

THIRD SECTOR LEEDS: Social value roundtable notes and next steps

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On 17 June, Third Sector Leeds (TSL) hosted a roundtable event to discuss the opportunities and challenges for partners in Leeds to work differently together to achieve more around social value. The roundtable included three workshops to address different aspects of what we recognise as 'social value activity':

- Leveraging in more investment for communities
- Effectively matching or 'brokering' skills sharing between private and public sector organisations, and communities and third sector
- Making the most of social value opportunities within contracting

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS AND AGREEMENTS

There was a clear need identified independently at each of the three workshops for a time-limited working group to look at the following:

Investment – a group to look at funding the infrastructure for organisations to work together to secure and manage investment

Brokerage – a group to create a clear, costed brief for a future model for brokerage across the city

Commissioning – a group to look at social value within contracting to develop a consistent approach through:

- Sharing learning from current practice
- Agreeing some Leeds-specific TOMs (themes, outcomes and measures) that we all use
- Creating a social value provider list for informal, low-cost purchases

EXPLORING LEVERAGING MORE INVESTMENT INTO COMMUNITIES

Strengths

- Well established organisations with expertise
- Forward thinking
- Social Value as an idea has been around for a while
- Leeds organisations have ability to make a small amount of money go further
- Third sector value recognised

Weaknesses

- No consistent format for reporting on social value
- Lack of focus on the end output or the individual
- Tender processes do not always lend to maximising outputs
- No single platform across sectors
- Lack of time and resources

Opportunities

- Establishing a consistent language across the city
- Sometimes donations are easier to give - can do a lot with little money
- Do new things with existing initiatives
- Social Value Fund
- Focus on 'telling the story'
- Keep it Local commitments
- Community asset transfer and placemaking – the value that can be generated from third sector owning buildings/land
- Work towards navigating complexities together
- Organisations can give to multiple funds (both existing and new ones)
- Reciprocal relationships could be developed

Threats

- Potential for conflict between organisations and pots of money
- Limited resources within the city
- Differing Social Value frameworks
- Mismatch of offers versus actual requirements in Leeds
- Might not mean anything without proper engagement
- Costs money to all to have measures
- Bureaucracy can slow down progress

Other key points:

- Rather than an action for social value, committing to a behaviour may be more beneficial
- When looking at social value on a search engine there is no consistency with what it is/means, more consistency could be used to make sure 'everyone is on the same page'
- Build on the relationships that the third sector already has rather than creating something new

ACTION: bring partners together to look at funding the infrastructure for managing and maximising investment

- Scope out where we might seek funding for the capacity needed to allow orgs across sectors to work together to secure inward investment more broadly

EXPLORING SOCIAL VALUE BROKERAGE

What are the opportunities to release unpaid time from larger organisations into communities?

- Many organisations are already active in the 'Corporate Enabled Volunteering' space – e.g. Leeds Building Society who have a structured approach, enabled by an internal online platform – LBS are moving towards building long-standing 'strategic' relationships with organisations they know (e.g. that they have funded) – ergo there's lots to learn from orgs like this.

- Key types of volunteering include:
 - ‘Classic’ Employer Supported Volunteering – (team days to do one off, relatively low skill voluntary activity – often environmental)
 - Both one off and longer-term volunteering to enable communities (e.g. providing training to community members)
 - Release of ‘professional’ skills to support either community members or community organisations

What are the necessary conditions for this to happen effectively?

- Understand more what demand there is for both volunteers and volunteering
- Be clear about the benefits of the exchange – (e.g. Business Case for this form of Volunteering, the benefit that community orgs derive, what communities offer to larger orgs)
- Develop a clear menu of options
- Promote both the menu and the specific opportunities
- Promote and enable strategic leadership in larger organisations to create a structured programme
 - (All of the above require people and ‘marketing’ resource to make progress)
- In all likelihood we need digital platform/or platforms to underpin all of the above
 - Need to recognise that platforms already exist (e.g. Leeds Building Society already have their own platform) - so something new may not be appropriate and/or a new platform needs to integrate (so that people don’t have to update in more than one place)
- Need to have recognition of lack of capacity to volunteer and lack of capacity to ‘host’ volunteers.

How can we make this happen – who leads, what does it look like, how will it be resourced?

- Some participants felt ‘the city’ needs a specific time-limited task group, to create a clear, costed, brief for a future model (which could then be funded)
 - This would need significant commitment from a range of strategic partners and may require some scoping/feasibility investment
- Participant suggested that a time-limited task group should/could:
 - Be ‘sector’ blind – and include representatives from all sectors
 - Ensure that it understands the different drivers of different sectors
 - Address the ‘platform integration’ question
 - Address the people resources needed to coordinate a brokerage and build relationships
 - Understand what assets are already available to support this work (e.g. Business Relationship Managers already exist in the Council’s Economic Development Team)
- One participant suggested that any task group could/should include representation from Leeds Inclusive Anchor Network, Business Anchor Network, Leeds Community Anchor Network, other key stakeholders tbc (e.g. Leeds City Council’s Procurement Team).

ACTION: working group to develop a business case to fund and develop a social value brokerage platform

- This may require some time or monetary investment from partners to initiate

EXPLORING CONTRACTING, RECRUITMENT AND SUPPLY CHAIN OPPORTUNITIES

The minimum weighting that should be applied to social value (within procurement) is 10% (Social Value Act 2013)

What counts as 'social value activity' within procurement – how do we measure it?

- Recognised that this was measured differently in each organisation
- Leeds City Council uses a tool called the Social Value Engine, and measures activity against 50+ TOMs (themes, outcomes, measures)
 - These don't always feel appropriate for 'people's services'
- One challenge is that activity has to be new to be counted – e.g. needs to create 20 new local jobs, rather than valuing a service which keeps 20 local people employed.
 - This can disadvantage third sector orgs
 - We need to ensure that any future measurement / framework counts existing social value / what would be lost by losing a contract
- Some use social return on investment (SROI), which is more complex
- Perception that focusing on measurement using TOMs or other tools doesn't always capture the 'real-life' impact of activity

ACTION: working group to collectively develop a set of 'Leeds TOMs' that are specific to our communities, assets and needs

- These should be tied to the redevelopment of key policy such as the Compact and Commissioning Code of Practice
- Agreed that these need to a baseline criteria that are achievable for all organisation – but can be built upon
- Overall principles / framework / priorities around social value should support contracting, but not be limited to this – reference wider social responsibility and understand added value.

Key challenge: how to ensure that providers deliver the social value activity they say they will deliver?

- LCC has a team that follow this up – this is an asset, but recognise this isn't an easy task
 - Can ask providers to pay this funding back, but this doesn't solve the issue
 - Not all organisations have this resource
- Could we make better use of contract pauses (e.g. where a contract is 2 year + 2 years, review after the first 2 years)?

We are a Keep it Local council and Integrated Care System – what does this mean?

- It doesn't mean keeping services the same
- Lack of certainty around what you can legally do to support Keep it Local
- How do we all collectively change our procurement approaches to reflect this?

ACTION: social value working group to be formed to look at how we can prioritise local knowledge and expertise in supply chains

- This could be the Social Value Forum already planned by Leeds City Council
- This is likely to be of interest to the Inclusive Anchor Network, who have priorities around buying locally
- This could be a good opportunity to share learning from current practice, e.g. LTH hospital build
- Collectively looking at the opportunities and the legalities involved

How can we prioritise buying from the third sector wherever possible, as we know they have inherent social value?

- Perception that it's unfair to ask third sector orgs to justify their social value in the same way as private organisations
- Could third sector orgs automatically score 100% on social value questions (in contract bids) – this would automatically give them some level of advantage?
 - This wouldn't allow for differences between third sector organisations – some deliver a lot more social value than others
 - The way that social value is currently measured (on 'new' activity rather than existing) may mean that this disadvantages third sector orgs
- Private sector orgs make choices about where to buy from outside of procurement, and this can be informed by social value more broadly
 - Potential for a Social Value approved provider list, enabling decisions to be made about spending based on whether a provider is local, third sector, the ethos, EDI and other factors
 - This could work for buying in things like catering, event space etc

ACTION: to pull together a social value provider list for orgs who offer space, catering, and other good/services, outlining location, sector, ethos etc., for partners to use when a choice is being made but doesn't need to be 'procured' in the formal sense

- This will need input from all partners on current processes for selecting providers like these

This roundtable involved representation from the following partners and networks:

Third Sector Leeds

Chair
 Voluntary Action Leeds
 Forum Central
 Groundwork
 Leeds Community Foundation
 See Ahead
 Turning Lives Around
 Northpoint

Leeds City Council

Procurement
 Economic Development
 Financial Inclusion
 Adults & Health
 Asset Based Community Development
 Communities

Health

Leeds Community Healthcare Trust
 Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust
 West Yorkshire Health & Care System

Leeds Business Anchor Network

CEG
 Leeds Building Society
 Arup

Leeds Inclusive Anchor Network

National Powergrid
 British Library