminal justice agency, tend to be the first point of contact for Londoners involved in the CJS. Therefore, the relationship of the police and the increasingly diverse community it serves in London is vital to the success of the Mayor's for a safer city for all Londoners. This relationship, leading to a better understanding and appreciation of each side's role and focus in working towards a safer London, can have a positive impact in preventing the spread of extremism and hate. Local community agencies need to be engaged with on an equal level and with respect. Police officers should receive better training in community relations, with community agencies involved in shaping and delivering this training. The police and the related criminal justice agencies have a key role to play in ensuring better social integration and community cohesion. Developing strong and positive relationships with civil society is crucial to achieving this. Getting this right will give credence to the Mayor's stated aim of increasing active citizenship and increasing civic participation and 'democratic governance in working towards a safer and more secure London for all.
- The LVSC SFC Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) VCS group continue to be concerned about the rise in sexual violence in London. While it is good that the Mayor is committing to confronting the issue of VAWG 'wherever and however it occurs', it is disappointing that this serious issue affecting many vulnerable women and girls in the capital warranted only a few lines in this document. LVSC SFC group would like to have more clarity on how the Mayor will confront this issue. There is lack of joined-up working in resourcing gender-focused services that can help vulnerable women and girls in London feel more secure and empowered to be part of a vibrant and prosperous city. Issues around access to adequate and gender-focused health services, refuges and secure accommodation continue to be 'live' issues that need to be tackled to ensure that vulnerable women and girls are inclusive of a 'city for all Londoners'.
- LVSC SFC network fully supports the Mayor's commitment to ensure a safer and secure London for all where local communities are effectively engaged in tackling the scourge of knife crime. There needs to be an acceptable balance between enforcement and prevention, keeping in perspective that serious youth crime adversely affects both victims and perpetrators. The Mayor will need to be clearer in defining his objectives in creating opportunities and avenues where the excluded youth population of London can thrive and prosper. Effectively working with local authority partners, Community networks such as ours and other influential statutory/decision-making agencies on focused approaches to reducing the debilitating effects of poverty and inequality on the lives of many of London's youth population must be a top priority for the Mayor.

- Finally, the Mayor's call for devolved powers to City Hall in the long-term is to be welcomed. Key issues of concerns such as hate crime and extremism can come into sharper focus under the Mayoralty. Devolution will allow the Mayor to have a clear direction in terms of strategy and policy that will be London-focused and effectively consider the collective voice of Londoners. Also, skills acquisition, employment, quality health/social care and housing can be better integrated in terms of delivery and meeting the needs of vulnerable Londoners. Economic and financial inclusion are key ingredients for reduction in poverty and inequalities blighting the lives of marginalised groups in London, which in turn can contribute to reduction in involvement in crime as well as reducing reoffending. From this standpoint, we can begin to develop important shared objectives and outcomes that will benefit all Londoners in the long-term.