



Thurrock Joint Compact 2012

A VISION FOR THURROCK

“Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish”

In order to achieve this vision, partner organisations have agreed the following priorities which Thurrock Council has adopted to inform its corporate plan:

- Create a great place for learning and opportunity
- Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity
- Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities
- Improve health and well-being
- Protect and promote our clean and green environments

“We share a commitment to improving outcomes for all residents of Thurrock in a time of severe financial constraint. As a group of senior personnel from across the public and third sectors we recognise that improving cross sector partnership working is a crucial element of this. We will therefore develop an action plan to improve cross sector partnership”.

The Joint Compact will achieve a meaningful framework to support and inform joint working across sectors for the benefit of residents and communities in Thurrock. The five key principles reflect commitments in the National Compact. Furthermore, they aim to provide guidance around the key issue which arise through partnership working where jointly agreed principles can help build positive relationships and trust between all sectors involved in improving their communities.

An effective partnership between Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors (VCFS), Thurrock Council and Partners will help achieve the following outcomes:

1. A strong, diverse and independent voluntary, community and faith sector in Thurrock
2. Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services in Thurrock
3. Responsive and high-quality programmes and services for the residents of Thurrock
4. Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services
5. An equal and fair society

1 A strong, diverse and independent Third Sector

We recognise the importance of a strong, diverse third sector to creating communities that work together when facing common issues and have access to the support and tools needed to solve problems in alliance with the public sector.

Commitments for Thurrock Council and Partners

- 1.1 Respect and uphold the independence of the third sector to deliver their mission, including their right to campaign, regardless of any relationship, financial or otherwise, which may exist.
- 1.2 Ensure the third sector are supported and resourced in a reasonable and fair manner and reduce bureaucracy to a minimum where they are helping to meet Thurrock priorities.
- 1.3 Support the development of VCFS infrastructure. Infrastructure bodies enable VCFS organisations to advocate for and support local voluntary and community sector organisations, through services such as capacity building, representation and other forms of support and to assist VCFS organisation with their capacity and capability to deliver positive outcomes.
- 1.4 Identify where there are costs to third sector organisations as a result of partnership work with the public sector and offer support on a clear and consistent basis. This can be especially important for all organisations that are helping to organise or run consultations.
- 1.5 Avoid compromising or undermining the independence of third sector organisations (whatever financial or other relationship may exist between them)
- 1.6 Ensure greater transparency by making data and information more accessible, helping the third sector to challenge existing provision of services, access new markets and hold public bodies to account.
- 1.7 Consider a range of ways to support third sector organisation, such as the sharing of resources or use of public owned premises.

Commitments for the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

- 1.8 When campaigning or advocating, ensure that robust evidence is provided, including information about the source and range of people and communities represented.

- 1.9 Ensure independence is upheld, focusing on the cause represented, regardless of any relationship they have with statutory bodies, financial or otherwise.
- 1.10 Work in constructive partnership with the public sector to meet the needs of local communities.
- 1.11 Ensure accuracy when calculating costs, avoiding duplicate claims from different sources.
- 1.12 Develop and adopt policies that reflect Best Practice within an organisations field of work and achieve a standard acceptable to all.

2 Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services in Thurrock

VCFS organisations, including those that receive no public funding are in a good position to understand what people want and how their needs can be met. By working together and co-designing programmes, the public sector and the VCFS can deliver policies and programmes that are built around communities and individuals, meeting their needs and reflecting their choices.

Commitments for Thurrock Council and Partners

- 2.1 Ensure that social, environmental well-being and economic value forms a standard part of designing, developing and delivering policies, programmes and services.
- 2.2 Consider the social impact that may result from policy and programme development, and in particular consider how these would impact local efforts to inspire, encourage and to empower social action in communities.
- 2.3 Work with VCFS organisations from the earliest possible stage to design policies, programmes and services. Ensure new programmes and services uphold jointly agreed outcomes, providing scope for innovation wherever possible. Ensure those likely to have a view are involved from the start and remove barriers that may prevent organisations contributing.
- 2.4 Give early notice of forthcoming consultations, where possible, allowing enough time for VCFS organisations to involve their; service users, clients, beneficiaries, members, volunteers and trustees in preparing responses. Where it is appropriate, and enables meaningful engagement, conduct 12-

week formal written consultations. For shorter time-frames or a more informal approach, provide a clear explanation and rationale. Adopt the Principles of Community Engagement reflected in the Thurrock Community Engagement Strategy and Tool-kit.

- 2.5 Provide feedback as standard practice unless other arrangements are made (for example through an overall Council or Partners response) to explain how respondents have influenced the design and development of policies, programmes and public services, including where respondents' views have not been acted upon.
- 2.6 Assess the implications for the VCFS of new policies, legislation and guidance, aiming to reduce the bureaucratic burden, particularly on smaller organisations.

Commitment for the VCFS

- 2.7 Respect the right of the elected and appointed public sector bodies to take decisions that may be unpopular with some voluntary and community groups.
- 2.8 Promote and respond to Council and Partners consultations where appropriate.
- 2.9 Seek the views of services users, clients, beneficiaries, members, volunteers and trustees when making representation to Thurrock Council and Partners. Be clear on who is being represented, in what capacity, and on what basis that representation is being made.
- 2.10 Demonstrate the social, environmental well-being or economic value of the programmes and services provided, where appropriate.
- 2.11 When putting forward ideas, focus on evidence-based solutions, with clear proposals for positive outcomes.

3 Responsive and high-quality programmes and services for the residents of Thurrock

The Council wants to see more organisations able to thrive and benefit from a wider range of opportunities with regard to income maximisation. Our intention is to ensure that funding follows agreed outcomes that reflect the genuine needs of residents, identified and agreed through open engagement. We recognise however, that locally based voluntary organisations often experience many barriers when trying to access mainstream funds, and we intend to support a transparent approach to funding decisions and improved commissioning and procurement to address these barriers.

Commitments for Thurrock Council and Partners in Thurrock

- 3.1 Ensure that VCFS organisations have access to information to support their development and a greater role and more opportunities to deliver public services. Encourage the opening up of new markets in accordance with wider public service reform measures and reforming the commissioning environment in existing markets where possible.
- 3.2 Consider a wide range of ways to fund or resource VCFS, including grants, contracts, loan finance, use of premises and so on. Work to remove barriers and bureaucracy that may prevent VCFS organisations accessing Statutory Sector funding, thereby enabling smaller organisations to become involved in delivering services where they are best placed to achieve the desired outcomes.
- 3.3 Ensure transparency by setting out clear procedures for accessing different funding sources and provide a clear rationale for all funding decisions.
- 3.4 Commit to multi-year funding where appropriate and where it adds value for money. The funding term should reflect the time it will take to deliver the outcome. If multi-year funding is not considered to be the best way of delivering the objective, explain the reasons for the decision.
- 3.5 Ensure well managed and transparent application and tendering processes with clear eligibility criteria which are proportionate to the desired objectives and outcomes of programmes.
- 3.6 Agree with VCFS organisations how outcomes, including the social, environmental or economic value, will be monitored before a contract or funding agreement is made. Ensure that monitoring and reporting is relevant and proportionate to the nature and size of the opportunity. Be clear about what information is being asked for, and why and how it will be used.

- 3.7 Ensure equal treatment across sectors, including reporting and monitoring arrangements, when tendering for contracts.
- 3.8 Recognise when VCFS organisations apply for a grant they can include appropriate and relevant overheads, including costs associated with training and volunteer involvement.
- 3.9 Discuss and allocate risks to the organisation(s) best equipped to manage them. When prime contractors are used, ensure they adhere to the principles of the Compact in allocating risk. Ensure delivery terms and risks are proportionate to the nature and value of the opportunity.
- 3.10 Ensure that the widest possible range of organisations can be involved in the provision of services through appropriate funding and financing models, for example outcome based payments and payment in advance of expenditure.
- 3.11 Encourage feedback from a range of sources on the effectiveness of the partnership between Thurrock Council and VCFS organisations and how successful it has been in delivering their objectives. Consider placing this feedback in the public domain.

Commitments for the VCFS

- 3.12 Ensure eligibility for funding before applying and be explicit about how outcomes will be achieved.
- 3.13 Ensure robust governance arrangements so that organisations can best manage any risk associated with service delivery and financing models, including giving funders early notice of significant changes in circumstances.
- 3.14 Be open and transparent about reporting, recognising that monitoring, whether internal or external, is an aspect of good management practice.
- 3.15 Demonstrate the social, environmental or economic value of the programmes and services provided, where appropriate.
- 3.16 Help facilitate feedback from users and communities to Thurrock Council and its partners to help improve delivery of programmes and services.
- 3.17 Recognise that Thurrock Council and its partners can legitimately expect VCFS organisation to give public recognition of its funding.

4 Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services

At a time of considerable change, The Compact and related protocols will inform and guide our behaviours and shared values when changes need to be considered.

Commitment for Thurrock Council and Partners

- 4.1 If a programme or service is encountering problems, agree with the VCFS organisation a timetable of actions to improve performance before making a decision to end a financial relationship.
- 4.2 Assess the impact on beneficiaries, service users and volunteers before deciding to reduce or end funding. Assess the need to re-allocate funds to another organisation serving the same group.
- 4.3 Where there are restrictions on future resources, discuss the potential implications as early as possible with VCFS organisations, give organisations the opportunity to respond, and consider the response fully, respecting sector expertise, before making a final decision.
- 4.4 Give a minimum of three months notice in writing when changing or ending a funding relationship or other support. If this standard can not be met due to exceptional circumstances, a clear rationale for why an alternative decision has been taken must be provided.

Commitments for the VCFS

- 4.5 To take into consideration public sector budgetary constraints when VCFS sector is looking to meet their future needs and choices.
- 4.6 Contingency planning for the end of a contract or grant helps minimise the impact on beneficiaries.
- 4.7 Plan for the end of funding to manage any potential impact on beneficiaries and the organisation.
- 4.8 Contribute positively to reviews of programmes or services to inform future practice.
- 4.9 Advise Thurrock Council and Partners of any social, environmental or economic impact of funding changes and on ways to minimise their effects on people in vulnerable situations.

5 An equal and fair society

We want to support communities that demonstrate care for each other and are public spirited in their day to day contact with each other. Stronger joint working will strengthen our ability to tackle social exclusion, promote social inclusion and create a society in which everyone can participate. This will strengthen Thurrock's approach to a proactive Single Equality Duty.

Commitment for Thurrock Council and Partners

- 5.1 Work with VCFS organisations that represent, support or provide services to people with characteristics specifically protected by legislation and other under-represented and disadvantaged groups. Understand the specific needs of these groups by actively seeking the views of service users and clients. Take these views into account, including assessing impact when designing and implementing policies, programmes and services.
- 5.2 Acknowledge that organisations representing specific disadvantaged or under-represented group(s) can help promote social and community cohesion and should have equal access to statutory funding.
- 5.3 Take practical action to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and to ensure a voice for under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

Commitments for the VCFS

- 5.4 If receiving funding from statutory partners, show how the value of the work can help that body deliver its public sector duties on promoting equality and tackling discrimination.
- 5.5 Take practical action, such as through funding bids, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build stronger communities.