

# How to win funds and influence people

## Chapter 1: Nottingham City Council

Welcome to our new series on developing a stronger voluntary and community sector. We will be looking at a range of ways your voice can be heard including influencing decisions and accessing finance. This first chapter focuses on the City Council.

### What's what

#### **what is a portfolio holder ...**

9 elected members with lead responsibility for particular service areas. Jon Collins, who is leader of the City Council, also has Portfolio responsibility for the City Council's relationship with the voluntary sector.

**what is an area committee ...** the City Council has nine area committees that provide an opportunity for residents and other partners to understand and influence the decisions taken by elected members on issues that affect that area..

#### **what is the voluntary sector open forum ...**

a quarterly vehicle for the VCS and City Council to talk. Lead Officers ensure the issues raised are used to inform future Council thinking. Meetings are publicised in NCVS' Snippets magazine and anyone is welcome to attend (although you are requested to register in advance). The City Council invite all previous attendees who have registered and groups who have applied for funding.

#### **what is the neighbourhood management team ...**

neighbourhood management is a new approach to delivering council services. It is intended that the 9 neighbourhood managers will make things happen by connecting customers to services and involving communities in decision making.



### **Make yourself known**

Make sure key people in the city council know who you are and what you do. The City Council employs over 13,000 people and has 55 elected members. Has your organisation identified and established a good working relationship with the right elected members and city council officers? Do they understand your aims and the fit with the city council's aims? Do you? The City Council's corporate priorities are expressed in the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan.



## Decide why you want to influence the city council.

### to make a difference to how the city council relates corporately to the VCS

- attend the quarterly voluntary sector open forum
- respond to corporate consultations
- understand and use the Compact

### to raise the profile of communities of interest or identity

- make contact with the City Council's Action on Diversity Team
- respond to corporate consultations - such as the Your Voice Your Choice Community Strategy consultations - to ensure the specific needs of communities are understood and prioritised

### to make a difference to what happens in your local area

- area committee
- local elected member(s)
- neighbourhood management team

### to influence the service delivery, policy or strategy for particular departments

- respond to consultations - your key contacts in the city council will let you know when these are planned
- build relationships with key staff - depending on what you want to influence this might be individual front line staff, whole teams or senior management - or all of these.
- spend time developing partnership working - the city council will always look for VCS input into developing strategies, but they can't ask you if they don't know who you are
- there are 9 Portfolio Holders - elected members with lead responsibilities for particular service areas - find out which portfolio your organisation sits in (it may be more than one).

### to receive funding

we all want this. But don't limit your relationship with the city council to grants and contracts. The VCS has considerable expertise and close links with local residents that the council needs to develop more effective services and find out what works in communities.

### to do any (or all) of the above

- Remember we are stronger together. Other VCS organisations can support you to influence the city council.
- Local Area Partnerships, Notts Black Partnership, Community Network - if its neighbourhood renewal see if we can help
- VCS infrastructure bodies like HLG, Enable or Self Help Nottingham - if it's about their subject area (or you think it should be) see if they can help
- wider voluntary sector issues - Nottingham CVS might be able to help you

Contact us on 0115 934 8415 or email [info@ngcn.org.uk](mailto:info@ngcn.org.uk) for help or signposting.