

MINUTES.
BRISTOL COMPACT (Sub-group).
6th September 2007.
The Create Centre.

Present: Christine Storry (BCC – Economic Regeneration), Wendy Stephenson (VOSCUR), Sabrina Lee (VOSCUR), Phil Gingell (BCC – Community Engagement) and Ariaif Hussain (BCC – Community Development).

Apologies: Faith Davey (The Care Forum), Aileen Edwards (Second-step).

WS explained the sub-group had been set up to look at reviewing and up-dating some of the implementation guidelines produced in 2005.

The Compact is also to be revised and Gillian Douglas (BCC – Equalities and Cohesion Manager) has produced a new draft.

All members of the sub-group had a copy of the Funding and Procurement Guidance.

AH asked how this document fits within the Compact framework.

WS explained the Compact was a statement of the aspirations of partnership working. It was split into various sections, one of which was Funding and Procurement. Sub-groups of the steering group were set up to write implementation guidance for each section. These set out what the aspirational commitments were in practice.

AH then asked whether there were examples of where the implementation guidance had not been followed.

WS confirmed there had been, for example the Community Regeneration Investment Strategy consultation broke Compact guidance in several ways. The lack of funding for some community transport projects was also problematic as these organisations were not invited to sit on steering groups discussing how community transport contracts would be commissioned.

This is one of the reasons the guidance needs reviewing to attempt to give it more teeth.

CS Home Office/Treasury projects, Hearts and Minds review and partnership documentation published in December 2006 in particular which need to be reflected in the guidance. Commissioning bodies need to be more involved.

WS suggested dividing the guidance into sections which could, then, be looked at individually.

AH asked which sections of the guidance, apart from Procurement, need revising? Procurement and Commissioning needs work to bring this into line with current legislation. WS asked if CS could look at this section.

ACTION: CS	To review Procurement/Commissioning section.
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WS asked SL to look at Full cost recovery.

ACTION: SL	To look at Full cost recovery aspect.
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AH offered to look at Cutting red tape, Funding agreements and The withdrawal of funding from VCS organisations. He would like to look at the document in its entirety, notwithstanding the work being done by other members of the sub-group, as it does seem very nebulous.

ACTION: AH	To look at these 3 areas.
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AH also wondered whether there should be something around de-commissioning. Where contract tendering takes place there will be providers who lose out in such an exercise and would, therefore, be "de-commissioned". AH is looking at this issue through his work with the VCS Project Board.

It is hoped that by April 2008 grant funding and commissioning will be part of the new e-procurement system. This should make it easier to monitor and react to issues around contract commissioning/procurement.

The different commissioning criteria/procedures of various departments within the local authority may be an obstacle to efficiency. WS is prepared to contact departments to clarify their commissioning procedures. AH can provide contact details:-

- Wendy Fabbro (Adult Community Care)
- Nicola Waterworth (CYPS)
- Jane Houben or Gillian Douglas (Community Development)
- Sue Lampard or Monira Chowdhury (Supporting People)
- Matt Jacobs (Regeneration)
- Sue Bandcroft (Drug Strategy Team)

ACTION: AH	To confirm contact details and assist WS as appropriate.
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ACTION: WS	To contact departments to ascertain commissioning procedures.
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AH feels there is an emphasis on the undertakings of the VCS. Should there not be more mention of what is required from the local authority?

Re Cutting the red tape, AH enquired about the “lead funder”. WS feels it would be worthwhile contacting Derek Dodd (Regeneration Support Manager) who lead on this. He should be aware of the position at the time he moved across to Regeneration Support.

ACTION: AH	To contact Derek Dodd.
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Should there be a stronger appeals process for groups not happy with commissioning/funding decisions? How can VCS organisations become more involved in such decision-making? Would a more generic approach to public involvement across the authority ease this process? Should VCS organisations be more involved in designing a commissioning process?

Funding agreements, simply describes the minimum requirements of such agreements. WS thinks this could be up-dated and shared with other partners for comment. Should the document aspire to more than just the minimum requirements? What about

“performance management”? Possibly “objectives and outcomes” can be changed to simply “outcomes”.

CS also pointed to the section relating to the funder terminating the contract. Should it not be of equal importance if the organisation is not satisfied and wants to terminate?

The authorities budget is set annually. VCS organisations want the security of the 3-year cycle. Does there need to be an “in principle” commitment to this 3-year cycle?

CS and WS agree the differences between commissioning and procurement should be made clear.

AH asked if the question of “grant funding” should be more explicitly mentioned. CS highlighted 3 requirements:-

- Grant funding
- Commission servers/SLA
- Procurement contract

Equal opportunities, relates particularly to funding and procurement guidance, more generic equalities information is contained in the Compact itself. Sub-group felt this part of the guidance was a little “wordy” and needed re-writing.

ACTION: WS AH	To look at Equal opportunities aspect.
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Full cost recovery, SL feels there is too much emphasis on what the VCS organisations should do. There is a lot of training that needs doing and a consistent model across the departments has to be implemented. AH is unsure, however, whether so much emphasis should be given to the AVECO model. A model developed by BCC and the VCS should be the one recommended.

WS feels the sub-group should aim to have a new document prepared by the end of the year. Circulate draft proposals around sub-group by the start of November. To be discussed at the next sub-group meeting.

ACTION: WS	To co-ordinate draft submissions from sub-group members.
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Date of next meeting.

Wednesday 7th November 2007 11:00-1:00 at The Create Centre.