

## Case Study

### *A view from the Chair*



The London Borough of Camden is home to some of the world's most prestigious cultural institutions, a diverse and successful business community, a rich creative heritage and a knowledgeable voluntary sector.

Despite this, many Camden residents feel isolated or are living in poverty. Camden Giving has been established to create a fairer future for the people of Camden. The Camden Giving vision is to bring together businesses, the voluntary sector, residents and the public sector to build a brighter future for Camden residents. This approach is at the heart of everything Camden Giving does.

Camden Giving has a Steering Group comprising residents and representatives from businesses, the voluntary sector and Camden Council. Following a long period of discussion within the council and with the local voluntary sector a group of stakeholders was convened in May 2016, leading to the first meeting of a formal Steering Group in October.

Following the confirmation of the allocation of Section 106 (planning gain) funds to Camden Giving in autumn 2016, the wheels were finally in motion and with a grants pot already in place things were able to move very quickly. The Steering Group appointed a Director in March 2017 and the programme launched in April. Since then Camden Giving has awarded nine grants totalling £77k to support the communities directly affected by the Kings Cross Development. Voluntary

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Action Camden has been involved from the very beginning and administers the current grants.

Camden Giving is able to make the Section 106 money go further by leveraging its cross-sectoral relationships. For example, as well as receiving funds from Camden Giving local charities delivering

employability projects have been introduced to businesses and are now discussing access to local jobs. PBGSs are in a position to make the funds come to life in a way the Council cannot.

#### What is a Section 106 agreement?



A Section 106 is a legal agreement between a developer and local planning authority about measures that the developer must take to reduce the negative impact of a development on the community in order to secure planning permission. The most common measures are the provision of public open space or affordable housing as part of the development, or funds for education, highways or town centre improvements.

Simon Pitkeathley, Chief Executive of the Camden Town and Euston Town Business Improvement Districts and urban regeneration charity the Camden Collective, is Chair of Camden Giving. Here he talks about cross-sector partnerships as part of the DNA of Camden Giving and offers advice for other PBGS Chairs:

*"I got involved personally because of a sense I've had for some time that when we talk about community we don't do it in a way that includes business, and professionally because businesses already do a lot in their communities which isn't always recognised, and it makes sense to co-ordinate that."*

*"It's essential to have a range of people round the table. If you are creating a space between the sectors you need to have them all represented in the room. The challenge is that those different perspectives all need to be heard. Handling people's sensibilities is part of the job. The key is recruiting someone like our Director who has experience of both business and the voluntary sector; she makes things happen fast in a matter of fact way and that helps diffuse potentially conflicting points of view."*

*"Working with the council and Voluntary Action Camden has given us the infrastructure to get things moving very quickly. We only have a year's funding for the Director's role so it was important to see success fast. The high number of applications for the initial grants round show that there's a demand for what we do and we have already succeeded in getting out to the groups we exist to support."*

*"I would advise Chairs of other fledgling giving initiatives to hire someone brilliant and let them get on with it. Chair effectively and keep a low profile. When you have limited resource the person running it needs enabling, not distracting."*

*"We have a strong, coherent group which is able to navigate tensions and we have made a good clear start. From my perspective as Chair, that's what's important."*

➤ [www.camdengiving.org.uk](http://www.camdengiving.org.uk)



**Men in the south of Camden have a life expectancy 11 years shorter than men in the north of the borough**



**34%**

**of children and**

**32%**

**of older people in Camden live in poverty, the national average is**

**18.1%**

**Camden has the second highest number of businesses in London but only 8% of jobs in Camden go to residents**