

COMPACT

for HULL

Consultation and Policy Appraisal: a Code of Good Practice



Compact on Relations between the
Public Sector and the Voluntary and
Community Sector in Hull

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1. Introduction

The Compact for Hull

1.1 The compact for Hull is an agreement intended to provide a framework for developing effective relationships between the public and voluntary and community sectors in the city of Hull. Its objective is to create a level playing field and ensure that services are delivered in the best way possible and to the needs of local people.

1.2 As part of that process, the Compact sets out the key principles and undertakings which will underpin the relationship between the public and voluntary and community sectors in the city of Hull.

Status of the Compact for Hull

1.3 The Compact has been drawn up in partnership, following extensive consultation between the public and voluntary and community sectors in Hull. The Compact is deliberately not exhaustive, but recognises the diversity of the voluntary and community sector and its activities. It is both a general framework and an enabling mechanism that enhances the relationship between the public and voluntary and community sectors.

1.4 The Compact is an agreement about relations between the public and voluntary and community sectors. It is an agreed statement of intent, its authority is derived from its endorsement by all parties during the process through which it was drawn up, and with their ongoing involvement in its review and development.

1.5 The Compact has been supported by five codes of practice, covering:

- Funding and procurement;
- Consultation and Policy Appraisal;
- Volunteering;
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) voluntary and community organisations; and
- Community groups.

1.6 All of these codes, within the principle of the Compact, have a commitment to equality and diversity. The Compact is committed to promoting equality and diversity, and believes that all people should be treated fairly and not be discriminated against. If you would like any advice or further information relating to equality or diversity issues please contact:

Hull City Council's Equalities Team

Telephone 01482 300300 or e-mail equalities@hullcc.gov.uk

or

Humber all Nations Alliance (HANA)

Telephone 01482 491177 or e-mail admin@hanaonline.org.uk

2. What is the Consultation and Policy Appraisal Code of Good Practice?

2.1 **The aim** of this Code of good practice is to make a positive impact on the way in which public agencies consult on and appraise their policies in respect of the community and voluntary sector.

2.2 Implementing improved practice will ensure that public agencies are informed by a wide range of experience and interest and can take into account the potential impact of their proposals on different sectors of society.

2.3 For voluntary and community organisations, consultation presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, expertise and experience to bear on local policies, on behalf of the people and causes they work for.

2.4 The voluntary and community sector should offer their advice and views based on objective experience and appropriate consultation with the people they work with or represent.

2.5 Effective consultation is important because it:

- enables more people to contribute to the policy making process;
- leads to more realistic and robust policy that better reflects people's needs and wishes;
- helps to plan, prioritise and deliver better services;
- creates a working partnership and mutual understanding with those consulted; and
- identifies problems quickly, enabling matters to be put right before they escalate.

3. Undertakings by the public sector

3.1 Public agencies will seek to ensure that:

- new policies and procedures are appraised at an early stage for their likely impact on the voluntary and community sector and this impact is communicated through the consultation process;
- consultation is built into regular planning cycles and that where issues are likely to affect the voluntary and community sector, early consultation will take place in any policy planning process;

- consultation is fit for purpose, using appropriate methods for different objectives and stages, different audiences and different issues;
- they involve the voluntary and community sector, where appropriate, in shaping the overall criteria for consultations;
- they maximise the opportunities for people to respond to consultations by ensuring that the specific needs of minority, disadvantaged and socially excluded groups are taken into account, and that any consultation materials are clear, concise and accessible for all communities of interest;
- they are honest and clear about the purpose of consultation, about what can and cannot be influenced, the process to be followed, how the results will be used, and what feedback will be given;
- they work towards implementing a normal consultation period of twelve weeks for formal written consultations. Where twelve weeks is not possible, a minimum of eight weeks consultation is required, (as outlined in the National Compact), and an explanation is needed from the public agency as to the reason why 12 weeks was not possible;
- they implement recommended good practice in respect of consultation outlined in the Community Engagement Toolkit; and
- feedback and analysis of the outcomes of consultation will always be provided.

4. Undertakings by the Voluntary and Community Sector

4.1 Voluntary and Community Sector organisations will seek to ensure that:

- they are clear about the groups or causes they represent, and how they represent them, and that they state this clearly;
- they consult and feedback the results of any consultation wherever possible to their volunteers, members, supporters or users, and where this is not possible they clearly indicate in any consultation response

that it is based on their knowledge and experience of working with the groups concerned;

- they maximise the opportunities for people to respond to consultations by ensuring that minority, disadvantaged and socially excluded groups are proactively engaged;
- any information they present to public agencies is as accurate as possible, and any research is conducted in an objective and unbiased manner;
- consultation includes all groups and organisations that need to be consulted, and that public agencies are informed where there are gaps or omissions;
- they respect the confidentiality of any information received;
- they implement good practice in the way they consult with and represent their volunteers, members, supporters and users;
- agreed deadlines for consultation responses are met; and
- they use the good practice principles set out in this Code and consult their public agency partners when they are reviewing any of their own plans, policies or procedures, which may significantly affect their relations and dealings with those partners.

For further copies of this document please contact:

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The Guildhall

Hull

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There is a national version of the Compact (including five national codes of practice) that outlines the agreement between the Government and the voluntary and community sector to improve their relationship for the benefit of each other and the communities they serve. To view the national Compact please visit the Compact website www.thecompact.org.uk