VCSE Engagement Strategy Delivery Plan Overview

Civil Society Pledge: We will promote the notion of civil society and recognise its fundamental role in developing the best sense of self and community for all. In doing so we'll recognise the ecosystem of social and community activists, agencies, groups, and organisations that are independent of government (local or national) and look for ways to work more closely with the sector to benefit our communities.

Pledge Outcome	Position Statement/Actions to date	How we measure success	Future actions
We will have created a fuller picture of the key groups and organisations in our local civil society.	• We are enhancing our understanding of the VCSE sector by using existing council data. • Our insights will improve further with the renewal of our MyCake data dashboard contract along with data we already have. • We are undergoing research project commissioned by the City Mayor with New Local that we will be able to utilise. • Currently, knowledge across council service areas is fragmented, with key VCSE group information scattered. To address this, we need to consolidate and share this information internally to ensure all services have access to comprehensive data. • Beginning to build rapport with Universities and	• Creating maps and graphs to illustrate the sector. • Increasing the number of anchor organisations we engage with. • Boosting internal and external awareness of the sector through projects, information sharing and collaboration. • Regular engagement with Civil Service stakeholders.	• We will work closer with service areas and identify further who their anchor groups are. • We will provide opportunities such at events, project forums and community feedback to help build relationships. • Engage directly with public sector organisations and how they support the VCSE Sector.

	Emergency services etc that can start the conversation of what stakeholders can support the sector.		
We will have identified anchor groups and organisations in each ward.	- We have started to build a bigger picture of which VCSE groups are key to different service areas. - We have a stakeholder analysis identifying who are groups the VCSE Team engage with.	- Testing a model of civil society groups collaborating in specific areas to address key issues. - Identifying and engaging more anchor groups and key stakeholders. - Anchor groups assisting smaller organisations, with case studies shared to promote best practices.	Once finalised we will share internally and with external public sector stakeholders to build relationships further on a ward-by-ward basis.
We will be clearer about what role they play in our local communities and how we can be involved.	- We are regularly attending sector events to stay in the loop with current trends and stakeholders. This allows us to be 'on the ground' and amongst the conversation. - We need to understand the bigger picture of groups in the city before we can fully identify the role of these anchor groups and how to work best collaboratively with them.	- Increasing sector collaboration with the City Council and other organisations. - Promoting knowledge exchange between the sector, the City Council, and other groups.	- Go through information gathered from mapping and identify who to and how we engage with them. - Facilitate the conversations when we know what the driving factors are for the sector.
We will have found ways to work in a more coordinated way with these organisations.	Once anchor organisations have been fully identified and we have clarity on their role in the community we	Identifying issues using various engagement tools with the sector and our service areas.	Establish the mechanism for these groups to engage with each other in conjunction with other VCSE groups too.

	want to establish a mechanism for them to engage with each other.		
We will have championed and improved peoples understanding of the concept of civil society, making it an important part of internal and external discussions.	• We are continuing to work with the comms team to identify a VCSE comms plan to find opportunities where we can promote and raise awareness of relevant VCSE campaigns and • Attending future DMT's to raise awareness internally • Coordinating with the different strategies such as the Equalities Strategy to boost our impact and find collaboration opportunities	• Raising awareness of the VCSE sector within the City Council through more comms.	• Continue to represent the VCSE Sector and keep sharing knowledge with internal stakeholders • Continue to share comms with external stakeholders as part of our comms plan
We will do what we can to identify and work together on issues of mutual interest.	• We are part of internal projects and forums representing the VCSE sector, where appropriate we will signpost to a VCSE leader • We will integrate mutual interest list within our comms plan to identify areas VCSE Groups can be involved and have an impact	• Inviting and actively involving the VCSE sector in relevant discussions and future planning.	• Continue to represent the sector internally • Signpost to relevant groups where appropriate • Integrate this

Data and Insights Pledge: We will champion the sector inside and outside the council by promoting its activities, worth, and benefit. We will enable this by gathering more accurate, current, and reliable information from the sector, locally and nationally, and will make informed decisions based on the data and information collected. We will also share this data and information with VCSE organisations.

Pledge Outcome	Position Statement/Actions to date	How we measure success	Future actions
We will have better arrangements in place so we can coordinate thinking, planning, and working across the Council's divisions and service areas in relation to local VCSE sector groups, organisations, projects, and services.	• Identified internal stakeholders that already work with the sector • We regular meet with them on an individual basis depending on trends and needs. • We need to create an event calendar for internal stakeholder meetings with strategic topics outlined for each.	• Understanding the work of different service areas related to VCSE, identifying opportunities for collaboration, and recognising which areas rely on VCSE groups. • Holding regular, coordinated discussions with services about the sector and its issues. • Establishing and engaging champions in our ongoing efforts.	• Now the internal stakeholders have been identified we can build a regular meeting schedule to meet with these champions and discuss relevant VCSE related opportunities and challenges • Include these meetings within our comms plan
We will have established better lines of communication between all council staff working with groups and organisations in the sector so that information can be shared promptly and effectively with each other and, where relevant, with the sector and the city.	• Looking to create and test the need for a forum style group to be created. • While working individually with champions with their specific needs and deliverables for their service areas.	• Champions established and in regular contact with the VCSE Engagement Team. • Officers becoming more knowledgeable, offering support, and engaging with groups in the city. • Providing divisions and services with more information about VCSE sector issues and activities.	• Pilot Internal VCSE Champion Forum with relevant topics • If required create a Terms of Reference and commit to quarterly meetings

We will have formed a mechanism for officers working closely with VCSE organisations to link up regularly, and work more closely with representatives from the local VCSE sector and other civil society actors on important matters, and when reviewing progress of this strategy on a quarterly basis.	• Building opportunities to engage with LCC officers and VCSE leader through comms such as our newsletter. • We invite relevant internal service areas to events to support and give further opportunities to network and collaborate.	• City Council service areas are informed about VCSE sector initiatives and available support. • Conducting options analysis to identify best practices in sector engagement. • Facilitating more cross-over and collaborative efforts to support the sector. • Quarterly internal meetings are taking place and are well attended by relevant officers.	• Formalise dissemination of information and forming this as part of our comms plan • Continue to engage with VCSE Sector to understand how they would like to be engage with by LCC
We will have a better mutual understanding of assets held by us which are used by the sector, and those that could be used by the VCSE sector, to contribute towards common goals.	• We identify what the needs are through out Needs Assessment process. • Signposting to self-serve assets with member organisations such as NCVO which can support with registering organisations and constitution writing.	• Gaining a better understanding of the resources owned by the sector and how we enable VCSE groups. • Documenting the opportunities and assets that VCSE groups may require from LCC to thrive.	• Continue to identify needs • Continue to build asset bank with up to date and relevant resources • Understand what other service areas are using and sign posting to. • Identify how we package this to make it more accessible

We will develop a better understanding of the contribution of the VCSE sector to the economy and annually share this information with the local sector and the city.	• When our MyCake contract is renewed we will be able to see on an annual basis what funding is coming into the city through the VCSE Sector • We meet with the inward investment team to understand sector and where investments are coming from	• We'll have more data illustrating the economic impact of VCSE groups from other service areas, MyCake, and external organisations (VAL/LCF). • We're cultivating stronger relationships with universities to foster collaboration and support for the VCSE sector. • Reports are being generated and used across the council to address the sector's needs effectively.	• Continue to work with the inward investment team • Create annual report to identify the importance of the sector
We will have set up and delivered an outreach programme for elected members so that they are familiar with the diverse range of groups and organisations in the sector that are working with and/or situated in their wards.	• We are conducting Ward Cllr Meetings to understand the needs of VCSE Groups for a more localised understanding of the needs • Finalising ward profiles with the Neighbourhoods team to where groups are located	• Developing area profiles in collaboration with other service areas, incorporating diverse data sources. • The proposal for an outreach programme has been approved, and we are successfully piloting it across the city.	• Complete picture of ward profiles • Disseminate that information • Regularly update Scrutiny as and when required • Share invites to future events relevant to the sector

Pledge Outcome	Position Statement/Actions to date	How we measure success	Future actions
We'll be sharing information with partners and making better use of different sources of information, data and intelligence about the local and national VCSE sector so that we're all more aware of the impact of the sector in Leicester.	• We are actively going to meetings to collate information from external stakeholders like VAL and the Community Foundation • Consistently horizon scanning locally and nationally to understand the everchanging sector needs	• Regular communications and knowledge sharing with the public sector regarding VCSE-related matters. • Achieving a more informed understanding of the structure of the sector in Leicester. • Identifying gaps or areas of need through analysis of received data.	• Continue collating data from internal and external sources • Compile in a way that is relevant to the data sets and what that tells us • Use this process and data sets to make strategic decisions progressing the strategy

Pledge: We will do everything possible to help the sector become more financially robust, paying particular attention to micro (less than £10K p.a.), small (less than £100k p.a.), and fledgling or newly established VCSE groups and organisations. As the council can no longer be the funder of first choice, we have to rethink the role we play in relation to the sector and enable it to be funded and supported in different ways.

Pledge Outcome	Position Statement/Actions to date	How we measure success	Future actions

Crowdfund Leicester will continue to be an effective vehicle for financial support of local VCSE sector groups and organisations.	• We hold bi-weekly meetings with platform provider SpaceHive for regular updates and progress actions • We are supporting more projects in partnership with SpaceHive in their campaigns journey to maximise them reaching more audiences through workshops and individual meetings • We need to raise more awareness of this platform, bust the myths that come with Crowd funding and make it more well known this is an available resource for VCSE groups to utilise	• Compiling a detailed table showcasing various types of funding available on other local authority crowdfunding platforms. • Increased number of projects on the CFL platform • Increasing the number of Council funds accessible on Crowdfund Leicester. • Increasing the availability of partner funds on Crowdfund Leicester. • Providing ongoing collaboration and support to services and partners directing their funds to Crowdfund Leicester.	• Continue to promote CrowdFund Leicester in our comms and our incorporate it in our comms plan • Work with SpaceHive to improve our offering of support • Direct funders, businesses and communities to projects on the platform to support • Continue to fund through the City Mayors Community Engagement Fund where projects align to the eligibility criteria
We will know much more about, engage with, and establish stronger relations/awareness of local, regional and national funders.	• We hold meetings with various funders like Lloyds Bank Foundation and The National Lottery to understand their current scope of funds and where we can match with VCSE orgs • Using MyCake we will be able to identify gaps with specific funders and form a tailored approach to match their fund with	• Developing strong relationships with funders to facilitate collaboration and mutual understanding. • Leveraging research and data to advocate for addressing challenges and seizing	• Identify gaps in funding using the MyCake data dashboard • Continue to meet with funders and advocate for the VCSE groups aligned to their funds aims

		opportunities identified by the Council and the sector. • Cultivating strategic partnerships with funders to align priorities and maximize impact in addressing community needs.	• Organise in person/digital funding fair style events to build relationships with funders and the sector
We will put together a toolkit to display all relevant funding opportunities in an accessible way for the local sector.	• We need to understand the tools that are available, more and more platforms are closing down or rising in cost. (e.g Idox) • We work collaboratively with other service areas to share funding opportunities and share with each others networks for maximum reach	• Gain a thorough understanding of available funding tools and select budget-friendly options. • Develop an effective, user-friendly, and inclusive funding tool to attract diverse applicants and ensure successful outcomes.	• Find a clear and simple process to collate funding opportunities and decide where they can be hosted • Continues to share funding opportunities internally and share with networks
We explore ways of making it easier for VCSE organisations to provide services on our behalf.	• VCSE groups are part of the conversation when service areas of working with communities, we need to work with these service areas to see how we go from conversations and insights to delivery • We have worked with the commissioners and the procurement team to see what is possible in terms of simplifying the process to allow for more VCSE groups have the opportunity to be contracted by LCC	• Compile and export a detailed report on VCSE groups and the categories they operate in. • More discussions and awareness raising in DMT meetings for opportunities for the VCSE Sector. • Develop an accountability matrix	• Attend DMT meetings to see what their needs are and if VCSE groups can support with delivery • Continue to understand the services provided by individual VCSE Orgs

		for service areas involved in strategy actions.	
We will look at how VCSE partners, the council and other public organisations could pool funding, resources, and capacity to tackle issues.	• We work with other public bodies where relevant about the possibility of gaining joint funding. For example the VRN (Violence Reduction Network)	• Create a roadmap outlining priorities and milestones to align the sector, partners, and council in achieving desired outcomes. • Increased number of joint funding bids with relevant stakeholders that are working towards a common objective.	• When relevant funds are announced we will reach out to public bodies to see where aims are aligned and combine resources to maximise success
We will encourage joint fundraising among local sector groups and organisations for activities and projects of common benefit.	• We communicate fundraising opportunities to the sector when these opportunities arise • We need to create more enabling opportunities at events that bring people together and give them space to think more collaboratively	• Host a well-organised events with appropriate participants and facilitate meaningful interactions. • Develop a recognised twelve-month plan for regular engagement with stakeholders. • Ensure effective communication of messages to target groups, generating interest and participation. • Enable increased collaboration among	• Design more events to enable collaboration when it comes to fundraising • Continue to share opportunities with the sector through our comms plan

		groups and organisations to raise funds together.	
We will take the lead as the local voice in lobbying national government for effective funding of the sector.	• We communicate regularly with the VCSE Sector and engage with them through forums, meetings and feedback to understand the current needs in Leicester	• Attain a comprehensive understanding of sector challenges and effectively communicate information to prompt appropriate government action. • Ensure effective communication of sector needs and potential contributions, advocating for their inclusion in funding criteria. • Facilitate VCSE access to available funding opportunities for making positive changes in their local communities.	• We will continue to champion the needs of the sector through DMT meetings and Directorial buy in for supporting the sector. • Continue to collect insight and trends from sector leaders to understand needs as and when there may be a shift

Infrastructure Support Pledge: Put in place a fair and transparent process of assessing VCSE support needs and matching them with appropriate sources of support and assistance, either from our own resources or through other providers.

Pledge Outcome	Position Statement/Actions to date	How we measure success	Future actions	
We will identify and assess the needs of individual VCSE groups and organisations and meet these with tailored support. This will range from information and advice that is already freely available from local and national experts or peer sources to more direct grant-based or commissioned support.	• We deliver needs assessment sessions on an individual org basis, these sessions allow us to hear directly from groups what their needs are and how we can support them • We send self-serve resources through the NCVO and NAVCA to support groups in short term for areas like governance support • Where self serve resource isn't available the VCSE Engagement Team	• Experience a rise in groups approaching the council for assistance through the needs assessment process. • Grow our collection of resources to share with the sector, ensuring we stay current with the latest available resources. • Deliver more training and information sessions across the city to diverse groups, enhancing their knowledge and skills.	• Continue to grow our resource bank and share with the sector • Shape our Needs Assessment Process to maximise the resource we have and time spent with sector leaders	
We will identify and work with local, regional, and occasionally national providers who can meet specific infrastructure support needs of applicant groups and organisations from the local VCSE sector.	• We are continuously in conversations with local and regional training providers to see what their offering is for the sector • These infrastructure support needs are directed from the information we collect from the sector such as Needs Assessments, MyCake and engagement meetings to identify needs such as, marketing, fundraising, or business support • We are forming these trainings as part of our event calendar	• Promote cross-work among different service areas within LCC, resulting in heightened awareness of the sector's work. • Foster increased meaningful relationships, ensuring the sector feels supported and connected to the council.	• Continue to ensure we are working with the best experts in their field to provide the most impactful training to the sector • Provide consistent training to sector leaders to support the sustainable development of the sector	

		• Maintain a diverse pool of reliable infrastructure providers locally, regionally, and nationally for necessary support. • Utilise MyCake regularly and thoroughly review reports to shape evidence-based support direction.	
We will establish a VCSE peer review and support process.	• Once the full list of key anchor groups are identified we will be able to build a program where they can support fledgling groups to thrive • Identify VCSE orgs that would benefit from this kind of support • We will need to design of an attractive package to ensure the quality of the program • Exploring the possibility for a digital forum platform to enable peers to discuss and share knowledge with each other in a more informal way while staying connected	• Witnessing a rise in VCSE groups collaborating on events, projects, and campaigns, collectively striving to enhance civil society in Leicester. • Developing a platform in collaboration with VCSE groups, which is actively used and facilitates meaningful interactions among stakeholders.	• Once we have our anchor group list reach out with an attractive program that they would be excited to join • Identify and reach out to VCSE orgs that would benefit from peer support • Complete DDaT for possible platform provider to support the sector

Volunteering Pledge: We will help develop, improve, and sustain efficient volunteering policies and processes within the sector. We will provide support where we can and share learning with groups and organisations to help recruit, manage and retain volunteers. This will create a connected volunteering ecosystem in Leicester and will encourage better volunteering opportunities to be developed.

Pledge Outcome	Position Statement/Actions to date	How we measure success	Future actions	
Lead by example in recruiting, managing, and retaining volunteers.	• Working on developing volunteering internally via Volunteering Forum. Will create mechanism to update sector about what we are doing to develop volunteering e.g. via email update/meeting with sector and volunteer forum members. • Currently mark national events such as national volunteers week, small charities via comms.	• Foster a shared understanding of volunteering and its positive impact on the local community, resulting in an overall increase in volunteering. • Encourage the sector to implement systems for recruiting, retaining, and managing volunteers, with sample data available for sharing with volunteers and LCC. • Establish an appreciation programme to acknowledge volunteers' contributions, ensuring volunteers feel valued across the city. • Form a volunteer group with representatives from VCSE, businesses, NHS, universities, etc., to	• Working with Individuals from different communities involved in volunteering and collaborating to ensure opportunities are available for all. • Using and sharing comprehensive data available on local volunteering efforts • An annual formal event to celebrate volunteers e.g., awards ceremony. • Holistic insights, ensuring diverse perspectives lead to more comprehensive and balanced metrics. Fostering collaborative innovation by leveraging unique strengths of each sector, enhancing the development of effective measurement tools. Promote accountability and

		ensure diverse perspectives. • Develop an outline of a twelve-month plan for volunteer initiatives. • Implement a twelve-month plan with tracked progress and completed actions.	transparency, ensuring that measurement processes are fair, unbiased, and trusted by all stakeholders. • Clear goals and timelines, ensuring organised and effective volunteer activities. Specific milestones and evaluation points to allow for continuous improvement and adaptation. • A framework that works and supports sustained and impactful outcomes.
Use Assemble as an accessible digital platform to promote and update volunteering opportunities from local VCSE groups and organisations.	• Currently 2 opportunities from sector live (4 published in total)	• Display external (VCSE) opportunities on Assemble for broader access and engagement.	• Increased inclusivity and participation. Making a wider range of opportunities visible to a diverse audience, encouraging broader involvement in local volunteering opportunities
Draw on local and national examples of good practice to enhance the quality of the volunteer experience	• Discussions had with local and London Borough Councils. Currently reviewing programmes.	• Maintain a table outlining suggested approaches to enhance the quality of	• Referencing and implementing proven methods to improve

and consider new models for volunteering, such as incentivisation of volunteers in appropriate settings.		- volunteering experiences. - Utilising a successful model as a framework to improve volunteering practices. - Produce a progress reports detailing lessons learned from the model's implementation and outlining next steps for further improvement in volunteering.	- satisfaction and effectiveness. - Using established frameworks to foster more structured, reliable, and impactful volunteer practices. - Continuous learning and development ensuring insights and experiences are systematically captured and analysed, facilitating informed decision-making.
Find ways of sustaining and channelling community spirit shown by grassroots volunteering initiatives that came to the fore during lockdown (such as, mutual aid groups; food and medicine pick-up; keeping an eye on vulnerable neighbours).	- Using VCSE update (email to sector to do this) by encouraging groups to sustain efforts. - Once workbook gathered will share local opportunities with internal service areas. Currently been focusing on Internal discussions with LCC colleagues via Volunteering Forum.	- Attain a comprehensive understanding of the status and opportunities within mutual aid groups. - Update a workbook with available opportunities and share it with the sector via email, Assemble, and front-facing service areas such as libraries and customer services.	- Enhancing the effectiveness, coordination, and sustainability of mutual aid efforts. - Current shared information enabling increased involvement, better resource utilisation, and a more connected and informed community.

Encourage our council colleagues to volunteer with local groups, organisations, activities, and projects.	• Volunteering opportunity shared with staff via FACE (especially during events such a national volunteers week)	• Increased number of Council staff volunteering (information to be obtained from staff i.e., Survey)	• Skills and knowledge sharing benefitting the local community as well as Council staff personal development leading to fulfilment.

Business Partner Pledge: We will broker and facilitate relationships between the VCSE sector and businesses, employers and investors to maximise mutual benefits. This takes place at some level now, but we want to make it more regular, reliable and coordinated to be much more beneficial to all.

Pledge Outcome	Position Statement/Actions to date	How we measure success	Future actions	
Promote more realistic options for VCSE groups and organisations to develop commercially and sustainably (for example, to establish a 'trading arm' for goods and services).	• We are building connections with businesses that have experience in expansion and a willingness to support VCSE orgs • We first need to understand if this is a priority for groups or if there are other elements of development that are more crucial to them	• Organise regular forums and focus groups to facilitate joint communication, guiding collaborative efforts. • Establish an LCC-led program to provide tailored support on a 1:1 basis for groups. • Enhance communication with the business sector and VCSE groups already engaged in business partnerships.	• Continue to build relationships in the business sector through networking and 'match making' with groups that have similar values	
Look for opportunities for the local VCSE sector to work together with local	• We are enabling relationships to grow through our business and vcse sector events that will form part of our infrastructure support pledge too	• We possess knowledge of available business support and effectively share it with the	• Continue to put on events that enable the two sectors to come	

businesses for mutually beneficial ends.	• We are sharing with the sector CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiatives that local businesses have such as pro bono support, volunteering programs, awards and funding opportunities.	sector, detailing offerings from various businesses and their locations. • Forge stronger relationships with the business sector, collaborating to support VCSE groups effectively. • Cultivate longer-lasting and more meaningful relationships between groups and businesses, reducing pressure on the council for support. • Organise well-attended in-person events across the city, fostering moments of connection between the two sectors.	together and collaborate • Continue to be knowledgeable about CSR initiatives available in the city • Share CSR initiatives and have this within our comms plan to the sector • Champion real examples of City VCSE x Business partnerships
Identify opportunities for the local VCSE sector within government initiatives that apply in Leicester, such as the Levelling Up agenda.	• We constantly have our ear to the ground with government initiatives and how we can support the VCSE Sector, this is inclusive of the Levelling Up agenda and the Community Ownership Fund • As we build and enable a supportive vcse-business community through our comms, events and development opportunities we will see a rise in the number of partnerships which will hopefully inspire more of these partnerships to blossom	• Experience a rise in engagement with Government-led initiatives, showcasing active involvement in national programs. • Witness an increase in government funding and support directed towards Leicester,	• Continue to share opportunities with VCSE groups and where appropriate invite businesses to be involved • Continue to work with internal service areas to share knowledge

| | | indicating growing recognition and investment in local initiatives.
• Increased collaboration between the business and VCSE sectors, promoting synergistic partnerships for community development.
• Notice more business representatives sharing their knowledge and skills within organisations, dedicating time and resources to support VCSE groups and fostering new relationships. | and maximise reach of government initiatives |