Anchor Institutions and Anchor Collaboratives

Hackney Health and Wellbeing Board
16 June 2022

Anchor Institutions

An **anchor organisation** is typically – though not exclusively – not for profit organisations that are based in a city or town and are unlikely to move location, usually because their purpose and mission is intrinsically bound up in that area. They are also often one of the major players in the local economy, and can use this economic power to create wealth and improve opportunities for the people in that place.

Impact and key areas of focus

Anchor institutions can use their influence to improve local social, economic and environmental conditions and reduce inequalities.

Anchor institutions can have a positive impact on local communities in two main areas: the local economy and the environment.

Both these areas have the potential to improve the health of individuals and communities.
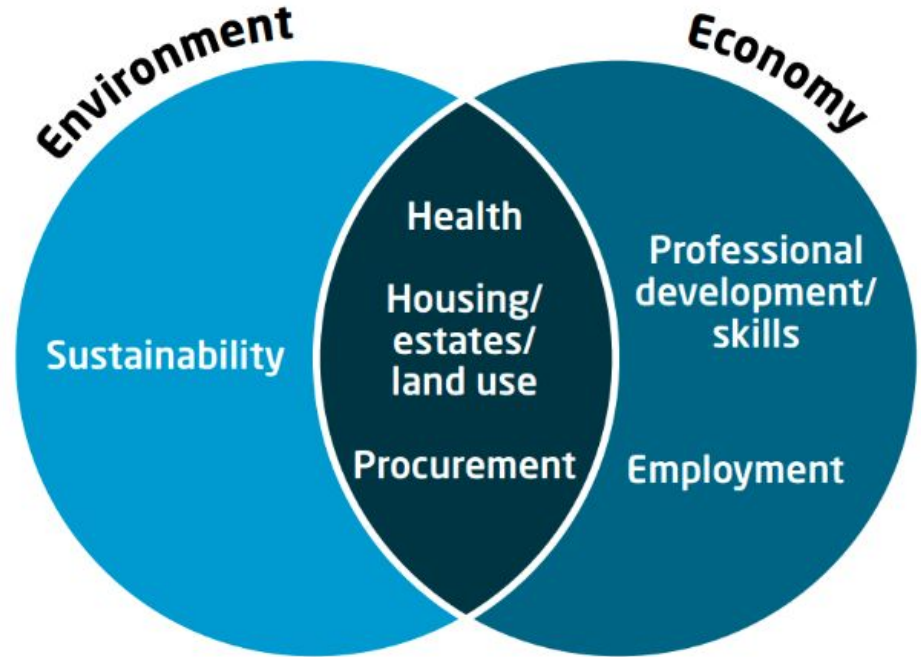
Policy context

The NHS Long Term Plan and 2020/21 NHS People Plan both outlined ambitions for the NHS to create new opportunities for people from more deprived areas to enter employment within the health sector by expanding apprenticeships, providing routes into employment for volunteers and working more closely with schools, colleges and universities.

Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) offer an opportunity for NHS organisations, local authorities, voluntary sector and other local organisations to work together to address these issues.

Building on the work started prior to the Covid-19 pandemic to strengthen the collective action of Hackney's anchor institutions is a **key action** in **Hackney's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy**, as one of the '10 cross-cutting areas for action' to reduce health inequalities referenced in the Strategy - the approach supports implementation of all 3 strategy priorities.

Hackney's new 2022-2026 Labour Manifesto has a commitment to develop a Hackney Net Zero Partnership - bringing together the Council, public sector partners and businesses to ensure that we can work together to reach a net zero borough.

Learning from the City & Hackney Anchor Collaborative

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Hackney Health and Wellbeing Board

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RENAISI

What is an Anchor Collaborative?

A local system-wide approach to community wealth building by place-based economic and strategic actors/ institutions

- Based on international research

- Connected to Inclusive Economy Strategy

- Clear hooks into NHS priorities

- Aligns with commitments in the 2022 Hackney Labour manifesto

- Instigated and part funded by Renaisi

- Potential to strengthen collaborative system behaviours across the place

Motivation:

City and Hackney's biggest institutions can collaborate to use their resources to tackle inequalities and build an inclusive local economy. Working across a place-based system allows for learning and projects that have greater impact than if organisations did this work on their own.

Who has been engaged?

In City and Hackney **the anchors that have been directly engaged** are:

- Hackney Council
- the CCG
- ELFT
- the GP Confederation
- City of London Corporation
- Homerton Hospital.

There have also been conversations with a **wider range of local and London wide stakeholders** about the work, including Peabody, Barts NHS Trust, local projects in Hackney (e.g. the Improving Outcomes for Young Black men initiative, the Sport England pilot); public health teams, Citybridge Trust, the Museum of London, the North East London Commissioning Support Unit and many others.

Definitions

An **anchor collaborative** is a formal partnership of anchor organisations that share a common geography, and have clearly defined, collective, objectives that guide their work. They are often supported by a trusted independent organisation that helps to facilitate the work, and this role is typically funded by a philanthropic partner.

Community wealth building is an approach to local economic development which prioritises benefits to the local economy and community. Anchor organisations have an important role within community wealth building as the most stable and significant local economic actors.
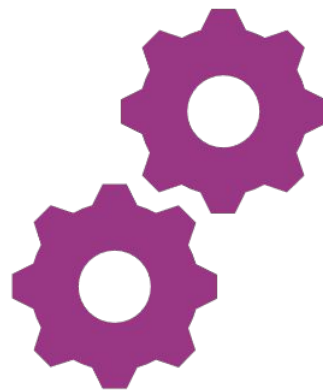
Collaboration as approach– collective impact

Common agenda — Build a shared agenda around priorities owned at a senior level

Shared measurement — Track and understand progress in a similar way for accountability

Mutually reinforcing activities and approaches — Build relationships and increase knowledge of what anchors and the wider system is doing

Continuous communication and relationships — Through sharing, improving and aligning practice towards common goals

Independent backbone support — Have a neutral, facilitating actor to hold the space, allowing learning, challenge, and system accountability

Progress in two streams

Workforce – apprenticeships

Apprenticeships were identified as an opportunity to collaborate via a 'rotating apprenticeships' pilot across the organsiations.

A small group of leads across City of London, Hackney Council and ELFT came together to develop the idea with Renaisi, who developed a short paper to outline the project. This has been planned to be a small scale pilot with a relatively senior / skilled apprenticeship offer, but it could be adapted and rolled out much more widely.

However the apprenticeship leads were unable to gain the senior sponsorship within their organsiations needed to bring accountability and resources to this initiative, which prevented its realisation.

With the group having developed the collaborative proposal it was convened for, only to face barriers at the system level, this aspect of the collaboration has now been paused.

Procurement

We have now had 10 workshops with the Procurement Group, which engages 7 -12 people from procurement, business engagement and strategy teams across the anchor organisations.

Each workshop took a similar structure, beginning with an update from each of the anchor representatives on their current focus alongside any challenges and successes they would like to share with the group.

We would then often go into a deep dive into a topic suggested by the group, sometimes bringing in external speakers or other colleagues from the anchor organisations, such as net zero / sustainability leads; or skills and employment leads, where useful.

While we were not prescriptive about the themes that the group would focus on, topics have generally fallen under the three areas of Net Zero, Social Value and Modern Slavery.

Opportunities in the procurement workstream

Opportunity	Discussion
Collectively engaging suppliers	There is a common ambition across anchor organisations to diversify their supplier base and to remove some of the barriers that exist for small and medium sized organisations, and BAME-led organisations. As they are working across a shared footprint, and commissioning similar types of services, the anchors could engage these local suppliers collectively to build their capacity to bid for tenders and understand the main barriers they face.
Developing common social value metrics	Social Value policies and measurement processes has been a recurring. Among the NHS anchor partners there have been some efforts to align social value objectives and metrics across the North East London footprint. To take this further across all the anchors would require political agreement from the local authorities, and some dedicated resource to work up an agreed set of social value objectives and metrics.
Developing thinking and practice on the circular economy	Another common priority has been developing an approach to supporting green jobs and the development of skills needed for the circular economy. Anchor partners are at early stages of their thinking, which presents opportunities for commissioning shared research into the future economic needs of the area.

Collaboration within the group

Regular peer-to-peer engagement around the main themes of Net Zero, Social Value and Modern Slavery in the Procurement workshops demonstrated that anchor organisations benefit from coming together to:

1. **Debate and challenge** each other in thinking around policy issues to co-develop approaches on emergent and strategic cross-cutting themes

2. Engage in **practical sharing of resources** and commonly used documentation around processes and organisational policies

Collaboration within the system

Opportunities for collaboration have not yet progressed into tangible actions beyond discussion within the workshops. Those in the group have articulated a number of system-level barriers that they all face when trying to bring ideas to action:

1. **A lack of alignment in timescales and processes** impeding pursuing joint tendering for suppliers

2. **Limited engagement from the senior decision makers** needed to alter strategies and reporting requirements: this lack of the 'authorising environment' meant that the imperative to collaborate slipped behind other organisational priorities.

3. **Limited commitment to resourcing collaborative work** (such as research and strategy development) and low accountability or capacity to engage in activity beyond the day job.

Learning around effective collaboration

- The importance of the '**authorising environment**' for the delivery of public value. Active leadership is needed to support new ideas to take root and give permission to staff to work in new ways, as well as setting expectations for delivery.

- Collaboration should **start from a shared set of goals that reflect system priorities**. As efforts to enable collaboration have often focused on trying to align different organisations workplans, the workstreams have felt detached from the objectives and priorities of the wider health and care system.

- Collaboration must be **embedded into local governance systems.** Without establishing a governance structure for the collaborative linked to systems level ambitions, individual organisational pressures have been prioritised over initiatives that emerged within the collaborative.

- Collaboration must be **resourced.** Organisations must be willing to commit staff time and financing to support and coordinate areas of shared interest, such as research, or large scale provider engagement. This can both provide the capacity to pursue this work and build accountability and commitment into the collaborative.

Recommendations for the future

1. Begin by bringing senior leaders together to identify priority areas of work for collaboration and shared objectives

2. Develop a governance structure with regular ways for the collaborative workstreams to update progress and escalate any issues with clear visibility between working groups and senior leadership

3. Map out practical barriers to collaboration (such as tendering regulations, sign off processes, yearly timelines) within workshops at the beginning of the collaboration to discuss how they might be overcome and rule out activities where they will not be possible

4. Identify practical activities of value that can quickly demonstrate the benefits of collaboration, embed collaborative processes and begin to bring the anchors together to achieve the shared objectives: e.g. developing a set of common metrics or aligning action plans.

5. Identity areas of shared investment (e.g. pieces of research, supplier development funding) which could be improved via pooled resources and the input of multiple anchors in tendering processes.

6. Embed ongoing reflection and learning into the collaborative working groups to build a culture of challenge and drive which infiltrates practice outside the group

7. Engage senior leaders in ongoing evaluation to build accountability and ensure ownership of progress and challenges at all levels

Questions for HWB

1. As part of our HWB Strategy action plan, what steps can the HWB partnership take to ensure that local anchor organisations are working collaboratively to maximise the economic and social impact in our local community?
2. What should be our focus over the next four years?
3. How can we bring all of this work together to demonstrate collective impact?
4. Where should the governance structures sit for this work?
5. Who, in each organisation, will have delegated authority to ensure any new AI objectives are fulfilled?

About Renaisi – place is the thread

Renaisi is a Hackney social enterprise, committed to improving places for the people who live in and use them. We do that by trying to understand what drives social change, what role place has in social change, and we work with different stakeholders to achieve that. We work with:

- **individuals** experiencing economic exclusion

- **social organisations** trying to improve their impact

- **funders** looking to learn about the value and role of their investments

- **place-based systems** that want to work differently through leadership and coordination

Each of these stakeholders is an integral part of improving places and a target for our products and work as a social enterprise.

We aim to influence the policy and practice debate by delivering quality work, highlighting practical examples, and demonstrating our learning on the role of place-based approaches.

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