

Driving NI7 Agenda Forward

Partnership working between the statutory and the Third sector agencies has become an increasingly important part of delivering better services for local people.

Thurrock's Sustainable Community Strategy launched in April 2007 sets out the vision, aims and strategy to enable all the public, private, voluntary and community sector partners to work together in partnership to ensure :

Thurrock will be the location of choice - a place where people thrive and prosper; where you can access services that will make a difference; and where development is sustainable and supports our new and existing communities as they grow

The Shaping Thurrock Partnership (Thurrock LSP) brings the partners and the activity themes together to deliver a series of programmes designed to achieve this vision. These efforts contribute in driving the NI7 agenda forward.

Thurrock LSP board also provides leadership to NI7 initiatives. Community Involvement board, which is a sub-group of LSP, is providing platform to third sector organisations to drive NI7 agenda forward. Thurrock Council has shown real commitment through various initiatives and support.

Thurrock Compact is an agreement that sets out how different sectors will work together to effectively address the challenges facing the borough and improve outcomes for residents. It sets out principles and values and makes clear commitments that all sectors can apply.

Compact Monitoring Groups (CMG), hosted by the CVS, meets regularly and has representations from VCF and statutory agencies including, Thurrock Council. This group organises compact events, plan the work programme and drive the "Compact Agenda" forward.

Thurrock third sector and statutory sector, working in partnership, has taken a lead on

1. Produced a document which clarifies what is meant by "Developing a Thriving Third Sector".
2. Producing a VCS Strategy on Developing a Thriving third Sector after consultation with VCS in Thurrock.
3. Calling in statutory partners to join in developing a "Thurrock Third Sector Development Strategy", positive development has been made towards achieving this aim.
4. Have organising 2 thematic stakeholder's event 1) LSP and the third sector, 2) Comprehensive Area Assessment and role of the third sector. The purpose

of these events have been to develop shared leadership, VCS and the statutory sector, to create an environment for a thriving third sector.

5. We have acknowledged the league position of Thurrock VCS and statutory sector relationship after Home Office National Survey of Third Sector organisations' report was published. We are putting our efforts together to build a package of support for the third sector organisation. We are hopeful that next year the outcome of the repeat survey would be better.
6. We are at present undertaking research on identifying Infrastructure needs of Third Sector organisations, specifically focusing on the effects of economic downturn and how sector can be better supported in the present economic climate.
7. A Training Workshop was held on 20th July 2009. The purpose of this event was to use the Outcome Based Accountability framework to get from Talk to Action. This workshop enabled all parties to understand what was meant by creating a suitable environment for a thriving third sector and how to create such an environment.
8. A comprehensive NI7 action plan has been finalised to develop the third sector in Thurrock and to deliver on NI7 targets.
9. A portfolio of evidence has been put in place to capture NI7 progress. This document is in the process and will be available by the end of August.

The Voluntary, community and faith sector organizations are aware that 'Thurrock Compact' exists. They also know that they can approach the Compact Champions if relationships with the statutory sector don't work out. My experience is that the 'Thurrock Compact' has not, as yet, been sufficiently put to the test. Nevertheless I am hopeful that we can achieve improved outcomes.

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