

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

17 MARCH 2011

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – Cllr Lupton

DRAFT COMPACT BETWEEN STOCKTON RENAISSANCE AND THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

1. Summary

This report provides Cabinet with a brief overview of the draft Compact, developed jointly with Catalyst, which covers the principles under which Stockton Renaissance and the voluntary and community sector work together in the Borough. The existing Renaissance Compact (developed 2008) has been refreshed to reflect changes to the Compact with the voluntary and community sector at the national government level.

2. Recommendations

- I. Receive this report and note its content
- II. Consider the draft Compact document between Stockton Renaissance and the voluntary and community sector.
- III. Consider adopting the draft Compact and signing up to the Compact on behalf of Stockton Council.
- IV. Agree the Compact be presented to Renaissance on 14th June 2011.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To ensure that there is an up to date Compact document in place for Stockton Renaissance and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgment of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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COMMUNITY SECTOR**

SUMMARY

This report provides Cabinet with a brief overview of the draft Compact, developed jointly with Catalyst, which covers the principles under which Stockton Renaissance and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) work together in the Borough. The existing Renaissance Compact (developed 2008) has been refreshed to reflect changes to the Compact with the voluntary and community sector at the national government level.

The main changes from the 2008 Compact are :-

- The document has been streamlined into chapters
- Includes a contact for any Compact compliance issues
- Specific chapter on advancing equality
- Commissioning chapter strengthened

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i Receive this report and note its content.
- ii Consider the draft Compact document between Stockton Renaissance and the voluntary and community sector.
- iii Consider adopting the draft Compact and signing up to the Compact on behalf of Stockton Council.
- iv. Agree the Compact be presented to Renaissance on 14th June 2011.

BACKGROUND

1. Compacts cover the principles under which both the Local Strategic Partnership and Third Sector operate in their relationship with each other. It can cover a variety of factors including consultation, representation of the Third Sector, commissioning etc. Stockton Renaissance and the Third Sector have had a Compact in place for a number of years which has been refreshed regularly.
2. The former government undertook a major consultation on their Compact in 2009, which the Council responded to, and launched nationally a new document in December 2009. In light of the new document Stockton Renaissance, its partners and the VCS started the process of refreshing the local Compact document.

3. Subsequently the new Coalition Government released their own Compact for the Coalition Government and the civil society organisations in December 2010 . The proposed draft Compact between Stockton Renaissance and the Voluntary and Community Sector reflects the changes.
4. The draft Compact has been developed in collaboration with Catalyst and other public sector partners- the Police, Fire Brigade, Job Centre Plus and Primary Care Trust . Other VCS infrastructure bodies actively involved included Stockton Community Groups and Residents Association and Tees Valley Rural Community Council. The draft has developed and strengthened the old document including commissioning arrangements and a contact for compliance. The Council's Procurement and Diversity teams have been actively involved in drafting the relevant chapters. The draft consultation document was launched at the Catalyst event in September 2010 and closed at the end of December 2010. All comments received have informed the draft document which also reflects the principles within the new government compact.
5. Areas that the new Compact strengthens in particular are set out in the chapter on advancing equalities and in the chapter on commissioning. Examples of the main commitments include:-

Consultation

- Renaissance: Where a policy decision is likely to have a significant effect on the Third Sector, Catalyst must be involved at the earliest opportunity, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks, where possible for wider consultation. Explanations where appropriate to be provided where this minimum cannot be adhered to. – This commitment is in the existing Compact 2008
- VCS: Accept that, in rare cases, consultations may need to take place in shorter time-frames than 12 weeks.
- VCS:Be clear about whose views are being represented and what those views are. This includes explaining whether views have been gathered directly (and from what audience), or whether the response is based on the organisation's knowledge and experience of the issues.
- VCS:Make sure all research and information that is presented to Stockton Renaissance is accurate and credible. Explain where the information comes from and if there is conflicting evidence.

Funding/Commissioning

- Where possible commit funding for up to three years or more subject to central government financial settlements. If this is not possible, Stockton Renaissance partners make a commitment to explain clearly why not.
- Aim to make commissioning decisions and inform organisations at least three months in advance of the expected start date. Any departure from that time-scale should be justified and explained.
- Make payments in advance of expenditure where there is a clear need and where this represents value for money. This may be particularly relevant for grants.
- Aim to make payments within 28 working days of invoices or grant claims being received, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed.

- Give a minimum of three months' notice in writing when ending a commission or other support, and provide a clear rationale for why the decision has been taken. Subject to the public sector organisations having received three months notice from central government.
 - Review programmes and services with relevant VCS organisations to inform future practice.
6. It is proposed that the Compact would apply to the relationship and activities between Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board and the Voluntary and Community Sector. There will also be an opportunity within the document for public sector organisations to sign up to adhere to the principles in this document within their own organisations; recognising that some may have other arrangements in place. The Council has previously taken the opportunity to sign up to the Compact in this in this way.
 7. The draft Compact will complement the work that is being undertaken around the VCS including the Third Sector Strategy that Catalyst has developed.
 8. It is proposed to take the draft Compact to Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board on 14th June 2011 before a formal launch that month.

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

RISK ASSESSMENT

This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

The Compact supports the capacity building and relationships with the voluntary and community sector and delivery and as such would contribute to all the themes.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This report is not subject to Equality Impact Assessment as it makes no proposals for service development or policy change.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

The Compact has been included on the council consultation plan and on the Stockton Renaissance web-pages.

Background Papers

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: