

#OurWayAhead Planning Group Statement of Purpose

Who we are: A Pan London Network, whose members range from voluntary organisations to community sector networks and associations.

Our story: Something felt wrong: decisions taken in the name of communities¹ without their involvement, ever deeper poverty and rising inequality, lives lost as services fail. We organised an event as a call to action on 12th July 2017 at London Metropolitan University which saw over 200 groups and individuals engage in an afternoon and evening of dialogue, networking, campaigns and presentations. We set up a planning group and have committed to work collectively in solidarity with campaigns and build a grassroots movement for social justice as detailed below

Area of focus: London; with a further interest in communities affected by London



The goal of the Movement:

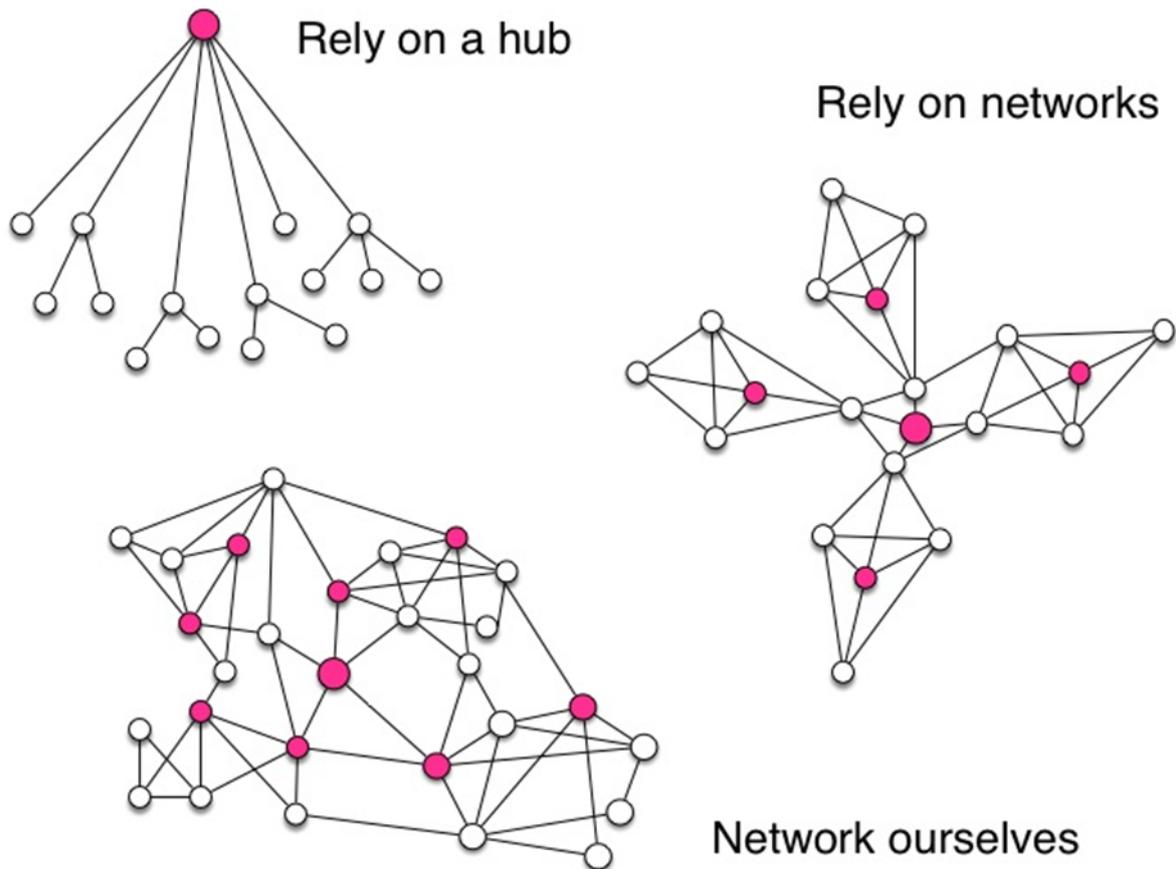
Our long term goal is to ensure that grassroots communities and communities of identity and interest have greater power in issues that affect their lives. We reject top down way of operating 'on' communities of place, identity and interest and believe that policies designed without the consent of communities will fail and deserve to do so. There is no single 'way ahead' for communities. We want to reverse the inequality of power, voice and money evident in public policy set by statutory, funder and senior voluntary sector vested interests. We will do this by campaigning, mapping and community development. Ensuring outcomes of strengthened platforms

¹ Communities refers to those that can be defined by geography, identity or interest

and spaces for action, sharing research and ensuring campaigns are more widely supported.

There are alternatives to ‘top down’ leadership

We are committed to being inclusive and accessible and will constantly review and improve our work to ensure this happens. We reject the monopolising of power by organisations that are hierarchical because the outcome of this are processes and structures that are not inclusive or accessible. As the diagram below shows, our model is one whereby we ‘network ourselves’.



Justice not charity:

We are motivated by principles of justice not charity and believe issues of oppression can only be solved in a systematic and structural way. We understand that oppression has many overlapping causes and characteristics but believe that it is ultimately created and perpetuated by inequitable relationships of power and is a direct consequence of social, political and economic choices. Therefore we will grow our own power and trust in one another to create an alternative and fairer London.



These objectives were to be realised by the following activities:

- ∅ Gathering data and research on grassroots community activity (mapping)
We have developed over 30 local case studies and mapping of communities across London and are building a digital map
- ∅ Convening/facilitating networks ('bottom across')
We have held a number of events, including community cafes', dialogue on GLA consultation and 'open space' dialogues for reflection and action
- ∅ Intelligence gathering – empowering through story telling
We are working with private sector partners, universities and community groups to transform the narrative in order to celebrate, inspire and energise future action
- ∅ Supporting community campaigns
We have developed our capability to work in solidarity with campaigns, leveraging our networks and enhancing our access to digital cascading of communications to multiple audiences
- ∅ Joining up the sector - linking large with small; coalition building and being a network of networks
We continue to build coalitions and alliances as a 'network of networks' using the 'CoTech' #ourwayahead website to enable collaboration and sharing of resources, connecting communications: building accessible digital community platforms
- ∅ Bringing in resources for communities of place, interest and identity
Communities need money and resources to support what they do. We will continue to make the case for investment because the work done needs to be funded

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