

COMPACT AT WORK



Making the Compact work for you

Improved Procurement Processes

Essex County Council has recently revised its procurement policies. By removing barriers and levelling the playing field for voluntary and community sector organisations, they now follow both the letter and the spirit of the Essex Compact.

Impact:

At Essex County Council a Working Group has sought to simplify and provide helpful guidance on the tendering process, together with assigning risk in a way which is proportionate to the value of the opportunity. This culture shift towards fairness and equality in procurement will mean better, more informed bids from the sector with less time being wasted on filling in forms. The anticipated result is that more voluntary sector organisations will feel empowered to bid and their unique skills and local knowledge will benefit their communities greatly.

What happened:

By integrating the Compact into guidance across all of their spending processes, the council has ensured that Compact compliance and good procurement practice are now seen as two sides of the same coin. Essex's 'Funding and Procurement Code of Conduct' formalises the Compact as an expectation rather than an aspiration and Procurement Officers will now see compliance as part of their job.

The council has sensibly included guidance in this code on how to engage with the voluntary and community sector as well as on the proper procedure for assessing the impact of procurement.

Recognising that more could be done, a working group was established, initially made up of Essex based business representatives but now being expanded to include voluntary and community sector representatives.

This working group has already been successful in removing, or at least reducing barriers to sector organisations. The council's standard pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) has been reduced in length by half and is accompanied by a 'How to' guide which makes specific reference to the Compact and a useful 'Fit to Supply' checklist, which ensures that bids are well informed. The PQQ also sets levels of Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance on a case by case basis ensuring that risk is proportionate to the nature and value of the opportunity.

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Compact Name:

[Essex Compact](#)

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Compact Principles

3.2

3.5

3.6

3.7

3.9

Tags

Working groups
Implementation
Value
Local Compacts
Members

Quote

“The Compact is all about developing best practice and mainstreaming fair ways of doing things, and we’ve seen some real advances in procurement policies of which this is an example”.



Simon Banks
Community Planning and Public Engagement
Essex County Council

Relevant Compact Principles

3.2 Consider a wide range of ways to fund or resource CSOs, including grants, contracts, loan finance, use of premises and so on. Work to remove barriers that may prevent CSOs accessing government funding, thereby enabling smaller organisations to become involved in delivering services where they are best placed to achieve the desired outcomes.

3.5 Ensure well managed and transparent application and tendering processes, which are proportionate to the desired objectives and outcomes of programmes.

3.6 Agree with CSOs how outcomes, including the social, environmental or economic value, will be monitored before a contract or funding agreement is made. Ensure that monitoring and reporting is relevant and proportionate to the nature and size of the opportunity. Be clear about what information is being asked for, and why and how it will be used.

3.7 Ensure equal treatment across sectors, including reporting and monitoring arrangements, when tendering for contracts.

3.9 Discuss and allocate risks to the organisation(s) best equipped to manage them. Where prime contractors are used, ensure they adhere to the principles of this Compact in allocating risk. Ensure delivery terms and risks are proportionate to the nature and value of the opportunity.

Related Links

[The Essex Compact](#)

[Essex procurement guidance documents](#)

Compact Voice: www.compactvoice.org.uk