

Co-operate: Tower Hamlets Voluntary Community and Public Sector Partnership Terms of Reference

Purpose

Co-operate is a voluntary, community and public sector partnership. It is a strategic body that engages its partners, harnessing their collective knowledge, skills and expertise, to maximise the effective delivery of Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy. Co-operate provides an opportunity to come together to consider recovery and renewal, bringing in new thinking and new ways of working.

There will be three meetings per year, consisting of two general business meetings and a third meeting an annual review and planning meeting.

Roles of Co-operate:

- Providing strategic direction to progress the effective delivery of Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy and overseeing the delivery of this Strategy, including the work of the Strategy's Task and Finish Groups
- Creating and sustaining effective strategic relationships with and between key partners, harnessing knowledge, encouraging networks, and identifying and driving forward opportunities and improvements.
- Responding to key strategic issues that emerge including local, regional and national issues.

Membership:

Membership will comprise representatives from the VCS, officers from the Council, and other statutory and private sector partners. There are three categories of members which will make up the Partnership. These are:

- Standing Members
- Representative Members
- Co-opted Members

There will be 7 **Standing Members**, as set out below. Standing Members serve on the group by virtue of the position they hold and will continue as members on an ongoing basis. (New appointees to the various posts will therefore automatically become members).

1. Chief Executive of Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service (Co-Chair)
2. LBTH Cabinet Member for the Voluntary & Community Sector (Co-Chair)
3. LBTH Director responsible for the VCS
4. LBTH Head of Service responsible for the VCS
5. Senior Manager from Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group (or any successor body to this organisation) with responsibilities for VCS
6. Representative from Tower Hamlets Housing Forum

7. Senior Manager from Queen Mary University of London with responsibilities for community engagement

There will be an agreed number of **Representative Members** who will attend on behalf of different sections of the VCS in the borough and will participate in the Partnership on behalf of the section of the VCS which they represent, rather than in a personal capacity or on behalf of the organisation they work for:

1. Chair of Tower Hamlets Inter-Faith Forum, representing faith organisations
2. Chief Executive of East End Community Foundation, representing funding and grant-making bodies and the Funders Forum
3. Chief Executive of Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets, representing volunteering
4. Local VCS organisation nominated by The Community Advice Network
5. Local VCS organisation nominated by Children & Youth Forum
6. Local VCS organisation nominated by Disabled People's Network
7. Local VCS Organisations nominated by Health and Wellbeing Forum
8. Local VCS organisation nominated by the LGBT Network
9. Local VCS organisation nominated by the Older People's Reference Group
10. Local VCS organisation nominated by the Women's Network
11. Local VCS organisation representing the BAME Network
12. Local VCS organisation representing people of Bangladeshi ethnicity
13. Local VCS organisation representing people of Somali ethnicity

The final category of membership is that of **Co-opted Members** for individual meetings of the Partnership. Where the body of Standing Members and Representative Members identify gaps or the need for a particular organisation to attend a meeting of Cooperate, in order to discuss and address specific issues, then people may be co-opted.

Co-opted Members may be engaged for fixed durations as required: perhaps in order to support a specific area of work being undertaken by the Partnership. As a rule however, such appointments should not be for more than one year at a time and built-in reviews must be incorporated in order to agree the need for continuation.

The membership will be reviewed and changed as necessary to ensure it is effective for VCS organisations and the wider membership.

Member Roles & Responsibilities:

Individual members role is to contribute to shaping and delivering the VCS Strategy to achieve the best results for the local VCS and people in the borough. This includes:

- To attend all meetings or send a deputy and actively contribute
- To support and contribute to the work of the Co-operate partnership
- To consult with colleagues from their respective Forum, Equality Network, or wider group they represent, and bringing these forward as contributions at meetings.
- To provide feedback to forums, Equality Networks or wider group they represent relating to matters discussed at Co-operate meetings

Where a Member fails to contribute to two consecutive meetings, their continued involvement may be reviewed.

Supporting Officers:

The following LBTH Officers will attend meetings in a supportive capacity:

1. LBTH Senior Manager responsible for the VCS
2. LBTH Manager responsible for the VCS

Meetings – Structure and Frequency:

- Meeting dates will be agreed by the Co-Chairs
- Meetings will be convened and serviced jointly by The Council and THCVS
- We will aim to circulate meeting agendas, including all supporting paperwork 5 working days prior to scheduled meetings
- We will aim to circulate meeting minutes no more than 10 working days following each meeting.
- A forward Plan of future agenda items will be maintained

Sub-groups will be established as required to progress actions, including the Task and Finish Groups that will be taking forward delivery of the VCS Strategy's priorities.

Cooperate will link to other VCS forums such as the current Mayors VCS Teleconferences, but will have a distinct role. Whilst Co-operate exists in the long term and is focused on strategic planning, the Mayors Teleconference which is focused on relationships with particular VCS organisations.

Review:

Terms of Reference will be reviewed to reflect changing landscapes and to best meet the purpose of the partnership.