



CITIES FOR ALL

Disabled People As Partners In Making Our Towns And Cities Better For Everyone

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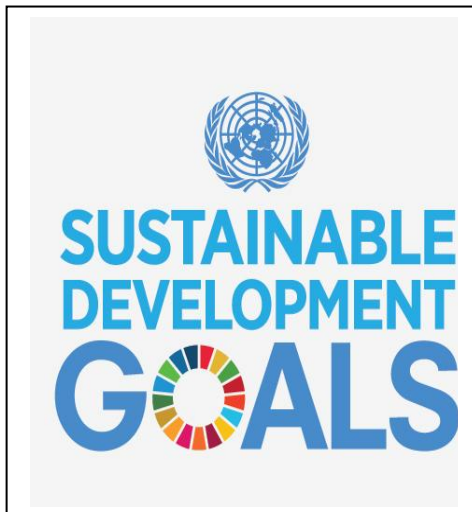


I Overview

From the local to the global, we face many common and urgent challenges if we are to find ways of living in harmony with each other and with our natural world. The overarching strategic requirement is that we appreciate the strong interconnectedness of environment, economy and society and, as the New Economics Foundation puts this most simply, we find ways of simultaneously addressing the 'triple bottom line' of protecting the environment, enabling sustainable economic development and advancing social justice (1).

This is a very radical shift from the path we are on. At the global level, the implications are spelt out in much more detail in the United Nations *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2). Global agreements need to be set out in very broad terms both to secure wide support and be generally applicable across countries. Governments vary in their practical commitment to implementation, but major global agreements like these define a clear direction of travel and provide the standards against which civil society and other advocates can hold governments to account.

The seventeen inter-related agenda goals (SDGs), each with a set of specific targets, strongly embrace this triple bottom line and include:



- taking urgent action to combat climate change;
- halting biodiversity loss;
- ensuring access to green energy;
- promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth;
- reducing inequality;
- ensuring inclusive and equitable education;
- ending poverty and hunger; and
- ensuring healthy lives for all through the life cycle.

This agenda requires the active inclusion of disabled people, both in contributing to the process of change and benefitting from the outcomes. Around 20% of the world's population are disabled, as broadly defined, and disabled people are over-represented among poor people and in poor places. Different kinds of disadvantage and discrimination are inter-related. The United Nations has also reached strong global agreement, in the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD) (3), on a human rights approach to securing their equal citizenship in all its forms: political, social and economic, as well as a

commitment to mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of strategies for sustainable development like the *2030 Agenda*.

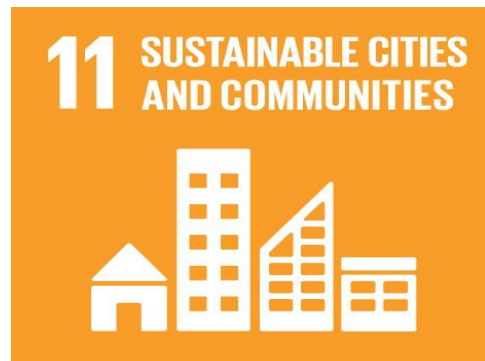
The articles in this Convention highlight a wide range of rights to equal treatment, for example in relation to:

- equal recognition before the law and protection from discrimination;
- participation in inclusive education;
- living independently and being included in the community;
- access to the physical environment and public services;
- participation in employment;
- access to quality health care;
- achieving an adequate standard of living; and
- participation in political life.

In short, *full and equal inclusion in society*.

The *2030 Agenda* requires intelligent action at all levels from the personal choices we make about how we lead our own lives up to the global efforts required to tackle climate change, rejig our economies and promote greater equality.

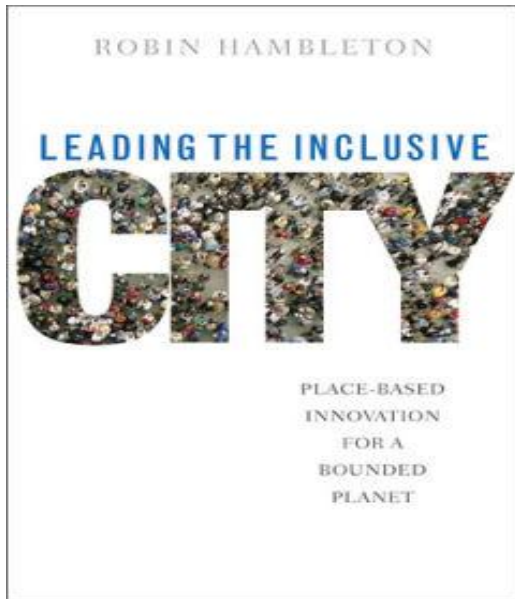
Especially important - and the focus of this guide - is action at, and within, the level of the **city**. Indeed the SDGs include a specific goal (No. 11) to *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, with several targets based on the 17 goals which all aim to ensure that our towns and cities are ecologically sustainable and provide a better life for everyone (4).



Cities and other urban settlements are important partly because they are increasingly where most of us live and help to define our identities. The cover picture (source: Wikipedia) shows night-time in the heart of Coventry, a city at the centre of England and one focus of our discussion here. They are also important because towns and cities are typically a key level in our national systems, small enough to be concerned with real people in real places but typically big enough to have the power and democratic authority required to provide a counter-weight to the place-less power of corporate and unaccountable elites who profit from globalisation.

The fullest account of how cities can become the focus of our efforts to create a sustainable and inclusive future is offered in a recent text by our colleague, Robin

Hambleton *Leading the Inclusive City: Place-based leadership for a bounded planet* (5).



This book offers a grounded vision of a better future and an optimistic account of the role of *civic leadership* in achieving positive change, illustrated by stories of innovative cities from around the world. By civic leaders here Hambleton certainly means elected politicians, but also those playing managerial and professional roles, community activists and people in local businesses and trade unions, with an interest in urban development from the grass roots upwards.

At the core of these alliances across interests and agencies is the partnership between city government (and other public institutions with responsibilities for city development) and civil society, especially as represented through citizen associations seeking to advance the interests of their members and make the city a better place to live their lives.

Democratically-elected city authorities (of course, the extent of genuine democracy varies considerably in different countries) and their officers have a responsibility for 'place shaping' to promote the well-being of the whole community, most importantly through addressing the 'triple bottom line': goals which require the support and often the active participation of local people. Equally civil society associations with aspirations to advance their interests so as both to sustain and 'scale up' the impact of their work frequently need to find ways of engaging with public institutions and exercising policy influence.

These *civic partnerships*, working with other local interests, face three particular challenges in moving from their vision for the city to taking effective action to advance the local agenda. First, reflecting on the global goals and listening to local needs and aspirations, they need to identify a limited number of local *strategic goals* to provide an overarching framework for shaping and assessing progress.

Second, they need to recognise that not only are different goals typically interconnected in various ways but also that often the structures that have been created to deliver local policy and plans (departments of local government, specialised institutions, etc.) are often too narrow in their focus to tackle complex challenges: rather they need to find ways of working across agency boundaries so as to *engage the whole system* in finding the most promising ways forward.

Equally, the 'structures' of civil society (e.g. particular non-government organisations and civil society associations) have often evolved so as to focus heavily on the interests of one group or one geographical area in such a way as to make their own claims in competition with others and miss the significance of wider changes which might bring benefit to all.

Third, they need to appreciate that traditional planning systems, although appropriate for some challenges in relatively stable conditions, often fall short when problem-solving needs fresh thinking and creative implementation, especially when available resources require frugal innovation (6).

Hambleton suggests instead that successful cities find ways of creating new 'spaces' (he calls these *innovation zones*) where people with different interests and perspectives come together with some degree of autonomy to explore together how high level strategic goals can be operationalised in specific initiatives, using processes of social discovery which tests better ways of doing things. There are a variety of methodologies available for guiding these processes of discovery, testing and learning among which Otto Scharmer's *Theory U* is perhaps the most fully developed (7).

Following the UNCRPD, we argue that all these processes need to be designed to ensure the *full participation of disabled people*, recognising that disabled people themselves are very far from being a homogeneous group.

As local citizens, disabled people have as much interest as anyone else, for example, in living in cities which have clean air, green spaces and safe streets. Often disadvantaged themselves (indeed, as we have already argued, disability typically cross-cuts other forms of disadvantage) they also share an interest in reducing inequality and promoting inclusive communities.

Disabled people and their associations also have an interest in ensuring that mainstream policies tackle the specific barriers to their participation, whether attitudinal, physical, communicative or inadequacy in the personal support they require to live their lives to the full. For example, if education is to be fully inclusive, there needs to be a transformation of the system so that, in effect, everyone can participate in ordinary schools but enjoy a personalised education. Or to take another example, city transport systems need to attend carefully to accessibility requirements if they are genuinely to provide transport for all.

To use a terminology borrowed from international development therefore, if disabled people are to be part of the 'all', this will often mean adopting a 'twin-track' approach in which equality of rights and opportunities are pursued through addressing inequalities between disabled and non-disabled people in all aspects of development (i.e. 'mainstreaming') *and* investing in specific support to disabled people and their associations to empower their participation in achieving positive change on an equal basis with others.

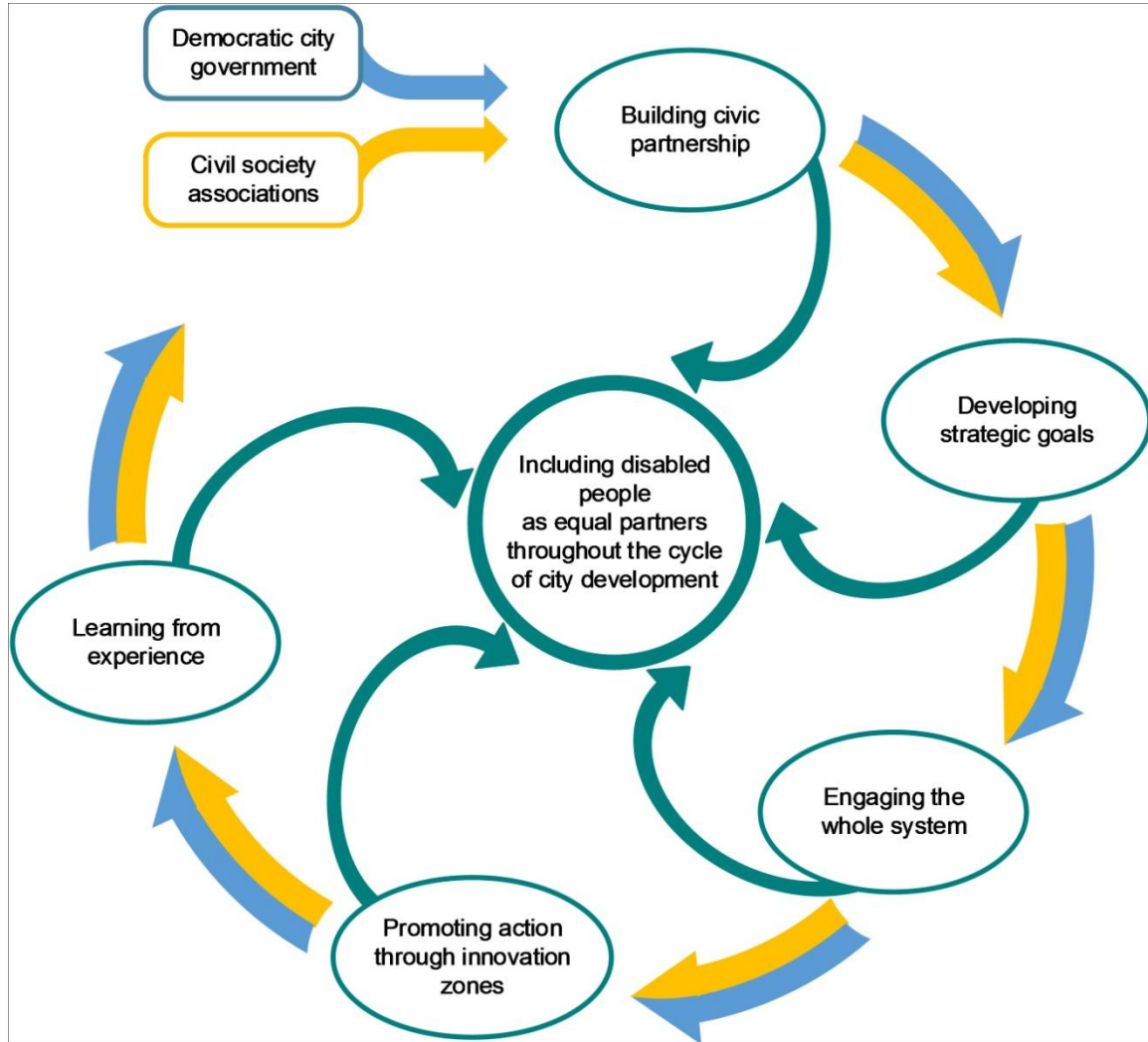


Disability Rights UK (8) has provided the fullest guides, using many practical examples, to what is involved on both 'sides' if public authorities are to ensure that there are fully inclusive processes to achieve fully inclusive outcomes and disabled people's organisations are able to be effective partners in these processes.

In the *Diagram* below, we provide a simple representation of the different elements of an inclusive process for developing cities for all through civic partnership, set out in the form of a continuous cycle of building partnerships, defining goals, taking creative action and learning from experience. By putting the inclusion of disabled people at the centre of this cycle, we seek to emphasise the twin track approach in every phase of local development. While picturing a cycle with numbered steps, we also recognise that efforts to enhance city life for all can start anywhere in this cycle and civic leaders may need to look 'backwards' to earlier stages in the cycle as well as 'forwards' (i.e. clockwise) to turn aspirations into reality.

In the rest of this guide we unpack these elements in more detail and identify key issues for city government and civil society associations at each stage in the cycle.

Disabled People As Partners In Making Cities Better For Everyone



II Grapevine in Coventry/Warwickshire: Working at the juncture between public policy and communities to make city life better for everyone

Coventry is a city in the centre of England with a population of 350,000. Historically a strong manufacturing centre, it is also known for the major destruction it suffered in the Second World War and its subsequent efforts to become a global city of peace and reconciliation. It adjoins the much more dispersed County of Warwickshire, the birthplace of William Shakespeare. Grapevine is a highly innovative community organisation based in the city and seeking *to help all kinds of people experiencing disadvantage to build better lives as part of more inclusive communities, putting relationships at the heart of its work*. Founded as a project in 1994 to offer a drop-in centre for people with intellectual disabilities, it has grown significantly as a charity over the last 20 years to become a development agency, now with 30 staff, very many local connections and a current budget of £850,000. It ensures through its Trustees and its staff that the lived experience of various kinds of disadvantage are strongly reflected in its own organisation. Most importantly, it has transformed how it now works: moving from offering day services to a particular 'client group' to this wider agenda, mobilising a wealth of community assets; supporting individuals but also helping them build social movements with other citizens to tackle collective challenges; and working at the juncture between people, communities and public policy and institutions (local authorities, the National Health Service etc.) to both catalyse civic partnerships which address the root causes of local problems and test innovative solutions. It's Chief Executive since 2000 has been Clare Wightman. She tells a small part of this complex and creative story from a civil society perspective.

Clare writes:

Put at its simplest, Grapevine is a team, at the heart of local communities, working to change things so that those at most risk of exclusion can help make their community a better, fairer and more welcoming place for everyone.

But the way we pursue this mission has evolved over many years as we learnt from local people, developed our own thinking about citizenship and social change and sought to respond to public policy (for example, the priorities of the powerful Coventry City Council) and the wider economic context, especially national austerity.

In our early days, Grapevine was established with support from the Council to offer a 'drop-in' centre for people with intellectual disabilities as the Council started to disinvest in traditional 'day service' provision. Our approach to this was influenced by the concept of 'citizen advocacy' originally pioneered in the United States in the 1980s. Citizen advocacy offers a way for individuals with intellectual disabilities (who are often marginalised or devalued by their communities) to be

connected to a valued person: this citizen advocate then helps them establish their place in their community.

We continue to believe that this concept has positive value but there were contradictions in what we were doing, as the 'drop-in' centre started to resemble the day services it had replaced and risked perpetuating segregation rather than inclusion.

Our experience by the start of this Century led us to move in a fresh direction. We were assisted here by new policy thinking, especially the new national policy document *Valuing People* (2001) which, while focused on people with intellectual disabilities, set out a much wider framework for local action grounded in the principles of Rights, Independence, Choice and Inclusion....and required, among other things, the creation of a multi-stakeholder Partnership Board led by the local authority to lead implementation.

Around that time, Grapevine elected to broaden its work, not just focusing on people with intellectual disabilities. Today we work with many others facing disadvantage: young people, migrants, families in crisis and many groups of disabled people and their families.

We are also now concerned less with 'services' as traditionally understood, and more with helping people to live full lives as citizens, playing their part in local communities. Most of the resources necessary to make this happen already exist in the community if we can mobilise these assets and help people make the necessary connections. If people can get the resources they need and can make the best use of public services, then they can shape their own lives.

At different stages of finding their own paths to community, people may need different kinds of support, all of which we try to make available. We characterise the main kinds of support as:

- Partnership - Some people need someone along with them on the journey, at least for a while, to keep them strong and hopeful.
- Preparation - Some people need help to prepare for personal change and transition, to get inspiration, support to plan or practical assistance.
- Self-direction - Some people just need to access information and networks to find the right resources for themselves and their families.

Let me illustrate what this means in practice with a recent example. Children and young people with various kinds of impairments often need the service of Occupational Therapists (OTs) to develop their skills and self-confidence and thus facilitate their capacities for living their lives to the full. But in Coventry these professionals are in short supply, there are long waiting lists for assessments and restrictive eligibility criteria.



This challenge was one focus for what we called an 'Ideas Factory', a forum where disabled children and families, a variety of community practitioners (offering yoga classes, swimming lessons, animation workshops etc.) and OTs came together to invent, explore and test alternative ideas for the young people to get the help they needed using available community assets and included with other young

people in positive activities..... without eligibility criteria! Moreover the OTs were willing to give some time to advising on how these activities could most benefit particular children (in the illustration here, for example, how the animation workshop could maximise the use of fine motor skills).

Complementing these approaches, Grapevine operates as a platform for wider social change across the whole community. Our journeys become more helpful, more inspirational and more transformational when we can come together. We think of this in terms of helping to create social movements for change, capable of both strengthening communities and engaging with public systems to make our city better for everyone.



For example, we are active in:

- Organising café conversations and 'walks and talks' where a diverse range of people can meet each other, talk about local issues and make useful connections.
- Using social media to share stories and information.
- Spotting and supporting emerging leaders.
- Planting seeds, promoting new ideas and taking action.
- Finding ways to challenge injustice and exclusion.

Interestingly while the positive values in the 2001 national policy reinforced and increased opportunities for our work to promote rights, personalise support and advance inclusion, the negative impact of the 2008 global financial crisis (reflected especially in severe cuts to local government and other services) has also encouraged the City Council's interest in our kind of asset-based community development.

Grapevine's mix of approaches is now matched by our funding and our overall position within the community. Grapevine's funds come from a balanced mix of statutory and non-statutory sources, and it is likewise positioned at the juncture between public services and community life, seeking to challenge, connect and cooperate.

Moreover our reputation and strong community roots often mean we have a seat at the tables where the City and other public bodies develop strategy and major programmes. In terms of the framework offered in the *Diagram* (page 7) we recognise that often, especially as austerity has bitten, a seat at the top table delivers little benefit unless we are also working nearer the ground where there is collaboration across different stakeholders and real energy for innovation - and even then wider system change can be elusive.

Over this 20 years at Grapevine, citizen advocacy has become community advocacy. This is not just because the community is itself critical to every person's ability to lead a valued life. It is also because the community needs these different voices and experiences in order to become fully itself. The goal is not just that the individual becomes part of the community; the goal is that the community becomes more truly what it should be, a place that welcomes, supports, and is in turn nourished by, all of its members.

All of this work remains in flux. Austerity, fear and discrimination still stalk our communities. But Grapevine (9) remains positive and ambitious, hungry to learn more about what it takes to bring about positive social change. We're never satisfied!

III Cities for all: the guide and check-list

Our focus here is on how city governments can work together with civil society and other interests to advance SDG 11, making their cities sustainable and inclusive. On the side of city government, with leadership from elected politicians together with managerial and professional officers, the challenge is to develop ways of engaging with other interests which permit the wide sharing of information and plans, create forums in which different interests and perspectives can be explored, and involve people and groups directly in taking action to improve the city. Typically this requires changes in the culture of public bodies to promote openness and changes in the processes of decision-making so as to benefit from this wide participation.

Equally on the side of civil society groups and associations, it requires that they find good ways of engaging their own, often diverse, memberships and develop their capacities for building alliances with other interests, thinking strategically and working in partnership with public bureaucracies so as to strengthen their impact in city life.

Within the great diversity of civil society interests and associations, this guide, gives particular emphasis to how *disabled people* can be equal partners in the processes and outcomes of city improvement. We have symbolised this focus by putting the full inclusion of disabled people as a circle at the heart of the cycle of development represented in the *Diagram* (Page 7), capturing the essence of the slogan 'Nothing about us without us' and meaning, most simply, that in relation to all the questions identified in what follows, we need to ask 'How well are disabled people and their associations represented in this process?' and 'How could they be included better?'

Typically the barriers (attitudinal, physical, communicative etc.) which prevent disabled people fully enjoying city life are also likely to be barriers to their full participation in city development. Tackling these barriers requires strong leadership from city government and its partners in valuing disabled people and their right to participate, as well as specific investment in promoting disability awareness and adopting inclusive processes; it also requires that disabled people's organisations develop their own capacities for engaging their memberships, strengthening their voices, building alliances and contributing strategically.

We have included examples of these processes in relation to all the issues which follow.

1. Building civic partnership

These commitments to partnership are the basis for exploring and developing ways of working together to identify and advance the agenda for city development. Of course, 'working together' can take many forms: the provision of information to citizens; public authority consultation about proposals or seeking feedback on the effectiveness of public policies; the focused participation of civil society groups (for example, in the development of specific services); and at best, real partnership in the development, delivery and scrutiny of city initiatives.

Working together can also take place at different levels from city-wide policy forums down to neighbourhood development. Some of the best examples of real partnership are visible in cities which have decentralised political power to the level of smaller communities and organised services at this more local level. It's at this level too where development can best tap the assets of communities, for example in the capabilities of their members and their *social capital* (expressed in reciprocity and social networks). The example of Porto Alegre in Brazil which pioneered participative budgeting is well known; another example comes from Seattle in the USA. Jim Diers' book *Neighbor Power* (10) tells first-hand the story of how over a decade, with leadership from the Mayor, Seattle decentralised its services to the neighbourhood level and invested in local community development to build strong associations of citizens as empowered partners with the city authorities.

In Coventry:

We saw that Grapevine seeks through a variety of methods to engage with public authorities so as to understand and inform the policy agenda (for example, participation in the 'Valuing People' Partnership Board), explore promising innovation through creating forums for cross-boundary working nearer the ground (for example, through the 'Ideas Factory') and support the development of both individual and collective advocacy to ensure that disabled and other people's voices are influential in local development.

In Lancashire:

Lancashire is a County (that is a second tier elected authority including many smaller industrial towns within it) covering a large urban and rural area in the North of England. Its population is close to 1.5 million. The County Council has implemented a specific method of commissioning services, for example, for children and adults needing social care, which creates a direct link between people's experiences and public policies. Known as 'Working together for change' (11), this method brings together public officials, people using services, their families and carers to identify common themes in the information gathered from listening carefully to individuals (e.g. disabled people) and thus identify what is working to support them to live their lives as they wish...and what is not - and so suggest ways of doing things better.

Building civic partnership: key issues

1.1 How well are city authorities engaging citizens and inviting partnership with civil society associations, including disabled people's organisations, in taking action to improve the city?

1.2 How well are civil society associations engaging their own members and developing their capacity to be empowered partners with city authorities?

1.3 How well are both 'sides' welcoming diversity, reaching out to people at risk of marginalisation and removing the barriers to their full participation?

2. Defining strategic goals

As we say above, cities and their populations face a complex system of challenges. Historically, challenges like these have been addressed through separate policies, different departments of government or other agencies and involving different professions, often through specific programmes or services which were not well connected either with each other or with the communities they served. But these challenges are typically interconnected and in a world of limited resources, we need approaches to city development which maximise progress from all our efforts.

An important response to this requirement is found in *outcomes-based policy-making*. This approach encourages public authorities, working with their communities and other local stakeholders to ask – and answer – the question 'What are the key things (the valued outcomes) we are seeking to achieve overall in this city?' and then to use this public statement of priorities as the template to guide and evaluate everything which is done e.g. through the enabling role of city government, the services it commissions and provides and different kinds of community action. Both across the city and in more specific service or local initiatives, civic leadership can require attention to how proposed policies and programmes contribute to both delivering specific objectives and advancing the strategic goals i.e. achieving as far as possible 'win-win' in terms of outcomes (12).

An essential starting point in creating this strategic framework are the SDGs and the disability-focused outcomes in the UNCRPD. But the former is expressed in terms of a 15 year times scale and the latter invites progressive realisation over an unspecified period. Civic partnerships at the city level need to identify their priorities through assessing the gap between current reality and these long term goals, engaging communities in determining local aspirations and considering available opportunities for positive change (13).

In Coventry:

We saw in the story that Grapevine has been particularly active in offering a new understanding of the 'inclusion' part of SDG11 to the Coventry strategic agenda (and therefore to advancing the UNCRPD) by showing how communities become stronger and more resilient where more use is made of their informal assets and disabled and other disadvantaged people are welcomed as contributors.

In London:

London is the U.K.'s capital city, a metropolis with a very diverse population approaching 9 million people, at the heart of a much larger and very populous region. It is also a second tier public authority governed by an elected Mayor and Assembly. The Mayor has recently produced a draft strategic plan for the city's future based on extensive public consultation over the last year on a document 'The Mayor's vision for a diverse and inclusive city' (14). Informed by the SDGs, this vision organises its proposals according to different areas of city life: a great place to live; a great place to grow up; a great place to work, etc and a healthy, green, safe and enjoyable city. In each of these areas, disability and other forms of inequality are treated as cross-cutting issues: the vision and the plan continually ask and seek to answer the question 'How can we ensure that all Londoners share in the benefits of city life?'

In Islington:

Islington is one of the 32 boroughs within London, each with their own elected municipal council. Its population at the last census was 206,000. The Council has a strong commitment to engaging local people, for example through independently-led commissions ('The Fairness Commission', 'The Young People Commission' etc.) It uses the 'triple bottom line' to define its strategic objectives in terms of strengthening the local economy and paying the living wage, promoting vibrant and inclusive communities and minimising negative environmental impacts, all as part of a political commitment to reducing inequality.

Defining strategic goals: key issues

2.1 How well have city authorities and local civil society associations created effective processes for wide participation (including that of disabled people) in defining strategic goals designed to make their cities better for everyone?

2.2 How well are these goals expressed as valued outcomes providing a framework to guide and evaluate a wide range of local actions?

2.3 How well have civil society associations articulated their aspirations in terms of valued outcomes and identified how these can be 'mainstreamed' as part of action on the city-wide priorities?

3. Engaging the whole system

As we have argued, building commitment to a limited set of strategic goals and delivering concerted action require new ways of working: we typically need approaches which effectively engage relevant 'whole systems' (15). If we think for example about ensuring all city dwellers breathe clean air, we have to attend to green energy production and use, including at the domestic level; transport systems including making more public space traffic free; greening the environment, etc. - issues which are traditionally addressed through different public agencies and involve both business and citizen behaviours.

Working across agency and other boundaries to address a complex challenge is helped of course where agencies are serving the same geographical areas (e.g. the whole city or the same neighbourhood), have some joint governance arrangements and perhaps draw on 'pooled' budgets. It is also helped by careful analysis of causes and effects which illuminate how each agencies' activities impact on achieving the desired goal.

But the first of these conditions is often poorly met and the second usually leaves much to explore in delivering concerted change. We also need collaborative ways of working, including the involvement of civil society, to make a significant difference.

In Coventry:

As we saw, a major contribution of an 'intermediary' agency like Grapevine is in getting more of the relevant local system into the room through mobilising people's lived experience, the current informal assets in communities and the expertise of professional workers, all brought together to address more holistic definitions of particular challenges. Grapevine can tell many stories like the one which created 'natural occupational therapy'.

in Lambeth:

Lambeth is another London Borough, population 303,000. The 'Lambeth Living Well Collaborative' is a platform of partners who have come together for the last eight years with the aim of radically improving the outcomes experienced by people with severe and enduring mental health problems. The Collaborative is made up of commissioners from the Council and the local NHS, agencies that provide services - both public and community, people who use these services and informal carers. Its vision is that 'the Lambeth Living Well Area will provide the context within which every citizen whatever their abilities or disabilities, can flourish, contribute to society and lead the life they want to lead'.

The Collaborative is adopting a range of innovative methods both to ensure that the people using services, together with peer supporters and advocates, are fully involved in reviewing existing provision and designing new services and also to

promote effective collaboration between different elements of the total provision. In relation to the former, the full range of participants have been involved in setting out the Collaborative's key objectives and regular breakfast meetings, open to all, take decisions about the day to focus of the work to be done. In relation to the latter, the local authority and NHS have adopted an approach to commissioning in which rather than inviting competition among different service providers, a group of providers enter as equal partners into a single arrangement with the commissioners to deliver services (sharing risks and responsibilities) - thus incentivizing collaboration and enabling integration between providers who each have unique contributions to make.

Engaging the whole system

3.1 How well are city leaders working across agency boundaries to identify and engage the whole systems relevant to addressing their strategic goals?

3.2 How well are civil society associations (including disabled person's organisations) building connections and alliances with other civil society associations so as to facilitate strong civil society influence in this whole systems working?

3.3 How well is this collaborative working reflected in delivering effective action?

4. Promoting action through innovation zones

As we saw earlier, Hambleton identifies innovation zones as an important feature of cities which are responding well to 21st Century challenges. These zones arise from areas of overlap between different realms of place-based leadership, with different kinds of legitimacy (political, managerial, civil society etc.), where different perspectives can be brought together to engage in creative dialogue about building a better future. As we have just seen, productive innovation is also more likely where (in relation to particular strategic challenges) we can 'get the whole system' into the room.

Learning from studies of the natural world (especially ecology) we know that life is made up of systems embedded within larger systems, in mutual interaction. Translating this idea into social systems, we can envisage city-wide systems as setting goals, defining parameters (e.g. resource allocation) and helping to spread innovations that are being generated on a smaller scale through empowered cross-boundary teams and networks.

There are a variety of social technologies which help to get the right people in the room and foster conversations which matter (16). What these methods have in

common is establishing a safe space for exploration among a diverse set of people and fostering a proto-typing approach to inventing and testing new solutions which go beyond 'business as usual'. 'Theory U' (See Note 7) offers a well-structured path for this creativity.

In Coventry:

We saw that Grapevine, often with support from public authorities, has been especially creative in finding original ways (sometimes deceptively simple like the 'walk and talk' sessions) of hosting diverse participants in conversations which matter. Part of their learning is that larger scale change (e.g. through the work of a City Programme Board or a major health services provider) is more likely if innovation starts on a smaller scale by attracting the most interested people and going 'where the energy is'.

In Lambeth:

Continuing the example of the Living Well Collaborative, a lot of effort is invested in bringing people with different experiences and perspectives together to find new solutions to perceived challenges. In recent years, the Collaborative has hosted innovative co-design sessions, involving people with expertise from elsewhere, to which over 1,800 local people have actively contributed. It regularly uses a wide range of mechanisms for engagement including the breakfast meetings, peer support network meetings that report into these and strong online communication tools that provide much wider feedback. There is also a 'Peer Innovation Fund' open to people with lived experience of services and focused on turning ideas about better mutual support into practical initiatives.

Promoting action through innovation zones

4.1 How well are civic leaders at the city level providing clear direction and empowering inclusive cross-boundary teams to create innovative responses to strategic challenges?

4.2 How well are different realms of leadership, including that of civil society, developing the capacity of their members to be effective partners in joint problem-solving?

4.3 How well are these problem-solving teams using modern social technologies to mobilise diverse talents and perspectives in the process of innovation?

5. Learning from experience

In *Beyond The Stable State* (17) Donald Schon provided a now classic analysis of why, in situations of complexity and rapid change, governmental agencies and their partners must become adept at *public learning* so as to be resilient in the face of uncertainty and adaptive to new challenges. This is essential at the level of our cities.

Looking back on the preceding four sections, we can see that this needs to include learning about the state of the city itself through study, analysis and listening carefully to different perspectives; learning about the processes of purposeful social change through thoughtful reflection on experiences throughout the cycle shown in the *Diagram*; learning about substantive progress towards achieving the strategic goals established at city level through qualitative and quantitative assessments; and learning about how far this progress is impacting equitably on different sub-groups within the population through these assessments and direct feedback from people and their representatives.

The whole of the Grapevine story in Section II is actually a story of 'organisational learning': evolving new ways of working through learning from experience and reflection about how better to advance the core mission of building inclusive communities.

Learning from experience

5.1 How well are civic leaders working to create a culture of openness and mutual sharing of experiences and information so as to promote public learning across the city?

5.2 How well are civic leaders investing in the multiple forms of learning required to illuminate both the processes and outcomes of city development?

Finally, the *Diagram* (page 7) represents all these aspects of development as a cycle or spiral, a continuing process of making a positive difference together in the long journey to achieve sustainability and inclusion for all.

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Notes and Resources

1. A recent 'new economics' textbook, *Doughnut Economics*, puts this overarching strategic challenge succinctly, using the image of the doughnut with a hole in the middle: 'The boundaries of the inner ring represent the social foundation of well-being that no-one should fall below. The boundaries of the outer ring represent the ecological ceiling of the planetary pressures that we should not go beyond. The task of the new economics {i.e. the ways we organise production, distribution and consumption} is to provide a roadmap for staying within the doughnut defined by these boundaries so as to achieve prosperity for all within the means of our planet.' Kate Raworth, *Doughnut Economics* Random House, 2017.
2. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* United Nations, 2015. Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>
3. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD) United Nations, 2006. Available at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>
4. The SDG 11 targets are set out on page 24 of *Transforming Our World* (Reference 2. above). These embrace: planning urbanization; improving air quality and access to green spaces; providing adequate housing, clean water and good sanitation; establishing accessible transport systems; and ensuring universal access to these benefits, including for persons with disabilities.
5. Robin Hambleton *Leading the Inclusive City: Place-based innovation for a bounded planet* Policy Press, 2015.
6. Charles Leadbetter *The Frugal Innovator: Creating change on a shoestring budget* Palgrave, 2014.
7. C. Otto Scharmer *Theory U: Learning from the future as it emerges* Berrett-Koehler, 2009. The 'U' here refers to the shape of a process for social learning. Simply summarised, this approach requires that an innovating group or network go on a journey together where they try to remove their blinkers so as to better observe what is currently happening and listen deeply to the experiences of others. The group takes the time to share and make sense of these observations and support each other in considering what might be better, looking inside themselves to identify their highest aspirations and taking responsibility for acting so as to make a positive difference, always asking 'What more is possible?' The application of this methodology to contemporary global challenges is well described in Otto Scharmer and Katrin Kaufer *Leading from the Emerging Future* Berrett Koehler, 2013. A handy tool-kit for applying these ideas to 'sustainable

place-shaping' *Arts-based methods for transformative engagement* is available at: www.sustainableplaceshaping.net

8. Disability Rights UK *Inclusive Communities: A guide for Disabled People's Organisations* and *A guide for Local Authorities* DRUK, 2014. Available at: <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/policy-campaigns/reports-and-research/inclusive-communities>

9. More information about Grapevine at: www.grapevinecovandwarks.org
For videos illustrating the work described here, see for example <https://youtu.be/vxejkap3Kro> (on the 'Ideas Factory' method for creating community initiatives) and <https://youtu.be/ZQx9eQplZ5Q> (on 'Walk and talk' as a way of working across boundaries to make new connections).

10. Jim Diers *Neighbor Power: Building Community The Seattle Way* University of Washington Press, 2004

11. There are more details of *Working Together For Change* on-line at: <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/working-together-change/>

12. This approach is described further in *Commissioning for outcomes and co-production: A practical guide for local authorities* new economics foundation, 2014. Available at: http://neweconomics.org/2014/06/commissioning-outcomes-co-production/?sf_action=get_results&_sf_s=Commissioning&_sft_latest=research

13. One set of processes for enhancing city life is captured in the concept and practice of the Smart City (i.e. focusing especially on the use of the new data collection and communication technologies). The *Smart Cities for All* toolkit offers good advice on how to ensure that the 'all' fully includes disabled people: <http://smartcities4all.org/english-toolkit/>

14. *The Mayor's vision for a diverse and inclusive city* Available at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/microsoft_word_-_final_diversity_and_inclusion_vision_for_publication_lo.pdf

15. For a useful guide to what is involved in 'whole systems' working, see Margaret Attwood and others *Leading Change: A guide to whole systems working*, Policy Press, 2003.

16. Together with 'whole system' events, these include: 'World Café', 'Open Space', 'Future Search' and perhaps most intensive, 'Social Labs'. On the latter, see for example, Zaid Hassan *The Social Labs Revolution* Berrett-Koehler, 2014.

17. Donald Schon *Beyond The Stable State* Temple Smith, 1971

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