

London Borough of Sutton

Sutton Compact

Sutton's agreement between the voluntary and community sector and public sector

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Signatories:

Councillor Ruth Dombey, Leader of Sutton Council

Councillor Simon Wales, Lead Councillor for Finance, Assets and the Voluntary Sector

Niall Bolger, Chief Executive of Sutton Council

SCVS on behalf of VCS

+ sign up from other public sector partners e.g. PCT, (CCG), Hospital Trusts, Police

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The renewed Sutton Compact is an agreement between the public sector and the local voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The agreement aims to ensure that local public sector bodies and the local VCS work in partnership to achieve common goals and outcomes for the benefit of communities and citizens in Sutton.
- 1.2 Sutton's public sector is committed to supporting the local VCS and believes that a strong and independent sector is integral to our commitment to empower local residents to make decisions on behalf of their neighbourhoods.
- 1.3 The London Borough of Sutton believes that everyone should have the opportunity to take part and take pride, and this emphasis on building an inclusive and fair society is equally held by our local VCS. This document is a joint commitment to make every effort to work together and build strong relationships that will ensure we always working in the best interests of our residents.
- 1.4 Sutton's renewed Compact has been re-written to complement the renewed National Compact published in 2011 and signed by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Civil Society and the Chair of Compact Voice.

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2. OUTCOMES

2.1 Sutton's Compact is designed to ensure that we are building on our already strong relationship between our Public Sector and the VCS. This document outlines our joint commitment to achieve the following outcomes:

- A strong, diverse and independent civil society
- Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services
- Responsive and high-quality programmes and services
- Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services
- An equal and fair society

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3. COMMITMENTS FOR SUTTON'S PUBLIC SECTOR AND VCS

A STRONG, DIVERSE AND INDEPENDENT CIVIL SOCIETY

UNDERTAKINGS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

- 3.1 Respect and uphold the independence of the VCS to deliver their mission, including their right to campaign, regardless of any relationship, financial or otherwise, which may exist.
- 3.2 Ensure that the VCS is supported and resourced in a transparent, reasonable and fair manner where they are helping the public sector fulfil its aims.
- 3.3 Ensure that the public sector collectively recognises the need to resource local support and development organisations in order to assist the VCS with their capacity and capability to deliver positive outcomes.
- 3.4 Ensure greater transparency by making data and information more accessible, helping the VCS to challenge existing provision of services, access new markets and hold the Council to account.
- 3.5 Consider a range of ways to support the VCS, such as enabling greater access to Sutton owned premises and resources.
- 3.6 Ensure that volunteers do not pay to access Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks.

UNDERTAKINGS FOR THE VCS

- 3.7 When campaigning or advocating, ensure that robust evidence is provided, including information about the source and range of people and communities represented.
- 3.8 Ensure independence is upheld, focusing on the organisation's objects, regardless of any relationship they have with the public sector, financial or otherwise.

EFFECTIVE AND TRANSPARENT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

UNDERTAKINGS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

- 3.9 Ensure that social, environmental and economic value forms a standard part of designing, developing and delivering policies, programmes and services.

- 3.10 Consider the social impact that may result from policy and programme development, and in particular consider how these would impact local efforts to inspire and encourage social action and to empower communities.
- 3.11 Work with the VCS from the earliest possible stage to design policies, programmes, and services. Ensure those likely to have a view are involved from the start and remove any barriers that may prevent organisations from contributing.
- 3.12 Give early notice of forthcoming consultations, where possible, allowing enough time for the VCS to involve their service users, carers, beneficiaries, members, volunteers and trustees in preparing responses. Where it is appropriate, and enables meaningful engagement, conduct 12-week formal written consultations, with clear explanations and rationale for shorter time-frames or a more informal approach.
- 3.13 Consider providing feedback (for example, through an overall public sector response) to explain how respondents have influenced the design and development of policies, programmes and public services, including where respondents' views have not been acted upon.
- 3.14 Assess the implications for the sector of new policies, legislation and guidance, aiming to reduce the bureaucratic burden, particularly on small organisations.

UNDERTAKING FOR THE VCS

- 3.15 Promote and respond to Council consultations, where appropriate.
- 3.16 Seek the views of service users, carers, clients, beneficiaries, members, volunteers, and trustees when making representation to the public sector. Be clear on who is being represented, in what capacity and on what basis that representation is being made.
- 3.17 When putting forward ideas, focus on evidence-based solutions, with clear proposals for positive outcomes.

RESPONSE AND HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

UNDERTAKINGS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

- 3.18 Ensure that the VCS has a greater role and more opportunities in delivering public services and services which meet the proven needs of local people by opening up new markets in accordance with wider public service reform measure and reforming the commissioning environment in existing markets.
- 3.19 Consider a wide range of ways to fund or resource the VCS, including grants, contracts, loan-finance, use of premises and so on. Work to remove barriers that may prevent the VCS accessing public sector funding, thereby enabling smaller organisations to become involved in delivering services where they are best placed to achieve the desired outcomes.

- 3.20 Ensure transparency by providing a clear rationale for all funding decisions.
- 3.21 Commit to multi-year funding where appropriate and where it adds value for money. The funding term should reflect the time it will take to deliver the outcome. If multi-year funding is not considered to be the best way of delivering the objective, explain the reasons for the decision.
- 3.22 Ensure well managed and transparent application and tendering processes, which are proportionate to the desired objectives and outcomes of the programmes.
- 3.23 Agree with VCS organisations how outcomes, including the social, environmental or economic value, will be monitored before a contract or funding agreement is made. Ensure that monitoring and reporting is relevant and proportionate to the nature and size of the opportunity. Be clear about what information is being asked for, and why and how it will be used.
- 3.24 Ensure equal treatment across sectors, including reporting and monitoring arrangements, when tendering for contracts.
- 3.25 Recognise that when VCS organisations apply for a grant they can include appropriate and relevant overheads, including the costs associated with training and volunteer involvement.
- 3.26 Discuss and allocate risks to the organisation(s) best equipped to manage them. Where prime contractors are used, ensure they adhere to the principles of this Compact in allocating risk. Ensure delivery terms and risks are proportionate to the nature and value of the opportunity.
- 3.27 Ensure that the widest possible range of organisations can be involved in the provision of services through appropriate funding and financing models, for example outcomes based payments and payment in advance of expenditure. Payment in advance of expenditure should be considered on a case by case basis where this represents value for money.
- 3.28 Encourage feedback from a range of sources on the effectiveness of the public sector's partnership with VCS organisations and how successful it has been in delivering their objectives. Consider placing this feedback in the public domain.

UNDERTAKINGS FOR THE VCS

- 3.29 Ensure eligibility for funding before applying and be explicit about how the outcomes will be achieved.
- 3.30 Ensure robust governance arrangements so that organisations can best manage any risk associated with service delivery and financing models, including giving funders early notice of significant changes in circumstances.
- 3.31 Be open and transparent about reporting, recognising that monitoring, whether internal or external, is an aspect of good management practice.
- 3.32 Demonstrate the social, environmental or economic value of the programmes and services provided, where appropriate and proportionate to the size of contract.

3.33 Help facilitate feedback from users and communities to the Council to help improve delivery of programmes and services.

3.34 Recognise that the Council can legitimately expect VCS organisations to give public recognition of its funding.

CLEAR ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING CHANGES TO PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

UNDERTAKINGS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

3.35 If a programme or service is encountering problems, agree with the voluntary or community sector organisation a timetable of actions to improve performance before making a decision to end a financial relationship.

3.36 Assess the impact on beneficiaries, service users and volunteers before deciding to reduce or end funding. Assess the need to re-allocate funds to another organisation serving the same group.

3.37 Where there are restrictions or changes to future resources, discussion with VCS organisations the potential implications as early as possible, give organisations the opportunity to respond, and consider the response fully, respecting sector expertise, before making a final decision.

3.38 Recognise that it is good practice to give a minimum of six months notice (but never less than 3 months) in writing when changing or ending a funding relationship or other support, apart from in exceptional circumstances, and provide a clear rationale for why the decision has been taken.

UNDERTAKINGS FOR VCS ORGANISATIONS

3.39 Plan for the end of funding to reduce any potential negative impact on beneficiaries and the organisation.

3.40 Contribute positively to reviews of programmes and funding practice.

3.41 Advise the public sector on the social, environmental or economic impact of funding changes, and on ways to minimise their effects on people in vulnerable situations.

AN EQUAL AND FAIR SOCIETY

UNDERTAKINGS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

3.42 Work with VCS organisations that represent, support or provide services to people specifically protected by legislation and other under-represented and disadvantaged groups. Understand the specific needs of these groups by actively seeking the views of service users and clients. Take these views into account, including assessing impact, when designing and implementing policies, programmes and services.

3.43 Acknowledge that organisations representing specific disadvantaged or under-represented group(s) can help promote social and community cohesion and should have equal access to state funding.

3.44 Take practical action to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and to ensure a voice for under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

UNDERTAKINGS FOR VCS ORGANISATIONS

3.45 If receiving funding from the public sector, show how the value of the work can help that body deliver its public sector duties on promoting equality and tackling discrimination.

3.46 Take practical action, such as through funding bids, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build stronger communities.

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For more information on the Sutton Compact please contact,

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