

THE HEREFORDSHIRE COMPACT

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CABINET

13 DECEMBER 2007

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To approve the Herefordshire Compact.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendations

- THAT (a) the Herefordshire Compact be adopted; and**
- (b) codes of good practice be developed to support the implementation of the Herefordshire Compact.**

Reasons

In Herefordshire, there is an existing Health and Social Care Compact, which has been developed by relevant partners: the Council, the Primary Care Trust and the Alliance representing the Voluntary Sector. It is however, national government policy to have an agreed and published Local Compact covering all public sector services engagement with the voluntary and community sector at a local level. It is proposed that the Herefordshire Compact (Appendix 1) is endorsed by Herefordshire Partnership's Chief Executives Group and it will supersede the existing Health and Social Care Compact.

Considerations

1. The Compact was developed at a national level and is underpinned by a set of principles, as the basis for a partnership between government and the voluntary and community sector. Local Compacts aim to do this locally between the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), local authorities and other local public bodies.
2. A Local Compact provides a framework to promote and support partnership working between the Voluntary and Community Sector and public bodies. It is a statement of principles and practice which serves as a foundation for effective and productive relationships between partners. It is a means of strengthening and sustaining the VCS and supporting the aims and objectives of the statutory sector. The Local Compact is therefore of mutual benefit.

3. In Herefordshire, there is an existing Health and Social Care Compact, which has been developed by relevant partners, including the Council, the Primary Care Trust and the Alliance representing the Voluntary Sector. This has been used as the basis for consultation on a Local Compact which will cover the wider Herefordshire Partnership, including the Voluntary and Community Sector. The resulting document will form a countywide Local Compact to supersede the existing Health and Social Care Compact, to which all members of the Herefordshire Partnership will be able to sign up to.
4. The development of the Herefordshire Compact is being driven forward by the Local Compact Working Group (LCWG) which is made up of senior representatives nominated by the organisations represented on the Herefordshire Partnership Chief Executives Group.
5. A three-month consultation period on the draft Compact finished in mid August. Various tools were used as part of the consultation process, including the eConsult page on Herefordshire Council's website, news articles in various publications across the public and VCS sectors and a workshop event held on 6th July. In total, 18 written responses were received (13 from VCS organisations and 3 from Parish / Town Councils) as well as 50 people attending the event on 6th July. The responses were taken in consideration by the LCWG, in redrafting the Herefordshire Compact (Appendix 1).
6. Members of the Working Group are responsible for securing approval from their respective organisations. Amendments to the consultation draft have also been agreed with the Compact Code Implementation Group (CCIG), which currently oversees the Health and Social Care Compact. The redrafted Herefordshire Compact has been submitted to Herefordshire Partnership Chief Executives Group for approval.
7. A Local Compact is supported by Codes of Good Practice which help to turn the principles within the Compact into action. Nationally there are 5 codes of good practice which cover: Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Sector organisations; Community Groups; Consultation and Policy Appraisal, Funding and Procurement and Volunteering. The Local Compact Working Group are currently considering which codes to prioritise, and will take into account national policy development.
8. A Funding and Procurement Code for Health and Social Care is already in place and the implementation of this will continue under the existing arrangements. The best practice from this Code will form the basis of consultation for the wider Funding and Procurement Code for the Herefordshire Partnership, to ensure consistency and avoid duplication.

Financial Implications

Whilst this report has no direct financial implications, it should be noted that Government policy is to encourage through local compacts that three year funding settlements for local authorities, be passed on to the Voluntary and Community Sector organisations which they fund. Closer working of this nature also fits with the Governments agenda for the Comprehensive Area Assessment and closer collaboration should lead to improved value for money.

Risk Management

The Council and the wider Herefordshire Partnership have good working relationships with Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in Herefordshire. However as it is national government policy to have an agreed and published Local Compact it detracts from the Council's reputation not to have one.

The new Comprehensive Area Assessment will measure councils' compliance to the national Compact code of practice for funding for the VCS. Whilst some service areas within Herefordshire Council have adopted a number of the principles of the national code, the development and implementation of a local code will be a priority once the Local Compact has been adopted.

Alternative Options

There are no Alternative Options.

Consultees

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – A Local Compact for Herefordshire.

Background Papers

Strong and prosperous communities - The Local Government White Paper – October 2006;

Developing and implementing the new comprehensive area assessment and associated inspection arrangements – Department for Communities and Local Government April 2007.

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