

# CONCORDANCE AGREEMENT



**swan**foundation  
(southeast)

# What is Concordance?

Concordance is an agreement, between Swan Foundation and its partners, to make a difference in people's lives.

It will bring investment from partner companies into the neighbourhoods where it's really needed.

Our aim is simple: to improve the quality of life for people and communities in East London and Essex.

Concordance is about forming partnerships to make things happen.

## Swan Foundation

Swan Foundation was set up to help the Swan Housing Group maximise what it can do for the communities it serves.

By working imaginatively with ambitious and committed partners the Foundation will help improve people's lives.

## Our promise

Swan Foundation promise that 100% of the resources we attract, whether that is time, money, advice or facilities, will be used for the benefit of local communities.

Swan Housing Group has contributed seed money of £60,000 to Swan Foundation and will match fund initiatives where possible. We will also provide administration support and basic running costs.

Support from our partners will help us to continue with innovative projects and help us achieve our goals. And it will enable the development of exciting new projects that will engage and empower individuals and communities.

## Priorities

We want to encourage partners to contribute to positive action in the following priority areas:

- **Education, training and employment**
- **Community cohesion**
- **Environment**
- **Health, well-being and sports**

Through Concordance, the Swan Foundation will help companies show that they are serious about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

We believe that our approach will:

- support the values of the companies involved.
- help companies to direct some of their CSR activities on defined areas.
- target support based on evidence of need.
- empower local communities and promote self-improvement by ensuring that they are engaged in designing and delivering local CSR activities.
- make sure that CSR activities are properly evaluated and based on evidence of effectiveness.
- provide a strategic response to local needs, in which disparate resources are brought together in a co-ordinated way.

We also want to work in a sustainable way, creating relationships that are mutually advantageous, capable of enduring beyond a single transaction and deliver added value to the services we deliver to our communities.

# What are the objectives of Concordance?

- Support investment in the development of the people in our organisations: we all have staff who could benefit from using some of their time and expertise to work with local communities.
- Involve residents directly in the development of their communities, from the design of homes and neighbourhoods to health and social enterprise initiatives.
- Conduct business in such a way as to promote a sustainable environment for today's and future generations, reducing waste, emissions and discharge in the construction of properties, for instance, and taking the lead in the development of energy efficient, affordable housing.
- Build working relationships with contractors, suppliers and partners which benefit communities.
- Act as a broker for organisations that wish to work collectively to provide activities that improve people's lives and support them in their future aspirations.

# How Concordance arrived at its priorities?

## Our priorities are:

- Education training and employment
- Community cohesion
- Environment
- Health, well being and sports

These key priorities are based on evidence from consultation with local communities and information about areas of social need in East London – largely Tower Hamlets – and Essex, where Swan Housing residents live.

## In Tower Hamlets, for instance, we know:

- The population of Tower Hamlets is set to increase faster than the rest of London between now and 2011.
- Tower Hamlets has a much younger population than the rest of the UK and London and the largest percentage of 20 to 34 year olds of any Local Authority in the country.
- Over half of Tower Hamlets' population are from black and minority ethnic groups.
- A third are Bangladeshi, of whom half are under 20 years old.
- 60% of the white British population are over 30.
- Tower Hamlets has the fifth lowest male life expectancy of all local authorities in the country. The relationship between early death and deprivation is well recognised. According to the Indices of Deprivation Tower Hamlets ranks as the second most deprived local authority in England.

- The number of households in Tower Hamlets is projected to increase from 78,500 in 2001 by 34% to 105,368 in 2016.
- New build initiatives are anticipated to lead to significant increases in the school age population in Tower Hamlets.

## In Essex, we know:

- The County has areas of contrasting prosperity and deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 details sub-ward areas (officially known as Super Output Areas or SOAs) level. 22 SOAs of Basildon Town have an overall deprivation rate which falls within the worst 20% of the country.
- In common with other New Town areas, the age profile differs to the national average. 38.8% of the population fall under the 0-29 age group, compared to 37.7% nationally, whilst 19.4% of residents are aged over 60 years, compared to 20.9% nationally.
- Ethnic minority groups account for 3.1% of the population, which is above the Essex average of 2.9%.
- Within our resident profile, there is evidence of high levels of unemployment and a high proportion of 'young' residents.

# Education, training and employment

By providing essential skills and opportunities to individuals, we aim to support people in overcoming barriers to becoming economically active and increase their chances of reaching their full potential, both within and outside the education system.

For some, this means helping them to improve their skills and knowledge in spoken and written English. But for others, it might mean helping them to fulfil their entrepreneurial aspirations – many Swan residents have ideas that would inspire even the toughest Dragon's Den master!

# Community cohesion

Community cohesion reflects a community culture where different groups of people get on well together. Building bridges between communities is essential to successful integration and enabling new and existing residents to adjust to one another.

## **Swan Foundation aims to ensure:**

- That people from different backgrounds have similar opportunities in life.
- People understand both their rights and their responsibilities.
- That trust is built up amongst local people and between those people and local service providers.
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common – their shared values – along with a recognition of the benefits of diversity.

# Environment

By supporting the development of a sustainable environment, we can ensure that living spaces are those that people actually want to live in.

We can also encourage change in attitudes and behaviours in ways that will help save energy and water, reduce waste, litter and graffiti and increase recycling, cut back on emissions and discharge in construction, and challenge anti-social behaviour.

# Sport, well-being and health

By making better use of existing open spaces and creating more, where possible, and providing opportunities for local communities to become involved with sport and recreational activities, we can help to create vibrant, more engaged and healthier neighbourhoods. And we can support initiatives such as health awareness and healthy eating programmes, as well as anti-bullying initiatives and respect campaigns, all of which help to promote and encourage a sense of well-being.

# Benefits to business: why you should get involved?

Research by the Institute of Business Ethics has shown that socially responsible businesses outperform their competitors.

Additionally, research shows that 87% of employees across Europe would feel more loyal to a company if it were seen to be carrying out activities that would help improve society.

Concordance can help shape your relationships with stakeholders in order to make a difference to communities and the environment as well as improve business-practice and competitiveness.

A key goal for any business is constant improvement in the development and delivery of products and services. As society changes and new challenges arise businesses must respond in order to succeed.

Swan Foundation's close ties to Swan communities mean we can share information with you that will benefit your customers and business.

# How will Concordance work?

We will give you a central point of contact – a named person – at the Swan Foundation who will respond to questions, provide you with information about our current projects and keep you in touch with new initiatives and development opportunities.

We will ask you for a central point of contact, so that we can build a personal relationship with you. This will help us understand your interests, goals and concerns, and how we can work together best.

We will send you regular updates on the projects we have delivered and – importantly – their outcomes; the results of consultations with our communities; and the kinds of things we are planning to do next.

We will hold quarterly 'Thought Leadership' events for our partners, to share information and best practice, provide a forum to stimulate discussion and innovation in CSR, explore ways in which we might influence public policy and practice and how we might respond better to community needs and aspirations.

All you need to do is sign up to the Concordance agreement - a commitment to work with us and achieve our goals.

That's it. No financial commitments – although we hope you will support our projects as they develop. Just a bit of your time, your commitment to targeting CSR and your creative input into delivering it. And hopefully, your continued support to make long-term change possible.

# Thought leadership

We think that housing organisations and their partners can do much more for people by working together. Many of these organisations are doing similar projects for similar groups of people and often in areas that overlap. By working together it may be possible to deliver better value projects to more people.

We want the Swan Foundation to take a lead in developing the thinking in this area. We will be hosting some thought leadership sessions during 2010 and would like you to come along to add your views and ideas.

Please contact us if you are interested in attending or for more details on **01277 844721** or email us **info@swanfoundation.org.uk**

**Please fill out  
the enclosed  
card with your  
contact details  
and hand it  
back to us.**

Help us turn  
aspirations  
into reality.



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