



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

The Civil Society Strategy

Toolkit



Overview

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Introduction

The Civil Society Strategy

Government believes in the strength of civil society as an enormous force for good. We want to make sure that it is at the heart of our efforts to create a better and fairer society.

- [The Civil Society Strategy](#) aims to find new ways for government and other partners to work with and for civil society to tackle challenges and unlock opportunities to build a stronger society now and in the future.
- We want to be ambitious about what can be achieved, but must also be realistic about the financial and legislative constraints we continue to face. Within this context, we welcome bold ideas on what government's role in supporting civil society should be.

Developing the Strategy

The Civil Society Strategy will help shape our work with and for civil society over the next ten years and beyond. It will:

1. Articulate Government's vision of civil society in a way that reaffirms the value it places on it
2. Unlock civil society's potential by addressing the challenges it faces through non-financial governmental intervention
3. Set a new framework for effective collaboration between Government and civil society to solve the most pressing and complex societal issues

To shape this Strategy, we want to hear from a wide range of people from across different sectors. You can help us by having a conversation with your members, community or other interested parties. This toolkit explains what questions to discuss, what formats might be useful and how to feed your conversations back to us.

How to use this toolkit

Setting up your conversation (1)

1. You will need a place to meet, 30 minutes or more and someone to take notes.
2. Decide who you want in the room - we want to hear from as many different people as possible, there is no right or wrong combination and you may want to reach out to an existing network of yours. Below are some ideas of people to consider inviting.

charities
commissioners
older people
social enterprises
Infrastructure bodies
business owners
academics
charity employees
health workers
young people
People who care about society
councillors
volunteers
youth workers
faith communities
community leaders
active citizens

Setting up your conversation (2)

3. You can use the example workshop activities as the basis for your conversation (slides 11 - 13). Alternatively, you may pick as many areas for discussions as you like (slides 17 - 30). In doing so, you may want to consider:
 - The size and experience of your audience
 - The amount of time you have available
 - The amount of time you have to capture feedback after the discussions
4. Depending on your audience, you may wish to simplify the questions in a way that stays true to the intended content.
5. After the conversation, we would ask the lead organiser to submit notes and feedback by filling in the relevant section in the [online platform](#). If this format is not accessible to you, please send your feedback to civilsocietystrategy@culture.gov.uk instead.

Hints and tips for your conversation

In answering questions, please encourage participants to:

- Be as specific as possible
- Consider what could be different as well as how this could be achieved
- Reflect their own experiences, as well as examples they are aware of in the UK and abroad
- Consider different types of organisations and people when they explore questions
- Consider the role of different parties in achieving change (such as central and local government, charities, businesses, themselves and / or your organisation and others)

Submitting your feedback

Your feedback is very valuable to us. Please make sure you share it by submitting your answers through the relevant sections on our [online platform](#).

When feeding back, please:

1. Select 'I am responding on behalf of an organisation'
2. Fill in the relevant information for the lead-organiser of the workshop
3. Select 'yes' when asked about whether you used the toolkit to conduct a workshop
4. Complete the relevant section(s) of the online platform
5. Press 'submit'

If you cannot access the online platform to submit your feedback or have any questions relating to the Strategy, please get in touch via civilsocietystrategy@culture.gov.uk

Example workshop and materials

Developed in collaboration with:



Example workshop activities & timings



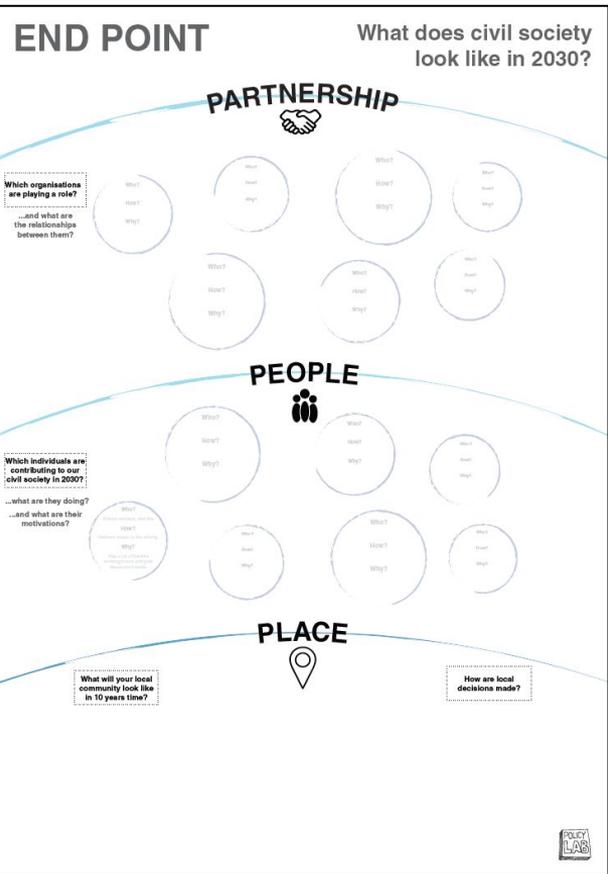
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5 mins	Take some time to introduce the workshop
20 mins	Introductions - Take some time to introduce participants to each other. As an icebreaker, you might ask participants to draw what they think civil society looks like now (5 mins). They can then share this on tables or with their neighbour (5 mins). Next, ask participants to draw their own vision of what it might look like in the future (5 mins) then discuss on their table (5 mins) Resources required: Paper, pens.
30 mins	Our vision for people, place and partnership - Use RESOURCE 1 - 'vision canvas' to co-create a vision for civil society in 10 years. If you need prompts for discussion, you can use the question sheets in this toolkit. Resources required: Vision canvas (pdf provided) - you could also recreate this on flip-chart paper, pens.
15 mins	What is our challenge? - Collectively think about the biggest challenge you will have to overcome in order to get to the vision-state. Devise a 'How can we...?' question for each of the three sections of the vision (people, place and partnership). Resources required: Small cards/post-its for participants to write challenges, pens.
30 mins	How can we get there? - Use RESOURCE 2 - 'ideass grid' to ask participants to rapidly come up with ideas for what they can do individually, what they can do as a community and what government can do to meet the individual challenges (10 mins). To stimulate discussion, try asking: <i>'What would you do if you had no money?'</i> , <i>'What would a scientist do?'</i> , <i>'What would [local community hero] do?'</i> . Collect the actions together (20 mins) and try to fill in the ideas grid with three ideas to solve each challenge. Resources required: Ideas grid (pdf provided), small pieces of card for proposed interventions or actions, post-its, pens.
After the event	Use the 'vision canvas' and 'actions grid' to answer the questions in our online survey. You might also want to take a photo of your materials and tweet #civilsocietystrategy @PolicyLabUK and send the picture to civilsocietystrategy@culture.gov.uk

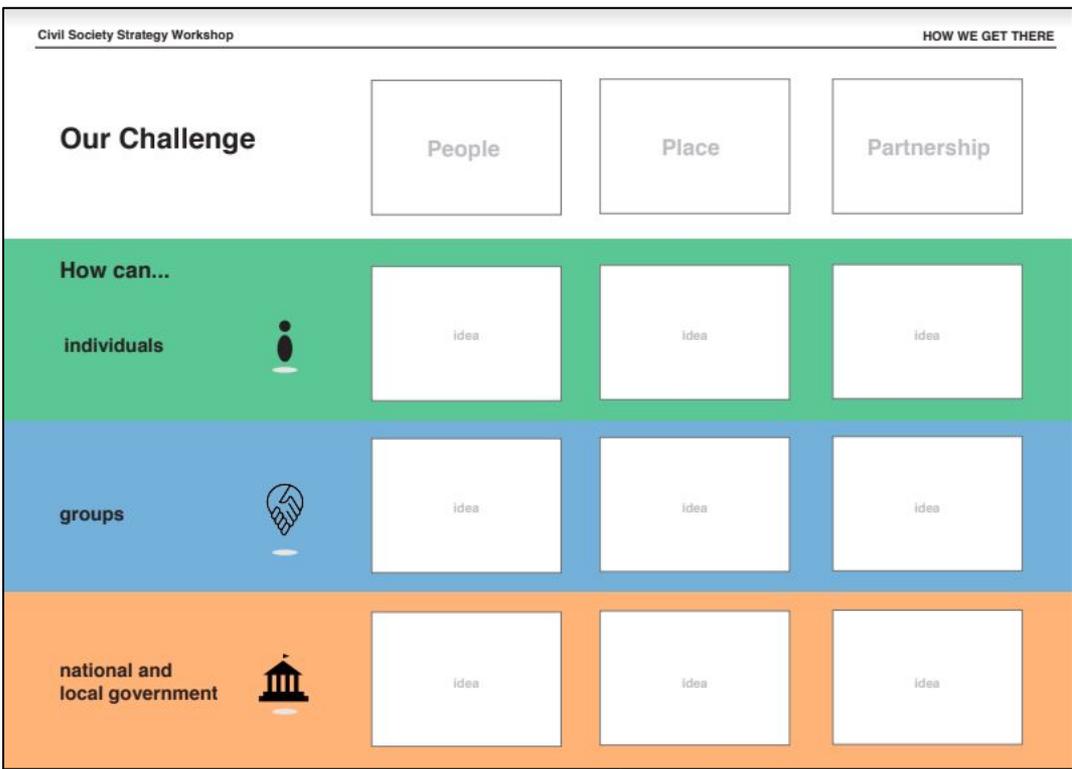
Workshop materials (available as pdf)



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Example of RESOURCE 1 - 'vision canvas'



Example of RESOURCE 2 - 'ideas grid'



Questions

The Strategy conversation is framed around four high-level themes...

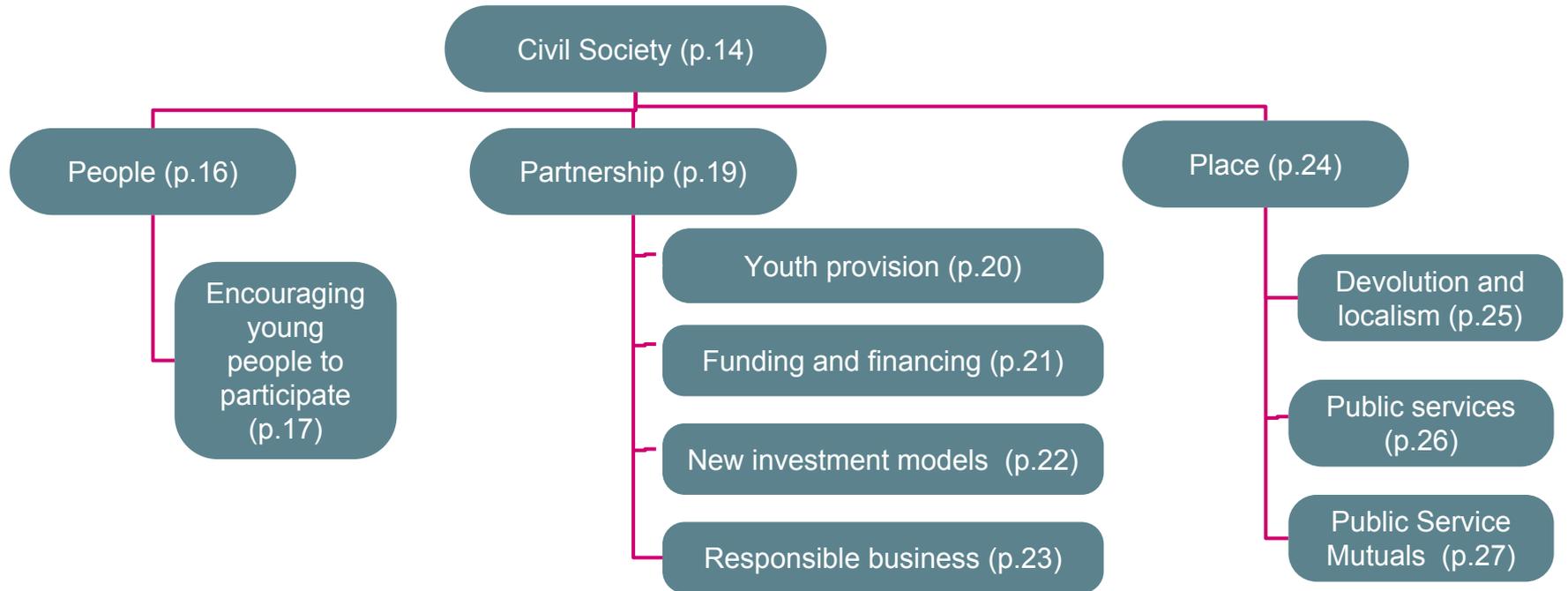
Civil Society - This theme is about the big questions of what civil society is, how it is working well and what needs to change to strengthen it further.

People - This theme explores how more people could be empowered to take action on issues that matter to them.

Partnership - This theme explores the best ways to work in partnership across sectors to create social good and have a positive impact across society.

Place - This theme explores how we empower local people to improve the places they live and work in and to have a say in how they are run.

Each theme includes general questions on the theme as well as questions on some related topics as outlined by the flowchart below. Remember, you do not have to answer all questions, you can choose to answer those relevant to you only.



Civil Society

For the purpose of the Civil Society Strategy, we define civil society as inclusive of all those outside of the public sector, who share the mission of building a stronger society and improving lives, regardless of traditional sector boundaries such as charity or private and for profit or not.

What are the strengths of civil society?

How can government help to increase the impact of civil society?

How can civil society be supported to have a stronger role in shaping public policy today?

How can public trust in civil society be built and maintained?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using our interpretation of civil society (above) in developing this Strategy?

Thinking about the next 10 years, how can civil society be supported to have a stronger role in shaping public policy?

People

Questions in this section explore how more people can be supported to play an active role in building a stronger society. This can be through social action, which includes anything from simple acts of neighbourliness through to charitable giving, volunteering, community asset ownership, civic engagement or running groups/organisations with a social mission.

We want to understand the potential to enable all citizens to be fully engaged, active and with the skills and self-confidence to change the world they live in for the better - no matter what their background.

When people contribute they enrich both their own lives and the lives of others. Everyone has the ability to give something if they are given the right support and opportunities.

People (1)

How have people taken action to improve things for themselves and their communities? Why has it worked well in those instances?

Which changes do you think are the most important in enabling more people to take action on issues that matter to them?

How could these changes be implemented in the long term (i.e. 10 years)?

How could these changes be implemented today?



People (2) - Encouraging young people to participate

How have disadvantaged and disengaged young people been successfully encouraged to get involved in social action?

How have young people shaped national policy making?

Which changes do you think are the most important to improve this in the future?

How could these changes be implemented over the next 10 years?

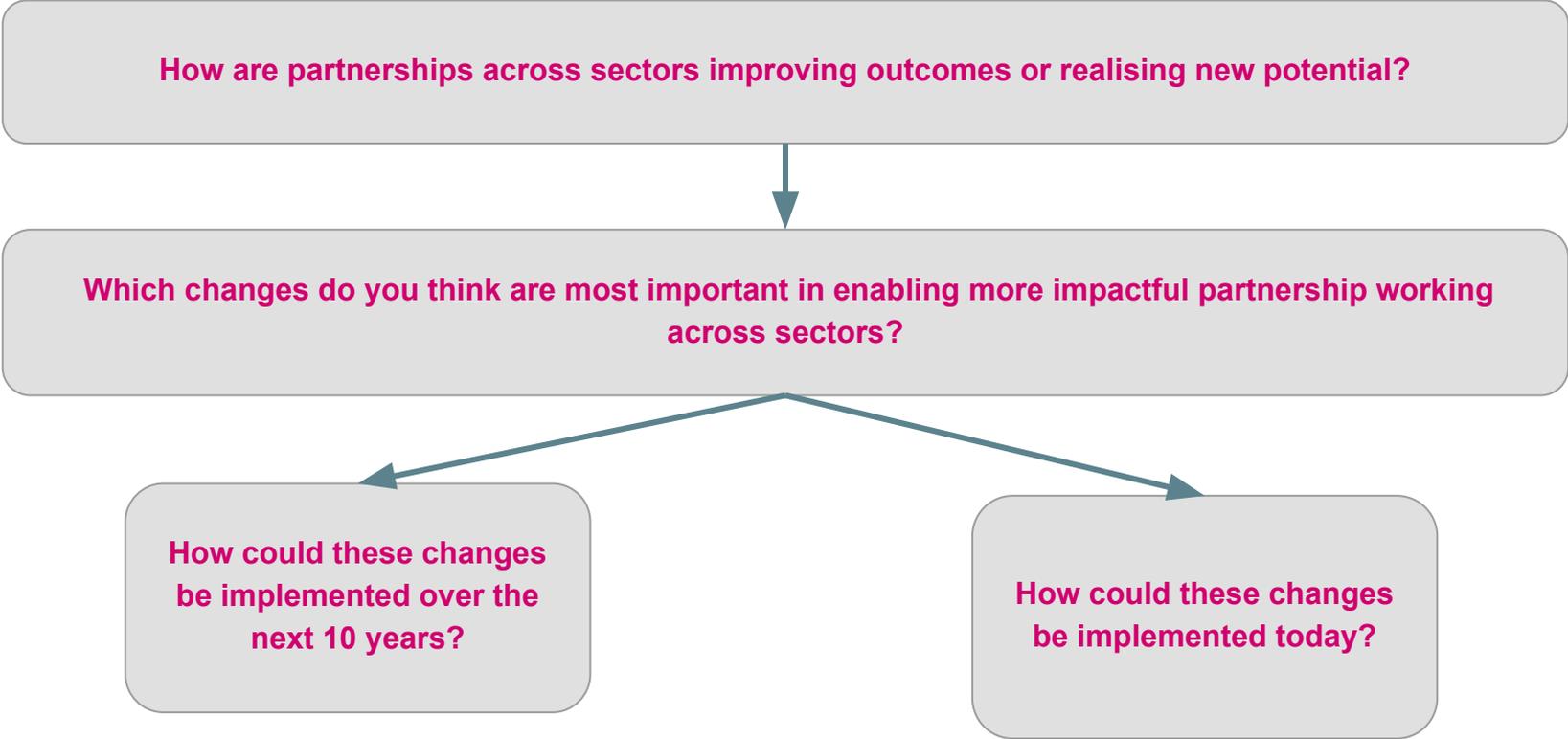
How could these changes be implemented today?

Partnership

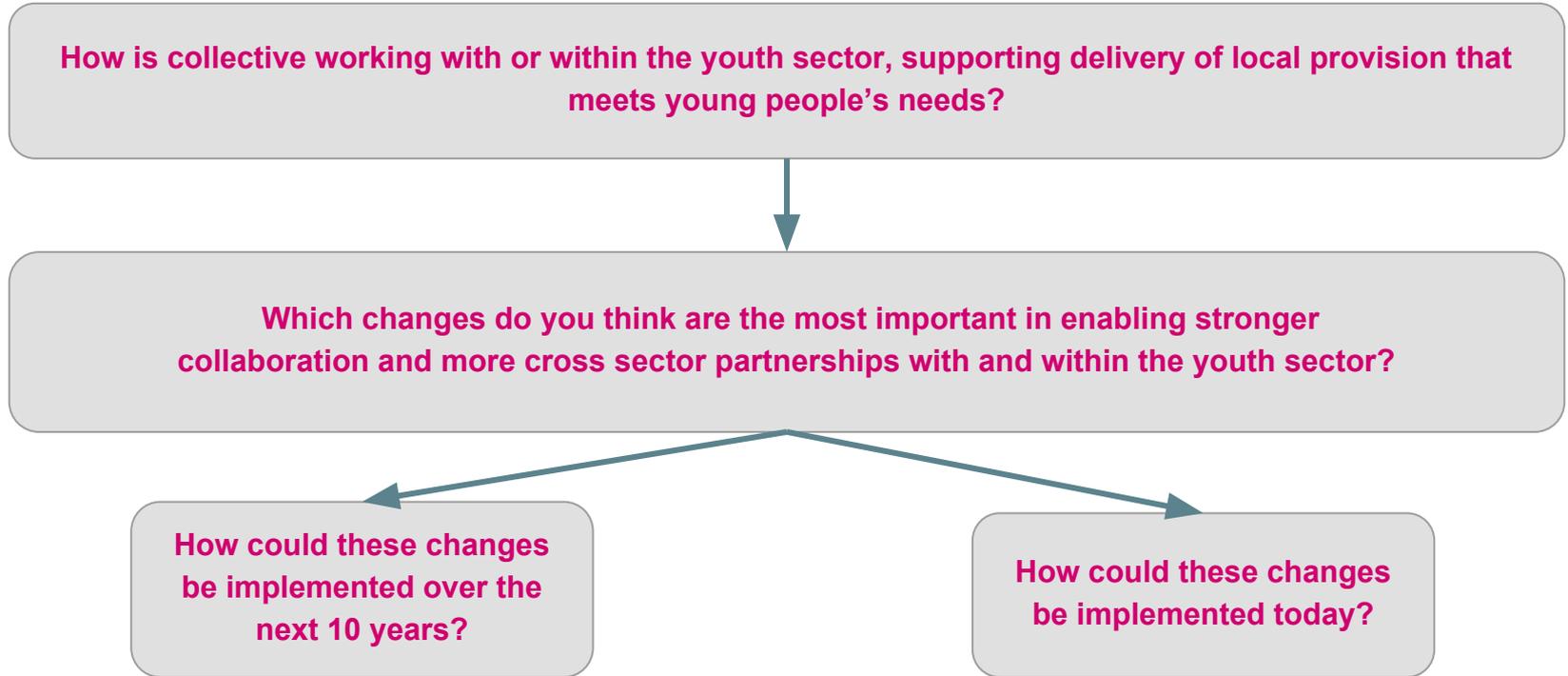
Questions in this section explore the best ways to work in partnership across sectors. We are particularly interested in unlocking the full potential of the private and public sector to work with civil society, to create social good and have a positive impact across society.

By working towards shared goals and pooling knowledge and resources, partnerships, old and new, can help to improve outcomes for those in need and grow or replicate solutions that work. At the same time partnerships can help realise efficiencies and unlock new, more innovative delivery models.

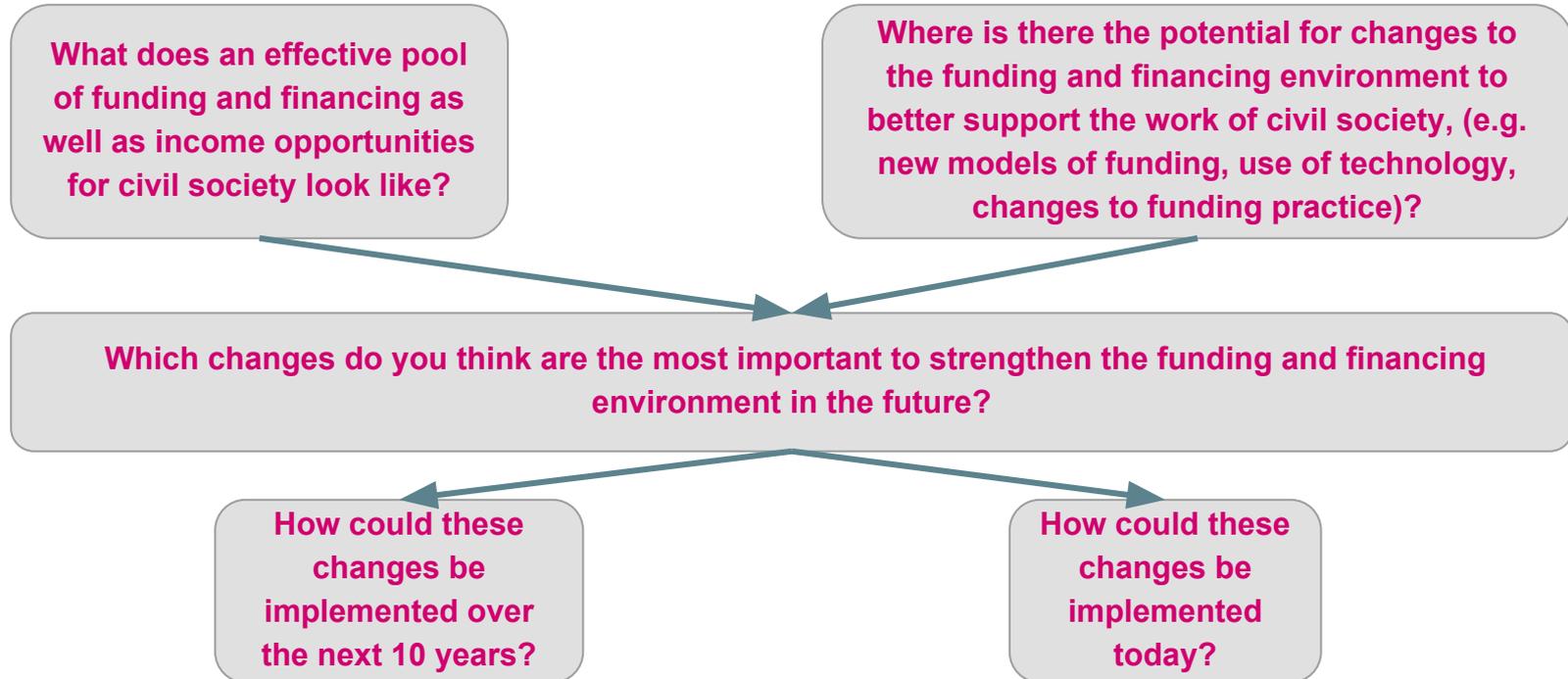
Partnership (1)



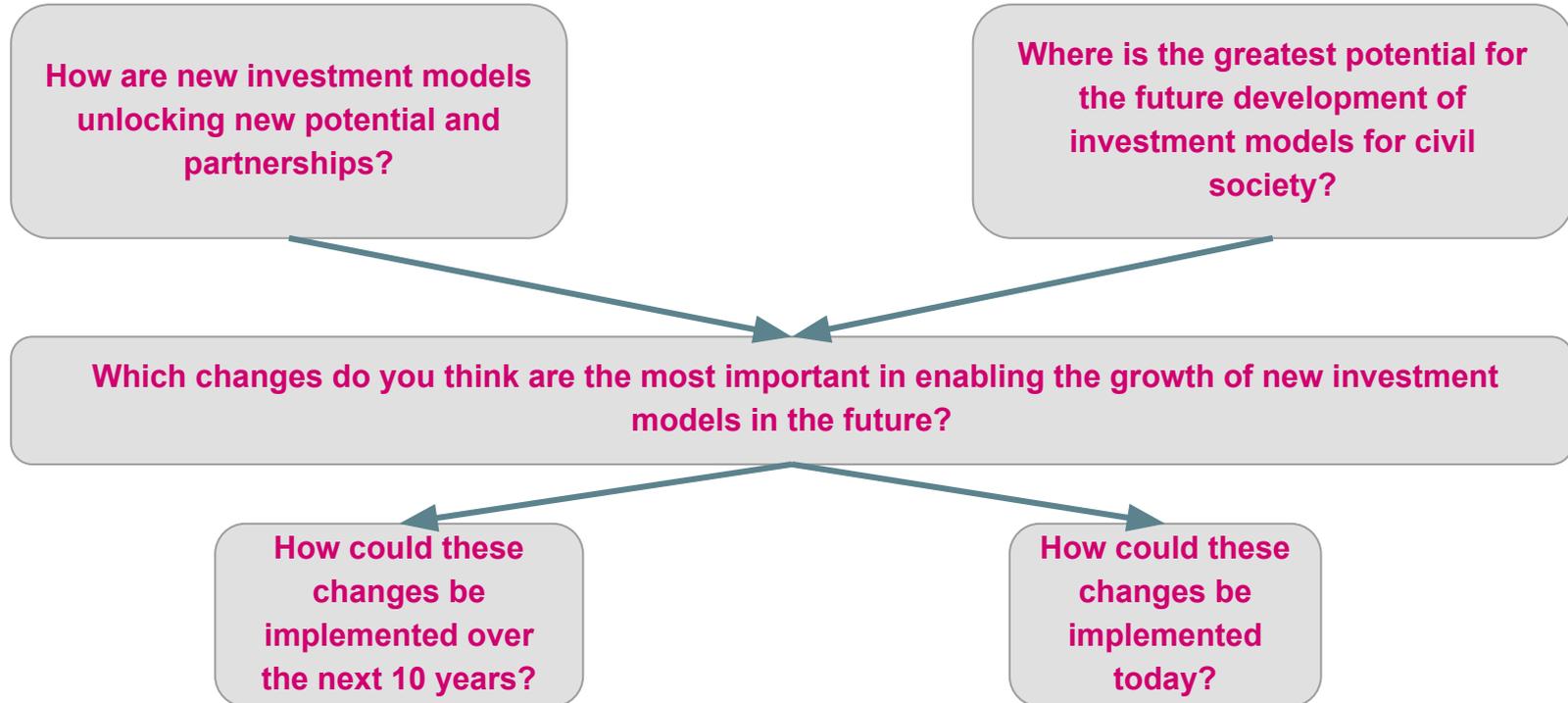
Partnership (2) - Youth provision



Partnership (3) - Funding and financing environment



Partnership (4) - New investment models



Partnership (5) - Responsible business



Place

Questions under this theme explore how to enable more people, service providers, voluntary and community organisations, businesses, social enterprises, and public sector institutions to work together to make the places they care about brilliant places to live and work in. In particular we are interested in exploring:

- how to break down barriers in our communities and build a common sense of shared identity, belonging and purpose
- how to build strong local public services that respond to the needs of communities and draw on the talents of diverse people and organisations from across different sectors



Place (1) - Devolution / localism

How have local people, businesses, voluntary and community organisations, and decision makers worked together successfully to break down barriers in our communities and build a common sense of shared identity, belonging and purpose?



Which changes do you think are the most important in enabling communities to break down barriers and build a common sense of shared identity, belonging and purpose?



How could these changes be implemented over the next 10 years?

How could these changes be implemented today?



Place (2) - Public services

How have local public services successfully responded to the needs of communities?

Which changes do you think are the most important in enabling local public services to respond further to the needs of communities?

How could these changes be implemented over the next 10 years?

How could these changes be implemented today?



Place (3) - Public service mutuals

Do you know of any public service mutuals that are unlocking new partnerships and potential?

Which changes do you think are the most important in enabling more people working in mutuals to deliver public services in the future?

How could these changes be implemented over the next 10 years?

How could these changes be implemented today?

Thank you for helping us shape the Civil Society Strategy

Join the conversation on social media using **#CivilSocietyStrategy**.