



Dacorum Compact

An agreement built on shared values, understanding and mutual respect to develop partnership working in the Statutory and Third Sectors in Dacorum, for the benefit of the local community



DACORUM COMPACT

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Introduction

The Dacorum Compact is a local agreement between Statutory Sector agencies and the Voluntary and Community Sector. It seeks to identify, develop and implement ways in which the sectors can work together for the benefit of everyone in the Borough.

The Dacorum Compact was initially agreed and published in 2002. Since then, Codes of Practice have been added to cover Volunteering and Consultation and others are planned. The Codes are the means by which the Compact comes alive and becomes operational. This revision of the Compact document aims to highlight what works well for us in Dacorum and to inspire partners to develop new ways of achieving joint aims. It will hopefully strike a balance between the formal 2002 version and the practical issues around current partnerships. It's important that the Compact is a live document and not a dust gatherer!

Dacorum has a long history of effective joint working between voluntary and community organisations, Dacorum Borough Council, other statutory agencies and Town and Parish Councils. It is not difficult to find good examples of Compact ways of working. (See Annex A). Pre Compact, these partnerships developed informally and relied on the networking skills of individuals from both sectors. The 2002 Dacorum Compact had around 60 signatories from across local public, voluntary and community sectors. It clarified their relationships, and provided a framework to deal with change and potential conflict.

There have been many new local and national initiatives since 2002 and new terminology has been added to the lists of both sectors:-

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's), Local Area Agreements (LAA's), ChangeUp, Sustainable Community Strategies, the Third Sector, Full Cost Recovery and Infrastructure Consortia ... to mention just a few!
But don't panic - see the jargon buster in Annex B.

As Voluntary and Community Sector is such a cumbersome phrase, the widely accepted term "Third Sector" will be used in this document.

Aims of the Dacorum Compact

The Dacorum Compact aims to promote partnerships between the Statutory Sector and the Third Sector for the benefit of everyone in Dacorum. It provides a framework for collaborative working and as a result, more effective and co-ordinated services for the local community.

Shared Vision

The local compact is an expression of the commitment by both sectors to work in partnership for the improvement of society, and to nurture and support voluntary and community activity.

Voluntary and community groups bring distinctive value to society and fulfil a role that is separate from both the public and private sectors. They develop active citizenship and enable people to contribute to public life and the development of their communities.

Voluntary and community organisations are sensitive to local need and are generally quick to respond. They often involve users in the design and delivery of services and act as advocates for those who have no voice. They help to alleviate poverty, improve the quality of life and involve people who are socially excluded.

The local compact seeks to improve the understanding and response of the partners to the needs of the community they serve, and to focus the resources they secure to meet those needs.

Challenges

- To publicise the Compact and its relevance to the strategies and operations of both Statutory and Third Sector agencies to increase “buy in”
- To ensure policy makers are fully conversant with the undertakings of the Compact
- To ensure all partners have the capacity and resources to be involved with Compact development
- To set up a meaningful review process for Compact performance monitoring
- To establish ways of working through difficult situations e.g. funding cuts

Shared Principles

The shared principles of the Dacorum Compact are key to the strategies of Statutory and Third Sector agencies:-

- A healthy voluntary and community sector, with high levels of voluntary activity and community involvement, is essential for a democratic society
- Both Sectors acknowledge the importance of promoting equality of opportunity for all people regardless of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion and or belief.
- In the development and delivery of public policy and services, statutory agencies and the Third Sector have distinct but complementary roles.
- Meaningful consultation builds relationships, improves policy development and enhances the design and delivery of services and programmes.
- The independence of a healthy and diverse Third Sector is understood and respected
- Voluntary activity supports thriving communities and needs sustainable resources
- Third Sector organisations are entitled to campaign within the law in order to advance their aims.
- Dacorum Borough Council and other statutory agencies play a significant role as a funder of core Third Sector organisations. Funding is an important part of the relationship.
- The work of agencies in both sectors is influenced, and sometimes controlled, by sub-regional, regional and national agendas, priorities, initiatives and standards
- Statutory and Third Sectors have different forms of accountability and are answerable to a different range of stakeholders, but common to both is the need for integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Working in partnership results in better services and outcomes for the local community. It requires open and honest relationships

Undertakings by the Statutory Sector

Independence

Statutory agencies recognise and support the independence of Third Sector organisations, including the right within the law, to campaign, to comment on the statutory authorities' policies, and to challenge those policies, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist, and to determine and manage its own affairs.

Funding and accountability

In consultation with the voluntary and community sector, develop criteria and procedures relating to funding, which achieves the following:

- the allocation of resources against clear and consistent criteria, including value for money and the statutory agencies aims;
- funding policies which take account of the objectives of voluntary and community organisations and their need to operate efficiently and effectively;
- common, transparent arrangements for agreeing and evaluating objectives, performance indicators and their associated targets, facilitating prompt payment, reviewing financial support, consulting upon changes to the funding position, and informing voluntary and community organisations about future funding as early as possible, normally before the end of the current grant period; and where it is necessary to reduce funding to give notice in line with the guidelines agreed by the Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Chair and Chief Officer's Group (CHACE);
- recognition of the value of long-term, multi-year funding, where appropriate, to assist longer term planning and stability;
- where appropriate, providing other forms of support including premises and other gifts in kind.
- statutory funders will work towards aligning funding systems across and within their agencies.
- the principle of full cost recovery will be accepted whilst acknowledging the practical difficulties of achieving this.

Policy development and consultation

The Compact is key in the planning processes of the Dacorum Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership) and the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy (Community Plan) and the Herts Local Area Agreement. Compact Partners are involved in all these processes.

Dacorum Borough Council and other statutory agencies will undertake the following commitments in relation to policy development and consultation with the voluntary and community sector. It will:

- appraise all new policies and procedures to see what impact they are likely to have on the Third Sector;
- consult the Sector on issues that are likely to affect it; and set reasonable timescales for a response, usually allowing a period of eight weeks for consultation with the wider voluntary and community sector so that it can consult its users as part of the process;
- take account of the specific needs and interests of women, minority groups and socially excluded people through representative groups;
- respect the confidentiality of information provided by voluntary and community organisations where requested;
- develop codes of practice in line with national guidelines.

Improved local government

The Borough Council will undertake to improve its practices and procedures in relation to the Third Sector by:

- promoting effective partnership working where cross-directorate and inter-agency issues are concerned;
- ensuring whenever possible that decisions are made public;
- recognising the important role and contribution of the many smaller voluntary and community groups operating within the Borough;
- reviewing the operation of the local compact annually together with the voluntary and community sector through the CHACE group.

Undertakings by the Voluntary and Community Sector

The voluntary and community sector recognises the unique role and duties of statutory agencies, including their duty to obtain best value for all public funds and to comment on and assess work carried out by the voluntary sector which is funded by grants.

Funding and accountability

- To maintain high standards of governance and conduct, and meet reporting and accountability obligations to funders and users. Where applicable, to observe the accounting framework of charities.
- To respect and be accountable to the law and in the case of charities, observe the appropriate guidance from the Charity Commission, including that on political activities and campaigning.
- To develop quality standards where appropriate to the organisation.

Policy development and consultation

- To ensure that service users, volunteers, members, supporters and staff are informed and consulted where appropriate and possible, about the organisation's activities and policy positions.
- To respect the confidentiality of statutory agencies information, when given access to it on that basis.

Good practice

- To promote effective working relationships with statutory agencies.
- To involve users wherever possible, and carers where appropriate, in the development and management of activities and services.
- To endeavour to put in place policies for promoting best practice and equality of opportunity in activities, employment, involvement of volunteers and service provision and to develop codes of good practice jointly with the statutory agencies in line with national guidelines.

Annex A - How the Dacorum Compact is working for us!

These are just a few examples which demonstrate a Compact way of working in Dacorum from 2002 – 2007.

- 100% upfront payment of funding at the beginning of each financial year to agencies in receipt of DBC core funding
- Transfer of projects from statutory to voluntary agencies to ensure their sustainability e.g. Shopmobility, Connect Dacorum
- Introduction of appropriate levels of financial audit for DBC core funded organisations - savings in accountants fees for smaller organisations
- Appointment of Dacorum Borough Council Liaison Officers for core funded organisations
- Feasibility studies on forming a Management Services Organisation
- Release of premises for voluntary sector use e.g. The Roundhouse for the Volunteer Centre
- Setting up the CHACE group – a partnership of Chairs and Chief Officers of core funded organisations, Dacorum Borough Council Officers and Councillors
- Publication of the Dacorum Volunteering Code of Practice
- Publication of the Dacorum Consultation Code of Practice
- 3 year Partnership Agreements
- Work shadowing during Compact Week 2006
- 20% discretionary business rate relief
- Compact partners involvement in Local Strategic Partnership and associated Forums
- DBC instigated an Employer Supported Volunteering scheme which will enable staff to get first hand knowledge and experience of the Third Sector
- Adoption of ***Valuing Volunteers in Hertfordshire*** logo by local agencies supporting the Herts Local Area Agreement

Annex B – Jargon buster

- **Codes of Practice:** Guidelines added to the Compact to cover Volunteering, Consultation, Funding and Procurement, Ethnic Minority Voluntary and Community organisations and Community groups
- **Community:** Any group or organisation of people working together who identify with a common concern, interest, issue or place
- **Community Sector:** A blanket term to describe small community groups which are typically managed by volunteers, do not employ staff and do not have regular income or funding
- **Consultation:** The process by which the opinion of others is sought within defined parameters, in an organised and equitable way about future decisions. It may involve testing the impact of decisions that have been made
- **Dacorum Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership - LSP)** - a single non-statutory, multi-agency body, which matches local authority boundaries, and aims to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. LSP's tackle deep seated, multi-faceted problems, requiring a range of responses from different bodies. Local partners working through a LSP are expected to take many of the major decisions about local priorities
- **Full Cost Recovery** - the total costs of delivering a service, including a share of the organisation's overheads.
- **Herts Infrastructure Consortium** – consists of nine Councils for Voluntary Services, ten Volunteer Centres and other infrastructure organisations and statutory partners. It's main objective is to encourage sustainable infrastructure within the Third Sector in Herts and to work in partnership ensuring that the largest possible spread of needs within the community are met without duplication
- **Hertfordshire Forward:** This Countywide LSP was originally called Herts Together. It produced a community strategy for the county (2004-10) aimed at improving the well-being of Hertfordshire's residents. This strategy is being adapted to fit the 4 themes of Hertfordshire's **Local Area Agreement (LAA)** for which Hertfordshire Forward is the lead body

- **Local Area Agreement (LAA)** - a single framework through which government departments can allocate additional funding to local authorities and their partners. The aim is to reduce and simplify funding streams and give more scope for local authorities to concentrate on local priorities. The funding focuses on the themes of children and young people, safer and stronger communities, and healthier communities older people
- **Partnership:** A number of organisations and individuals who agree to work together for a common aim or set of compatible objectives. Members of a partnership share resources and responsibilities and agree to work together in a co-operative and mutually supportive fashion to achieve partnership aims
- **Third Sector:** Another name for the non-profit, or voluntary/community sector (government and private sector being the first two sectors)
- **Voluntary Sector:** A blanket term to describe neighbourhood based groups, communities of interest, self help groups, campaigning organisations, voluntary organisations that employ staff, local charities and local branches of national charities
- **Statutory Sector:** Is the name given to organisations created through Acts of Parliament whose functions are determined by the law. Local authorities, including parish and town councils, are democratically elected and are accountable to the voters and central government. They have legal responsibilities for the social well being, economic development, environment and health of the people it serves. Other Statutory Agencies, e.g. Health Authorities and the Probation, Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Services, are not directly elected and are accountable to the appropriate Secretary of State
- **Representatives:** People who are appointed or elected, to put forward the views of a wider constituency
- **Stakeholders:** Are the service users, key agencies and people, for example volunteers, members, employees, trustees, funders, supporters who have an interest in, or stake in, an organisation's authority or service

Annex C - Further Information:-

The Compact

www.thecompact.org.uk

NCVO Guide to Local Compacts

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compactadvocacy/index.asp?id=1952

Cabinet Office – Office of the Third Sector

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/compact/

Dacorum Partnership (LSP)

www.dacorumpartnershipnews.org.uk

Hertfordshire Forward

www.hertslink.org/hertfordshireforward

Local contacts:-

Dacorum Borough Council
David Gill, Senior Manager, Community Engagement
01442 228511

Community Action Dacorum
Mark Mitchell, Executive Manager
Tel: 01442 253935

Hertfordshire Constabulary
Chief Inspector Paul Newell
Tel 01442 271081

East and North and West Hertfordshire Primary Care Trusts
Peter Wright, Public Health Partnership Manager
01923 281652

Hertfordshire County Council
Andrew Burt, Funding & Partnerships Manager
Tel: 01992 555213

Volunteer Centre Dacorum
Heather Allen, Manager
Tel: 01442 247209



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