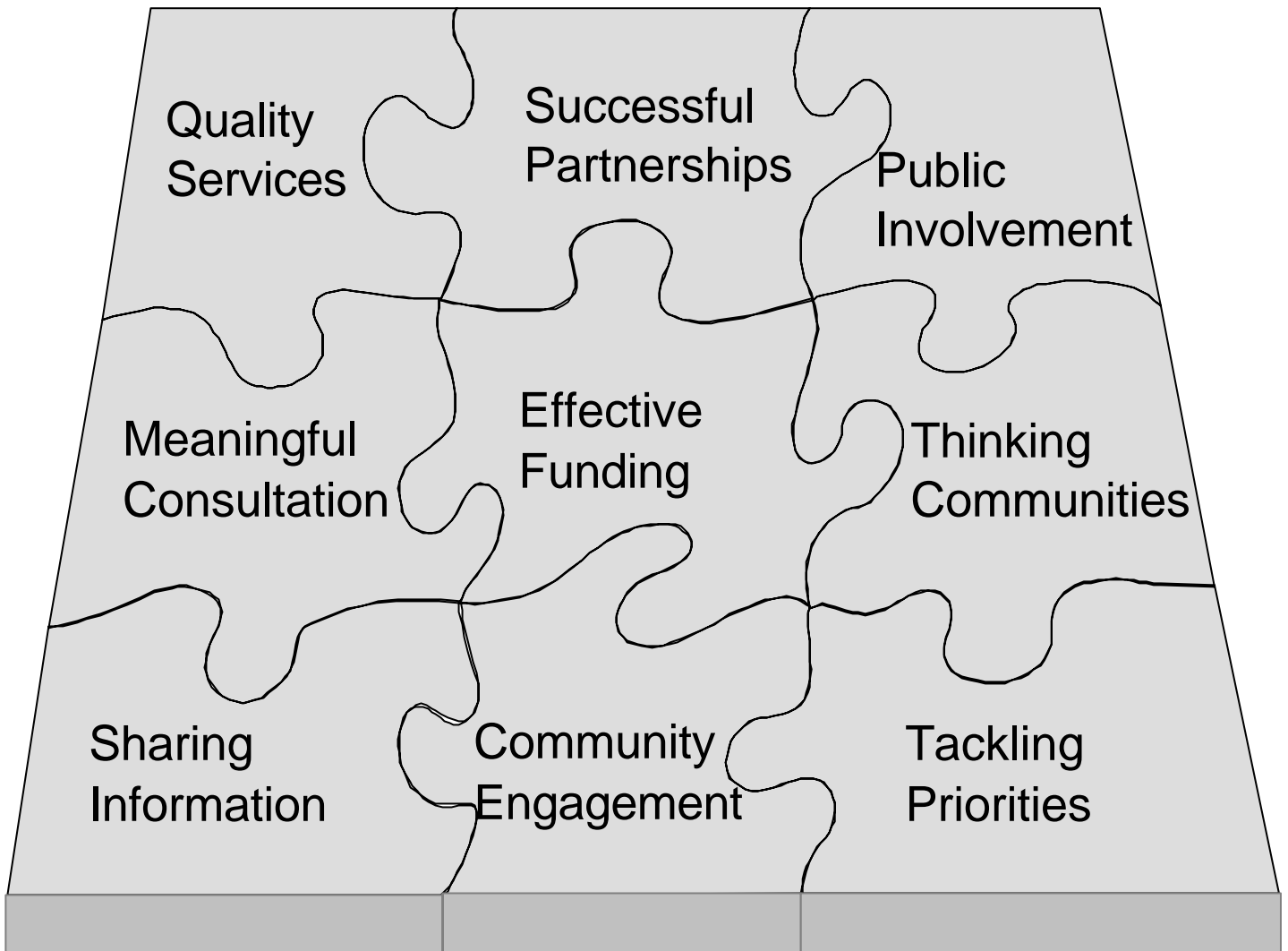


# Compact

working together | better together



## **The Rochford Compact**

A Local Compact for Rochford and District  
Voluntary, Community & Statutory Organisations, working together

## Forward

The national Compact is a partnership agreement that was established in 1998 between the voluntary & community sector and government to improve their relationship for mutual advantage.

Local Compacts aim to do this locally between the voluntary & community sector and local statutory bodies (i.e. primarily District/Borough Councils, Primary Care Trusts and County Councils).

They are a written understanding between these parties, which should be in place by April 2005, but they are **not**:

- a legally binding document or contract
- a service level agreement
- a funding guarantee

Success lies in commitment to the principles set out within this Compact and in using it as an instrument to drive change.

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## **Our Vision is to :**

- effect lasting change in the relationship between the statutory and voluntary/community sectors, by building on good foundations
- deliver meaningful and significant benefits to communities and individuals within and across the district of Rochford

## **Overview of The Rochford Compact**

The Rochford Compact is an agreement between local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, Rochford District Council, Castle Point & Rochford Primary Care Trust and Essex County Council setting out how we will work together in a series of Codes of Practice to achieve this vision.

These Codes of Practice are the promises all parties and the systems to help make sure that the agreement works. They cover the following areas :

- Funding Code
- Community Groups' Code
- Volunteering Code
- Consultation and Policy Code
- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups' Code
- Procurement Code

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It is intended that this Compact will be supplemented by a more formal agreement of joint plans setting out the detail around:

- what we are aiming to achieve
- the resources available
- the actions to deliver the objectives
- responsibilities and timescales
- the measures of success

These plans will be informed through a review of what is already being done, what is working well and what needs to be improved. This should ensure that effort is focused where it is most needed.

## **Benefits of The Rochford Compact**

Commitment to this Compact will enable us to:

- better understand the needs of the local community and how they might best be met through collaborative working
- further develop joint plans and implement joint solutions to address these needs
- maximise our collective effort through working together and pooling knowledge, expertise and other resources
- improve understanding and build on the relationships across the whole of the statutory, voluntary and community sectors covering the district

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## Funding Code

To improve communication, understanding, transparency and trust between partners covering all aspects of funding relationships :

The statutory sector (Rochford District Council, Castle Point & Rochford Primary Care Trust and Essex County Council) will :

- adopt processes that are non-discriminatory to small voluntary and community groups
- recognise the importance of funding core costs and repeat funding
- recognise the benefits of offering multi-year, roll-forward funding, where possible, to allow for long-term planning
- adopt an open, transparent and timely funding process
- adopt the practice of written agreements which set out the objectives being funded in a SMART<sup>1</sup> way, the payment arrangements and the monitoring of conditions

The voluntary and community sector will :

- make appropriate use of the services provided by local umbrella and infrastructure organisations in respect of
  - funding information
  - completion and submission of applications
  - advising the outcome of funding bids promptly
- meet the requirements for reporting and accounting to funding bodies
- keep usage records and maintain proper financial accounting procedures

<sup>1</sup> **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**esourced, **T**imed

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## **Community Groups' Code**

To promote a better understanding of community groups, how they operate within the wider voluntary sector and the particular problems they may face in order to help create and maintain the conditions and support that will help them succeed :

The statutory sector will :

- ensure that we do not discriminate against any voluntary or community group on the basis of faith, race, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation, and will respect the voluntary nature of their work
- actively support the development of voluntary and community groups, recognising their local knowledge, expertise and perspective
- support the work of infrastructure organisations, to identify unmet need and facilitate the development of services to meet this need
- ensure that it realises the principles of accountability and transparency in all areas of activity, whilst respecting necessary confidentiality

The voluntary and community sector will :

- make and maintain contact with as many voluntary and community sector organisations as feasible, to ensure that services provided cover as wide a range of activities as realistically possible
- encourage involvement in community sector activities which are best suited to their needs and abilities
- ensure that community groups are inclusive and do not discriminate on the basis of faith, race, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation

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## Volunteering Code

To enable more people to become involved in the various forms of voluntary activity that are a vital part of active citizenship and offer them the necessary support :

The statutory sector will :

- recognise the four principles of volunteering :
  - ✓ **Choice** – volunteering is a choice, not a forced activity
  - ✓ **Reciprocal benefit** – volunteers should benefit from volunteering e.g. new skills, sense of achievement
  - ✓ **Diversity** – volunteering should be open, accessible and relevant to all
  - ✓ **Recognition** – the value of volunteering must be recognised

The voluntary and community sector will :

- actively promote volunteers and volunteering through celebratory events
- ensure that volunteers are valued and offered appropriate out-of-pocket expenses
- ensure that volunteers are managed and supported with clear job descriptions and roles
- ensure that volunteers have access to support and training, with special recognition of the rural nature of our district and the difficulties this may pose for volunteers
- ensure that no volunteer is discriminated against on the basis of faith, race, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation
- ensure that ‘Criminal Records Bureau’ checks are made on volunteers, where necessary



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## **Consultation and Policy Code**

To establish effective consultation processes that give the opportunity for all partners to inform policies/strategies and delivery plans :

The statutory sector will :

- ensure inclusiveness with partners and share strategy documents and consultation exercises
- ensure that all our documents use simple, clear language and are provided in formats to meet the needs of residents of Rochford District
- build early consultation into plans for statutory policy and strategy development, ideally allowing a minimum of 6 weeks for written consultation where possible
- recognise the constraints upon, and resource implications for, voluntary and community organisations and use a range of consultation methods in order to be as inclusive as possible

The voluntary and community sector will :

- encourage participation in consultation both as an organisation and by its individual membership
- respond to consultation initiatives in a constructive and inclusive way
- share feedback on the results of consultation
- respect confidentiality of information provided and supplied

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## **Black and Minority Ethnic Groups' Code**

To ensure that groups and individuals from black and minority ethnic voluntary and community organisations are included in all activity associated with best practice in partnership working between the sectors :

The statutory sector will :

- share policy documents and best practice, and ensure that BME groups are properly represented
- include in this category other groups that may experience marginalisation, disadvantage, exclusion or discrimination
- work to promote and monitor policies and services that eradicate discriminatory practice, e.g. equal opportunities policies

The voluntary and community sector will :

- play an active part in working with existing BME groups and encouraging new ones
- work with statutory and other voluntary and community organisations to eradicate discriminatory practices and promote a fully inclusive culture

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## **Procurement Code**

To build effective and mutually rewarding procurement relationships, for example, community transport service :

The statutory sector will :

- recognise the voluntary and community sector as partners in :
  - identifying need
  - planning of required service outcomes
  - development of effective procurement strategies
  - procurement of services
  - delivery of services
- keep the voluntary and community sector informed of procurement options and opportunities
- work to reduce barriers to entry

The voluntary and community sector will :

- contribute specialist knowledge and experience and draw on its unique access to the wider community as a partner in :
  - identifying need
  - planning of required service outcomes
  - development of effective procurement strategies
  - procurement of services
  - delivery of services
- identify areas of potential mutual benefit
- provide constructive feedback on progress in reducing barriers to entry

