

# **The Voluntary and Community Sector and Kirklees Council A Strategy for 2015 - 2025**

**Our vision is that the Voluntary and Community Sector and Kirklees Council work together to ensure a good quality of life for all the residents of Kirklees. This will be through joint design of services and the effective and innovative use of resources.**

Together we have identified three things that we will need to make this happen:

- Goal 1 Stronger, more effective working relationships between sectors
- Goal 2 A stronger, more sustainable and diverse voluntary and community sector
- Goal 3 Better outcomes for local people by planning and delivering services in new ways

This strategy is part of a major transformation in Kirklees which will see the council, voluntary and community sector (VCS) and relationships between us radically reformed to meet the challenges we face.

The voluntary and community sector and the council are complex and diverse, as are their relationships with each other. The size, focus, intent and resources of VCS organisations are variable, as are the amount and range of investment and partnership that different council services have with different parts of the VCS. Our approach to implementing this strategy will reflect that diversity.

Our vision and goals reflect the key areas we need to focus on to create new relationships between our citizens and organisations, build positive, resilient communities that are able to do more for themselves and each other and connect together the people, ideas and resources to make this a reality.

We are in a period of change and so this strategy will not be a static document, but an ongoing process that through regular review will help us achieve the changes needed in Kirklees to realise our vision. It will be supported by detailed delivery plans and monitoring.

The strategy will be overseen by a cross sector board which will also review our progress and impact on a quarterly basis. This is in addition to internal governance through the Council's cabinet and through the Third Sector Leaders (TSL) Executive.

Throughout this strategy the words "we", "us" and "our" are used to denote the cross sector partnership that is working together.

## The Way Forward

This strategy describes two different types of activities:

- **Agreed Actions**  
Where we already have a shared understanding of what needs to be done and agreed implementation plans to achieve the improvements we are looking for.
- **Challenges**  
Where we know what we want to achieve but need to innovate, test, explore, adapt and experiment to find what works best.

### Goal 1: Stronger, more effective working relationships between sectors

#### Agreed Actions

- We will enable people to register the barriers and conflicts that are preventing effective joint working or approaches which support communities to do more for themselves and each other – and develop solutions to these barriers together.
- We will build better relationships through regular face to face interactions and more joint activity. This will include meetings between the Third Sector Leaders (TSL) chair / executive committee & the council's Chief Executive, Leader & Cabinet; and cross sector workshops and networking events.
- Our work together will be guided by the principles of the [Kirklees Compact](#) so we continue to build trust and better working relationships between sectors.

#### Challenges

- The diversity of the VCS means that the impact and potential contributions of the sector are under-valued. So:
  - We need to increase collaboration, trust and synergy between sectors – for example, through joint project teams; seconding, sharing and/or co-locating staff from across sectors; enabling the sharing of space and infrastructure; and through better use of technology.
- A key strength of the sector is its independence and ability to work differently and challenge existing ways of working. So:
  - We will explore how we can be effective partners without diluting the independence of the VCS, including their ability to advocate and lobby, whilst respecting local authority governance

- Our process, bureaucracy and approach to risk can inhibit our effectiveness and impact. So:
  - We will explore what works to ensure a proportionate, flexible approach that removes barriers to effective joint working.
  - Kirklees Council will explore ways to simplify commissioning, grant giving, contract management and risk management processes, ensuring they are proportional and appropriate in each case. The council will also seek ways to influence its partners to adopt or develop similar approaches.

## **Goal 2: A stronger, more sustainable and diverse voluntary and community sector**

### **Agreed actions:**

- Kirklees Council will continue to incorporate social value into existing grant making, procurement, commissioning processes and wider joint commissioning arrangements.
- Kirklees Council will model the impact of small, but multiple, changes on VCS funding, including areas such as rate relief, rental discount, etc.

Together we will identify ways of managing this impact.

- Together we will encourage the development of consortia of local VCS organisations to bid for resources including grants and contracts.
- We will embed investment in communities and the VCS in the council's approach to early intervention and prevention
- We will seek continued investment into the VCS through grants with the aim to maximise the impact of community groups benefiting from such funding.
- Together we will use our cross sector expertise to assist organisations of all sizes in applying for funding. We will have a particular focus on attracting new external funding into Kirklees to address shared priorities through collaborative working.

### **Challenges:**

- We know that diverse sources of income will help the sustainability of the sector. So:
  - We will investigate potential new funding approaches such as philanthropic investment and crowd funding.

- Some parts of the VCS lack the skills to access funding opportunities. So:
  - The VCS will seek ways to address this, including promoting peer support and collaboration within the sector.
- With a variety of funding sources for the VCS, there can be a mismatch between the activities funded and where impact is most needed: So:
  - We will seek ways for statutory bodies and funders to collaborate more to ensure that funding is better coordinated for maximum community value and impact.
- In economic terms the VCS already contributes significantly to our economy but it is important that we maximise the contribution of the sector to economic outcomes.
  - Together we will identify how we can enable VCS organisations' contributions to the priority outcomes in the Kirklees Economic Strategy.
  - We will ensure the VCS is part of economic thinking and planning and together research the role the sector plays in the local economy. Through this we will develop ways to better recognise, support and extend the VCS's contribution and increase our understanding about the links between social capital and economic prosperity.
- The VCS is, and should continue to be, diverse and independent, however we need to explore where there are opportunities to work collectively or pool resources to maximise impact and sustainability. So:
  - Together we will develop a more effective, collective approach to reducing costs and administrative burdens on the sector.

### **Goal 3: Better outcomes for local people by planning and delivering services in new ways**

#### **Agreed actions:**

- Kirklees Council will ensure the VCS are integral to the development of plans for transforming the Council.
- The council will ensure that it is an explicit expectation that collaboration with the VCS is considered when undertaking service redesign.
- We will work together to support more community activities based on identifying and building upon community assets.

- We will enable more innovative and impactful community activity through building relationships, collaborating and sharing stuff, space and skills – for example, through Comoodle - Kirklees' successful Bloomberg Mayors Challenge programme.
- We will promote and maximise the impact of volunteering and social action through appropriate volunteer-led service delivery and specific volunteer programmes.
- We will provide and support current and new volunteering opportunities that enhance the employability and wellbeing of local people

**Challenges:**

- Our joint focus needs to be on approaches which support strong and more resilient communities. So:
  - We will ensure we develop a shared understanding of how to build and sustain communities, focusing attention only on approaches which help support the capacity, connectedness and capabilities of communities.