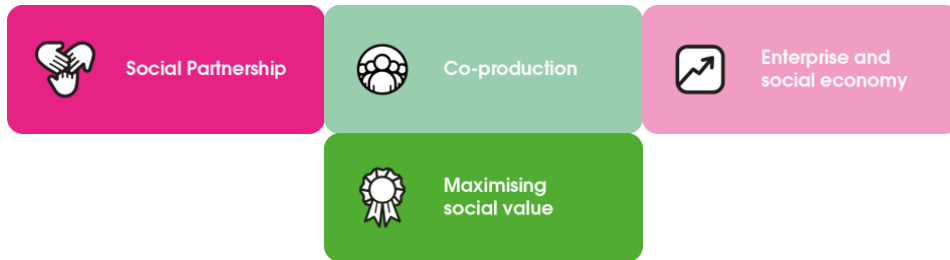




# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

### COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING



## Kirklees Council

### Kirklees VCSE Investment Strategy: working together to make our local places even better

In Kirklees we know that our voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector are an essential part of our economy, our communities and our service delivery landscape. This was particularly the case during the COVID pandemic, is true in the current cost of living crisis but is true when we're not in crisis too. For this reason Kirklees Council and our VCSE infrastructure organisation Third Sector Kirklees (TSL) have co-developed a VCSE Investment Strategy that will ensure the sector remains resilient and are able to play a powerful role in making our local places even better.

Our principles of People, Partners, Places go through the way we work and our third sector partners are key. The strategy builds on our Working Alongside Principles. Kirklees Council, our partners and citizens are working together to make the local places where we live, work and play better. Here's how we're working alongside each other in our local places, including our values, our stories and practical ideas to help you and others to get involved.

We are....

- coming from a different place
- learning by doing
- working on trust
- growing confidence
- taking courage from kindness
- sharing with each other
- listening with curiosity
- being open and honest
- involving others early
- recognising everyone



People-centred councils  
driving social innovation  
putting people first

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Development of the strategy was led by a well-respected figure from the local third sector and was co-produced through a mixture of one to one conversations and focus groups with over 30 VCS organisations and 14 different Council teams/officers. Conversations were based around some identified topic areas covering a stock take of the current situation, the aims of the work, priority areas and potential impact. However, they also incorporated flexibility to follow the conversation and allow other ideas to be uncovered and investigated.

The key themes of the strategy are:

- Building trust and working together
- Building on existing work
- How we can work together to attract more non-council funding
- Developing a set of funding principles for multi-year funding that encourages transparency and builds capacity and resilience
- Communication: what's happening locally, sharing our stories
- Asset transfers: responding to community need and avoiding liability transfers
- Increasing social enterprise start up and support.

Since work began on the strategy closer working relationships have developed between the Council and VCSE colleagues. One work stream is around procurement. It aims firstly to strengthen the ways in which community organisations can benefit from social value commitments made by suppliers to the Council while reducing the capacity required to serve this process. It is also building capacity in the sector to engage with social value in procurement when bidding for contracts and identifying any possible areas where these processes may create barriers to VCSE organisations.

Promoting social enterprise is another workstream. Work has already been done to create a single Kirklees page that provides information about social enterprises and cooperatives as well as running the first Kirklees Social Enterprise Awards in 2022 in partnership with Locala – our local community healthcare provider which is one of the largest employee-owned businesses in the country.

More recently the strategy has provided the basis for a conversation among senior leaders around the development of community power in Kirklees. These exciting discussions lay the foundations for a greater releasing of power to communities to shape their places and make decisions based on the things that are most important to them.

The VCSE Investment Strategy articulates the local recognition of the importance we know the third sector plays up and down the country. As a shared strategy it gives us the basis on which to continue to strengthen the way in which we work alongside as partners. We continue to have challenging conversations that allow us to work together to make our local places even better.

## Overview of the Kirklees VCSE Investment Strategy

### 8 Shared Outcomes for Kirklees



### Our shared values - Working alongside

**Priority 1 – Invest to build trust and transparency:**  
creating an environment for partners to work alongside each other

#### Objectives

- Create more opportunities to get to know each other better, listening and sharing skills, resources and knowledge with each other
- Develop a joint understanding of what funds are available to the VCSE in Kirklees and identify the best way to maximise impact
- Collaborate more and compete less. Start the conversations early and keep them going
- Jointly assess social value within the VCSE

#### Measures of success

- Evidence of improved working together
- New partnerships and alliances
- Clear view of total funding available to VCSE
- Social value demonstrated by VCSE
- Partners know what's happening in their areas

**Priority 2 – Invest in whoever is best placed to provide the service or support:**  
recognising & valuing each other's strengths

#### Objectives

- Jointly agree the best process or organisations to manage funding, moving funding closer to the community
- Invest in further development of VCSE infrastructure support
- Don't divest assets, invest in communities – work together to develop a needs led approach to community asset transfers
- Look within Kirklees first

#### Measures of success

- Effective grants programme with no duplication
- More active community buildings meeting community needs – case studies
- Examples of Kirklees Council and partners using local social enterprises for support and services

**Priority 3 – Invest to increase VCSE capacity, resilience and sustainability:**  
empowering the VCSE to help themselves

#### Objectives

- Recognise the value of, and create conditions for, more Kirklees based community business (social enterprises, enterprise activity and cooperatives)
- Develop a commitment to a set of 'funding principles' to help improve VCSE capacity and resilience
- Invest in resource within the VCSE to enable the VCSE to attract more non-Council funds

#### Measures of success

- Number of new and sustained community businesses - social value achieved
- Value of non-council funding secured
- £ + social value of businesses working with VCSE
- Implement principles + evidence of impact

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