

The Staffordshire Partnership Compact

The Staffordshire Partnership Compact is a commitment between third sector and public organisations across Staffordshire, and aims to help them work better together.

The principles of the Staffordshire Partnership Compact have been approved by the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership Executive Board and will be effective from 2009 to 2012.

The Staffordshire Strategic Partnership recognises the value of the compact and agrees that each organisation that forms the partnership will make the best effort to ensure that the compact principles are embedded within their own organisations.

Signed.....



Date.....

23rd June 2009

Kent Parson, Chief Officer
Chase Council for Voluntary Service
on behalf of
Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Consortium of Infrastructure Organisations

Signed.....



Date.....

23rd June 2009

Ron Hilton, Chief Executive,
Staffordshire County Council
on behalf of
Staffordshire
Strategic Partnership



Staffordshire Strategic Partnership



The Staffordshire Compact

2009 to 2012



Staffordshire Strategic Partnership

If you need a copy of this information in large print, braille, another language or on audio tape or CD, please contact Tim Leese by phoning 07814 372627, or email tim.leese@staffordshire.gov.uk.

The Staffordshire Compact

Introduction

We have developed this compact as part of the work of our Local Area Agreement (an agreement we have with the Government to improve how we deliver public services and improve the quality of life for local people). This compact is a commitment between third sector (made up of voluntary and community organisations) and public organisations (made up of local authorities, police, fire and rescue and the health authority) in Staffordshire, and aims to help them to work better together.

The N17 steering group are working towards an 'Environment for a Thriving Third Sector' (a national standard for developing partnership working between third sector and public organisations). The N17 steering group will monitor how we introduce the compact, to make sure we use it properly, and to make sure it benefits all sectors.

The compact must:

- allow the third sector to work to their strengths;
- encourage third sector and public organisations to work together;
- allow third sector organisations to become main service providers;
- improve funding and commissioning. (commissioning is an ongoing process of assessing need, identifying the standards that we need to meet, planning how to use resources, providing services and evaluating the service and reassessing the need.)

The Staffordshire Compact includes the following sections.

- the shared vision
- the shared aims
- shared values and principles
- the commitment of public organisations to the third sector
- the commitment of the third sector to public organisations
- codes of practice
- ways of solving disagreements.

The shared vision

We want to use this compact to continue to make Staffordshire a county where third sector and public organisations work together and share:

- values;
- understanding; and
- respect.

The shared aims

The aims of the Staffordshire Compact are to:

- provide a framework for third sector and public organisations in Staffordshire to work together, to provide more effective and co-ordinated services to local communities;
- agree principles and an effective framework for working together, so we can work in line with the national codes of practice;
- provide arrangements that will allow us to introduce our Third Sector Commissioning Standards (which will set out a number of minimum standards that we can include in commissioning);
- establish who is responsible for work areas;
- make sure that partners are able to get involved in the process and are supported to deal with disagreements;
- provide arrangements to monitor and review how effective the compact is;
- make arrangements to discuss the role and purpose of the compact with third sector and public organisations across Staffordshire
- work with the district compacts.

Shared values and principles

Our shared values and principles should support and guide how all partner organisations work together. We understand that:

- to create a community that includes and involves everyone, we must encourage voluntary action and ways to get the community involved in what we do;

- having an independent and wide-ranging third sector will benefit Staffordshire communities and will make a considerable contribution to the local economy;
- third sector and public organisations have different roles in developing and delivering public policies and services, but that they work well together;
- working together towards common aims makes services more effective for the community, as it builds relationships and improves the way we develop and deliver policies and services;
- third sector and public organisations have different responsibilities and are run in different ways, but are all committed to working in a fair, sensitive, responsible, open and honest way;
- third sector organisations are entitled to campaign, represent people and challenge and try to change public policies (within the law);
- public organisations fund and support third sector organisations, which improves the well-being of residents. Public organisations have a duty to give priority to funding activities that support their legal responsibilities.

We believe in equal opportunities, and this will influence everything we do.

The commitment of public organisations to the third sector

Independence

Public organisations recognise that the third sector are independent and have rights within the law to:

- campaign against a policy;
- comment on a policy; and
- challenge a policy;

regardless of whether or not they are funded by the public organisation they are challenging.

Funding and support

We will:

- give funding and other resources using clear, relevant and consistent criteria;
- include the full cost of services and projects, including administration and management in any funding we provide (as promoted by the Treasury), so third-sector organisations can pay the full costs of providing services;
- have clear arrangements for agreeing and assessing aims, performance indicators and other targets;
- give honest and quick feedback to funded organisations about successes or problems in performance;
- work towards having policies and systems that work together across and within organisations that provide funding;
- make sure we quickly pay grants and contracts (including paying ahead of time, if appropriate);
- give information to third-sector organisations about funding opportunities and decisions, before the end of the current grant or contract period;
- meet the needs of smaller third-sector organisations when we design systems for applying for funding;
- help develop successful third-sector organisations by introducing, where possible, funding over a longer time;
- provide access to technical advice and support, training, transport, accommodation and other resources (if appropriate);
- recognise that to work effectively, third-sector organisations need appropriate funding; and
- support the physical and organisational structures needed for third-sector organisations to work and develop.

Developing policies and getting people's opinions

We will assess new policies and procedures, particularly those that are at the development stage. We will identify as far as possible the problems that they may have on third-sector organisations, and consider these in our equality impact assessments, which public organisations must carry out when developing any new policy, procedure or service.

Depending on how urgent, sensitive or confidential issues are, public organisations will speak to third-sector organisations about the issues that are likely to affect them. National standards recommend that public organisations give third-sector organisations three months to respond.

We understand that third-sector organisations have limited resources, so may find it difficult to get their members, service users and other relevant people involved in their work.

We will take account of the specific needs, interests and contributions of people who represent minority groups and groups excluded from society.

We will respect confidentiality within the law and our public responsibilities, when we give people access to information which third-sector organisations have provided

Better local management

We will:

- review with third-sector organisations how this compact is working every year;
- make sure that their members and staff are fully informed about the compact, that they follow its principles, and that we regularly update them on its development and progress; and
- manage how the compact is used across Staffordshire, to make sure that it is effective and appropriate to meet the needs of all partners.

The commitment of the third sector to public organisations

The third sector is made up of a wide range of charities and other not-for-profit organisations, which exist to benefit the community. The sector includes local branches of national charities, local voluntary organisations and neighbourhood groups. Some of these have staff who are paid, and others rely entirely on volunteers.

Funding and responsibility

We will:

- maintain high standards of management and behaviour, and meet any responsibilities we have to funders and users;

- keep to the law and, in the case of charities, stick to appropriate guidance from the Charity Commission, including that on political activities and campaigning;
- provide high-quality services, based on best-value principles, and develop and use quality standards appropriate to the organisation; and
- make the most of outside funding opportunities only available to third-sector organisations, by working with other third-sector organisations that we are connected with.

Developing policies and getting people's opinions

We will:

- make sure that we tell service users, volunteers, members and supporters about activities and changes in policies, when we take a case to other agencies or when we are responding to a consultation exercise (if appropriate);
- accurately represent the views we are given;
- keep information confidential; and
- check policies and plans, particularly at the development stage, to see how they will affect legal organisations.

Good practice

We will:

- promote partnerships and effective working relationships with public organisations and also across the third sector;
- try to understand the work and responsibilities of public organisations and funders, and be able to show the added value that can be brought to the public organisations;
- get members, service users and volunteers, wherever possible, involved in developing and managing their activities and services;
- put in place policies for promoting best practice and equal opportunities in activities, employment and services;
- make sure that members, staff and volunteers are fully informed about the compact, that they follow its principles, and that we regularly tell them about any developments or progress; and
- review how this compact is working every year.

Codes of practice

The codes of practice will provide a basis for the working relationships and arrangements between third sector and public organisations across Staffordshire. The Compact Working Group will make sure that there are appropriate and effective links to the national codes of practice with the relevant agencies. Those codes will cover the following areas.

- 'Equality and Diversity'
- 'Volunteering'
- 'Consultation and Policy'
- 'Capacity Building'
- 'Funding, Commissioning and Procurement'

Ways of solving disagreements

The Staffordshire Compact Working Group will develop a clear, effective and practical procedure for dealing with problems in the compact.

A plan to introduce the Staffordshire Compact

Development area	Actions	Start date	Lead officer and organisation
Further development of the Staffordshire Compact			
Set up the Staffordshire Compact Working Group	<p>To watch over how the compact is introduced and developed, in line with actions below.</p> <p>To report progress directly to the LAA NI7 Group.</p>	January 2009	Jeanette Burrows, Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Consortium of Infrastructure (SCIO) and Tim Leese, Staffordshire County Council (SCC)
Develop codes of practice to strengthen the compact	<p>Develop codes of practice for the following areas, in line with national codes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Equality and Diversity' • 'Volunteering' • 'Consultation and Policy' • 'Capacity building' • 'Funding, Commissioning and Procurement' <p>Refer to the appropriate county group to develop each code of practice (for example, Staffordshire Consultation Network and Stafford Equalities Network).</p> <p>To work with district and borough compacts to explore possibly developing one set of codes of practice that we will use across the country.</p>	May 2009	Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)
Awareness and ownership			
Senior-level ownership	<p>Make sure we introduce the compact at a senior level within the organisation, (for example, SCC Senior Management Team and PCT boards).</p> <p>Make sure we introduce the compact at levels of the LAA partnership.</p>	February 2009	Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)

Development area	Actions	Start date	Lead officer and organisation
Launch of the Staffordshire compact	Hold a launch event across Staffordshire (NI7 conference) Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how important the compact is; • why we should link up the voluntary and community sector; and • the Staffordshire Commissioning Standards. 	June 2009	Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)
Put the Staffordshire Compact into practice across public organisations	Train all middle managers on all parts of the compact. Develop an induction process for staff. Discuss the compact with our human resources department. Encourage people to mention the compact in strategies and policy papers. Have training on the compact for certain members of the council. Explore how using the compact can help us introduce action plans produced in response to the recommendations made by the Audit Commission following the Inspection of Safer, Stronger and Greener Communities.	June 2009	Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)
Senior-level ownership	Make sure we introduce the compact at a senior level within SCIO chief officer level.	April 2009	Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)
Put the Staffordshire Compact into practice across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Consortium of Infrastructure (SCIO) and voluntary Organisations	Train all SCIO staff on all parts of the compact. Train the third sector on the compact. Develop an induction process for staff from SCIO organisations and other third-sector organisations.	May 2009	Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows, (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)

Development area	Actions	Start date	Lead officer a organisation
General promotion	<p>Develop the electronic NI7 news sheet.</p> <p>Include compact information on the home pages of government and SCIO organisations' websites.</p> <p>Look into how possible it would be to have compact information in the 'Safer & Stronger Communities Microsoft Sharepoint initiative'.</p> <p>Show the compact to district Local Strategic Partnerships and thematic partnerships, (Children's Trusts, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, Healthier Communities and Older People boards).</p> <p>Work with communications teams in Staffordshire County Council and other organisations to explore effective press coverage.</p>	June 2009	Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)
Make sure we work with district and borough compacts	Make sure we use what we know from district and borough compacts, and how they relate to the Staffordshire Compact.	June 2009	Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)
Resources for development			
Identify the need for resources	<p>Identify costs attached to any marketing activity and costs associated with assessing the compact.</p> <p>Give LAA NI7 Group a business plan of associated costs.</p> <p>Hire volunteers to help promote the compact (such as Community Partnership Officers, staff from the Council for Voluntary Services and a district representative from the Local Strategic Partnership).</p>	February 2009	Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)

Development area	Actions	Start date	Lead officer and organisation
Total commitment			
Develop a process for solving any problems arising from the Compact	<p>Develop a clear procedure to deal with any problems.</p> <p>Have a system that will provide a basis for dealing with problems.</p> <p>Develop a flow chart for dealing with problems.</p> <p>Develop a panel who will be responsible for managing how we deal with any problems.</p>	July 2009	Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)
Assess how effective the Staffordshire Compact is	<p>Develop a way of making sure we are committed to developing a system that records any problems and good areas of the compact.</p> <p>Work with SCIO and legal organisations to regularly review the compact.</p> <p>Carry out 12-month reviews across SCIO and legal organisations and give feedback to the LAA NI7 Group.</p> <p>Learn from any complaints or problems.</p> <p>Make any changes needed to the compact after the 12-month review.</p> <p>Have ways to measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any improvements that have come from the compact; • how the compact is used within policy processes; • compact champions and their jobs; • whether the compact has been effective in supporting the main processes (such as comprehensive area assessments and the Local Strategic Partnership); • the compacts budget; • that consultations are in line with the 12 week national standards; and • the practical ways of assessing what we need to do and how we plan to do so with the resources we have available. 		Compact Working Group, Jeanette Burrows (SCIO) and Tim Leese (SCC)