



Norfolk VCSE Sector  
Leadership Group

27<sup>th</sup> April 2021

## **Norfolk's Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector – Election Pledges**

Norfolk's Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) is made up of over 3,500 registered organisations with many thousand more informal groups. They vary significantly in both size and the nature of the social issues they seek to address but have been critical to our Covid-19 response efforts. As examples:

- Mutual Aid and Good Neighbour Schemes have responded to over 97,000 requests.
- Across Norfolk food banks have provided over 35,000 in emergency food parcels in the last year – they are only one part of the VCSE effort to make sure no-one goes without.
- High quality advice provision from local charities to over 48,000 people – getting help with managing debt, navigate the benefits system or coping with being newly unemployed.
- Norfolk's Cultural network has distributed over 21,000 creativity packs to children and families living in digital poverty.

The sector employs an estimated 16,000 people who provide advice, care and support to some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. Many thousands of people also volunteer in roles from leading grassroots organisations and supporting neighbours to providing specialist advice. They are experts in their fields with valuable insight and specialist skills.

The VCSE Sector Leadership Group draws members from different parts of the sector to provide a strategic voice.

We are calling on all candidates in the forthcoming local elections to commit to the following key areas.

### **Flexible and sustainable funding**

We need a commitment to an approach to funding the VCSE sector that is flexible and sustainable. Flexibility allows VCSE organisations to make best use of available funding to respond to local needs. We know funding will remain limited. Sustainability means giving organisation long-term commitments that allow them to effectively plan. Sustainability is also about supporting investments in workforce, ICT and other infrastructure, that allows organisations to increase the quality of their support and work more effectively across sectors.

### **A collaborate approach**

We need to create a better culture of collaboration. We need a commitment that Local Authorities will work in partnership with the VCSE sector. This requires a fundamental shift to a culture that engages early, responds to requests, and aims to work with partners based around common goals. Working jointly to develop, decide and deliver initiatives will best meet the needs of our communities. This means no one agenda will be able to dominate but supports a culture of genuine collaboration.

### **Well served and well engaged across all members of our community**

We need commitment to ensure all members of our communities receive high quality services and are treated with respect. We need commitment to increasing the breadth of diverse experience within our decision-making structures.



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**Personalised approach to vulnerability**

We need to build on the positive work undertaken throughout Covid-19 to look after the most vulnerable in our communities. We need a commitment to a long-term strategy to identify and reach out pro-actively to the most vulnerable people in our community. We need a commitment to provide support that responds to their needs and seeks to prevent, empower, and re-enable.

Yours Sincerely,

Jon Clemo

Chair, Norfolk VCSE Sector Leadership Group