

# **THE BASILDON DISTRICT COMPACT**

**MARCH 2003**



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## **Message from the Chair of the Compact Steering Group and the Leader of Basildon District Council**

### **Message from the Chair**

Basildon District Council instigated and enabled the creation of a Local Compact after conducting some initial surveys amongst the Voluntary and Community Sector. This action followed on from the publication of the National Compact 'Getting it Right Together'.

The Surveys indicated strong support among the representatives from the voluntary and Community Sector and Statutory Authorities. The enthusiasm to make a Compact work in Basildon and District was there for all to see. However, the challenge to bring together all the various sectors with their many different backgrounds and ethos, not withstanding the legal requirements placed upon statutory authorities, presented an enormous challenge.

Within a short while a Steering Group was formed and the concept of a Basildon Compact had begun. The Steering Group and its sub groups demonstrated within the development process the benefits of the Compact. Involvement and consultation have been key to developing the Basildon Compact. There have been many meetings, public events, including a '*Have Your Say Day*', to identify issues of concern to be included in the draft document. The draft document was followed by a period of consultation including the Voluntary and Community sector '*Did We Get It Right Day*'. The information obtained provided much of the material used by the Steering Group as the basis for their detailed work.

Credit must be given to all members of the Steering Group and everybody who has contributed with their hard, time-consuming work, especially for their faith in developing the Compact within their own organisations. Four people I must mention are Kerry Franklin, Basildon Primary Care Trust, Kabba Alpha, Basildon District Council, Lee Heley and Lorna Wallace of Basildon, Billericay & Wickford Council for Voluntary Service, who spent many hours collating, analysing and drafting the Compact document.

The Compact's action points will ensure that the level of involvement for the coming months and years should form the foundation for practical initiatives to be tackled. Building on the commitment already shown, enabling the Voluntary and Community sector and the Statutory Authorities to work together effectively for the good of the people of the Basildon District.

David Beale, Chair  
Basildon District Compact Steering Group

### **Message from the Leader of the Council**

'The Council is pleased to have adopted the Local Compact, this is a living action plan for the Council, which will be reviewed regularly to demonstrate what we have discovered and achieved. The Local Compact is an important part of our consultation programme to ensure that all parts of the community have a clear voice on issues that we need to change and, indeed, how those changes could or should be made.

The Local Compact is important to the Council and the Council is committed to a continued programme of improvement in delivering its services in a fully socially inclusive way.

The Local Compact is seen as a driving mechanism to assist the Council to create and sustain strong links with local organisations where effective dialogue may take place between the Council and other agencies within the District. The Compact will offer the opportunity to develop coherent consistent approaches to consultation and participation.

The Council looks forward to a long, productive and equal partnership with local people and communities so that the Council may develop positive responses to the needs of the District. The Council is particularly keen to encourage the development of the voluntary sector and to use the Compact as a key tool in developing that relationship'.

**Cllr Malcolm Buckley**  
**Leader of the Council**

## **Basildon District Compact**

### **Introduction**

The Basildon District Compact follows on from the National Compact between Government and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) published in 1998. In the spirit of the national compact and following on from the September 2001 VCS Conference, a multi-agency Steering Group was set up in December 2001 to develop the Basildon District Compact.

The Steering Group formalised the key issues that are incorporated in this Compact. Having decided on the key issues, it organised a consultation event on 20 June 2002 with the theme "Have Your Say". The day focussed on four Workshops. In each of the Workshops, the Steering Group heard from you how the relationship between the statutory agencies and the VCS could be improved in the District. The Workshops focussed on seven key issues (codes of good practice): Premises, Funding, Volunteering, Community Groups, Partnerships, Consultation and Black and Ethnic Minority Groups.

The Steering Group was keen to gather a wide range of diverse views as possible. As a result, the first draft of Compact went out in July for postal consultation document for twelve weeks. Several comments were received, and these are reflected in the compact. The Steering Group also organised a Challenge Event: "Did we get it right" for the Voluntary and Community Sector while the draft was out for wider consultation. Views from this event have also been incorporated. Appendix 1 presents the key milestones in developing the Basildon District Compact and the list of organisations and individuals are shown in Appendix 2.

The Compact Codes have been written in the same way. Each starts with an introduction explaining the background to the area: i.e. partnership, consultation, etc. All of what you said during the consultation period has been used to draw up the undertakings contained in this compact. The undertakings are key parts of the compact. The undertakings are the actions and ways of working that will underpin the mutual relationship between the VCS and statutory agencies. Some of the undertakings will be implemented by the statutory sector, some by voluntary and community groups, and some by both. Partners who have signed up to the Compact, have agreed to follow through these undertakings as the means for improving relationships for effective partnership working in the District.

Finally, there is an action plan for each code area to make the undertakings more specific. 'Lead agencies' have been identified and a 'yes' to highlight that the action potentially has 'resource implications'. It is anticipated that the lead agencies will champion the specific action points.

The Compact also has sections on 'Our Vision', 'the Aims and Objectives of the Compact', 'Our Shared Values and Principles', the 'General Undertakings', and 'Review and Conflict Resolution'. Some of the undertakings appear across the code areas. This is to reflect your views at the "have your say" workshops and the challenge events "Did we get it right" to reflect the wide range of diverse views that were gathered. This compact is about joint ownership, and should be delivered in the spirit of partnership.

## **Our Vision**

**Our vision** is a Basildon District where the relationship between the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Statutory Sector is one of mutual trust and respect. A District where decision-making processes are in partnership, clear, mutually agreed, adhered to and fitting into wider policy issues.

## **The Purpose of the Basildon District Compact**

**The purpose** of the Compact is to improve working relationships by developing partnership arrangements between all the statutory agencies (including the Police, Health Authorities (PCTs), Learning and Skills Council, Essex, Essex County Council and Basildon District Council) and the voluntary and community sector in the Basildon District and those that provide services to the District (but not necessarily located within it).

## **The Aims of the Compact**

**The aim** of the Compact is to provide the means of supporting the development of the Voluntary and Community sector's capacity so that voluntary and community organisations can do more to meet both their aims and those of their statutory partners, thereby enhancing their contribution to the community

## **The Objectives of the Compact**

- To enhance the voluntary and community sector's capacity to provide quality services to the community
- To enhance the effectiveness of statutory agencies and voluntary and community organisations in meeting the needs of the community
- To develop mechanisms for involving the voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations as equal partners with statutory agencies in strategic and funding partnerships
- To improve the relationship between black and minority ethnic organisations and the VCS and statutory agencies
- To improve the relationship between community groups and the statutory agencies
- To improve communication consultation processes between statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector

The Compact should underpin and complement existing and future policies and procedures of statutory agencies and the VCS. In this regard, the Compact is linked to:

- The Modernising Agenda and Best Value
- BDC Council Plan
- Corporate policies such as Equal Opportunities
- Departmental policies and procedures
- Basildon District Local Strategic Partnership and its Community Strategy

## **Our shared Values and Principles**

In developing, signing up to and monitoring this Compact, the voluntary and community sectors and statutory agencies share the following common principles and values:

- Recognising, respecting, valuing and promoting the independence of voluntary and community organisations as the voice of specific communities in the District.
- Recognising that statutory authorities are legal entities with statutory duties and responsibilities.
- Promoting and ensuring equality of opportunity for all, regardless of class, race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or faith.
- Recognising the advantages of working in genuine partnerships, and building effective partnerships with organisations both within and outside the District for the benefit of the Basildon District.
- Promoting the development and maintenance of effective levels of communications to avoid duplication, and ensure ongoing consultation and involvement of all in the activities of the District.

## **Signing up to the compact**

It is understood that the voluntary and community sector in the Basildon District has hundreds of different organisations, each separately accountable, and this independence is what gives the sector its strength. The voluntary and community sector seldom have developed mechanisms for holding its members to account: individual organisations have therefore made a commitment to the compact, and local umbrella bodies will promote it to other community groups. The “Voluntary Sector” and “Community Sector” cannot sign on behalf of every local group. Local Statutory Agencies by contrast are accountable, and can be held accountable for undertakings in the Compact. In this respect, voluntary and community sector groups Management Committees have signed up on behalf of their groups (and/or on behalf of other groups) and will be accountable for the undertakings in this Compact.

## **Review, Conflict Resolution and Performance Management**

The action plan will be reviewed at least six monthly by the Compact Steering Group.

An annual report on the action plan will be sent to the Local Strategic Partnership, Basildon District and relevant committees of each agency that have signed to the compact. These reports will highlight successes and problems with implementing the compact.

If the undertakings agreed to in the compact are not met, the Compact Steering Group will write to the chief executive of the organisation concerned and ask for a response. In view of the above:

- The Compact Steering Group, which should be renamed, remains for ongoing monitoring and implementation of this compact. It will forge links with Basildon District Local Strategic Partnership (BDLSP) and other strategic partnerships in the Districts.
- Compact monitoring and implementation would be assisted through the following:
  - Jointly agreed Action Plan with specific target dates
  - Integrating Compact with VCS and statutory agencies policies and procedures (mainstreaming the Compact)
  - Designation of a dedicated/Contact Officer and Member who will be responsible for Compact and voluntary sector support and development in each of the statutory agencies
  - Shared consultations, including information from consultants
- Annual review and report on Action Plan prepared by Compact Steering Group and sent to all agencies and BDLSP, showing:
  - Log of significant achievements
  - Major issues/policies impacting on VCS
  - Learning points from difficulties and missed opportunities
- Action Plan to also indicate:
  - Level of awareness by residents/agencies' staff
  - How relationships have improved?
  - What next needs to be done?

### **General Undertakings**

The Statutory Agencies and the Voluntary and Community Sector will:

- Work together to develop effective partnership relationships in which each will contribute to meeting the needs of the residents of Basildon District.
- Work together to develop projects when needs within the community have been identified.

## **PARTNERSHIP CODE**

Partnership working is increasingly being recognised by central and local governments as the best approach for tackling the interconnected problems facing communities. This recognition has stemmed from the realisation that the single agency, single issue approaches have proven to have major limitations in tackling the social, economic and environmental problems besetting many communities in Britain today. Partnership working is also a central principle of the Basildon District Compact.

Partnership working involving the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and other agencies evokes general issues such as:

- 'what is a partnership?'
- 'types of partnerships'
- 'why should the voluntary and community sector engage in partnerships?'
- 'what are the funding arrangements in partnerships?'
- 'what are the barriers faced by the voluntary and community sectors in partnerships?'
- 'what support should be given to the voluntary and community sectors to assist them in engaging effectively in partnerships?'

These issues were commented upon by several agencies during the 12 week consultation period. The following were recurring themes:

- That partnership be defined as two or more agencies working towards a common goal, each bringing something to the partnership, and recognised by all participants as being equal.
- That partnerships need to share services to offer the best services to the community.
- That there are different types of partnerships.
  - Project specific partnerships as ESF Connect Basildon Project partnerships formed to respond to funding opportunities.
  - Countywide partnerships e.g. the Advisory Forum, working towards the standardisation of training.
  - Statutory partnerships like the Basildon Local Strategic Partnership.
  - Regional partnerships like the Disability Partnership Boards and several such partnerships formed for a variety of reasons.
- That the barriers identified by the VCS in partnerships during consultation be recognised and addressed.

### **Undertakings**

#### **Joint undertakings**

#### **The VCS and Statutory Agencies will:**

- Jointly promote the Compact within their agencies and their partners
- Partnership meetings will be held in venues and at times accessible and convenient for all members
- Ensure issues around diversity and inclusivity are recognised and acknowledged in all activities undertaken

**The statutory agencies will:**

- Endeavour to involve the VCS in all partnership arrangements in the discharge of the duty of 'well being' at all stages. This will mean the sharing of information in accessible formats, including the development of a partnership website
- Review with the current partnership arrangements and consider options that will ensure the effectiveness of the VCS in partnerships such as payments to VCS for its involvement
- Depending on the issue and priority, seek to involve the most appropriate VCS group on partnerships
- Recognise that different arrangements are required by different groups when drawing up Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for VCS groups to deliver aspects of partnership programmes
- Undertake frequent mapping exercise with the VCS with the aim of identifying gaps and overlaps in service provisions and areas of support required
- Support the establishment of a VCS Action Group and will consult with the group on issues of concern to the VCS
- Work with the VCS to address perceptions of inequality and remove the barriers inhibiting the effectiveness of the VCS in partnerships

**The voluntary and community sector will:**

- Work with statutory agencies in the development of a partnership website
- Work with statutory agencies to establish a VCS Action Group, a partnership group that will represent the interest of the VCS
- Work with statutory agencies to identify options for capacity building measures, support and incentives for enhancing effective partnership working
- Welcome the recognition of the inequality perceived by the VCS and will work with statutory agencies to address the barriers to VCS involvement and participation in partnerships
- Welcome the taking of leadership roles in partnerships and ensure that this responsibility is discharged in a professional manner

**ACTION PLAN**

| <b>Action to Deliver Undertakings</b>  | <b>Lead Agencies</b> | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Establish a Steering Group   | All Agencies         | Ongoing            | Yes                          |
| Provide shared training opportunities to VCS on Best Value and new local government structures | Statutory Agencies   | Ongoing            | Yes                          |

|  |                                      |                  |     |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----|
| Provide training and capacity building measures for Statutory agencies staff and VCS for effective partnership working   | VCS & Statutory Agencies (BDC, PCTS) | 2003 and ongoing | Yes |
| VCS and statutory agencies to develop mechanisms for inviting each other to attend their respective training provisions. | VCS & Statutory Agencies             | 2003 and ongoing | Yes |
| Integrate Compact in agencies policies and procedures  | All Agencies                         | 2003 and ongoing | Yes |
| Review/Map current partnership arrangements with the aim of benchmarking community involvement in partnerships           | Statutory Agencies                   | 2003 and ongoing | Yes |
| Develop communication systems, including a website for sharing information for partnership members                       | All Agencies                         | 2003 and ongoing | Yes |

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### **BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BME) GROUPS' CODE**

Both central and local governments now recognise that BME groups, including faith and refugee groups, have important and continuing roles in helping to achieve their objectives and that both can play positive roles in supporting the work of BME groups. Despite this recognition, the BME sector experiences social exclusion, marginalisation and disadvantage. For example, 'Bringing Britain Together' – a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal, (1998) states that “ethnic minority disadvantage cuts across all aspects of deprivation”. Although BME groups work to tackle the disadvantage experienced by the communities they serve, many of them continue to be excluded from the traditional structures of the voluntary and community sector. This often also results in exclusion from engagement with both the local VCS and statutory agencies.

In applying the Compact theme of 'getting it right together' and the aim of addressing the exclusion experienced by BME groups, the Basildon Compact believes that it is vital to engage with this sector to build positive relationships, with mutual trust and confidence. In view of this, actions need to be taken by all concerned to ensure that the BME sector in the District has equality of opportunity to be directly involved in partnerships, consultations and decision-making processes with local statutory agencies. Some of the issues addressed below include: the role of BME groups; the framework for partnerships between statutory agencies and BME groups and local relations; tackling racism, inequality and exclusion; consultation, participation and representation; funding, capacity building and other support issues such as volunteering and mentoring?

## **Joint Undertakings**

Statutory agencies and the BME sector in the Basildon District are committed to establishing and maintaining best practise in their relationships.

### **The VCS and Statutory Agencies will:**

- Develop a partnership approach to responding to policy issues and strategies for achieving race equality, including the promotion of cultural diversity.
- Work together in partnership with other agencies to promote joint working on regeneration initiatives which should be aimed at improving the BME community, social inclusion and a cohesive District.
- Encourage and support volunteering by and within BME communities in line with this Compact's code on Volunteering and code for Community Groups.
- Policy documents should be supported by BME groups to ensure that they address the needs of BME communities.

### **The Statutory Agencies will:**

- Seek and value the contribution the BME sector can make in helping them achieve their objectives.
- Recognise and support the independence of the BME sector, its uniqueness and diversity.
- Operate effective and transparent equal opportunity policies with monitoring and evaluation systems that ensure that the BME sector is treated fairly and with respect in all their interactions with statutory agencies.
- Support and advise the BME sector to have access to grants and funding opportunities administered by local statutory agencies and government funded programmes, particularly those that impact significantly on BME communities.
- Seek the views and encourage the active involvement and participation of the BME sector in the LSP, the development of community plans/strategies and neighbourhood renewal, the Compact SG and the Minorities Forum.

### **The BME sector will:**

- Play a full and active part within the wider VCS in making sure that the Compact undertakings are realised.
- Work in partnership with statutory agencies and the wider VCS in promoting race equality, tackling social exclusion and promoting cultural understanding.
- Facilitate the Minorities Forum as a partnership body, which includes faith groups to share expertise and other practical skills, and as a vehicle for responding to consultation demands and linking with all other partnerships like the Compact Steering Group and the Basildon LSP.

- Make use of appropriate training and capacity building opportunities for its Trustees and BME communities.
- Adapt appropriate quality standards and best practice in the management of a BME sector community premises and in service delivery.

### **On tackling racism, inequality and exclusion**

The need to tackle racism in all its ramifications has long been recognised. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999), the amendment to the Race Relations legislation and the Race Equality in Public Services (2000) are some of the key actions taken to push forward race equality. The Basildon District Compact will provide a framework through which the BME and the local VCS sectors can work in partnership with statutory agencies to:

- Challenge institutional racism
- Detect and take action on processes, attitudes, and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage BME people.

This Compact also recognises that the negative outcomes of social exclusion are disproportionately represented in BME communities. Tackling social exclusion effectively should include:

- Deliberately targeting initiatives at BME communities.
- Work in partnership with the BME sector to draw on their experience and knowledge, to make sure targeted interventions become more effective.
- Tackling racism and exclusion should be kept firmly on the agenda right across the VCS and statutory agencies.

### **On Consultation**

- In recognition of the above, consultation with the BME communities should be all inclusive, recognising the broad spectrum of interests, such as women's groups, gay and lesbian groups, disabled groups, age groups, religious and faith groups.
- A number of barriers exclude the effective involvement of the BME sector in consultation processes. In overcoming some of these barriers particular attention should be given to the most appropriate means of engaging smaller, under-resourced groups (these constitute the majority of the BME sector). These may include:
  - informal interactions
  - meeting language needs
  - offering financial support for expenses incurred
  - offering payments in advance

**On BME participation and representation in policy development, delivery and review:**

- It is imperative that policy development and implementation meets the need of BME communities
- Consideration should be given to the selection of individuals to act as representatives from BME communities to avoid individual overload. Diversity input into policy development should draw on a large pool of individuals, forums and organisations. It should be always important to recognise and value the skills, experience and knowledge held by individuals.

**ACTION PLAN**

| <b>Action to Deliver Undertakings</b>   | <b>Lead Agencies</b>                         | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|---|--|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Involve the BME in strategic and funding partnerships, including the LSP  | LSP, Statutory Agencies                      | 2002               | Yes                          |
| Periodically organise cultural and multi-racial festivals and events  | VCS, with assistance from Statutory Agencies | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Recognise and develop support systems for the Basildon Minorities Forum   | Statutory Agencies (BDC, PCT, ECC)           | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Develop transparent equal opportunities (and race equality) policies, with regular monitoring and reviews                                       | All Agencies                                 | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Provide capacity building measures, and other training and support for BME Groups, including assistance with funding applications and mentoring | All Agencies                                 | Ongoing            | Yes                          |
| Assist the BME Sector and other grass root community groups to acquire premises for service delivery and cross cultural uses                    | Statutory Agencies                           | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Develop and use appropriate mechanisms for consulting with the BME Sector on policy, practice and strategic issues                              | Statutory Agencies                           | Ongoing            | Yes                          |
| Encourage and support volunteering by and within BME communities  | All Agencies                                 | Ongoing            | Yes                          |

| Action to Deliver Undertakings   | Lead Agencies      | Target Date | Resource Implications |
|--|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Recognise and support existing BME umbrella organisations and support the development of new ones (Like the Ethnic Minorities Forum) | All Agencies       | Ongoing     | Yes                   |
| Work proactively in partnership with BME communities to tackle racism in all its ramifications                                       | All Agencies       | Ongoing     | Yes                   |
| Deliberately target initiatives and schemes at BME communities to tackle social exclusion, isolation and to foster equality          | Statutory Agencies | Ongoing     | Yes                   |

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### **COMMUNITY GROUPS' CODE**

#### **What is a community group?**

The national code on community groups states that: it is the role of community groups to lead and represent the community. The community sector is the organised community. It operates closest of all to the grass roots. Community groups operate as communities of interest (i.e. sharing a common concern or purpose or interest, attribute, belief) or a local geographic community – such as a neighbourhood group of residents. Some are campaigning groups and some run services like community nurseries, community centres, or information and advice to their community. Faith groups are also local community groups – communities of belief at a local level. Community groups are usually democratically organised with members taking most decisions at regular meetings.

There are also many small groups whose shared interest is a leisure activity, hobby, sport or “friends of.....”.

#### **Strengths of community groups**

Community groups are a unique source of local information about the communities in which they work which is vital for local authorities to make use of when planning and delivering services to those communities.

#### **Why is there a need for a separate code?**

There are many more community organisations locally than large voluntary service providers. However, the consultation showed that it is difficult for many smaller organisations to engage in with local statutory agencies because they are volunteers who work during the day. It is important to specifically focus on community groups to make sure that statutory authority processes meet their needs as much as paid voluntary sector workers.

## **Undertakings**

### **Joint undertakings**

The VCS and Statutory Agencies will:

- Adhere to this code and compact principles.

### **Statutory Agencies will:**

- Recognise and respect that community groups are almost entirely run by volunteers, with full and busy lives outside their commitment to the group, and that working with and engaging with this sector needs to take account of this.

### **On funding**

- Develop clear funding processes, with clear time scales, indicating when funding is to be available, for what, and how to apply.
- Investigate ways of bringing together funding streams to make administration of funding simpler
- Funders publish split in their funding between community groups and service provider (voluntary) organisations.
- Recognise that community groups are unable to pay for activities in advance, and therefore to fund in advance
- Recognise that if there is a matched funding requirement, that volunteer time can be put towards this, and valued as part of the costs of a project.
- Make monitoring requirements for funding proportionate to the amount of funding on offer
- Support infrastructure bodies like Basildon Billericay and Wickford Council for Voluntary Services (the local CVS) to offer advice and support for community groups to fundraise, including the setting up of new groups

### **On partnership**

- Value community groups for what they have to offer by way of expertise, knowledge and skills
- Recognise that as large organisations with paid professional staff and (often) lead agency status, statutory authorities hold power in partnerships that include community organisations. Recognise that with that power comes responsibility, to ensure partnership structures and meetings are designed to level out the power imbalance by:
  - making it a condition of relevant partnerships that they include community groups
  - offering training and support to community members to take part in partnerships

- listening to community members with respect, and taking action following their views
- building in quorum requirements that include community representation
- making meetings times and venues accessible to community members

### **On transport**

- Support transport initiatives that enable community groups to carry on their activities effectively

### **On communication and information**

- Publish details of different statutory directorates “The Basildon District Directory”– names and telephone numbers so that community groups know whom to contact about their specific area of interest in the different agencies, including the range of expertise in statutory services that community groups can benefit from locally
- Information needs to be accessible to community groups in terms of formats and languages
- Consider re-establishing community development and liaison teams

### **Community Sector will:**

#### **On general issues**

- Tackle discrimination in all its forms
- The community sector will develop clear feedback mechanisms to the community that each group aims to speak for.
- Organisations will develop means of drawing (and holding to account) leadership of the group from community it speaks for.

#### **On specific issues**

- Promote the database of community organisations held by the CVS, and promote the CVS as the access point for information on local community groups
- Set up a federation of community associations, supported by the Compact steering group
- With statutory agencies, the CVS will promote its capacity building support funding advice; training; working with statutory agencies
- Organise ways of community groups learning from each other – offer mentoring and support
- Recognise priority resources of agencies/limited resources/look for ways to share resources/recognise concept of public accountability of agencies

**ACTION PLAN**

| <b>Actions to Deliver Undertakings</b>  | <b>Lead agency</b>        | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Grant scrutiny process in BDC to take into account funding issues in the COMPACT, which includes 3 years funding and service level agreements (SLAs)                | Basildon District Council | August 2002        | Yes                          |
| Essex County Council Social Services, Basildon District Council and the PCTs to discuss stream lining funding to the voluntary sector, in consultation with the VCS | Stat Agencies             | 2003               | None                         |
| Funding policies to the voluntary sector developed in all statutory agencies that take account of issues raised in this document, in consultation with the VCS      | Stat Agencies             | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Local Strategic Partnership to include VCS representation   | BDC / LSP                 | 2002/3             | Yes                          |
| Statutory agencies to develop and adopt guidelines on partnerships including community groups that follow the undertakings of the compact                           | Stat Agencies             | 2003/4             | Yes                          |
| Agencies to review policies on consultation to include the undertakings in this compact code  | Stat Agencies             | 2003/4             | Yes                          |
| Develop an action plan for setting up an umbrella body for community associations   | Steering group            | 2003/4             | Yes                          |
| Organise mentoring between individuals in statutory and community organisations to increase understanding between sectors   | Steering group            | 2003/4             | Yes                          |
| Promote the database of local voluntary organisations through the local media and statutory agencies  | CVS                       | 2002/3             | Yes                          |

| <b>Actions to Deliver Undertakings</b>  | <b>Lead agency</b>               | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Promote the capacity building services available to community organisations in the media  | LSP / Steering Group / CVS / BDC | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Publish the Basildon Directory, linked to the Basildon District Local Strategic Partnership, of who's who in statutory services, and key leads in different fields, so community groups know who to contact | LSP / CVS / BDC                  | 2003/4             | Yes                          |
| Add community association events to the CVS and other websites  | CVS/ BDC                         | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Link the "What's on" of clubs and hobbies into the wider information on what local community groups offer locally   | BDC                              | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Review transport provision for community groups both voluntary and statutory, and ensure that enhanced provision is offered to community groups   | BDC, PCTs, BDVC                  | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Involve relevant community groups in Best Value and the scrutiny process  | BDC, ECC                         | 2003               | Yes                          |

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### **VOLUNTEERING CODE**

Volunteering is described in the national compact as "an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment, or some one (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to close relatives."

A more elegant definition is "the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of the community, undertaken unpaid and by choice."

The four principles of volunteering are:

Choice: You choose to volunteer, you are not forced into it

Diversity: Volunteering should be open to all

Reciprocity: Volunteers don't get paid, but should benefit in other ways – a sense of achievement, skills, and experience

Recognition: The value of volunteering needs to be recognised

How far volunteering includes support to family members is open to debate, as support to family is rarely given totally “freely and by choice” – there are obligations we are under to our family - although it is unpaid.

A volunteer can be active in a statutory, community or voluntary organisation – special police constables are one example of statutory volunteers. Many elected members in statutory authorities are also volunteers. On the other hand, there are paid members of staff - who are not volunteers - in many voluntary organisations.

### **Joint undertakings**

The VCS and Statutory Agencies will:

- Promote volunteering in the Basildon District with events like volunteers’ week and the international day of volunteering, and high profile media coverage
- Value volunteers and volunteering
- Encourage the development and introduction of staff volunteering policies, including paid time off to engage in volunteering activities.

### **On managing volunteers**

- Staff who recruit, induct and manage volunteers should have this work recognised as part of their job description, and receive appropriate training, insurance cover, support and possibility of signposting to job vacancies or opportunities.
- Ensure that there is a clear expense policy in place that reimburses out of pocket expenditure.
- Organisations should ensure that the management committee and senior staff are aware of issues affecting volunteers.
- Volunteers should receive at least thanks and recognition for their contribution – formally and informally. They should get fair treatment, training and support according to the resources of the organisation they are involved in.
- Offer volunteers the opportunity to gain accreditation for their skills gained through volunteering
- Assist potential volunteers to find volunteering opportunities that fit their needs, interests and abilities
- Develop ways of referring “surplus” volunteers to other organisations, and of sharing volunteer recruitment, supported by the volunteer bureau
- Ensure that volunteers have clarity in the role and tasks they are required to do by the organisation
- Have policies in place on equal opportunities, including the recruitment of volunteers, including the recruitment of ex offenders.

**Statutory Agencies will:**

- Recognise that volunteering is fundamental to democracy
- Support volunteering infrastructure bodies, such as the Volunteer Bureau to rely on realistic sustainable long term funding to carry out a high quality service in promoting volunteering locally, and matching volunteers to volunteering opportunities
- Support volunteering by offering a low-cost, high quality criminal records bureau checking system, reducing the administrative fee from Essex County Council for volunteer checks.
- Not to exploit volunteers and use them as a cheap way of delivering public services.

**On volunteers being consulted and involved in partnerships**

- Volunteers' needs will be taken into account when consulting. See the consultation code of good practices for more details: including timing of events, expenses for taking part, and training to take part in partnerships.

**On funding**

- Volunteer time will be recognised by funders as a legitimate contribution to projects.

**Voluntary and Community Sector will:**

**On groups managing volunteers & the volunteer bureau**

- Promote the good practice guide in volunteering available free from the volunteer bureau, and have example volunteer policies available for groups to use.
- Advocate free checks for volunteers from the Criminal Records Bureau, and ensure that local groups have access to a suitable umbrella body.

**ACTION PLAN**

| <b>Actions to Deliver Undertakings</b>                              | <b>Lead agency</b>        | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Promote good practice in volunteering guide                         | CVS / VB                  | 2002/3             | None                         |
| Annual joint events around volunteers week and IYV day (5 December) | Steering Group            | 2002/3/4           | Yes                          |
| Develop service level agreement with the VCS                        | BDC/ ECC / PCT<br>CVS/ VB | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Develop and promote high quality low cost CRB system                | ECC / BDC                 | 2002/3             | Yes                          |

| <b>Actions to Deliver Undertakings</b>   | <b>Lead agency</b>                | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Develop volunteer policies, using good practice examples for volunteer bureau                          | All orgs. working with volunteers | 2003               | None                         |
| Develop mechanism for sharing volunteers through volunteer bureau                                      | CVS / VB                          | 2003/4             | Yes                          |
| When developing consultation policies (see consultation code) incorporate undertakings under this code | Stat Agencies                     | 2003               | Possibly                     |
| When developing partnership policies (see partnership code) incorporate undertakings under this code   | Stat Agencies                     | 2003               | Possibly                     |

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### **FUNDING CODE**

This Code is intended to be of mutual advantage to statutory organisations and the voluntary and community groups. It should help to develop and sustain effective procedures that result in sound funding decisions to support well-delivered programmes. Funding helps to underwrite the capacity of voluntary and community organisations to add value by:-

- Using their expertise to inform and implement Government 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
- Co-ordinating/meeting the aims and objectives of funding partners

## **Undertakings**

### **Statutory Agencies will:-**

- Endeavour to develop a 3-year 'rolling' funding policy
- Promote fair access to funding by providing clarity of what funding is available, when it will become available and what the criteria for access is
- Provide application forms that are simple, easy to understand and to complete
- Recognise core costs and the different ways these can be met
- Develop a joint approach with the voluntary and community groups to monitor and evaluate the use of funding against agreed objectives – making sure that these are proportionate to the amount of funding on offer
- Work with voluntary sector in exploring contracting opportunities while acknowledging cross geographical and local authority boundaries
- Investigate ways of bringing funding streams together to make admin. simpler such as the establishment of one stop funding unit
- Provide support and guidance in the completion of funding applications
- To recognise that some community groups are unable to pay for activities in advance, and therefore requires funds to be released in advance
- To recognise that if there is a matched funding requirement, that volunteer time can be put towards this and valued as part of the costs of a project
- Endeavour to publish the split in their funding between community groups and service provider (voluntary) organisations

### **The Voluntary and Community Sector will:-**

- Have effective and proportionate systems for the management, control, accountability, propriety and audit of finances
- Develop exit strategies for when funding comes to an end
- Develop a joint approach with the statutory organisations to monitor and evaluate the use of funding against agreed objectives
- Work with statutory organisations in exploring contracting opportunities

**ACTION PLAN**

| <b>Actions To Deliver Undertakings</b>   | <b>Lead Agency</b>                      | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|--|---|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Develop a 3 year funding policy which takes into account issues raised in volunteers code  | Statutory Organs.                       | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Provide clarity on what funding is available, when it is available and how it can be accessed where these opportunities fall outside the 3 year funding policy | Statutory Organs.                       | 2003 & ongoing     | Yes                          |
| Develop standardised application forms where possible, seeking the advice of the voluntary sector in the design of the application forms                       | Statutory Organs.                       | 2003 & ongoing     | Possibly                     |
| Explore alternative funding provision for meeting of voluntary organisations core costs  | Statutory Organs.                       | 2003 & ongoing     | Possibly                     |
| Investigate ways of bringing together funding streams to make admin. of funding simpler  | Statutory Organs.                       | 2003 & ongoing     | Yes                          |
| Publish split in funding between community groups and voluntary organisations  | Statutory Organs.                       | 2003 & ongoing     | None                         |
| Clarify processes for establishing exit strategies for when initial funding comes to an end  | Voluntary Organs/Statutory Agencies     | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Develop joint monitoring and evaluation criteria   | Statutory Organs, with Voluntary Sector | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Explore contracting opportunities  | Statutory Organs with Voluntary Sector  | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Provide support and guidance in completion of funding application forms  | Statutory Organs.                       | 2004               | Yes                          |

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**CONSULTATION CODE**

Effective consultation and policy appraisal is an essential part of ensuring that the relationship between statutory and voluntary and community groups works. Voluntary and community groups act as pathfinders for the involvement of users in the design and delivery of services and often act as advocates for those who otherwise would have no voice. In so doing they provide both equality and diversity.

Statutory agencies consult with VCS groups to ensure that in developing its policies it is informed by a wide range of experience, and takes into account the impact of its proposals on different sectors of society.

Effective consultation:-

- Enables others to contribute to the policy making process
- Symbolises the statutory organisations' commitment to be open and accountable
- Leads to more realistic and robust policy that better reflects people's needs and wishes
- Helps to plan, prioritise and deliver better services
- Can create a working partnership and mutual understanding with those consulted
- Identifies problems quickly enabling matters to be put right before they escalate

## **Undertakings**

**The Statutory Agencies will:**

- Build consultation into the planning cycles and provide a 12-week consultation period on policy proposals wherever possible
- Write documents in simple language and be clear about their purpose - i.e. SMART objectives (specific measurable, achievable, realistic time bound)
- Give feedback to community groups after the consultation is completed and explain where decisions have already been made and make clear what can change and what cannot change
- Use more than one method of consultation and learn from others
- Ensure that the language and format of consultations is relevant and accessible to community groups
- Ensure that consultation events take place during the evening and weekend as well during the day so that volunteers who work can attend.
- Support the development of an umbrella organisation for Community Associations to help consultation with these organisations, and to enable these groups to influence decision-makers
- Seek to be flexible and sensitive to the needs of those who are to be consulted with – to think about how to reach all of the intended target audience and to take account positively of the specific needs, interests and contributions of those parts of the sector which represent women, black and ethnic minority groups and the socially excluded.
- Publicise the consultation and encourage participation taking into account the timing of consultation events including the evenings and weekends

- Join more than one consultation exercise together where this is possible to do using the Local Strategic Partnership Group as an opportunity to identify consultation programme
- Take into account the cost to volunteers in taking part in consultation and offer incentives to achieve involvement required
- Analyse carefully the results of the consultation and report back on the views that were received and what has been done as a result
- Evaluate carefully after consulting, and learn lessons for next time

**The Voluntary and Community Groups will:-**

- Provide feedback within the consultation period
- Take account positively of the specific needs, interests and contributions of women, black and ethnic minority groups and the socially excluded
- Use their infrastructure to encourage participation in consultations (commensurate with their available resources) including co-operating with each other through intermediary bodies and national, regional and local networks to streamline the consultation process
- Give their groups feedback on the outcome of the consultation

**ACTION PLAN:**

| <b>Actions To Deliver Undertakings</b>  | <b>Lead Agency</b>                                   | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|---|--|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Include consultation in planning cycles and provide 12 week period wherever possible  | Statutory Organs.                                    | Immediate          | Possibly                     |
| Write documents in simple language and be clear about their purpose including what can change and what cannot change  | Statutory Organs                                     | Immediate          | None                         |
| Use more than one method of consultation to encourage participation and develop targeted approaches taking into account timing of events                                      | Statutory Organs with Voluntary and Community Groups | 2002/2003          | Possibly                     |
| Statutory organisations to establish systems to provide feedback to consultees  | Statutory Organs.                                    | 2002/2003          | Yes                          |
| Statutory organisations will establish a system of sharing their consultation programme within the LSP structure in order that joint approaches can be made wherever possible | Statutory Organs.                                    | 2002/2003          | No                           |

| <b>Actions To Deliver Undertakings</b>                                  | <b>Lead Agency</b>                                   | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|---|--|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Provide incentives to consultees  | Statutory Organs.                                    | 2002/2003          | Yes                          |
| Evaluate consultation, provide feedback to consultees and learn lessons | Statutory Organs. and voluntary and community groups | 2002/2003          | Yes                          |

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### **PREMISES CODE**

Premises are a big issue for all organisations in the District; rents are high, and there is little available land for redevelopment. There are many small groups with very low incomes for whom even hiring a hall once a month is expensive. There were specific issues around individual community centres, which are outside the scope of the Compact.

#### **Undertakings**

##### **The Statutory Agencies will:**

- Work with the voluntary sector to produce lists of available halls for hire
- Review the use of the premises they control, and consider options for opening premises where appropriate to voluntary groups
- Develop policies on use of their buildings for the voluntary sector.
- Review lease arrangements with VCS groups, for external funding application purposes, with the view of extending these to up to 25 years or as appropriate
- Work with the voluntary sector to promote the donation of buildings once a month in-kind from private companies
- Work with the voluntary sector to offer information and support to groups about home working

##### **The District Council, as a planning authority, will**

- Endeavour to offer technical support to voluntary groups looking to develop community properties
- Encourage across departments working at an early stage to offer support to voluntary groups bidding for the development of community premises.
- Ensure the needs of community premises are included into development schemes and Local plans, where possible.

### The voluntary and community sector will

- Work together where possible to make the best use of premises
- Work with the statutory authorities to develop a voluntary sector centre to offer affordable accessible premises to groups, including new groups, with serviced IT and telephones
- Work with the statutory sector to develop a proposal for an Arts Centre
- Take responsibility for reasonable running and up keep of buildings under their control, within the constraints of lease and other agreements
- Recognise that there are costs associated with maintaining and servicing office space that need to be met from some source
- Ensure that they take responsibility for Health and Safety, undertaking training where required
- Maximise the use of community buildings for the benefit of the whole community

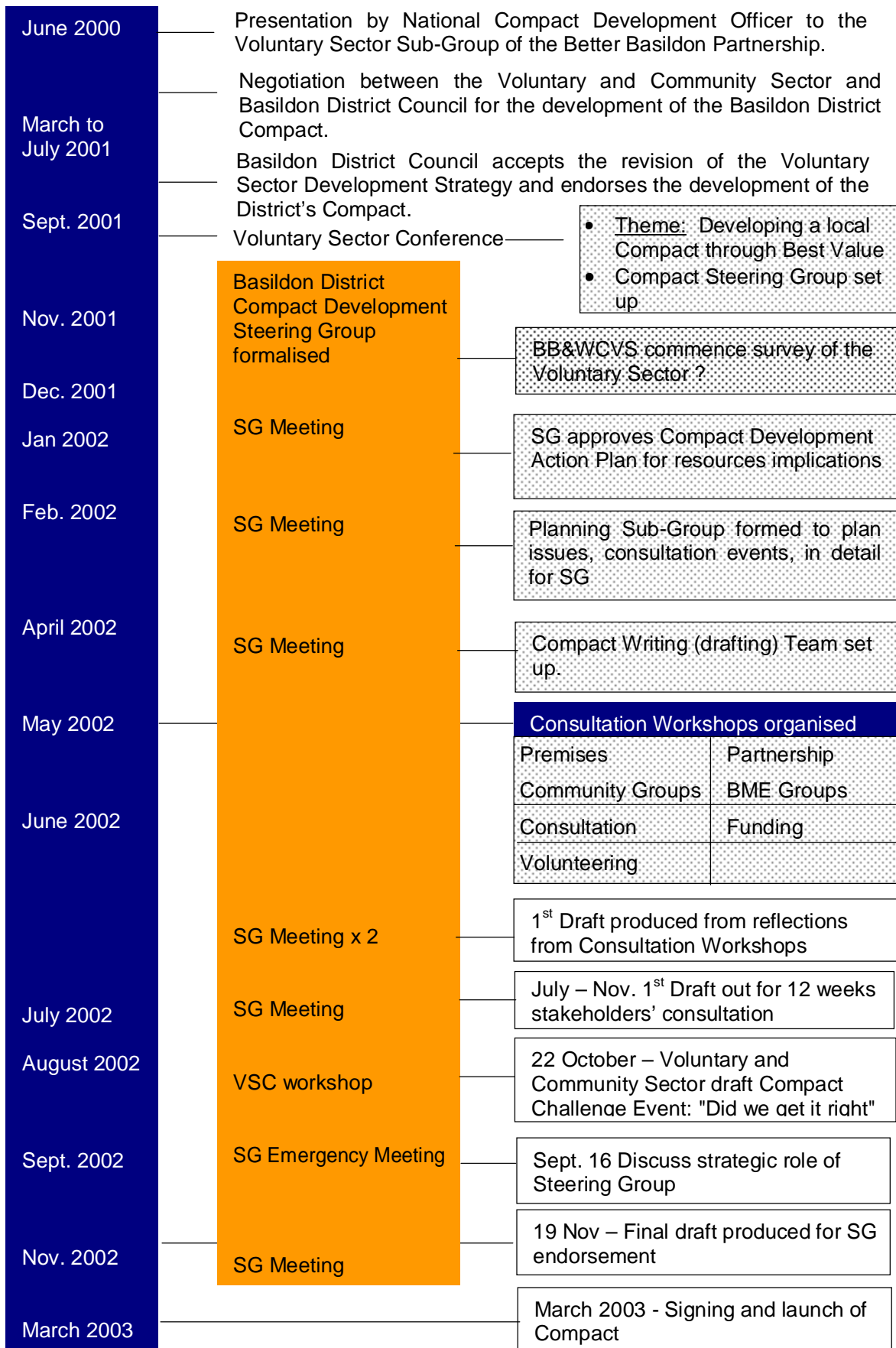
### **ACTION PLAN**

| <b>Actions to Deliver Undertakings</b>  | <b>Lead Agency</b>             | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Produce an ongoing list of available space, and include on the CVS and BDC websites | BDC / CVS                      | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Review premises for under use   | All Stat. and Vol. Orgs.       | 2003 / 4           | No                           |
| Review security of tenure of VCS organisations within premises                      | BDC / ECC / Comm Assocs.       |                    | No                           |
| Promote "in-kind" donation of premises monthly from private companies               | BDC / CVS                      | 2003 / 4           | Yes                          |
| Produce home working pack for new groups  | BDC / CVS                      | 2003 / 4           | Yes                          |
| Produce a paper on voluntary development centre, linked to the Fairshare scheme     | CVS / BDC                      | 2002               | No                           |
| Develop premises policy in relation to the voluntary sector                         | Statutory agencies             | 2003               | Yes                          |
| Produce a paper on Arts Development Centre  | BDC / Bas District Arts Assoc. | 2002               | No                           |
| Review leasing policies and charging structures                                     | Community Associations         | 2003               | No                           |

| <b>Actions to Deliver Undertakings</b>  | <b>Lead Agency</b>           | <b>Target Date</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b> |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Hold training sessions on managing your building, and recent legislation affecting this | CVS / Community Associations | 2003               | Yes                          |



**DEVELOPING THE BASILDON DISTRICT COMPACT: THE KEY MILESTONES**





**LIST OF ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE SIGNED UP TO THE BASILDON DISTRICT COMPACT TO DATE:**

Basildon, Billericay, Wickford Council for Voluntary Services  
Basildon Citizens Advice Bureau  
Basildon District Council  
Basildon District Volunteer Carers  
Basildon Islamic Centre  
Basildon Magistrates Court Witness Service  
Basildon Mediation  
Basildon Muslim Womens Group  
Basildon Primary Care Trust  
Billericay Early Years Forum  
Bosom Friends, Basildon & Thurrock Breast Cancer Support Group  
CRUSE Bereavement Care  
Essex County Council  
Essex Police  
Great Berry Residents Association  
Hamelin Trust  
Home Start Basildon  
Harmoni Therapeutic Services  
'Interlock!' Northlands Park Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Scheme  
La Danse Fantastique  
Laindon and Billericay Tenant Management Board  
Noak Bridge Community Association  
Pound Lane Neighbourhood Trust  
RPS Rainer  
St Luke's Hospice  
START (Support Through Art)  
South Essex Rape & Incest Crisis Centre  
Sure Start  
Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership  
The Salvation Army, Basildon Corps  
Victim Support South Essex