

**A COMPACT FOR  
WALTHAM FOREST**

**September 2003**

## **Introduction – Why have a Compact?**

This is a statement of partnership between the local Statutory sector and Voluntary and Community sectors. It is a commitment to work together more closely and to respect each other's rights and responsibilities. It offers a new approach to partnership and a framework to develop more detailed agreements in specific areas in the future.

By the statutory sector we mean the Local Authority, the Health Services, Police and other official Local Government organisations. The Voluntary and Community sector includes Charities, Community Groups and organisations, Housing organisations, Campaigning organisations, religious (faith based) organisations, Sport, Art and Environmental Groups."

The Waltham Forest Compact will encourage greater links and inter-relationships amongst all partners engaged in the *Local Strategic Partnership*.

## **2. Aims and Status of this Compact**

The aim is to provide a framework for enhancing the relationship between the local statutory organisations and the Voluntary and Community sector. The development of this Compact is a learning process for all participants and the intention is for it to develop over time.

Though the Compact will not be legally binding, it is expected to have authoritative status in promoting good quality working relationships.

All partners within the scope of the Compact will be invited to adopt it formally and to promote its adoption by other groups.

The partners that adopt the Compact will use it to inform their dealings with other bodies, whether or not those bodies have adopted it themselves.

## **3. Purpose of the Compact**

The Compact's primary purpose is to:

- Promote a culture of empowerment and continually improving working relations between the sectors in Waltham Forest.
- Develop the relationship between and across sectors at all levels.
- Improve communication and information flow between organisations and with the general public.

## **4. Principles underpinning the Compact**

- Mutual responsibility for the success of the Compact.
- Respect for all participating organisations and for all points of view.
- Open channels of dialogue.
- Transparency of processes.
- Openness of approach and equal access to information where appropriate.
- Honesty and integrity between parties.
- Inclusiveness and respecting diversity.
- Improvement supported by regular review processes. Respecting government policy on the inclusion of the voluntary and community sector alongside the statutory sector in developing policy.
- Commitment to the resolution of conflict.
- Agreement to respect existing consultation guidelines.
- Equality of access and equality of opportunity.
- Acknowledgement of the different roles, resources and influence of the various partners to the Compact.

## **5. The five main areas covered by this Compact**

The five main areas covered by the Compact are:

- **Diversity and Equality**
- **Partnership**
- **Funding**
- **Accommodation**
- **Consultation**

## **Diversity and Equality**

Achieving diversity and equality in partnership working is a key objective of the Compact.

Compact partners will:

- Consult and involve as far as possible socially excluded groups in their partnerships.
- Monitor and support the participation in partnerships of the black and minority ethnic groups, women, lesbians and gay men, and disabled people.
- Provide appropriate opportunities for socially excluded and under represented groups to participate in partnerships.

## **Partnership**

Partnership is the essence of the Compact. It is defined as:

*Two or more parties working together, formally or informally to achieve a shared vision or goal.*

Compact partners will:

- Work towards a better understanding of each of the partner(s) roles and responsibilities.
- Agree clear objectives for each individual form of partnership.
- Ensure the membership of each formal partnership is appropriately representative in order for it to achieve its goals.
- Jointly promote the adoption of Compact working by other partners as Appropriate.
- Jointly develop benchmarks on community involvement in partnerships.
- Explore partnerships opportunities that are mutually beneficial.
- Evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of partnership working to ensure continuous improvement and added value from partners.

## **Funding**

Compact partners will:

- Work together to develop clear and realistic expectations about what each other can do in relation to funding issues and who takes responsibility for initiating action.
- Work together to develop funding strategies that support and enable local community development where appropriate.
- Engage in dialogue about the principles and criteria used to make decisions about funding.
- Negotiate the range of different funding relationships e.g. contracts, service level agreements, grant aid, etc.
- Negotiate realistic targets at the outset of all contracts and grant aid agreements.
- Work together to develop monitoring procedures that take into account the differing requirements of all funding organisations.
- Work in partnership to increase funding and resources from external/alternative sources.

## **Accommodation**

Compact partners will:

- Work towards the delivery of high quality and cost-effective services located in a high standard of accommodation and ensure that organisations do not have to operate from substandard premises.
- Work towards achieving access to reasonable and appropriate accommodation for all partners, particularly voluntary and community groups.
- Work to ensure that accommodation currently available to the voluntary sector in Waltham Forest, and accommodation with potential for community use which may be or become available to partners is used and managed to achieve the best possible long-term social benefits for Waltham Forest residents and voluntary and community groups.
- Work to address barriers to access accommodation by the voluntary and community sector as a whole and particularly the barriers which exist for black and minority ethnic organisations, and small volunteer led community groups.

- Develop and review a work programme relating to improving access to good quality accommodation for voluntary and community groups.
- To take joint actions on the following area in relation to accommodation:
  - Information development and sharing.
  - Advice and in-kind and technical support.
  - Funding.

## **Consultation**

Partners will encourage involvement at an early stage and to ensure that participants are made aware of what they may expect as a direct result of their involvement.

The partners will:

- Produce an annual consultation plan.
- Provide an opportunity for all the appropriate stakeholders to take part in consultation exercises.
- Annually test public opinion on partner's services.
- Collate different forms of feedback received by the partners through general correspondence, complaints, suggestion boxes, user satisfaction surveys etc.

This will be measured on an annual basis and published within a performance plan. The Council's Corporate Communications Unit will lead on this work.

## **6. Mechanisms**

### **Compact Monitoring Group**

A Compact Monitoring Group comprised of representatives from the voluntary, community and statutory sectors will oversee the operation of the Compact and will report to the Excellence in Public Services Local Strategic Partnership thematic group, Community Empowerment Network (CEN) and the Voluntary Sector Forum on an annual basis.

The group's responsibilities are to:

- To monitor, evaluate and oversee the development and implementation of the Compact.

- To consider how far existing policies, strategies and arrangements need to adapt and develop to meet the requirements of the Compact.
- To produce an annual monitoring report on the implementation of the Compact and to recommend any changes.
- To report any dissatisfaction with the progress or structure of the Compact by raising the matter with their organisation or department. If the issue remains unresolved then to raise the issue formally within the Compact Monitoring Group.
- To participate in reviews of the Compact or its operation.
- To participate equally in building the capacity of the Compact, valuing each other's views.
- To have a commitment to openness and the sharing of information with the aim of continually increasing the effectiveness of the Compact.

## **7. Success Criteria**

Indicators of success, which must be measurable and open to assessment, will include:

- Fewer implementation problems on projects and partnerships.
- Greater effectiveness on the part of participating organisations – better results with less wasted effort
- General agreement that the Compact has been helpful to organisations and to the people of Waltham Forest e.g., as indicated by improved working relationships and a greater awareness and understanding of respective roles and responsibilities.
- Improved communication between and across all partners.