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## **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) and the Voluntary, Charity & Social Enterprise (VSCE) sector operating within Eastleigh borough.**

### **Introduction**

This MOU has been jointly agreed between representatives from EBC and the VCSE sector. Whilst not legally binding, it sets out the intent and mutual benefit with regard to the working relationship between EBC and the VCSE organisations that sign up to the MOU. VCSE organisations receiving funding from EBC are required to sign up to this MOU.

The intention of the MOU is to provide consistency in the relationship between EBC and VCSE organisations within Eastleigh Borough, to ensure that resources are used effectively and efficiently to support the community, and that the best possible outcomes are achieved.

VCSE in this case includes charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, faith groups and social enterprises where profits are reinvested in their social purpose.

### **Purpose**

The MOU creates a flexible and adaptable framework of mutual understanding between partners working towards shared priorities while nurturing a culture of clear communication and reciprocity.

VCSE organisations are already working in areas of poverty reduction, health and wellbeing, community development, environment, housing, transport, skills, employment and more. This is recognised and supported by EBC, and the intention is to strengthen the relationship between EBC and the VCSE sector to further the possibilities of partnership working.

### **Shared principles**

The success of the relationship between EBC and the VCSE sector relies on clear and open communication from all sides, coupled with the understanding that, in some cases, there is a need for confidentiality and that transparency may sometimes be constrained.

This MOU highlights a number of shared principals which EBC and the VSCE will work towards:

- EBC and the VCSE sector recognise the role that each play in improving the lives and outcomes for people living and working in the borough.
- EBC and the VCSE sector are committed to promoting voluntary activity and to supporting and celebrating the contributions of volunteers across the borough.
- EBC recognises the independence of the VCSE sector and its right to challenge policies and practices of the Council. Where feasible, EBC will consider the needs of, and seek the views of, the VCSE sector when reviewing its policies and practices.
- The VCSE sector recognises that EBC has statutory responsibilities and that there are constraints placed upon the Council impacting how and where it can use its resources. In delivering its statutory responsibilities EBC will have regard to the VCSE sector and its ability to contribute to statutory and non-statutory functions and services.

- EBC will consult the VCSE sector on issues which affect them, including their users/clients/beneficiaries and their volunteers. When consultation is required, EBC will do this with clear parameters (what can/cannot be achieved/changed), with adequate time for response and in an accessible format. Feedback will be provided outlining the results of each consultation. Where feasible, advanced notice of upcoming consultations will be given, and efforts will be made to minimise significant consultations happening at the same time.
- The VCSE sector acknowledges the need for accountability when receiving public money and commits to providing information on how that funding has been spent and the outputs and outcomes that have been achieved.
- EBC acknowledges the need for clear and consistent processes for determining which organisations will receive council funding.
- EBC recognises that much of the VCSE sector relies on individuals with limited time and resources and that their individual organisations will be their priority. Equally, the VCSE sector commits to responding to invitations from EBC to relevant consultations and forums.
- EBC endeavor to invite representatives of relevant organisations to said forums. VCSE organisations endeavor to make sure that any changes of relevant contacts are communicated to EBC.
- EBC and VCSE organisations value and will proactively take steps to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across all of Eastleigh's neighbourhoods and communities. We stand together in celebrating diversity and will call out and challenge discrimination or exclusivity.

### Acknowledgement

This MOU was drafted by Community First as a representative of the VCSE sector, and the draft then shared with VCSE organisations that are members of the Eastleigh Welfare Agency Partnership for comment before publication.

This MOU will be reviewed by the Health and Communities Partnership Manager at EBC and the representative of the VCSE sector every 2 years. Last reviewed January 2025.

Signed on behalf of EBC:



Andrew Saunders

Signed on behalf of the VCSE:



Jo Proctor