



# Citizenship and Integration Initiative

**Learning Partner Report**

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## Contents

Introduction .....	5
Context .....	7
Development of the Initiative.....	7
Citizenship, migration and integration.....	7
Cross-sector collaboration .....	9
Civil society expertise and voice .....	10
Aims of the Citizenship and Integration Initiative.....	11
Aims and objectives .....	11
Types of objectives.....	14
Tensions within the Initiative’s objectives .....	14
The Citizenship and Integration Initiative model.....	18
Overview of the model .....	18
Secondment application process .....	19
Funded community projects.....	20
Ongoing support of independent funders .....	20
Overview of work delivered .....	21
Young Londoners .....	21
Legal Advice in Primary Schools project .....	22
Voter registration and political literacy .....	23
EU Londoners.....	24
Citizenship Ceremonies .....	25
Hostile Environment and Welcome.....	26
The nature of Citizenship and Integration Initiative secondments .....	27
Type of work delivered by secondees .....	27
Project delivery.....	28
Informing policy within the GLA .....	28
Types of policy input.....	29
Leveraging the benefits offered by partnership working .....	29
Ownership .....	32
Focus of secondments over time .....	33

What was achieved by working in this way? .....	36
Achieving more than the sum of its parts.....	36
Influencing the political agenda.....	37
Benefits to the GLA and civil society organisations.....	38
Improving the lives of Londoners .....	40
Overcoming barriers to cross-sector collaboration.....	42
Overcoming barriers to social change .....	44
Responding to change over time .....	46
What the Initiative was not able to achieve .....	48
Independent identity .....	48
Public profile .....	49
Engaging support from the Mayor.....	49
Engaging the public, communities and grassroots civil society .....	50
Limits to achieving more than the sum of its parts .....	50
Longer-term relationships between civil society organisations and the GLA.....	51
Challenging working culture at the GLA .....	52
Minimising power imbalance.....	52
Limited benefits experienced by seconding organisations.....	53
Capacity in the sector.....	54
Recruitment process .....	54
Limits to flexibility .....	55
Number of community projects funded .....	55
Challenges of the model.....	57
Summary of learning and recommendations .....	59
Recommendations for this Initiative .....	59
Recommendations for other Initiatives of a similar nature .....	62

## Introduction

The Citizenship and Integration Initiative is a pooled fund to support work on citizenship and integration in London. It was launched in 2017 and aims to raise and distribute £1 million from a number of independent funders in the Mayoral term to further shared goals on social integration. This investment has been used to fund secondments from civil society organisations into the Greater London Authority (GLA), as well as projects outside of the GLA. The Mayor of London has appointed a Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, and the GLA has made an equivalent investment into their new Social Integration team.

At its core, this initiative is about testing a new model of cross-sector partnership working between London’s regional government authority, civil society organisations, and independent philanthropic funders. The key question addressed by this report is: **what can be achieved when regional government and civil society is funded to collaborate in this way?**

The following partner organisations and teams have been involved in the Initiative to date:

Funders	Greater London Authority	Civil society organisations
Trust for London	Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement	Citizens UK
Unbound Philanthropy		Coram Children’s Legal Centre
Paul Hamlyn Foundation		Just for Kids Law / Let Us Learn
City Bridge Trust		Migrants Organise
Pears Foundation		New Europeans
	Executive Director, Communities and Intelligence	Hope Not Hate
	Assistant Director, Communities and Social Policy	Project 17
	Social Integration team	

**Renaisi** were commissioned in July 2017 to act as learning partner to the Initiative. Our role has been to support the partners to learn from their activities, use this to refine the Initiative based on evidence, and share key learning with other stakeholders. An earlier interim report of our findings can be found [here](#).<sup>1</sup>

This report takes stock of key learning over two years into the Initiative, drawing together insights from our work to date and providing recommendations for others considering a similar approach. First we explore the political context which has provided a rationale and backdrop to the Initiative’s work. We then describe the aims of the Initiative, including some tensions in priorities between partners. The next sections explore the model, overview of work delivered and

<sup>1</sup> *Citizenship and Integration Initiative Interim Report*, Renaisi, May 2018

the nature of secondments funded by the Initiative, followed an assessment of what this approach has been able to achieve to date. The report then summarises ambitions that the Initiative has not yet been able to achieve, and challenges experienced to date. It concludes with summary of key learning and recommendations.

## Context

### Development of the Initiative

Momentum to develop this Initiative was built over a period of time in the run up to the 2016 Mayoral election, with key contributions made by independent funders, civil society organisations and GLA officers. In April 2016, Citizens UK organized a Mayoral Assembly at the Copperbox where Sadiq Khan heard from a member of Let Us Learn about her experience of having insecure status, and committed to supporting Londoners in this position. The Initiative also builds on recommendations in the British Future report, *Making Citizenship Matter* (2016), that the Mayor should create an Office for Citizenship and Integration.<sup>2</sup> GLA officers and independent funders worked together to create a blueprint for the Initiative, and were able to secure the Mayor's commitment to the project.

### Citizenship, migration and integration

What it means to be a citizen, who benefits from those rights and privileges, and how all of us live together in society are defining issues for our times. Questions of citizenship and social integration represent a public policy challenge that is growing in importance, but which suffers from a lack of political attention and informed debate. Public attitudes towards these issues tend to be polarised and in recent years, increasingly negative, particularly in relation to migration and associated social challenges. Commentators have highlighted a lack of political leadership in the UK to find progressive ways of talking about citizenship and integration issues.<sup>3</sup>

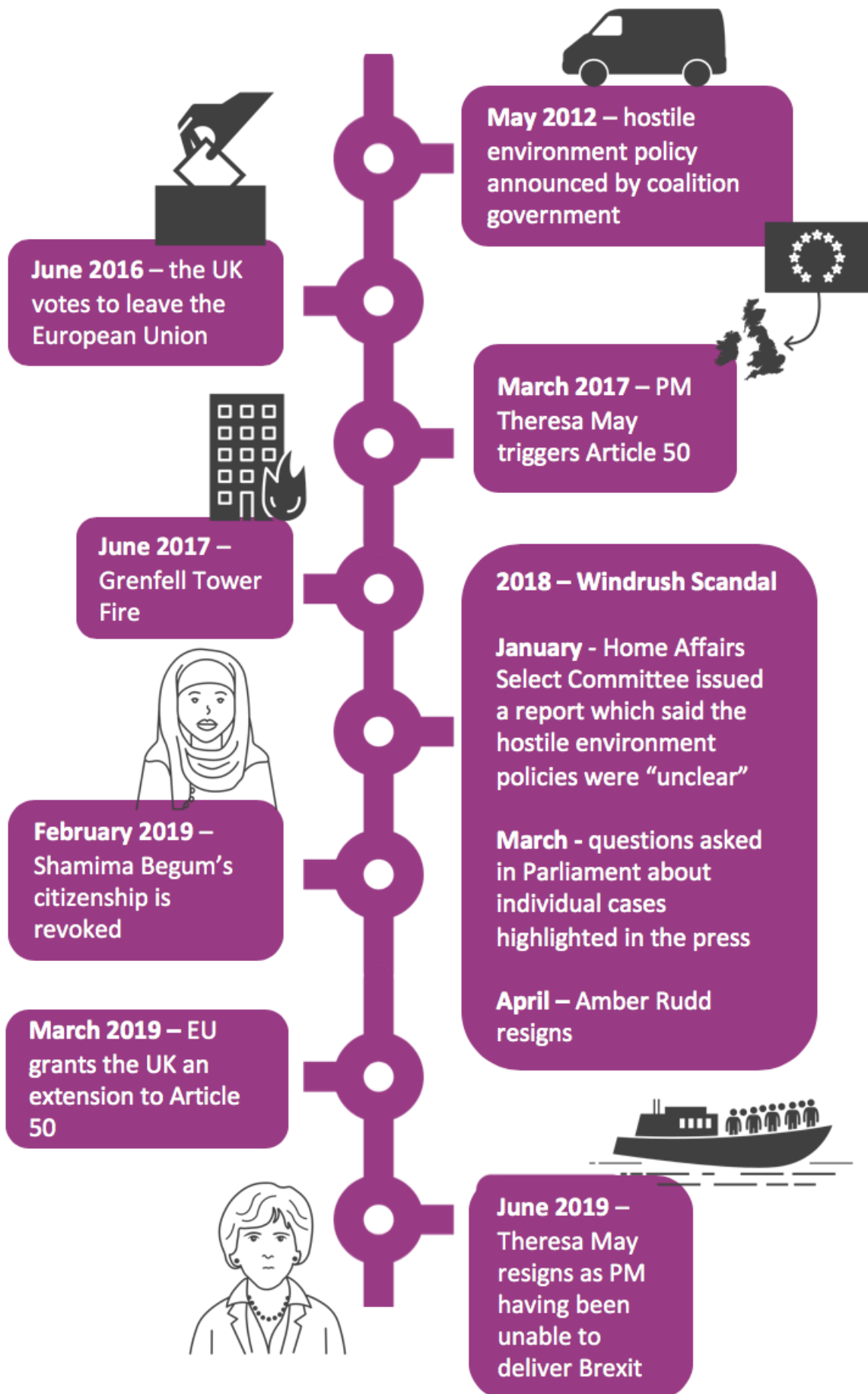
Within the lifetime of this Initiative, a series of high-profile national events have highlighted the importance of these issues for our society:

- The **Brexit vote**, ensuing political crises and deadlock – bringing to the surface deep societal divisions and unleashing a rapid increase in hate crime
- The **Windrush scandal** – raising questions about access to citizenship rights and racism in British society
- The **revoking of Shamima Begum's citizenship** – with the implication that the 'right' to citizenship is conditional
- The **Grenfell disaster** – exposing inequalities, distrust of authorities and social injustice
- The Government's ongoing **hostile environment policy** – which has provided a background to all of the above, as well as threatening migrant rights and integration

The following timeline provides an overview of some of the key moments which have influenced the political and policy context in which the Initiative has evolved.

<sup>2</sup> Available online at: <http://www.britishfuture.org/publication/making-citizenship-matter/>

<sup>3</sup> *Integration Not Demonisation*, All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration, August 2017





All of these events were of national importance, and were shaped by the national policy context. But the Citizenship and Integration Initiative operates at a regional, not national level. Unlike counterparts in the USA, **London's Mayor has no direct powers over policy relating to migration and citizenship** despite the significance of these issues to this diverse city. However, the Mayor does have an influential voice, and the opportunity to shape political and public discourse in the city. One ambition for this Initiative was to see whether London's regional government could be supported to push citizenship and integration issues up the political agenda, and counteract negative national discourse with a more positive approach which reflects London's diversity and progressive attitudes in the city.

*"We were saying [to the seven regional Mayors elected in 2016-17] – this should be an issue on your agenda. That's still the core message."*

*"There is a real opportunity around city administrations championing rights of people living there, as citizens of a city. Policy at a national level is so hostile – this is an emerging opportunity to counterbalance that at city level."*

It is worth noting the important effect that the Brexit vote and subsequent political crisis has had on this Initiative. Many partners feel that its potential has been limited by the political and public attention that Brexit has consumed. However, the partners were able to adapt the objectives and include a new strand of work supporting EU Londoners in the second year of the Initiative. Arguably, the political context made this work even more necessary, but also made it challenging to bring attention to other issues even if they are related.

*"The timing was really bad for this kind of work with Brexit and everything..."*

## Cross-sector collaboration

Another key contextual factor for the Initiative is a high level of interest in the social and public sectors in the possibilities presented by improved cross-sector collaboration.<sup>4</sup> The extent of responsibilities of the state, and the proper role of charities in delivering public services, are important questions for our sector; boundaries between sectors are fluid, contested, and constantly renegotiated.<sup>5</sup> Cross-sector collaboration is widely supported and valued in theory, but it is difficult to do well in practice. This Initiative can be seen as one way of addressing the challenges of meaningful and sustainable collaboration between civil society and the public sector.

*"It became clear that there was a real appetite within the GLA to engage with foundations and civil society, and they would be able to 'match' funding on both sides – both sides took it more seriously given that the other party was willing to commit resource."*

<sup>4</sup> *The state of collaboration: How ready are we to collaborate?* Collaborate Foundation, June 2018; *New Municipalism in London*, Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), March 2019

<sup>5</sup> *Social Power: How civil society can 'Play Big' and truly create change*, Sheila McKechnie Foundation, June 2018

*“There is no one actor for these issues. It requires partnerships across different sectors.”*

## Civil society expertise and voice

A third significant context to the Initiative is the ability and role of civil society organisations to contribute their knowledge and expertise on social policy issues to the public policymaking process. Partners felt that there was mutual benefit to Londoners in supporting the democratic mandate of the Mayor and the GLA with informed and relevant experience from civil society. By working in a more direct way, via secondments, the model is an attempt to address the siloed nature of much public policymaking. A further ambition for the Initiative was to unleash civil society’s potential to drive social change in London, by providing a vehicle for informing and contributing to the work of the GLA.

*“The broad goals were negotiated over time between Trust for London, other funders, civil society and the GLA. It confirmed that the CII would be at the heart of the new Deputy Mayor’s agenda and the broader work on citizenship and integration.”*

*“We want to try to shift the paradigm, to create a culture of being welcoming and supportive of migrants.”*

# Aims of the Citizenship and Integration Initiative

## Aims and objectives

The overall ambition for the Initiative is to advance shared goals of encouraging active citizenship, social integration and shared identities among all of London's residents. If the partnership model is effective, then it should advance these goals in a way that is **'more than the sum of its parts'**, i.e. to achieve more together than would have been possible by individual organisations outside of the partnership model.

*"Has more been achieved by bringing different stakeholders together than would have happened if working separately? What has been the added value of working together?"*

*"The other thing is could we have done it anyway? Or did it only happen because we did it together? Hopefully the latter."*

In early conversations about their motivations for being involved, partners collectively articulated three 'levels' of ambitions that they hoped the Initiative would achieve. Most partners had some level of interest in all of them, but priorities varied.

- 1) To push citizenship and integration issues up the political agenda, and leverage in funding to resource this work.**

*"It will be a success if the CII is embedded in the medium-long term in London's government... and there is a long-term focus on integration and citizenship by the Mayor of London."*

- 2) To enable the GLA and civil society organisations to mutually benefit from each other's skills and strengths.**

*"I hope there is some change in the way people go back and work in their individual organisations. I hope the Initiative will do something to shift the culture at the GLA. And I hope the secondees will go back into their organisations and have a better idea of how to work better with public sector bodies in future."*

- 3) To make progress on important social issues relating to citizenship and integration, thereby helping to improve the lives of Londoners.**

*"I want [the team] to feel they have made progress, and done stuff that makes a difference... basically, some hard evidence that we have made a difference."*

Within the third ambition, two goals stood out as being particularly important to most partners:

- a) improving young Londoner's access to their citizenship and residency rights, ideally increasing the number of young Londoners registered as British Citizens;

*“Ultimately it’s to make London a better place through social integration in general. But a very high priority within this is to support young people to gain citizenship status.”*

*“The ultimate aim... is that more young people are registered as citizens, and the barriers preventing them from participating in civic life are removed.”*

b) increasing rates of voter registration in communities which are currently under-represented.

*“The biggest legacy might come from [secondees] working on voter registration – getting the GLA to a point where they feel able to do that is a huge achievement, especially if it continues going forward.”*

Together, these ambitions form a coherent set, but they do not share a single measure of ‘success’. For example, it would be possible for the Initiative to succeed in achieving (1) but not (2) or (3), and so on. Civil society organisations strongly prioritised (3), whereas other partners’ priorities were more balanced.

The following table outlines the Initiative’s shared goals, collectively agreed by the partners. These were revised and updated for the third and fourth year of delivery.

	Initial objectives (2017-2018)	Revised objectives (2019-2021)
<b>Civic engagement/ Active citizenship</b>	<p><b>Increasing civic engagement (e.g. through formal citizenship processes/ ceremonies, voter registration)</b></p> <p>Increase voter registration</p> <p>Work with local authorities on approaches to British citizenship processes</p> <p>Develop London-wide citizenship ceremonies</p> <p>Develop Londoner welcome pack using intelligence from other work</p>	<p><b>Supporting Londoners to be active citizens - Encouraging active citizenship and increasing voter registration</b></p> <p>Work to increase voter registration, building on the political literacy resources developed in the previous year.</p> <p>Drawing from research commissioned across the GLA and the Citizenship Ceremony pilots, pull together insights on key intervention points to increase active citizenship across London.</p> <p>Focus on how the GLA can embed learning from citizenship ceremony research, voter registration drive and other existing GLA projects into GLA programmes to increase civic participation.</p>

<p><b>Young Londoners / EU Londoners</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting young Londoners to secure their legal rights to residence (as committed by the Mayor during the election campaign)</b></p> <p>Raise awareness &amp; increase support available for young people with irregular status (lobbying where appropriate)</p> <p>Work with E&amp;Y to develop London Curriculum on citizenship</p> <p>Embed citizenship approaches in schools (including London welcome pack, voter registration etc)</p> <p>Work with children's services on approaches to young people with irregular status</p>	<p><b>Tackling barriers and inequalities - Securing status – supporting young Londoners and European Londoners to secure their legal rights</b></p> <p>Continue work on Young Londoners with insecure status. Focus on ensuring young people access the online resources, and organising young Londoners with insecure status to inform the work of the Mayor.</p> <p>Inform a wider programme of work to increase access to legal advice.</p> <p>Continue work on EU Londoners, maintaining the EU Hub, engaging with European Londoners on EU settlement scheme, increasing access to legal advice and developing a 'Settled Status ceremony'.</p>
<p><b>Social integration/ Hospitable environment</b></p>	<p><b>Celebrating diversity and building shared identities (including engaging with Londoners on what it means to be a citizen of London)</b></p> <p>Explore what it means to be a citizen of London and develop associated campaign</p> <p>Develop pilot projects/funding to promote social contact</p>	<p><b>Promoting shared experiences - Creating a more hospitable environment</b></p> <p>Develop thinking on creating a hospitable environment in London, focusing on research and guidance as to how frontline professionals can be welcoming within the confines of the law, with a particular focus on ensuring unnecessary barriers are not in place to exclude Londoners from the services they are entitled to (e.g. primary care).</p> <p>Building on work mapping welcome organisations and strengthening their work.</p>

## Types of objectives

**Some of the Initiative’s objectives are more clear-cut than others.** The success of the young Londoners strand, and voter registration, could in theory be measured by counting whether there has been an increase in people accessing these rights or not. In contrast, the integration strand of work can never be ‘finished’ because integration is an ongoing process for a diverse society, and as such there is no clear measure of success.

**The types of ‘problem’ addressed by these areas of work are also different in nature.** The young Londoners work addresses a justice issue – young people’s inability to progress in their lives because they lack the rights associated with citizenship. The EU Londoners and voter registration work addresses a process challenge – enabling people who already have rights to access and use them. The work on citizenship ceremonies is about addressing the challenge of how to encourage a certain type of social behaviour.

As a result of this, secondees furthered the Initiative’s objectives in two contrasting ways:

- **Within the parameters of existing policy:** Supporting Londoners within the constraints of current policy, providing capacity and resource to make approaches more effective but not challenging the status quo.
- **Challenging existing policy:** Encouraging and supporting the GLA to challenge current policies which are seen as unjust, infringing Londoner’s rights and/or acting as a barrier to integration.

## Tensions within the Initiative’s objectives

There has been a strong alignment of partners around the overall vision and objectives for the Initiative, which were developed collectively. However, there is an inherent tension between and within the core concepts that the Initiative addresses: ‘citizenship’ and ‘integration’.

Concept	Meaning	Examples of work aligned with this concept
<b>Citizenship rights</b>	Access to rights associated with having British Citizen status, including voting rights. <sup>6</sup> This affects a minority of people in society who lack access to rights, or the ability to exercise them.	<p>Young Londoners work facilitating access to citizenship and settled status.</p> <p>Voter registration work ensuring those who have this right are able to use it.</p> <p>Influencing work on the hostile environment – particularly focusing on the lack of rights faced by those without citizen status.</p>

<sup>6</sup> For more detail, please see *Nationality: right of abode*, Home Office, May 2018

<p><b>Active citizenship</b></p>	<p>The involvement of individuals in their communities and the decisions that affect them: this can take place at local, national and international levels. It could look like resisting unwanted change in a local community, voting in democratic processes or being involved in a movement to promote fair trade.<sup>7</sup> This is relevant to everyone in society.</p>	<p>Using citizenship ceremonies as a vehicle for promoting active citizenship, and an opportunity to encourage people to volunteer, vote, give blood etc.</p>
<p><b>Integration</b></p>	<p>How we all live together, positively interact and connect with others from different backgrounds - this affects everybody in society.<sup>8</sup> The Mayor's Strategy for Social Integration identifies three elements: equality, relationships and participation.</p>	<p>Secondees' contribution to the GLA's Social Integration strategy.</p> <p>Influencing the #LondonisOpen campaign, focusing messaging on 'you belong' not just 'you are welcome'.</p>

*“Because it was the same word [citizenship], people assumed it would be easy to package together. But we are working with 10 year olds trying to save up to become citizens, and [secondee] was working with adults who had citizenship and were celebrating in a town hall. It is very hard to bring those things together. There are three or four different meanings of the word citizenship which are actually quite separate.”*

The Initiative embraced all three concepts relating to citizenship and integration, where it could have chosen to focus on only one or two. The following table summarises some benefits and disadvantages to this broad approach:

Benefits of broad approach	Disadvantages of broad approach
<p>Broad appeal across a range of stakeholders</p> <p>Wider range of funders interested</p>	<p>Creates incoherence between objectives that have a clear 'all of us' focus, and those that are specific to certain groups</p> <p>Harder for partners to maintain consensus</p> <p>Work is less focused</p>

<sup>7</sup> This definition is adapted from *An Introduction to Active Citizenship*, Community Southwark, date unavailable

<sup>8</sup> This definition is taken from *All of us: The Mayor's Strategy for Social Integration*, Mayor of London, March 2018



Able to make case that the Initiative benefits everybody – not just certain groups	Seconding organisations more interested in citizenship rights – causing frustrations when secondees are asked to work on other areas
Greater potential to attract public interest by being less niche	Resources spread more thinly than could have been achieved with more specific focus
Supports a progressive ‘all of us’ approach to social integration	

The Initiative sits between the GLA’s need to serve all Londoners, civil society’s focus on certain disadvantaged or marginalised groups, and funders’ interest in developing a model that can have a sustained impact and potentially be replicated elsewhere. The Initiative’s broad aims were a pragmatic response to the challenge of bringing these stakeholders around a common goal, however some partners questioned whether more could have been achieved if the aims had been more focused.

*“If the Initiative had been specifically focused on [young people with insecure status], I wonder if we could have made more progress... the Social Integration brief has been quite wide... It started out very very broad. Could we have gone deeper and quicker if the focus had been narrower?”*

*“The issues are quite broad – citizenship ceremonies is tangentially linked to [young people with insecure status] but not very linked, so it is very broad which is a challenge.”*

Most of the civil society organisations involved in the Initiative have a core mission related to citizenship in the ‘rights’ sense. Whilst the Initiative did have a strong focus on this, its work also encompassed citizenship in the sense of ‘participation’ and broader ‘integration’ work as well, and was positioned within a broad inclusion agenda within the GLA. This created a tension between the broader aims of the Initiative, and the priorities of civil society organisations, which tend to have quite specific aims and a focus on minority groups experiencing injustice.

*“I was really frustrated in the first year because I felt that [the Initiative’s agenda was] ‘its not about immigrants, it’s about inclusion’ – but the four seconding organisations were all focused on immigrants.”*

*“When you have [civil society] organisations who are interested in immigration and citizenship, and the GLA doesn’t actually have any power over those areas of law and policy, then the great hope is that they would be more vocal about it. In year one we had to do quite a lot of convincing about that... They wanted it to be applicable to other areas, but what [seconding organisations] do is a very specific thing and not relevant to everyone.”*

**Overall the partners were fairly well aligned in their core values and areas of interest, however the Initiative’s broad aims created space for differences of opinion and prioritisation to emerge.** The broad aims were a pragmatic response to bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders, but made consensus harder to achieve. Beyond a general



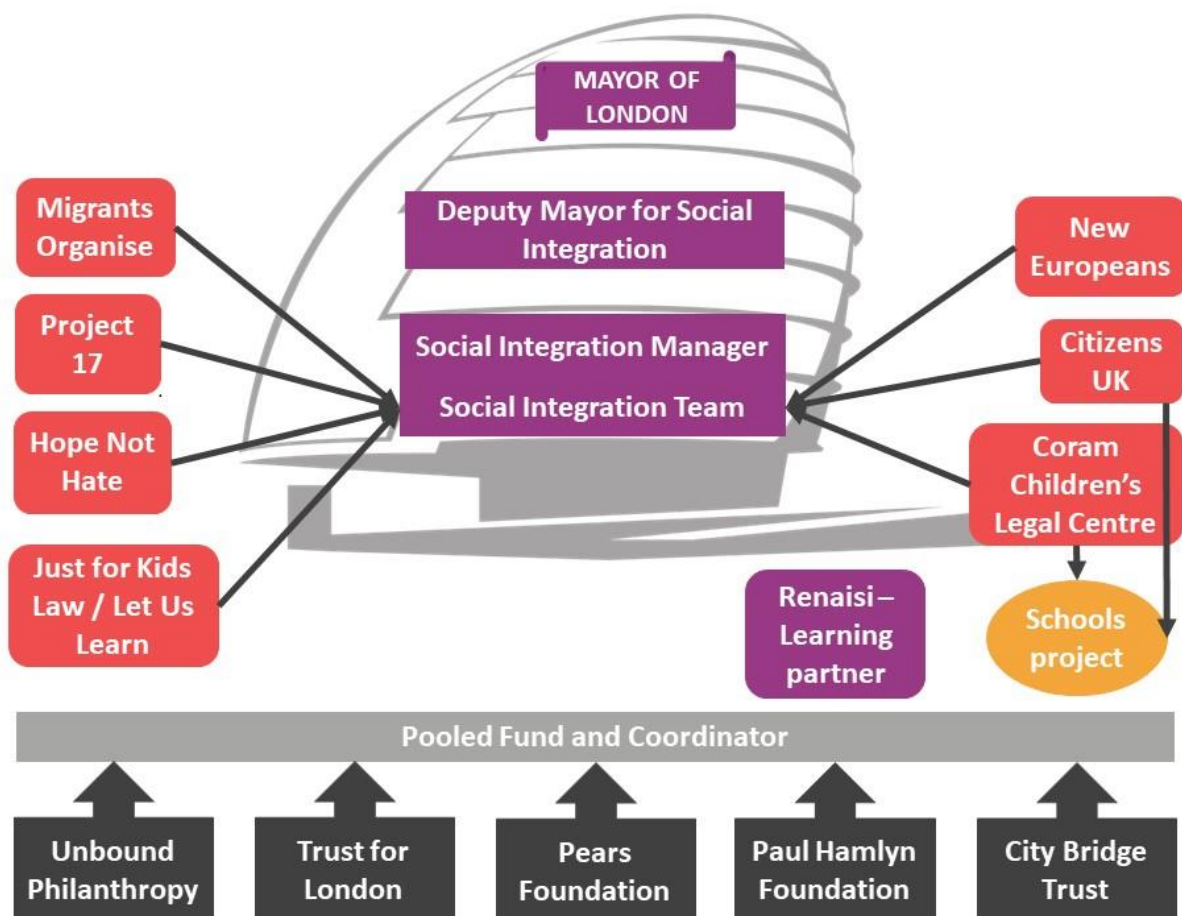
commitment to citizenship and social integration, partners had different priorities within the broader objectives – including different levels of aim (p.10) and/or an interest in different types of citizenship and integration work (pp.13-14).

## The Citizenship and Integration Initiative model

### Overview of the model<sup>9</sup>

The Citizenship and Integration Initiative was established following a campaign by civil society organisations highlighting the challenges experienced by young people with insecure status, alongside recommendations in a report authored by *British Future* for the Mayor of London to create a new Deputy Mayor with responsibility for citizenship and integration.<sup>10</sup>

The concept is relatively straightforward, though untested on this scale in a UK context: the Mayor of London created a new Social Integration team within the GLA, overseen by the new Deputy Mayor, and funders created a pooled fund to pay for secondments from civil society organisations into the team and work towards the Initiative’s shared goals. Funds were also used to pay for a community project in primary schools and to support civil society engagement in the citizenship ceremony pilots (see p.18). The Initiative is overseen by an Advisory Group comprising representatives from funders and the GLA, and informed by a wider Reference Group including secondees and representatives from civil society organisations.



<sup>9</sup> Please see our interim report for a more detailed exploration of the model (*Citizenship and Integration Initiative Interim Report*, Renaisi, May 2018)

<sup>10</sup> *Making Citizenship Matter: Why London needs an Office for Citizenship & Integration*, British Future, February 2016

Secondments were initially intended to be full-time for a full year, however in most cases this was not possible because civil society organisations were unable to let go of employees with key skills and responsibilities on a full-time basis. The secondments therefore varied in intensity and length. Each secondee was appointed to work towards objectives under one or two of the Initiative’s strands of work (see pp.11-12).

Timescale	Seconding organisation	CII strand	Days per week
April 2017- April 2018	Just for Kids Law	Young Londoners	3
	Coram Children's Legal Centre	Young Londoners	3
	Migrants Organise	Voter Registration	3
Hostile Environment			
April 2017- April 2019	Citizens UK	Citizenship Ceremonies	3
April 2018- April 2019	Coram Children's Legal Centre	Young Londoners	3
	Just for Kids Law	Young Londoners	3
April 2018- April 2020	New Europeans	EU Londoners	3
		Hostile Environment	
Jan 2019- Dec 2019	Hope Not Hate	Voter Registration	5
May 2019- April 2020	Project 17	Young Londoners	3
		Hostile Environment	

## Secondment application process

The call for applications was informed each year by the shared goals, with priorities agreed by the Advisory Group. Trust for London and the GLA developed the briefing materials about the secondee opportunities and secondee job descriptions were provided by GLA officers. The Trust for London then invited civil society organisations with relevant experience to put forward an application including a named individual applicant, through either an open or closed call. Some roles were more competitive and attracted more interest than others, and some applicants were

given a different secondment to the one they had originally applied for if it was felt that there was a good fit with their skills and experience.

In the first year of the Initiative, secondees were appointed from four civil society organisations which had some level of involvement in calling for or setting up the Initiative. In subsequent years, three additional organisations joined that had not previously been involved. There were some challenges in attracting new civil society organisations to put forward a secondee, largely due to a lack of capacity in the sector (see p.42).

### Funded community projects

Alongside the secondments, the Initiative's pooled fund paid for some community-based projects to further the Initiative's objectives outside of the GLA secondments. Two such projects were funded:

- **Voluntary organisations' involvement in Local Authority citizenship ceremonies:** Pears Foundation provided funding to enable VCSE organisations to participate in six Local Authorities' citizenship ceremonies, as part of a pilot research project organised by one of the Initiative's secondees.
- **Legal Advice in Primary Schools project:** City Bridge Trust provided funding for a pilot project combining legal advice and community organising in two London primary schools, delivered by Coram Children's Legal Centre, London Citizens and King's College London. This project is independent of the Initiative's secondments.

### Ongoing support of independent funders

As well as providing funding for the Initiative, the independent funders have also offered ongoing support and advice to ensure the success of the model. This has included:

- Strategic advice to guide the Initiative's ongoing development
- Contacts and relationship building to add value to the secondees' work
- Liaising with GLA colleagues and secondees, through the Advisory Group and Reference Group, to connect work with other activities happening outside of the GLA
- Trust for London also provided communications capacity to support the dissemination of the Initiative's outputs
- Commissioning and supporting the Legal Advice in Primary Schools project

## Overview of work delivered

This section summarises the Initiative's key achievements to date.

### Young Londoners

**Young Londoners Forums:** In each year of the initiative to date, a Young Londoners Forum has been hosted at City Hall to bring together young people with insecure status to discuss the issues affecting their lives and what change they would like to see. The first of these was hosted in July 2017, and the second was hosted in July 2018. The second Forum also engaged a steering group of young people to help set up the forum, design the agenda and facilitate some of the sessions.

**Guidance for young people and professionals:** The secondees also worked on writing and collating information and guidance for young people without citizenship, and for professionals working with these young people. The guidance aims to help young people looking to secure rights to citizenship and residence in the UK. It offers guidance to help young people to identify what legal immigration options they have and the steps to take towards obtaining citizenship. The guidance can be found on the GLA website [here](#). The guidance was launched alongside a promotional video telling the stories of young people with insecure status and the impact it has on their lives.

**Message testing research:** A piece of research was commissioned by the secondees and carried out by Britain Thinks on public attitudes towards different messages communicating the issue of young Londoners with insecure status. This research was designed to inform the Mayor's communications on this issue. The insights were then also shared with a small group of civil society organisations working on this issue as the findings were relevant to some of their public communication work.

**Research on the numbers of young people with insecure status:** A second piece of research was also commissioned and delivered by the University of Wolverhampton to provide an updated estimate of the numbers of young Londoners who are foreign-born, or foreign nationals, and within this group the likely numbers who are undocumented and who are nationals of EEA+ countries. The report highlights which London boroughs have high concentrations of young migrants and concludes with a discussion about the number who have taken up the various regularisation pathways available.

**Legal sector support:** Secondees have been working with the Social Integration Team to identify ways that capacity could be increased across the legal sector to support young Londoners with insecure status. The GLA hosted a roundtable with the legal sector and civil society to understand the challenges facing the sector and identify possible solutions.

**Informing:** Alongside these activities, secondees have been both proactively and reactively informing and contributing to policy responses and related areas of work within the GLA. For example, secondees contributing to the Mayor's response to the Windrush scandal, highlighting commonalities between the experience of the Windrush generation and the current situation for young Londoners with insecure status.

## Legal Advice in Primary Schools project

In the first year of the Initiative, secondees working on the Young Londoners strand of work identified an opportunity to test the provision of legal advice for young people with insecure status in schools. A workshop was held in February 2018 with organisations working in and with schools to help develop this idea.

**The partnership:** As a result of those discussions, a project was formally commissioned and awarded to a partnership between Citizens UK, Coram Children’s Legal Centre and Kings College London Widening Participation Department. The partnership received a development grant to deliver pilot activities from January 2019 for a period of two years.

**The project:** The pilot provides holistic support to parents of children with insecure status in two primary schools to ensure that they are supported, offered quality legal advice and given the opportunity to organise and change the systemic challenges they are facing. The proposed activities follow the cycle of organising: to engage and support parents in campaigning work, developing their own campaigns for local, regional and national change. This is then delivered alongside an added component of legal support for families with insecure status. Teachers are also supported to understand how they can support children, drawing on the ‘Guidance for Professionals’ published by the GLA.

**Extent of the challenge:** To date, the project has highlighted a higher level of demand and need for legal support in the two schools than originally anticipated. This has meant that the partners have had to manage the expectations of the schools community on what is possible to achieve through this programme. Individual advice provision has been rolled out slowly, with clear parameters around what type of cases can and cannot be supported. The extent of demand is particularly high in Lewisham where there are fewer advice services available locally.

**Future potential:** It is too early to assess the impact that the pilot project has had on schools and families, however the level of take up and interest indicates that there is potential for wide-reaching impact in the schools where the project is running. There is also strong potential for this model to be replicated in other schools if it does prove successful in combatting this issue.

*“My hope is, what we learn from it could shape the next decade of migrant and integration organising efforts... Having someone to give legal advice and an organiser based in a school, that is transformative.”*

## Voter registration and political literacy

The voter registration strand of work represents a significant increase on the extent of the GLA's activity in this area. To get the project off the ground, the secondees acted as internal champions and successfully arranged for legal advice on the parameters within which the GLA could legally take action.

*“The work that [secondee] has done on voter registration is very exciting and very new for the GLA, and leading to a fair amount of discussion internally about... what we want to do.”*

The project is directly overseen by the London Assembly, and secondees have delivered the following elements of the project:

**Political literacy materials:** This piece of work was signed off in advance of the other elements, laying the groundwork for later activities. Teaching materials about political literacy were developed to include in the London Curriculum. Shout Out UK was commissioned to develop these resources, with the secondees involved in the initial commissioning and then checking the final resources. One of the secondees then also supported the promotion of the materials, for example through sourcing speakers as part of the Association for Citizenship Teaching conference where the political literacy tools were showcased.

**Research into rates of voter registration:** A piece of research was commissioned to identify communities within London who have lower than average rates of voter registration. The aim of this research was to inform the focus of London Voter Registration Week (below) and provide a clear rationale for targeting specific communities to register to vote. The research identified that young people aged 16-25, including those in Further or Higher Education and living in the private rented sector, are one of the most under-registered groups in London and should be a priority for voter registration efforts.

**London Voter Registration Week:** Despite all of the political and practical challenges to this area of work, the first London Voter Registration Week was successfully launched in September 2019. The campaign involves daily online and offline activity targeted at 16-25 year olds, and is supported by 40 partner organisations working across 20 boroughs. The work is supported by Hope Not Hate who have been commissioned to coordinate the Week's activities. Campaign partners include Further Education colleges, University Students' Unions, faith organisations and youth sector organisations.

**Working with other teams within the GLA:** The secondees working on this strand have worked with the Education and Youth Team on the political literacy materials, to contribute to the London Curriculum. One of the secondees worked with Team London to scope out ideas on how to mobilise young people to run events about suffrage and democracy, helping to shape colleagues' thinking. Secondees also helped to shape GLA communications on this issue. Overall, consistent work to emphasise the issue of voter registration really brought a shift in thinking about the possibilities that do exist for the GLA to act, and colleagues felt that they learnt a lot from secondees about the democratic process and voter registration.



## EU Londoners

The strand of work to support EU Londoners was introduced in the second year of the Initiative. Brexit was already a high priority issue for the GLA, and the secondees were able to provide specialist advice, contacts and capacity. The work to date includes:

**EU Londoners hub:** The EU Londoners hub offers information to help European Londoners in the build up to, and after, Brexit. The website has been translated into all EU languages to make the information more accessible, and offers a range of information about the process of applying for settled status and relevant services and support organisations available. The idea for the hub was developed by the secondee at the GLA alongside other teams across the organisation; 3 Million and Here For Good were then commissioned to map out the content.

**Microgrants programme:** Alongside the launch of the EU Londoners Hub, a microgrants scheme was launched to support charity and community groups to run information sessions for their members to learn more about the EU Settled Status scheme and be signposted to appropriate support. These aimed to reach out to particular groups who may be less likely to access support and information in other ways – such as those from particular community groups or those without access to the internet.

**#LondonisOpen campaign:** The secondee worked closely with the marketing team at the GLA to inform the #LondonisOpen campaign. This included advice that the campaign message for EU Londoners should focus on ‘belonging’ rather than ‘welcome’. The secondee then supported the campaign by drawing on her network to source individuals from across different European communities to both appear in a promotional video campaign, as well as ensuring that the campaign was successfully translated into all European languages.

**Takeover day:** A ‘takeover day’ was organised at City Hall on the 29<sup>th</sup> March, involving organisations that work with EU migrants coming to City Hall to take part in an information fair for members of the public to visit. The fair also included stalls and information sessions from lawyers offering pro bono advice to EU citizens in need of legal advice.

**London is Open bus:** Simultaneous to the takeover day at City Hall, a number of London buses drove around London with materials and advertising for the #LondonisOpen campaign, as well as legal professionals on hand to offer pro-bono legal advice to EU citizens. The Mayor also participated in the bus tour and attracted substantial media coverage.

**‘We are all Londoners’ day and EU Settlement Ceremony:** A celebration of European culture and communities took place on 21<sup>st</sup> September, and involved sharing food, language, art and stories as well as free immigration advice and discussing the impacts of Brexit. Alongside these activities the Mayor hosted London’s first ever Settlement Ceremony to recognise a group of European Londoners who have committed to stay in London.

**Policy reforms:** The cost of settled status was originally set to be £50. The secondee successfully campaigned for the GLA to cover this cost for their staff, and worked with others in the Social Integration Team, alongside other organisations, to make the case for the Home Office to remove the fee altogether.



## Citizenship Ceremonies

In the first and second years of the Initiative, one role was dedicated to the delivery of a strand of work to explore the potential for Citizenship Ceremonies to act as a ‘touchpoint’ to encourage active citizenship such as volunteering, donating blood or registering to vote. The work included:

**Research into the effectiveness of pilot interventions to influence active citizenship:** Six local authorities across London were selected to pilot different approaches to encouraging active citizenship at their Citizenship Ceremonies – such as encouraging participants to make a pledge, or arranging for voluntary organisations to attend (funded by Pears Foundation) and provide volunteering opportunities for attendees to sign up to. Research into the effectiveness of each approach was led by Professor Peter John.

*“[We were] trying to get more people to think about how they can get involved in their local communities... We were working with the idea that councils had these plans for active citizenship and participation but had not connected it with opportunities to do it [like Citizenship Ceremonies].”*

**Research into the effect of attending Citizenship Ceremonies on attitudes to migration:** A second piece of research was then commissioned and delivered by the Behavioural Insights Team, to explore whether members of the public who attend Citizenship Ceremonies experience a change of attitudes towards migration as a result of witnessing the ceremony.

**Guidance on Citizenship Ceremonies for Local Authorities:** A short, accessible guide was produced to provide inspiration and advice to Local Authorities on how to use their Citizenship Ceremonies as an opportunity to promote active citizenship.

**Mayoral Citizenship Ceremony:** Each year the Mayor hosts a Citizenship Ceremony for a small number of new citizens from across London. The second year took the lead on planning and organising the biggest ever Mayoral Citizenship Ceremony, which took place in February 2019 in the Southbank Centre. The event drew on the research on pilot interventions (above) to inform and shape the ceremony, for example by including the opportunity to make a pledge. Zrinka Bralo of Migrants Organise, one of the Initiative’s seconding organisations, acted as MC and the event was attended by over 200 people.

## Hostile Environment and Welcome

This strand of work has been delivered throughout the period of the Initiative, however it has been supported by several secondees alongside other areas of work, rather than having a dedicated role committed to this area. For this reason, the activities delivered have been smaller in scope. These include:

**Welcome:** One of the initial projects planned as part of plans to counter the hostile environment related to supporting London's welcome groups. This involved developing London's approach to welcoming newcomers to the city with practical actions to connect existing groups and create an infrastructure to support this work.

**Hostile environment research:** A piece of research has been commissioned by the GLA's Opinion and Research Team to look at the hostile environment and the impact it has on staff and professionals at particular entry points such as teachers, NHS staff and landlords. This will also draw on quantitative surveys and interviews with civil society organisations. This research aims to support the Mayor's office by informing policy work against the Hostile Environment, demonstrating that it has a negative impact on all Londoners – not just migrants.

**Informing policy responses:** The secondees were able to proactively build connections across different teams in the GLA, drawing their attention to the Hostile Environment and how it relates to different areas of work. They also acted as a skilled resource to support other colleagues, and contributed to the development of policy responses primarily for the Home Office. The secondees also worked internally to encourage the GLA to continue to use the term 'Hostile Environment' because it is felt to be more accurate than 'Compliant Environment', which the Government has recently introduced as alternative terminology.

**Relationship with the Home Office:** One of the secondees worked with a colleague in the Social Integration Team to write a letter to the Home Office relating to survivors of domestic abuse with insecure status. Following this, they attended a meeting at the Home Office along with MOPAC (Mayors Office for Policing and Crime) on this issue. As a result the Home Office are now reaching out for support from the Social Integration Team on other related issues. The secondee and GLA colleague then also worked collaboratively with MOPAC to shape the agenda for a roundtable feeding into the GLA's response to the draft Domestic Abuse Bill, to make sure that the additional challenges faced by those with insecure status are not overlooked.

## The nature of Citizenship and Integration Initiative secondments

### Type of work delivered by secondees

Broadly, secondees delivered three distinct types of work.

Type of work	Description	Examples from the Initiative
<b>Project work</b>	Delivering a scheme of work. This could involve events management, managing a research project, scoping new ideas, procurement, planning a campaign week, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citizenship ceremonies research project</li> <li>Mayor's Citizenship Ceremony</li> <li>Young Londoners Forum</li> <li>Guidance for young people and professionals</li> <li>Voter registration week</li> <li>EU Londoners hub</li> <li>Political literacy materials</li> </ul>
<b>Reactive policy support</b>	Acting as a skilled resource within the GLA, able to contribute to policies and offer specialist advice when asked by colleagues, including in other departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributing to policies being developed across the GLA</li> <li>Offering advice on legal questions from staff in other teams</li> <li>Contributing to Mayoral advocacy positions on related issues e.g. Windrush scandal, Grenfell response</li> <li>Contributing to strategic meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Proactive policy input</b>	Secondees proactively engaging with other teams within the GLA to further the shared objectives of the Initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leading team sessions about Young Londoners issue</li> <li>Engaging with other departments to progress the issue of voter registration</li> <li>Proactively informing and shaping internal responses to policy issues, drawing on secondees' specialist expertise</li> </ul>

## Project delivery

Secondees have drawn on their expertise and specialist knowledge to undertake scoping, research and consultation activities to design new projects and see them through the GLA sign off process. Once project ideas are agreed, secondees have led on implementation including (in most cases) embedding the project within the GLA so that the work can sustain beyond the timeframe of the secondment itself.

## Informing policy within the GLA

As noted above, each secondment was linked to one or two objectives, or 'strands', within the broader aims of the Initiative. Project work was always directly related to secondees' stated objective(s), however both reactive and proactive policy input could happen in two ways:

- The majority of policy work was directly relevant to their stated objective(s);
- However, secondees also influenced work on topics and themes which drew on their particular skills and experience but wasn't directly relevant to their stated objective(s).

This second type of influencing usually furthered the broader aims and objectives of the Initiative, and often aligned with their seconding organisation's specialist expertise, even if it went beyond secondees' stated area of work.

*"I think the secondees being in the GLA has worked well. As well as working on their own work plans, they're being involved in other parts of the GLA, trying to embed thinking about immigration and secure status and citizenship in other aspects of what the GLA does. That's been a really positive thing."*

The secondees sit within the relatively new Social Integration team, which has been working to increase awareness of its role within the organisation alongside more established teams and agendas. As awareness grew within the GLA, opportunities for secondees to engage in reactive and proactive policy work also increased.

Examples of this type of policy input include:

- The secondees working on the Young Londoners strand worked with the GLA's Health Team to write a policy response to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's call for evidence into the Home Office charging for its services. The secondees added four additional policy lines based on their experience.
- One of the secondees helped the GLA's Education and Youth team with the children's rights enquiry which took place in Parliament. The secondee gave evidence and information relating to the experiences of young people with refugee and migrant backgrounds.
- Two of the secondees also supported the Education and Youth team to run an event with young people who had been in care and have insecure status.

## Types of policy input

Secondees contributed to thinking and policy at three levels:

- 1) **Vertical influencing:** Work to contribute to the policies and priorities of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor within the GLA.
- 2) **Horizontal influencing:** Supporting and informing other teams delivering related areas of work within the GLA.
- 3) **External influencing:** Supporting the GLA to exert influence outside of the organisation, for example the Home Office.

**Secondees made a substantial contribution to informing the GLA's work horizontally and externally, but felt less connected to the senior levels of the GLA and found it challenging to connect to the work at this level.** They felt too far removed from the Mayor, and sometimes also the Deputy Mayor, to have a sustained conversation about the issues they were working on.

*“The GLA is also a very hierarchical building – [secondees] have come in at the bottom and have very little traction internally. It is difficult to get ideas across to others and have an understanding of role and expertise. [Secondees] are also in a junior position not relating to [their] experience and level outside.”*

*“It's so hierarchical... We wouldn't have been able to meet with [the Deputy Mayor] sooner, because we're not in control.”*

**The Initiative could have a clearer collective position on whether secondees should be encouraged or supported to contribute to and inform policy making and activity at a high level within the GLA.** Particularly in the first year, civil society organisations and secondees were disappointed that they had not been able to directly engage with the Mayor on a more substantive level around key policy agendas. However, **GLA colleagues felt that the horizontal and external contribution that secondees made was hugely valuable, and has had a long-term impact on the GLA's ambitions, delivery and knowledge of key issues.** Arguably influencing at a more political level within the GLA should be undertaken by members of the Advisory Group, informed by secondees' work, rather than by secondees themselves (see p.37).

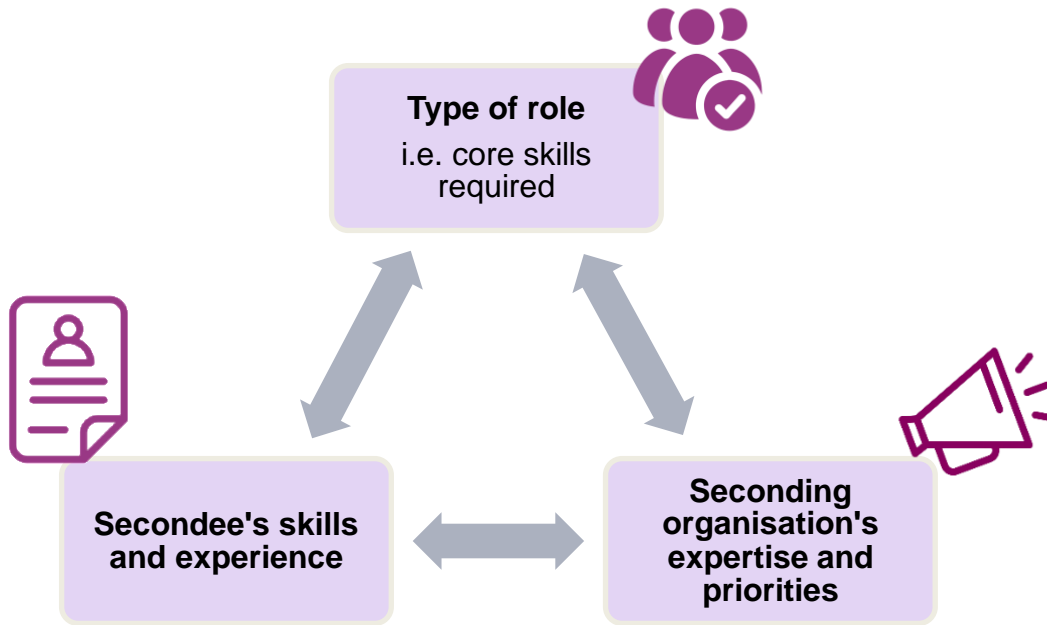
## Leveraging the benefits offered by partnership working

All of the secondees delivered valuable work and were seen as an important resource by colleagues within the GLA.

*“I think it's really really positive in having expertise in the building on certain issues... it's been useful to draw on them and get their support. I thought it was really enriching in having that frontline experience.”*

*“Having secondees as part of the Social Integration Team goes beyond the engagement we can do otherwise. Even when we have [ongoing] relationships with previous secondees... issues of confidentiality mean conversations are slightly different – having [secondees] embedded in the team is really powerful.”*

Secondments added most value when three key elements were aligned:



The following table provides an overview of these three elements for each secondment funded by the Initiative to date. We are not attempting to provide an exhaustive list of secondees’ skills, of seconding organisation’s expertise and priorities, nor a comprehensive summary of the content of each role, but rather attempting to represent the core aspects of each.

Secondment	Type of role	Secondee – core skills and experience	Seconding organisation – core expertise and strategic priorities
Young Londoners (2017-18)	Strategy development Policy advice Briefing papers	Policy expertise Campaigning Legal expertise	Children’s rights Campaigning Legal advice
Young Londoners (2017-18)	Strategy development Events management Briefing papers	Lived experience Campaigning	Campaigning Legal advice Grassroots activism
Voter registration and hostile environment	Strategy development Internal influencing Briefing papers	Community organising Campaigning	Campaigning Grassroots activism Community organising

(2017-18)			
<b>Citizenship ceremonies</b> (2017-19)	Strategy development Research management Events management	Community organising	Community organising Grassroots activism Campaigning
<b>Young Londoners</b> (2018-19)	Commissioning research Writing guidance Events management	Legal expertise Casework	Children's rights Campaigning Legal advice
<b>Young Londoners</b> (2018-19)	Commissioning research Writing guidance Events management	Lived experience Campaigning Legal knowledge	Advocacy Campaigning Legal advice Grassroots activism
<b>Voter registration</b> (2019)	Programme design and delivery Project management Procurement	Education Campaigning Advocacy work	Campaigning Advocacy Public engagement
<b>EU Londoners</b> (2018-20)	Project design and management Events management Web content	Programme delivery Campaigning	Campaigning Research Outreach
<b>Young Londoners</b> (2019-20)	Events management Internal influencing	Frontline advice Policy	Frontline advice Advocacy Legal support

**The secondments which had the closest alignment of the type of role, secondees' skills and experience, and seconding organisations' expertise and priorities were best able to leverage the benefits of working in partnership.** These were able to use secondees' skills from their personal and/or professional experience, draw on the knowledge, connections and specialist expertise of their civil society organisation, and deliver work which the GLA would have found difficult to deliver outside of this Initiative. The secondments added less value if these elements were less well aligned – as the work was more likely to have been possible to deliver outside of the partnership.

*“The work that [secondee] was doing wasn't related to the work of [seconding organisation]... It missed out on everything that [seconding organisation] adds – the people and relationships... Whatever the work the secondee is doing, it needs to be closely aligned with broader [seconding] organisational goals and*



*reviewed periodically... It missed out on a lot of the strengths of us as an organisation.”*

## Ownership

Using a secondment model as the mode of cross-sector collaboration had many advantages, particularly in terms of the close and embedded relationship between secondees and the GLA. However, in some cases **this model was not as effective at embedding the relationship between the GLA and civil society organisations**. As secondee workplans were developed by and for the GLA (see p.17), some civil society organisations felt a lack of ownership or real influence over the work delivered by their secondees within the GLA. Some tensions arose, and potential value was lost, when seconding organisations felt that their priorities were not being furthered through the secondment of their employees.

*“We haven’t really been able to influence or achieve anything meaningful for our mandate for our members... We actually can achieve more from the outside sometimes.”*

In some cases, civil society organisations raised concerns early on and were able to make the case to the GLA that their secondees’ work should be better aligned to the expertise and priorities of the seconding organisation. The GLA was responsive to this, particularly in later years of the Initiative.

*“In the early part [of the secondment] the fact they had their pillars [i.e. strands of work – see p.11-12], there wasn’t much room for our subject. That was less helpful than we might have wanted because our secondee was working on things not relevant to our beneficiaries... But by reason of being [in City Hall] and being able to inform them about the significance of the issues [we work on] there has been a shift, so now there is a pillar [relevant to our priorities].”*

*“There was a bit of a challenge... Where there was a suggestion that [secondees] was going to have to work on areas of work that didn’t relate to what we do because they needed more capacity on [other area of work]. So we had some back and forth where I said [secondees] categorically cannot work on things not related to [seconding organisation]. In this model, because it’s not just a typical secondment, it’s more about how it helps the seconding organisation as well, it needs to be clear that what the member of staff is going to be working on is relevant and fits with what the organisation is about.”*

The secondments which have a closer alignment between the expertise and priorities of the seconding organisation, and the secondee’s workplan and area of focus within the GLA, have been more successful in facilitating a stronger relationship between the GLA and the seconding organisation.

*“We’re an organisation people know of now... We’ve had opportunities to speak at events in City Hall, host events in City Hall, put forward people to be in videos, help with translations... We have moved a lot closer to the GLA and*

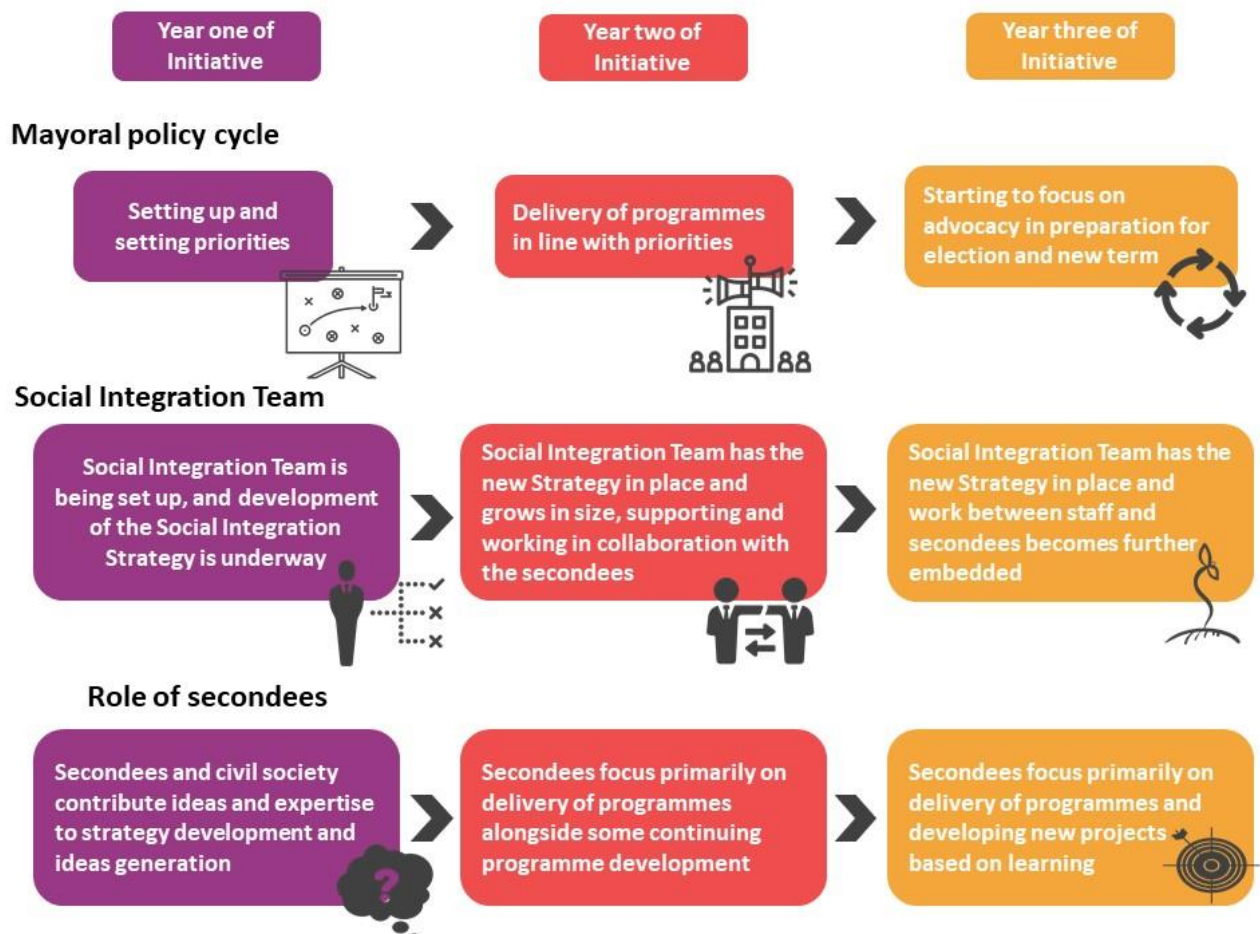


*are getting lots of opportunities we wouldn't otherwise get in making our voice heard."*

**The Initiative was designed as a partnership between civil society and the public sector, but there is an inherent power imbalance in this model.** It is vital that the work delivered by secondees is directed by the GLA and fits into the GLA's structures and priorities. However, the Initiative aims to achieve more than a 'normal' secondment. The ambition is for the secondment model to enable a deeper and longer-lasting level of partnership working between civil society organisations and the GLA. For this to happen, the secondments need to facilitate more than a temporary exchange of personnel – **each seconding organisation needs to have a level of ownership and say over the broad priorities of their secondees' work to ensure that both sides of the partnership benefit, and to enable sustained partnership working to become more embedded at an organisational level.** This needs to happen in the early stages of designing the secondment, as the GLA's processes of decision-making and financial sign-off limit the possibility for later changes.

### Focus of secondments over time

The first year of the Initiative coincided with the set-up of the new Social Integration team – the secondees were in post earlier than most other new team members. This had an impact on the type of work that the secondees delivered, as they had fewer opportunities to collaborate with other team members, and at times found it challenging to navigate the wider GLA structure. In later years, secondees joined an established team who were able to offer more support and opportunities to collaborate. The following diagram summarises the broad focus of work that secondees delivered in each year of the Initiative to date.



Generally, secondees found the opportunity more rewarding and felt that they had more impact in later years of the Initiative, compared to the first year. Progress in the first year was felt to be slow, and secondees’ roles were largely focused on developing the new [Social Integration Strategy](#) (2018)<sup>11</sup> rather than ‘doing’. **The ability to contribute to this strategy was a rare opportunity for civil society (via the secondees) to directly inform the Mayor’s strategic focus** and to embed certain principles across the GLA’s work. However, the time investment and ‘inward focus’ of strategy development led to some frustration for secondees, who were used to working at a faster pace in civil society, and some of whom expected to have more opportunity to deliver work with a direct impact on communities.

*“[Secondees] were told that we were brought in because we are ‘doing’ people. The initial conversations revolved around let’s get going and get things delivered in the time frame. However, from conversations with staff in the GLA they are pretty pleased that we have got a plan after four months.”*

*“Unfortunately, time isn’t on our side because of the way things work at the GLA, as processes are quite slow. Even though we’re currently delivering on planning, by the time things happen we will have left the GLA.”*

<sup>11</sup> *All of us: The Mayor’s Strategy for Social Integration*, Mayor of London, March 2018

**Generally, civil society secondees wanted to have a combination of ‘power’ and ‘action’ in their roles**, but it is challenging to maximise both of those things at the same point in the policy cycle. In the first year, they had substantial power – as they were able to shape and inform the Mayor’s *Strategy for Social Integration*, which has underpinned the work of the whole Social Integration team in subsequent years – however the roles were largely developmental rather than ‘action-focused.’ In later years of the Initiative, secondees lost power to some extent – the Strategy and specific priorities were already in place, although opportunities to shape their own projects remain – however they were able to be more focused on ‘action’ and delivery. **Appointing secondees whose skills and interests match the stage of the policy cycle is key.** Arguably, civil society involvement in shaping the ideas generation and policy development work in year one could have been done outside of the secondment structure, however not all partners agree on this.

## Summary

- By being embedded in the Social Integration team, secondees were able to engage in proactive and reactive policy work within the GLA, as well as delivering project work
- Secondees were able to contribute at three levels (vertically, horizontally and externally to the GLA), however they found they were less able to have an impact vertically because of their relatively junior position
- Secondments added most value where the type of role, the secondee’s skills and experience, and the priorities and expertise of the seconding organisation were well aligned
- For the Initiative to enable deep, long-lasting partnership working to develop between seconding organisations and the GLA, each seconding organization needs to have a level of ownership and say over the broad priorities of their secondee’s work to ensure that both sides of the partnership benefit, and to embed sustained partnership working at an organisational level
- Secondees had substantial power to influence the Mayor’s *Strategy for Social Integration* in the first year of the Initiative, however they generally felt that they had more impact in later years when they were able to be more focused on delivery

## What was achieved by working in this way?

There is no single measure of ‘success’ for an Initiative of this nature. It is a multifaceted model, working in complex policy areas that defy clear-cut analysis. However, there are some areas in which the Initiative was more successful than others. This section is structured around the key questions and aims identified in the *Introduction* and *Aims of the Initiative* sections.

### Achieving more than the sum of its parts

There are many examples of the Initiative achieving more in partnership than would have been possible by the organisations independently. We identified three types of added value that arose from the partner organisations working together:

- 1) Improved quality** of activities; the GLA could have delivered certain activities alone, but the quality would not have been as high. For example, GLA colleagues felt that having the secondees in post improved the quality of statements released on behalf of the Mayor.

*“[The GLA’s] press team and government relations team were coming to us [for advice on Windrush response]... [The secondees] came back with a really strong narrative – some of the changes we saw government concede on were due to the way that we advocated for change.”*

*“[It was] felt [the GLA’s] Windrush response was so strong – we had existing programmes and policy lines we could draw on and have legitimacy and not just jump on a bandwagon. We had legitimacy and platform to do so because of [the Young Londoners] secondments.”*

Other examples include:

- Secondees were considered to have played a key role in shaping the Mayor’s response to the Windrush scandal, enabling the GLA to quickly develop a strong response which also highlighted the work being delivered on the related issue of young Londoners with insecure status
- The EU Londoners Hub being more appropriate for the communities they are seeking to help, having been shaped and sense-checked by the secondees’ networks
- Research on the number of young people in London with insecure status was considered to have been improved by the secondees using their expert knowledge and understanding to work with the data team internally at the GLA to interpret the data

- 2) Greater exposure and/or prestige** of activities; civil society organisations could have delivered certain activities alone, but the reach and influence would not have been as great.

*“Where the GLA convening power and profile has come in, that has really added value – such as the stuff around the EU settled status scheme and the leadership the GLA has taken on this. It is not something civil society or funders could have done – it’s a good example of how their infrastructure can be used to influence more widely.”*

Examples include:

- The research on Citizenship Ceremonies would not have had the same reach without the GLA’s connections with local authorities
- The guidance for young people and professionals as part of the Young Londoner’s strand had greater reach and influence than civil society organisations could have achieved alone

**3) Secondees were able to inform, shape and contribute to wider GLA activities and policymaking**, to an extent that would not have been possible outside of secondment model.

*“[The secondees] do massively shape [GLA policy]... Hostile environment, Windrush, [GLA colleagues] got statements from [secondees]. We rarely disagree or change anything.”*

Examples include:

- Some of the secondees contributed to policy responses from within the GLA across different teams relating to the Home Office’s Hostile Environment Policy – for example, a policy response relating to the circumstances of domestic abuse survivors with visa restrictions
- Some of the secondees contributed to conversations about adult education funding at the GLA, highlighting how the eligibility criteria for 16-24 year olds can exclude certain groups of young people. This issue was raised with the Home Office, and the GLA has taken forward a small number of the proposals
- Staff at the GLA described how interactions with the secondees had encouraged them to think about what activities young people may or may not be able to access as a result of their immigration status, and how they should respond to this in their areas of work

## Influencing the political agenda

Overall, the Initiative was highly successful in achieving the ‘level 1’ ambition: to push citizenship and integration issues up the political agenda, and leverage in funding to resource this work. The GLA now has a Deputy Mayor for Social Integration and an established Social Integration team, which has grown in size since the Initiative was established and in 2019/20 had a programme budget of £1.2m. To date, the Initiative has attracted £776k of pooled funding from independent

funderson. Partners have commented on how much more attention citizenship and integration issues are given within the GLA, compared to previously.

*“If civil society and philanthropy didn’t focus on this issue, would [the GLA] have commitment? What would be in place now? Would it have received the focus, strategy, and awareness that it now has? Very likely not.”*

The secondees’ work made a significant contribution towards the Mayor and Deputy Mayor feeling more confident and informed to speak out on issues relating to citizenship, particularly the experiences of young people with insecure status. As a result, the GLA was able to become more vocal on complex issues that are politically difficult, drawing on the lived experience of Londoners, and which other public administrations can be wary of engaging with.

*“The secondees have helped [the GLA] to become more confident about these issues, and how to fit them into their own vision of social integration and mobility.”*

One of the key challenges inherent in this model is the appropriate level of influence that independent foundations should have on a public body, by providing it with resource to deliver work on certain shared policy goals. Overall, partners felt that the amount of resource provided was appropriate and in line with the charitable objectives of the foundations.

*“I think if the team [of secondees] became that much bigger, you’d have to ask whether it is right that it is independently funded – if it is core to what the GLA does, shouldn’t it be paid for by the GLA... I would have some nervousness about independent foundations doing more from within City Hall – the contribution, significant as it is, is still at the margins of the GLA budget. There shouldn’t be a temptation to ‘take over’ this function of the GLA.”*

There remains a question as to how sustainable these achievements will be, particularly under a new Mayor. **The model is built on a highly embedded approach which requires substantial investment of time and resource, and is therefore vulnerable to a change in leadership and priorities on the part of any of the organisations involved.** The model relies not just on adequate resource, but also committed relationships of trust and shared values.

*“I hope that there will be some commitment to sustaining what we’ve got... We are still in the foot-hills of fulfilling the potential.”*

## Benefits to the GLA and civil society organisations

The Initiative did succeed in benefitting both the GLA and civil society organisations through the partnership (the ‘level 2’ ambition).

*“The secondees really wowed – they are a really high performing, enthusiastic and capable team.”*



However, these benefits were not experienced equally. **Civil society organisations felt that they carried more of the risks, and experienced fewer of the benefits, than the GLA in this model.**

Benefits experienced by GLA	Disadvantages & risks experienced by GLA
<p>Valuable expertise brought by secondees</p> <p>Additional capacity in the Social Integration Team</p> <p>Energy and ideas of secondees</p> <p>Connections to communities and other organisations</p> <p>Regular access to advice and experience of other partners including funders</p> <p>Internal specialist resource, able to quickly react to policy needs</p> <p>Increased knowledge and awareness of social issues on the part of colleagues in other teams</p> <p><i>“It’s really, really positive to have that expertise in the building on certain issues... I thought it was really enriching in having that frontline experience.”</i></p> <p><i>“The expertise of secondees was pivotal in enabling the GLA to be able to respond in depth to external changes.”</i></p>	<p>Approach is resource-heavy (e.g. recruiting, managing and integrating the secondees annually)</p> <p>Most secondees also working part-time in other role, which can restrict their ability to deliver work to required timescales</p> <p>Potential reputational risk should something go wrong</p> <p>Navigating potential political sensitivities of secondees’ work and links to civil society organisations</p> <p><i>“Sometimes if urgent stuff came up... I found it hard to find the right person to speak to given different working patterns... It is hard to keep track of who I could speak to each day.”</i></p>
Benefits experienced by seconding organisations	Disadvantages & risks experienced by seconding organisations
<p>Ability to progress some strategic priorities in partnership with GLA</p> <p>Learning how the GLA works internally to inform future partnership or advocacy</p> <p>Secondees benefit from professional development, particularly those who came with less professional experience, including skills in procurement, policy making, writing briefings and policy responses, and how to work within a public institution</p> <p>GLA’s reach and influence helped to give some areas of work more traction</p>	<p>Hard to backfill posts despite being fully funded to do so – ‘losing’ vital capacity and knowledge</p> <p>Salary discrepancy – risk of losing good staff who become accustomed to higher salary</p> <p>Challenging to maintain communication between two managers (in GLA and in seconding organisation)</p> <p>Secondees hold the knowledge and connections from the GLA – this doesn’t always flow easily into the organisation itself.</p> <p>Risk that benefits are lost if individuals move on</p>

Stronger relationships and partnerships between seconding organisations (relationships existed already, but Initiative consolidated some of those)

*“It’s upskilled [secondee] quite a bit which is good.”*

*“[Schools project is] exactly the kind of thing we wanted to do anyway, but didn’t have the capacity, and through the partnership with [other civil society organisation] it has deepened our work immeasurably. We are now partnering in all sorts of ways...”*

*“It is good [for published research] to be coming out of the GLA, it has a level of credibility to it. Also with the guidance and resources – these will have credibility and reach. The dissemination power of the GLA is a key benefit.”*

*“Obviously we benefit because of the policy work that we do, we benefit from anything in our sector that complements and helps that – so in terms of achieving our mission it’s been helpful.”*

Risk that secondees achieve less in their time at GLA than they could have achieved in seconding organisation

Not in full control of secondees’ workplans – risk that secondees spend their time on something that is not strategic priority for the organisation, and therefore not worth ‘losing’ them for

Reputational risk – being seen as too close to government body, losing independence

*“[The uplift in] pay was challenging... There is such a massive disparity [between GLA and civil society]... that is a risk for the seconding organisations.”*

*“The main challenge is covering the work, when you lose a member of staff.”*

*“It affects our independence – we want to hold the state to account but the GLA are working with the state.”*

**Seconding organisations acutely felt the reputational risk of being seen as too close to the GLA, or complicit in policy decisions and work which is at odds with their organisation’s own policy or values.** This issue was a recurring theme in our conversations, however interviewees were reluctant to be quoted on this topic, even anonymously.

## Improving the lives of Londoners

The most ambitious aim, and the one which the Initiative had least direct control over, was ‘level 3’: to make progress on important social issues relating to citizenship and integration, thereby helping to improve the lives of Londoners.

*“For me, having the Mayor speak out about the plight and situation of so many young people in London [was very positive]. He could have done that anyway, but I got the sense he got more confidence from the secondees who had contact with young people in that situation... He became more confident and more informed to say what their experience was like.”*



A lot of work has been delivered, which is detailed above in the ‘Overview of work delivered’. The key achievements are summarised below:

Area of work	Key achievements
<b>Young Londoners</b>	Two Young Londoners Forums Guidance for young people and professionals published Message testing research Research on numbers of young people with insecure status Social media campaign highlighting issue of insecure status
<b>Voter registration</b>	Political literacy materials for London Curriculum developed Voter Registration Week campaign including online hub Resources for educational institutions Building a coalition of influencers and civil society organisations
<b>EU Londoners</b>	EU Londoners Hub EU Londoners takeover day and London is Open bus Microgrants and outreach Mayoral advocacy successful in getting fees for settled status waived European Londoners day and EU Settlement Ceremony
<b>Citizenship ceremonies</b>	Pilot project to research effectiveness of interventions to influence active citizenship Research commissioned into effect of attending citizenship ceremonies on attitudes to migration Guidance on citizenship ceremonies for local authorities Mayoral Citizenship Ceremony
<b>Welcome and hostile environment</b>	Developing an approach to support London’s welcome groups Research on the impact of the hostile environment on staff and professionals in key service sectors Informing other GLA teams’ approaches and understanding of hostile environment Supporting influencing work with the Home Office

Overall, funders were very positive about the work that has been delivered and the impact that this has had, and will have in the future, on issues relating to citizenship and integration in London. In particular, it is clear that work on these issues has become more embedded within the GLA and the secondees have influenced other GLA teams' thinking and delivery.

*“I think there’s huge potential in [the model]. The idea of funders being the conduit to second staff from civil society into institutional settings like that is a really great model in many ways... Putting individuals in organisations you know into institutions you want to know it. It is an interesting concept for big change pieces... In some areas of this project this was illustrated really well.”*

However, it is still far too early to judge whether the sum of work delivered to date will ultimately be successful in creating long-lasting, widely felt social change. The secondees' work addressed complex issues, in a context where there is usually no direct line between work outputs and Londoners ultimately experiencing the impact.

*“There have been some solid outputs but it is much harder to know what the impact has been. There is no counter narrative of what would have happened if [secondees] weren't in the [Social Integration] team. It is clear that it has had an impact on prioritisation in the GLA and the ability of civil society to influence things... But it is harder to pin down the impact in terms of young people's actual experience.”*

## Overcoming barriers to cross-sector collaboration

**This model of collaboration requires a large investment of time and money to make it effective.** It is not a cheap solution to improving collaboration – but there is hope that the effects will be longer-lasting, if the relationships that have been built can be sustained through periods of political and contextual change.

*“[The GLA] wants to make sure that we are working tangibly with people that have got real expertise. What better way to do that than organise secondments into the building.”*

The Initiative has been effective at strengthening the relationships between some key players, notably:

- **The GLA and independent funders:** relationships already existed, but the regular contact and partnership working required for the Initiative has strengthened those relationships and led to partnership working in other areas

*“Through the Initiative and the fact [funders] were offering [resource], even though we have worked with the GLA in the past... the depth of engagement now is much greater.”*

- **The GLA and individual secondees:** secondees developed good connections with colleagues in the Social Integration team at the GLA which have been maintained since leaving their role

*“In the future I would feel confident that I could use secondees as a contact to go to.... It builds capacity and relationships that will be really useful in the future. The influence won’t just be in the year that they’re here but will be in the relationship in future years.”*

- **Civil society organisations:** in most cases, relationships between civil society organisations already existed, but have been consolidated through jointly engaging in the Initiative

*“The seconding organisations were already working together to a degree. That has solidified... That’s been very good.”*

The table below illustrates how far the Initiative overcame common barriers to cross-sector collaboration.

Barriers to collaboration <sup>12</sup>	How far did Initiative overcome barriers?
Enough resource to establish collaborations and keep them going	Initiative was well resourced (in time and money) by key partners A Coordinator was appointed to oversee the Initiative and maintain momentum
Clear and realistic aims for the collaboration, making it worthwhile for all parties	A set of shared objectives were agreed at the start of the Initiative and have since been adapted Arguably, the aims were too broad for the collaboration to be as effective as it could be
Collaboration is not felt to be meaningful – e.g. ‘too many meetings, not enough action’	Key stakeholders from the Initiative were brought together through Advisory Groups and Reference Groups Secondments provided capacity to deliver work
Having the right people in the room to establish and commit to collaboration	Structure of the Initiative, and funding invested, ensured that the collaboration was maintained over time
Civil society organisations forced into competitive mindset by funding structures in the sector	Secondees worked collaboratively within the GLA Civil society organisations specifically funded to work in partnership on the schools project
Senior level buy-in	The Advisory Group and Reference Group included senior leaders from across the stakeholders involved

<sup>12</sup> *Local Cross-Sector Partnerships: Tackling the Challenges Collaboratively*, Ben Cairns and Margaret Harris, May 2010

Close ongoing working at an organisational level – not just reliant on individuals who move on	Secondment model embedded individual connections and relationships with secondees  Collaborative working between GLA and seconding organisations (beyond set-up stage) was limited
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*“I definitely believe in a funding model that encourages people to work in partnership. So that’s been very positive.”*

## Overcoming barriers to social change

The Initiative had some quite specific goals that partners wanted to pursue and was designed to empower civil society organisations and the GLA to achieve social change more effectively together, than they could have achieved independently. The following table summarises how well this model enabled that to happen.

Barriers to social change	How far Initiative overcame barriers...
<i>Faced by the GLA as a public institution</i>	
<b>Bureaucracy limits an organisation’s ability to use its power</b>	<p>Most of the time, secondees had to work within the limits of a large public body and did not feel empowered to challenge those systems</p> <p>Over time, secondees learnt how to navigate bureaucracy at the GLA more effectively</p> <p>On occasion, ‘insider knowledge’ of the GLA allowed secondees to campaign more effectively from their seconding organisation</p>
<b>Challenge of engaging grassroots communities in social change process</b>	<p>Secondees were able to bring their networks and skills in engaging with grassroots communities into the GLA to help shape their work and improve how it would be received ‘on the ground’</p> <p>However, secondees sometimes found that the sign off process within the GLA made it difficult to engage grassroots communities at the right stage of work</p> <p>Some partners were hoping for more opportunities to ‘bring people in’ to City Hall, but there were several notable examples where this did happen</p>
<b>Cannot be expert in everything – lack of expertise on specific social issues</b>	<p>Having the secondees working inside the building allowed the GLA to draw on their specific knowledge and expertise, to a greater extent than could have been achieved in a less intensive model</p>

<p><b>Electoral cycles drive shorter-term thinking and makes it difficult to sustain priorities</b></p>	<p>It remains to be seen whether the Initiative will be sustained over more than one Mayoral term</p>
<p><b>Limited powers over migration and citizenship policy</b></p>	<p>The amount of impact possible on some issues was limited by the GLA's lack of formal powers around citizenship and migration issues</p> <p>Secondees were able to work alongside colleagues at the GLA to communicate with the Home Office, and shape some internal influencing work</p> <p>On some occasions the secondees were able to utilise the voice of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in advocacy, and were able to shape and contribute to some of their statements</p>
<p><b>Political sensitivities – limits to what the GLA can speak out about, and how</b></p>	<p>Secondees were limited in what they could do or say due to the political sensitivities of certain issues</p> <p>However, there were examples of secondees using their experience to encourage the GLA to be more open to speaking out or acting on certain issues</p> <p>There were some occasions where secondees were able to 'change hat' and speak out on an issue from their seconding organisation, rather than from the GLA</p>
<p><b><i>Faced by civil society organisations</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Having enough headspace for campaigning work, particularly organisations where this is not their core mission</b></p>	<p>Secondments created some opportunities to campaign more effectively, but also limited others</p> <p>For secondees who came from frontline roles, the secondment offered space for them to step out of their day-to-day and focus on policy-related work</p> <p>Secondees were more able to explicitly campaign on certain issues from their seconding organisation, than from the GLA</p>
<p><b>Limited funding to resource campaigning or more strategic social change work</b></p>	<p>Initiative provided funding for secondee roles to engage in strategic work</p> <p>Funding was provided to cover seconding organisation management costs</p>
<p><b>Lobbying Act – civil society feeling unable to campaign or have a voice</b></p>	<p>Civil society organisations involved in the Initiative tended to be those which are already outspoken and experienced in campaigning</p>

<p><b>Social change requires input of lots of different actors, but collaboration between organisations is challenging</b></p>	<p>The Initiative brought together organisations all working on similar issues to campaign and push forward a set of shared goals and objectives</p> <p>Many of those relationships existed already, but were consolidated</p>
<p><b>Lacking the capacity or expertise to deliver certain areas of work, e.g. research</b></p>	<p>Secondees were able to deliver some pieces of work which benefits the civil society sector, and which the sector would have found challenging to deliver without support</p>

*“The last [research on numbers of young people in London with insecure status] was from 2007, done by the GLA. National policy is being made based on either no numbers or that research. So having [the new research on numbers] available for the rest of the sector to draw on will be really valuable for the sector as whole.”*

## Responding to change over time

The Initiative evolved over time and was able to adapt to some changes in context. Notable examples include adapting the objectives in the second year to include a strand of work to support EU Londoners; and adapting the secondment model to take on a shorter-term, full-time secondee to progress the voter registration work (this post has now been extended to one year). The partnership also took on board feedback and learning throughout the project.<sup>13</sup>

*“The model was flexible enough to embrace [changes] when they happen... The foundations are there for the freedom and resource to be responsive.”*

The secondments themselves provided the GLA with a level of flexibility, in the sense that they had specialist expertise available on hand when it was needed to respond to specific developments. For example, in the aftermath of the Windrush scandal, the GLA was able to draw on the secondees’ expertise to inform a clear policy response linked to the work on young Londoners with insecure status. The secondees also responded to numerous requests for input into policy responses, press releases and the like.

*“[GLA policy advisors have to make] really tough, challenging decisions about policy immediately. [They] can check things with the secondees. Having them in the building when things happen to check [is really helpful].”*

<sup>13</sup> See p16 of our interim report for examples (*Citizenship and Integration Initiative Interim Report*, Renaisi, May 2018)

## Summary

- The secondment model helped to improve the quality of the GLA's activities and outputs; increased the exposure and prestige of work compared to what civil society organisations could have achieved alone; and enabled secondees to inform policymaking within the GLA
- The Initiative has helped to push citizenship and integration-related issues higher on the political agenda at the GLA
- Both seconding organisations and the GLA experienced benefits from the partnership, however seconding organisations felt that they carried more of the risks, and experienced fewer of the benefits, than the GLA in this model
- Partners agree that the Initiative has the potential to create long-lasting, widely felt social change, but it is too early to assess what impact has been achieved to date
- The Initiative has strengthened the relationships between the GLA and funders, between the GLA and individual secondees, and between civil society organisations
- The Initiative evolved over time and was able to adapt to changes in context



## What the Initiative was not able to achieve

The Citizenship and Integration Initiative always faced some limitations to what it could achieve, notably:

- The GLA has limited powers over citizenship and migration-related issues; despite substantial opportunity to influence public debate and attitudes within London, there are many realities and barriers which it cannot change
- Although the Initiative was relatively large-scale and well-funded for the social sector, choices still had to be made about what level and scope of work could realistically be delivered
- This Initiative is an experiment; it is the first time a project of this nature has been attempted at this scale in a UK context, and it is unrealistic to expect it to achieve its full potential straight away

Nonetheless, there were some ambitions articulated by partners in the early stages of the Initiative which have not yet been achieved. Some of these ambitions proved more difficult than perhaps initially thought; others required more capacity or input from partners than has been possible to date. Some could still be addressed in the remaining period of the Initiative, if there is an appetite for this.

### Independent identity

The Initiative is independent, in the sense that it is a partnership which is jointly governed by several organisations. However, the extent of the Initiative's independence from those organisations is a challenging tension within the model.

*“It feels like it's [the GLA's] agenda even though civil society and funders are working towards something similar. I feel the focus has become on the secondees – if we didn't have them I don't think anything would be there. Are we doing anything else towards these shared goals? Not a lot, no.”*

The Initiative does not have a strategy of its own to set out how it will achieve the shared goals outlined on pp.11-12, other than through secondments to the GLA. **This made it challenging for the partnership to leverage the voice, expertise and influence of those involved to pursue those shared goals outside of the secondment structure.** Partners could have done more to work together outside of the GLA, for example to take forward ideas developed by secondees in year one which it was not possible to deliver within the GLA, or to progress work on voter registration, where there are strong limitations to the GLA's role.

*“Signing up to the goals and ambitions is fine. But there are practicalities about who does what, the decision making, how do you maintain a sense of a joint initiative and not drift back into our own little worlds?... How do you maintain that DNA of what's different about this partnership to other things that you're doing? I think that's what we could improve on but it's not too late to do that.”*

## Public profile

Initially, some Advisory Group members wanted the Initiative to have a public profile, to engage with Londoners about the social issues that it was set up to address. In practice, the Initiative attracted limited media coverage and has limited resource for external communications about the issues that it addresses. With the exception of some public events, the majority of secondees' work has been low profile, and the partnership has not collectively developed a public voice.

*"[There hasn't been] much public projection of this agenda. The Initiative is not known to generalist policy people with an interest in London... We thought the point was to have some capacity to communicate and tell the story... There is a risk to the institutionalisation of the agenda – it remains low profile, with elite audiences."*

*"I suppose if I had a more general thought about what needs to be achieved and hasn't, it would be something around influencing the conversation across London. Sometimes we talk to ourselves. It's a much bigger point than just this piece of work, but we haven't had much media coverage. Sometimes these initiatives exist in a bit of a bubble. I suppose it would be good to think about how we could develop a narrative around it that has some influence."*

Questions still remain about how realistic this ambition is, and to what extent it should be a priority for the partners involved. There may be opportunities for the Initiative to support civil society organisations in their public-facing communications about the issues that the Initiative is set up to address, if this is felt to add value to the work already underway.

## Engaging support from the Mayor

The Mayor of London has met most of the secondees and been involved in various projects and initiatives which they have developed, including the Mayor's Citizenship Ceremony, Young Londoners Forum and EU Londoners takeover day and London is Open bus tour. The secondees have also contributed to some policy statements made by the Mayor. However, some partners had hoped that the Initiative would be able to more strongly leverage the Mayor's voice to speak out on relevant issues, particularly citizenship rights for young Londoners. Secondees were too junior within the GLA to have much opportunity to engage the Mayor directly (see p.20); it may have been possible for more senior Advisory Group members to make direct contact on certain issues, but this has not happened to date.

*"We have more of an opportunity to reach the politicians than most, so perhaps we should use that opportunity a bit more than we do. I don't think [Advisory Group members] have ever had a direct conversation with the Mayor, which might have been possible if we'd pushed for it... It would have been possible if we'd thought about the independent sponsors – the foundations – doing the asking."*

Developing a strategy for the Initiative's work outside of the secondment model may help to identify where value could be added by engaging the Mayor outside of the GLA, to explore possibilities for furthering the Initiative's shared objectives.

### Engaging the public, communities and grassroots civil society

Some partners had wanted the Initiative to enable communities and grassroots civil society organisations to have more access to City Hall. There were several occasions when this did happen – notably the Young Londoners Forum, and EU Londoners takeover day – however this level of engagement was not sustained. Some roles were designed to have more scope to 'bring people into the building' than others. Additionally, the sign off process within the GLA made it difficult for secondees to know when to engage civil society without raising expectations that might then be disappointed.

Some partners feel that secondees should achieve this by going 'out' to communities and bringing insight back into the building.

*“With organisers, their expertise isn't writing research papers or desk-based work. To get the most out of them, they'd be out in communities.”*

Others feel that the secondees should create more opportunities for communities to come into City Hall and participate in decision making.

*“How do our members have more access to City Hall? That is part of the challenge.”*

There is no strong consensus on the extent to which this point should be a priority for the Initiative. Secondees deliver valuable work within the GLA, most of which does not require the involvement of the public. However, many of the secondees are skilled in community organising and related engagement skills, so the opportunity to extend this aspect of their work could add value to the GLA which has not yet been fully realised.

### Limits to achieving more than the sum of its parts

On pp.26-27 we describe the three ways in which the secondments added value above and beyond what could have been achieved by the partner organisations separately. However, this added value was not realised in all areas of work and it was challenging – if not impossible – to ensure that this was always the case. Partners disagreed over how well certain areas of work offered more than could have been achieved separately, notably:

- **The microgrants programme** – alongside the launch of the EU Londoners Hub, a microgrants scheme was launched to support charity and community groups to run information sessions for their members to learn more about the EU Settled Status scheme and be signposted to appropriate support. Arguably, this project could have been funded externally to the Initiative, rather than internally at the GLA – and some felt that the cost of administering the grants within the GLA was comparatively high. However, others felt that it was important for the Mayor to actively support communities to understand their rights and how to access settled status.

- **The Legal Advice in Primary schools project** – although this project was informed by some of the work undertaken by secondees, arguably it could have been funded and delivered outside of the Initiative. Currently the GLA has very limited involvement, although links with the Equality and Fairness team have been made and there may be an opportunity to develop stronger links with the GLA in the coming year so that the project can inform and influence other areas of GLA work.

*“The secondees... helped shape the call for what [funders] wanted to fund. That was useful. But realistically, the work we funded we could have done anyway.”*

- **The research on numbers of undocumented young people** – arguably this could have been commissioned independently by funders, as the work did not need to draw on the expertise or networks of the GLA. However, others felt that the work would benefit from the GLA’s profile and credibility, and ability to influence future GLA work.

*“Some of [the secondee work] could have been done outside of the GLA – like the microgrants or commissioning research. I’m not sure this is the best use of their role. Generally though it has added to what civil society groups are doing.”*

## Longer-term relationships between civil society organisations and the GLA

As noted previously (p.31), the Initiative was an effective way of embedding collaborative working between secondees and the GLA. It was less successful at embedding collaboration between the GLA and civil society organisations, because **the benefits of close working were vulnerable to being lost once the individual secondee moved on.**

*“I wouldn’t be able to say that [seconding organisation]... has really strong connections with the GLA. Now that we don’t have a secondee there, I don’t think that relationship has particularly solidified, more so than if I’d just contacted them separately.”*

*“While [the secondee] had relationships [in City Hall], it didn’t feel like the [seconding] organisation did.”*

**Potential value has been lost by not providing more opportunity to strengthen senior level relationships between civil society organisations and the GLA.** In the first year of the Initiative, senior representatives of seconding organisations and the GLA attended regular Advisory Group meetings together. However the Advisory Group membership was later narrowed to focus on operational matters, and civil society leaders were instead invited to attend wider Reference Group meetings which provide strategic direction. These Reference Groups do not tend to be attended by the Deputy Mayor, although he/she has been invited. This means that the Initiative now provides limited opportunities for senior representatives of civil society organisations and the GLA to meet. There have been some practical benefits to this split (e.g. making meetings more manageable), however regular contact between senior partners to the Initiative is vital for its long-term sustainability. The Initiative must create space for sustained dialogue and constructive challenge between partners, and not lose the wider benefits of

partnership working. In any Initiative of this nature, **if senior level buy-in from civil society organisations is lost then the partnership cannot sustain in the long term.**

## Challenging working culture at the GLA

Some partners had hoped that the secondees would be able to bring some of the culture of civil society into the GLA, and challenge the GLA to embrace new ways of working.

*“I hope the CII will do something to shift the culture at the GLA... But maybe organisational cultures are harder to shift than you think they are.”*

The secondees brought substantial expertise and knowledge from their civil society roles, but in practice it was very difficult for them to work in a way that was substantially different to ‘normal’ GLA roles.

*“The [secondee] roles were framed as civil servants. It was more like our secondees had to adjust to City Hall ways and behave like civil servants, rather than the opposite.”*

This ambition was always going to be challenging, but it was perhaps made more difficult given secondees’ roles became increasingly indistinct in nature from other roles within the Social Integration team, as the team became more established and the roles became more embedded (see diagram on p.24).

*“It was really valuable when we were just forming a team or didn’t have one. So having civil society go in and help establish the team was extremely valuable. Secondees got to push the agenda, within parameters. The GLA got really skilled people. Secondees learnt a lot. Now they have a team and resources... to employ people directly and the agenda is in place – is it a nuisance [to have more secondees]?”*

There is no clear consensus on the extent to which secondees’ role should be to ‘shake things up’ and challenge the GLA to work in new and creative ways, versus bringing skills and expertise but operating in line with the GLA’s existing culture. This matters because it **raises questions about how radical the Initiative is intended to be.** The secondees have brought new ideas, and introduced some new approaches, but those taken forward have tended to be relatively ‘safe’. **The Initiative would benefit from a conversation between partners on the extent to which bringing challenge to the GLA should, or could, be part of its ambition.**

## Minimising power imbalance

All partners are aware that there is a power imbalance within the partnership. This is inevitable, and it is unrealistic to expect that it can be completely equalised. Nonetheless, civil society organisations are acutely aware of the imbalance, and at times have been less vocal than they might have wanted to be.

*“There is always an awkward power balance when [seconding organisations] are in a room with funders and the GLA... That probably didn't facilitate everyone being clear and on the same page at the beginning.”*

Civil society organisations lost potential power in a number of ways, notably:

- **By no longer attending Advisory Group meetings** where operational decisions about the Initiative are made. This reduced the issue of potential conflicts of interest (see p.45), but also limited civil society organisations' ability to regularly engage with senior representatives of the GLA and funders, and influence key decisions.
- **By having limited influence over secondees' job descriptions**, which are developed by the GLA (see p.17).
- **By having limited influence over secondees' work plans** once they are established in the role.
- **Because many of the seconding organisations are funded separately by the same funders involved in the Initiative**, which means those relationships are very important to them, and they can consequently feel limited in their ability to bring challenge to the partnership.

*“We could have definitely made better use of seconding organisations... drawing out strategic ideas... we didn't make the most of the great minds... in the room.”*

*“With this kind of group work when you have funders around the table, you tend to have a weird game played by people because there is power and money involved. People mince their words and don't really say what they mean. The power dynamic is really awful.”*

Efforts have been made to set a tone which puts all partners on an equal footing, and this requires continuous work. The Initiative may benefit from more regular check-ins on whether civil society organisations feel that they have as much opportunity as possible to voice any concerns and bring constructive challenge to the partnership.

### Limited benefits experienced by seconding organisations

On p.28 we note that civil society organisations feel that they experience fewer benefits and greater risks than the GLA in this model. This matters because it **limits the opportunity for the partnership to draw on the best of both sectors to achieve change**. The seconding model brings many benefits, but at the moment the disadvantages fall more heavily on seconding organisations: they 'lose' the capacity of skilled members of staff, and are limited in their power to influence secondees' work within the GLA. As noted on p.30, they also feel a strong sense of reputational risk associated with their employees' involvement in the GLA.

*“What is the offer we are providing [civil society] organisations with? Is it enough? Are we listening to what they are saying that they would like to see*



*from an initiative like this? ... We need to think about the extent to which we are all working together, all of us, and are we all getting what we need from the arrangement. This is a good moment to reflect on whether ... [civil society organisations] are getting enough from it.”*

**A sense that the benefits to them have been limited has been a factor in some organisations deciding not to put forward another secondee** to participate in the second or third years of the Initiative. However, there is a desire on the part of all partners to ensure that the benefits are felt more evenly. Current and former seconding organisations may be able to provide some ideas on how the model could be tweaked to ensure that they experience greater benefit from the partnership.

### Capacity in the sector

**A major challenge for the Initiative has been the limited capacity of organisations with the right expertise and subject specialism to participate.** Many civil society organisations struggled to ‘afford’ to send an experienced member of staff on secondment, and found it difficult to backfill that role. Some organisations were unable to participate for that reason. There was a relatively small pool of potential secondees with the right skills for the Initiative to choose from, and this has created recruitment challenges, with some secondment posts remaining unfilled in the third year of the Initiative.

Some areas of work within the Initiative have a clearer ‘pool’ to recruit from than others, for example there is a well-established group of organisations in London working on children’s rights issues, but few organisations specifically working on social integration – though many do broadly relevant work through a focus on related issues.

**The capacity of civil society to participate is an important limiting factor in the size of the Initiative**, and should be a key consideration for others who may be interested in developing a similar initiative in other policy areas, or in other areas of the country.

### Recruitment process

**The application process created some ambiguity as to whether the ‘applicant’ was the organisation, or the individual** – in practice it was a mix of both. Earlier secondments attracted interest from a group of organisations with a strategic interest in the Initiative, who wanted to be involved and found someone within the organisation who was suitable to fill the required positions. Some later secondments attracted the attention of individuals, who were interested in the opportunity and persuaded their organisation to support their application.

This created some tensions between the GLA and funders over the extent to which the Initiative should prioritise partnering with strategically relevant organisations, versus prioritising individuals who were well suited to particular roles even if their organisation may not have a strong strategic interest.

*“[The GLA] wants people who fit well in their team. They are less likely to take people who just seem interesting... There is a bit of a mismatch in the type of*



*people and organisations [funders] are looking for and how the GLA is thinking those people might fit.”*

On some occasions, this resulted in differences of opinion over whether a particular applicant should be accepted as a secondee or not, and whether they are a suitable candidate for the Social Integration team. It raises questions of control and ownership between funders and the GLA, and how disagreements should be resolved in a partnership of this nature. There is a risk that partners become frustrated if they feel that their preferences are not being taken into account. **If there is not a strong consensus between funders and the GLA in the recruitment process, there is also a risk that civil society organisations feel that they have been given mixed messages** which could damage the reputation of the Initiative in the longer term. This can be addressed, to some extent, by having both the GLA and funders involved in the interviewing process, although that is unlikely to always be practicable.

### Limits to flexibility

As a relatively large partnership, there are inevitably some barriers to the Initiative’s agility and ability to evolve. Partners are very aware of this, but it presents an ongoing challenge to ensure that it is possible to flex when needed.

*“It’s a little bit complicated, and therefore the management structure around it feels... complicated. There are lots of people involved in the management and advisory structure for a relatively small-scale team. That is the downside. But I can’t think of a better way of doing it.”*

This is also an ongoing tension for secondees. Secondees had to work within the structures and hierarchy of the GLA, which did not have the culture of flexibility that they were used to in the civil society sector.

*“There is an understandable tension sometimes – the GLA is like all bureaucracies, it is not always able to move quickly, so it’s natural for secondees to become frustrated and feel they could do it quicker externally.”*

Some limitations to flexibility are inevitable. Ongoing discussion amongst partners are required to ensure that any opportunities or needs for flex are considered as far as possible.

### Number of community projects funded

Fewer community projects were funded under the Initiative than originally hoped. This was partly because it was harder than anticipated to find projects to fund that could leverage the opportunity of having both GLA and civil society involvement, and which aligned with funder interests. Some project ideas could be delivered within the GLA budget and did not require additional funding to be leveraged in by the Initiative, and others could be funded directly by individual funders. After the first year, there was a limited pipeline of new ideas that could have been funded – secondees did not have a clear mandate to develop ideas for projects, and lacked capacity to develop them to a stage where they could be funded.

*“I think the difficulty has been a lot of the work has been invested in the team itself as opposed to ideas. Potentially the GLA has got the resources they want... Perhaps there isn't the demand?... I don't know whether perhaps secondees weren't aware of it or became embedded in the GLA and didn't know they could come back to funders to give ideas for additional work [that could be funded]. Maybe we invested too much in the secondee model rather than things around that which would enhance [secondees work].”*

Secondees developed a long list of project ideas in year one of the Initiative, some of which may be suitable for funding outside of the GLA. Funders could also invite applicants outside of the existing civil society organisations and secondees to submit applications for project ideas to the pooled fund, if they are suitably collaborative and aligned with the Initiative's overall objectives.

## Summary

Some ambitions articulated by partners in the early stages of the Initiative have not yet been fully achieved, although in some cases some progress has been made. These include:

- Establishing an independent identity and public profile
- Engaging the public, communities and grassroots civil society in the GLA's work
- Developing longer-term relationships between civil society organisations and the GLA
- Challenging working culture at the GLA
- Achieving the full potential benefits for seconding organisations
- Limitations to the flexibility of the model

## Challenges of the model

Earlier sections of the report discuss what the Initiative has and has not been able to achieve to date. In this section, we describe some challenges that arise from the nature of this model which require ongoing monitoring and management. Any similar initiative, whether developed in a new policy area or in a different area of the country, is likely to face similar challenges and will need to consider how these will be managed by the partnership.

### STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

#### Governance and relationships



- The Initiative is governed by an Advisory Group with senior representatives from funders and the GLA, chaired by Trust for London
- Trust for London manages the pooled fund on behalf of other funders
- The partnership requires a high level of trust and strong relationships between key partners. An initiative of this nature is unlikely to be successful if those relationships are not in place when governance arrangements are set up

#### Conflicts of interest



- There are several layers of potential conflicts of interest involved in an initiative of this nature
- Secondees experience potential conflicts of interest as their roles at the GLA and in their civil society organisation expose them to information which could be strategically advantageous to the other. This had many benefits, but could also be challenging to manage
- Civil society organisations experience potential conflicts of interest in their desire to challenge certain decisions, but also maintain positive relationships with funders
- Civil society involvement in the Advisory Group brought some benefits, but also introduced potential conflicts of interest if those organisations were party to decisions or discussions which could give them competitive advantage

#### Influencing within the partnership



- There are several layers of sensitivity and potential challenges related to the appropriateness of organisations influencing each other within the partnership
- The Initiative involves some level of influence of independent funders on a democratically elected public body. The appropriate level of influence has to be navigated carefully
- Civil society organisations seek to influence GLA policy and the Mayor of London, both through this Initiative and externally to it. There are sensitivities to this, particularly where seconding organisations may disagree with policy decisions relating to their secondees' areas of work
- Similar initiatives will need to consider how to manage the potential complexities of influencing within the partnership

## PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

### Secondment-related



- The secondment model presents various challenges which are explored in more detail in our [first report](#)
- These include: aligning pay structures between civil society organisations and the GLA; recruiting secondees with the right level of experience for the roles (neither too junior nor too senior); designing the roles to make the most of the partnership (see p.21); secondments requiring substantial management resource (see p.29)
- Secondees can find it challenging to balance two part-time, intensive roles; they can also experience challenges relating to the difference in culture between the GLA and civil society organisations
- Limited capacity in the civil society sector creates a significant challenge to an initiative of this nature, and civil society organisations can find it difficult to ‘afford’ to second their staff (p.42)
- It is important for similar initiatives to invest time in setting up the secondments well, and to manage the expectations of all parties on what it is possible for secondees to achieve within a regional government body, particularly on a part-time basis

### Articulating value



- It is an ongoing challenge for the Initiative to easily articulate what it is trying to achieve, and how. This is particularly the case because it has relatively broad aims and scope of work, and because it is a complex and evolving model which defies neat classification
- The shared objectives are a helpful starting point, but do not capture the full value of secondees’ work – particularly when value is often created outside the ‘official’ scope of their roles (see pp.19-20)
- Partners’ perspectives of what has and has not been successful also tend to diverge on some key issues – without clear-cut and measurable outcomes, it is difficult to ‘objectively’ evaluate areas of work which have an inherently subjective element

*“All the key organisations have respected the structure and been very thorough in fulfilling their duties to it... It’s worked because people have genuinely committed to the structure. It is dependent on a degree of complexity and a significant investment of time as well as money. That has implications for the extent to which you could take the model and take it to other places or policy areas. You’d have to think about the whole package and the time, not just the money. If you weren’t able to maintain fidelity to that combination, you wouldn’t get the same result.”*

## Summary of learning and recommendations

This Initiative was designed as a new model of collaborative working which could be replicated in other policy areas, and/or adopted by other regional administrations. For example, the GLA is considering replicating the model to support the development of the Violence Reduction Unit. This section first summarises recommendations for this Initiative, followed by the key areas of learning and recommendations for those considering a similar initiative elsewhere.

### Recommendations for this Initiative

#### Alignment of projects

This report highlights that secondments add most value when the skills and experience of the individual secondee, the strategic priorities and expertise of the seconding organisation, and the skills and knowledge required for the role are well aligned. Currently, civil society organisations contribute to the role development at a strategic level through the Reference Group meetings, for example to inform the overall aims and objectives of the Initiative.

1. We recommend that seconding organisations are also given the opportunity to directly contribute to the overall scope and main priorities of the role that their secondee is offered at the GLA. This could be achieved in a number of ways:
  - a. By potential seconding organisations and the GLA coming together to co-produce the role, ensuring that it meets the GLA's core priorities but also considers how to make the most of the expertise, connections and aligned work that the organisation has to offer. This could be a particularly valuable process for organisations that are new to the Initiative and are less well known to the GLA.
  - b. By arranging a discussion meeting between senior members of the seconding organisation and managers at the GLA before the secondee begins the role, to discuss wider opportunities for partnership working and exchange of knowledge and expertise. This could be combined with discussions on the practicalities of managing secondees across two organisations (for those in two part-time roles).
  - c. By ensuring that seconding agreements set out what elements of the work align with the priorities, interests and expertise of the seconding organisation, and specify anticipated opportunities for the GLA to draw on that experience in the secondment period.

#### Benefits for seconding organisations

This report highlights that seconding organisations feel they experience fewer benefits from the partnership than the GLA. There are also some practical challenges to their involvement, notably the difficulty in backfilling posts (even though this is fully funded).

2. We recommend that the GLA and funders consult with civil society organisations, including current, former and potential seconding organisations, to explore ways to make the Initiative

a more beneficial experience for them, and how to overcome or improve some of the practical barriers to involvement.

### **Identity and profile**

The report highlights that the Initiative has not developed an independent identity or public profile to the extent that some partners had anticipated.

3. We recommend that the partners discuss and agree the extent to which this should be a priority for the Initiative. If this is still considered a priority, partners should discuss how to manage this in the context of the Mayoral election taking place in May 2020 which limits the GLA's ability to communicate on political topics in this period.

### **Shared goals**

The report notes that outside of the Legal Advice in Primary Schools project, the Initiative has created limited opportunities for partners to collaborate outside of the secondment model to further their shared goals.

4. We recommend that all partners discuss opportunities to pursue the shared goals outside of the secondment model, and the extent to which this is feasible given restrictions on individuals' time and resource. Partners should also discuss the practicalities of when such work could take place and to what aim, for example in the run-up to the 2020 Mayoral Election, or in the early stages of the new Mayoral term.

### **Flexing the model**

This report highlights that the Initiative has been relatively flexible to date, and has been able to respond to changes in the external context. However, some elements have remained fairly consistent: secondments tend to be part-time, start at a similar point in the year and are one year in duration. Secondees have also been placed at the same grade within the same team.

5. Given that relationships are now well established and the core approach has been successful, we recommend that the GLA and funders consider implementing a more flexible model to working with civil society. This could include considering secondments at different grades within the GLA; shorter, more focused secondments to deliver a particular key piece of work; and/or other ways of collaborating with civil society outside of the secondment model.

### **New Mayoral term**

This report notes that secondees have found it challenging to engage in 'vertical' policy work within the GLA. Some partners have an appetite for more senior Advisory Group members to engage with the Mayor directly to discuss opportunities to build on the work of the Initiative to date.

6. We recommend that Advisory and Reference Group members develop a joint plan to implement in the aftermath of the May 2020 Mayoral Election – covering whether and/or how

senior representatives could (re-) engage with the (new or current) Mayor, and what the Initiative's 'ask' would be to build on the progress made to date.

### **Community organising**

It is notable that several secondees have significant community organising skills but felt that these were not used to their full potential at the GLA. However, the Legal Advice in Primary Schools project is built on community organising principles and has been highly successful to date.

7. We recommend that the GLA and relevant civil society organisations discuss whether community organising skills could add further value to the GLA's work, and if so, how those skills could be brought to the GLA through secondments or otherwise.

### **Longer-term relationships between seconding organisations and the GLA**

This report notes that whilst the Initiative has been successful in strengthening relationships between most of the main stakeholders to the Initiative, it has been less successful at strengthening relationships between the GLA and some seconding organisations.

8. We recommend that the GLA and civil society organisations discuss how this model could be used to strengthen longer-term relationships that persist beyond the duration of secondments themselves, for example by embedding opportunities to bring together senior representatives to discuss progress at key points in the secondment.

### **Power dynamics**

The issue of an imbalance in power between partners to the Initiative has been raised at several points in our work, though this appears to have improved over time as relationships have become more established.

9. This imbalance will never be fully equalised, however we recommend that a standing item is formally added to Reference Group agendas to check in on the question of whether civil society organisations feel that they are being heard, and to proactively invite feedback.

There are certain areas where the issue of unequal power has been more problematic than others, notably the question of where the Initiative's priorities should lie within the broad aims, and how to make sure that civil society organisations' strategic priorities are being furthered.

10. We recommend that funders and the GLA should discuss with civil society organisations how well they feel that the current work of the Initiative is aligned with their strategic priorities, and whether there is anything more the Initiative could do to ensure that their priority objectives are being worked towards.

### **Recruitment**

This report notes that recruitment has at times been challenging, due to limited capacity in the sector and some organisations' inability to put forward a secondee despite an interest in the Initiative's work.



11. We recommend that the partners consider the opportunity for open rolling 'Expressions of Interest', to engage organisations that may be interested in working more closely with the GLA but are not certain whether a secondment is possible or desirable at this stage. These organisations could be supported to liaise with the Initiative's partners to identify any opportunities for joint working, whether that is within the secondment structure or another approach.

### **Projects**

12. We recommend that the partners consider whether there is appetite to fund more projects, in a similar model to the Legal Advice in Primary Schools project. We further recommend that the partners should consider what mechanism(s) could be used to develop new projects – whether through scoping and then commissioning the work, inviting speculative applications to the pooled fund, or other approaches.

13. We further recommend that efforts continue to be made to establish links between the Legal Advice in Primary Schools project and other teams within the GLA, to ensure that learning from the project can iteratively inform GLA policy and related activities.

## **Recommendations for other Initiatives of a similar nature**

### **Context**

This Initiative was developed to focus on a set of issues that are particularly pertinent to London and its context as a diverse world city. It was made possible by the presence of an expert, active group of civil society organisations that campaign and work on those issues at a grassroots and policy level in the city. Similar initiatives should ensure that they also respond to local issues and draw on the resources that exist locally to address those issues.

### **Aims**

This report identifies that there are both benefits and disadvantages to having a broad set of aims and objectives. However broad the aims are, it is important that partners achieve consensus on the priorities, and that all parties feel that their particular strategic aims are being furthered, at least in part, through the partnership model.

### **Model**

In this case, the secondees joined the newly established Social Integration team within the GLA. In other contexts, there could be a range of ways that secondees could be integrated at different levels of seniority. This should reflect their particular skills and experience, as well as the needs of the regional authority.

### **Capacity of civil society sector**

This Initiative would not have been possible without the capacity of the the civil society sector to engage. Similar initiatives should consider how much capacity is available, both locally and/or in the relevant topic area, as this will inform the type, duration, intensity and number of secondments that are possible.

### **Commitment to partnership work**

This report notes that the model is relatively resource intensive and requires substantial commitment of time and resource to make it work. Other initiatives should note that the model can only be successful if all partners are willing to invest, and if there is a good foundation of existing relationships and trust to build on.

### **Seconded roles**

We found that secondments added most value when the skills and experience of the secondee, the priorities and expertise of the seconding organisation, and the skills and knowledge required for the type of role, were well aligned. Similar initiatives should try to respond to the opportunities that exist in the local civil society sector – identifying skills and experience that public bodies could benefit from, and considering how to use the secondment model to facilitate cross-sector learning. Initiatives should ensure that secondees' work is of relevance of the work to the seconding organisation, and try (where possible) to time the secondments so that there is a match between individual skills (e.g. strategy development, project management) to points in the policy cycle where those skills are needed.

### **Secondments**

In this case, seconding organisations could find it challenging to backfill the roles once their employee was placed on secondment in the GLA. It is important to ensure that seconding organisations are supported to manage the 'loss' of the secondee so that they do not feel that their involvement comes at too high a cost.

### **Recruitment**

The secondee recruitment process can be challenging, as both funders and the public body involved in the Initiative have a strong stake in making sure the right decisions are made. It is also important that roles are broadly in line with the interests and priorities of the seconding organisation. Similar initiative should clearly outline decision-making responsibilities and consider whether there are opportunities for civil society and the regional authority to co-produce roles, to ensure alignment at an early stage.

### **Challenges**

The final section of this report notes some of the challenges inherent in this model. No approach is perfect – other initiatives should consider these challenges and how they could be mitigated in their local context.