

## **ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **Communities 1<sup>st</sup> - What We Stand For Policy Statement (6)**

#### **Introduction**

Climate change represents one of the most pressing challenges of our time, impacting communities at both local and global scales. As Communities 1st, in partnership with our valued Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations, we recognise the urgency of this issue and its disproportionate effects on the most vulnerable among us, including those in low-income households, individuals living in poor-quality housing, and those facing socio-economic barriers to adaptation. Our commitment is to leverage our collective voice and resources to foster a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future for all members of our community.

#### **Building Resilient Communities: A Collaborative Approach**

Climate change's impacts, from increased extreme weather events like heatwaves, floods, and droughts, pose significant health and safety risks and worsen inequalities for those less prepared, especially affecting low-income households, those in substandard housing, older people and ethnic minority groups due to socioeconomic obstacles. Local authorities face resource and expertise shortages in implementing adaptation strategies. Yet, leveraging national and international experiences, local initiatives can boost resilience and sustainability. There's a critical need for adaptation strategies that address the vulnerabilities of these communities, advocating for a collaborative effort among local bodies, VCFSE organisations, and the broader community to develop and implement effective solutions. This concerted action should aim to integrate local knowledge and expertise, fostering an inclusive approach to build resilience and ensure sustainable outcomes for all.

#### **Our Pledge**

As Communities 1st and our member organisations, we commit to:

- Advocate for and implement adaptation strategies that prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable.
- Collaborate with local authorities, businesses, and environmental experts to enhance our community's resilience through informed policy-making and sustainable practices.
- Educate and empower our community members through initiatives like the Carbon Literacy courses, promoting awareness and action on climate issues.

#### **Our Ask of Decision-Makers and Influencers**

We call upon our politicians, senior leaders, and officers within governments, local councils, the NHS, and other public sector bodies to commit to our cause. We ask that they:

1. Promote partnerships between VCFSE organisations and public bodies to develop and deliver climate resilience projects, utilising the sector's unique strengths.
2. Create specific funding for local VCFSEs to lead innovative projects in climate adaptation and mitigation, focusing on aiding vulnerable groups.
3. Acknowledge and back VCFSE-led grassroots efforts as vital to local climate strategies, including aiding the expansion of successful models.
4. Ensure VCFSE representation in climate policy making, to reflect community needs and insights.