



## COMMISSIONING Sunderland City Council

### A Bottom's Up Approach to Creating a Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Alliance in Sunderland

In the spirit of true partnership making, Sunderland City Council, Gentoo Housing Group and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (All Together Better) together with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) are on an exciting journey to establish an Alliance that shapes the future provision of infrastructure support services, to ultimately support the growth and development of the VCSE sector in Sunderland.

Back in September 2019, a VCSE partnership-led engagement event, known as Voluntary Organisations In Sunderland Engage (VOISE) was held, with over 130 VCSE representatives in attendance. The event was a huge success in discussing what infrastructure support for Sunderland should look like in the future, given the complexity of the sector over the years.





Visit YouTube via this link  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lvLCn6xTwM>  
 watch a brief animation providing feedback from the  
 VOISE Even

Collectively, the VCSE sector in Sunderland would like to:-



- (a) Come together to build on what already exists;
- (b) Develop diverse and sustainable income streams;
- (c) Engage and play our part in supporting the wider sector;
- (d) Support cross-sector collaboration;
- (e) Find a solution to sector support that is sector led but with council buy-in;
- (f) Build on local area arrangements with a city-wide approach;
- (g) Encourage and support volunteering;
- (h) Share information with and about the sector;
- (i) Encourage sector leaders to share and support others; and
- (j) Amplify the voice of the sector through meaningful representation.

The creation of the Alliance is somewhat very different to the traditional approaches across the country and is being developed in true partnership with the sector. It's a partnership of equals, whereby the aim is to co-design a robust solution to sector support that is sector-led with buy-in from all involved, to support the ambitions of the City of Sunderland.

Formalised through a partnership agreement, with robust governance arrangements in place, the Alliance is to run for a period of three years with the ability to extend beyond this period by agreement. Whilst in the early days of setting up the Alliance, the three main partners have financially contributed £30,000 each, £90,000 in total, to resource additional capacity to get the Alliance up and running. Exact costings of the new independent service / organisation will be finalised as part of the co-design / development stage of the Alliance together with its future service offer.

The future is certainly bright for the VCSE in Sunderland ensuring the new independent body offers the right mix of support, challenge, leadership, skills and knowledge together with helping foster relationships between the local VCSE, public bodies and local businesses, to promote local action and make sure local communities have a voice.

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