



Third Sector  
Dumfries and Galloway

## Policy Briefing No 2

### The Third Sector & Community Planning

*Working together to put our sector first*

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#### Introduction

The purpose of this Policy Briefing is to set out a framework within which the third sector can engage and influence Community Planning in Dumfries and Galloway.

“Engage and Influence” is one of our principal work streams designed to establish a clear vision and sense of purpose to our role in Community Planning; to establish a baseline of understanding and bring new thinking to the way that, as Dumfries and Galloway’s Third Sector Interface, we work within the Community Planning Framework.

We are working to deliver on 4 key milestones:

- ◇ To develop a comprehensive understanding of community planning partnerships and other public sector partnerships, work streams and change programmes where there is an expectation of engagement from the third sector;
- ◇ To develop a database of and record information about the people currently representing the third sector – and a panel or people that we can call on to represent the sector in the future;
- ◇ To develop and implement systems for supporting (including training and briefings on issues) third sector representatives and ensuring that they are accountable for their work;
- ◇ To develop effective thematic networks of third sector organisations and to ensure that these networks are supported, able to set and prioritise issues of concern, and can influence the work of staff and third sector representatives.



## What is Community Planning?

According to the Scottish Government Community Planning is a process which helps public agencies to work together with the community to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives.

Dumfries and Galloway Council has a statutory responsibility to initiate, facilitate and maintain Community Planning.

The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) in Dumfries and Galloway provides the over-arching partnership framework helping to co-ordinate other initiatives and partnerships and where necessary acting to rationalise and simplify a cluttered landscape. The CPP also has a responsibility to improve the connection between national priorities and those at a regional, local and neighbourhood level.

The core partners in our CPP are Dumfries and Galloway Council; NHS Dumfries and Galloway; Police Scotland; Scottish Fire and Rescue; Scottish Enterprise; and SWestrans (South West Scotland's Regional Transport Partnership).

Across Scotland the third (voluntary) sector is represented on the CPP by the local Third Sector Interface.

In addition to the core partners, the CPP also involves a range of other organisations. These include Jobcentre Plus, Further and Higher Education institutions, Scottish Natural Heritage, Skills Development Scotland and business representatives.

## What is a Single Outcome Agreement?

A Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) is an agreement between our Community Planning Partnership and the Scottish Government which sets out the priority outcomes for the people and communities of Dumfries and Galloway, and how our CPP will work towards achieving them. It also shows how the local priorities contribute to national priorities.

In Dumfries and Galloway the overarching vision of our Community Planning Partnership and the Single Outcome Agreement is that the partners will work together to create an ambitious, prosperous and Dumfries and Galloway where people achieve their potential. This means:

- ◇ Providing the right services in the right place, at the right time and at the right price
- ◇ Listening to, speaking and consulting with individuals and communities
- ◇ Treating people equally and respecting others irrespective of social and cultural differences
- ◇ Ensuring long term economic, social and environmental wellbeing
- ◇ Finding ways of planning and delivering services in a better way that makes a real difference to people's lives

## COMMUNITY PLANNING IS ABOUT

**Making sure that the people and communities of Dumfries and Galloway are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them;**

**&**

**A commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.**





## Our Shared Priorities

### Priority 1

Providing a good start in life for all our children

### Priority 2

Preparing our young people for adulthood and employment

### Priority 3

Caring for our older and vulnerable people

### Priority 4

Supporting and stimulating our local economy

### Priority 5

Maintaining the safety and security of our region

### Priority 6

Protecting and sustaining our environment

The current (2013-16) Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) can be downloaded from our web site:

[www.thirdsectordumgal.org.uk](http://www.thirdsectordumgal.org.uk)

The SOA sets out six priorities for the Partners in the CPP, including the third sector. These are the shared priorities of the people and communities of Dumfries and Galloway.

The third sector has a significant role to play in delivery of services to the people and communities of Dumfries and Galloway and therefore in working towards meeting the six priorities set out in the SOA.

The role of the third sector is not to replace public services, but to add value to the services delivered by our public service partners, and to bring new ways of thinking to the way in which public services might be delivered.

Many third sector organisations working in Dumfries and Galloway are commissioned by Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway to deliver services.

As a recipient of public money the third sector therefore has a responsibility to be both efficient and effective in the way in which we conduct our business, whether this is as a voluntary organisation, charity or social enterprise. We have to be focussed upon improving the lives of the people and communities that we serve, and through the CPP to be accountable to them.

Partnership working (based upon the principles of co-production) between the public and third sector organisations is key to the success of community planning.



## What is a Third Sector Interface?

The purpose of this part of this briefing is explain the role, function, authority and accountability of a Third Sector Interface. The intention is to explain why Third Sector Interfaces exist and what the Scottish Government expects them to do.

It will become clear to the reader that at the heart of what makes a Third Sector Interface different is that it brings the sector together to work locally with public sector and other partners; to raise the profile of the sector in a particular locality; and to support the sector in that locality to develop and grow – in short to put the third sector first in all that it does.

### Scottish Government Policy

Third Sector Interfaces are a **unique and distinct** product of Scottish Government Policies and Ministerial direction. In the absence of those policies and direction (and of the associated Government funding streams) Third Sector Interfaces would not exist.

The roots of the creation of Third Sector Interfaces can be found in the Scottish Government's public service reforms following the recommendations of the Christie Commission. Within this context the Scottish Government recognised that the third sector has a major role to play in Scotland's future and in helping drive forward public sector reform.

The Scottish Government's commitment to our sector was clearly articulated in the Spending Review of September 2011 when it stated:

"We will be working across Government and the public sector to ensure that the third sector's role can be maximised, supporting greater collaboration between the public and third sectors at both the local and national level"

From April 2011 the Scottish Government ceased its funding of networks of councils of voluntary service, volunteer centres, local social economy partnerships, and social enterprise networks and concentrated that funding on "single interfaces". The justification for this decision was that single interfaces would provide for a coherent structure for the third sector in each area, with clear links to Community Planning Partnerships and Single Outcome Agreements.



An interface is a point at which two systems meet and interact. Third Sector Interfaces are intermediate organisations sitting principally at the interface between the public sector and the third sector, but also the private sector.

The purpose of a Third Sector Interface is :

"to provide for a single point of access to support and advice for the third sector within the local area and also to provide strong coherent and cohesive representation for the third sector on the community planning partnership"

Dumfries and Galloway's Third Sector Interface was originally a partnership of six organisations. On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 it became a single organisation incorporated as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).





### Common Outcomes

More people have the opportunity and enthusiasm to volunteer

Volunteer involving organisations are better able to recruit, manage and retain volunteers

Social Enterprise develops and grows

Third sector organisations are well run and deliver quality services

Different organisations and sectors are more connected and understand each other better

Third sector organisations feel better able to influence and contribute to public policy

### Functions of a Third Sector Interface

The Scottish Government funds Third Sector Interfaces to deliver on four areas of activity. This includes promoting, supporting and developing:

- ◇ Volunteering
- ◇ Social Enterprise (and a more enterprising third sector)
- ◇ A strong third sector

And in the context of this briefing:

- ◇ **Building the third sector relationship with community planning.**

The function of an Interface does not rest there, but is further defined in a series of documents the terms and content of which are agreed between Voluntary Action Scotland (the intermediary body representing the 32 Third Sector Interfaces) and the Scottish Government.

Each local interface must work to deliver on **common outcomes** which underpin a set of common services – a description of a portfolio of services that every local interface is expected to deliver, the idea being that every community and individual across Scotland should be able to access the same range and quality of services from their local interface, no matter where they live in Scotland.

A local interface may choose to deliver its services in different ways to suit the needs of local communities.

### Authority and Accountability of a Third Sector Interface

An Interface has no statutory authority underpinning its role. Its authority rests upon Ministerial direction to both the public and third sector to work together in particular ways. Specifically the local third sector interface is the third sector representative with Community Planning Partnerships and is a signature to the local Single Outcome Agreement. Authority is then embedded by the local public authority's recognition of the role and functions of their local Third Sector Interface.

Authority also rest upon the consent of the third sector in a locality. In Dumfries and Galloway the interface is a membership organisation. The members elect a Board of Trustees and the Board of Trustees is accountable to the members.

Interfaces are accordingly accountable to a range of stakeholders. They are accountable to the Scottish Government who expect them to deliver on policy agendas, Ministerial directions and to agreed outcomes and work plans. They are accountable to their local partners in the public sector. They are accountable to third sector organisations and to the people working within the third sector locally – and to those whose needs the third sector serves.

## Engage and Influence

A Third Sector Interface acts as a voice for the third sector within its locality.

The Interface seeks to represent the interests of the sector through advocacy and by engaging with public sector partners to influence public policy and the way in which public services are delivered locally and in communities.

The Scottish Government's expectations of a Third Sector Interface are extensive, and at odds with the resources available to it. The challenge lies in:

- ◇ The number of partnerships and forums that the sector is expected to engage in
- ◇ The need for appropriate and accountable representation from the third sector
- ◇ The capacity of the sector through its representation to engage and to influence
- ◇ The capacity of the Interface to support engagement and to demonstrate positive outcomes from that engagement (influence)
- ◇ And specifically in relation to Dumfries and Galloway our extensive geography and mix of communities

These are the challenges that our "Engage and Influence" work stream is designed to address.

## The way forward

We have recently completed a restructuring of staff structure of the organisation.

A Policy, Research and Community Planning Officer (Hayley McGowan) is now responsible for ensuring that the work of our Interface in relation to community planning is supported.

In addition we also now have officers working in local areas to support the engagement of the sector with community planning at a "locality" level

This is a first, but very important step, in bringing about change in the way in which we will manage our responsibilities.

The next step is to renew and refresh our approach to engagement with community planning. To achieve this we will need to revisit the appointment of those volunteers that represent the interests of the sector on the forums of the community planning partnership; and ensure that they are supported and accountable for their work.



## Role of a Third Sector Interface

**The expectation of the Scottish Government is that a Third Sector Interface will:**

**Advocate the role of the third sector in the design and delivery of social policy and services**

**Involve the third sector in planning processes**

**Provide opportunities for the third sector locally to network and take joint action with regards to services, public policy and creating change**

**Communicate policy information and support the sector to influence policy discussions both nationally and locally**

**Bring extensive knowledge of the third sector to partnerships**

## Community Gatherings

- ◇ Stranraer and The Rhins
- ◇ Newton Stewart and the Cree Valley
- ◇ The Machars
- ◇ Kirkcudbright
- ◇ Castle Douglas
- ◇ Dalbeattie
- ◇ Upper Glenkens
- ◇ Dumfries
- ◇ North West Dumfries (Lochside/Lincluden)
- ◇ Thornhill and Mid Nithsdale
- ◇ Upper Nithsdale
- ◇ Moffat and Upper Annandale
- ◇ Lockerbie and Mid Annandale
- ◇ Annan/Gretna (A75 corridor)
- ◇ Langholm and the Esk Valley



## Locality Forums

- ◇ Wigtown
- ◇ Stewartry
- ◇ Nithsdale
- ◇ Annandale & Eskdale

## Third Sector Forums

Despite the apparent layers of complexity community planning has at its core the simple concept of involving all relevant stakeholders in planning for and overseeing the effectiveness of services at the most local level possible.

We need, therefore, to ensure that when we involve the third sector in our work in relation to community planning we do so, firstly, at community level.

Deciding what the appropriate community level should be is not a simple matter. In geographic terms is it a neighbourhood or village, or perhaps a town and its hinterland? However we define community there will be those who disagree with the definition.

## Community Gatherings

In the first instance we propose to organise informal community gatherings of third sector organisations and community councils in the areas listed in the panel. (With the exception of Dumfries these areas are the catchments of our secondary schools).

Community gatherings have already been held in Stranraer, Whithorn, Newton Stewart, Dalbeattie and Castle Douglas.

Feedback from these events suggest that the idea of more locally based meetings of the third sector was welcomed; that it was an opportunity for people working and volunteering in the sector to get to know each other, and also to get to know more about other third sector organisations working in their community.

## Locality Forums

The structure of our local government, and the joint public body that will become responsible for the delivery of adult health and social care will be based upon localities, almost certainly defined geographically around the "districts" of Wigtown, Stewartry, Nithsdale and Annandale & Eskdale.

It is essential that the third sector, and the Interface, is keyed into these locality arrangements.

We therefore propose to convene four locality forums. We will use the Community Gatherings to consult on how often and where these locality forums should be held; and to guide the agenda.

## Thematic Forums

In addition to connecting the sector to community planning at a locality level we recognise the need for third sector organisations to meet to discuss issues and develop policies around themes of common interest.

Thematic Forums		
SOA Priority 1 Early Years	SOA Priority 2 Young People	SOA Priority 3 Older & Vulnerable People
SOA Priority 4 The Economy and Employment	SOA Priority 5 Safe & Secure Communities	SOA Priority 6 Environment & Sustainability

It seems logical to arrange such thematic forums around the priorities of the Single Outcome Agreement.

We will therefore convene six thematic forums and consult on how these should function. There is a view that thematic forums do not necessarily need to be convened as meetings (though it would seem reasonable that they are convened as such as might be needed), but can be effective as online forums with a regular exchange of information, views and feedback from third sector representatives on community planning and other partnerships.

Thematic forums will be encouraged to form sub and working groups as may be needed from time to time.

## Strategic Forum

There is a need ultimately to tie the work of, and the concerns and issues raised at community, locality and thematic level, to a strategic forum where priorities and policies can be discussed and agreed. This is particularly important if the work of the interface and its staff team is to be responsive to the needs of the sector as well as being focussed and effective.

We propose that each locality and thematic forum will have a Convenor, who is appointed by the Board of the Interface. There will be 10 Convenors, who along with the sectors two representatives on the Community Planning Partnership and representatives on the forums of the CPP, will comprise the membership of the strategic forum.

The Convenors of our forums will have a "job description" and will be recruited from a panel of volunteers from across our communities. Their task will be to ensure that their forum is convened; has an agreed agenda; is enabled to raise and discuss issues affecting the sector; and is supported by staff of the interface. They will also represent the interest of their locality or thematic forum at the strategic forum.

As an organisation we are committed to excellence and continuous improvement. The creation of systems that allow the sector not just to engage in community planning, but to influence the way in which services are delivered to the people and communities of Dumfries and Galloway is essential if we are to be a truly effective third sector interface

**STRATEGIC FORUM**

**Representative Accountable**

**Effective**

**Made up of**

**The Sector's Representatives to the Community Planning Partnership**

(2)

**The Convenors of Locality & Thematic Forums**

(10)

**Third Sector Representatives**

(?)

*Working together to put our sector first*



## Connect

In addition to community gathering and a system of forums we recognise the need for a space where people from across the third and public sector can come together to discuss issues of common concern, and in the process be better connected to each other and issues of public policy.

In 2013 we organised Connect 2013, a successful one day event, bringing together over 250 people from across the third and public sector to explore and discuss issues of common concern.

Connect will become an annual event and planning for Connect 2014 is already underway.

Connect 2014 will be held on Monday 10th November at the Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries. Information about the event can be found at:

[www.connect2014.org.uk](http://www.connect2014.org.uk)

## Third Sector Representation

A key element to effective third sector engagement and influence with community planning is the skills, knowledge and experience of our voluntary representatives.

Our voluntary representatives are, in every sense of the word, our champions. We have a duty to recognise the energy and commitment that they bring to their role as champions of the third sector; and a duty to ensure that they are supported and are accountable.

Our voluntary representatives are individuals drawn from third sector organisations in Dumfries and Galloway and who possess the skills and expertise to operate strategically on behalf of the third sector in the forums of the Community Planning Partnership (and other partnerships). They are individuals that have:

- ◇ A commitment to values and principles of volunteering
- ◇ Knowledge and experience of working and/or volunteering in the third sector.
- ◇ Knowledge of the issues affecting third sector organisations, in particular those issues that fall within the remit of the forum of the Community Planning Partnership on which they are our representative.
- ◇ Experience of partnership working with the public sector in Dumfries and Galloway.
- ◇ An ability to represent the interest of the third sector and to distinguish those interests from the interest of the organisation that employs them or which they volunteer with.
- ◇ Good communications skills and a commitment to keeping the sector informed.
- ◇ An ability to understand, convey and inform public policy issues and contribute to strategic development.
- ◇ A commitment to equal opportunities.

connect  
2013

## Champions of the Third Sector

### Key Competencies

Skill

Knowledge

Experience

Energy & Commitment

Working in ways that are

Strategic

Accountable

Supported



## Appointment of Representatives

The sector already has representatives working across many and diverse community planning forums and partnerships. They are not, however, yet fully integrated in the work of the Interface. It is therefore proposed to renew and refresh our representation.

Our community planning partners expect that third sector representatives will be appointed by the Interface and that, through the Interface, they will be accountable to the sector.

In renewing and refreshing our representation the Board of Trustees of our Interface will give priority to:

- ◇ The appointment of Forum Convenors
- ◇ The reappointment of those who are already our representatives.
- ◇ Identification of and filling gaps in our representation; and
- ◇ Developing a database of individuals who express an interest in taking part in training to become our voluntary representatives of the future

## Have your say ...

We want to know what you think about our proposals. You can give your feedback at events that we shall be running in Dumfries on the 4th July and Stranraer on the 10th July. Information about these events can be found on our web site.

Alternatively, please send your comments to me using the contact details below:

Hayley McGowan,  
Policy, Research and Community Planning Officer

### Contact us:

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Web: [www.thirdsectorfirst.org.uk](http://www.thirdsectorfirst.org.uk)

On line community [www.thirdsectorfirst.ning.com](http://www.thirdsectorfirst.ning.com)

### Visit us at:

16 Queensberry Street, Dumfries, DG1 1EX

8 Castle Street, Stranraer, DG9 7RT

c/o Dalbeattie Initiative, 71 High Street, Dalbeattie, DG5 4HA

c/o Langholm Initiative, Buccleuch Mill, Glenesk Road, Langholm, DG13 0ES

### Join us

Membership of Third Sector First is open to all third sector organisations and groups operating in Dumfries and Galloway. If you are not a member and would like to join us please contact us at the address below or by sending an email to [secretary@thirdsectorfirst.org.uk](mailto:secretary@thirdsectorfirst.org.uk). An online application form can also be found on our website.