

DRAFT RENEWED TORBAY LOCAL COMPACT

An agreement to ensure an effective working relationship between the Torbay Strategic Partnership – council, local NHS, fire service, police and probation service – with the local voluntary and community sector

2011-2014

Foreword by the Mayor of Torbay (as taken from previous draft local Compact, to be updated as necessary for final document)

Torbay's public sector bodies recognise the value of a thriving local third sector and the benefits it brings to securing effective outcomes for the residents of Torbay. Community Plan priorities include, Learning and Skills for the future *"to work with the voluntary sector to raise skills through community development.* " Stronger Communities *"Support volunteers in the community and self help"*

However it is also acknowledged that we need to improve the way we work with the third sector, the approach has been lacking in a coordinated direction and financial commitment. The timing is appropriate with the Transformation change agenda and the decision to introduce a commissioning model across all of the service delivery activity.

The third sector is an important element of a strong society. It has a clear role in providing services as well as helping to shape policy and contributing to the development of stronger communities. The third sector can also contribute to transforming public services. To enable this Torbay Strategic Partnership (TSP) and other partners, must be able to draw on the understanding and experience of the third sector in designing, developing and delivering services.

The role of local authorities is also changing. The council is a community leader, leading by example, responsible for creating more vibrant, safer and stronger communities as well as securing effective outcomes that lead to an improvement in people's quality of life. The council cannot fulfil this role without support from a thriving local third sector.

The successful outcome is an increase in the number of productive partnerships that can generate additional funding and capacity and clearly demonstrate a return on public investment.

This is particularly relevant in areas where Torbay is transforming the way services are delivered and how agencies work collaboratively with communities focussing on more prevention and early intervention. Specific areas that will benefit from these improvements will be the 'Closing the Gap' programme, the transformation of adult social care and our approach to planning for an ageing population and our transformation of Children's Services. The need for strengthening of the sector is further reinforced by the impact of the recession and public finances.

Mayor Nick Bye

Foreword by Rose Sanders, Chair of Torcom, Torbay's Voluntary and Community Sector Consortium

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Torbay is made up of hundreds of voluntary and community organisations (VCO's) working at the very heart of our community to make a real difference to the lives of local people.

Known by a variety of different names over the years, the sector has been documented as far back as the 19th century and has grown to be the vibrant body of organisations currently working in the Bay across all walks of life.

The skills and expertise of the VCS are now more recognised and inline with the national political changes, the onset of the 'Big Society' and 'Localism' the VCS need to continue to build on the good working relationship it has with our local partners in Torbay. This can only be to the good of all parties concerned and the community we all serve.

As Chair of Torcom, the voice of Torbay's voluntary sector, I would like to commend this new, refreshed local Compact to all of you who work in the VCS and public sector. The Compact is quite simply an agreement between statutory bodies and the voluntary and community sector, to improve the way they work together, for mutual benefit. It will have different implications for different parts of the sector. However, it will frame the relationship wherever a voluntary or community organisation has dealings with public bodies.

This Compact is a document to be used by the VCS and public sector to ensure that its principles are upheld – and to advise on and support taking action if those principles are broken. Once again, it is local people who are at the heart of its implementation.

In the current climate, working together is now more vital than it has ever been so we need to uphold the Compact Principles to strengthen our local partnerships and build on our working relationship for the good of the Community in Torbay.

Rose Sanders
Chair of Torcom, Torbay's Voluntary and Community Sector Consortium

BACKGROUND TO THE COMPACT

The word “compact” literally means official agreement. The first national document was agreed in 1998, produced after the 1996 report of the Deakin Commission which concluded that the Government needed to recognise the importance of the voluntary and community sector’s diverse roles. The Commission also concluded that the Government had a responsibility to promote a vibrant VCS.

Local areas are encouraged to follow the principles in the national Compact. Torbay has had a Compact in place since 2004.

Alongside this document measures are being introduced to ensure there is greater accountability and transparency around the implementation of the Compact.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE COMPACT

An effective working relationship between the Torbay Strategic Partnership and local voluntary and community organisations will help achieve the following outcomes:

1. A strong, diverse and independent voluntary and community sector
2. Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services
3. Responsive and high-quality programmes and services
4. Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services
5. An equal and fair society

1 A strong, diverse and independent voluntary and community sector

The Torbay Strategic Partnership will:

- 1.1 Respect and uphold the independence of VCOs to deliver their mission, including their right to campaign, regardless of any relationship, financial or otherwise, which may exist.
- 1.2 Ensure VCOs are supported and resourced in a reasonable and fair manner where they are helping the TSP fulfil its aims.
- 1.3 Ensure that the TSP collectively recognises the need to resource national and local support and development organisations in order to assist VCOs with their capacity and capability to deliver positive outcomes.
- 1.4 Ensure greater transparency by making data and information more accessible, helping VCOs to challenge existing provision of services, access new markets and hold the TSP to account.
- 1.5 Consider a range of ways to support VCOs, such as enabling greater access to state-owned premises and resources.
- 1.6 Ensure that it is free for volunteers to access Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks. Work towards streamlining processes for volunteers who are volunteering for more than one cause.

The Torbay Voluntary and Community Sector will:

- 1.7 When campaigning or advocating, ensure that robust evidence is provided, including information about the source and range of people and communities represented.
- 1.8 Ensure independence is upheld, focusing on the cause represented, regardless of any relationship they have with the TSP, financial or otherwise.

2 Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services

The Torbay Strategic Partnership will:

- 2.1 Ensure that social, environmental and economic value forms a standard part of designing, developing and delivering policies, programmes and services.
- 2.2 Consider the social impact that may result from policy and programme development, and in particular consider how these would impact local efforts to inspire and encourage social action and to empower communities.
- 2.3 Work with VCOs from the earliest possible stage to design policies, programmes and services. Ensure those likely to have a view are involved from the start and remove barriers that may prevent organisations contributing.
- 2.4 Give early notice of forthcoming consultations, where possible, allowing enough time for VCOs to involve their service users, beneficiaries, members, volunteers and trustees in preparing responses. Where it is appropriate, and enables meaningful engagement, conduct 12-week formal written consultations, with clear explanations and rationale for shorter time-frames or a more informal approach.
- 2.5 Consider providing feedback (for example through an overall TSP response) to explain how respondents have influenced the design and development of policies, programmes and public services, including where respondents' views have not been acted upon.
- 2.6 Assess the implications for the sector of new policies, legislation and guidance, aiming to reduce the bureaucratic burden, particularly on small organisations.

The Torbay Voluntary and Community Sector will:

- 2.7 Promote and respond to TSP consultations where appropriate.
- 2.8 Seek the views of service users, clients, beneficiaries, members, volunteers, and trustees when making representation to government. Be clear on who is being represented, in what capacity, and on what basis that representation is being made.
- 2.9 When putting forward ideas, focus on evidence-based solutions, with clear

proposals for positive outcomes.

3 Responsive and high-quality programmes and services

The Torbay Strategic Partnership will:

- 3.1 Ensure that voluntary and community organisations have a greater role and more opportunities in delivering public services by opening up new markets in accordance with wider public service reform measures and reforming the commissioning environment in existing markets, making tendering processes as brief and comprehensive as possible within the regulations
- 3.2 Consider a wide range of ways to fund or resource VCOs, including grants, contracts, loan finance, use of premises and so on. Work to remove barriers that may prevent VCOs accessing TSP funding, thereby enabling smaller organisations to become involved in delivering services where they are best placed to achieve the desired outcomes.
- 3.3 Ensure transparency by providing a clear rationale for all funding decisions
- 3.4 Commit to multi-year funding where appropriate and where it adds value for money. The funding term should reflect the time it will take to deliver the outcome. If multi-year funding is not considered to be the best way of delivering the objective, explain the reasons for the decision.
- 3.5 Ensure well managed and transparent application and tendering processes, which are proportionate to the desired objectives and outcomes of programmes. Provide information about up and coming commissioning opportunities in good time, particularly recognising that need for smaller VCOs. Negotiate channels of communication and local points of contact for support .
- 3.6 Agree with VCOs 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
- 3.8 Recognise that when VCOs apply for a grant they can include appropriate and relevant overheads, including the costs associated with training and volunteer involvement.
- 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.

- 3.10 Ensure that the widest possible range of organisations can be involved in the provision of services through appropriate funding and financing models, for example outcome based payments and payment in advance of expenditure. Payment in advance of expenditure should be considered on a case by case basis where this represents value for money.
- 3.11 Ensure all bodies distributing funds on the Torbay Strategic Partnership's behalf adhere to the commitments in this Compact. This includes the relationship between prime contractors and their supply chains. Demonstrate how funding arrangements and financial support can allow smaller and specialist providers to play a greater part.
- 3.12 Apply the Compact when distributing European funding. Where conflicts arise with European regulations, discuss the potential effects and agree solutions together
- 3.13 Encourage feedback from a range of sources on the effectiveness of the TSP's partnership with VCOs and how successful it has been in delivering their objectives. Consider placing this feedback in the public domain.

The Torbay Voluntary and Community Sector will:

- 3.14 Ensure eligibility for funding before applying and be explicit about how outcomes will be achieved.
- 3.15 Ensure robust governance arrangements so that organisations can best manage any risk associated with service delivery and financing models, including giving funders early notice of significant changes in circumstances.
- 3.16 Be open and transparent about reporting, recognising that monitoring, whether internal or external, is an aspect of good management practice.
- 3.17 Demonstrate the social, environmental or economic value of the programmes and services provided, where appropriate.
- 3.18 Help facilitate feedback from users and communities to the Torbay Strategic Partnership to help improve delivery of programmes and services.
- 3.19 Recognise that the TSP can legitimately expect VCOs to give public recognition of its funding.

4 Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services

The Torbay Strategic Partnership will:

- 4.1 If a programme or service is encountering problems, agree with the voluntary organisation a timetable of actions to improve performance before making a decision to end a financial relationship.
- 4.2 Assess the impact on beneficiaries, service users and volunteers before deciding to reduce or end funding. Assess the need to re-allocate funds to another organisation serving the same group.
- 4.3 Where there are restrictions or changes to future resources, discuss with voluntary and community organisations the potential implications as early as possible, give organisations the opportunity to respond, and consider the response fully, respecting sector expertise, before making a final decision.
- 4.4 Give a minimum of three months notice in writing when changing or ending a funding relationship or other support, apart from in exceptional circumstances, and provide a clear rationale for why the decision has been taken.

The Torbay Voluntary and Community Sector will:

- 4.5 Plan for the end of funding to reduce any potential negative impact on beneficiaries and the organisation.
- 4.6 Contribute positively to reviews of programmes and funding practice.
- 4.7 Advise the Torbay Strategic Partnership on the social, environmental or economic impact of funding changes, and on ways to minimise their effects on people in vulnerable situations.

5 An equal and fair society

The Torbay Strategic Partnership will:

- 5.1 Work with voluntary and community organisations that represent, support or provide services to people specifically protected by legislation and other under-represented and disadvantaged groups. Understand the specific needs of these groups by actively seeking the views of service- users and clients. Take these views into account, including assessing impact, when designing and implementing policies, programmes and services.
- 5.2 Acknowledge that organisations representing specific disadvantaged or under-represented group(s) can help promote social and community cohesion and should have equal access to state funding.
- 5.3 Take practical action to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and to ensure a voice for under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

The Torbay Voluntary and Community Sector will:

- 5.4 If receiving funding from a government body, show how the value of the work can help that body deliver its public sector duties on promoting equality and tackling discrimination.
- 5.5 Take practical action, such as through funding bids, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build stronger communities.

Contact details

Torbay Strategic Partnership
c/o Town Hall
Castle Circus
TORQUAY
TQ1 3DR

01803 201201
www.torbay.gov.uk

Torcom
c/o Community and Voluntary Action Torbay
11 Castle Road
TORQUAY
TQ1 3BB

01803 212638
www.torcom.org.uk

DRAFT