

**A THIRD SECTOR STRATEGY
FOR
PLYMOUTH**

2008-2011

Foreword

Our vision, of being one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone, is at the centre of the Local Strategic Partnership's plans. We understand that local people need to be able and willing to involve themselves in decision making about services that affect them for the vision to become a reality.

A strong, independent and diverse third sector has a crucial role to play in helping us achieve our ambitions. Working with business and statutory partners, the sector has a unique contribution as an advocate for individuals and groups whose views need to be heard, in bringing people together to fight inequality, and increasingly in delivering services to citizens.

A great deal has already been achieved in working together to support a thriving third sector, and there is still much we can do to improve the way that we work together to achieve outcomes that would not be possible if our organisations were working alone.

This document sets out how we plan to work together to increase and strengthen the role of the third sector in helping the city to achieve its ambitions.

Vivien Pengelly
Leader of the Council and Chair of Plymouth 2020

What do we mean by the term 'The Third Sector'?

Central government gives the following definition in their 'Third Sector strategy for communities and local government' published in June 2007.

"a huge diversity of non governmental organisations ...value driven and principally reinvest surpluses or raise funds to further social, environmental or cultural objectives ... includes community groups, voluntary organisations, faith and equalities groups, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives, mutuals and housing associations"

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Executive Summary

This strategy has been prepared in response to a request by the Executive Group of the Local Strategic Partnership in July 2007. The 'issues and drivers' section of the document sets out the reasons for the request, which range from an understanding of the growing importance of the sector in supporting the social inclusion agenda and in service delivery to an acknowledgement of the need for greater consistency in funding, commissioning and infrastructure arrangements amongst all partners if the potential of the sector is to be fully realised. The strategy also summarises the national context for developing the third sector, ensuring that local priorities are consistent with those of the government.

In addition, Plymouth's Compact has been incorporated into the strategy, and sets out specific undertakings for each sector to establish a framework for positive, effective working relationships.

The cross sector working group set up to deliver the strategy agreed a set of goals that, when delivered would ensure a 'best practice' approach to supporting and developing the third sector in the city. An exercise was undertaken to 'baseline' current arrangements against the agreed goals to establish what needs to be done to make progress against each of them.

Finally, seven proposals have been put forward for consideration by the LSP that, if agreed, will ensure that the strategy is implemented.

1. Vision and Introduction

Plymouth's Local Strategic Partnership has fully embraced a vision of being one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone. This is only possible where communities are engaged and involved in decisions that impact on their everyday lives, supported by an independent and diverse third sector.

The Third Sector Strategy sets out how the LSP is planning to make itself better at engaging with the third sector and enabling it to develop as an effective local partner, specifically by:

- Recognising the role of the third sector in our work
- Reducing inconsistency in how we work with the third sector
- Creating a framework for strong local partnerships
- Ensuring fairness in service delivery

1.1 Development of the strategy

In January 2007 the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP – Plymouth 2020) Executive responded to the funding deficit of two key infrastructure community and voluntary sector organisations, took steps to address immediate funding issues but also commissioned a fundamental review of those CVS functions which support the LSP and how they are funded.

This led to the development of a project to produce an overarching strategy which can direct and guide the public sector's relationship with the community and voluntary sector (now increasingly embraced within the third sector) and bring arrangements more in line with government policy and strategy.

A Third Sector Steering Group was formed to lead this work, chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council, involving representatives from the public sector bodies in the city and the voluntary and community sector who are members of the Change Up Consortium and latterly, representatives from the business sector and Government Office South West.

Goals were clarified and agreed to set future direction against the current issues and "drivers". Soundings and feedback have been taken to develop a position statement on the current arrangements which has led to the development of a number of proposals to move the relationship forward. An early draft of the Strategy was presented at a Community and Public Sector conference in September 2007 – "Together we can..." at which further feedback was taken and incorporated. The result is the current Third Sector Strategy document.

There have been concurrent actions to refresh and revitalise the Plymouth Compact which sets the "rules of engagement" between the public and third sector and this is incorporated as an integral part of the document.

2. Issues and drivers

2.1 Discussions amongst Members of the Steering Group led to the identification of a number of issues which impacted on working arrangements and relationships and required attention. These issues have provided focus and the Strategy that has been formulated, seeks to address them.

1. An effective Third Sector will bring significant benefits to all the citizens of Plymouth
2. Decision making and resourcing, in some areas, in relation to the Third Sector has been inconsistent, ad hoc, siloed and short term
3. A need to address the lack of understanding about the value and opportunity to utilise the expertise of the VCS in successful service delivery
4. The need to build the capacity of black and minority ethnic groups along with other communities of interest and geography to enable effective decision making at both neighbourhood and city levels
5. The need to develop an agreed co-ordination mechanism within the third sector at an infrastructure level
6. Cabinet Office pressure for greater use of the third sector in public service delivery
7. Local Area Agreement mandatory outcomes for increased levels of volunteering and greater involvement of local people in decision making
8. The Justice and Health and Local Government Bills place further duties on statutory organisations to engage with the third sector.

3. Strategy Goals

3.1 Goals for the Strategy have been formulated and agreed to meet the vision and the issues and drivers identified. They have been significant in guiding the inquiries and analysis which has informed the development of the position statement and also have influenced the proposals contained within the Strategy. The goals themselves have been developed and modified as the Strategy has evolved.

1. Ensure the role of the Third Sector is understood and acknowledged across all sectors, particularly valuing its contribution through volunteering and campaigning activity to strengthen communities and build civil society.
2. Ensure that whole communities are involved in shaping the city's future, including those who traditionally have not played an active role
3. Increase the role of users and communities in commissioning decisions
4. Ensure that a rolling, cross sector three year funding strategy is in place
5. Facilitate and encourage partnership with the LSP as far as possible making use of existing infrastructure

6. Ensure infrastructure continues to support small community groups
7. Review barriers and incentives to the transfer of assets to aid the development of “community anchor” organisations to promote enterprise, and sustainable support to local groups
8. Focus on third sector organisations of sufficient scale and capacity to develop and deliver our shared objectives across the city
9. Successfully establish ‘community calls for action’, as set out in the Justice and Health and Local Government Bill.
10. Strengthen and make effective the working relationships and arrangements between the public sector, business sector and the third sector building on and complying with the principles and undertakings contained within the Plymouth Compact.
11. Increase the third sector’s role in public service delivery particularly through the promotion and stimulation of social enterprise
12. Ensure that the third sector is involved early in policy formation, consultation, service delivery and design, and that its voice is heard and reflected

3.2 Plymouth Change Up Consortium Infrastructure Strategy

This Strategy document has been reviewed against the Consortium Infrastructure Strategy and there is alignment. Both documents share a similar vision for the involvement and contribution of the third sector to the city’s development. This strategy puts forward proposals for the sustainable resourcing of infrastructure activity and views the Consortium as the prime delivery agent, both emphasised within the Infrastructure Strategy. It also provides a basis upon which the key issues for frontline groups contained within Infrastructure Strategy can be addressed.

This Strategy will now guide and direct the development of the public sector’s relationship with the third sector, as the Infrastructure Strategy guides the Change Up Consortium to stabilise and improve provision to front line organisations across the sector.

4. The national scene and its impact on the local context

- 4.1 At this time there are three documents of significance from Government Departments in relation to the third sector.
- 4.2 HM Treasury has undertaken a significant review of the sector over a number of years, which culminated in a final report, published in July 2007 by the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury entitled “The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration” 2007. The Department for Communities and Local Government has produced a “Third sector strategy for Communities and Local Government” discussion paper and the Department For Education and Skills also published its “Third Sector Strategy and Action Plan”. These Departmental strategy documents take their lead from the Cabinet Office - Treasury Review but

emphasise the significance of the sector and connect with the themes set out in the Review.

- 4.3 The Review sets out the proposed framework for partnership with the third sector for the next ten years. It makes significant comments about the anticipated role of the sector and also, as the report was prepared to coincide with the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, identifies areas targetted for national investment. All of this has a relevance to the local context and has influenced the formation of this Strategy and will also provide a useful benchmark for further developments.

Cabinet Office and HM Treasury Review on the role of the sector

- 4.4 The sector is seen as a **significant independent and positive force** which is bringing and will continue to bring key benefits which need fostering in a **long term relationship**.

Its strengths and specific contribution can be summarised as:

- drawing communities together, delivering involvement and participation, tackling disadvantage and encouraging cohesion
- adding informal capacity through voluntary involvement which can positively reduce demand for formal statutory services
- being a force for change, innovation and development in public services
- stimulating enterprise activity that can deliver social and environmental outcomes through business approaches

- 4.5 The Review identifies four areas of common interest held between Government and the Sector and sets out its vision in relation to each of these areas.

1. **Enabling greater voice and campaigning** – “to ensure that third sector organisations are able to play a growing role in civic society, better engage with decision makers and are never hindered from speaking out and representing their members users and communities”.
2. **Strengthening Communities** – “to foster greater shared actions between different sections of the community and work within Local Government, public services and others to promote understanding and relationships across society”.
3. **Transforming services** - “to improve public services through delivery where it is best placed to do so but also being the catalyst for change in designing and innovating development of services”.
4. **Encouraging social enterprise** – “to create the conditions for the development of thousands more social enterprises and enabling those organisations that wish to diversify their income streams to undertake more trading activity”.

Funding the sector

- 4.6 The trend away from financing the sector through sole reliance on grants continues - a mix of funding streams including asset transfer and where appropriate public

service delivery is favoured to encourage sustainability, along with a number of strategically targetted investments.

Some of the investment measures highlighted in the Review are shown below.

4.7 Enabling greater voice and campaigning

- Investment in innovative consultation approaches and better use of the Compact to protect the rights of organisations to campaign

4.8 Strengthening Communities

- Investment in £80m fund over 4 years designed to provide core small grant funding for grass root organisations supporting community action and influence and complementing existing provision by local authorities
- £50m to local independent foundations to invest in endowment funds to provide sustainable funding over time to frontline organisations
- Investment in community anchor organisations to enable them to become sustainable through support to develop assets or generate income and move away from grant based funding
- Government investment to enable asset transfer development, taking forward the £30m community assets fund already announced
- Investment of £117 m in the national framework for youth volunteering and also encouraging volunteering between young and old and within those groups where people are less likely to volunteer

4.9 Transforming services

- Deliver and extend the national programme for third sector commissioning
- Identify key opportunities for third sector organisations to deliver more and better public services – key areas identified are in waste, health and social care and youth services
- The Department of Health and the Department for Business and Enterprise will publish third sector strategies and the Department for Communities and Local Government and Department for Children Schools and Families will move forward with their already published strategies. The Ministry of Justice will continue its involvement with the third sector in support of work of Community Justice Centres. From the Department of Work and Pensions opportunities for the third sector to deliver Pathways support will exist.
- Invest £65m in the Futurebuilders Fund for organisations looking to deliver public services in all areas

4.10 Encouraging social enterprise

- Investment in further raising awareness of the social enterprise business model

- Work to improve the business support that is available for people wanting to start and grow social enterprises through Business Link and capacity building support from Capacitybuilders

4.11 Sustaining the partnership over time

- £83m through Capacitybuilders to support infrastructure building across the themes of the third sector review. An increased focus on ensuring infrastructure organisations reach down to the smallest organisations building capacity at community level, as well as investment in a voice programme and ensuring infrastructure is equipped to support organisations wishing to adopt a social enterprise approach.

4.12 As well as this investment the Review highlights that partnership working will be strengthened through a review and revision of the Compact in 2008/09 and that the Government directed Comprehensive Area Assessment performance framework to be introduced for localities from 2008 will monitor to ensure the effective involvement of the third sector. The indicators from the National Indicator Set that have been selected for Plymouth's revised Local Area Agreement are:

- participation in regular volunteering (local indicator)
- an environment for a thriving third sector (NI7)
- percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality

Change Up

4.13 A Capacity Building and Infrastructure¹ Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector was published by the Home Office in 2004. Although this document is over three years old – it still has relevance in describing the purpose, form and funding of infrastructure for the VCS/ third sector. A number of points are reproduced here.

4.14 The “bold but achievable” aim set by the framework was that, “.....by 2014, the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations will be met by support which is available nationwide, structured for maximum efficiency, offering excellent provision which is accessible to all while reflecting and promoting diversity and is sustainably funded”.

4.15 The framework was designed to be used, “as a planning tool for Government, funders and voluntary and community sector partners at all levels ... enabling them to develop action plans and providing a point of reference for future thinking”.

4.16 The framework, although stressing that no one size fits all, identified the support needs of frontline organisations as

Performance improvement – frontline organisations should be better able to improve the performance of their organisation, choosing tools right for them. Infrastructure organisations should act as clearing houses for skill sharing, mentoring and opportunities to supply help and support without charge.

¹Infrastructure comprises the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people knowledge & skills that exist to support & develop, co-ordinate, represent & promote frontline organisations

Workforce development and leadership – employing organisations should have greater access to HR support and advice and there should be accessible professional development opportunities for VCS workers

ICT – frontline organisations and funders should have a common awareness of costs and benefits of ICT

Governance – Board members should be aware of their responsibilities and have access to helpful information and development

Recruiting and developing volunteers - there should be a lean effectively marketed high quality volunteering infrastructure

Funding VCS activity – frontline organisations should be able to take advantage of opportunities to diversify their income sources – skills in contract negotiation, effective fund raising, and asset ownership were highlighted

To meet those needs, the framework identified that a variety of ways could be used by organisations helping each other as well as from public sector. Specialist infrastructure², including that working with marginalised groups should be integral to the developments of “hubs of activity”, and should be represented in the management of generalist infrastructure³. It was envisaged at all levels – including the local level - that “infrastructure should gradually coalesce into geographic hubs of activity with services sharing premises, back office facilities or merging depending on needs”.

4.17 On funding, the framework commented as follows:

“A higher proportion of infrastructure costs should be funded by frontline organisations through membership fees and the sale of services. The costs of infrastructure services should therefore be included in the core costs of delivery. The public sector also has a key role to play in maintaining the existence of strong and robust infrastructure. Public sector funding should be long term, strategic and focused on clear objectives which infrastructure bodies should deliver to agreed standards.”

This has been taken into account in the formulation of the proposals contained later in the Strategy.

² Infrastructure organisations that provide support to a particular “sub-sector” of the voluntary and community sector, or offer a specific area of expertise

³ Infrastructure organisations who provide support to all frontline organisations within a particular geographic area

5. Position statement (Where we are now)

- 5.1 In order to establish what must be done to meet the goals of this strategy, it is necessary to clarify what the current position is.

A position statement has been compiled from both factual and anecdotal evidence provided initially by Third Sector Infrastructure organisations represented on the Change-Up Consortium, representatives from public sector organisations, and from comments made by attendees at the September 2007 - Community & Public Sector Conference – “Together we can...”

This position statement is contained within Appendix 1 of this document.

What follows is a summary of key points made in relation to each of the goals of the strategy.

Goal 1. The role of the Third Sector is understood and acknowledged across all sectors, particularly valuing its contribution through volunteering and campaigning activity to strengthen communities and build civil society.

- 5.2 The term generates a sense of coherence which is not necessarily felt by people working, for instance, in the VCS organisations, housing associations and social enterprises within the city.
- 5.3 Up to now, there has not been enough momentum towards achieving a greater coming together and co-ordination across the sector.
- 5.4 Contributions from both public and third sector representatives indicate a degree of frustration that there is great potential within the sector in the city which is not being capitalised upon and could be achieved if there was greater collaboration.
- 5.5 There is a willingness for actions to be initiated to achieve a greater sense of coherence across the sector.

Goal 2. Ensure that whole communities are involved in shaping the city's future, including those who traditionally have not played an active role

- 5.6 There is not a clear approach in place in relation to engaging neighbourhoods/communities of geography across the city. Housing associations may have a contribution to make here.
- 5.7 More needs to be done to establish comprehensive and open ways to achieve involvement across communities of geography and interest.
- 5.8 More needs to be done to establish clear and joined up means of engagement with marginalised groups, including people from B&ME groups, across the city. There are also concerns raised about the patchy infrastructure for diverse communities and lack of support to capacity build BME infrastructure. Fata He highlight that there needs to be a clear definition between BME led groups (those BME groups and organisations whose boards and management committees are at least 80% represented by people from BME backgrounds), and those organisations that deliver services to various BME groups. Fata He suggest that there needs to be

clarity around this point as funding/commissioning does not always go to BME led groups, which leaves “a feeling of ‘having done to’ rather than ‘doing for themselves’.”

Goal 3. Increase the role of users and communities in commissioning decisions

- 5.9 There are examples e.g. within the Learning and Skills Council and Children’s Services, where work with the sector is conducted in a structured and strategic way on an equal partnership basis to build up capacity. These approaches could be built on and act as a model more widely across the sector.
- 5.10 More clarity is required from both public and third sector perspectives about which organisations represent which sections of the population.
- 5.11 There is a need for a well maintained map of the network of organisations across the sector and their representative mandate.
- 5.12 Contributors indicate that involvement and dealings within the third sector are not always inclusive. Some people and organisations feel “left out of the loop” or excluded from involvement.
- 5.13 There is, in some cases, a lack of clear coordinated forums where people can come together. More action is needed to bring together disjointed groups. The network of organisations within the sector needs to be actively managed.

Goal 4. Ensure a rolling cross sector three year funding strategy is in place

- 5.14 There are examples of three year funding arrangements for procured services in parts of the sector but this approach is not applied across the whole.
- 5.15 Little evidence that the principles of full cost recovery in relation to procured services are being applied or consistently interpreted within the sector.
- 5.16 Community and infrastructure organisations are largely dependent on short term (1 year) funding support
- 5.17 Positive developments in the sector are inhibited by the short term funding because organisations are so focussed upon survival.

Goal 5. Facilitate and encourage partnership with the LSP as far as possible making use of existing infrastructure

- 5.18 The presence of the third sector within LSP governance arrangements which is achieved through a clear open transparent election process is perceived as a strength.
- 5.19 Current infrastructure arrangements are perceived as unclear and poorly understood across both the public and third sectors
- 5.20 There are concerns that the current infrastructure is not really fit for dealing with the diversity of the sector with suggestions that there should be more joining up of

organisations, more involvement with other strands of the sector (social enterprise and housing associations) and a central point of contact.

- 5.21 There is a perceived need to achieve consensus on what is required of the infrastructure for the third sector and how it should be funded on a medium term basis.

Goal 6. Ensure infrastructure continues to support small community groups

- 5.22 There is a perceived need to improve communication between infrastructure and front line organisations to improve networking and capacity building.
- 5.23 There is a perceived need to look at alternative models for providing support for small community groups, e.g. through larger organisations, community anchor organisations and extended schools.

Goal 7. Review barriers and incentives to the transfer of assets to aid the development of “community anchor” organisations to promote enterprise and sustainable support to local groups

- 5.24 There are a number of examples of asset transfer in the city yielding lasting benefits and potential sustainability.
- 5.25 Knowledge and lessons from these examples do not appear to be widely known or disseminated. There is a need to achieve sign up to a strategic application of such an approach.

Goal 8. Focus on third sector organisations of sufficient scale and capacity to develop and deliver our shared objectives across the City

- 5.26 It is perceived that the current infrastructure does not focus on the needs of medium/ larger size third sector organisations.
- 5.27 The potential for medium/larger organisations to support smaller third sector organisations is not being sufficiently explored and exploited.
- 5.28 More needs to be done to bring together the strands of the sector – community, voluntary and social enterprise.
- 5.29 More focus is required on the proactive promotion of social enterprise activity and exploration of the potential value of community anchor organisations.

Goal 9. Successfully establish ‘community calls for action’ as set out in the Justice and Health and Local Government Acts’

- 5.30 These will shortly become statutory duties and it is important that third sector organisations are involved to promote and ensure that these mechanisms are used effectively to exercise influence on the public sector.

Goal 10. Raise awareness of compliance with the Compact across the LSP

- 5.31 There is significant variance in knowledge, awareness and application of the Compact across the public sector.

5.32 Generally the compact appears to have a higher profile within the third sector than within the public sector.

Goal 11. Increase the third sector's role in public service delivery

5.33 There are significant levels of public service being delivered within parts of the third sector, although there are potential areas which remain significantly underdeveloped.

5.34 More structured approaches, as applied within Children's Services and the Learning and Skills Council, to develop local consortia and ensure third sector organisations participate in all stages of the commissioning cycle may well address the concerns raised about the capacity and capability of the third sector to deliver more public services.

5.35 There is currently no city wide strategic commitment to a defined level of public service delivery through the third sector.

Goal 12. Ensure the third sector is involved early in policy formation, consultation, service delivery and design and that its voice is heard and reflected.

5.36 It appears that there are a large number of planning forums involving third sector organisations which have impacted positively upon public service design. This is particularly evident in policy areas focusing on children and young people and vulnerable adults.

5.37 Planning forums appear to have developed to meet specific identified needs/initiatives rather than as a result of an overarching strategy.

5.38 Key obstacles identified to further productive engagement include where the size and capacity of organisations to participate is not taken into account, the lack of consortia arrangements and conflicts between third sector organisations working within the same communities so that there is not a coherent voice.

5.39 It appears there is opportunity to align some of these forums in a more co-ordinated way to streamline the means of engagement and find better ways to draw in third sector organisations which meet their size, circumstances and capacity.

5.40 Summary of areas for development emerging from the position statement for the LSP are

1. Strengthening the identity of the sector
2. Setting the conditions to establish an infrastructure arrangement which is "fit for purpose" and meets both the city's and the sector's requirements
3. Developing a clearer city wide approach in relation to communities of geography
4. Establishing clearly recognisable transparent and streamlined means of engagement across communities of geography and interest, including groups connected with the six equality strands, ensuring that there is clarity around

who are the lead organisations to achieve effective capacity building for long term engagement and involvement

5. Extending strategic approaches to commissioning and opportunities for public service delivery
6. Ensuring that contractual arrangements between the public sector and third sector are put on a three year footing as a norm with clearer practical guidance on how full cost principles are to be applied
7. Advancing the strategic agenda in relation to asset transfer and community anchor organisations
8. Stimulating social enterprise activity
9. Ensuring appropriate support to community groups

5.41 Conclusion

Notwithstanding the above, the priority for attention at this time is the drawing together of a clear plan about how third sector infrastructure arrangements should be arranged and funded in the medium term

6.0 Financial situation

- 6.1 It is not possible currently to give accurate information about how much money is invested within the third sector. This is largely in relation to payments for services which are procured from the sector. However suffice it to say that the sums involved are considerable and it is a multi million pound relationship.
- 6.2 The picture indicates very limited support being provided from the public sector in total for direct infrastructure costs across the city. Historically it does not appear an area which has received significant attention or investment, although contributions have been made over the years on an annual basis. Plymouth City Council is the main contributor to such investment currently. These payments are made within contractual arrangements with an expectation that certain services are delivered for the money. In the case of PCP these are for achieving effective third sector representation and involvement in decision making on LSP theme groups and Board and community engagement responsibilities. In the case of the Guild, to support the volunteering infrastructure provided through the volunteer centre and brokerage service. Fata He as the BME infrastructure lead highlight there has been very little investment or cash commitment in relation to building the capacity of BME groups across the city
- 6.3 Infrastructure support has been agreed for 2008-9 from the transitional Working Neighbourhoods Fund, but decisions will need to be taken over the next few months about long term, mainstream funding for third sector infrastructure.

7.0 Proposals – how we get there

- 7.1 The Strategy has set ambitious vision and goals.
- 7.2 It is important to recognise that delivering these is a challenge for all parties and it is not a case of it being a public sector or a third sector problem to solve in isolation. It is going to require new types of arrangements to be developed in which all parties recognise and accept they have to change their approaches - which served the city well in the past - but are no longer appropriate for the emerging forward looking agenda.
- 7.3 The public sector in the city needs to recognise that it can no longer act unilaterally in its dealings with the sector but has to act in consort and establish arrangements for the medium term which will set the foundation for a profitable and beneficial long term relationship.
- 7.4 The third sector needs to recognise that by coming together more as a sector and developing greater coherence it can access and utilise resources and expertise which will strengthen its position and support its sustainability.
- 7.5 The key challenge and priority which emerges from the position statement that has to be addressed first is the development of infrastructure which is “fit for purpose” and gets closer to the vision described in the Change Up Framework and meets our local requirements. This will provide the essential building block upon which further public and third sector developments can take place. It may also provide a basis from which advantage can be taken in drawing in a share of the national investments highlighted earlier to the city’s benefit.
- 7.6 Infrastructure which can span and bring together the whole of the sector is informed by what is required from a public sector perspective and is funded appropriately to deliver that requirement. It is positioned to draw on and harness existing strengths and resources within the sector which will strengthen its ability to realise the sector’s potential and play its part in delivering the shared objectives for the city and the areas for development described above
- 7.7 To achieve this requires commitment across both sectors. However it is recognised that in order to move forward from the current position the public sector needs to provide a lead.

Proposal one

- 7.8 Through the LSP Executive that the public sector agrees to commission jointly one set of infrastructure from the third sector through the Change Up Consortium which meets the strategic agenda – nationally and locally - on a medium term basis.

Lead: Carole Burgoyne, Assistant Chief Executive, Plymouth City Council
Timescale: July 2008

- 7.9 In order to develop clarity about what that infrastructure focuses upon, an exercise has been undertaken which has sought systematically to identify what the requirements are against the agreed goals of the strategy. This is currently being finalised.

- 7.10 If there is consensus about the proposed approach it will be necessary to agree commissioning and contracting arrangements beyond 2008-9
- 7.11 At this stage it is not possible to have this level of clarity so that costed solutions can be proposed. However what it does require is commitment on the part of key representatives across the public sector and third sector to take a number of steps in the course of the next two months so that a medium term solution can be put in place.

To move forward to this goal the following further proposals are made.

Proposal two

- 7.12 That a group of representatives from the public sector agencies and the third sector is formed to firm up and prioritise a specification for infrastructure

Lead: (PCC: Giles Perritt) involving representatives from Plymouth PtCT, Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, Learning and Skills Council, Job Centre Plus. Consortium to identify third sector representatives.
Time scale: July 2008

- 7.13 This is necessary to ensure that the specification meets each public sector organisations' requirements and can be financially supported, and that specific priorities are established as further considerations about what is affordable in the immediate and medium term are clarified. This approach also matches the Change Up Framework approach which highlighted that public sector funding for infrastructure should be long term, strategic and focused upon clear objectives which infrastructure bodies deliver to agreed standards

Proposal three

- 7.14 **That representatives across the third sector explore ways that infrastructure arrangements can be developed which match more to the approach outlined in the national Change Up Framework, including ensuring that the Consortium achieves greater representation from across the strands of the sector.**

Lead: Georgie Constable, PCP, with Consortium.
Timescale: to be set by Lead.

- 7.15 There are clear indications arising from the information collected so far that more needs to be done to ensure better accountability between the Consortium and frontline organisations and that efforts should be made to ensure that the Consortium involves and engages more of the strands of the sector to develop a more cohesive force.
- 7.16 The Change Up Framework makes it clear that it is not the intention that the public sector directly funds all third sector infrastructure and that a higher proportion is funded through front line organisations which are included in the core costs of delivery. The Framework envisaged infrastructure which was structured for maximum efficiency.
- 7.17 The implication of Proposal One will be that the Change Up Consortium will pick up on and complete the work started in relation to clarifying the financial situation and

the projected funding gap so that this informs further discussions between the public and third sector about how this gap is reduced and closed.

Proposal four

- 7.18 That Steering Group Members from each public sector organisation commit to explore and clarify the level of investment which can be made to support core third sector infrastructure developments during the next three years

Lead: Giles Perritt, Plymouth City Council.

Timescale: to be set by Lead.

- 7.19 The financial position makes it clear that the level of investment in third sector infrastructure has historically been limited and not strategically focused. This action will ensure that public sector organisations clarify the extent of commitment in financial terms for the medium term.

Proposal five

That in order to maintain continuity whilst the proposed arrangement is put in place and to ensure a viable infrastructure for 2008/09, the LSP Executive agree in principle, subject to the LAA procurement process, to utilise LAA funding as a contingency in the event that public bodies fail to identify sufficient contributions.

Lead: Karen Kay, Plymouth City Council.

Timescale: completed

Proposal six

- 7.20 That the group of representatives from the public sector bodies and third sector commit to finalise the specification on the basis of affordability and prioritisation.

Lead: (Giles Perritt), involving representatives from Plymouth PtCT, Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, Learning and Skills Council, Job Centre Plus.

Consortium to identify third sector representatives.

Time scale: to be set by Lead.

- 7.21 There will be a need for movement compromise and consensus building on all sides to deliver this goal but it is necessary to achieve arrangements which move us forward in the direction that has been agreed.

Proposal seven

- 7.22 That this strategy document is circulated widely for comment and feedback within the public and third sector

Lead: Giles Perritt, Plymouth City Council

Timescale: to be set by Lead

- 7.23 There has been only limited consultation on the issues that have arisen and informed this strategy document. This is particularly the case in relation to frontline organisations across the third sector. Indications are that many of the involved parties do not consider current communication channels are sufficiently clear or transparent. This document should be used as a vehicle to try to counteract that perception and bring improvements in this aspect.

July 2008

Plymouth

COMPACT

Draft for consultation

1. What is the Plymouth Compact?

The Plymouth Compact is an agreement between local public sector bodies and the Third sector to support and improve partnership working between the sectors. It is underpinned by Codes of Practice, based on the national Codes, which cover the following areas:

- Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organisations
- Community Groups
- Consultation and policy appraisal
- Funding and Procurement
- Volunteering

The Plymouth Compact and its Codes contain specific undertakings for each sector, as well as a series of joint undertakings, which aim to make a positive impact on partnership working in the county. In this context, the term “undertaking” commits partners to work towards the principle or action in question.

2. What is the Plymouth Compact for?

The Compact sets out a framework to help us develop positive, effective, working relationships by:

- Recognising and building on those things we already do well together
- Setting standards and making clear commitments about the ways the sectors will work with each other
- Creating an environment of mutual trust and respect which allows us to take full advantage of new opportunities for partnership working.

The principles set out in the Plymouth Compact will underpin the relationship between the sectors in all areas and, in particular, will provide the Local Strategic Partnership in Plymouth with the foundations for mutually beneficial relationships.

3. Where are we now?

There is much that is already good about the way the two sectors work together. A great deal of Third Sector activity within the city is funded by the public sector and there is a strong record of partnership working between the sectors. However, some obstacles exist:

- 3.1 Existing funding processes do not always allow voluntary and community groups to plan ahead.
- 3.2 Some voluntary and community groups find it difficult to influence policy development.
- 3.3 The value of the contribution made by volunteers is not always recognised.
- 3.4 Some parts of the Third Sector find it more difficult to access the support that they need.
- 3.5 Organisations do not always do all they could to avoid duplication and to work together.
- 3.6 Standards of governance and accountability within the third sector are not always as high as they should be.
- 3.7 Public sector bodies are not always as clear as they could be about funding priorities.
- 3.8 The two sectors do not always communicate with each other as much or as well as they could.

4. What difference will the Plymouth Compact make?

The Compact aims to make improvements to the way the two sectors work together. We will begin this process by making clear, explicit commitments about the expectations that partners can have when dealing with each other. In time, this will enable us to tackle the obstacles identified above and will work towards:

- 4.1 Less unnecessary bureaucracy for Third Sector organisations in applying for and managing funding.
- 4.2 A more level playing field for all partners.
- 4.3 Clearer and more meaningful consultation processes which allow all sections of the community to influence priorities.
- 4.4 Greater transparency and accountability in all areas of public life.
- 4.5 More co-operation and less duplication across all statutory and Third Sector organisations.
- 4.6 More informed decision-making resulting in better and more appropriate services for the people of Plymouth.

5. What principles do the Compact partners share?

The Compact is underpinned by a number of common beliefs or principles:

- 5.1 Voluntary action plays an essential part in Plymouth. It enables local people to play a full and active part in community life and promotes representation for disadvantaged groups and communities.
- 5.2 An independent and diverse Third Sector is vital to the well-being of communities in Plymouth.
- 5.3 The public sector and the Third Sector have differing and complementary roles. They may have different lines of accountability and are answerable to a different range of stakeholders, but both are committed to integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership in the development and delivery of public policy and services.
- 5.4 The Third Sector is ideally placed to harness the knowledge and energy of local people and empower them to develop their own solutions to meeting their needs.
- 5.5 Local people and groups have a right to be involved in shaping the decisions that affect their lives including policy development and the design and delivery of services and programmes.
- 5.6 Third Sector organisations are entitled to campaign within the law in order to advance their aims.
- 5.7 Both sectors affirm each other's complementary and distinct roles in identifying and meeting the needs of local people, and recognise the value of working in partnership towards common aims and objectives.

6. Joint Undertakings

All partners to the Plymouth Compact are committed to working together to continually improve the effectiveness of the relationship between the public sector and the Third Sector, and undertake to:

- 6.1 Promote and develop effective working relationships, consistency of approach and good practice between different public sector bodies and the Third Sector, particularly where issues involve more than one agency.
- 6.2 Foster a greater understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the sectors.
- 6.3 Build the capacity of the Third Sector and enable it to fulfil its strategic role.
- 6.4 Fully implement and champion the Plymouth Compact at all levels within our agencies or organisations, and ensure that staff have the necessary competencies to do so.
- 6.5 Promote the adoption of the Compact to other local public bodies and voluntary and community organisations that are not yet signed up to the Plymouth Compact.
- 6.6 Respect protocols in the sharing of confidential information.
- 6.7 Review the operation of the Plymouth Compact annually.
- 6.8 Nominate a Compact champion in each organisation to ensure that the Compact is fully implemented.

7. Public Sector Undertakings

The Plymouth Compact public sector partners undertake to:

- 7.1 Recognise and respect the independence of the Third Sector, including its right within the law to campaign, to lobby and to comment on public policy
- 7.2 Recognise and address the need for funding to include an appropriate proportion of the overhead and management costs in order to ensure the Third Sector is able to fulfil its role most effectively.
- 7.3 Recognise the right of the Third Sector to determine and manage its own affairs.
- 7.4 Work towards greater transparency, equity and consistency in all funding allocated to the Third Sector.
- 7.5 Support and encourage the Third Sector in taking full advantage of appropriate external and local funding opportunities to meet city wide priorities.
- 7.6 Consult the Third Sector on issues that are likely to affect it in a timely and appropriate way, taking account of the specific needs of those parts of the sector that represent groups who are at risk of being excluded.
- 7.7 Adhere to the principles of open government (which seeks to ensure that wherever possible decisions and findings are made public and explained).
- 7.8 Rationalise wherever possible the appointment of public sector representatives on management committees and make sure that those fulfilling such roles are appropriately trained.

8. Third Sector Undertakings

The Plymouth Compact Third Sector partners undertake to:

- 8.1 Maintain and promote high standards of governance, accountability and conduct to meet its obligations to its funders, beneficiaries, staff and volunteers.
- 8.2 Recognise and address the need for an appropriate proportion of overhead and management costs to be reflected in funding bids.
- 8.3 Respect and be accountable to the law.
- 8.4 Develop quality standards appropriate to the organisation, over time, in order to ensure best practice and equality of opportunity in activities, employment, involvement of volunteers and service provision.
- 8.5 Seek to ensure that beneficiaries, members, volunteers and supporters are informed and consulted as widely as possible before presenting a case to the public sector, or responding to consultations, and to represent their views accurately.
- 8.6 Where appropriate, seek to actively involve and value the contribution of beneficiaries, staff and volunteers in the development and management of activities and services.

9. Reviewing the operation of the Plymouth Compact Annually

The Plymouth Compact provides a framework to help us work together more effectively. As such, it needs to evolve to take account of improvements in the relationship between the sectors and the changing partnership environment. There will be an annual review involving representatives of all Plymouth Compact partners to:

- a) Review the operation of the Plymouth Compact and its Codes of Practice.
- b) Ensure all partners are complying with Compact undertakings.
- c) Agree an annual action plan, which sets milestones for the further development of the Compact and its implementation.
- d) Evaluate the difference that the Compact is making in Plymouth.

The Plymouth Compact was originally developed by a multi-sector Compact Steering Group and working groups. It has been revised and updated by a multi-sector working group and consulted on with the Local Strategic Partnership and the wider Third Sector.

The Third Sector comprises an extremely broad and diverse range of groups and organisations, from national and international charities employing large numbers of staff to small neighbourhood-based groups run entirely by volunteers. The sector represents the voices of many different sections of society, including service users, and is an important partner in both strategic planning and service provision.

The Public Sector is made up of local statutory agencies, and includes Local Authorities (councils), the Police, Fire Service, Primary Care Trusts, NHS organisations, Learning and Skills Councils and Job Centre Plus.

This document can also be made available in different formats or languages by request.

Please contact us at the address below for more information:

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