

Delivering Together

Shared Principles - Shared Priorities



A partnership agreement between the Third Sector and
Conwy County Borough Council
2012 - 2015

Foreword

Welcome to the third Conwy County Borough Council and Third Sector Partnership Agreement, outlining how the Third Sector in Conwy and Conwy County Borough Council will work together. It includes shared principles and commitments to strengthen the links between both partners for the benefit of the citizens and communities in the County.

This agreement is not a statutory requirement; we have chosen to develop it because of the desire and goodwill between both partners to work well together.

The Third Sector in Conwy makes a significant contribution to improving the lives of people throughout the County. There are 1129 voluntary/community groups based in Conwy, attracting funding of £1,796,861 in 2011/12. During the same period CVSC registered 300 new volunteers.

This agreement and its implementation will help us to continue to support and understand each other so we are able to respond to the challenges ahead.

With the current economic climate, creating substantial pressure on public and voluntary sector funding, it is more important than ever that we work well together. This agreement aims to help us to do that.

We would like the staff and volunteers across the Third Sector and Conwy County Borough Council to support the principles and be involved in developing the new work areas that need to be undertaken in this agreement. Please see the “How you can be involved” section.

We look forward to working together to implement this agreement.

Iwan Davies, Chief Executive - Conwy County Borough Council
and
Wendy Jones, Chief Officer – Conwy Voluntary Services Council



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Why do we need a partnership agreement?

a. What is the partnership agreement?

The partnership agreement is a voluntary agreement which sets out the commitment between the Third Sector and Conwy County Borough Council to work together to shared principles and shared priorities, providing a clear framework to improve the relationship between the partners for the benefit of the citizens and communities of Conwy.

b. The Conwy County Borough Council and Third Sector Partnership Agreement

The second Partnership Agreement (formerly known as the Compact) was published in 2004. This agreement will be replacing the former Compact and any new codes of practice developed as a result of this agreement. This agreement will be managed by the Third Sector Partnership Committee.

The content of this agreement has been informed by consulting with the Third Sector, CVSC Board of Trustees, Third Sector Staff, Conwy County Borough Council Staff and Conwy County Borough Councillors.

c. The need for a new agreement

It was felt that the old agreement was outdated and needed to be refreshed due to the significant changes that both sectors have gone through over the last 8 years.

The consultation showed us that the following are the challenges of working together:

- Consultation and Representation
- Communication
- Partnership
- Funding and Resources
- Respect & Equality
- Knowledge of the Third Sector
- Information Sharing
- Service Delivery
- Support

The principles have been developed as a direct result of the stated challenges as these are how we will improve the relationship.

The relationship between the Third Sector and the Conwy CBC was rated as:

- 14% Excellent
- 41% Good
- 34% Average
- 6% Poor
- 3% Very Poor
- 3% Don't Know

Generally, the relationship is quite good with 55% stating that the relationship is Excellent or Good but this relationship needs to continue to be worked on as 43% think it is Average/Poor/Very Poor. (Please note that this totals 101% due to rounding up)

A full consultation report has been produced which goes into more detail

The 8 Shared Principles

a. The 8 shared principles

The following principles have been identified as key to developing the relationship between the Third Sector and Conwy County Borough Council, these have been selected based on the challenges identified across all Partners.

- 1. Partnership** a strong trusting relationship between the Partners is essential to achieving our shared commitments and delivering services for the benefit of the local community. All partners have complementary and distinct roles.
- 2. Independence** it is recognised that the Third Sector is independent.
- 3. Diversity** the difference, diversity and capacity between the partners should be respected and valued.
- 4. Accountability** all partners have their own sets of responsibilities and constraints but are committed to acting transparently, with integrity and objectivity.
- 5. Equality** the importance of promoting equality of opportunity for everyone is acknowledged and that all partners should be given equal consideration and respect.
- 6. Communication** continuously work together to improve communication, openness and sharing best practice between all partners.
- 7. Community Involvement** all partners have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them and they play a valuable role in the development of policies and services.
- 8. Challenge** it is accepted that partners have the right to challenge processes and matters that affect them. All partners have to be open to challenge.

Shared Principles to Shared Priorities

On a daily basis all partners can work to the 8 principles but to make some of the principles work more efficiently and have a greater impact shared priorities have been identified through consultation.

The shared priorities identified through consultation are:

Commissioning

Third Sector Involvement in
Policy and Service Delivery

Communication

Working closer together on
Community Involvement

These priorities will be phased as to ensure sufficient resources can be committed to ensure delivery. These are in priority order.

Working groups will be set up to deliver on each of the priorities with representatives from the Third Sector and Conwy CBC.

Delivering the Partnership Agreement

The successful delivery of this agreement will depend on:

- Clear monitoring, evaluation and review structures
- A strong relationship between the Third Sector and Conwy County Borough Council

a. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

- The implementation of this Partnership Agreement will be the responsibility of the Third Sector Partnership Committee
- The Third Sector Partnership Committee is responsible for the setting up of any working groups to deliver any of the shared priorities
- Clear actions will be developed for each shared priority, with action owners and timescales, these will provide the basis of the monitoring and evaluation
- The action plans will be monitored bi-annually and evaluated annually
- Progress will be reported to Partnership Overview and Scrutiny and CVSC Board of Trustees annually
- The Third Sector Partnership Committee will review and refresh the Partnership Agreement annually

b. Resolving disagreements

There may be issues in implementing the Partnership Agreement, all partners need a process to challenge and resolve disagreements. Most issues are mainly caused by symptoms of wider problems which need to be addressed and identified in a non-confrontational way.

All partners are expected to follow the Effective Dispute Resolution Tactics adapted from the Compact Advocacy Fighting the Good Fight: Effective Dispute Resolution Tactics **(Appendix A)**.

The process for how disagreements will be resolved can be found in **(Appendix B)**

c. Compliments and examples of good practice

If you have any compliments or examples of good practice please contact either the Conwy Voluntary Services Council on mail@cvsc.org.uk or Conwy County Borough Council on partnerships@conwy.gov.uk

How you can be involved

a. CVSC Members

CVSC has signed up to this Partnership Agreement on your behalf so you will be automatically covered by this Agreement.

There are a few ways you can get involved:

- Discuss with the CVSC about you representing the Third Sector on the Third Sector Partnership Committee or working groups that have been set up to deliver the shared priorities
- Take part in the annual review of the Partnership Agreement

b. Non-CVSC Members

You can sign up to this Partnership Agreement by completing the “Sign Up” Form (Appendix C)

The ways in which you can get involved are the same as CVSC Members but discuss this with the Representative Officer from Conwy County Borough Council.

c. Third Sector Staff and Conwy County Borough Council Staff

You cannot sign up to this agreement individually as it is established on an organisational basis.

You can become a Partnership Agreement Champion and promote this Partnership Agreement within your Service/Organisation.

d. Conwy County Borough Council – County Councillors

You can be involved in 2 ways:

- The work of the Third Sector Partnership Committee will go to the Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee annually, if you are not on this Committee you can still attend and make your views heard
- Discuss with the Chair of Partnership Overview and Scrutiny about representation on the Third Sector Partnership Committee or any working groups that have been set up to deliver the shared priorities

Please contact: Partnerships@conwy.gov.uk or 01492 576239 or mail@cvsc.org.uk for any further information.

Appendix A

Effective Dispute Resolution Tactics*

1. **Keep your own house in order**

You have a better chance of settling a dispute successfully if you make sure that you abide by funding agreements, honour the Partnership Agreement principles and fulfil financial obligations. This includes sending reports on time and keeping a written record of all communication.

2. **Prevention is better than cure**

If you have any concerns around your funding or relationship with a public body, don't wait for it to turn into a problem. Read the Partnership Agreement and any codes of practice and open up a dialogue. If you can engage constructively before something really becomes an issue, you'll have a better chance of getting it solved.

3. **Challenge early**

The longer time elapses after a decision has been made, the harder it is to reverse it. In case of public law breaches a challenge has to be brought to court promptly and in any case no more than three months after the decision was taken.

4. **Be clear about your objectives**

Know what you are unhappy about and what you want to achieve. Keep it as straightforward as possible, and try to be realistic

5. **Keep it professional**

Although emotions can run high, you are more likely to achieve what you want if your organisation is viewed as professional, effective and good to work with

6. **Consider all your options**

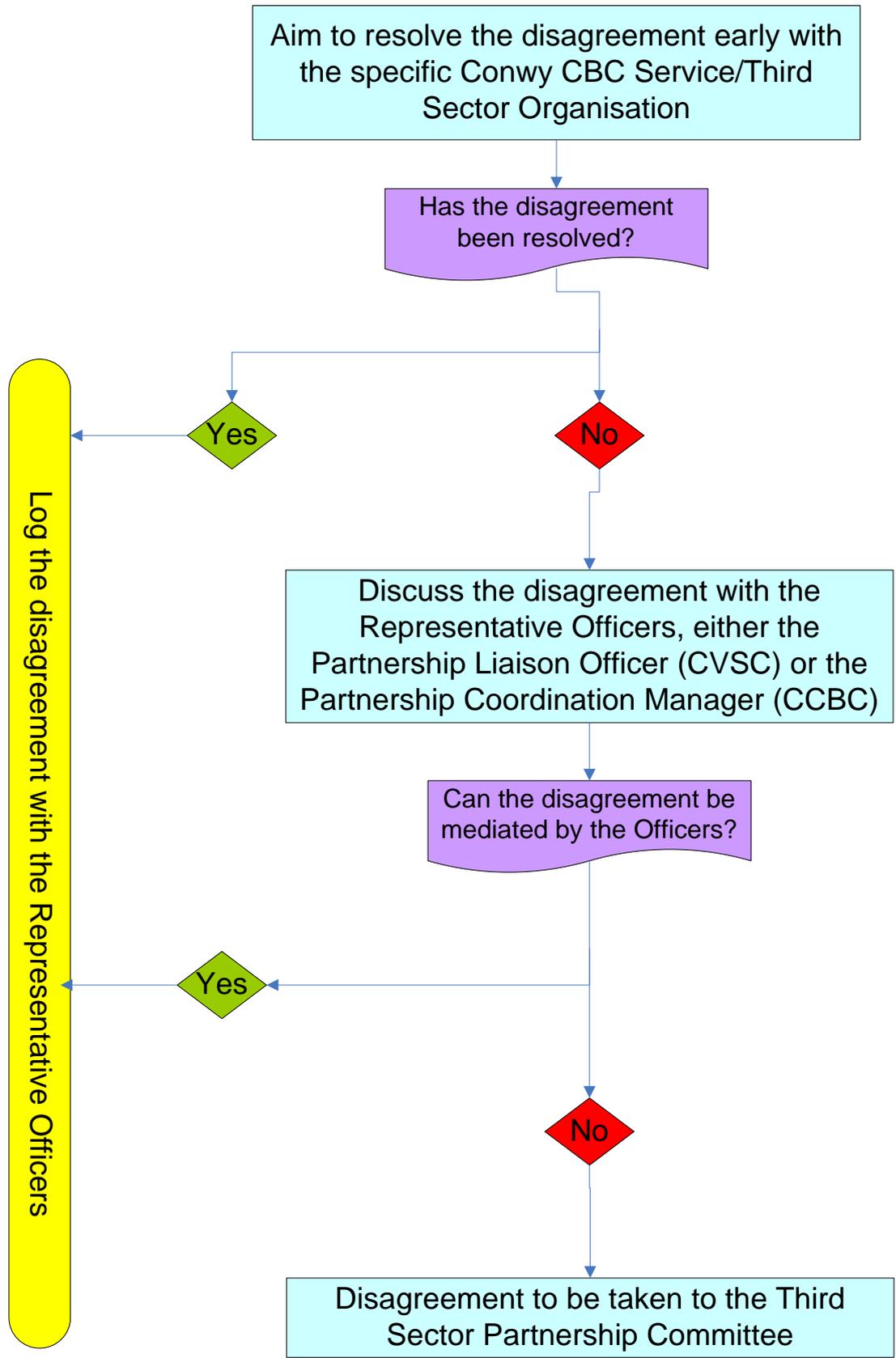
Every organisation has their right to independence and to manage their affairs, but some are reluctant to be seen to confront their funder. You can raise the issue through the Third Sector Partnership Committee if you have followed the agreed disagreement process.

7. **Get help**

It is useful to get an outsiders perspective on the dispute. You can use an advocacy organisation if you need the support

* Adapted from Fighting the Good Fight: Effective Dispute Resolution Tactics published by the Compact Advocacy and can be found on: www.compactvoice.org.uk

Appendix B – Disagreement Resolution Process



Appendix C – Sign Up Form



**My organisation wishes to sign the Partnership Agreement
(Third Sector and Conwy County Borough Council)**

By signing this Partnership Agreement we are showing our commitment to working in partnership guided by the shared principles and shared priorities.

1.	Name of Organisation:											
2.	Status:	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30px; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Registered Charity</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Community Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Voluntary Organisation</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Statutory Organisation</td> </tr> </table>			<input type="checkbox"/>	Registered Charity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Voluntary Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Statutory Organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Registered Charity											
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Group											
<input type="checkbox"/>	Voluntary Organisation											
<input type="checkbox"/>	Statutory Organisation											
3.	Address:											
4.	Telephone:											
5.	E-mail:											
6.	Contact Name:											
7.	Position:											
8.	Signature:											
9.	Date:											
10.	Are you interested in being a Member of the Third Sector Partnership Committee	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>							
11.	Are you interested in being involved in delivering the shared priorities?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>							

Please complete and return this form to:
Partnership Coordination Manager, Conwy County Borough Council, Bodlondeb, Conwy.
LL32 8DU.