

# What motivates people to get involved and what gets in the way?

Emerging findings from our research into  
Empowered Communities in the 2020s.



Care and consideration for  
other people and the future



# What motivates?

## Drivers

What makes people want to take action/get involved?



**Injustice:** Wanting to correct an injustice or take action about something that is going wrong



**Emotional response to an event or issue:** Feeling angry, sad, passionate or excited



**Aspiration:** To make life and the place you live in better for yourself and the people around you



**Values rooted in faith, politics or family;** inherited because it is what your mother or grandmother did



**Purpose:** Having a sense of purpose makes people feel good about themselves and their lives



**Responsibility:** Feeling a sense of responsibility to care for others in the community



Something people feel is going wrong, a gap or a problem



People want to make their place better or the lives of people like them better

# What motivates?

## Enablers

What makes people want to take action/get involved?



**Relationships:** Being encouraged to get involved and guided by someone you trust; and the opportunity to meet people, to be social



**People:** Having role models, supporters or help with making connections



**Resources:** Having the money and time to volunteer



**Confidence or hope:** Believing that you can make a difference



**Ownership:** A community that leads and drives the process



Somebody you trust says...  
this is going on, why  
don't you join in, you've  
got something to say

# What gets in the way?

## Internal constraints



**Fear:** Fear of drawing attention to yourself, of being 'found out' by authorities (for example, this was raised in relation to some refugees)



**Money:** Worrying about paying bills, living in poverty



**Time:** Working long hours or having other responsibilities that make it difficult to find the time



**Caring duties:** Looking after grandchildren and elderly parents



**Culture:** In some areas, the women take on the caring duties while men dominate town and community councils



**Health:** Poor health can be a barrier



**Disability:** Stress and anxiety brought on by punitive benefits changes are 'time consuming and draining, they sap resilience down to nothing'



**Confidence:** You go along and do not feel able to contribute



**Despondency:** Thinking that community action does not make a difference



It's very hard for them to do community work because they are struggling to meet the absolutely pressing needs pouring through the door

# What gets in the way?

## External disincentives



**Format:** Unfamiliar or off-putting way that meetings are conducted; not understanding how a local system works



**Culture:** The language and tone of events, activities and meetings; includes male dominated meetings and/or ego driven individuals holding power at local level



**Issues:** Feeling that the issues being put forward are not those that are relevant or interesting to you



**Institutions:** Statutory agencies that do not understand how to work with communities



**Experience:** You go along and do not feel heard. Outsiders may have fantastic ideas, but communities are tired of being surveyed, consulted and still not having a voice



Many Somalis locally are struggling, going out early in the morning and coming back late in the evening. And what could a single mother do trying to bring up young children on her own? They might want to engage but would they have the time and capacity? They have to feed their children. They may be working Saturdays and Sundays. Everyone is struggling