

Participation & Partnerships

A strategy for strengthening the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in Barking & Dagenham

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1. Introduction

We believe that it is our community that makes Barking and Dagenham a great place, and it is our community that is key to making the borough a place people are proud of. That is why we celebrate all those who, driven by a love for the borough and its residents, work tirelessly to bring about positive change locally.

Our role, as a Council, has changed in recent years and at the heart of the changes we have made, is our community. We have designed and built an entirely new kind of Council. However, we know that this in itself will not change the lives of residents. We now need to build on this new Council to drive real change. From a service-delivery model aimed at ‘meeting needs’, our role is now to support residents to be more independent, providing them with the tools they need to do more for themselves and achieve their full potential.

Building on the great work of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE), this strategy sets a four-year vision which builds on ideas from residents and the sector to meet our ambitions, improve outcomes for all, and promote a thriving borough (Figure 1).

A strong VCSE sector is central to this approach, from small community groups running street parties, through online communities, faith communities, as well as large borough-based and national charities, all have an essential role to play.

This strategy focuses on the Council’s role and its ability to enable the VCSE sector. But the vision of this strategy will only be achieved if we all play our part. That is why we would invite VCSE organisations, both locally and nationally, to join us in the journey, working with residents to make Barking and Dagenham a great place to live, work, study and stay, while ensuring no one is left behind.



Figure 1 - Borough Manifesto goals and outcomes

2. Vision and goals

We define the social sector as all individuals, groups and organisations that are in the pursuit of social change, with voluntary and community, social enterprises, charities and faith groups at its core (which we refer to as voluntary, community and social enterprise - VCSE), as well as individuals and funders. All have a role to play in the borough, and all contribute to a healthy and strong society, building on the passion, skills and expertise available locally (Figure 2).

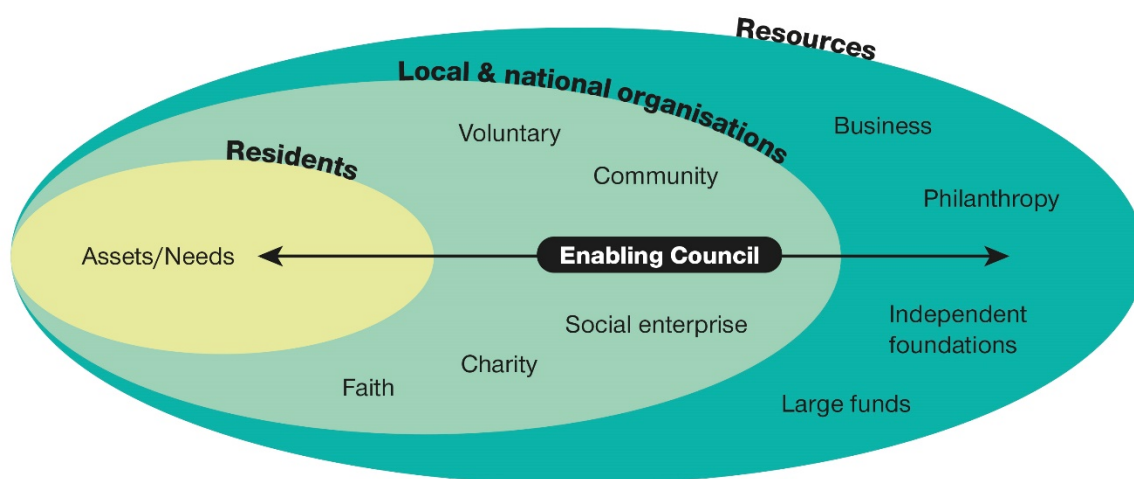


Figure 2 - The social sector in Barking and Dagenham

This strategy champions a healthy, independent and influential VCSE working in our community for the benefit of all. Practically, our vision for a strong VCSE means there are many ways in which individuals' ideas, projects and concerns can develop, flourish and be addressed. It means a dense network of organisations:

- shaping and delivering essential services and support;
- helping people grow in life and seize opportunities;
- and building a better future for everyone.

To work out how this vision could be delivered in practice, we have carried out extensive research. Three, clear goals arose, which cut across the different spheres outlined above. These are:

Goal 1: Increasing participation: We want participation to become part of every day life. This means practical participation, e.g. people getting together in neighbourhoods; civic participation, e.g. through volunteering in schools, the charitable sector and social enterprise; as well as participation in the design and production of services and putting individuals and organisations at the heart of shaping the very services they rely on or help to deliver.

Goal 2: Enabling and embedding relationships based on trust: Critically, it also means supporting a more collaborative approach respecting all partners' contributions as equal and coming together to achieve more. We want to improve the way we can work across all organisations. This means drawing on data and expertise to make it easier for people to collaborate, as well as creating a climate of trust between stakeholders. This also means

staying focused on outcomes and learning from failures, as well as being honest with each other.

Goal 3: Building the sector's capacity: Our approach is two-fold: reimagining how we can best partner with and support the VCSE across a range of initiatives, and reshaping approaches to commissioning and giving locally. Practically, this goal looks at how we can increase the resources available for the sector, facilitate the sharing of time, skills and intelligence, and the sharing of building and spaces.

3. Increasing participation

The challenges we face today are long term and continuous. They are not one-off events that can be cured by an expert or by a process that is done to us. What is common to these modern problems is that the solutions require our participation (Cottam, 2018).

Civic participation can be described as the range of behaviours, attitudes and actions that reflect concerned and active membership in a community. Strong civic participation is the sign of a functional democracy. This may include 'traditional' citizenship activities, such as voting, serving as a trustee or a director on non-profit or school boards, as well as less traditional forms of political participation, such as community organising and social activism. Participation is peer to peer. Participation is what happens when people are involved in initiatives and decisions that affect their own lives.

But sometimes, for a variety of reasons, e.g. social and economic, civic participation can wane. We know that formal volunteering rates in the borough are lower than many other places in England or in other London boroughs. We also know that a lot of informal charitable work takes place, that many residents spend a lot of their time providing unpaid care to family members and other people, and that volunteering around local initiatives is part of many resident's lives. For some residents, adding formal volunteering – with all the commitment it entails - to their already busy agenda appears next to impossible.

This is a loss, because participation increases social capital. It reduces loneliness. It makes communities.

Therefore, we believe that creating more opportunities for participation – in all its guises – can deliver huge benefits for individuals and communities. We want busy residents to engage but also want them to feel able get on with their lives. For this reason, engagement should be flexible, and provide multiple routes and opportunities. In engaging with residents, we should always favour approaches that are led by and responsive to them.

We need to build a future where participation becomes the norm and operates at all levels. This includes people in neighbourhoods getting together and adopting creative ways to use their skills and experience, through practical participation. This also means working to increase social enterprise, civic participation and volunteering in the charitable sector. Lastly, it means putting individuals and organisations at the heart of shaping the very services they rely on or help to deliver – designing them and making decisions on where and how money should be spent.

This is a bold ambition. We know that we haven't got it sorted yet, and that we will make mistakes. But this should not stop us from trying and learning together. Participation needs to reach into

everything that public institutions, VCSE organisations and local businesses do to transform our common civic wealth.

3.1 Supporting the growth of participation

VCSE organisations are great agents of participation. They can support participation by mobilising existing relationships between volunteers, organisations and residents, saving time and energy that would be taken building those relationships from scratch. They can also offer an independent perspective on the needs and wants of people in their area of operation. The strategy proposes a series of actions aimed at furthering participation.

Action	Indicator of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design a Participation and Engagement strategy for the Council 	Strategy is adopted and implemented across council services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase youth participation through NCS, the Duke of Edinburg Awards, Youth Parliament and Young Mayor, and through peer-mentorship 	Improve relationships between National Citizenship Service and local charities requiring digital development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the social infrastructure support provider to assess the digital needs of VCSE organisations and develop an action plan to address them 	A more adequate digital capacity building offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and launch an interactive online participation channel to better permit VCSE organisations to influence and direct local authority consultations and decisions 	Improvement of residents reporting they feel listened to Increased challenges and advocacy from the sector on Council decision making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the process by which community requests that reach a certain threshold on digital platform can trigger a public conversation with relevant Council services and/or partners 	Improvement of residents reporting they feel listened to in the Resident’s Survey Increased amount of people involved in civic engagement and participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot a resident panel for allocating NCIL funds 	An approach for running resident panels in Barking and Dagenham
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Barking and Dagenham Delivery Partnership and other partners to 	More partners engage with VCSE activity

increase their support and work with VCSE organisations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the development of the practical participation support platform in the borough through Every One Every Day reaching out to 25,000 residents 	More people declare they take part to participation and/or volunteering activities

3.2 Promoting collaborative commissioning

We refer to the term ‘participation culture’ to describe new types of participatory projects that differ from current activity. It refers to a culture in which residents do not act as consumers, or beneficiaries only, but also as contributors and co-producers. Embedding this culture requires a step change in the way the Council and its partners operate, from a ‘doing to’ approach to ‘doing with’.

Commissioned services being delivered by the voluntary sector locally include adults and children’s care and support, growth and homes (learning and skills), and parks and events. However, as budgets shrink and the Council is forced to refocus on the delivery of highly specialised statutory services, the role of the sector is increasingly shifting towards managing demand, and doing preventative work, e.g. helping those who are on the brink but are not (yet) eligible for statutory support.

VCSE organisations have a huge role to play in this regard as they constitute, with friends and family, trusted, locally-anchored outlets that people can go to get help. These frontline organisations also have privileged access to the needs and assets in our community. We need to create new opportunities for commissioners to work more closely with VCSE organisations to unpick issues that are known to them.

We also want to continue to better utilise data, look at increased use of behavioural insight and innovative approaches to service design. We need to be more transparent and open to the ideas and experiences of others. This includes making data accessible to VCSE organisations and working together with them to demonstrate their impact on prevention.

We need to be mindful of the demand this puts on those who are asked to participate. We are asking Council staff (in some cases) to take a different approach to their work, including facilitation and public engagement skills. This requires training, time and (some) resources, as well as a wider culture change. Councillors are going out and talking to residents already – the expertise they have in hearing community voices contributes significantly to this engagement.

Action	Indicator of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share information on our procurement forward plan and provide a framework/process/opportunity that helps VCSE organisations work more collaboratively on opportunities. 	Sustainability of VCSE organisations is increased

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design training material with commissioners in adults and children’s care and support, growth and homes (learning and skills), and parks and events in participatory techniques 	Commissioners are able to more consistently apply the commissioning mandate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued publicly available data on commissioned contracts 	Increased transparency and trust in the system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream an ambitious approach to social value across commissioning and procurement 	Procurement drive better outcomes in the areas of high deprivation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design social value monitoring and evaluation frameworks that are proportionate to the contract being procured 	Small organisations are able to successfully bid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Lab that enables commissioners and VCSE organisations to work together to find innovative solutions to complex issues. 	Better integration of responses to complex issues Statistics on these issues start to reverse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the involvement of residents directly and meaningfully in the commissioning, monitoring and evaluation of programmes affecting them. 	Better/more effective service design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a shadowing scheme for councillors, officers and community & voluntary sector colleagues. 	Increased understanding and trust between council officers and VCSE organisations

4. Enabling and embedding relationships based on trust

We have to be active agents of change. Solutions require us – communities, businesses, and citizens – to work together, drawing on new ideas and above all on each other to create change. (Cottam 2018).

The complexity of some of the issues faced by residents, such as chronic health, or domestic violence, suggests that there are no easy solutions to these issues. Recognising that no individual or organisation alone can claim to have a complete understanding or solution of a complex issue, we need to get better at working across organisations, and at drawing from a wealth of expertise, from data insights to involving people with lived experience. This requires collaboration and partnership across the board, and an approach that is flexible enough to stay focused on the outcomes that we are trying to achieve.

However, collaboration brings its own set of challenges, and sometimes our own rules and framework may not support a spirit of collaboration. We also need to acknowledge the persistence of competitive mindsets in the sector, as well as a need to distribute professional skills – such as negotiating or building legal frameworks – in order to collaborate successfully and further a shared mission. Concerns have also been expressed about the dominance of certain charities in certain debates and discussions, amounting to potentially unfair competition tactics from larger organisations.

The challenges of collaboration are not unique to VCSE organisations, and we too need to get better at working with our peers and those outside of public services. We need to increase trust between partners through the joint development of a local compact that will help standardise the rules of the game, and keep all parties to their collaborative commitments, in ways which don't disadvantage smaller organisations and go beyond 'the usual suspects'. We believe that infrastructural support can underpin this form of collaboration and capacity building, to deliver better collective impact.

Action	Indicator of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support for the development of VCSE organisations in Barking and Dagenham through a contract for infrastructure support from July 2019. 	Measurable increase in collaboration across organisations and partners / More funding attracted to the borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission the development of an open-source collaboration pack. Design and make collaborative documentation accessible (methods, framework, contract) – in partnership with VCSE organisations 	Increased in absolute number of organisations that enter into partnership agreements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-produce a compact between the local authority, other partners and VCSE organisations to help define the rules of collaboration, increase trust and challenge 	Compact is adopted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broker relationships between businesses trying to demonstrate social value and local VCSE groups, as part of the Council's new social value policy developments 	Increased relationships between businesses VCSE organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure VCSE voices inform the development of future devolution asks 	Encourage greater participation of VCSE organisations in Local London
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up iterative learning groups on selected issues from Borough Manifesto priorities 	More intelligent and integrated local networks on selected issues

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the sector and partners (possibly through BDDP) to map out and categorise organisations in the borough which have similar objectives (public, private and third) 	Resources are better aligned to maximise outcomes for residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to publicise learning from collaborative learning 	Trust in the Council by residents grows

5. Building the sector's capacity

Our local VCSE sector offers a huge variety of services to meet the needs of our residents and provide a critical social safety net. This is more important now than ever before. The sector is also a source of innovation and creativity, with many exemplary methods and ways of working emanating from the borough becoming recognised and practiced across the country.

A number of great initiatives are already happening in partnership between the public and social sector to grow platforms and mechanisms to expand VCSE organisations and resident engagement locally, such as:

- The development of Future Youth Zone by Onside, a voluntary sector partner, to support and engage our young people;
- Commissioners procuring from and funding VCSE groups;
- The cultural partnership;
- The parks and open spaces strategy which embeds opportunities for working with VCSE groups as part of the delivery model;
- The establishment of Barking Renew;
- The ongoing tenders for services locally predominantly across social care
- Ongoing support and engagement through BAD Youth forum, Flipside and other opportunities;
- The Summer of Festival programme;
- Ongoing developments of the Integration and Cohesion Strategy, the Faith Policy and the Participation and Engagement Strategy.

In addition to this, the Council has sought to create a favourable environment for VCSE organisations to grow, to engage with residents and, to take an enabling role. In this context, the Council has created a number of ways to support the work of the VCSE sector:

- Supporting Barking and Dagenham Council for Voluntary Services (BDCVS), through a contract and the transfer of the Ripple Centre following refurbishment. This is a resource that generates income to support capacity-building work with VCSE organisations locally.
- Establishing the Participation and Engagement team to provide a point of contact for VCSE organisations in the Council, and to lead on a number of strategic initiatives in the past two years.
- The launch, in April 2017 of Crowdfund Barking and Dagenham, a local platform associated with a small grants fund and, in October 2017, of the first local lottery in London.

- The launch of Every One Every Day, which has supported more than 2000 residents to date and attracted significant external funding. As part of the initiative, residents are invited to share ideas for projects and community businesses they would like to co-launch into their neighbourhoods. The project is being embedded in frontline council services and a warehouse for residents will be opening in the Spring of 2019.
- Providing a space for engagement on a range of topics, through various events; the 'Big Conversation', 'Human Library', the first community cohesion hackathon, and 'Belief in Barking and Dagenham'.

We know that the resource-tight environment in which we operate is a challenge, but it also presents an opportunity to make a shift towards community-owned approaches to change and encourage more creative thinking about how to address VCSE organisations' needs. Finance is just one element of what sustains an organisation; skills, time and space are also critical to ongoing success. This section is divided into resources and investment, time, skill and intelligence, and buildings and spaces.

5.1 Investment

Across London, a number of local giving schemes have been developed to channel more direct investment, financial or otherwise, into the community. While Barking and Dagenham has significant growth opportunities, at present there are only 10 employers in the borough with more than 250 employees, most businesses are small, and the industries present are generally in low-value sectors. Therefore, we need to be creative in developing our approach for financial local giving and channel more resources to the sector.

There are a number of ways in which investment in VCSE organisations take place in Barking and Dagenham. Collaborative bids between the local authority and VCSE organisations can attract significant resources to the sector. Funding infrastructure support at a borough level, whilst recognising contributions at a sub regional and regional level too, such as the support offered by the London Hub is another way. The Council will continue to support VCSE organisations in their work to support residents by funding collaboration and capacity building for the sector, as well as encouraging joint bidding, in line with the Borough Manifesto outcomes for our residents.

Achievements to date include:

- **Crowdfunding:** 'Crowdfund Barking and Dagenham' is a platform introduced by the Council in partnership with Crowdfunder UK in April 2017 with a pot of £120,000. It focuses on projects which get local people into employment, improve health and wellbeing, encourage civic pride, and build cohesion, offering match funding that is raised from other sources. In December 2018, 11 projects had been financed through the platform for a total of £29,000. Crowdfunding follows a direct democracy approach to social investment, garnering communities of interest to support causes and activities which are important to them.
- **Local lottery:** A local lottery scheme was launched in September 2017 to help good causes raise money. 33 groups had signed up between October 2017 and July 2018, raising close to £38,000 by December 2018. In addition to providing a new source of income for VCSE organisations, the local lottery is also increasing awareness on the work good cause groups are doing in the borough through a sustained social media presence.
- **Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL):** NCIL will be used to support a VCSE grants fund to ensure that residents benefit from the regeneration in the borough. As part of

these developments, Cabinet also agreed to use NCIL to create the basis for an endowment, which would fund community projects long term. Approximately £327k have been raised through NCIL so far and it is estimated that future income will oscillate between £150k and £800k yearly.

These disparate but not insignificant opportunities have helped to sustain our local sector. However, the overarching governance of these mechanisms still needs to find a home. The Council is committed to keep working with VCSE organisations to develop a local giving model that responds to Barking and Dagenham’s unique specificities.

Action	Indicator of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implement a process for joint fundraising between the Council, VCSE organisations and partners 	Joint fundraising increases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-produce a local giving model with the social sector, including an endowment, and encourage highly aspirational contributions from business 	External funders make significant contributions to the endowment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of organisations who apply for crowdfunding and benefit from the local lottery 	Increased number of new projects each quarter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue investment in crowdfunding and secure continuation of scheme post 2019 	Budget ringfenced for two years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiment with participatory budgeting as a method of community development 	Successfully run a NCIL Residents Panel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with Barking Renew to strengthen the link between regeneration, place and people 	An action plan with recommendations is taken forward including increasing grants programme

5.2 Time, skill & intelligence

The local ecosystem of VCSE actors, public bodies, corporations and residents have the capacity to give much more than financial resource. Skill sharing, through professionals becoming more engrained and embedded within the communities they serve, and open data, as a tool to compliment VCSEs local knowledge and build insight on specific issues are also critical resources.

To lever these, we need to create routes for public and private sector bodies to share more. We must find better enable businesses to contribute to borough outcomes, as many are willing to channel energy towards social responsibility. Social value, as a concept, is about seeking to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefit that can be created by procuring or commissioning goods and

services, above and beyond the benefit from the goods and services themselves. This means leveraging our purchasing power to encourage suppliers to enable genuine social outcomes to the borough.

The Council started working on a new social value policy to make the most of the borough’s regeneration and the creation of new service delivery companies such as Be First, BD Management Services Ltd and BD Service Delivery Ltd and enhance the way social value is used in procurement. The long-term aim is to ensure commissioning initiatives and other large-scale procurements are leveraged in favour of a social agenda – as defined by the Borough Manifesto targets - to maximise value for money and improve social and environmental outcomes in the community. One small part of our aspirations for this tool is that it will create new channels to promote sharing of time, skills and intelligence from businesses.

The introduction of new funding initiatives in the borough have provided an opportunity to learn about the state of the sector locally. Several organisations have run successful crowdfunding campaigns. However, we have learnt that for smaller organisations who do not have sufficient resources, this has required creative solutions, e.g. the pairing of business students from secondary school to build and market a project. This highlights the interdependencies between organisations and individuals, different parts of the social sector locally, and the benefits of youth participation and mutual aid. A challenge for our future growth and independence of the sector is to improve opportunities for these relationships to be brokered.

Action	Indicator of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist local VCSE partners in the development of a volunteering platform that can match supply and demand and increase the sharing of skills and knowledge in the sector 	Reported increase in the opportunities for targeted volunteering in VCSEs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage Council staff to share skills with local VCSE organisations through better using their volunteering days 	Council staff uptake of volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase corporate giving of skills to VCSE organisations 	Number of hours secured through social value gains
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve local open data through leveraging intelligence from corporate partners 	More corporate partners provide open data as part of social value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued sharing of accessible Council-owned data with VCSE organisations 	<p>More use of the data explorer by VCSE organisations</p> <p>Improved calibre of bids leading to increased success of bids</p>

5.3 Buildings & spaces

Community groups and businesses are often reliant on access to buildings and spaces. Support in this regard can take various forms, from rent reduction to the transparent allocation of new spaces, and to community asset transfers (CAT).

A CAT is the transfer of the ownership and/or management of an asset, often a building or a space, from its public-sector owner to a community organisation for less than market value. These transfers are made in order to achieve social, economic or environmental outcomes in the community in which the asset is located. Previous transfers have focused on community halls and centres, e.g. the Chadwell Heath Community Centre. Other approaches have focused on leases to community halls, retail, faith, parks and open spaces, as well as sharing the location of services with Community Solutions and others. For instance, the Barking Library hosts a range of services from ComSol as well as VCSE organisations, such as the CAB and Digilab.

In addition, the Council has a VCSE rent reduction scheme that currently applies to the commercial portfolio.

If we want our growth to be inclusive, we need to create the conditions under which more of these socially-oriented, community business can thrive and consider how we ensure the creation of community spaces in new developments. One part of this is buildings and spaces which will be integral to developing the sense of community and delivering activities and services locally.

Action	Indicator of success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase availability of space for VCSE organisations through leveraging resources from corporate partners 	More corporate partners provide affordable space as part of social value
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow VCSE ecosystem through increased community stewardship of small green plots 	Develop small green plots asset policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an asset transfer policy across ComSol, My Place, Parks & Events, with clear process for publicising and transferring buildings to VCSE organisations, including new developments. 	Information about available buildings is widely available and community groups apply for asset transfer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on the current rent reduction scheme for VCSE organisations occupying Council building and spaces to create a more transparent policy 	Transparency on the eligibility and requirements for qualifying for rent reduction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit to publishing the list of buildings (or spaces in a shared building) available at any given time. 	Transparency on what is available

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Appendices

A.1 New developments

Recent developments point to the huge progress we have made over the past couple of years when it comes to the physical regeneration of the Borough. We are actively demonstrating that Barking and Dagenham is 'London's Growth Opportunity' by delivering ground breaking developments, attracting major investment into new homes, industry, and infrastructure, and linking these to the aspirations of residents set out in the Borough Manifesto to seek to ensure that no one is left behind. These developments include:

- A new film studio in Dagenham East rivalling Pinewood – bringing jobs and investment as well as a huge boost to London's creative industries and film and TV production in the UK;
- London's first Youth Zone, a state-of-the-art youth facility providing year-round youth services for 2-300 children and young people every day, with ongoing funding from the private and voluntary sectors;
- A £70 million deal agreed for new railway line to Barking Riverside;
- £350 million committed to modernise council housing;
- New cultural quarter at the Roding Riverside with the new Boathouse;
- A raising of the higher education offer in the borough with the attraction of Coventry University to Dagenham Civic Centre;
- The construction of 50,000 new homes by 2037.

Organised carefully, this growth will bring tremendous benefits to the borough and to its residents, generating 20,000 new skilled jobs over the next 20 years. Regeneration is about so much more than bricks and mortar. It is social, it is about people. We need to use regeneration plans to shape great places and support strong communities, making Barking and Dagenham a great place to live, work and visit; renewing the borough for the 21st century. We know that without empowered and involved communities, a largely top-down approach to regeneration could equally translate into growing inequality, social exclusion and marginalisation.

That is why we have embraced *municipal entrepreneurialism*, an approach which combines the enduring core values of the public sector, with the community involvement and flexibility of the voluntary sector, and the commercial-mindedness of the private sector. To put this into practice we have pioneered a new form of council-owned company, rejecting out-of-date ideas of the public/private split, generating vital revenues, protecting jobs and intervening in private markets that are failing both local workers and the wider community.



We have established council-owned companies in the areas of sustainable energy, housing and regeneration, school improvement, home and traded services. These companies are wholly owned by the Council (or, in the case of the Barking and Dagenham School Improvement Partnership, by the Council and schools), and are mandated to pursue the priorities of the community as articulated in the Borough Manifesto but, by operating in the private sector, they have independence and the ability to innovate, take risks and do things differently.

We have also transformed our in-house services, breaking down the traditional siloes of the twentieth century and rebuilding the organisation to act as an enabling and collaborative council, with a focus on better utilising our data, looking at increased use of behavioural insight and innovative approaches to service design.

A particular highlight of the last four years has been our efforts to connect and reconnect with residents and actively listen to all parts of our community. In the last two years we engaged with an unprecedented 6,000 residents, through consultation and engagement work to find out what they care about and what they want for the Borough.

3,000 residents came together to produce the Borough Manifesto, a vision for the future of the Borough which forms the top-level strategy for the Council and partners, to deliver the aspirations of residents. They have also come together to develop the Good Neighbour Guide, a shared understanding of what being a resident means in Barking and Dagenham. Meanwhile, The BAD Youth Forum continues to give children and young people a voice and influence over decision-making. More recently, the Council has worked with VCSE organisations on a wide range of engagement activities across the community including 'Big Conversation' events and focus groups, 'Human Library', the first community cohesion hackathon, 'Belief in Barking and Dagenham'. These are a small part of an array of initiatives aimed at giving residents a say in the organisation of public life.

But we need to do more.

These are challenging times for residents. We are not where we could or should be in terms of outcomes; in areas such as employment, skills, educational attainment, and health, we are well below London averages (See Appendix 8). Demand for services and support is increasing while the resources available to us are rapidly diminishing. In order to meet this challenge while improving health and wellbeing within our community, we must enable greater independence among individuals and families. This will require public services to better empower individuals and families to exercise greater choice and control, not only over how they use services, but over their own health and wellbeing.

To realise the vision laid out in the Borough Manifesto, we have developed a new corporate plan articulated around three interdependent goals: (1) inclusive growth; (2) Enabling greater independence and capability, and; (3) participation and engagement:

- **Inclusive growth** means improving people's material life. Narrowing material gaps in wealth/income, with a particular focus on work/wages and places being more prosperous. We need to encourage enterprise and enable employment, expanding jobs in key growth sectors and connecting local people to those opportunities. In particular, this means supporting residents who have found it harder to gain employment to benefit from the new jobs that will be created in the borough over the coming years, as well as ensuring better wages for those who are currently in work but struggle to make ends meet.

Increasing wellbeing suggests people's broader lives being enriched and going well, related to health/wellbeing, culture, community and places; being and feeling healthy, safe, green and clean. It also suggests people feeling positive and hopeful about their lives and the place they live. People feeling engaged and with a degree of control over what's going on around them; places with good community relations and not dominated by market interests.

- **Enabling greater independence and capability:** This suggests a combination of technical and social solutions. We can use science and data to increase prediction and prevention, e.g. through analysing spend, identifying cohorts with common risk factors, hot spotting, analysing root causes and understanding flow. At the same time, we need to work with VCSE organisations to reconstruct and densify our community support structures as the response to vulnerability is necessarily human rather than technical.

In practice, this means improving our ability to help residents increase their financial and housing stability, reducing debt before they are made homeless or go hungry. For example, helping residents to make and maintain benefit claims when they first need to, not after a long month of waiting, and to find their way back to secure better paid employment. Or pointing residents towards community services and activities nearby, before social isolation takes hold and more intrusive services are required.

- **Participation and engagement, trust and love:** Building participation and engagement at the core of our interventions suggests educating and informing, as well as respecting people's agency. It means agreeing to share control through the introduction of genuine co-production processes. Crucially, participation should lead to increased trust, more cohesion in the community, and a widely shared feeling that we share a common destiny.

Central to our transformation is an understanding of citizenship rooted in civic pride, social responsibility and active participation. It is obvious that the Council cannot singlehandedly create a new relationship with residents. If our community is to be empowered, residents must take the lead. This also means that we require a vibrant, robust and flourishing VCSE organisations with which we can partner.

A.2 A changing VCSE landscape

These are changing times for social sector organisations, marked by both challenges and the blurring of traditional boundaries. Continued reductions in public funding, changes to commissioning, growing demand for services, the increased complexity of the issues that people face and, in some instances, dents to its reputation have all placed considerable strain on the sector.

Places are increasingly recognised as complex systems, influenced by many but controlled by none, and the boundaries between the roles of the public sector, business and VCSE organisations are shifting with, notably, a rapidly growing social enterprise sector. According to Social Enterprise UK, there are 100,000 social enterprises in the UK, 25% of which are under three years old. The sector is now worth £60bn, representing 3% of UK GDP and 5% of the UK workforce (Social Enterprise UK, 2018).

And whilst a growing number of businesses adopt a ‘social’ lens, charities’ sense of identity is also in flux. According to New Philanthropy Capital (NPC), many leaders are ambivalent about describing themselves as ‘charities’ in the traditional sense. There is a shift to a language of ‘causes’, or ‘movements’, which are seen as catalysing support. For Charity Commission Chair Baroness Stowell, some of these changes suggest that the concept of the registered charity may not remain the primary vehicle through which people express their charitable instincts into the future (Baroness Stowell, 5 October 2018).

In this increasingly blurry landscape, the government’s Civil Society Strategy categorises the sector in terms of activity, as defined by its purpose, rather than solely through its organisational form, e.g. charity/non-charity. The broad definition includes “all individuals and organisations, when undertaking activities with the primary purpose of delivering social value, independent of state control” (Cabinet Office, 2018). This definition widens the group of stakeholders to include charities, public service mutuals and businesses with a primary social purpose.

Voluntary and community groups have been historically funded by donations from the public, alongside independent trusts and foundations, and grants from public authorities. The later model, advocated for by national bodies such as ACEVO and NAVCA, is impacted by austerity measures and significant variations locally. Commissioner perspectives on working with VCSE organisations also appear to differ widely. A recent report by the King’s Fund for the Department of Health notes that some commissioners see their role solely as stimulating a market of providers, with no specific interest in creating a strong social sector. Others have made a clear choice about the value of the sector as a critical player in developing assets-based approaches, engaging VCSE organisations as key partners in the co-production of outcomes (Baird, Cream, & Weaks, 2018).

In its 2018 Civil Society Almanac, NCVO looks at all organisations that exist between government, individuals and businesses. It notes that the sector’s overall income increased by 4% with a slight fall in government investment being offset by growth in public funding, up by 7%. The public remains the most important source of funding for charities, with research showing that whenever a news story hits about poor governance and hysteria hits about the impact on trust, it does little to alter trends of individual investment.

However, these encouraging numbers hide significant disparities within the sector itself, particularly between large and small and medium charities (SMC). NCVO suggests that the sector is still dominated by larger charities with 3% of organisations making up 81% of the sector’s total funding. In “The value

of small”, Dayson, Baker and Rees (2018) argue that SMCs are increasingly struggling to convince commissioners and funders of the need for, and value of, their work. They add that central government austerity measures have had a more important impact on SMCs than on large charities.

Some of these gaps have been bridged through the introduction of new funds. For instance, City Bridge Trust’s Cornerstone Fund, with grants up to £20,000, aims to support partnership approaches led by voluntary organisations delivering civil society support. The fund puts a particular emphasis on cross-sectoral collaboration that involve the public and private sector. Big Lottery’s Reaching Communities makes grants of over £10,000 to support ideas and organisations that bring people together and build strong relationships across communities; improve the places and spaces that matter to communities; and enable more people to fulfil their potential by working to address issues at the earliest possible stage.

A3. Size and capacity of local VCSE organisations

Some of the challenges at the national level also play out in Barking and Dagenham, albeit in a slightly different way. Data shows that locally the VCSE sector is relatively small compared with other places, with less charities per head of population than the rest of London and a lower volunteering rate than the England average (See Appendix 2). In addition, the established sector has mixed success in attracting external funding or diversifying their funding streams. Barking and Dagenham has a greater proportion of small charities, with limited flexibility and an income of under £100,000.

According to the Charity Commission, there were approximately 414 registered charities operating in Barking and Dagenham in 2018, of which 186 were based in the borough (90 of which only work in B&D). Of these 187, a large proportion were faith-based organisations (43%), with an income of approximately £7.8 million (Figure 2). Non faith-based charities represented an income of approximately £12.4 million. Within that group, 6 charities do not spend their money locally, e.g. in aid relief for a total of £468,000.

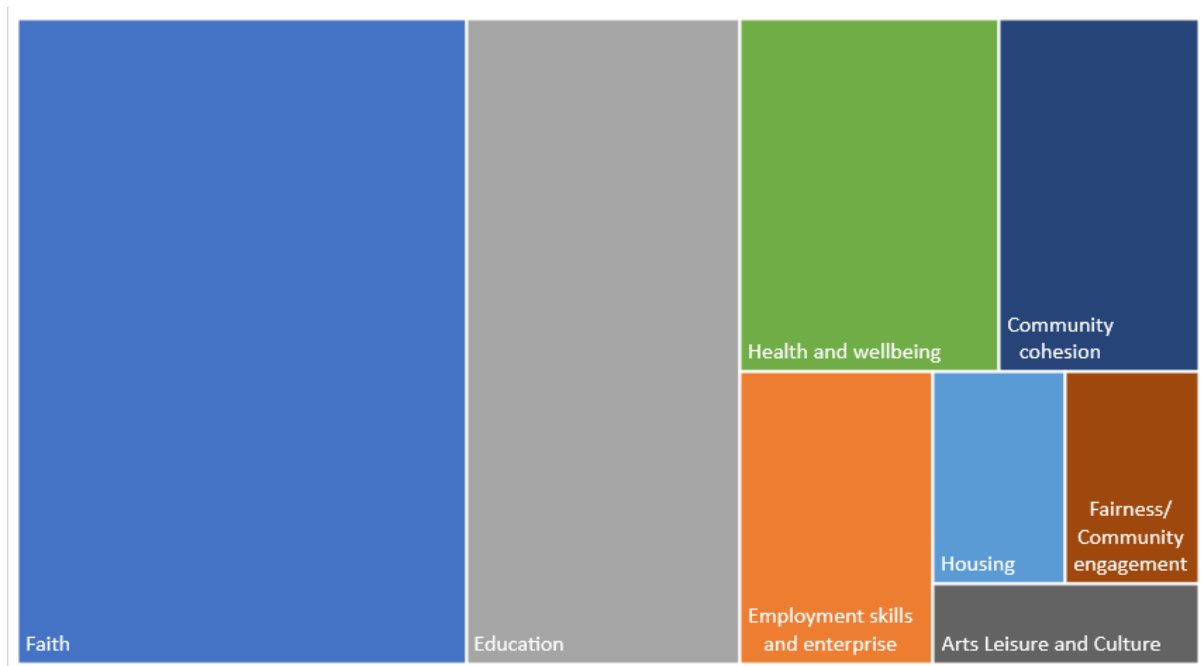
Organisations based in B&D (2017 data)	Number	Proportion	Income
Faith-based organisations	79	43%	£7,761,929
Non-faith based organisations	107	57%	£12,380,530

Faith-based charities in Barking and Dagenham (Source: Charity Commission)

Using a methodology that focuses on charities’ area of benefit (AOB), the Centre for London calculates that there are approximately 0.7 charities active locally per 1000 population in Barking and Dagenham. The borough is part of a small club in London, together with Brent, Hounslow and Newham, that have less than one charity per 1,000 residents (Harrison-Evans, Rogers, Belcher, & Colthorpe, 2018).

By comparison, central London boroughs like Camden, Hackney and Westminster have between three and four times more charities per head of population that have at least some form of local activity. Albeit by a small margin, neighbouring boroughs’ charity sectors still fare better than Barking and Dagenham, with just over 1 charity per 1,000 population in Redbridge, Havering, Bexley and Greenwich.

Charities locally supports residents and the community in many ways (Figure 3). Out of the 90 charities that work exclusively in the Borough, the main services provided included faith (46%), education (28%), health and wellbeing (14%), community cohesion (11%), and employment and enterprise (9%). It should be noted that most charities declare providing more than one service.



Services provided by charities based and working in Barking and Dagenham (Source: Charity Commission)

Lower levels of volunteering are also reported in Barking and Dagenham than in the rest of England. In 2017, the LBBDD Resident’s Survey identified that just one in five (23%) residents had volunteered in the last 12 months, compared to the national average of 42%. Volunteering personal time to community projects is widely believed to support the growth of a community as a whole and an essential ingredient of healthy democracies.

It should however be noted that these numbers refer to formal volunteering activities, and therefore might exclude a range of activities, e.g. such as religious charitable work, or unpaid care for others. With an estimated 128 known religious groups in the borough, one can imagine the significance of charitable work carried out by worshippers. In addition, the 2017 GP Patient Survey indicates that 14% of our population provides some form of unpaid care, with over 8% providing more than 20 hours per week (5% nationally).

Another important characteristic of the sector locally is its mixed success in attracting external funding or diversifying their funding streams, resulting in a relatively high reliance on commissioning from the local authority. Some of the larger groups have the capacity and are delivering significant programmes with external funding from the Big Lottery, the Arts Council and other funders. With over £8.1 million distributed to local charities between 2012 and 2018, Big Lottery is by far the most significant external donor in Barking and Dagenham. However, several large funders, such as Sport England and City Bridge Trust report low levels of funding locally, and concern has been expressed about the ability of groups to make successful applications to both local and national funders.

The Council remains the largest funder of VCSE groups in Barking and Dagenham. Internal spend figures indicate that the Council commissions for approximately £8.3 million in charities and

community interest companies (2017 estimates). A strong commitment to support social infrastructure was made by the Council in September 2010, with the transfer of the Ripple Centre to the Barking and Dagenham Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) following refurbishment under a 25 years lease. Other steps in supporting the sector locally have included:

- Use of buildings e.g. in parks, and the transfer of community centres on leases
- Introduction of VCS rent support scheme
- Supporting bids to external funders, e.g. the £1.4 million bid to MHCLG as part of the connected communities programme focused on community cohesion.
- Funding of London's first Youth Zone and Every one Every Day.

Currently there are a number of different approaches to community development and VCSE support operating in the borough with different funding models. These include:

- North meets South Big Local endowment in Marks Gate funded by the Big Lottery;
- The Thames View Community Project, funded by the Big Lottery over three years, looking to establish a local community development trust;
- BDCVS – supporting charities and wider VCSE organisations;
- Barking Enterprise Centre – supporting businesses, some of whom have a community focus, e.g. social enterprises;
- Every One Every Day – providing the infrastructure for and supporting residents to develop their own projects;
- Theme- and group-based capacity building programmes such as Creative Barking and Dagenham and Future (Youth Zone).
- Community hubs such as Harmony House, Excel Women's centre, Kingsley Hall and The Hub at Castle point.

The approach taken by the Council has sought to create a more favourable environment for VCSE organisations to grow and, in line with its new approach, to take an enabling role rather than the more traditional controlling and shaping role. This has included steps to create new opportunities for VCSE organisations, such as:

- the introduction of crowdfunding with small grants;
- the use of buildings to develop opportunities, e.g. Growing Communities farm;
- the co-location of services with Community Solutions, e.g. Barking Learning Centre with VCSE partners like Digilab and Barking and Dagenham CAB;
- supporting the cultural partnership;
- the local lottery.

One of the significant steps that the Council has taken in the last few years is to work collaboratively on local initiatives that will benefit residents or responding to requests from local organisations. Recent examples of this include: working with Love Valence to leverage significant funding for the Valence Park, applying for funding with partners for funding.

In some cases, it has also included parting with our usual way of working and inviting new organisations into the borough, to challenge our perspectives and build on social innovation practices from elsewhere.

A broad approach to the social sector, one that includes all individuals and organisations that are in the pursuit of social change (outside public sector control) is needed if we want to enable all those who have the drive and the capacity to work together to make a positive change around them with and for residents.

A.4 Strategic framework

In April 2016 Cabinet agreed to build on the recommendations of the Growth Commission and to commit to a set of principles, in light with the Commission’s suggested vision for Barking and Dagenham residents. The principles that are particularly pertinent to this report are:

- Supporting the renewal of civic culture through much more active involvement of local people and communities in civic life, organised and empowered to support and challenge the public and private sectors.
- Leaving no-one behind, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and benefit from the borough’s economic growth.
- Ensuring that the local community and businesses, as well as the Council and other public-sector organisations, each play their role.
- Doing more to work in partnership with community and voluntary organisations to provide services and enabling residents to become less reliant on the Council.

The Council cannot singlehandedly create a new relationship with residents, and neither should we. Everything that we have sought to do recently, and our direction of travel support our ambition to work with residents and partners in the “place” of Barking and Dagenham. If our community is to be empowered, residents must take the lead. This also means that we require a vibrant, robust and flourishing VCSE organisations with which we can partner.

There are several initiatives and activities that sit within the Council’s remit, which impact on our relationship with VCSE organisations in Barking and Dagenham within this context. Some of these are being developed in parallel to this strategy (e.g. the Integration and Cohesion Strategy, the Participation and Engagement Strategy, the Loneliness Strategy). Existing frameworks include:

<p>Equalities Policy</p>	<p>The equalities policy sets out a number of measures to ensure the nine protected characteristics, and additional issues of poverty inequalities are taken account in council decision making. This includes ensuring that physical regeneration supports employment and skills outcomes through planning obligations; ensuring regeneration works with local communities to ensure proposed developments preserve or enhance local social, historical, cultural, environmental, and economic characteristics; supporting social entrepreneurs in the borough to set up and grow where they can contribute to equalities outcomes, and ensuring commissioning reflects the needs of service users. This policy will support these objectives through setting an agenda for Social Value, growth in the community and voluntary marketplace, and tools for more person-centred commissioning.</p>
<p>Prevention: a local framework</p>	<p>The prevention framework recognises that life events may impact very differently on each individual, and that some communities and individuals may have different levels of capabilities to sustain their wellbeing. It therefore sets out a flexible, diverse response to individual need setting out a borough wide approach to prevention. This recognises the value of a thriving social sector, and ‘micro-providers’ of preventative care. Emphasis is placed on integration of care and support provision. This policy sets out some of the ambitions for infrastructure to support VCSE organisations growth.</p>

Culture Everywhere	The culture everywhere framework recognises that much of the strength of our community is borne from its diversity. It identifies that culture has a social value, as well as intrinsic value in shaping ideas and ways of seeing. It recognises the continued importance of participatory projects to improving cultural participation and development and sets out that new cultural activity should be led by residents, building confidence and expertise. It highlights the need to build capacity of cultural organisations in the borough, often part of the social sector, with a focus on collaboration partnerships, and information sharing.
Commissioning for better outcomes framework	This framework sets out a number of principles for the way we will commission services and collaborate with others. It places using evidence of what works and measuring outcomes; taking a whole system approach (in partnership with communities, businesses and residents); taking a person centred approach; co-producing with communities; and developing the marketplace. The VCSE strategy will respond to several of these themes and considers ways in which the market can prepare for a more outcomes-focussed commissioning landscape.
Growth Commission	A team of independent experts were commissioned to review our ambition to be London’s growth opportunity and make recommendations how to maximise the contribution of the Borough to the London economy; generating growth in Barking and Dagenham in a way that benefits all residents. A stocktake of the situation, two years on, suggests focusing on three themes, i.e. articulated around people as beneficiaries, and the structural conditions (environment) that influence their wellbeing. A third theme is concerned with participation as a way to increase transparency in the inclusive growth agenda, as well as to enable a sense of ownership, i.e. to enable people to get involved in decision-making.
Borough Manifesto	The Borough Manifesto is a collaborative, place-based, resident-led vision of the future of Barking and Dagenham. It is a set of aspirations and targets, jointly owned by public, private, community and voluntary sector organisations, setting out how the Borough should move forward over the next 20 years. It is therefore a steer for all local partners.
Transformation programmes	Ambition 2020 was the Council’s wholesale transformation plan to create a sustainable organisation that can live within its means; tackle the challenges the borough faces; respond to the Growth Commission findings and deliver the Council’s vision. Ambition 2020 triggered significant re-configurations of services and functions through several transformation programmes which have moved into implementation. Managing change and transitioning to new service delivery models will require a continued, learning based approach which puts participation and engagement with the social sector at its core.

Community Solutions	A flagship transformation programme is Community Solutions. The purpose of this new service will be early resolution and problem-solving to help residents to become more self-sufficient and resilient. It will tackle the multiple needs of households in a joined-up way and at an early stage. It will comprise multi-disciplinary and multi-agency teams that will collaborate closely with the voluntary and community sector and others to deliver early intervention and preventative support.
Customer Access Strategy	It is estimated that 20% of adults in the borough do not have all five of the basic digital skills, and that 72% have not used all five basic digital skills in the last three months. It is therefore important that when designing mechanisms of engagement that we harness VCSE organisations' capacity to reach different parts of the community.
Equalities events and Summer of Festivals	The Council uses its events programme to build community cohesion and bring different groups through community and cultural events. Within this programme are a series of VCSE related events including LGBT History Month, Black History Month, and Women's Empowerment Month. The Council also facilitates community-led 'donate a flag' event to celebrate different groups and cultures within the borough.
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Worklessness is an important public health issue. There is strong evidence that shows that for most of the population, being in 'good' work is better for residents' mental and physical health, than being out of work. The income from work also allows residents to meet their basic needs and withstand financial shocks. Within the borough, 6.9% of working age people are unemployed, higher than the London average of 5.7%. We also know that 32% of working people who live in the borough are paid below the London living wage. 15% of residents are estimated to be in elementary occupations, compared to the London average of 9%.

From a strategic perspective the VCSE Strategy is the first of a suite of strategies and policies that will be brought forward in 2019 fleshing out the participation and engagement theme of the new corporate plan, which reference and build upon each other. These are:

- A Cohesion and integration policy which recognises the importance of our vision for set out in the Borough Manifesto's vision for 2037, that is *'to make Barking and Dagenham a friendly and welcoming borough with strong community spirit'*.
- A Faith policy which recognises and celebrates the contribution of faith communities in the borough
- A Participation and Engagement strategy which seeks to develop our approach across the Council to participation and reinvigorate some of our existing engagement mechanisms through the development of community alliance networks.

A.5 Equality and diversity

This strategy is underpinned by the Council's priorities in terms of equality and diversity, in light of the Borough's glaring inequalities across a variety of indicators. LBBD residents live shorter lives, and in poorer health when compared to the rest of London. Male healthy life expectancy in LBBD is 59.8 years, compared to a London average of 64.1 years. Female healthy life expectancy in LBBD is 58.5 years, compared to a London average of 64.1 years. Barking and Dagenham also has the second highest proportion of overweight or obese children in 2016/17 was the second highest in London and England at 43.8%.

In jointly working to improve these figures, VCSE organisations have a unique position, and contribution to make to help address structural inequalities, e.g. through their frontline activities and commitment toward people with protected characteristics. This strategy outlines the Council's ambition and commitment to work with the social sector to stimulate its growth and increase participation, particularly from under-represented groups.

As required by the Equality Act 2010, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed to outline how the needs of the Borough's diverse communities have been taken into consideration in the development of the strategy. It also outlines the actions proposed in regard to the impact of the themes set out in this strategy on residents in Barking and Dagenham across all protected characteristics.

A.6 Engagement, consultation and co-production

The ideas and plan laid out in this strategy are the product of ongoing engagement from the council's Participation and Engagement Team, through focus groups, 1-1 conversations, discussions with other places on best practices on VCSE, and feedback from a range of stakeholders and VCSE actors locally. The direction proposed in this document was also discussed with key commissioning directors and services within and outside the Council, including Inclusive Growth, Social Care, My Place, Procurement and Community Solutions.

In addition, this strategy builds on a number of other pieces of research and consultation, including:

- In-depth qualitative work commissioned to the BDCVS with local voluntary and community groups on the future of the sector;
- A four-weeks public online consultation;
- Three public workshop sessions organised on 13 and 17 December in Dagenham Library, the Salvation Army (Barking) and BDCVS on 3 January.

A.7 Local giving models

Our local charitable sector cannot rely on historic endowments like in other boroughs. A classic example are the endowed foundations, that have been in existence for centuries of the likes of Cripplegate Foundation in Islington, or United St Saviour's Charity in Southwark, or City Bridge Trust, which works across London.

In 2010, Cripplegate Foundation brought together local and national organisations to establish 'Islington Giving', raising almost £6 million to this date, and bringing people who live and work in Islington together to support their local community, whether with time, expertise, networks, or money. In addition, Islington Giving awards grants to voluntary organisations that provide support and activities to Islington residents. The approach aims to offer multi-year funding to successful applicants (typically 2 or 3 years). This funding also covers core costs to ensure groups have the resources and capacity to support local residents and to contribute to the stability of the voluntary sector.

United St Saviour's is a charity to supports the people and communities of north Southwark. Through grant-making programmes, it helps communities tackle social need by investing in projects, also providing housing for older people and maintaining the place through history and resources. Practically, it proposes a Community Investment Programme for grants of more than £5,000 to help fund projects and organisations that work on positive ageing, strong, resilient communities and levelling the playing field. In addition, it proposes a Community Engagement Programme for applications up to the value of 5,000, supporting 58 different events or projects in 2017-18.

Besides these two examples, differences in the availability of funds mean that models differ widely across London from the local authority. Whilst the likes of Islington, and Lewisham have budgets of £2.7M and £4.5M respectively, others such as Redbridge and Havering are more modest (£700k and 270k respectively). The existence of resources such as endowed foundations in certain boroughs makes a big difference as it provides VCSE organisations with a safety net during economic hardships, allowing them to continue to operate when they are most needed.

A.8 Borough Data

