

# West Sussex County Council respects the following principles in working with our voluntary sector partners

## PURPOSE

The County Council recognises the importance of having a strong and effective relationship with our Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) in order to achieve its 'West Sussex Plan' ambitions for our communities and places by working in partnership and collaboration we recognise the added value in working together towards common aims and objectives will achieve more effective outcomes for our residents. To achieve this purpose the partnership between WSCC and the VCS is founded on the following key principles.

## PRINCIPLES

- 1 Community focussed**  
We will place our communities central to everything we do, reflecting their local needs, challenges and opportunities for the people and communities we are here to serve.
- 2 Partnership and collaboration**  
We will focus on longer term partnerships built on honesty, respect and independence and hold each other to account for our collective outcomes.
- 3 Leadership**  
We will recognise the contribution and value of the strength of different sector leadership for common purpose and outcomes.
- 4 Shared understanding**  
We will share our information to enable collective thinking.
- 5 Transformation**  
We will continue to develop new ways of thinking together for the benefit of our communities.

The principles govern the way that the County Council will act as illustrated by the examples below. These examples were developed with the Voluntary Community Sector.

**Partnership and collaboration**

We recognise the added value in working together towards common aims and objectives and will work together as one system to achieve positive outcomes for our residents.

**Honesty**

We will engage in open communication, and enter into open, full and frank discussion of issues of mutual interest, concern or misunderstanding and difficulty.

**People focussed**

We endeavour to put our customers central to everything we do.

**Being realistic**

We will allocate resources to support the effective and efficient use of assets to gain best value, recognising the limitations of resources and funding. We will place a social value on 'in kind' costs and the use of community assets.

**Accountability**

We recognise the importance of evidence based outcomes and that contributions and achievements of our partners are recognised.

**Equality**

We value the need for fairness for all, regardless of background and will actively promote equality and fairness for all through our activities.

**Representation**

We recognise the need for the widest possible representation, reflecting the needs and choices of the people and communities we serve and we will work in co-productive ways to achieve this.

**Respect**

It is recognised that partners have different accountabilities, and we will accept and develop a mutual understanding of these differences, and we will act with transparency and integrity in all of our dealings.

**Social action**

We engage with and support communities to understand and address local need. The use of community based assets (such as buildings, resources and skills) in support of this principle is championed and valued.

**Volunteering**

The energy and commitment of people freely giving time for the public good is recognised and valued.

**Independence**

We recognise the right of all our partners to campaign, comment and challenge actions or intentions of other partners.

**Diversity of the Sector**

We value and foster a thriving voluntary and community sector, encouraging innovation and choice through a multitude of voices.

**Dispute resolution**

We work with an ethos that encourages mediation at the earliest stage as the best course of resolution where there is conflict or breakdown in relationships.