

Keep it Local – next steps in East Sussex

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What Keep it Local means for East Sussex County Council

The process for joining:

As discussed, the key thing we are asking councils to do to join the Network is to endorse our [six Keep it Local principles](#). We haven't been prescriptive about exactly what the mechanism is for doing this, as we recognise this will vary between councils. However, as discussed this could involve:

- Leader/relevant cabinet member and chief executive signing an endorsement
- Taking a cabinet decision to endorse

Some suggested wording for this endorsement is set out in this document.

There is no fee for joining the Keep it Local network. In addition to membership of the network, which is funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales (LBFEW) as a whole, we also give all Keep it Local councils a year of free Locality partner membership.

The ask - we are also asking councils to:

- Appoint a ‘Keep it Local champion’ in the Cabinet and in the Senior Management Team – to help embed Keep it Local practice across the council. See appendix 1 for more detail on what the role of the Keep it Local champion might entail.



- Convene a conversation with your local community – to ensure this isn't a process that happens behind closed doors but creates a partnership with the local community to co-design what it means to Keep it Local in the East Sussex setting.
- Work with Locality and peer councils in the Keep it Local Network - to assess and improve current practice.

More background information about the Keep it Local Campaign and more detail about what it means to join the Keep it Local Network can be found in our '[Join the Keep it Local Movement](#)' report:

Proposed wording and more detailed explanation of the ask

We believe in the power of community. That's why we understand the best way to tackle the challenges we face as an authority and create transformative local services for our residents is to Keep it Local.

This means we will work to harness the local potential that exists in our county, by building strong local partnerships, sharing power, and maximising local strengths.

In doing so, we can use public resources to invest in the local economy and support community capacity; and provide services which intervene early to reduce long-term costs and drive down pressure on our public services.

Recent years have seen a trend towards outsourcing services at scale, which has crowded out local community organisations. Our council aspires to a different way: to Keep it Local.

Locality will support East Sussex County Council to work towards this aim. We will join the Keep it Local Network – a coalition of forward-thinking councils like ours. To sign up to the Network we will commit to work towards six 'Keep it Local principles.'

1. Think about the whole system, not individual service silos.
2. Co-ordinate services at the neighbourhood level.
3. Increase local spend to invest in the local economy.
4. Focus on early intervention now to save costs tomorrow.
5. Commit to your community and proactively support local organisations.
6. Commission services simply and collaboratively so they are 'local by default'

We will convene a discussion with the local community to co-design what it means to Keep it Local in the East Sussex setting. We will then continue to work with Locality and peer councils in the Keep it Local Network to assess and improve our current practice.



East Sussex County Council will appoint a 'Keep it Local champion' in the Cabinet and in the Senior Management Team to take ownership of this work and work with colleagues in pursuit of these aims.

Other councils' wording for endorsing the Keep it Local Principles and joining the Network:

South Gloucestershire Council: The council published Leader Toby Savage's [pledge](#) to commit to the Keep it Local principles.

Leeds City Council: [Council and democracy \(leeds.gov.uk\)](#) – you can find the decision from the Executive Board of the Council to sign up to the Keep it Local Principles and Network here, as well as the supporting documents.

Wirral Council: [Decision - Wirral Council to Commit to Keep it Local Campaign | Wirral Council](#) – you can find the supporting documents for the motion at the link above, including how the Keep it Local Campaign aligns with other activity with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), the Social Value Portal and Power to Change.

Text of the motion: [COUNCIL MINUTE EXTRACT.pdf \(wirral.gov.uk\)](#)

Benefits of joining the Keep it Local Network

We know none of this is easy, especially with councils facing such huge challenges. We hope that the benefits of being a member of the Keep it Local Network are clear. As set out in our '[Join the Keep it Local Movement](#)' publication, we support members of the network by:

- Convening two network meetings per year to report on progress;
- Providing regular updates and sharing best practice learning that emerges across the network;
- Offering free Locality membership for a year and providing specialist advice on how to Keep it Local in practice;
- Facilitating access to a sounding board of peers in other forward-thinking authorities to work through problems together;
- Providing a clear intellectual framework to articulate the work you're already doing and help you go further.
- Creating the Keep it Local award to showcase best practice.



As we look to the coronavirus recovery, we'll be convening regular online sessions with members of the Keep it Local councils – to enable peer learning on a range of future facing issues. Recent sessions have included:

- The future of adult social care, and communities' role in this system
- How to get the most for your place from social value
- The role of community organisations in the economic recovery

Our work to support places to Keep it Local

Here we provide a snapshot of some of the work we've done with local authorities to Keep it Local in recent years.

Economic resilience work in six places

Work with six local authorities through our [Powerful Communities, Strong Economies](#) action research in 2017 – looking at how the Keep it Local approach can build local economic resilience. Local authorities were:

- Bradford MDC
- Bristol City Council
- Calderdale Council
- Dorset County Council
- Hackney Council
- Shropshire Council

Keep it Local in South Gloucestershire:

Toby Savage, the Leader of **South Gloucestershire Council** is an active member of the Keep it Local Network. He has championed the Keep it Local principles within the council. On joining the Keep it Local network he said:

“We want to build on and strengthen that relationship as we develop a new approach to providing services for local people and communities. We're joining the Keep it Local Network because we know this is the beginning of a journey and recognise the power of learning from other councils in the Network as we make this shift.”

In 2019, South Gloucestershire [won the Keep it Local award](#) for in recognition of their work with the local voluntary sector.



The council's recent work has included embedding metrics around strengthening community spirit into their Covid recovery plans. Their new four-year Council Plan makes a commitment to “enable communities to work together to improve their lives and address the problems important to them”. The Key Performance Indicators put in place to monitor achievement of this commitment include those from the ‘Framework for Measuring Community Spirit’ produced jointly by Locality and the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH).

Ongoing work in Bristol and Bradford

Bradford and Bristol are our two current Keep it Local pilot areas, where we've been working with the council in depth for the past three years. Areas of work we've focused on include:

- Support on commissioning for homecare services and designing delivery models which provide a mix of regulated provision and community-based services.
- Support on commissioning domestic abuse services.
- Support with pre-engagement practice and protocol to ensure local providers are able to compete with bigger providers.
- Advice and support on production and revision of social value policies and toolkits, including the development of a joint social value and inclusive growth policy
- Capacity building support for VCS organisations to ensure they are tender-ready.

Ongoing work with Calderdale and Wakefield:

We support **Calderdale Council** to use new and innovative commissioning methods to commission their voluntary sector infrastructure – through use of the Light Touch Regime combined with Alliance Contracting. In **Wakefield**, we are working with the Public Health team to support them to engage a greater number of VCS organisations in their service provision.

Keep it Local in London

As outlined above, we worked with **Hackney Council** on a previous Keep it Local project, they have since joined the Keep it Local Network. Alongside Hackney, **Lewisham Council** are one of the first Keep it Local councils. See appendix 2 for a full list of the Keep it Local councils.

Hackney: In Hackney, we worked with the council and community organisations there to develop their approach to sustainable procurement, and to help the local authority



understand the local economic impact of their grant funding of local organisations. [More detail in this report](#): Page 59

Mayor of Hackney, Philip Glanville on joining the Keep it Local Network:

“We’re building a fairer, safer and more sustainable Hackney, but we know we cannot do it alone. Our communities hold the assets and tools to shape the borough beyond what just the Council can control, and we know that people want services they feel connected to.”

“So, we’re embedding the Keep it Local principles at the heart of our Community Strategy, and the day-to-day operation of the council. We’re disrupting service siloes, finding existing expertise in our communities, boosting our co-production, changing our procurement and commissioning – pushing for ‘local by default’.”

Lewisham: We are working with Lewisham and their local infrastructure organisation, Lewisham Local, to look at the impact of their social value policy on small, local organisations.

Cllr Jonathan Slater, Cabinet Member for Communities Lewisham Council on joining the Keep it Local Network:

“We are really proud of the work we are doing to support our thriving community sector. It’s important that we continue to unlock the potential in our borough and build strong local partnerships, joining the network will help us to work collaboratively with other councils to build on this.”

Places that have recently joined the Keep it Local Network

In places that have recently joined the Keep it Local Network, we’ve focused on a range of different projects:

- Joining up social value work with community asset transfer approaches.
- Convening public meetings with local voluntary sector on new infrastructure offer.
- Supporting the development of service co-design approaches with the local voluntary and community sector.
- Developing a new local authority wide commissioning approach for work with the voluntary and community sector.

Other case studies



A sample of two case studies, developed as part of [this essay collection](#), which lay out what the Keep it Local principles look like in practice.

Kirklees: [People, Partners, Places](#)

At Kirklees Council we recognise the importance of a strong voluntary and community sector (VCS) and a grassroots approach to tackle the shared challenges we face. So, we've sought to put power directly in the hands of communities through Community Asset Transfer and developed our Community Plus approach to harness the existing assets in our neighbourhoods. We're creating place-based partnerships between the Council and communities which are delivering clear outcomes for the people of Kirklees.

Oldham: [The Oldham Model](#)

Reform in Oldham – making a real difference to local lives – building thriving communities, developing cooperative services and working towards an inclusive economy. In this case study, we outline how we've fundamentally rethought the way we interact with communities and place. In this spirit, we outline how our social prescribing innovation partnership has provided flexibility to work and coproduce with partners and residents and lay out some of its early impacts.

Appendix 1: The Keep it Local Principles

The six Keep it Local Principles are explored in [a series of essays](#) along with examples of how they can be put into practice.

Principle 1: Think about the whole system not individual service siloes

Across the country, people are beginning to think very differently about public services. At the heart of this is a growing recognition of the complex nature of social problems and the need to work as a whole system to address them.

The starting point in this journey varies from place to place. Some are developing new principles across a whole system; others are innovating in a part of the system to catalyse wider change. But it is clear that a new world is emerging which requires not just new practice, but a change in the way we think about how social change happens and a new language to enable it.

Principle 2: Co-ordinate services at a neighbourhood level

We live our lives in neighbourhoods – so it makes sense for them to be the starting point for how we think about services. Working at a neighbourhood level – with communities who understand both the challenges local people face and the strengths they have to overcome them – can help find creative solutions to seemingly insurmountable problems.

Councils can support good neighbourhoods in two main ways: by sustaining local places and spaces, and by working with local organisations to support social interaction. In so doing, they can tap into the strong local networks and trusting relationships that have been built up over time – and are ready to be drawn on when a crisis hits.

Principle 3: Increase local spend to invest in the local economy

The rise of community wealth building presents an opportunity for local authorities – working alongside other anchor institutions – to lead the way in creating economies that work for local people.

A progressive approach to procurement is central to this agenda – but it does not stop there. Community wealth building is a suite of activities which seeks to reorganise the local economy and build greater levels of economic and social justice.

Principle 4: Focus on early intervention now to save costs tomorrow

Traditional models of public service provision were invented in different times to address different challenges. As such, the state-led or market-driven approaches of the past are



simply not set up to enable us to move away from crisis mitigation towards early intervention and prevention.

So now we need to make a decisive shift to the community: to mobilise the strengths that exist locally, and harness them in the name of early intervention and prevention. Under this new “Community Paradigm”, public services would be designed and delivered by and with communities themselves.

Principle 5: Commit to your community and proactively support local organisations

It's vital that councils understand the particular value that local community organisations bring to a place. A strong and active civil society is an inherently good thing whether or not it is commissioned to deliver public services.

There are all sorts of positive ways in which local authorities can build strong relationships with the community sector – listening to campaigning groups, providing small grants, supporting community asset transfer, involving local people in planning and development decisions. What is crucial is to create an environment where local community organisations can flourish.

Principle 6: Commission services simply and collaboratively so they are “local by default”

The EU procurement rules are often held to have imposed burdensome obligations that inhibit commissioning good sense. Yet the true villain is to be found much closer to home: domestic, bureaucratic institutionalism.

Commissioners can and should embrace the possibilities within our current regulations to prioritise social purpose and social value; and build strong partnerships with the local community.



Appendix 2: Keep it Local champion role outline

We see Keep it Local champions as: leading the council's public commitment to the agenda; and driving forward its internal implementation.

We have recommended champions in both the Cabinet and SMT to ensure both political and corporate buy in.

We believe the role will be most effective if it is defined by champions themselves. This will enable them to build on the council's particular commitment to the Keep it Local agenda, the things it most wants to achieve by being part of the Keep it Local network, and what might be required to overcome any specific challenges.

However, we would expect being a Keep it Local champion to encompass some of the following. Some of these may be most appropriately fulfilled by either the executive member or the SMT role. Others may be appropriate for both people, and some may be combined to result in one broader responsibility.

- Being a powerful public advocate for the Keep it Local approach
- Being involved with Keep it Local Network meetings and events where appropriate
- Using the six Keep it Local principles as the basis for developing council policy and strategy where relevant
- Identifying opportunities to embed the Keep it Local principles in council services and activities
- Working to ensure a cross-departmental approach to achieving Keep it Local outcomes
- Leading the internal communication of the council's Keep it Local commitment
- Informing and reminding those sitting within their teams, and beyond, of the council's Keep it Local commitment and that it's a thread that should run through all work
- Being a key figure in ensuring close involvement of and partnership with the local community
- Overseeing any outcomes agreed with Locality and the local community to work towards as part of Keep it Local

Appendix 3: Who are the Keep it Local councils?

In March 2020, we announced the first tranche of councils to join the Keep it Local Network. We are now working to induct new councils into the network, as we look to the role communities will play in the coronavirus recovery.

We have also recently had two new additions to the councils below as Leeds City Council and Wakefield Council have endorsed the Keep it Local principles and become our 12th and 13th councils in the network.

Who are the Keep it Local trailblazer councils?

- 1 Bradford Metropolitan District Council
- 2 Bristol City Council
- 3 Calderdale Council
- 4 Hackney Council
- 5 Kirklees Council
- 6 Lewisham Council
- 7 Newcastle City Council
- 8 Oldham Council
- 9 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- 10 South Gloucestershire Council
- 11 Wirral Council



Appendix 4: A 'whole systems' Keep it Local approach

