

# COMMISSIONING in SUFFOLK



**Commissioners and providers need to work effectively with markets, individuals, families and communities to fulfil needs and expectations especially with fewer resources available.**

**Increasingly we will rely on managing relationships to deliver outcomes, increase efficiency and reduce costs. The principles outlined in this document will help us to do just that. They are central to the way that all in Suffolk will do business in the future and provide the backdrop to the council's drive to be more commercially focussed and delivering more person and community focused approaches.**

This short document sets out the principles for good commissioning in Suffolk. Commissioning is our toolbox to help redesign the whole system of providers and partners, to think differently and innovate, and to lead the future service design.

## Chris Bally,

Director of Corporate Services, Corporate Services

## Gavin Bultitude,

Assistant Director Strategic Planning & Resources, Adult and Community Services

## Tina Hines,

Head of Strategic Commissioning, Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services

## Christine Geeson

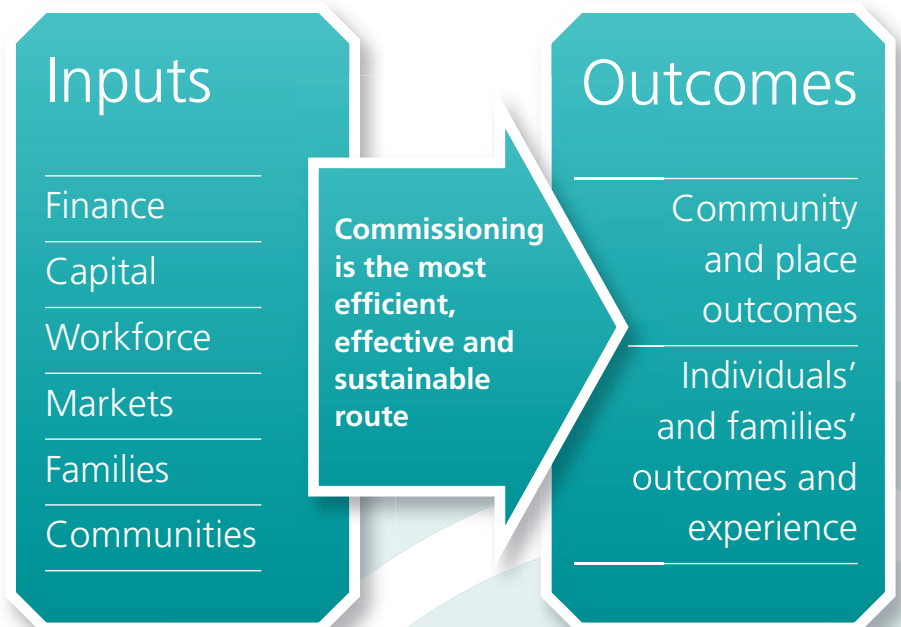
Head of Communities and Partnerships, Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services

This document was written in collaboration with VCS Suffolk Congress and the Suffolk Chamber of commerce

# Introduction

Commissioning is about getting the positive outcomes that individuals, families, communities and society need, by using the resources that are available in the most efficient, effective and sustainable way. Resources mean not just taxpayers' money but also the professionals and clinicians, internal and external providers, buildings and most importantly the family and community that people contribute to and rely on.

The following diagram represents how to think about commissioning; showing how all the resources in Suffolk can be used to achieve the desired outcomes.



# Commissioning process

The commissioning process can be illustrated as a continuous flow of activity.





The principles in this document are for everyone working with and within Suffolk County Council including internal and external providers, councillors, directors, partner agencies, voluntary and community groups, and strategic and operational commissioners. The people of Suffolk may also find this document helpful to understand how we commission in Suffolk, and how together we can improve outcomes for all.

# PRINCIPLES

As commissioning involves all resources in the system, all of the stakeholders in the process should commit to following these principles for good commissioning.

- 1 Deliver the agreed strategic priorities whilst achieving outcomes for Suffolk in the most efficient, effective, safe and sustainable way
- 2 Ensure that the people of Suffolk are central to commissioning activity and delivery
- 3 Operate a culture of fairness, transparency and proportionality and keep appropriate records
- 4 Communicate effectively with stakeholders especially when engaged in the commissioning or tendering process and involve current and potential providers in commissioning activities
- 5 Develop creative, innovative and much more cost effective approaches to achieve desired outcomes
- 6 Strengthen society, local communities, community capacity and the economy through the totality of commissioning
- 7 Give due consideration to equalities, diversity, health and safety, social, economic and environmental value through commissioning and service delivery
- 8 Performance manage and evaluate for impact on outcomes
- 9 Reflect on, and learn from, the commissioning and procurement process
- 10 Continue to develop professional relationships between commissioners and providers – working in partnership and maintaining strong commercial awareness.

## Understand

Identify the outcomes we want to achieve, local needs, resources, evidence of what works well, current provision and priorities. This involves gathering the views of the individuals, families and communities whose outcomes we want to support so that services and other help can be configured most appropriately to address their needs within available resources.

Providers are a key source of information and insight in this phase. Their views of the needs of individuals, families and communities should be included (they should also support commissioners to talk with and listen to a wide range of people whose outcomes we intend to support), as well as their insight into what types of help and service configuration may be most appropriate in response. This should take into account other needs assessments, evidence, existing performance information and the State of Suffolk report.

*Continued overleaf*



# Plan

Map out and consider different ways of addressing the outcomes and needs identified, including digital solutions. How can they be addressed efficiently, effectively and in a sustainable way? Optimal use can then be made of available resources regardless of who invests them. Providers can be involved at this stage to add their expertise to the discussion.

Commissioning strategies should reflect the full use of resources:

- Families and communities, including volunteering
- Finance
- Workforce: what shape, skills or training might be needed? How should markets be arranged and incentivised? This should be informed by – and inform – the range of other local workforce plans
- Facilities: what needs to be in place and where? For example: co-location of services or resources, bringing together universal and acute services where appropriate, making use of existing community buildings or running a school competition.

It is important for providers within this phase to be honest about capacity to deliver, identify additional social value that they can contribute to Suffolk and where appropriate join up with other providers and develop new business models to comprehensively support outcomes for individuals, families and communities, not just deal with narrow symptoms.



# Do

Make investment decisions based on the appropriate action identified in the 'plan' stage to secure delivery of the desired support. This is often undertaken with partners and is likely to be a package of mechanisms to achieve the outcomes. This investment can be in any or all of the areas of planning set out above.

It is important that providers deliver services or support in a way that encourages independence for individuals, families and communities and has sustainable impact.

# Review

Monitor delivery against expected outcomes and individuals, families and communities' experience, and report how well it is doing against the plan.

This is in effect asking, 'did our 'do' phase deliver on the 'plan' we put in place to deliver against what we 'understand' to be the needs?' Part of the review role should include considering whether the strategic plans are addressing identified needs and monitoring whether all partner agencies are acting in accordance with the commitments they made. The review should feed into the next phase of commissioning as it is a key source of information for the 'understand' and 'plan' phases.

Commissioners and providers should actively seek to involve individuals, families and communities at each commissioning stage so that they become co-designers and co-producers of the positive outcomes which commissioning strives to achieve.

