

A VOLUNTARY SECTOR
COMPACT FOR BARNET

April 2002

FOREWORD

The voluntary and community sector is central to a democratic, socially inclusive society and this Compact recognises and values the increasingly vital and vibrant role that the sector fulfils. The services provided by the sector, complement local authority provision and are part of a whole package of quality services available to the community.

Genuine partnership working is essential for maximising the value and effectiveness of services. In the development and delivery of public services, the Council and the voluntary and community sector have distinct but complementary roles. The voluntary and community sector, in addition to ensuring a diversity of service provision, play a key role in promoting and building communities, reaching out to under-represented communities and enhancing the capacity of communities in making decisions affecting their lives.

It is timely for the Council, and the voluntary and community sector in Barnet to jointly produce this document which describes the vibrant and evolving relationship and which will provide a framework for moving forward in partnership towards common aims and objectives and creating Opportunity for All.

This Compact provides a clear and consistent framework for clarifying in plain language and developing the relationship and demonstrates that Barnet Council values and respects the contribution of the voluntary and community sector.

The Compact represents our joint commitment to improving working relationships between the local authority and the voluntary and community sector. It is a starting point for developing partnerships on shared values and mutual respect.

We would like to thank those who contributed in the development of this compact.

Councillor Jim Tierney	Albert Wright	Rose Hambury
Cabinet Member for	Chair	Chair
Local Partnerships	Barnet Voluntary	Barnet Volunteer
London Borough of Barnet	Service Council	Bureau

What is the Voluntary and Community Sector?

The Voluntary and community sector includes charities, community organisations, housing organisations, campaigning organisations, religious (faith based) organisations, sports groups, arts groups and environmental groups.

These groups and organisations are independent, defining their own aims and objectives and choosing methods by which they achieve them. They often elect a small group of people known as a management committee who take responsibility for the running of the project. Sometimes the management committee employ staff to assist in this. The groups usually have a constitution, which guides the activities and development of future work.

The sector should not be referred to as the 'voluntary sector' but 'voluntary and community sector' wherever possible. The voluntary sector covers a wide range of organisations, from large charities providing services, to very small organisations with a local focus. A community organisation leads or represents a community, whether a community of place (neighbourhood) or a community of interest-sharing a common purpose, concern, interest, race, disability or belief.

When engaging with the sector, it is important to involve community organisations and not rely on solely involving large organised groups, especially in the process of consultation.

Key Principles for Joint Working

The key principles and values, which will underpin the relationship between the Council and the voluntary and community sector are set out below:

- An independent and diverse voluntary and community sector is fundamental to the well-being of a democratic society.
- Recognition that volunteers make a vital and unique contribution to the well-being of people and communities in Barnet.
- Commitments to equality of opportunity for all, regardless of age, disability, ethnic background and skin colour, faith, gender, health, language, social and economic background or being lesbian or gay.
- Partnership working across the sectors requires understanding, openness, honesty, accountability, collaboration and a recognition of the equal value of their contribution.
- Partnerships must be based on the principle of equality, mutual respect, and recognition of differences, as well as similarity of purpose.
- An approach recognising that the diversity of funding services is one of the best guarantees of continued independence of the voluntary and community sector.
- Meaningful consultation builds relationships, improves policy development, and enhances the design and delivery of services and programmes.
- Voluntary and community organisations are entitled to campaign within the law in order to advance their aims and objectives, to comment on public sector policy, to challenge policy, and to determine and manage their own affairs.

Barnet Council's Commitments to the Voluntary and Community Sector

The Council recognises that voluntary and community organisations have valuable skills and abilities, and it will undertake to:

- Continue to review the Compact where necessary as circumstances change.
- Involve the voluntary and community sector more fully in the identification of needs in the community and in the implementation of strategies, which meet shared policy objectives.
- Ensure clarity of purpose by specifying clearly why funding under service agreements is being made.
- Demonstrate accountability and good value for money by defining the benefits derived from public funds in a way in which both quality and quantity are measurable.
- Stimulate the development of more flexible and innovative services, which are responsive to the changing needs of local people.
- Involve users and carers wherever possible in the development and monitoring of services.
- Recognise and support the independence of voluntary and community sector including its right within the law to campaign, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist and to determine and manage their own affairs.
- Ensure timely consultation allowing reasonable timescales for response.
- Aim for transparency and openness in dealings with the voluntary and community sector
- Actively implement policies that promote equality, enhance social inclusion and challenge discrimination in activities, employment, and involvement of volunteers, helping to secure employment and other opportunities for local people.

Voluntary and Community Sector Commitments to Barnet Council

The Voluntary and Community sector recognises the responsibility it has to Barnet's residents, and others it may come into contact with, and undertakes to:

- Maintain high standards of governance, conduct, and openness.
- Involve and consult users, carers, and volunteers.
- Promote effective working relationships within the voluntary and community sector and between the sector and public and private sectors.
- Actively implement policies that promote equality, enhance social inclusion and challenge discrimination in activities, employment, and involvement of volunteers, helping to secure employment and other opportunities for local people.
- Act lawfully and follow Charity Commission guidance.
- Promote effective working relationships with the council, and across the voluntary and community sector.
- Attempt to secure funding for activity from a variety of sources rather than become wholly dependent on Council funding
- Develop quality standards that are appropriate to each organisation.
- As a partner, recognise that the council has certain statutory duties to discharge.
- Campaign/lobby to improve practice, policy, and services.

The Way Forward

The Compact sets out the key principles and values, and undertakings given by both Barnet Council and the voluntary and community sector. Barnet Council and the local voluntary and community sector are committed to working together to develop the Compact's application and effectiveness.

The Compact, as a framework document, is a starting point not a conclusion, and is intended to be a living document. It will be a fundamental reference document and processes will be developed to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to the quality of relationships and partnerships at all levels.

We would like to thank the following for their contributions to and comments on the Compact and the Codes of Practice:

African Cultural Organisation
African Dependants Cultural Organisation
Age Concern Barnet
ASPIRE National Training Centre
Barnet African Caribbean Association
Barnet African Community Forum
Barnet African Health Organisation
Barnet Asian Older People's Association
Barnet Borough Arts Council
Barnet Citizens Advice Bureau
Barnet Carers Centre
Barnet Elderly Asians Group
Barnet MENCAP
Barnet Multi-Cultural Community Centre
Barnet Primary Care Trust
Barnet Play Association
Barnet Voice for Mental Health
Barnet Voluntary Service Council
Barnet Volunteer Bureau
Burnt Oak Traders Association
Chaverim
Community Focus
Countryside Management Service
Disability Action in the Borough of Barnet
East Barnet Community Festival

East Finchley Advice Service
Ezer North West
Finchley Society
Federation of Resident Associations in Barnet
Friend in Need Community Centre
Friends of Barnet Borough Libraries
Grahame Park Community Development Group
Hendon Citizens Advice Bureau
Hindu Cultural Society
Jewish Aids Trust
Jewish Care
MaPS
Mill Hill Good Neighbours
MIND in Barnet
North Finchley Local Agenda 21
Pathway Employment
PentaHact
Raphael House Trust
Somali Family Support Group
St John Ambulance
Sub-Saharan Refugee Organisation
The Personal Development Centre
United Nations Association
Watling Festival

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMPACT

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE ON FUNDING

1. Aim

1.1 This Code of Good Practice aims to clarify the funding relationship between the council and the voluntary and community sector, recognising the sector's desire for greater security; the council's desire for genuine accountability; and users' desire for the delivery of good quality services.

2. The importance of council funding and the added value that the sector can deliver

2.1 Through a variety of funding streams, the council helps to underwrite the capacity of voluntary and community organisations to add value by:

- using their expertise to inform and implement council policy;
- promoting equality and social inclusion and alleviating poverty;
- fostering, supporting and empowering service users, volunteers and active communities;
- building bridges between the public sector and communities;
- providing high quality services that are complementary or additional to public services; and
- identifying new needs and better ways of meeting existing needs.

3. An effective funding framework

Council undertakings:

3.1 The council is committed to establishing and maintaining best practice in the way in which it funds the voluntary and community sector. The council undertakes to implement an effective funding framework that:

- helps to ensure Best Value;

- applies procedures that are consistent with the principles of good regulation and the need to provide effective protection of, and proper accountability for, public money;
- respects the sector's independence;
- responds to the sector's need for financial stability to enable it to fulfil its full strategic role;
- improves sustainability and longer-term planning;
- recognises core costs and the different ways these can be met;
- promotes fair access to strategic, project and contract funding, and provides clarity in the objectives of grant programmes and their eligibility criteria;
- uses plain language in publicity, application forms and ancillary literature, in the interests of reaching all sections of the community;
- provides transparency and objectivity in administrative and assessment procedures (including clear timescales for processing and acknowledging applications; prompt notification of decisions; and, wherever possible, the provision of advice on alternative sources of funding and arrangements for referring unsuccessful requests to other appropriate agencies);
- ensures clarity and consistency in funding conditions;
- recognises the need for premises and supports this at market rents wherever possible from within the Council's property portfolio;
- establishes a joint approach to monitoring and evaluation; and
- strengthens partnership working.

Voluntary and community sector undertakings:

- 3.2 The voluntary and community sector recognises that receipt of public funds carries with it responsibilities to the funding body and to the public that benefit from the services provided. The sector undertakes to pursue good practice in the use and administration of public funds (including council funds) appropriate to the scale of funding and operation covering:

- effective and proportionate systems for the management, control, accountability, propriety and audit of finances (including adequate insurance cover to meet all legal obligations);
- compliance (by organisations that hold charitable status) with the accounting framework for charities and appropriate guidance from the Charity Commission;
- systems for planning and implementing work programmes;
- systems for monitoring and evaluating activities against agreed objectives;
- clear and effective employment policies, management arrangements and procedures;
- systems for quality assurance and accountability to service users, including complaints procedures and the involvement of users, wherever possible, in the development and management of activities and services;
- policies for ensuring equality of opportunity in both employment practice and service provision;
- the involvement of volunteers wherever possible in service provision; and
- public acknowledgement of council support (in an approved format).

4. The Way Forward

4.1 Statutory authorities currently operate within financial constraints that inevitably affect the level of funds available to support voluntary sector activity. Within this climate, both the council and voluntary and community organisations have a responsibility to ensure that services are delivered to the community as effectively, efficiently and economically as possible. The cost of services and the benefits they produce should be shown openly and explicitly.

4.2 The council recognises that voluntary and community groups have a variety of funding needs, not least towards core management and administrative costs which must be met if they are to operate efficiently. An over-reliance on council core funding (or any other single source of funding) is, however, both unsafe from an organisation's viewpoint and unfair to other groups if it precludes them from gaining access to the programme of grant aid. Voluntary and community groups should

therefore seek to develop packages of funding from various sources, including other public bodies, charities and self-generated income.

4.3 The aim is to strike a balance between supporting an organisation's core activities, providing the bedrock for attracting added investment from other funders, and encouraging new enterprise and initiatives in response to changing needs and priorities. This may be achieved in a variety of ways, combining formal contracts, one-year revenue grants, fixed-term project grants and one-off/start-up grants.

4.4 Strategic funding, either through a contract or a grant, and including project grants for a specific piece of work or activity (which legitimately may include an apportionment of core costs), may be considered over longer periods and should be based on a number of factors, including:

- the availability of funding;
- value for money;
- a mutually agreed framework for monitoring and evaluation; and
- formal review processes.

Funding over two or more years should be subject to an annual review of progress against mutually agreed objectives, reflecting the fact that strategic funding is not an open-ended commitment and that the council must retain the ability to exit from the relationship. The likely duration of a funding arrangement and the circumstances under which the arrangement may be terminated should be made clear at the outset. The funded organisation should at the same time have a realistic 'exit' strategy.

4.5 Whatever the type of support, there should be consistent criteria applied to any group seeking council funds (eg definable local benefit; democratic management; commitment to equal access, etc) at a level which maintains probity of confidence in the use of funds, whilst not becoming a barrier for legitimate and worthwhile new ventures.

4.6 This code of practice will be amended, updated and clarified where necessary as circumstances change.

Barnet Voluntary Sector Compact

Code of Practice- CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Barnet Council's Commitment to the Voluntary Sector

The Council will make every effort to consult the voluntary sector on matters that will affect them at the earliest possible stage, and do so in a spirit of transparency of decision-making. In particular it will adhere to the following standards, which are consistent with its proposed Consultation Charter:

1. Say what and why

- say *what* it is we are consulting on and, if appropriate, what elements of the proposal or document are for information only and not for consultation
- give the reasons *why* we are consulting on the issue or proposal
- spell out the *options for action* or the range of possible decisions, and in the case of an multi faceted proposal, provide consultees with the opportunity to comment on each individual element of the proposal.
- provide *background material* where appropriate and ensure it is *accurate and complete* to the best of our knowledge
- Use *plain language* in all consultation documents, and make available in accessible formats

2. Say who

- explain *which categories of groups* are being consulted this time and why their input is important (for example, '*because disabled people are particularly affected by this proposal*)

3. Say how

- describe *how we will consult* on this issue – for example a public meeting; a postal survey; a consultative conference; a set of focus groups
- say *how much time* will be allowed for the consultation, why this period has been chosen and *start and finish dates for the consultation, which will be given at the beginning of the consultation document.. Endeavour to give enough time* for every 'consultee' to consider the issues properly, and

consult with the rest of their group if they represent one, and attempt where possible to set a minimum consultation period of 12 weeks

- Give the *name and telephone number* of a person who can answer questions about the consultation

4. Tell you about it

- *publish a list of forthcoming consultations* on the council's website (www.barnet.gov.uk) including start and finish dates
- *say how we will publicise the results* of the consultation; also when, where and how we plan to do this (meeting note: Sub-Group recommended use of press releases and public notices as well as website)
- *tell the people who took part* in the consultation what the overall results are and, in the case of multi faceted proposals, the response to each element of the proposal.
- *tell other interested parties* as well
 - *publish the final decision* as soon as it has been taken

5. Use the results

- *use the results* of the consultation to influence the decisions we make
- *list the voluntary sector participants and make their written submissions publicly available* (subject to confidentiality requirements)
- *explain* to the interested parties *how the consultation influenced the decision*

THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR'S COMMITMENT TO BARNET COUNCIL

When participating in consultation activities, the voluntary sector in Barnet undertakes to:

- Advise the Council of Groups that should be consulted, and share proposals with other interested groups
- To consult in such a way that the response fairly reflects the view of the whole organisation
- Endeavour to ensure that flexible arrangements are in place when a rapid response is required that may not meet committee deadlines
- Ensure that comments are accurate and relevant to the area of interest of the organisation concerned, and explain in a reasoned way how the proposals might affect their interests
- Wherever relevant, seek the views of all elements of their organisation (staff; service users; members) and show this in a response
- Send comments by the deadline requested
- Inform, and where appropriate, consult relevant local authority Officers and Members on changes to their organisation where they have an impact on the Council (eg changes in patterns of service delivery)
- Tell the Council of changes in the details of the main contact person for the organisation
- Respect any confidentiality requirements marked on Council's consultation material

BARNET VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMPACT

BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS: A CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. AIM

The aim of this Code of Practice is to make a positive difference in the relationship between Barnet Council and Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community organisations (which includes faith groups and refugee and asylum seeker organisations). In 2001, it is estimated that 26% of Barnet's residents are from BME communities. Barnet has also just established a Black Business Association.

The Code of Practice for Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community organisations outlines the principles which underpin the framework of the relationship. The Compact also aims to acknowledge the contribution of voluntary and community organisations in the development of a democratic and socially inclusive society by enabling individuals to contribute to public life and the development of their communities.

2. UNDERTAKINGS

(a) Mutual Undertakings between Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organisations and Barnet Council

A number of key principles must underpin the framework of the relationship:

- There is a joint commitment to take the equalities agenda forward through Barnet Council's policy to 'Creating Opportunity for All'
- For BMEVC organisations to participate effectively, it must be recognised that they need appropriate support and information
- For true participation, there must be a recognition that BME communities operate within different religious and cultural frameworks and adjustments are made accordingly.
- There is a recognition that the BMEVC sector has arisen in response to the specific needs of their communities and by bridging gaps in mainstream services

(b) The Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Sector's commitments to Barnet Council

The Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community (BMEVC) sector accepts it must re-define its relationship with Barnet Council unlike the wider voluntary and community sector, the BMEVC sector has a great deal of catching up to do. Therefore, any undertakings agreed must accept that many BMEVC organisations are very small with fragile infrastructures.

- BMEVC organisations welcome Barnet Council's commitment to challenging discrimination, promoting equality and addressing social exclusion through its commitment to 'Creating Opportunity for All'.
- BMEVC organisations will support Barnet Council's commitment to 'Creating Opportunity for All'
- BMEVC organisations wish to participate in the Council's drive to promoting social inclusion in an effective way
- BMEVC organisations want Barnet to be a safer borough and will participate in initiatives designed to meet this objective
- BMEVC organisations will support Barnet Council and other partners in leveraging in money to tackle social exclusion
- BMEVC organisations want to be included in making Barnet a cleaner and more attractive borough
- BMEVC organisations have a passionate commitment to ensuring and maintaining a democratic and just society

(c) Barnet Council's Commitments to the Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community (BMEVC) Sector

Barnet Council accepts that without the contribution of BMEVC sector it would be unable to deliver a vast range of equitable and high quality services. In recognition of this it commits to make the following undertakings:

- Barnet Council is committed to taking forward the equality agenda through its policy of 'Creating Opportunity for All'. As part of this commitment every service provided by the council and its partners will be tested against the 3 policy principles:

- Does it challenge discrimination?
- Does it promote equality?
- Does it encourage social inclusion?

- Barnet Council is committed to developing an equal, collaborative relationship with BMEVC organisations based upon mutual respect

- Barnet Council will continue to support the growth and development of the BMEVC sector

- Barnet Council will provide opportunities for voluntary and community action by empowering BMEVC organisations appropriately

- Barnet Council will improve its methods of consultation to ensure that BMEVC organisations feel that a meaningful dialogue has taken place between itself and other partners

- Any consultation process undertaken by Barnet Council must be representative of the whole community

- Barnet Council acknowledges that many BMEVC organisations would like to receive support other than funding. Examples include the development of an uncomplicated directory of services, opportunity to attend training courses, access to the interpreting and translation service

- Barnet Council accepts that developing meaningful partnerships requires a recognition that different organisations have different ways of working and that it must also be prepared to be guided by the skills and expertise of BMEVC organisations

- Barnet Council will actively seek out guidance and knowledge from BMEVC organisations with a view to setting up equitable partnerships

BARNET VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMPACT

CODE OF PRACTICE ON VOLUNTEERING

1. AIM

(a) This Code of Good Practice aims to:

- Actively promote volunteering as a community activity
- clarify the role volunteers play within a defined organisational structure
- value the vast contribution that volunteers make to the local community and beyond
- acknowledge the variety of volunteering opportunities and to enable and support more people getting involved
- recognise that local voluntary bodies provide excellent training, support and development for volunteers to go onto other work, either paid or unpaid

(b) Definition

Volunteering is the giving of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

(c) Principles

- **Standards** – there must be identifiable minimum standards for health and safety, including identifying the duty of care each organisation has for each individual and each individual has for their organisation
 - list of activities
 - reimbursement of expenses
 - appropriate insurance
 - recognised channels for addressing volunteer views and concerns
 - shared responsibility to uphold and promote the aims, principles and standards of the organisation
 - regular opportunities to discuss progress and development needs of the organisation
- **Equal Opportunities** – volunteering is an option that should be open to everybody, irrespective of their gender, race, beliefs, disability, mental or physical health, religion, age or sexuality.

Volunteering should be promoted to people who do not traditionally see themselves as being volunteers. Resources should be put into promoting volunteering to people who face difficulties getting involved or who are from groups who are discriminated against.

- **Choice** – volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual
- **Reciprocity and recognition** – volunteers offer their contribution unwaged but should benefit in other ways in return for their contribution to wider social objectives. Recognition of the value of what volunteers contribute, to the organisation, to the community, to the social economy, and to wider social objectives is fundamental to a fair relationship between volunteer organisations and the Council

2. UNDERTAKINGS

(a) Mutual Undertakings:

- work towards social inclusion, particularly in areas of deprivation, promoting community/neighbour activities/involvement
- ensure that volunteers working, or likely to work, with children or vulnerable people undergo safe recruitment practices including police checks where required
- to be an effective force for change where local and government policies are having an adverse effect on people's ability to volunteer
- there should be greater publicity for the achievement of volunteers, and that both sectors will work together to expand the public perception of volunteering
- to actively participate in the promotion of local and national volunteering events eg volunteer week
- to support and train to develop the use of new technology whilst recognising that resources are not available to all
- to investigate the use of joint training initiatives
- enable management committees/boards to promote and implement best practice
- recognise the complementary contributions that both paid staff and volunteers make to an organisation

(b) The Council will:

- recognise the quality of work undertaken by volunteers is equal to that of paid workers. Volunteering is a substantial social investment that makes a major contribution to the regeneration of the local community;
- ensure that voluntary bodies are consulted before the introduction of proposed regulations, guidance etc affecting the involvement of volunteers;
- recognise barriers to volunteering

(c) The Voluntary and Community Sector will:

- recognise basic levels of statistics and record keeping
- ensure all voluntary organisations comply with current legislation on data protection
- be committed to acknowledging the interests and concerns of their volunteers and actively involve them in the development of the organisation
- ensure that volunteer views are taken into account in decisions about the organisation

BARNET VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMPACT

CODE OF PRACTICE ON COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

1. GOVERNING PRINCIPLES - AIM

(a) Recognition of the nature of community organisations

All sides need to recognise, and take into account, the special nature of community organisations.

While there are no hard and fast definitions, community organisations often have some or all of the following characteristics, which distinguish them even from other voluntary sector organisations, let alone the statutory or private sectors:

- Small.
- Independent of formal bodies.
- Often unfunded, or seeking funding.
- Focused on a specific community of interest, either by area or issue.
- Simple infrastructure, and in some cases virtually none.
- Operating at a distance from 'authority', so more flexible, but also less experienced in dealing with authority.
- Form and/or disband more easily, but also more frequently.

All concerned need also to recognise that each of these characteristics can be both a strength and a weakness.

(b) The principle of equality

Central to good relations between the Council and the community sector is the principle that the two should engage as equal partners, regardless of any discrepancy in resources, influence or numbers between the two. This holds good even where the Council is working with a single community organisation. It is only if this principle of equality is observed that each side will be able to claim, and feel, ownership of the results.

(c) The need for unimpeded, two-way communication

If the principles of recognition and equality are to be upheld, then it is essential that there be full, unimpeded, prompt two-way communication between the parties, with each side working continuously to improve the flow of information and understanding.

2. UNDERTAKINGS

Recognising the distinct nature of community organisations, the subscribers to this Compact give the following undertakings.

(a) Mutual Undertakings

Trust and Commitment

Both sides recognise that communication, equality and accessibility should lead to the development of mutual trust and commitment, which can override any specific differences, and undertake to act in their dealings with each other in such a way as to foster such mutual trust and commitment.

Transparency

It is important to be open and transparent in all dealings, before during and after decisions are made. Each party undertakes to keep the other fully informed at all stages, subject to matters of commercial confidence.

Accessibility

This has a number of aspects, as follows:

- Empathy
- Language
- Physical access

Each side undertakes to address the requirements relevant to their mode of operation to ensure accessibility.

Representation

- All parties should recognise that the diversity of community organisations in terms of their size, nature and interests is a major strength of Barnet and undertake to respect that diversity, both in terms of views sought, and decisions taken.

(b) Council Undertakings

Transparency

The Council undertakes act transparently about funding, and will accordingly:

- keep applicants fully informed about funding limitations.
- inform applicants for funding in a prompt and timely manner of the funding decision, and,
- where an application is refused, where possible give an indication of the reasons for the refusal, along with information on alternative sources.

Encouragement and enabling

- The community sector may lack experience in managing services, budgets and staff, and in negotiating with the local authority. The Council will not use these as a pretext not to engage with the sector, and where possible will, in conjunction with larger voluntary sector agencies, support community organisations with their development needs.

Accessibility

Empathy

- The Council, recognising that many community organisations may feel intimidated dealing with a large organisation, will endeavour to present a 'welcoming face'

Language

- The Council will apply its 'plain language' communication policy when working with community organisations.

Physical access

- The Council undertakes to ensure that wherever possible venues are physically accessible to those with a disability, and that the Council complies with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Representation

- The Council undertakes to take account of the input and contribution of any, and every, genuinely representative organisation.

- The Council, when developing new and ongoing initiatives, will actively seek out representatives of communities with an interest and work with them.

(c) Community Sector Undertakings

Transparency

The sector undertakes to act transparently about funding, and will accordingly keep the Council informed of the project delivery and any changes in circumstances.

Accessibility

Empathy

- The community sector will seek to fully recognise that the local authority has to allocate limited resources and arbitrate between competing claims.

Language

- Community organisations also undertake to describe their services and issues in a way that the Council can understand.

Physical access

- Community sector organisations undertake to ensure, as far as lies within their power, to ensure that venues are physically accessible to those with a disability, and are in compliance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Representation

- An organisation representing a community (whether of geography or a common interest) undertakes to ensure, as far as is in its power, that its structure genuinely reflects the composition of that community and that it represents its views.
- Community organisations should recognise that the Council needs often to deal with representative organisations rather than individuals.