

networkfareham Board Meeting
9 March 2010
Briefing Note on the implications of the 'Refreshed' Compact

Purpose of Briefing

Nationally Local Strategic Partnerships are seen as key to the successful development and implementation of the Compact.

This note draws attention to recent developments in the Compact and the need for decisions to be made on the future action.

The Compact

“A Compact is an agreement, drawn up by voluntary and community groups and public bodies together, setting out guidelines for how they should behave towards each other in order to deliver mutual benefits. It is a ready-made manual about best practice.

Mutual respect and understanding and fair treatment are the building blocks for real partnership between the voluntary & community and public sectors. Setting out how the two will work together is what the Compact is all about.”

These are the words of the opening paragraph of *One Compact for Hampshire*, which was agreed in 2004, following the expectation that local Compacts would be agreed following the principles of the national Compact published in 1998.

In addition to the Compact document a number of Codes of Good Practice were published both nationally and locally. Authorities and organizations across the County agreed the Hampshire Compact, but local documents were also produced to reflect differing local circumstances.

The Compact in Fareham

In Fareham a Compact Partners' Group was set up to encourage the implementation of the Compact. This is an informal group, which currently has a handful of representatives of voluntary organizations, plus just one representative of a public body – The Local Pensions Service. The group decided to seek stronger links with public bodies.

In November 2009 Fareham Compact Partners' Group arranged a briefing session for Councillors at which it was agreed that one of the speakers from the Partners' Group should attend this meeting of networkfareham.

Mark Bowler, Head of Leisure & Community, then prepared a report for the Council's Chief Executive's Management Team (CXMT) regarding progress with the Fareham Compact, the launch of the new refreshed National Compact and opportunities for improving the awareness of Compact within the Council. As a result the CXMT agreed the following:

1. To amend the committee report template to prompt report authors to consult the Compact Partners' Group about any relevant issues contained within the report.

2. The Leisure & Community Section will continue to support the administration of the Compact Group and monitor progress through the Community Action Fareham quarterly performance monitoring meetings. (Lead Officer = Mark Bowler).

3. The Head of Corporate Services will liaise with the Fareham Compact Group with the aim of raising awareness of the Compact and its core principles within the Council. (Lead Officer = Lindsey Ansell, Head of Corporate Services)

Refreshing the Compact

Since 1998 there have been significant changes to law, policy and practice and many required services are commissioned from voluntary organizations. Consequently, following a period of consultation, the national Compact has been 'refreshed', making it considerably shorter and without separate Codes of Practice.

This raises the question as to whether local Compacts also need to be revised, and at what organisational or geographic level. Such a revision seems essential in Hampshire where some partners to the Compact, especially in the field of health, have been superseded by new bodies covering a wider area.

Paul O'Beirne, as Chairman of the Compact Partners' Group wrote to various bodies regarding their awareness and involvement in the Compact and enquiring whether they had a Compact Champion. A recent helpful response from Mrs Fleming of NHS Hampshire indicated that they do not have a nominated lead officer, but wish the principles of the Compact to be embedded throughout their organisation.

She emphasised that they do not underestimate the importance of the Compact in relation to how they relate to partners across Hampshire or the work of each Local Strategic Partnership. At the same time they need to consider what resources they have available to offer meaningful support to individual LSPs and Compacts. For this reason NHS Hampshire has decided to work most closely with Hampshire County Council and Community Action Hampshire.

She concludes "It would be most helpful, given this approach, if you could let me know how best we could make this work at a more local level. At present we have an agreement with Community Action Hampshire to use their existing communications and engagement channels to ensure District and Borough LSPs and Compacts are invited to ... workshops. Are you able to advise other ways through which we can improve the relationships we have with organisations such as Fareham Community Action and the Fareham Compact?"

I understand that Mel McKeowan, Head of Communications and Engagement at NHS Hampshire has contacted you and made arrangements to meet to explore and better understand the changes that are happening with regard to the Compact in Hampshire and more specifically in Fareham and Gosport."

The letter raises important issues such as:-

How well local groups are involved in decisions on the future of the Compact?

At what local level should Compacts be agreed?

Who should be involved?

How best to involve the Local Strategic Partnership?

How to embed the principles of the Compact into organisations?

Alan Backhouse (Fareham Compact Partners' Group)