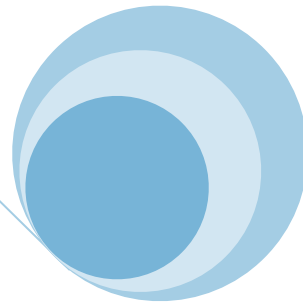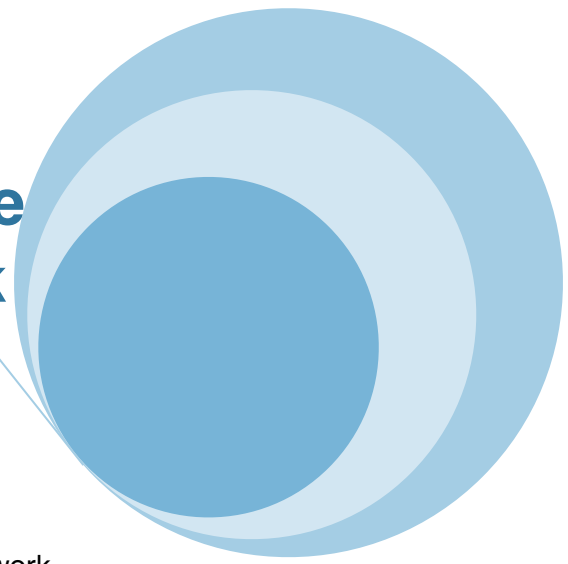# Resilient Communitie
- A Fuzzy Framework
for Sheffield

This document sets out the jointly agreed framework that will underpin how agencies, communities and citizens can work together to improve outcomes for local people.

Introduction

Throughout 2014 organisations and individuals from across Sheffield have been working together to explore approaches to building resilient communities. Over 16 organisations and a workshop of over 50 key individuals have discussed this issue at length, and agreed;

- ➤ That Sheffield should be doing more to help citizens and communities become more resilient

- ➤ However this is not an agenda which will work with a top down approach

This 'fuzzy framework' sets out jointly agreed principles, based on the work done so far. The proposal is that these principals should underpin all organisational and community led approaches. If adopted, they will start a process of helping to empower our communities and citizens to cope with the change and challenges they face.
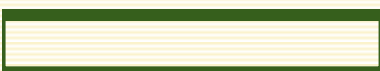
What do we mean by resilience and why is resilence important ?

Change is and will continue to be constant for the citizens and communities of Sheffield. It can take many forms, from personal change (for example in a person's health or education) through to global changes (such as changing weather because of climate change or changing jobs because of global labour markets).

'A truly resilient community learns how to thrive in the face of change and adversity and adapts to fulfill the local potential of people, businesses and organisations. Resilient communities are smart communities with the ability to self-organise and shape their own futures'

Resilient communities have;

- ➤ A positive sense of place and identity *'we like living here'*

- ➤ Active citizens and networks *'we will get involved to make our neighbourhood better'*

- ➤ Vibrant and involved community organisations and resources *'we have local skills and assets'*

- ➤ Strong ,inclusive and effective community leadership *'we will make things happen'*

Working together better to build resilient communities; our five key principles

1. The community should be the starting point

Communities work together best when focused on those things which matter most to that community. Helping organisations achieve their goals is unlikely to motivate individuals in their community. Instead what will drive people to get involved is a focus on issues which will benefit of their community, their families and themselves. People are passionate in their hopes and aspirations for themselves, their family and neighbours, and the place they live in.

Any work that is aiming to contribute to the development of resilience in a community needs to take community aspirations as its starting point, work towards bringing these out into the open and then look at how they can be achieved, whether that is by using what is available in the community already or bringing in appropriate resources from elsewhere.

This process of understanding and articulating community aspirations is a complex one as diverse groups may not have shared interests. The culture, history and resources of a community will also be different. However this is a key challenge for local community leaders (democratic leaders and active citizens) to facilitate building the process of shared aspirations.

2. Build on what the community is good at

When considering how to work towards achieving the community's aspirations the first port of call should be the skills, capabilities and resources the community has to offer. Resilience develops as people make connections and develop their skills, which cannot happen if things are done to them rather than by them. When considering communities, the starting point should be "what is

good about this place?", rather than "what is this place lacking?". All communities will have assets.

An asset based approach does not, or should not attempt to pass over obstacles and challenges. Indeed asset-focused work when done properly includes space for the exploration of gaps and difficulties, and is the framework within which these are clearly identified. The key thing is that the underpinning ethos of such an approach is about supporting and developing community assets, with problems tackled in order to do this and achieve aspirations, rather than having as prime focus a community's deficits.

3. Agree on what success for that community looks like ….and join – up to achieve it

An agreed sense of what success (long, medium and short term) could (and should) look like creates an overarching sense of vision and purpose for the community. This doesn't mean that all organisations and communities should be working together all the time; it does mean that we need to be much better at knowing what is going in respective areas of work and how we can work together effectively to a common sense of purpose.

This is about co-operation and communication; in a time of dwindling resources there is a need to ensure those available in Sheffield are maximized as far as possible. This doesn't mean treading on anyone's toes: the left hand needs to know what the right hand is doing, but we should accept that some things are best done single-handed. Tools such as digital communication and platforms should be utilised where relevant

4. One Neighbourhood at a time; No set approach

Communities and neighbourhoods have developed at different paces and in different ways across Sheffield. This means that what works in one area may

not work in another; similarly, the right organisation to lead in one area may be the wrong one in another. The approaches most likely to succeed will recognise this and not seek to impose a uniform structure, but will instead work within what has grown organically and must be flexible enough to do so.

Approaches and ways of working do need however to be shared between neighbourhoods and communities. While each community is different, methods of working may be transferable. Case studies are powerful tools for change

5. Work together to build the stories of success

People know that community based interventions work. But the evidence base needs to be strengthened, so that the city and communities can build on success, stop reinventing the wheel and communities have the evidence to influence the way public, private and voluntary sector organisations are doing things. Stories of success can provide inspiration and models for working to communities which are not sure how to progress

Making the fuzzy framework happen

Agreeing a set of principles has not been an easy process. These co-produced principles do however reflect the expertise, passion and evidence of practitioners and citizens committed to empowering communities.

Leaders and organisations across the city need to commit to this framework if it has any chance of making a difference.

A route map to success needs

	Leadership and commitment • Political support and commitment to building the skills in community
	Capabilty and skills • Development of a shared whole city training and capacity building programme
	An implementation plan and stories of success • A jointly developed and resourced implementation