

THE DORSET COMPACT**REPORT BY THE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To bring the Dorset Compact to the attention of Members and to ask them to consider whether Christchurch Borough Council should become a signatory to it.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 “Compact” is a national concept delivered at the local level. It is an agreement between all independent voluntary and community groups and the local or county council and other public bodies. 118 local authority areas are covered by a Local Compact presently and it is the Government’s aim that all areas will be covered by the end of 2004.
- 2.2 The purpose of a local Compact is to improve working relationships by developing partnership between local government, the voluntary and community sector and other partners. A local Compact offers the means of supporting the development of the voluntary and community sector’s capacity so that independent, accountable voluntary and community organisations can do more to meet both their own means and those of their statutory partners, thereby enhancing their contribution to the community.
- 2.3 The Dorset Compact Group is a county-wide group of voluntary and community and public sector organisations chaired by VOLNET, the voluntary sector support network managed by Dorset Community Action, and co-ordinated by Dorset County Council. Community Development staff from Christchurch Borough Council have attended occasional meetings of the Compact to help to formulate the approach in Dorset.
- 2.4 The Government’s recent Treasury cross-cutting review of the “Role of the Voluntary Sector in Public Service Delivery” recommended improvements to relationships at both national and local level including an increase in the number of local Compacts.

3.0 THE DORSET COMPACT

- 3.1 Community and Public Sector organisations in Dorset share a fundamental aim to serve and represent the interests of local people in communities. The Dorset Compact aims to:
- Build on the existing relationships and good practice between the public sector and the voluntary and community sectors
 - Strive to maintain and improve the quality of life for individuals and communities in Dorset
 - Base relationships on trust, openness, fairness and consistency

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- 3.2 The growing involvement of volunteers in the Community Partnership which is currently producing the Christchurch Community Plan, suggests that, as a Borough we have a responsibility to adopt similar guidelines for our support and treatment of our community.
- 3.3 Most of the other districts in Dorset are already Members of the Dorset Compact, several Christchurch community organisations are already signatories and our own Community Partnership Steering Board recently agreed to sign up to the Compact.
- 3.4 The recent CPA Peer review, whilst commending our approach to Community Planning, recommended that the authority should consider signing up to the local Compact.
- 3.5 The Shared Principles of the Partnership Agreement, Joint Commitments to Action and the first good practice guide (a code of consultation) produced by the Dorset Compact are attached at Appendix 1.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Plan

- 4.1 The role of the community is explicit in the emerging themes of the new Corporate Plan

Legal

- 4.2 There are no legal implications as a result of this report. The Compact is said not to be legally binding.

Environmental

- 4.3 Opportunities for volunteering are recognised as being fundamental to a sustainable and healthy community but the value of unpaid work should be recognised. By becoming a signatory to the Dorset Compact, Christchurch Borough Council will demonstrate its commitment to these principles.

Financial

- 4.4 There are no financial implications as a result of this report. It is anticipated that the Code of Good Practice on Funding will look at how voluntary groups and organisations are funded, manage their resources and obtain funding. It will not commit the Council to any financial outlay. Should there be any financial implications for this, or any of the as yet unpublished Codes of Practice, they will be reported separately to future Committees.

Equalities

- 4.5 The Compact supports the promotion of equality of opportunity for all.

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5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 All local authorities are being encouraged to form Local Compacts to demonstrate their commitment to valuing the work of volunteers in the public sector.
- 5.2 A local Compact already exists for Dorset and several of Christchurch's local community organisations including the Christchurch Community Partnership have already become signatories.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 That Christchurch Borough Council adopts the Dorset Compact, implements the principles and codes of conduct where practicable to do so, and continues to contribute to the development of future codes of conduct.

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Background Papers:

None