



EVENT REPORT

ENABLING COLLABORATION IN NEIGHBOURHOODS

Published 03 August 2022

A report on Third Sector Leeds' Citywide Event:
Collaboration in Neighbourhoods on 29 June 2022.

CONTEXT

Achieving greater collaboration within the third sector and with our partners.

If one positive came out of the Covid-19 pandemic it was the quality of the collaboration between third sector organisations and their public sector partners. Organisations across Leeds started working in different ways, sharing resources and ideas and putting aside organisational boundaries for the benefit of communities.

Third Sector Leeds believes that for our city to meet the challenges ahead, the third sector needs to continue to be a key partner in driving change and that we need not only to capture the spirit of pandemic collaboration but to go further faster.

This event, attended by 27 participants, launched our [Annual Report for 21/22](#) and focused in on our key theme for 22/23, *achieving greater collaboration within the third sector and with our partners*. For this event we chose to focus on how we can achieve greater collaboration in our neighbourhoods.



**"GREAT TO HAVE THE
OPPORTUNITY TO MEET
PEOPLE IN PERSON AND
BUILD TRUST &
CONNECTION"**

FEEDBACK FROM AN EVENT ATTENDEE

PRESENTATIONS

Creating a Vision for Neighbourhood Collaboration – Learning from Leeds Community Anchor Network

Andrea Edwards, New Wortley Community Centre

A group of organisations across the city, many of whom were involved in the pandemic emergency response as Community Care Hubs have come together to explore becoming a Community Anchor Network.

There are now 19 organisations who have committed to coordinating local action across neighbourhoods, covering 24 wards in the city. LCAN has established a clear set of working principles which focus on 'Generous Leadership' (community anchor organisations offering time and energy to coordinate local partnerships) and on collaboration rather than competition.

Andrea shared some examples from the experience of New Wortley Community Centre's work in Armley Ward including:

- Convening a group of like minded organisations that are committed to working together across Armley ward
- Beginning to develop a Community Voice Group which will move around the Ward and shape the work of the partners
- Stepping back from an interest in leasing a shop front and supporting another organisation's proposal when it became clear that the other organisation was better placed to make a difference
- Developing a coordinated approach to food distribution which plays to all partner's strengths.

PRESENTATIONS

Ensuring that Communities Shape City Services - Leeds City Council's Neighbourhoods and Communities Review

Lee Hemsworth, Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare

The Council has always recognised that neighbourhood working is key to achieving the best results for communities, but the pandemic experience really shone a light on how things could be done differently. Delivering emergency services through locally trusted, ward based community organisations got support where it was needed flexibly and quickly.

Building on that learning, the Council undertook a strategic review of how it works in Neighbourhoods and Communities which set out a vision to build new partnerships (of public and third sector organisations) at a neighbourhood level that can deliver services differently.

The Council is now working on testing some ideas that show how that vision can be made real. It is looking at 3 areas:

- Youth Provision in the City
- Development of Community Entrepreneurship
- Tackling the Welfare / Cost of Living crisis

Lee's mission is to build a truly community led city welfare system and he encouraged the people in the room to start to think about what this might look like.

"LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING HOW THIS WORK DEVELOPS IN THE FUTURE"

FEEDBACK FROM AN EVENT ATTENDEE



TABLED DISCUSSION

Most of the tables in the room focused on these questions:

1. What works well for collaborations in neighbourhoods?
2. What could make collaboration easier in neighbourhoods?
3. What can others do to enable collaboration?

Some of the key themes that were common in discussion were:

- An essential first step is to ensure that the third sector (and communities) are round the table at the right boards when decisions are made
- However, representation also needs to recognise differentials in power and resource between different partners
- Building collaboration takes time and often needs to start from shared principles and recognition of each other's strengths, specialisms and areas for growth; organisations that are further in their journey need to be generous in supporting others
- We should be open to building new consortia and partnerships, but partnership building needs to be done in a way that values everyone's contribution.
- New neighbourhood arrangements need to be multi-disciplinary, bringing together people with a range of views and experiences and from different perspectives
- It's important that any new arrangements take account of the differing experience of people from a range of backgrounds; this may need structures that are built around communities of interest as well as of geography

One table took up Lee's challenge and looked at what a genuinely community led welfare system might include. Some ideas included:

- Building new arrangements that 'bridge' between citywide and neighbourhood approaches and experiences including:
 - > A city campaign to take the stigma out of needing welfare support; a challenge to the narrative of 'strivers and skivers'
 - > Creating city systems that share data and signpost services better (and including the third sector in these data analysis and referral networks) – for instance a single directory of services
- Building on the experience of the pandemic by investing in locally trusted organisations that can enable access to welfare



"MEETING OTHERS AND FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT WHO'S NOW IN THE CITY AND WHAT THEY ARE UP TO WAS GREAT. WE MAY VERY WELL HAVE SOME COLLABORATIONS COME OUT OF THESE IN PERSON CONVERSATIONS!"

FEEDBACK FROM AN EVENT ATTENDEE

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) As Leeds Community Anchor Network develops it could consider ways in which it works with Third Sector Leeds and others to amplify the voice of communities in city discussions.
- 2) As Leeds Community Anchor Network develops it could consider ways in which it works with Third Sector Leeds and others to amplify the voice of communities in city discussions.
- 3) Citywide infrastructure bodies could undertake work to highlight learning from existing consortia which highlights the positive experiences of consortium partners and areas for growth, both as consortia form and as through their period of delivery.
- 4) Third Sector infrastructure (both locally and citywide) needs to build more opportunities for organisations to get to know each other and share their experience, values and learning – an essential way to build relationships for the future.
- 5) Subject to necessary investment, the Council and other statutory partners could go further faster in co-locating with third sector partners and building interdisciplinary/ cross organisational teams at a neighbourhood level.
- 6) Partners should continue to explore options to improve signposting and referral at a local level including exploring a single ‘directory’ for the city.
- 7) Partners should consider making a positive case for welfare support that minimises the stigma of needing help.
- 8) Local and citywide third sector infrastructure should continue to invest resources in building partnerships of organisations that work with people with shared backgrounds and in building links of mutual support across these organisations.

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